

Culinary 181

Chapter 181: Uncle Shen, what happened to your face? Making Boiled Chinese Broccoli!

As he was busy, Uncle Yu from the neighboring supermarket pushed the door open again and came in.

"Boss Lin, Boss Lin, did you hear? The shops next to us and upstairs were all transferred to a big boss yesterday afternoon. It seems like there's going to be some major action..."

Lin Xu smiled. The whole affair concerning the hidden instigator, which had dragged on for several days, had finally reached its grand conclusion.

He said to Uncle Yu, "That person is me... My father-in-law bought the shops a couple of days ago. He transferred them all to me yesterday and asked me to expand the scale of this shop."

Uncle Yu was utterly bewildered. So, I've been worrying for nothing these past few days?

He quickly asked, "Does your girlfriend have any siblings? My nephew and my niece are still single, you know. If she has any, and they're available, I could certainly help play matchmaker..."

Uncle, you sure change your tune fast... Lin Xu said with a smile, "My girlfriend is an only child, and so am I. We need to earn more money. Otherwise, supporting both sets of parents in their old age will be a major issue."

"Right, right, right, you definitely should earn more money."

Uncle Yu remarked with a sigh. Then, a thought struck him. "By the way, if you're expanding the shop, does that mean you'll have to close for a while before reopening?"

"Yes, once the design for the store is ready, we'll close for renovations. If the noise disturbs you then, please bear with us."

"That's a small matter. Renovations are always noisy, aren't they? Just get it done quickly. Every extra day it takes means we have to wait another day. You wouldn't believe it, but I've become addicted to your food."

After saying this, Uncle Yu turned to leave. He planned to inform the neighbors out for a walk about Lin Ji's upcoming renovation. After all, that's what the neighborhood's self-appointed intelligence chief does—always so enthusiastic.

Lin Xu called out, "Don't rush off, Uncle Yu. The meat pies in my pot are almost done. I'm not quite sure about the seasoning; could you give them a taste test for me?"

Uncle Yu was delighted. "Boss Lin, you're just being modest. You even won the gourmet championship at Fishing Platform. Making meat pies must be child's play for you... Alright then, it looks like I'm in for a treat today!"

He didn't bother notifying anyone else and just waited for the meat pies.

The two of them chatted about amusing local happenings—though, of course, it was mostly Uncle Yu doing the talking. This old man knew all the gossip on the street, and every customer visit to his supermarket was an opportunity to exchange information.

Soon, the meat pies in the pot were ready. Fried to a tempting golden brown on both sides, they exuded an enticing wheaty aroma.

After taking out all the meat pies, Lin Xu placed another batch of uncooked pies into the pan. Then, taking a plate, he placed two on it and handed it to Uncle Yu.

"Wow, these meat pies look really good! They're no worse than the famous 'Door-stud Meat Pies' sold on Qianmen Street."

Beijing has several famous food streets, such as Niujie, Guijie, Yuanbao Street, and Qianmen Street. Thanks to Lin Ji's Food, Yingchun Street was also being mentioned more and more frequently by seasoned food connoisseurs.

"Ever since you opened your shop, foot traffic on Yingchun Street has increased considerably. Even the business at my supermarket has gotten a bit better than before. Once your new shop opens, our Yingchun Street might even become a dedicated food street."

Lin Xu said with a smile, "If Yingchun Street becomes a food street, business will probably be even better."

No sooner had he spoken than the system's notification echoed in his mind:

"The host wishes for Yingchun Street to become a food street, triggering the side mission [Investing in Opening a Shop]: Please invest in a snack shop on Yingchun Street within one month. Upon completion, reward: one Double Points Card for 72 hours, and one Basic Cooking Techniques Upgrade Card."

Open a snack shop? I haven't even figured out my current restaurant yet, for crying out loud! Does the system really think so highly of me, expecting me to single-handedly develop a whole street's worth of gourmet food?

Just as he was grumbling to himself, his father-in-law's family walked in.

Lin Xu remembered his father-in-law being full of vigor when he left last night. He hadn't expected that today, Shen Guofu would look like an eggplant nipped by frost, so dejected he could barely lift his head.

What's this? Only when Shen Guofu raised his head did Lin Xu see that there was actually a scratch on his face.

"Uncle Shen, what happened to your face?"

Shen Guofu said listlessly, "Don't even mention it. A stray cat got into the house last night. Just as I was about to chase it out, it scratched me..."

No sooner had he finished speaking than Lin Xu saw his mother-in-law glare fiercely at his father-in-law.

TSK... Looks like his mother-in-law really put him through the wringer last night.

He quickly offered the freshly made beef-filled pies, saying, "Come on, come on, have some of these beef-filled pies to recover. They're freshly made and still warm."

Just as Shen Guofu reached out to take one, Han Shuzhen said, "Your Uncle Shen doesn't want meat pies; he just wants something vegetarian. Xiao Xu, do you have any steamed buns in your fridge? If so, warm up a couple for your Uncle Shen and prepare a dish of leafy greens. That's what he likes."

Shen Guofu nodded, his face a picture of 'joy.' "Yes, I like that. I like it so much, I could cry just thinking about it."

Lin Xu gave him a sympathetic glance.

Sigh... He just had to take home all those vegetarian dishes last night. Now it's his turn to eat them, serves him right!

He took two steamed buns left over from a couple of days ago out of the refrigerator and put them in the steamer. Just as he was getting busy, Shen Jiayue ran over and whispered, "Last night, Mom really put Dad through it. She forced him to play on the dancing machine, making him follow the rhythm. If he missed a single step, he had to start all over again. Dad got so exhausted he was just rolling his eyes."

Chapter 182: Uncle Shen, What Happened to Your Face? Making Boiled Chinese Broccoli!

Lin Xu: ?????? My mother-in-law's punishment methods are quite unique. But then again, I can't play the dance machine either.

He quickly said, "I think couples need to communicate more; physical punishment is wrong. Don't learn that from your mom, okay? It's very detrimental to nurturing marital harmony."

Yeah, it's fine to be entertained by others' troubles, but it's not so funny when it's your own.

"What greens are you planning to cook for my dad?"

Lin Xu looked at his father-in-law's listless appearance, then at the fresh vegetables bought that day, and said, "I'll make Boiled Chinese Broccoli..."

This was the first Perfect Level vegetable technique he had acquired. He hoped it would give his father-in-law a good appetite.

After speaking, he took a bunch of Chinese broccoli, removed the older leaves at the bottom, washed it twice in clean water, and then trimmed off the tough root ends.

Next, he boiled a pot of water.

He started making this Cantonese dish that Lingnan people love to eat.

Once the water in the pot boiled, he drizzled in a little peanut oil and a small spoonful of salt.

Adding oil to the water would make the blanched vegetables more vibrant. And adding salt would give the Chinese broccoli a subtle base flavor.

After adding the oil and salt, he stirred the pot with a spoon, allowing the salt to dissolve and the oil to disperse.

Then Lin Xu aligned the washed Chinese broccoli at the base, grasped the leafy tops with his hand, and placed the root ends vertically into the boiling pot.

The stems of the Chinese broccoli were thick and not easy to cook through, whereas the leaves were very tender, so he had to use the "blanch the roots first, then the leaves" method.

When the root ends had been blanched in the water for about thirty seconds, he laid the Chinese broccoli down in the pot.

He also used a spoon to gently separate any clumped Chinese broccoli, ensuring even heating.

Blanch for about twenty seconds more.

He used a large slotted spoon to remove the Chinese broccoli from the pot.

He rinsed them with cold water to lower their temperature and prevent the residual heat from overcooking them.

Then he drained the water and arranged the Chinese broccoli stalks vertically on a rectangular plate before starting to make the sauce.

Whether the Chinese broccoli tasted good depended critically on the sauce.

A delicious sauce could enhance the freshness of the Chinese broccoli.

A bad sauce, on the other hand, would make it bland and tasteless.

Lin Xu added some seafood sauce to a bowl, then poured in a spoonful of oyster sauce, half a spoonful of white sugar, and a little cornstarch. He mixed in some of the hot water used to blanch the Chinese broccoli until everything was well combined.

Next, he set up a wok.

He poured a little lard into the wok.

Normally, peanut oil or other vegetable oils would be used, but considering that his father-in-law would probably prefer lard, Lin Xu made the substitution.

Once the oil was hot, he added minced garlic and sautéed it until fragrant.

Then he poured the prepared sauce into the wok.

SIZZLE!

The aroma of the sauce was instantly released by the hot oil.

He turned off the heat.

He carefully spooned the sauce from the wok over the Chinese broccoli. The father-in-law's special edition Boiled Chinese Broccoli was ready.

Actually, if he wanted to save trouble, he could have just used the Steamed Sea Bass method: pour Steamed Fish Sauce over the blanched Chinese broccoli, top with shredded Scallion and Ginger, and then scald it with hot oil.

However, Chinese broccoli made this way wouldn't be as fragrant as when using sautéed garlic.

After serving the Chinese broccoli, Shen Guofu, who had been looking quite grim, suddenly widened his eyes.

This aroma... It's the fragrance of lard!

Just as he was about to start eating, Shen Jiayue, who was gnawing on a meat pie, suddenly said, "Wow! That smells so good! Mom, letting Dad eat such delicious food—are you punishing him or rewarding him?"

Shen Guofu: "..."

Daughter, even when I'm in this state, you still don't forget to fan the flames, huh?

Chapter 183: Delicious Chicken Soup Noodles! Xiaodou, congratulations on being fired!

When Lin Xu was cooking the Chinese broccoli, Uncle Yu had already taken his meat pies home to eat.

His family was enjoying their meal together, and as an outsider, Uncle Yu felt it would be a bit awkward to stay. Besides, Lin Ji's upcoming closure for renovations was indeed a big deal and needed to be publicized quickly.

Indeed, even street gossip had its own sense of urgency.

The value of firsthand information was worlds apart from secondhand news, so it was crucial to start spreading the word before everyone else found out.

「In the restaurant.」

Shen Guofu glared at his daughter, then picked up a freshly steamed bun to eat with his Boiled Chinese Broccoli.

The moment it entered his mouth, he could taste the unique fragrance and texture of lard.

The addition of lard made the sauce slightly rich, but paired with the tender, fresh Chinese broccoli that had a hint of sweetness, the combination was simply divine.

And then there was that wonderful garlicky aroma.

Mmm, delicious! My son-in-law truly understands me; he knows exactly what I'm craving right now. It's a pity it's morning. If it were lunchtime, stuffing a couple of slices of Pickled Pork into the steamed bun would have made it absolutely perfect.

He ate while glancing towards the kitchen.

My son-in-law said he's making chicken broth noodle soup for everyone. I wonder how it'll taste. Eating the steamed bun with the Boiled Chinese Broccoli... well, it is a tiny bit dry and hard to swallow.

Next to him, Han Shuzhen and Shen Jiayue were enjoying the freshly cooked beef pancakes.

These pancakes were made to perfection.

The outer crust was golden, fragrant, and delightfully crisp.

Each bite produced a satisfying CRUNCH; they were so flaky they practically melted in the mouth, crumbling exquisitely.

The filling inside was even more spectacular.

The beef itself, not too finely minced, was succulent and tender to the chew, carrying a rich aroma of green onions. It was still slightly juicy, but not overly so, because the excess juices had been absorbed by the glass noodles.

These savory juices infused the glass noodles, making them richly flavored and satiny smooth—a perfect complement to the beef filling.

"Wow! Delicious, delicious!"

After finishing one, Shen Jiayue immediately reached for another.

Seeing Lin Xu rolling out dough, Han Shuzhen went to the kitchen, intending to check on the beef pancakes in the pan and make sure they didn't burn.

Just then, Shen Jiayue secretly took a beef pancake and furtively passed it to Shen Guofu, mouthing to him, "Use the bun to hide it! Don't let Mom see!"

Shen Guofu was overjoyed.

I'd never have guessed that my daughter, who had just been fanning the flames, was actually a deep-cover comrade on my side. I really misunderstood her just now.

He took a bite of the beef pancake.

Phew... Eating meat feels so good! I have to say, my son-in-law's skills are truly amazing. These pancakes are perfectly crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, with a delicate skin and a generous amount of filling. Every bite is packed with meat. No wonder his daughter and wife love them so much.

A couple of bites of beef pancake, then a mouthful of Boiled Chinese Broccoli.

Mmm, the tender, crunchy Boiled Chinese Broccoli, with its hint of garlic, perfectly offset the richness of the beef. They're a spectacular pair.

The beef pancakes weren't very big.

Shen Guofu quickly finished one.

Just as he was about to ask his daughter for another, he saw his wife approaching from the kitchen, holding a small basket brimming with freshly cooked beef pancakes.

His son-in-law also seemed to have finished rolling the dough and was about to start cooking the noodles.

Sigh! My chance is gone!

「In the kitchen.」

Lin Xu washed the pot and placed it on the stove.

He added three large bowls of the chicken broth he had prepared yesterday, followed by another three large bowls of fresh water.

When making chicken broth noodle soup, you couldn't use pure chicken broth, or the resulting soup would be too greasy. It was necessary to dilute the broth with an equal volume of fresh water to balance the richness and perfect the flavor.

After pouring in the chicken broth and water, he turned on the heat to bring it to a boil.

Once the water boiled, he grabbed a handful of freshly washed green vegetables, tossed them in to blanch briefly, and only then did he add the thinly rolled dough, cut into large pieces, into the pot.

The dough pieces were so thin they were almost translucent and cooked through with just a brief scalding. That was why it was essential to add the green vegetables first, then the dough pieces, to prevent the latter from becoming overcooked and mushy.

When the water in the pot came to a boil again, Lin Xu began to season it.

A small spoonful of salt, another of pepper powder, half a ladleful of Light Soy Sauce, a touch of Dark Soy Sauce, and finally, a drizzle of chicken oil into the pot.

With a gentle stir of the spoon, a savory fragrance immediately wafted upwards.

Lin Xu turned off the heat, fetched a few empty bowls, and began ladling the chicken broth noodle soup into them. Once filled, he carried them to the dining table, then returned to the kitchen to prepare two small cold side dishes.

Then, he sat down next to Shen Jiayue and began to eat breakfast.

"Mmm, this aroma is so wonderfully fresh and savory," Shen Guofu commented, sniffing his bowl of chicken broth noodle soup, his eyes instantly closing in bliss.

Such a rich, fragrant soup paired with beef pancakes would be absolutely divine, wouldn't it? Too bad his wife wouldn't let him eat it. Sigh! It was all his daughter's fault for posting that photo, condemning him to gnaw on steamed buns now.

Seeing her husband's longing expression, Han Shuzhen's heart softened. She said, "Go on, eat if you want to. Didn't you already sneak one earlier?"

Shen Guofu's old face flushed, and he promptly said, "I was just trying a tiny bite... Yueyue gave it to me, you know. I wasn't planning on eating it at all."

My dear daughter, now you get a taste of betrayal too.

Nearby, Shen Jiayue, who had been lowering her head and savoring her chicken broth noodle soup, looked up: ??????

I go out of my way to sneak you a pancake, and this is how you repay me? By selling me out immediately!

Han Shuzhen glanced at her daughter, then said, "Just don't eat too many, alright? Making you dance on the dance machine last night wasn't really about punishing you. You had all that alcohol and Braised Pork Belly; if you didn't jump around and burn some of it off, it would all turn straight into fat..."

So that was it... Shen Guofu felt a warmth spread through his heart. My wife was actually looking out for me! I'm so touched!

Chapter 184: Delicious Chicken Soup Noodles! Xiaodou, Congratulations on Being Fired!

After Han Shuzhen finished speaking, she looked at Shen Guofu and asked,

"Do you now understand my good intentions?"

"I do, honey, you've been so good to me..." Shen Guofu said, holding a beef patty and nodding repeatedly as he nibbled on it.

However, just when he was touched, he heard his wife add,

"In that case, are we still going dancing tonight?"

Shen Guofu: "..."

Honey, have you secretly been attending cram school lately? You're full of tricks! If I say I don't want to dance, will you make me eat plain buns instead?

Sitting opposite him, Shen Jiayue smiled proudly. Haha, tonight she could enjoy her dad's hilariously clumsy dance moves again!

She gleefully scooped a small spoonful of soup from her bowl, blew on it, and then brought it to her mouth.

Wow! Delicious and savory, perfectly seasoned. Lin Xu's knack for seasoning is absolutely incredible.

One sip of soup followed by a bite of the crisp-skinned beef patty. The delicious chicken broth and the rich beef patty created a perfect match!

"This soup is really delicious, and the noodles in it are so smooth and tender, it tastes great!"

Lin Xu didn't actually know how to make chicken broth with noodles, but having frequently eaten the ones made by his mother Chen Meijuan, combined with his foundation in hand-rolled noodles, he hadn't messed up today. It was a pity that he hadn't yet exchanged for the Eye of Discrimination and didn't know at what level his cooking was. He planned to exchange for it later and always pay attention to the level of the dishes he made, so if he ever became complacent and the quality dropped, he could rectify it promptly. He felt this Skill was very suitable for head chefs. Simply glance at the dish prepared by a subordinate chef to know its Level and whether they had put their heart into it. No need to even taste it; it couldn't be more awesome. Too bad the points needed to exchange for this Skill were too high. It would be difficult to obtain it in a short time. Alas! You only realize you don't have enough when you need it! This made him start to pay attention to the task of opening a snack shop. That task rewarded a Double Points Card valid for 72 hours. After activation, you could gain double points for

three days. Based on the current rate of 50,000 points a day, with the Double Points Card, it would be 100,000 a day, making it 300,000 in three days. This reward was quite tempting for Lin Xu, who was desperately in need of points. And now that he had a company, there was no operational issue in investing in opening a snack shop. But who should he get to manage it? And what kind of snacks would be good to offer? This was indeed a troublesome question.

While he was mulling over it, he picked up a stalk of Boiled Chinese Broccoli with his chopsticks and tasted it.

Although pork lard was used to add richness, the overall taste was still quite fresh and tender. If it was introduced today, it would likely set off a craze for Boiled Chinese Broccoli in the shop. He planned to post an update under the Lin Ji's Food topic after he was done with work to advertise and also increase the topic's popularity.

Due to the live broadcast of the cooking competition yesterday, the Lin Ji's Food topic had soared to second place in the Yanjing Region's food category ranking, but it had since slipped to fifth place. The topic rankings were fiercely competitive, and climbing to number one was not so easy.

As Lin Xu was contemplating this, the scene under the Lin Ji's Food topic was entirely different.

Uncle Shen from Spring Breeze Food Market: The news about the store closing for renovations is true. Boss Lin specifically told me when he was buying groceries today, but the new store's renovations should be quick, so everyone will be able to eat there again soon.

I'm the Lady Boss's Hardcore Fan: Then what are we going to eat during the renovation?

Meow Star Dweller: Never Submit!: Exactly! It took me so long to find a good restaurant, and I even posted check-ins with my empty bowls online and became a Lin Ji Boy, why are they renovating so soon!!!!!!!

Don't Argue, If You Argue It Means You're Fat: I also don't know if the prices and flavors will change after the reopening.

Genius Girl Loves Food: There should be some adjustments, but not significant ones. The number of dishes will increase a lot because Boss Lin plans to work at Fishing Platform for a month. With his talent, he can probably learn seven or eight out of ten dishes from Fishing Platform.

Trying Hard to Save For a Hair Transplant: Lele, how do you know so much?

Genius Girl Loves Food: Because I have a lot of hair!

Trying Hard to Save For a Hair Transplant: Just wait, I'm going to change my name now!!!!!!!

System Notification: [Trying Hard to Save For a Hair Transplant] has changed their name to [Eat, Sleep, Hit Lele].

Genius Girl Loves Food: ?

System Notification: [Genius Girl Loves Food] has changed their name to [Genius Girl with Lots of Hair].

Eat, Sleep, Hit Lele: ?

System Notification: [Eat, Sleep, Hit Lele] has changed their name to [Lele is a Big Stinky Bug].

Genius Girl with Lots of Hair: ?

System Notification: [Genius Girl with Lots of Hair] has changed their name to [No Choice, Having Lots of Hair Means Confidence].

Soon, the originally normal Li Qiang was led by Geng Lele into goofiness.

「After breakfast.」

The entire Shen Family headed out to work. As soon as they stepped outside, Shen Jiayue pulled Shen Guofu aside and quietly asked,

"Dad, can I drive our family's big G?"

Shen Guofu glanced at her curiously and asked,

"Tired of driving the BMW?"

"No, it's just that Lin Xu will be working at Fishing Platform in a few days, and his grocery car isn't convenient to drive in and out. So, I want to let him drive my X1, and I'll drive the big G from home."

Shen Guofu immediately shook his head and said,

"Nonsense! Can our son-in-law drive your X1?"

Seeing her dad's reaction, Shen Jiayue thought he was unhappy about her lending the car to Lin Xu. Just as she was about to say something to make amends, her dad said,

"How can such a shabby car as the X1 be fitting for our son-in-law? Let him drive my big G to Fishing Platform directly, so he doesn't get looked down upon."

Shen Jiayue: ?????

Chapter 185: Delicious Chicken Soup Noodles! Xiaodou, Congratulations on Being Fired!

"Are you my dad or Xu Bao's dad?"

Why do you always side with him? But Xu Bao driving a Big G would look pretty cool, right? I can't wait to see him driving!

「In the restaurant.」

Lin Xu was about to promote the Boiled Chinese Broccoli under the Lin Ji's Food topic on his phone, but he saw that the place was already buzzing with excitement. Geng Lele had single-handedly steered the food topic onto a hilarious path, and the topic's popularity had surged by several thousand points.

Shouldn't she be at morning self-study right now? Has she completely let herself go?

He quickly typed out a post with a photo of the Boiled Chinese Broccoli: "Boiled Chinese Broccoli is on the menu for lunch today. Don't miss out if you like vegetables."

After posting, he put away his phone and started to get busy with the restaurant's affairs.

The Boiled Chinese Broccoli on the menu today should be a hit. To improve efficiency, he planned to prep some of the sauce needed for the Boiled Chinese Broccoli in advance. That way, when customers ordered it, he could just pour a spoonful over the blanched broccoli—quick and convenient.

It seems this sauce could also be used for rice noodle rolls. Too bad my own skills aren't good enough to make them. Otherwise, I should definitely steam some and see how they compare to the ones made by chefs in Cantonese restaurants. Aside from rice noodle rolls, I also want to learn how to cook Roasted Suckling Pig, Roasted Goose, Marinated Goose, Plain Chicken, Soy Sauce Chicken, Gulao Meat, Sizzling Clay Pot, Salt and Pepper Mantis Shrimp, and other Cantonese dishes. I should have asked Guo Xinghai to demonstrate when he was here yesterday. And there's still a Superior Cooking Learning Card I haven't used. What a pity, such a great opportunity missed. If I want to learn now, I'll probably have to go to Fishing Platform and try to learn from Guo Weidong by watching him. Hmm, although Chef Guo was defeated by my senior, his ability to secure second place for five consecutive years means his culinary skills are still very impressive. At least, he's much better than those head chefs who mock him.

「On the other side.」

Shen Guofu returned to his company. He dealt with some urgent matters first. Then he instructed Secretary Zhou, "Ask Dou Wenjing to come to my office."

At this moment, Dou Wenjing, who had just clocked in not long ago, was arguing with several department heads under the finance department. Those department managers had poached a few employees from her department while she hadn't been coming to the company much these past few days, and they were now in a heated argument.

"Manager Dou, don't be mad. Water flows upward, right? If they want to come to my department, I can't just send them away, can I?"

"Your department is so idle. You only do tax reports mid-month. We need to give the new staff more responsibilities."

"Manager Dou, according to company rules, you can only report this situation to the Financial Director and let him handle it. Coming to us to argue is just nonsensical."

"You haven't been to the company for a few days, and it's us you blame when employees leave on their own accord. Why don't you just stay away for a year?"

"..."

The department managers ganged up to argue with Dou Wenjing. Just as the argument was heating up, Secretary Zhou walked in, "Manager Dou, President Shen asks you to come to his office."

Dou Wenjing pointed at the department managers and said, "Don't think this matter is settled. I'll deal with you guys when I get back!"

Having said that, she grabbed her purse, CLICK-CLACKED away in her high heels from the finance department's office area, and followed Secretary Zhou to President Shen's office.

The arguing department managers looked at each other, confused. They didn't understand what had happened.

"I heard that Dou Wenjing has been following President Shen in and out these past couple of days. She's not about to get a promotion, is she?"

"So what if she gets promoted? We're some of the oldest employees in the company. President Shen can't really fire us, can he?"

"Exactly. We only poached a few of her employees. Besides, they were the best ones; they were just being wasted in her department."

"There are a few in her department who refused to switch jobs. Remember to 'take care of them' later. I hate those employees who refuse a toast only to be forced to drink a forfeit."

"..."

Dou Wenjing arrived at Shen Guofu's office. At that moment, the president was inspecting the various fine liquors in his cabinet.

"President Shen, you wanted to see me?"

Shen Guofu nodded. "How's the search for a designer going?"

"I've contacted a few, and we're doing some preliminary communication. I plan to first weed out the designers whose visions don't align with Lin Ji's, then make further arrangements."

Shen Guofu closed the door of the liquor cabinet. He then asked, "Dou, if you were the general manager of Dundun Catering Management Co., Ltd., what do you think needs improvement in my son-in-law's store?"

Improvement?

Dou Wenjing thought for a moment and said, "There are too few waiters; the place is too disorganized and noisy. Additionally, although the employees are paid above Beijing's average, they lack necessary skills and a clear path to promotion, leaving them without the motivation to continue working hard."

Shen Guofu sat back in his executive chair, looked at Dou Wenjing with a smile, and asked, "Had a fight just now?"

"A small misunderstanding. I can handle it."

Dou Wenjing nodded, but she didn't provide specifics or take the opportunity to complain to Shen Guofu because that would have made her seem incompetent.

Shen Guofu pressed the intercom button. Secretary Zhou quickly entered. Shen Guofu then instructed, "Those department managers who argued with Dou, dismiss them all. The Chief Financial Officer isn't supervising properly; dock three months' salary. As for those tax department employees who switched jobs, fire them all. They didn't get a raise but lost their cushy jobs to do harder work instead. My company won't tolerate such fools."

Secretary Zhou acknowledged and promptly left to handle the matters.

Shen Guofu looked at Dou Wenjing and asked, "Feeling better now?"

Dou Wenjing's heart swelled with gratitude, and all the bitterness from having her staff poached was swept away. However, she was also keenly aware that President Shen must have an important task for her. "President Shen, what do you need me to do?"

Shen Guofu smiled. "I need you... to resign!"

What?! All this buildup just to get rid of me?

Shen Guofu took a sip of tea and said, "Process your resignation this morning. There's an interview at 34 Yingchun Street this afternoon. If you pass, you'll become the general manager of Dundun Catering Management Co., Ltd. That start-up company needs talent like you."

Dou Wenjing's emotions went through a series of ups and downs. She had not at all expected President Shen to have such plans for her.

She bowed deeply. "Thank you for giving me this opportunity, President Shen."

Shen Guofu said, "I already spoke to HR. Your resignation will come with a 2N+6 compensation package. Additionally, I'll personally grant you a bonus of one hundred thousand yuan for the legwork these past few days. Work hard, and there will be new surprises waiting for you next year."

"Yes, sir!"

Chapter 186: Boss Lin, can you teach me how to make Pagoda Meat?

"Hi everyone, I'm Lin Xu. Today, I'm going to teach you a dish that can win a cooking competition—White Jade Lotus Root Strips."

It was 10 a.m. During a lull in the morning rush, Lin Xu started filming today's food tutorial.

After yesterday's victory, the White Jade Lotus Root Strips had become incredibly popular. Everyone was curious about the recipe. They wondered just how delicious a cold vegetable dish had to be to beat Gulao Meat and Fried Pork and become the champion of the Fishing Platform cooking contest.

Seizing this popularity, Lin Xu decided to make a video about White Jade Lotus Root Strips. He wanted to give the fans a direct look at how challenging this dish was.

To enhance the filming quality, he made a special trip to an import supermarket to buy a bottle of imported white soy sauce. It was a seasoning often used in Japanese and Western cuisines but rarely in Chinese cooking.

While he was filming the video, Chen Yan at Joyful Media, located in Wangjing, was giving Wu Kexin instructions for today's livestream.

"Your brother-in-law's fame has surged since the win. So today, go visit his restaurant again. I'll have him prepare the White Jade Lotus Root Strips once more so the fans in the livestream can enjoy it."

I think it's you who wants to enjoy it, but that dish is indeed tempting. Too bad the judges devoured it before I got a taste yesterday... Wu Kexin gave Chen Yan a look, then said, "Okay, I'll get ready and head out in a bit. Are you coming too, Boss Chen?"

"Yes. This is a crucial time for your transition, so I need to control all aspects of the livestream."

Hmm, I'll take this chance to feast at my brother-in-law's place. They're always flaunting their affection, so I have to find a way to get my own back!

The two women packed up the livestream equipment and, bags in tow, headed down to the parking lot. They then drove the white Porsche 911 toward Yingchun Street.

On the way, Chen Yan asked while driving, "Have you thought about the content for the next livestream? Do I need to communicate with Lin Xu in advance?"

Wu Kexin, recalling her notoriety as the 'Queen of Streaming Disasters,' said to Chen Yan, "I want Boss Lin to teach me a dish I've failed at before. I hate being called the Queen of Streaming Disasters, and I want to shake off that nickname."

"No problem, I'll discuss it with him once we get there."

Driving along the expressway to the North Fourth Ring, they took the exit near Tsinghua University, made a turn at the intersection, and arrived on Yingchun Street.

Just after turning the corner, Chen Yan pointed to the high school Geng Lele attended, which was opposite them, and said, "Lele said that the pan-fried buns there are really delicious. When you run out of material, you can visit this shop for a livestream."

"Alright, Boss Chen, I'll keep an eye out for it."

Arriving at Lin Ji's Food, Chen Yan parked the car in a spot in front of the restaurant and then stepped out, opening her parasol.

Meanwhile, Wu Kexin started the livestream.

She began greeting her online friends, "Hi, I'm Xinxin. Today, we're continuing our shop visit livestreams. Unfortunately, I missed out on Boss Lin's White Jade Lotus Root Strips at yesterday's contest. So today, we're here at his restaurant to discover what kind of magic this dish possesses to have won the championship at the Fishing Platform cooking competition."

After greeting the viewers, Wu Kexin turned the camera, and the entrance of Lin Ji's Food appeared before the fans.

Cao Zei Shall Not Die, Only Wither: I just love watching Lin Ji's shop visit livestreams.

Just Want to Freeload and Do Nothing: You don't need to say anything; your ID has already revealed everything.

Being a Foodie Is Quite Nice: I'm really curious about Boss Lin's White Jade Lotus Root Strips. Remember to try it for me, host.

Lin Daiyu Plucks Weeping Willows: I really don't believe a vegetarian dish can beat meat dishes unless you let me try!

Zhishen Buries Flowers: Hey, you actually have a couple ID with me!

Me, 300 Pounds, Slimmest in the Family: I still prefer meat and have no interest in vegetable dishes.

Aspiring to Be a Senior Pastry Chef: Brother, listen to me and eat some veggies.

Xinxin's Diehard Fan: I petition for Xinxin to replicate the White Jade Lotus Root Strips!

Xinxin's Fan Club Pampers Her: We both petition for Xinxin to replicate the White Jade Lotus Root Strips!

...

The livestream chat was lively.

Many people were eagerly calling for the host to replicate the White Jade Lotus Root Strips.

But Wu Kexin ignored them.

I'm just here to do a livestream; I didn't plan on making a total fool of myself.

She pushed open the door and walked in.

When Wu Kexin greeted Song Tiantian, the live chat exploded with viewers calling Song Tiantian "my wife," which amused Wu Kexin greatly.

They only dare to get cheeky online.

If anyone dared to shout that in the shop, Song Tiantian would certainly drag them out and toss them across the street.

While she greeted Song Tiantian, Dundun, who was napping on the counter, turned over and, using its mouth, pulled the small blanket next to it more snugly around itself.

The chat was flooded with comments like "Wrap up snug, my little quilt!" and some viewers even said they do the same thing when sleeping in an air-conditioned room.

"Hello, Dundun!"

Wu Kexin rubbed Dundun's head a couple of times, and the clever little cat reciprocated by nuzzling her hand.

The fans in the livestream were instantly charmed by the little creature.

"Wow, such an adorable and well-behaved cat."

"Not only is it adorable, but it also loves to perform all sorts of antics. I suggest checking out the videos Boss Lin makes; there's a Dundun segment at the end of each one, and it's always up to something different."

"Otherwise, where do you think Boss Lin's tens of thousands of followers come from? [Sly]"

"Boss Lin announced he's making White Jade Lotus Root Strips today too. Looking forward to new antics from Dundun!"

"..."

After interacting with Dundun for a bit and making sure its little blanket was tucked in snugly, Wu Kexin moved further inside.

Chapter 187: Boss Lin, can you teach me how to make Pagoda Meat?

At that moment, she finally saw that Lin Xu was actually filming a cooking video.

The dish he was cooking was none other than the White Jade Lotus Root Strips they hadn't gotten to eat yesterday.

"You've really lucked out today, folks! Boss Lin is actually making White Jade Lotus Root Strips. Later on, I absolutely must taste it for him to check the seasoning," she said.

After speaking, she approached closer, waving at the action camera that was filming.

"Hello, hello, hello! I'm Xinxin, and I'm here to check out Boss Lin's place. If there's anything you want to eat, leave a message in the live comments! I'll make sure Boss Lin cooks it."

Short videos and live streaming overlap in some areas, but their fan bases aren't completely identical. Therefore, these small surprises and interactions are great for encouraging cross-following between the two groups of fans.

"Is Boss Lin done yet? I wanted to try it yesterday but didn't get the chance; the judges ate it all."

Lin Xu had just poured hot Seasoning Oil through a fine mesh strainer holding Sichuan peppercorns onto the lotus root strips.

Smiling upon hearing this, he said, "It will be ready soon. All that's left is the plating."

After speaking, he grabbed a clean plate and placed it on the workbench. Then, he picked up a portion of lotus root strips with his chopsticks and laid them on the plate, adjusting them slightly so they lay flat and aligned. He then added another portion.

He layered the strips horizontally, then vertically.

Layer by layer, he piled them up until they formed a ten-centimeter cube.

"WHOA! His chopstick skills are so deft!"

"Compared to Boss Lin, my hands are as clumsy as my feet."

"Amazing! No wonder he's the cooking contest champion. You can tell just from his use of chopsticks; ordinary people can't compare."

"I wonder if this dish will be added to the restaurant's menu?"

"It's hard to say. Even if it's added, it would probably be very expensive. After all, it's a dish for VIPs; the Fishing Platform surely wouldn't allow it to be sold cheaply."

"No matter the cost, I want to try it!"

The live stream viewers were already very interested in this dish.

Now, watching Lin Xu make it with their own eyes, their curiosity intensified even more.

After plating, Lin Xu set the plate on an automated rotating display stand and took a close-up with the action camera, then moved on to the tasting segment.

"Should we let Dundun try some?" Wu Kexin asked curiously.

Lin Xu shook his head. "Dundun only comes over for a taste when I'm cooking meat dishes; it completely ignores vegetarian ones. But it's perfect that you're here today. You can be the taste-tester, and let your live stream viewers experience it too."

After speaking, Lin Xu looked toward Wu Kexin's live stream camera and performed a flourish with the nearby kitchen knife.

The live stream viewers were startled.

"CRAP, CRAP! He's brandishing a knife at us!"

"Where are all those people who were clamoring for him to draw his knife earlier? Why have they all gone quiet now?"

"I used to practice that knife flourish too. Ended up with the nickname 'Nine-Fingers'."

Shortly after, Lin Xu and Wu Kexin filmed the tasting.

"Wow, this texture is so refreshingly crisp! And the slight numbing taste of Sichuan peppercorns is just marvelous. No wonder he won the championship; this dish is extremely delicious!" After taking a bite, Wu Kexin's face was filled with surprise.

"This is the best cold dish I've had in all my years of live streaming! It's incredible that it's made from Lotus Root. The texture, the taste—they're just perfect!"

She continued to eat several more bites, growing more and more satisfied.

After filming her tasting, Lin Xu began packing up the filming equipment, planning to edit the video during his lunch break and then upload it to the short video platform.

While he was busy, his sister-in-law, Chen Yan, came over to discuss doing a live broadcast together with Wu Kexin.

"Sure, no problem. Which dish do you want to feature on your stream, Xinxin? Let me prepare a bit. How about we start after the lunch rush?" Lin Xu suggested.

To ride the wave of his cooking championship win, it was better to do the live stream sooner rather than later. That way, they could keep the buzz going a bit longer.

Wu Kexin said, "Boss Lin, I want to make Pagoda Meat!"

Pagoda Meat?

That dish was indeed worth a try.

The so-called Pagoda Meat is actually a variation of Pickled Pork. The pork belly is sculpted into a pagoda shape using Continuous Cutting, then filled with stir-fried Dried Vegetable, and finally steamed over high heat for two hours.

The best Pagoda Meat has a vibrant red color and an exquisitely beautiful presentation.

However, taste-wise, it's identical to Pickled Pork. If it isn't steamed thoroughly, several slices might stick together when you try to pick them up with chopsticks, making it far less convenient to eat than regular Pickled Pork.

But because of its beautiful presentation and the considerable skill required to make it, Pagoda Meat has become a popular challenge for many food content creators.

Conversely, professional chefs who teach cooking online tend to shy away from such flamboyant, showy dishes.

Once they settled on making Pagoda Meat, the live stream viewers got excited.

"Haha, Sister Xinxin is finally going to tackle the dish she messed up before!"

"Hope she doesn't drag Boss Lin down with her."

"Probably not. Boss Lin's Knife Skills are so good; Pagoda Meat should be no problem for him."

"I hope Boss Lin shares some tips during the stream, so us clumsy folks also have a chance to try these challenging dishes."

"If you're clumsy, I wouldn't recommend this dish. You might end up with an extra piece of 'meat'!
[joking]"

"Yeah, you don't want to slice your hand instead of the pork. That would be quite the disaster!"

「Soon, it was time for lunch.」

When Shen Jiayue came to pick up her boxed lunch, Lin Xu had just taken the pot of Braised Pork Belly, simmering in a clay pot, off the stove.

Chapter 188: Mr. Lin, Can You Teach Me How to Make Pagoda Meat?

"Wow, my Braised Pork Belly!"

Shen Jiayue couldn't help but swallow her saliva when she saw the Braised Pork Belly, and she kept bragging to her cousin Chen Yan, "Yesterday, my Xu Bao made Braised Pork Belly for me. It tasted incredibly delicious. He even said he'd save a few pieces for you, but unexpectedly, you didn't come."

Chen Yan sneered. With the way you two carry on with your public displays of affection, I'd have been overwhelmed if I had come. Wait a second... Braised Pork Belly? I have to eat more later. Considering how much my tender heart has been hurt, it wouldn't be excessive to eat more Braised Pork Belly, right?

When lunchtime started, Wu Kexin and Panda, who had come to get lunch boxes, were live streaming together, while other people sat at the nearby dining table eating.

"Wow, this Braised Pork Belly smells so good. Brother-in-law, your cooking is really amazing!"

Chen Yan no longer cared about the fattening concerns of Braised Pork Belly; she just wanted to enjoy a few more pieces with rice.

The fatty but not greasy texture, the sweet and salty flavors blending together, the rich aroma, the thick sauce... The more Chen Yan ate, the more delicious she found it, even more so than the Braised Pork Belly sold for 599 per serving in some of Shanghai's private kitchen restaurants.

Of course, the most straightforward difference was that the 599-per-serving Braised Pork Belly came as one large piece, a single portion. Someone with Chen Yan's appetite would need two servings, let alone those with even bigger appetites.

And today, Lin Xu made over ten pounds of meat in one go.

After a bunch of them ate for a good while, there was still more than half left, which was way better than the one-serving portion of Braised Pork Belly.

After the meal, Shen Jiayue and Panda each took their lunch boxes and left.

Wu Kexin lazily set her live-streaming phone high up in a corner, letting her followers get a direct sense of Lin Ji's Food's terrifying customer flow during the lunch peak.

After the midday rush, the place was a mess.

While the waiters were cleaning up, Wu Kexin took down the phone used for live-streaming.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu was getting ready in the kitchen with a piece of pork belly about twenty centimeters square on a side and some Dried Vegetable that had been soaked in the morning but not used up.

These are the ingredients needed for Pagoda Meat.

Besides these two items, Pagoda Meat also required one very important tool—a mold.

The so-called mold is a conical container that looks like an inverted pyramid, into which you put the neatly cut Pagoda Meat upside down and then add the Dried Vegetable. After steaming, you flip it onto a plate, and there you have the beloved dish, Pagoda Meat.

This container is used for shaping.

Actually, the ancient method of making this dish also used a mold, but it wasn't this kind of stainless-steel container. Instead, it was a conical bowl, a type of porcelain bowl specially made for similar kinds of dishes.

However, now, such molds have all been replaced by stainless steel products.

After the live stream started, Lin Xu first greeted the fans in the live-stream room.

Then, after introducing the ingredients and utensils he would be using, he began to work on the preparation.

He placed the piece of pork belly into a pot, added water, then scallion and ginger along with cooking wine, and turned up the heat to boil.

After it came to a boil and the scum was skimmed off, he added a few Sichuan peppercorns and star anise and a bay leaf, using the spices to add some base flavor to the pork and also effectively remove any gamey taste.

After boiling for approximately thirty minutes, the pork was thoroughly cooked, so he turned off the heat and took out the meat.

Then, while it was hot, he smeared a layer of honey on the surface of the pork skin. This would utilize the caramelization of the sugar when frying to color the pork.

"Damn, isn't Boss Lin scared of getting burned?"

"He's truly a Heartless Iron Hand! That pork just came out of the pot. It must be eighty or ninety degrees, right?"

"No wonder his cooking tastes so good. He's even toughened up his hands."

"I wanted to learn this, but after seeing Boss Lin's operation, I decided to give up. My tender hands can't handle this treatment!"

Next to him, Wu Kexin was also curious, "Aren't you afraid of getting burned?"

Lin Xu said with a smile, "You get used to the burn after a while."

He placed the evenly spread meat in front of a fan to dry off the moisture while taking this time to set a wok on the stove and heat the oil on high, preparing to fry.

When the oil in the wok reached medium heat, Lin Xu took the piece of pork belly, now dry on the surface, and placed it skin-side down into the hot oil.

"SIZZLE..."

A fierce noise erupted as the hot oil in the pot boiled furiously.

Lin Xu covered the pot and waited until there were no more sounds from inside before lifting the lid and flipping the meat to continue frying.

Once the meat in the wok was fried, Lin Xu scooped out the chunks and placed them into ice water to let the pork skin puff up.

Twenty minutes later, he fished out the pork. The tiger skin pattern had formed, and it was quite pretty.

"Actually, you could make the Pagoda Meat now," he explained. "But in this state, the pork isn't easy to cut, and the fatty parts feel like they've melted, so it's easy to make a mistake. That's why it's better to put it in the freezer for a while to firm up the meat, which makes it much easier to cut."

He wrapped the meat in a plastic bag and placed it at the bottom of the freezer, then placed two thick blocks of ice on top of the meat. The purpose of this was to flatten the meat block to facilitate cutting it into the Pagoda shape.

While waiting for the meat to freeze, Lin Xu kept himself busy. He went back to where he was staying, retrieved his laptop, went to the store, edited the video of the White Jade Lotus Root Strips, and chose to upload it.

"Damn! I just realized Boss Lin does his own editing."

"He doesn't even have a team or an assistant. He does everything from shooting to editing all by himself."

"He's ventured into another field! He's done it again!"

"As expected from the King of Crossovers, even his video editing is awesome. So many clips simplified into such a direct edit. I'd deliberate half a day over making a photo slideshow."

"If one day Boss Lin actually learns postnatal care for sows, I wouldn't be surprised at all."

"..."

After Lin Xu finished uploading the video, he took out the nearly frozen block of meat, ready to cut it.

The meat was slightly frozen but not turned to ice, the perfect state for cutting, and it had been pressed very flat in the freezer, which would make the slicing process much more convenient.

He placed the mold upside-down on the meat and trimmed off the excess from the edges.

These trimmings could later be minced and stir-fried with the Dried Vegetable to enhance its texture when steamed.

After shaping, Lin Xu grabbed the kitchen knife and began cutting the meat.

He positioned the meat on the edge of the cutting board, with a metal basin next to it.

Then he made a cut along the edge of the meat block, about five to six millimeters thick, stopping half a centimeter from slicing through completely. He paused his cut, rolled the meat block over, lifted the slice he'd just made, and continued cutting straight down.

When reaching the edge, he left a half-centimeter margin again, then kept rolling and cutting.

The slices he cut were placed in the basin to the side—they couldn't hang continuously, or they would easily break apart.

The meat block slowly shrank as he cut, but he never fully severed it.

Wu Kexin watched in stunned amazement. She finally realized this dish wasn't something her superficial culinary skills could handle; it was a tremendous test of Knife Skills, patience, and physical stamina.

And the most important thing was, you couldn't slice too slowly; you needed to cut quickly.

Otherwise, once the meat thawed out completely, you wouldn't be able to make the cuts, and all the effort would be for naught.

After Lin Xu finished slicing the meat and placed it in the basin, he poured in a marinade made of light soy sauce, fermented tofu, white sugar, and other seasonings to marinate the slices.

Then he reassembled the pieces into a solid block with the skin side down in the mold.

Pressing down again to refine the Pagoda shape a bit more.

Finally, he poured the remaining marinade into the mold, allowing the meat to continue marinating.

After completing these steps, he washed and finely chopped the soaked Dried Vegetable.

He then stir-fried it with the trimmed fatty pork edges until dry, and packed it into the mold to fill the remaining space.

He topped it all off with a generous spoonful of the stock used to cook the meat, then placed the mold in the steamer to steam.

"Phew... no wonder I couldn't make it well. I'm tired just from watching."

Wu Kexin actually let out a sigh of relief when she saw Lin Xu place the mold in the steamer.

I regret choosing this dish. Since Boss Lin made it so perfectly this time, if I tried to replicate it next time and there was even a slight imperfection, my fans would say it's a flop... If only I had chosen the "Three Non-Stick" dish instead. That should be a bit simpler than Pagoda Meat.

While she was mumbling to herself, Dou Wenjing, having just completed her resignation procedures and carrying her office belongings from her previous company, walked directly into Lin Ji's Food, saying, "Boss Lin, Manager Shen said your company needed a general manager, so here I am for the interview..."

Chapter 189: Pagoda Meat is Ready! No Appetite Because of the Hot Weather? Spicy and Sour Noodles to the Rescue!

"Job interview?"

Lin Xu looked at Dou Wenjing, who was holding a box of miscellaneous items. She doesn't seem like she's here for an interview, but rather ready to start working right away, he thought.

He asked with a smile, "Wenjing, what was your monthly salary at my father-in-law's company?"

"Listed companies usually offer an annual salary. Mine is three hundred thousand, which averages out to twenty-five thousand per month."

The fans in the live streaming room, who were waiting to eat Pagoda Meat, were surprised:

"What the heck is happening? We were just cooking, and now there's an interview going on?"

"Have we crossed over into some domineering CEO's territory?"

"I'm not convinced by a domineering CEO who doesn't have a sinister and wild smile."

"This lady looks pretty capable."

"She just said she was interviewing for general manager, right? Can I interview for an assistant position?"

Twenty-five thousand a month? Lin Xu thought.

He then said, "How about this, Wenjing? I'll give you thirty thousand for the first month. You need to find a reliable designer to complete the store's design and finish the renovations within a month. We can discuss your compensation in detail once we're open. Is that okay?"

"Of course!" Dou Wenjing agreed, then asked, "What are your requirements for the new store's overall style? It would help me to have a reference when I'm looking for a designer."

Lin Xu thought for a moment and said, "Let's go for a modern Chinese style—trendy but not flashy. We'll need to see the actual design plans, but I don't have any major specific demands."

A restaurant spanning several thousand square meters was something Lin Xu had no concept of, let alone how to design it.

"Alright, Boss. I know which designer to look for. Where are the keys for the shop next door? Can I use it as a temporary office?"

The keys were in a drawer beside the cash register. Lin Xu took them out and handed the bakery keys to her.

The bakery's equipment had been moved out last night, apparently sold second-hand. However, the tables, chairs, and air conditioning were still there, which was more than enough for a temporary office.

Dou Wenjing took the keys and moved her personal belongings into the shop next door.

The first job interview at Dundun Catering Management Co., Ltd. ended just like that, quite briefly.

Chen Yan approached curiously and asked, "Brother-in-law, isn't offering thirty thousand right away a bit much?"

It was supposed to be an interview, but he only asked about her salary before making a decision. Wasn't he going to interview more candidates?

Lin Xu responded with a smile, "She's an outstanding manager handpicked by my father-in-law from his own company. Thirty thousand isn't too much; in fact, it might even be a bit low. After all, if she stays on for another couple of years, she might become the company's finance director. By then, her annual salary would have to start at seven or eight hundred thousand, right?"

Hearing that it was her uncle who had chosen the manager for her brother-in-law, Chen Yan immediately stopped questioning.

Yes, although her uncle usually had a kind, smiling demeanor, like a thoroughly good fellow, he had his own wealth of experience when it came to management. The talent he selected would undoubtedly be top-tier for any company. She really envied her brother-in-law for having their uncle personally help screen management talent. Thinking back to when she first started her company, she had nothing and had to do everything herself. It was completely incomparable to her brother-in-law's situation.

But they're going to renovate here? Chen Yan wondered. She looked at Lin Xu curiously and asked, "Are you planning to expand the store?"

Lin Xu nodded. "Starting from the bakery on the left and extending to the clothing store on the right, plus the second and third floors—that's the scope of the new store. It'll be about three to four thousand square meters. My father-in-law bought all these shops a couple of days ago and transferred them to my name yesterday."

Chen Yan wasn't very good with numbers. To get a more direct sense of how big the new store would be, she specifically ran outside to take a look.

When she returned to the store, her face was filled with uncontrollable excitement. "Wow, this storefront is really huge! The renovations should make it look very impressive. Customers finally won't have to queue for a seat anymore!"

The fans in the live streaming room were confused by all this.

Wu Kexin happened to be free and was also curious about the size, so she picked up her phone and started filming the area.

From the far-left bakery to the far-right clothing store, the distance was about one hundred meters. The depth of all the shops was over ten meters. This meant the ground floor alone was over a thousand square meters. With three floors, it totaled more than three thousand square meters.

It really was huge.

The comment section in the live stream exploded!

Jiji Fu Jiji, Mulan Raises Chickens: Damn! This is some serious investment!

Men at Thirty, Hold Back Tears, Don't Cry: I really want to @ my father-in-law and tell him to learn from this.

Two Hundred Pounds of Cuteness: I wanted to @ someone too, but then I realized, damn, I don't even have a girlfriend. Where would I get a father-in-law?

I'm Solo Mid, Super Cool: WAAAH, I'm crying my eyes out! As a single dog, I've taken over ten thousand points of damage!

I Am a Lonely Wolf: I've given up on finding someone. I've lost interest in everything else too. I feel like a walking corpse every day, with no interest in anything.

Who Isn't a Baobao: Same here. No interest, no desire, just like a walking corpse every day.

Jiji Fu Jiji, Mulan Raises Chickens: Anyone want the link?

I Am a Lonely Wolf: May good people live in peace.

Who Isn't a Baobao: May good people live in peace.

I'm Solo Mid, Super Cool: May good people live in peace.

Two Hundred Pounds of Cuteness: May good people live in peace.

An hour and a half later, as the staff in the store were preparing for dinner, the much-anticipated Pagoda Meat was finally steamed.

Lin Xu, wearing heat-resistant gloves, brought out the mold containing the Pagoda Meat.

Chapter 190: Pagoda Meat is Out of The Pot! Hot Weather Killing Your Appetite? Time for Some Spicy and Sour Noodles!

The meat's fragrance had fully steamed out, and the Dried Vegetable had completely soaked up the meat broth.

Holding the Pagoda Meat mold, Lin Xu poured the excess broth from inside into a bowl. Then, placing a plate on top of the mold, he held the mold with one hand and pressed the plate with the other, quickly flipping both. The mold landed steadily in the center of the plate.

When he removed the mold, the Pagoda Meat's form was finally revealed. The rosy pork skin was layered in concentric circles, with streaks of fresh white fat peeking out from between them. The alternating red and white colors were incredibly appetizing at first glance. However, it wasn't time to taste it yet.

Lin Xu carried the just-poured broth to the stove, poured it into a pot, and brought it to a boil over high heat. He then whisked in some Water Starch to thicken the broth slightly. Next, he drizzled some Seasoning Oil over the broth. This would enrich the broth's aroma and make its color brighter.

He carried the pot over to the Pagoda Meat. Using a ladle, he carefully poured the broth from the pot over the Pagoda Meat. Wu Kexin hurried over for a close-up shot.

Once the bright, viscous broth was ladled over the Pagoda Meat, the previously matte slices of meat instantly took on a glossy sheen, even shimmering faintly under the lights.

"Wow! It's glowing!"

The fans in the livestream chat all gulped, their mouths watering. That color was just too tempting, wasn't it? It was enough to make you weep with craving!

With the sauce poured, this stunningly presented Pagoda Meat was finally complete.

Lin Xu looked at Wu Kexin and asked, "Did you learn how to make it, Host Wu?"

Wu Kexin shrugged. "My eyes and brain learned it, but I can't guarantee my hands can do it well."

Tsk, the title 'Queen of Bloopers' really isn't easy to shake off.

"Alright, you can taste it now. We need to get ready for dinner too."

Dinner at the restaurant, unsurprisingly, was noodles rolled out by Niu Chuan. And since Lin Xu had requested he roll only one bowl's worth at a time, Niu Chuan's daily noodle-rolling frequency had noticeably increased. Niu Chuan had become increasingly adept at rolling noodles.

Shen Jiayue wasn't coming to the restaurant for dinner today. She and her parents were going to Old Lady Yu's place for Crystal Sugar Pork Knuckles and also planned to take the old lady to stay at the villa for a couple of days.

Right, once the restaurant renovations begin, the son-in-law can visit them at the villa. Old Lady Yu and the relatives will need to give their approval then.

As Wu Kexin was taste-testing, Lin Xu asked Chen Yan, "It's time for dinner. What do you want? Rice or noodles?"

There were only two staple options in the restaurant: rice or noodles.

Chen Yan patted her flat stomach and said, "I ate too much Braised Pork Belly for lunch, and it's so hot, so I don't feel like eating anything right now."

Just then, Song Tiantian called Dou Wenjing from the adjacent office to join them for dinner. "Wenjing, what are you planning to eat?"

Although Dou Wenjing was currently the only one in her office, she still had to prepare all the necessary documents and materials. She was incredibly busy, completely focused on her career. Hearing Lin Xu ask what she wanted to eat, a craving for something delicious finally stirred within her.

"It's so hot, I don't feel like noodles or rice... Do you have anything sour and spicy? Something refreshing that won't make me put on too much weight?"

Sour and spicy?

Lin Xu thought for a moment and asked, "How about... I make some sour and spicy noodles?"

Hearing "sour and spicy noodles," Dou Wenjing immediately nodded. "Yes, yes, yes, that's perfect! I'm meeting the designer at five-thirty this afternoon. I'll get ready to go after I eat."

Lin Xu said, "You don't need to report these things to me; just get the design plans out as soon as possible. By the way, property management has the architectural blueprints. If you need them, remember to get them. We're the owners now, so we have that right."

"Understood, Boss Lin!"

As Lin Xu was about to make the sour and spicy noodles, Chen Yan said, "Make a bowl for me too, brother-in-law. I'm not hungry, but just hearing 'sour and spicy noodles' makes me want to try some."

"Alright, hang on. It'll be ready soon."

Lin Xu then looked at the restaurant staff and asked, "Who else wants sour and spicy noodles?"

In the distance, Wu Kexin, who was eating Pagoda Meat, raised her hand. "Me, me, me! I'll have a big bowl!"

Song Tiantian also raised her hand, clearly wanting to taste the sour and spicy noodles too.

Lin Xu counted. Including himself, he needed to cook five bowls of sour and spicy noodles.

Making several portions of another dish might have been difficult on short notice, but sour and spicy noodles were an exception. As long as you had sweet potato noodles, Chili Oil, and vinegar, you could whip up a bowl in minutes.

He put a pot of water on to boil and took some high-quality sweet potato noodles from the storage room to soak in water. Soaking the sweet potato noodles first improves their texture when cooked and also washes off any surface dust.

Once the water in the pot boiled, he added the slightly softened noodles and began to cook them. While the noodles cooked, he started preparing the seasoning base in the bowls for the sour and spicy noodles.

"Do you all want chopped scallions, cilantro, and garlic?"

"Yes, yes, yes! We're not picky!"

"I'll have them too!"

"Yes!"

"Yes, Boss Lin!"

Lin Xu brought over three empty bowls. Into each, he successively added minced scallions, ginger, and garlic, Chili Oil, some of the restaurant's everyday Chili Vinegar, a bit of lard, a drizzle of Sichuan peppercorn oil, half a small spoonful of salt, a pinch of sugar to enhance the umami, and a dash of Light Soy Sauce. Finally, he added half a bowl of the hot, starchy water the noodles were cooking in to each bowl. He stirred the contents of each bowl until well combined.

A sour and spicy aroma, mingled with the fragrance of lard, wafted up. It was accompanied by the distinct numbing fragrance of Sichuan peppercorn oil.

Lin Xu took a sniff. He hadn't been particularly hungry before, but this tantalizing sour and spicy aroma immediately whetted his appetite.