

TALISMAN EMPEROR

Chapter 18 - Du Qingxi

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Along with the entrance of this young girl, the room suddenly went silent, and even narcissistic Qiao Nan and the boy crazy Pei Pei self-consciously shut their mouths.

Chen Xi looked up and a woman in a black dress with a tall and well-proportioned figure entered his eyes. The woman was as pretty as a picture; she had a fine nose and cherry lips with skin that was white as snow. Looking from afar, she seemed like a proud and aloof black peony that was in full bloom, revealing a unique icy cold feeling.

“She’s Du Qingxi[1. Her name (杜清溪) forms part of the name of the restaurant (清溪酒楼), but I prefer translating her name when used in the restaurant than calling it Qingxi Restaurant], the owner of Clear Stream Restaurant. She usually lives in seclusion and is rarely seen, as she’s in closed door cultivation most of the time and extremely rarely comes within the restaurant. Her origins are rather mysterious and no one knows of her strength. Supposedly even General Qin of the General’s Estate has to be courteous to her.” Bai Wanqing’s voice that was gentle and pleasing silently pierced into Chen Xi’s ears, and only then did he understand the identity of the woman before him. Chen Xi couldn’t help but be slightly astonished, the ability of this woman was indeed extremely astonishing, as she was able to control the number one restaurant in Pine Mist City at such a young age.

After Du Qingxi walked in, she directly ignored everyone else and only covertly glanced at Chen Xi before directing her gaze at old man Ma as she directly said, “The disciple you’ve recruited will be provided with 100 spirit

stones a day, and the materials needed for practicing his culinary arts will be provided for free. But he must sign a three year agreement with me and guarantee to only work in my Clear Stream Restaurant within the next three years. How about it?" Her voice was frosty, and it revealed a sense of being unquestionable.

Old man Ma shook his head. "I only pass down culinary arts, you have to discuss these things with that kid."

Du Qingxi's beautiful brows frowned as she looked at Chen Xi and slowly said, "You've heard my conditions clearly, to sign or not to sign the agreement is all up to you."

Truthfully speaking, these conditions had already exceeded Chen Xi's expectations, as he originally thought that being able to earn a few tens of spirit stones would already be a blessing. Never had he imagined that Du Qingxi would directly give him a remuneration of 100 spirit stones, and at the same moment that he was stunned, he couldn't help but feel extremely pleasantly surprised.

Chen Xi silently pondered for a moment before making his decision and replying. "I can agree to only working at Clear Stream Restaurant, but I'm unable to guarantee the time. However, what I can assure you is that as long as I'm within Pine Mist City, I will not work in another restaurant."

He did this to be prepared for any contingencies, as he was burdened with too many things and was utterly unable to guarantee if he would be able to be a spirit chef apprentice for three years in Clear Stream Restaurant.

Du Qingxi was startled, seeming to have never expected that Chen Xi would dare to negotiate with her, and she coldly nodded after some time. "I hope you can abide by your promise."

She turned around and left after she finished. Her actions were decisive, without the slightest hesitation.

It had only been a short while since the moment Du Qingxi entered and left the room, but the grandness of her presence and the decisiveness of her words were expressed vividly. Coupled with her extremely beautiful icy cold appearance that was proud and aloof, she was like a queen that stood above the masses as she inspected her territory, causing one to unconsciously feel reverence.

But all this had very little effect on Chen Xi, as he only knew that he'd already become a spirit chef apprentice that had a remuneration of over 100 spirit stones a day. So, his mood was extremely happy and he completely didn't mind how dominating Du Qingxi's attitude was.

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"Miss, we've already finished investigating, this is the detailed information on Chen Xi." Wu Feng had a respectful expression and passed over a piece of paper.

Wu Feng's face was fair and clear, with a feminine disposition. When Du Qingxi was born, he was arranged to be like a shadow guarding by her side.

"Chen Xi, originally the eldest grandson of the eldest son of Pine Mist City's Chen Clan..."

The paper recorded everything about Chen Xi in detail; all the things that had happened since he was born until now all appeared on the thin piece of paper.

After Du Qingxi finished reading, a trace of rare surprise appeared within her chilly starry eyes. "Clan annihilated, parents separated, marriage contract torn to shreds, grandfather killed... This fellow is really misfortunate, no wonder others call him a jinx."

Wu Feng frowned. “Miss, you wouldn’t be feeling pity for him so you gave him such generous conditions, right? Those ingredients are all things that are filled with spirit energy, just allowing him to waste it like this, seems... slightly improper, right?”

Du Qingxi said indifferently, “So long as he’s able to learn 10% of old man Ma’s culinary arts before the Southern Barbaric Nether Domain trials, so what if he wastes some materials?”

Wu Feng seemed to have realized something as he exclaimed in shock. “Miss, could it be that you really want to head to the Southern Barbaric Nether Domain?”

Du Qingxi said indifferently, “Exactly, I’ve already obtained an Essence Seal Pill, so reducing my cultivation to the Congenital Realm isn’t a problem. But you know as well, the spirit energy in the Southern Barbaric Nether Domain is exhausted, and baleful qi billows. If I’m not accompanied by a spirit chef, then bitterly spending three years there will only lead to death.”

Wu Feng was astounded. “How could it be three years? Normally when the Southern Barbaric Nether Domain opens, it would close within three months. Could it be that there’s some unforeseen event this time?”

Du Qingxi coldly glanced at Wu Feng, then said after a long time. “These things were told to me by my father. Are you sure you want to know?”

Wu Feng seemed to have thought of something terrifying as he fiercely shuddered, then hurriedly shook his head. “This subordinate is only worried about Miss’ safety, and has absolutely no intention of offence.”

Du Qingxi waved her hand and instructed. “You stand down first. Remember, don’t spread the matter of Chen Xi practicing culinary arts in Clear Stream Restaurant. Although the Li Clan is small, the shadow of the Su Clan lurks behind it. It’s better to not have a dispute with them.”

Wu Feng respectfully complied, then his body swayed before transforming into a faintly discernible black smoke that disappeared.

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Not long after Du Qingxi left, Bai Wanqing bid her farewell and left as well. As for Qiao Nan and Pei Pei, old man Ma directly waved the iron ladle about to drive them out of the room, only leaving him and Chen Xi behind.

Old man Ma didn't like talking nonsense, and he had utterly no intention of having a conversation with Chen Xi as he started passing down his culinary arts right away.

Before he started teaching, wooden puppets held trays that were like flowing water and placed them before Chen Xi. Within every tray was many types of various ingredients that hadn't been cleaned and cut, and spirit energy suffused out, causing it to be extremely conspicuous.

Chen Xi roughly counted, and he couldn't help be startled by the entire 100 plus trays that contained over a thousand ingredients. What did old man Ma want to do?

"These 1308 types of ingredients contain fruits, vegetables, grains, demon beast flesh... They're the most basic ingredients, and are also called low-grade ingredients. So long as you're able to cook various different dishes with these ingredients and its effects are able to be enjoyed by Postnatal Realm cultivators, then you'll be considered as having learned the basics."

"I'll demonstrate the method of cooking 13 dishes now. Within these 13 dishes, each of them places particular emphasis on various things such as knife skill, spirit flames and pairing of the five elements. Pay attention and learn." Old man Ma was brimming with energy and vitality as he explained a great many things while his spittle scattered about, then he arrived before the

stove and casually grabbed a few ingredients and started personally instructing.

“This dish is called Fragrant Chili Braised Crimson-Horn Prawn. The Crimson-Horn Prawns are 0.33m long and live on the bank of spirit lakes. They’re of cold-yin attribute with a fresh and tender texture. It must be cooked with fiery-yang attribute shellfish with a piercingly hot taste as supplementary ingredients. Then further supplement it with Kyllinga Herb, Azure Haired Wild Boar Lard, Emerald Crystal Salt, etc. Then, use Blazing Yang Flame...” As he spoke, old man Ma’s hands weren’t idle, as they first cleaned and cut the materials, then controlled the spirit flame. Once the flames heated up, he put in the seasonings, then held the ladle and lifted up the wok before swiftly stirring with smooth and swift movements that seemed extremely free and easy.

Chen Xi devoted his heart and soul as he stared unblinkingly at old man Ma. Five years spent doing talisman crafting caused him to develop an extremely good habit, and that was no matter what he did, so long as he wanted to do it, he would be able to put his heart and soul into it in an extremely short amount of time.

These 10 days, Chen Xi had visualized the Fuxi Divine Statue without slacking in the slightest. The strength of his soul was advancing by leaps and bounds with a shocking speed, and it had already faintly arrived at the verge of breakthrough.

At this moment, he had only just gathered his condition when his mind instantly entered a clear and nimble state. The movements of old man Ma became slow in his eyes, every movement and every step was seen by him perfectly, then memorized in his heart.

Sizzle!

Strands of striking fragrance that suffocated the nose with a pungent smell drifted out in the entire room.

Not long after, a Crimson-Horn Prawn that was red as fire occupied the pure white jade tray, and traces of glossy and boiling sauce hissed on the surface of the Crimson-Horn Prawn as it emitted a pungent fragrance that caused one to drool.

“Try it, if you can’t prepare it to attain this taste in the future, then don’t tell anyone that you’re my disciple!” Old man Ma was brimming with energy and vigor, and he revealed a sense of proudness, as he was obviously extremely confident of his skill.

Chen Xi gulped down a mouthful of saliva with difficulty before picking up the chopsticks and lightly touching the prawn’s shell. The Crimson-Horn Prawn split open neatly from the middle, revealing the snow white and translucent flesh within, and the fragrance it emitted became even more dense and enticing. The tip of his chopstick lightly flicked as he picked up a piece of prawn flesh that emitted steam, then placed it into his mouth.

The moment the prawn flesh touched his tongue, a unique fresh and hot feeling instantly covered his entire body. Chen Xi felt his tongue lightly tremble as if shocked by electricity, and his mouth was filled with a numbing tender and smooth feeling, causing him to be unable to help from lightly chewing. The prawn flesh was smooth and supple, with a pungent and refreshing taste, and was extremely delicious.

“How do you feel?” Old man Ma crossed his arms before him, and had an appearance that was brimming with confidence.

Chen Xi mumbled. “Let me eat another mouthful.”

As he spoke, he once again waved his chopsticks, and they swiftly swooped down like rain drops. He didn’t have the usual sedate and calm appearance,

and was instead like a reincarnated hungry ghost as he gobbled down. In the blink of an eye, he'd already cleanly annihilated the entire Crimson-Horn Prawn.

It wasn't Chen Xi's fault that he forgot himself like this, as this Crimson-Horn Prawn was really too delicious. To him who had only eaten white rice and salted vegetables for the past ten years, the Crimson-Horn Prawn was no different from a supreme delicacy that was rare in the world, causing him to be unable to stop even though he wanted to.

Most importantly, after he ate the Crimson-Horn Prawn, he clearly perceived a burst of rich spirit energy gush into his Dantian like a stream, actually causing his cultivation to instantly explosively increase by a shred!

Chen Xi couldn't help but sigh extremely emotionally, no wonder all the rich and powerful sects and families had their own spirit chefs. Not only are they able to savor delicacies, but they're also able to absorb spirit energy. Who wouldn't be willing to enjoy such dishes?

Old man Ma was extremely satisfied with Chen Xi's behaviour, as actions always spoke louder than words, and Chen Xi gulping down the dish earlier was undoubtedly the highest praise to his culinary arts. But he still said in contempt. "Kid, this is only a dish prepared for Postnatal Realm cultivators, can you be a little more mature?"

Chen Xi went silent, but he was incomparably ashamed in his heart, he had indeed forgotten himself earlier...

"To a qualified spirit chef, delicious delicacies are a Great Dao that's able to cause tongues to be unbound, and allow life and cultivation to be rich and brilliant. It's the final destination that every spirit chef seeks and climbs towards their entire lifetime. Kid, it isn't such a simple matter to become a qualified spirit chef." Old man Ma's expression suddenly became

incomparably solemn, and his eyes revealed boundless fanaticism and staunchness.

Chen Xi was incomparably dazed, and he was unconsciously filled with anticipation towards his future life!