

Culinary 101

Chapter 101: Reconciliation between Father and Son! Can't Pass the Knife to Old Shen!

The phone rang.

Yue Liyue suddenly noticed a hint of panic in his dad's eyes.

He froze for a second, and immediately a thought popped into his head:

"Dad, is that big-shot patron who pays fifty grand a month just to play games with me actually you?"

Zhong Huairen set down his chopsticks.

His expression was a little embarrassed:

"Your mom and I were worried you weren't having a good time in Beijing. You didn't want us to give you money, so we came up with this idea."

Yue Liyue opened his mouth.

No wonder that big-shot patron never wanted to voice chat.

No wonder that guy kept telling him to go to bed early.

No wonder every gaming session ended so quickly.

No wonder...

He always thought his top-tier skills and flashy moves won over this patron, but turns out it was just his old man in disguise.

He wasn't sure if he should feel touched or kinda bummed.

He originally wanted to make it on his own to show his parents.

Who'd've thought, in the end, he still had to rely on them to get by.

"Sorry, kid, your mom and I just worry about you too much...that's why..."

Zhong Huairen actually enjoyed hanging out with his son like this.

Every night after work, he'd sit on the sofa next to his wife. They'd listen to their son's yelling and commands while clumsily tapping away at the mobile game on their phones.

He didn't get any of the gaming lingo.

Had no clue about what made each character different.

Stuff like "mid lane" and "jungle" was complete Greek to him.

But he got to hear his son's voice, hear his son calling him "big-shot patron." At the start of every stream, Yue Liyue would greet politely, and at the end, say good night.

That was more than enough!

To stay in closer touch with his kid, Zhong Huairen made a new WeChat account, even turned on dual-app mode and set a special notification sound.

The goal? So he could get messages from his son ASAP.

But today, rushing out the door, he forgot to turn off the sound, letting his disguise slip.

Yue Liyue rubbed his face:

"I should be the one saying sorry, I was too stubborn and made you guys worry..."

The father and son who'd grown distant from gaming found a way back together at Lin Xu's restaurant.

Zhong Huairen picked up his chopsticks again.

His face broke into a gentle smile:

"Alright, alright, let's keep eating. Once the fish gets cold it's no good...From now on, if I want to play games again, you gotta play with me! Month's not over yet, need to get my fifty thousand's worth."

Yue Liyue lowered his head.

Secretly wiped away tears at the corner of his eye:

"Your account's rank is way too low. Later I'll get you a better one so we can team up!"

"Better not."

"How come?"

"Cause I'm scared you'll call me a scrub teammate..."

When the father and son were full, Lin Xu and the gang were busy moving packed box lunches outside.

Box after box got loaded onto a small van sent by the Audit Bureau's logistics team.

Once packed, Shen Jiayue, feeling a bit stuffed, took the cart and two temp workers to go deliver meals over at the venue.

Noon.

After a whole morning of training, Tan Yajun arrived at the lounge near the venue.

He lifted a teacup soaked with chrysanthemum and honeysuckle and took a sip.

Finally, that dry scratchy throat feeling eased up.

Hadn't done training for ages—after lecturing nonstop, his throat still wasn't used to it.

He took a couple more sips of the cooling herbal tea. His assistant, Yuan Fei, came in holding a hot towel:

"Mr. Tan, the Audit Bureau's leaders have lunch ready in the cafeteria. They're inviting you to join them."

Tan Yajun waved him off:

"I'll skip it. I've been talking all morning, throat just got a break, and if I go join their lunch, I'll have to chat for ages again."

With that, he took off the gold-rimmed glasses perched on his nose.

Took the hot towel Yuan Fei handed over, opened it up, and pressed it to his face.

Nice!

Getting blasted by venue A/C all morning, his face was numb. Now, with a hot towel over it, it felt as if all his pores just opened up.

Once the towel was down, he took another sip of tea.

Finally, he asked:

"Have the box lunches arrived yet? Grab me one, veggie if possible. Meat makes you phlegmy—not good for speaking."

Box lunch?

Yuan Fei was a bit surprised.

Opt out of a fancy meal to eat box lunch with the trainees?

This...

But box lunches from Lin Ji's Food should taste good, at least.

Yuan Fei didn't say more, just hurried out.

Soon after, he brought back two lunch boxes and two bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup.

"This one's Tomato and Egg Rice, this one's Noodles with Braised Eggplant and Pork Sauce. Which one, Mr. Tan?"

"Tomato and egg,"

Tan Yajun replied, lifted the lid off a bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup, and the fresh savory scent instantly perked him up.

Whoa!

This soup's legit fresh!

It'd cooled to just the right temp now, great for drinking.

He picked it up, took a sip, and the delicious egg drop soup instantly whetted his appetite.

If the soup's already this good, the box lunch should be even better, right?

He opened up his lunch box, took the chopsticks and spoon from Yuan Fei, and grabbed a spoonful of egg drenched in sauce. Tender, fragrant—paired with the tangy-sweet tomato, every bite was a treat.

That young guy at Lin Ji really knew his way around a kitchen.

But then he remembered Audit Bureau missed out on such a talent, and he felt a pang of regret.

Would've been great if they'd hired him!

As he was eating, a thought popped up:

"How many box lunches arrived this morning? Is there enough for all the trainees?"

He remembered glancing at the contract yesterday evening.

It only listed the number of trainees.

He and Yuan Fei just ate two—would there be enough for the trainees?

"Shen Jiayue said they brought 335 portions today, 23 more than the 312 on the contract. Definitely enough."

Yuan Fei lowered his head, eating the Noodles with Braised Eggplant and Pork Sauce.

He'd eaten at the restaurant twice before but never ordered that dish.

Never thought it'd taste this good.

Mixed with rice—pure magic!

As he was eating, he heard Tan say:

"Since they sent 335, let's settle the bill for 335."

Yuan Fei almost choked on the rice.

Is that really necessary?

"Running a small business is tough. No need to nickel-and-dime them."

The owner of Lin Ji is the son-in-law of billionaire Shen Guofu. If that guy hears Audit Bureau shorted his son-in-law, half the cigars in my humidor'll get swiped!

Hmph, Fatty Shen's always looking for excuses to mooch my cigars as it is.

If we stiff his son-in-law—

May as well hand him the knife myself!

Back at the shop.

Every seat was packed.

Lunch rush had officially arrived.

"Boss Lin, I saw Yue Liyue post a story about eating steamed fish at Lin Ji's Food. Is the place launching new dishes?"

"Yeah, I saw it too. That fish looked amazing!"

"Is it possible to get steamed fish here right now? If yes—I'll take one!"

"Me too, I want one as well..."

Lin Xu said:

"We just tried making two Steamed Sea Basses this morning, turned out pretty good. We'll have a few available this afternoon. If you're after some, come by early."

As he was speaking—

Some logistics workers rolled in boxes on dollies.

The custom-made tableware had arrived.

Staring at these big boxes,

Lin Xu couldn't help but mutter inside:

"Last time, swapping out chili vinegar got me a Basic Techniques lottery spin. This time, switching out the shop's tableware—should trigger a reward too, right?"

Chapter 102: Another Useless Skill Added! Geng Lele's Grandfather!

「Audit Bureau.」

Inside the training session hall, the trainees were picking up their boxed meals. There was little choice among the three types, and their minds weren't really on the food, as being in training meant a potential promotion. Compared to their future prospects, a little craving for food was nothing. But as they smelled the aroma from the dishes and tasted the freshness in the Nori Egg Drop Soup, these trainees found their attention irresistibly drawn to the culinary delights.

"Everyone says the food at these training sessions is inedible, but **this** is what they call inedible?"

"Our department head said the boxed meals at training are so bad that dogs wouldn't touch them, and he even told me to buy a few extra instant noodle bowls."

"Damn! My boss said the same thing. I actually bought several bowls of noodles."

"Which restaurant are these boxed meals from? I have to go eat there when this is over."

"Me too! I've got to try it. The flavor is just too good!"

"I used to hate boxed meals, but with today's, I feel like one just isn't enough."

As everyone was discussing this, one very cute individual stealthily snuck into the control room for the hall's screen. Using Tan Yajun's computer, which was displaying the PowerPoint presentation, this person typed out a line on the screen:

[The supplier for this session's boxed meals is Lin Ji's Food, located at 34 Welcome Spring Street, North Fourth Ring Road.]

The large screen in the hall suddenly lit up, startling the trainees who were eating. However, after they saw the message, their interest was immediately piqued.

"Lin Ji's Food?"

"I'll have to check it out later."

"Me too, me too!"

"If their boxed meals are this delicious, their other dishes must taste even better!"

"..."

Listening to the trainees' discussions, Shen Jiayue's face revealed a triumphant smile.

Ha! I've attracted more customers for Xu Bao again!

「Two o'clock in the afternoon.」

The hustle and bustle in the store had subsided. Lin Xu instructed a few of the servers, "Take the tableware out of these boxes, clean and disinfect it in the dishwasher, and use it to replace the existing tableware in the restaurant. Wash the old tableware and store it in these boxes."

Now that the new tableware had arrived, it was time to make the switch and let the customers experience the genius girl's unique designs. As for the restaurant's original tableware, Lin Xu had already contacted a dealer who collected second-hand tableware; they would drive over that afternoon to take it all away.

When the restaurant first opened, Lin Xu thought the included tableware was decent. But after seeing the tableware designed by Geng Lele, he couldn't help but feel that the restaurant's original set seemed a bit cheap. It was like playing a video game: the free, basic equipment could no longer keep up with his character's needs after leveling up.

The servers crowded around the dishwasher. First, they washed the existing tableware basket by basket. Then, they opened the new boxes and placed the new tableware into the dishwasher baskets to continue the disinfection and cleaning process.

Apart from bowls and chopsticks, the new tableware set was comprehensive. It included vinegar cruets, chili bowls, tissue boxes, chopstick holders, soup spoons, soup bowls, rice bowls, small and large noodle bowls, small saucers, large dinner plates, soup tureens, fish platters, Crispy Meat baskets, and toothpick holders. All these items were adorned with the restaurant's logo.

The servers were busy until three-thirty in the afternoon before they had completely replaced all the restaurant's tableware.

Once they were done, Lin Xu heard the system's notification tone.

"Host has updated the restaurant's tableware and received one chance at the Excellent Level Basic Cooking Techniques prize draw. Would you like to draw now?"

As expected... Updating the tableware really did trigger a prize draw.

Although Lin Xu was still a bit resentful about drawing the Pig Slaughtering Technique last time, since this was a free chance, what was there to complain about?

"Draw!"

He muttered a small prayer and then pressed the draw button.

After the wheel in his mind stopped spinning, the notification sounded.

"Congratulations to the Host on acquiring the Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique—Whole Pig Slaughter."

Could you be any more perfunctory? Weren't Kneading Dough and Preparing Fillings perfectly fine techniques? Why not stick with those? Another useless Skill. It's just like picking up some useless piece of trivia while surfing the web. It's unappetizing, but... I can't just get rid of it.

After the prize draw, Lin Xu took advantage of the lull to set up an aquarium in the storage room. Then, he went to a seafood shop in the Chunfeng Market and purchased over twenty lively sea bass. The fish were all around a pound and a half each.

Starting that afternoon, Steamed Sea Bass would be on the menu. The price was already set: 90 RMB per half-kilogram. Compared to the seafood prices in the wet market, this wasn't low. However, when compared to similar restaurants, ninety RMB per half-kilogram was quite reasonable. Many restaurants in Beijing charged three-digit figures for Steamed Sea Bass, some even pricing it at 299 or 399 RMB per fish, with a clear "take it or leave it" attitude.

「Evening.」

The young prodigy, Geng Lele, arrived at the restaurant with her backpack.

"Good kitty, I'm here to see you!"

She hugged Dundun tightly, nuzzling it affectionately, even grabbing both of Dundun's front paws and waving them around. "Holy fire shines bright, holy fire glows, all my disciples, MEOW MEOW MEOW MEOW! Dundun, from today onwards, we shall establish the Meow Meow Sect! You are the Holy Master of the Meow Meow Sect, and I am the High Priest. Together, we will unite the martial world!"

Lin Xu: "..."

Has this girl been researching folklore and legends lately? Why has she become so... eccentric?

"What are you doing, Lele?"

Geng Lele cheerfully rubbed Dundun's head, "I've noticed that since Dundun came to the restaurant, business has gotten even better. So, I want to absorb some of its luck to prepare myself for going home."

Going home? What does that have to do with luck?

"My dad returned from the research institute because of issues with my college admission. I'm worried I'll get lectured when I go home, so I came here first to absorb some of its luck."

This... You should believe in science, girl. Wait... you're going home?

Lin Xu immediately said, "Wait a moment, I'll pack some food for you."

Previously, Geng Lele's grandfather had helped by writing the calligraphy for the restaurant's name, and Lin Xu hadn't yet given him an honorarium. This was the perfect opportunity to repay the favor. Lin Xu packed thirty Chicken Feet, and also packed dishes like Lotus Root, Alcoholic Peanuts, Steamed Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce, and Crispy Meat.

「Half an hour later.」

Geng Lele, carrying a large bag of food, pushed open the gate of a courtyard house near the North Third Ring Road. The courtyard house was filled with various plants and flowers. In the middle stood a clump of bamboo, creating an instantly refreshing feeling for anyone who looked at it.

"Old Man, look what delicious food I've brought for you!" Geng Lele called out as she pushed open the door to the study, addressing an elderly man inside who was dressed in a Tang suit and had graying hair.

This was the famous calligrapher, Geng Lishan.

Mr. Geng glanced at the bag in Geng Lele's hand, a trace of displeasure crossing his face. "You impudent girl! How many times have I told you? Don't bring all sorts of things into the study! Why don't you ever listen?"

Geng Lele took out a container of Chicken Feet from the bag, opened it, and presented it to Mr. Geng. "I'm giving you another chance to choose your words!"

"Oh my, my granddaughter is so considerate! She knew I was craving Chicken Feet and brought them over... Is this that restaurant whose name you tricked me into writing last time?"

"Can what a scholar does be called trickery?" Geng Lele retorted, taking out more food. "You snack on these for a bit. I'll bring out the rest at dinnertime. Make sure you eat less then, so Grandma doesn't nag you again."

"Good, good, good. My granddaughter is always so thoughtful."

While she was busy, Geng Lele noticed a red invitation on the table and asked curiously, "Whose happy occasion is this?"

"No, it's a culinary competition at the Fishing Platform. They asked me to be the head judge, and I couldn't refuse, so I accepted. Do you want to come along and broaden your horizons then?"

Chapter 103: Do You Really Treat Dundun as Your Grandson? Senior Brother, I Want to Learn How to Make Dry-Fried Green Beans!

What's so special about these things? The former head chef at Fishing Platform used to wander around the restaurant in floral T-shirts every day, and the current executive chef often helps out too. Fishing Platform isn't mysterious anymore. Still, Boss Lin should go see these kinds of cooking competitions. He might get inspired to create some new dishes, and then we'd all get to enjoy them.

Geng Lele asked, "Can I bring a friend?"

"Of course, you can."

"What about a cat?"

"That's fine too... Wait, are you making friends with cats now?"

Geng Lishan glanced at his granddaughter. Has human interaction ceased to satisfy this girl's genius brain?

He didn't understand the world of a top student, so he just continued munching on chicken feet. "These chicken feet are really well-made. There aren't many restaurants in Beijing that can match this place. The ones with good flavor have a bad texture, those with a good texture lack the right color, and those that look decent still have their claw tips on. Overall, I'd say this place serves the best chicken feet in Beijing."

Old Master Geng wasn't just a calligrapher but also a renowned food critic in Beijing. Not only was he picky with food, but he also didn't mince words. For example, a few years ago, he lambasted a private kitchen that had supposedly even hosted Clinton and charged over 3,000 yuan per person, claiming their dishes weren't about taste but about showing off status—a disgrace to the culinary world. He also blasted a famous Beijing duck restaurant for its excessively high prices and poor service, tarnishing Beijing's reputation.

Geng Lele, sitting on a nearby lounge chair, said earnestly, "When we go to Fishing Platform, Grandpa, please don't start scolding everyone again."

Geng Lishan smiled as he gnawed on chicken feet. "I'm not a shrew. Why would I scold anyone? However, I would like to offer some advice to those young chefs. Cooking shouldn't just be by the book—it lacks culture, depth, and imagination. The culinary world hasn't had any intriguing tales for a long time..."

After finishing two chicken feet, he was about to try some pork ear with his chopsticks when Geng Lele stopped him. "Eat more of the bony ones and save the others for dinner. This way, there will be fewer bones in front of you, and it will seem like you've eaten less... Don't you know this trick, being such a great gourmet?"

Geng Lishan chuckled bitterly. "Since when do food critics study such tactics?"

Still, he put down the pork ear and opted for the Steamed Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce. "This dish is also delicious—smooth and slightly chewy, and you can taste the freshness of the Pork Ribs. This level of skill is truly impressive."

Geng Lishan couldn't praise Lin Xu's culinary skills enough. He had never imagined he could find Cantonese cuisine in Beijing that was even more authentic than in Yangcheng.

「Inside the restaurant.」

The evening's group meals were already prepared and were currently being loaded into cargo vans.

"Haha! Finally, I don't have to go home to millet porridge and mixed-grain flatbreads!"

Employee Shen, who was usually keen on slacking off, arriving late, and leaving early, had actually grown fond of working overtime ever since her family started eating millet porridge and mixed-grain flatbreads at home. She boldly told her parents she wouldn't be home for dinner. This feeling was great! You guys can have those millet porridge and mixed-grain flatbreads yourselves. This young lady isn't joining you!

However, what she didn't know was that upon learning his daughter was working overtime and wouldn't be home for dinner, Shen Guofu, after finishing his company work, drove to the People's Hospital. He picked up Han Shuzhen, who had just finished her shift, and they headed straight for Yingchun Street.

"Finally, we can eat heartily in the restaurant. It feels so good not having to pretend."

Shen Guofu drove his Bentley, his eyes sparkling with excitement for the food ahead.

Han Shuzhen muttered from the passenger seat, "I wonder if they have any new dishes. I've gotten a bit tired of the same old things these past few days."

"But I remember you ate seven out of the ten chicken feet we took away last night. You call that tired..."

As Shen Guofu was speaking, he felt a threatening aura from his side and quickly changed his statement. "I know you were just forcing yourself so I wouldn't eat too much. My dear, you go to such lengths for my health. I'm so touched."

The murderous intent vanished, and the danger was averted.

Though it wasn't quite rush hour yet, the traffic on the road had noticeably increased. The couple drove on, stopping and starting. By the time they reached the entrance of Lin Ji's Food, it was almost 5:30 p.m., and a long queue had already formed at the door.

Just when it was almost their turn, Shen Guofu immediately noticed the newly added dishes on the blackboard. "Shuzhen, they've added Steamed Sea Bass! It's only ninety yuan per pound. Shall we try it?"

Han Shuzhen was completely focused on Dundun, who was lying on the cashier counter, worry evident in her eyes. Why is this little guy not cheerful at all? Could he be feeling unwell?

As a doctor, she instinctively associated listlessness in young ones with illness. She hadn't even glanced at the new dishes.

Shen Guofu said with a smile, "Don't cats love to sleep? You're worrying like he's your own grandkid."

Han Shuzhen shot him a glance. "If my future grandson clung to me like this, I'd wake up laughing from my dreams."

The queue moved forward gradually. Finally, it was the couple's turn to enter the restaurant.

As soon as Han Shuzhen entered, Dundun, who had been sleeping on the cashier counter, sprang up. He looked at Han Shuzhen and let out a pitiful "MEEEOOW~~~~~"

"Oh my, what's the matter, little one?" Han Shuzhen scooped up the little 'gas tank' into her arms.

Dundun nestled against her arm, curling up in her embrace just like a baby. Director Han's maternal instincts surged, and she suspected the little fellow must have suffered some terrible injustice. "Has someone bullied Dundun?" she asked Song Tiantian curiously.

"No, our boss's wife was just teasing him. He always looks this pitiful whenever she does."

Their boss's wife? Han Shuzhen glanced at Lin Xu, busy in the kitchen. So young and already married? I wonder what this fortunate girl looks like. Is she even good enough for such a young man?

Shen Guofu ordered a Steamed Sea Bass, a plate of onions with black fungus, a portion of boiled pork slices, plus four bowls of rice and two cups of Sour Plum Soup.

After ordering, two seats became available inside. To avoid hindering other customers, the couple left Dundun on the cashier counter and went inside to eat. Hmm, after we eat, we'll have to spend some quality time playing with the little fellow. That aggrieved look... he's really no different from a child.ÿÿÿ

「Before long.」

The steamed fish was served. Shen Guofu tasted it and instantly fell in love with the flavor. "Oh, this tastes so good! Shuzhen, have some more; it's good for your skin..."

While the couple was eating, a Cayenne slowly parked in a spot right outside the door. Xie Baomin got out of the car, glanced casually at the Bentley in the next spot, and chuckled, muttering, "Even people who drive Bentleys come here to eat. Junior Brother's business is really booming!"

Upon entering the shop, he headed straight for the kitchen. "Sorry, Junior Brother, I had a meeting to discuss an event at the end of the month, so I'm late... But I'm free all day tomorrow. I can help out in the shop then."

After saying that, he washed his hands and tied on an apron. Then he started to help fry the Fried Crispy Pork.

While busy, Xie Baomin glanced at the prepared cold dishes on the nearby workbench. He said casually, "Your selection of cold dishes is a bit limited here. How about I add one for you tomorrow? Is there anything you're interested in?"

These words exactly scratched Lin Xu's itch. He had just received a Superior Cooking Learning Card today and was wondering how to use it.

He said with a smile, "How about dry-fried green beans? I'm quite interested in that dish!"

Chapter 104: Master's Third Layer of Disguise! The Essence of Dry Stir-Frying is Deep Frying!

The restaurant lacked dishes that could be prepared in large batches, and dry-fried green beans fit this criterion perfectly.

Xie Baomin said, "No problem. Dry-fried green beans are such a simple dish, perfect for your restaurant. Remember to buy some stringless green beans when you do the shopping tomorrow."

Green beans? Isn't it supposed to be long beans?

"Green beans have a plumper texture, making the resulting dry-fried green beans taste better, but you need to buy the stringless kind; otherwise, the texture will be much worse."

After saying this, Xie Baomin reminded him again, "The name for green beans varies by region. Just buy the round, thick kind, not the flat ones. Flat beans have a crunchy texture and don't taste as good as green beans."

Lin Xu nodded. He planned to send Uncle Shen a message later, asking him to keep an eye out for these when stocking up at dawn.

The introduction of Steamed Sea Bass was well received by the customers. By six o'clock, more than twenty sea bass had been sold out. The last one was taken by Li Qiang, who was saving up for a hair transplant. He wasn't working overtime tonight, so he let loose a bit, ordering not only a Steamed Sea Bass but also Chicken Feet, Pork Ribs, peanuts, and Boiled Pork Slices. After ordering, he and a few colleagues each opened a small bottle of baijiu. The plan was to eat and drink their fill before going home to sleep it off.

Lin Xu felt that with such dietary habits—spicy and greasy Boiled Pork Slices, combined with high-proof alcohol—even without staying up late coding, his hair volume would be in jeopardy.

「The next day.」

At eight o'clock in the morning, Xie Baomin elegantly arrived at the shop.

"Is Master not here?"

"Master has been helping out with some community event these past few days, only coming over at mealtimes... It seems he's also secretly set up a live-broadcasting account; I have no idea what he plans to do with it," Lin Xu said while busily chopping meat.

Xie Baomin smiled. "He's lived a carefree life, like an old rascal. He probably thinks live-broadcasting is fun."

Lived a carefree life?

Curious, Lin Xu asked, "Master... doesn't he have family to take care of?"

During his long apprenticeship, he had never seen Master's family nor heard him talk about them, except for the time when he mentioned his wife liked Ginger Milk Pudding.

"Master is a womanizer. He's been married four times and divorced just as many, and he still has no children to this day. The wife you mentioned who likes Ginger Milk Pudding? That would be his second wife."

Lin Xu was speechless. ...

At the time, he had thought it was rather romantic of Master to make Ginger Milk Pudding for his wife every day after work. He hadn't expected the term 'wife' to have different versions: first wife, second wife, third wife... Are you kidding me? It's like he's cycling through Hokages in Naruto!

"So, he's alone now?"

"He's by himself, but whether he's lonely is hard to say. After all, Master has been a Casanova his whole life, and he also owns some houses and shops, so he's not short on money. I heard from my disciple that he once saw him dancing with a young foreign girl in a Sanlitun bar."

Lin Xu was speechless again. ...

He never would have thought the old man, who quietly came to eat every day when the restaurant first opened, was actually such a playboy beneath the surface. This was the third persona he'd discovered, after 'National Banquet Chef' and 'Youth with White Hair.' Who knows how many more masks Master has to shed?

Having finished speaking, Xie Baomin washed his hands and casually scooped up some of the green beans soaking in the sink. "These beans are great—tender and plump. They're perfect for making dry-fried green beans."

The ends of these green beans had already been snipped off. Xie Baomin rinsed them, drained them, and then cut them into segments about ten centimeters long. After cutting, he placed them inside a basket to drain.

Next, he started preparing the necessary aromatics and spices. The ingredients for this dish were quite simple: chopped green onions, ginger slices, Sichuan peppercorns, dried chili segments, one star anise broken into pieces, and some toasted sesame seeds.

After all the ingredients were prepared, Xie Baomin asked, "Don't you have any Sichuan peppercorn oil in the shop?"

Sichuan peppercorn oil? Do you use that for dry-fried green beans?

"No, we don't. If you need it, Senior Brother, I can ask Tiantian to buy some from the nearby supermarket."

Xie Baomin laughed and waved his hand. "Then forget it. The Sichuan peppercorn oil from the supermarket isn't very good. If we have time later, after the rush, I'll teach you how to make some. It's quite handy for cold dishes or mixing into fillings."

Lin Xu had originally thought that this 'Sichuan peppercorn oil' was simply oil infused with Sichuan peppercorns. He assumed its preparation would be similar to Chili Oil, perhaps even simpler. But from what his Senior Brother implied, it required setting aside specific time to make. Was it really that complicated?

While he was puzzled, Xie Baomin brought over the pot often used for deep-frying meat, poured in the oil used for Fried Crispy Pork, and turned up the heat.

The dish 'dry-fried green beans,' despite its name, isn't cooked solely by stir-frying. Instead, the green beans are first deep-fried in hot oil until thoroughly cooked and fragrant. Only then are they stir-fried in the wok with aromatics like dried chili and Sichuan peppercorns. In fact, nearly all 'dry-fried' dishes involve a deep-frying step.

"When deep-frying, it's best to use oil that has previously fried meat; this way, the green beans will be more flavorful."

When the oil was at medium heat, Xie Baomin poured the basket of green beans into the wok and began to fry them.

"The oil temperature shouldn't be too high. This way, the fried green beans will achieve that plump, tender, and substantial texture. If the oil temperature is too high, the beans will dry out, and the texture will suffer."

Uncooked green beans contain a toxin, so it's essential to fry them for an adequate amount of time to ensure they are thoroughly cooked.

While the green beans were frying, Xie Baomin didn't stand idle. He soaked the required dried Sichuan peppercorns and dried chili segments in warm water. Lin Xu understood this step. It was simply to prevent them from burning during stir-frying. Soaking them beforehand also helped to release their numbing and spicy flavors more easily during the stir-fry.

When the surface of the green beans in the wok began to wrinkle, resembling tiger stripes, Xie Baomin turned up the heat, raising the oil temperature to medium-high. Soon, the wrinkled tiger stripes on the surface of the green beans turned an appetizing golden brown. Using a skimmer, Xie Baomin fished the green beans out of the oil.

"Dry-fried green beans can be served hot or cold. Which do you prefer, Junior Brother?"

Hot or cold? This touched upon a gap in Lin Xu's knowledge. The dry-fried green beans he'd seen at restaurants and night market stalls were always in the cold dish section. That must be the cold version, right? So, what's the hot version?

"The hot version involves stir-frying a small piece of pork belly with the beans, similar to dishes like 'Cauliflower in a Big Bowl' or 'Hand-Torn Cabbage.' The pork belly enhances the flavor of the green beans, and it must be served hot to be truly delicious. If it gets cold, a layer of pork fat congeals on the surface of the beans, making them greasy and unpalatable."

Was there even a need to choose?

Lin Xu immediately said, "Let's go with the cold version. I'm planning to serve this as a cold dish."

Since it was to be served cold, there was no need to add sliced meat. Xie Baomin removed the soaked Sichuan peppercorns and dried chilies from the warm water, drained them, and began to cook.

He heated the wok and added half a ladleful of the oil used for frying the green beans. Then he added the chopped Scallion and Ginger, along with the soaked dried Sichuan peppercorns and dried chili segments, and stir-fried them until fragrant. Next, he added the fried green beans and continued to stir-fry.

As he watched the process, Lin Xu silently chanted in his mind, Use the Cooking Learning Card.

Suddenly, a flash of golden light swept through his mind. Learning Target: Xie Baomin. Current skill: General Technique for Dry-Frying. Learn?

Lin Xu: ?????? Oh my god! Can such good things really happen?

Learn!

Chapter 105: Foolishness is Contagious! Making Sichuan Peppercorn Oil!

"The host has expended one Superior Cooking Learning Card and obtained the Superior universal cooking technique—Dry-frying. This technique can be used to make all types of dry-fried dishes. Congratulations to the host."

Ha! Originally, I just wanted to learn one dish, but I ended up accidentally learning an entire cuisine. Now, **that's** what I call a surprise!

Lin Xu was very happy.

Because with this Dry-frying Technique, the restaurant could offer so many more dishes. Apart from dry-fried green beans, there were dry-fried fatty intestines, dry-fried meat shreds, dry-fried beef, dry-fried chicken pieces, dry-fried pork trotters, dry-fried squid, dry-fried potatoes, and various other dishes perfect for pairing with drinks or complementing a meal. Although, compared to stir-fries, dry-fried dishes do rely heavily on deep-frying. But they're delicious! Who can resist all kinds of dry, fragrant, and spicy dishes?

Xie Baomin, who was stir-frying the green beans, looked at his junior brother with curiosity.

"Why are you suddenly so excited? Did you learn it?"

Only then did Lin Xu snap back to reality and, with a smile, said, "I've pretty much figured it out. When I have time, I plan to give it a try and see how the dish turns out."

"Learning it just by watching once? Junior Brother, your talent is really something else. If I'd had your talent when I was an apprentice, I would've been spared so many beatings."

Actually, Xie Baomin's talent wasn't bad. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been taken on as an apprentice by Chief Gao, nor would he have become the executive chef of Building Two at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse in his forties. In the culinary industry, this already put him at the very top of the pyramid. He was a figure countless chefs looked up to. But his junior brother was so outrageously talented, it made Xie Baomin, who should have been a top student, look like a complete novice by comparison.

Lin Xu waved his hand. "I don't have much talent. I've just watched a lot of similar cooking videos before, and just now I watched you make it live. I just grasped the key points of dry-frying, that's all."

"What? You've even mastered the key points of dry-frying? Junior Brother, your talent is just incredible!"

Lin Xu: "..."

Why does explaining it just make things sound worse?

When the dried chili and Sichuan peppercorns in the wok had been fried until completely dry, Xie Baomin drizzled some light soy sauce along the edge of the wok. This would add a savory, soy-sauce fragrance to the green beans, making them even more delicious.

"If you have Sichuan peppercorn oil, this is also when you'd add it. The Sichuan peppercorn oil helps to bloom the savory notes of the light soy sauce. As the moisture in the light soy sauce evaporates, the fragrant and numbing flavor of the Sichuan peppercorn oil infuses into the green beans."

I get it, I get it. It's a shame the restaurant doesn't have Sichuan peppercorn oil; we'll have to skip this step for now.

Xie Baomin went straight to seasoning. He added two small spoons of salt to the wok, then one small spoon of white sugar to enhance the umami. He continued to stir-fry, allowing the sugar and salt to dissolve completely. Next, he added a large handful of roasted white sesame seeds, tossing them quickly

with a small spatula for ten seconds. This ensured the sesame seeds coated the green beans evenly and allowed the heat to release their fragrance.

He turned off the heat and dished out the green beans. The sesame-coated green beans were placed onto a tray, ready to be sold at noon.

"Junior Brother, try the flavor."

Lin Xu didn't hesitate. Using chopsticks, he picked up a bean that was emitting a rich, spicy aroma and took a taste.

The flavor was numbing, spicy, fresh, and fragrant upon entering his mouth. The slightly browned green beans were perfectly dry and aromatic, yet they had a substantial, tender texture when chewed, almost as if he were eating meat instead of beans. After he finished, a slight sweetness lingered in his mouth, leaving him wanting more.

Delicious!

The combination of the numbing-spicy flavor and the dry fragrance was perfect, making one instantly crave a cold beer to go with it.

"Thanks, Senior Brother, for giving my restaurant another great dish to serve with drinks."

Xie Baomin smiled and said, "Why be so polite between us martial brothers? It's only right that I help you."

Lin Xu took out his phone, shot a short video of the freshly made dry-fried green beans, and then posted it under the Lin Ji's Food topic. The topic was currently ranked sixteenth on the Yanjing Region food list. Although it had climbed a few spots in the past few days, there was still a huge gap to the number one spot, #YanjingFoodShare#. So, Lin Xu had been frequently posting updates in the last couple of days to increase the topic's popularity, which in turn could also boost the enthusiasm of netizens for posting.

"Boss Lin has more and more tricks up his sleeve these days! And I mean his cooking skills."

"SLURP... I want to try it."

"I want to try some too..."

"You two above, make it clear. Do you want to try Boss Lin or the dry-fried green beans?"

"What? Can you try Boss Lin too?"

"Every last one of you above, you're all under arrest! Take 'em away!"

"..."

No matter when, the goofy netizens were always online. Under this post by Lin Xu, they frantically built up the comment thread, drawing in many passersby netizens to spectate.

After Lin Xu posted his update, he also shared the short video he recorded to the group chat. The reactions here were much more normal.

Shen Jiayue: "Wow! It looks so tempting, I want to eat it!!!"

Chen Yan: "Brother-in-law, are you introducing a new dish? @Wu Kexin, you should try making it when you're free."

Wu Kexin: "@Chen Yan, please spare me, Boss Chen! My attempt at egg yolk baked pumpkin yesterday was such an epic fail, my fans were as excited as if it were the Spring Festival."

Geng Lele: "All hail the Queen of Fails!"

Yue Liyue: "All hail the Queen of Fails!"

Hair Loss Qiang: "Queen of Fails... Geng Lele, can you stop changing my group display name? I've decided, next week I'm going to shave my head bald, and then you'll all stop bringing up my hair!"

Geng Lele: "Alright, Bald Qiang!"

Yue Liyue: "Alright, Bald Qiang!"

Won't Change Group Name Until I Lose 30 Pounds: "Alright, Bald Qiang!"

Bald Qiang: "Who was that just now... Who was so quick and changed my name again?"

Unexpectedly, the group chat had also become goofy, and the meme was spreading like wildfire. Lin Xu put away his phone and continued with his work.

Once the morning rush was over, Xie Baomin said, "Now that we finally have a little break, let me make some Sichuan peppercorn oil for you."

"Is it difficult?"

"The difficulty isn't high, but the steps are a bit tedious."

As long as it wasn't difficult, it would be fine.

Xie Baomin set up a wok and poured in half a wokful of oil. He first heated the oil, then turned off the heat to let it cool a bit. While the oil was cooling, he took out a stainless steel bowl and poured in a large bowl of red Sichuan peppercorns, followed by a third of a bowl of other Sichuan peppercorns. Then he added half a bowl of boiling water to the peppercorns.

"Soaking them in boiling water helps to remove the bitterness and medicinal taste from the Sichuan peppercorns as much as possible. It also washes off any surface dust. Additionally, soaking them helps to fully release their fragrance when they're later processed with oil."

By the time he was about done with this, the oil in the wok had cooled to about 60-70% heat. Xie Baomin added the prepared scallion sections, slices of ginger, sections of celery, and cilantro roots to the wok, using the residual heat to fry them and enhance the oil's fragrance.

「Twenty minutes later.」

The red Sichuan peppercorns and the other Sichuan peppercorns had swollen from the soaking. He used a strainer to transfer them from the bowl to a basket. First, he drained the water, then placed them near a fan to blow-dry as much surface moisture as possible. Then, he poured the dried Sichuan peppercorns into a clean bowl.

By now, the oil in the wok had completely cooled down, and the scallions, ginger, celery, and cilantro had been fried until their surfaces were slightly yellow. Using a strainer, he fished out these aromatics. Afterward, he lifted the wok and poured the infused oil into the bowl holding the Sichuan peppercorns.

CRACKLE...

Even though the oil temperature was already below 30% of its peak, it still sizzled upon contact with the slightly damp Sichuan peppercorns.

Lin Xu, standing by, found this quite strange.

Pouring the oil into the bowl? What was this step? Weren't they going to fry the peppercorns later? If they weren't fried, how would the flavor of the Sichuan peppercorns be released?

Just as he was pondering, he noticed Xie Baomin bring over kitchen plastic wrap and carefully seal the bowl containing the Sichuan peppercorns and oil.

"Senior Brother, what's this for?" Lin Xu had once again encountered something beyond his knowledge.

"Steaming!"

Steaming? There was a steaming step in making Sichuan peppercorn oil too?

Chapter 106: Riding on Dundun's Luck! Good boy, daddy is going to expand your network!

"When Sichuan peppercorns are sealed in oil and then steamed, their aroma and numbing flavor can infuse into the fat..."

After explaining, Xie Baomin opened the steamer, cautiously placing the basin, sealed with cling film, inside. After positioning it properly, he closed the cabinet door and began the steaming process.

This step reminded Lin Xu of the method used for making fermented black bean sauce. The fermented black bean sauce the restaurant used every day was made by steaming fermented black beans in peanut oil for over four hours inside the steamer, allowing the bean's aroma to fully merge with the peanut oil.

Would Sichuan peppercorn oil and fermented black bean sauce share the same method?

"Not the same. Fermented black bean sauce can be used after steaming. However, Sichuan peppercorn oil must be poured into a pot and boiled again. This evaporates the water from the Sichuan peppercorns, making it less prone to spoilage. At the same time, the fragrance will become much richer."

It still needs to be boiled? The making of Sichuan peppercorn oil is indeed much more complicated than making Sichuan peppercorn powder. However, with such a complicated method, the resulting Sichuan peppercorn oil must be pretty good, right?

Lin Xu was a bit eager to try it.

Half an hour later, when Shen Jiayue came to the store to pick up boxed lunches, Xie Baomin, wearing heat-resistant gloves, took the Sichuan peppercorn oil out of the steamer. He first removed the cling film from the surface. Then he poured all the fat and Sichuan peppercorns from the basin into the wok in one go.

After half an hour of steaming, the numbing fragrance in the fat had become intense. But this still wasn't the best state for Sichuan peppercorn oil.

Xie Baomin turned on the stove, adjusted the flame to the lowest, and then stirred slowly with a spoon, allowing the oil temperature to gradually and evenly rise. This process needed to be handled with care. This was because the Sichuan peppercorns, after being soaked in boiling water and steamed for half an hour, had become completely soft. Just a bit too much force and they would crumble. And the crumbled Sichuan peppercorns could easily burn. This would cause the entire pot of Sichuan peppercorn oil to develop an unpleasant burnt taste.

As the oil temperature gradually increased, the water content in the Sichuan peppercorns was also continuously fried off, and it would even splatter occasionally. However, at this point the oil wasn't very hot, so even if it splashed onto an arm, it wouldn't burn much.

As the water in the fat was boiled off, the previously soggy peppercorn kernels were fried back to a crispy state. When stirred, it was clear the kernels had become lighter. When they collided, there was even a dry sound.

At that moment, Xie Baomin turned off the flame. Then he poured all the richly fragrant, numbing oil and Sichuan peppercorn kernels into the basin.

"Next is cooling. When the temperature completely drops, we'll remove the Sichuan peppercorn kernels and drain off some of the oil; Sichuan peppercorn oil will be ready. But don't throw away those kernels – they can still be used when braising Chicken Feet."

After the Sichuan peppercorn oil was prepared, the store unknowingly accumulated several types of flavored oils. There was Chili Oil, Seasoning Oil, chicken oil, pork lard, Soy Sauce, as well as the Scallion Oil created when frying red onions, and now including the just-made Sichuan peppercorn oil, the variety of seasoning oils was increasing.

As Lin Xu was reflecting on this, the system's prompt suddenly rang in his mind.

"Host has obtained six types of seasoning oils, completing the Hidden Task 'Making Seasoning Oils,' and is awarded one Excellent Level Basic Cooking Techniques lottery draw. Would you like to draw now?"

There's a lottery for this too? It won't draw another pig-slaughtering Skill, will it?

Lin Xu chose to draw.

When the lottery wheel in his mind started spinning, he was just about to say a prayer when he suddenly remembered Geng Lele's action of seeking good luck from Dundun the day before. That girl was supposed to get a scolding when she got home yesterday. But judging by her lively spirit in the group chat today, it didn't seem like she was punished; instead, it was as if she had been rewarded.

Could it be due to Dundun's good luck? Thinking about it, Dundun was said to bring wealth and popularity. Using Dundun in place of those vain prayers should be more effective. After all, that little guy is a Divine Artifact!

On this thought, Lin Xu went outside and picked up Dundun, who was playing hide and seek with Shen Jiayue, and held him in his arms. Dundun immediately curled up quietly in his arms. He rubbed his fluffy face against Lin Xu's neck. After the rub, he even looked at Shen Jiayue with a provocative gaze.

"What are you doing?" Shen Jiayue asked curiously, putting down the cat teaser stick.

"Taking a few sniffs of the cat."

"Absorbing the cat's luck? Are you planning to siphon off Dundun's good fortune? That won't do, you need to recite a Spell."

Shen Jiayue put down the cat teaser, picked Dundun up, and then took hold of Dundun's two front paws. She mumbled words under her breath, chanting, "Holy fire bright and clear, holy fire shining near, all my disciples, MEOW, MEOW, MEOW, MEOW!"

After she finished, she ceremoniously placed Dundun's right front paw on Lin Xu's arm.

"Last night after Lele and I created the Meow Meow Sect, I immediately agreed. She is the High Priest of the Meow Meow Sect, and I am the leader. Professor Xu and his wife along with Old Master Zhou and his wife are the four Elders. What do you plan to be?"

Professor Xu and Old Master Zhou were among the elderly folks who had been attracted to Dundun because they liked cats. Now, they pretty much treated Lin Ji's Food as their own canteen.

I often feel out of place with you all because I'm not silly enough... Lin Xu silently complained in his heart. They say children with intellectual disabilities have lots of joy, but why is it that our Shen Jiayue, a graduate from a prestigious 985 university, and the genius girl Geng Lele are the same? And there's Professor Xu and the others, still so childlike even after retirement. It seems that silliness knows no age or IQ...

Lin Xu massaged Dundun's big head and silently pressed the lottery button in his mind.

The roulette wheel slowly came to a stop. The system's notification sound rang in his mind.

"Congratulations to the host for acquiring an Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique—Filling."

Filling? What kind of Technique is that?

Just as Lin Xu was curious, a flood of knowledge poured into his mind. After going through it, he discovered that this Technique had a very wide range of uses. It could be used not only for making dumplings and buns but also for wrapping sweet rice balls, Fish Balls, and Snacks. In fact, it covered any culinary Technique that involved wrapping a filling.

Holy shit!

I've hit the jackpot! Why didn't I think of rubbing Dundun for luck when I was drawing the lottery yesterday? From now on, I won't pray to those random gods and spirits during the lottery; I'll just rely on Dundun's luck. That's what you'd call getting the most out of something, putting the cat to good use, right?

Soon, the lunch service at the restaurant started. Today, the fish Lin Xu steamed was wrapped in the pork net fat that his master mentioned the day before. He placed the pork net fat in water, blanched it with Scallion and Ginger and Cooking Wine to remove the gamey smell and impurities, then wrapped the fish and put it into the steaming cabinet.

After steaming, the pork net fat disappeared. But the fragrance on the fish had become even more intense.

"Wow! It tastes even better than yesterday's fish." Shen Jiayue took a taste and immediately fell in love with the flavor. It was more fragrant than yesterday's, and the Fish Skin seemed to have stayed more intact, not as burst and frayed.

My Xu Bao's cooking is getting better and better!

Many customers who came late yesterday didn't get to eat fish. They specifically requested Lin Xu to prepare more today to satisfy their cravings. So, Lin Xu prepared fifty fish, which was the limit of the aquarium.

After lunch ended, Lin Xu curiously checked his phone. Yue Liyue would usually have come by now, why is there no sign of him today?

「At the same time.」

Zhong Huairen, carrying various gifts from Yangcheng and accompanied by his son Yue Liyue, arrived at a small community at the end of Yingchun Street.

"Good boy, I'll take you to meet my teacher in a while. You need to be polite, okay? While I can't help much with your career, I can help you build some connections in Beijing."

"I got it, I got it!"

The father and son entered the building and knocked on the door of an apartment.

Soon, the door opened. Professor Xu's figure appeared at the door.

"Professor Xu, I've come to see you."

"Oh, Huairen is still such a fine figure of a man."

After greeting Zhong Huairen, Professor Xu finally noticed Yue Liyue following behind. "Yue Liyue? How come you're here too? Have you tried the new steamed fish at the restaurant? That fish is really delicious! We almost didn't get any yesterday..."

Zhong Huairen: ???

What did I come to see Professor Xu for?

Chapter 107: Addicted to Boxed Meals! Brother-in-law, have you seen this streamer before?

"You two...know each other?"

Zhong Huairen looked at Professor Xu, who was chatting enthusiastically about gourmet food with his son, feeling an inexplicable sense of disconnect.

He remembered that during his time at Beijing University, Professor Xu was always stern and unsmiling, as prim as an old scholar. The students' biggest fear was being called on by him to answer questions.

But now, the professor, whom students had once rated as the most unapproachable, was talking and laughing animatedly with his son, a warm smile never leaving his face.

If I took a picture and posted this in the alumni group, it would absolutely blow their minds, wouldn't it?

"We're all customers at Lin Ji's Food. Sometimes we even share a table when dining, so how could we not know each other? Yue Liyue is your son, Huairen? I really had no idea! Please come in; it's hot outside. Come in and enjoy the air conditioning."

After retiring, Professor Xu had lost the authoritative aura he carried while teaching. Instead, he had become a kindly old man.

At that moment, Auntie Xue also came out of the kitchen. "The meal will be ready very soon," she said. "You all chat first. What would Yue Liyue like to drink? We have all sorts of beverages in the fridge; feel free to take whatever you want, don't be shy."

He had originally intended to introduce his professor to his son. Who knew they were already much more familiar with each other.

They had become friends despite their age difference.

Amidst his reflections, Zhong Huairen felt an even greater fondness for Lin Ji's Food.

It's all thanks to this restaurant. Otherwise, my son would probably still be pulling all-nighters as a game power-leveler. While that earns money, it comes at the cost of his health. It's not like now, where he live-streams, plays games, and occasionally takes on coaching gigs. He's living a more carefree life than his old man. I'm so grateful to Boss Lin. If he ever decides to open a branch in Yangcheng, I'll definitely go and support him, no matter what!

Before long, lunch at Professor Xu's home began.

Due to the hot weather and Auntie Xue's less-than-stellar cooking skills, most of the dishes were takeout from Lin Ji's Food.

Professor Xu took a piece of black bean pork ribs and put it in his mouth, chewing while saying, "I didn't used to like this dish much; I always found it a bit gamey. But Boss Lin's version is so fresh and tender, it hardly tastes like pork. I wonder how he does it."

Yue Liyue said, "Boss Lin said the pork ribs must be chopped into small pieces and then soaked under running water for four hours, until they turn from red to completely white. That's the way to do it."

Everyone enjoyed the meal, discussed the delights of Lin Ji's Food, and agreed to eat there again that evening.

Indeed, Zhong Huairen was flying back to Yangcheng the next morning, so tonight was essentially his farewell dinner.

「In the rest room next to the training venue of the Audit Bureau.」

Tan Yajun said emotionally while savoring a delicious boxed meal, "I've eaten so many delicacies from all over, but who would've thought I'd be so captivated by a simple boxed meal? Yuan Fei, when the training's over, ask around in the office. If no one objects, let's just order our lunch from Lin Ji's Food from now on. It'll save everyone the daily hassle of deciding what to eat."

Yuan Fei's eyes brightened.

If that's the case, wouldn't we get to eat such delicious food every day?

He hastened to agree, "Sure thing, Director Tan, I'll make sure to get this sorted out as quickly as possible."

In the past, lunchtime always presented a dilemma: go downstairs to eat or order delivery? And if they went downstairs, which restaurant and what dishes to choose? Now, things were much simpler.

Thanks to Director Tan's arrangement, not only were they spared these dilemmas, but they could also experience the joy Shen Jiayue felt having lunch delivered daily.

It was a double delight!

「In the restaurant.」

The lunchtime rush was still booming.

The newly introduced dry-fried green beans had become a favorite among the customers.

"These green beans are great, spicy and numbing!"

"I wasn't planning to come for lunch, but I couldn't resist after seeing Boss Lin's post. I didn't expect it to be so worth it; these green beans taste amazing."

"They're a perfect match for an ice-cold beer!"

"Boss Lin's cooking skills are truly impeccable!"

"What? Master Xie made this? No wonder it's so delicious! I have to get a takeout order before I leave."

"Me too! Getting to taste the skills of Fishing Platform's head chef for just over twenty yuan is an incredible deal!"

Although Fishing Platform had begun serving the public quite a while ago, its restaurants in various buildings even catered for weddings and other events. However, the per-person cost of over two thousand yuan still deterred many. For many, spending two thousand yuan on a single meal wasn't necessary, especially since that was the per-person cost. A meal for a family of four or five would mean ten thousand yuan gone, just like that.

But now you could taste the skills of Fishing Platform's head chef for just over twenty yuan. No one would resist such a temptation.

So, before noon, the large tray of dry-fried green beans made by Xie Baomin was completely bought out by customers. He had no choice but to prepare another large tray.

This time, when preparing it, he added some Sichuan peppercorn oil, making the numbing flavor more pronounced and the dish even more delicious.

As the two apprentice brothers were busy in the back kitchen, Old Gao walked in from outside.

Seeing his master again, Lin Xu felt as if he were seeing the Turtle Hermit from *Dragon Ball*. He had thought the man to be a highly respected elder, but in private, he turned out to be a flirtatious old sea king. The disparity was quite significant.

"Are we serving dry-fried green beans now? Not bad, not bad. This dish suits the restaurant... But since we're serving dry-fried green beans, we might as well add dry-fried chicken cubes, dry-fried cauliflower, and other similar dishes too. The preparation is more or less the same. With a talent like Little Xu's, he should be able to make them easily."

Lin Xu: "..."

Thankfully, I acquired the Dry-frying Technique. If I had only learned to make dry-fried green beans, my image as a talented individual would have shattered instantly, wouldn't it? That's why one shouldn't try to build up a certain persona. Otherwise, it's bound to collapse sooner or later.

He continued working as he spoke, "It's been a bit busy these past two days. I was planning to add them in another couple of days."

Old Gao nodded approvingly. "That's right, there's no need to rush with the new dishes. Take it slow, so that customers remain curious and regulars keep coming back... Give me a serving of Tomato Egg Rice. I still have to go to the community center to help out after I eat."

Lin Xu agreed and scooped the rice.

Worried that his master wouldn't be full, he generously added more rice and ladled a big spoonful of Tomato Egg topping over it. After serving it, he got back to his busy work.

Old Gao sat at an empty seat near the kitchen entrance, leisurely eating while playing on his phone. Once finished, he pushed his bowl aside and strolled out of the restaurant.

「Half an hour later.」

Chen Yan, dressed in a white business suit, suddenly rushed into the shop with a look of urgency.

Lin Xu was curious. His sister-in-law usually came before mealtimes to freeload off the staff meals. Why was she here at this hour today?

"Brother-in-law, did a streamer come by to eat just now?"

Streamer? None that I saw!

Lin Xu replied, "If they're just here to eat, how would I know if someone's a streamer?"

After saying that, he poured a cup of Sour Plum Soup and handed it over.

Chen Yan accepted it and took a sip. "Our company has been following a new streamer these past two days. His popularity is growing fast, but he's never shown his face. He just posted a status update showing him eating here at the restaurant and praising your cooking skills, so I rushed over in my car..."

Saying that, Chen Yan took out her phone and opened the streaming platform.

"He's called Gao Xiaoshuai, probably not very old. Look, this is the status update he posted; it's a bowl of Tomato Egg Rice."

Lin Xu took it and looked.

This... isn't this the bowl of rice I served Master?

Chapter 108: Another Vest Drops! The Secret to Delicious Stir-Fried Chicken Chunks!

Not far from Yingchun Street was the entrance to a leisure park.

Old Gao took out a portable selfie stick from his bag, fixed his phone on it, then put on his Bluetooth headset and opened the live streaming app on his phone.

He didn't choose the commonly used front camera for streaming.

Instead, he activated the rear camera and aimed it at the main gate of the leisure park.

Then he activated the voice changer feature.

The live stream started!

"Good afternoon, middle-aged and elderly friends! I am the host Gao Xiaoshuai, continuing today's live stream of the matchmaking corner at the leisure park. If you're interested, show some love with a little gift!"

The number of followers in the live stream room wasn't large, just a few hundred.

But the activity level was pretty good.

As soon as Old Gao spoke, various gift effects started flying all over the screen.

The chat also heated up.

"Xiaoshuai is online!"

"Finally, a host who pays attention to the emotional issues of the elderly! Sending a rocket to show my support."

"Is that Ms. Yang from this morning still coming to the matchmaking corner?"

"Yes, yes, I want to ask the same. I just retired this year like Ms. Yang, with social security and medical insurance. Can you help me connect with someone, host?"

"I want to learn Tai Chi Boxing from Brother Sun who does Tai Chi. Can you pass the message for me?"

"Brother Sun really looks cool doing Tai Chi. I also want to learn, but I have to look after my grandson, so I can't find the time."

"..."

Watching the various comments on his phone, Old Gao said, "Folks, I'm just showing you the situation at the matchmaking corner of the leisure park. If you want to date, please come to the spot. After all, public transport is free for those over sixty now."

A few days ago, when Old Gao came for a walk, he noticed some single middle-aged and elderly people, who were supposed to be matchmaking for their children, were secretly matchmaking for themselves.

So he came up with the idea of live streaming.

He wanted to encourage those elderly folks and to get more single elderly people who longed to form families to join in.

After two days of live streaming, the number of middle-aged and elderly people coming for matchmaking had increased.

The corner originally meant for parents to find partners for their children had now become a place for the elderly to chat and get to know each other.

But Old Gao also had a new problem.

A few female fans kept pestering him in the live stream:

"If I go to the leisure park, can I see you, Xiaoshuai?"

"How about we date, Xiaoshuai? I have a retirement salary of 17,000, and I own a small courtyard house inside the Fourth Ring."

"You're so humorous and fun, it must be interesting to be with you. Can I invite you out for a meal?"

"Xiaoshuai, do you dare to show your face? If you show your face, I'll send you that Carnival!"

"..."

「In the shop.」

Lin Xu looked at the photo posted by the host Gao Xiaoshuai, confirming it was indeed his master.

Because the bowl of rice was served by him, it was quite abundant, and the tomato and egg dish was also filled generously.

This must be his fourth alias, right?

He never expected his master to have another alias as Gao Xiaoshuai apart from being the eighteen-year-old white-haired young lad; his mindset seemed even younger than his own.

He said to Chen Yan, "I know this person. I'll ask him if he's interested in signing a contract when I get a chance. If he does sign, he will surely sign with your company, so don't worry."

Lin Xu didn't plan to reveal Gao Xiaoshuai's real identity.

After all, it was his master.

It's better to maintain his persona for as long as possible.

As for signing a contract, if his master wanted to sign, he would definitely choose Chen Yan's company. Since he hasn't reached out yet, it implies that this alias was just for fun and might be deactivated in a few days.

Well, for someone with such a playful character, making money and all that is secondary.

Having fun and enjoying himself is what matters.

When his master feels like live streaming isn't fun anymore, he probably won't continue.

Indeed, the following morning when Chen Yan came to the shop to grab a meal, she brought some unsettling news, saying, "That Gao Xiaoshuai who was live streaming for middle-aged matchmaking has announced a temporary halt to broadcasting. Apparently, several female fans kept pestering him, which annoyed him, and then he just stopped broadcasting, even ignoring those who sent Carnival rewards."

Heh!

I actually guessed right.

Master was only live streaming as a hobby after all.

But to not even respond to those rewarding him with Carnivals, that's a bit...

That's money, after all!

Just as he was feeling sentimental, Lin Xu glanced at Old Gao.

Unexpectedly, the old man's face remained calm, as if the Gao Xiaoshuai everyone was talking about had nothing to do with him.

This acting skill...

It's a pity he's not an actor.

"Brother-in-law," Chen Yan said, "didn't you say you know Gao Xiaoshuai? Could you talk to him and ask him to start live streaming again? With such high-quality fans, it's a pity not to strike while the iron is hot."

Lin Xu: "..."

I'm not! I didn't! Stop making things up!

I'm usually pretty nice to you too, sister-in-law. Why would you sell me out just like that?

Old Gao glanced at his disciple and then picked up a piece of dry-fried chicken to taste, timely changing the subject. "These chicken chunks are well made. You must marinate the chicken thoroughly before frying it; otherwise, the seasoning stays on the outside, and the chicken won't taste as good. Also, add more Sichuan peppercorn oil. The numbing and spicy flavor should stand out to make it more delicious."

To provide an extra dish for the employees, Lin Xu had specially bought a rooster that day and prepared dry-fried chicken chunks for everyone.

Old Gao's timely interjection diverted the topic to the chicken chunks.

Shen Jiayue found these dry-fried chicken chunks extremely delicious. The surface of the numbing and spicy chicken was slightly crispy, while the inside remained tender and juicy, making it very satisfying to eat.

Even the dried chilies tasted fragrant and crispy.

She didn't expect that such a perfect dish could still have flaws in Old Gao's eyes.

Was a State Banquet master's palate really that critical?

While she was eating, she received a message from Yuan Fei: "Today is the last day of the training, and Director Tan has asked us to add one or two more dishes tonight, urging the trainees to eat well. Also, prepare an extra table for the evening meal, as Director Tan is planning to host guests."

Oh?

Adding dishes? And an extra table?

Doesn't that mean Lin Xu will earn more money?

Shen Jiayue immediately replied, "Got it! I'll arrange it right away!"

Adding dishes is easy. Just add the dry-fried chicken chunks and the newly introduced dry-fried green beans from yesterday. With these two dishes, the trainees will surely be very satisfied.

She told Lin Xu about it.

Lin Xu said, "After I finish up at noon, I'll go to the market to buy some freshly slaughtered roosters and green beans. It's good we were notified now; if it were the afternoon, we'd really struggle to manage."

「After noon.」

As soon as Lin Xu finished his tasks, he rode a shared bicycle to the market.

He bought a dozen freshly slaughtered roosters and picked up some green beans at Uncle Shen's stall, then returned to the shop to start working.

He chopped the chicken meat into smaller pieces.

This makes it easier to marinate and fry; if the pieces are too large, it's difficult to marinate and fry them thoroughly.

The chopped chicken was placed in clean water. This dish couldn't be blanched, so impurities and blood had to be removed by soaking.

After soaking, the chicken retained more moisture, making it taste even better.

Some restaurants' dry-fried chicken chunks have a gamey taste because they aren't soaked long enough.

Additionally, when the chicken meat isn't fresh, a bit of baking soda must be added while soaking to tenderize the meat, resulting in a more tender texture in the cooked chicken chunks.

Half an hour later, the chicken chunks were scooped out, washed again, and the water squeezed out before marinating began.

Into the bowl went salt, pepper, Cooking Wine, Light Soy Sauce, Scallion and Ginger, and other ingredients. He stirred them evenly before adding some dry starch to ensure the chicken chunks were evenly coated.

Finally, he drizzled a bit of cooked oil over them. This would allow the chicken pieces to separate quickly during frying and prevent them from sticking together.

While he was busy with these, Shen Guofu, who was in his office processing documents, received a message from his friend Tan Yajun: "Old Shen, today marks the official end of the training session at the Audit Bureau. How about we have a drink together tonight?"

Chapter 109: Your Reverse Bargaining Makes Me Anxious! Earn 100,000 a Day Lottery!

"Have a drink?"

Shen Guofu looked at the message from Tan Yajun and frowned slightly.

Drinking isn't a problem, but I've already promised my wife we'd have dinner at Lin Ji tonight. My daughter isn't working overtime tomorrow, so I have to go home early to trick her into eating coarse grains. Today, I can finally enjoy dining at Lin Ji again. How could I miss that? Besides, it seems my wife also bought a scratching post for Dundun and a small mat for it to sleep on at the cashier's desk. I want to see if the little guy likes them.

Thinking this, he declined his old friend's drinking invitation, "I've got some things on my end tonight. Let's wait a couple of days. I'll make the arrangements then, and Old Tan, just don't give me a hard time when the time comes."

Alright, in a few days, after my little rascal has had her fill of coarse grains, I'll bring her along, invite Old Tan and his wife, and we'll all have a meal together at Lin Ji. At the same time, I want my daughter to learn a thing or two from Brother Lin. Stop scamming your own parents all the time! Go earn money from outsiders if you're so capable!

「In the rest room of the Audit Bureau.」

Seeing the message from his old friend, Tan Yajun was somewhat surprised. Old Shen has never refused a drink before. I was ready to have a few drinks with his son-in-law's cooking today, but he can't make it and even took the initiative to reschedule. What does this mean? Is he planning an engagement? No, that can't be right. It shouldn't be so soon.

Tan Yajun thought for a while. It's probably because their parents are going to meet, so Old Shen isn't in the mood to drink. Once they've met, Old Shen will likely find time to host a dinner and announce that his daughter is seeing someone. He might even bring Boss Lin along for everyone to meet. Well, any parent with a daughter would want a son-in-law who can cook and earn money. He's basically the template for a perfect son-in-law! Since that's the case, I might as well wait to drink at Old Shen's happy occasion. But if his son-in-law isn't cooking then, I won't approve!

「In the restaurant.」

Lin Xu brought the chicken, which had been marinating for over half an hour, to the workstation next to the stove, preparing to deep-fry the pieces. He set up a wok, poured oil into it, and turned up the heat. While waiting for the oil to heat up, he carefully picked out the Scallion and Ginger used in the

marinade. These could easily burn if added to the oil, making the entire pot of oil taste burnt, so they need to be removed beforehand.

When the oil was about sixty percent hot, he scooped up the marinated chicken pieces with a large spoon and dropped them into the wok, one spoonful at a time. Then, he stirred with the spoon in the same direction to separate the chicken pieces in the oil. The oil needed to be hot when the chicken pieces were first added; this way, their surfaces would fry dry instantly, locking in the moisture. Once the surfaces had turned slightly golden, he turned down the heat, allowing the oil temperature to drop slightly. He used an immersion frying method to cook the chicken slowly. This method had the advantage of producing juicier chicken with a more tender taste.

After the chicken was fried, he lifted it out and began to fry the next batch. Once all the chicken had been fried, he increased the oil temperature to seventy percent hot. He poured the chicken pieces back into the wok in batches for a second frying. Second frying helps remove excess fat while making the chicken's surface crispier and tastier.

After removing the chicken pieces again, Lin Xu pinched one to taste. Hmm, the skin is crispy, and the chicken inside is flavorful and delicious. Especially the parts with skin, fried to a crispy and fragrant perfection. If I just sprinkled some spicy seasoning on this, it would become dry-fried chicken pieces. Unfortunately, I'm too busy to bother with that now. Otherwise, I'd definitely plate it and try to snag some rewards from the system.

After frying the chicken, Lin Xu also fried some green beans. He then soaked some dried chili segments and started making dry-fried chicken and dry-fried green beans.

While he was busy, one of the four temporary workers, a man named Ma Zhiqiang, came over and quietly said to Lin Xu, "Boss, I don't need the pay for these few days..."

Hmm? What does he mean by that? Lin Xu thought.

"I want to stay in our restaurant," Ma Zhiqiang continued. "I like the atmosphere here; it feels better than any other place I've worked before."

He wants to stay? Ma Zhiqiang was the youngest of the four temporary workers, around thirty years old. He was very diligent and would sometimes even wipe down the workbench and stove after finishing his tasks. He was a person who couldn't sit still. What boss wouldn't like such an employee?

Lin Xu said, "The restaurant really does need another person. If you want to join, just come to work with Che Zai and the others tomorrow. As for the wages for these few days, you should take what you've earned. It's your rightful pay... But the regular salary won't be as high as temporary work, though."

Last night, after returning home, Ma Zhiqiang had specifically invited Che Zai, Niu Chuan, and Xu Xinhua for drinks at a night market stall to express his desire to stay at the restaurant. All three had encouraged him to give it a try.

Unexpectedly, the boss agreed right away. Ma Zhiqiang said gratefully, "Temporary work isn't available every day. If one can have a stable job, who would want to live so precariously?"

Since that was the case, Lin Xu then said, "Then you can stay. Just like Niu Chuan and Master Xu, the probationary salary is eight thousand yuan. After a month, we'll sign an official contract, and we can renegotiate your salary then."

With that, Lin Xu went back to making the dry-fried chicken and dry-fried green beans.

Meanwhile, Ma Zhiqiang secretly pumped his fist. Clearly, being able to stay at the restaurant excited him greatly.

「Five o'clock in the afternoon.」

Shen Jiayue, Che Zai, and the others were about to deliver the group meals when Tan Yajun's assistant, Yuan Fei, drove the Audit Bureau's Audi and slowly stopped at the restaurant entrance.

"Boss Lin, are you busy now? I've come to settle the group meal charges for the past three days."

Settle the account so soon? Lin Xu was a bit surprised.

Not only was he surprised, Yuan Fei was as well. It's normal for such transactions to be delayed for ten days to half a month. But just after Director Tan finished today's training, he urged me to settle the accounts, and he even emphasized that it's better to overpay than to underpay.

Lin Xu calculated based on the 312 people specified in the contract. Lunch was 40 yuan per person, and dinner was 80 yuan per person, making the daily meal cost 120 yuan per person. Multiplied by 312 people, that's 37,440 yuan. The training lasted three days, so multiplied by three, the total is 112,320 yuan.

Revenue of 112,320 yuan in three days! Even after deducting the cost of ingredients, labor, utilities, and all other expenses, the profit is still very substantial. This group meal business is indeed lucrative.

As he was thinking this, Yuan Fei said, "Boss Lin, I think you calculated it wrong. Take the boxed lunches, for example. There were 335 servings on the first day, 337 on the second, and 340 today. That's a total of 1,012 servings for three days, costing 40,480 yuan. The evening meals were different as well..."

He punched numbers rapidly on a calculator and worked out the total amount for the three days of meals. "The total is 123,560 yuan, is that correct? We already paid a deposit of 40,000 yuan, so we still need to pay you 83,560 yuan."

Lin Xu was speechless. I've seen people bargain down, but this is the first time I've seen someone bargain up! Such a flurry of calculations, and the result is an extra ten thousand yuan. Is this how you guys at the Audit Bureau usually work? I'm genuinely worried about your future!

As he was muttering to himself, Yuan Fei transferred 83,560 yuan. "Don't forget to issue an invoice, Boss Lin. We still have to book this."

Lin Xu nodded. Just as he was about to agree, the system's notification suddenly echoed in his mind:

"Ding! Daily revenue has broken one hundred thousand for the first time. Completed Hidden Task: [Daily Earnings of One Hundred Thousand]. Reward: One Perfect Level meal product draw. Draw now? (Y/N)"

What? Another chance for a draw?

Lin Xu rubbed his hands, looking towards Dundun, who was sprawled over the cash register, fast asleep...

Chapter 110: Perfect Level Pickled Pork! How about some steamed sugar triangles for you?

Last time, after mooching off Dundun's luck, Lin Xu immediately drew the Filling Technique. So this time, he absolutely had to borrow his little kitty's luck again.

What else could he do? He was just notoriously unlucky, after all.

He'd been too busy to play games lately; otherwise, Lin Xu would definitely have been drawing prizes with Dundun in his arms.

Getting whatever Character Card he wanted would have been a breeze.

Yuan Fei was still waiting for a reply. Lin Xu collected his thoughts and said with a smile, "The invoice won't be a problem. I'll contact you once it's ready."

"No need, no need. Just give it to your wife later. She's in charge of this, after all. I'm just here to transfer the money."

With that, Yuan Fei bid farewell and left. Lin Xu had originally planned to pack some food for him, but Yuan Fei declined. Lin Xu saw him to the door.

After Yuan Fei drove away, Lin Xu turned around and picked up Dundun, who was still fast asleep on the cash register. He thought silently,

Draw!

Dundun seemed a bit confused. But seeing it was Lin Xu, the cat promptly snuggled into his arms. Then, Dundun looked around provocatively but, failing to locate the Yueyue Demon King, his little face suddenly drooped.

Lin Xu rubbed the little fellow's head. Once the lottery wheel in his mind was fully spinning, he pressed the draw button.

Soon, the wheel stopped. The system's prompt sounded in his mind: "Congratulations to the host for acquiring the Perfect Level steamed dish—Pickled Pork."

Wuhu! Lin Xu thought. Having Dundun's help really made a difference. I actually managed to draw such a classic steamed dish so easily! Coincidentally, the steamer has enough space. I can steam some and try selling it at the store. I can't always introduce new appetizers and cold dishes. This type of meat dish also needs to be introduced to thoroughly whet the customers' appetites.

After the drawing ended, Lin Xu placed Dundun on the cash register and turned to head to the kitchen.

Dundun: ... Cuddle me when you need me, then toss me aside when you're done. Hmph, human! What do you take this kitty for? I'm angry! The kind of angry that can't be easily appeased!

The little fellow grumpily lay down on the cash register, ready to continue his sleep. Suddenly, he smelled a fragrance. Opening his eyes, he saw Lin Xu putting steamed Chicken Thigh in the cat bowl.

"Tiantian, this Chicken Thigh has just been steamed, and it's still a bit hot. You feed it to Dundun later. I need to get back to work."

"Alright, Boss! Dundun, aren't you going to thank your dad?"

Dundun thought, No! This kitty is still going to be angry for another five minutes... Well, maybe just one minute; five minutes is too long.

「8:30 PM.」

When the store was preparing to close, Lin Xu called out to the young apprentice, "Take the Pork Grease out of the fridge and soak it in water. We'll steam buns with it in the morning."

Unknowingly, a lot of Pork Grease had accumulated, even taking up precious freezer space. It had to be used up quickly to make room for freezing other ingredients.

"Alright, Boss! Finally, we can have buns again!"

The young apprentice happily fetched a large basin of water. Then, he took the bags of Pork Grease from the freezer, one by one, and placed them in the basin to thaw. To improve the thawing, he specifically placed a colander over the Pork Grease and weighted it down with a small basin filled with water.

After the young apprentice finished this, everyone clocked out and headed home.

As soon as Lin Xu got home, Dundun immediately dashed to the cat tree to sharpen his claws. Lin Xu stuffed his clothes into the washing machine and then comfortably took a bath. After his bath, he hung up the clothes, flopped onto the bed, and picked up his phone to chat with Shen Jiayue.

"I just saw the young apprentice saying in the group chat that you're going to make buns? Can I have some too?"

A certain adorable girl in bunny pajamas was also lying in bed, visions of the Pork Grease buns they had eaten on graduation photo day floating in her mind. Oh, how I miss Auntie's cooking!

Lin Xu was amused by her obvious craving. "Sure. Don't eat breakfast tomorrow. I'll get an errand runner to deliver them to your audit office. You can try my steamed bun skills too."

Now that I have the Dough Technique, the Filling Adjustment Technique, and the Filling Technique, making buns is no challenge at all, Lin Xu thought. The reason I'm making buns tomorrow isn't to show off, but simply to free up some space in the freezer.

Seeing her message, Shen Jiayue immediately replied, "Then I'll have four buns and a bowl of soup. If you have other types of buns, give me some of those too."

Other buns? Lin Xu mused. Isn't she asking for too much? It's so busy in the morning; who has time to prepare several different kinds of fillings?

He was just about to refuse when a thought struck him: Since I can make buns, steaming a few brown sugar triangles shouldn't be a problem, right?

So he quickly typed back, "Tomorrow, I'll also steam some brown sugar triangles for you. You shouldn't always eat such greasy food so early in the morning; it's good to have some variety."

Brown! Sugar! Triangles!!!! Shen Jiayue's eyes lit up with surprise. This is my absolute favorite! I remember in elementary school, Grandma would often give me a small brown sugar triangle, repeatedly reminding me to be careful not to burn my mouth while eating. So many years have passed in a blink of an eye, and it feels like I haven't had a brown sugar triangle in ages. I can't believe I'll get to eat them tomorrow! This is such a delightful surprise! Oh, Lin Xu, you're so good to me! Can I marry you right now?

After chatting a bit more, they both went to sleep.

「Early the next day.」

After buying groceries from the market, Lin Xu first prepared some dough. Then, he brought over a wok, washed it with hot water, placed it on the stove, added a bowl of flour, and slowly toasted it over low heat.

He kept stir-frying until the flour turned slightly golden brown and emitted a fragrant aroma; the toasted flour was then ready.

When making brown sugar triangles, whether using brown sugar or white sugar, some toasted flour should be added. This makes the melted syrup thicker, preventing it from oozing everywhere when eaten. Plus, the syrup gains a tempting floury aroma, tasting much better than sugar alone.

After the toasted flour was ready, Lin Xu began to attend to other tasks in the shop: soaking the Chicken Feet, placing vegetables in the sink, charring pork skin, and also making some red onion crisps for braised pork rice.

By six o'clock, the dough had risen. Lin Xu kneaded it twice. First, he wrapped the Pork Grease buns with their prepared filling and placed them on a steaming tray to proof further, which would make the bun skins even tastier.

After wrapping the Pork Grease buns, he started on the brown sugar triangles. He mixed brown sugar and toasted flour in a 3:1 ratio in a bowl. Then, he divided the dough into small pieces. After dividing, he flattened each piece and rolled it into a wrapper.

Holding a wrapper in his hand, he used a small spoon to place a few scoops of the brown sugar filling in the center. He then pinched three points of the wrapper's edge towards the middle, folding and sealing them tightly, forming the basic shape of a brown sugar triangle. Finally, he sealed all three edges completely. A beautiful brown sugar triangle was made.

As he was wrapping them, a commotion suddenly came from the entrance, and it sounded like his master's voice was part of it.

"You're the only one live-streaming around here, and you still say you're not Gao Xiaoshuai?"

"I'm not... Don't pull me! I was just... just taking a few pictures... Let go! Quickly, let go of me!"

Lin Xu went to the door. He saw Old Gao being pulled by a woman in a leopard-print dress. She looked to be in her fifties and still had a certain charm despite her current state.

Seeing Lin Xu open the door, the woman finally let go.

"Master, who is this?" Lin Xu asked. He had never seen his master look so flustered.

The woman, however, was also in a disheveled state; the heel of one of her high heels had snapped off.

Old Gao cleared his throat twice and sheepishly put away his selfie stick. "Just... just a... a regular... leopard-print auntie..."