



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I think you realise that, actually, I am quite an accomplished cook. One look at Bo-Bo and you know that he could not have acquired that bulge around his middle without eating copious quantities of the food that he enjoys. That is the result, as you can appreciate, of the expertise that I have acquired, over the past few years, in perfecting the art of gastronomy. Well, after reading the report about Michelin Star Awards – all of which I do concur, by the way – it came to me that the Michelin Star award-givers forgot about Hongkong congee, Hongkong egg tarts and Hongkong hotdogs! How could that have happened? I recall that the last white Governor of Hongkong, now known as Lord Patton, loved Hongkong's egg tarts so much that he made his favourite, egg-tart shop world famous. But the Michelin Star Award people forgot, completely, to sample Hongkong's egg tarts in order to make a determination as to which is the best. Also, not once did anybody consider Hongkong's hotdogs or Hongkong congee! Look, the way that I see the situation is that if a bowl of wonton noodles can achieve the one-Star Michelin Award, for what reason can not a Hongkong congee shop or a Hongkong egg-tart shop be awarded a Michelin Star? And what about the wonderful and unique Hongkong hotdog? So, in order to qualify for next year's Michelin Star Awards for Hongkong congee, Hongkong hotdogs and Hongkong egg tarts, I am going to set up a stand in Central, specialising in these delicacies. I suppose you know that, when Bo-Bo was more active in Hongkong Governmental affairs, I became very friendly with Angelina Jolie, the actress with the very sexy thick lips. The way that I met this wonderful lady was that, by chance, I was sitting beside her in a Cathay Pacific aeroplane on a trip to Canada where I was accompanying Bo-Bo on a diplomatic mission (very hush-hush ... I can't tell you more than that). I was in Seat A1, of course, when, to my great joy and surprise, there was sexy lips, sitting across the aisle. I called to her: 'Hi!' I yelled to her excitedly, 'Angelina Jolie, I presume?' (I am an avid reader of the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the investigations of Sherlock Holmes, a mythical, London detective who was the main character in the famous stories, penned in the late 19th Century, so I know the correct address to a complete stranger, except that I left off the 2 words, 'Dr Watson'). Anyway, Angelina Jolie, the lovely lady that she is, responded to my address in a very positive manner and we had a lovely talk, leading, of course, to the matter of food. As it turns out, she loves Hongkong congee, Hongkong hotdogs and, especially, Hongkong egg tarts, but she has to control her eating habits and refrains from eating them too much. I invited her to my home in Mid-Levels and, on her next trip to Hongkong, she stayed with me and we had a wonderful time, shopping and eating and, naturally, being seen in Mandarin Oriental to the envy of many people, including that horrible woman who is now a Legislative Councillor and whose hairstyle used to resemble that of a mop. Well, since I have an internationally renowned actress as my supporter, my success as the sole purveyor of Hongkong hotdogs, Hongkong congee and Hongkong egg tarts on the first transportable restaurant in Central Hongkong is assured.

Bo-Bo, the lovely frog-face that he is, agreed to finance the project because, according to him, if the Hongkong Government of today can give away more than \$HK1.40 billion in order to establish a new Sichuan panda park and access roads to it, for what reason should he not give seed capital for the establishment of the first Hongkong congee, Hongkong hotdog and Hongkong egg-tart stand to be placed in Central. Armed with more than \$HK100,000, I am off tomorrow to obtain permission from the police for a

suitable location to establish my wheeled stand in Central. I was thinking of a site, somewhere near the Legislative Council Chambers because there is a little park, across the way, and business should be brisk, 7 days per week. On Sundays and holidays, the Filipinas and Filipinos monopolise the area between the Headquarters Building of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd and all the way down, abutting Mandarin Oriental. My only concern is that the Filipina maids of Hongkong might try to compete with me on their holidays. I'll take that chance, however, because I have absolute confidence in my cooking ability. Filipinos and Filipinas only know about crispy pata and fried chicken wings and boiled chicken legs. I shall be specialising in Hongkong hotdogs, Hongkong congee and Hongkong egg tarts. I shall have no equal, to be sure. About the price: I have decided not to be too greedy. Initially, I shall set the price of a Hongkong hotdog at \$HK5.88. As for the Hongkong egg tart, the price shall be \$HK2 per tart. A bowl of Hongkong congee shall be the very fair price of \$HK18, complete with a Styrofoam bowl and a transparent plastic spoon. Then, after I get my one Michelin Star, up will go the price, of course. Where I shall differ from the hotdogs, sold on carts in Toronto, Canada, and on carts in Los Angeles, California, is that I shall not be bathing Hongkong hotdogs in mustard and ketchup, but the hotdogs shall be liberally spread with XO sauce over home-made pok bian (Peking pancake, normally used to wrap Peking duck slices). This will give the Hongkong hotdogs a distinctive taste that will be unique. I trust you not to give away the secret of my coming success on the first Hongkong hotdog, Hongkong congee and Hongkong egg-tart transportable stand in Central Hongkong.

Talk to you in the new year. Have a lovely Christmas and salivate for my Hongkong delicacies, coming in 2009.

Love you.

First Lady

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