

For Dinner 121

Chapter 121: I will definitely take it seriously.

Adrian Zhekova said, "Then I'll pick you guys up tomorrow."

Seeing Cindy Clarke's surprised look, Adrian said, "Why are you so surprised?"

"I just didn't expect you to accompany me to the competition." For some reason, knowing he would be there made Cindy feel more at ease. Although she was confident in passing the auditions, she still felt nervous.

But now, she was inexplicably calm.

"The competition is at three o'clock tomorrow, so we definitely need to go there early to prepare. It's better to be at the venue at least half an hour early, right? With plenty of time, we can handle any situations that may arise." Adrian Zhekova calculated for Cindy.

"So we should arrive before two-thirty. To avoid traffic jams, let's leave at one-thirty." Adrian pushed the time forward bit by bit, "So, I'll come to your place at one o'clock?"

Before Cindy could even agree, Adrian said, "Since it's already noon, I might as well come to your place in the morning. We can have lunch at your place, and after eating, I'll take you guys directly to the competition."

Cindy: '

How did the conversation turn into having lunch at her place?

Cindy blinked and accepted the idea.

After all, he was Morgan's father.

She had said before that she wouldn't refuse him spending time with Morgan.

"What do you want to eat?" Cindy asked.

"Just have something casual, don't prepare anything too troublesome. You have a competition in the afternoon, so save your energy for that." Adrian said, "Although it's just the auditions, if you can leave a deep impression on the judges, it will be beneficial for future competitions."

Although Adrian didn't personally handle the competition matters, he left it to a designated person in charge.

He just needed to listen to periodic reports.

But after all, Adrian was the boss, and he knew more about this aspect than Cindy did.

"I will definitely take it seriously." Cindy said.

Adrian smiled and said, "Why don't you just forget about preparing lunch tomorrow? I'll have Eastco Resto send food.'

Eastco Resto was another Michelin-starred restaurant under Pingla Group.

However, it only had one star.

Its cuisine was different from Quire's.

Quire mainly served Cantonese cuisine.

Eastco Resto focused on Chinese-style creative dishes.

But because it didn't specialize in any particular area, its star rating was not as high as Quire's.

However, the taste and creativity were actually quite good.

"You've already tasted Quire's signature dishes." Adrian said.

Every day, when Cindy brought him food, she would taste dishes from his restaurant as well, and she had tasted quite a lot.

Cindy felt like she had gained a lot of knowledge.

"Taste a different restaurant's dishes tomorrow. You might get some inspiration." Adrian said.

The headmaster was sitting in front, although he didn't turn around, his ears were always on their conversation in the back.

With the seats on the stands close together, the headmaster could hear Adrian and Cindy's conversation clearly.

The headmaster thought to himself, it seemed that Adrian and Cindy's relationship was really good.

Listening to their conversation, they sounded like an old married couple.

Furthermore, Adrian cared so much about Cindy's competition.

From what Adrian said, it seemed like he wanted Cindy to taste all the high-end restaurants under the Pingla Group's banner.

All to help her perform better in the competition.

Looking at the two of them, they didn't seem like they had no relationship at all.

So why did Adrian turn his face just now?

He didn't say anything wrong!

Knowing that Adrian would also be coming, Cindy told Peggy Lewis about it.

So that when Peggy saw Adrian, she wouldn't be caught off guard without any mental preparation..

Chapter 122: No Experience in Bringing Up Children

However, after Peggy Lewis heard the news, she immediately replied, "It's fine, I'll go straight to the racecourse and wait for you guys there instead of going to your place first."

"Why though?" Cindy didn't want Peggy to avoid coming over just because Adrian was there.

"It's so much trouble for me to drive to your place first, and then follow you guys to the racecourse. After you're done with the competition, I'll still need to follow you back to get my car," Peggy explained.

But in reality, she just didn't want to be a third wheel.

It's better to let Cindy and Adrian spend more time together.

"It would be better for me to just drive directly to the racecourse, wait for you to finish, and then leave straight away without having to detour," Peggy suggested.

“But it would be nice if you followed us back home, so we could all have dinner together tonight,” Cindy said.

Peggy’s tone was suggestive, “Cindy, have you noticed that when talking about you and Adrian, you’ve already started using the word ‘we’?”

Cindy: ‘

“And you even thought of having dinner together so naturally,” Peggy continued.

“What nonsense are you talking about!” Cindy’s rebuttal was weak.

Did she really say it that naturally just now?

But Peggy successfully diverted Cindy’s attention from the previous topic and made her stop insisting that Peggy had to tag along with them.

So the next day, Adrian arrived at Cindy’s house around 10:30 in the morning.

For lunch, he had Eastco Resto deliver a meal.

As for whether other high-end restaurants really deserve their reputation, Cindy didn’t know.

But at least the high-end restaurants under the Pingla Group that she had tasted from several different branches were indeed deserving of their reputation.

It’s no wonder they’re so well-known.

So far, every single restaurant she had tried had its own unique features that couldn't be replicated or found elsewhere.

After having lunch, when the time came, the three went to the racecourse together.

When they were leaving the house, Morgan seemed deep in thought, touching his chin.

Soon, they arrived downstairs.

This time, Adrian was driving his usual Rolls-Royce Cullinan.

It has a normal SUV height, which wasn't too inconveniencing.

However, for Morgan, it was still a bit high.

His short legs struggled as he climbed into the car with great difficulty.

Seeing this, Adrian directly picked him up.

Morgan felt as though his whole body was floating in the air.

But before he could enjoy the sensation, he was already sitting steadily in the back seat.

"A safety seat!" Morgan was surprised.

Adrian had actually installed a child safety seat on the back seat of the car.

It was just the right size for Morgan.

The safety belt attached to the child safety seat can better secure the child, making it much more suitable than the car's original seat belt. After buying her car, Cindy had also installed one in the back seat.

She didn't expect Adrian to have installed one as well.

It wasn't there yesterday.

At this time, Cindy had already sat down in the passenger seat and heard Morgan's words. She turned her head just in time to see Adrian helping the little one buckle the seatbelt.

Before Cindy could ask, Adrian explained, "I should've installed one in my car long ago, but I didn't think of it."

Cindy understood.

After all, he didn't have experience with raising children either.

"Since Morgan will be riding in this car often, I installed the safety seat after I went home yesterday," Adrian explained further.

Morgan was shocked.. How was it that he would be riding in Adrian's car often?

Chapter 123: Uncle must have some kind of conspiracy!

Morgan Clarke tried to lean forward, but Adrian Zhekova's newly installed child safety seat was just too secure.

The seatbelt held him firmly in place, and he could only lean forward a little before being stopped by the safety restraint.

Morgan covered his face in surprise and asked, "Uncle, do you... do you really like me that much?"

He thought Adrian was going to tease him again.

Unexpectedly, Adrian looked back and softly smiled at him, "Yes, I do. I like you very much."

The little guy was stunned.

His uncle must have some ulterior motive!

"You... you don't think you can win Cindy over just like that!" Morgan puffed out his cheeks and said.

It must be Adrian's scheme, but he saw through it!

Adrian: "..."

What on earth was this bratty kid's problem?

To be nice to him was to be accused of an ulterior motive!

Cindy overheard the conversation and giggled.

Adrian looked at her, both amused and frustrated, "This little guy is so mean to me, and you're not even helping."

Cindy smiled and said, "It's all because he inherited his dad's temperament."

Adrian paused for a moment, then his face broke into a gentle smile, his eyes curving ever so slightly with joy.

He looked so tender and alluring.

Adrian just smiled at Cindy and didn't say anything, but it seemed as if many words had already been spoken through his gaze.

Cindy didn't know why, but she felt her face turn red under his tender gaze.

Adrian only said, "You should still help a little."

Morgan, sitting in the back, looked at Adrian and then at the blushing Cindy.

Something seemed off.

What sort of mystery were these two trying to solve?

What had he missed?

Why couldn't he understand what they were saying?

Cindy, still blushing, felt her heartbeat quicken as Adrian started to drive away.

They arrived at the racecourse and parked the car, then the three of them ran into Peggy Lewis at the entrance.

She was waiting at the gate for them.

When she saw Cindy and Morgan, she immediately waved to them and said, "Cindy! Morgan!"

Cindy introduced her to Adrian.

After Peggy greeted Adrian, she went right over to Morgan.

Morgan tried to walk between Cindy and Adrian, but Peggy stopped him.

"Where do you think you're going? Walk with your godmother." She had the feeling this little guy was trying to sabotage Cindy's love life.

Morgan glanced at Adrian and Cindy walking ahead together, then looked at Peggy and whispered, "But I'm scared Uncle will take advantage of my Cindy!"

Peggy:

She always thought this little guy was too clever for his own good.

To make it easier to speak with him, Peggy simply picked him up.

Morgan immediately protested, "Godmother, put me down! I can walk by myself! "

"Just wait a moment, there's no one else here. They won't see you being carried." Peggy really did know Morgan well.

Morgan looked around and, seeing that no one was there, stopped trying to wriggle free.

"How come you're so concerned about saving face, little guy? It's perfectly normal for a four-year-old child to be carried around." Peggy teased.

"I'm a big kid now!" Morgan immediately protested.

"Yes, yes, you're a big kid." Peggy nodded hastily, "I just wanted to whisper something to you. It's easier to talk when I'm holding you."

Peggy didn't dare mention that the little guy was too short, fearing it would hurt his feelings..

Chapter 124: It's Just a Resemblance, Right?

Morgan Clarke, of course, could tell the hidden meaning behind Peggy Lewis's words.

He kicked his short legs twice, and then glanced at Adrian Zhekova's long legs in front of him.

With a heart full of envy, he asked Peggy, "What is it?"

"What's going on with Cindy and Adrian Zhekova?" Peggy whispered, "Have they always been like this?"

Morgan looked at Cindy Clarke and Adrian Zhekova, and nodded, "And recently, Uncle has been coming to see us a lot."

Morgan leaned in closer to Peggy's ear and said softly, "Also, Uncle asked me to call him Papa. I think he wants to chase after Cindy."

Peggy smiled and patted his little head, "Calling him Papa isn't a loss, and he can support you."

Morgan actually thought so too, "I'm just afraid that he'll take advantage of

Cindy."

“With you around, how could he take advantage? If he really likes Cindy, he’s quite good, you should stop blocking, give them a chance,” Peggy advised. How could their relationship develop if this little guy kept blocking them?

“Well... I’ll think about it.” Morgan whispered.

Before they knew it, they arrived outside the competition venue.

Some competitors were already waiting, so Morgan hurriedly let Peggy put him down.

Cindy had already put on her mask, went to the registration desk to sign up, and got her name tag stuck on her clothes for the judges to recognize.

All ten people in their group had already arrived.

There were still 15 minutes left before the previous round ended.

Cindy looked around and noticed that Zoe Silverstone wasn’t in her group.

If Zoe Silverstone passed the auditions, they wouldn’t meet until the preliminary round.

Among the other nine competitors, some also brought family members and friends to cheer them on, but none brought as many people as Cindy did.

Three of the competitors came alone, they had traveled to Belfard to participate in the competition.

It was quite costly, so it wasn’t convenient for them to bring family or friends along.

The three lone competitors gathered together to chat.

“See that girl with the mask, and the man who came with her, why does he look familiar?”

The Cooking Competition was organized by Pingla Group, so naturally, the competitors had a certain understanding of the Pingla Group.

“I feel like... he looks like Adrian Zhekova, CEO of Pingla Group,” another competitor whispered.

They were afraid of meeting the real person and being overheard.

“No way! It must be just a resemblance!” Another person took a deep breath,

“How big would their connections be to have Adrian Zhekova himself accompany them to the competition?”

“Yeah, if it were the finals or something, it would make sense, but this is just the auditions.”

“It’s probably just that people can look similar.”

Everyone guessed like this, but even though they said so, their hearts were still unsure.

What if it’s true?

He did look like the photos!

They hadn’t seen Adrian Zhekova in person, just caught a glimpse of his photos once or twice.

So when they saw him in person, they really couldn’t tell.

Someone with more courage stealthily took a picture of Adrian.

At this time, the competition time was up, and the competitors from the previous round came out.

Some people looked relaxed, some were full of confidence, while others had a

look of dejection..

Chapter 125: Adrian Zhekova Really Brings Trouble

The competition venue needed to be cleaned up and the ingredients restocked.

Therefore, they could only enter in 15 minutes.

Someone casually asked a contestant who had just finished their round: "What was the theme of your round? Was it difficult? How were the judges?"

In order to be as fair as possible, the audition's themes varied in each round.

"Our theme was duck cuisine," someone said. "It's hard to say how difficult it was. If you stick to the conventional and don't stand out, then it's not difficult. If you want to be innovative, then it's hard. The judges were of a high standard and very fair, which is beyond doubt."

Of course, the one who asked didn't expect the other to say anything bad about the judges.

They couldn't pick up any useful information from this conversation either.

At this moment, someone announced that the contestants for their round could now enter and prepare.

“Go Cindy!” Morgan Clarke clenched her little fist, cheering for Cindy Clarke.

“Cindy, you can definitely do it!” Peggy Lewis was full of confidence in Cindy.

After all, in the formal advancement competition, meeting a strong opponent might be a bit suspenseful for Cindy.

But during the auditions, Peggy Lewis never doubted that Cindy would get through.

However, to avoid arousing resentment, Peggy Lewis did not dare to say it out loud.

She didn’t want to make enemies for Cindy right at the start.

Cindy smiled and nodded at them, then subconsciously looked up at Adrian Zhekova.

Adrian Zhekova gave a slight smile, suddenly raising his hand and placing it on top of Cindy’s head, rubbing it twice: “You definitely can.”

Cindy’s face turned red: “Thank you .

After that, Cindy turned around and ran off.

As a result, she was so nervous that she tripped over her own feet and almost fell down.

Staggering, she braced herself against the wall to steady herself.

However, feeling incredibly embarrassed, Cindy didn’t dare look back and hurried into the competition area.

Peggy Lewis shook her head, thinking that Adrian Zhekova was only causing trouble.

If he jumbled Cindy's thoughts before the competition, what would happen if it affected her performance?

When the contestants for Cindy's round entered, the venue had already been rearranged.

Each person had their own cooking station.

Name tags were also placed on the counter for each contestant. Cindy's name tag, as she requested earlier, read "Cain Velman."

Cindy found her cooking station and stood by it.

When the other contestants saw the name tag on Cindy's cooking station, they all looked at her in surprise. "So, she's Cain Velman," someone said.

But not everyone knew who she was.

Many professional chefs would not pay attention to a food blogger.

In their eyes, food bloggers were all amateurs.

"Who is Cain Velman?" some asked.

"She's a nonnlar food blogger who caused allite a stir with another food

blogger, Zoe Silverstone, not long ago. Both of them signed up for the competition," someone explained. "You can search her up online later." "So, she's a food blogger," someone said after hearing the explanation.

There was a clear disdain in his tone, as if looking down on food bloggers.

“I didn’t expect amateurs to participate in the competition this year. Isn’t this a joke?”

“This is really belittling the Pingla Culinary Competition.”

“And belittling us professional chefs.”

“However, isn’t this a good thing? At least, now we know that we have two fewer competitors. Cain Velman and Zoe Silverstone may be successful as food bloggers, but they aren’t fit to be professional chefs. We can directly eliminate them. Our chances of advancing will be greater..”

Chapter 126: It’s Nice to Have a Foil

“That’s true, and it’s nice to have someone to contrast with in our group. The worse she performs, the more professional she makes us look.”

“Hehe, we’ve been talking for so long, but we haven’t introduced ourselves yet. After this round, we’ll have to interact in future competitions.” The first person to speak said.

“Let me introduce myself first, my name is Albert Lambert, and I come from Sun City.”

“What a coincidence, I’m your fellow townsman. My name is Filbert Henly, also from Sun City. I know of this Albert Lambert, he’s the head chef of the most famous online restaurant in our Sun City, very strong.”

“Not at all, everyone here is a professional chef, I’m just slightly famous in little Sun City.” Albert Lambert humbly said, “There are always people better than oneself, I wouldn’t dare to be arrogant.”

However, his humble words couldn't conceal his proud nature.

"My name is Blake Walker, I come from Sea City, but I work as a sous-chef in a restaurant in S City. There's no helping it, the competition among restaurants is too fierce, always having a head chef on top of me, so I wanted to take this opportunity to sign up and try it, prove myself. With the experience of the

Pingla Culinary Competition, if I switch restaurants, my chances of becoming a head chef will be greater."

"S City, the competition pressure must be enormous. Which restaurant do you work for?" Filbert Henly asked in surprise.

"I work at 'Blaze' restaurant." Blake Walker replied. "Wow, brother! That's a famous high-end restaurant!"

Everyone was shocked and admiring.

In an instant, Blake Walker stole Albert Lambert's limelight.

Albert Lambert's smile had frozen.

"You wouldn't just rank highly in our group, but even in the entire major competition."

"Not at all, I'm just a sous-chef, not a head chef, there's still a long way to go." Blake Walker humbly said.

Afterward, everyone continued introducing themselves.

"My name is Adam Dominick, and I come from Harville." "My name is Yergo Powell, and I come from Goldburgh City."

“Stephan Luther, from Boreedville.” “Bella Turner, Havenport.”

“Harper White, from Farow City.”

“Iris Doone, from Huxley City.”

Although these six people came from different places, they all now worked in Belfard.

At this point, Albert Lambert, who had been overshadowed earlier, suddenly addressed Cindy Clarke: “Are you Cain Velman? That’s not your real name, right? I’ve never heard of the surname Velman’.”

Unlike their previous introductions, Cindy Clarke was familiarizing herself with everything on the cooking station.

From utensils to seasonings, so as not to be flustered when she actually started cooking.

But she had heard all the words they had just said.

When they discussed her, including their disdain for her, they didn’t intentionally lower their voices.

They didn’t care if she heard them, probably thinking that she would definitely be eliminated in this audition.

They would never see her again in the future, so they didn’t need to save face for her.

Cindy didn’t feel like saying much to them, it was better to let the results do the talking.

But she didn’t expect that when she didn’t speak, these people would become even more presumptuous.

Albert Lambert was clearly provoking her.

“Why don’t you use your real name for the competition?” Bella Turner also asked, “I remember the registration page said to use your real name, which matches the ID information, right?”

“And you’re wearing a mask, not even showing your face?” Yergo Powell also questioned.

“These things, I have applied to the organizing committee, and they have approved.” Cindy didn’t feel like explaining too much to them..

Chapter 127: You Think Too Highly of Yourself

She came to compete, not to gain approval from these people.

“You’re not being fair here,” Adam Dominick frowned and said, “We all followed the registration requirements strictly, why are you different?”

“Besides, what are you hiding? Wearing a mask and not daring to use your real name,” Stephan Luther sarcastically complained.

“Then take your opinions to the organizers,” Cindy Clarke said coldly, “I applied to the organizers and got permission.”

She was confident and unapologetic.

Cindy Clarke glanced at them coldly: “Or, do you all want to use this method to make me quit, so that you’ll have one less competitor?”

“You? A competitor? Don’t make me laugh!” Harper White mocked in amusement.

The food blogger Cain Velman sure knew how to inflate his own worth.

Harper had also watched Cain Velman’s cooking videos online but found them mediocre.

Teaching ordinary people and making simple, convenient home-cooked meals was acceptable, but it was not enough in front of professional chefs.

But if she were to say this to Cindy Clarke, Clarke would tell her that an ordinary home would not cook like a professional chef.

Firstly, the variety of seasonings available would be limited, making it impossible to prepare such a complete array.

Also, where would ordinary people be able to match the various techniques of professional chefs?

Moreover, many chefs like to use lots of oil, but which ordinary household would pour half a pot of oil when cooking?

As a food blogger, Cindy Clarke’s videos were naturally for a wider online audience, taking into account the habits of ordinary people.

How could she possibly follow the chefs’ methods?

Albert Lambert sneered disdainfully: “What a joke! You’re just an amateur food blogger, not a professional chef at all. Would we consider you a competitor? You think too highly of yourself.”

“Indeed, to be frank, in our eyes, there are only nine competitors in this group, and you’re not one of them,” Stephan Luther said.

Cindy Clarke nodded, "In that case, there's no need for you to worry about whether my not showing my face and using my screen name meet the registration requirements. Because you don't even think of me as a competitor, right?"

"Since I'm someone you all look down upon, why are you bothering with me?" Cindy Clarke smiled slightly, "Please go back to your positions and prepare for the competition. Don't let this affect your mood and performance. Otherwise, if your scores are low, you might blame me for affecting you."

Cindy Clarke glanced around them and noticed that only Blake Walker and Iris Doone had not said a word from the beginning.

She didn't know what these two were thinking and was not interested in finding out.

She just lazily watched the other seven.

All seven of them were quite irritated by Cindy Clarke's words.

Although they looked down on her, what she said was not wrong.

But why did it make them feel so frustrated?

It was like punching a soft cotton, making them feel irritated.

Extreme frustration.

At this moment, the five judges returned to their seats after their break.

No one dared to say anything more, and everyone went back to their positions.

All five judges looked at Cindy Clarke.

They saw the name “Cain Velman” written on the name tag on her table and noticed her wearing a mask.

But they didn’t say anything.

Because the organizers had contacted them, and even Adrian Zhekova had personally contacted them.

If Adrian Zhekova was contacting them personally, they naturally had to give him face and show respect..

Chapter 128: Will there be any favoritism for Cindy Clarke?

Therefore, seeing Cindy Clarke dressed like this, the judges didn’t say anything.

As if her attire was completely normal.

Seeing the judges’ reaction, did the crowd still not understand?

She really had applied to the organizing committee and received permission.

The crowd: ‘

At this moment, they really wanted to curse.

She wore a mask, covering herself so tightly, yet the judges pretended not to see it.

Could it be any more excessive?

However, since the judges did not care, they didn't dare say anything either.

They didn't want to leave a bad impression on the judges before the competition even started.

But, they couldn't help but think, even this kind of request was granted by the organizers.

Would the judges give Cindy Clarke any special treatment?

Everyone looked suspiciously at her, clearly discontent.

If they really gave her special treatment, it would be too unfair to those who were competing seriously!

"Let's introduce ourselves first. I am a teacher from the Pingla Culinary Academy, Wesley Gordon, and my specialty is Cantonese Cuisine," one of them said.

"I am a teacher from the Pingla Culinary Academy, Hunter Clarke," one of the two female judges said, "I mainly teach desserts at the Academy."

But even though both teachers had their own specialties, it didn't mean they only knew that one thing.

As teachers, they had to choose a particular subject to teach.

However, in reality, since they were able to become teachers at Pingla Culinary Academy, they had to be well-rounded in multiple aspects.

"I am Rosaline Parker, a graduate of Pingla Culinary Academy, and now the owner and head chef of Delic Restaurant," said the other female judge.

The judges were already announced on the internet, so when the crowd heard this, they were not surprised.

"I am Michael Greene, head chef of Quire."

"I am Charles Dean, and I have 18 restaurants all over the world, including three Michelin-starred restaurants: one three-star, one two-star, and one one-star," the last judge said, "I am the head chef of the Michelin Three Star Restaurant, and I also serve as a guest chef at the other establishments." "You can actually speak Chinese," Blake Walker exclaimed in surprise.

Charles Dean laughed: "Apart from work, I spend some time studying local cuisine around the world. Twenty years ago, I spent five years in Hearth

Nation, so I learned Chinese quite well."

"Alright, now let's announce today's competition topic," Wesley Gordon said.

Everyone temporarily put their thoughts aside and listened to the judges: "Today, your group's theme is noodles."

"No matter which country's noodle dish, whether it's a dessert or a main course, or even a side dish. As long as the noodles are the main ingredient, there are no other restrictions."

Noodles have many possible variations, but it's not easy to make them stand out.

While the others had already started working, Cindy Clarke thought for a moment and decided to make soup dumplings.

She chose chicken feet and pig's trotters, boiled them with bay leaves, green onions, and ginger to make a thick collagen-rich soup, and then put it in the refrigerator to solidify.

Afterward, she ground the shrimp into a paste and mixed it with raw crab meat.

She then pounded the beef and pork by hand to make a meat paste.

Fortunately, there were fewer judges, so she didn't need to make a large quantity, and thus didn't need to spend too much energy pounding the meat.

The hand-pounded meat paste was very elastic and sticky, making it easy to roll into a ball.

Poking a hole in the small meatball, she added the shrimp and crab paste and then placed the solidified soup, now gelatin-like, into the shrimp and crab mixture. Finally, she rolled the meat filling into a ball, placing it inside the dumpling skin..

Chapter 129: Standard and Normative

These minced meat mixtures were made into a total of 8 dumplings and placed in a steamer basket for steaming.

Everyone was busy cooking their dishes, with no time to watch others. But the five judges had a clear view of their every move. From their choice of kitchen utensils to the cooking methods, the use of ingredients, and various small tricks, everything was overseen.

"Blake Walker, Iris Doone, and Cain Velman are performing quite well," Wesley Gordon commented.

Michael Greene nodded, "The three of them are familiar with their cooking stations, know where all the kitchen utensils are stored, where each seasoning is, saving time identifying them and making their work smoother."

Charles Dean commented calmly, "We observed discretely before, while the other nine were introducing themselves, Cain simply got familiar with her cooking station."

“After the self-introductions, the others would pick on Cain. Only Iris Doone and Blake Walker didn’t, they went back to their spots to get acquainted,” Hunter Clarke added.

“With the competition approaching, they are still thinking about verbal battles.” Wesley Gordon first expressed his dissatisfaction with those seven people.

“It’s a pity they didn’t study at Pingla Culinary Academy, otherwise, they would know. On the first day of school, the headmaster told us in his inaugural speech, to concentrate on the task at hand, ” said Rosaline Parker, a Pingla graduate, “They were about to compete, but they still wanted to nitpick, showing that they didn’t take cooking seriously from the bottom of their hearts.”

“For them, cooking might just be one of the ways to make a living, not something important. Their attitude towards cuisine is not sincere, nor focused enough. Such mindset is bound to limit how far they can go. In the end, cooking is just a means to make a living for them.”

Want to become a famous chef?

Want to own your own restaurant?

Want to make your name known in the world?

These dreams are now all impossible.

The other four nodded in agreement.

Rosaline Parker smiled at Hunter Clarke, “Professor, this is your home field.”

Although the teachers at Pingla had a range of demands, with him specifically teaching this course, there were bound to be higher expectations. Hunter Clarke’s gaze fell on Cindy Clarke, “I am looking forward to it.”

Time was up, the countdown alarm rang.

All movement halted.

The 10 contestants, according to the order of the draw, sequentially presented their dishes to the judges.

As luck would have it, Cindy Clarke was drawn 10th, the last to present.

Fortunately, the steamer basket could perfectly maintain the temperature of the food, so there was no need to worry.

The first contestant, Albert Lambert, presented Egg and Noodles Dumplings.

The wrapping was made of egg and flour, with egg yolk as filling.

The distinguishing feature of this dish is, when cut open, the inside yolk should be runny.

The judges knew, Albert Lambert was just trying to cater to Charles Dean by making a dish from Western cuisine, in an attempt to take a shortcut to a high score.

But in fact, as long as the food is truly delicious, no matter what type of cuisine, it can score highly.

“Mediocre,” Hunter Clarke flatly stated, “The smell of the egg yolk hasn’t been reduced.”

Albert Lambert was aggrieved, thinking sarcastically: Is your taste really that sensitive?

Even after adding seasonings and sauces, you can still taste the smell of the

egg yolk?

Albert Lambert turned expectantly to Charles Dean, who shook his head, "This dish is only at the level of an ordinary restaurant, it's not impressive.."

Chapter 130: Surprise

Wesley Gordon looked serious when he addressed everyone, "I have said the same thing for all the rounds of the competition today. Mediocrity, that merely meets the standard of ordinary restaurants or even street food, is useless."

"What we are looking for are outstanding chefs with their own creativity, who exhibit a love for cooking in their cuisine, and not just treating it as a tool. If you think this is merely auditions and as long as you don't make mistakes, you can pass, then you're gravely mistaken. Even if you pass now, you'll be eliminated after advancing."

Obviously, this was directed at Albert Lambert's dumplings.

Albert Lambert returned with an ugly look on his face.

The judges ate the dishes that followed but didn't give much feedback, they merely nodded their heads and noted something down after their names on the form, which they didn't know.

Both Iris Doone and Bella Turner, the two girls, made Chinese dim sum.

But Bella Turner didn't receive any feedback.

Like the ones before her, Bella Turner was obviously disappointed.

When she got down, she took a look at Iris Doone who was on stage and had met her.

Bella Turner sincerely hoped that Iris Doone wouldn't get any feedback either.

She also understood that not receiving feedback meant not standing out in the eyes of the judges, and the judges didn't feel it was worth commenting on.

"Good afternoon, judges. I have prepared apple pie," Iris Doone placed the apple pie in front of them.

Hunter Clarke cut the apple pie open and gave a slight smile, "The crust is well-made, layered distinctively, and it didn't crumble down. The crust was kept intact."

Hunter Clarke took a piece of the crust off and looked at it against the light,

"Semi-transparent, almost the thinness of paper."

He then tasted it combined with the filling, "The filling is soft and substantial, and not too sweet. Your basic skills in Chinese dim sum are pretty solid."

Iris Doone said delightfully, "Thank you, sir."

"However, it lacks some dazzle. Keep trying," Hunter Clarke added. But at least, she did receive some feedback, which was way better than others.

Iris Doone was not disappointed.

Blake Walker also received a few remarks.

But so far, there hasn't been any food that has amazed the judges.

However, the five judges expected this.

It was just auditions, filled with a mixture of good and bad.

To be mediocre was already good enough.

At last, it was Cindy Clarke's turn.

Cindy Clarke directly brought a small steamer basket to the judges.

"Good afternoon, judges. I have prepared dumplings," she said.

Given that she was personally introduced by Adrian Zhekova, the five judges naturally paid more attention to Cindy Clarke.

"Everyone else prepared something sophisticated, ranging from dumplings to beautifully made Eastern and Western-style desserts. But no one made this," Hunter Clarke seemed to admire Cindy Clarke's choice to make dumplings, "it looks quite rustic."

However, blocked by Cindy Clarke, the others couldn't see Hunter Clarke's expression.

They thought Hunter Clarke was being sarcastic, implying that making dumplings in a competition was not very sophisticated.

The ones earlier who couldn't keep their faces straight now lowered their heads and laughed spitefully.

However, immediately after, they heard Wesley Gordon say, "Dumplings may seem simple, but making them well is not easy."

"Teacher Clarke, why don't you have a taste first?" As a master of pasta, Charles

Dean suggested with a smile.

Hunter Clarke then picked up a dumpling.

“This...”

Everyone was surprised.

Hunter Clarke picked up the dumpling from the very top, where the dumpling was sealed..