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When Matthew called for dinner, all the boys ran to the dining room, where Alfred and the other Anthony were already bustling around the table, while I went to the kitchen.

It is imperative that I describe its appearance and the appliances that Mr. Kleks had brought there. Along one wall stood on long tables tin cans, filled with glasses of various colors and shades. On the opposite side were placed vessels with edible paints and a huge collection of the strangest brushes and brushes. On the windows stood wooden boxes with brightly colored flowers, among which nasturtiums and geraniums. In the middle of the kitchen rose a large table with a metal top. On it stood a crackly glass jar, filled with candle flames, and a multitude of small jars with colored powder. Getting down to cooking dinner, Mr. Kleks put on a white kit and set about preparing the dishes. Into a huge saucepan he poured three quarts of orange slides, added a handful of white powder, added water, painted green peas on the surface with a thin brush, then to finish, he added a few candle flames, from which the water in the saucepan immediately boiled. Then Mr. Kleks mixed thoroughly the entire contents of the saucepan, poured it into a tureen and said to me:

- Take this tureen to Alfred in the dining room. I think the tomato soup will be excellent today. Indeed, I must admit that I've never eaten anything as tasty in my life, and yet after all, it didn't even take five minutes to cook the soup.

While the boys ate the first course, Mr. Kleks set about preparing the roast. To do this, he put one candle flame in a large roasting pan, placed a tiny piece of meat, threw in two slides: one red and one white, sprinkled it all with gray powder, and when the meat was already roasted and the slides were overcooked, he put a magnifying pump and pressed its bottom several times. The roasting pan immediately filled to the brim with appetizing and fragrant roast beef, draped with beets and mashed potatoes. On top of the potatoes, Mr. Kleks painted dill green. The roast could hardly fit on the platters, which I carried to the dining room.

For dessert, Mr. Kleks decided to make gooseberry compote. He cut off a few leaves of geraniums, sprinkled them with gooseberry powder and tasted them.

- I don't taste it! - he said to himself. - Better would be raspberry compote.

Without thinking long, he grabbed a thick brush, dipped it in red paint and painted gooseberry compote into raspberry compote. It was so excellent that I tried it three times, and I would have been happy to eat even more. I could afford to, because after

preparing the compote, which took one moment, Mr. Kleks went to the dining room with a topping, so that he could pour the brown sauce over the roast, strengthening the gums.

When the boys got down to cleaning and other farm work after lunch, Mr. Kleks returned to the kitchen and said to me:

- Well, Adas, now it's time for us, I'm sure you are already very hungry. Tell me, what would you like to eat for dinner? You can choose any dish you have an appetite for.

I am very gluttonous by nature, so Mr. Kleks's proposal moved me a lot. I thought for a long time about what I actually had an appetite for, and finally chose an omelet with spinach.

Mr. Kleks immediately snatched a brush in his hand, dabbed it with various paints and combining them in just the right way, painted the omelet, then the spinach, threw in the flame of the candle, then deftly set everything out on a plate, saying:

- I think you will enjoy my omelet; it should be excellent. The omelet was indeed delicious and simply melted in the mouth. In a similar way Mr. Kleks prepared for me chicken with miso and blueberry dumplings.

In response to my question, Mr. Kleks took out of his pocket a box of pills for hair growth, swallowed five such pills one by one and said:

- This is quite enough for me. On the other hand, for taste I'll have my favorite colorful dish.



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Saying this, he picked a nasturtium flower, dipped it first in green paint, then in blue, then in silver, and finally ate it with great taste.

- I have to explain this to you," said Mr. Kleks seeing my surprise.

- Many, many years ago, I was in Beijing, the capital of China, and became friends there with a certain Chinese scholar, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo. The name has surely already flashed across your ears. Well, the aforementioned Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo taught me how to make edible paints, which are the essence of various flavors. Blue paint is sour, green paint is sweet, red is bitter, yellow is salty, while various combinations of paints produce flavors of intermediate flavors. Thus, the right combination of green paint with white paint and with a little gray gives a vanilla taste, brown with yellow has a chocolate taste, paint silver, admixed with black and sprinkled lightly with celadon, tastes like pineapple. And so on and on.