

Little Girl 651

Chapter 651: Spirit Food Association

Without a Spiritual Delicacy Master, as a Spiritual Food Restaurant, Chu's Restaurant would not qualify to open its doors.

After the previous Spiritual Delicacy Master was dismissed, Xin Lin realized this, and that was why she switched to selling steamed buns, intending to prevent similar incidents.

Currently, Xin Lin's Spirit Cuisine Skill has reached the level of a One-star Spirit Cuisine Master, nearly approaching the Two-star Spirit Cuisine Master, but that was only flat-topped by the Heaven-defying Book.

The qualification evaluation for Spiritual Delicacy Masters, within Purple Cloud City, only occurs once a year, so Xin Lin has not yet become an official Spiritual Delicacy Master.

She originally planned to wait a few more months before participating in the evaluation.

Unexpectedly, a moment of negligence led to an accident.

"Little Boss, it's all my fault, you can scold or beat me, just aim it at me."

Ma Jingtian was full of self-blame.

After Little Boss and Divine Doctor Chu split up, only Chu's Restaurant and the Medical Hall remained, with the Medical Hall hardly making any profit. Just when Chu's Restaurant had finally stabilized, he messed it up.

"Don't panic yet, let's go ask the Spiritual Cuisine Master Association."

Xin Lin pondered.

"Xiao Xin, aren't you a Spiritual Delicacy Master yet? I remember you said you apprenticed for Old Man Ji? That old man has some connections at the Spirit Food Association, why don't you go and ask him?"

Master Mo seemed to be napping on the side, but his ears were perked, and he listened clearly to the whole situation.

In his view, Xin Lin's cooking skills were not inferior to those of an ordinary Spiritual Delicacy Master.

"Master Ji has been bedridden recently, and I don't want to bother him, Master Mo, can you help me ask Master Mu for leave, I'll be back soon."

Master Ji's condition had stabilized, but to avoid raising suspicions, Xin Lin did not want him to intervene.

As a student of Qingtian Academy, Xin Lin was not allowed to go out normally, but fortunately, now using the title of an apprentice at the Medical Hall and under the guise of buying medicine, she could occasionally make an outing,

Xin Lin and Ma Jingtian left, and Master Mo thoughtfully paused for a moment.

"Beibei, take that silly egg, let's go into the city."

Master Mo called out twice, took Chu Bei and the Overlord Egg, and left Qingtian Academy.

The Spirit Food Association of Purple Cloud City, is run jointly by the owners of a hundred Spiritual Food Restaurants within the city, with Master Chen from De Yue Building as the chairman.

After revoking the business license of "Chu's Restaurant," Master Chen couldn't wait and brought out the Phoebe Wood Sign.

The sign was still the same as before, only the words "Chu's Restaurant" had disappeared.

"Master Jiu is indeed Master Jiu, he was right. Haha, this sign, it's mine now!"

Master Ji couldn't wait, instructed someone to refurbish the sign, and the three golden characters of "De Yue Building" shone brightly.

"Hang up the sign for me."

Master Chen ordered the sign to be hung up, and once it was up, whether it was an illusion or not, Master Chen felt that De Yue Building suddenly seemed much more prestigious.

The seal ordered by the Empress Dowager had already been removed.

De Yue Building did have some foundations, and after Master Chen hustled, the negative impact of the bun incident gradually subsided.

"With this sign, it won't be long before De Yue Building can grow substantially, even making a name beyond Longteng. By then, we'll see if those Spirit Cuisine Masters still underestimate our De Yue Building."

Master Chen was indulging in his beautiful thoughts when he suddenly heard a furious roar.

"That's our Chu's Restaurant's sign, shameless, daring to steal our sign!"

Ma Jingtian charged forward, followed by Xin Lin.

Chapter 652: New Signboard

Xin Lin and Ma Jingtian were searching for the Spirit Food Association in the city and upon inquiry, they realized that it was located near the De Yue Building.

They passed by De Yue Building, little did they know they would witness such a scene.

To monopolize this signboard, Master Chen had indeed gone through the motions; he repainted the Phoebe Wood Sign and re-carved the characters, thinking that no one would recognize it. However, Ma Jingtian and Xin Lin recognized it.

"Ma Jingtian, stop spouting nonsense. Which of your eyes saw that it's your signboard? This is our De Yue Building's gold-lettered signboard. I think you've healed from your old wounds but forgotten the pain, just out of prison and you want to go back in already."

Master Chen was calm, his face filled with disdain.

"Ma Jingtian, don't stir up trouble. We came here today to discuss matters with President Zhao, not to cause a scene."

Xin Lin glanced at the signboard.

Phoebe Wood Sign, genuine as ever.

But the letters on it had vanished.

Xin Lin remembered clearly, the Phoebe Wood Sign had a spirit nature; ordinary carpenters could not carve words on it.

But now, there were new characters.

As long as this signboard was hung, the reputation and returning customers of De Yue Building would gradually increase.

"Heavenly Destiny Book, what's going on? Can a system-generated treasure change owners?"

Xin Lin inquired.

"The Life Book indicates that normally outsiders cannot use a system treasure. With Chu's Restaurant closed down, the Phoebe Wood Sign became ownerless and defaults to recognizing the new owner as the master. To reacquire the Phoebe Wood Sign, De Yue Building must be taken down."

Heaven-defying Book explained without emotion.

No wonder, Master Chen put great efforts into shutting down Chu's Restaurant.

Xin Lin clenched his fists tightly.

It seems, Master Chen had guidance from a skilled master; otherwise, with his abilities, he would never think of the method to shut down Chu's Restaurant.

Xin Lin scanned his surroundings, noticing no one suspicious.

"So, you were the owner of Chu's Restaurant all along, what a joke. A mere apprentice, who just learned the craft for a few days, and you dare to open a Spiritual Food Restaurant."

Master Chen had found out everything from an informant in Chu Mansion.

He and Master Jiu thought there was some mastermind behind Chu's Restaurant.

It seems they were all fooled by Xin Lin.

"Master Jiu, Chu's Restaurant is not a Spiritual Food Restaurant; it's just a breakfast shop. I have no objections to you shutting down Spiritual Food Restaurants, but shutting down Chu's Restaurant lacks fairness. I request the Spirit Food Association to reconsider this matter."

Xin Lin said.

"Empress Dowager has ordered a thorough investigation of all kinds of taverns and restaurants. Your bun shop, having previously made several people sick, poses hidden dangers, and also wrongly displayed the signboard of Spiritual Food Restaurant. I was ordered to shut down Chu's Restaurant, with no oversight. If you disagree, you are free to plead your case before Empress Dowager."

Master Chen had an air of righteous indignation.

Chu's Restaurant's Delicious Spiritual Food Buns ruined the reputation of De Yue Building, and Master Chen cunningly took this opportunity of Empress Dowager disciplining De Yue Building to regulate all the Spiritual Food Restaurants and other businesses in the city.

"Absurd, Little Boss, there's no need to talk more with such people."

Ma Jingtian rolled up his sleeves, ready to start smashing the place.

"Who dares cause trouble in De Yue Building."

A chilling voice was heard from the building.

Xin Lin looked up only to see a man with a sullen face standing on the second floor of De Yue Building, leaning against the railing.

Chapter 653: The Well-Intentioned Savior Turns to Blunder

The man's face was pale and beardless, and his figure was emaciated, with a pair of sinister eyes.

He swept his gaze over Xin Lin and Ma Jingtian, the corners of his mouth curling into a cold arc.

Xin Lin immediately felt a chilling sensation, as if her entire body was entwined by a poisonous snake.

"That night, the one who entered the Chu Mansion was him, this man is an Evil Cultivator."

Gui Hu casually reminded.

The description of the ghost soldiers matched exactly with the man in front of them.

Xin Lin understood.

The mastermind behind Master Chen must be this person.

On the street, there was a bustling crowd.

Yet, in Xin Lin's mind, myriad thoughts churned swiftly, and she swiftly came to a decision.

The man warned her with a sentence but did not make a move.

"Make way, make way, who says Chu's Restaurant has no Spiritual Delicacy Master, here comes the Spiritual Delicacy Master."

Behind her, Master Mo's voice timely arose, as he parted the onlooking crowd and pushed the newcomer forward.

"Master Chen, you have no authority to shut down Chu's Restaurant, I, Ji Mou, am a specially appointed Spiritual Delicacy Master for Chu's Restaurant."

A significantly thinner Master Ji advanced to the fore, amid Master Chen's stunned silence and the cold gaze of the man upstairs, and said with a smile.

"Master Ji, aren't you..."

Master Chen's face was full of disbelief.

"Master Ji, why are you here?"

Xin Lin was also surprised to see Master Ji, and at the same time, she felt a sense of foreboding.

"Xiao Xin, something happened at Chu's Restaurant, why didn't you tell me? You must not have regarded me as your master."

Master Ji looked affectionately at her. Including this time, Xin Lin had helped him significantly twice, and this time, she had even pulled him back from the Ghost Gate. If not for Master Mo passing on the news, he would still be in the dark.

"How about it, Xiao Xin, I've helped you a great deal this time, right? No need to thank me, just cook a few more good dishes tonight."

Master Mo wore a smug expression.

She was really too clever; Chu's Restaurant was short of a Spiritual Delicacy Master, and she immediately found one, literally saving them like fire-fighting.

Xin Lin inwardly groaned.

This time, Master Mo had really overstepped, putting her in a big mess.

Turning around, she noticed that the sinister man upstairs had already disappeared.

At this point, Xin Lin could only grit her teeth and replan everything.

"Master Chen, I have been unwell these past few days and have not gone to the association. How could you shut down Chu's Restaurant without my permission? It seems you do not regard me as the Deputy Chairman at all."

Master Ji said displeasedly.

"Master Ji, you have always been the head chef at Taoyao Pavilion, since when did you become Chu's Restaurant's Spiritual Delicacy Master? I think, you are simply abusing your power for personal gains."

Master Chen retorted sharply.

"Who says I'm not Chu's Restaurant's Spiritual Delicacy Master? The signature Delicious Spiritual Food Buns of Chu's Restaurant were taught to Xiao Xin by me. Can't you see that the unique style of those buns is my doing?"

Master Ji had only recently discovered that this year's most popular Delicious Spiritual Food Buns in Purple Cloud City were actually made by Xiao Xin.

At first listen, his statement was flawless.

After all, Xin Lin's skill in making buns was indeed taught by Master Ji.

Master Chen was left speechless, after which, he snorted and said,

"Chu's Restaurant is a One-Star Spirit Restaurant, have you ever seen any Spirit Restaurant that only makes buns and cannot produce a signature Spiritual Delicacy? What kind of Spirit Restaurant is that? I'm right, aren't I?"

After saying this, Master Chen looked around, and the onlooking bystanders also nodded in agreement. A Spirit Restaurant must know how to make Spiritual Delicacies.

Chapter 654: Signature Dish

The Ultimate Lingxiu Buns priced at one silver each can hardly be considered true Spiritual Food.

"This..."

Master Ji hesitated slightly and looked at Xin Lin.

What is the signature dish of Chu's Restaurant?

A Spirit Food Restaurant without a signature specialty dish really is somewhat inexcusable.

However, Master Ji could not report his own specialty dish.

"Who says Chu's Restaurant doesn't have a signature spirit dish? Little Boss's Braised Pork Belly is delicious, comparable to any spirit dish from any other Spirit Food Restaurant!"

Ma Jingtian, standing nearby, couldn't contain his dissatisfaction and grumbled.

"Braised Pork Belly? You're not telling me it's just braised pork, are you? Do you think any random dish can qualify as spirit food? Let me tell you the truth, the main spirit dishes recognized by the Spirit Food Association must be approved by ten restaurant owners from the association to become a signature dish, and this applies to every Spirit Food Restaurant. Plus, this signature dish cannot be the same as any signature dish from the hundred Spirit Food Restaurants within Purple Cloud City. The Braised Pork Belly you're talking about? There're not a hundred Spirit Food Restaurants that can make it, but surely ninety."

Master Chen said disdainfully.

Ma Jingtian, seeking support, looked at Master Ji, and even Master Ji nodded in agreement.

"Chu's Restaurant wants to be recognized again, but simply having Master Ji join is not enough. It must also have a signature dish, and unfortunately, Chu's Restaurant is undeniably unable to do so. Therefore, its closure is unquestionably justified."

Master Chen said with a mocking sneer.

"Hold on, if I can make a Braised Pork Belly that is different from all other Spirit Food Restaurants, then could it qualify as Chu's Restaurant's signature dish, and could Chu's Restaurant then obtain legal recognition?"

Xin Lin, who had been silent all this while, suddenly stepped forward, interrupting Master Chen.

"Such grandiose claims. This dish, I suppose, would have to be made by Master Ji personally?"

Master Chen glanced at Master Ji.

Although Master Ji appeared to be able to move freely, his pale complexion and the dark shadows under his eyes visible with a tinge of blue clearly indicated he was still not capable of cooking Spiritual Food.

But if not him, then Chu's Restaurant was likely doomed...

"Of course, it's me..."

Master Ji clenched his teeth, about to take action.

"There is no need to use a butcher's knife to kill a chicken. Master Ji doesn't need to cook such a Braised Pork Belly. Master Ji will supervise, and I will prepare this Spirit Delicacy."

Xin Lin declared decisively.

"Fine, as you wish. I'll summon a few restaurant owners to come and see how you're going to make a Braised Pork Belly that can compare to a One-star Spiritual Delicacy."

Master Chen also had a look of anticipation for a good show and immediately found someone to spread the word.

By the afternoon, eight restaurant owners from the city had gradually arrived at De Yue Building.

"To ensure fairness, I will have the assistant chefs of De Yue Building also make a Braised Pork Belly, and then we will present both dishes together. Master Ji, myself, and the eight restaurant owners will judge and determine which one is more delicious."

Master Chen declared with an expression of uprightness.

Xin Lin said nothing more and went into the kitchen of De Yue Building.

The last time, the kitchen at De Yue Building was blasted into a mess by an Overlord Egg, but after refurbishment, it was completely renewed.

De Yue Building was indeed the city's top Great Spirit Restaurant.

This kitchen was more than twice as spacious as the kitchen of Taoyao Pavilion, not only equipped with the usual ingredients but also stocked with some fresh produce.

Even the stove array included more than a dozen stations for various cooking techniques.

Xin Lin was going to make Feng Xi Braised Pork Belly using just pork. She looked around the kitchen, picked out a few excellent pieces of pork belly, while the assistant chefs of De Yue Building took out the "pork" that had been prepared earlier.

Chapter 655: Spiritual Food Showdown

De Yue Building's assistant chef, seemingly just an assistant, but who doesn't know that De Yue Building's assistant chefs are all meticulously selected and are at least two-star Spirit Cuisine Masters.

The piece of meat in his hand looks no different to others.

But in Xin Lin's eyes, she could tell at a glance that the texture and fat content of the meat were different.

Dark Beast Meat... Naturally, the quality of Dark Beast Meat is much better than ordinary pork.

Master Mo always talked about capturing a few Dark Beasts to make soup, but Dark Beast Meat is expensive and rare.

Xin Lin had known that Master Chen harbored no good intentions, but she hadn't expected him to resort to such despicable means to elbow out Chu's Restaurant.

Xin Lin sneered, but did not expose him.

"The preparation time is half an hour, and ingredients and stove can be freely used."

Master Chen, seeing that Xin Lin did not recognize the Dark Beast Meat, was quite smug.

Master Ji, on the other hand, felt something was off and was about to say something but was stopped by a look from Xin Lin.

Master Ji knew Xin Lin was full of tricks, so he said no more.

The ten Spiritual Food Masters exchanged pleasantries.

The assistant chef from De Yue Building had already started cooking, his knife skills were extraordinary; he ignited the fire, added ingredients to the pan, stir-fried, seasoned, thickened, and colored, completing all steps in one fluid motion.

Looking at Xin Lin's side, she had not used a stove, but took out a small furnace instead.

"Hold on, for fairness, your furnace needs to be inspected before use."

Master Chen quickly stood up to intervene, but Xin Lin did not say much and handed over the Dan Wood Furnace.

Master Chen thoroughly inspected it inside and out, and only after confirming there were no Spiritual Energies or other effects, did he return the furnace to Xin Lin.

Other restaurant owners had no objections.

Among the Spiritual Food Masters, some used regular stoves to cook Spiritual Food, and some had special furnaces.

However, as a little apprentice like Xin Lin, who hadn't even been an assistant chef for long, it was unlikely she could afford any powerful Spirit Stove.

Compared to De Yue Building's assistant chef, Xin Lin was not so flashy.

She just normally sliced the pork, added very little seasoning, and an extra handful of dried Wind Breath Grass, poured the rocks into the furnace, and then focused on controlling the Fire Spirit.

The Dan Wood Furnace showed no signs of activity for a long time.

Half an hour passed in a blink of an eye, and the ten restaurant owners sat outside.

After a while, two plates of Braised Pork Belly were served.

As the two plates of Braised Pork Belly were brought out, several restaurant owners frowned.

Spiritual Food, like any other dish, emphasizes a balance of color, aroma, and taste.

These two dishes, not to mention their appearance, just the color, the left plate was clearly superior, while the right plate had little aroma, losing a point right away.

As for Master Chen, he immediately recognized that the left plate was made by their own building's assistant chef.

"Dear restaurant owners, please go ahead and taste."

Master Chen smiled, showing no intention to use his chopsticks.

He had eaten De Yue Building's Braised Pork Belly countless times; he didn't need to taste it to know the flavor, and as for the right one... How good could Braised Pork Belly cooked from ordinary pork be?

Several restaurant owners picked up their chopsticks one after another.

Master Ji, due to his recent convalescence and the need to avoid greasy food, hesitated a bit but still picked up his chopsticks.

He first tried the Braised Pork Belly on the left, Master Ji slightly nodded; it was no fluke that De Yue Building had become the leading Spiritual Food Restaurant in Purple Cloud City.

Chapter 656: We All Choose...

This time, Xiao Xin is likely doomed.

Master Ji had another small bite of the Wind Breath Braised Pork Belly on the right.

Just one bite, and Master Ji's chopsticks paused, his eyebrows furrowed.

Almost simultaneously, the other heads of the restaurant put down their chopsticks too, also furrowing their brows.

Seeing this, Master Chen laughed twice.

"Fellow restaurant owners, it seems the result is quite clear now. Place your chopsticks on what you believe is the tastier dish, the one that can be called Spiritual Food, the Braised Pork Belly."

Master Chen was full of smugness.

Little guy, thinking of competing with him? No chance.

Master Ji picked up his chopsticks and placed them on the right plate of Braised Pork Belly.

"Heh~"

Master Chen chuckled dryly, having guessed that Master Ji would be biased.

However, there were ten people present, and regardless of how much Master Ji tried, it was of no avail.

Next, another restaurant owner picked up his chopsticks, placing them on the plate of Wind Breath Braised Pork Belly on the right.

"What?"

Master Chen's face stiffened.

Another owner put their chopsticks on the same right plate.

One, two, three... as if they had agreed beforehand, those restaurant owners did not hesitate at all to place their chopsticks on the right plate.

"What do you mean by this? How is it possible that... you know, the plate on the right is made by that little apprentice."

Master Chen slammed the table and stood up.

"Master Chen, we don't know who made it, we just chose based on our personal taste. De Yue Building's Braised Pork Belly flavor is unmatched, but compared to the one next to it, it's just ordinary Braised Pork Belly. Don't believe it? Try it yourself."

The owner of Spiritual Food Restaurant smiled and pushed the Wind Breath Braised Pork Belly towards Master Chen.

Master Chen snorted coldly.

A plate of Braised Pork Belly without even a scent, how could it be tastier than De Yue Building's.

He took a bite and immediately frowned.

"Cheating! She cheated! This isn't pork, but clearly upper-class porcine meat! She must have switched it with Chen Hai's porcine meat."

Monstrous porcine, a two-star Beast, resembles a domestic pig but is not; its meat is smooth and tender, well-marbled, truly top-notch.

He had explicitly prepared ordinary domestic pork for Xin Lin.

With these words, Master Chen almost bit off his own tongue; inadvertently, he had blurted out his own use of Beast meat for his Assistant Chef.

The other restaurant owners coughed lightly, none of them spilling the beans.

"It's all porcine meat, so why do you think this dish is tastier?"

Master Chen was still not convinced.

"Master Chen, try the Braised Pork Belly your Assistant Chef made and you'll understand."

The owner of Spiritual Food Restaurant also shook his head.

Fuming, Master Chen took a bite of his Assistant Chef's Braised Pork Belly.

With that bite, his expression changed.

Why is the meat so dry?

And not even a hint of fragrance.

He didn't believe it and took another bite, but it was the same.

Master Chen tasted another bite of the Wind Breath Braised Pork Belly and almost swallowed his tongue.

"This... this..."

Master Chen started to stammer, how could the difference be so vast, isn't it all just Braised Pork Belly?

"Master Chen, making Wind Breath Braised Pork Belly the signature dish of Chu's Restaurant, I suppose you have no objections now?"

Master Ji stood up with a beaming smile.

Chapter 657: A One-Month Pact

"The Life Book prompts, congratulations life master, you have defended the glory of Chu's Restaurant and defeated a Two-star Spirit Cuisine Master, Heaven-defying Value +20."

Inside the dining room, an enchanting voice echoed in Xin Lin's mind.

Xin Lin was not surprised at all.

That's why not all Braised Pork Belly can be called Wind Breath Roast Pork.

Produced by the Dan Wood Furnace, it's bound to be exquisite, otherwise, her Heaven-defying Value would have been wasted for nothing.

It was only after Xin Lin tasted Wind Breath Roast Pork that she realized why the Heaven-defying Book dared to be so arrogant in its tone, saying not to compare Wind Breath Roast Pork with other street foods.

As a One-star Spiritual Delicacy, the most distinctive feature of Wind Breath Roast Pork, apart from its detoxifying property, is another characteristic.

Anyone who consumes it will find any similar food tasteless within a day, akin to chewing wax.

The Braised Pork Belly from De Yue Building might be visually and aromatically appealing, but after a Spirit Cuisine Master from another restaurant has tasted Wind Breath Roast Pork, the pork from De Yue Building, even if made with Dark Beast Meat, will definitely taste horrible.

Thus, this competition, for Xin Lin, was devoid of any suspense.

It's laughable how confident Master Chen appeared.

"Life Book prompts, a random task is issued, become a formal Spiritual Delicacy Master. Duration, one month, successful completion will grant a Spiritual Food Wooden Box, failure results in a deduction of half the Heaven-defying Value."

But before the joy in Xin Lin waned, another voice in her mind startled her.

Another random task, this time it's for the Spirit Cuisine Master, but what's this about deducting half of her Heaven-defying Value?

One month, how could she become a Spiritual Delicacy Master, considering the examination for Spirit Cuisine Masters is nearly two months away.

Upon reflection, Xin Lin thought she could only leave it to luck; if it really didn't work out, she'd spend all her Heaven-defying Value and let the Heaven-defying Book try to trick her again!

However, the reward this time was a bit peculiar; what exactly is this Spiritual Food small treasure box, seems a bit different from the usual wooden boxes.

A moment later, Master Chen and Master Ji entered.

Master Ji wore a face full of smiles.

"Xiao Xin, your Braised Pork Belly is very well done. After our several evaluations, it can be Chu Restaurant's signature dish, but..."

"But don't get too complacent, Chu's Restaurant now has a signature dish, but it still doesn't have the qualifications to operate. Master Ji is the head chef at Taoyao Pavilion, and he cannot serve as the head chef at two Spirit Cuisine Restaurants simultaneously. To re-open Chu's Restaurant, you must become a Spiritual Delicacy Master, at least a One-star Spiritual Delicacy Master."

Master Chen, clearly displeased, recognized the result as the victor was already decided, and with so many restaurant owners present, he couldn't resort to foul play.

So he made it difficult on the pathway of becoming a Spiritual Delicacy Master.

After some debate with him, a conclusion was reached.

"Originally, the annual validation for Spiritual Delicacy Masters was supposed to take place two months later; however, this year is exceptional. In a month, which happens to be the Emperor's 40th birthday on September 9th, the Spirit Food Association decided to prepare for the validation early for this specific birthday. When the time comes, just be prepared, pass the validation, and you can become a One-star Spirit Cuisine Master."

Now, Master Ji, battling illness, couldn't manage both Chu's Restaurant and Taoyao Pavilion; this was the most he could help Xin Lin with.

However, it meant that Chu's Restaurant couldn't operate normally this month.

"Thank you, Master Ji, I will participate in that validation then."

Xin Lin nodded in agreement.

As she left De Yue Building with Ma Jingtian, Xin Lin looked up and saw the high-hanging Phoebe Wood Sign at the entrance.

Chapter 658: Seeking the Life Book's Help

Upon leaving De Yue Building, Ma Jingtian was still full of indignation.

"Little Boss, are we just going to let this go? We haven't even taken back our sign."

"Do you intend to break into the government office again?"

Xin Lin remained calm and composed, showing neither joy nor anger.

"But... that's our sign!"

Ma Jingtian stubbornly objected.

He had been a bandit for a long time and couldn't stand the idea of his belongings ending up in someone else's hands, not to mention that Master Chen's tactics were even more despicable than those of a bandit.

"A blessing in disguise may come from a misfortune."

Xin Lin smiled.

"Xiao Xin, I was a great help today. I'm not asking for much, just make that Wind Breath Roast Pork for dinner tonight."

Master Mo and Silly Chu's dad were guarding outside with the Overlord Egg. As soon as they saw Xin Lin, Master Mo approached with a face eager to show his merits.

"There won't be any Wind Breath Roast Pork, but there is a meal at Taoyao Pavilion. I'll be the host tonight."

Master Ji came out beaming with smiles.

By winning the Assistant Chef from De Yue Building, Master Ji felt greatly honored.

He invited everyone to have a meal at Taoyao Pavilion. Unfortunately, Master Ji himself was still recovering from his injuries and couldn't cook personally.

"Master Ji, you are not fully healed from your injuries. You should still be careful. If Master Chen knows you're safe, he will definitely think of other methods."

Xin Lin reminded him.

"Don't worry. I've been fighting with him for decades. What can he possibly do?"

Master Ji said cheerfully.

Through his words, Xin Lin learned that Master Chen and Master Ji used to be fellow disciples, and Master Ji also learned cooking at De Yue Building.

The original head chef of De Yue Building had intended to pass the position to Master Ji. However, at some point, Master Chen used some trickery to snatch away the head chef's position and even kicked Master Ji out of De Yue Building.

Master Ji had to look for work far and wide, but other Spiritual Food Restaurants wouldn't accept him, and he ended up as the head chef in a place like Taoyao Pavilion, which was associated with less savory activities.

He found out afterwards that Master Chen was the one sabotaging him behind the scenes, leading to a grudge and an ongoing open and secret struggle for decades, all to no avail.

Whenever Master Chen was around, Master Ji inevitably suffered mockery and suppression.

This time, being able to make Master Chen eat humble pie, Master Ji couldn't be happier.

"Caution is the surest path to longevity. Master Ji, take my advice, don't prepare any Spiritual Food until you're fully recovered."

Although Xin Lin had helped Master Ji by removing the parasitic eggs from his body, Master Ji's essence and cultivation had been significantly depleted by the Corpse Leech, and it would be difficult to recover quickly.

Master Ji readily agreed, and everyone ate and drank until the moon climbed over the willow tops.

Master Mo drank quite a bit and staggered as he walked, eventually being carried back to the School Clinic by Silly Chu.

After setting everyone else up, Xin Lin returned to the small wooden house number 24.

Back in the small wooden house, Xin Lin wasn't the slightest bit sleepy.

"Heaven-defying Book, how can I reclaim that Phoebe Wood Sign?"

What was eaten must be spit out.

Xin Lin hadn't reacted on the spot to retake the Phoebe Wood Sign, but that didn't mean she really didn't want it.

A gentleman's revenge is not too late, even after ten years.

"Life Book reminder: Answering the question requires deducting 10 Heaven-Defying Value points."

The response of the Heaven-defying Book was exactly what Xin Lin had in mind.

Xin Lin nodded in agreement.

"Life Book reminder: 10 Heaven-Defying Value points deducted. The only method to reclaim the Phoebe Wood Sign is to shut down De Yue Building, making the sign ownerless."

The Heaven-defying Book answered deliberately.

Chapter 659: Smashing the Signboard!

"Can't you answer with a little more sincerity? If this method is viable, do you think I'd still be asking you?"

Xin Lin was speechless.

"The Heaven-defying Book indicates that to obtain other methods, 10 Heaven-defying Points must be deducted."

The Heaven-defying Book still spoke in its listless tone.

Sometimes, Xin Lin really wondered who on earth invented this Heaven-defying Book. This thing is stubborn as a stinky stone in a privy pit.

"The Heaven-defying Book indicates: 10 Heaven-defying Points deducted. The method to retrieve the Phoebe Wood Sign is unique, however... if the life master wishes to render the Phoebe Wood Sign ineffective, there's another method—desecrating the sign. The Phoebe Wood Sign is a Spiritual Object; once desecrated, it loses all spiritual power and even brings about negative effects."

"How exactly do I desecrate it?"

Xin Lin perked up at the thought.

Never mind if she couldn't get it back at the moment.

After all, Chu's Restaurant wasn't open recently, and disabling the Phoebe Wood Sign was a method in itself.

Anyway, she didn't want De Yue Building and Master Chen to benefit from it.

"The Heaven-defying Book asks: Is this the third question?"

The Heaven-defying Book countered.

"Heh~ Look at you, learning to ask back."

Xin Lin said, unamused.

"You don't need it to answer this question. I can tell you how to desecrate that piece of wood."

Gui Hu's breath filled the entire cabin.

Xin Lin was thrilled.

"Just smear it with some Ghost Energy, and that piece of wood will become nothing more than a coffin plank."

Gui Hu said indifferently.

Coffin plank?

"Golden Nanmu is already the perfect choice for coffin planks, haven't you stayed inside one?"

Gui Hu gave Xin Lin a somewhat displeased glare.

Xin Lin recalled the memory and snapped back to reality.

When she first encountered Gui Hu, wasn't she inside a coffin?

So, that coffin was actually made of Golden Nanmu?

As for the Ghost Energy, doesn't Gui Hu have plenty?

So just a flick of his finger, and the sign would turn into a coffin plank!

Xin Lin glanced at Gui Hu.

Gui Hu remained motionless.

Xin Lin coughed lightly.

"Fu Xi's Energy?"

Gui Hu didn't budge.

With her meager amount of Fu Xi's Energy, Gui Hu didn't even care for it.

He rather go out himself and absorb directly using the Heaven and Earth Devouring Spirit Array.

"Candied Hawthorn?"

Xin Lin found out that Gui Hu seemed to quite like the Candied Hawthorn she made.

Otherwise, the Overlord Egg wouldn't have complained that its Candied Hawthorn disappeared while it was asleep.

Gui Hu still didn't move.

"What will it take for you to agree to help?"

Xin Lin asked, frustrated.

"Eat together."

Gui Hu took his time and finally uttered four words.

Eat together?

That simple?

Xin Lin blinked.

She thought Gui Hu would come up with some harsh and excessive conditions.

Wait a minute... Xin Lin remembered something.

The Pride Corpse has been eating for a while now, and it seemed, he has never once dined with them at the same table.

Has he always been eating alone... all by himself?

Every time, she would eat with silly Dad, Master Mo, even the Overlord Egg often dined with them, but never once had the Pride Corpse joined them.

He never suggested it, and Xin Lin never thought to invite him.

It wasn't her fault, really, who in their right mind would invite the Corpse King to dine together?

Normal corpses don't eat.

"Alright, we'll eat together."

Xin Lin patted her chest and readily agreed.

On Gui Hu's cool face, there wasn't much change in expression, but those cold blue eyes seemed to have a slight shift, turning into a clear sky blue.

Chapter 660: Conspiracy

In the dead of night within De Yue Building.

"Master Jiu, didn't you say that Master Ji was bound to die this time? How come he's still well and even spoiled my plans?"

Master Chen was furious, his face flushed with anger.

He had already made plans that once Master Ji died, he would take over Taoyao Pavilion.

De Yue Building had been stuck as a Three-star Spiritual Restaurant for many years, operating on a small scale. If he could take over Taoyao Pavilion, which was also a Three-star Spiritual Restaurant, it could advance to a Four-star Spiritual Food Restaurant, and his own status as a Spiritual Delicacy Master could also rise.

Yet, all those plans were ruined.

"I find it odd too, how he survived. The leech eggs inside his stomach have been cleared by someone, apart from being a bit weak, he has no other issues. Earlier, the Master Ji I had bribed has also disappeared without a trace and can't be contacted."

Today, when Master Ji appeared, Master Jiu, who was hiding in De Yue Building, had already noticed.

He was observing in the shadows and found that Master Ji had recovered without treatment.

Not a single one of his leech eggs remained.

This was no small matter.

Could it be that someone secretly helped and cleared the parasites from his body?

But Master Jiu had inquired clearly that there were no such experts in Purple Cloud City.

This was also something Master Jiu couldn't figure out.

"Without Master Ji's death, I won't pay the compensation."

Master Chen said, huffing angrily.

A thousand Intermediate Qi Stones were not a small number.

Even for a large establishment like De Yue Building, it might not have that much income after several years.

Master Chen this time, in order to completely remove Taoyao Pavilion, Master Ji, and that troublesome Chu's Restaurant, had really invested heavily.

"I have already helped you get the Phoebe Wood Sign, you at least need to pay fifty percent of the Qi Stones, otherwise, don't blame me for being unkind."

Master Jiu's face darkened, and with a loud slap, he hit the desk.

The sturdy desk instantly turned into powder.

A chilling aura surged around.

Master Jiu's face, which was already paler and colder than an ordinary person's, appeared completely bloodless in the night.

Master Chen snapped to his senses, then remembered that the person before him was not an ordinary man, not someone who could be threatened with a few words.

Though he was a Four-star Spirit Chef, he was merely a Martial Artist in the early stages of the Xuan Transformation Realm.

Master Jiu's fearsomeness was not something ordinary people could handle.

Master Chen secretly felt alarmed.

"Master Jiu, please don't be angry. I was just impulsively agitated. Don't worry, I will definitely gather fifty percent of the Qi Stones. But regarding Master Ji?"

Master Chen quickly switched his demeanor, showing a face eager to please.

"Rest assured, I will act in the next few days. Although his injuries are not serious, his Essence Blood is severely depleted, and he can't even prepare Spiritual Delicacies. Otherwise, he wouldn't have relied on that young girl to suppress you today. Compared to him, that young girl seems rather interesting."

Master Jiu said with a sinister smile, his pale face and those bloodshot-like lips looked chilling.

"Are you talking about Xin Lin, that girl? Does she really have something extraordinary?"

Master Chen also detested Xin Lin, his teeth itching with hatred.

A mere apprentice who managed to cook Braised Pork Belly and make those Delicious Spiritual Food Buns with such a flavor, undoubtedly, it must have been Xin Lin who prepared them.

If he continued to do nothing and let her learn about Spiritual Delicacies, she might surpass him in a few years!

That alone was a reason he could absolutely not allow Xin Lin to grow up; he must nip her in the bud!