

Gourmet 101

Chapter 101: Is This Human Stupid?

"You want to eat this, right?"

Ouyang Xiaoyi said with a chuckle as she used her chopsticks to pick up a piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs covered with amber-colored sauce and slightly wave it around Yang Chen's face.

At that moment, Yang Chen was already captivated by the intoxicating smell emanating from the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. His eyes were unable to move away. The amber-colored luster of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was simply too alluring. He subconsciously felt his stomach was empty and could not help but want to have a taste.

"Go order it yourself if you want to eat! Hmph! This is mine!" When Ouyang Xiaoyi saw Yang Chen drooling, she immediately became overjoyed. She had a triumphant expression as she shoved the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs into her mouth in one bite. Her eyes curved into two adorable crescents.

Yang Chen was furious. He knew this brat was definitely up to no good. However, he really had to admit that the aroma was truly fragrant. He had never smelled anything as captivating or enticing before.

Yang Chen was thinking whether he should also order a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, but he was hesitating since he already ordered Red Braised Meat. He gave up in the end. He decided to taste the Red Braised Meat first before making the choice. However, in order to resist the temptation, Yang Chen forced himself to look away from Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was enjoying the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

"Chew, chew." Ouyang Xiaoyi was amused as she watched Yang Chen who had closed his eyes so that he would not see the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. She was elated in her mind as she chewed loudly on purpose. Since Yang Chen was unable to see, she was using sound to entice him.

For Yang Chen, this was simply the most upsetting torture. It was even more upsetting than making him perform ten sets of kata out in the snow.

Nearby, Song Tao had been monitoring both of them. However, when he looked at the plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Ouyang Xiaoyi, he could not help but swallow his saliva as well. The smell was simply too aromatic. Even though the rumors alleged the price of the dishes in the black-hearted store was ridiculously expensive, there was a reason for its pricing.

Unfortunately, a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs actually cost fifty crystals. When Song Tao imagined how fifty crystals would slip away from his pockets if he ordered the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, he even lost his appetite for eating.

While withstanding the temptation of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Yang Chen managed to endure until Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen. He became excited when he saw the plate of carnelian-like Red Braised Meat that was exuding a cloud of steam.

"Here's your Red Braised Meat, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang calmly said. Compared to Yang Chen's eagerness, Bu Fang was easygoing.

Yang Chen's eyes were staring straight at the Red Braised Meat in front of him. The pieces of meat were translucent like carnelian and gave off an extremely beautiful red luster when placed under the lighting. It was exquisite like a piece of artwork and he could not bear to eat it.

However, the craving for food in his stomach conquered his appreciation for beauty in the end. Yang Chen grabbed his chopsticks and carefully picked up a piece of Red Braised Meat. As the chopsticks lightly clamped onto the piece of Red Braised Meat, a slightly translucent juice seeped out and a fragrance wafted into the air.

Placing the piece of meat in his mouth, a faint sweetness accompanied with the rich taste of meat instantly invaded and occupied his entire mouth. Yang Chen's whole body seemed to be wrapped by the flavor of the meat. The first layer of the venison was oily but not greasy. It was springy and the texture was extremely good. When Yang Chen reached the lean meat portion which should be firm, the tenderness and smoothness was outside of his expectations. The piece of meat entered his stomach with a gulp.

"It's... It's really delicious!" Yang Chen blankly muttered. He was looking at the plate of Red Braised Meat in disbelief. There was actually such a delicious Red Braised Meat in the world. Compared to the Braised Spirit Pork from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, the difference was like the distance between heaven and earth!

Just a single piece of meat was able to thoroughly subdue Yang Chen. Ouyang Xiaoyi's eyes became even more curved. She cheerfully picked up another piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs and shoved it into her mouth. Her cheeks were bulging as she chewed on the meat.

"Hmph! I already told you earlier, the smelly boss' dishes are definitely the most delicious!"

Yang Chen smacked his lips. He felt as if he did not taste the Red Braised Meat just now, and so, he picked up another piece of meat and once more shoved it into his mouth. With a gulp, the piece of meat entered his stomach... Yang Chen's eyes widened in surprise. He picked up another piece of meat and blissfully shoved it into his mouth. With a gulp, the meat entered his stomach.

Thus, Yang Chen began to continuously pick up the pieces of meat and continuously shove them into his mouth. He was simply unable to stop himself. When Bu Fang was carrying out the Egg-Fried Rice, the entire plate of Red Braised Meat was gone.

"Here's your Egg-Fried Rice, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said as he placed the Egg-Fried Rice that seemed to be exuding golden light in front of Song Tao.

Song Tao, who was already extremely tormented, picked up the porcelain spoon without saying anything and began scooping up the rice. The moment the spoon dug into the rice, the egg aroma and rice fragrance that was contained within instantly gushed out. Steam rose up and enveloped Song Tao's face, sending him into an euphoric state.

Even though the price of the Egg-Fried Rice was not considered expensive and the cooking method was simple, it was undeniable that the fragrance exuded by this simple dish was the strongest. The reason was the eggs by themselves were extremely aromatic when stir-fried.

No one could resist the Egg-Fried Rice's fragrance. Neither Song Tao nor Yang Chen could do it.

After eating a bite of Egg-Fried Rice, Song Tao was thoroughly captivated by it. He was continuously scooping the rice, chewing, and swallowing. He was completely subdued by the delicious flavor of the dish and forgot all about his objective for entering the store.

After a short while, the entire plate of Egg-Fried Rice was completely finished. The plate was licked clean and not even a single grain of rice was left.

"Delicious!" Song Tao placed the plate down and ran his tongue over his lips. He did not expect the Egg-Fried Rice to be so delicious. A single serving was simply not enough to satisfy him.

"Owner Bu, give me another serving of Egg-Fried Rice!" While facing such a delicious taste, even a fellow like Song Tao who was stingy by nature chose to compromise and decided to order another serving of Egg-Fried Rice.

"You'll have to order another dish. Since you've already ordered Egg-Fried Rice, you're not allowed to order it any more," Bu Fang replied after giving him a glance.

Song Tao was startled for a moment and then remembered the rules written on the menu. He suddenly felt somewhat depressed... At that moment, only then did he suddenly remember that he was not there to have a meal. He was there to abduct Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi.

Therefore, Song Tao withstood the temptation and carefully took out a single crystal. He placed it on the table with a face filled with reluctance before turning around and leaving.

Bu Fang's face was filled with doubts as he watched Song Tao leaving. Didn't he say he was going to order another dish?

After leaving the store, Song Tao did not go far. He found a comfortable spot a few meters away from the entrance of the alleyway and squatted down. He did not dare to make a move within the store, but once they were outside... He would be able to instantly capture the two brats and then leave. At the very least... He could not let the supreme beast dog have the chance to make a move.

The miserable fate of his two subordinates that were sent flying was still fresh in his mind. He did not dare to let that supreme beast dog unleash its claws...

Heavy snow was unsteadily falling from the sky without warning. The imperial city was once again covered with a layer of snow.

Within the store, Yang Chen, who was still craving for more, ordered some more dishes and he was heartily enjoying his meal. On the other hand, Xiaoyi ordered a serving of warm Fish Head Tofu Soup and she was elatedly sipping the soup.

The two of them simply had no plans to leave.

At the entrance of the alleyway, Song Tao was squatting there without moving. His body was already covered with a thick layer of white snow. Whenever he slightly moved his body, there would be snow falling off from him.

Lying at the entrance of the store, Blacky rolled its eyes. It was speechless for a moment because of Song Tao's behavior. It thought, "Is this human stupid?"

Song Tao was questioning his own normality as well... However, he had no other choice. In order to complete the mission, he could only make such a fearless sacrifice.

Qian Bao was wearing a brocade robe and a fox-skin overcoat. He was accompanied by a chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. When he reached the entrance of the alleyway, he spotted the shivering Song Tao, who was hiding within the alleyway. He immediately waved his hand away in disgust and said, "Where did this filthy beggar come from? Get lost, don't block the way."

When Song Tao heard those words, he immediately entered a daze. He was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor... He was actually being treated as a filthy beggar? Since when did he become this miserable?

Chapter 102: We Are Here Today to Consult You on Cutting Techniques

"What are you looking at? Are you not satisfied? Never seen a rich man before?"

Qian Bao was immediately upset when he noticed the filthy beggar squatting in the corner was actually glaring at him. He swung his fox-skin overcoat and coldly berated the beggar.

Song Tao was dumbfounded. He pursed his lips together and looked at Qian Bao. He wondered where in the world this fellow obtained the courage to behave arrogantly in front of him. Even though his current appearance was indeed rather miserable... Nevertheless, he was still a sixth grade Battle-Emperor!

The middle-aged chef standing behind Qian Bao glanced at Song Tao in disgust as well. He waved his hand away and said, "As expected of a store opened within an alleyway. No wonder there's not

many people coming through here. It's all because of filthy beggars like this. They're simply ruining the appetite of customers."

"Master Zhao, as long as you're able to get back our restaurant's prestige, I'll immediately give you a thousand gold coins when we get back! I'll guarantee you a blissful Spring Festival!" Qian Bao gave Master Zhao a glance and began laughing. This Master Zhao was the most skilled in cutting techniques among the chefs of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Qian Bao knew that no one within his restaurant could produce dishes with a taste comparable to the dishes from the black-hearted store. Even though he had never tasted them before, since Bu Fang's store had obtained the former emperor's recognition, their standard would definitely be at the level of his restaurant's Roasted Flower Duck. Therefore, defeating the black-hearted store with taste was too difficult.

Since that was not possible, he could only try with cutting techniques. Therefore, Qian Bao brought along the chef that was the most skilled in cutting techniques within the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

A thousand gold coins! Master Zhao's eyes immediately lit up and the corners of his mouth widened into a large grin. A thousand gold coins was already a huge sum of money to him. He had to work an entire year in order to get this much.

"No problem, boss! Leave this to me! I'll definitely use my cutting techniques to viciously pare that little restaurant's face! I'll let them understand what a real chef is!" Master Zhao reliably said while patting his chest.

"Alright, I am counting on you," Qian Bao said with a laugh.

After that, the two of them walked past Song Tao in revulsion and intended to enter the alleyway.

However, they might not care about Song Tao but the latter was displeased about them. Within the black-hearted store, Song Tao felt extremely vexed because of that supreme beast dog. After leaving the store, there were actually two blind fools that dared to prance around in front of him. They were even taunting him and treating him as a beggar.

When have you ever seen a beggar that was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor?

When Qian Bao felt a hand pressing down on his shoulder, he was startled for a moment. Then he felt his entire body being suppressed by an imposing presence and he was completely unable to move.

"What the! You filthy beggar, what are you trying to do? Don't push your luck! Remove your filthy hand!" When Master Zhao saw that Song Tao's hand was placed on Qian Bao's shoulder, he immediately started shouting and stretched his hand out toward Song Tao.

Song Tao's body shook for a moment as true energy instantly burst forth and blew away the snow that covered his body. His hair was fluttering and his clothes violently flapped under the outflow of his true energy. His eyes were sharp as a knife.

Master Zhao's hand that was just stretched out uncontrollably trembled. Damn... How did a filthy beggar suddenly turn into a cultivator?

Song Tao gave Master Zhao a wide-eyed glare and shouted, "Get lost!"

His voice violently surged forward like rolling thunder.

Master Zhao immediately took several steps backward in fear. Both of his legs were trembling. This presence... was too terrifying.

Even though Master Zhao had a cultivation level as well, he was only a second-grade Battle-Master. When faced with the terrifying aura of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor, he was close to wetting his pants in terror.

On the other hand, Qian Bao was still quite calm. He was someone who had seen the world after all, so his behavior was not as pathetic as Master Zhao.

"This lowly person failed to recognize such a great person. It is the fault of this lowly person for offending your excellency. I am the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. I wish to set up a banquet for your excellency to express my apologies! Would your excellency please calm down..." Qian Bao said with a trembling body.

Song Tao was going to slap these two fellows to death at first. However, when he heard Qian Bao was the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, he suddenly stopped his descending hand and then dispersed the true energy.

"Since they're from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant... forget it," Song Tao thought.

"Hmph, if it wasn't for the fact that you're from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, I would've already slapped both of you to death!" Song Tao coldly said. The true energy swirling around him gradually dissipated and then he regained his serene appearance. "I heard the two of you saying that you're going to that black-hearted store in order to challenge Owner Bu, right?"

Qian Bao was startled for a moment before he hurriedly nodded his head and said, "That's right! We're indeed going there to challenge Owner Bu... However, if your excellency does not permit, we'll immediately turn back."

Even though Master Zhao was agonizing over the loss of the thousand gold coins, after thinking for a while, his life was far more important. Therefore, he was nodding his head as well.

"What are you going back for? Go compete with him! You must compete! Furthermore, you must compete with him outside!" Song Tao's eyes did a little turn before he said with a sneer.

Qian Bao and Master Zhao were both surprised for a moment. The two of them looked into each other's eyes. So, this filthy beggar... Oh, his excellency was not someone from the black-hearted store?

"Aren't the two of you going to challenge Owner Bu in cutting techniques? Why don't you set the location of the match right here at the alleyway's entrance? Wouldn't this be more fair and just?" Song Tao said.

"This... What's the difference? It's even harder to perform cutting techniques in the cold," Master Zhao silently complained.

"Just do what I tell you to do. Do you have any complaints?" Song Tao coldly said as he gave Master Zhao a glare. He did not dare to act impudent within the store because they had a supreme beast dog. However, what was stopping him from being arrogant in front of two ants?

Qian Bao could only helplessly accept Song Tao's decision in the end. Then, the two of them headed toward Bu Fang's store step by step while under Song Tao's watchful eyes.

Song Tao was feeling satisfied by his own wit. "Heh, I might not be able to do anything within the store. However, things are much simpler if we're here at the entrance of the alleyway. Even if that supreme beast dog intervenes, I'll still be able to escape! Furthermore, I'll be able to snatch away those two brats as well!"

Qian Bao rubbed his hands together and expelled a cloud of white breath as he stepped into Bu Fang's store. As he entered the store, it was like stepping into a warm world. While snow was swirling outside, the interior of the store was warm and cozy.

A rich fragrance was slowly wafting within the store and Qian Bao was instantly attracted by the fragrance of the fish soup and the mellowness of the meaty aroma. He could not help but swallow his saliva. As he had expected... Only the smell of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's Roasted Flower Duck could match this fragrance.

Master Zhao was a chef as well. The moment he smelled the aroma of the dishes, he knew he would definitely lose if they competed in cooking. He would lose without even having a chance to retaliate. The difference in level between them was too large.

"Hmm? It's you? What are you having?" Bu Fang recognized Qian Bao. Previously, he went to the latter's restaurant and found fault with their dishes from the first floor till the third floor. He criticized their dishes to the point where they had no merit to speak of. He was naturally familiar with their owner.

He did not think that Qian Bao would actually come into his store...

"Owner Bu should still remember me, right? On that day, Owner Bu's evaluation of Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's dishes has really allowed me to receive a lot of benefits. The taste of many of our dishes have indeed improved after undergoing revisions. However, the saying goes that we should reciprocate politeness. That's why... I brought our Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's number one chef here today to consult you."

Qian Bao's words were quite pompous, but the meaning was actually quite simple: We're here today to find fault. Since you found my fault, I must find yours. Otherwise, we'll lose our face!

"Consult?" Bu Fang expressionlessly glanced toward Qian Bao as well as that Master Zhao standing behind Qian Bao. He pursed his lips and then said, "If the level of your chef is the same as last time, then I won't accept, because the two of you don't have the qualification."

"We don't have the qualification..." The muscles on Master Zhao's face twitched for a moment. However, he was unable to refute either. The rich fragrance that pervaded the air was causing him to lose confidence.

However, compared to Master Zhao's forlorn appearance, Qian Bao looked much more calm. He looked around the store's interior and said with a grin, "Owner Bu, we're not here to consult you on cooking. We're here to... consult you on cutting techniques!"

Master Zhao's heart trembled for a moment, then he proudly raised his head and haughtily said, "That's right! We're here today to consult Owner Bu on your cutting techniques!"

Chapter 103: Young Man, Use Your Eye-Blinding Cutting Techniques to Teach Him How to Be a Better Person

Master Zhao was very confident. He had extraordinary confidence over his cutting techniques. There was no reason other than the fact that he had spent over a dozen years on practicing cutting techniques alone. Ever since he was an apprentice chef, he spent every single day continuously waving around a kitchen knife and handling ingredients.

He could stand other people saying his dishes tasted bad but he could not stand anyone saying his cutting technique was bad, because it was an insult to the time he spent on practicing his cutting techniques.

It was precisely because of this confidence and solid cutting techniques that Master Zhao stood out among the many capable chefs of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant and was eventually chosen by Qian Bao to challenge Bu Fang.

Master Zhao haughtily looked at Bu Fang. He did not think the youngster before him was superior to him in cutting techniques. Cutting techniques not only needed talent but also required constant effort, and Master Zhao felt he was someone who possessed talent and had made constant effort.

Meanwhile, Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen had already finished eating their food and were curiously watching this stimulating scene unfold. Ouyang Xiaoyi was very excited as she thought, "Last time, the smelly boss almost wrecked the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. Now, they're upset and came for revenge!"

This little brat was purely watching from the point of view of a spectator. Her large eyes blinked as she looked at Bu Fang. She wanted to know how the smelly boss would handle this matter.

Honestly speaking, Bu Fang was truly not interested in stuff like challenges and learning from one another. He only wanted to peacefully cook dishes, run his business, earn crystals, and raise his cultivation level... His wish was that pure and simple. There was not much complicated things mixed within.

Previously, if the system had not given him a mission, Bu Fang would not have even bothered to step into the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

"Compete in cutting techniques? Why do I have to compete with you? Not interested." Bu Fang expressionlessly pursed his lips together as he turned around and headed for the kitchen. He could not be bothered to pay any attention to Qian Bao and Master Zhao.

Qian Bao was surprised for a moment. He did not expect Bu Fang's refusal. However, his eyes soon lit up as he thought, "He's refusing? Doesn't that mean he's lacking in confidence? This Owner Bu is definitely inept at cutting techniques... Otherwise, why would he refuse our challenge? He refused since he knew he would lose!"

The more Qian Bao thought this was the case, the more excited he became, and the more he could not let Bu Fang refuse his challenge because he felt he had discovered Bu Fang's weakness.

"Owner Bu... Aren't you being a little unreasonable right now? When you came over to find fault at the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, did I ever say a single no? I magnanimously allowed you to sample our dishes. Today, I came here with the intentions of learning from each other, yet you refused my invitation. This is a little unfair. Are you perhaps lacking in confidence? Are you self-conscious that your cutting techniques are inferior to my chef's?" Qian Bao said with a smile while his facial muscles were squeezed together.

His voice contained an extremely provoking tone, which was capable of causing any listener to become very uncomfortable. At the very least, Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was originally having fun watching the scene, became so exasperated that her teeth itched. She thought, "What do you mean by unfair? What do you mean by lacking in confidence? Would Owner Bu be lacking in confidence with his skills?"

"I am not lacking in confidence or being unfair. Rather, even if we're competing in cutting techniques, your chef is not qualified to compete with me. Since he isn't qualified, why would I compete with him?" Bu Fang stopped walking, turned his head and indifferently said. From his tone, not even a single trace of anger could be detected. It was as if he was just stating the truth.

Master Zhao was immediately angered. He thought to himself, "I am not qualified? I am the most skilled person in cutting techniques within the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, yet you're actually saying that I'm not qualified?"

Then, Master Zhao coldly taunted him, "Brat, you're really cocky. Unfortunately, you won't become better at cutting techniques by being cockier. We'll only find out whether or not I am qualified after we compete. Deciding whether I am qualified or not, who do you think you are!"

Qian Bao timely came out with a smile and said, "How about this, Owner Bu. Last time, the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's reputation was tarnished by you. This time, you can't expect us to be at a disadvantage as well. As long as you admit your cutting techniques are inferior to our Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's chef, we'll write off this matter. How about it?"

Bu Fang indifferently looked at Qian Bao. Was this fellow an idiot? He already said that the chef was not qualified to challenge his cutting techniques, yet this Qian Bao still wanted him to acknowledge his cutting techniques was inferior. What a joke.

Bu Fang's expression became cold as well. Since they wanted to seek their own deaths, he would fulfill their wish.

"Abrupt mission: Accept the cutting technique challenge from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant chef arranged by Qian Bao and completely dominate your opponent. (As the saying goes, a scholar prefers death to humiliation. A chef's cutting techniques must not be disgraced. Young man, use your eye-blinding cutting techniques to teach him how to be a better person!)

"Mission reward: Meteor Cutting Technique advancement."

Just as Bu Fang was about to give a response, the system's solemn voice resounded within Bu Fang's mind. Even though the system was solemn as always, Bu Fang seemed to be able to feel the anger contained within the system's mission.

With a trace of strangeness on his deadpan face, Bu Fang indifferently glanced toward Qian Bao and Master Zhao. Since even the system issued him with the mission, he would really be unreasonable if he did not accept their challenge.

Since that was the case... then he would accept.

"Alright, I accept. However, wait until my opening hours is over," Bu Fang indifferently said.

The smile on Qian Bao's face froze and slowly disappeared. He seriously asked, "Owner Bu, are you accepting our challenge?"

Bu Fang expressionlessly nodded.

"Then, is it alright for me to decide the location of the match?" Qian Bao asked. He still remembered Song Tao's instructions. When he recalled the terrifying aura he felt from Song Tao, he decided to follow Song Tao's orders.

"Up to you." Bu Fang could not be bothered to say anything else. He turned around and stepped into the kitchen.

Master Zhao and Qian Bao looked into each other eyes, and revealed a hint of triumph on their faces at the same time. Then, Qian Bao turned toward the kitchen and shouted, "Then, Owner Bu, I'll be leaving first. Once your opening hours has ended, I'll send someone to make arrangements for the challenge."

"Alright," Bu Fang's voice coldly drifted out of the kitchen.

Qian Bao and Master Zhao immediately left Bu Fang's store in high spirits. They had to prepare the stuff needed during the challenge.

Once they left, Ouyang Xiaoyi ran toward the kitchen window and asked, "Smelly boss, did you really agree with competing in cutting techniques? Is your cutting techniques... alright?"

Bu Fang raised his head and gave Ouyang Xiaoyi a glance. Then, a wisp of green smoke encircled his hand and an unassuming kitchen appeared. As Bu Fang's fingers nimbly started moving, that kitchen knife immediately wandered about his hand as if it was alive...

Ouyang Xiaoyi had never seen someone manipulate a kitchen knife in such a gorgeous manner before. Her eyes were almost popping out of her head. She suddenly felt her worry from just now was simply a joke... The smelly boss was a demonic genius with superb culinary skills. How could his cutting techniques be weak?

She could almost imagine the results of the coming match. The expression of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's owner would definitely become extremely ugly... She looked forward to the smelly boss slapping other people's face the most!

The opening hours soon ended. Both Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not in a hurry to leave. They were looking forward to this challenge.

Qian Bao's efficiency was still quite good. After a while, someone came and informed Bu Fang about the location of the match. However, the location startled Bu Fang for a moment.

"At the entrance of the alleyway?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

"Yes." The person who came to inform him nodded with absolute certainty.

Without saying anything, Bu Fang put on a fur overcoat and then walked out of the store.

At that moment, the entrance of the alleyway was buzzing with activity. The alleyway's entrance, where the pedestrian traffic was usually scarce, was surrounded by a large crowd. There were two large tables with various ingredients on top of them.

Master Zhao, wearing a chef uniform, was standing in front of one of the tables. On his table, there was a large knife rack filled with various kitchen knives and every single knife was glinting with sharpness.

Chapter 104: Let Us Compete by Slicing a Hundred Radishes

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were blindly following after Bu Fang as they looked toward the entrance of the alleyway that was buzzing with activity. The large crowd blocking the entrance was making Ouyang Xiaoyi excited.

This Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's owner was indeed different. He actually brought so many people to spectate this match. Was he planning to let the entire imperial city know?

Qian Bao was beaming as he stood at the entrance of the alleyway and watched the spectators in the surroundings. He was ecstatic that so many people were there. Once the news that a chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had defeated the owner of the black-hearted store was spread, the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant shall become even more renowned within the imperial city. When that time came, there would be more and more customers dining at the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

"Oh my, Owner Bu, you finally came. Look, so many people are paying close attention to this match. Try not to go easy on us." Qian Bao's face was full of smiles as he spoke to Bu Fang.

Bu Fang gave him a meaningful glance. He understood Qian Bao's intentions very well. Qian Bao wanted to make use of him as a stepping stone to make the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant even more famous.

There was actually nothing wrong with this idea because Bu Fang's store had recently become extremely well-known within the imperial city. If the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant managed to obtain victory during the match, its reputation would reach a whole new level.

However, this decision was made by Qian Bao under the assumption that Master Zhao's cutting techniques would definitely defeat Bu Fang's.

Bu Fang nodded and walked up to one of the tables. On the table, there were many fresh ingredients. Large snowflakes unsteadily descended from the skies and landed on these ingredients.

When Master Zhao saw Bu Fang, he drew out a broad-headed kitchen knife in an attempt to intimidate him. That shiny kitchen knife started whirling in his hand, giving off light from the body of the blade.

The sudden whistling sound caused by the whirling of the kitchen knife was extremely noticeable. The crowd that was rather noisy a moment ago quieted down as they held their breaths in anticipation of the impending match.

"Owner Bu, I've diligently practiced my cutting techniques for over a dozen years. Today, I'll definitely not go easy in the slightest. I'll use everything I have to compete with you," Master Zhao said. Then, he suddenly banged the table and sent a round potato, that was lying on the table, flying into the air.

Master Zhao's gaze became sharp and the kitchen knife he was holding instantly came slicing out. The kitchen knife continuously whirled in the air, producing the sound of something being sliced up.

With a loud tearing noise, Master Zhao's kitchen knife made a final horizontal cut and firmly stopped in front of him. Thin strips of the evenly cut potato were piled on the back of the kitchen knife.

This performance was very gorgeous. At least, the surrounding spectators were all clapping their hands in astonishment.

Master Zhao placed the potato strips onto a plate. A trace of a confident smile tugged at the corners of his mouth as he provocatively looked at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang remained expressionless. He was not surprised by Master Zhao's performance of cutting a potato in the air in the slightest.

Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was standing next to Bu Fang, disdainfully snorted at Master Zhao's provocative gaze.

"Tell me, how are we going to compete? I want to go back and sleep after we're done here." Bu Fang indifferently said. His voice was calm as water.

However, Bu Fang's indifference sounded like he was lacking in confidence in the ears of others. Suddenly, many of the spectators were looking at Bu Fang with eyes filled with ridicule and amusement. There was even booing coming from the crowd.

Qian Bao was overjoyed to witness such a scene. The more brutal he stepped on Owner Bu, the more the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's renown would increase.

"In this match, we're competing in three categories: speed, accuracy, and ruthlessness. The so-called speed refers to how fast you can finish cutting the ingredients. Owner Bu should know this clearly. Accuracy refers to the accurateness when cutting the ingredients as well as the precision. Ruthlessness refers to the dissection of meat ingredients. We're competing in these three categories today," Master Zhao solemnly said as he stuck the kitchen knife on the cutting board.

Bu Fang nodded. He was not surprised in the slightest. Those were the standard when competing in cutting techniques.

"Let's begin," Bu Fang said.

"Very well! We'll start with the first category then. We have two hundred radishes over here. How about determining the winner by comparing the time we take to slice a hundred radishes?" Master Zhao said.

"Radishes... again?" Bu Fang thought. The corners of his mouth widened into a smile as he looked at the radishes stacked on the table. He softly replied, "Alright."

"Owner Bu, take a good look! I am going to start!" When Master Zhao heard Bu Fang's reply, fighting spirit instantly surged from his body, causing the chef uniform he was wearing to flap wildly.

Master Zhao's hand reached out and drew out another kitchen knife. He was going to use two kitchen knives at the same time to cut the radishes.

First, he used his kitchen knives to pick up a radish and move it onto his cutting board. Then, he started chopping down rapidly with his kitchen knives with a clear rhythm. Don, don, don... Within a single breath, a single radish was evenly sliced into pieces. After finishing the first radish, Master Zhao was already preparing the second radish.

As expected of a chef who spent over a dozen years practicing his cutting techniques, Master Zhao's understanding and mastery of cutting techniques had already reached an unattainable level for many chefs. The fact that he was using two kitchen knives at the same time while maintaining such precision when cutting the radish was already extremely difficult for most people. Not to mention, his speed was so fast that onlookers were almost unable to keep up.

A hundred radishes were all precisely sliced into pieces by Master Zhao within ten minutes.

As Master Zhao finished slicing the last radish, he slammed both of his kitchen knives into the cutting board before taking a step back and letting out a deep breath. His forehead was covered with fine beads of sweat.

A series of exclamations and cheers instantly erupted from the spectators, greatly satisfying Master Zhao's self-esteem. He firmly believed that Bu Fang would definitely not be able to surpass him.

"Owner Bu, it's your turn!" Master Zhao overbearingly said.

Bu Fang gave him a glance and indiscernibly shook his head while letting out a soft sigh.

"Since you're seeking death, I'll help you fulfill your wish. The system wanted me to teach you to be a better person. If I don't show you a trick or two... even I wouldn't be able to forgive myself," Bu Fang muttered to himself. Thereafter, he did not use the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and took out an ordinary kitchen knife instead.

After performing an unremarkable trick with the kitchen knife, Bu Fang lightly flicked the blade with his finger and then nodded.

"The timer starts now!" Qian Bao said with a chuckle. His face was filled with confidence. On that day, Master Zhao was exhibiting better than usual. His performance was very assuring.

"Alright, let's begin," Bu Fang indifferently said. After that, he extended out his hand while gathering true energy in his palm and suddenly banged the table. He controlled the true energy so that the table was not destroyed, but instead sent the radishes flying into the air.

Buzz...

Within an instant, Bu Fang's eyes became sharp as an eagle's gaze. In that moment, the aura exuding from him underwent a dramatic change.

A hundred radishes were floating in the air, and then the kitchen knife held within Bu Fang's hand started to rotate by itself. The rotational speed was so fast that it struck fear in the hearts of the onlookers. That kitchen knife seemed to have turned into a ray of light as it instantly made a vertical cut.

Plop! Plop!

Everyone present was dumbfounded. Their faces were all filled with incredulity as they stared at the scene before them. Within their field of vision, everything—except for that one hundred floating radishes and a stream of light that erupted from the darkness—had disappeared. That stream of light was like a rain of meteors streaking across the night sky as it went past those radishes.

Once the darkness subsided and everyone's vision was restored, they discovered the hundred radishes floating in the air had all exploded into pieces. Each piece was sliced into tiny cubes and they were even more exquisite and smaller than Master Zhao's handiwork...

Plop plop plop!

It was as if the sky was raining radish cubes. Bu Fang held up a basket with a single hand and the falling radish cubes all landed inside the basket. Once the final radish cube landed at the top and rolled for a while before quieting down, Bu Fang finished his turn of the first category.

The time he took... was only four breaths. This was including the time it took for the radish cubes to fall into the basket.

Within an instant, the entire alleyway became so quiet that even a pin drop could be heard. Everyone was absentmindedly staring at Bu Fang. The confident smile on Master Zhao's face had already stiffened. He appeared comical and ridiculous like a clown.

While looking at Bu Fang's face filled with indifference, Master Zhao felt as if ten thousand suckling pigs were dashing through his heart... "God damn! Are you calling this a cutting technique? How is this any different from cheating?!"

Chapter 105: The Thousand Layer Tofu Flower

After placing the basket filled to the brim with diced radishes onto the table, Bu Fang indifferently gave Master Zhao a glance. The latter was completely struck with astonishment. His mouth was wide open and incredulity was written all over his face.

Of all the choices they could make, they actually chose to compete in slicing radishes against him... Bu Fang was speechless as well. The training method for the Meteor Cutting Technique was exactly slicing radishes. Furthermore, he had to practice with an extremely heavy kitchen knife that was specially-made. Under this sort of circumstances, it was natural for his cutting technique to be out of the ordinary.

Besides, Bu Fang was even more familiar with slicing radishes since he had to slice a thousand of them every single day. Slicing a hundred radishes within five breaths was like a walk in the park for him. Therefore, if they wanted to blame someone, they could only blame Master Zhao for selecting something that was most advantageous to Bu Fang.

"Let's begin with the second category," Bu Fang indifferently said. That serene voice of his instantly awakened everyone from their astonishment.

"You... How did you do it?! This is impossible! I spent over a dozen years diligently practicing my cutting techniques! How could I be inferior to a rascal like you!" Master Zhao muttered while shaking his head with an absentminded expression.

Bu Fang placed the ordinary kitchen knife he was holding onto the cutting board. He expressionlessly gestured toward Master Zhao to have a look at the kitchen knife he used.

As Master Zhao laid his eyes on that kitchen knife, his pupils immediately constricted. He saw that the entire blade of the kitchen knife was crumpled up and there were even some cracks on its surface.

"How could anyone achieve this level of cutting technique without undergoing arduous training? You diligently practiced for many years, but I've diligently practiced as well. It's just that our methods are different, that's all," Bu Fang said.

Master Zhao was startled by Bu Fang's words for a moment. Then, he looked toward Bu Fang with a somber expression and nodded, having regained his spirit once more.

"Many thanks for your pointer, Owner Bu. Let's continue, I'll do my best," Master Zhao said. This was still a match where he was betting his dignity as a chef after all. There was no way he could just give up like this.

"The... The second category is measuring the preciseness of your cutting techniques. We've prepared two pieces of tofu, and Owner Bu and Master Zhao will be slicing them. The person who makes the thinnest slices without breaking the tofu is the winner." At that moment, Qian Bao had already lost that self-confidence from before. The Meteor Cutting Technique that Bu Fang displayed had completely defeated his self-confidence.

Bu Fang nodded. Cutting tofu was indeed one of the methods to test a chef's cutting techniques. Since tofu was tender, the chef's control over his strength and preciseness of his techniques were extremely important. Once a mistake was made, the entire tofu would crumble apart.

Master Zhao did not say anything as he directly drew out a slightly narrower kitchen knife and walked toward the tofu placed on a cutting board with a serious expression on his face.

The tofu was delicate and glossy. It looked extremely brittle as if it would crumble from a single touch.

Since the temperature outside was colder, the tofu only was brought out when they were ready. There was still a slight warmth exuding from the tofu.

Slicing tofu was a challenging task, so Master Zhao had to completely immerse himself into the work. All of his attention was focused on his kitchen knife as he started cutting the tofu.

While Master Zhao was beginning to cut the tofu, Bu Fang took out an ordinary kitchen knife once more. This kitchen knife looked exactly the same as the previous one. They both belonged to the type of larger kitchen knives.

His eyes landed on the tofu. After glancing at Master Zhao who was carefully cutting the tofu with all of his concentration, the corners of his mouth slightly widened.

After experiencing the first round of the match, the surrounding spectators were no longer blindly believing in Master Zhao. Many of them were paying close attention to Bu Fang's movements. However, bewilderment and awe soon appeared on every single one of their faces.

When confronted with the delicate tofu, Bu Fang did not choose to be careful like Master Zhao. He treated the tofu as if it was a radish. He twirled around the kitchen knife with his fingers and suddenly chopped down toward the delicate tofu.

The scene from before, when the radishes were cut, appeared once more. During the moment the stream of light was released, it was as if a countless amount of meteors were flashing across the darkness. That delicate tofu immediately began to tremble.

Within four breaths, Bu Fang had already finished cutting. He put away the kitchen knife and looked at the tofu in front of him. That tofu was still intact, as if it was not cut at all.

"This... What's going on? There's nothing happening to the tofu?" someone within the crowd puzzledly whispered. After all, even though seeing was believing, the tofu before them was completely the same as before.

"Be patient," Bu Fang calmly said, suppressing the discussion within the crowd. Using his hands, he carefully lifted up the piece of spotlessly white and warm tofu and placed it inside a transparent bowl of water. This bowl was prepared by Qian Bao beforehand and allowed the appearance of the tofu to be seen from all directions after it was sliced.

Bu Fang carefully submerged the tofu inside the bowl and then suddenly drew his hand out from the water without causing a single ripple.

In the next moment, an unbelievable change occurred to the tofu inside the transparent bowl.

The change occurred in a quiet manner. After being immersed into the water, strips of tofu that were as fine as hair began hovering. It was like a flower bud was quietly blooming and the fine tofu strips were its petals.

This was the first layer. It was soon followed by a second layer of tofu petal blooming with a different angle. Every single strip hovering in the water was extremely fine.

Beneath the surface, the tofu seemed to be naturally elongating upward as layer after layer of tofu strips started rising due to the effects of buoyant force, forming what looked like a thousand layer flower.

"The thousand layer tofu flower, please enjoy." Bu Fang mildly said to the crowd of spectators.

Everyone sucked in a breath of cold air. They were amazed by the fact that a single cuboid tofu could actually be cut into such a beautiful tofu flower. Those fine petals looked even more fragile than hair as if they would disintegrate with a single touch...

As the sun's rays penetrated through the transparent bowl and lit up the thousand layer tofu flower floating within the bowl, the strips of tofu hovering in the water looked like a flower fluttering in the wind.

When Qian Bao saw the scene before him, both of his legs went weak. With such a tofu flower, how were they going to win? They were simply not a match for Bu Fang.

"So, it's not that Owner Bu is inept at cutting techniques. It's just that he didn't think it's worth his time to compete with us," Qian Bao bitterly thought. "I was actually dumb enough to shamelessly ask for my own humiliation."

The crowd of spectators was loudly exclaiming as they surrounded the transparent bowl and marvelled at the exquisite tofu flower. They were already completely conquered by its beauty.

On the other side, Master Zhao was still meticulously slicing away at the tofu with his kitchen knife. He did not just give up, and he was not affected by the external influences either. He was fully focused on his work in front of him.

Bu Fang nodded and could not help but feel some admiration toward Master Zhao. He was truly a chef who respected his own dishes.

After over a dozen minutes, Master Zhao completed his own product and placed it within a transparent bowl. Every single strip of tofu that spread out within the water was extremely fine. Even though it could not be compared to the thousand layer tofu flower, his work was already considered to be the pinnacle of cutting techniques.

"Owner Bu, I acknowledge that my skills are beneath yours. This is my loss, and there's no need for us to continue with the third category either. Compared to your cutting techniques, my skills are still lacking. I still need to diligently practice some more," Master Zhao said, while feeling both helpless and bitter.

Bu Fang nodded. The system had already announced the completion of the mission in his mind.

Qian Bao really failed this time. He was feeling really depressed for offering Bu Fang the chance to slap his face. For Bu Fang to be demonically talented at both culinary skills and cutting techniques,

it was simply inconceivable. However, with the vastness of the Hidden Dragon Continent, the appearance of such demonic geniuses was normal as well.

"With Owner Bu's excellent culinary skills and razor-sharp cutting techniques, staying within such a tiny store is truly a waste of your talents. I wonder if Owner Bu has any interest in coming over to Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. If the both of us work together, with Owner Bu's culinary skills and the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's reputation, we'll definitely become well-known through the continent!" The desire to bring Bu Fang over to his side grew within Qian Bao's mind.

"Not interested."

Obviously, Bu Fang rejected his proposition. Even the emperor was heartlessly refused by him, let alone the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was lying on the table in front of the transparent bowl. Her large eyes were filled with astonishment as she stared at the thousand layer tofu flower that seemed to be crafted via supernatural means. Yang Chen was extremely surprised as well. Was that really something that could be made with a kitchen knife? The culinary world... was truly unfathomable!

Suddenly, both of them felt a hand pressing down on their shoulders and were both startled at the same time. Then, they felt the loss of control over their body as a powerful aura suppressed their true energy.

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen looked each other in the eyes and silently shouted the same thing in their minds: Oh no!

Chapter 106: The Elegance of That Kitchen Knife

A mountain-like pressure suddenly fell upon the bodies of Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen, causing their entire bodies to stiffen. They were completely unable to manipulate the true energy within their bodies, as if it was frozen solid.

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen turned their heads around with much difficulty and saw Song Tao condescendingly looking at them from behind.

An unfathomable light flashed within Song Tao's eyes. True energy continuously appeared in the depth of his eyes as a terrifying aura flowed out from his body. After all, Song Tao was a very powerful sixth grade Battle-Emperor. He was not someone that Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen could deal with.

"I finally caught the two of you!" Song Tao was sneering as his hands pressed down on their shoulders, controlling the two to walk away from the crowd like they were puppets.

Song Tao was very excited. He was finally able to complete his master's order. This task was truly difficult. If the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had not challenged Bu Fang, he really would not be able to find such a good opportunity. The identities of these two brats were far too important for him to mess up.

The importance of Ouyang Xiaoyi, the princess of the Ouyang family, need not be said. She was also the greatest constraint of the Ouyang family. On the other hand, Yang Chen, son of Marquis Yang, was the sole heir to the Yang family. For the Yang family, he was the most treasured person.

As long as they could control these two brats, they had obtained the bargaining chips to negotiate with the Ouyang and Yang families.

While everyone else was captivated by the beauty of the thousand layer tofu flower, Song Tao was planning to leave while quietly grabbing onto Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen.

With the true energy in their bodies being controlled by Song Tao, Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not even capable of uttering a single word. Their eyes were filled with anxiety but there was nothing they could do.

"Oi, where are you taking them?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked Song Tao through the crowd.

Song Tao's body immediately stiffened as he silently groaned in his mind. He thought he could get away without anyone noticing, but he still got caught by Bu Fang. With a supreme beast backing up Bu Fang, fleeing was the only thing on Song Tao's mind.

Song Tao gave Bu Fang a glance before he picked up Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen, and clamped the two under his armpits. True energy gushed out from his feet as he attempted to escape.

Bu Fang immediately understood the situation. This fellow was abducting children in broad daylight. His actions were simply unforgivable.

Bu Fang's eyes became focused as he raised his hand and released the true energy within his body. A wisp of green smoke gathered within his palm and then the pitch-black Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared in his hand. He threw it as hard as he could toward Song Tao, who was in mid-air.

The kitchen knife, having been infused with Bu Fang's true energy and sharing Bu Fang's will, flew toward its target at an extremely fast speed.

At that moment, Song Tao took a glance back. When he saw that Bu Fang actually threw a kitchen knife at him, his eyes were filled with ridicule as the corners of his mouth widened into a smirk. He was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor. How would a kitchen knife be able to intercept him? Even though he had to admit that Bu Fang's culinary skills were pretty good, a mere fourth grade Battle-Spirit was simply not enough when it came to fighting!

Both of Song Tao's hands were preoccupied, so he kicked his foot toward the simple and pitch-black kitchen knife instead. He was completely looking down on the kitchen knife. It was just a kitchen knife... It was not as if it was a divine weapon or something, right?

When the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife finally made contact with the sole of Song Tao's foot, Song Tao froze. He suddenly discovered that the true energy gathered at the bottom of his foot was broken without providing any sort of protection. After that, blood came spilling out as the kitchen knife viciously stabbed into his foot!

"What the hell!" Song Tao screamed out. A hint of terror appeared on his face, and his eyes were filled with fear when he looked at Bu Fang. He thought, "Damn... That kitchen knife can actually penetrate the true energy barrier of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor? Are you kidding me?"

Song Tao did not dare to stay any longer. The sole of his entire foot was almost sliced off by the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife... As the true energy burst forth from his body, he tried to escape. He did not want to face Bu Fang any longer.

However, the moment Song Tao flew into the air, a tender shout filled with valor came from afar. Even though the shout was a woman's voice, it was surging forward like rolling thunder.

Song Tao was startled for a moment. After that, his pupils constricted and he became vigilant. A graceful figure was rapidly approaching from afar, holding a spear attached with a red tassel. The figure was almost ripping through the air as she came straight at him.

"You audacious fiend! Release the marquis' son!"

The spear, infused with terrifying true energy, actually possessed the powerful presence of a Battle-King. At that moment, Song Tao—who was floating in mid-air—was in a situation where he was actually unable to defend himself against this attack.

Both of his hands were grabbing hold of someone and his foot was injured by that Bu Fang's pitch-black kitchen knife...

Song Tao was tearing up inside... He thought, "What did I ever do to you? Why is completing a mission so difficult!"

Luo Sanniang from the Yang family, a fifth grade Battle-King, was Yang Chen's third sister-in-law. Her cultivation level was superb and she was considered one of the strongest among the females in the imperial city. No... To be exact, the females in the Yang family were all extremely gallant and powerful.

Song Tao did not anticipate that someone from the Yang family would arrive so quickly. In the current situation, he must release someone in order to safely defend himself against Luo Sanniang.

Therefore, he let go of Ouyang Xiaoyi. Compared to Yang Chen, the importance of the Ouyang family's princess was not that great.

Ouyang Xiaoyi's mind went blank when she was suddenly released by Song Tao in mid-air. She was flailing her arms around and screaming as she fell, completely forgetting that she was a fourth grade Battle-Spirit.

On the other hand, Bu Fang was completely composed. He dashed forward and caught the falling Ouyang Xiaoyi with one hand while catching the returning Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife with the other. Even though he was useless in combat, catching a loli was not an issue with his cultivation level backing him up.

Bang bang bang!

In the air, the two exchanged three moves in a row. Luo Sanniang landed on the ground and stumbled several steps backward. Her large chest was moving up and down, and her face overflowing with bravery was clouded with anger.

Song Tao was still a sixth grade Battle-Emperor after all. Luo Sanniang was not a match for him if she confronted him head-on.

"You scum, who gave you the courage to abduct the marquis' son! You're seeking your own death!" Luo Sanniang shouted. Her slender legs kicked off the ground and she charged forward once more with her spear stabbing toward Song Tao.

True energy gushed out from Luo Sanniang's body like a blazing inferno and covered the entire spear with violent flames.

"You lunatic! We're in the imperial city..."

When Song Tao saw Luo Sanniang's actions, his pupils constricted and he started to panic. If he only used one hand to block this attack, the aftermath of the flames would destroy the surroundings. With so many clueless spectators below them, there would definitely be quite a number of casualties. If that were to happen, there would be huge repercussions.

"The members of the Yang family are indeed all lunatics! They are all unreasonable lunatics!" Song Tao cursed in his mind. He had no choice but to dump Yang Chen. Then, he raised his hands and shot out two lumps of true energy, smothering the flames that enveloped the spear.

A distance away, the city guards could be seen rushing over. Song Tao roared in frustration as he turned around and swiftly departed while limping.

Even after spending so much time plotting and getting treated as a beggar by others, he still failed in the end... Song Tao was livid. If the sole of his foot was not injured by Bu Fang's attack, he would have already gotten away.

Luo Sanniang watched as Song Tao's figure limped away. She scornfully spat out a mouthful of blood and coldly snorted.

After that, she trotted toward Yang Chen who had safely landed.

"Third sister-in-law!" Yang Chen timidly yelled when he saw Luo Sanniang approaching.

She stopped in front of Yang Chen and immediately started twisting his ear. "You little rascal! How dare you play truant! You've really done it this time!"

"Third sister-in-law... I won't do it anymore," Yang Chen, feeling humiliated, hurriedly begged for mercy.

As Luo Sanniang angrily breathed out, she started coughing and her large chest was jiggling violently.

"Hurry up and thank Owner Bu. If it wasn't for him, the two of you would've gotten abducted once more," Luo Sanniang exasperatedly said.

At that moment, Bu Fang was walking toward them along with the frightened Ouyang Xiaoyi. He gave Luo Sanniang a glance and his eyes swept over her bountiful chest. While keeping on a straight face, he asked, "Why is that person trying to abduct Xiaoyi and the shota?"

Luo Sanniang had just caught her breath and her pupils constricted when she heard Bu Fang's words. Her chest jiggled as she yelled out, "Oh no! The marquis and General Ouyang have already left to look for the crown prince!"

Chapter 107: Researching a New Dish

"This morning, the marquis and General Ouyang received a secret letter from the crown prince. The crown prince claimed that he had information about your whereabouts, so they went to the crown prince's palace," Luo Sanniang said with a rather unpleasant expression.

Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi only understood Luo Sanniang's words but did not understand the meaning behind them.

On the contrary, Bu Fang knew some parts of the story but he was completely uninterested in this matter. In fact, whoever became the emperor was the same to him since he only wanted to run a restaurant within the imperial city. As long as the new emperor did not bother him, everything was fine.

"Alright, since that fellow has already been driven away by you, you should take these two brats home," Bu Fang said to Luo Sanniang.

Luo Sanniang was startled for a moment, then she looked at Bu Fang and nodded. "I've long since heard of Owner Bu's name. Now that I've personally seen you, the owner of the store that's the talk of the town is indeed not an ordinary person."

To be able to nearly slice off the sole of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor with a single attack using a kitchen knife, this Bu Fang's combat prowess was rather incredible. Battle-Emperors were already considered the top-notch experts within the entire Light Wind Empire. However, the protective barrier of a Battle-Emperor was penetrated by a kitchen knife of a mere fourth grade Battle-Spirit. This was simply unimaginable for Luo Sanniang.

"I am good friends with Yanyu, so I've heard stories about Owner Bu. I've always wanted to find an opportunity to visit Owner Bu's store to try out the delicious food that was highly praised by Yanyu. When I get the chance next time, I'll definitely visit," Luo Sanniang earnestly said.

"Alright, you're very welcomed." Bu Fang nodded. So, this busty chick before him knew Xiao Yanyu. No wonder she was greeting him as if they were old friends.

Luo Sanniang grabbed hold of the hands of Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. After bidding farewell to Bu Fang, she hurriedly left with the two brats. The crown prince was obviously planning to use their whereabouts to coerce the Ouyang and Yang families into supporting him when he sent the secret letter to them. This would be a tremendous help in aiding his enthronement.

However, the truth was Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not in the crown prince's clutches. Or to be exact, these two brats unexpectedly escaped.

In that case, the situation became rather uncertain.

...

The employees from Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had already removed the tables and ingredients used for the match and the thousand layer tofu flower made by Bu Fang was carefully taken away by Qian Bao. This piece of work could be considered a masterpiece among cutting technique and there was even some sculpting techniques used.

The alleyway became spacious once more. However, news of Bu Fang's godlike, uncanny cutting techniques had completely spread. A chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the black-hearted store's owner. This was not an inconsequential advertisement. At the very least, many of the spectators followed after Bu Fang in the hopes of glimpsing his culinary skills.

Bu Fang walked back into the store but he started covering up the entrance with the door boards, completely ignoring the crowd gathered outside.

"Owner Bu, why are you closing up so early?" a potential customer puzzledly asked. They witnessed Bu Fang's cutting techniques and wanted to savor the delicious food within the store, since they were already there. They did not anticipate that Bu Fang would actually close up the store.

"Today's opening hours has already ended. If you want to taste my dishes, come back earlier tomorrow to queue up," Bu Fang expressionlessly said while completely ignoring the crowd outside of the store whose expressions were gradually becoming displeased.

"You're really unreasonable. It's not as if we won't pay for the food. Why are you not letting us in?"

"Are you not running a store to make money? This is a chance for you to make money and you're not interested, are you stupid?"

...

The crowd's dissatisfied complaints continued to resound within the alleyway. Obviously, Bu Fang's decision to close the store had angered them.

Bu Fang was leaning on the doorway, expressionlessly watching the crowd. He was not in a rush to give them a response and just indifferently looked at them, while listening to their complaints and abuse.

Only until everyone had gotten tired, Bu Fang stood up and picked up the last piece of door board. He said, "I already said that the opening hours has ended. If you want to eat here, come back earlier tomorrow to queue up. This store does not provide services during non-opening hours."

After Bu Fang finished speaking, he closed up the last piece of door board with a bang.

Everyone was stunned. There actually existed such a weird and stubborn owner in this world? Who was not even interested in making money?!

"Ptui! What kind of a garbage store is this! Who the hell do you think you are! I am not interested in eating here anymore!" One of the customers dissatisfiedly spat on the ground and turned around with the intention to leave.

However, before he could even take a single step, he felt a gigantic pressure fall upon him. He tumbled onto the ground and coincidentally lied down on the place where his spit landed, lightly brushing against that spot. He only felt the pressure disappear after the floor was wiped clean.

That person's face was filled with terror as he got up from the ground in a pathetic manner and scrambled to escape from the alleyway. There was something strange within the alleyway!

The others did not feel that pressure, so they were puzzled when they saw that person frantically running away.

Since the entrance of the store was closed, they did not persist any further and left the alleyway one after another. The entire alleyway regained its tranquility once more.

Blacky lazily rolled its eyes while lying in front of the store's entrance. It moved its head and adjusted its position before continuing with its cozy slumber. How dare he spit in front of the store's entrance... There was no way Blacky would let him leave before he wiped the floor clean.

Bu Fang took off his overcoat once he got back into the store. He stretched his body and walked toward the kitchen.

The system's reward had already been given out, but Bu Fang was unexpectedly unconcerned about it. Regarding the system's somewhat revengeful mission this time, Bu Fang felt rather amused. He did not think the system would be capable of throwing a tantrum as well.

Back in the kitchen, a wisp of green smoke encircled Bu Fang's hand and the extremely sharp Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared in his hand.

The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife that almost sliced off the sole of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor was still unassuming. There was neither dust nor blood stains on it.

However, Bu Fang still habitually used the spring water provided by the system to wash the knife's blade. After all, as a chef, Bu Fang was quite obsessed with cleanliness.

After cleaning the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, Bu Fang waved his hand and the kitchen knife turned into a wisp of green smoke, returning into the mark on his wrist. Then, he went into a daze for a while, staring at the cutting board in front of him.

Bu Fang suddenly did not feel like cooking the dishes on the store's menu. He was feeling exhausted after cooking the same thing every single day. All humans have a sense of laziness and Bu Fang was a human as well.

He thought about going back to sleep in his room, but felt that it was a little too early for sleeping.

Therefore, Bu Fang was feeling somewhat undecided on what to do for a moment.

Suddenly, he narrowed his eyes and took out a piece of the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat from the system's storage space. This was the meat from the Wandering Dragon Cow's legs and was filled with a rich amount of spirit energy.

Bu Fang rubbed his chin as he looked at the piece of beef shank. Suddenly, he wanted to cook his own dish instead of following the dishes on the menu.

Creating and researching new dishes was a thing that every single chef was interested in, and Bu Fang was not an exception.

The Wandering Dragon Cow was a seventh grade spirit beast. Its meat was extremely hard and it was impossible for an ordinary kitchen knife to cut into it. Therefore, Bu Fang summoned the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife once more and swiftly turned the piece of meat from the Wandering Dragon Cow into minced meat.

Looking at the minced meat, Bu Fang suddenly remembered an extremely delicious dish. However, in order to cook that dish, he still needed to prepare and process many other things and the steps were rather troublesome.

However, as he recalled the taste of that dish, Bu Fang's exhausted mind suddenly became energetic.

He took out the intestines of the Wandering Dragon Cow from the system's storage space and repeatedly washed the blood-stained intestines at the sink. He used the spirit spring water provided by the system which ensured the spirit energy contained in the intestines was preserved.

After cleaning the intestines, Bu Fang carefully started peeling off its outer layer, the submucosa.

This submucosa was an important material in the dish Bu Fang was going to make next.

Chapter 108: An Extravagant Sausage

On the imperial city's Long Street, heavy snow was unsteadily falling from the skies above, covering the green quartzite tiles and pressing down upon the tents set up by vendors next to the street.

A chilly wind blew past, causing the pedestrians wearing layer upon layer of clothes to uncontrollably shiver and exhale a cloud of white breath before continuing on their way.

Luo Sanniang was dragging along Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. The three of them were slowly walking on the imperial city's Long Street. The snowy breeze and falling snowflakes were all blocked by the true energy barrier that Luo Sanniang had erected.

As the three of them walked on, Luo Sanniang was still berating Yang Chen about something, while Yang Chen appeared miserable with his little face almost scrunched together. Next to them, Ouyang Xiaoyi was giggling at Yang Chen's wretched appearance.

Suddenly, the snow that covered the skies stopped falling and the entire street became quiet. Luo Sanniang's pupils constricted. She could not hear anything in her ears, except the sound of her own breathing.

She turned her head with much difficulty and looked at Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. Their tiny mouths were opening and closing, as if they were saying something. However, Luo Sanniang could not hear anything at all.

At the end of the street, a man wearing an overcoat with images of cranes sewn on it leisurely walked forward with his hands held behind his back.

With every step he took, Luo Sanniang felt the pressure on her body increase. The scenery in the surroundings became dull and only the man leisurely walking toward her was left in her pupils.

"Zh... Zhao Musheng?!"

Luo Sanniang's red lips slightly opened and she cried out this name in astonishment, only to discover that she was unable to make any sound. Her delicate body was slightly trembling. The pressure was suppressing her to the point where she was unable to move even a muscle.

Zhao Musheng leisurely walked with his hands held behind his back until he came before Luo Sanniang. His pupils were ever-changing like the vast ocean, as if a Buddhist aura was circulating inside and a sutra was being chanted.

Luo Sanniang blankly stared at Zhao Musheng. The corners of the latter's mouth curled up as he passed by her. He grabbed hold of the hands of Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi, and step by step disappeared from the imperial city's Long Street...

Bang!

Luo Sanniang's eyes widened as she powerlessly knelt down on the ground. Her perky chest was moving up and down as she gasped for air.

The clamor of the city and the howling of the winter wind returned to her ears once more. A snowflake quietly fell and landed on Luo Sanniang's loose black hair. Her true energy barrier had already collapsed without her awareness.

The entire imperial city was in a state of shock. The prominent families, Ouyang and Yang, had declared their intention to aid the crown prince's enthronement. This news was like a devastating earthquake had occurred in the already turbulent imperial city.

The rich and influential families that were originally still indecisive all began to pick a side. Most of them had chosen to support the crown prince, Ji Chengan.

The number of rich and influential that was supporting King Yu had substantially decreased as well. With the support of the Ouyang and Yang families, the crown prince's enthronement was practically in the bag. Once the crown prince became the emperor, there was basically no chance for King Yu to make a comeback.

There was still one more prominent family within the imperial city, the Xiao family. General Xiao Meng had already announced earlier on that he would only support the emperor. This meant that unless special circumstances arose, he would not support either the crown prince or King Yu.

King Yu's manor.

The expression of King Yu, Ji Chengyu, sank as he banged the table with his palm, shattering the entire table into pieces. The aura exuding from his body became extremely bleak.

"That damnable Zhao Musheng! That detestable old fox! He didn't make any movements, so I thought he was going to be a spectator! I didn't anticipate that he would do this! Damn it! God damn it!"

Inside of the room, Hun Qianyun wrapped in a black robe faintly smiled as he watched the enraged King Yu. He said, "There's no need for King Yu to be angry. Humans are bound to make mistakes. The fact that Zhao Musheng was able to become the Minister of the Left proves his craftiness. Nevertheless, even if the crown prince has gained the support of the Ouyang and Yang families, we're not necessarily helpless against them."

King Yu took a deep breath and suppressed his anger. He looked at Hun Qianyun and gestured for him to continue.

"We've already gained the support of many court officials, including the Finance Minister himself. With his help, we'll be able to control the entire economy of the imperial city. Furthermore, the

White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect from the four great sects of the Heterodox Path have already dispatched their experts to support King Yu. In terms of high-end combat capability, as long as Xiao Meng doesn't intervene, we have the upper hand over the crown prince," Hun Qianyun said.

"The White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect?" King Yu instantly narrowed his eyes sharply at Hun Qianyun.

On the contrary, Hun Qianyun was perfectly composed as he calmly looked back at King Yu.

"When did I ever say I wanted assistance from the White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect? The four Heterodox Path sects really are close..." King Yu said with a sneer.

Hun Qianyun lightly chuckled and shook his head. "We're not the four Heterodox Path sects anymore. The Death Soul Palace was wiped out by Emperor Changfeng, so they're no longer considered part of the four great Heterodox sects. However, with the aid of the three great Heterodox sects' support, is King Yu still not confident of sitting on that throne?"

"You truly are self-assured," King Yu said while narrowing his eyes.

"I think we're the same." The spirit fire within Hun Qianyun's eye sockets pulsed.

...

Bu Fang carefully peeled off the outer layer of the Wandering Dragon Cow's small intestine. The transparent and springy outer layer of the small intestine was very suitable for being used as a sausage casing.

Indeed, Bu Fang was planning to make sausages, a type of food that he loved back when he was on Earth. The rich aroma of an authentic, well-made sausage was guaranteed to make anyone salivate.

However, the sausage that Bu Fang was making this time was not an ordinary one. Based on the ingredients alone, it was already far superior to ordinary sausages. Only Bu Fang would be wasteful enough to use the meat of the Wandering Dragon Cow to make sausages.

Once the sausage casing was prepared, Bu Fang placed it aside and took out some of the spirit herbs he harvested during his visit to the Valley of the Fallen Phoenix from the system's storage space.

These spirit herbs were not as valuable as the Phoenix Blood Herb. However, the herbs were still rather precious and brimming with spirit energy.

The Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen whirled in Bu Fang's hand and fell like a meteor, turning all of these spirit herbs into fine powder. With the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife's special characteristics, the medicinal property of these spirit herbs was all preserved. After mixing the powder with the minced meat, he took a small break and later added seasoning before retrieving the sausage casing.

He took out some specially-made rock sugar provided by the system. Every single piece of the rock sugar was as beautiful as a gem. However, this beauty was soon turned into dust by Bu Fang's kitchen knife. After mixing these rock sugar dust into the minced meat, Bu Fang began shoving the minced meat into the sausage casing.

With the help of true energy, stuffing the minced meat was much easier. Bu Fang only needed to infuse true energy into the sausage casing and it would become inflated. After that, it was an easy matter to shove the minced meat into the sausage casing. Once the entire sausage casing was full, he used catguts to segment it into individual sausages.

Looking at the bulging sausage, an intense amount of spirit energy was seeping out from the sausage casing. There was already a fragrance wafting from the sausages even before they were cooked.

This fragrance was not the aroma of meat, but the smell of the spirit herbs mixed within the minced meat.

Bu Fang was rather satisfied as he looked at the twenty odd sausages. There was only this much sausages. Once they were sold out, there would not be any more.

After all, there was only one seventh grade Wandering Dragon Cow and it only had a single small intestine...

When Bu Fang imagined the fragrance these sausages would exude after he deep-fried them, his mouth started to salivate. He was itching to cook them right now.

However, there was no point in being anxious. After preparing the sausages, he still needed to let them dry cure for a few days. Therefore, Bu Fang hung the sausages within a cupboard provided by the system. This cupboard had the effect of accelerating the dry curing process. The principle was the same as accelerating the fermentation process back when he used the Nine Brewing Method.

After closing the cupboard, Bu Fang let out a deep breath. He was looking forward to the result. After all, this was his first time not making something from the system's menu.

"System, what's the approximate price for my sausages after they're cooked?" Bu Fang asked in curiosity.

Chapter 109: The High-end, Refined, and Classy Big Dipper Carving Technique

"The host's personal dish has been detected. The price evaluation of the dish will now begin..." The system's solemn voice resounded within Bu Fang's mind, and then became silent.

Bu Fang waited for a few seconds but he was puzzled when there was no reply from the system.

However, the system's solemn voice soon rang out once more.

"The Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausage is made from the shanks of the Wandering Dragon Cow. It is rich in spirit energy and has multiple natural spirit herbs added, which not only increased the flavor of the sausage but also increased its medicinal value. The submucosa of the Wandering Dragon Cow was used as the sausage casing, which encases the spirit energy to prevent dissipation. The system's price evaluation of this dish is: two hundred fifty crystals per sausage, it should not be consumed by those with a cultivation level below fifth grade Battle-King."

Two hundred fifty crystals per sausage... When Bu Fang heard the price, he went into a daze and then became utterly speechless.

A single sausage was actually going to be sold for two hundred fifty crystals. So far, this was the most expensive dish within the store. Furthermore, he was the one who created the dish. For some reason, Bu Fang suddenly felt a little excited.

However, after thinking for a while, Bu Fang felt the price was reasonable because the sausage was different from the Improved Rice Noodle Roll. Bu Fang only added a little bit of the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat into the Rice Noodle Roll, while the sausage was stuffed with the shanks of the Wandering Dragon Cow. The difference in quantity between the two could not be compared.

Besides, not only the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat, the spirit herbs added into the sausages were also considerably expensive. Therefore, the price being set as two hundred fifty crystals was truly not that high, to the point it could even be called affordable. After all, there was basically no possibility of an ordinary person getting the chance to eat the meat of a seventh grade spirit beast.

There were twenty one sausages in total. If he sold all of them, he would get five thousand two hundred fifty crystals. In order to become a fifth grade Battle-King, he needed ten thousand crystals after conversion. According to his current energy conversion ratio, he needed to achieve a sales figure of twenty thousand crystals.

After selling all of these sausages, Bu Fang would be able to save a quarter of the time needed to reach the next cultivation level. This was an unexpected surprise for him.

The most important thing was... the twenty one sausages only used up less than a single leg of the Wandering Dragon Cow. The entire Wandering Dragon Cow had so much meat. If he cooked and sold all of it, Bu Fang would probably earn enough to become a sixth grade Battle-King...

He actually wanted to immediately cook one of expensive sausages and taste the flavor. Unfortunately, dry curing the sausages required time.

Therefore, Bu Fang could only head toward his room while stretching his body. After he finished washing up, he climbed onto his bed and went to sleep.

As someone aiming to become the God of Cooking, having enough sleep was important.

...

The Yang manor.

Both of Luo Sanniang's legs were slightly trembling as she returned to the manor. The moment she stepped into the manor, a graceful figure hurried over from afar to support her.

"Elder sister Luo, are you alright?" A feminine voice sounded out from the mouth of the graceful figure.

"Juan'Er, hurry and bring me to see the marquis!" Luo Sanniang urgently said while grabbing hold of the gentle and beautiful woman in a turquoise dress.

Luo Sanniang's reaction clearly gave the woman called Juan'Er a scare. She timidly asked, "Did elder sister find Xiaochen?"

"I found him and managed to rescue him. I was bringing him back... when someone else abducted him." Luo Sanniang's eyes suddenly became dull.

Juan'Er's tiny mouth slightly opened as she exclaimed in disbelief, "Who would dare to abduct someone under elder sister's protection within the imperial city?"

Luo Sanniang could only bitterly smile in response. The truth was not something she could explain easily. Until now, she still could not believe that the man whose entire body was enveloped within a buddhist aura was actually Zhao Musheng, the Minister of the Left who has always been known for his refinement and was even nicknamed as the feeble scholar!

It turned out that everyone was deceived by Zhao Musheng. This wily old fox was not only not a harmless scholar, but he was also a terrifying expert whose cultivation was so strong that Luo Sanniang was not even capable of resisting.

Until that day, Luo Sanniang had only felt that sort of terrifying presence, that made her feel as if the entire world was spinning, from a single person.

That person was the Light Wind Empire's number one expert, seventh grade Battle-Saint Xiao Meng.

Zhao Musheng was a seventh grade Battle-Saint? Luo Sanniang herself was confused... Even she was unable to believe this sort of incredible claim.

During the reign of the Emperor Changfeng, Zhao Musheng passed the imperial examination and step by step turned from a young scholar into the top-scorer of the imperial examination. His career was meteoric, spending only over a decade to become the Minister of the Left. Everyone assumed Zhao Musheng was simply just a scholar.

Which is why many people were unconcerned about him. Even if he was peerless in devising stratagems, the empire valued one's martial ability after all. They all thought a scholar was not capable of anything big.

As the night descended, the imperial city was still in a tumultuous state.

The situation of the entire imperial city was unstable and dangers were present everywhere.

At the Yang manor, the Marquis Who Pacifies the West, Yang Mo, returned with a grim expression. Luo Sanniang relayed everything she had seen and heard to the white-headed and imposing elderly man.

"I understand," Yang Mo said and gestured for Luo Sanniang and Jian'Er to withdraw.

He sat above the main hall without saying anything. The fact that Zhao Musheng abducted Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen in order to force the two families into supporting the crown prince was clearly a declaration of war against King Yu...

"If Zhao Musheng truly is a seventh grade Battle-Saint, why was he hiding his cultivation level for so many years? Zhao Musheng... Who exactly are you? And what are you planning?" Yang Mo softly muttered.

He was not worried about Yang Chen's safety. Furthermore, in a few more days, Zhao Musheng would dispatch his subordinates to send Yang Chen back. However, knowing the truth would not change anything.

Because the Yang and Ouyang family siding with the crown prince had already become a fact. There were many court officials following them, so it was impossible for them to go back on their word. Which is to say, they could only continue to support the crown prince.

"However... Is the crown prince really suitable as an emperor?" Yang Mo let out a long sigh. Even though the crown prince was neither foolish nor cruel, he was too mediocre. There was still quite a difference in the abilities of the crown prince and King Yu.

Yang Mo was really unable to understand Zhao Musheng's intention for supporting the crown prince.

At the Ouyang manor, a similar sigh could also be heard.

...

Within this unstable imperial city, while some people were unable to have a good night's sleep, Bu Fang was sleeping soundly.

The so-called imperial family's affairs had nothing to do with him. His only objective was just to run the store. Once the night quietly passed and the sun rose over the horizon, Bu Fang got up from bed on time.

Putting on a woolen clothing, Bu Fang left his room and entered the kitchen. Everyday, during this hour, he would practice his cutting techniques. Even though Bu Fang had the system, he still had to diligently practice. There were no shortcuts to success.

However, Bu Fang had no intentions of practicing his cutting techniques that day. His Meteor Cutting Technique had already reached the culmination of the first level. Even though the second level was already unlocked, Bu Fang was not in a hurry. First, he wanted to practice the Big Dipper Carving Technique that was already unlocked.

When it came to carving techniques, Bu Fang actually had some experience with them. While making the Thousand Layer Tofu Flower from the day before, he mixed in some carving techniques during the cutting process. Even though he did not include a lot of carving, it still caused the thousand layer tofu flower to stun everyone present.

Now that he was going to begin the system's carving technique training, even though the difficulty might be higher than the thousand layer tofu flower, there would not be a need for him to mix in that many complicated cutting techniques.

"Big Dipper Carving Technique: a special carving technique that requires true energy. The host needs to utilize true energy all the time while carving. Extreme care and precision needs to be taken during the carving in order to adhere true energy from the kitchen knife onto the surface of the dish. This would increase its vividness and achieve a dreamlike effect. The Big Dipper Carving Technique provides an exclusive magic array as well. Once the carving is completed, plating will increase the beauty of the dish."

Bu Fang checked the system's introduction of the Big Dipper Carving Technique. After taking a look, he realized this technique was not an ordinary carving technique and he even needed to utilize true energy. In an instant, this technique became high-end, refined, and classy.

Chapter 110: How Dare You Snatch My Phoenix Blood Herb

True energy was needed while practicing the Big Dipper Carving Technique. This made the difficulty of the training even harder for the practitioners because true energy was very unstable. If any mistakes were made during the sculpting process, the ingredient would be damaged. Therefore, the chef's ability to control true energy was strongly tested.

Similar to the cutting technique training, the system prepared a specially-made kitchen knife for Bu Fang as well but this one was much lighter. The kitchen knife used during the cutting technique training was made from a special metal and lifting it up alone was extremely strenuous.

When Bu Fang looked at the thick and broad kitchen knife, he began to feel unwell. He thought, "Shouldn't those kind of small-sized carving knives be used when practicing carving techniques? What's the meaning of giving me a butcher's knife?"

The kitchen knife itself was not that heavy, but the visual impact made Bu Fang feel depressed.

Pursing his lips, Bu Fang walked toward a cupboard and took out a piece of tofu that was prepared by the system. This was the ingredient that was going to be used for the practice. Obviously, Bu Fang was not supposed to use this tofu for testing his cutting technique, but to practice his carving technique.

The tofu was extremely white and it was still exuding warmth. A faint fragrance was wafting from the tofu. Without a question, the quality of the tofu was very high. At the very least, it was much better than the one prepared by the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Grabbing the thick and broad kitchen knife, Bu Fang felt rather awkward for a moment as he faced the palm-sized, delicate tofu. He did not know how he should proceed.

With the first swing of his knife—the moment he circulated his true energy—the tender tofu immediately broke into pieces and bits of tofu flew everywhere.

Clearly, his first attempt had failed.

However, Bu Fang was not discouraged. Since he was holding a kitchen knife that was similar to those used by butchers, Bu Fang had not intended to succeed with his first attempt. Therefore, his expression remained the same as he retrieved a piece of tofu from the cupboard and continued with the carving technique training.

When it was almost time for the store to open, there was already a thick layer of tofu gathered on the table. Bu Fang had already lost count of the number of times he failed.

Nevertheless, growing from failure, reviewing one's mistakes, and finding the key to success were the most important parts of learning.

True energy flowed like a stream into the specially-made kitchen knife. Bu Fang wielded the kitchen knife as if it weighed nothing and skillfully carved on the surface of the tofu...

His movements were awkward but they were much better than before when the tofu crumbled upon contact.

Gently pulling back the kitchen knife, Bu Fang let out a deep breath. He twirled the kitchen knife in his hand and performed a knife trick before gently placing it down. He finally finished the first work.

In front of Bu Fang, there was a palm-sized tofu with some parts starting to slowly fall off, as if its clothes were being taken off to reveal the world inside.

It was a lotus flower carved from tofu with white and delicate petals. The petals were translucent like paper and seemed like they would be destroyed from a single gust of wind. The layers of petals stacked together were extremely beautiful. Furthermore, the use of true energy seemed to have caused the surface of the tofu lotus flower to glisten, making it exceptionally attractive.

"I still need to put in more effort. Nonetheless, I finally managed to carve out the first piece of work after using up the entire morning practice," Bu Fang muttered to himself. After that, he cleaned up the kitchen and started preparing Blacky's breakfast, the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

A busy day was beginning once more.

For three consecutive days, the imperial city was in an uproar. The situation within the imperial court was constantly changing.

The news of Emperor Changfeng's demise was already made known and the time of the funeral procession was confirmed. It was set to be held three days before the Spring Festival. The funeral of a great emperor was definitely going to be a grand and spectacular affair.

Even though the crown prince and King Yu were still fighting over the throne, neither of them dared to disregard Emperor Changfeng's funeral. This was not just a problem of respecting Emperor Changfeng, but also a test of their filial piety.

Ji Chengxue, who was on a campaign outside of the empire's border, was already en route back to the imperial city. The news of the emperor's demise had finally spread to him, so he chose to return. Even though he knew the current state of the imperial city was stormy, he still wanted to come back. His purpose was not just to attend the funeral.

On a mountain path, a troop of bunched-up soldiers was slowly proceeding along the rugged terrain. Ji Chengxue, wearing a military attire, was slowly walking in the middle of this troop with a grave expression on his handsome face.

Next to Ji Chengxue, there was a figure with a bamboo hat slowly moving along with them while riding atop a horse.

The both of them were silent and the mood between them was extremely awkward and tense.

When the majestic silhouette of the imperial city appeared before them, Ji Chengxue took a deep breath. His eyes glistened with a meaningful light.

"Are you really planning to enter the imperial city?" A hoarse voice reached Ji Chengxue's ears coming from the mouth of the man wearing a bamboo hat.

"There's still ten more days before the Spring Festival and father's funeral is held three days before that. If I don't head back right now, I won't be able to make it for his funeral," Ji Chengxue mildly replied.

"Nevertheless, you should think carefully... Once you step into the imperial city, there's a chance that you might be targeted by the crown prince and King Yu... When that happens, you'll be in grave danger."

"I've never been safe. Even though they seem to be unconcerned about me... I am still a prince after all." Ji Chengxue chuckled as he turned his head toward the man hidden under the bamboo hat and said, "It might be dangerous for me to enter the imperial city, but your situation is not any better than mine. Right, Xiao Yue?"

The figure under the bamboo hat chuckled helplessly for a moment. However, after a long while, the both of them started laughing together.

"Now that you've mentioned it, I really miss Owner Bu's Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. It's been so long since I've smelled its aroma that I am really craving for some right now. I really want to drink a dozen jars immediately." Xiao Yue hoarsely said.

Ji Chengxue's lips curled up as he gave Xiao Yue a glance. "A dozen jars? You wish. Owner Bu only sells three jars per day. You're lucky if you even get to drink a single jar."

Xiao Yue stared blankly for a moment and then let out a deep sigh.

...

Before Ji Chengxue's army reached the imperial city, three figures were standing before its imposing gates.

The person leading them was a woman wearing a veil, whose attire was very casual. Her overflowing long hair was tied up with a simple string, and she did not have too many accessories on her. She was also wearing a loose robe that completely concealed her figure.

On the other hand, the other two figures were respectfully standing behind the woman. If Bu Fang was here, he would definitely recognise them because they were the people he met in the Wildlands, Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao.

At that moment, Tang Yin was both respectfully and fearfully looking at the woman in long robes with a complicated expression on his face.

"Master... Are we really going to look for senior? Senior is really terrifying and unfathomable!" Tang Yin helplessly said.

The eyes of the woman wearing a veil turned and landed on Tang Yin. Suddenly, an enormous pressure caused Tang Yin to break out in cold sweats.

The woman's eyes were extremely beautiful. Her eyebrows were long and curvy, and the corner of her eyes were slightly curving upward. Her skin was fair and supple. Just from looking at her eyes, she appeared to be a devastatingly beautiful woman.

"Xiaoyinyin, I don't know how powerful that senior of yours is. However... if you continue to nag at me, I'll make you drink an entire jar of my special chilli sauce!" the woman said. Her voice was pleasing to the ears but the words that came out of her mouth made Tang Yin want to cry.

This woman was Tang Yin's master as well as the third elder of the Celestial Arcanum, Ni Yan! She was an extremely temperamental woman!

After glaring at Tang Yin, Ni Yan turned her gaze toward Lu Xiaoxiao and asked, "Girl, that Phoenix Blood Herb was really taken by that fellow, right? You're not lying to me, right?"

Lu Xiaoxiao hurriedly nodded her head.

Ni Yan's narrowed her beautiful eyes and snorted before heading into the imperial city.

"How dare you snatch my Phoenix Blood Herb, and I even heard that you're a chef... I like to talk with my culinary skills the most! Ahem!"

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao helplessly looked each other in the eyes before they hurriedly followed after her.