

## Village Girl 161

### Chapter 161: The Fragrant Carp Soup

Without money, she could no longer buy the land, farm, or build a house. She had to find a way to get some more money.

She couldn't sell any more tigers. There were only a tigress and Little White left on Mt. Da Ao. She wouldn't sell the tigress or Little White. Lin Yuelan didn't plan to go to other mountains to look for tigers either.

As for the other animals, they were not as valuable as tigers. Of course, there were also some rare animals and rare herbs on the mountain. However, these rare animals were intelligent enough to communicate with Little Green. Therefore, Lin Yuelan wouldn't hunt them. As for herbs, she was planting them in her space.

So, her only way to earn money was...

Lin Yuelan put down her chopsticks and said with a faint smile, "young master Liu, young master Zhou, I only know how to make some ordinary home-cooked dishes. If you like, I can make some. I hope you won't mind."

"Miss Lin, you're too polite and humble." Zhou Wencao hurriedly spoke to Lin Yuelan in a flattering manner. "It's brother Liu's and my honor to be able to taste miss Lin's cooking."

Lin Yuelan rolled her eyes and was somewhat speechless at pretentious people like Zhou Wencai.

After that, Lin Yuelan was led to the big kitchen by Liu Qi.

The chefs and assistant chefs were a bit surprised by the arrival of their young master. What surprised them, even more, was that the young master seemed to have brought a young woman with him.

After everyone greeted Liu Qi respectfully, they all stopped what they were doing. They did not know why the young master had brought such a lady to the kitchen.

Liu Qi pointed at the kitchen and told Lin Yuelan, "Miss Lin, this is what we have in the kitchen. See what kind of dish you can make. I'll have them prepare the ingredients."

Lin Yuelan looked around the kitchen. It was quite spacious, and the ingredients were quite well-organized.

Seeing that there was a carp in the wooden bucket, she said, "I'll make a fish dish then!"

Hearing that Lin Yuelan was going to cook fish, Liu Qi was a little surprised. Fish was notoriously hard to cook. If not handled well, the fish would not smell or taste good.

Yuelan Inn had steamed fish as their signature dish because they had a special technique to remove the fishy smell. However, Liu Qi understood the smell couldn't be removed completely.

Fish was a hard challenge. To make a fish dish without the fishy smell was impossible.

After Liu Qi recovered from his surprise, he reminded her gently and suggested kindly, “Miss Lin, I heard from brother little twelve that the braised rabbit meat you make is delicious. Why don’t you make that? After all, fish is not easy to handle. ”

Lin Yuelan shook her head and said with a smile, “Young master Liu, it’s fine. I’ll make a fish dish!” Her tone was very firm.

Liu Qi was helpless. He could only go along with it.

Master Yang, the head chef of Yuelai Inn, was slightly angry when he found out that Liu Qi had brought Lin Yuelan to the kitchen to cook. What nonsense was that? Lin Yuelan Inn’s kitchen was a sacred place. Not everyone could enter it. What if his secret formula was stolen?

However, before master Yang could protest, he heard Lin Yuelan say that she wanted to prepare a fish dish. He was incredulous.

Master Yang immediately said angrily, “Young master, this is the kitchen. Outsiders are not allowed here. You’re interrupting our work by bringing this woman here. You need to leave with her. Everyone’s busy here!”

Master Yang was the head chef of Yuelai Inn. The business of Yuelai Inn had grown in the past few years, and it had a lot to do with his cooking. Even the young master, Liu Qi, had to be polite and respectful to him.

However, Master Yang had a bad temper. He was easily angered especially when he was disturbed while he was cooking. He would scold that person no matter who they were.

## **Chapter 162: The Fragrant Carp Soup**

Liu Qi looked at the angry Master Yang and went up to him. “Master Yang, please calm down. Miss Lin will only borrow the kitchen. Her cooking skills are amazing, and I feel like trying some of them.”

Master Yang had a bad temper, but he was obsessed with the culinary arts. If Liu Qi had brought some elders over and said that they were good at cooking, Master Yang would be more respectful. However, Liu Qi brought a young woman who didn’t even look that old. Was he kidding?

Could the cooking skills of this young lady be better than Master Yang, who had been cooking for decades? Did the young master mean that as an insult? To make matters worse, the young lady chose to make a fish dish, the most difficult thing to cook. Was she provoking him?

Master Yang looked at the young woman behind Liu Qi. There was a hint of sarcasm and mockery in his anger. He said, “Young master, I don’t know if the food made by a little girl is good or not, but young master, look at what she picked. Do you think fish is easy to prepare? Does she even know how to prep a fish and get rid of the fish smell?

“I’ve been cooking for more than 30 years before I figured out my secret methods.

“You better hope that she is not just talking big. There’s nothing I can’t stand more than baseless arrogance.”

Liu Qi felt very embarrassed when he heard master Yang scold Lin Yuelan.

He was the one who had invited Lin Yuelan to the kitchen, but she was the one getting scolded instead. This made him feel a little guilty.

However, Master Yang was not entirely wrong.

Just as Liu Qi was about to apologize to Lin Yuelan and suggest that she choose another dish, Lin Yuelan walked toward Master Yang and said to master yang with a faint smile and a cold smile, "Age is not all-important. Master Yang, even if you've been studying for 30 years, it doesn't mean that you should discredit someone younger."

Master Yang was furious hearing the provocative words. He pointed at Lin Yuelan angrily and said loudly, "What a snarky woman. Fine. I'd like to see what kind of dish you can serve!"

Then, he shouted at his disciples, "Move! Do you think you'd be able to learn anything new by staying here?" Master Yang then glared at Lin Yuelan. He pulled off his white apron, put it on the frame, and walked out of the kitchen. The other apprentices and subordinates also followed master Yang out of the kitchen.

Suddenly, only Liu Qi and Lin Yuelan were left in the spacious kitchen.

Liu Qi looked at the messy kitchen and felt a little disheveled. After the workers left, who was going to help Lin Yuelan wash the vegetables and start the fire?

However, with Master Yang's stubbornness, he would definitely not let anyone come back to help Lin Yuelan unless her cooking skills could really move him.

Liu Qi smiled at Lin Yuelan embarrassedly. "Miss Lin, how about I help you start the fire?" However, as a young master, he didn't really know how to do that.

Lin Yuelan glanced at him and asked, "Young master Liu, do you know how to start a fire?"

Liu Qi's face turned red from embarrassment. He coughed twice and said honestly, "I don't, but I can learn." It was the least he could do after everything that had happened.

Lin Yuelan shook her head and said, "It's alright. Young Master Liu, do you mind calling Little Twelve to the kitchen?"

Little twelve definitely knew how to start a fire.

Liu Qi said, "Okay. Miss Lin, you can use anything in here as you wish." Liu Qi pointed at the vegetables in the basket.

After Liu Qi left, Lin Yuelan walked around the kitchen, wanting to see what spices there were.

Soy sauce hadn't been invented, and there was no vinegar. However, there was wine, salt, and oil. To Lin Yuelan's surprise, there were also classic Chinese seasonings like star anise.

### **Chapter 163: The Fragrant Carp Soup**

While Lin Yuelan was examining the stove, little twelve quickly walked over.

The moment he came in, he asked excitedly, "Miss Lin, what are you planning to cook? If there's anything you need, I can help."

As far as he knew, no matter what Miss Lin cooked, it was very delicious.

Lin Yuelan nodded slightly and said, "Help me start a fire!"

After that, she took out the carp from the bucket and started to prepare it. The carp was wild. This kind of carp was perfect to be steamed or made into soup.

Therefore, Lin Yuelan decided to make carp soup.

Little twelve was surprised. He asked, "Miss Lin, are you going to make a fish dish?" As far as he knew, fish was not easy to cook and not delicious because fish had a strong fishy smell.

Little twelve was a little disappointed. He thought Lin Yuelan would at least make a dish like the braised rabbit meat from yesterday.

However, at the same time, little twelve was also very curious. He wanted to know if Lin Yuelan made a miracle with a fish dish too.

Lin Yuelan scaled the fish and carved it open. After taking out the internal organs, she washed the fish and put it on a plate. She then sprinkled some salt on it and marinated it for a while.

While that was happening, Lin Yuelan reached for the ginger. She washed it and sliced it into pieces. Then, she grabbed some green onions and sliced them too.

When little twelve heated up the iron pot, he poured some oil into it. There was no processed oil back then. It was pork lard.

When the oil was hot, Lin Yuelan slid the fish into the wok and fried it on both sides. Then, she poured some wine and ginger slices into the wok. When the fragrance came out, she added some cold water. She flipped the fish only after the water was boiling.

Lin Yuelan let the water boil for 15 minutes, and the clear soup turned milky white. At that moment, the dish was ready to be served.

Before that, Lin Yuelan added some salt and scallions.

Then, the soup was ready. Lin Yuelan covered the wok to let the soup simmer.

When little twelve smelled the aroma of the fish soup, his eyes were full of admiration and disbelief.

This smell was too fragrant.

There was no fishy smell at all. On the contrary, all he could smell was the strong fragrance. This was definitely another finger-licking delicacy.

Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai began to squeeze into the kitchen when they smelled the aroma.

Liu Qi stared in disbelief at the pot that was still covered. He asked, "Miss Lin, what dish is this? Why does it smell so good? There's no fishy smell at all. How did you do it?"

Liu Qi bombarded Lin Yuelan with questions. When he met Lin Yuelan's mischievous, half-smiling eyes, his eyes flickered. He then realized this was Lin Yuelan's secret recipe. There was no reason for her to give him the secrets so directly.

Lin Yuelan smiled and said openly, "Young Master Liu, those are my secrets. If you want to know them, it's easy. You can pay!" She stated her purpose clearly.

Liu Qi was stunned. It wasn't that he didn't want to buy Lin Yuelan's fish recipe. On the contrary, he was very willing to buy it.

However, he had to taste the food first, right? How could he pay without inspecting the goods?

Zhou Wencai said half-jokingly, "Miss Lin, if brother Liu doesn't buy your recipe, I'll buy it from you!"

Liu Qi immediately said, "Who says I'm not buying the recipe. I'm just wondering what kind of recipe is this."

Hmm, that's a good excuse.

Lin Yuelan went along and introduced the dish, "actually, it's just a soup."

Lin Yuelan reached out and opened the lid. The moment the lid was opened, the rich aroma of the fish soup filled the entire space.

"It's really fragrant!" Master Yang, who was in his fifties, suddenly walked in and said excitedly, "this fragrance is amazing. The taste must be amazing too. Miss, did you really cook fish?"

The fish didn't smell fishy at all. How did she do it?

#### **Chapter 164: The Fragrant Carp Soup**

Master Yang was even more shocked when he saw the milky white soup in the pot. He pointed at the thing in the pot and asked in disbelief, "Is this... fish soup?"

Compared to frying fish, making fish soup was even more difficult. This was because the fish smell would be even stronger in soups.

Master Yang's steamed fish didn't have much smell because he had accidentally knocked over sour wine over the fish one time. Then, when the fish was steamed, he noticed that the fishy smell had lightened. When Master Yang would make steamed fish in the future, he would sneakily pour some sour wine. Therefore, no one had discovered that the steamed fish he had prepared was actually marinated with sour wine.

However, he was sure that Lin Yuelan's soup was not treated with sour wine, so how did she make the fishy smell disappear?

The fish soup was served.

Everyone was looking at the fish in the milky white soup. It looked fine and tender. It must be delicious.

They all drooled.

Master Yang looked at the dish and swallowed his saliva. His attitude toward Lin Yuelan took a 180-degree turn. With a kind gesture, he said, "Miss, can I try your dish?"

Lin Yuelan glanced at master Yang and nodded. "Of course!"

Master Yang quickly brought a small bowl and a spoon over. After pouring half a small bowl of soup, master Yang sniffed the soup in the bowl and said in surprise, "I've never smelled fish soup as fragrant as this."

Only the poor and those who could not eat meat would go to the river to catch some fish to eat. However, no matter how the fish was cooked, it would smell. Therefore, not that many liked to eat fish.

Master Yang took another sip of the soup and exclaimed, "the fish meat is fresh and tender, and the fish soup is delicious. It's wonderful!" After saying this, he said very sincerely, "Miss, I apologize for what I said. This is very delicious. You're right. Age is not everything. Life is full of learning opportunities. Perhaps I'm getting old." Master Yang had a bad temper, and his temper came and went quickly. Since he was rude earlier, he apologized to Lin Yuelan.

Lin Yuelan was flattered, "master Yang, please don't say that. You are an experienced chef. I can't rival your experience."

Master Yang shook his head and said, "no, miss Lin. I shouldn't have lorded my age over you. I was wrong. Therefore, I need to apologize."

Well, what could Lin Yuelan say to that?

After accepting Master Yang's apology, the group went back to the private room. Once the dish was served, there was an endless clanging sound as the porcelain bowls knocked against one another.

"Hmm? What is this?" Little twelve spat out a slice of ginger. "Why does it taste so spicy?"

Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai stared at the thin piece of object in curiosity and puzzlement.

They had seen this before. Their families would boil water with this when they had the flu. But why would this thing be inside the fish soup?

The two of them looked at Lin Yuelan like inquisitive children.

After Lin Yuelan finished her bowl of soup, she wiped her mouth with a handkerchief and said, "Just as you thought, this is the key to removing the fishy smell!"

She had never intended to hide the existence of the ginger slices. Otherwise, she could have fished out the ginger slices before the soup was served.

"Is that true?" Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai asked in astonishment, "Why haven't others thought of this?" If this technique was effective, they could use this more often in the future. They were definitely businessmen. Profit always came first.

Lin Yuelan said calmly, "A chef's skill is important to make a good fish dish, but this thing can indeed lower the smell of fish."

Zhou Wencai was curious. He asked with a smile, "Miss Lin, then how do you plan to sell your recipe now?" The key ingredient of the recipe was revealed, so the recipe wasn't worth much now.

He was surprised that Lin Yuelan was so short-sighted. She hoped to earn money from her recipe but she had unwittingly revealed the key to her recipe. Therefore, he wanted to know what Lin Yuelan would do next.

Lin Yuelan chuckled at Zhou Wencai and said, "I never planned to sell this recipe anyway."

Zhou Wen and Liu Qi exchanged looks. Was Lin Yuelan toying with them?

But it didn't look like it. Based on her sinister smile, she must have other intentions.

As expected...

"I'm giving this dish recipe to you for free. However," Lin Yuelan continued, "I have other fish recipes like braised fish, stewed fish, sweet and sour fish, chopped pepper fish head, and so on. They are all delicious!"

So, this fish soup was just the bait! Most of the fish dishes listed by Lin Yuelan they hadn't even heard of before!

Zhou Wencai immediately asked in high spirits, "Miss Lin, may I know how we can cook those dishes?" He believed that the same technique used to remove the smell in the carp soup would be replicated for the other dishes.

However, different recipes would have different techniques. Lin Yuelan waved her finger and said, "I told you that the recipe for this carp soup is free, but if you want the recipes for the other dishes..." Lin Yuelan made the gesture for money.

After tasting the carp soup, Liu Qi saw a strong business opportunity. He immediately said, "How about this, Miss Lin? I'll use 100 taels to buy the recipes, but you can't give them to anyone else!"

'I really can't underestimate the brilliance of these merchants.' Lin Yuelan thought.

Using 100 taels to buy the recipes sounded like a profit to the seller, but in the long run, it was more beneficial to the buyer.

Once Liu Qi closed off the market and ensured that only Yuelai Inn would have her special fish dishes, Yuelai Inn would dominate the restaurant business in town. Lin Yuelan predicted that he would get back the 100 taels in profit after half a year. After half a year, he would have 100% of the net profit from the sales.

Therefore, Lin Yuelan shook her head and said, "I won't do that!"

Liu Qi's expression changed immediately. He asked directly, "What do you want then?"

## **Chapter 165: Clear the Land**

"So," Guo Bing said in surprise, "When you went to town, Miss Lin bought a shop and managed to get 30 percent of the net profit of the Yuelai Inn?"

Miss Lin was really a genius. She kept giving them surprises.

Little twelve took the pastry he bought from town and put it in his mouth, saying, "yes. All Miss Lin did was make fish soup and sell them the other recipes. Then, she took 30 percent of the net profits from the sales of these recipes. She's really amazing." When he thought back to what had happened, he was still excited.

Everyone, including Jiang Zhennan, was surprised.

"Fish soup?" Guo Bing exclaimed, "little twelve, are you sure? Did miss Lin really make a profitable deal just because she made fish soup?"

The deal was profitable. Lin Yuelan provided the recipes. If the dishes sold well, she would get a 30% share of the net profit. If they didn't sell well, she wouldn't have to compensate for any losses. Why would the boss of the restaurant make such a disadvantageous deal with Lin Yuelan?

Little twelve ate a few pieces of cake and swallowed a few mouthfuls of water. He continued, "That's because you weren't there to taste the fish soup Miss Lin made. It was so delicious. There's no fishy smell at all. The soup is rich and fragrant, and the meat is extremely tender."

The others started salivating. They had gone up the mountain to hunt, and their lunch was some roasted meat. The boss had picked some mushrooms too, but no matter what they did, they couldn't make the food taste as delicious as Miss Lin's food.

Before they went down the mountains, they picked up some mushrooms, hoping that Miss Lin would cook those for them. However, before dinner, Little Twelve started to show off.

Everyone knew that fish was very hard to cook because of the heavy fishy smell. Normally, very few would choose to cook fish unless they were very poor and couldn't afford meat and vegetables. Of course, the soldiers had eaten plenty of fish too. When they were on the battlefield, they were not given many choices. However, this unpalatable food was made into a delicious dish and helped Lin Yuelan negotiate a profitable deal. It was unbelievable.

"I should have been the one to accompany Miss Lin to town!" Guo Bing wailed with regret. That way, he would be able to witness Lin Yuelan's smart business wit and taste the delicious food.

Even Jiang Zhennan was jealous of little Twelve. He had volunteered to accompany her to town, but she picked Little Twelve instead. This caused him to miss seeing Lin Yuelan's cute and clever moments.

Jiang Zhennan was shocked by the thoughts in his heart. He couldn't explain their origin. He ultimately settled on the reason, friends. Lin Yuelan was his only friend. They were slightly different in physical age, but their mental age appeared to be similar.

After Guo Bing wailed regretfully, he told little twelve with some resentment, "Alright, little twelve, I've heard enough of your gloating. Later, we'll go to the river and catch two fish. We'll ask miss Lin to cook for us. What do you think, boss?" Guo Bing asked the silent Jiang Zhennan, but before Jiang Zhennan could answer, he continued to say, "I wonder how did Miss Lin negotiate with the young master of Yuelai Inn that he'd agree to such a deal with miss Lin? Miss Lin must be extremely cunning and devious to make the young master agree to this."



“Ouch!” Guo Bing yelled because someone smacked his head. Guo Bing touched his head, and his eyes were accusatory as he said, “boss, why did you knock my head?”

Jiang Zhennan’s sharp eyes stared at him, and then he said, “Who are you calling cunning and devious? Hmm?”

Guo Bing then understood the boss was unsatisfied with his choice of words.

### **Chapter 166: Clear the Land**

Guo Bing saw the dark expression on his boss’s face and immediately went up to please him. Then, he smiled and said, “What was I saying? How can a fairy-like person like miss Lin be cunning and devious? Clearly, she is capable and clever to win over the young master. Don’t you think so, boss?” But internally, he was grumbling. ‘Boss, do you really have to do that? I only said two derogatory words, and you already smacked my head. In fact, I didn’t even say anything bad. I was only saying that Miss Lin is smart.’ Of course, Guo Bing didn’t have the guts to say these things out loud.

After little twelve had eaten and drunk enough, he rubbed his stomach and began to talk about the negotiation between Lin Yuelan and Liu Qi.

...

Liu Qi wanted to buy all the fish recipes, but Lin Yuelan refused him. Liu Qi was quite angry, but he still asked calmly, “then, miss Lin, what do you want?”

Lin Yuelan said, “I want a share of the profits!”

Liu Qi’s face darkened. In his mind, Lin Yuelan was being greedy. Even people who were selling their hundreds-year-old craft, they wouldn’t ask for a share of the profit. Was she treating him like a fool?

After all, what Lin Yuelan was suggesting was crazy. Basically, she wanted to give Liu Qi the recipes but then have Yuelai Inn do all the work, and she’d reap all the profits.

Liu Qi was not angry. Instead, he laughed and said, “Miss Lin, you’re not joking with me, are you?” Then, he said sharply, “Are you treating me like a fool? Do you think I don’t understand the economy of the business world? Or is your ambition so big that you think you can ask for a share of Yuelai Inn’s profits with just a few recipes?”

Lin Yuelan shook her head. “It’s neither. Young master Liu, you have misunderstood me.” Then, her clear voice resounded in the small private room, “I merely want the profit share of my recipes and not the profit share of the entire Yuelai Inn.”

‘Phew... That was scary.’ Zhou Wencai and little twelve exchanged looks and heaved a sigh of relief at the same time.

Earlier, the atmosphere was tense. They all thought that Liu Qi and Lin Yuelan were going to quarrel. After all, Lin Yuelan’s words were quite misleading.

Zhou Wencai picked up the folding fan and fanned himself a few times before closing it with a snap. He held it in his left hand and said with great interest, “Miss Lin, this is the first time I’ve heard of such a

novel trading method. But I don't get it. You said you only want the profit shares from the sales made from your recipes, but how can you be sure that the dishes made from your recipes will sell?

"Furthermore, what if the other restaurants copied your recipes and no longer came to Yuelai Inn? Wouldn't Yuelai Inn suffer a huge loss?"

"However, you don't need to worry about this because you are basically investing without putting in any capital.

"If your dishes sell well, you'll get a share of the profit. If they don't, you will miss the profit share. In conclusion, you don't have to consider the risk at all.

"So, no matter how you look at it, Brother Liu is the one at a disadvantage. Think about how this feels for him?"

"In my opinion, Miss Lin, why don't you just sell your exclusive recipes to Brother Liu? You'll get a lot of money upfront. In the future, whether Yuelai Inn makes a profit or a loss, it has nothing to do with Miss Lin. Isn't that better?"

After all, the key ingredient to the carp soup was clear. Some smart customers would figure it out after eating the soup a few times. Therefore, how many people would still come back to Yuelai Inn in the future?

If Yuelai Inn bought out the recipes, the inn would produce the dishes before the others figured out the key ingredients to cooking fish. Then, the inn would make a quick profit.

Both sides benefitted from this trade. So why would they go for the method of sales profit sharing? That was rather unusual.

Before Lin Yuelan offered this plan, she had considered these questions. Lin Yuelan looked at Zhou Wencai and said with a smile, "Young master Zhou, I've considered that problem as well. However, ponder this. Why am I giving you the recipe for this carp soup for free? It's because the secret ingredient is easy to crack, and the recipe is easy for others to imitate."

### **Chapter 167: Clear the Land**

Then, her smile disappeared, and she said seriously, "but what if I tell you, there's no one else in this world who can replicate my other recipes?"

Zhou Wencai and Liu Qi were shocked when they heard Lin Yuelan's sharp and arrogant tone.

There wouldn't be a second person who could replicate her second recipe?

Wasn't this a little too exaggerated?

The corners of Lin Yuelan's mouth curved up to a certain degree, and she revealed a confident and brilliant smile. She said, "The reason is that there is a most important seasoning in the other recipes that only I have. Without that seasoning, the dishes will be very different in color and taste."

Zhou Wencai and Liu Qi looked at each other after they heard that. They didn't know if they should believe her or not. The words sounded too arrogant and presumptuous. Plus, they came from someone

who was only in her teens, not a master with decades of experience. She was a young woman who came from the countryside. What kind of amazing seasoning could she have in her hands?

This sounded unbelievable.

However, Liu Qi still asked hesitantly, “Miss Lin, what is this important seasoning then?”

Lin Yuelan opened her backpack and took out a porcelain bottle that was the size of two fingers and half the height of a chopstick. She opened the lid and poured some reddish-brown liquid into a small plate. Then, she put the bottle back into her back.

Lin Yuelan pushed the small plate toward Liu Qi and said, “Try it!”

Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai were especially curious. When they heard Lin Yuelan telling them to try it, Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai quickly picked up their chopsticks and dipped them in the sauce. They tasted the sauce.

After a while, they frowned. Then, they dipped their chopsticks in the sauce and put the chopsticks in their mouths again. Their brows furrowed again.

After that, Liu Qi put down his chopsticks and said to Lin Yuelan, “it has a salty taste and a slight fragrance. What is this?”

Lin Yuelan said, “this is called soy sauce. It’s a special seasoning to help with color and taste.”

“But, it only tastes salty to me.” Liu Qi said doubtfully. “I’m sure you can replace this with salt.”

Lin Yuelan shook her head and said, “young master Liu, can you lend me your kitchen again?”

Liu Qi immediately understood and said, “sure!”

Then, the group went to the big kitchen.

When Master Yang saw them and heard that Lin Yuelan was about to cook another fish dish, he didn’t show any dissatisfaction. He even volunteered to help her.

Lin Yuelan didn’t refuse Master Yang’s help. After all, Master Yang would be making these dishes in the future.

Other than Master Yang, Liu Qi, and Lin Yuelan, the others were chased out. After all, this recipe was supposed to be a business secret. Even though Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai were good friends, he had to be careful.

Lin Yuelan decided to make braised carp.

Due to the lack of seasoning, Lin Yuelan grabbed only ginger, star anise, green onion, sugar, wine, and dried chili.

After removing the scales and the internal organs of the carp, she cut lines on both sides of the fish so that the marinate could go in better. She spread some salt and wine on the fish.

Then, she heated the wok and added lard. After the wok was hot, she put the carp in. After a quick fry, she lowered the fire and slowly burned the fish on both sides until they were golden yellow.

Then, she added sugar and waited until the sugar melted. After that, she poured in wine and soy sauce. Lastly, she poured in water and brought the dish to a boil. She let it simmer for 15 minutes. Then, she garnished it with chopped green onions.

Finally, the dish was ready.

Master Yang and Liu Qi had their eyes wide open throughout the whole process, staring at Lin Yuelan's every move. They had never seen fish prepared in this way before. The fragrance overflowed. The fish was beautiful and looked delicious.

Master Yang couldn't control his emotions and said excitedly, "miss ... Miss Lin, can I have a taste?"

They never knew that the fish could be done this way.

She used salt and sugar in her recipe. Most importantly, Miss Lin used soy sauce to add color to the fish.

Since it smelled good, it should taste even better.

Lin Yuelan nodded and said, "Master Yang, of course, you can!"

### **Chapter 168: Clear the Land**

Master Yang picked up a pair of chopsticks and picked up a piece of fish from the tail.

He chewed slowly and almost jumped up in excitement. He clapped his hands and said loudly, "It's delicious! The taste is fresh, the meat is tender and fragrant, and the sauce! The sauce is rich and delicious. I've been cooking for decades, but I've never had such delicious food."

Lin Yuelan thought to herself, 'The people of this era haven't invented seasonings like soy sauce, so of course, the food here is comparatively tasteless.

'This fish has ginger slices, a sugar shell, and the world's first soy sauce. It's going to taste amazing.'

Even before the dish was served, Liu Qi was already highly interested when the dish was being cooked. The fragrance was too alluring.

Lin Yuelan's dish was ready to be served. However, before they returned to the private room, Lin Yuelan requested Master Yang to make another braised fish. Master Yang expertly copied Lin Yuelan's cooking methods, but he didn't have the secret soy sauce.

In terms of color, his braised fish was not as beautiful as Lin Yuelan's dish. As for the taste, Master Yang realized that his dish lacked a kind of fresh saltiness in his fish.

Then, the two dishes were served for comparison. In the private room, the guests started with Lin Yuelan's braised fish. The fish looked beautiful and smelled amazing.

After eating Lin Yuelan's dish, everyone was still hungry for more, and they tried Master Yang's dish next. There was a clear difference in taste.

The specialty of braised carp was the saltiness and freshness of the sauce. Without soy sauce, the freshness of the fish couldn't be brought out, and the taste was thus lacking.

Lin Yuelan wiped the corner of her lips and smiled at Liu Qi. "Young master Liu, what do you think?" She was asking about their trade offer.

After listening to Master Yang's evaluation and tasting the two dishes himself, Liu Qi evaluated the value of this dish in his heart.

He said, "Miss Lin, I can agree to your cooperation plan. However," He was worried about one thing, "Can you supply us with the seasoning for the long term? Also, how many fish recipes can you provide?"

He was in the kitchen when Lin Yuelan cooked the fish. The recipe and cooking method was okay, but the most important thing was the secret seasoning Lin Yuelan had.

Lin Yuelan blinked her bright eyes and said with a smile, "Don't worry, young master Liu. I can provide this seasoning for a long time. And I can provide more than just fish recipes. I will create a new dish every once in a while. Of course, I want a profit share for all the recipes I provide."

Lin Yuelan's goal was simple. She wanted money.

The corners of Zhou Wencai and Liu Qi's lips twitched.

Only then did they realize how big of a money-grubber Lin Yuelan was. From her shamelessness to grab a free meal to this trading of recipes, her only goal was money, money, money.

Based on the market projection, it was indeed more profitable for Lin Yuelan to opt for profit share rather than selling Liu Qi the recipes.

Liu Qi thought for a while and said, "Okay, I agree with your trade plan! However, miss Lin, you have to promise that you won't leak the recipe and cooking method to anyone else in the future!"

He was worried that Lin Yuelan would sell these recipes to other restaurants in the same way. Then, the whole trade would be pointless.

Lin Yuelan could rake in a lot of gold, but Liu Qi would suffer a huge loss.

Lin Yuelan smiled and said, "Since I've decided to work with you, of course, I won't choose to work with other restaurants. But," Lin Yuelan's tone changed. "But this will only work for three years."

Liu Qi was taken aback. He frowned slightly and stared at Lin Yuelan with his sharp eyes. He asked in confusion, "Only three years?"

What was the meaning of this?

Lin Yuelan replied, "Yes!"

Zhou Wencai and Liu Qi were surprised again. "What do you mean?"

### **Chapter 169: Clear the Land**

Lin Yuelan continued, "What I mean is that in the next three years, I promise not to cooperate with other restaurants and that I will only provide you with my seasonings. I also promise to release a new recipe every month.

“Three years later, I might work with other restaurants, or I might even open my own restaurant. Of course, I will not set up the partnership or new restaurant in An Ning County or the surrounding counties. So it won’t have much of an impact on Yuelai Inn.”

Liu Qi pondered over Lin Yuelan’s words.

It made sense. The world was so big, and Yuelai Inn was just a small town in the Long Yan Country. No matter how delicious the food was, people from far away would not be able to frequent it.

Even the people from Qingfeng provincial city would find it hard to come here for a meal, let alone those in the capital, where the rich and powerful gathered.

Therefore, three years later, as long as it didn’t affect the business of Yuelai Inn, it was Lin Yuelan’s freedom to expand her business. Therefore, Liu Qi did not disagree with this.

As for why it had to be three years later, Liu Qi believed Lin Yuelan wanted to use Yuelai Inn to make a name for herself first.

After that, he raised another question. “Will you still get the profit-sharing after three years?”

Lin Yuelan nodded. “Of course. That’s part of the offer.”

The corners of Liu Qi and Zhou Wencai’s lips twitched once again. Lin Yuelan was openly taking advantage of them. She only provided the recipes, but she wanted to take advantage of them forever. Liu Qi did not agree with this.

He said, “No. If Yuelai Inn continues to operate in the next 100 years, doesn’t that mean your children and grandchildren will continue to benefit from the profit share? They can just sit back and enjoy the free money. That is not fair.” Liu Qi had to plan ahead. He couldn’t agree to this.

Of course, Lin Yuelan wouldn’t keep taking advantage of him. Besides, she would eventually sell soy sauce on the market. But she’d make sure it was after her deal with Liu Qi was over. Or else she’d feel so apologetic towards him.

“Of course, you’re right. Any transaction has to have a deadline. Ten years,” Lin Yuelan said seriously, “I will only work with Yuelai Inn for ten years. After all, I will not take any profit share anymore. Young Master Liu, what do you think?”

Ten years wasn’t a long time, but it wasn’t short, either.

However, it was also the most reasonable time limit.

Liu Qi nodded and said, “Alright then.”

Lin Yuelan continued, “However when it comes to business, I think it’s better for us to write it down in black and white. Then we can all feel at ease, don’t you agree, Young master Liu?”

This was good for Liu Qi, so he naturally agreed.

After a while, Liu Qi picked up a pen and paper. In black and white, he wrote down the cooperation method, profit sharing, and so on clearly.

After that, the two of them signed their names, and Zhou Wencai became the witness.

...

“Just like that, the cooperation deal is done?” Guo Bing’s mouth was wide open in disbelief.

Guo Bing was a military counselor on the battlefield, but he was a blind strategist in the business world.

He didn’t understand the politics of business, but he felt that Lin Yuelan was really good at taking advantage of others.

However, once he thought about it, Liu Qi hadn’t lost fully either. If the new dishes could bring booming business to Yuelai Inn, then the whole inn would benefit. For example, they would order the other dishes on the menu that were not part of Lin Yuelan’s recipes. Plus, these customers would stay at Yuelan Inn too. These profits would have nothing to do with Lin Yuelan. Therefore, it was not that Liu Qi didn’t earn anything.

“But, how did miss Lin know so many new recipes?” Guo Bing was a little confused. The recipes she knew had not been seen in the Long Yan Country before.

Jiang Zhennan and Guo Bing didn’t know what to think of Lin Yuelan. On the surface, she looked like a young woman, but she knew too much mysterious knowledge. She was so mysterious that they wouldn’t be surprised that she was actually a fairy.

### **Chapter 170: Clearing Land**

“Ah, forget it. I’m not going to waste brain power over this.” Guo Bing patted his head, then looked at Jiang Zhennan with bright eyes. He smiled and said to Jiang Zhennan in an attempt to please him, “boss, help us tell Miss Lin that we wish to eat carp soup, braised carp, and so on.”

Jiang Zhennan’s sharp eyes glared at him, and he said coldly in a low voice, “why don’t you tell lady Yue ‘Er yourself?”

With that, he left. He moved towards the hut.

When he entered the room, Lin Yuelan was calculating some silver on the table.

As soon as she saw Jiang Zhennan, she immediately waved him over and said, “masked uncle, how much land do you think I should buy?”

Jiang Zhennan pulled out a stool, sat down, and said, “According to the land trading law in the Long Yan Kingdom, one Mu of high-grade land is fifteen taels of silver, medium-grade land is ten taels of silver, and low-grade land is five taels of silver. Furthermore, when buying land, you have to pay taxes. The tax is one tael of silver for each Mu of land. Then, you have to get the official government stamp before the sale is completed.”

When Lin Yuelan heard this, she lowered her head and rested her chin on the edge of the table. She looked at the silver and said in frustration, “I received 100 taels of silver in advance from the young master of Yuelai Inn, Liu Qi. How much land could I buy with one hundred taels of silver?”

She planned to buy at least 10 mu of land and then expand further when she had the money.

Jiang Zhennan looked at Lin Yuelan's lowered head and the lovely expression on her face. His expression under the mask also softened a little, and his voice subconsciously changed from cold to gentle.

Just as he was about to comfort Lin Yuelan, she suddenly thought of something and shouted, "Oh, right. I could get you guys to clear the land for me. How could I have forgotten about that?" Of course, Lin Yuelan didn't really forget that. She was merely reminding Jiang Zhennan of it.

Jiang Zhennan's mouth twitched.

1

Ever since he had met Lin Yuelan, the corners of his mouth had twitched a lot. It was because Lin Yuelan would always give them a lot of surprises.

Jiang Zhennan took the teacup on the table, poured a cup of tea, and placed it in front of Lin Yuelan. Then, he said, "Miss Yue 'Er, clearing the land is a small matter for soldiers like us. Besides fighting wars, we're most competent at clearing land."

When they were guarding the border, there was always a shortage of food. Therefore, they had to clear up the land and start their own farm. They had grain supply from the imperial court, but it was never enough.

Lin Yuelan had another concern. How about the ownership of the land around them? How would she go around claiming them? Lin Yuelan asked, "How does this work? Do I have to buy the land first before I can have you guys clear it for me?"

Jiang Zhennan shook his head and said, "There's no need. Once the undeveloped land is measured by the village chief, the court, the land that is cleared will belong to the land reclaimer."

Lin Yuelan nodded. In other words, the undeveloped land would go to the person who developed it. There was no need to pay taxes or money. It was perfect.

Instead of buying land, she'd save more by developing and clearing the land herself.

Lin Yuelan immediately clapped her hands and said excitedly, "Yes, let's start that tomorrow!"

Thanks to her spirit water, most of the soldiers' injuries had healed. Therefore, they were strong enough to work. Since they were there, she might as well put them to work.

The five were all soldiers and had great strength. They would clear the undeveloped land quickly. In one or two months, she'd have enough land to start her own farm.

Therefore, clearing the land was more worth it than buying land!

Lin Yuelan immediately held Jiang Zhennan's hand excitedly and said, "Let's go, masked uncle. Let's go and find Grandpa Village Chief." After that, she took Jiang Zhennan's hand and hurriedly walked in the direction of Li Zheng's house.

Guo Bing and the others watched Lin Yuelan and Jiang Zhennan left hand in hand. They stared at their backs in surprise.

Guo Bing suddenly asked, "How many times has it been?"



This was a random question, but the subordinates seemed to have a tacit understanding and replied, "I think this is the third time."