

Valiant Life 231

Chapter 231: Mirror Box Tofu

There were only three of them and there was no need for so much food. They just wanted to gather around and reminisce about the past.

Xiao Yan was a local from Zhongzhou. She met Bai Ke at a village near Zhongzhou. It was quite interesting. Xiao Yan was working in Zhongzhou and her first job was a service crew in Bai Ke's shop. They fell in love after some time and she became Bai Ke's girlfriend.

But Lin Fan viewed it differently. He thought Bai Ke was a witty businessman. Initially, he had had to pay Xiao Yan \$2000 a month but he could save on that now. Furthermore, he got himself a girlfriend as well. Where could he find such a deal anywhere else? He still benefited from that regardless of how you were to look at it.

Xiao Yan wasn't pretty but she wasn't ugly either. She looked elegant and was friendly. She always had a smile on her face. She was probably the silly girl that laughed a lot back in high school. However, a girl that liked to laugh was usually lucky. It was something that was proven in Metaphysics.

"Lil' Ke, don't cook too many dishes. It's enough already." There were four dishes and a bowl of soup on the table. There was even a pig's head. Bai Ke was still busy in the kitchen and he was thinking of cooking another dish.

"Coming, coming!" Bai Ke carried a bowl of spicy duck's blood and beef tripe soup. Then, he took a bottle of the finest white wine he had.

When Lin Fan saw the bottle of white wine, he trembled. "I don't drink white wine, I drink beer."

But Bai Ke wasn't agreeable to it, "It's okay. Drink slowly. I don't expect you to finish it in one gulp."

Lin Fan didn't say much. It was the first time meeting him in a long time and they had to have a good chat. Bai Ke opened the bottle of white wine and poured a cup for Lin Fan. It was a small cup which weighed about a hundred grams.

"Young Fan, how're things in Shanghai?" Bai Ke asked.

"Things are fine." Lin Fan ate some dishes and asked, "What about you?"

Bai Ke said helplessly, "The business isn't good these days. There are so many competitors. But it's enough to make ends meet. Come, try my dishes and tell me how they taste."

Lin Fan smiled and took a piece of bright red beef tripe. "This dish was your aunt's best dish. It was delicious. Let me see if you've learned well."

He placed it in his mouth with the chopsticks. Bai Ke smiled at Lin Fan and asked, "How was it?"

Lin Fan placed his chopsticks on the table and raised all ten fingers. Bai Ke was elated when he saw that but then, Lin Fan took away a hand. He waved only five fingers in front of him.

Bai Ke looked extremely helpless as he dragged his voice, "Only 50%..."

Lin Fan smiled. "Alright, it's really not bad. I remember you couldn't even cook shredded chicken with capsicum properly. Now, you can prepare a table of dishes. That's awesome."

Bai Ke was elated when he heard his compliments. "Of course. I made an effort to learn it. My cooking skills have definitely improved."

"Here, let's have a toast."

Xiao Yan sat beside them and just smiled. She listened attentively and didn't interrupt them at all. Sometimes, when she heard something hilarious, she would add a sentence or two.

The two of them were talking about their high school days. They were extremely happy reminiscing about the past. They talked about how they skipped classes together. Lin Fan smiled. "I couldn't get into band one because I followed you guys."

Bai Ke chuckled, "Keep bragging..."

Then, a customer came.

Xiao Yan immediately stood up and served the customers. One of the customers looked at the interior of the shop and furrowed her brows. "Are we really eating here?"

The middle-aged man said, "This is the one. The other shops are too full. I don't know how long we'd have to wait before we'd get to eat our food."

Xiao Yan stood beside them and smiled. The customers were still discussing among themselves. It wasn't even confirmed if they were going to eat there.

The best time of the day for business for a restaurant was in the afternoon and evening time.

It was almost 7:30 pm and there was only one group of customers. For a restaurant on a food street, the business was considered extremely bad.

In the end, the customers agreed to eat there. It was a four-seater table and there wasn't enough space. They shifted to another table and it became a six-seater, which was just nice.

Lin Fan looked at Bai Ke. "I'm okay, you can go ahead and cook for them."

Bai Ke nodded., "Alright, wait here. I'll be fast."

Lin Fan looked at the time and realized how bad the business was. Then, he looked at the number of customers outside. There were a lot of townsfolk but none of them noticed this shop. Most of them wanted to go for the nicely decorated shops with signature dishes.

There were more youngsters in the crowds and these unique shops were more popular with them.

This shop looked extremely old and it naturally wasn't their first choice.

Lin Fan sat there alone and ate the dishes. He wasn't anxious at all. It was good that they had business. A restaurant owner should be fearful when there's no business.

But Bai Ke's dishes were average home-cooked food. They weren't special and weren't very appealing to people.

His skills were a part of the problem. The other problem was his shop.

When the cooking skills weren't that great, the interior of the shop had to be top-notch.

If the cooking skills were awesome, even if the shop just had a table outside, there would be people fighting over it.

Soon, a dish was served. The customers started to eat and Xiao Yan was getting busier.

Then, another group of customers came in.

Lin Fan was feeling pretty good. It looked like Bai Ke's business was decent, just that the customers were a little late.

Xiao Yan smiled even wider when she saw another group of customers enter the shop. After all, who wouldn't be happy with good business? However, the two groups of customers started to urge them for their food."

"Waitress, could you rush our food? It's been almost twenty minutes. I only received two dishes so far. It's too slow. Can you just refund us? We want to leave for another restaurant," said a customer at the first table.

Xiao Yan immediately went forward. "Sorry, these vegetables are fresh and they have to be washed. That's why there is a delay. I'll go rush the people in the kitchen."

"Hurry up please."

When Xiao Yan entered the kitchen, the customers started to grumble.

"I already told you that we should've gone somewhere else. The dishes are taking so long to come and the taste is average. The shredded chicken with capsicum is a little salty..."

"Just put up with it and eat a little. We'll just wait for one more dish and our soup. We'll cancel the rest of the dishes. We have to fill our stomachs for our journey later."

...

Lin Fan didn't say much as the customers had reason to complain. The dishes were served pretty slowly. Then, he stood up and entered the kitchen.

Bai Ke was extremely busy in the kitchen. The spatula in his hands didn't even stop moving. When he saw Lin Fan, he said anxiously, "Young Fan, don't worry. I'll be there soon. Just wait for me."

Lin Fan chuckled, "It's okay. Just do what you have to do. I'm not in a rush. I saw that the customers were in a rush. I'll cook some food for the customers as a gift for them. Just ignore me and continue with what you're doing."

The kitchen wasn't big but it had two woks.

Bai Ke was a friend of Lin Fan and the restaurant was a place filled with their high school memories. Obviously, Lin Fan wanted it to do better.

What could he do?

The dishes couldn't be too complicated and there couldn't be too little ingredients. As for the taste, he thought that his cooking skills were decent enough.

That's all he thought was needed.

There was a dish in Jiangsu cuisine that was simple, yet difficult to make. It was the Mirror Box Tofu. A traditional Jiangsu dish.

Chapter 232: Appeasing your restless hearts

Lin Fan didn't interfere with whatever Bai Ke was doing. He just got Xiao Yan to help him take some ingredients.

There were prawns, pork, onions, ginger, tomato sauce, eggs and tofu...

He gently sliced the prawn's head off and took out the shrimp intestines. There were a total of ten customers outside. He kept ten prawns and used the remaining six prawns to make prawn paste.

Bai Ke saw Lin Fan preparing food in his peripheral vision. He asked curiously, "What are you making?"

"Jiangsu Mirror Box Tofu. Have you heard of it?" Lin Fan chuckled.

Bai Ke shook his head. It was something he had never heard before. He didn't know what dish it was but he didn't want to bother too much about it. The customers outside were getting impatient. He wanted to quickly prepare the food to prevent any conflict.

Lin Fan mixed the pork with the prawns and added several condiments. Meanwhile, the ten prawns were marinated with eggs, starch, and salt.

He placed the tofu on his hand and felt the texture of it. It felt pretty good. He began to cut the tofu up and the pieces of tofu fell onto the chopping board. They were of uniform size and shape.

The key to cooking the dish well was controlling the fire. He would be deep frying it later so that the tofu would have a golden crust. It was easy to over-fry it and the hardness had to be just right. Therefore, it required constant monitoring too.

An average chef wouldn't mind if it was over-fried. However, it was different for Lin Fan. He believed that cooking is a work of art and it had to be perfect.

Sizzle

The tofu was being fried in the wok and he took it out shortly after. He placed it aside and began to drain the oil from it.

Then, he started to prepare the sauce. It was a key step in preparing the Mirror Box Tofu. If the sauce was well prepared, the dish would've been 70% done. The remaining 30% depended on the tofu.

Bai Ke was drenched in perspiration. It was exhausting to cook especially when the customers outside were rushing him which made him even more anxious. Meanwhile, Lin Fan wasn't anxious at all. He just took his time.

He gently sliced an opening on the surface of the tofu and took out about one-third of the tofu. Then, he stuffed the minced meat and prawn paste into it. After that, he took a shelled prawn and placed it on top of the minced meat. The curved prawn was shaped just like a gear on top of the tofu.

The sauce had been prepared and the pieces of tofu were placed into the sauce to let it simmer.

Gradually, an aroma arose in the kitchen. Bai Ke was stunned and he froze when he smelled the fragrance. "Where is the aroma coming from?"

"Here," Lin Fan said as he pointed at the pot.

Bai Ke was in disbelief. "How could it be..."

Lin Fan chuckled, "You can have a sniff."

Bai Ke placed the spatula down and leaned over to take a sniff. He was stunned. It was as if he didn't recognize Lin Fan anymore. "This was made by you?"

"Why? You still don't believe me? This is Mirror Box Tofu." Lin Fan took a few sniffs and realized it was time to take the tofu out of the pot. When he opened the lid of the pot, the aroma filled the entire kitchen. It even went to the dining area.

The customers were stunned when they smelled the fragrance. "It smells so good. What is it?"

"I think it's from the kitchen."

"Waitress, what's that? Why does it smell so good?"

Xiao Yan was stunned. She didn't know what it was. When she walked into the kitchen, she saw two beautiful dishes that she had never seen before. She didn't know what they were.

Lin Fan washed some vegetables and placed it on the side of the plate as garnish. Then, he smiled. "How is that? This is Mirror Box Tofu."

He was extremely satisfied with his work. If it could be given marks, it would definitely score 101 points out of 100. He wasn't even afraid of giving it one more point than full marks. It was that good.

Bai Ke looked at Lin Fan suspiciously. It was as if he had seen a ghost. The smell was unbearable and he immediately said, "Let me have a try."

slap

Lin Fan smacked Bai Ke's hand. "This isn't for you. It's for the customers outside. They are all grumbling. Quickly prepare the dishes."

"Huh..." Bai Ke was extremely tempted. He hadn't expected Lin Fan to know how to cook. Furthermore, the taste and appearance of the dish shocked him.

The cubes of tofu were spectacularly placed together. Especially when the sauce was poured over them, it was a beautiful sight. It caused him to crave for the tofu.

"Xiao Yan, help to take the dishes out." Lin Fan carried a plate and asked Xiao Yan to take the other.

When Xiao Yan carried the plate, the aroma filled her nostrils. She forcefully swallowed her saliva as she looked at the dish.

Outside!

Lin Fan placed the dish for four onto the table for four. Then, he smiled. "Sorry, everyone, for making you wait. This Mirror Box Tofu is a gift from us. When I eat outside, I hate it when the food is served slowly too. Everyone just wants to have a good and hearty meal. It's infuriating to only receive two dishes after twenty minutes. I hope you won't mind us, the other dishes are coming soon."

The customers were reasonable people. When they saw that the staff was so polite, they didn't say anything else. Although the aroma of the Mirror Box Tofu was superb, they had not tried it yet.

"Please hurry up then, thanks for the dish too."

The customers were stunned when they looked at the Mirror Box Tofu on the table.

The dish looked really beautiful and vibrant. It had the look of those dishes that appeared on the gourmet magazines.

Lin Fan thanked them and said, "Alright, everyone, you should start eating it soon. It won't taste as nice when it's cold."

The customers at the two tables took a piece of tofu each. The sauce on the tofu slowly dripped down and it gave off an extremely mesmerizing fragrance. Then, they took a bite.

Suddenly, everyone became quiet.

The customers' expressions suddenly changed. They were all in disbelief.

The sweet and sour flavor exploded in their mouth. The tenderness of the minced meat along with the taste of the shrimps, tofu, and condiments flooded their mouths in waves.

Then, the customers felt as if they were in a food paradise, especially when the tofu melted in their mouths like ice. Their rage had been appeased by the dish.

"Delicious..." A customer recovered from his indulgence. Then, he immediately ate the remaining piece of the tofu and took a deep breath as he chewed on it.

Xiao Yan was stunned when she saw what was happening.

Bai Ke was speechless as he came out of the kitchen with another dish. The expressions of the customers said it all.

Lin Fan chuckled. Delicious food was the easiest way to appease people.

Then, he looked at Bai Ke and smiled. "Quickly prepare the other dishes. The customers are waiting."

Bai Ke nodded. "Okay, okay..."

He was stunned. Since when had Young Fan known how to cook? That was too unreal. Furthermore, the customers finished every single drop of sauce on the plates too.

Chapter 233: Won over

The taste of the Mirror Box Tofu had stunned the two tables of diners. After they cleared it, they stared at Lin Fan, then looked at Xiao Yan. "This dish, could you give us another serving of it? We'll pay for it."

"Yeah, we'll pay. It's too delicious. This flavor is insane. With the minced meat and shrimps inside the tofu, this taste is simply irresistible."

The diners had all been enraptured by the dish. Xiao Yan didn't know what to say. They didn't know how to make the dish.

Lin Fan smiled. "My apologies, everyone. This dish is limited not for sale. I'm just a friend of the owner's but if you have the opportunity, you can come here again for another taste. Of course, the taste may not be the same but it will still leave everyone satisfied."

The diners had no choice but this time, they remembered this dish.

After some time, they sent off the two tables of diners. As the diners left, they were extremely reluctant as if they were still immersed in the flavor of the dish and couldn't forget it.

As Xiao Yan was cleaning up the shop, Bai Ke went next to Lin Fan. "Young Fan, how do you know how to cook? Your dish was so well done too."

Lin Fan grinned. "You didn't even eat it, how would you know it's good?"

Bai Ke said excitedly, "I'm not blind. I saw the expressions on the diners' faces. They were all captivated by your dish."

Lin Fan patted Bai Ke on the shoulder. "Seeing how you are, could it be that you want to learn? If you want to learn, I can teach you."

"Ah!" Bai Ke's face was beaming with excitement but then it turned gloomy again. "You won't even be in Zhongzhou for long. Learning to cook requires time. How would I be able to learn properly?"

"Don't worry, I won't be teaching you many dishes. In fact, it definitely won't be possible to teach you everything. There are many shops nowadays with one or two popular signature dishes. I could teach you to cook Mirror Box Tofu and one other dish. You won't be able to make it as tasty as mine, but as long as you reach a certain standard, it would be enough to make those diners cry out that it's a brilliant delicacy."

That was really what Lin Fan thought. Jiangsu cuisine is a cuisine by itself, but it also contains some Jinling dishes, Yangzhou dishes, Suxi dishes, Xuhai dishes and dishes from other parts of China. It contains a diverse range. If it wasn't for the Encyclopedia, there wouldn't be many people who would dare to bang their chests and say 'I can cook all the dishes of a cuisine perfectly and better than anyone else in the world'.

Even top chefs who were masters in certain cuisines wouldn't dare to guarantee that they could cook all the dishes in a cuisine very deliciously.

After all, knowing how to cook something and cooking it well were two completely different things.

Therefore, Lin Fan was prepared to teach Bai Ke just two dishes. If he could cook them to a certain standard, he could rely on these two dishes to make his restaurant become a well-known restaurant and his business would naturally flourish.

If it was someone else, Lin Fan would have been too lazy to care. If they wanted to learn from him, he would just tell them to get lost but Bai Ke was different. For one, he used to be a schoolmate of his and they got together quite well. Secondly, this shop held a fond place in his memories of his high school days. He had eaten here so many times in the past, how could he just forget about it?

He wanted to help Bai Ke. If he just gave money or things to Bai Ke straight, from what Lin Fan knew, Bai Ke would definitely reject them. He might even think that Lin Fan was pitying him and it would result in a rift in their relationship that would be difficult to fix.

However, teaching Bai Ke to cook these two dishes was a different story.

To cook a dish may seem simple to most people but to cook a dish to its best taste isn't something that can be done without the guidance of a master. Even top chefs, when they want to create new dishes, have to go through countless failures to create a strong foundation of understanding of the compatibility of different ingredients. Only when the flavor produced is to their liking, will they dare to use those ingredients to create a new dish.

Lin Fan's suggestion moved Bai Ke's heart. It wasn't that he didn't want to have this signature dish but he didn't have the ability. In order to improve his restaurant, he had read numerous cooking books but even if he followed the instructions, the taste his cooking produced wasn't satisfactory. If he hadn't spent some time learning from his Mom, he might not have been able to survive till then.

"Young Fan, I don't remember you learning how to cook. Where did you learn it?" asked Bai Ke.

Lin Fan smiled mysteriously. There was a place mentioned in the Encyclopedia, New East Cuisine School, specializing in the Eight Great Chinese Cuisines. He had to have learned his culinary skills from somewhere...

"At New East," replied Lin Fan.

Bai Ke was puzzled, he had no idea where that was. "Where's this New East? How come I've never heard of it?"

Lin Fan had no idea what this New East was either, so he made up a story, "It's a training workshop. Later on, the students got involved in a scuffle and a number of people got injured, so the workshop got sued and was closed down."

Bai Ke was still puzzled. He had never heard anything like that before. But when he thought about it, there were many mini-workshops around so maybe he just didn't know about this one. However, for this workshop to get sued like that because their students got into a fight was a shame.

"Why don't you start teaching me now? I learn very fast," Bai Ke said.

"What are you going to learn now? You called me here to reminisce about the old times. If you want to learn, then start tomorrow. Let's not talk about other things and drink some wine first. There shouldn't be any more customers coming in," said Lin Fan.

They drank all the way till eleven. Lin Fan's head was dizzy. He had not thought that he would be finished after just 200ml. But at least he could still stabilize himself. He rejected Bai Ke's offer to send him back and called a cab for himself.

At his apartment entrance, he took out his keys.

At such an hour, his Mom and Dad must have been asleep. He wondered what nonsense Wang Ming Yang talked about with his Mom and Dad that night. But it didn't matter. The next morning, he would have to wake up early and leave the house quietly, so even if he wanted to ask them, he wouldn't be able to.

He pushed open the door.

The living room was full of noise.

"Aunty, don't worry, this is on me. Uncle, let's drink..."

"Ah, he's back..."

Lin Fan stood at the entrance, looking at those familiar silhouettes in the living room. He was momentarily stunned. Then, he looked at the time. It was almost half past eleven but they were still not done. They must have had a lot to talk about.

A few gazes fixated on Lin Fan, causing his little heart to start quickening its beat. This is too f*cked up.

His Mom sat there and said, "You little brat, come here quickly. Mom wants to ask you some questions."

Lin Fan was startled, then he suddenly started shaking and rocking. "Ah, my head is dizzy. I drank too much today. I can't handle it, I need to go to sleep..."

At that moment, he started to walk unstably, right towards his room. He didn't dare to chat with his Mom. He would rather play dead. He had to wait until Wang Ming Yang and the rest left, then get a clearer picture of what they had talked about and come up with a plan.

Of course, how could she not see through her own son? "Trying to act drunk again."

Wang Ming Yang smiled. "Quick, come over here. Auntie said that she won't rush you to get married."

When Lin Fan heard that, he stopped in his tracks. "Ah, my head isn't hurting anymore. Ma, why are you guys not done yet?"

Lin Fan had relaxed slightly after hearing Wang Ming Yang's words. It seemed that Wang Ming Yang hadn't disappointed him. He must have been won over by Lin Fan.

At the dining table.

Lin Fan's Mom said in a sincere tone, "Son, Lil' Wang told us about this situation. We are really relieved but you have to remember, those are good young ladies. You can't be in two minds about it. Even if you have to pick, after you've picked someone, you can't cheat the other lady's feelings and you definitely can't cause her any hurt. If I find out about it, I'll make sure that you won't have any more good days."

Lin Fan took a deep breath. "Ma, don't worry. Don't you guys trust me?"

Mom nodded. "Yeah, we trust you."

After that, everyone chatted for a bit at the dining table.

Wang Ming Yang and Xu Zi Le prepared to leave. It was really getting late.

Lin Fan's Mom didn't urge them to stay any longer. "Quick, send Lil' Wang downstairs."

Lin Fan acknowledged.

In the lift.

Wang Ming Yang was smiling. "How was it? Amazing, right? You trust me now, right?"

Lin Fan gave him a thumbs up. "Amazing."

"Haha..." Wang Ming Yang laughed. When they got to the ground floor, he held onto Xu Zi Le and they left into their couple's world.

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Chapter 234: Imparting godly skills

The next day!

He was still in his dreams when Mom came in and pulled the curtains open, letting in the sunlight. "What time is it already? You're still sleeping! Hurry up and get up for breakfast!"

Lin Fan opened his eyes groggily and looked at the time. "Ma, it's only 7.30. Let me sleep a while more."

Mom said, "Get up for breakfast quickly. If you don't have your breakfast early in the morning, it'll affect your stomach. Hurry up, stop dawdling."

There was no choice, he couldn't keep sleeping. He finished brushing his teeth and washing his face but even then, he was still groggy.

At the dining table, Mom questioned him about some things. He answered them in his daze. What was there to ask about? They had already talked about everything yesterday. However, to his Mom, even if she asked him questions over and over again, it wouldn't be enough.

Dad just sat there without saying a single word. In this house, Mom was the boss.

At that moment, the phone rang.

It was Fraud Tian. "When are you going to be back, kid? The townsfolk are getting impatient."

Lin Fan smiled and said, "Soon, in the next few days."

Fraud Tian said, "Alright then. If you don't come back for much longer, these people are going to cause trouble."

After hanging up, Lin Fan smiled to himself. Those townsfolk were still missing his scallion pancakes. Not eating the scallion pancakes for this while has gotten them all stirred up.

After saying bye to Dad and Mom, Lin Fan left. When he reached the ground floor, he gave a call to Bai Ke.

Bai Ke answered, "Young Fan, what's up so early in the morning?"

He sounded like he was still sleeping. If Lin Fan couldn't sleep, he couldn't let Bai Ke sleep either. "Get up quickly and go to the shop. Don't you want to learn some godly skills?"

When Bai Ke heard that, he snapped out of his daze, "I'm coming, I'm coming..."

He had been thinking so much about learning those dishes that he had almost gone crazy, especially after seeing the expressions on the faces of those two tables of diners the previous night. He couldn't even sleep soundly. He hadn't even tried those dishes, but seeing the expressions on the diners' faces was enough to give him an idea of its taste.

It must have been first-rate.

Bai Ke stood at the entrance waiting. When he saw Lin Fan's silhouette, he ran forward excitedly as if he saw something incredible.

Lin Fan smiled. "Looks like you're excited. You'll learn the first dish today. You have to put in some effort, I'll be going back to Shanghai in a few days."

Bai Ke banged his chest and said, "Don't worry, I'll be very serious. With a Master like you guiding me, I'll definitely be ready."

Xiao Yan was packing the things in the shop. She had bought some vegetables back too. When she saw Lin Fan, she was all smiles. She knew quite a number of Bai Ke's friends but those that she knew were mostly fair-weather friends. Even though she had only seen them interact a little the previous night, she could tell that Lin Fan was Bai Ke's true friend.

For Bai Ke to have a true friend, she was very happy.

In the kitchen.

Lin Fan changed his clothes and put on the apron. He washed his hands and at the same time, he cleaned the wok a little.

"The dish I'm teaching you today is last night's Mirror Box Tofu. This dish was developed in the 20th century in the 40s by Liu Jun Ying. It's an improvisation of the common Tofu with Minced Meat. This Mirror Box Tofu is also known as Gold Embedded White Jade Box," said Lin Fan slowly.

Bai Ke was confused, "Young Fan, who is this Liu Jun Ying? He actually created such a delicious dish?"

Lin Fan was stunned. He didn't know who this Liu Jun Ying was either. This was all information from the Encyclopedia. He had another question too. "Have you ever seen this dish before?"

Bai Ke shook his head. "Never seen it before. Although I'm not some great chef, I don't think there is such a dish in Jiangsu cuisine. In fact, I did a search on the internet after going back last night and I couldn't find this dish either."

Until then, Lin Fan had never found out where this Encyclopedia came from. He also didn't understand some of the information in it, like that song 'Sky's singer 'Wang Fei'. He had searched for her before, but he couldn't find such a singer. Then, that Liu Jun Ying from the Encyclopedia must not have existed either.

"This dish probably didn't get very popular, so not many people know about it. Let's get back to making the dish." Lin Fan could only put it that way.

Bai Ke was eager to learn, so he didn't bother about it.

Xiao Yan had bought all the ingredients for Mirror Box Tofu and placed them at a side. At that moment, she stood next to Lin Fan with a pen and paper in her hands, recording everything that Lin Fan said.

Lin Fan took the ingredients into his hands and nodded. "Whether a dish turns out well, apart from the chef's ability, it also depends on the freshness of the ingredients. These prawns and pork have to be chosen well. They absolutely cannot be of low-quality, otherwise, it would have a significant effect on its texture.

Bai Ke was nodding from the side. At that moment, Lin Fan was like a teacher while Bai Ke was his student, standing there and listening attentively to the teacher's teachings.

"The pork must have alternating layers of fat and lean meat. The fat dissolves when placed in the mouth while the lean meat maintains its chewiness, giving it an improved texture." Lin Fan's hands kept moving. He removed the head of the prawns, then deveined the shrimp, getting all the ingredients prepared.

Bai Ke watched without looking away for a moment, fearing that he might miss an important point. To him, for Young Fan to be able to teach him this dish, he was way too fortunate.

When a disciple wants to learn a skill from a master, he has to see if the master is willing. Right then, Lin Fan was slowly teaching him, painstakingly showing him all the steps and revealing all the secrets to him.

At that moment, the wok had heated up and the oil started to boil up.

"Look closely now. This is an important step in this dish. If you don't learn this step, the dish will basically be ruined. "Lin Fan placed a piece of tofu into the oil-filled wok.

Bai Ke watched with maximum focus.

Lin Fan pointed to the tofu in the wok. "Look, as the tofu is placed in the oil, its outer layer gradually turns golden. At this point, you need to watch its maturity closely. Don't let the tofu get overcooked but make sure it's not too soft either. Watch carefully as it's outer appearance changes. Alright, remove it from the wok."

Lin Fan taught meticulously, Bai Ke studied attentively and Xiao Yan recorded everything detailedly.

'Ginger and scallions are added to the wok for fragrance.

Add a suitable amount of tomato sauce, then quickly stir-fry.

Add water.

A suitable amount of dark soy sauce.

Add oyster sauce, sugar, and other condiments.'

These steps appeared simple but knowing how much of each ingredient to add was a skill too.

If nobody was there to teach you, even if you stood there watching, you would never be able to produce the same kind of taste.

At that moment, Bai Ke was really grateful for Lin Fan. He completely explained in detail all the steps involved and even how much of each ingredient to use. It was the core of the dish explained.

'On low heat, put on the lid.'

Ten minutes later.

A serving of Mirror Box Tofu emerged from the wok.

Lin Fan wiped his hands, "You guys can have a taste. Remember this taste."

Bai Ke looked at the delicacy before him, at its exquisite appearance, its gorgeous colors, and his taste buds couldn't resist it any longer. He took a piece of tofu and bit into it. Suddenly, his expression changed completely.

He then looked at Lin Fan in disbelief. "This is way too good..."

The expression that Bai Ke was making was similar to those that the townsfolk used to make when they ate Lin Fan's scallion pancakes. That devilish expression really looked exaggerated.

"Wife, try it. It's really really delicious." Bai Ke resisted the urge to finish the piece of tofu as he placed the rest of it into Xiao Yan's mouth.

After Xiao Yan ate it, she looked at Lin Fan with a face of astonishment.

How could it be so good?

Lin Fan said, "What I did just now, have you remembered it?"

Bai Ke nodded. "I've remembered it. But for me to produce this taste, I'm afraid it will be really difficult."

Lin Fan chuckled. It isn't just difficult. It is extremely difficult.

Lin Fan had the Encyclopedia's knowledge, so the taste he produced was definitely the best in the world. What he was skeptic about was that there was probably some kind of effect added to his dish from the Encyclopedia. This dish already tasted great by itself but with the additional effect from the Encyclopedia, it was definitely earth shattering.

'Encyclopedic Points +1'

...

Chapter 235: A huge blow

After Bai Ke and Xiao Yan tasted the Mirror Box Tofu, they kept on savoring its extraordinary aftertaste. It was a taste that made people feel carefree and at ease.

At that moment, they understood just how delicious that Mirror Box Tofu was and why those two tables of diners from the previous night had behaved so maniacally.

Bai Ke was full of confidence. He believed that he would definitely be able to reproduce that flavor.

Lin Fan and Xiao Yan stood aside as Bai Ke began to try making the Mirror Box Tofu.

The steps involved in making this dish weren't complicated and were easy to remember but as Lin Fan saw it, if Bai Ke really wanted to get a grasp of it, he would have to try numerous times.

Not long after...

Bai Ke was elated, "My Mirror Box Tofu is done. My dear gourmets, please have a taste."

Xiao Yan said, "This one's appearance seems much worse than Brother Lin's. It doesn't look good at all."

Bai Ke smiled embarrassedly, then said, "Just because it doesn't look good doesn't mean it won't taste good. I believe it will taste very good."

Lin Fan said, "Let Xiao Yan taste it. As a diner, she will critique this dish."

Xiao Yan picked up her chopsticks and had a try of the dish as Bai Ke waited in anticipation.

"The tofu is a little hard and this taste is very sweet," said Xiao Yan but when she saw Bai Ke's disappointed expression, she added, "It's still alright though."

Lin Fan said from the side, "Xiao Yan, you shouldn't try to praise him. If it's good, it's good. If it's not good, then it's not. We are trying to train him, not lie to him."

Xiao Yan was a little startled, then she understood and her tone changed, "It tastes bad. It's hard to swallow."

"Ah..." Bai Ke was really hurt. It was too big of a hit. "Even if it's bad, you don't have to put it so bluntly. At least give me a little confidence."

Lin Fan smiled and said, "That's enough. Honest feedback allows one to improve. Pretense will only make one overconfident. I don't even have to taste your dish to know how it tastes. The tofu was in the wok for too long. The shrimps and pork must be sliced evenly. If some of them are big and some of them are small like this, it'll affect the texture. There were too many condiments. You have to be aware of the flavor. You only need a suitable amount of tomato sauce. It isn't supposed to be so overpowering so why would you make it so sour?"

Bai Ke sighed. It was a huge blow to him. Then, he gathered up his confidence and said, "I don't believe it. Just wait, I'll keep cooking."

Lin Fan smiled as he watched Bai Ke. Although it was a simple dish, to make it well required some effort.

At that moment, Bai Ke started getting to work again. Although he hadn't reproduced the flavor that Lin Fan made, after trying that dish made by Lin Fan, he had full confidence in this dish.

Because he knew that if he could make that dish well, it would definitely be a signature dish.

Lin Fan was a stern teacher. Every sentence from him left Bai Ke overwrought. And he was starting to get stricter. In making a dish, every step is important.

Appearance, smell, and taste.

Only with these three attributes can something be considered a real dish.

"Cut the tofu precisely. They must be of the same size and the edges cannot be broken. A dish's first impression lies in its appearance. If it doesn't even have this, then it can never be a signature dish."

Bai Ke said, "Oh, oh, I'll start again."

"Look at the tofu's outer layer. When it's golden and shiny, remove it from the wok. It'll be overcooked if you wait any longer."

"The tomato sauce is just a condiment and to add color. You're adding too much. Are you trying to make a tomato tofu?"

...

A great master produces a brilliant disciple. Although Bai Ke wasn't Lin Fan's disciple, Lin Fan was very serious in teaching that dish. It might only be a dish to Lin Fan, but to Bai Ke, it was something important that his restaurant couldn't recover without.

For Bai Ke's sake, he had to be strict.

Bai Ke had sweat flowing down his back from being reprimanded by Lin Fan. The pressure was immense. He had wanted to tell Young Fan not to say such harsh words but when he saw the expression on Lin Fan's face, he carried on cooking obediently.

He realized that Lin Fan's face was really stern and it was a little scary.

A serving of Mirror Box Tofu was done.

Lin Fan glanced at him. "This is important: its appearance is too ugly."

Bai Ke didn't say a word and started cooking again.

Xiao Yan stood by his side, wiping the sweat from Bai Ke's forehead with a towel.

The second serving.

"Redo it. It's still ugly."

Third serving.

"Redo. It looks average."

Fourth serving."

"Redo. The appearance is okay, but it lacks fragrance."

Fifth serving.

Sixth serving.

...

He reached the twelfth serving.

Bai Ke looked at Lin Fan in anticipation. He wanted to hear a word of praise. Making twelve servings straight, he was about to fall apart. As fellow young people, he naturally didn't like having his mistakes picked out by someone else.

But this was different. He knew that Young Fan was doing this for his own sake. Moreover, Young Fan's culinary skills had left him in awe. He had no choice but to give in. Having such a master teaching him to cook was something most people wouldn't be able to get even if they paid for it.

Those top chefs or whatever simply couldn't compare to Young Fan.

"Mmm." Lin Fan nodded. When Bai Ke saw this, he was incomparably exhilarated. Then, he hugged Xiao Yan and cried out in joy. However, Lin Fan's next words brought him back down to Earth.

"Redo it. The appearance is there, the fragrance is there but the taste still has a long way to go. Keep going."

Xiao Yan tasted it. "Brother Lin, I think this taste is not bad. It's better than most restaurants."

Lin Fan said coolly, "It isn't even at a fraction of my standard. It won't make customers stay. Keep going."

Bai Ke sighed, "Young Fan, please tell me, what fraction of your standard do I need to achieve?"

Lin Fan raised a finger, "Ten percent."

Bai Ke buried his face in his hands. Keep cooking. If you don't go crazy, you're not trying hard enough...

Time passed very quickly. It was going to be noon very soon.

During this period, there were customers who came but they were all rejected because Bai Ke was busy cooking. Moreover, the kitchen was in a mess. There were ingredients everywhere.

...

The n-th serving.

Bai Ke wiped the sweat from his forehead, then looked anticipately at Lin Fan. This time, he had spent all his effort.

Lin Fan looked at the Mirror Box Tofu and nodded. "Appearance and flavor are complete. As for the taste, let me have a try."

Under Bai Ke's anticipatory gaze, Lin Fan took a bite and tasted it. Then, he smiled. "Not bad. Not bad at all. You've grasped the essence of this dish."

When Bai Ke heard the sound of this compliment, he was so elated that he jumped. "I did it! I did it!"

As Lin Fan watched Bai Ke's elated expression, his heart was filled with joy for Bai Ke as well, but then he said, "Don't get happy too soon. Do it a few more times. This taste still has a little way to go."

"Ah!" Bai Ke looked at Lin Fan with his mouth gaping. Then, he sighed again and carried on cooking.

Lin Fan said, "Remember, the flavor is important. You need to take control of the amount of condiments. If it's too little, it'll be tasteless. If it's too much, it'll be too overpowering. If you want this to be a signature dish, you need to put in some effort."

They carried on all the way to 5 pm.

When the serving of Mirror Box Tofu was placed in front of Lin Fan, Lin Fan was slightly astonished. He had not thought that Bai Ke would be able to improve at such a rate.

When Lin Fan tried it, he nodded. "Not bad, it's already at ten percent of my standard."

In Lin Fan's eyes, this dish still had many inadequacies but for it to make an imprint on diners' memories and to become a signature dish was definitely not an issue. If Bai Ke kept on practicing, he would improve even more and the taste would become even better.

"Alright, this standard is enough to satisfy the diners. But you have to keep on practicing from now on. I think it's time to let the diners have a taste," said Lin Fan.

Bai Ke said helplessly, "But we have no customers."

Lin Fan smiled, "Go out there and yell 'Half price for dinner and free signature dish'! There will definitely be customers that way."

When Bai Ke heard that, he was delighted. "You're right!"

Xiao Yan tidied up the kitchen as Bai Ke went outside hurriedly to carry out Lin Fan's plan.

He was now beaming with confidence. It was as if his whole body was charged up with energy.

Chapter 236: The second dish

The first day of teaching had produced remarkable results. Bai Ke's learning ability was pretty good. He had managed learned the dish in a day. Although it was only ten percent if Lin Fan's standard, it wasn't something to be looked down on.

Lin Fan sighed in his heart. Should I establish a training school next time? It would earn me some Encyclopedic Points.

I could stage a comeback for that New East Cuisine School from the Encyclopedia and make it bloom into the sunlight once again.

Of course, it was just a passing thought.

Outside!

Bai Ke was raising his voice, "For those of you passing by, don't let this opportunity pass you by! Today's dinner will be at half price. On top of that, you will get a free new dish, the 'Mirror Box Tofu'. It tastes exceptional. Don't let it pass you by!"

His voice was not soft at all and it really managed to draw attention from the passers-by. However, when they saw how run down the shop looked, they were turned off.

Still, this half price managed to draw some customers in because it really was very cheap.

Gradually, customers started coming in.

When some of the other restaurants' owners saw this, they started to laugh. They knew that that shop used to do alright but ever since Bai Ke had taken over the shop, their business suffered a drastic decline. If they managed to make a net profit of two or three hundred in a day, it would already be considered lucky.

Even though they were using a half-price promotion to attract customers, it wouldn't sustain for long.

Lin Fan said, "That's about it. There are already two tables. Make sure you're able to serve them quickly enough."

Bai Ke was full of confidence. He nodded. "Yep, I'll go to the kitchen now."

There wasn't much more for Lin Fan to do but he wanted to see how the diners critiqued his food.

Very quickly, Bai Ke carried the Mirror Box Tofu out. "Everyone, this is a new dish of our restaurant. It's free to give everyone a taste. If you have any feedback, do let me know."

The diners were pretty happy. They had a free new dish as well as half price on all the other dishes. It was definitely affordable. They all acknowledged Bai Ke's words.

Lin Fan was noticing the expressions on the diners' faces. After tasting the Mirror Box Tofu, they all let out an expression of shock. It was as if they hadn't expected it to taste so good. Then, they moved their chopsticks non-stop as if they couldn't stop themselves.

"This is good. This new dish is really good."

"Hey, we've never seen this dish before. This is clearly just tofu, how could it taste so good?"

"Not bad, not bad. This restaurant doesn't look like much. I didn't think that this dish would be so delicious."

...

It had gained the recognition of the townsfolk. Lin Fan heaved a sigh. As for the second dish, he thought about it for a moment and finally decided on Cherry Pork.

It wasn't too difficult a dish as it didn't involve any complicated steps and it was quick to make. He could teach it to Bai Ke. Moreover, this dish went very well with rice. People often came to this restaurant to have rice so that they would be full. And when this Cherry Pork is paired with Mirror Box Tofu, it would definitely receive good feedback

The Mirror Box Tofu had captured all of the diners' stomachs. They, of course, had never thought that this dish would taste so good. On top of that, it looked so good too.

They were still savoring the aftertaste when the other common household dishes arrived.

The diners thought that these dishes would be like the first dish, incomparably delicious. But when they tasted the dishes, they were severely disappointed. The dishes didn't taste as good as they thought they would.

But when they thought about how good the Mirror Box Tofu tasted, they didn't think of much else.

"Boss, give us another serving of that first dish."

"Another serving. We'll pay for it. These household dishes are average but that tofu tastes really good."

At that moment, Xiao Yan was working busily here and there but when she heard the diners' praises, she felt pretty good. As for Bai Ke, who was in the kitchen, he couldn't help but be delighted. He hadn't thought that this Mirror Box Tofu would be so well-received. Naturally, he was exhilarated. But what saddened him was how unwelcome his household dishes were.

Still, he had heeded Lin Fan's advice. Signature dishes are based on quality, not quantity. If he could make one dish that left an impact on customers, then he would have succeeded.

Even by relying on one dish, it's possible to shake the earth.

In the end.

Bai Ke and Xiao Yan were dead tired sitting on the chairs but the smiles on their faces were very bright.

Bai Ke, in particular, was exhilarated. "Young Fan, you really are f*cking awesome. Did you see that? Those customers couldn't stop praising this dish."

Lin Fan smiled. "But your other household dishes left them disappointed."

Bai Ke said grudgingly, "That can't be helped. At least they weren't too bad."

Lin Fan nodded. "I'll teach you another dish tomorrow that you can use as a signature dish in future. As for this storefront and door, I feel that it can be changed. After all, a good storefront is important."

Bai Ke nodded. "Mmm, the storefront should be renovated. Just like the other shops, it should be given a more relaxing feel."

ring ring

At that moment, a call from Wang Ming Yang came.

Wang Ming Yang: "I'm singing right now. Come and have some fun."

Lin Fan replied, "Nah, I'm a little tired today. You have fun, I'll pass."

Wang Ming Yang: "Alright."

After hanging up, Lin Fan looked at the time. It wasn't early anymore. Then, he bid goodbye to Bai Ke and agreed to meet earlier the next morning. Bai Ke had worked the whole day and his arms were incredibly sore. He wanted to go back earlier to rest too.

The next day!

Lin Fan woke up early and had his breakfast. Then, he headed towards Bai Ke's shop

At the shop.

Bai Ke came up to Lin Fan's side. "Young Fan, what dish are you going to teach me today?"

Lin Fan noticed that Bai Ke was very energetic that day. It seemed like this man had received a boost from the joyous happenings the previous day. Then, he smiled and said, "Today, I'll teach you a dish called Cherry Pork."

"Cherry? Cooking a dish using cherries?" Bai Ke was surprised. He didn't understand it.

After the Mirror Box Tofu, Lin Fan realized that some knowledge inside the Encyclopedia was non-existent in reality. After he went back the previous day, he did a search for this Cherry Pork and realized it really didn't exist. It was a dish that existed in the Encyclopedia but not in real life.

Of all the Jiangsu dishes in the Encyclopedia, some of them existed in reality and some of them didn't. It really was strange.

But he didn't bother about it. As long as it tasted good, it was fine. What was the use of bothering about so much?

Lin Fan smiled and said, "There aren't any cherries. It's only named Cherry Pork. This dish is slightly more difficult to make than the Mirror Box Tofu. However, it is suitable for both young and old and goes very well with rice. It can be said to be a very delicious dish."

When Bai Ke heard this, he couldn't wait to start.

He really wanted to learn even more dishes but he knew that Young Fan had his own matters to care about. To be able to learn two kinds of dishes from him, Bai Ke was already thanking the gods for it, so naturally, he didn't dare to think too much.

In the kitchen.

As Lin Fan prepared a serving of Cherry Pork, Bai Ke and Xiao Yan were flabbergasted by the fragrance.

The Mirror Box Tofu was already delicious enough but they never thought that when the Cherry Pork emerged from the stovetop, its fragrance would be so irresistible. Furthermore, they had no idea how those little cherry-like pieces of bright and beautiful pork were made.

"I think this dish is really hard to make," muttered Bai Ke to no one in particular.

Lin Fan smiled. "It's not too hard. With me teaching you, it'll be simple."

Bai Ke looked at Lin Fan. His heart was filled with delight. That's right, he had Young Fan. And Young Fan would even teach him to step by step. Even if it was harder, it wouldn't be a problem.

Chapter 237: Have a goal

The 'Cherry Pork' dish was ideal. Although it was supposedly not too difficult, compared to the 'Mirror Box Tofu', it was still no easy feat. If it was a typical chef teaching his disciple, a decent standard would probably be enough. But the one teaching Bai Ke was Lin Fan. This master, who was scary when he became serious, absolutely tormented Bai Ke.

"It's no good. It's too soft. Redo it."

"The color isn't right, there's no luster. Redo it."

"Redo."

"Redo."

...

This word 'Redo', came out of Lin Fan's mouth countless times. Each time, to Bai Ke, was torturous. Compared to making Mirror Box Tofu, this was much more terrifying and much more challenging.

Lin Fan said sternly, "If you want to make this dish well, coating the meat so that it holds on to the sauce is the most important part. I can't be too thin, otherwise, the sauces won't cling to it. It can't be too thick either, otherwise, the texture will be ruined. The ratio of sugar to vinegar must be controlled. If it's too sweet, it would be cloying. Too sour and it would just taste bad. You need to remember this."

Bai Ke was under a lot of stress. He nodded. "I understand."

"Mmm, redo it. There's no rush. If you don't make it today, there's still tomorrow."

This dish could become more popular than the Mirror Box Tofu, so Lin Fan was being absolutely strict with Bai Ke. This dish had to be prepared to its best.

Of course, this 'best' is referring to normal people standards. To reach Lin Fan's standard would just be a stupid dream.

Xiao Yan was watching from the side and feeling sympathetic for Bai Ke but in her heart, she was still smiling. The previous night, Bai Ke had said arrogantly that he was a genius, that he could learn any dish in just one day. At that moment, he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to finish learning it that day so he was really trying hard. That was not bad at all.

Noon came.

Customers came again. They were the same diners as the previous day. They had brought their families to try out that Mirror Box Tofu but then they realized that the shop wasn't accepting any customers that day. However, when they found out that a second new dish would be out soon, they were very curious.

Lin Fan looked at Bai Ke, who was sweating from head to toe and said, "Rest for a bit. We'll carry on in a while."

Bai Ke shook his arms. After working the whole morning, his arms were getting tired.

Ten minutes later.

"Carry on," said Lin Fan.

Bai Ke nodded and pumped himself up. He had to succeed.

Lin Fan felt that the most meaningful thing about him coming back was teaching Bai Ke these two dishes. Bai Ke was his friend and naturally, he hoped that this friend could live a better life.

Moreover, this knowledge that he obtained from the Encyclopedia hadn't even been put to much use before. To be able to help a friend, in Lin Fan's eyes, was a fortunate thing.

Then, it was 7 pm.

Bai Ke sat there, drained. He looked at Lin Fan with anticipation. He had lost count of how many servings he had made. But without any exceptions, they all failed.

Lin Fan looked at Bai Ke. "There's a huge improvement. Just by using this current taste, you could please most customers without any issues. However, that's not what I'm aiming for. Right now, the only problem is your garnishing. But there's no rush. If you make a few more servings, you'll get the hang of it and the taste will improve."

Bai Ke nodded. "Alright, I will do my best. Today, it was no good but I believe that tomorrow, I will be able to do it."

Lin Fan smiled and said, "We'll stop here for today and continue tomorrow."

Lin Fan was thinking, Who knew that teaching something to someone and being a teacher could feel so good?

It even made him ponder about the goal of his life. Ever since he had gotten the Encyclopedia, he realized that wealth wasn't all one could wish for. He had gradually come into contact with people that he couldn't come into contact with before. And he didn't have any wild ambitions either. He wanted no part of those businesses where everyone was trying to cheat one another. He just wanted each day to be happy and joyful, to be carefree and free to do whatever he wanted.

When he had been teaching Bai Ke, he had thought about something and that was the children at the Children's Welfare Institute.

Some of them were physically able but they hadn't received any education since young. When they grow older, it would be easy for them to stray onto the wrong path. As for those physically disabled, if they didn't develop some sort of skill, they might not be able to survive in society when they grow older.

As of then, the skills that Lin Fan possessed that could be taught to them seemed to only consist of culinary skills and Ba Gua Zhang.

Ba Gua Zhang could help to strengthen their bodies and culinary skills could allow them to become skilled chefs. These were both skills that could be useful to the children in future.

But this still needed to be thoroughly thought about. Sometimes, thinking too simply could cause complications when something is implemented.

In the Children's Welfare Institute, there was no lack of children who had lost both arms. They wouldn't be able to learn culinary skills. And at that moment, Lin Fan didn't have any other skills to teach to them.

It seemed like Lin Fan would have to keep working hard.

However, this matter seemed to have a high chance of working out. Contributing to society, helping those children and making them not feel inferior. It might even help himself to earn some Encyclopedic Points. It was killing two birds with one stone.

It was a shame. They were still all too young. Once they got a little older, if he gained some other knowledge, that would be good.

Drawing or calligraphy, for example. Skills appealing to both young and old would be good.

The next day!

In the kitchen.

Under Lin Fan's instruction, Bai Ke was making Cherry Pork.

Under Lin Fan's guidance, Bai Ke had gained some level of adeptness towards this dish but it wasn't enough to please Lin Fan. The flavor was still lacking.

Its appearance and fragrance were both complete. As of then, all it was lacking in was flavor.

Lin Fan said, "Don't rush. This is how learning to cook is like. It's not supposed to be done in a single breath. It requires you to take the flaws and inadequacies and slowly improve on them. You're already doing pretty well."

Bai Ke smiled. "No problem. I know you're doing this for my sake. Don't worry, I won't be defeated so easily. I'll definitely perfect this dish."

Lin Fan nodded. "Mmm, I believe in you."

In reality, the taste produced by Bai Ke was already pretty good. He already had a good grasp of the condiments but he was still lacking just a little bit so he needed to keep improving. He could point out what was lacking in this dish but to make up for it was another thing. Therefore, he still needed to practice.

Xiao Yan hadn't expected Brother Lin to be so strict either. She felt that Bai Ke's Cherry Pork was getting better and better. It almost had her salivating, but to Brother Lin, it still had a long way to go.

Of course, she knew that Brother Lin had set high standards for Bai Ke to reach and she wanted Bai Ke to be able to make the dish better too, so she kept doing her best to support him.

If she were to compare Bai Ke's dish to Brother Lin's, it was still very far apart. But as Brother Lin said, for Bai Ke to achieve this standard was already superb.

In the end, at nighttime, he still hadn't met Lin Fan's requirements. But there was no rush. He was already learning quickly.

After Lin Fan went back, he got a call from Wang Ming Yang. It turned out that Wang Ming Yang was going to take a plane back to Shanghai that night. His company might have something that they needed him for.

Lin Fan was prepared to leave after teaching Bai Ke.

At night, he lay on the bed.

He unlocked his phone and searched for information regarding children's welfare centers.

He discovered that in the past, people weren't allowed to establish children welfare centers, but now, they were actually allowed to privately establish a center.

However, the requirements for the founder were very high. Even a little scary.

...

Chapter 238: Has anyone seen this species before?

For the next few days, Lin Fan spent some time chatting with his parents and also went to Bai Ke's place. By the third day, Bai Ke had made huge improvements to his 'Cherry Pork' and pretty much met Lin Fan's requirements.

With two signature dishes in his arsenal, he could now relax. As long as he ran his shop properly, he definitely would not have any problems. As for the operations side, Lin Fan didn't know much but Bai Ke, with his experience, should be able to find a suitable operating style.

At the apartment entrance.

Lin Fan waved at his parents. "You can go back now. I'll be fine alone."

Mom said, "Be careful on the road. When you come back next time, bring your girlfriend along with you so we can see her."

He had been most afraid that his Mom would say that but it couldn't be helped. "Alright. You guys can go back. The car is here, I'll be going."

The taxi was here. He placed his luggage at the back, then got onto the car as he waved at his Mom and Dad.

Mom said, "Next time our son comes back, we should be able to see our daughter-in-law."

Dad said, "That's his business. Why are you caring so much?"

Mom said, "That's your son, don't you know how to show some concern for him? And you keep wanting to have grandchildren too. Do you think that will happen if we don't prompt him?"

...

At the airport!

Pushing his luggage, Lin Fan headed inside the airport. The timing was just right. It was time to check in and wait for his flight.

"Little Bro, wait a moment." At that moment, a voice came from behind. Lin Fan looked back, a little surprised.

There were three people. Among them, a slightly old, dark-skinned man dressed in slightly inappropriate clothes handed Lin Fan two red bills. "Just now, when you alighted from your car, I saw that you dropped your money."

Lin Fan reached into his pocket and felt inside. He wasn't used to using a wallet, so he just put his cash inside his pocket. It seemed that when he had been alighting from his car, he had really dropped his money. He smiled and said, "Thank you."

"No need to thank me, it's what I'm supposed to do," said the dark-skinned man. This was the first time he was at the airport. Seeing such a big place, he was a little nervous.

Lin Fan realized that some passersby would turn their gaze towards him as if they never thought that a farmer would come to take a plane.

After thanking him again, Lin Fan smiled at him, then headed inside the airport. He was going to go to the counter to get his boarding pass but then it was still early so he went to the toilet.

At that moment, a call came.

Bai Ke: "Young Fan, have you reached the airport?"

Lin Fan said, "I just reached. I drank so much with you last night that I'm still slightly dizzy."

Bai Ke laughed, "That's what it's like to be happy. When will you be coming back again?"

Lin Fan replied, "I don't know about that but it won't be too long. The latest is the new year when I'll definitely come back."

The two of them exchanged a few more words, then hung up.

At the counter.

There were many people getting their boarding passes, so there was a queue. But there was no hurry. Lin Fan could take his time. After all, they still had to check through his baggage.

Suddenly, a voice rang out from the front.

"Can you three farmers hurry it up? Once you're at the counter, just hurry up and get your boarding pass. If you've never taken a plane, then don't take one. You're wasting other people's time." This voice was a little piercing. The surrounding passengers were startled as well. They never thought someone would say such things.

The counter staff smiled thinly at the three people. "Could you please show me your IDs?"

When the three of them heard this, it was like they just woke up from a dream. They hurriedly reached for their identity cards.

The words from the person behind were insulting to them but they didn't show any particular response. When they entered the airport, they had already been astonished by this big place.

They couldn't understand the English words and names on the tickets. They had only found this place, after much trouble, thanks to the staff's guidance.

Lin Fan took a glance at the person who had said those insulting words. Although he couldn't see that person's face, Lin Fan saw that he was dressed in Western-style clothing that appeared really expensive. At that moment, he seemed to be talking to the other passengers.

"Look at those three people. Coming here, not knowing how to get their boarding passes and looking in every direction. It seems like they'll be climbing over the counter soon. They really are like three stupid ghosts."

The surrounding passengers just shook their heads and smiled. They didn't say anything.

This matter had nothing to do with them, so they just watched.

However, what that man said wasn't entirely wrong. Those three people were indeed a little like he said.

The man stood there as his mouth kept talking like a machine gun, "There was a foreigner here just now and he saw everything. They're simply disgracing the Chinese."

When the staff at the counter heard this, he frowned slightly and looked up at the man but in the end, he just sighed and continued serving the three farmers.

When Lin Fan saw the three of them, he was a little surprised. These were the three people he had seen at the entrance.

At that moment, the slightly older, dark-skinned farmer said apologetically, "I'm sorry, I've wasted your time. This is the first time we're taking a plane, so we're a little curious."

The man in Western-style clothing laughed coldly. He tilted his head up and said, "If you've never taken a plane, why start now? If you're traveling to work, you should be sitting in a bus or cramming into a train."

"We're not going there to work, we're going there to see our children graduate. They bought airplane tickets for us to go over..." said the dark-skinned farmer in a soft voice as if he knew that they had disturbed the other people and was being reserved because of it.

"Hehe..." the man laughed and didn't say much else, but the disdain in his eyes only grew.

Some of the surrounding passengers couldn't stand it. They felt that the way this man spoke was really insulting. But it was a big world and there were many different kinds of people that existed. Some people really thought that highly of themselves and looked down on some kinds of people.

Lin Fan smiled, then walked forward from the side to face that man. With his eyes open wide and in a slight squat, he stood there looking at the man.

When the man realized that there was someone standing right in front of him and staring at him, he frowned. "What do you want? What are you looking at?"

The other passengers were disgusted with that insulting man but they didn't know what this other youngster was doing.

Could it be that he couldn't stand the man's words and wanted to quarrel?

Lin Fan shook his head, then he clicked his tongue and said, "It's a big world and there are all kinds of things. An animal that can talk is rare, but an animal that can take a plane on its own is unheard of."

He then looked at the surrounding passengers and asked, "I haven't seen many animals but I have never seen an animal that looks like this. Does anyone know what species of animal this is?"

Pfft!

The surrounding passengers couldn't help bursting into laughter. A youngster held his phone as he laughed and said, "Brother, I have never seen such an animal before either. I'm filming it right now. Later on, I'll upload it and ask my online buddies. They are very knowledgeable, so they should know what species that is."

Lin Fan nodded. "That's very kind of you. Who knows? You might even discover a new species of animal."

When the man heard these words, his face turned greenish and pale. Then, he glared at Lin Fan and said, "Are you retarded? Do I even know you? I dare you to say that again!"

Lin Fan shook his head. "What bullsh*t are you spewing? You obviously don't know me. I have never raised an animal of your species! If you knew me, I would have to give myself two hard slaps. How could I have raised an animal like you?"

The passengers, once again, burst into laughter.

Even the staff at the counter couldn't help laughing.

Chapter 239: You're really amazing!

Qiao Fei was infuriated. He hadn't expected this fella to argue with him and even call him names.

He pointed at Lin Fan and crossed over. He wanted to give Lin Fan two tight slaps to teach him a lesson.

He wanted to take action against him.

The surrounding passengers were all shocked. Just as Qiao Fei approached him, Lin Fan immediately slapped him on his face and he collapsed to the ground.

slam

There was a loud noise. The surrounding passengers were shocked. They hadn't expected the situation to turn out like that.

Even the three farmers were stunned.

The security officers on duty rushed over. They were the policemen of the airport and when they heard the loud noise, they immediately rushed over to prevent anything from happening.

When the officers saw him lying on the ground, they didn't understand what had happened. Qiao Fei just lay on the floor and covered his face. He looked miserable.

"What happened?" the security officers asked as they helped Qiao Fei up.

Lin Fan didn't wait for Qiao Fei to reply. He innocently said, "I don't know. This person has no manners at all. He tried to cut the queue and tripped over the barricade."

When Qiao Fei heard what he said, he was infuriated. "F*ck you and your rubbish. You were the one who hit me."

Lin Fan shrugged. He didn't want to admit it at all.

The security officers looked at the surrounding passengers, "Did they fight?"

The passengers already hated this fella a lot and they were elated with what had just happened. Lin Fan had taken one for the team.

Then, the passengers replied.

"They didn't fight. This fella has no manners at all. He wanted to cut our queue and tripped over the barricade. His face planted onto the ground but he blamed him for it."

"I can attest to that. They didn't fight at all."

"Yeah, this man tried to cut our queue and tripped. Now, he's even blaming someone else. He's so scheming. We all witnessed what happened."

"I can attest to that. This man didn't hit anyone."

The passengers continued to talk amongst themselves. They weren't afraid since there were so many 'witnesses'.

Qiao Fei pointed at the people surrounding him, "You guys are all blind!"

The passengers were infuriated. "Please watch your words. Don't just scold innocent people like us."

When the security officers saw what was happening, they were stunned. They noticed that there was a red mark on this person's face. He looked like he had really gotten hit but they didn't want to create trouble for themselves. Hence, they went to the counter to find out more details.

"Did you see them fight?"

The staff at the counter looked at him curiously. "Fight? I didn't see anything. I was busy with work and didn't notice anything. I don't think they did. There are so many passengers that can be witnesses."

The staff had actually witnessed the slap but he didn't want to be involved in that matter. Therefore, he pretended that nothing had happened.

The security officers were puzzled. They looked at Qiao Fei and thought he was being unreasonable.

Qiao Fei was extremely furious. He hadn't expected everyone to lie through their teeth. Then, he said angrily, "I want to take a look at the CCTV monitors. I want this matter to be investigated."

The security officer furrowed his brows. "Sir, an investigation would require written comments from a superior. It would also require a fair amount of time. It will affect your current flight. If you insist on it, I will apply for the footage now."

"It's just a footage clip. It won't take that long. I want to see it, now!" Qiao Fei exclaimed furiously.

Lin Fan chuckled, "Security officer, please chase him out of here. I suspect there's something wrong with this man's brain. Everyone said that he tripped on his own accord but he's insisting that we are wrong. I feel that this man will create unnecessary trouble if he's allowed to board the plane."

laughter

The surrounding passengers laughed. They weren't bothered by this man at all. The security officers were there and he definitely wouldn't dare to hit anyone. Furthermore, there were so many people. If he really dared to hit someone, they wouldn't let him off so easily.

Qiao Fei was extremely furious. He looked at Lin Fan and pointed at himself. "There's a problem with my brain? Look, I'm a VIP of this airline. You're the one with brain problems. Do you know how many trips I make per year? At least two hundred trips, do you know that?"

The security officer furrowed his brows. "Sir, please control your emotions. This is the airport and it's a public space. Please do not raise your voice."

Lin Fan glanced at Qiao Fei and twitched his mouth. "A man with no manners indeed. You're making so much noise. I wonder what kind of compulsory education you had. You don't even have basic courtesy. Everyone, please ignore him. You'd only bring more trouble to yourselves if you care about this person. He's such a disgrace. The airport is like the windows to our nation. It should bar people like him in the future."

The surrounding passengers nodded in agreement.

"Let's ignore him and not cause trouble for ourselves."

"Let's not even talk about his manners. He doesn't even have any manners at all, making so much noise in a public area like this. Even my three-year-old child knows that."

We have too many of this type of people in our country. They've affected the overall quality of our people.

"Hey, nowadays, people only dress up well but they're rotten on the inside."

...

Qiao Fei was furious. He hadn't expected to become a victim of everyone's personal attacks.

The security officers realized that the matter was becoming more serious. Then, they looked at Qiao Fei. "Please come with us."

Qiao Fei was both stunned and angry. "Why should I follow you? What about him?"

"I'm sorry, sir. Please cooperate with us. If not, it would delay the flight," the security officer said.

"I want to complain about all of you. Do you know I'm a VIP customer of this particular airline?! Do you know who you're talking to?" Qiao Fei shouted at the security officers and he looked extremely fierce.

The security officers placed their arms behind them as if they were waiting for a retaliation to happen.

Lin Fan chuckled, "VIP customer, you're really amazing! The boarding time is almost up. You might not be able to make it anymore."

Qiao Fei was speechless but he knew that he had things to do in Shanghai. Then, he pointed at Lin Fan. "You're good. You're very good."

Lin Fan laughed, "I'm glad you know that. You didn't have to say that. After all, I won't change my impression you."

Finally, Qiao Fei left with the security officers. He glared at Lin Fan as he left.

But Lin Fan wasn't afraid at all.

clap clap

The crowd clapped and Lin Fan bowed to the three farmers. Then, he continued to queue behind. The incident had delayed the flight but they should have no problems boarding the plane.

A tanned man said gratefully, "Thank you for helping us."

Lin Fan waved his hand. "Don't mention it. Nobody would've just let him get what he wanted. Even if I wasn't here, there would definitely be someone here to help you guys out. This person looks like a dog and is indeed one."

After all the checks were completed, they proceeded inside.

He still had to walk some distance. He had to hurry up.

The fortunate thing was that the boarding area for his plane wasn't very far away. It was just in front. If it was the furthest boarding area, he'd have to walk at least twenty minutes to reach the place.

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Chapter 240: Followed him there

A few hours later.

Lin Fan stood outside the Shanghai airport. He took a deep breath and felt revitalized. He finally could breathe in the same familiar air again.

He hailed a cab.

"To Cloud Street."

The driver replied, "Alright."

At that moment, there was a car behind the cab. Qiao Fei pointed at the cab in front of his and said, "Follow him, I'll pay you double the cab fare."

The taxi drivers in Shanghai were experienced and skilled and it was rare for them to be involved in accidents. There was even a saying that if you could drive smoothly in Shanghai, you would be unstoppable anywhere else in the world.

The driver looked excited. "Sit tight, I assure you we'll be on their heels."

Qiao Fei tightened his seatbelt and sneered. This fella had actually messed with him at the airport. If he hadn't been rushing for his flight, he wouldn't have let him off so easily.

He had taken the first class cabin and after coming out of the plane, he had been waiting there for Lin Fan. He refused to let him off until he settled the score with him.

In the cab.

Lin Fan was talking to Wang Ming Yang over the phone.

"I'm in the cab now. I'm on the way to the shop first. Why did you call me?"

Wang Ming Yang replied, "It's all thanks to you. I'll tell you a piece of good news later."

Lin Fan chuckled, "What is it? You sound so happy."

Wang Ming Yang replied, "Wu Huan Yue's album is out. Obviously, I had to upload it online first. The number of downloads is crazy! There were 150,000 downloads in just the first twenty-four hours. Do you know what this means?"

Lin Fan laughed, "Why did you tell me this information? I don't belong in the music industry. But you sound like you're thinking of a huge celebration, aren't you?"

Wang Ming Yang was ecstatic even though he wasn't earning money. In fact, he had to pay for advertisements. But now that the results were so stellar, he was extremely happy. After all, it showed that he had made the right decision to invest in the music industry. It had really succeeded.

He thought through everything. He was going to be involved in the music industry for just a while so that his reputation would increase. After that, he would join the film industry as that was where the money was at. Furthermore, it would make him famous in the shortest period of time.

But it was taxing for Wu Huan Yue. She had to practice her singing and acting at the same time.

Teen male idols were the most popular in the current film industry, even if they had zero acting skills. However, they couldn't be famous for a long time. What he wanted to do was to create a true star performer. One that was capable of lasting through the years and wouldn't become irrelevant over time. He wanted someone that would be remembered by people.

What made Wang Ming Yang relieved was that even though Wu Huan Yue was working so hard everyday, she wasn't afraid of these practices and challenges at all.

Furthermore, she was extremely pretty. She was the type of woman that people would find her prettier the more they looked at her. There were many pretty ladies around but they all looked average after several looks.

"Of course, we have to celebrate. But let's wait for now and see how the final results are," Wang Ming Yang said happily. If he could single-handedly help Wu Huan Yue rise to fame, he would have a great sense of achievement.

Lin Fan nodded. "Alright then, let's leave it at that for now. I'll be back at my shop to take a break. Just contact me if anything happens."

Wang Ming Yang replied, "No problem, my brother."

...

Soon, he reached Cloud Street.

Lin Fan paid the fare and alighted. When the shop owners saw Lin Fan, they were extremely passionate towards him.

"Master Lin is back! How did it feel to return home?" The boss of the shoe shop asked as he was smoking outside.

Lin Fan chuckled, "It was okay. It felt pretty good."

As he walked past a jewelry shop, the lady boss, Sister Wen, asked, "Little Boss, you're back. I haven't seen you in a long time and I kinda missed you."

"Sister Wen, you missed me? If your husband finds out about this, he would definitely come looking for me."

Sister Wen replied, "This fella's mouth is beginning to get worse after returning from home."

Lin Fan waved at everyone. He had a good relationship with all the shop owners nearby. He greeted everyone as he walked past each shop.

Elder Dog Nicholas, who was lying at the door, suddenly stood up and looked at Lin Fan. He charged towards him and barked. Then, he stayed around him with his tail raised up high.

"After being gone for a few days, Elder Dog looks bigger now," Lin Fan said. Elder Dog Nicholas' snow-white body looked slightly bigger. He was about one centimeter taller. As to how Lin Fan had noticed it, it was all based on instinct.

Elder Dog Nicholas ran around happily and barked.

In the shop.

Fraud Tian hugged Lin Fan when he saw him. "Wow, I haven't seen you in just a few days and I missed you so much. Did you bring anything nice?"

Lin Fan pretended that he missed him too. He smiled. "I didn't bring anything back though."

Zhao Zhong Yang was broadcasting in his shop and he pointed the camera of his phone at Lin Fan. "Our Master Lin is finally back. Everyone, please clap for him."

Wu You Lan looked at Lin Fan curiously. She asked, "How did the matchmaking go?"

She asked her question in a straightforward manner.

Lin Fan shrugged. "It didn't succeed. She didn't like me because she thought I was too old."

Wu You Lan smiled. "That person must have had good taste."

"Haha..." Lin Fan laughed. The matchmaking session had been his most feared thing when he had gone back. Since everything was settled beautifully, he wasn't afraid anymore.

Wu Tian He chuckled, "We were so busy during your absence for the past few days. Besides us, the townsfolk missed you too."

Lin Fan smiled. "They must be so impatient after not eating any scallion pancakes for the past few days."

Fraud Tian glanced at Lin Fan. "You don't know what happened. These townsfolk came every single day to see if you were back. They wished you'd returned sooner."

"Let's not talk about these. I brought some local specialties back for all of you," Lin Fan said. Then, he opened the bag and took out the things.

...

At a short distance from the shop, Qiao Fei sneered when he saw Lin Fan enter his shop. So this is his shop...

Then, Qiao Fei walked towards the shop without any hesitation. He wanted to let Lin Fan know the consequences of his actions against him.

Initially, he had thought Lin Fan was some powerful individual but now, it seemed like he was just an average person.

In the shop, Fraud Tian was talking but then he saw someone standing at the entrance. He went forward and asked, "May I know what you're looking for?"

Qiao Fei pushed Fraud Tian aside and looked at Lin Fan. "Dude, you must be shocked to see me, right?"

Lin Fan was stunned. He hadn't expected him to be there. Perhaps he had followed him back to his shop?

Fraud Tian looked at the man and then at Lin Fan. "You know him?"

Lin Fan chuckled, "I don't know him. I only met him once at the airport. I didn't know his sense of smell was so good. He actually managed to find me here."

Everyone in the shop was shocked. They didn't know what was happening.

What was his relationship with this man? Things didn't seem too good.