

THE FAUX FISHMONGER IN THE KITCHEN

廚房裡的偽魚販

Chefs striving to acquire stars, the influence of online reviews, gender issues, generational differences – see fine dining through the eyes of a “Michelin fishmonger”. Lin Kai-Lun, a writer well-versed in fish, draws a subtle portrait of the camaraderie and craftsmanship of chefs and fishmongers, rendered in a warm, straightforward style.

Lin Kai-Lun, a third-generation fishmonger, made the shift from street vendor to high-end restaurants when he began sourcing supplies for chefs. From the unique perspective on the restaurant industry acquired from this experience, he took up his pen to record his observations and take readers on a tour through the little-known world of high-end restaurants.

Divided into three sections, the book starts with “people”, then moves on to “situations” and “relationships”. Part one introduces the various types of chefs, from those who pretend to know everything to those who lose their way in the fight to acquire stars, to those who face gender challenges or must re-evaluate their self-worth. Part two focuses on the real-life issues restaurants deal with, from showy marketing strategies to chaotic customer reservations. In a society where the blind pursuit of outward appearances and online reviews is the norm, the book highlights the various difficulties endemic to the food service industry. In the final section, Lin Kai-Lun describes in detail his relationships with the chefs, making clear the singular degree of trust in their interactions.

The book’s thoughtful observations and descriptions not only give readers the inside story on the fine dining industry, but also invite reflection on how dreams often conflict with reality. Lin Kai-Lun presents complex emotions and interpersonal relationships to readers in a straightforward style, giving the book both the feel of a documentary and great depth. His nuanced descriptions let readers



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peek into the kitchen to see how dreams and reality intertwine.

Lin Kai-Lun 林楷倫

A fishmonger by trade, Lin Kai-Lun is also the recipient of numerous literary prizes in Taiwan, including the 2020 Lin Rong-San short story prize and the 2021 China Times literature prize. His writing focuses on real-life stories marked by rich observational detail.