

Gourmet 261

Chapter 261: Your Poison Runs Too Deep

Having gone through turmoil after turmoil, the Southern City finally welcomed a period of peace.

A portly white figure stood beneath the towering city gates. Its robotic eyes slowly changed from a purplish hue, a color that stirred bone-chilling memories in those who witnessed it before, to red.

The machete on Whitey's hand slowly softened and became a fan-sized palm.

Five bodies fell around it. These five mysterious people had been intending to assassinate Bu Fang but were all killed by Whitey. The ground was covered in dark blood.

Whitey blinked its eyes, not bothered by the five rotting bodies. It turned its back and returned to Bu Fang's side.

Bu Fang shifted his gaze from the Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish to the five rotting bodies. He immediately frowned as he felt that the pungent stench from the bodies was familiar.

It was the same... as the Ghost Chef's.

"Well... Never mind. Who cares about that?" Bu Fang relaxed slightly and did not bother to look at the five pools of blood. He patted Whitey's chubby belly and continued to concentrate on the Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish.

The size of this Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish was huge. It was even bigger than the Wandering Dragon Cow in the system's storage space. However, its worth was not as high compared to the Wandering Dragon Cow.

When Whitey eliminated the five mysterious people, Bu Fang had already analyzed the Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish. The quality of the fish's flesh was clearly contaminated as black stains surfaced.

After walking around the Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish once, Bu Fang patted the body of the fish and suddenly jumped onto its back. He used some of the true energy he'd just recovered and summoned the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife.

After a moment, he continuously thrust his palms into the back of the fish. With a serious look and high explosive power, he actually managed to remove the bones of this demonic fish.

Its humongous fish bones resembled a very sharp weapon. Each one was capable of penetrating through any object, being extremely sharp.

However, Bu Fang wasn't interested in the fish bones and threw them aside. The Battle-Emperors of the Southern city were all shocked.

"These were the fish bones of a seventh grade spirit beast... Throwing away all that money!"

The people of the Southern City were all very intelligent. With many businessmen residing here, all the cultivators naturally also became good at doing business. These fish bones would definitely fetch a good price.

When Bu Fang threw these fish bones aside, it caused many of the people around him to be greedy. They were all plotting on how to snatch these fish bones later.

Slice!!

The loud noise caught everyone's attention, stunning them. The body of the Demonic Fish was cut in half, and Bu Fang jumped into the centre of its body, searching for something.

"Oh... I found you."

After searching for awhile, Bu Fang finally found a piece of fish meat from inside the body. That piece of meat was uncontaminated and as pure as white, giving off a light scent.

Bu Fang spun the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife in his hands, displaying some knife handling skill, and removed the piece of meat that was roughly the size of a grindstone.

This piece of meat was the essence of the Demonic Fish. Being uncontaminated proved the spirit energy it possessed was extremely high.

The pure white fish meat was soft and warm. Bu Fang smelled it, but it didn't have a fishy smell. Instead, it gave off a light scent, similar to milk.

Satisfied, Bu Fang put this piece of meat into the system's storage space and jumped out of the body of the Demonic Fish, landing on top of it.

Bu Fang took a deep breath, causing his true energy to flow and take away some of the impurity left on his body.

The crisis in the Southern City was finally resolved. This Demonic Fish that caused so much trouble had been slain, and even its most precious meat had been removed from it.

After Bu Fang left, the Battle-Emperors in the Southern City slowly inched toward the corpse of the Demonic fish. Their gazes flickered as they started searching for valuable parts.

As Bu Fang expected, the mysterious five men made use of this Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish, contaminating it. It was a pity that now most of the fish meat could not be used for cooking.

If not, the meat of a seventh grade spirit beast would surely fetch a good price.

However, most people still managed to find some valuable items from this Demonic Fish and were extremely pleased.

Many people were fighting for the fish bones. Although the fish meat could be used as an ingredient, the fish bone could be made into weapons. If one could find a good smith, they might be able to craft some high level weapons from them. After all, the spirit energy and spirituality of a seventh grade spirit beast's bones couldn't be underestimated.

Whitey followed Bu Fang, walking in line with him. Both of them walked briskly along the streets of the Southern City.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Yu rushed over. Xiao Yanyu tapped her chest. She felt a load off her chest when she saw that Owner Bu was safe and sound.

Xiao Yu, on the other hand, was excited, blabbering on and on to Bu Fang. His immense respect for Bu Fang was unceasing like the water in a river.

Bu Fang nodded his head to Xiao Yanyu and walked toward the Xiao Family members with Whitey.

Xiao Keyun was saved, although his whole body was covered with the blood of the Demonic Fish. With the help of the Xiao Family members, he was partly healed after drinking an elixir.

He was weak and pale as he looked at the approaching Bu Fang.

"Thank you, Sir, for saving me. If not....." Xiao Keyun said faintly but full of gratitude. He was still a little traumatised by the dangerous moment just now.

If Bu Fang did not interfere, he would have been crushed to minced meat by the claws of the Demonic Fish.

Bu Fang nodded his head, accepting the gratitude of Xiao Keyun.

"You have been poisoned. While the elixir may have helped you achieve a breakthrough, it will also penetrate your body, reaching into its deepest depths and lodging itself there with its venomous tendrils. If you face a similar problem in battle next time... you will surely die," Bu Fang explained.

The heart of the people from the Xiao Family trembled slightly. Xiao Keyun felt an urge to say something but couldn't think of anything to say.

In the end, he only had himself to blame for what happened.

If he had been more cautious and examined the elixir before consuming it, such incident would not have happened.

"Second Master, our... our antidote stocks are running out." An old member of the Xiao Family worryingly said.

Xiao Keyun was lost and afraid. The person who provided him with the elixir had been killed by the puppet behind Bu Fang. The antidote was going to be out soon. The next time his condition acted up, he might truly die a terrible death.

Xiao Kecheng stood to one side, not daring to make a sound. He felt relieved, happy even. Initially, the five mysterious men were looking for him but felt that he was too weak and his standing in Xiao Family too low. They had only used him to get to know his second brother. He hadn't expected them to have such evil intentions.

If he were to test the drug for them, the one suffering would certainly have been him.

Thinking of that, his heart lightened up.

Lin Qin'Er's face was pale as she grabbed her husband's arm. The skin on his arms was rotting, releasing an odor, but she wasn't bothered by it. She was overwhelmed with worry and helplessness.

Xiao Yu was also dreadfully pale. He hadn't expected things to end up like this.

"Owner Bu..... do you have any way to save my second uncle?" Xiao Yanyu kept turning her head from Bu Fang to Xiao Keyun, frowning.

Owner Bu was not an ordinary chef. At that time, the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup rescued her from the brink of death. Maybe Owner Bu had a way.

"Senior, please save my father!" Xiao Yu turned to Bu Fang after hearing what Xiao Yanyu said. Bu Fang's previous accolades had convinced him there was nothing this senior couldn't do.

Lin Qin'Er seemed as though she was holding onto her only life line as she stared at Bu Fang.

Xiao Keyun was helpless. He knew the condition of his family. Without the antidote, the next time his condition acted up, he would definitely become a puddle of black water.

But what could Bu Fang do? He wasn't a doctor.

Xiao Kecheng also stared at Bu Fang. This guy that came out of nowhere, don't tell me he even has some medical skill? Don't tell me he could really save Xiao Keyun? If this was true, he would really crawl into the toilet and cry.

Bu Fang was troubled. It's not that he didn't want to save him, but he wasn't confident he could do so. This poisonous elixir was extremely toxic. Even the seventh grade spirit beast had been poisoned to the point that all its meat had been contaminated too. The body of Xiao Keyun might already be corroded by now.

"Master Bu... Please save my husband, I will agree to all your demands!"

Lin Qin'Er saw that Bu Fang was contemplating and quickly kneeled down. Her eyes were full of tears as she pleaded him.

Bu Fang quickly helped Lin Qin'Er up.

"I cannot guarantee that he will be saved. He has consumed the elixir for far too long, and his body seems like it's already been corroded by the poison. I can only say... that I will give it a try." Bu Fang relented.

Lin Qin'Er and Xiao Yu's eyes glowed up instantly. Bu Fang didn't reject them, meaning there might still be some hope.

The two of them were elated and thanked Bu Fang profusely.

Xiao Yanyu pursed her lips and looked toward Bu Fang. Her beautiful eyes glowed, touched by his compassion.

Bu Fang felt pressured by the expressions and warmth from these people. He waited for them to calm down before re-emphasizing, "That... I said I would give it a try. Please don't get your hopes up too much. Oh... and since you all want to save him, you should prepare a clean kitchen for me so I can give you my best."

Eh... except for Xiao Yanyu, the rest of the people were stunned and looked at Bu Fang in embarrassment.

To save a person, don't you have to feel his pulse or prescribe him some medicine? Why do you need a kitchen?

At such a critical moment, we don't have time to cook!

"Young Master Bu, please save my husband. If you want something nice to eat, I will prepare it for you myself..." Lin Qin'Er said, after staring awhile a bit anxiously.

Bu Fang's face turned black. He did not want to explain too much. He coughed and scanned through the faces of the people.

"Just do as I said, prepare a clean kitchen for me. I am the one saving him... there is no need for pulse taking, I will rely on my culinary skills.

Chapter 262: Lian Fu's Battle with King Yu

"Cooking?! Cooking can save lives?"

Someone in the Xiao family questioned this notion out loud. It wasn't because they didn't trust Bu Fang, but because this truly sounded too outlandish.

The best a chef could do was make gourmet delicacies, which would certainly satisfy one's hunger, but surely it couldn't save one's life?

"Ignorant. If I say it can, then it certainly can. Or else, do you care to venture a try?" Bu Fang curled his lips and threw Xiao Kecheng a cold look as he sneered. He did not appreciate his cooking skills being questioned, let alone by someone with such trivial queries.

Xiao Kecheng's face froze as he sniggered quietly. Give it a try himself? What a joke... he couldn't wait for Xiao Keyun to pass away so nobody would compete with him for the patriarch role of the Xiao Family, never mind lend a helping hand... Besides, he also didn't have the required capabilities.

Lin Qin'Er was actually also in doubt. Her husband's life was on the line there, so she dared not act recklessly. Saving lives with cooking... this really did sound absurd. She was different from Xiao Kecheng in that she was excellent at cooking herself. But even so, she had never heard of rescuing people with cuisine.

However, she did not challenge Bu Fang directly, especially since Xiao Yanyu kept on signaling her with winks. She knew Xiao Yanyu was never one to talk big.

At this point in time, she really had no other choice. At last, she made up her mind and answered with clenched teeth: "All right! Young Master Bu, allow me to prepare the kitchen for you right away."

Xiao Yanyu breathed out a sigh of relief. She was worried that her Aunt Lin would question Owner Bu just like Xiao Kecheng. If that were the case, given Owner Bu's peculiar temper, he might outright refuse to offer any further treatment.

Nobody said anything else. This group of people proceeded to carry the fragile Xiao Keyun back to Xiao's Quarter.

It was also this very day that the Xiao residence had become the spotlight of the Southern City. Many of the strong warriors in the city paid their visits, hoping to befriend the young man who had butchered the seventh grade spirit beast.

This even alarmed the Lord of the Southern City.

However, the Xiao Family turned away numerous visitors on the pretext that Bu Fang needed to conserve his strength in order to save a life. This caused many to go home crestfallen.

Of course, plenty of them also expressed their empathy. In witnessing the battle of the Southern City, they knew that Xiao Keyun, the Second Master of the Xiao Family, was badly hurt and was nearly killed by the seventh grade demonic fish. Therefore, they didn't hold a grudge against the Xiao Family's excuses.

By the time Bu Fang had entered Xiao's Quarter once again, everyone's attitude was completely changed. Putting aside whether Bu Fang could rescue their Second Master, simply his cultivation level deserved respect from the Xiao Family.

The grand master of the Xiao Family also came out of the loft. His body trembled as he conversed with Bu Fang, entrusting him with the task of saving his second son.

"Young Master Bu, the kitchen is ready." Lin Qin'Er wiped off the beads of sweat from her forehead. She was slightly out of breath from running back here. In order to provide Bu Fang with a spotless space, she cleaned the kitchen herself. All was done so Bu Fang would be wholly satisfied.

Bu Fang nodded his head, beckoning Lin Qin'Er to lead the way. A crowd made of Xiao Family members trailed behind Bu Fang, very much intrigued.

The swarm of folks all gathered by the kitchen. A trace of curiosity flickered across Xiao Yanyu's eyes. She was very excited to watch Owner Bu cook again.

"I just need one person to take care of the fire. Everyone else, please leave the kitchen." Bu Fang ordered calmly.

The crowd made a ruckus, breaking out into lively discussions. They were looking forward to witnessing a cuisine that could save lives. But since Bu Fang demanded for their departure, they had no choice but to clear out.

At the end, only Xiao Yanyu remained in her spot. She stood there with an elegant posture, blinking her lovely eyes at Bu Fang.

"You're going to light the fire?" Bu Fang was somewhat shocked. This was no easy task so he had expected a burly fellow to stay behind... nonetheless, it didn't make too much difference.

"Owner Bu, are you sure about this? My uncle's circumstances... seem very severe." Xiao Yanyu rolled up her sleeves, exposing her fair, jade-like wrists. They looked so impeccable that not even a single blemish could be found.

"Let me give it a try. It might work," Bu Fang replied.

After patting Whitey's belly, Bu Fang turned around and walked to the kitchen counter. He pulled out a cutting board and placed it on the table along with some porcelain bowls. He scanned the environment within the kitchen with his eyes, familiarizing himself with the available tools in here.

After that, he sunk into the chair and started to rest.

Xiao Yanyu blinked her eyes in bewilderment as she peered at Bu Fang, "Owner Bu..."

"Let me take a break first. Without enough true energy, how could I make a qualified Elixir Cuisine?" Bu Fang rolled his eyes and grumbled impatiently. He had nearly exhausted his supply of true energy today by grappling with the Demonic Fish. There was no way for him to recover so soon.

Xiao Yanyu was instantly taken aback but couldn't help bursting into a soft laughter. That was certainly true... Bu Fang had just used up a lot of energy, yet a dish as advanced as Elixir Cuisine required a great deal of true energy. Without good conditions, mistakes could easily occur.

Bu Fang casually waved his hand and took out a piece of golden Oyster Pancake from the System's dimensional bag. The pancake emitted a hot steam and a rich fragrance.

This was food he had prepared for himself before leaving home. The Oyster Pancake tasted delicious, but its main function was helping him regain spirit energy. Though not enough spirit energy could be recovered, it was still of use.

Bu Fang took a bite of the Oyster Pancake. With his cheeks stuffed full, he chewed hard with widened eyes.

Xiao Yanyu gazed at Bu Fang quite speechlessly, not knowing what to say.

"Um, please ask the others to bring any elixir they can find in the Xiao residence. I'll see if anything can be used to my advantage." Bu Fang muttered with a mouthful of Oyster Pancake, after which he took another bite.

Xiao Yanyu smacked her lips and shot a glimpse at the Oyster Pancake. She swallowed her saliva and stood up. Unsure whether to laugh or cry, she sauntered toward the door.

Bu Fang watched as she left. Then, he took out another piece of Oyster Pancake from the System's dimensional bag and shoved it into his mouth.

...

The sword clashed against the spear, emitting a loud crispy clonk.

Waves of true energy burst forth, spreading as if ripples breaking through the air.

Lian Fu's figure trembled slightly in the air. His white locks of hair swayed as he fumbled several steps backwards. With a long face, he held the Black Firmament Sword in his hand, trying to concentrate his true energy.

Ji Chengyu, with a long halberd in his hand, exerted an unparalleled pressure. Scorching flames burned in his eyes as hot steams practically rose from his body. As he floated in the air, he looked simply undefeatable.

He brandished his long spear and charged toward Lian Fu much like a fearsome dragon. Lian Fu had reached seventh grade Battle-Saint and thus protected the Imperial City for as long as he could remember. The old Ji Chengyu could have easily gotten his ass kicked by Lian Fu. But today... he was able to rival Lian Fu.

That sense of power felt too good to be true!

Bang!!

Lian Fu's body quivered as he staggered a couple more steps backwards. Ji Chengyu pressed on hard, waving his long spear as he swooped on Lian Fu.

Waves of true energy from both sides collided and scattered through the air, sending turbulent sea waves from beneath to roll about violently.

Lian Fu's heart began beating with fear as the battle continued. Since when did Ji Chengyu's cultivation improved to this staggering extent?

The barrier to seventh level Battle-Saint was not easy to overcome. When Ji Chengyu's cultivation was officially sealed by the late Emperor Changfeng, he was still merely a sixth grade Battle-Emperor. Yet... his capabilities now reflected entry into the seventh grade echelon. Something unusual must have taken place.

Pitch-black streams of mist wrapped around Ji Chengyu's arms, rattling like tiny serpents. They provided immense strength to Ji Chengyu, and thus every time he waved his long spear, he was able to force Lian Fu down and stir the oceans below.

"Chief Officer Lian, that's all you've got? You have truly disappointed this sovereign!"

Ji Chengyu was becoming more wild and savage as the battle went on. His eyes flickered red as he launched vicious words of contempt toward his opponent.

A warrior that was way out of his league in the past was now easily subdued by him. This kind of thrill and pleasure opened up every pore in his body. It felt like he was about to reach even higher grounds in terms of power and strength.

The two's duel moved from the sky to the surface of the ocean. Seething waves tumbled, but neither paid any attention. Every time they crashed against one another, towering ocean waves would rise up and shower down like a rainstorm.

The downpour of sea water drenched Lian Fu. He looked like a sorry mess, with his cap completely shattered and white pieces of hair sticking all over his face.

"King Yu, if this is the case, then I will no longer hold back!"

Lian Fu was enraged. He was also fed up with constantly being at a disadvantage in this battle.

After a deafening howl, Lian Fu waved his sword. Waves of light blue true energy gushed out, wrapped around his body, and transformed into a soaring eagle.

Lian Fu tapped several times on the ocean surface with the tip of his toes. Then, his figure suddenly accelerated and appeared right before King Yu. His sword slashed through the air—the first slice knocking off King Yu's cap, the second leaving a gash on King Yu's cheeks, and a third greatly wounding King Yu's majestic momentum.

Now this was an experienced seventh Battle-Saint, whose abilities remained incredibly daunting.

Zhao Ruge stood on a large ship and watched as the tide suddenly turned against King Yu. He couldn't help but shake his head in disappointment. After all, King Yu had just newly acquired this

power and was still no match to a Battle-Saint like Lian Fu. If he was already slipping into the inferior position, then it would only be a matter of time before he was captured.

Zhao Ruge gave Lian Fu, who was now crushing King Yu, a hard look and retreated to the ship's cabin.

Not after long, a violent force of energy surged out of the cabin.

The sound of a bowstring being plucked echoed in the ship. Then, a long black arrow shot out of the cabin with a loud whistle, almost distorting the space of air around it.

Lian Fu was forcing King Yu to retreat when he suddenly sensed danger coming his way. He lifted up his head only to see a pitch black arrow expanding in his vision.

Chapter 263: Elixir Cuisine, Completed

Boxes after boxes of delicate jade cases were sent into the kitchen, packing the table inside.

At the end of the day, the Xiao Family was one of the biggest financial oligarchs of the Southern City. Therefore, their accumulation of wealth far exceeded that of the average family. Their force of influence was also beyond the imagination of an ordinary person.

Bu Fang stood up out of curiosity and inspected these spirit herbs with his eyes. He discovered that most of these elixirs were rare and precious; one was even a sixth grade spirit herb. For a wealthy household whose most powerful warrior was only a sixth grade Battle-Emperor, possession of such spirit herbs was quite impressive.

Bu Fang selected among these spirit herbs the ones with the strongest properties, and then asked for the rest to be taken away.

Having had two pieces of Oyster Pancakes, he felt as if his body had recovered a good amount of true energy. His true energy vortex was also circulating functionally once more.

Bu Fang washed the cutting board, after which a wisp of smoke began twirling around his hand. Then, the dark black, unadorned Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. Bu Fang twirled and spun the knife in his hand.

Next, Bu Fang minced the spirit herbs he had specially selected and placed them on a porcelain plate. With the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, Bu Fang didn't need to worry about sensing the spirit energy fluctuations of these herbs. Since he was no longer concerned with the loss of spirit energy, this part was essentially some light work.

After processing these spirit herbs, he took out several more spirit herbs from the system's dimensional storage to neutralize the properties of the previous batch.

Bu Fang also took out a piece of snow-white fish the size of a rock and placed it on the cutting board. A faint milky fragrance spread from the flesh of the fish.

When Xiao Yanyu spotted the piece of fish, her eyes instantly sparkled. This was the flesh of a seventh grade spirit beast. It was highly valuable and definitely superior in quality to ordinary ingredients.

Xiao Yanyu, being as bright as she was, immediately understood Bu Fang's plan upon catching sight of this piece of fish. Judging by its appearance, this must be the finest piece of flesh on the demonic fish. Most importantly, this part was not contaminated by the dark energy as did other pieces, which meant it must contain a medium that could resist the evil substance.

This would be the most suitable ingredient for treating Xiao Keyun's illness.

That was exactly Bu Fang's objective. He washed the fish as well as his palms, and then squeezed the flesh of this huge piece of fish. It was rather soft on the outer surface but somewhat firmer in the inner part.

Bu Fang quietly measured it in his head, then twirled the knife and carefully cut off a large piece of flesh.

He packed up the rest of the fish and placed it into the system's dimensional storage. Only one slab remained on the cutting board, but it was large enough.

Once carved into thin slices, the snow-white fish began reflecting conspicuous lines of patterns. Each piece flushed faint shades of red, which was extremely eye-catching.

Having slit down the middle of the fish, he made a few more cuts on both sides. Next, he carved it horizontally once, leaving a slash.

After processing the fish, Bu Fang looked toward Xiao Yanyu. He instructed calmly: "Now, start the fire."

Xiao Yanyu nodded and began to light the fire. She cooked frequently herself so this was nothing new to her. For the young lady of such an influential household, it was something rare and commendable.

Not before long, the fire was ready. Bu Fang poured some of the water he had brought back from the Heaven Alps Spirit Lake into the pot. Then, he placed the processed fish inside as well.

Next, he dumped the minced spirit herbs into the pot, boiling it with the other ingredients inside.

Having covered the pot with a lid, Bu Fang began to circulate the true energy within his energy core. He enveloped the lid with such energy as he tried to sense the spirit energy fluctuations of the ingredient and spirit herbs within the pot.

"Keep the flames burning, don't stop." Bu Fang glimpsed at Xiao Yanyu, who was working hard on the fire.

Xiao Yanyu's delicate face became a little flushed by the heat of the fire. The blushes on her face were like blooming lotus flowers, spreading an intoxicating sense of charm.

Xiao Yanyu shot a glance at Bu Fang before getting back to the fire. The flames burned even more fiercely as the water inside the pot began simmering. Bu Fang took his time, his palms still pressed on the lid. Waves of true energy circulated above like tiny serpents, corresponding to the spirit energy fluctuations underneath.

Many of the spirit herbs within the pot began to melt in reaction to Bu Fang's flow of true energy. They dissolved like frost melting and disappeared into the clear water. All of the essence had effectively seeped into the flesh of the fish.

The fish had become paler in color, white as snow, as if there was a beam of light swirling inside.

Once the fire had blazed for around half an hour, the fish was finally thoroughly cooked under Bu Fang's force of true energy. He removed the lid, which immediately released a surge of hot steam. Akin to a giant mushroom, the searing mist rushed to the sky, crashed into the ceiling, and then fully dissipated.

Bu Fang grabbed the spatula and picked out the white, juicy fish. Crystal drops of water dripped from the flesh, each bead glittering and translucent.

He placed the snowy white fish into a giant porcelain bowl. The flesh was glossy, extremely tender and soft. Hot steams pranced on its surface like a swarm of tiny serpents, spreading to all direction.

Bu Fang grabbed a single chopstick and poked at the fish. A sparkling juice immediately trickled out.

Dense aroma, much like the scent of roasted milk, spread from the flesh. This fragrance was so delightful it nearly melted Bu Fang's heart.

Putting aside the fish, Bu Fang redirected his focus onto the pot of clear fish soup. He skimmed off the floating residues of spirit herbs and foams from the surface, leaving a pot of boiling fish soup as translucent as clear water.

He then took out from the system's dimensional storage a giant Blood Crown, which contained an abundance of spirit essence. Bu Fang sliced off a small dice and placed it into the boiling water. The Blood Crown was cloaked with true energy, enabling it to dissolve into the broth like melting snow.

The soup instantly turned into a ruddy shade, emitting a dense fragrance of spirit essence.

Xiao Yanyu observed Bu Fang's movements. His every action was as smooth as the floating of clouds and flowing of water. He brought with him a particular sense of beauty, making her eyes sparkle. Although her face was currently flushed by the nearby heat, her heart was simply on fire.

After a while, she suddenly become perplexed, finding Bu Fang's cooking procedures somewhat familiar.

"Isn't... isn't this the cooking method of Dragon River Vinegar Fish?" Xiao Yanyu became more and more astonished as she detected the similarities. The only difference here was the fish used.

The Dragon River Vinegar Fish was a famous dish of the Southern City, one not necessarily difficult to make. However, the grasp of heating was extremely important, so was the selection of seasoning. Producing just the right sauce was the most onerous task involved, since the taste of the Dragon River Vinegar Fish depended solely on this dressing.

Owner Bu had never thoroughly studied this dish. How could he perfectly grasp its temperature and heating procedure? Plus, could he make a sauce good enough to restore the true flavors of the dish?

Most importantly... was this an Elixir Cuisine? Could the Dragon River Vinegar Fish be turned into an Elixir Cuisine?

While Xiao Yanyu was still stuck in a trance, Bu Fang had already started making the sauce. The thick sauce reflected a light shade of dark auburn, emanating an intoxicating aroma that was both sweet and slightly sour. Since the Blood Crown was added to the mix, a sniff of this fragrance sent waves of spirit essence rushing through one's body, like a majestic dragon.

He scooped up some sauce and poured it downwards. The dense, viscous nectar formed a blackish brown stream. On the other hand, an energy vortex continued circulating within Bu Fang's energy core. His supply of true energy, nearly half recuperated, was exhausted once more.

Bu Fang twirled the spoon, then with curled lips and narrowed eyes, scooped out all of the sauce within the pot.

Once this nectar was poured onto the snowy white fish, its flesh looked as if it had been revived, taking big gulps to inhale the dense spirit essence of the sauce. Hot steams rushed into the air and scattered into all directions, bringing with it the sweet and sour aroma. The presentation was very appealing.

Yip Yip Yip.

A light noise echoed, much like the sound of a spirit beast bawling. Afterwards, a faint silhouette of a spirit beast faded above the dish.

A stormy gust of air surged out, blowing at strands of Bu Fang's loosely tied hair.

Xiao Yanyu also stood up and peered at the dish, which was overflowing with spirit energy and rich aroma, with great excitement.

The Elixir Cuisine... was completed?!

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled up. He took out another dice of Blood Crown, crushed it into powdered form and sprinkled it over the dish.

"The Elixir Cuisine, Blood Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish, completed."

Chapter 264: The Fall of Lian Fu

The pitch-black arrow, launched from the cabin of the giant ship, slit through the air. A dark wind rumbled like thunder booming in the sky.

This speed was too fast, leaving no time for Lian Fu to react.

His white strands of hair rustled in the fierce storm. In a split second, the pitch black arrow had already arrived before his face.

Ji Chengyu's heart trembled. He felt a domineering aura pressing down on his body, as if he was being crushed by a gigantic mountain. The arrow gave him an awful sensation of unsettlement, prompting him to twist his head towards the ship's cabin furiously.

"When did this sovereign ask for your help?" Ji Chengyu roared in wrath.

However, the only reply he got was silence.

Lian Fu shouted with a hoarse voice and planted the Black Firmament Sword before his chest, hoping to resist this nearly inescapable strike.

Click!!

The arrow sped through the air and rammed into the Black Firmament Sword shielding Lian Fu's chest. The sword, despite how sturdy and sharp it was, nearly wailed, unable to withstand the strike.

Lian Fu's body was hurled backwards by a formidable force. His figure slid onto the surface of the ocean, sending waves crashing into the sky.

Crack!

With a crispy snap, the Black Firmament Sword in Lian Fu's hands shattered into pieces. He spat out a mouthful of blood, sensing his energy wane.

A trace of fear flickered across his eyes as he gravely peered toward the ship. That shot of arrow... was terrorizing, and definitely not the work of an ordinary person.

"King Yu... what kind of people are you colluding with? I sincerely urged you not to be so misguided as to bring disaster upon yourself. Don't ruin the great Light Wind Empire!" Lian Fu pressed hard on his chest. The Black Firmament Sword in his hands had already smattered into smithereens, only leaving behind the handle. Peering at this sword's handle, Lian Fu was overcome with incredible sorrow.

Ji Chengyu, with his bloodshot eyes, turned toward the ship. He never expected the folks on the ship to step in... they had promised to stay out of it!

"You, eunuch, are way too noisy."

A thunderous boom reverberated above the sea as another arrow dashed out of the ship. It was as black as ink, instantly cutting through the air.

Lian Fu's eyes widened as he tried to concentrate whatever energy remained in him. Thrusting a palm forward, he attempted to block this shot of arrow.

However, the arrow slit through the sky and instantly pierced through his body, causing blood to splatter everywhere.

Lian Fu staggered several steps backwards in the air. He bit his lips as the muscles on his face quivered. A huge hole appeared on his chest, on which black mists of energy twirled about to further corrode the wounded flesh.

Spat...

Another mouthful of blood burst out as all colors drained from Lian Fu's already pale face. He no longer had the energy to hold on to the handle in his hand. As the remains of the sword fell into the ocean below, it made a small splash in the water.

"The Black Firmament Sword..." A dejected grief smeared across Lian Fu's face. That was the sword granted to him by Emperor Changfeng. Alas, this last token of memory was just smashed into bits.

He had sworn to guard the sword with his life. Now that it has been shattered... his time was also up.

"You!!" Ji Chengyu widened his eyes and glared at the blurry figures resting in the cabin furiously. He gitted his teeth with puffed cheeks, displaying the rage burning within.

He didn't want anyone else to get involved. Instead, he aspired to defeat Lian Fu on his own, to vanquish a figure he had considered unbeatable in the past.

He gazed at Lian Fu, who seemed to be rapidly losing signs of life. Blood gushed out of his chest, dripping into the vast sea, and was instantly swallowed by violent waves.

In the ocean, swarms of plump fishes traced the scent of blood as they leaped up. The creatures gathered by the spot where drops of Lian Fu's blood hit the water, making splashes in the wave.

Lian Fu's dry hair gradually withered. His face was as white as a sheet of paper, sending the signals of near death.

"King Yu... Don't ruin your father's lifetime of work!"

Lian Fu sighed with a low voice.

Splash!

Ji Chengyu's pupils shrank as the scarlet redness gradually faded from his eyes.

Another pitch black arrow burst out of the cabin at full speed and directly penetrated Lian Fu's fragile body, which was dangling in the air. The huge force of energy flung Lian Fu far away, generating splattering pools of blood.

Lian Fu's body has been wrecked, as if a dead leaf spiraling downward against the blowing winds.

Bang!

Lian Fu's body smashed into a small boat floating on the water. As he dully gazed at the infinite sky, his gray hair withered at a speed visible to the naked eye. His energy and spirit were dissipating, his signs of life fading.

"Your Majesty... I'm coming to serve you."

A deep sigh of relief seemingly echoed from a distance.

Ji Chengyu drew in a sharp breath and closed his eyes. When he fluttered open his eyelids once more, he had already restored his calm composure.

He took a step and returned to the ship's deck. As he stared at that lonely boat, with a twitch of the mouth, he sensed an unexpected surge of grief fill his heart.

Lian Fu still died after all. Yet perhaps this death was also a kind of liberation for him.

"King Yu, if the Venerable Master hadn't stepped in, you probably couldn't have defeated Chief Officer Lian. Isn't this a sign that the Venerable Master cares for you?"

Inside the ship cabin, Zhao Ruge waved his paper fan as he emerged. There was a gentle smile on his face, yet in Ji Chengyu's eyes, it looked more like a mocking smirk.

"Well... what should we do with Lian Fu's corpse?" Zhao Ruge asked.

Ji Chengyu cast another look at Lian Fu's dead body. Sighing softly, he turned his head and walked deeper into the cabin.

"At the end of the day, he was still my father's right hand man. Take good care of his remains... send it back to Ji Chengxue for a proper burial."

...

The Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire.

Inside the main halls stood Ji Chengxue with his hands behind his back, pacing slowly. The halls were quite empty since all of the servants were sent away on his order. This was so nobody would disturb him.

Suddenly, Ji Chengxue froze on his tracks. His right eyelid began to twitch violently, with his heart shivering.

He pounded his chest hard as his face paled.

He turned around and peered at the sky through the gates of the main halls. There seemed to be a shooting star gliding across the infinite heavens.

Ji Chengxue narrowed his eyes and sighed softly.

The Xiao residence of the Imperial City.

Xiao Meng was sitting in his study room, practicing his calligraphy at ease until all of a sudden, his brush jerked. It left a huge blot and sent ink splashing everywhere, ruining the piece of work laying before him.

In this precise moment, his heart began to feel fretful and agitated.

After hanging his writing brush back onto a shelf, Xiao Meng tore up the piece of work on his table. He walked to the windows, hands behind his back, and gazed at the sky.

...

Hot steams and a dense fragrance surged from the dish placed on the table, bubbling fervently.

"Owner Bu... isn't this how the Dragon River Vinegar Fish is cooked?" Xiao Yanyu batted her beautiful eyelashes once she saw this Elixir Cuisine, asking out of curiosity.

The cooking procedures for the Dragon River Vinegar Fish... how could Owner Bu know it so well? Especially when it came to the sauce, which demanded particular skills and high proficiency.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled. The journal had recorded detailed steps as well as important precautions for the cooking of Dragon River Vinegar Fish. Having studied it several times, Bu Fang felt like these instructions have been imprinted in his brain.

It just so happened that the main ingredient of today's Elixir Cuisine was also fish, giving him a chance to practice the cooking of Dragon River Vinegar Fish.

Though apparently only the fish selected was not the same, in reality, the fundamental purpose of the two dishes were also quite different. He was making an Elixir Cuisine after all, the focus of which was the medical effects of the dish.

He had utilized numerous spirit herbs to boil the fish, enabling the essence of the herbs to seep into the flesh. Furthermore, his sauce was also made with Blood Crown, which meant the medical effects of the dish should be striking enough.

He had observed Xiao Keyun's conditions. The poison that had infected him was terribly strong and also immune to any ordinary medicine, which could only serve as temporary remedies instead of long term solutions. To fully cure him would be too difficult, or perhaps even impossible. Thus, Bu Fang decided to give it a shot by utilizing ingredients with higher concentrations of medical properties.

This particular piece of flesh was the finest part of the Demonic Fish, as it could successfully resist the erosion of the black forces of air. This meant it had special qualities in defending against that horrid dark force, making it the perfect main ingredient of this dish.

Furthermore, the piece of fish had absorbed the essence of numerous spirit herbs. By making a sauce with Blood Brown, this Blood Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish was bound to contain a formidable degree of healing effects, even more so compared to the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup that Bu Fang had cooked long before.

He reached the doors to the kitchen and pushed them open. The crowd waiting right outside immediately shifted their glances at Bu Fang, blinking their eyes.

"Come on in, you may now bring the patient. The Elixir Cuisine is ready. Now, whether or not it'll work... will depend on his luck."

Bu Fang announced calmly. Xiao Keyun was severely wounded, as the poison had already corroded nearly half of his body. Though they've got that prime piece of flesh from the Demonic Fish, whether or not it could serve its functions was still unknown.

Lin Qin'Er was all worked up, urging the servants to carry the Second Master here immediately.

Xiao Keyun still looked rather weak and fragile, his vigor dimming.

However, upon smelling the rich aroma that drifted through the kitchen, he felt his eyes sparkle and the pain in his body greatly easing.

"Thank you for your troubles, Young Master Bu." Xiao Keyun gestured at Bu Fang with cupped hands.

Bu Fang waved his hands, looked around, and then pointed at the steaming hot Elixir Cuisine on the table.

"This is the Elixir Cuisine. Madame Xiao, you can feed him," Bu Fang said calmly.

Everyone in the Xiao family gazed at the dish Bu Fang had cooked. Suddenly, their eyes narrowed with a shred of doubt.

"Isn't this just... Dragon River Vinegar Fish? Can a plate of Dragon River Vinegar Fish cure the Second Master? This is absolute... nonsense!"

Chapter 265: I Don't Appreciate Anyone Questioning My Dish

The members of the Xiao Family peered at a dish very much similar to the Dragon River Vinegar Fish. They shared surprised looks, lowered their heads, and whispered in each others' ears.

Though this dish smelled fabulous, in fact, emanating the best aroma they had ever come across, and despite that this fish contained a high level of spirit essence... it was still merely a plate of Dragon River Vinegar Fish. It was something that easily appeared on their dining tables everyday.

Everyone in the Southern City was familiar with the Dragon River Vinegar Fish, yet none had ever heard of its healing properties or ability to treat poison... This was something completely beyond their comprehension, effectively renewing their understanding of Dragon River Vinegar Fish.

Bu Fang easily ignored their skepticism toward his Blood Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish. From Bu Fang's perspective... they simply had no grounds to challenge him. They certainly had no idea how pricey this dish actually was, nor have they tasted it yet. What right did they have to stand there and talk rubbish?

Therefore, Bu Fang retained his composure and merely took in everyone's reactions. Unflustered, he pulled over a chair and sat down, leaning against the back in a relaxed manner.

Lin Qin'Er obviously knew much more about cooking than the rest of the Xiao Family. She was different from them in that she had been cooking under the influence of her parents ever since a young age. Her best dish was the Pan-Fried Pork Bun, a well-known authentic speciality dish of the Southern City.

Only she knew why out of some many competing Pan-Fried Pork Buns, hers was deemed the most authentic gourmet delicacy.

She had a rather fragile body and terrible lack of cultivation talent. In fact, she was only able to reach the echelon of second grade Battle-Master by consuming countless elixirs of the Xiao Family. Even then, only her cultivation level had advanced, as no further improvements to her physical condition could be seen.

Facing this dish akin to Dragon River Vinegar Fish, Lin Qin'Er face became incredibly solemn. This was the first time she had ever seen a dish so rich with spirit energy. It filled her eyes with amazement.

Though this dish looked quite similar to Dragon River Vinegar Fish on the outside, Lin Qin'Er knew very well that there was a whole world of difference between the two dishes. In fact, this was not something the average Dragon River Vinegar Fish could compete with.

With a grave expression, she carefully accepted the pair of silver chopsticks handed to her by a servant. Then, she extended the chopsticks into the steaming hot fish.

With a yank, the fish meat immediately spread open, releasing a new wave of fragrance that was buried beneath. It made one feel like bathing in a river of rich milk.

Those in the Xiao Family were simply intoxicated by such a refreshing, pure scent that filled their hearts with a faint sweetness.

She carefully picked up a piece of fish. The snowy white flesh was dipped in a dark auburn sauce, which was so viscous that one could pull out thin threads with a light pluck.

The fish meat quivered gently, white and glossy, as hot mists rose from it. The dense sauce emitted an intriguing scent of sourness. Simply smelling it forced people to gulp down their saliva.

Xiao Keyun also widened his eyes, a trace of eagerness sweeping across his frail complexion. He smacked his lips as he stared at the piece of fish Lin Qin'Er was sending his way.

"Be careful, it's hot."

Lin Qin'Er reminded him softly. A hand of hers hovered under the fish, lest it accidentally slip and fall onto the floor.

One bite of the fish and Xiao Keyun's taste buds were electrified by the tart flavor. It was as if his entire tongue was enveloped by the sauce. His body shivered as an indescribable sensation of satisfaction surged through him.

When the sourness had faded, the rich, milky fragrance of the fish meat then blossomed in his heart. It refreshed his mind, making him feel like a warm stream had melted in his mouth and glided down his stomach to purify his body.

"This... this fish..." Xiao Keyun's heart trembled as he detected a strong, tempestuous force of spirit energy, along with rich waves of true energy, that suddenly burst inside his body.

"This is the finest piece of fish meat from the seventh grade spirit beast that had bombarded the Southern City earlier... Owner Bu was so kind as to put it to use for this dish. Since that part was never contaminated by the poison, perhaps it may be of help in treating Uncle's conditions." Xiao Yanyu explained this with a smile hanging from the corners of her mouth.

The troublesome seventh grade spirit beast that had attacked the Southern City... this piece of news was like a grenade thrown into the hearts of the Xiao Family members. It basically blew their minds.

"That meat belongs to a seventh grade spirit beast! Besides, it is the finest piece... the price is unimaginable!"

"Oh my god! The Second Master has eaten the flesh of a seventh grade spirit fish!"

Everyone in Xiao Family suddenly became sorely envious as they directed their gazes at the Bloody Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish. Gone was the indifference and doubts, they were now overwhelmed with jealousy, desire, rapacity, and more.

They were truly envious. Who could get the chance to eat the flesh of a seventh grade spirit beast? Beasts like those were so removed from their lives that it was nearly impossible to encounter one, let alone devour it.

Lin Qin'Er felt her heart tremble. Although she already had her speculations, it still came as a shock when she learned the true value of this fish.

Xiao Keyun was also dumbstruck. He had never expected this piece of fish to belong to a rare seventh grade spirit beast. No wonder it tasted so out of the ordinary.

Considering this, Xiao Keyun couldn't help but stick out his tongue to lick his lips.

Bu Fang leaned against a chair and observed them calmly. He curled his lips. This dish didn't just contain the flesh of a seventh grade Demonic Fish. As for the other spirit herbs, in addition to the Blood Crown of another seventh grade spirit beast, the Black Swamp Boa... they were all incredibly precious ingredients.

Yet, Bu Fang didn't offer any more explanations. He couldn't be bothered to waste time on this group of people.

Under the support of Lin Qin'Er, Xiao Keyun finally finished the entire plate of fish. The other members of the Xiao family stood around in utter jealousy.

This was especially the case for Xiao Kecheng, who had eyes burning with the flames of envy. It was such a rare gourmet delicacy... Why couldn't he be the one eating it?!

Xiao Keyun began to feel somewhat dizzy. He had eaten the entire portion of fish and now both the spirit energy and doses of medicine began to take effect, bursting within his body. He felt like his entire body was drenched in a warm liquid, within which were microscopic creatures that gushed into his pores.

"Agh!!"

Xiao Keyun's face instantly flushed red, with his eyes bloodshot. After a wretched wail, he began to sense tens of thousands shots of pain spreading through his body, as if being constantly pricked by needles.

With a thump, Xiao Keyun collapsed onto the ground and curled into a ball. The throbbing pain tortured his mind. It was simply unbearable.

Xiao Keyun's reaction drained the color from everyone else's cheeks. The other Xiao Family members widened their eyes in horror when they observed his absolute misery.

The chopsticks in Lin Qin'Er's hand fell to the floor as she become angst. Seeing her husband suffer like this sent searing pain up her own heart.

"Young Master Bu... what is happening? My husband... what is wrong with him?!" Lin Qin'Er eyes welled up as she looked toward Bu Fang.

"Humph... Perhaps this dish is poisonous. More toxin is entering his bloodstream now that brother has eaten it!" A trace of delight quickly flickered across Xiao Kecheng's eyes upon witnessing Xiao Keyun's dreary state. Thereafter, he quickly masked it with a face of unease and sadness.

The crowd became instantly agitated once they heard this remark. Their gazes toward Bu Fang at this point was no longer as friendly as before.

Sensing the others' change in attitude, Xiao Yanyu immediately knitted her brows, as a sense of displeasure crept into her heart.

Bu Fang remained unperturbed as he continued leaning on the chair. Xiao Keyun's behaviors were within his expectations. Now, if he had absolutely no reactions after eating the Blood Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish, that would be something to worry about.

This Blood Crown Intoxicating Demonic Fish consisted of the flesh of a seventh grade Demonic Fish, a seventh grade blood crown, and more than tens of rare spirit herbs. It contained a rich concentration of spirit energy and spirit essence. Yet, all of these energies were compressed within the flesh of the fish. Once the food hit Xiao Keyun's stomach, everything burst forth.

It was as if a bomb of spirit energy had exploded within his body. If nothing had happened... then it would be a real problem.

As for the attitudes of the Xiao Family members, Bu Fang couldn't care less. Or more precisely, he simply didn't take these folks seriously, let alone worry about their opinions.

However, Bu Fang detested Xiao Kecheng's mindless babbles. He was already on Bu Fang's wrong side, and now he was trying to stir up more trouble with his talks of rubbish. At this point, Bu Fang was clearly fed up.

"I poisoned him even more? What? You have a problem?"

Bu Fang ignored Lin Qin'Er's teary eyes, especially since they would see the effects of the dish soon enough.

His gaze landed directly on Xiao Kecheng, causing the latter to tremble with fear.

"What... what do you want? This is the Xiao household... don't even think about acting recklessly!" The muscles on Xiao Kecheng's face shivered. This man before his eyes was a formidable existence, powerful enough to defeat a seventh grade Demonic Fish. If the young man wanted to make things difficult for him... this thought struck him as extremely frightening.

"I don't appreciate anyone questioning my dish. Poisoning him even more heh... I'll have to say I feel very uncomfortable hearing that," Bu Fang uttered coolly.

"Could... could I be wrong about that? Just look at my brother... he seems to be in even more pain than before!" Xiao Kecheng tried to act tough with a firm voice and stern tone. However, he still felt somewhat self-assured since Xiao Keyun looked more miserable than earlier.

Bu Fang twisted the corners of his mouth, sneered coldly, and then patted Whitey's belly. He really couldn't be bothered to speak another word to Xiao Kecheng. And plus, he didn't need to explain himself. Who did this Xiao Kecheng think he was.

"Strip him and throw him out. It vexes me to even look at him."

Bu Fang ordered Whitey calmly.

Everyone in the Xiao household was taken back. Even Xiao Yanyu found it amusing... Owner Bu, you're being mischievous again.

Whitey's mechanic eyes sparkled faintly as they glanced at Bu Fang. Then, a robotic voice rang in the air: "Troublemaker, you will be stripped as an example to others."

What? What was that?!

Xiao Kecheng gaped fearfully as Whitey approached him one step at a time. He felt all the hairs on his body stand on their ends. With his arms blocking his chest, he began to shout in protest.

When it came to Whitey, nobody in the Xiao Family dared to do anything. The image of Whitey slaying the five Battle-Emperors constantly flashed across their minds, basically indelible. To fight against this slaughtering machine for Xiao Kecheng was preposterous... how would he ever be worth the risk?!

Rip!!

Under the shocked glances of the Xiao Family members, Whitey grabbed Xiao Kecheng's body and flung him away casually. Then, a crispy sound echoed in everyone's ears.

A naked body twirled in the air, making a full circle, and was then heavily tossed out of the kitchen, causing a pool of dust to shoot up.

"Agh!! You bastard..." Xiao Kecheng was simply furious. He picked himself up and hurriedly covered his private parts. Flames nearly shot out of his eyes.

Yet, Whitey was standing right by the kitchen doors. Its mechanic eyes flashed red and scanned his entire body.

Xiao Kecheng's body immediately stiffened, as if the burning flames of fury were put out by a basin of cold water.

Without another word, he turned around and rushed off. And hence one could see him dashing under the sunset with his private parts covered.

Bu Fang had already become quite acquainted with scenes like this. Let's not kid ourselves, just how many people have Whitey stripped already...?

Bu Fang studied Xiao Keyun, who was writhing about in pain on the floor. He arched his eyebrows as his eyes suddenly brightened.

"It's... about time."

In the very next moment, a reeking stench spread from Xiao Keyun's body. Grey-black grains of seeds then appeared above him.

Chapter 266: The Pan-Fried Pork Buns of the "Beauty of Bun"

An awful odor spread through the kitchen, causing everyone to pinch their noses in disgust. This smell was simply too repulsive for anyone to bear.

Bu Fang furrowed his brows and waved his hands before his nose. Then, he sauntered out of the kitchen and instructed calmly, "Someone watch over him. Once the toxins are driven out, he should be able to recover."

The members of the Xiao Family stared at one another blankly. At the end, only Lin Qin'Er and Xiao Yu stayed behind, with everyone else clearing out.

Xiao Yanyu, on the other hand, accompanied Bu Fang on his casual stroll in the Xiao residence garden.

The sun gradually dipped down the horizon, emitting the lasts of its dusky rays of light. The sunset stretched out the shadows of the pair, bringing with it a distinctive atmosphere.

As the sun had completely set, darkness obscured the entire sky. Sparkling stars twinkled around the two crescent moons. At last, Bu Fang and Xiao Yanyu returned to the halls of Xiao's quarter.

Xiao Keyun was already fully recovered. He had taken a shower to cleanse his body of the poisons and reeking stench. His entire physique still appeared fragile, with a pale face and bloodless lips. It was obvious that the process of toxin expulsion put him through a tortuous suffering.

However, giant smiles beamed across both Lin Qin'Er and Xiao Yu's faces. The expressions of the other family members also appeared much relieved. It was apparent that the toxins within Xiao Keyun's body had been fully purged.

"Thank you, Young Master Bu, for saving my life." Xiao Keyun stood up from his seat. Though his body was still in a weak state, he mustered up the energy to cup his hands and bow to Bu Fang. His face was filled with gratitude.

Bu Fang merely waved his hands. It seemed like Xiao Keyun had truly recovered.

"Though your body is now rid of poison, you can probably tell that you are still quite feeble. That is because your conditions were too severe. Now that the toxins are cleared, their side effects are still affecting you. Your cultivation level has been set back, and this retrogression means a fragile physique is inevitable," Bu Fang announced calmly.

Xiao Keyun fell silent. He was already a sixth grade Battle-Emperor, yet the healing process caused him to slip back to the echelon of fifth grade Battle-King, to an extent even weaker than before. Plus, his body had suffered total exhaustion, which meant a long rest was in place before he could regain his strength.

One could say he was hit by a huge loss this time, gaining nothing in return.

Bu Fang didn't engage in any more small talk with the Xiao Family members and immediately returned to the guest room arranged for him. He was so worn out that he directly hit the hay after taking a quick shower.

To say he had all the energy sucked out of him may be a slight exaggeration. Yet, it was true that he had just butchered a seventh grade Burst-Dragon Demonic Fish and cooked an Elixir Cuisine. These were certainly taxing tasks.

This was especially true for slaying of the Thunder Dragon Demonic Fish, an absolutely exhausting feat. This was precisely why Bu Fang did not enjoy being dragged into bloody conflicts—they were too enervating.

By dawn the next day, rays of sunshine shot through the windows of the room. They hit the floorboards, giving out a trace of warmth.

Bu Fang got up, stretched himself and yawned. Then, he washed up and walked out of his room.

The environment of the Xiao household garden was excellent, especially the air, which was extra refreshing. The early morning sunshine cast through the cracks of the bushes, scattering glimmering golden glints all over the ground.

Bu Fang wandered through the garden, walking on the tracks made of stone. In this very moment, an unprecedented sense of relaxation washed over his body.

He had sauntered for a while before another figure from a distance slowly jogged toward him.

Xiao Yanyu stared at Bu Fang, who was his usual cold and aloof self, as he stood amidst the specks of sunlight. Her face slightly changed. The Owner Bu in this very moment exhibited a unique quality, one that she has never seen before.

However, she had to get down to business, and so snapped out of it quickly.

Bu Fang was led into the main hall of the Xiao residence by Xiao Yanyu. Not many people were here this early in the morning, but a special aroma drifted in the air.

Detecting this scent, Bu Fang immediately felt his eyes brighten. Gourmet delicacy alert!

Owner Bu, to repay you for saving uncle's life, Aunt Lin stepped into the kitchen herself to make you Pan-Fried Pork Bun..." Xiao Yanyu explained.

Bu Fang was taken by surprise, and the corners of his mouth curled up. Now, this was interesting.

Bu Fang strode into the hall and found himself a seat. Not after long, Lin Qin'Er walked in with a plate of delicate Pan-Fried Pork Buns in her hands.

Her face was somewhat pale, and her lips also quivering.

"Young Master Bu, I know that this Pan-Fried Pork Bun is nothing compared to what you have done to save my husband's life. Consider this a small gift from us. I hope my cooking doesn't disappoint you." A soft smile smeared across Lin Qin'Er's pallid face.

Pan-Fried Pork Bun? Bu Fang's eyes sparkled as he nodded.

A plate was placed in front of him. It was not huge and there were a total of four buns inside. Each was fried to perfection, golden and crispy, as they emitted a rich fragrance.

Hot steams rose above the Pan-Fried Pork Buns. Their golden appearance was exquisite. Tiny drops of oiled sauce trickled through the buns, creating tiny bubbles.

The Pan-Fried Pork Bun was a specialty cuisine of the Southern City. Bu Fang had eaten this dish before and remembered that it tasted quite good. Its fried, crispy outermost bun had an especially delightful texture. However, that dish was also just barely satisfactory for Bu Fang.

He wondered how the highly praised but no longer available Lin Qin'Er buns would taste. Hopefully, he wouldn't be let down.

Lin Qin'Er's body was trembling a bit. She found a seat for herself after setting down the plate. She seemed slightly out of breath and looked very much enervated.

Bu Fang shot a glimpse at her, and then retreated his glance. He grabbed a pair of chopsticks and picked up a bun.

After studying it for a bit, he opened his mouth and took a big bite.

A dense, tasty hot oiled sauce oozed out of the bun after his bite. It slid right into his mouth, sending a shiver down his body.

The flavor was undeniably marvelous. Both the fragrance of the meat and vegetables perfectly set themselves free in Bu Fang's mouth, tingling his taste buds. Bu Fang couldn't help but curve his eyes into a smile.

Indeed, it tasted much better than any of the other Pan-Fried Pork Buns he had tried in the Southern City. Besides...as he chewed and savored it carefully, he discovered something else worth mentioning.

It was the fact that Lin Qin'Er's Pan-Fried Pork Buns actually contained spirit energy. Though it was not rich in concentration, it was still perfectly reserved within the ingredients. Since this Pan-Fried

Pork Bun was not made of rare ingredients, it didn't hold much spirit energy to begin with. What Lin Qin'Er had accomplished was managing to retain most of it in her dish.

This was what amazed Bu Fang the most. It surprised him that someone could make such a Pan-Fried Pork Bun.

No wonder Lin Qin'Er had that awful look on her face. It was no easy task to preserve all of the spirit energy within the ingredients. Judging by Lin Qin'Er's state, she must have exhausted a large amount of true energy in making this dish. After all, she did not have a high cultivation level or a strong physique.

In order to retain the spirit energy, one must connect with the spirit energy within the ingredients. This meant performing the Spirit Resonance, which entailed maintaining the same frequency as the spirit energies of the ingredients. Such an endeavor was a huge burden to one's energy and spirit force.

Bu Fang, on the other hand, had already mastered the control of spirit energy. Besides, his spirit force was strong enough to make it a less arduous task. For Lin Qin'Er though... it must have been laborious.

This was also probably why Xiao Keyun didn't want Lin Qin'Er making this Pan-Fried Pork Bun anymore.

"Not bad." Bu Fang, quite out of character, didn't offer any criticism of the dish. Instead, he merely uttered two words to express his thoughts.

It was by no means easy for someone with Lin Qin'Er's cultivation level to cook such a dish. Deep down, Bu Fang even felt true respect for her, since she must have gone through countless rounds of training, not to mention trial and error, to make a gourmet delicacy like this.

Flutter. The sound of pages flipping echoed in Bu Fang's mind. His eyes dimmed, sensing that another recipe has been added to the journal. It was the details procedures for cooking Pan-Fried Pork Bun.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled as he happily devoured a few more buns. After clearing the plate, he let out a long, satisfying breath.

Lin Qin'Er grinned at Bu Fang as she felt her heart fill with a swelling comfort. Seeing a smile on the face of someone who consumed her dish was one of the most gratifying experiences.

Now that everything has been settled in the Southern City, and that he had tasted the Pan-Fried Pork Bun, Bu Fang knew it was time to take off. His trip to the Southern City could be considered a success.

Though there occurred some unexpected incidents, including the men in black on top of the somewhat familiar poisonous pills... Bu Fang really couldn't care in the least. What good would come by involving himself? These were none of his business.

Thus, Bu Fang didn't stay at the Xiao residence for long and instead immediately bid farewell to Xiao Yanyu and the others before taking off with Whitey. They were ready to depart from the Southern City.

Across the rising tides of the Dragon River, Bu Fang walked with his hands behind his back. Whitey followed his every step.

Xiao Yanyu watched as Bu Fang's figure faded, feeling somewhat dejected inside. However, she quickly concealed this sense of desolation with a cool expression. She couldn't leave the Southern City just yet, as many things remained unsettled for her family... including the reason behind the mysterious men summoning her back to the Southern City, and so on.

At the Ten-Mile Pavilion of the Southern City, starry beams glistened as a whistling breeze howled.

Bu Fang's hair danced wildly in the wind. He stepped into the circle of storm and in a split second, vanished into thin air.

Chapter 267: As You Were Saying... Which Dish Did You Find Unsatisfying?

The Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire.

In the empty main halls sat a silent Ji Chengxue. He clutched a letter in his hands so tightly that the pages had become wrinkled. His bloodshot eyes widened as he stared at this letter in shock.

After quite a while, as if a tight string finally loosened, Ji Chengxue sagged into the throne. It felt like all the energy in his body has been sucked out.

The letter also fluttered onto the floor.

"Dead... Chief Eunuch Lian is actually... dead." Ji Chengxue muttered with dull eyes and a bitter face. He was now filled with regret. Why did he ever approve Lian Fu's mission to personally capture Ji Chengyu, as it merely brought upon a tragedy at the end.

Ever since the late Emperor Changfeng's reign, Chief Eunuch Lian had been the seventh grade warrior protecting the Imperial City. With him there, the palace was always secure. He and Great General Xiao Meng made up the dynamic duo that safeguarded the Imperial City, effectively deterring the intrusion of sects. However, as of now... Chief Eunuch Lian, a seventh grade Battle-Saint, has fallen.

Bang!

Ji Chengxue smashed the throne with his angry fist. His face was filled with remorse and rage and his eyes were red with streaks of blood. He couldn't help but clench his teeth.

"Damn it! Ji Chengyu... No matter what has come of us, Chief Eunuch Lian was still a senior figure who watched us grow up. You actually had the nerve to kill him!"

Ji Chengyu must have played an undeniable role in Lian Fu's decease. Lian Fu was clearly out to capture Ji Chengyu, and furthermore, his death corresponded with the first traces of news on Ji Chengyu.

Was Ji Chengyu's force of influence already strong enough to eliminate a seventh grade Battle-Saint? Could it be Ji Chengyu has colluded with some kind of formidable association?

After all, Ji Chengyu had collaborated with the Joyous Union Sect, the White Bone Palace, and other warriors before. Was he now involved with some powerful party... to sabotage the Light Wind Empire?

Lian Fu's death brought Ji Chengxue an intense sense of crisis, prompting his heart to beat rapidly and fiercely.

"Reporting... Your Majesty, General Xiao Meng requests to meet!" An eunuch shouted loudly outside the main halls.

"Let him in, now!"

Ji Chengxue's voice had hardly faded when a burly figure sauntered in and stepped into the middle of the main halls.

Xiao Meng peered at Ji Chengxue's bloodshot eyes and sighed softly in his heart. Lian Fu's death was no trivial matter. The fall of a seventh grade Battle-Saint was a huge loss for the empire. However, compared to his news...

"Your Majesty, I've received some urgent messages. Hangyang County, Jianyang County, Shangxuan County and other large counties are all under the attacks of ferocious spirit beasts. It has caused a huge number of casualties and deaths. The Western Mistery City is also suffering the assault of a seventh grade spirit beast. There are some injuries and deaths there as well..."

Ji Chengxue, still immersed in the sorrow over Lian Fu's death, got a worse headache upon hearing the bad news.

With so many large counties disrupted at the same time, hell would soon break loose in the Light Wind Empire...

Why would these spirit beasts rampage out of the blue? They have always peacefully coexisted with the human society, so why were they suddenly stirring up trouble? Ji Chengxue couldn't even convince himself that nobody was scheming behind all of this.

Though it was true that the impending spring season caused spirit beasts to become more irascible, it was still rare in the history of the Light Wind Empire to have them collectively attack human cities.

"General Xiao, send someone to further inspect the situation. Make sure we gain the most accurate intelligence. In addition, dispatch armies to these cities to help subdue the spirit beasts."

Ji Chengxue rubbed his temples and replied helplessly. That was the best he could do in the current situation.

Xiao Meng nodded. After gazing at Ji Chengxue knowingly, he turned around to leave the main halls.

Ji Chengxue pursed his lips and mumbled to himself. At last, he lifted up his head and sighed. Since the old times, emperors have always had such a burden on their shoulders. Others were brought to believe this was a rewarding position and hence fought for the throne. Yet, how many of them could ever experience the onerous duties that came with the post.

Ji Chengxue suddenly missed the gourmet delicacies and fine wines in Owner Bu's store.

Those were simpler, more carefree days—devouring delicious dishes while gulping down exquisite wine.

...

Bu Fang had returned to his store. The gust of wind faded as the glistening spots of the magic array also vanished.

Back into his own room, he finally felt a sense of comfort. Whitey's duplication had already disappeared, not that this was something Bu Fang minded at all.

Sniffing at the somewhat rotten smell on his body, Bu Fang knitted his brows into a frown. He walked straight to the bathroom to take a shower.

Hot steams continued to rise, leaving strands of Bu Fang's hair slightly moist. After putting on a new robe, he walked out of the bathroom, feeling alive again.

Bu Fang brushed through his wet hair and left it untied. Then, he walked out of his room to go downstairs.

Having been away from the store for so many days, he was now primarily concerned with how business had fared.

It sounded quite busy in the kitchen, with the sound of chopping, frying, and pots clanging together ringing by his ears.

Rich fragrance drifted within the kitchen and the store, inducing one to take in deep breaths.

"Not bad, the two little ones have seen tremendous improvements in their cooking these days." Bu Fang nodded as a satisfied look flashed across his face. By simply smelling the food aroma spreading through the air, he could detect the level of their cooking.

He didn't step into the kitchen and instead, marched into the store.

Before even setting foot in the store, he caught the sound of a quarrel inside.

Bu Fang instantly frowned.

Arguments hardly broke in this store. Ever since the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit incident, those in the Imperial City seldom dared to make a scene here.

Perhaps the the store's name was not big enough throughout the empire, yet in the Imperial City, even the rich and powerful weren't stupid enough to bother him.

"This old fellow travelled all the way here from the Hundred Thousand Alps and you serve me this crap? Though the taste is technically not bad, and the spirit energy contained is rich... But! This is far from all the praises I've heard about the gourmet delicacies of this store?" A rough, very much displeased, voice rang in the air.

"I already told you that Owner Bu is not here at the moment. All your dishes are cooked by the apprentices. Everybody is aware of that, so why be so picky about it?" A trace of impatience and uneasiness could be detected in Ouyang Xiaoyi's tone.

Bu Fang narrowed his eyes. It turned out that someone was unsatisfied with the taste of the dishes? Bu Fang refrained from expressing any opinion. Though Xiao Xiaolong and Yu Fu's skills have yet to reach his level, both the flavor and spirit energy within each dish still lived up to their prices.

Entering the store, Bu Fang caught sight of a bunch enjoying their meals. Ouyang Xiaoyi had her back to Bu Fang and was currently arguing with a rather chubby, white-bearded old man.

The chubby elder had a kind, even somewhat charming face, one that was impossible to truly get mad at.

Yet, Ouyang Xiao here bickered with him relentlessly.

The old man was so peeved he couldn't help but burst into a laugh, "You, little lassie, are really unreasonable. I'm just giving my complaints here, why can't you understand where I'm coming from. I'm merely stating the facts—although the dishes taste fine, they are still yards away from what I expected given all the rumors."

Ouyang Xiaoyi pursed her lips, ready to retort him. By now, she had become very defensive of the store.

Before she even opened her mouth, a calm and gentle voice rang behind her.

"Xiaoyi, stop arguing."

The chubby old man narrowed his eyes, lifting up his head to face Bu Fang. His charming, likable face flushed red.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was caught by surprise. Then, she turned around in excitement to see the slender figure of Bu Fang standing there with a head of dampen hair.

"Owner Bu! You're back!" Ouyang Xiaoyi's eyes instantly lit up. She began to dart towards him eagerly but then, recalling something else, froze on her tracks and rolled her adorable eyes. She humphed at Bu Fang.

"What a surprise that you still remember this place!" Ouyang Xiaoyi puckered her lips, her cheeks puffed.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth gently curved. He walked forward and patted Ouyang Xiaoyi's head. Then, he directed his gaze at the chubby elder.

Studying the old man, Bu Fang squinted his eyes. Though he himself had rubbish combat capabilities, he still had the cultivation of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor. Relying on his cultivation, he could easily sense the formidable energy circulating within the old man's body.

Well... so what if he might be a terrifying warrior?

"As you were saying... which dish did you find unsatisfying?" Bu Fang tilted his head, gazed at the old man, and asked calmly.

Chapter 268: The Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar

"So, which dish did you find unsatisfying?"

Bu Fang's tone was very calm. His glance landed on the slightly chubby man, without any hint of overbearingness. It felt like a question he put forward quite at ease.

The chubby elder was taken aback. A smile quickly flashed across his face as he gazed at Bu Fang with sparkling eyes, "So, you must be the owner of this restaurant. I have long heard of your name. Seeing you today reminds me of the saying that the youthful can make great heroes."

"I am merely a chef, far from a hero." Bu Fang waved his hands and shrugged it off. This old man seemed amiable enough, not like one looking for trouble at all.

Bu Fang pulled over a chair and sat right across from the chubby elder. There were three dishes before the elder—Egg-Fried Rice, Lees Fish, and Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

All three dishes had been touched. Half of the Egg-Fried Rice was gone, the Lees Fish had been poked a few times, but only one or two pieces of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs have been eaten.

"Heh heh, it's quite a coincidence. This old fellow also happens to be a chef. I've heard that Owner Bu's dishes are incredibly delicious and thus travelled thousands of miles to come here. Never did I expect the dishes to be so below expectations. Honestly, I'm slightly disappointed." The elder looked disillusioned as he shook his head.

Ouyang Xiaoyi, who stood behind Bu Fang, curled her lips. She obviously thought this old man was here to pick a quarrel.

To both the elder and Ouyang Xiaoyi's surprise, Bu Fang actually nodded solemnly. He converged a ball of true energy in his hands and formed a pair of chopsticks. Then, he picked up a piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, and placed it into his mouth.

After chewing for a while, Bu Fang knitted his brows into a frown.

"There are many flaws in this Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. But then again, one's cooking can only improve through tireless practice. Nobody can make the perfect dish right from the start, right?" Bu Fang explained earnestly. He dissolved the true energy chopsticks and peered toward the elder.

The old man was somewhat taken aback, and then burst into a hearty laugh. Even his eyes squinted into a thin slit.

"Yes, Owner Bu speaks with reason. It turns out this old fellow has been too inflexible."

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled.

"I come from the Hundred Thousand Mountains. Ever since that lassie Ye tasted your gourmet delicacies, she went on and on about it beside my ears. I finally grew tired of all her nagging and sneaked away from home. I thought that while I'm at it, I might as well come try Owner Bu's cooking myself. Prior to this conversation, I was not convinced of your talent. Yet after Owner Bu's words, I've finally come around." The elder cackled with glee. With the wave of a hand, a yellow earthen-toned gourd materialized.

"Owner Bu, this is a treasure of mine. I'm wondering if it could be exchanged for a meal made with Owner Bu's own hands?" The old man laughed. As he shook the yellow earthen-colored gourd, the nectar inside swashed against its vessel.

Hun? Bu Fang paused for a moment and studied the gourd within the elder's hand.

The old man broke into a wide smile and pulled off the lid of the gourd. As the plug popped off, a rich, citric aroma surged out. This sharp sourness was mixed with a particular trace of sweetness, tugging at one's heartstrings.

Bu Fang's heart, which was utterly unaffected before, now suddenly shuddered. His gaze fixated on the gourd as he drew in quick breaths.

The elder was satisfied to see Bu Fang's startled expression. Nobody could keep their cool once smelling his specially-made vinegar.

"Lassie, get us a saucer here." The elder simpered at Ouyang Xiaoyi and instructed.

Ouyang Xiaoyi couldn't help but glare her eyes. Despite so, she still walked back to the kitchen window and asked Xiao Xiaolong, who was busy inside, for a saucer.

"Oh hey, Owner Bu is back?!"

Not after long, Xiao Xiaolong and Yu Fu both emerged from the kitchen. The two of them looked at Bu Fang excitedly. Yu Fu still seemed rather bashful whereas Xiao Xiaolong couldn't stop chuckling.

Ouyang Xiaoyi handed the saucer to the elder, and humphed with a twitched nose.

The old man smiled softly, oblivious to Ouyang Xiaoyi's attitude. He set the saucer on the table and carefully poured a little vinegar from his gourd.

Bu Fang's heart trembled, his eyes glued to the rim of the gourd.

A thick stream of blackish red hued vinegar streamed out of the gourd's mouth. It was accompanied by peculiar waves of spirit energy, in addition to that burst of sourness.

Ouyang Xiaoyi, and everyone nearby, also detected this scent. The insides of their mouths began to numb as they salivated at a faster speed.

"Excellent vinegar!"

Bu Fang's eyes lit up. As he drew in a deep breath, the tart flavor crawled up his nostrils, tingling his entire nose with a sharp acidic sensation. Yet, at the same time, it was all incredibly gratifying.

"If I didn't guess wrong, this should be a type of fruit vinegar!" Bu Fang observed.

The elder filled the saucer with this vinegar and then retracted his gourd. After making sure it was safely plugged, he waved his hands, causing the gourd to disappear.

"Precisely correct. Owner Bu has got sharp eyes. This is a creation of mine, the 'Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar', something that this old fellow has always taken pride in." The elder waved at this saucer of vinegar and pushed it directly in front of Bu Fang.

Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, Bu Fang's heart quivered. It was most likely that this Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar was not brewed by any ordinary spirit fruit. Seeing the fluctuations of the spirit energy and its rich sour flavor, he speculated that this may be the product of eight pieces of seventh grade spirit fruits.

However, Bu Fang couldn't be so sure yet. He cautiously picked up the saucer and brought it closer to his lips. Suddenly, the critic scent exploded in the air near him, bringing with it a whiff of sweetness.

For a chef, condiments like vinegar, wine, or sauce were highly important. An exceptional serving of vinegar could add a magical touch to the dish, whereas top quality wine could give it a finer aroma.

He took a small sip of the Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, and the sourness immediately drilled through his tongue. Its critic scent bloomed within his mouth and danced on his tastebuds. This was a sensation that covered his body with goosebumps. Yet, after the acidity faded, what took over was a sweetness that refreshed his heart.

That Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar felt like a cool creek trickling through his body, prompting him to close his eyes and truly savor its delicate taste. This was a flavor that lingered in both his mouth and heart for a long time.

Bu Fang's face was covered with little beads of sweat. The zesty tang of the fruit vinegar caused him to perspire involuntarily.

"Yes! Excellent vinegar!" Bu Fang fluttered open his eyelids and praised it a second time. This was truly the first time he had tasted such spectacular fruit vinegar.

"Hehe, of course. This Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar took this old fellow tens of years to brew. Eight different servings of the vinegar respectively rested in barrels made with the bark of eight spirit fruit trees. Every year, the fruit vinegar within each barrel would switch places and be intermixed with each other while I incessantly nourish it with my own spirit energy. Given all of this, it'll actually be difficult to end up with a disappointing end product!" The elder was very pleased with himself, curling his beard as he introduced his masterpiece. He was evidently comfortable with giving away the procedures, since many more intricate steps were needed to truly brew this vinegar.

Bu Fang was still immersed in the aftertaste, but didn't ask for any more. Fruit vinegars should only be savored a sip at a time. Too much all at once did no good.

Pondering over the mixture of sweetness and sourness in his mouth, Bu Fang curled his lips. He ogled the elder, with his eyes shining brighter and brighter. Mind you, this was the kind of stare that sent shivers down the latter's body.

"Sir, you mentioned you wished to try my cooking? I've been experimenting with a new dish lately and have been short of a good ingredient. Once I tasted your Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, I honestly could not contain my enthusiasm for it." Bu Fang uttered slowly.

The chubby elder's eyes widened. What did Bu Fang mean by this? Could it be he wanted to use his fruit vinegar to cook dishes?

"Owner Bu... this old fellow's vinegar is very precious. Allowing you to taste it once is already a generous move. I cannot offer it to you in bulk!" He spent years brewing this vinegar, and to be honest, there wasn't that much in volume. He simply couldn't afford to have Bu Fang squander it on dishes.

Bu Fang merely shook his head, stood up from his seat, and instructed Yu Fu to get another saucer from the kitchen.

Bu Fang placed the saucer before the elder and reassured him solemnly: "I don't need much, just a small saucer. If my new dish doesn't suit your taste, or turns out unworthy of your Eight Spirit Fruit

Vinegar... then I am willing to personally cook every dish there is in this restaurant for you... free of charge."

The old man was dumbstruck. Ouyang Xiaoyi, Xiao Xiaolong, and Yu Fu, all standing beside Bu Fang, also gaped with open mouths.

"Owner Bu... oh... that is too much!" The elder's eyes lit up. With a smile, he waved his hand and summoned the gourd. Then, he poured a little fruit vinegar into the saucer.

Too much my ass... Bu Fang took over this saucer of Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, twitched the corners of his mouth, and took in a deep breath.

"Please wait momentarily."

Afterwards, Bu Fang returned to the kitchen with the fruit vinegar, ready to cook his new dish.

Chapter 269: The Dragon Liver Popsicle

The new dish Bu Fang was preparing couldn't truly be considered new, because it was always in Bu Fang's memory. He just lacked an important ingredient to cook it, which was a table vinegar.

The dish depended completely on vinegar; the better the vinegar, the tastier it would be.

He carefully took out a pack of Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar before returning to the kitchen, which was the same as before. Two small stoves close to him gushed with steam, and Bu Fang's stove had already been neatly cleaned.

Bu Fang placed the fruit vinegar on the kitchen stove and used the Spirit Lake water to wash his fair white hands. After wiping them dry, he directly went to the refrigerator.

As he opened the refrigerator, an ice-cold air immediately rushed out. This ice-cold air contained a surging and turbulent spiritual energy.

"System, is the dragon liver used for the Dragon Liver Popsicle harvested from a real dragon?" a puzzled Bu Fang asked.

That's right, the dish which he wanted to cook this time was the one which the system had once given to him as a reward, the Dragon Liver Popsicle. He didn't cook it until now because the system would only provide him with the dragon liver. He still needed to find or brew himself the most important ingredient, the vinegar.

Excellent vinegar takes many years to brew, and Bu Fang didn't have time to waste in such arduous work such as brewing an aged vinegar. The podgy old man's Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar needed to be fermented for dozens of years, and during the process, it still needed to be separated into eight separate barrels. The vinegar in each barrel must also be switched to another barrel every year. Such a process must be done carefully without even the slightest mistake.

It was because of all this that the Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar was so precious. The brewing was extremely difficult.

Extremely satisfied with the Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, Bu Fang prepared to cook the dish.

"The dragon liver the system provides is the liver of a seventh grade spirit beast called the Frozen Domain Flood Dragon. Its liver has been processed carefully to allow it to retain its dragon energy and spiritual energy. Frozen, these two have already fused together. It is as fresh as if it was just cut from that Flood Dragon," the system replied with a solemn voice.

A Flood Dragon liver... Bu Fang knitted his brows. How good would it be if it was the liver of a True Dragon.

"System, can you provide me a dragon liver of a higher grade? Such as that of a True Dragon?" Bu Fang undeterred asked.

After a long while, the system replied to Bu Fang. "A True Dragon is a spirit beast of the ninth grade and above, the host's current rank is too low to qualify for obtaining a True Dragon liver. The system recommends using another dragon's liver."

"The eighth grade Deep Sea Flood Dragon liver, exchange value: 13,000 crystals."

"The eighth grade Ice Flame Demonic Dragon liver, exchange value: 15,000 crystals."

The system suggested two types of dragon liver, but after looking at their price, Bu Fang couldn't help smacking his tongue. He shook his head and chose to forget about it.

The system could provide a higher-grade liver like the ninth grade Extreme Region Ice Dragon liver, but his current rank was too low. He still didn't have the qualification to exchange for it.

He removed the dragon liver which had been sealed by a translucent ice crystal from the refrigerator. This dragon liver was permeated with various strange and queer blood veins. Sealed in ice it seemed as if it was a beautiful amber, releasing a gorgeous luster.

Bu Fang didn't immediately break the ice crystal, but set them aside.

At this moment, it seemed like the temperature in the kitchen suddenly dropped. Bu Fang took out a spirit fruit from the system's inventory. This was a fifth rank spirit fruit. Its pulp was crisp and tender, resembling a fried, shelled peanut just off the stove.

A wisp of green smoke twirled around his hand as he summoned the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife.

Crack! He directly broke the spirit fruit's peel into pieces and exposed the pulp inside. Bu Fang calmly waved his kitchen knife and cut the pulp into grain-like small pieces.

Bu Fang filled a small bowl he prepared earlier with the minced pulp and ignited the stove before placing it on top and frying them. He threw some seasoning in, and it began emitting a rich, sweet fragrance.

Once it was ready, he poured the pulp into a large basin.

After being fried, the fruit pulp became translucent and sparkling, like a mass of tiny diamonds. Each piece emitted a glittering radiance.

After he finished preparing the fruit pulp, Bu Fang took the Flood Dragon liver still sealed inside the ice crystal.

He waved his Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife before gently tapping it just above the center of each side of the ice crystal. Several thin fissures started spreading out from the ice crystal's center, as if they were ferocious dragon whiskers.

He revolved his true energy in his hand and placed his palm on the ice crystal. Immediately, the dragon's chilling energy was sucked up into his palm, causing his body to shiver.

Crack!

His True Energy ferociously surged forward and drilled into those whisker-like fissures, causing the ice to fracture. Piece after piece fell off until only a completely intact dragon liver remained in his hand.

A wild and sweet fragrance spread out from the dragon liver, a special fragrance which only a dragon liver could possess.

This dragon liver was the size of a wash basin, quite small for a dragon liver. After sizing up the dragon liver, Bu Fang immediately cut a small piece off with a wave of his knife.

The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was extremely sharp. It was quite easy for it to cut the dragon liver, despite it being frozen for a long time. If he'd used another knife, it wouldn't have been as easy for him to cut through it.

Bu Fang continued to cut and ground the dragon liver until all that remained was a small piece the size of a palm. Despite becoming quite small, the vein and spiritual energy contained in it were as ferocious as before.

He took a translucent ice crystal and swiftly waved his kitchen knife, making a popsicle out of it. Such a thing wasn't difficult for him to accomplish with his current carving skill level.

He stuffed a third of the dragon liver with several popsicles before beginning the next step of the dish.

Using his Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, he ran it along the veins of the liver, digging out all of them in process before placing them all into a small hole in the middle. Afterwards he picked up the podgy old man's Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar. The next step was going to be the most important one.

He carefully covered the newly-created fissures and the small hole with his True Energy so that the viscous fruit vinegar he'd begin slowly pouring in wouldn't be frozen by the dragon liver's chilling energy.

After the fissures and small hole were filled with fruit vinegar, he took the minced bits of dragon liver he'd cut before and used them to cover and pad the small hole and fissures. This made the dragon liver seem completely intact from the surface, despite its insides being now full of the sweet fruit vinegar.

Even after all of this, he still hadn't finished preparing the Dragon Liver Popsicle. He took the dragon liver and put it inside the fried fruit pulp, still sparkling like diamonds. The fruit pulp moistened and completely covered the dragon liver.

When light shone upon the sparkling fruit pulp, it seemed as though it was glowing. It was as beautiful as a work of art. One couldn't help but exclaim at its perfection as they laid their eyes upon it.

Even Bu Fang himself couldn't help exclaiming after looking at this Dragon Liver Popsicle. It was truly too beautiful.

He took a round cover made out of ice and covered the Dragon Liver Popsicle he'd already placed on a white ceramic plate. A dense cold breath spread out from it, into the surrounding.

Finally, the Dragon Liver Popsicle was complete.

The Dragon Liver Popsicle was different from the rest of the dishes he'd prepared until now, it couldn't even be considered a dish. It could only be considered a dessert; one that was quite complex to prepare.

Its ingredients were precious, and the procedures for preparing it were diverse and complex. They required a high level of True Energy control, and while it didn't require a high level of knife control and carving skill, its requirements were still not low. At the very least, someone like Xiao Xiaolong or Yu Fu couldn't make it.

Bu Fang lifted the white ceramic plate which was covered by the ice cover and leisurely left the kitchen.

The light in the store shone down upon him, and under such light, the ice cover seemed as if it was glowing.

At this moment, there were already many customers in the store, and all of them were attracted to the dish in Bu Fang's hands. Everyone raised their heads and stared at it while exclaiming.

Xiao Xiaolong and Yu Fu stretched their necks, curiously gazing at Owner Bu's new dish.

All of his new dishes had managed to attract their curiosity and amaze them, yet they couldn't help but wonder if this new dish would also manage to shock and astonish the masses.

The podgy old man was the most curious. He was a culinary chef. Moreover, his culinary skill wasn't inferior to a Masterchef. If Ye Ziling hadn't returned and said his dishes tasted inferior to Owner Bu's dishes, he wouldn't have taken the trouble to travel a thousand miles to reach a reclusive place such as the Light Wind Empire.

Although the Light Wind Empire was a human empire, in the vast Hidden Dragon Continent, it wasn't considered anything special. It was still a small corner, even when compared to the land of Southern Border.

He narrowed his eyes and stared at the dish Bu Fang was carrying in his hand. He immediately raised his eyebrow, and with his eyesight, he could clearly make out what Bu Fang was carrying.

"Is that an ice lump?" the old man confusedly whispered.

Bu Fang walked toward the old man and placed the dish in front of him. The corners of Bu Fang's mouth rose upward and he calmly said, "This is my new dish, the Dragon Liver Popsicle. Please have a taste."

Saying this, Bu Fang lifted his slender finger and tapped the ice cover.

TLDR of the whole process:

1. Cut Fruit and mash into pulp

2. Fry fruit pulp into glistening, sugary, fruit jewels
3. Crack open the ice block which contained the Dragon Liver.
4. Absorb the frosty energies from the ice.
5. Process the exterior of the Dragon Liver until only the best part remains.
6. Carve ice block into popsicle stick.
7. Shove ice popsicle a third into the liver.
8. Devein the Dragon Liver and pour the veins into the resulting hole.
9. Infuse Fruit Vinegar into the fissures caused by removing the veins and use True Energy to prevent the Fruit Vinegar from freezing up as it flows.
10. Cover the stuffed Dragon Liver with the minced Dragon Liver harvested from processing the exterior.
11. Dip the covered Dragon Liver with the fried Fruit Pulp.
12. Cover with an ice dome to keep it cold.

The end result is a popsicle that is glistening like a polished ruby. The popsicle itself has a crispy exterior, kind of like rice crispies, and a soft meaty and mushy interior that is bursting with sweet yet sour bits. A refreshing treat for both the eyes and the palette!

Chapter 270: Another Stick Please

Bu Fang's slender and thin finger flicked the ice cover lightly. Immediately, the cover emitted a faint cracking sound.

A beam of white true energy burst forth from Bu Fang's finger, then rumbled unrestrainedly into the ice cover. Subsequently, under everyone's astonishment, the ice cover started to become a blossoming flower bud, unfurling petal by petal.

The ice-cold chilliness within the ice cover soared like a mushroom cloud, ramming into the ceiling and surging out.

One light ray, then two blossomed densely from the white porcelain plate. Everyone's gaze reflected the delicate brilliance.

However, it had gone beyond everyone's expectations. The fragrance they had imagined did not rise up to the brilliance circulating in front of their eyes. There was no pervading strong fragrance. It was something very inconceivable because, to the majority of them, the aroma of the dish was the prerequisite they used to determine whether a dish would be delicious.

The brilliance gradually dwindled. Subsequently, everyone couldn't help but narrow their eyes as they looked at the porcelain plate. On the plate, the ice crystal had shattered into shards. In the middle of it, lay an inlaid diamond ice crystal cube.

"This... can this be eaten?"

"Could Owner Bu have made a mistake... This is an art piece, right? How is this a dish?"

"So beautiful, but can this really be eaten?"

...

The diners were all extremely puzzled. One after another, they were in a bit of doubt. There was no aroma, and upon judging its appearance, it basically did not look like a dish that could be eaten... This was not the dish they imagined. It was not surprising that they would be so skeptical about it.

Even Xiao Xiaolong and Yu Fu were somewhat puzzled. They had never once seen such a weird-looking dish before either.

On the face of the slightly plump old man was an expression of astonishment. However, very quickly, this expression disappeared. He frowned and scrutinized the ice-crystal cube. He then lifted his head and looked at Bu Fang puzzledly.

"Owner Bu... What kind of dish is this?" the old man asked.

He was an experienced chef and had seen a lot of bizarre dishes before. Therefore, he was not too shocked by it. It was just that he truly couldn't tell what kind of dish this was. Hence, he asked Bu Fang directly and hoped the man would give him an explanation.

Nevertheless, Bu Fang curled up his mouth slightly as he smiled and did not speak. He pointed at the popsicle that had suddenly appeared on top of the ice crystal.

The slightly plump old man contracted his pupils as he extended his hand and picked up the popsicle. Immediately, the chilliness permeating from the popsicle made his face tremble slightly.

After he lifted the popsicle, the ice crystal cube unexpectedly came with it.

"Take a bite, you might be surprised," Bu Fang said.

This... Can this really be eaten?

The slightly plump old man glanced at Bu Fang suspiciously. When he saw Bu Fang's unperturbed look, he narrowed his eyes, opened up his mouth and took a small bite at its corner.

"Oh!"

Just as the slightly plump old man bit down, his eyes immediately widened and his pupils shrank. His face was filled with an inconceivable expression.

Xiao Xiaolong and the others were also startled. There's something odd?!

The astonishment in the old man's eyes vanished slightly as he strongly bit down on it. There was no ice-cold feeling of eating a ice cube like he had imagined. The ice crystal on the surface of the cube was not an ice cube at all.

Crunch, Crunch!

The old man took a small bite at the corner of the dish and started to chew. Immediately, there were the sounds of crunchiness of nipping into a spirit fruit. At this moment, the more the old man chewed, the more apprehensive he got. On the surface was the crunchiness of a pulp, in the middle was a strange and soft flavor like a soft mud. Within it, there was a familiar flavor mixed. It was his Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar!

That diamond-looking thing was unexpectedly a pulp... Oh! Right... it's the fifth grade Jadeite Fruit! If that fruit pulp was stir-fried, it would turn glittery and translucent like an ice crystal. Furthermore, there was a concentrated aroma in it that would blossom and burst out the moment it entered one's mouth.

The old man closed his eyes, savoring the concentrated and not greasy pulp aroma that was blossoming in his mouth. The pulp was gentle like jade and the meat paste was mellow and rich, making the Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar even more sweet and sour. This caused him to be permeated into a peculiar ambience in an instant.

All of a sudden, it was as if a light ray had passed by in a flash in front of his eyes, his entire being turned rigid, when he swallowed the delicacy in his mouth down. After falling into his stomach, it seemed like a roaring Flood Dragon that was about to burst out as its leg stomped down, causing the whole mountain peak to tremble violently.

"This... Could this be a real dragon liver?!" The old man looked at Bu Fang unconfidently while his heart was filled with shock.

Bu Fang nodded his head, answering the shock in the old man's heart.

"This is the liver of a seventh grade spirit beast, the Frozen Domain Flood Dragon. Even though it can not be compared to the tastiness of a true dragon's liver, it's compatible with the stir-fried jadeite fruit, making it even tastier. Finally... I specially added your Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar, causing the taste of this dish to increase by another level. Vinegar is the key to this dish," Bu Fang said.

"Without this vinegar... I truly have no intentions of cooking this dish."

The old man nodded earnestly, somewhat proud of himself. Subsequently, his gaze shone when he looked at the cube as he bit it mouthful after mouthful. The aroma burst forth within his body, causing him to feel blessed with the desire to close his eyes. Subconsciously, he felt as if he had sat cross-legged on the back of the Flood Dragon and was following the creature as it spread its wings and soared.

Crack!

Unconsciously, the old man had already finished eating the popsicle. With a bite, he had bitten the popsicle into shards. Losing the support of true energy, the popsicle stick melted into ice-cold water.

"Delicious! Truly delicious... Old man, I had never once tasted such a peculiar delicacy before. This kind of delicacy is a good match with my fruit vinegar. Hahahaha!" The old man started to laugh carefreely.

When they saw how excited the old man had become after finishing the delicacy, the surrounding people all felt like their hearts had been messed with by something.

Xiao Xiaolong and Yu Fu were in extreme astonishment. They looked at Bu Fang in admiration. He truly deserved to be called Owner Bu, to be able to make a multitude of bizarre things.

"Owner Bu... is it possible to make another stick for me? I will supply you with the fruit vinegar!" The old man licked his lips. He crinkled his eyes and laughed as he looked at Bu Fang.

At this moment, he was certain that Ye Ziling did not lie. Owner Bu may look young, but his culinary skills had reached a unimaginable degree. This Dragon Liver Popsicle exceeded the understanding he had for the dishes he tasted in the past as it was filled with a new and odd feeling. Furthermore, that taste... had practically left him a rich aftertaste.

"Sure, but I will be charging a fee for it. 800 crystal for a portion," Bu Fang reclined on his chair as he shot a quick glance at the old man, then his lips curled as he said.

Didn't you despise the dish for not being tasty before? Weren't you boasting arrogantly over here before?

Why don't you continue boasting?!

Bu Fang crossed his arms around his chest and looked at the old man indifferently. When the surrounding people heard the price Bu Fang quoted, they inhaled in a mouthful of cold air.

800 crystals... Was Owner Bu trying to rob people?

This was just a dish...

"Sire should have tasted the difference and peculiarity in this dish and also the true energy contained in it. There was also the tastiness of the dish and in addition to the difficulty of making the dish... It is worth 800 crystals," Bu Fang said.

The old man's complexion was in extreme pain. That's right, with his culinary standards, he was naturally able to tell the rareness in this dish. It didn't matter if it was the true energy in his body that had started to revolve faster without his knowing or the meticulous control of true energy used to make this dish, it made him gasp in admiration.

A dish, 800 crystals... and this was also under the circumstances of him providing the Eight Spirit Fruit Vinegar. Indeed worth it.

"Sure! I am convinced of Owner Bu's workmanship. This is 800 crystals. I'll have to trouble Owner Bu to make another plate of it for me." The old man gritted his teeth and took out a bulging bag that he placed on the table. His gaze regarded Bu Fang luminously.

Bu Fang stood up and waved his hand casually. He put away the crystal and opened his mouth afterwards.

"If you want to eat the Dragon Liver Popsicle, please come back tomorrow. Oh... Do remember to leave behind the fruit vinegar," Bu Fang said. After he finished speaking, he turned around and walked to the kitchen.

The old man was taken aback. He did not get angry, and his smile was very straightforward. He asked Yu Fu to go to the kitchen to bring out a saucer to pour some fruit vinegar in. After that, he stored the gourd as he hummed in a minor key and left the small store.

If he said tomorrow, tomorrow it is. In any case, he was not in a rush. He was extremely interested in the Dragon Liver Popsicle. To be able to utilize his fruit vinegar in such a way on a delicacy made his heart feel somewhat itchy. He must savor the dish tomorrow and must find the technique to make it. Once he returned, he was going to try cooking it himself. This way, his fruit vinegar would have ample opportunities to shine!

After the old man left, those diners who were standing in a circle also dispersed. The business hours was also about to end for today, so Ouyang Xiaoyi and Xiao Xiaolong bid farewell to Bu Fang and left the small store. The door shutters joined together and the operations came to an end.

"Rest early. Tomorrow, I am going to inspect on your knife work and carving skills." Just as Bu Fang was about to return to his room, he spoke to Yu Fu, who was about to enter the kitchen to practice her dishes, causing the latter to be taken aback slightly.

"Owner Bu will be inspecting our knife work and carving skill..." Yu Fu's complexion was somewhat odd. Wouldn't Xiao Xiaolong be in deep sh*t?