

Chapter 11: Real Culinary Skills

The norm is for everyone to die together? Very glad that I'm still alive? Fortunate that I'm still alive?

Klein shivered and quickly ran to the door, trying to catch up with the policemen and ask for protection.

But as soon as he reached the handle, he suddenly stopped.

That officer talked so horribly about it, why didn't they protect me, an important witness or key lead?

Isn't that too careless?

Were they just probing me? Or maybe it's a bait?

All kinds of thoughts rushed into Klein's mind; he suspected that the police were still secretly "watching" him, observing his reaction.

He felt much calmer after thinking of this and was no longer so panicked. He slowly opened the door, deliberately shouting with a trembling voice at the staircase, "You guys will protect me, right?"

Tap, tap, tap... There was no response from the police officers, and there was no change in the rhythm of the contact between the leather shoes and the wooden stairs.

“I know! You’ll do that!” Klein shouted again in a tone of feigned conviction, trying to act like a normal person that was in danger.

The sound of footsteps gradually weakened and disappeared into the bottom floor of the apartment.

Klein snorted and laughed, “Isn’t that response too fake? Their acting skills are not up to standard!”

He did not run after them. Instead, he turned back to the room and closed the door behind him.

In the next few hours, Klein fully expressed what they called back in Foodaholic Empire, China—restlessness, nervousness, agitation, inadvertence and murmuring words that he did not understand. He did not slack just because there was no one around.

This is called the self-cultivation of an actor! He laughed at himself in his heart.

When the sun moved to the west, the clouds on the horizon appeared to be reddish-orange. Tenants in the apartment came home one after another; Klein shifted his focus elsewhere.

“Melissa is almost done with school...” He looked at the stove, lifted the kettle, peeled off the coal and took out the revolver.

Without pause or delay, he reached to the back of the board under the double-decked bed where more than ten wooden strips were staggered out.

After clipping the left wheel between a piece of wooden strip and board, Klein straightened up and waited uneasily, fearing that the police would burst open the door and rush into the room with guns in their hands.

If it was an Age of Steam, he was certain he would not be seen by anyone when he did that. However, there were extraordinary powers here, ones that he had proven through his own experiences.

After waiting for a few minutes, there was no movement at the door. There was only the chatter between two tenants who were heading for the Heart of the Wild Bar on Iron Cross Street.

“Phew.” Klein exhaled, feeling assured.

All he needed to do was wait for Melissa’s return and cook the stewed mutton with tender peas!

When the idea came to Klein’s mind, his mouth seemed to taste the rich flavor of the gravy; he remembered how Melissa cooked stewed mutton with tender peas.

First, she boiled the water and stir-fried the meat. Then, she added onions, salt, a little pepper, and water. After a specific period of time, the peas and potatoes were added, and the stew was to be cooked for an additional forty or fifty minutes with the lid on.

“It’s indeed a simple and crude way to do it... Supported purely by the flavors of the meat itself!” Klein shook his head.

But there was no other way about it. It was hard for commoners

to have many kinds of condiments and various cooking methods. They could only pursue simple, practical, and economical methods. As long as the meat was not burnt or spoiled, anything was good for people who could only eat meat once or twice a week.

Klein was not a very good cook himself and ordered takeout food most of the time. But by cooking three or four times a week, after many weeks of accumulated practice, he had a passing standard and felt that he would not let the pound of mutton down.

“When Melissa comes back to cook it, it will be done after 7:30pm. She would be starving by then... It’s time for her to see what real cooking is!” Klein made an excuse for himself. First, he started the fire again, went to the bathroom to collect water, and washed the mutton. Then he took out the kitchen boards and knives before chopping the mutton into tiny chunks.

As for the explanation for his sudden culinary skills, he decided to blame it on the dead Welch McGovern, who had not only hired a chef who was good at the Midseashire flavor, but also often created his own delicacies and invited people to try them.

Well, the dead cannot refute me!

Nevertheless, tsk, this is a world with Beyonders; the dead are not necessarily unable to speak. With that in mind, Klein felt a little guilty conscience.

He threw aside his confused thoughts and put the meat into the soup bowl. Then he took out the condiment box and added in a spoonful of the crude salt, half of which had begun yellowing. In addition, he cautiously took some black pepper grains from a special small bottle, mixing and marinating them together.

He placed the saucepan on the stove and, while waiting for it to heat up, Klein rummaged for the carrots from yesterday and cut them into pieces with the onions he bought today.

When he was done with his preparations, he took out a small can from the cupboard and opened it. There was not much lard left in it.

Klein took a spoonful, put it in the pan, and melted it. He added in the carrots and onions and stirred it for a while.

As the fragrance began to pervade, Klein poured all the mutton into the pot and fried it with care for a while.

He should have added cooking wine in the process, or red wine at least. However, the Moretti family did not have these luxuries and could only drink a glass of beer a week. Klein had to make do with whatever was available and poured in some boiled water.

After stewing for about twenty minutes, he opened the lid, put the tender peas and cut potatoes in it, and added a cup of hot water and two spoons of salt.

He closed the lid, lowered the fire, and exhaled satisfactorily, waiting for his sister to reach home.

As seconds turned into minutes, the fragrance in the room intensified. There was the allure from the meat, the rich smell of potatoes, and the refreshing scent of onions.

The smell gradually mixed up, and Klein swallowed his saliva from time to time, keeping track of the time with his pocket

watch.

After more than forty minutes, some not-so-brisk but rhythmic footsteps approached. A key was inserted, the handle was turned, and the door opened.

Before Melissa came in, she whispered doubtfully, “Smells good...”

With her bag still in her hand, she stepped in and glanced over at the stove.

“You made this?” Melissa took off her veil hat and her hand paused mid-air, looking at Klein in astonishment.

She twitched her nose and inhaled more of the fragrance. Her eyes quickly softened, and she seemed to find some confidence.

“You made this?” she asked again.

“Are you afraid I’d waste the mutton?” Klein smiled and returned with a question. Without waiting for an answer, he said to himself, “Don’t worry, I specifically asked Welch to teach me how to cook this dish. You know, he has a good cook.”

“First time?” Melissa’s eyebrows creased subconsciously, but they were smoothed by the fragrance.

“It looks like I’m talented.” Klein laughed. “It’s almost done. Put your books and veil hat down somewhere. Go to the bathroom and wash your hands, and then get ready to taste it. I’m very confident about it.”

When she heard her brother's orderly arrangements and saw his gentle and calm smile, Melissa stood rooted at the door and failed to respond in her daze.

"Do you prefer the mutton to be cooked longer?" Klein urged with a laugh.

"Ah, okay, okay!" Melissa jolted back to her senses. With a handbag and veil in each hand, she rushed into the room quickly.

When the lid of the saucepan was uncovered, a sudden blast of steam appeared before Klein's eyes. Two pieces of rye bread were already placed to the side of the mutton and tender peas, allowing them to absorb the fragrance and heat to become soft.

By the time Melissa had packed her items, washed her hands and face, and returned, a plate of stewed mutton with tender peas, potatoes, carrots and onions was already placed on the table. Two pieces of rye bread, colored by a light dip into the gravy, were on their plates.

"Come on, try it." Klein pointed to the wooden fork and spoon next to the plate.

Melissa was still a little confused. She didn't refuse; she picked up a potato with her fork, put it into her mouth and bit it lightly.

The taste of the starchy potato and gravy fragrance flooded her mouth. Her saliva secretion went crazy as she gobbled down the potato in a few mouthfuls.

"Try the mutton." Klein gestured at the plate with his chin.

He had tasted it just now and thought it was barely at a passing standard, but it was enough for a girl who was inexperienced with what the world had to offer. After all, she only ate meat occasionally.

Melissa's eyes were filled with anticipation as she carefully forked some mutton.

It was very tender and, as soon as it entered the mouth, nearly melted. The fragrance of the meat exploded in her mouth, filling it with delicious meat juices.

It was an unprecedeted feeling that made Melissa unable to stop eating.

By the time she realized it, she had already eaten several pieces of the mutton.

"I... I... Klein, this was supposed to be prepared for you..." Melissa blushed and stammered.

"I'd nibbled some of the food just now. It's the privilege of being a cook." Klein smiled and soothed her sister. He picked up his fork and spoon. At times, he would eat a piece of meat and sometimes, he would stuff his mouth full of peas. At other times, he would put down the utensils, break off a piece of rye bread and dip it in gravy.

Melissa relaxed and was immersed in the delicacy again by Klein's normal behavior.

"It's really delicious. It doesn't seem like you were doing it for the first time." Melissa looked at the empty dish and praised him

with all her heart. Even the gravy was finished.

"It's a long way from Welch's chef. When I'm rich, I'll take you and Benson out to the restaurant and have a better meal!" Klein said. He was beginning to look forward to it himself.

"Your interview... Burp..." Melissa did not finish her words because she suddenly let out a sound of contentment involuntarily.

She put her hand over her mouth in a hurry and looked embarrassed.

The fault is with the stewed mutton with tender peas just now! It was just too delicious.

Klein laughed secretly and decided not to make fun of his sister. He pointed to the plate and said, "This is your mission."

"All right!" Melissa stood up immediately, took the basin and rushed out the door.

When she came back, she opened the cupboard to check the condiment box and other items as per normal.

"Did you just use them?" Melissa was surprised, and turned to Klein, holding the black pepper bottle and lard can.

Klein shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"Just a little. It's the price of a delicacy."

Melissa's eyes twinkled, her expression changing for a few moments, before she finally said, "Let me cook in the future."

"Um... You have to hurry up and prepare for the interview. You have to think about your job."