

Genius 321

Chapter 321: Junior Master! Taking a Second Disciple_2

Tang Feifei spoke huffily, her little hand making another ear-twisting gesture, while Xiao Muxue, rarely seen joining in such antics, indicated with her tone that their words must be true.

"Sorry, sorry... I just thought of something good and got distracted..."

Qin Fang was also very embarrassed. He had just realized the benefits of the "Junior Master" skill and couldn't help but get overly excited.

Luckily, he was using his Riding Skill while driving, and even though he wasn't paying much attention to his surroundings, nobody could have a steadier ride than his—it was as if a computer controlled everything, operating automatically.

"You... be careful when driving. If you space out again, see how we deal with you!"

Tang Feifei and Xiao Muxue couldn't help it; despite their fierce looks earlier, they were simply worried about Qin Fang. His condition really did seem abnormal, almost as if he was spacing out.

"Got it, got it!"

Qin Fang responded hastily, his excitement having subsided by now. How could he make the same mistake again?

After this scare, Qin Fang behaved much better and drove straight back to Fang Feixue.

After days of preparation, the facade of Fang Feixue had been completely redecorated, the parking lot had been arranged, and they had even signed an agreement with a large nearby marketplace to allow free parking there with a Fang Feixue parking card.

This was a display of Qin Fang's confidence in Fang Feixue, his precaution against future issues. He didn't want to damage Fang Feixue's interests because of such a small mistake when crunch time arrived.

Xiao Qing and the other four intermediate managers had all started their positions, and within just a couple of days, Xiao Qing had already trained the Fang Feixue staff remarkably well. The entire atmosphere had been rejuvenated, including the employees' spirits.

As Qin Fang's first disciple, Wen Yi had firmly secured her position as the top chef in Fang Feixue's kitchen. The original masters had long recognized her ability, and even the newly recruited chefs were impressed by her culinary skills.

As soon as Qin Fang returned to the restaurant, he immediately appointed Wen Yi as the head chef of Fang Feixue. She was now in charge of the kitchen, with everyone else, including Uncle Fang and Xiao Qing, having only advisory power and no command authority—except for Qin Fang himself, of course.

Of course, this was due to Qin Fang's trust in Wen Yi, and also for another more important reason.

"Taking disciples?"

When the few key people in the restaurant heard the news, they were all stunned.

"Boss, are you really... really going to take disciples?"

Apart from Xiao Qing and a few new managers who were extremely shocked, the others, particularly the veteran chefs, were brimming with joy.

"Yes! Even though Fang Feixue's new branch has not yet opened, you are all longtime servants of Fang Feixue. I'm sure you understand that its future will continue to grow. However, Wen Yi is only one person. In the future, as we open new branches, we will need others to oversee them, so I plan to take on new disciples..."

Qin Fang seemed very calm, and even though he was very excited inside, his face didn't show it.

"Boss, how many disciples are you planning to take this time?"

A senior chef immediately asked. They were amongst the earliest to follow Qin Fang. While Wen Yi was now their head, their admiration for Qin Fang had always been greater than for her.

This was no surprise since when Fang Feixue opened, Qin Fang was already at Intermediate Cooking, whereas Wen Yi had only just reached that level, naturally unable to compare with Qin Fang.

"Two..."

Qin Fang held up his fingers, quietly stating the number.

"Two..."

A moment of disappointment flitted across the faces of the senior chefs, but it quickly turned into surprise, and one of them immediately said, "Boss, I have a distant nephew..."

"My nephew also..."

"I..."

No sooner had Qin Fang mentioned his intention than the old-timers began vying with one another, which shocked the newly joined managers and chefs of Fang Feixue.

Qin Fang, the owner of Fang Feixue, certainly didn't need this eager sucking up.

Learning this craft was different from others, especially for chefs, who start out with hard times. These people all started as apprentices, enduring years to become skilled, and because of the hardship, they didn't want their children retracing their arduous paths.

But to their amazement, these veteran chefs, who made the newcomers feel inferior, couldn't wait to push their sons and daughters forward at the whisper of the boss taking disciples.

"Stop, stop, stop..."

Qin Fang had a wry smile on his face. The senior chefs had been rather puzzled when he first took Wen Yi as a disciple and hadn't thought she was anything special.

But Qin Fang's way of teaching was different from the norm. In just a few days, his disciple's ramen skills had improved drastically. Although she couldn't compare to Boss Qin Fang, she was far better than the other masters.

And this was only the beginning. Wen Yi gradually moved from ramen to cooking. Although she started out ordinary, her dishes became increasingly delicious, and she kept trying new things and innovating. She created several signature dishes for Fang Feixue, and even the old chefs benefitted, each gaining one or two signature dishes of their own.

Chapter 322: Junior Master! Taking a Second Disciple_3

Until today, when Qin Fang announced that Wen Yi had become the head chef of Fang Feixue, they finally realized that Wen Yi had truly completed his apprenticeship. The journey from the start of his studies to becoming a full-fledged chef took less than three months, a feat closely tied to Wen Yi's earnestness and diligence. However, without a mentor like Qin Fang, he certainly wouldn't have achieved such success.

Perhaps Wen Yi's foundation in cooking was still somewhat shaky, for instance, his basic knife skills were weak, but these shortcomings could be entirely compensated for by Qin Fang. At least they all knew that Wen Yi's current knife skills were no less proficient than those of the old chefs who had been in charge for ten or twenty years.

During this process, Qin Fang seemed to care little and seldom intervened, but his occasional visits to the restaurant and the kitchen, along with a few simple pointers, always left them feeling like they had gained immensely. This was precisely why they always thought Qin Fang was much stronger than Wen Yi.

In a span of three months, he had trained an apprentice who would have taken at least five to six years to be ready under them, and whose strength was obviously far greater. This caliber of training, even those well-known chefs in the country couldn't match, elevating Qin Fang's status in their hearts by an immeasurable amount.

This was the very reason they were all vying for the mere two available spots.

This was an incredible opportunity, and naturally, they wanted to secure this chance for their families and friends.

"Stop making a fuss for now. There are only two spots available, and you all are the veterans of Fang Feixue—you will certainly be given priority. However, I must state plainly that when choosing apprentices, character is paramount. Honesty, kindness, filial piety, respect for teachers—these are the bare minimum. I certainly do not want to end up raising an ingrate..."

"Next comes diligence. You have all seen Wen Yi's case. Her success today is entirely due to her hard work. Those who shirk hard work, even if I take them in, will be sent away..."

"The last point is loyalty. My apprentices are part of Fang Feixue, just like you. I will sign long-term contracts with them, ensure decent treatment, and the better their cooking skills, the higher their income will be, similar to Wen Yi's situation. Perhaps one day they will want to leave Fang Feixue to set out on their own, and I will certainly support that. However, before then, I hope they will stay with Fang Feixue."

"That's all I have to say. Go back and think it over. If you can accept these conditions, bring the candidates to me. I will train two directly, and the rest can be trained by Wen Yi. If I decide to take on more apprentices in the future, I will also choose from among them first..."

With that, Qin Fang didn't continue any further. He had said all that needed to be said, and what remained was to prepare some alternate candidates.

In fact, these requirements were what Qin Fang had thought up on the way back, and they were also his biggest concern. He wanted to win a good place for Fang Feixue in the culinary festival, and that meant raising their cooking skills to an advanced level before the competition, or rather, before the finals.

That's exactly why the requirements for choosing apprentices this time weren't particularly high, but they were certainly not to be compromised. He didn't want to end up doing all the hard work of passing on his cooking skills, only to have to strip it all away and waste his efforts if things went wrong.

Recruiting apprentices went quite smoothly. It took just one evening, and Qin Fang didn't return to the restaurant until the next afternoon. The reason was that several potential apprentices had already been sent to Fang Feixue.

The senior chefs were all locals from Ninghai, if not from Ninghai City District, then from the suburban counties at most, just an hour away from the city center.

It so happened that they had nothing urgent to do on those two days, so almost immediately after Qin Fang issued the directive, they informed their relatives. After explaining the opportunity carefully, those relatives pondered a bit and then sent the kids from their families who had no interest in academics but were still relatively honest to the restaurant.

Looking at these young people of the same age as himself, or even a bit older, Qin Fang felt a bit of pride in his heart. Among them, two would become his apprentices.

Similarly, the potential apprentices sized up Qin Fang with curiosity. They all knew that this young man, who was the same age as them, had started from a ramen stall and became worth millions in just six months, now owning this large restaurant—a legend in the making.

"Interview one by one..."

However, Qin Fang's expression was rather cold, simply sitting in a small room and asking the candidate apprentices to come in one by one for an interview.

The interview process was very straightforward. Under a highly stressful atmosphere, Qin Fang slightly intimidated them, causing a flurry in their minds, and he took the opportunity to use the Mind Reading Technique, thereby thoroughly understanding each person.

While there were nearly ten candidates who came this time, only three barely met Qin Fang's satisfaction in the end. But since it was a pressing matter, he had to settle, at least confirming these three were quite honest without any ill intentions, which Qin Fang cared about the most. As for diligence, it depended on the individual's drive, and Qin Fang believed that a high salary would be the best motivation.

He kept all three, taking Sun Liang and Wu Ping as his apprentices, while Zhou Rui became an in-name apprentice, with the understanding that his performance would determine whether he was taken as a direct apprentice or given to Wen Yi to train, and so forth. In any case, they kept him in the restaurant.

Chapter 323 Two Major Forces Congratulate Together_1

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Perhaps the two new disciples had been intimidated by Qin Fang, as they seemed to regard him with considerable fear.

However, Qin Fang couldn't be bothered with that; he simply took them to the kitchen and taught them how to make ramen in great detail. After receiving the message "You have successfully taught Cooking Skill to Sun Liang and Wu Ping," the mentor-disciple relationships between Qin Fang, Sun Liang, and Wu Ping were officially established.

"Wen Yi, from now on, these two younger brothers will be your responsibility. As the eldest disciple, you will train them. I will occasionally give some pointers too!"

Qin Fang was essentially a lazy person. After imparting the Cooking Skill, he only held the title of master nominally. As for the specifics, he was too busy to handle them and left everything to Wen Yi. This made his life much easier; he was able to increase Proficiency quickly without having to lift a finger, leaving more time to do other things.

Actually, Wen Yi didn't really need to teach them much. Her main role was to oversee them. The rest was up to the diligence of the two individuals.

In the disciple option for Qin Fang, the already graduated Wen Yi's name had turned blue, clearly indicating that she had finished her apprenticeship. However, their mentor-disciple relationship hadn't ended. It simply meant that Qin Fang couldn't gain any more experience from Wen Yi.

Of course, Wen Yi's Cooking Skill advanced just like Qin Fang's, but she only received one-fourth of the experience he gained. The remaining three-quarters became system losses, making Qin Fang lament that the System was truly extortionate!

Nevertheless, this wasn't something Qin Fang could control. He was now focusing on the performance of his two disciples, Sun Liang and Wu Ping, to see if they would make him proud. He could tell by looking at the Skill Proficiency. Those who were diligent could stay, while the lazy ones would be shown no mercy and ousted from the Sect. Then he could take in the waiting substitute, Zhou Rui...

After dealing with these matters, it was almost time. Fang Feixue was making final preparations because it was set to open officially the next day.

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Qin Fang and Xiao Muxue still lived downtown, and Tang Feifei continued to reside in her family's home at the provincial committee compound. However, they all arrived early at Fang Feixue after breakfast, anticipating that the Ninghai Main Store would officially open at around half-past ten in the morning.

The dining hall had been cleaned thoroughly, with all the tables and chairs neatly arranged, complete with tablecloths and small decorations. All the necessary bowls and chopsticks for the restaurant were also unpacked and sterilized, ready to use.

One of the most important aspects was the kitchen. With Wen Yi as the head chef and over ten apprentices, both junior and senior, all were present, including the apprentices brought by these masters and the three newbies with special identities, Sun Liang, Wu Ping, and Zhou Rui, all dressed in crisp, white chef's attire.

All varieties of vegetables, meats, bean products, and spices were also ready. For this purpose, Qin Fang had even prepared several secret sauces in advance. This might be the last time Qin Fang made the secret sauces himself, as Wen Yi's Cooking Skill had reached Intermediate level, and she would take over this task in the future.

The flower baskets were prepared at the entrance, alongside banners ready to be displayed, fluttering gently in the breeze.

Xiao Qing, as the manager of Fang Feixue, was standing at the entrance, welcoming the arriving guests—some were her previous friends or known business owners.

Qin Fang, Tang Feifei, and Xiao Muxue also attended in fine dress. However, their main responsibility was to take care of their acquaintances and the guests Qin Fang had invited, such as the city bureau chief Ye Heng and his son, siblings Ning Yumo and Ning Weiqiang, Tang Cheng, and Tiger Li Dong...

"Congratulations, congratulations!"

The first to arrive were classmates of Qin Fang, Tang Feifei, and Xiao Muxue. Since today was a weekend and students were off, they had time to drop by.

Xiao Nan had also returned from Southern Yue and led several dormitory brothers in two cars to the scene. They were the earliest to know about Fang Feixue's opening. Xiao Nan had flown back to Ninghai last night, and Qin Fang had him drive his newly purchased Audi Q7 straight to the school to pick up everyone.

"Brothers, it's crowded today, and I can't attend to everyone. Please go inside... Order whatever you want!"

Qin Fang embraced his brothers warmly and ushered them into the restaurant. Since it was the first day of opening, acquaintances ate for free and first-time customers received a fifty percent discount. Qin Fang didn't mind this initial loss because he wanted to make a great first impression.

"Younger Brother Qin, congratulations,"

Following were Tiger, Li Dong, Big Bear, and others from Tang Cheng's circle, all reputable figures in the underworld. They commanded such presence that they intimidated the more perceptive and knowledgeable onlookers—the only exception might have been Mouse Qiang. By status, he shouldn't have been there, but he was lifted by Qin Fang, which was giving face to Qin Fang.

"Brother Hu, you're too kind. Please, come in, come in!"

Of course, Tiger and the others didn't come empty-handed. They had thick red envelopes and a large gold ingot. Qin Fang found himself both helpless and pleased.

"We're all brothers here, no need for formalities! You do your thing, and we'll help ourselves... Just join us for a good few drinks later!"

Since their first meeting with Qin Fang, Brother Hu and his crew felt a strong connection. Coupled with their ties to Tang Cheng, they never really treated Qin Fang as an outsider.

"Of course, just wait and see how I'll drink all of you under the table..."

Qin Fang said with a laugh and led Brother Hu and the others into the shop.

By now, there were already quite a few people seated inside, most of whom were invited by Xiao Nan. However, when they spotted Brother Hu and his group, their eyes popped out in surprise.

"Brother Dong actually came..."

"Brother Bear is here too..."

"Even Lord Hu is here... This shop's owner really has tremendous clout!"

A few who recognized Brother Hu or Li Dong immediately started talking amongst themselves, surprised by the appearance. Those who were familiar with Brother Hu and Li Dong came over to greet them, instantly heating up the atmosphere.

Others who didn't know Brother Hu and his crew inquired about them and learned they were the big shots from the southern part of the city. They couldn't help feeling surprised and eager to curry favor.

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"Young Master Qin, congratulations! This is just a small token, please accept it with my compliments..."

It wasn't long before a group of about a dozen people arrived by car, with Li Hui of Bihai Pavilion at the forefront. Qin Fang was quite familiar with him.

"I didn't expect Mr. Li to come in person. I'm truly delighted. Please, come inside!"

Qin Fang was indeed surprised, but he didn't make a fuss about it. If Brother Hu's presence represented Tang Cheng, then Li Hui's was representative of Li Rui. Judging by the red envelopes and gifts Li Hui brought, he wasn't far behind Brother Hu and his group in terms of generosity.

Regarding all these offerings, Qin Fang didn't pry and accepted everything, then led Li Hui and his group inside.

As Li Hui passed by Tang Feifei and Xiao Muxue, he paused briefly, then very respectfully greeted Tang Feifei with a "Good day, Miss Tang." Unfortunately, Tang Feifei didn't pay him any attention.

Li Hui knew Tang Feifei's identity and naturally didn't dare to get upset. He led his people inside.

Upon seeing Brother Hu and his group, he merely nodded at them and then took a seat at another table at a distance, maintaining a clear boundary between them.

"Isn't that Li Hui from Bihai Pavilion? Even he's here..."

Many of the people who had arrived earlier in the shop recognized Li Hui. After all, those who had money often liked to have fun, and while they couldn't get into Elite Salon, Bihai Pavilion was accessible, so recognizing Li Hui wasn't strange at all.

"The owner of this shop is really something. These two groups are famously discordant, and today they're sitting together. The face given is unusually big..."

Those who managed to make a name for themselves naturally had good judgment. Li Rui controlled over half of Ninghai's underground forces, while Brother Hu temporarily held the south of the city. His influence might not be as extensive as Li Rui's, but it was certainly not to be underestimated, especially with Ninghai's top young master, Tang Cheng, standing in front.

It was an inevitable situation; despite Governor Tang having higher-ranking officials such as the party secretary and the governor above him, the current governor was confirmed to be transferred to another province as the party secretary. The current party secretary was also due to retire in a year or two, with children who had emigrated overseas many years ago. Secretary Tang was about to become Governor

Tang, and Tang Cheng, Ninghai's top young master, was soon to become Jiangnan Province's top young master.

In comparison, although Li Rui had an uncle who was a deputy party secretary and a standing committee member of the provincial committee, ranking temporarily above Secretary Tang, he couldn't exert much influence while Secretary Tang's career was in full swing. Maintaining the stability of the Li Family was considered good enough and explained why Li Rui was relatively low-profile.

Brother Hu, with Tang Cheng backing him, was untouchable by Li Rui's vast control of the underground forces, but the animosity between them was genuine. While there were no major conflicts, the small frictions were never-ending.

Qin Fang was very aware of these issues, but for the time being, he didn't want to get involved. There was undeniable discord between him and Li Rui, poised to erupt sooner or later.

However, from the current perspective, neither of them seemed eager for a direct confrontation. So, for now, they would live and let live. Qin Fang pondered whether Li Rui intended to deal with Chen Weilian, who had betrayed him, before slowly settling the score with Qin Fang.

No matter whether things were as he imagined or not, Qin Fang wasn't particularly worried. This situation actually gave him some breathing space and time to prepare, which was even better...

Chapter 324 - The Police and the Thieves Are Family_1

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"Boss, nothing... nothing's gonna go wrong inside, right?"

Anyone could see that the people at those two tables were not getting along, and Xiao Qing was no exception. She carefully approached Qin Fang and asked with some concern.

"Nothing will happen!"

Qin Fang shook his head, certain that Tiger and Li Hui wouldn't start trouble here, for they had to give face to him as the host. If they really wanted to fight, there was no need to do it at his place.

Besides, Qin Fang knew that soon the sons and daughters of the city bureau director and the provincial political and legal committee secretary would arrive; these two groups would be looking for death if they caused trouble here. Not to mention that many people knew that this restaurant had a share owned by Secretary Tang's daughter, Tang Feifei—even though Tang Feifei herself had never acknowledged it.

"As long as everything's fine, that's good... that's good..."

Xiao Qing was still a bit worried, but thinking of Qin Fang's indifference when he made that phone call that day, and Tang Feifei's composed demeanor, she felt much more at ease and continued to greet the customers.

Some of the waitstaff in the restaurant seemed a bit tense, but there were also some who were braver. These were the former employees of Fang Feixue who had experienced the incident with Brother Beard and his protection money. They recognized Li Dong, who was sitting with Tiger, so they naturally felt more relaxed.

Qin Fang wasn't too worried, especially when he soon saw the arrival of a familiar face, which made him even less concerned.

"Officer Li..."

The visitor turned out to be Li Qiming, who had been following Ye Heng; it was even Li Qiming who had given Qin Fang a ride here last time. This time, they arrived directly in two police cars.

Seeing the arrival, Qin Fang immediately greeted them with a big smile. Aside from Li Qiming, there were seven or eight other officers with not insignificant ranks. Qin Fang figured these men were most likely the heads of branch bureaus, deputy directors of the city bureau, political commissars, and so on, at the very least a police station chief.

There was no doubt, these people were Ye Heng's people.

Bureau Chief Ye wouldn't have called on people who disagreed with him; that would not have been a congratulatory visit, but adding trouble. Old Ye had been in Ninghai for so many years, doing so well, he wouldn't do something so unreliable.

"To all the officers, thank you for coming. Please, come inside..."

Guests were guests; they were giving face to Qin Fang. Regardless of their status or position, Qin Fang was very polite to them. As the saying goes, it's easier to meet the king of hell than the little devils. It wasn't because of Old Ye's connections that he could ignore these lower-ranking police officers.

"Young Master Qin, you're too polite! We're just coming to scout out in advance. Bureau Chief Ye will personally come over later..."

Li Qiming, who was Ye Heng's confidant, was very courteous to Qin Fang, immediately speaking with extra care. The police officers following him were also very polite, proactively handing over red envelopes and looking at Qin Fang with smiles on their faces.

"Bureau Chief Ye is coming too? That's really great..."

Qin Fang immediately acted very surprised, as if he had absolutely no idea beforehand.

"Young Master Qin, you're busy, we'll go inside first!"

Although these officers knew Qin Fang was just being polite, none of them would call him out on it. Li Qiming also politely spoke and then entered with the other officers.

However, as they walked past Qin Fang, they all very courteously handed him their business cards, which Qin Fang also accepted one by one.

"The police are here too? Things are getting lively..."

"That seems to be Director Gu, and there's Director Li, Director Fang..."

"They all have high positions, ah. Heads of branch bureaus, deputy directors of the city bureau, heads of criminal police squadrons, traffic police squadrons... Wow, this is really lively!"

"More than lively, it's practically a gathering! Police, underworld, all in the same pot..."

When Li Qiming led a group of police officers from the Ninghai Police Circle into the restaurant, they also immediately noticed the two groups sitting at two tables yet distinctly apart from each other. They all showed surprise, but after all, they were police officers, so they didn't pay too much attention. After a moment's hesitation, Li Qiming sought the opinions of the others, and eventually they took the table right between Tiger and Li Hui's, effectively separating the two groups completely.

Qin Fang couldn't help but glance outside as well and a calm smile appeared on his face. With this group of police officers holding down the fort, the chances of the two underworld factions causing trouble seemed much less likely.

However, the guests who were already seated inside were starting to get a little unsettled. They had never seen a situation like this, where not only were the strongest of the underworld factions in attendance, but also an unexpectedly large contingent of police officers.

In such circumstances, only one thing could be said, that is, the owner of this establishment had connections far and wide, covering both the underworld and legitimate circles.

The more people thought about it, the more they felt lucky to be there. After hesitating for a moment, they immediately called some of their good friends, urging them to come over quickly. Even though they

might not be able to make new friends, just sharing a casual acquaintance would count for something if they crossed paths again in the future.

Most of the people Xiao Qing invited were from the business community, and they naturally welcomed the chance to network with people from the underworld or the official sphere.

People saw and heard, and then the idea struck them, leading to a whole bunch of them secretly making calls to invite others.

Of course, more people were still watching the excitement here, after all, it's not often that two grudging underworld factions are mixed with a bunch of high-ranking police officers—the scene was really too interesting to miss.

"Director Gu, I didn't expect you to come... It's rare for us all to gather like this, today I'm going to toast you a few times!"

Seeing the few police officers who walked in, Tiger and his crew were quite surprised too. Their line of work was on the fringe, and they were most averse to tension. Though not necessarily afraid, sitting together like this still felt somewhat uncomfortable.

However, they weren't too concerned. They were here today purely to offer their congratulations. Qin Fang had a good relationship with them, and at the same time, they also had a good relationship with Ning Weiqiang, whose father was a provincial leader in charge of political and legal affairs. If they were to feel truly uncomfortable, it would be sitting with Ning Weiqiang.

Once the police officers were seated, Tiger immediately poured himself a drink and approached their table. Among them, Director Gu was from the southern city precinct. He was formerly the deputy director but got promoted after the Xiao Nan incident. As for Director Liang, who had stirred up trouble, had been dealt with by Old Ye.

Tiger actually had a very good relationship with Director Gu, who had often accepted his "gratitude" in the past, so Tiger didn't hesitate to approach him.

"Director Fang, Director Li, it's been a while since we last met. Today we should really drink a few good rounds!"

Li Hui, on the other hand, was no exception. He immediately led his people over with glasses in hand, and a group of them began to drink with the police officers they knew well.

"Fangfang, things aren't going to get rowdy inside, are they?"

Not only had the other guests noticed, but Qin Fang and his party had as well. Tang Feifei was a bit worried and asked a question. Nearby, Xiao Qing couldn't help but tense up as well. She had thought that the presence of the police would calm both factions down, but she didn't expect the situation to turn out like this—it was both surprising and nerve-wracking.

"There won't be any problems! What's this called? This is called 'the police and thieves are all one family'..."

Qin Fang said with a laugh, shaking his head. He knew that with the police around, the two factions wouldn't start a commotion, but he hadn't expected these underworld figures to boldly toast the police.

However, it made sense. They weren't causing trouble or engaging in any illegal activities there, and regardless of the police officers' good relations with them, by virtue of not breaking the law, the police had no reason to take action against them.

'Police and thieves are all one family', a phrase that Qin Fang would only say among them, as hardly anyone was listening. If this had been said in the store in front of everyone, it would truly be inappropriate. The police officers, even if they wouldn't flip out, would probably find it improper to stay any longer.

And indeed, just as Qin Fang had said, while it wasn't to the extent of the police and thieves being one family, the group of police officers led by Li Qiming didn't give the two factions a cold shoulder. They coped with the situation politely and quite obviously maintained their distance.

When it came to toasting, they would drink, but they certainly wouldn't show the kind of intimacy they would with friends. Whether police officers or underworld figures, all of them had been in their respective fields for a long time and had a good grasp of propriety. Otherwise, they wouldn't be brought here.

"Young Master Qin, congratulations..."

Just as Qin Fang and his group finally felt relieved, more people began to arrive outside, quite a number of them. Looking outside, Qin Fang saw at least a dozen luxury cars, with an even greater number of people congregating in a lively and impressive gathering.

"Xiao Liang, Xiao Tang, Xiao Gu, is that you guys? Are these all your friends?"

These newcomers were the same youngsters Qin Fang had encountered at the 4S store a few days ago. As for those following behind them, they seemed to be peers of a similar age, apparently children of influential families. Yet, their gaze towards Qin Fang was rather complex, filled with fear, some envy, and admiration...

"Yes, yes, yes, we all hang out together as buddies! Actually... Young Master Qin, we're all your fans. If possible, could we get your autograph later?"

Xiao Liang appeared to be their leader and cautiously inquired. The incident at Bihai Pavilion had caused quite a stir in Ninghai, and these privileged young masters had certainly heard about it.

Xiao Liang and his friends were rather show-offs. Although they already knew about Qin Fang—the same person who overcame Gu Tong on Longquan Mountain to become Ninghai's top Car God—when they encountered Qin Fang at the 4S store and received his invitation, they couldn't resist notifying their good friends.

Chapter 325: Grand Opening of the New Store (3) Privileged Young Masters' Gathering_1

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This privileged young master's circle was just that large; those who usually mingled together were either children of officials or rich second-generation kids with more money than they could handle. Once he spoke up, a large number of people responded to his call, and suddenly so many had arrived.

Of course, there were also many who didn't believe it, thinking the three of them were simply spouting nonsense, which is why only this many people showed up, relatively few compared to those who attended the Longquan Mountain races.

"There's no problem, please come in..."

Qin Fang nodded and followed Xiao Liang and the others, who were either officials' or rich second-generation kids, giving their venue face. They'd likely become regulars at Fang Feixue in the future. After all, making money was the goal, and naturally, it was easiest to earn money from these people.

"Young Master Qin, please don't trouble yourself, we can take care of ourselves..."

Xiao Liang and his group dared not let Qin Fang treat them like this. They immediately declined with caution and entered the store first.

"Miss Tang..."

Who knew who had the sharp eyes, but someone recognized Tang Feifei and immediately exclaimed in surprise.

"Who is Miss Tang?"

"Which Miss Tang?"

"Secretary Tang's daughter... Isn't that Young Master Tang's younger sister?"

Just like that, many people's expressions changed as they looked at Qin Fang and Tang Feifei. If they had been skeptical before, now they truly believed it, and everyone suddenly started behaving much more docilely.

If Tang Cheng could be considered Ninghai's foremost young master, then Tang Feifei was certainly the top sister of Ninghai.

Unfortunately, Tang Feifei was rather naive, and the Tang Family Members always tried to keep her from being influenced by certain people in society. As a result, she had a very limited circle of friends, most of whom were very proper, and there was always someone secretly protecting her. Any less reputable characters were discreetly dealt with.

Because of this, even though Tang Feifei's status was far from simple, there weren't actually many of Ninghai's privileged young masters who had seen Tang Feifei. That's why she had been standing here for quite a while without many people recognizing her.

Perhaps the few police officers did recognize her but chose not to speak up, as their position didn't really allow it.

Born into a wealthy family, even when Tang Feifei was recognized, she just smiled indifferently without speaking. At most, she would stand closer to Qin Fang, giving off a vibe of a golden boy and a jade girl.

Xiao Liang and his group were stunned. They had already met Tang Feifei before, but at the time, they thought she was just another girl Qin Fang was courting, and they had no idea she was actually Miss Tang.

Thinking of this, the three of them couldn't help but feel a chill down their spines, wiping the cold sweat from their foreheads and secretly relieved that, on that night, Qin Fang had taken another pretty girl with him to Longquan Mountain instead of Miss Tang.

Just thinking about it made them shudder, and they felt extremely fortunate that they hadn't been inappropriate with Miss Tang. Otherwise, they might not just get dumped into the river but also possibly end up with all their limbs broken.

Unaware of their predicament, Tang Feifei allowed them to breathe a sigh of relief, and they quickly led people into the venue. They didn't dare to keep standing at the door; the pressure was just too great.

"Master..."

Almost as they had gotten everyone inside and were about to enter themselves, they heard a very crisp and pleasant voice from behind. The three guys couldn't help but turn their heads to look, feeling as if their souls were leaving their bodies. They exchanged glances and quickly scurried into the store, then deliberately found a corner to sit down in.

"Ding Chuchu?"

Qin Fang was quite surprised to see this still very young girl, who despite only having known each other for one night, had the guts to skip home and follow a stranger like him to a place as chaotic and complicated as Longquan Mountain.

"Haha, surprised, aren't you?"

Today, Ding Chuchu was dressed in a very casual outfit. With a pretty face and a skinny, petite frame, she looked remarkably clean and cute—a definite little beauty.

"Indeed, quite surprised..."

Seeing Tang Feifei's puzzled look, Qin Fang also felt quite helpless. He had almost forgotten about this quirky little beauty, and here she popped up again.

"Haha, these two must be the masters' wives, right? Hello, I'm Ding Chuchu, I'm the master's apprentice..."

Ding Chuchu, the scrappy girl, didn't show any discomfort, seeing the two beauties Tang Feifei and Xiao Muxue next to Qin Fang, she promptly called out crisply.

As for Xiao Qing beside them, unfortunate as it was, she was completely ignored, rendering Qin Fang's deliberate arrangement ineffective.

"Don't talk nonsense..."

Both girls turned red-faced as the little girl called them out. Even though it was true, Qin Fang wasn't ready to admit it and had to hurry to send this troublesome girl away.

"Fangfang, I quite like this little sister. You're Ding Chuchu, right? Then I'll call you Chu Chu; let's go talk over there..."

Unexpectedly, Tang Feifei and Xiao Muxue actually took a liking to the girl, perhaps because she was younger than them, but not by much, and she was also very lively and cute. They immediately took her under their wing, leaving Qin Fang behind and dragging Ding Chuchu aside to whisper among girls.

Qin Fang could only helplessly touch his nose, and without guessing, he knew that Ding Chuchu would spill his secrets and pry for information from Tang Feifei and Xiao Muxue. The girl was cunning and not easy to deal with despite her young age; Qin Fang had already learned that firsthand.

Chapter 326: Grand Opening of the New Store (3) Privileged Young Masters' Gathering_2

"Young Master Qin, long time no see, congratulations!"

The person who came this time took Qin Fang by surprise. It was actually Li Xiang, whom he had badly messed with before, almost turning him into a complete vegetable. However, now Li Xiang looked at Qin Fang with a complex expression in his eyes, but he bore no hostility, which made Qin Fang both surprised and a little astonished.

What surprised him was that Li Xiang came over with a few friends, rather than accompanied by his father, the city bureau chief Ye Heng.

"Young Master Ye, how's your recovery going?"

Since Li Xiang held no hostility towards him and was so polite, as the host, Qin Fang naturally had to be even more magnanimous. He immediately asked with a cheerful smile.

"Then I really have to thank Young Master Qin for the few acupuncture needles you stuck in me..."

Though the words came out through gritted teeth, the squint in his eyes seemed rather joyful, which made Qin Fang even more surprised.

"Young Master Qin, could you stick a few more needles in me later? Don't worry, I won't shortchange you on the consultation fee!"

Not only that, but Li Xiang also leaned in and whispered into Qin Fang's ear.

"Uh..."

Qin Fang was befuddled by this guy this time. What's going on? Did Li Xiang want to become a vegetable again?

"Well... after you gave me those needles, I felt energized. Even getting the job done became stronger; handling two ladies at night was no problem at all..."

Seeing Qin Fang's puzzled expression, Li Xiang didn't hide anything and just told the truth.

"So that's how it is..."

Only then did Qin Fang understand, "But Young Master Ye, it's best if you recuperate a bit more. I'll sort it out for you when I have time. Your body will feel even better then, especially given your previous condition..."

"Understood, understood..."

Li Xiang immediately showed a look of realization. When he accidentally saw two people coming over, he quickly said to Qin Fang, "Young Master Qin, I won't hold you up any longer. I'll go inside first..."

Li Xiang then dropped a thick red envelope and stepped inside with his entourage, not even intending to introduce them to Qin Fang, perhaps thinking they weren't worthy.

But this inevitably led to some grumbling from his friends. However, Li Xiang simply said, "Don't you see who's coming behind us?"

The moment these guys looked back, they immediately fell silent and hurriedly followed Li Xiang inside.

"Brother Tang, Brother Qiang, you two came as well, I'm so happy..."

Seeing these two arrive together, Qin Fang's face lit up with delight, and he greeted them eagerly. Xiao Qing hesitated for a moment before also stepping forward to greet them.

It couldn't be helped; this was supposed to be Tang Feifei's role, but unfortunately, she and the other two girls had gone aside to chat, so she had to pitch in.

"How could we not come when you're opening a new store?"

Ning Weiqiang immediately laughed, fumbled about, and, instead of producing a red envelope, he pulled out a set of keys and handed them to Qin Fang, "Couldn't figure out what gift to give, so just take this for now! Consider it a present from me and Old Tang..."

Qin Fang was slightly taken aback as he looked at the car keys in his hand, which were for a Land Rover...

"Sigh, Brother Qiang, why didn't you give it to me earlier! I just bought a car a few days ago..."

Qin Fang said with a wry smile, pointing at the nearby Audi Q7.

"Damn, you should have said so sooner!"

Ning Weiqiang was also taken aback before he cursed with a smile, "Anyways, I've already given it, whether you drive one car or two, what's the issue, what man ever complained about having too many cars?"

"Then I'll accept it! Thanks, Brother Tang, Brother Qiang..."

Qin Fang didn't put on airs any further. The Land Rover had a pretty dominant presence and was worth no less than his Q7. It also matched his personality well, and since it was a gift, he didn't hesitate any longer.

"No need to be so formal among brothers, it just makes things feel distant..."

Tang Cheng did laugh heartily as he patted Qin Fang's shoulder, a slap that was like an Iron Sand Palm; ordinary people would have had a layer of skin rubbed off with such a hit, even Qin Fang couldn't help but to shake his shoulder, though nothing untoward seemed to happen.

"Not bad, you haven't let your skills slide! What about Feifei?"

Tang Cheng was very satisfied with this, but he asked about Tang Feifei, as he hadn't seen her upon arriving.

"Sure, over there!"

Qin Fang pointed towards where Tang Feifei and the other two girls stood, chatting and laughing happily.

"Chu Chu is here as well?"

Tang Cheng merely nodded briefly, but Ning Weiqiang appeared somewhat surprised; he and Ding Chuchu were not merely acquainted.

"Chu Chu?"

Tang Cheng, however, was briefly taken aback, looking quite puzzled.

"The daughter of Vice Governor Ding, grew up in the United States, and only returned not long ago..."

Ning Weiqiang quickly explained, and Tang Cheng nodded. He knew the leaders in the province, and while he might not have seen all their children, he had heard of them; Ning Weiqiang's remark jogged his memory, and he did not inquire further.

However, by the way his eyes flickered, it seemed he was contemplating something.

"Young Master Qin, congratulations, congratulations..."

Just then, someone else approached, speaking in a very amicable tone, but with a distinct red glow about them.

And Qin Fang didn't recognize the young man who walked over, his gaze filled with confusion.

"Who would have thought that the famous Young Master Rui would be here, Qin Fang, your influence is truly not small!"

Fortunately, Ning Weiqiang on the side helped Qin Fang out of the awkward situation, ostensibly complimenting Qin Fang's influence but indirectly reminding Qin Fang of the newcomer's identity.

"Young Master Rui?"

Qin Fang was only momentarily stunned; he didn't need to use his Scouting Skill to know the identity of the newcomer: the eldest son of the Li Family, the Underworld overlord of Ninghai, owner of Bihai Pavilion, Li Feng's brother—Li Rui.

"Young Master Rui, your presence truly graces my humble establishment; I am flattered by your visit!"

Qin Fang did not hesitate, initially thinking that Li Hui's passing visit was all, to find that even Li Rui had personally arrived was quite unexpected.

No matter what Li Rui's purpose for coming, or whatever the case, Qin Fang couldn't afford to be too discourteous.

"Young Master Qin, you are too polite! Hmm, this place isn't bad, and the location is decent; if you could add some unique features, business would definitely be very good..."

Compared to Tang Cheng and Ning Weiqiang, Li Rui clearly had much more clout in business. Not only did he control strength on the Underworld, but he also oversaw the Li Family's commercial enterprises, with Bihai Pavilion being just one of them—there were many more establishments like Fang Feixue, lounges, hotels, and others.

"Then I'll take that as your blessing!"

Qin Fang naturally expressed his gratitude with a bow.

Tang Cheng and Li Rui did not speak, nor did their eyes ever meet, but both men had excellent composure, much more so than Brother Hu and Li Hui; they could nod, smile, and greet each other when meeting, which may not make them look like good friends, yet they didn't appear as adversaries either.

"Brother Tang, Brother Hu and the others are already inside, I won't escort you in. I'll make sure to accompany you for a few drinks in a moment!" Qin Fang immediately led Tang Cheng and the others

inside, as he was also very familiar with Brother Hu and the crowd, and it was good to have them stabilize the scene.

"Young Master Rui, Brother Hui and the others are already inside, please..."

Qin Fang naturally did not forget to invite Li Rui in as well, although he didn't understand political matters, nor was he willing to meddle or ask too much, it was still important to make clear the order of precedence.

Doing so might slightly displease Li Rui, but it also made Qin Fang's stance clear: He was closer to Tang Cheng's side.

Neither Tang Cheng nor Li Rui were ordinary characters; Tang Cheng wouldn't hold any grudge against Qin Fang just because Li Rui came to congratulate him, and similarly, Li Rui wasn't displeased that Qin Fang first escorted Tang Cheng inside, thereby neglecting him.

It was because they had such poise and depth that they could control the current situation—...

Chapter 327: Grand Opening of the New Store (4) Officials Attended_1

...

Qin Fang could set aside all these matters for the time being without paying particular attention to them. What truly surprised him was Xiao Qing staring astonishingly at Tang Cheng, Ning Weiqiang, Li Rui, who had already walked inside, and the lively little girl Ding Chuchu in the distance. She asked with some confusion, "Boss, who are all these people?"

Xiao Qing was not young anymore, having mingled in society for several years and seen a lot, so she picked up some social etiquette. However, today's scene was really too intimidating, and her curiosity couldn't help but surface.

Qin Fang glanced at Xiao Qing with a very calm look in his eyes and finally said lightly, "Brother Tang is Feifei's older brother, the son of Secretary Tang from the city committee. Brother Qiang is the son of Secretary Ning from the provincial political and legal committee. Young Master Rui is the nephew of Vice Secretary Li from the provincial committee and the owner of Bihai Pavilion, and that Ding Chuchu, as you heard, is the daughter of Vice Governor Ding..."

What?!

Xiao Qing felt her brain wasn't working well enough, thinking to herself what kind of people these were. They all looked ordinary like herself, yet each of their statuses was truly not simple. In just a short while, four children of provincial party standing committee members had appeared, all of them being privileged young masters...

Although she had worked in many hotels and even stayed at the Elite Salon, she had not met many truly powerful privileged young masters. At most, it had been little privileged young masters like Xiao Liang and Xiao Tang.

But today's scene was truly astonishing.

Not only was Xiao Nan greatly surprised, Fang Feixue's shop was also in an uproar.

Originally, when Xiao Liang and his group of around thirty people entered, it had already caused a commotion. These people were mostly little privileged young masters or rich second generations with significant worth. Compared to them, the rich businessmen who entered earlier became insignificant, prompting a flurry of phone calls.

As if that wasn't enough, Ye Xiang then led a group of people inside. Even before Xiao Liang and his companions could show off, they were overshadowed again. Ye Xiang and his group held more significant status; their parents were powerful bureau-level officials in the provincial and city governments, much more formidable than Xiao Liang and his peers.

As for Tiger and Li Hui, they didn't pay too much attention to Li Xiang and his group; after all, their own backers were much more powerful. However, the group of police officers had no such luxury. Inevitably, they had to take Ye Xiang seriously, since he was the son of their high-ranking leader.

Everyone thought Ye Xiang and his group were already the pinnacle of grandeur, but then three more entered, and the whole place went silent even Ye Xiang and his group became very well-behaved.

All three of Ninghai's top young masters had arrived. Although the three of them did not belong to the same faction, they entered around the same time, which made quite the statement.

Tiger and Li Hui were also feeling rather proud; after all, these were their high-profile bosses, so naturally, they were very happy.

Yet, they weren't the happiest ones. The happiest were the modestly well-off small business owners invited by Xiao Qing, who were all ecstatic.

What level of figures were Ninghai's three young masters?

Normally they were figures these business owners could not even brush against, and now they were sitting just a short distance away, even sharing a smile with them—an honor beyond ordinary, so even more began making phone calls outside.

Tang Cheng and Ning Weiqiang did not sit with Tiger and his group; similarly, Li Rui didn't either. Instead, the three of them sat at a table by themselves.

Many people around wanted to join them at their table, yet no one felt entitled enough, simply not at the proper level, so they could only watch eagerly.

Qin Fang had prepared private rooms for them, but seeing that they were content to sit in the common area, he didn't insist. He was slightly perplexed by this but didn't pay it much mind. However, when he turned his head back, his eyes widened in astonishment, and he exclaimed.

"Sister Ning!"

When Ning Yumo appeared, Qin Fang almost jumped with excitement, quickly stepping forward to meet her.

If there was one guest he most hoped would come to his new store's opening, it was not Tang Cheng or Ning Weiqiang, but rather his elder sister, Ning Yumo.

Although they hadn't known each other for long, the help Ning Yumo had given Qin Fang was enormous, and almost entirely selfless, which touched Qin Fang deeply.

However, when he heard Ning Yumo couldn't attend the opening ceremony, he was genuinely heartbroken, to the point where he was even too preoccupied to cheer up Xiao Muxue that evening, just hugging her the whole night.

"I'm so glad you could come!"

Qin Fang said, quite moved.

"Giggle giggle giggle, aren't you surprised? I was teasing you that day. Even Feifei and the others saw through it, but you didn't. You're really quite dense!"

Ning Yumo rarely teased Qin Fang, which touched him even more. He was so moved he couldn't even find the words to speak, just gazing adoringly at Ning Yumo.

"Where are Feifei and the others?"

However, Ning Yumo was a bit overwhelmed by Qin Fang's intense gaze, which reminded her of being forcefully kissed by him at the banquet that day, and she immediately averted her eyes.

"They are over there, I'm going to find them. You handle your business..."

Then, without giving Qin Fang a chance to speak, Ning Yumo headed straight towards Tang Feifei and her group. Tang Feifei and the others had also noticed Ning Yumo's arrival and immediately greeted her with smiles. Ning Yumo and Ding Chuchu had known each other for a while, so no introductions were needed, and the four of them set off to have fun together.

"What are you looking at? Get back to work or I'll dock your pay!"

Qin Fang forced a wry smile and shook his head, before noticing Xiao Qing's strange look and immediately snapped angrily.

"Boss, you're really something!"

To his surprise, Xiao Qing didn't seem scared at all. She gave Qin Fang a thumbs up and said just that, followed by a burst of giggles before she swiftly moved away.

Watching Xiao Qing's enticing, swaying hips, Qin Fang felt an unexpected surge of heat in his chest. Her ambiguous comment only intensified his glare, and he muttered to himself, "One day, I'll show you what 'really something' means!"

When a woman tells a man "you're really something"...

Fortunately, Qin Fang didn't linger too long because someone else had arrived.

"Director Ye, you finally made it..."

Leading the group was none other than Bureau Chief Ye Heng, and Qin Fang hurried forward to greet him.

"Little Qin, how could I miss the opening of your new shop?"

Ye Heng said with a chuckle, "Come on, let me introduce you to a few people..."

There were quite a few people accompanying Ye Heng, most of whom were around his age. However, there were also some younger individuals, likely assistants carrying bags, who appeared to be secretaries of some sort.

"This is Director Cao, he's in charge of finance..."

"This is Director Min, he's in charge of taxation..."

"This is Director Guan, he's in charge of industry and commerce..."

"This is..."

"This is..."

It turned out that none of the officials who came with Director Ye were simple figures—all of them were directors. As for whether they were heads or deputies, Director Ye didn't specify, and Qin Fang didn't ask. He knew better than to pry into such matters.

Qin Fang greeted each director with proper courtesy, polite but without any hint of subservience or obsequiousness, which seemed to surprise them.

"Gentlemen, this young fellow Qin Fang is quite impressive. Though he's young, his capabilities are not to be underestimated! In just a few months, he started from scratch and now has a net worth of tens of millions! What's more, he's on good terms with both of Secretary Tang's kids and happens to be Secretary Tang's daughter's boyfriend..."

Before arriving, Director Ye actually hadn't said much, but since everyone was in good standing and he was soon to be promoted, most of the directors were eager to curry favor with him, so they all came along.

However, they were all taken aback by Director Ye's introduction. Each of their eyes lit up, and their gazes towards Qin Fang changed significantly. These officials had keen eyes—they also noticed four girls chatting and laughing not far away. They might not have been familiar with three of them, but they recognized Ning Yumo, and that made them even more reluctant to underestimate the situation.

The news of Director Ye's promotion seemed rather miraculous. The incident with Ye Xiang turning into a vegetative state had caused quite a stir, and it was expected that someone would seize this

opportunity to bring Ye Heng down. However, unexpectedly, Ye Heng had switched to Secretary Tang's camp. Instead of falling, he soared up the ranks like a rocket, and these directors were green with envy.

As for the young man in front of them, he seemed quite ordinary. They didn't care about his rags-to-riches story. It was nearly impossible for an ordinary person to amass tens of millions in a few months, but with Secretary Tang's powerful backing, even a little bit of grease would fatten Qin Fang up; reaching a net worth of hundreds of millions wouldn't be difficult.

After all, Qin Fang was Tang Feifei's boyfriend!

Moreover, by the sound of Director Ye's voice, it seemed that Qin Fang had already gained the Tang Family's approval, which was no small feat. While he might not be as high status as Tang Cheng, his rank was already quite significant. If he put in a good word for them before Secretary Tang's promotion to Governor Tang, organizing a few promotions wouldn't be difficult—Director Ye was the perfect example of that.

"This young man Qin Fang is really good!"

"Starting from scratch, he's very capable indeed!"

"..."

So, the directors, who hadn't taken much notice of Qin Fang, overdid their praise, leaving him feeling rather awkward. He thought to himself: You can praise me all you want, but do you have to be so ridiculous?

You say I'm as handsome as a jade tree and as suave as a dandy, I'll endure it!

You say my lips are red and my teeth are white, I can barely accept that!

But out of the blue, you say I have a graceful poise... I'm a man! A man! A real man!

After much difficulty, he finally got this group of directors—who apparently lacked more than a primary school education—inside the shop. Initially, he intended to seat them in a private room, but as soon as they saw the three young masters, they refused, and settled for sitting at a table adjacently to Tang Cheng and their group instead.

Qin Fang took a look and was even more baffled, but it wasn't his place to comment. The only surprise was that after Tang Cheng and his group sat down, combined with the other tables in the room, they were seated at the place of honor. Indeed, these three masters left nothing to chance!

Chapter 328 father-in-law-to-be Secretary Tang_1

...

Since all these people had already arrived and sat down, and it was impossible to persuade them to leave, he simply let go of the matter. There were still things at the door that needed his attention, so he stepped out again.

By this point, quite some time had already passed since the official opening time, but guests kept arriving, and Qin Fang couldn't well begin early, could he?

However, after receiving so many people, there were hardly any new arrivals; most were guests who had been invited by those already inside and did not require Qin Fang's personal attention.

Just then, a middle-aged man strolled over leisurely. Although he didn't appear exceptional, Qin Fang almost immediately noticed from within the crowd that this man was no ordinary person; he had an air of authority about him that clearly set him apart.

"Young man, is this store open?"

Soon, the middle-aged man approached Qin Fang and asked in an even tone.

This middle-aged man appeared to be in his forties, but Qin Fang felt he must be older. His voice was even, neutral, yet it carried a dignified presence that was authoritative without being overly friendly—quite a unique vibe.

As for his looks, Qin Fang felt a strong sense of familiarity, as if he had seen him somewhere before, but no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't remember where.

Moreover, it was clear the middle-aged man didn't recognize Qin Fang either, judging from the way he had asked his question, which made Qin Fang dismiss his initial guess even more.

"There are many people who look alike... It's not strange..."

Qin Fang shook his head, casting aside the peculiar thought.

"Yes, sir! This store is mine. Today is the grand opening, and as my first customer, all of your consumption is on the house!"

Having discarded that thought, Qin Fang immediately beamed the brightest of smiles and said to the middle-aged man.

"First customer? Young man, it seems you're mistaken. There are quite a few people seated inside; how could I be the first? The most important thing in business is honesty and integrity—you shouldn't behave like this..."

Unexpectedly, the middle-aged man took the matter seriously and began to lecture Qin Fang.

"Please don't mind that, sir. Those are all friends who have come to congratulate me on the opening of my new store! You do not need to be with them; I'll take you straight to a private room. It's very quiet there and won't disturb you..."

Although Qin Fang was somewhat puzzled, he didn't mind it much. He was actually telling the truth. Despite the large turnout, no one had come to dine as a regular customer; they were there to offer congratulations, handing over red envelopes, and Qin Fang couldn't very well accept money from them.

But this man was indeed the very first actual customer, so Qin Fang decided to comp his meal as a good omen for the opening.

"Free of charge, and a private room, too—won't you be running at a loss if you do business like this?"

This gentleman certainly had a penchant for the particulars. After accusing Qin Fang of lacking honesty, he now seemed to be saying that Qin Fang was too earnest, creating a bit of a contradiction.

"Ha, you have misunderstood, sir! Although I lose out on this first bill and the room, my small restaurant aims to earn reputation and word-of-mouth through quality. I believe you'll be very satisfied after trying our dishes, and I trust you'll come back again, and then again... Like that, won't I have made my money back?"

Dealing with such a fastidious person would perhaps annoy or frustrate most businessmen, but Qin Fang had time on his hands and decided to chat with the middle-aged man at the door, intent on persuading him to enter.

The middle-aged man was surprised to hear Qin Fang's response and gave a slight nod, "It seems I really am destined to be your first customer! I must try your dishes to see if they're as good as you claim..."

"This way, please..."

Qin Fang smiled too, finally having persuaded the man.

At that moment, the group of girls on the side seemed to have had their fill of fun and started heading towards Qin Fang, apparently ready to enter the store.

"Master, we're going in now; you wait here by yourself!"

Ding Chuchu, who was as sprightly as ever, chatted with the three others while casually greeting Qin Fang, then prepared to walk past him.

"Secretary Tang!"

Just then, Ning Yumo casually glanced toward Qin Fang and froze, her eyes widening in disbelief before she exclaimed in surprise.

"Secretary Tang?"

Qin Fang was stunned too, instinctively repeating the phrase, yet he couldn't gather his wits.

"Dad!"

Before he could come to his senses, Tang Feifei heard Ning Yumo's exclamation and turned her gaze over as well, equally shocked. However, she quickly smiled and called out crisply.

"Dad?"

Qin Fang was dumbfounded, then realization dawned, and his face turned unspeakably awkward, "You are Secretary Tang... Secretary Tang?"

It was a redundant question; now that Tang Feifei had called him "dad," there was no doubt about it.

Chapter 329 father-in-law-to-be Secretary Tang_2

Qin Fang immediately showed a bitter smile on his face. Although he felt that the middle-aged man in front of him looked familiar, he never associated him with Secretary Tang, let alone imagined that this high-ranking official would not only be without his official car but even without a secretary...

Now, knowing that this middle-aged man was none other than Tang Feifei's father, Ninghai's top authority, Secretary Tang, he finally realized—wasn't that familiar feeling because he looked like someone he knew?

Tang Cheng was his son and looked very much like Secretary Tang!

Tang Yongming was his brother, and the two siblings also bore a strong resemblance to each other...

Qin Fang knew both of these men quite well, so how could he not find Secretary Tang's appearance familiar? But he just couldn't recall it in the moment.

"Xiao Qin, not bad!"

Secretary Tang seemed very amiable and didn't show any dissatisfaction toward Qin Fang. On the contrary, he was very pleased with Qin Fang's actions, deeming every response from him to be quite good.

"What are you standing there for? Aren't you going to thank me..."

Seeing Qin Fang standing there dumbfounded, Tang Feifei immediately nudged him and reminded him with a coquettish tone.

"Er... Thank you, Secretary Tang!"

Qin Fang then came back to his senses and expressed his thanks awkwardly.

"Thank me for what? I'm your first customer today, and I'm eating and drinking for free! I should be the one thanking you... Haha!"

Secretary Tang appeared very affable and gently patted Qin Fang's shoulder, laughing as he spoke.

"It's an honor for Fang Feixue to have you come to our restaurant to dine! It's like a live advertisement. Not to mention eating and drinking for free, technically we should be paying you advertising fees..."

Finding the city's Party Secretary to be so affable and approachable, Qin Fang also became less restrained, and his speech flowed much more freely and naturally.

This pleased Secretary Tang very much; Qin Fang was neither servile nor overbearing, polite and measured—a promising material indeed!

"Dad, let's go inside. Today you're definitely going to have a taste of Fang Feixue's specialty dishes! Qin Fang, why are you still standing there? Go to the kitchen and get Wen Yi to prepare well... No, better still, you should take care of it personally!"

Hearing her father's satisfaction with her beau, Tang Feifei was naturally the happiest. Although her family had never explicitly opposed her relationship with Qin Fang, neither had they expressly approved of it, even Tang Cheng's attitude was merely non-obstructive, while also continuously testing Qin Fang.

Now things were looking up; her father's approval was akin to giving his blessing. This meant her relationship with Qin Fang was now completely legitimate. She couldn't express how happy she was inside and naturally wanted to properly thank her father.

"Xiao Qin can cook too? Seems like he's not too bad at it?"

Upon hearing this, Secretary Tang became interested and asked with a chuckle. He was already clued in on Qin Fang's background and knew that Qin Fang had started out from a ramen stall, but being adept at making ramen didn't necessarily mean one was equally skilled in cooking other dishes, hence the question.

"It's alright," replied Qin Fang, modestly.

"What do you mean 'alright'? Do you need to be so modest with my dad? Dad, let me tell you, our restaurant's head chef is Qin Fang's disciple, who had just recently completed his apprenticeship... In reality, after only a few months of learning, she already surpassed the teacher who has been working here for decades in skill, yet she's still not as good as what Qin Fang makes..."

As a daughter, she naturally sang praises of her beau non-stop in front of her father, though it was the truth. However, from Secretary Tang's parental perspective, it seemed a bit of an exaggeration.

In the meantime, they had already walked into the Fang Feixue restaurant. The atmosphere inside had just begun to recover a bit, but at this moment, it quieted down once again.

"Secretary Tang!"

"It's Secretary Tang..."

"Secretary Tang is here..."

When they saw Secretary Tang enter, everyone was stunned, especially the police officers like Li Qiming, who promptly stood up all at once.

Ye Heng and the other bureau directors were no exception; they not only stood up but also approached Secretary Tang to greet him.

Tang Cheng, Ning Weiqiang, and Li Rui, the three young masters, were no exception. Outside, they were known as the three young masters of Ninghai, but in front of Secretary Tang, they were just juniors, with Tang Cheng being Secretary Tang's own son.

"Dad!"

"Uncle Tang!"

"Secretary Tang..."

Three people, three different forms of address, yet they also represented three different levels of intimacy.

The several bureau chiefs, including Ye Heng, found it difficult to speak up, after all, they were subordinates, and their relationship with Secretary Tang could never be as close as Tang Cheng, his biological son.

"You're all here, it seems Xiao Qin has quite the gathering today..."

Secretary Tang merely glanced lightly, assessing almost everyone present with a simple remark.

However, his words made everyone feel a chill, especially the officials, who were scared to death, fearing that Secretary Tang might say something that would put them in an awkward position.

"Haha, don't take it too seriously. I'm not here today in my capacity as the Party Secretary. I've come purely as a regular customer to enjoy a meal with my family. Carry on with your work!"

Fortunately, Secretary Tang's words were just that, and he soon showed a faint smile, affectionately stroking Tang Feifei's sleek, black hair—his precious daughter. Although she was attending university in Ninghai, his busy work schedule rarely afforded him the chance to dine with his son and daughter.

"Secretary Tang is right. We are just here to support Xiao Qin and wouldn't dare interrupt Secretary Tang's meal with his family..."

Although the situation was somewhat awkward, ultimately, it was Ye Heng who stepped up and said something.

By now, everyone in Ninghai's official circles knew that Ye Heng was Secretary Tang's protege, so it was more appropriate for him to say this. It wouldn't have seemed right even if Ning Weiqiang had said it.

"Old Ye, I won't keep you... Xiao Cheng, Feifei, Xiao Qin, Yu Mo, Weiqiang, Li Rui, and a few young friends, let's all go inside!"

Secretary Tang greeted them briefly and quickly gathered the people around him, including Li Rui, leading them to the private room Qin Fang had prepared.

As expected, Qin Fang took the lead, guiding them as a host, opening doors and clearing the way until they were all settled. Only then did Qin Fang take his leave to personally cook their dishes.

"This Boss Qin is really something else!"

"Even Secretary Tang personally came over, that kind of face is not small!"

"Yeah, I've heard that Secretary Tang never attends such banquets..."

"Didn't you see just now? Secretary Tang's daughter was holding hands with Boss Qin. They are a couple..."

"Boss Qin is Secretary Tang's son-in-law? No wonder..."

The crowd buzzed with conversation. These people were not of high status, mostly just small-time affluent individuals, chattering back and forth, and they quickly concluded that Qin Fang was Secretary Tang's son-in-law.

And this conclusion was passed around from person to person until the initial speculation became an affirmation and, ultimately, a fact recognized by everyone, including Xiao Liang and Ye Xiang.

In no time at all, everyone accepted this as fact.

Only Tiger and his group really knew the truth. However, after hearing people talk, and with Secretary Tang's apparent acceptance of Qin Fang that day, they too came to believe it.

Perhaps Qin Fang was not yet officially the son-in-law, but it was a fact that he and Tang Feifei were in a romantic relationship; at the very least, he was the son-in-law-to-be, with only their young ages limiting the young couple.

Insiders were unaware of these shifts in belief, and by the time they found out, rumors had already turned into fact. However, they didn't make any effort to clarify since the Tang Family Members were very approving of Qin Fang.

Secretary Tang felt that way, Tang Cheng did as well, and so did the Tang Family Third Son Tang Yongming. Even the head of the Tang Family, the Director of National Security Tang Yongchen, felt this way. Otherwise, how could Qin Fang possibly have National Security credentials, a gun, and a gun permit?

This too was another aspect of the Tang Family's approval of Qin Fang.

Chapter 330: Signature Dish: Seven Orifices Exquisite_1

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These were matters unknown to outsiders, and Qin Fang and Tang Family Members wouldn't actively speak about them to others.

After greeting Secretary Tang and others, Qin Fang was immediately rushed by Tang Feifei to prepare the dishes. He didn't need to personally handle every dish. He only had to cook one or two of his best specialties.

Qin Fang had already pondered and considered this on his way to the kitchen.

Qin Fang's Cooking Skill had reached Intermediate at 95%, just a stone's throw away from leveling up, a proficiency so advanced that even the fast-learning and highly intuitive Wen Yi couldn't hold a candle to him.

"Sigh, it's a boon for Li Rui..."

Just thinking about the people sitting in that private room, most of whom could be considered his own people, the only exception was Li Rui. Even though he came to Fang Feixue to offer his congratulations, Qin Fang knew that he was an enemy, a Viper hiding malice behind his smile.

As the saying goes, there is fine wine for friends and a hunting gun for wolves.

The Tang Family Members were friends, naturally to be entertained with fine wine and delicious food. However, there happened to be a wolf among them, and Qin Fang still had to offer fine food and wine. It was hard not to feel depressed.

...

In the kitchen.

"Master, what dish are you making?"

Wearing a pristine white chef's robe, Wen Yi curiously watched the pot of food Qin Fang was making but was filled with confusion. It looked somewhat like Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, but the ingredients used and the cooking methods had similarities, yet more differences, which prompted her question.

Sun Liang, Wu Ping, and Zhou Rui, also curious, stood by, watching carefully, yet they did not find an opportunity to interject.

Sun Liang and Wu Ping were okay, at least they had attained Beginner Level Cooking Skill and had officially started learning. With continuous diligent practice, they would become capable chefs like Wen Yi before long.

As for Zhou Rui, he was somewhat behind. He had to start with the basics. However, Wen Yi occasionally gave him pointers, and though she did not formally take him as her disciple, Zhou Rui respected her a lot, even though he was a bit older than her.

"This is a dish I've conceived on the spur of the moment. Pay close attention, everyone. If you learn it, it will become our signature dish at Fang Feixue..."

This dish was the result of Qin Fang's contemplation along the way, a hint of insight he had before advancing to Advanced Cooking, and also a very special cooking technique.

The dish, based on Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, required even more meticulous selection of ingredients and a variety of cooking methods: frying, sautéeing, boiling, deep-frying, sticking, roasting, braising, stewing, steaming. Almost a dozen different cooking techniques were mixed together to create this very unique dish... it was not just a simple braise like Buddha Jumps Over the Wall.

"Wen Yi, come and be my sous chef..."

The preparation of this dish was extremely difficult; time was the real essence. Unfortunately, Secretary Tang and the others were waiting in the private room, so Qin Fang had to call upon Wen Yi to join forces in creating the dish.

Even with differing strengths between two chefs with Intermediate Cooking skill, such minor differences wouldn't adversely affect the entire dish.

After detailed instructions on what Wen Yi needed to do, she listened intently and nodded from time to time, seeming to grasp the points. Even the parts she found difficult only caused her to hesitate briefly before she understood and immediately got to work.

As for Sun Liang and Wu Ping, the pair of junior brothers found the explanation quite mystical. They only vaguely knew the method, but why and how to do it well were beyond their grasp. This was the gap in cooking proficiency.

The cooking process was very complex, and even though the other chefs in the kitchen helped with the prep work, Qin Fang's and Wen Yi's exceptional speed, especially Qin Fang, with his One-Handed Weapon Mastery, handled the kitchen knife, spatula, ladle, and so on with utmost finesse. Still, it took nearly half an hour before the dish was finally completed.

Meanwhile, the dishes for the other guests in the restaurant had been served, with Wen Yi personally managing the private room.

When Qin Fang, pushing a cart, opened the door to the private room, all eyes turned to him. To his surprise, while everyone outside had begun eating, the guests inside were still talking and hadn't started their meal.

"I apologize for keeping you waiting!"

Looking at the empty seat next to Tang Feifei, which was also next to Secretary Tang, Qin Fang felt a slight jolt in his heart and spoke apologetically.

"Xiao Qin is here. Come, take a seat!"

Secretary Tang still maintained his warm smile and did not seem angry that Qin Fang had made them wait for half an hour.

"Yes, Secretary Tang..."

Qin Fang respectfully spoke as he placed the real main course on the table, still covered by a large metal lid.

He held a great deal of respect for this dignified middle-aged man, not just because of his status but also because he was Tang Feifei's father.

"Xiao Qin, don't keep calling me Secretary Tang. From now on, you can call me Uncle Tang..."

Tang's Secretary said with a smile, his tone very amiable. He was quite pleased with Qin Fang, which naturally led to a closer relationship.

"Yes, Uncle Tang!"

Qin Fang responded without hesitation, immediately starting to address him as such, while Tang Feifei's face also revealed a radiant smile.

"This dish is Fang Feixue's signature dish, specially prepared for you..."

Obliged by such kindness from Secretary Tang, Qin Fang felt he could offer nothing in return. He immediately stood up and unveiled the large metal lid on the table, revealing the dish inside.

"Wow, it smells so good..."

Ding Chuchu, ever outspoken, couldn't help but exclaim almost at the exact moment Qin Fang lifted the lid, as the tempting aroma hit her, bouncing up with a voracious appetite, and she nearly reached for the chopsticks before noticing Secretary Tang looking at her with an amused expression, causing her to smile sheepishly.

"Not bad, the aroma is enticing..."

Luckily, Secretary Tang didn't mind. With his status, he had tasted all sorts of dishes, so he appeared quite composed. However, his brief comment conveyed a genuine appreciation.

"Xiao Qin, what's the special feature of this dish? It looks a bit like 'Buddha Jumps Over the Wall', but not quite like it..."

Looking at the seven distinct colors in the pot, even Secretary Tang, who had seen countless delicacies, found this dish to be extraordinary.

"Actually, there is no particular trick to it. The name of the dish is 'Seven Orifices Exquisite'. It involves using different cooking methods to prepare the required ingredients separately first and then combining them into one pot, stewing it in the manner of 'Buddha Jumps Over the Wall'. Each of the seven flavors stands out on its own but can also blend with the others, achieving a harmonious result, hence the name 'Seven Orifices Exquisite'... "

Qin Fang explained with a chuckle. The actual cooking process was far more difficult than what he described. Blending the seven different flavors into one pot and then slow-cooking it for a few more

minutes, ensuring the original tastes were preserved while merging together, was unimaginably challenging...

"Seven Orifices Exquisite... what a good name!"

Secretary Tang nodded slightly and murmured a compliment, casting a meaningful glance at Qin Fang as a flicker of surprise crossed his eyes.

Actually, the name was something Qin Fang had come up with on a whim without holding any particular significance, but Secretary Tang's expression seemed to invest it with some meaning, something Qin Fang himself failed to notice.

"Uncle Tang, as an elder, please, you should try it first to appreciate Fang Feixue's signature dish..."

Qin Fang immediately said, showing his respect.

"Good, good! Xiao Qin, you have promised me that once I've eaten here, I will certainly become a repeat customer. If it doesn't satisfy me, I'll have to give you a spanking..."

Secretary Tang joked as he reached out with his chopsticks to pick up some food.

His way of selecting food from the dish was very particular. Most people faced with such an unusual dish would pick just one of the seven flavors to start with, but Secretary Tang went straight to the center, where the seven flavors were mixed together.

In the art of cooking, the biggest taboo is a cluttered taste, as it can completely ruin an otherwise delicious dish. If the seven mixed flavors in this dish couldn't blend harmoniously, then despite how delicious the other seven individual flavors might be, the dish would still be spoiled...

As he tasted the dish, there was no significant change in Secretary Tang's expression, making Qin Fang grow somewhat nervous.

As the creator of the dish, Qin Fang was very satisfied with it. Although he dared not claim it to be flawless, he believed it represented the pinnacle of his current skill level.

If he were to surpass that, he would have to wait until he achieved Advanced Cooking.

Yet, with Secretary Tang remaining silent, Qin Fang couldn't tell if he was satisfied or not. After all, Secretary Tang was well-traveled and had tasted far more delicacies than Qin Fang had encountered. Perhaps Qin Fang's 'Seven Orifices Exquisite' didn't hold as high a place in Secretary Tang's heart as Qin Fang had imagined.

"Come on, everyone, try this dish!"

Secretary Tang's calm demeanor made Qin Fang nervous, but still, he maintained a warm smile as he invited everyone present to taste the dish.

The others naturally did not dare to refrain and picked up their chopsticks to try the dish...

It seemed that considering Secretary Tang had tasted the most complex part of the dish in the middle, the other guests hesitated only for a moment before deciding to avoid that area, regardless of taste, and instead sampled from the nearest individual seven flavors.