

Gourmet 141

Chapter 141: Crush Everything Before You, Young Man!

"Slurp!"

Ouyang Zongheng stroked his beard as he picked up the noodles with his chopsticks and sent them into his mouth. Even though the appearance of the Dry-Mixed Noodles was pathetic-looking compared to Red Braised Meat and Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs... It was still paid for with his money!

"Oh?!" The rich flavor of the noodles burst forth the moment it entered his mouth, causing Ouyang Zongheng's eyes to immediately widen. He subconsciously exerted more strength and the noodles were suddenly sucked into his mouth with a slurp.

The sauce of the noodles sprayed everywhere and a rich fragrance pervaded the air.

Even though the fragrance of the Dry-Mixed Noodles was not as strong as the Egg-Fried Rice and not as enticing as the Red Braised Meat, this sort of faint fragrance was even more tempting. The moment Ouyang Zongheng started slurping down the noodles, he could no longer stop himself. In that instant, the sound of Ouyang Zongheng slurping the noodles resounded throughout the store.

As Ouyang Xiaoyi gleefully gulped down a mouthful of the Fish Head Tofu Soup, the mellow flavor of the soup spread from the tip of her tongue and caused her to be completely captivated. She felt as if she had turned into a fish and was freely roaming in a milky white sea. Once in a while, she would even cheerfully bite into corals made from tofu.

"Slurp!"

As the sound of slurping rang out, Ouyang Xiaoyi's beautiful fantasy was ruthlessly broken. The irritating feeling of suddenly being dragged back into reality caused her to angrily turn toward her dad who was busy slurping down noodles next to her.

"Can't you eat your noodles in a quieter manner? You're disturbing my enjoyment of the fish soup! Smelly dad!" Ouyang Xiaoyi resentfully said with a pout.

"...Cough cough cough!"

Ouyang Zongheng's eyes widened as the sound of slurping suddenly stopped and then his entire face turned red. He covered his mouth and started coughing... He ate too quickly and choked on the noodles.

Ouyang Zongheng grabbed the cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine that Ouyang Zhen was just about to drink and then finished the entire cup in a single gulp. He immediately felt a relaxing and refreshing sensation coursing through his body!

"Ha... How invigorating!" Ouyang Zongheng said with satisfaction as he wiped his beard with his sleeve.

As he smacked his lips, his nostrils suddenly flared up. He thought, "My gosh... What is this smell! Wine? What an aromatic wine?!"

Ouyang Zongheng looked at the celadon cup in his hand and broke into a grin when he saw Ouyang Di carrying a jar and pouring wine into a cup.

"You rascal, hurry up and fill this cup to the brim for your dad! How could you not share such a fine wine with your father! When we get back, I'll double your training volume!"

Both the three Ouyang brothers and Ouyang Xiaoyi were speechless.

"Slurp!" After finishing another cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine, Ouyang Zongheng started his journey of slurping noodles once more.

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After finishing their meal, the members of the Ouyang family were languidly leaning back on their seats in contentment. The satisfying feeling of tasting delicious food gave them great delight.

Bu Fang wiped off the water droplets on his hands and walked out of the kitchen. When he saw the languid members of the Ouyang family, he broke into a grin.

"The total amount is three hundred and twenty crystals and one hundred gold coins. Thank you for your patronage," Bu Fang said toward Ouyang Zongheng who was patting his stomach in satisfaction.

Ouyang Zongheng's action of patting his stomach immediately froze and he suddenly felt as if the entire world had gone dim... He thought, "Three hundred twenty crystals, how on earth do they eat so well!"

Under Ouyang Zongheng's extremely reluctant gaze, Bu Fang took the crystals and gold coins and brushed his hands together in satisfaction.

After he received this sum of money, the system's solemn voice resounded in his mind.

"Congratulations to the host for achieving a profit of twenty thousand crystals and completing a short term objective, you shall soon receive the system reward. The system reward is being released..."

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment. Thereafter, the corners of his lips curled up and he let out a deep breath. Without his realization, he had already reached a profit of twenty thousand crystals. It was not easy at all.

In other words, he obtained an amount of true energy worth ten thousand crystals. This also meant that his cultivation level had finally reached fifth grade Battle-King.

"I am finally a man who could be called Battle-King!" Bu Fang gleefully thought. Just when he was about to examine the system's reward, Ouyang Zongheng suddenly moved closer to him. He was so close that Bu Fang could even smell the sauce of the Dry-Mixed Noodles that splashed on him.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together as he took a step backward and indifferently looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

"If you have something to say, spit it out. Don't get so close to me," Bu Fang expressionlessly said.

Ouyang Zongheng's movement immediately froze and he suddenly gave an embarrassed smile. He wiped his hands on his clothes and said, "Owner Bu... It's like this, I actually came here today to discuss an important matter with you."

"Speak," Bu Fang replied.

"Owner Bu, your culinary skills are outrageously good. The flavor of your dishes has already reached an indescribable level. I don't think you want the delicious dishes that you personally cook to be stuck here in this store without anyone knowing, right? That's simply an insult to your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng said while stroking his beard.

Bu Fang indifferently looked at him and beckoned him to continue.

"Owner Bu, you should know about the Spring Festival. Tomorrow's the first day of the Spring Festival and the Hundred Family Banquet will be held on the second day. On that day, well-known chefs from all over the Light Wind Empire would rush over to cook at the Hundred Family Banquet. This is the perfect opportunity to let everyone know about your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng said with a smile as he stared intensely at Bu Fang.

"Therefore, Owner Bu, wouldn't you consider participating?"

The Spring Festival... Bu Fang narrowed his eyes and recalled that a few minor officials had arrogantly come to his store to cause trouble some days ago. Their intentions also seemed to be getting him to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet...

"I don't care about your whatever Hundred Family Banquet. Arrogantly coming to my store and causing trouble is your fault," Bu Fang thought. Therefore, Bu Fang ordered Whitey to strip the minor officials and throw them out.

Bu Fang had almost forgotten about this matter but suddenly remembered it with Ouyang Zongheng's reminder.

"This Hundred Family Banquet seems pretty formidable from the sound of it," Bu Fang thought as he nodded and looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

"I am not going to participate. I am not interested," Bu Fang replied.

"Ah? What? You're not participating? Why?"

Ouyang Zongheng's expression stiffened and he immediately asked in confusion. In his opinion, participating in the Hundred Family Banquet for a chef was as important as participating in the imperial examination for a scholar.

As a chef, Bu Fang was actually not interested in participating in the Hundred Family Banquet hosted by the empire. This... was simply absurd!

"From the sound of its name, I already know it's a troublesome matter. I only want to peacefully cook delicious dishes in my store. If they're willing to frequent my store, they're very welcomed to do so," Bu Fang sincerely said. This was indeed his heartfelt thoughts. He was someone afraid of trouble.

His wish was to sit near the store's entrance with a cup of hot tea in his hand as he observe the changes in the world and watch the flowers blossom and wilt. It was that simple.

"Owner Bu, there will be a selection during this year's Hundred Family Banquet. The number one chosen by the guests would be awarded by the empire. Aren't you interested in the rewards?" Ouyang Zongheng asked while staring at Bu Fang.

Reward? The empire's Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was already taken away by Bu Fang, what else could they provide that would interest him?

"Abrupt mission 2: Would the host please participate in the Hundred Family Banquet hosted by the Light Wind Empire and get voted number one by the guests as well as obtain the empire's prize reward.

"Crush everything before you, young man.

"Mission reward: cooking method of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart."

Bu Fang sighed internally. He was afraid of trouble but there were times when the system would issue troublesome abrupt missions to him.

Chapter 142: Feeling Empty, Lonely, and Cold on the Night Before the Spring Festival

"Do you really think a mere reward will be able to persuade me to participate?" Bu Fang stood there with his back straightened as he seriously looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

Ouyang Zongheng was surprised for a moment. He thought, "As expected of the chef acknowledged by His Majesty, his strength of character is incomparable to ordinary chefs. Looks like the difficulty of inviting Owner Bu is very high."

"Owner Bu, are you really not going to reconsider? This is an opportunity to let everyone know about your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng asked with reluctance.

Bu Fang looked at him and blinked for a moment. He let out a deep breath and then asked, "First, tell me what's the reward for first place?"

"Hmm? What?" Ouyang Zongheng broke into a grin as he looked at Bu Fang. "You're already given in? What happened to your steadfastness? What happened to your moral integrity and indifference to materialistic goods?"

"Cough, cough... Owner Bu, it's like this. The reward of the Hundred Family Banquest this time is personally chosen by His Majesty from the imperial palace's treasury and the reward will only be announced after the first place is selected. Therefore, I don't know the answer to your question either... However, I can assure you that you won't be disappointed by the reward!" Ouyang Zongheng said with confidence while patting his chest.

Bu Fang lowered his eyes and pretended to think for a moment. Thereafter, he looked up at Ouyang Zongheng and said, "Alright, I agree to participate."

When Ouyang Zongheng heard that Bu Fang actually agreed to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet, his face immediately brightened up like a blossoming chrysanthemum.

"Oh my, if Owner Bu is participating, you'll definitely win first place! Tsk, tsk, tsk. Your dishes are the best I've ever tasted, they're much better than the food cooked by the chefs from the imperial kitchen! Just one word, excellent!" Ouyang Zongheng gave Bu Fang a thumbs up as a string of praises left his lips.

If someone else saw this scene, they would never think that this salesman-like middle-aged man was actually a well-known general of the empire.

Ouyang Zongheng let out a deep breath and felt extremely relieved. Since Owner Bu had agreed, the mission given by the emperor was completed.

Even though the process was so painful that he could not breathe, the end result greatly satisfied him. Even so, the stash money that he had accumulated for the past few months was all used up by his daughter...

Bu Fang sent the member of the Ouyang family off with his eyes and then went back into the kitchen.

Bu Fang was someone afraid of trouble but he was a serious person as well. He had always treated culinary with a serious attitude. Since he had chosen to participate, then he would perform his very best.

Therefore, he would ensure that all preparations were made so that he could obtain first place in the upcoming Hundred Family Banquet.

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As the Spring Festival approached, the streets of the imperial city became very lively and busy. Everyone was spring cleaning, putting up spring couplets, cooking delicious food, and preparing to welcome the coming new year.

The vendors along Long Street had all packed up their stalls earlier than usual and eagerly headed home with joyous expressions to welcome the coming new year with their families.

Dense amount of smoke drifted up into sky and was blown away by the wind.

As the night descended, the two moons hovered high above in the sky like two silver plates. The moonlight, that was usually eerie, seemed to have turned warm as it illuminated the streets.

On the streets, many children were running about in thickly padded clothings with rosy cheeks and breathing out clouds of white breath while holding lanterns in their hands. As they ran about, their laughter broke the silence of the night and created a festive mood.

Large red lanterns were hung at the doorways of large households while the housekeepers and maidservants busily prepared the necessities for celebrating the new year.

Within their kitchens, large fires blazed away as sounds of stir-frying resounded incessantly and the fragrance of dishes swirled about and lingered in the air for a long time.

Plates after plates of exquisite dishes were cooked and served on their dining tables. The numerous member of large households would gather together for the reunion dinner.

The mood of the Spring Festival was festive and lively.

At Fang Fang's Little Store, Bu Fang removed a doorboard and stepped out of the store. The alleyway was quiet and desolate. Even the moonlight which was warmer than usual could not disperse the hint of emptiness in the alleyway.

He dragged a chair toward the entrance of the store and sat down upon it. The store was not opened for business but he still sat there as usual. As the winter wind blew into the store and struck his face, he could not help but tuck his head into his shoulders.

Under the cold moonlight, a person, a chair, and a dog seemed to be out of tune with the festiveness outside of the alleyway.

Bang!

A stream of fireworks flew into the air and blossomed in the pitch-black night sky.

"Oh, how beautiful," Bu Fang thought.

Suddenly, a series of footsteps came from the alleyway. Bu Fang immediately looked toward the entrance of the alleyway in puzzlement and saw three figures slowly approaching.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were walking hand in hand with the sprightly Ouyang Xiaoyi. That night, Xiao Yanyu was not wearing a veil and her peerless facial features were in full view. Her milky white skin seemed to be faintly shimmering under the illumination of the moonlight.

"Smelly boss, we're here to bring food to you!" Ouyang Xiaoyi said with a smile.

Xiao Yanyu exhibited the graceful bearing of a young lady from a prestigious family as usual. She was wearing a dress made from silk with a faint smile on her lips while holding a lunch box in her hand.

"Tsk, tsk. Owner Bu, are you admiring the fireworks? What a leisure mood you're in! However, I have to say, your store is an excellent spot for viewing fireworks!" Xiao Xiaolong said with a smile as he dragged a few chairs out from the store on his own and placed them next to the entrance, while he himself sat down next to Bu Fang.

Bu Fang was somewhat bewildered as he looked at the three of them. He thought, "What's going on? They're here to bring food to me?"

Xiao Yanyu gently smiled and said, "Tomorrow is the Spring Festival and tonight is the time for a reunion dinner. Since Owner Bu appears to be alone, we thought that you might perhaps be feeling lonely. Therefore, we brought some food here. This pastry was personally made by my mother as appreciation for your favor."

As Xiao Yanyu spoke, she gracefully sat down on a chair and placed the lunch box in front of Bu Fang.

As the lid of the lunch box was removed, a faint fragrance immediately wafted out. Even though it was not as strong as Bu Fang's dishes, the refreshing fragrance was rather pleasant as well.

Layers after layers of exquisite and aesthetically-pleasing pastries were taken out.

"Here, give this a try. This was personally made by my mother," Xiao Yanyu said with a smile on her lips as she looked at Bu Fang while holding a plate of pastries in her hands.

Bu Fang seriously gave the three of them a glance. He suddenly felt a warm feeling in his chest and the corners of his lips curled up.

As he picked up one of the pastries and gently took a bite, his eyes immediately lit up. The taste of the pastry was extremely delicious. It was sweet, but not sickly sweet. Furthermore, it broke into pieces upon entering his mouth. The texture was extremely good as well. In addition, the filling inside was still emitting a hint of warmth, like the warmth of eating honey.

"Not bad," Bu Fang praised, even though from his perspective, there was still quite a number of flaws in this pastry.

Xiao Yanyu's eyes immediately lit up, thinking it was rare to hear a word of praise from Owner Bu. Both Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi eagerly grabbed a piece of pastry as well and stuffed them in their mouths. And so, the four of them sat in a circle and ate delicious food.

The warm ambience immediately dispersed much of the coldness within the alleyway.

"Owner Bu, try this plate of Pineapple Jade Heart Cake!" Finally, Xiao Yanyu took out a place of pastries from the lunch box and offered them to Bu Fang with a face filled with expectations.

Chapter 143: The Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake

"Does it taste good?" Xiao Yanyu nervously asked. The light in her eyes became brighter as she watched Bu Fang take a bite of the Pineapple Jade Heart Cake.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together. As he savored the flavor of this pineapple cake that tasted slightly odd, a hint of strangeness appeared on his face... He thought, "Was this really made by the same person? The difference in the taste is a little too wide..."

"This... doesn't taste too good. It's too sweet. Furthermore, the fillings became too hard after being steamed for too long. Moreover..."

Bu Fang subconsciously began pointing out the flaws. His attitude toward food was serious. Therefore, he would talk non-stop once he started giving his assessment.

Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi were dumbfounded and the corners of their lips twitched as they watched Bu Fang become more and more enthusiastic as he continued with his assessment..

"Stop eating then! Since it's so awful!" Xiao Yanyu's pretty face flushed red in an instant and a dark cloud-like redness appeared on her cheeks. She was incomparably beautiful when she looked both angry and embarrassed.

She snatched the Pineapple Jade Heart Cake back and placed it back into the lunch box in a fit of pique.

Bu Fang was bewildered. He thought, "What's going on? Was there something wrong with my assessment? There shouldn't be... This pineapple cake is really awful-tasting. It's obviously made by a beginner."

It was not on the same level as the pastries from before...

"Oh... Not on the same level?" Bu Fang thought and went into a daze for a moment before his gaze subconsciously landed on Xiao Yanyu. He immediately noticed her eyes were filled with resentment.

Bu Fang was not a fool and soon understood what was going on. This pineapple cake was definitely made by Xiao Yanyu and not her mother... This would also explain why there was a large difference in the flavor.

When Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi saw the somewhat embarrassed expression on Bu Fang's face under Xiao Yanyu's sulking stare, they could no longer endure it and burst out laughing.

"Owner Bu, it's rare for my elder sister to cook something and you actually criticized the pastries that she elaborately prepared to the point where they sound completely worthless. You've really offended my sister this time round," Xiao Xiaolong said with a laugh.

Bu Fang pursed his lips. The pineapple cake was indeed awful-tasting. Even though it was made by Xiao Yanyu, he was not accustomed to flattering others...

However, the fact that the three of them would visit him on this night warmed his formerly lonely heart. He felt that he needed to do something to express his gratitude.

"How about cooking some dishes for them?" Bu Fang thought before he shook his head and then tossed this idea out of his mind. The three of them frequently patronized his store and thus were well acquainted with his dishes. Therefore, cooking the store's dishes would not be sincere enough.

"Tonight is the night before the Spring Festival, which has the same meaning as New Year's Eve on Earth," Bu Fang thought for a moment before he got up from his seat and headed toward the interior of the store.

"Give me a moment, I'll prepare something to celebrate tonight," Bu Fang said as he headed toward the kitchen.

Owner Bu was going to cook something for them? The eyes of Xiao Yanyu, Xiao Xiaolong, and Ouyang Xiaoyi all lit up.

Bu Fang's culinary skill was, needless to say, extraordinary, and the dishes he cooked were unforgettable. For the first time ever, he was offering to cook for them... They were immediately filled with expectation.

After waiting for a short while, Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen with a large basin in his hand.

The three of them were immediately perplexed. What was Owner Bu planning to do?

Bu Fang did not dispel their doubts and instead placed the large basin in front of them.

The weight of the basin was evidently not light and the basin was also filled with glutinous rice flour. This rice flour was crystal-clear and looked like crystal powder.

Bu Fang poured boiling spirit spring water into the basin and then used his hand to stir the mixture.

"Owner Bu, what are you planning to make?" Xiao Xiaolong asked as he puzzledly looked at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang gave him a glance and said, "Don't say anything, just watch."

Thereafter, as Bu Fang raised his fist, true energy surged forth from his dantian and enveloped his hand like a glove.

Bang! A loud noise rang out as Bu Fang's fist swiftly smashed into the eddy inside of the basin. With Bu Fang's precise control over his true energy, the eddy trembled for a moment.

Bu Fang pulled his fist back and then it smashed downward once more. A loud noise rang out like the sound of a breaking mirror.

The three of them were astounded as they watched Bu Fang's violent and fierce actions. They thought, "Is he really making food? Are you sure he's not venting his anger? Just imagine if those fists were landing on a person's body..."

After an unknown amount of punches, Bu Fang's actions gradually became less wild and even became slightly gentle. Although every punch would still produce a thunderous noise.

"This... Good heavens!" Xiao Xiaolong cried out in astonishment as he stared at Bu Fang's fist that was enveloped with true energy. He saw white silk-like threads attached to Bu Fang's true energy.

As Bu Fang raised his hand, numerous threads were connected to his fist. Each and every thread was glossy and even thinner and softer than the finest silk.

Bang.

After the final punch landed, Bu Fang stopped moving and dispersed his true energy. He raised his fist and the threads stuck on it disappeared as well. The three of them immediately looked into the basin in curiosity and saw a large piece of crystal-clear glutinous rice block that was still emitting steam.

Even though there was no trace of any fragrance, the three of them could not help but swallow their saliva...

"Smelly boss... This is a dish made using your fist? Is it edible?" Ouyang Xiaoyi asked.

"It's edible, but it'll be even tastier after processing," Bu Fang said. "You can actually try making it at home yourself, as long as you can control your true energy well enough."

"What's the name of this food?" Xiao Yanyu's melodious voice rang out.

"Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake," Bu Fang replied.

Thereafter, Bu Fang raised his hand and the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. After twirling it around, he sliced the year cake into four equal pieces.

Back in the kitchen, Bu Fang placed them onto a blue and white porcelain plate before letting it steam in a bamboo steamer.

"Come in," Bu Fang yelled toward the three who were still sitting at the entrance.

The three of them immediately came into the store in excitement and saw the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake placed on the table.

Its appearance was plain and simple. The three of them could not tell what was so different about it.

However, the smell was...The rich fragrance of the glutinous rice was accompanied with a sweet aroma and lingered around the tip of their noses like silk.

The sweetness was not sickly sweet and not faint either. It aroused their appetite in a just nice manner and made them salivate without even noticing.

"Have a try. This year cake should be eaten on the night before the Spring Festival to wish for steady improvements in the coming new year," Bu Fang said.

The ingredients used for the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake was specially bought by Bu Fang from the system and paid for using his crystals. However, Bu Fang did not care about that.

The sentiment behind their visit was not something that mere crystals could compare with. The only way he could express his gratitude was cooking for them.

Xiao Yanyu gracefully picked up a Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake with her chopsticks. Her glossy lips softly parted and revealed her pearly white teeth as she gently took a bite.

Thereafter, Xiao Yanyu's beautiful eyes widened and were filled with incredulity.

So, the so-called Thousand Wrapped Silk... was truly a Thousand Wrapped Silk!

Chapter 144: Overlapping of the Two Moons and the Arrival of the Spring Festival

As the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake entered her mouth, Xiao Yanyu felt as if she was biting a sponge and each and every layer of this particular sponge was incomparably soft. The silk-like texture of the year cake rubbing against her pearly white teeth and red lips made her feel as if she was being caressed by a soft breeze and caused her body to shudder.

A sweet flavor suddenly spread within Xiao Yanyu's mouth and the year cake seemed to have unfurled like a bundle of loose threads in that instant. It continuously bounced and struck the back of her mouth as if giving an extremely pleasurable and gentle massage.

The sweetness enveloped her tastebuds and slowly permeated her mouth inch by inch. Its speed was not fast but made Xiao Yanyu feel as if the entire world had become sweet.

Within an instant, Xiao Yanyu's face became flushed and her body subconsciously fidgeted for a moment. She was behaving in a somewhat unnatural manner. After taking a bite of this Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake that entered her mouth, she felt as if the clothes on her had fallen apart like the year cake in her mouth...

How embarrassing!

Xiao Xiaolong experienced the same thing as Xiao Yanyu. When Bu Fang gave him a glance, he saw that Xiao Xiaolong's face was flushed red as well... Bu Fang was dumbfounded by his bashful appearance.

"How delicious!"

Ouyang Xiaoyi was the first to praise out loud with a joyful expression on her face. She thought, "Getting to eat the smelly boss' new dish is practically the greatest happiness. Furthermore, this dish is so delicious..."

"Don't be in such a hurry, you guys should continue sampling the taste. You haven't experienced the actual flavors yet," Bu Fang said as he himself took a bite of a Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake.

The three of them were immediately surprised. Could there really be something else different about this Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake?

The three of them immediately took another bite in suspicion. After taking a few more bites, they were gradually astounded by its soft sweetness.

As Bu Fang quietly savored the year cake in his mouth, the expression on his face became somewhat empty and his gaze became distant and deep...

Thousand Wrapped Silk was not just silk wrapped together but also worry.[1] This was the hidden meaning behind the name of Bu Fang's dish. These year cakes were personally made by Bu Fang punch by punch and contained all of his emotions.

This was a dish filled with emotions.

As Ouyang Xiaoyi continued eating, her eyes became somewhat watery. She did not know why, but her eyes were welling up with tears and an indescribable sadness was gathering in her chest.

This feeling was strange. It was just like nostalgia as well as loneliness...

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong ate the year cakes without saying a word but the expressions on their faces showed that they were affected by the emotions within the year cakes as well.

They quietly ate the year cakes and soon finished everything.

The taste was good and lingered within their memories. However, the waves of emotions were making their eyes well up with tears.

"Sis... After eating this year cake, why do I recall the three years when mother was lying on bed? I suddenly feel so sad," Xiao Xiaolong said.

Xiao Yanyu closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Thereafter, she opened her eyes and said with a radiant smile, "My silly brother, isn't mother already awake?"

Xiao Yanyu tasted the emotions within this Thousand Wrapped Silk Cake. However, she knew that this was not the emotions that Bu Fang wanted to express. Bu Fang himself might be the only person who could taste the actual flavor of this Thousand Wrapped Silk Cake.

"When you get home, give my thanks to your mother. The pastries were delicious," Bu Fang said as he stood at the doorway. After finishing the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake, it was time for the three to return.

Xiao Yanyu was rather surprised as she responded with a beautiful smile. She thought, "Owner Bu actually knows how to thank someone? How strange."

"Hmm, alright. I'll tell our mother. It's rare for someone to be praised by Owner Bu for their culinary skills," Xiao Yanyu said.

Bu Fang broke into a grin as he watched their disappearing back figure and softly muttered, "That's right, it would not be that bad if her skill at kneading the dough was better and control over the heat during the steaming process was better."

Bu Fang's muttering was not loud but it was really obvious inside of the quiet alleyway.

Within the darkness, Xiao Yanyu's figure staggered for a moment... She thought, "Fine, so Owner Bu is someone who knows how to be polite."

The alleyway regained its serenity once more. As Bu Fang looked up at the two silverish, circular plates in the sky that were working hard to give off light, the corners of his lips curled up. He went back into the store and placed the doorboards back in place.

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"My host, the system reward has already been released. Please check the reward," the system's solemn voice sounded out.

Bu Fang was wiping off the water droplets on his hands as was suddenly surprised for a moment. After getting interrupted by the Ouyang family's visit, he even forgot to take a look at the system's reward.

He immediately focused his mind and began checking out the reward.

Host: Bu Fang

Gender: Male

True Energy Cultivation Level: Fifth Grade (Has already a level of simulating objects with true energy. As the God of Cooking in the fantasy world, the host can try simulating kitchen tools with your true energy and cook even more delicious dishes. Work hard, young man.)

Cooking Talents: One Star

Skills: Level Two Meteor Knife Technique (10/100), Level One Big Dipper Carving Technique (30/100)

Tools: Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife (God of Cooking set)

God of Cooking overall rating: Junior Chef (Has already unlocked his talents. Finally capable of researching and cooking standalone dishes as well as using true energy to cook and process ingredients. Cutting and carving techniques have already stepped on the path toward becoming the God of Cooking.)

System Level: Five Stars (Conversion ratio is at seventy percent. The host is permitted to carry out the capture of ingredients.)

System reward: cooking method of Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings and one fragment of the God of Cooking set ($\frac{1}{3}$)

After checking out his system panel, Bu Fang's gaze landed on the system's level up reward. He wanted to see what was the reward this time.

"Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

Bu Fang knew very well that water dumpling was actually a type of dumpling but cooked with different methods. One type was steamed dumplings, while water dumplings were boiled. However, this Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling... Bu Fang was suddenly feeling somewhat curious.

However, he was not too surprised. Any recipe given to him by the system would definitely not disappoint him. The so-called Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings was bound to be something special.

Bu Fang suddenly had an impulse to go into the kitchen and make a serving of the Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings. However, after giving it a thought, he gave up in the end. The reason was that he used up quite an amount of true energy after cooking the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake and was already feeling somewhat tired. Since his body was not in the best condition and the dish would be affected by that, he decided to go back into his room and sleep.

Maintaining a good rest was extremely important to Bu Fang, even if he was already a man who could be called Battle-King.

Outside the store, there were still fireworks filling up the sky above the alleyway and giving out bright rays of light.

On the streets of the imperial city, the children were still excitedly shouting and the festive mood of the Spring Festival was getting more and more intense.

That night's imperial city was particularly lively as everyone waited for the coming of the new year.

In the pitch-black night sky, the two silver plates were getting closer and closer. Once these two silver plates had completely overlapped each other, it meant the start of a new year and the official coming of the Spring Festival.

Bu Fang lay on his bed as he looked at the bright moons through the window. Suddenly, he felt an inexplicable sense of joy.

Finally, amidst the cheers of the citizens throughout the Light Wind Empire, these two bright moons completely overlapped each other and became a single silver plate.

The single round moon radiated brilliant rays of light.

Amidst fireworks blooming in the sky, the Spring Festival finally quietly arrived.

As Bu Fang watched the overlapping of the two bright moons, he let out a light breath on his bed and slowly closed his eyes.

Chapter 145: The Fat Person Eating a Chicken Drumstick and the Skinny Person with a Wok on His Back

As the dawn of the Spring Festival arrived, smoke rose from the chimneys of many households within the imperial city. The citizens who worked hard for the past year got up early and began preparing a sumptuous Spring Festival breakfast.

At one of the the imperial city's gates, the guards on watch yawned and enviously watched as the scenery within the city gradually become livelier. Although it was the Spring Festival, the city guards were still alertly carrying out their duties. Even though the sect rebels were sabotaged by the old emperor, no one knew whether the cunning members of the sects would strike again.

As guards, protecting their country was their duty.

However, their minds were currently filled with warm beds, their pretty wives and their adorable children, oh and also the piping hot Spring Festival breakfast prepared by their wives.

Suddenly, the eyes of a languid guard who was indulging in a beautiful fantasy abruptly became focused and he was immediately alert as he looked into the distance with a grave expression on his face.

In a distance, two figures—one large and one small—were slowly heading toward the imperial city and the guards could feel an invisible sense of pressure coming from them, which caused the complexions on the guards' faces to slightly change.

"Two Battle-King experts?" This city guard was appalled. For them, Battle-Kings were already illustrious figures.

"Crunch, crunch."

The sound of teeth crushing bones distinctly sounded out and was even accompanied by the sound of chewing. The combination of the sounds sent chills up the spines of the two guards standing at the gate and caused goosebumps to rise all over their skins. They suddenly felt a sense of eeriness.

"Big bro, we've reached the imperial city," an indistinct voice rang out. After the sentence was finished, the sound of bones being chewed sounded out once more.

"You damn fatty, could you not speak to me when you're eating?!" The other voice seemed to be slightly annoyed and his tone was filled with revulsion.

"Crunch, crunch. Got it... Oh... Got it, I won't do it again. Crunch, crunch." An honest and foolish laughter accompanied by the sound of bones being chewed sounded out and was soon followed by the exasperated and frenzied grumbling of another person.

Within the field of vision of the two imperial city guards, the figures of the two gradually became clearer.

As they saw the two people, the pupils of the city guards shrunk at the same time.

One of them was tall and fat while the other was short and skinny. The tall one was extremely obese and his entire body was covered with chunks of flesh, so much so that his tiny eyes were almost hidden.

On the other hand, the short one was extremely thin. He had a protruding mouth with a sharp chin and looked rather... comical.

The fatty was wearing a large apron with a pocket sewn upon it. He reached his hand into the pocket and pulled out an overwhelmingly fragrant and glistening chicken drumstick before directly shoving the entire drumstick into his mouth. He did not even need to spit the bones out and swallowed the entire thing down after chewing a few times.

The short one was not normal either. He was not tall but was carrying a large black wok that was almost larger than him on his back and he looked as if he was a turtle carrying its shell.

"The two of you... Stop right there!" a guard imposingly said as he stopped them.

From a single glance, the guards could tell that the two of them were not normal. As city guards, it was their responsibility to stop and question them.

"Big bro, he's stopping us... Crunch, crunch," the fatty said as he pulled out another chicken drumstick from the front pocket of his apron, shoved it into his mouth and started chewed while sulkily looking at the shorty.

The shorty disdainfully gave the fatty a glance before he turned to the guard and said, "Hey, friend. We're chefs here to participate in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. We're from Qingyangzhen. [1]"

The guard was startled for a moment. He thought, "So these two strange fellows are chefs... Do the chefs these days all behave so strangely? He's even bringing his own wok to participate in the contest?"

The guard repeated Qingyangzhen a few times in his mind. Immediately after, his pupils shrunk and he seemed to have remembered something. He looked at the two in astonishment and said, "Qingyangzhen? Hmm? Are you talking about the Qingyangzhen that's also known as the entrance to the Wildlands?"

The shorty was very pleased with the guard's expression. He haughtily lifted his sharp chin and said, "Then, are we allowed to enter?"

The guard swallowed his saliva and moved sideways. This strange duo directly headed into the imperial city.

As the fatty walked past the guard, he stopped for a moment and broke into a grin. The thick flesh on his face trembled for a moment.

"Friend, you're not a bad person. You're actually letting us go in. Here, I'll give you half of this chicken drumstick." The fatty pulled out a chicken drumstick from his apron and placed it in his mouth. His large white teeth bit down with a crunch and directly divided the chicken drumstick into two halves.

As he chewed half of the chicken drumstick in his mouth, he gave the remaining half to the guard.

The guard accepted the drumstick in astonishment and stared at the two of them blankly as they entered the imperial city.

Once the fatty was gone, the guard suddenly recovered from his surprise and threw the chicken drumstick onto the ground with an expression filled with revulsion.

"Chefs from Qingyangzhen, I remember that the chefs from there are all very scary!" the guard softly muttered to himself as a hint of fear appeared on his face.

...

"Crunch, crunch. Big bro, why are we here to participate in this year's Hundred Family Banquet? If we're going to attend such a boring event, we might as well use the time to eat a few more chicken drumsticks. What's the point of competing with these mediocre chefs?" the fatty puzzledly asked in a mumble as he chewed on a chicken drumstick.

These two brothers were Ah Lu and Ah Wei. The fatty was called Ah Lu, while the skinny one was called Ah Wei. They were chefs from Qingyangzhen and were rather famous in that area. They studied their culinary skills under an elderly chef and often hunted spirit beasts in the Wildlands. Their dishes were bold but also delicious at the same time.

Even though their reputation was unknown in the Light Wind Empire, there was no one who did not know them within Qingyangzhen.

"I've already said before, don't talk to me when you're eating! How many times do I have to tell you?! Hmph... The old man is the one who told us to participate. He said the prize reward for the Hundred Family Banquet might be pretty good this year and hoped that we would present it to him.

If that wasn't the case, do you really think with my personality that I would choose to participate?" Ah Wei said with a disgusted snort as he lifted his sharp chin.

"What's the prize reward? Did the old man tell you?" Ah Lu swallowed the remnants of the chicken drumstick mixed with bones in his mouth and then curiously stared at Ah Wei with his tiny eyes.

"How would I know?" Ah Wei let out a snort and continued walking forward with the large black wok on his back.

Ah Lu went into a daze for a moment and then continued to reach into the front pocket of his apron. He pulled a greasy and fragrant chicken drumstick out and shoved it into his mouth. The apron's pocket seemed to be a bottomless pit and the chicken drumsticks seemed to be inexhaustible.

Afterward, Ah Lu gleefully ran after Ah Wei's back figure.

"Crunch, crunch. Big bro, where are we going now? Are we going to the empire's designated location prepared for chefs?" Ah Lu asked in a mumble.

Immediately after, Ah Wei's exasperated voice rang out once more. "Get lost! I told you not to talk to me when you're eating!"

"What are we going there for? What's the point of gathering with a bunch of trashy chefs? Let's go and look for something to eat!" Ah Wei said.

...

Bu Fang got up from bed on time as usual. After washing up, he slapped his own cheeks to wake himself up.

Last night's sleep was exceptionally well and allowed both his body and mind to completely relax. It was the most stable sleep he had ever since he came to this world.

When he arrived at the kitchen, Bu Fang began to practice his carving and cutting techniques in a skillful manner. There was already a large improvement to his carving technique since he first started. He could even carve out a realistic-looking flower with extremely smooth curvatures using a soft and tender tofu.

On the other hand, the improvements toward his cutting technique become somewhat slower. After all, the Meteor Cutting Technique had already risen to the second level and its difficulty had grown larger as well.

When the usual morning practice ended, Bu Fang began cooking some dishes. The first dish he cooked was obviously the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, which was Blacky's favorite. Just for that day, Bu Fang even specially increased the amount so that the lazy dog could have its fill.

After all, it was the Spring Festival...

A short while later, a rich fragrance wafted out from the kitchen. The fragrance was so aromatic that it was mesmerizing.

After bringing out a plate filled to the brim with Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Bu Fang removed a door board and the cold air outside immediately rushed into the store.

Despite the festive mood of the Spring Festival, the temperature did not increase even in the slightest. As he exhaled a cloud of white breath, Bu Fang placed the piping hot Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs that was giving off a mesmerizing fragrance in front of Blacky.

Blacky, who was originally lazily lying on the ground, immediately opened its eyes and excitedly got up with its tongue hanging out.

"Perhaps, this gluttonous dog would only reveal such an appearance while eating Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs!" Bu Fang thought.

Just when Bu Fang placed the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Blacky, he suddenly heard two distinctly different sets of footsteps coming from behind him...

"Crunch, crunch. Oh... Big bro, there's a store over here! Eh? This meaty aroma... It smells really good!"

Bu Fang stood up. Before he could even turn around, the sound of bones being chewed and an indistinct voice suddenly shouted in surprise from behind him.

Chapter 146: Lil' Doggy, Is It Possible for Us to Trade My Chicken Drumstick for Your Sweet 'N' Sour Ribs?

Ah Lu went into a daze as he stared blankly at the steaming plate of tangerine Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of the big black dog. He forgot about the half-eaten chicken drumstick in his hand and even forgot to chew the meat in his mouth.

This Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs smelled really delicious. It was much more aromatic than the roast meat made by the old man from Qingyangzhen who taught them how to cook. With such a comparison, Ah Lu felt the chicken drumstick in his hand had become somewhat bland and tasteless.

Ah Lu gave the chicken drumstick in his hand a glance and then broke into a grin. He still shoved the chicken drumstick into his mouth and swallowed it after chewing a few times.

The big black dog was just about to heartily enjoy the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs on its own when its body suddenly trembled for a moment. It immediately raised its head and discovered Ah Lu's staring gaze. That gaze was filled with greed and yearning and its target was the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

"How dare this human covet this lord dog's Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs?!" Blacky was furious! It immediately stood up and blocked the view of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs with its body. With its buttocks facing Ah Lu, it rather proudly wagged its tail.

With his line of sight obstructed, Ah Lu could only reluctantly give up on chasing the food with his eyes. After he smacked his lips, he ran his tongue over his lips as if he was attempting to lick the fragrance of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs wafting in the air.

"Put your tongue back in your mouth, could you not behave like a chef who's inexperienced with the ways of the world? If you're going to act like this, please don't tell anyone that you're my brother!" Ah Wei knitted his eyebrows together and his face was almost scrunched together from revulsion. Even though he had to admit that the fragrance of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was really not bad... his reaction was not as pathetic as Ah Lu's.

Bu Fang turned around when he heard the voices behind him. With his eyebrows raised, he looked at the two strange people in surprise.

One of them was a large and fat person wearing an apron and the other was a skinny person with a large black wok on his back...

"What an unique duo, are they here to cause trouble?" Bu Fang thought.

"Who are you guys?" Bu Fang asked.

After receiving a scolding from Ah Wei, Ah Lu immediately pulled his tongue back into his mouth with much reluctance while still reminiscing the aroma of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

Ah Wei was somewhat puzzled as he gave Bu Fang a glance. After suspiciously sizing Bu Fang up from top to bottom, he opened his mouth and asked, "Are you the one who made this Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs?"

This was a dish that possessed the finest presentation, aroma, and flavor. Without even having a careful observation, Ah Wei dared to conclude that this was definitely a classic and excellent plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs!

However, how could a chef who appeared to be younger than him cook such an outstanding Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs? Impossible... Ah Wei subconsciously shook his head. He was extremely confident of his own culinary skill. Ever since he was trained by the old man, the level of his culinary skill had been swiftly rising. There was definitely no way an ordinary chef could be better than him.

"I don't believe you, you're lying... Go and get the real chef," Ah Wei said as he gave Bu Fang a glance.

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment and looked at Ah Wei as if he was looking at an idiot. What did he mean by get the real chef? Bu Fang was standing right there, who else was he looking for?

Bu Fang could not be bothered to deal with such an unreasonable person. He immediately went back into the store and headed into the kitchen.

Ah Wei knitted his eyebrows together as he looked at Bu Fang's back figure. Did he make a mistake? That speechless gaze Bu Fang gave him before turning around made him question his life...

"Let's go, Ah Lu. Let's take a look inside this store," Ah Wei lifted his sharp chin and said with a faint smile.

"I didn't think we would encounter such an interesting store when we just arrived at the imperial city," Ah Wei said to himself. However, after waiting for a long while, there was still no response from Ah Lu. He immediately turned around in puzzlement and saw Ah Lu wriggling toward Blacky in tiny steps while continuously pulling out chicken drumsticks from his apron's pocket.

"Cute lil' doggy, why don't we exchange two pieces of my chicken drumsticks for a piece of your Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs? Two pieces is not enough? How about three pieces? Four pieces?"

While wriggling forward, the flesh on Ah Lu's face was quivering as well. He was really bewitched by the smell of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. The thing that Ah Lu liked to do the most was eating and he was especially sensitive about eating meat.

When Ah Wei turned around and saw this scene, his lungs almost burst from exasperation. He immediately shouted in anger, "What the hell are you doing! Hurry up and get over here!"

When Ah Lu heard Ah Wei's bellow, he was somewhat reluctant as he walked toward Ah Wei. In the end, the two of them stepped into the store.

The layout within the store was very cozy. At least, it gave Ah Lu and Ah Wei a pretty good first impression, especially the store's hygiene. That spotless feeling made them very happy.

Ah Lu shoved the four pieces of chicken drumsticks in his hands into his mouth in one go and brutally chomped down in frustration. With a loud crunch, he swallowed all of the chicken drumsticks and said, "Bi... Big bro! Look at the menu behind you!"

Hearing his words, Ah Wei turned around and looked. His eyebrows rose up in an instant and he immediately swore out loud, "God damn... This store really is a rip-off, it's even more of a rip-off than our store!"

Their store was set up at Qingyangzhen because it was situated at the entrance of the Wildlands. The prices of their dishes were extremely expensive, but they were expensive for a reason. All of the ingredients used in their dishes were personally obtained by them from the Wildlands. Furthermore, after being carefully cooked by them, the spirit energy within the ingredients could be preserved. Not only was the taste of their dishes good, they were even beneficial toward one's cultivation. This was the true reason why they were selling their food at such expensive rates.

However, what was this store's basis for selling their dishes at such an expensive rate as well? Was the owner of this store personally obtaining ingredients from the Wildlands too?

Nevertheless, even if he was personally obtaining the ingredients on his own, the prices of his dishes were still outrageously expensive. At their store, they had dishes that were priced in crystals but there were only a few of such dishes. On the other hand, almost every single dish in this store was priced in crystals...

Gulp.

Ah Wei was somewhat unable to accept the pricing.

"Where's the owner?! I want to make an order!" Ah Wei shouted.

Bu Fang slowly walked out of the kitchen and gave Ah Wei a glance. Indignation was fully displayed on the other party's face and his expression even contained a slight provocation.

"Oh, what do you want to order, tell me," Bu Fang expressionlessly said.

"Big bro, let's order the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs! I really want to eat that..." Ah Lu said in a mumble beside him.

"Don't talk to me when you're eating!" Ah Wei grumbled while giving Ah Lu a glance. Honestly speaking, he was slightly tempted by Ah Lu's suggestion, but he managed to endure the temptation in the end.

"We'll have two servings of Egg-Fried Rice. You can only tell a chef's level from the simplest dish... Besides, the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs is so expensive. If it doesn't taste good, our money would be wasted!" Ah Wei said.

Bu Fang broke into a grin as he gave these two weird brothers a glance. Without saying anything else, he only told them to wait a moment before he went back into the kitchen.

Ah Lu and Ah Wei found a table and sat down. Even though the environment within the store was completely different from outside and filled their hearts with warmth, the furnishing of the store was actually not luxurious at all and was just like an extremely ordinary store.

"Big bro, other people are having lavish meals on Spring Festival while we're only eating Egg-Fried Rice here... Why don't we order a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs as well? Otherwise, Red Braised Meat is acceptable too..." Ah Lu said as he swallowed another chicken drumstick.

"Hmph... Do you really plan on donating all of the crystals in your purse to this store? Are you stupid?!" Ah Wei said with a sneer.

He was in a huff as he sat on the chair with the large black wok on his back.

Ah Lu's face was filled with disappointment as his body trembled in frustration. "I can't eat any meat... I'm so sad," Ah Lu muttered to himself. Afterward, he pulled out two pieces of chicken drumsticks and shoved them into his mouth before fiercely chewing them.

Suddenly, the crunching noises in his mouth abruptly stopped and his nose twitched violently. His gaze immediately gave off an intense brightness as he looked in the direction of the kitchen.

There, a slender figure was slowly walking out with two plates of piping hot Egg-Fried Rice.

Chapter 147: The Hundred Family Banquet's Preparations

"This aroma..."

Ah Lu swallowed all of the chicken drumsticks in his mouth in one gulp. His gaze was already focused on the Egg-Fried Rice in Bu Fang's hands.

From a distance, the Egg-Fried Rice looked like it was radiating golden rays of extremely eye-dazzling lights and had completely attracted their eyes and attention.

The fragrance of the egg and aroma of the rice wafting in the air blended together and flowed into the nostrils of Ah Lu and Ah Wei, causing mesmerized expressions to appear on their faces.

When Bu Fang placed the plates of Egg-Fried Rice before them, Ah Lu eagerly grabbed his spoon and started digging in.

He was simply enticed beyond his limits by the fragrance of the Egg-Fried Rice. The fragrance of the eggs was in fact an aroma that was extremely capable of arousing a person's appetite.

As the spoon scooped a spoonful of rice and created a hole in the mound of Egg-Fried Rice, the flowing egg which was eighty percent cooked left a string-like trail. However, the aroma trapped within the rice instantly gushed out through the hole and enveloped Ah Lu in its fragrance.

"Hmm..." Ah Lu let out a moan and then immediately shoved the spoonful of rice into his mouth. His eyes, which were almost hidden by the layers of fat on his face, suddenly widened.

After swallowing down the rice, he excitedly looked toward Ah Wei and said in disbelief, "Big bro... This Egg-Fried Rice is really delicious!

"The eggs used in this dish should be from the third grade spirit beast, Thunderstorm Pigeon. However, the quality of the rice is also very good and it's not any inferior to the spirit energy rice meticulously grown by the old man. Furthermore, the degree of control over the heat is really high. The egg that's eighty percent cooked was able to rely on its own temperature after leaving the wok to instantly harden after entering one's mouth. This requires extremely precise calculation! Oh... In short, it's delicious!"

Ah Lu said in a muffled voice. After he was done speaking, he eagerly entered into a battle with the Egg-Fried Rice.

Bu Fang was slightly surprised. His heart was slightly stirred as he watched the fatty who was engrossed in devouring his food. This fatty was actually able to figure out the important cooking procedures and techniques of cooking the Egg-Fried Rice from just a single tasting. Furthermore, he even knew the origins of these ingredients and was basically correct in his deductions.

Without a doubt, this made it clear to him about the fatty's identity. He was a chef as well, and not just any ordinary chef.

Ah Wei was shocked as well as he looked at Ah Lu. He understood clearly how picky his younger brother was about dishes without meat. He could be very lenient about dishes with meat but was extremely picky when it came to dishes without meat.

Ah Wei's Egg-Fried Rice had arrived as well, but he was not impatient like Ah Lu. Instead, he carefully admired the presentation and aroma of the Egg-Fried Rice first. Only then did he begin savoring the taste of this Egg-Fried Rice.

The taste of the Egg-Fried Rice had really exceeded Ah Wei's expectations. It was so delicious that he was bewildered. However, those were not the main point. The main point was that the Egg-Fried Rice actually contained a rich amount of spirit energy.

"Why does this Egg-Fried Rice contain so much spirit energy? This is completely illogical," Ah Wei thought.

Therefore, under Ah Lu's surprised gaze, Ah Wei ordered another dish...

After ordering a few more of Bu Fang's dishes, Ah Wei completely understood the reason for the store's high pricing because all of these dishes actually contained spirit energy. Furthermore, the concentration of the spirit energy had completely exceeded Ah Wei's expectation. The density of the spirit energy was even higher than the dishes they were selling at their store.

"You're welcome to come back next time," Bu Fang said, after keeping the crystals, toward the back figures of the two brothers who were stepping out of the store.

The two brothers, Ah Lu and Ah Wei, silently walked out of the store and stepped into the world filled with snow. Ah Lu had even stopped eating his chicken drumsticks and some solemnity had appeared in their eyes.

If Bu Fang was participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet as well, according to the level of the dishes they had just eaten, the two of them basically did not even have the slightest chance of getting first place if they do not give their all... Bu Fang was giving them too much pressure.

"No wonder the old man said that the continent is teeming with talented individuals and told us not to be too conceited. We've only just arrived at the imperial city and we're already put in our place," Ah Wei thought.

"Big bro, now that we've met Owner Bu, I feel like we're going to lose..." Ah Lu said, seemingly having no confidence at all.

Ah Wei stopped walking and his sharp chin tilted upward as he earnestly said, "Therefore, we'll have to get serious... At first, I thought we could obtain first place without putting in any effort. Now it seems that it's not as simple as we imagined!"

As he straightened his back, Ah Wei took off the large black wok off his back and smashed the wok into the ground, causing the ground to slightly shake and sink a little.

"Let's give it our all. If we want to obtain first place, we'll need to demonstrate our actual culinary skills. Otherwise, we're not even qualified to compete with Owner Bu!" Ah Wei said.

Seeing the grave look on Ah Wei's face, the layers of fat on Ah Lu's face trembled and his expression became solemn as well. As he reached his hand into the pocket of his apron, he pulled out a chicken drumstick and solemnly shoved it into his mouth and started chewing...

...

The festive mood of the Spring Festival was still enveloping the entire imperial city, or perhaps the entire Light Wind Empire.

Each and every household was joyously preparing entire tables of sumptuous Spring Festival food in order to reward themselves for working hard for an entire year and allow themselves to experience the delights of delicious food.

Meanwhile, at the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the preparations for the Hundred Family Banquet were being hurriedly readied. Large tables were carried out and placed on the plaza grounds before bright red tablecloths were laid upon them.

As the standard of this year's Hundred Family Banquet was raised because of Ji Chengxue, no one dared to be careless and the preparation workload was heavier than previous years.

The main area of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery was densely packed with tables, while simple cooking stoves were set up in the inner area. They were specially prepared for the chefs, so that they could prepare their dishes in full view of the guests.

This would undoubtedly test the actual skill level of the chefs. However, the chefs who would dare to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet were all well-known within the Light Wind Empire. There was naturally no need to worry about their capabilities and they too were confident of their own skills.

While these preparations were going on, various types of dazzling ingredients were also being brought out. The dishes that were going to be cooked by each chef were different, so there were all sorts of ingredients as well.

Since that day was the Spring Festival, the store's business was not too good. Therefore, Bu Fang was languidly curled up on his chair and feeling extremely pleased as he drank from a cup of warm water in his hand.

However, when some travel-worn eunuchs rushed into his store, Bu Fang knew he was about to get busy.

"Owner Bu, may I know which ingredients you require? Please tell me, so that I could send someone to purchase them," a young eunuch respectfully said. This young eunuch was originally one of Lian Fu's close aides, so he did not dare to act impolitely in the slightest as he knew how terrifying Bu Fang was.

Bu Fang pondered for a moment. He was actually still mulling over the sort of meal he should cook during the Hundred Family Banquet.

Since it was the Hundred Family Banquet, the quantity of the food should be large enough. Otherwise, he would not be able to satisfy the requirement of a few hundred households... Therefore, Bu Fang concluded the main point of this year's Hundred Family Banquet: the dish he was going to cook needed both quality and quantity.

Therefore, choosing the right dish was extremely important for Bu Fang.

The guests attending the banquet were randomly selected from the commoners living within the imperial city. Many of them might not possess cultivation and there might not even be a shred of true energy in their bodies. If Bu Fang cooked using high grade ingredients with spirit energy, the quality of his food would be guaranteed. However, not everyone would be able to consume his food. In the end, choosing to cook dishes with spirit energy would be arduous and fruitless.

Therefore, after much consideration, Bu Fang finally decided on the dish he was going to make.

Bu Fang beckoned toward the young eunuch and said, "Help me prepare these ingredients..."

Chapter 148: If Anyone Is Unhappy with Me, Let Him Come and Look for Me

"This is... Owner Bu, are you sure you only need these ingredients?" The young eunuch was dumbfounded after Bu Fang listed out the ingredients that he needed. That slightly childish face of his was filled with surprise and incredulity.

"That's right, I only need these. Get them ready, I'll be there early tomorrow," Bu Fang said.

The young eunuch was startled for a moment. "Owner Bu, are you not going today? Famous chefs from all over the Light Wind Empire are gathered together. With your culinary skills, you'll definitely receive admiration from many of the chefs."

Bu Fang indifferently gave the young eunuch a glance. He shook his head and said, "I am not going. I'll go to the Gate of Heavenly Mystery tomorrow morning. Just make sure that the ingredients I need are ready by then."

"Wh... What about those famous chefs? They kept saying that they want to get acquainted with you. If you don't go, you might offend them," the young eunuch kindly reminded Bu Fang with a conflicted expression on his face.

Hearing this, Bu Fang suddenly broke into a grin. He patted the young eunuch's shoulder and said, "Go back and tell them, if anyone is unhappy with me, they're welcomed to look for me."

"How awe-inspiring... As expected of the rumored owner of the black-hearted store, he's quirky indeed. However, that bunch of famous chefs hold the advantage of greater numbers... He's only putting himself at a disadvantage," the young eunuch thought with a sigh.

The young eunuch seemed to have seen through the vicissitudes of life. He let out a sigh before turning around to report back to the palace.

As Bu Fang watched the disappearing back figure of the young eunuch, he lifted up the cup of water with both hands and took a sip of the water that was still emitting heat.

At that moment, Bu Fang was still, at the very least, a fifth grade Battle-King. Even though his combat ability might still be atrocious, it did not mean that he would allow others to bully him at will. He was uninterested in those so-called organizations and only wanted to cook his dishes in peace.

...

Inside of a luxurious inn in the imperial city.

Even though it was the day of the Spring Festival, this luxurious inn was still filled to capacity. It was reserved by the authorities as the accommodations for the famous chefs from regions throughout the empire.

Within the spacious lounge area of the luxurious inn, the area was currently crowded with a large group of people. There were men and women of various statures socializing with each other.

These people had all received invitation letters from the imperial palace. They were chefs from all over the empire that hurried over to the imperial city in order to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet. Each and every one of them was a famous chef in their towns and cities and their culinary skills were very good.

These chefs were all politely smiling as they greeted each other. They might not be familiar with one another but since they were already gathered here, they could naturally get acquainted with each other now and even help one another in the future.

However, the many chefs present were all actually encircling a few chefs standing in the center.

Those few chefs looked noticeably plump. With their wide bellies, they had wide smiles on their faces as they greeted the people around them with a wine cup in hand. However, it was obvious that everyone else was looking at them in a somewhat reverent manner.

These people were none other than the head chefs of the imperial kitchen. Originally, they were all selected from all over the empire by Emperor Changfeng and were thus renowned. Therefore, it was natural for them to be in a leading position now that they were mingling among those in the same profession.

"Chef Jin, the owner of the black-hearted store didn't come, like we expected," a middle-aged chef, with a somewhat round face and slightly chubby body, said as he raised his cup toward a bald man who appeared slightly younger than him. Even though he was smiling as he spoke, his eyes were noticeably filled with disdain.

The bald Chef Jin gave him a glance and only responded with a faint smile without saying anything.

Bu Fang's name was well-known among these chefs in the imperial city, especially the head chefs of the imperial kitchen. While the late emperor was still alive, his name was literally their nightmare.

Ever since the late emperor visited Fang Fang's Little Store, his taste preference became even harder to please. Almost every single day, many of the chefs would be reprimanded by their superiors.

The reason was their dishes were completely ignored by Emperor Changfeng as they were not to his liking.

During those days, the lives of these chefs were simply miserable. Every single day, they would have to think up a dish that could satisfy the emperor's taste buds...

"He's just a youngling who coincidentally cooked a dish that satisfied the late emperor's taste buds. Does he really think he's some kind of a top chef? Without years of experience, does he even know what real cooking is?" the bald Chef Jin said in disdain before he finished the cup of wine in a single gulp.

From his point of view, Bu Fang was only a lucky chef who entered the good graces of the late emperor by coincidence. If it was not for the late emperor, could that Bu Fang even amount to anything? He would not even have the opportunity to enter the ken of the imperial chefs.

"Owner Bu will be participating in tomorrow's Hundred Family Banquet as well. We should definitely use this opportunity to teach this Owner Bu about the true taste of good food," another imperial chef said with a sneer, echoing the same sentiment.

"Does anyone know what ingredients Owner Bu has prepared? We should be able to determine the dish he's going to make from the ingredients," another chef said.

The eyes of many chefs in the surroundings immediately lit up after hearing his words.

Chef Jin rubbed his own bald head for a moment and then the corners of his lips curled up as he said, "Who cares? I am confident that I will definitely trounce that Owner Bu with my dish tomorrow."

"That's right, Chef Jin is right. When the time comes, we just need to reveal our identities as imperial chefs and we'll practically be undefeatable!" One of the chefs started laughing.

Within the imperial city, the reputation of the imperial chefs were well-known. In the eyes of the ordinary citizens, chefs from the imperial kitchen were representatives of good food. Any dish made by them would definitely be delicious because they were the ones cooking for the emperor!

Who was the emperor? He was the dragon among men, a supreme being. Someone who was capable of becoming his chef should naturally be more remarkable than most chefs.

"Even without revealing my identity as an imperial chef, I'll still be able to effortlessly trounce him. He's just a little cook who got lucky, that's all. What's there to be afraid of?" Chef Jin was extremely confident of himself. His confidence was as bright as his bald head under the glare of sunlight.

"Chef Jin, Owner Bu may be nothing to worry about but we'll definitely need to pay some attention to the two brothers from Qingyangzhen. You might not have heard of them before, but they're famous food experts in the region around Qingyangzhen. The style of their dishes are very bold and the ingredients they use are very special as well. In short... they're very strong!" one of the chefs solemnly said.

Many of the other chefs sucked in a breath of cold air after hearing his words. They had evidently heard about the two brothers from Qingyangzhen before as well.

Chef Jin also narrowed his eyes and nodded. "Hmm, I've heard of them before as well. They're quite capable. However, the guests of the Hundred Family Banquet have different taste preferences compared to those Wildlands adventurers... Their chances of winning are low."

After hearing his words, the chefs one after another started praising Chef Jin's culinary skills and flattered each other as well. As the drinking party carried on, the night quietly passed by.

The next day, the first rays of light were just about to appear over the horizon.

At the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the final part of the preparations and arrangements was almost finished. The guards were also positioned at their respective posts in order to ensure the guests would enter in an orderly manner. Furthermore, a spectator area was set up outside for those citizens who did not manage to obtain admission rights, so that they could watch the proceedings of the Hundred Family Banquet.

There was also an area that was specially put aside as a spectator area within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Within the spacious plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, three hundred banquet tables covered by red tablecloths were set up. From a distance, they looked like bright red flowers in full bloom.

Beside the banquet tables, rows of kitchen stoves were set up. The guests would be able to clearly observe the cooking process of each and every chef. This was a valuable chance for them to see famous chefs at work.

As the first ray of sunlight fell from the sky, a deafening sound of drums sounded out from the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Don don don!

Every single drumbeat seemed to be striking one's innermost being and caused their senses to tremble.

After the drumming stopped, the Gate of Heavenly Mystery opened and the citizens waiting outside slowly entered in an orderly manner.

The citizens of the three hundred lucky households found their respective tables and sat down with joyful expressions on their faces. With so many people living in the imperial city, it was natural for them to be ecstatic about getting chosen as one of the lucky households.

On the other hand, those citizens that were seated at the spectator area were somewhat envious as they looked at the people sitting at the banquet tables. What a blissful situation to be able to taste the dishes of so many famous chefs.

As another three drumbeats rang out, chefs wearing neat and tidy chef's uniforms entered with their heads held high and chest puffed out as they headed toward their respective kitchen stoves.

Outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, a slender figure was leisurely approaching with his hands held behind his back.

Chapter 149: Owner Bu Has Become Cocky

"Oh my, Owner Bu, you're participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet as well! That's great, I'll be looking forward to your dish!"

As Bu Fang stepped into the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, he was suddenly greeted in an enthusiastic manner by a round meatball. A stunned expression immediately appeared on Bu Fang's face. What was Fatty Jin doing here? However, after thinking for a moment, his confusion resolved on its own. After all, there was no restriction in the random selection of the Hundred Family Banquet's guests. So it was not that surprising for Fatty Jin to be here as well.

"Owner Bu, this is my son and my daughter-in-law," Fatty Jin said with a smile as he pulled along his daughter-in-law and his son, who was round-looking like him.

Bu Fang nodded toward the gentle woman next to Fatty Jin. He was surprised that Fatty Jin could actually find such a gentle-looking woman for his son.

Their chat lasted briefly and Bu Fang was soon on his way toward a particular kitchen stove. The young eunuch from yesterday had already clearly informed him about the location of his kitchen stove, so he was able to easily find his own spot.

After reaching his kitchen stove, Bu Fang's eyebrows were immediately knitted together as he sized up the place. He let out a sigh internally. He was not in his store's kitchen after all... The kitchen stove was simply too crude but it was still not a hindrance for him.

A young eunuch was standing behind Bu Fang's kitchen stove. This young eunuch was specially assigned to help light the fire at Bu Fang's stove. There were young eunuchs like him standing behind the other stoves as well.

"Where are the ingredients that I asked for?" Bu Fang asked the young eunuch. The young eunuch immediately made a baffled expression and shook his head. Bu Fang mildly nodded in response. He was not so worried since he saw people carrying ingredients toward some of the other kitchen stoves. His ingredients should arrive soon enough.

Sure enough, the ingredients that Bu Fang needed were brought to him after a while.

The gaze of many of the chefs near Bu Fang were all focused on his location. They were very curious about the dish Bu Fang was going to make.

The bald-headed Chef Jin narrowed his eyes as he folded his arms across his chest and looked toward Bu Fang's location as well. The corners of his lips slightly curled up with a hint of disdain.

As a chef from the imperial kitchen, he had his own pride.

"Hmm?" Suddenly, Chef Jin's eyes widened and a surprised expression appeared on his face. There was simply too much variety in Bu Fang's ingredients. Furthermore, there were all sorts of colors... More importantly, none of them were high grade ingredients. There were only ordinary as well as exquisite ingredients. Some of them did not even contain spirit energy.

"Is Owner Bu planning to only use ordinary ingredients to make his dish? He's participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet like this?" None of the chefs were able to make heads or tails of the situation.

In their own opinion, no matter how delicious a dish made from ordinary ingredients was, how could it compare with dishes made from high grade ingredients? Just the fragrance that formed from the spirit energy alone was enough to instantly defeat everything.

This Owner Bu was being really cocky! Was he looking down on them? Did he really plan to defeat them with a dish that only used these ordinary ingredients?

One after another, many of the chefs revealed sneering expressions on their faces.

They were all looking forward to watching Bu Fang embarrass himself because once the cooking started, Bu Fang would understand the importance of using ingredients with spirit energy.

With the court musicians performing their music in the background, the mood in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery became even more festive. A group of guards marched out from the Main Hall and stood on both sides of the pathway as aristocrats, generals, and other court officials walked out after them while talking and laughing. Other than the commoners that were luckily selected, aristocrats living in the imperial city were naturally attending the Hundred Family Banquet as well while bringing along their families.

After all, there were not many opportunities for them to taste the cooking of chefs from all over the empire.

Ouyang Zongheng was sitting at one of the banquet tables with a smile on his face alongside Ouyang Xiaoyi as well as one of his wives. There were a lot of aristocrats at this particular banquet table, like members of the Xiao and Yang families... They were all families that were well-known in the imperial city.

In this year's Hundred Family Banquet, they were looking forward to Bu Fang's dish the most. The opportunity of eating Bu Fang's dishes outside of his store was even more difficult to encounter than the Hundred Family Banquet. Therefore, they were naturally filled with anticipation and immediately started a discussion on what Bu Fang would be cooking after sitting down.

With the gaze of everyone there focused on him, the emperor arrived in his dragon robe and a cloak made from the fur of a spirit beast draped over his shoulder. He elegantly sat down on the main seat and a smile appeared on his face as he observed the ongoing festivity.

Ji Chengxue exhaled a cloud of white breath and then started giving an inspirational speech that raised the intensity of the exuberant atmosphere even further.

Once his speech was over, Ji Chengxue announced the start of the Hundred Family Banquet.

...

Chef Jin pulled out a kitchen knife with an edge gleaming with sharpness. He specially requested the most famous blacksmith in the imperial city to forge this knife. The knife was heavy and capable of slicing through metal like it was mud. After using this kitchen knife for so many years, he was able to use the knife effortlessly.

For this year's Hundred Family Banquet, the dish he was going to make was none other than the Four Happiness Meatballs. He prepared many types of first-rate meat from spirit beasts. There was meat from both bovine spirit beasts as well as porcine spirit beasts from first grade all the way to third grade. The texture of bovine meat was soft and its marbling was extremely distinct. On the other hand, porcine meat was fat but not greasy and was abundant with spirit energy. He was going to make the Four Happiness Meatballs by mixing these two types of meat together. Chef Jin was confident that he could conquer everyone with this dish.

The ingredients he used were all top-notch. How could those garbage ingredients that Bu Fang prepared even compare with his? True delicious flavors would naturally require the use of excellent ingredients. How could dishes made from garbage ingredients be delicious?!

Therefore, Chef Jin viewed Bu Fang's actions with contempt. He originally thought Owner Bu might be an opponent that would be difficult to deal with. Now it seemed... he was just someone with an undeserved reputation.

The ingredients prepared by the chefs were all rather high quality. There was even the meat of a fourth grade spirit beast, the Antler Sheep. It was obvious that everyone was planning to use these high quality ingredients to boost their own fame.

Cries of astonishment immediately came from the spectators below.

At that moment, several hundred chefs immediately started processing their ingredients. Every one of them demonstrated their cutting techniques to their heart's content. Some of the more skillful chefs were simply eye-dazzling as they started performing their cutting techniques. The scene of the chefs brandishing their kitchen knives as the blades reflected the glare of the sunlight was extremely astounding.

The commoners, who had never seen such a spectacular scene before, immediately let out cries of astonishment.

In that instant, the distinct sound of kitchen knives colliding with cutting boards resounded within the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

...

Bu Fang took out the ingredients prepared by the imperial palace one after another. They were all ordinary ingredients that could be commonly seen in the homes of commoners.

These ingredients were really pitiful looking compared to the high grade ingredients prepared by the other chefs.

However, Bu Fang remained expressionless as he took out all of the ingredients. After cracking his neck, he was ready to start processing the ingredients.

The mark on his wrist flashed for a moment before a wisp of green smoke encircled his hand and a kitchen knife as black as ink appeared.

The more Bu Fang used the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, the more proficient he became at using it. It felt as if the knife had fused together with his own arm and was becoming extremely easy to use.

Holding the kitchen knife in his right hand, he gently flicked the blade with his finger. Bu Fang's mouth slightly widened into a smile as he felt the slight vibration coming from the knife.

With true energy gathered in his hand, Bu Fang suddenly slapped the top of the table with his palm and the meat placed on the table all bounced into the air.

Chapter 150: The Flamboyant Bu Fang and the Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumplings

The corners of Chef Jin's lips slightly curled up as he listened to the cries of astonishment coming from the crowd with a face filled with satisfaction. He could feel that the gaze of the spectators were all gathered on him and he was the center of attention.

He was confident that his cutting technique was the best among all of the imperial chefs. Perhaps his skill at handling the ingredients might not be as good as those old masters who had been

immersing themselves in the culinary arts for dozens of years, his cutting technique was definitely number one within the imperial kitchen.

After using a showy cutting technique to slice up a plate of beef, he looked up and found that the cries of astonishment became even more frequent. However... those cries were not directed at him.

His face slightly stiffened for a moment before a frown appeared on his face. His bald head seemed to be about to radiate light under the sun.

He turned his head toward the crowd and discovered the spectators were all looking at another cooking stove nearby. That was exactly where the chef he disliked, Bu Fang, was cooking.

The expression on his face became even worse and his mood turned sour. There was no way his mood would be good when someone he disliked stole his spotlight.

Therefore, he wanted to have a good look and see how this Owner Bu was able to steal his spotlight. After all... He had the advantage with his head sparkling under the sunlight!

As Bu Fang slapped the table with his palm, only the meat bounced into the air. The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was twirled around in his hand and then swung toward the meat in the air. The meat was only ordinary pork and not the meat of spirit beasts. Therefore, slicing through them with the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife that could cut through metal like mud was effortlessly accomplished.

As the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife continued to rotate and slice through the pieces of meat, the large pieces of pork hovered in the air and gradually became smaller in the eyes of the spectators.

Bu Fang held out a white porcelain plate and the slices of meat fell neatly onto the plate as if they were strictly arranged.

However, with the relaxed expression shown on Bu Fang's face, this was evidently only a very simple feat for him.

After the pork was sliced by Bu Fang, the slices were as thin as the wings of a cicada and even the veined patterns on its surface could be clearly seen.

Next, Bu Fang brought over the fruits and vegetables while twirling the knife in his hand and then diced all of them. This time, his method of dicing them was even stranger. He basically did not differentiate between them and directly threw all of them into the air.

The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife swept past like a gust of wind and a dark stream of light seemed to have flashed past. Those fruits and vegetables were all diced apart and fell into a pile on one side.

As Bu Fang scooped up Kuruma Prawns from the cold water, he twirled the kitchen knife in his hand and the outer shells of these prawns would be immediately removed with only the meat left. This series of movements were so quick that the crowd was almost unable to follow them. His method of handling the ingredients completely astonished the spectators.

A large basin of prawns were completely peeled within seven and a half minutes. Afterward, Bu Fang minced these prawns and mixed them together with other minced meat as well as the diced fruits and vegetables.

The colorful ingredients were strikingly bright and eye-catching. As Bu Fang stirred the mixture, he added some sauce and seasoning from time to time. Even though he had not started cooking yet, a faint fragrance was already wafting out from the mixture.

A distance away, quite a number of people were observing and watching Owner Bu's actions. This was the first time that they were seeing Owner Bu's appearance while he was cooking. They did not anticipate that his movements would be so graceful and swift.

"What's Owner Bu making? He's mincing and mixing so many ingredients together... Is he making the fillings for Golden Shumai? That's not right... Those are not the ingredients for the Golden Shumai," Xiao Xiaolong and the others puzzledly muttered. They were completely unable to guess the dish Bu Fang was making.

Not only Xiao Xiaolong and the others, but even many of the the chefs there could not understand. If he was making the fillings, what was the purpose of those pork slices that were thinner than the wings of a cicada?

Everyone was somewhat perplexed but the crowds of spectators were all cheering. Bu Fang's elegant manner of handling the ingredients had completely amazed them.

So, chefs could be this good-looking when they were serious!

After the fillings were properly seasoned, Bu Fang washed his hands with clear water and wiped the water droplets on his slender and fair hands with a clean cloth. Then, he took out a large bag of flour of the highest quality within the imperial city, which he requested from the young eunuch.

Even though its quality was still not as good as the flour provided by the system, Bu Fang was still rather satisfied after taking a pinch of the flour and sniffing it.

As the true energy vortex started rotating within his dantian, true energy gathered on his palm and Bu Fang's expression suddenly became stern. He poured the flour into a large basin and then added warm water before stirring the mixture. With the aid of true energy, the consistency of the flour rapidly started getting thicker.

Bang!

Once the dough was kneaded until its texture was somewhat smooth, Bu Fang tossed it into the air. While the large lump of dough was in mid-air, he promptly struck the dough with his palm and caused a loud slapping sound.

The dough shook for a moment and then rose upward once more. When it plunged downward again, Bu Fang threw out another palm strike filled with true energy.

Just like that, a lump of dough was continuously juggled like a ball by Bu Fang. It fell, rose into the air, fell once again...

Xiao Meng was sitting nearby at a banquet table and his eyes suddenly narrowed. With his cultivation level, he could naturally see through Bu Fang's technique. Every single palm strike Bu Fang was throwing was not simple at all. Whenever his palm struck the dough, a wave of vibration instantly passed through it and caused the entire lump of dough to become anew.

In simpler terms, Bu Fang was causing the lump of dough to flip inside out each time he struck it with his palm...

This was a very high level true energy technique that required the user to have an extremely precise control over one's true energy. Even Xiao Meng himself would only be able to perform such a feat after undergoing a lot of training.

Bu Fang's performance triggered cries of astonishment from the crowd once more. It was simply too showy and flamboyant!

Ouyang Xiaoyi burst into laughter. "I didn't know the smelly boss who's usually a cold person on the surface would actually be so flamboyant while cooking! Kekeke!"

Xiao Yanyu was also laughing while covering her mouth with her hand. When she recalled Bu Fang's face that was usually stern and compared that with his flamboyant appearance as he struck the dough palm after palm, she was suddenly unable to hold back her smile any longer.

Now that the dough was kneaded... Bu Fang's dish seemed to be ready. Was he making buns? Or was this a new type of Golden Shumai?

Many people were puzzled and continued with their guesses. There were many types of dishes that required dough. However, the exact dish was debatable because no one could tell from the fillings that Bu Fang prepared.

Once he was finished kneading, the entire lump of dough was giving off heat. This was induced by Bu Fang's true energy. Every time he flipped the dough inside out, the intense friction was enough to heat the dough to a scalding hot temperature.

As the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife rotated, the large lump of dough was rapidly cut into smaller lumps. Then, Bu Fang placed these lumps of dough aside.

"Come over here and start a fire. Bring the water in the wok to a boil," Bu Fang said as he beckoned toward the dazed young eunuch standing nearby, who seemed to have been shocked by his flamboyance.

Only then did Bu Fang let out a sigh of relief and look around his surroundings.

The chefs around him were almost finished with their dishes and were starting the finishing stage. The rich aroma of the dishes were rising into the air and lingering above the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. The air above the plaza seemed to become hazy as if the aroma was forming a cloud.

Such a scene was a rare sight to behold. With so many chefs cooking at the same time, the scale was simply too large.

Bu Fang looked away and paid no more attention to the completion state of the dishes belonging to the chefs around him. His slender fingers nimbly moved around a little and then he picked up a slice of pork that was as thin as the wings of a cicada. He stuffed the pork slice with the fillings mixed earlier and squeezed it into a ball. Grabbing a small lump of dough, he flattened the dough into a thin wrapper before wrapping the ball with it.

Once the wrapping was completed, layers upon layers of creases appeared at the opening and the dumpling looked like a crescent moon. It was so beautiful that it was like a work of art.

The Crescent Moon Dumpling was the most classic method of wrapping a dumpling.

However, this was not just any dumpling but a revised version made according to the latest system reward, the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumpling, that was given by the system. This was a version that was suitable for consumption by the general public.