

Gourmet 151

Chapter 151: Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumpling? Where's the Rainbow Colors?

Within the bustling Gate of Heavenly Mystery, a man whose head was sparkling under the sunlight was extremely eye-catching as he stood behind one of many cooking stoves.

Chef Jin's expression was solemn as he skillfully kneaded a meatball with his hands. This meatball was made using different kinds of meat mixed together and its taste was definitely extraordinary. This was a dish that he was extremely proud of. For the sake of this year's Hundred Family Banquet, he was giving his all.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Suddenly, Chef Jin stopped in the middle of kneading a meatball after getting startled by a deafening noise and discovering his cooking stove was slightly shaking.

He subconsciously looked toward the direction where the sound was coming from and saw a fat person was actually fiercely hammering at a piece of meat on a cooking stove with a sledgehammer in his hands.

"Is this his idea of cooking? Is there something wrong with this fatso's head?" Chef Jin sarcastically asked as the corners of his lips twitched. No one else ever cooked as if they were having a fight like this fatso.

Rip!

A bone-chilling sound rang out and goosebumps rose all over Chef Jin's body. His eyes widened as he looked behind that fatso.

There, a short and thin person with a large black wok on his back was cutting open a struggling spirit beast on the ground with the dagger in his hand...

Chef Jin swallowed his saliva with a gulp. His pupils constricted as he felt a sudden chill in his heart. The madness in that person's eyes made him feel as if he was looking at a vicious executioner instead of a chef.

"Who are all these people... This year's Hundred Family Banquet is simply too disorganized. They didn't even manage to filter these sort of people from the participants. This is simply nonsense."

Chef Jin muttered with a chilly expression on his face before he focused all of his attention back on making his dish once more.

...

Clouds of steam were rising from the wok and the water inside was already close to the boiling point.

At that moment, Bu Fang had already kneaded over a dozen Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings. This time, he did not follow the recipe provided by the system but used his own revised version instead. He only used ordinary ingredients for the fillings so that anyone would be able to eat the dish without experiencing any discomfort from consuming spirit energy.

Many of the chefs around him had already finished cooking and their dishes were already served to the emperor as well as some of the high-ranking officials.

As the ruling power of the empire, they were naturally the first to taste the dishes.

These people were nodding their heads as they ate the food. After all, these were the dishes of famous chefs. It was natural for them to taste good.

After tasting the dish in front of him, Ji Chengxue indifferently nodded and ordered someone to take it away without any change in his expression.

As each dish was taken away, the next dish would be brought forward.

Meanwhile, the commoners finally managed to have a taste of these delicious dishes as well. They were already close to their limits after having their appetites aroused by the fragrance wafting in the air. Many of their stomachs were rumbling in protest.

Chef Jin's dish was successfully completed as well. After pouring his meticulously prepared sauce over the meatballs, the piping hot and intensely fragrant Four Happiness Meatballs were ready to be eaten.

After seeing the rather appetizing Four Happiness Meatballs, Ji Chengxue raised his eyebrows and indiscernibly nodded. He picked up one of the meatballs and gently took a bite.

The moment his teeth broke through the surface of the meatball, a thick juice gushed out from the center and instantly flowed into his mouth. The aroma was so fragrant that Ji Chengxue could not help but continue sucking the juice from the meatball. The juice contained not just the flavor of a single type of meat but tasted of several different kinds of meat combined together. After undergoing a special preparation by the bald-headed Chef Jin, there was actually no sense of conflict in the flavors and the taste was surprisingly good.

After finishing the meatball, Ji Chengxue nodded in satisfaction. After tasting so many dish up until now, this was the only dish that he thought was interesting.

"As expected of a head chef from the imperial kitchen, it's not bad," Ji Chengxue praised with a smile.

When Chef Jin who was still cooking in front of his stove saw the smile on the emperor's face, he was suddenly overjoyed. He felt better than ever and was filled with confidence as if a seed had instantly grown into a plant and bore fruit upon his head.

Meanwhile, the imperial city's bigwigs and the commoners were full of praise as well as they ate the Four Happiness Meatballs. Evidently, this dish had conquered their stomachs.

"I am still a head chef from the imperial kitchen after all!" Chef Jin's bald head became even brighter as he resisted the urge to hum a tune. He thought, "Owner Bu? The brothers from Qingyangzhen? They're nothing!"

As Bu Fang's slender hands rapidly kneaded the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings, the amount of crescent moon dumplings in front of him grew more and more.

When the water in the wok had completely reached boiling point and the heat was enough to make him slightly narrow his eyes, Bu Fang started dropping the dumplings into the boiling water.

Plop, plop.

One after another, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were dropped into the bubbling water. They floated on the surface for a while before sinking to the bottom of the wok.

Bu Fang gave the water dumplings in the wok a glance before he went back and started kneading dumplings again. He prepared quite an amount of fillings which should be enough for a few hundred dumplings. Bu Fang's kneading speed was extremely fast and he could knead a crescent moon dumpling within a few breaths.

"Keep feeding the fire, don't let it get smaller," Bu Fang reminded the young eunuch stoking the fire.

The young eunuch hurriedly nodded and added a few more pieces of wood into the fire.

The dumplings soon started rising toward the surface of the water. Bu Fang's eyes were sharp and his hands were quick. The instant a dumpling reached the surface, he scooped it up and dropped it into a blue and white porcelain bowl.

A single bowl was only large enough to contain three of the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

The white and glossy Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings was not radiating rainbow colors despite its name. These dumplings were smooth and translucent, and the fillings inside could almost be seen.

From the outside, there seemed to be a faint amount of fragrance enveloping the fillings and made the dumpling appear extremely tantalizing.

After pouring a ladle of the soup into the bowl and then sprinkling some chopped up green onion, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings was completed.

The young eunuch approached Bu Fang and was slightly surprised as he looked at the exquisite crescent moon dumplings. The aroma of the dumplings were not as fragrant compared to the dishes of the other chefs.

However, the young eunuch did not say anything either as he picked up the dish and walked in Ji Chengxue's direction.

"This is Owner Bu's... dish?"

Ji Chengxue was filled with anticipation as he looked at the dish being presented by the young eunuch. However, when he saw the ordinary-looking crescent moon dumplings whose fragrance was not that strong either, the expectation in his heart rapidly declined and he became somewhat disappointed.

There were no dumplings in the Light Wind Empire, so Ji Chengxue did not recognize the dish. However, Ji Chengxue had tasted Bu Fang's Golden Shumai before and its rich fragrance and glistening appearance were still lingering in his memory even till now. In contrast, the adorable-looking water dumplings in the blue and white porcelain bowl in front of him were not as fragrant as he expected. Ji Chengxue let out a sigh.

"What did Owner Bu call this dish?" Even though he was somewhat disappointed, Ji Chengxue still asked the young eunuch.

"Owner Bu said this dish is called Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings," the young eunuch respectfully said.

"Hmm? Rainbow-colored? How is this rainbow-colored? Aren't these crescent moon dumplings entirely white in color?" Ji Chengxue was bewildered. He was somewhat confused as he gave the white dumplings another glance. Rainbow-colored was naturally seven colors. Why was the dish called rainbow-colored when there was only a single color?

Was there something else special about this dish? Ji Chengxue's eyes suddenly lit up. He suddenly remembered that with Bu Fang's capability in cooking, it was impossible for him to bring out such an ordinary dish...

The expectation in his heart, which had already fallen before, rose up once more. Ji Chengxue was now eager to have a taste of these Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

Using a soup spoon to scoop up a steaming crescent moon dumpling, Ji Chengxue blew on the dumpling before gently taking a bite.

After biting through the tender skin of the dumpling with a single bite, Ji Chengxue's eyes instantly widened and became filled with incredulity.

A rich aromatic explosion suddenly occurred in Ji Chengxue's mouth and the surging waves of flavor made him feel a sense of satisfaction.

As a rich fragrance wafted out from the bite he took from the dumpling, Ji Chengxue's nostrils widened when he saw the fragrance...

What the hell, this fragrance actually caused a rainbow!

Chapter 152: What a Dish That Delights People

A stream of fragrance gushed out from the bite in the dumpling toward his face and Ji Chengxue slightly narrowed his eyes. The rich fragrance burrowed into his nostrils within an instant and provoked his senses.

The rainbow-like fragrance appeared quickly and dissipated quickly as well, like a flash in the pan. When Ji Chengxue recovered from his surprise, the rainbow-colored fragrance had already gradually disappeared.

As Ji Chengxue gently chewed the morsel in his mouth, he was suddenly filled with a sense of happiness and a faint smile subconsciously appeared on his lips. His chest was filled with uncontrollable joy.

This dumpling was actually affecting his mood. After eating the dumpling, his chest was filled with numerous and diverse emotions like the colors of a rainbow and then finally stopped at joy.

Ji Chengxue was not surprised that the dumpling did not contain even the slightest spirit energy since Bu Fang only used ordinary ingredients. However... the texture of the dumpling's skin greatly astonished him.

The soft, tender, and flavorful skin of the dumpling felt extremely smooth in his mouth like a breeze brushing past...

Ji Chengxue was unable hold back any longer. He swallowed the remaining half of the dumpling in one bite and blissfully savored the taste.

After finishing a dumpling, Ji Chengxue lifted up the blue and white porcelain bowl. He blew into the bowl before drinking a mouthful of the soup with a slurping sound. The soup appeared extremely clear but the taste was not bland. On the contrary, it was savory like seafood soup.

Drinking a mouthful of soup after eating a dumpling was giving him a warm and fuzzy feeling in this cold winter.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was adding the wrapped crescent moon dumplings into the wok while swiftly scooping up the dumplings floating on the surface. Every blue and white porcelain bowl was given three dumplings with chopped up green onions sprinkled over them. It was simple and satisfying.

The eunuchs served the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings to the imperial court's high ranking officials and allowed them to have a taste as well.

As each of them took a bite of the crescent moon dumplings, they were astonished by the rainbow-colored fragrance and mystified by the stream of fragrance that gushed into their faces. It was simply... too beautiful.

Furthermore, the taste of the dumplings was beyond their expectations. It was so delicious that they almost swallowed their own tongues. Blissful and joyous expressions appeared on every one of their faces.

It was a dish that delighted people.

Finally, it was the turn of the commoners. They were already feeling somewhat impatient. When they saw the blissful expressions on the faces of the high ranking officials, they were already close to their limits. Just what sort of dish could make them feel so happy?

All of the commoners that received their Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were eager to have a taste of the dish. As they took a bite of the dumplings, the rainbow-colored fragrance gushed out and enveloped them.

The rich fragrance pervaded the air and filled the entire place. Everyone could not help but fiercely sniff the air. The craving in their hearts were teased to the point of being uncontrollable.

As an old couple took a bite of their dumplings, joyous expressions appeared on their faces and they felt as if they had suddenly become much younger.

"Old woman, have a taste of this. This dish... is really delicious." The old man scooped up a crescent moon dumpling with his spoon and held it in front of the old granny next to him with a face full of smiles.

The old granny immediately laughed in embarrassment and rolled her eyes at the old man but still took a bite at the dumpling. A warm feeling was spreading in their chests.

As the two elderly people with graying hair ate their dumplings, a feeling of happiness was being spread around them.

A young man was eating a crescent moon dumpling while his wife sat next to him. The two of them were at odds with each other due to a trivial matter and were currently at the stage of ignoring each other.

The wife's serving of crescent moon dumplings was still not served yet, so she was looking at her husband who was heartily eating his dumplings from the corner of her eye and getting angrier by the minute.

Suddenly, she was slightly startled when a white porcelain spoon with a steaming dumpling on top was thrust in front of her.

She turned her head and found her husband looking at her with a gentle expression on his face.

"Hehe, dear, have a bite as well. It's really delicious... There seems to be something magical about this dish!" the husband said with a soft laugh as he brought the dumpling to his wife's lips.

The wife was feeling exasperated a moment ago but her resentment disappeared in that instant. Her pretty face flushed with redness as she shyly took a bite at the dumpling. A rainbow-colored fragrance gushed out and caused her face to be filled with euphoria.

The wife ate half the dumpling and then her husband ate the rest of the dumpling in a single bite. The redness on her face immediately became brighter. She pinched her husband's arm and bashfully said, "What're you doing, there's so many people here! How embarrassing!"

Similar scenes continued to occur in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Every single person that tasted the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings would be filled with happiness. Furthermore, young couples who were previously quarrelling would be reconciled with each other.

The charm of the dumplings made everyone exude joyful emotions and increased the festive mood even more.

"Why is it not our turn yet?! It's too slow!"

Some of the more impatient commoners even left their seats and started heading in Bu Fang's direction.

With someone taking the lead, more and more people followed suit and left their seats. The order of the scene became somewhat chaotic all of a sudden.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together as he expressionlessly watched the crowd of people charging toward him.

Meanwhile, above the high platform, Ji Chengxue had already eaten the three dumplings in his bowl and even the soup was drunk without leaving a single drop. He felt extremely satisfied as he put down the bowl and let out a breath of hot air.

"Stop them, let them return to their seats and obediently wait. Otherwise, all of their qualifications will be cancelled and they'll be driven out," Ji Chengxue mildly said to the eunuch standing nearby as he gave the somewhat disorderly scene below a glance.

The eunuch relayed the command and numerous guards in armor immediately appeared to restore the order.

These commoners did not dare to disobey the emperor's will. They could only sit down on their seats and endure their cravings as they waited in anticipation for Bu Fang's dumplings.

Chef Jin's complexion became deathly pale and his bald head seemed to appear extremely dim under the sunlight...

"How is this happening? Why is this happening? How could he make such a delicious dish with only ordinary ingredients?" Chef Jin was beside oneself. The reaction of the crowd and Ji Chengxue's satisfied expression had no doubt told him that Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings had completely trounced his Four Happiness Meatballs.

This was practically a bolt from the blue for Chef Jin, who had always been a proud person. He boasted in front of the other chefs that Owner Bu was only a cook that got lucky and there was no need to be wary of him. However, the result had just mercilessly slapped him in the face. He was slapped so badly that even his bald head became extremely dim.

"I... don't believe this!" Chef Jin suddenly became somewhat agitated. He actually let go of the meatball in his hands and intended to walk toward Bu Fang.

"Chef Jin... Please complete your dish, you're not allowed to walk around without permission." The eunuch said in a high-pitched voice as he hurriedly stopped Chef Jin from leaving and caused the latter to become clear-headed.

Chef Jin took in a deep breath and meaningfully gave Bu Fang, who was methodically kneading his dumplings, a glance before letting out a snort.

Sizzle.

The sizzling sound of oil dripping into an open fire travelled into Chef Jin's ears and slightly startled him. He turned and looked toward a particular spot somewhere nearby.

His pupils constricted once more as he sucked in a breath of cold air.

The two brothers, Ah Lu and Ah Wei, were finished with their dishes as well... However, the visual effect was simply too shocking.

On top of Ah Lu's cooking stove, a gigantic metal rod was vertically standing there instead of a wok. The metal rod was piercing through a gigantic piece of aromatic roasted meat.

Glistening droplets of oil was continuously seeping through the surface of the meat and produced sizzling sounds as they dripped into the fire underneath the cooking stove.

Next to Ah Lu, Ah Wei had also finished his dish as well... His dish was also roast meat but he used a different cooking method from his brother.

Ah Wei was holding onto multiple skewers in each hand and each of the skewers was piercing through a small spirit beast covered in glistening oil.

Chapter 153: The Barbecued Boar That Wants to Ascend into Heaven

The fat all over Ah Lu's body was violently shaking as he rapidly swung the huge kitchen knife in his hand with a serious look in his tiny eyes and carved meat off the gigantic piece of roast meat.

Slice after slice of meat was carved from the gigantic piece of roast meat and they fell onto the white plates on the table. Each plate contained a single slice of roast meat. When five plates were filled, Ah Lu would put down the kitchen knife and use a ladle to pour some sauce over the pieces of roast meat.

The rich fragrance of the meat accompanied with the sweet and sour aroma sauce immediately rose into the air and overwhelmed the senses of the people nearby.

Then, Ah Lu signalled to the eunuch that the dish was ready to be served.

Ji Chengxue's eyes slightly brightened when he saw the piece of tender and juicy roast meat in front of him. The piece of meat was well roasted and the marbling on its surface was very distinct. From a single glance, he knew this was not just any spirit beast meat.

"Is this meat from the third grade spirit beast, Plum Blossoms Spotted Boar?" Ji Chengxue muttered to himself as something suddenly came to mind.

Ji Chengxue accepted a dagger made from gold that a eunuch attentively handed over. He pressed down on the roast meat with his chopsticks and then used the dagger to slice off a small piece of the meat. It was still quite easy for a sharp dagger to cut through meat that was already cooked.

The moment the meat was cut open, a puff of steam along with a rich fragrance suddenly gushed out from the opening. The fragrance was silky smooth, like milk.

Using his chopsticks, Ji Chengxue picked up the small piece of meat that he cut off and dipped it in the sauce before popping it into his mouth.

As he chewed the morsel in his mouth, the expression on his face became dreamy. His eyes were slightly narrowed and he seemed to be enjoying the wondrous feeling of the meaty flavor bursting in his mouth. His entire being seemed to be getting cleansed by the cloud of aroma.

Immersed within the feeling, he almost did not want to wake up.

After a long while, Ji Chengxue slowly opened his eyes and praised out loud with an enraptured expression.

Afterward, he continued eating the dish and started cutting up the meat into smaller pieces. The sweetness and sourness of the sauce was making it difficult for Ji Chengxue to stop eating.

When Ah Lu saw the enraptured expression on Ji Chengxue's face, he broke into a laugh and the fat on his face violently jiggled. He was just about to celebrate by pulling out a chicken drumstick from his apron but stopped after thinking for a moment. He was once reprimanded by his master for eating chicken drumsticks while cooking.

Plates after plates of roast meat were served to the guests and they all wallowed in its rich aroma and marvelous taste.

Suddenly, Ah Lu sniffed the air and the fat on his face started jiggling once more. He turned and looked in the direction of his brother's cooking stove. There, a fragrance that seemed to possess magical powers was drifting out.

"What a fragrant smell! I really want to eat that! Big bro's culinary skill has really improved again!" Ah Lu was almost drooling as he sniffed the aroma wafting in the air.

Ah Wei's culinary skill was good without any doubt. Ah Lu had always held great confidence in his elder brother, especially after getting agitated by Owner Bu.

Gulp! As he sniffed the aroma, the struggle on Ah Lu's face became even more intense. "I can't eat the roast meat... I really want to have a chicken drumstick right now!"

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was expressionlessly kneading his dumplings when he was slightly startled by an aroma wafting in the air. He sniffed the air and slightly raised his eyebrows.

"Someone's actually smoking meat with spirit herbs..." Bu Fang subconsciously muttered as his movements of kneading the dumplings slowed down a little. There was spirit energy within spirit herbs, and it was capable of improving the luster and taste of an ingredient.

Even though directly burning spirit herbs was a wasteful method, it was an extremely exquisite technique to smoke meat.

Bu Fang's expression slightly changed. He had to admit that the smell of the barbecued meat was really delicious. The result produced when the smell of the meaty aroma and medicinal fragrance were mixed together was unexpectedly good.

As the fragrance spread everywhere, the expression of everyone who smelled the aroma changed. They turned toward the source of the smell with captivated and intoxicated expressions. They were continuously swallowing their own salivas as rumbling noises came from their stomachs.

Ji Chengxue had just finished Ah Lu's roast meat and was still in a daze when his attention was attracted by this peculiar fragrance. He could not help but crane his neck toward Ah Wei's present location.

Ah Wei was holding five skewers on one hand and barbecuing spirit beasts covered in glistening oil with them. These spirit beasts appeared very adorable after getting processed.

Once the finishing touches were completed, Ah Wei handed the five skewers over to a eunuch.

"The emperor gets one skewer while others get one per table," Ah Wei said as he lifted up his sharp chin.

The eunuch hurriedly nodded after recovering from his surprise and carefully carried the skewers over to Ji Chengxue.

After leaving a small and delicate skewered boar at Ji Chengxue's table, he divided the remaining four skewers among the empire's high ranking officials.

Everyone was looking at the spirit beast on the skewers. Even though a rich fragrance was continuously emanating from the skewers and the aroma was continuously enticing them... no one, including Ji Chengxue, attempted to start eating.

The main reason was Ah Wei's barbecued meat was simply too lifelike like they were covered with a layer of red and tender skin. Every single spirit beast appeared extremely cute. They were so cute that no one dared to start eating.

"Start eating, what are you people looking at? Food is meant to be eaten, don't tell me you're just going to look?" Ah Wei tauntingly said with a sneer when he saw no one was actually eating.

After he was done taunting them, he went back to his cooking stove and continued barbecuing the spirit beasts...

Ji Chengxue narrowed his eyes before grabbing a dagger and directly cutting open the barbecued boar that looked as if it wanted to ascend into heaven with its legs spread wide open.

The skin of the barbecued boar was very crispy and tender. As his dagger sliced into the boar with a crunching sound, it was like cutting through paper.

The stomach of the barbecued boar was actually stuffed with ingredients as well. When the boar was cut open, the steaming sauce-like ingredients spilled out and covered the entire barbecued boar.

"A dish within a dish?!" Ji Chengxue exclaimed in surprise. The mellow aroma of the sauce was making him even more eager to start eating.

The somewhat tangerine sauce was different from the sauce used in Ah Lu's dish. It seemed to be cooked using stock before simmering with spirit herbs and then poured into the stomach of the barbecued boar. Once it was cut open, the sauce would automatically spill out.

Ah Lu's sauce was a condiment while Ah Wei's sauce itself could be considered a dish.

Ji Chengxue used a porcelain spoon to scoop up the sauce before cutting off a slice of the barbecued pork and then shoved them together into his mouth.

The moment the spoon entered Ji Chengxue's mouth, the hair all over his body stood up and there was even steam slightly gushing out from his nostrils.

The barbecued pork was extremely smooth and tender in his mouth. There was not even the usual chewiness of barbecued meat in the slightest. However, when matched with the mellow sauce that was just like countless ingredients mixed together, it instantly caused Ji Chengxue to be captivated and intoxicated.

Slicing the barbecued pork, scooping up the sauce, shoving them into his mouth, getting intoxicated... Ji Chengxue consecutively repeated these actions multiple times and half of the barbecued boar was eaten by him in a single breath. The sauce was also drunk to the last drop.

"Delicious! It's truly delicious!" Ji Chengxue praised with a bright smile while repeatedly nodding.

Hearing this, the corners of Ah Wei's lips curled up. With his eyebrows raised and chin tilted up, he turned his head and looked in Bu Fang's direction as if he was trying to provoke him.

However, Bu Fang was fully concentrated on kneading his dumplings and did not look up from start till finish.

Ah Wei's provocation resulted in failure in the end and it made him somewhat inexplicably furious. He put in so much effort to cook this dish just to avenge his humiliation and let Bu Fang know about his capability. However, it seemed... Bu Fang never saw him as an opponent in the first place!

"Hmph! Owner Bu, you shall soon experience the taste of defeat!" Ah Wei said with a snort.

As the chefs gradually completed their dishes, plates after plates of dishes were placed on the banquet tables and even the commoners had almost eaten all of the dishes. Although, everyone's progress rate might have been different.

Nevertheless, there were bright smiles on everyone's faces.

There were times when food had such magical powers that could make people feel happy and experience an indescribable joy.

Chapter 154: You Can't Accept the Result? Then Try a Serving Yourself

The Hundred Family Banquet was an activity held by the empire for the sake of celebrating the Spring Festival and the banquet itself was a festive event.

Within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the scene of clouds of fragrance in the air and the sound of laughter resounding incessantly in the background was very harmonious. The aroma of the food interweaved with the laughter of the guests formed an unforgettable picture.

The guests were heartily enjoying their meals and the chefs were diligently cooking the food. Within this cold winter day, the atmosphere created a different kind of warmth.

However... when the warm mood was over, it was time for a cruel competition where the guests had to select the number one chef for this year's Hundred Family Banquet.

For the guests, it was blissful and joyful while they were eating. However, picking someone... was painful because there were simply too many delicious dishes in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. Whether the Four Happiness Meatballs, the roasted spirit beast, the barbecued spirit beast that was a dish within a dish, or the Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumplings... These were all dishes that they had never heard before.

Many of them were troubled with making a choice but they had no other option. Each of them were given the right to cast a single vote and not using it would be a waste. Otherwise, attending this year's Hundred Family Banquet would be in vain.

After Bu Fang was done kneading the dumplings, he gently breathed out and wiped off the moisture on his hands as well as the droplets of sweat on his forehead. After kneading a few hundred dumplings in one go, even he was feeling exhausted.

The other chefs were also finished as well and some of them were leisurely leaning on their cooking stoves. Even though there was still quite a bit of ingredients left, it was already time for the voting so everyone stopped cooking. This also meant that the Hundred Family Banquet was nearly over.

Chef Jin's eyes looked rather fierce as he felt somewhat helpless. The chefs participating this year were simply too frightening. Whether it was Owner Bu or the brothers from Qingyangzhen, there was a great possibility for them to endanger his position and it was making him feel nervous.

Ji Chengxue stood up and slowly walked forward with a cloak made from the fur of a spirit beast draped over his shoulders. He surveyed the entire place from the platform he was standing on.

"In this year's Hundred Family Banquet, I wonder if everyone had an enjoyable and satisfying meal?" Ji Chengxue's calm voice resounded within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

As Bu Fang listened to Ji Chengxue's lengthy speech, he dropped some dumplings into the boiling water. After cooking for such a long while, he himself was craving the dumplings as well.

Bu Fang scooped up the translucent and adorably plump dumplings from the water. As he took a bite of one of the dumplings, a stream of rainbow-colored fragrance instantly gushed out. It enveloped his face and caused him to become somewhat intoxicated.

This rainbow-colored fragrance was produced only after performing a special preparation. The secret was inside the dough. When Bu Fang meticulously kneaded the dough with true energy, the dough was infused with his true energy. As the dumplings were cooked in boiling water, the true energy sparked a chemical reaction and manifested the various colors of the fillings inside. In truth, the visual image of the fragrance was not real. In simple terms, it was actually something like a mirage.

However, the fragrance itself was genuine.

After drinking a mouthful of the heartwarming soup, Bu Fang lightly breathed out and took another bite of the dumpling. The delicious flavor was wrapping around his taste buds and making him feel satisfied.

Sometimes, a bowl of dumplings was enough to make someone feel extremely satisfied.

When Bu Fang finished eating a bowl of dumplings, Ji Chengxue finally ended his lengthy speech as well. Like those high ranked officials and public figures, he needed to say a lot of insignificant matters before an event could start.

Bu Fang had already long gotten used to such things.

After Ji Chengxue was done with his speech, he went back to his seat and sat down. A eunuch stepped forward and started announcing the rules in a high-pitched voice. "Next, all of you're currently holding onto a special copper coin. This coin represents your vote. Among the dishes of the many chefs here today, which is your favorite? Once you've made your choice, place your copper coin into the porcelain plate in front of that chef's cooking stove. The chef with the most votes will obtain a reward prepared by the imperial court."

The commoners below immediately started whispering to each other while looking at the special copper coins in their hands.

When the eunuch announced the start of the voting, the commoners immediately left their seats and headed toward the chefs' cooking area.

"Chef Jin, the Four Happiness Meatballs were really too delicious! I am rooting for you!" a brawny man said as he excitedly placed a copper coin into the bald-headed Chef Jin's porcelain plate.

A smile immediately appeared on Chef Jin's face like a blossoming flower. The first person was already voting for him? Looks like the response for his Four Happiness Meatballs was pretty good.

Chef Jin rubbed his bald head and suddenly felt the world was beautiful again. He gave Bu Fang who was standing far away a provocative-like glance and then snorted at the fatty next to him who was continuously chomping on chicken drumsticks.

After getting the first vote, would the second vote be long?

"Fatty, your roast meat was very delicious! This elder sister is rooting for you!" This was someone who voted for Ah Lu.

"Chef with the large black wok, your barbecued spirit beast was practically making me unable to stop eating. It was simply too delicious! As expected of a chef! " This was someone who voted for Ah Wei.

"Owner Bu! You're so handsome! Your cutting technique was practically blinding my eyes! Your dumplings... made me want to cry! It's too delicious!"

"Owner Bu, I want to give birth to your child! I'll root for you forever!"

"Owner Bu, we really enjoyed your dish. We hope you'll continue cooking delicious dishes. We're rooting for you," an old couple encouragingly said with a faint smile as they walked over hand in hand and placed their copper coins into the porcelain plate in front of Bu Fang.

Bu Fang's expression straightened as he slightly bowed toward the old couple and softly said, "I'll do my best."

The situation became one-sided within an instant...

Chef Jin looked as if he had nothing to live for as he stared at the single copper coin sitting all alone in his porcelain plate. Where was the second coin that was agreed upon... What happened to the peak of his life that was agreed upon?

His bald head gradually grew dimmer and almost lost all of its luster.

Ah Lu pulled out a chicken drumstick from the pocket on his apron and fiercely chewed on them with a satisfied expression on his face.

On the other hand, Ah Wei was looking at the porcelain plate in front of him with a gloomy expression. Obviously, compared with Bu Fang... his votes were far lesser.

Was he going to lose? How could that be possible... He already put in so much effort to make this dish! He even resorted to a technique like dish within a dish, so why was he still losing? Furthermore, he lost to someone who was not even using ingredients with spirit energy!

Ah Wei tightly clenched his fist and firmly bit his lips. He was unwilling to admit defeat just like that.

"Smelly boss! This dumpling is super delicious! Are you going to sell this in the store?" Ouyang Xiaoyi gleefully said as she energetically approached Bu Fang. She was definitely going to vote for Bu Fang.

Xiao Yanyu, Xiao Xiaolong, and the others also came over and placed their copper coins into the porcelain plate in front of Bu Fang. They gently smiled and nodded toward Bu Fang.

Other high ranking officials came over as well. Even though some people within the high ranking officials chose Ah Wei, there were even more people who chose Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

From their point of view, Ah Wei's barbecue technique might have reached an extremely perfect level but there was no comparison with Owner Bu's dumplings in terms of emotional investment in the dish.

That sort of dish that could make people feel happy and let them experience bliss during winter was still lingering in their minds.

There was something magical about Owner Bu's dish! A sort of magic power that mesmerized them!

"I can't accept this result! How could I lose!" Ah Wei could not accept his defeat. His expression was extremely unsightly as he stared at the scant amount of coins in his porcelain plate. Of course, the scant amount of coins on his plate was already not bad when compared to other people's completely empty plates.

Even though his younger brother, Ah Lu, only had a few coins as well, Ah Lu was unconcerned about the result. He was having a good time delightfully pulling out chicken drumsticks and shoving them into his mouth.

"You can't accept the result?" Ji Chengxue indifferently gave Ah Wei a glance and asked, "This result is determined through voting, what are you unsatisfied about?"

Ah Wei was suddenly stumped for words. Indeed, Ji Chengxue's words were reasonable. The result was determined through the voting of all of the guests. What was his basis for not accepting the result?

However, he was still unable to accept the result... Why was the dish that he meticulously cooked inferior to Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumpling which did not even use ingredients with spirit energy?

Chef Jin was standing there, looking as if he had nothing to live for. When he heard Ah Wei's questioning, he also straightened his back and slightly nodded.

The taste of ordinary ingredients was definitely incomparable to ingredients with spirit energy. This had always been common knowledge in the culinary world. However, Bu Fang broke this principle today.

Bu Fang rubbed his own stomach as he expressionlessly gave Ah Wei and that bald-headed Chef Jin a glance and lightly breathed out.

He said, "You can't accept the result? Then try a serving yourself."

Chapter 155: Owner Bu Has a Venomous Tongue

Bu Fang was speaking in a calm voice. He was not using a condescending tone of someone who had just obtained victory but an indifferent and matter-of-fact tone.

Ah Wei was stunned. He did not anticipate Bu Fang to actually give such a reply. However, he really was tempted by Bu Fang's offer. He understood well enough that since Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings could acquire the fondness of so many of the guests, there was naturally something special about his dish.

"Alright, let me have a serving and I'll let you have a taste of my barbecued spirit beast as well!" Ah Wei solemnly said with a nod. This was the nature of his personality. He did not like to take advantage of anyone. Furthermore, he also wanted to see Bu Fang's reaction after tasting his dish.

Bu Fang nodded. With a wave of his hand, a stream of true energy breezed past and a few crescent moon dumplings splashed into the wok of boiling water.

Ah Wei walked back to his cooking stove and earnestly started barbecuing a spirit beast.

The other chefs there all looked at each other and then subconsciously looked toward Bu Fang and Ah Wei. Were the two of them really going to have a go at each other?

Ah Lu was chomping on a chicken drumstick with a face filled with curiosity as he watched Bu Fang and Ah Wei cook. He understood Ah Wei's barbecue meat very well. In his opinion, the taste of the barbecue meat was simply too delicious. Therefore, he found it rather incredible that Owner Bu's dumplings could defeat his elder brother's barbecue meat.

An amused smile appeared on Ji Chengxue's lips as he observed the crowd's mood. He stopped the eunuch who was going to interrupt them and said, "Let them finish their match."

The eunuch immediately bowed and stepped back behind Ji Chengxue.

The Wildlands was a mysterious place and even the imperial court had no influence there. By the fact that Qingyangzhen was located right outside the Wildlands and even relied upon it, there was naturally something unusual about this town. These two brothers who came from such a place possessed astonishing culinary skills. Without Owner Bu, they would indeed be number one in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. Unfortunately for them...

Owner Bu's culinary skills was simply too formidable.

A strong aroma was soon filling the air. The smell was coming from the lifelike barbecue meat in Ah Wei's hand. The barbecue meat of the small spirit beast was both tender and succulent.

This was the result of barbecuing meat with spirit herbs as fuel. Not only was the visual effect superb, but the taste was excellent as well.

In contrast, even though an aroma was also wafting from the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings being boiled in the water, this aroma was neither strong nor weak and could only be called ordinary. Compared to Ah Wei's barbecue meat, the aroma was completely not on the same level.

Even though many of the chefs were extremely puzzled and some of their gazes were even filled with suspicion... none of them dared to jump to conclusions because the copper coins inside of the porcelain plate before Bu Fang's cooking stove was proof that there was definitely something special about this dish.

Bu Fang scooped up the dumplings from the boiling water and poured them into a blue and white porcelain bowl. With chopped up green onion sprinkled on top of the three dumplings, the dish was completed.

Ah Wei's dish was completed as well. Oil was continuously dripping from the intensely aromatic meat of the barbecue spirit beast.

"Owner Bu, please have a taste of this." Ah Wei walked toward Bu Fang and handed the barbecue meat over.

As Bu Fang accepted the barbecue meat, a wave of fragrance immediately rushed toward his face. His body and mind were instantly engulfed and he felt as if he was wandering within an inescapable sea of fragrance. The smell... was really aromatic.

A green wisp of smoke encircled Bu Fang's hand and then the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. As he lightly sliced open the spirit beast's stomach, the piping hot sauce immediately enveloped the barbecue meat and the fragrance became even more aromatic.

If Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were simple and elegant white orchids, this barbecue meat would be a fiery rose. The two were completely different types of dishes.

Bu Fang cut off a slice of meat and picked it up with his chopsticks. He dipped the slice of meat in the sauce before popping it into his mouth. The texture of the crispy skin and succulent meat instantly overwhelmed his tastebuds and he could not help but nod as his eyes lit up.

Meanwhile, Ah Wei had picked up the bowl of dumplings. The dumplings that were like simple and elegant white orchids were not impressive at first glance. However, its whitish, adorable appearance made the dish slightly more appetizing.

"Big bro, let me have a taste as well," Ah Lu said in an indistinct voice as he greedily stared at the bowl of dumplings while chewing on a chicken drumstick.

Ah Wei immediately gave him a disdainful glance. "Didn't I tell you not to talk to me when you're eating something? Did you forget again? If you want to eat this, get your own spoon and scoop it up yourself!"

Ah Lu immediately gave a foolish laugh and quickly found a spoon. Like Ah Wei, he scooped up a dumpling and was going to shove it into his mouth.

Steam, accompanied with the faint aroma of flour and vegetables, was rising from the dumplings.

Ah Wei took a bite out of a dumpling and discovered a multi-colored fragrance drifting out that seemed to have turned into a rainbow. So... this was the true meaning behind Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings?

A comfortable, satisfied, and blissful feeling suddenly rose up in his chest. It was a sort of feeling that transcended the definition of delicious.

Ah Wei went silent and quietly finished the entire dumpling with an uncertain expression on his face. Just from eating the dumpling, he could tell that he was truly defeated. It was a one-sided loss for him.

The difference between him and Owner Bu was like an impassable chasm.

Next to him, the flesh on Ah Lu's face were almost scrunched together. His eyes were filled with tears and his lips were trembling as he sobbed uncontrollably.

"What happened to you?!" Ah Wei was startled by Ah Lu's reaction. He was only eating a dish, was there a need for him to be so dramatic?

"Big bro... I miss our mom and dad!" Ah Lu said in an indistinct voice with tears flowing down his cheeks as he shoved the remaining half of the dumpling into his mouth while sobbing uncontrollably.

Ah Wei became silent for a moment and then let out a soft sigh. There was truly something... magical about Owner Bu's dish.

Bu Fang finished tasting the barbecue meat. This time, he actually ate three more pieces. Even he was slightly surprised by himself. Evidently, this dish... was pretty good.

However... once Bu Fang ate a dish, he would give an honest appraisal with his venomous tongue out of habit. This time was not an exception either.

"The taste of your barbecue meat... is pretty good, but the way you handled the spirit beast meat is still not good enough. The spirit energy contained in the meat was equivalent to third grade but all of the spirit energy dissipated after getting handled by you. Furthermore, you smoked the meat with spirit herbs but did not manage to adhere the essence of the spirit herbs onto the meat. You also included a lot of unnecessary things that affected the taste. This is the cause of the slight oddness in the meat's flavor. In addition, the sauce..."

Everyone was staring at Bu Fang, who suddenly seemed to have turned into a chatterbox, with their mouths wide open. This was completely different from the usual Owner Bu who was concise with his words.

Ah Wei listened to the appraisal with an ashen expression. However, he was extremely shocked deep inside because Bu Fang was listing out the actual flaws of his dish. He could have averted some of the flaws that Bu Fang listed but even he could not avert some of the other flaws.

However, Bu Fang was capable of giving such a precise evaluation after merely having a few bites. It was simply terrifying!

"As expected of the man who could defeat me!" Ah Wei thought as he lifted his chin.

After Bu Fang finished his appraisal, he regained his refined demeanor and started cleaning up the cooking stove. This year's Hundred Family Banquet was finally over and there was no doubt who the winner was.

Bu Fang was the winner since his porcelain plate had the highest amount of copper coins.

Here... There were no applauses and Bu Fang was not experiencing the so-called joy of winning. He appeared calm as he gave the crowd the glance as if getting first place was a matter of course for him.

"Congratulations to the host for completing abrupt mission 2: obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet, crush everyone else, and spread the glory of the God of Cooking. The mission reward will now be issued."

Bu Fang went into a daze as the system's solemn voice resounded in his mind.

At the same time, a eunuch was announcing the final winner of the Hundred Family Banquet as well as the reward for getting first place.

Chapter 156: The Prize, a Single Seed

"This is the prize for getting first place?" Bu Fang asked in bewilderment. He expressionlessly watched as Ji Chengxue solemnly placed a seed with the size of peanuts into his hand.

"Isn't this just a peanut?" Bu Fang thought as he endured the impulse to slap Ji Chengxue's handsome face with a shoehorn.

After working hard for most of the day, he did not anticipate only getting a peanut-like seed like this. He was at a loss for words.

Looking at the pitch-black seed, it seemed to be somewhat old and in a bad shape. Its surface was covered with unusual thin markings that resembled an enigmatic magic array... However, it was still ultimately just a seed!

"Owner Bu, this is an extremely important treasure from within the imperial palace. My father highly regarded this seed while he was still alive. Today, I shall gift this to you as a reward. I hope you'll cultivate this seed and help germinate it," Ji Chengxue said with a smile.

Bu Fang glanced at the seed in his hand and then looked at the smile on Ji Chengxue's face. He kept getting the feeling that he was swindled... Bu Fang casually bounced the seed in his hand before storing it inside the system's storage space.

Even though he felt he had been swindled by Ji Chengxue, Bu Fang believed the system would not swindle him. If not for the system's mission, he would not have participated in the Hundred Family Banquet.

Since the system made him obtain this reward, it indicated that this seed was unusual.

The two brothers from Qingyangzhen were standing a distance away. Ah Lu was constantly taking out chicken drumsticks from his apron and popping them into his mouth, while Ah Wei was staring at Bu Fang with bitterness in his heart.

"Big bro, looks like we failed the mission that master gave us. We can't bring back the reward for getting first place," Ah Lu said in a muffled voice.

Ah Wei did not say anything and merely lifted his sharp chin. His mind was rapidly spinning in an attempt to think up a method for obtaining the reward.

"Directly snatch the prize from him? That's out of the question..." he thought. Even though their cultivation levels were slightly higher than Bu Fang's, they were not much stronger than him. Furthermore, they would certainly be hindered by the guards if they openly tried to snatch the prize inside the imperial city.

Snatch something personally awarded by the emperor? They were not stupid.

"Should we make a deal with Owner Bu? However, is there anything valuable on us that could be used for an exchange?" Ah Wei muttered as his eyebrows crossed together.

"Big bro, what's the point of thinking so much? Let's just go back and tell master exactly what happened. If he really needs that prize, just let him provide an item for us to come and trade with Owner Bu. If he doesn't need it, then there's no need for us to do anything," Ah Lu said while holding a chicken drumstick in his hand.

Ah Wei gave Ah Lu a surprised glance, seemingly in disbelief. He thought, "What's going on with him today? Did he become smarter after going through a competition?"

"Alright, then let's immediately hurry back to Qingyangzhen and let Master settle this matter on his own. We've already done all we could. We lost because our skills are still lacking," Ah Wei said as he slung the black wok on his back and made his way out of the imperial city.

They really did not want to spend even a moment longer here. It was a place filled with sad memories for them.

Bu Fang gave their disappearing back figures a glance but did not pay much heed to them. After thanking Ji Chengxue, he bid farewell with Ouyang Xiaoyi and the others before walking out of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery and disappearing in the swirling snow.

With this, this year's Hundred Family Banquet had also come to a satisfactory end.

A group of eunuchs rushed out from the Main Hall and started clearing up the garbage and objects in the plaza.

...

Bu Fang fiddled with the black seed in his hand as he walked into the alleyway. Large snowflakes were unsteadily drifting down from the sky.

A piece of snowflake landed on the back of Bu Fang's neck and he slightly sucked his breath as a chill suddenly spread from the spot. He tucked his neck into his shoulders and quickened his pace as he headed toward the store.

As usual, Blacky was lying at the entrance of the store. It seemed to have felt Bu Fang's approach and slightly raised its head while blowing steam from its nostrils.

"Good morning, Blacky," Bu Fang said with a faint smile as he bounced the black seed in his hand. The time of the day was naturally not morning. The sky was already starting to get dark and the day was about to end. However, there should not be much of a difference for Blacky who spent every single day either eating or sleeping.

Blacky rolled its eyes and ignored Bu Fang's immature teasing. It turned its head away and was just about to go back to sleep. Suddenly, Blacky raised its head and its eyes focused on the black seed in Bu Fang's hand.

Bu Fang had already removed the door board and was heading into the warm interior of the store. The seed in his hand was also casually kept into the system's storage space with a flip of his hand.

He was completely unaware of Blacky's gaze. If Bu Fang had seen the seriousness in Blacky's eyes at that moment, he would definitely not think the seed was useless.

Blacky's eyes revealed a hint of seriousness before turning into puzzlement and uncertainty after sniffing the air. In the end, it still let out a yawn and then went back to sleep.

...

Wuliang Mountain towered into the clouds like a sky-piercing stone pillar that reached into the skies.

At the peak of Wuliang Mountain, there was a rather decrepit monastery with a spacious courtyard and a majestic palace. The entire courtyard was shrouded with mist.

Beside the majestic palace, there was a small two-story wooden cabin. An elderly man with white hair and eyebrows was quietly seated inside with his legs crossed. There were a few brownish yellow jade talismans with unusual markings on them placed on his wrinkled hand.

The elderly man seemed to be taking a nap. His eyes were closed and the faint sound of regular breathing was coming from the tip of his nose.

Suddenly, the jade talisman in his hand started to slightly shake. The elderly man woke up from his nap and slowly opened his hazy eyes. The color of his irises were an odd blue. From a single glance, he seemed capable of staring straight into the stars.

"Why is the Celestial Arcanum Talisman shaking on its own? I haven't started my divination and a strange phenomenon has already appeared. Is some sort of treasure about to appear on the Hidden Dragon Continent once again?" the elderly man thought as he lifted up the jade talisman and stared at it with eyes that had seen through worldly desires.

With a casual point of his finger, the jade talisman immediately settled down and quietly lay down on the elderly man's hand. He stood up before tottering toward the window of the small cabin and sucked in a deep breath of cold air.

The elderly man stood in front of the window with his hands behind his back as he gazed at the layers of rolling clouds that surrounded the peak of Wuliang Mountain. Bright lights seemed to be circulating in his blue irises as if he was attempting to observe everything.

Afterward, he turned away and looked toward the disciples who were sweating like pigs in the courtyard of the Celestial Arcanum Palace.

This was the youngest generation of the Celestial Arcanum Sect and also the sect's foundation.

Suddenly, the elderly man looked into the distance after seemingly noticing something. He saw two figures moving at a rapid pace.

The person running in the front was an elderly man with shabby clothing and stubbles all over his face. He was moving across the courtyard in breakneck speed while hugging a wine calabash.

The person chasing the elderly man was a beautiful woman in a white dress whose hair spilled down her back like a waterfall. The woman's transcendent appearance was extremely beautiful like those of a banished immortal.

"Old drunkard! Stop right there! You promised to give me a tael of Dragon's Breath! You're going back on your word!" A rather alluring voice rang out. The outlines of her voluptuous figure was faintly discernible underneath her clothes as she indignantly chased after the old drunkard in front of her.

The tip of the old man's nose was red and his graying hair was a mess. He turned his head and said with a snicker, "Brat, you're being underhanded. I promised to give you a tael of wine but that was on the condition that you have to finish the wine on the spot. You should know my rules well enough. You're welcomed to drink my wine but there's no way I am letting you take away the wine! Who knows what you're planning to do with the Dragon's Breath!"

True energy flowed within Ni Yan's body as she took a step forward and rushed toward him. She was so fast that it was nearly impossible to follow her movements. However, the old drunkard snickered and increased the distance between them with just a single step as if the ground shrank.

"You... You rotten old man! I am the third elder of our sect! Can't I even ask for a tael of wine!" Ni Yan was utterly exasperated.

"Ho ho, that's right. I don't care whether you're our sect's third elder or not. Even if the supreme elder wants my wine, I won't give it to him either! I've always been someone who sticks to my principles!" the old drunkard loudly snickered like an impish old man as he hugged his wine calabash. Ni Yan was grinding her teeth in anger as she watched him!

The elderly man in the wooden cabin suddenly let out a soft chuckle and took a step forward toward the window... His figure abruptly shook and then he actually disappeared without a trace.

Hum...

"Did you just say that you wouldn't give your wine even if the supreme elder was the one asking?" The old drunkard was suddenly startled by an elderly voice that came from behind him and his heart almost jumped out of his chest. He even fumbled with the wine calabash and nearly failed to catch it.

"If you take someone by surprise... you might really frighten that person to death!" the old drunkard thought while silently cursing the supreme elder.

Chapter 157: Who Told You I'll Be Using Ordinary Ingredients?

"Su... supreme elder?!"

The old drunkard turned his head and his legs immediately went weak when he saw the elderly figure standing behind him. He was almost shocked to death from the sudden appearance of the supreme elder after just mentioning him moments ago.

With a gentle smile on his face, the elderly man casually waved his hand and the old drunkard's wine calabash fell into his hand. A hint of a smile appeared on his lips as he shook the calabash and the sound of sloshing came from within.

The elderly man uncorked the calabash and pinched his fingers together as a pearl-like droplet of wine floated out from the calabash.

"When I was younger, I was also someone who loved wine," the elderly man said with a chuckle. With a wave of his finger, the droplet of wine flew into his mouth. The droplet instantly expanded in volume and filled his mouth with wine.

The eyes of the elderly man narrowed as he reveled in the wine's flavor. He smacked his lips before tossing the wine calabash back to the old drunkard.

"This wine of yours is pretty good. Unfortunately, there's still room for improvement," the elderly man said with a faint smile.

The old drunkard's eyes immediately lit up after hearing the supreme elder's words. He looked toward the supreme elder and respectfully asked, "Supreme elder, is there really a wine that's even more delicious than the Dragon's Breath that I meticulously brewed?"

"Of course, there is. With the size of the world, all sorts of wondrous things exist and Hidden Dragon is only a small part of this world. Besides, you'll soon get to taste a genuine fine wine," the elderly man said with a chuckle as he lightly stroked his white beard. Then, his eyes landed on Ni Yan and slightly narrowed.

"You've achieved a breakthrough? Not bad, not bad at all. Looks like the imperial city really is paradise for you," the elderly man said with a smile.

Ni Yan might have been impudent toward the old drunkard, but she was behaving somewhat reserved in front of the supreme elder, a legendary figure in the Celestial Arcanum Sect. "Yes, in the imperial city, I ate... I had a fortuitous meeting there."

"Hahaha, it's fine. It just so happens that I want you to go on another trip to the imperial city. In the near future, an unusual treasure will appear there. Do your best and try to obtain it. If you can't, it doesn't really matter either," the elderly man said with a chuckle while holding his hands behind his back.

Ni Yan was surprised for a moment. Go on another trip to the imperial city? Were things over there going to get lively once more?

...

The sky had already gone dark and Bu Fang was back in his store. He did not choose to open the store and was instead deep in thought as he sat on a chair.

The system's reward was already issued. He was originally going to cook the dish but all of his attention was currently focused on that seed.

"System, you made me obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet in order to get this seed? What's so special about it?" Bu Fang asked in puzzlement.

The system did not immediately reply him and remained silent for a long while before it solemnly replied, "The host currently does not have the qualification to acquire information related to this seed. The host can only obtain information about this seed after the seed has been planted, germinated and bore fruit."

Bu Fang's face slightly darkened after hearing the system's response. What did the system mean by saying that he did not have the qualification to acquire information related to the seed? He was at the very least a man who could be called Battle-King!

Nonetheless, there was no point in getting angry. With the system's personality, Bu Fang knew he would definitely be unable to acquire the information since the system had already said so.

Fortunately, Bu Fang was not that obsessed with getting information on the seed either.

"How should I plant this? Where do I plant this seed?" Bu Fang asked.

"The system will provide a flowerpot for the host. Would the host please proceed with the planting of the seed," the system's solemn voice resounded once more. Afterward, Bu Fang sensed a flowerpot with the size of a washbasin suddenly appeared in the system's storage space.

"The Time Flow Flowerpot is capable of accelerating the germination and growth rate of the seed," the system introduced.

Bu Fang took out the extremely ugly ocher-colored flowerpot and placed the flowerpot in the corner of the store. The flowerpot was already filled to the brim with soil. According to the system's modus operandi, the soil contained inside the flowerpot was definitely something special as well.

He grabbed a handful of the soil and felt an extremely cold feeling in his hand that nearly froze his palm.

Bu Fang made a frown and then took out that black seed. He dug a small hole in the soil and dropped the seed inside before covering up the hole.

"Won't the seed die from the cold temperature of the soil? The seed looks difficult to germinate in the first place, wouldn't using frozen soil make it even more difficult?" Bu Fang was feeling rather perplexed. However, this might really be the ideal condition for this seed to germinate.

Bu Fang stood up and dusted off his hands. He went into the kitchen and washed his hands with water.

He drew out a kitchen knife and practiced his cutting and carving techniques for a while before ending that day's training. The Hundred Family Banquet was exhausting for the chefs and Bu Fang was feeling slightly fatigued after a day's work.

Bu Fang went back into his room and took a nice long shower. The steam drifted out of the bathroom and filled his room.

After finishing his bath, Bu Fang comfortably lay down on his bed. He slowly closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning, Bu Fang woke up as usual. After washing up, he left his room and went into the kitchen. Grabbing a kitchen knife and taking out some radishes, he started practicing his cutting technique. Practicing was even more important for level two of the Meteor Knife Technique. Furthermore, there was now a time limit as well.

Bu Fang did not neglect his carving technique either. After finishing the cutting technique training, he practiced his carving technique. His mastery of these two techniques was slowly improving.

After making a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen while sniffing the rich meaty aroma. He removed a doorboard and the cold air outside rushed into the store. After the Spring Festival ended, the snow became even heavier and the weather became much colder as well.

"Blacky, it's time to eat," Bu Fang called out as he tucked his neck into his shoulders and stepped out of the warm interior of the store. Since he was wearing a thin layer of clothes, he immediately felt cold and goosebumps rose all over his body.

On the other hand, Blacky was not bothered by the cold weather in the slightest. Its eyes were only filled with the sight of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. It was panting with its tongue hanging out as it excitedly stared at the plate in Bu Fang's hands.

After putting down the plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Blacky, Bu Fang immediately went back into the store. He was eager to get back into the cozy comfort of the store.

Just then, the sound of footsteps came from the direction of the alleyway and an already plump figure wrapped in thick layers of clothing appeared.

Bu Fang watched as Fatty Jin waddled into the store like a meatball. Fatty Jin exhaled a breath of cold air and said with a chuckle, "Good morning, Owner Bu. It's really cold outside today."

"The inside of this store is still the most comfortable after all. This warm feeling is making me feel like staying here forever," Fatty Jin said as he cheerfully sat down on a chair and took off his jacket.

Bu Fang expressionlessly nodded in response.

"By the way, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings from yesterday... can only be described as marvelous. They were so delicious that I almost swallowed my own tongue. I've never tasted anything as delicious as this dish before. Will you be selling the dish in the store?" Fatty Jin asked.

Bu Fang stared blankly for a moment and then subconsciously looked in the direction of the menu. Sure enough, the name of a particular dish was up there.

"Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings, one hundred crystals per serving."

Fatty Jin sucked in a breath of cold air and said, "One hundred crystals per serving... Owner Bu, isn't this too expensive? The ingredients used in these dumplings are only ordinary ingredients. It's a little unreasonable for the price to be so high."

The majority of the dishes in Bu Fang's store contained abundant amounts of spirit energy and their flavors were unprecedentedly delicious because those dishes used expensive ingredients without any exception. However, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings that Fatty Jin ate the day before only used ingredients like ordinary fruits and vegetables. For the price to be set at such a price, it was simply too unjust.

Even though Fatty Jin was the owner of a crystal mine, he would still feel slightly distressed if he squandered money like this.

Fatty Jin's question startled Bu Fang for a moment. He was rather perplexed as he looked at Fatty Jin and asked, "Who told you that I'll be using ordinary ingredients for the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumplings?"

Chapter 158: The Sisters-In-Law of the Young Marquis

The Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling was originally a mission reward from the system. Therefore, it was impossible for the recipe to use ordinary ingredients. Bu Fang only chose to use ordinary fruits and vegetables during the Hundred Family Banquet in order to ensure that the dish could be eaten by all of the guests. However, now that the dish would be sold in the store, he was naturally going to use much more valuable ingredients.

When Bu Fang brought out the steaming bowl of Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings from the kitchen, the aroma wafting in the air was completely different from the dumplings made during the Hundred Family Banquet. The aroma of these Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings that used ingredients with spirit energy was fully spreading throughout the room.

"Gulp!" Fatty Jin was almost drooling as he stared at the bowl of Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings in Bu Fang's hands. The rich aroma emanating from it was simply too appetizing.

"Here's your Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said as he placed the bowl of dumplings in front of Fatty Jin.

Fatty Jin's eyes were immediately attracted by the Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings. They were completely different from the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings made during the Hundred Family Banquet. The actual version of the dumplings were miles ahead in terms of color, fragrance, and appearance.

There seemed to be a light constantly changing on those white dumplings. It was sometimes bright red and other times emerald green... The switching between the colors of a rainbow was bewitchingly beautiful.

A cloud of fragrance was also hovering above the soup. It was simmered with the meat of a spirit beast and was filled with spirit energy. With a single sniff, a burst of energy instantly coursed through Fatty Jin's entire body and made him feel extremely comfortable.

"The Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were unable to fully manifest the colors of a rainbow because of the ingredients. At that time, I used a trick to trap the aroma and only managed to manifest the colors of a rainbow with the help of true energy. The actual version of the dumplings does not require special preparations like that. The ingredients alone would directly manifest the colors of a rainbow," Bu Fang explained.

Fatty Jin eagerly picked up a Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling with his chopsticks and took a bite. He suddenly felt as if he was standing underneath a waterfall. His entire body felt extremely comfortable as the falling water struck him.

He wanted to open his mouth and shout out loud. However, the moment he opened his mouth, his eyes widened because his mouth was instantly clogged up by the aroma.

Almost all of the flesh on Fatty Jin's face was trembling. His eyes were narrowed and his face was filled with pleasure. Delicious... It was simply too delicious.

A faint smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he glanced at Fatty Jin, who was revelling in the delicious flavors of the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumplings. Afterward, he pulled back a chair and sat down.

He subconsciously turned his head and looked toward the ocher-colored flowerpot sitting in the corner. He wondered how the seed was doing ever since he planted it yesterday.

Suddenly, his eyes widened as if he just discovered a new continent. A seedling throbbing with vitality was actually emerging from the ice-cold soil.

"It... germinated?" Bu Fang's face was filled with surprise. The speed of its growth was way too fast... Not even half a day had passed since he planted the seed.

However, Bu Fang quickly calmed down and walked toward the flowerpot. He squatted down next to it and carefully observed the seedling emerging from the soil.

The seedling was bright green in color and its surface was covered with complicated veined patterns. They looked like a blur in his eyes. Although he could not understand them, he was still amazed.

He leaned forward and sniffed the seedling but he could not smell a thing. Bu Fang was rather perplexed as he stood up. Nonetheless, he was too lazy to bother with the seedling any longer. With the help of the flowerpot, the seed should grow into a tall tree soon enough.

Ouyang Xiaoyi skipped into the store and cheerfully greeted Bu Fang. The latter nodded in response and continued to watch the falling snowflake outside while curled up on a chair.

From a distance, the sound of voices and feminine laughter came from the alleyway as several figures slowly approached.

Bu Fang puzzledly looked in the direction of the sounds and saw several slender and graceful women heading toward the store. Furthermore, there were people that he recognized in their midst.

"Juan'Er, I heard Owner Bu obtained first place in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. I'll bring you to eat something delicious today," Luo Sanniang said in a rambunctious manner. She was wearing a tight-fitting robe with slits on the sides of the lower part that revealed her fair and slender legs. She did not seem to feel cold despite the freezing weather.

There were a few other elegantly dressed women walking next to Luo Sanniang. One of them was a young-looking woman in a thick woolen clothing. Her nose was slightly red from the cold air and she was huffing out clouds of white breath as she blindly followed after Luo Sanniang.

Yang Chen was excitedly leading the way in front of the group while wearing red festive clothing.

"My dear sisters-in-law, you definitely won't be disappointed by Owner Bu's culinary skill," the young Marquis confidently said. As someone who had personally tasted Bu Fang's dishes before, he was naturally aware of their deliciousness.

The group arrived in front of the store and saw the big black dog lying on the ground as well as Bu Fang who was curled up on a chair... Both of them had the same slothful appearance. It was no surprise considering that they were from the same store.

"What an adorable doggy!" the young-looking woman in the thick woolen clothing suddenly cried out in joy when she spotted the big black dog soundly sleeping in front of the store. She then ran forward and petted Blacky's head with her delicate, fair hand.

Blacky was rather dumbfounded as it looked at the young lady whose eyes were filled with affection. This young lady was only a mere third grade Battle-Maniac. The Lord Dog was capable of killing her even with a sneeze. However, with the Lord Dog's identity, what was the point of getting back at a little girl?

Therefore, the Lord Dog changed its sleeping position and went back to sleep.

"This doggy... is really adorable." Juan'Er's eyes were shining as she rubbed Blacky's nice and warm head with both of her hands while giggling.

Bu Fang blinked in surprise as he looked at the lazy dog who was too lazy to even respond. He mockingly thought, "This lazy dog... If the one vigorously rubbing its head was a man, it would've already greeted him with its paws." Bu Fang was well aware of the formidableness of this lazy dog's paws.

"You over there... come into the store if you're going to order something. Teasing that dog is prohibited," Bu Fang said as he stood up. Even though he did not know whether the lazy dog would get angry, he thought it was better to draw this woman away.

Luo Sanniang gave that black dog a fearful glance. When she saw that Juan'Er was actually rubbing its head, her heart almost jumped out in terror. The naive Juan'Er might not know this dog's identity, but how could she not know? This dog... was the widely rumored supreme beast!

It was a supreme beast that could kill Juan'Er thousands of times with a single sneeze!

Luo Sanniang was dumbfounded. Should she think of her as innocent or just really bold... When she saw that Blacky did not seem to intend on getting even with Juan'Er, she breathed out a sigh of relief inwardly and then went into the store while dragging along the reluctant Juan'Er.

The interior of the store was very warm and cozy. The group of women felt as if they had just stepped into a spring-like zone. The aroma of the dishes wafting in the air was especially mesmerizing.

The young Marquis excitedly stopped in front of Bu Fang. He patted his own chest and said, "Owner Bu, these are my sisters-in-law. I am treating them today, so just bring out whatever is delicious!"

Bu Fang expressionlessly glanced at Yang Chen and his mouth widened into a smile as he gave the women behind him a glance.

"All of the dishes here are delicious, so just order whatever you want to eat," Bu Fang mildly replied.

His reply resulted in a rather embarrassed expression on Yang Chen's face. Every single dish in Owner Bu's store was excellent. If he ordered every dish... Yang Chen gave his money pouch a little squeeze and awkwardly sniffed.

"I think I'll just stop showing off..." Yang Chen thought.

Luo Sanniang put her hands at her waist and laughed. Juan'Er and the others were also chuckling while covering their mouths with their hands.

Thereafter, everyone turned to look at the menu behind them and froze momentarily before they started chattering with each other.

Chapter 159: Spirit Turtle Egg Tart

"Juan'Er, what do you want to eat? Hurry up and tell Owner Bu!" Luo Sanniang said with a smile as she put her arm around Juan'Er's delicate shoulders in a boisterous manner. Juan'Er was the only one left who had not ordered, so she could not help but remind her.

Juan'Er shyly gave the menu a glance and seemed rather embarrassed to speak her thoughts. All of the dishes on the menu were delicious, so... she wanted to order all of them. However, if she did that, that would give others a bad impression of her.

"Owner Bu... Spirit Turtle Egg Tart... What's that? Is it delicious?" Juan'Er softly asked in a voice that was gentle like water.

Bu Fang was slightly startled. Spirit Turtle Egg Tart? Wasn't that the new dish? That was the mission reward for getting first place in the Hundred Family Banquet, which he still had not checked after all this time. He did not anticipate that the dish would already be added onto the menu.

"Spirit Turtle Egg Tart is just Spirit Turtle Egg Tart. It's very delicious," Bu Fang said as he gave Juan'Er a glance.

Juan'Er's eyes immediately lit up. She realized that none of her sisters-in-law ordered this particular dish, so she was rather tempted to do so.

"Then... I'll have a serving of Spirit Turtle Egg Tart," Juan'Er said while pointing at the menu on the wall with her slender hand.

Bu Fang nodded in response and told them to wait before heading into the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Yang Chen led his sisters-in-law toward a table on his own. His sisters-in-law were rather pleased by the comfortable layout and furnishing of the store.

Cold sweat was actually dripping down Yang Chen's back. Every single one of his sisters-in-law was extremely tough and their cultivation levels were pretty high as well... Oh, except for his second sister-in-law, Juan'Er, who was a bashful young lady.

Today, Yang Chen brought four of his sisters-in-law. Three of them were the wives of his brothers while the last one was the wife of his cousin. They were all women of the Yang family who were capable at both public and domestic affairs.

He had always been praising Owner Bu's culinary skill in front of his sisters-in-law, so he specially brought them here today.

Bu Fang entered the kitchen and started cooking the dishes ordered by the customers one after another. His movements were extremely proficient. After cooking the same dishes every single day, he was naturally becoming more efficient and his cooking speed became even faster.

"Xiaoyi, serve the dish."

After finishing each dish, he placed the dish at the window and called for Ouyang Xiaoyi.

In the meantime, he continued to focus all of his attention on cooking the dishes.

Soon, he finished cooking all of the dishes with the exception of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart, which the delicate beauty ordered at the end.

Bu Fang was naturally quite familiar with egg tarts. However, he was actually feeling somewhat perplexed and bewildered. All along, he assumed that the system was only going to provide recipes of oriental style dishes. Contrary to his expectation, the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart suddenly appeared.

Bu Fang washed his hands with water and then his mouth widened into a smile. He focused his mind and started poring over the steps of cooking the dish provided by the system.

After muttering to himself for a while, Bu Fang finished memorizing all of the steps and then took out a large blue and white porcelain bowl from a cupboard.

The cooking process of egg tarts was more complicated. Bu Fang took out tools and ingredients from the cupboards one after another, which included a bag of graham flour, a cup of milk from an unknown spirit beast, a cup of evaporated milk, and a few Spirit Turtle eggs.

The first step was making the crust of the egg tart. Bu Fang mixed the flour with water and added butter before kneading the mixture into dough. While adding the water, he employed some techniques. Instead of pouring everything at once, he slowly poured the water to adjust the hardness of the dough.

When the outside of the dough was smooth, Bu Fang stopped kneading. He stored the dough inside a cupboard prepared by the system and let it rest for a while.

After waiting for some time, he took out the rested dough. He first sprinkled some flour on a chopping board and rolled the dough into a rectangular shape with a rolling pin. Next, Bu Fang utilized the true energy within his body to churn the dough. Each time the dough was folded, it would be filled with true energy which caused every inch of the dough to be flipped inside out.

The kneading method was the same as the one that Bu Fang employed while making dumplings during the Hundred Family Banquet. This was a kneading technique that Bu Fang developed on his own. However, this technique required the user to have precise control over their true energy.

Once a mistake was made, the internal structure of the dough would become uneven and the crust may crack during the baking process.

After folding a few times, the dough was placed back into the cupboard once more to let it rest and Bu Fang moved on to making the custard of the egg tart.

The flavor of an egg tart mainly depended on its custard.

He took out the Spirit Turtle eggs. These eggs were small and there were some ugly markings on their surface. There was even a faint fragrance emanating from them. Bu Fang first poured the spirit beast milk and evaporated milk into the blue and white porcelain bowl. Then, he added some high quality granulated sugar into the mixture and started mixing.

When the mixture was evenly stirred and the granulated sugar was fully melted, Bu Fang cracked the Spirit Turtle eggs into the bowl.

There was some skill involved in cracking the eggs as well because only the egg yolk was needed. Therefore, Bu Fang could not let the egg white fall into the mixture or the flavor would be affected.

Bu Fang nimbly broke open an egg with his fingers. Just as the egg yolk touched the mixture in the bowl, he instantly caught the egg white with the egg shells and perfectly separated the egg white from the egg yolk.

After adding egg yolks from a few Spirit Turtle eggs, Bu Fang continued stirring the mixture.

After stirring for a while, the color of the mixture was changing from milky white into pastel yellow. Furthermore, the consistency of the mixture was thickening after stirring for so long.

Bu Fang took out a strainer and strained the liquid mixture. Once that was done, only a paste formed from egg yolk and milk was left.

Bu Fang then took out the rested dough from the cupboard and cut out round pieces with an exquisite cutting technique.

An egg tart mold was conveniently prepared by the system, which slightly surprised Bu Fang.

Once the pieces of dough were fitted into the mold and the creamy paste was poured into the mold as well, Bu Fang finished the initial step of making the egg tarts.

The kitchen was well-equipped. After Bu Fang placed the egg tarts into the oven, he just had to wait.

Bu Fang was feeling somewhat excited as he looked at the Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts that were gradually changing inside the oven. He was staring at them without blinking while waiting in anticipation for the completion of the egg tarts.

Fortunately, the oven provided by the system was very efficient and the baking was done before long.

As Bu Fang pulled open the oven's door, a rich aroma of milk and eggs gushed out.

The Spirit Turtle eggs possessed a sort of bewitching fragrance in the first place. After getting processed in such a manner, the aroma became even more intense.

Bu Fang smacked his lips in anticipation. Even though the grade of the Spirit Turtle eggs was not that high, its aroma after getting cooked was extremely good.

As Bu Fang removed the egg tarts from the mold, the tender and fragrant Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts appeared before him.

He greedily inhaled the aroma wafting in the air. The smell of the spirit beast milk was almost captivating.

Bu Fang placed two of the egg tarts onto a white porcelain plate before walking out of the kitchen while carrying the plate.

The attention of the customers within the store were already attracted by the aroma wafting out of the kitchen. They were eagerly staring at Bu Fang as he slowly walked out of the darkness.

Bu Fang was carrying a white plate in his hand with a weirdly-shaped food placed on top. A rich fragrance and steam was rising from the plate.

"Here's your Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said as he placed the Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts in front of Juan'Er, who was already filled with anticipation.

Juan'Er's eyes were sparkling as she looked at the strange dish in front of her, which was both exquisite and extremely adorable but also bewitchingly fragrant. She was very excited and her delicate face was flushed in embarrassment.

"This dish has a really unusual shape, is this a pastry?" Juan'Er asked in curiosity. She also enjoyed cooking and she was most proficient in making pastries. Therefore, she was quite excited about the egg tarts which somewhat resembled pastries.

Bu Fang gave this bashful woman a glance and replied with a frown, "This isn't a pastry[1]... You can think of this as an after-meal dessert."

"This aroma is really fragrant, it's not something that pastries could compare with... An after-meal dessert? Hmm, I'm really looking forward to this!" Juan'Er's eyes narrowed and her face became flushed once more.

"Juan'Er, are you going to eat that? If you're not, then I'll go ahead and eat them! This smell is too fragrant, I'm really craving for them..." Luo Sanniang said in a boisterous manner while looking on from the side.

Hearing that, Juan'Er hurriedly grabbed one of the egg tarts in panic. The egg tart was still somewhat hot to the touch and caused Juan'Er to lightly yell out in surprise. She quickly blew on the egg tart before taking a bite out of it.

Chapter 160: Juan'Er's Egg Tarts of Darkness

Her rosebud mouth slightly opened and closed down on the soft and crispy Spirit Turtle Egg Tart, biting off a small piece while her face was flushed in anticipation. As she chewed her food with minimal jaw movements, she demonstrated the mannerism of a lady from a noble family.

The longer she chewed, the more her eyes widened. The delicious flavor instantly spread from her mouth and coursed throughout her body. The rich aroma of milk engulfed her and made her feel as if she was standing among a herd of spirit beasts.

A gentle wind breezed past as the herd of spirit beasts quietly grazed on the verdant field of grass.

"Hmm..." As Juan'Er swallowed the morsel of egg tart in her mouth, she was suddenly overwhelmed by a strange feeling that caused her to let out a moan. Her pretty face became even redder as if she was intoxicated. A breeze carrying the strong smell of the sea came whistling toward her as if attempting to blow her clothes away.

"De... delicious!" Juan'Er earnestly said with eyes filled with delight.

This was her first time tasting such a delicious dish. She could not believe that the feeling of being immersed in a surging ocean actually came from such a tiny egg tart. It was simply unbelievable.

She no longer cared about the hotness of the egg tart as she clasped the egg tart in her hands and gnawed at the egg tart. She was completely unable to stop herself. Her face was flushed as if she was basking in the happiness of the delicious flavor.

Luo Sanniang's mouth was wide open as she stared at Juan'Er who was currently ruining her own image. Was this still the Juan'Er that she knew? That Juan'Er who carried the mannerism of a young lady from a noble family, smiled without exposing her teeth, and ate her meals at a snail's pace?

Luo Sanniang felt as if her world view was completely overturned. Was Owner Bu's dish really that enchanting?

Yang Chen was also curiously watching Juan'Er whose face was filled with pleasure as he ate his Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. This was unlike his impression of his second sister-in-law.

Bu Fang had never tasted the egg tarts before as this was his first time making them. Therefore, he did not know what Juan'Er was feeling at the moment. However, he knew the taste of the egg tarts were pretty good based on her reaction.

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips before he let out a deep breath and sat down on a chair for a small break.

After finishing the first egg tart, Juan'Er immediately picked up the second one. She lightly exhaled from her mouth and then continued eating. She completely lost the grace and elegance of a young lady from a noble family. At that moment, she seemed like a glutton who was enjoying her favorite food.

The two egg tarts disappeared into her mouth before the eyes of the bewildered Luo Sanniang and Yang Chen just like that. Their mouths were hanging wide open from astonishment.

"I'm done eating! Owner Bu... These Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts... are truly delicious!" Juan'Er placed her hands together and bowed toward Bu Fang as she earnestly said, "Thank you for letting me taste such a delicious dish."

Bu Fang blinked in surprise. Her solemn attitude made him feel slightly uneasy, so he only responded with a rather awkward nod.

Yang Chen and the others soon finished eating as well. The group ordered quite an amount of dishes.

Seeing the pained expression on Yang Chen's face as he paid the bill, the group of women could not help but chuckle while covering their mouths. Oh, other than Luo Sanniang, who openly laughed with her hands placed on her waist...

"My dear sisters-in-law, like I've said before, Owner Bu's culinary skill is definitely the best in the imperial city! No one believed me back then. What about now?" Yang Chen seriously said while lifting up his chin.

Luo Sanniang was slightly annoyed when she saw Yang Chen's smug expression. She struck him on the back of his head with her palm and said in exasperation, "Why are you the one bragging when you're not Owner Bu? Since we're done eating, let's go back and train some more. In a few more days, the Marquis will be checking your cultivation level. When the time comes, you're really going to get it if you don't meet his standard!"

Yang Chen's expression immediately sank like a wrinkled tomato as he weakly headed outside of the store.

The group of women left one after another as well after bidding farewell with Bu Fang. The store suddenly regained its tranquility once more.

...

Juan'Er returned to the Marquis' Manor in a daze. She was somewhat distracted during the return trip and even nearly tripped over when getting off the carriage.

Fortunately, Luo Sanniang was right next to her the entire time and managed to stop her from falling face first into the mud.

"Juan'Er... What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?" Luo Sanniang asked with a frown.

Juan'Er's eyes were dull and lifeless. Suddenly, she looked up at Luo Sanniang with a gaze that sent chills up her spine.

"Good heavens... It's terrifying if you stare at me like that!" Luo Sanniang thought as a chill went up her spine.

"Sanniang, come with me to the kitchen, I'll cook something for you! You must help me taste my cooking!" Juan'Er pitifully pleaded while placing her hands together.

Luo Sanniang was surprised for a moment and then she was immediately dragged into the kitchen by Juan'Er.

"Xiao Chen'zi, make sure to practice hard. I'll come and check your training later..." Even while she was being dragged away, Luo Sanniang did not forget to nag at Yang Chen.

...

"Bang!"

From the kitchen of the Marquis' Manor, a dull sound rang out and was followed by the faint smell of something burnt drifting out...

Luo Sanniang was standing in the kitchen while looking at Juan'Er, whose face was covered in soot. The latter was holding a white porcelain plate and staring at Luo Sanniang with her innocent eyes.

"Sanniang, these are the egg tarts that I made, give them a taste!"

Luo Sanniang's gaze froze for a moment and then shifted toward the contents on the porcelain plate. She saw a pile of weirdly shaped lumps covered in burnt marks on the plate. The faint smell of something burnt was emanating from them.

"Egg tarts? Are you telling me those things are egg tarts?"

Recalling Owner Bu's Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts and then looking at the black lumps made by Juan'Er in front of her eyes, Luo Sanniang suddenly felt the entire world had turned dark.

"Juan... Juan'Er, are you sure... this thing is edible?" Luo Sanniang asked in bewilderment, which Juan'Er responded by continuously nodding.

"Just have a bite and stop eating if doesn't taste good." Juan'Er was filled with expectation as she stared at Luo Sanniang.

Luo Sanniang could not stand Juan'Er's pitiful appearance and immediately acceded to her request. She picked up a badly burnt egg tart and slowly observed its surface. She finally found a spot which was not burnt and started eating.

"Hmm?" The disgusted frown on Luo Sanniang's face suddenly disappeared and she gave Juan'Er a surprised glance. As she chewed the morsel in her mouth, she exclaimed in astonishment, "Juan'Er, you're incredible. This actually tastes pretty good. Even though the aroma and appearance are a lot worse than Owner Bu's Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts, the taste is still alright!"

Luo Sanniang was speaking the truth. Juan'Er's culinary skill was pretty good in the first place. She frequently helped the cook of the Marquis' Manor with making the side dishes. Furthermore, she also enjoyed making pastries as a hobby. Her culinary skill was not weak in the slightest.

The taste of the extremely unappetizing egg tarts before her eyes were still passable.

"That's great, then I shall bring them over to Owner Bu tomorrow and let him give me some advice. I've discovered that I've fallen in love with egg tarts! I must research the recipe for making egg tarts!" Juan'Er excitedly said.

Luo Sanniang's face stiffened for a moment. The corners of her mouth twitched as she stared blankly at Juan'Er, whose expression was serious.

"Let Owner Bu taste them... Are you sure about that?"

...

It was a dark and windy night with a snowstorm raging on.

Inside the alleyway, the store had already closed up for the day and the tranquility in the store was restored. Bu Fang was bustling about in the kitchen. After a short while, he finished making an egg tart and was tasting this delicious dish himself.

The Spirit Turtle Eggs which were filled with spirit energy had a flavor that was far superior to ordinary chicken eggs. After tasting the egg tart, he felt as if he was submerged in the deep ocean.

"The taste of this egg tart is not bad at all... However, it's still rather lacking as a reward for this time's mission." The taste of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart was indeed pretty good but receiving such a dish as a reward after spending so much effort to obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet was evidently quite unfair for him.

The egg tart was delicious but it was still just an after-meal dessert in the end...

"Is it because the previous abrupt mission is not completed yet? Therefore, the mission reward given this time was so pathetic?" Bu Fang muttered to himself with a frown.

The previous system mission required Bu Fang to develop and brew a wine that could surpass Dragon's Breath. According to Ni Yan's explanation, that Dragon's Breath should have been produced through numerous complex processes. It was definitely going to be hard to surpass.

Bu Fang was pondering over the problem while he headed for his room. Since it was time, he was going to bed to maintain his sleep.

"I need to find some time to gather some high grade spirit herbs. If I want to develop a wine that surpasses Dragon's Breath, relying solely on the Phoenix Blood Herb and Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit is still not enough... I still need to find some other ingredients!"

Bu Fang lay down on his bed and pulled a thick blanket over himself. As he pondered about the problem, he slowly closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep.