

Failure Not Wasted

Rodrigo had lived and died for this moment. For years he had struggled to find opportunities to grow as a creator of food. In obscurity he had devised clever techniques that went ignored, wonderful culinary sensations that no one but he had ever tasted. Now, due to a remarkable chance encounter, he was about to have an audience with Clarisse, the world's foremost practitioner of French cuisine. He had asked her what they would create together, but she said he should just bring whatever materials he liked and surprise her. He brought flour, eggs, spices, some special tools, and with her blessing, he got to work. He whipped the batter until it fluffed up into what looked like an alien body. Once his creation was out of the oven, he presented it to Clarisse. She looked at it and said gently, "Don't you think this is a bit too fluffed? And do you see there are insects? Your flour must have had louses." Rodrigo was devastated. His life was over. Clarisse took pity on him. "You may believe that this time was wasted, but that is far from the truth, as you will eventually learn. Here, consider this scrawny young cow, with stringy hair matted on her body. Apply your technique to her." Rodrigo didn't understand, but he did as he was told. The hair grew with his whipping until the cow became a fluffy body. "That's beautiful!" cried Clarissa. "I must give her to my granddaughter as a toy!" And just in case Rodrigo had missed the significance of what he had done, she pointed to his first, failed, creation and then to the second, saying "This batter too fluffed and loused... Thin heifer too fluffed – a doll!"

