

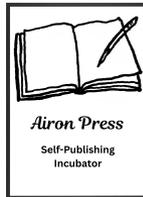


# Soup

JIMMY SAN

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J. P. SAN



AIRON PRESS

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# *The Altar*

**W**ho would have imagined that the greatest solutions to dealing with those who commit heinous acts and disrespect their creator lie not in complexity, but in simplicity? That something as humble as soup could hold the key to mending creation itself? And yet, as you'll soon see, it does—more profoundly than most could ever fathom. But perhaps the better question is this: Could you be the one to wield this secret, master the craft, and become my next apprentice?

It may have been the gods' greatest joke: soup, deceptively simple in appearance, yet holding a complexity that mirrors divine craftsmanship. Its genius lies in harmony—a delicate balance of fragrant spices and the seamless interplay of sour, spicy, and umami, where humble broth transcends its sim-

plicity and transforms into something profound. Simple yet intricate, it serves as a quiet foundation, bringing depth and transformation to all it touches.

In fact, this humble dish deserves to be listed among the world's greatest wonders. It is woven into nearly every culture—often overlooked, yet always present. A gift from the Divine, soup is a sustaining ritual, nourishing not just the body but the soul.

A bowl of soup can beckon an ancient whisper from the lips of Essence to speak a future into existence by a Controller. Soup is a tool of the Controller for he is one who commands the forces of spirit, shaping them through vessels both visible and invisible. A Controller doesn't merely create; they bend, mold, and weave the threads of fate itself, shaping the world with the tools at their command. Soup, among many others, is one such tool.

Part of the deception lies in its very simplicity: soup appears common, a humble dish for the masses. But in the right hands, it transforms into something far greater—an instrument of divine power, shaping destinies with every spoonful. In the hands of a Controller, soup is a vessel for healing, soothing, or even shaping the course of history. Different Controllers employ different objects to channel their powers.

Just ask Esau, who traded his birthright for a bowl of lentils. Some say he gave into his hunger and threw away something precious. Others claim it was part of God's plan. What they don't realize is that the soup wasn't just a meal—it was a choice, a choice carefully laid out by a master. Jacob didn't just make lentils, he created a moment in history. Those were tasty lentils, for sure. But they weren't just food—they were destiny on a spoon. In the right hands, soup becomes a vessel for blessing, curse, or magic. Esau may have lost an inheritance—but he certainly tasted one unforgettable feast.

Though human history may never record it, soup has been at the heart of some of the greatest divine battles: Badr, Chamkaur, Lanka—just to name a few. The accounts are buried, forgotten, but I was there. I've seen soup shape the outcome of wars, bring down gods, and turn the tide of fate itself.

So why speak of soup now, as the Lord's army faces a new threat? Because I consider every option: technology, prayer, sacrifice—or perhaps something far more subtle, yet no less lethal. Surely, the Divine has weightier means to determine the Elect, to name those written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Or so you'd think. But the truth, my friend, is far more elusive. Hidden within these pages lies not just a recipe—but the key to a divine weapon, a weapon so quiet, so powerful, it remains

unseen by most. Just as a ladle can shape the course of destiny with a simple gesture, so too can the hand of a ruler—or a god—shape the course of nations.

In places like Mondansk, where power is stitched together with convenience and desperation, the hand of destiny is no less present. The warriors of Troy would have marveled at how a horse, so seemingly insignificant, was the true instrument of their demise—an overlooked tool that led to their downfall, even as they triumphed. I speak of *le remède enfoui*, the ultimate martial response.

How can a mortal wield such a tool? Can carbon touch the Divine and not be altered, destroyed? Of course not. Pay attention and recognize how power can be held—and still allow one to live. It's the alchemy of spices, the ritual of stirring, occurring within the sacred vessel, that offers protection—the pot that holds not just broth, but the very essence of what is to come, a vessel through which the Divine flows and is shaped.

Above all, it draws from a single, unspoken ingredient, one that spirits inhabit and that channels the very essence of Creation itself. It reveals the divine attributes of Essence, the Creator of Creators, whose hands shape the world with every whisper of flavor. No recipe can capture it entirely: a dash of love, a sting of grief, and, yes, the hunger buried deep in the

cook's soul—all woven together in a delicate balance, creating something that transcends the earthly and touches the Divine.

When these things align, broth transforms into something else—blessing or curse—served by hand, swallowed by fate.

It all comes down to who holds the ladle—the vessel through which the divine touch is transmitted, yet protected from the mortal soul by Essence herself. To hold the ladle is to be chosen, to accept the responsibility of shaping fate. But the ladle is more than a simple tool; it is a mark of the chosen, granted by the Celestials, the divine representatives.

When Essence selects a Master Controller, it is not a mere appointment—it is a choice, often accompanied by a test. Only those who pass the tests and accept the challenge are bestowed with the sacred power of the ladle. Even I received the ladle—a tattoo under my right wing. (Reluctantly, I might add. My trainer didn't think I had the right attitude. Now, of course, I am the Supervisor of Master Controllers.) Engraved upon it is the symbol of our calling: a golden coin, the Chauvinized object that marks the moment the chosen begins their training under the watchful eye of a Master Controller. I did not require a Chauvinized object because I am a Celestial. These are not ordinary objects—they are the hand of destiny itself, shaping the course of fate.

But hey, you're probably not interested in all that. You just need to make your decision. Someone will come to you in your dreams again. But let me tell you why soup matters: I'm on my way to meet a warrior who understands these things. Nothing would make me happier than sharing a bowl with her. One day, perhaps you and I will share one too. Maybe I'll get lucky, and it'll be chicken-noodle—that's heaven by the spoonful.

Sometimes, it's not about what's in the pot—it's about who holds the ladle. And in this case, I've been known to hand out a ladle or two. I've got a soft spot for the truly chosen.

Angels like me know how to take it and dish it out. We take saving souls seriously. But let's not get ahead of ourselves, just yet.



Only a precious few experience a grandmother's hug on a chilly day—I have heard such an embrace described, *'like the richness of slow-cooked chicken fat, the sweet murmur of carrots, celery, and onions, brightened by lemon and softened by garlic.'* That description struck me as odd—if I didn't know better, it would be the musing of a hungry, cuddly rabbit. However, the remark came from a young girl, Lakita, who once recalled

the tantalizing aroma from the kitchen, thick with herbs—dill, thyme, parsley, and a teasing kiss of rosemary—*waltzing together in the rising steam*. That scent from a heavenly bowl of soup graced her senses and gently lifted—slow and golden—like a sunset slipping into the quiet of a river's silence.

This, my friends, is as close to peace as humans can get without the hand of God.

And then—add spirit.

The warm elixir carries you—not just to comfort, but to a place where the soul finally lets go. Lets go of craving, fear, and the illusion that anything stays the same. It is the stillness beneath the noise, the hush between thoughts, the breath of the Spirit that returns again and again, asking nothing in return.

It is shalom. And even angels would trade their wings for a taste.

I owe this reverence for soup—chicken soup—to a mortal: a feisty, contentious, utterly lovable grandmother from these very hills. Everyone called her Bubbe. She was the only mortal bold enough to wag a wooden spoon at an angel and bark, “Needs more love.”

Bubbe taught me many things. The most important was that soup was never just food. As Bubbe would say, usually with

her trademark grin, “Soup is love bubbling away in a pot.” Her words were playful, but the meaning was always clear. The whole region, informally known as Mondansk, whispered there was something special about her cooking. It could soothe hearts and minds—or conceal poisons potent enough to bring empires crashing down. In Bubbe’s kitchen, you’d never know which it might be until it was too late.

Such a simple meal... but in Bubbe’s hands, soup was power incarnate.

Born a fighter, I’ve always believed healing is a noble art—it’s in an angel’s DNA. I’ve seen it in a gentle touch, a burst of laughter, a whispered prayer—or in nations striving to stitch themselves back together. And whether in kitchens or kingdoms, one truth endures: ingredients may begin fragrant and pure, but the hands that stir the pot always leave a trace of themselves behind.

This is why I’m here. Prayer has brought me to a place where healing demands battle. I am here to prepare the warriors—to keep dirty hands from spoiling more than just the soup. Because sometimes, what’s cooking decides the fate of far more than dinner. And I’m guessing you’ve realized by now—I’m not really talking about food.

I'll heal with my sword and my fist. Then comes soup. I will teach other chosen angels to do the same and lead legions into battle beside the Controllers and the Archangels.



Mondansk, stitched together by the United States and China, is a grand experiment—held less by trust than by sheer convenience. A patchwork nation, inconvenient to reach but remote enough to control, it remains a secret too tightly held. The gods, of course, know what's happening there—and frankly, they don't care. The thing about gods: they claim omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence, but human drama? Not their concern.

From where I stand, humans have always believed they can patch together miracles if they stir hard enough. Nowhere did they stir more cleverly than in Mondansk. The superpowers set aside old grudges long enough to summon clever generals, silver-tongued diplomats, and men with ledgers full of secrets. They carved borders, built a puppet government, and birthed the Black Brigade—a secret police born from the disillusioned and profit-driven, bound by fear and control. But despite their careful choreography, cracks are already forming. The land

wears a mask of peace, but beneath it, tension simmers—coiled and waiting.



I drift downward through cool air, wings tucked close. The morning spills across fields of grain, flows through lowlands thick with evergreens, and climbs into the haunted, serene mountains. An eagle wheels through the sky. Beauty doesn't erase what remains—etched into the earth like ancient script: broken borders, buried treaties. Never truly forgotten.

The city sprawls below, fractured by scars of old battles, its rooftops clawed open to the sky. As I draw closer, I glimpse the aura from the Altar of Rosokova, concealed deep in broken stone. I pause to soak in the silvery haze, rippling like water disturbed by a breeze, casting an otherworldly shimmer on the stones around it.

Once, mortals called these stones sacred, but their sacrifices brought only blood and grief. Never salvation. Never peace. The spirits lingering here know this, as well as I do.

Mortals see emptiness where I see echoes. Their memories drift like fish in deep water, spiraling toward the altar—silent screams trembling like dark currents.

I fold my wings tighter and slip through a gash in the broken ceiling, wide as a temple doorway, descending into a chamber of stone and shattered debris. Soft light seeps through the roof's wounds, brushing cold, forgotten stone where prayers have long since dissolved into dust. It finds the Altar of Rosokova untouched by ruin, unmoved by sin. A pewter cup and chipped bowl remain—once filled with soup, though the warmth and scent have long fled. A faint fragrance lingers—not of moss or decay, but of spirits hidden in the cracks of silent stone. The spirits remember the secrets of this place—and so do I.

Sometimes I wonder if the land remembers me, too. I suppose that's overly dramatic—but then again, so is Mondansk. Nothing moves. Dust floats, suspended, turning lazily in the pale glow. Outside, the village wraps itself in quiet. No one speaks of this place anymore. Yet they come. I've seen them.

Once, a child claimed a fox slept beside the altar—its fur ash and flame. When it lifted its head, the boy swore it flew away. Another, an elderly woman, saw a Hungarian meadow viper curled inside the chalice. She swore it sprouted wings and flew away. A priest, once certain of many things, was overheard insisting that an owl drank from the chalice and cast spells too dreadful to repeat. The priest vanished, never to be seen again.

They all speak of birds. These things might wear feathers, but they were never birds.

Among the flowers linger small remnants of human life: mud-caked shirts, cracked porcelain, a half-buried stuffed duck toy. The duck reminds me of an old colleague—an odd angel who adored swimming pools and once called a blow-up toy his “ducky friend.” I hadn’t thought of him in years—not until I saw the duck. He believed things left in the wrong place could find their way into our hearts. He named it George. Or James. I forget now. Strange fellow. Memory clings to odd places—even forgotten toys beneath forgotten altars.

The altar hums with a low vibration. Its carvings spiral inward. No one reads them now, but they still speak—not in words, but in weight and warmth. They remember what was promised here—and what was taken in return.

Mondansk crept out of war like moss from stone. Built quickly—not from purpose, but from pressure. Engineers came first—tidy men with tidy rules. Then came the cheap. The necessary. Hired. Hated. Used. People called them thieves. Called them dirty. Yet still, they scrubbed floors, bought bodies, and traded judgment for pleasure—so long as no one was looking.

The children watched. They learned quickly. Even before the first flame, the earth knew. Now, houses burn, and no one asks why.

I stand in ruins older than memory; the stone leans toward me. It listens. I feel prana pulsing through it. It doesn't speak—but it remembers. This altar wasn't built to honor gods. It was built to sow fear—to amplify a ruler's power, to elevate a priest, to justify some grand 'Mandate from Heaven.' It dressed up despair and called it worship.

The spirits here aren't grieving. They're recording. They whisper—not to the villagers, but to me. And what they echo isn't prayer; it's a warning: Essence is coming—not to redeem, but to witness. This land remembers what mortals bury. And the stones? They're beginning to speak again.

Still, there is life in Rosokova. Beyond Uzhhorod, past the curling road, a new day unfurls across the ruins. The light glows gold—a color I've seen before, at many endings, and once or twice... at the beginning of something holy.

The bowl on the altar catches the light. Inside, a message, perhaps. For me. An empty vessel. A warning.

Because in the end, it's never the broth that poisons. It's the cook.



## About the author

**J**. P. San, also known as Jimmy, is an American novelist whose gripping stories blend suspense, drama, and a touch of the surreal. A lifelong lover of literature and storytelling, he draws inspiration from everyday moments and the complexities of human nature. When he steps away from his writing desk, he enjoys hiking, savoring good coffee, and discovering new places. He lives with his family in Maryland.



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