

## **Culinary 201**

Chapter 201: A Mutual Rush Indeed! Want an Interview? Get in Line First!

"Have you eaten?" Lin Xu asked Wei Qian.

"Not yet. I had the morning shift today and came straight here after work."

"Then hurry up and sit down to eat. Dundun, bring a pair of chopsticks and a bowl of rice for your Brother Qian."

"Right away! Brother Qian, come and eat. I'll get you some rice."

A warmth spread through Wei Qian's heart.

This is the difference. If only the kitchen staff at Building One were this personable, it would be great. But unfortunately...

After sitting down, he realized they were having Steamed Rice Flour Meat today.

I've never seen this dish in the restaurant before. Could this be a new item?

He remembered Dundun once saying that the staff meals were always new dishes that hadn't been served yet, which made the customers drool with envy. Every day, people would ask online what the staff were eating.

Wei Qian had always thought it was a joke.

Now, looking at the Steamed Rice Flour Meat on the table, he understood that Dundun had been telling the truth.

Trying out new dishes on the staff first; no wonder the business is doing so well. Lin Xu really knows how to read people.

Thinking about this, he picked up a slice of Steamed Rice Flour Meat with the chopsticks Dundun handed him and tasted it.

Mmm, the flavor was good. The pork was thoroughly marinated and slightly salty, but this saltiness was balanced by the Steamed Meat Powder on the outside. The taste was not too salty nor too bland—just perfect.

I never expected Lin Xu to make Steamed Rice Flour Meat this delicious.

He ate, marveling at the taste.

He took the bowl of rice Dundun served him and began eating at the staff table.

「After the meal.」

Lin Xu brought Wei Qian a bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup. "Have some soup to settle your stomach. In a couple of days, I'll start working at Fishing Platform. When you want to find me then, just come directly to Building Two."

Wei Qian tasted the egg drop soup and raised his eyebrows. "Damn! This is so flavorful! I saw you preparing this soup last time I was here. I thought since it was only six yuan a bowl, it must be average, but who knew it'd be this savory... Why didn't you set the price higher?"

Lin Xu smiled. "This isn't Fishing Platform. Who would come if the prices were high?"

However, once the new restaurant opens, the prices of these dishes will be readjusted. A small eatery has its pricing standards, and a large restaurant also has its own pricing principles; they can't be treated the same.

Each person finished a small bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup.

Geng Lishan stood up to take his leave. "I've eaten and drunk my fill, so I won't impose any longer. Young friend Lin, when you're not busy, come over to my place. I'll personally write a piece of calligraphy for you. For such delicious food, I feel I owe you something in return."

"You're too kind, Mr. Lishan."

A meal isn't worth much, but a piece of Geng Lishan's calligraphy is valuable enough to buy half a house in Beijing. The two simply can't be compared.

After seeing Geng Lishan and Professor Xu off, the restaurant welcomed its first wave of evening customers.

Lin Xu returned to the kitchen and began the night's work.

He had wanted to chat with Wei Qian about job-hopping, but he felt the timing wasn't right. It would be better to wait until he started working at Fishing Platform. Then, he could inquire about Wei Qian's situation in Building One. If it really wasn't good, he would poach the guy, saving him from being constantly ostracized by the chefs there.

The number of customers in the restaurant was increasing.

Wei Qian, who had originally come to hang out with Lin Xu, put on an apron and got so busy he was practically running off his feet.

He liked the atmosphere here, and he liked the people.

Everything felt so good.

So, after his shift, he didn't go back to the dorm to rest but rode a shared electric bike straight to Yingchun Street.

Tonight, the customers didn't ask about the renovations anymore. Instead, while eating, they couldn't help but take out their phones to snap a few photos. They photographed the dishes on their tables, the semi-open kitchen not far away, Dundun lying on the cash register, and everything else in the little shop.

This cozy little restaurant would soon be replaced by a large establishment and would be gone forever.

Although Lin Ji's Food had been open for less than a month at most, and these particular customers had been dining there for an even shorter time, they still felt a touch of sadness upon learning it was going to be demolished and renovated.

"Mr. Lin, have you decided on the closing date?"

"Not yet, but it will be soon," Lin Xu replied, rolling out dough in the kitchen while answering customers' questions. "I saw the draft designs today, and we might get the final renderings tomorrow. If there are no changes needed, we could close as early as the day after tomorrow."

"It's quite a shame. I hope when it reopens, the restaurant will still have this warm feeling. I love the atmosphere here so much."

"Don't worry, I'll definitely make you feel like you're coming home."

They were busy until 8:20 p.m. By then, all the food in the shop that could be sold was completely gone, and only then did the customers reluctantly leave.

"Your customers are insane," Wei Qian said, wiping sweat from his forehead. Last time they were this busy, there was still leftover Sour Plum Soup to drink. Today, however, even the Sour Plum Soup had sold out completely.

A business like this was truly enviable.

Lin Xu said, "They came to say goodbye. This place holds their laughter and their memories of sharing tables while dining."

As everyone started cleaning the kitchen, Wei Qian said, "You guys carry on; I'm going to ride back. Might as well enjoy the breeze and cool down."

He was just about to walk out.

Lin Xu pulled out the key to the big G from the cash register drawer. "Let me drive you. It's not safe to ride a bike this late at night."

"Holy crap! That 'Big Bro' outside is yours? When I first got here, I even took a picture of it, planning to use it as my phone wallpaper!"

Lin Xu was speechless. 'Big Bro'? What a traditional term for it.

"Well, I'm about to start working at Fishing Platform, right? My father-in-law lent me his car to use for a while. I'll return it once the new restaurant is renovated."

Chapter 202: It's a Two-Way Rush! Want an Interview? Get in Line First!

"Holy crap! Where did you find such a father-in-law? He's way too nice to you, like China's best father-in-law!"

Lin Xu didn't know why either. Perhaps he was too disappointed with Student Shen, so he pinned his hopes on me?

When they got outside, Lin Xu unlocked the car and they both got in.

"This is my first time riding in a 'Big Brother.' I'm going to have to take a couple of videos and show off on my social media. Now I'm also someone who's ridden in a 'Big Brother.'"

Lin Xu started the car with a laugh.

They arrived at the end of Yingchun Street, turned left, and then headed straight for Fishing Platform.

You have to say, the handling of the G63 was just great. The start was smooth and powerful, and the gear shifts were silky smooth without any jerkiness or weird noises.

While waiting for a traffic light at an intersection, Lin Xu asked, "How much are you making a month now?"

"Thirteen thousand. The wages at Fishing Platform aren't very high in the industry, but the food and accommodation are great, along with various other benefits. It suits someone like me who isn't very ambitious."

Only thirteen thousand? That really isn't high at all.

With Wei Qian's skills, he could be head chef anywhere, maybe even a chef de cuisine, and easily earn more than twenty thousand a month. But this also showed, indirectly, that Fishing Platform was filled with talent. Someone as skilled as Wei Qian wasn't even being fully utilized. If he hadn't managed to participate in the cooking competition (being under twenty-five) and achieve a good result, he might have been even more marginalized.

Fishing Platform had eighteen buildings, and each building had its own kitchen.

Lin Xu didn't believe Wei Qian was the only one not being fully utilized. This next month at work, my job is to identify these people and figure out a way to recruit them.

They arrived at the entrance to Fishing Platform. Since the car didn't have an internal pass and they hadn't booked a room, they couldn't go inside.

"I'll just stroll in; you go back, Lin Xu. Let me know when you start working, and I'll come to Building Two to hang out with you."

Whistling a tune, Wei Qian walked through the grand gates of Fishing Platform.

Watching his receding figure, Lin Xu firmly decided, no matter the cost, he would recruit this friend from Fishing Platform!

「After he drove away.」

Inside the gates of Fishing Platform, Wei Qian glanced back and then immediately took out his phone to send Guo Xinghai a message: "Damn, I even hinted so clearly today, yet Lin Xu didn't try to poach me. Do you think he looks down on my skills?"

Soon, Guo Xinghai replied, "If he doesn't appreciate your skills, then he could only try to poach Chef Guo and my uncle. Do you think he could manage that?"

"True, so what should I do next?"

Guo Xinghai, far away in Yangcheng, comforted him like an understanding big sister, "Just wait; your time will come. Actually, it's good he didn't poach you now. The new restaurant will take about a month to set up. If he poached you now, you'd still have to work at Fishing Platform, which would be even more painful."

"Right, then I'll keep waiting... Why don't you come work at Lin Ji's Food too? It'd be so cool to hang out every day."

Guo Xinghai sent a sweating emoji, "My family also owns a big restaurant. If I didn't know you wouldn't come to Yangcheng, I would've poached you long ago."

Seeing this message, Wei Qian burst into laughter. Wow! I've become a hot commodity too?

「The next morning.」

Zheng Xiaoguang had worked overnight to produce the store design renderings. After looking them over, Lin Xu sent them to his senior apprentice brother Xie Baomin and his master Mr. Gao, asking both to provide their feedback and suggestions for adjustments.

Xie Baomin, perhaps tied up in a meeting or something, didn't reply.

But Mr. Gao responded in less than a minute, "Build a Peking duck oven next to the kitchen. You can't avoid Peking duck if you're opening a restaurant in Beijing, so you need to prepare in advance. Plus, having a duck oven makes it much easier to cook other dishes like roasted suckling pig, crispy pork belly, roasted duck, and roasted goose."

He also reminded Lin Xu to use insulating and fire-resistant bricks for building the oven, advising him not to skimp on this cost.

Lin Xu acknowledged. He passed on the requirement for the Peking duck oven to Zheng Xiaoguang.

"That's easy. There's already a space a few meters wide reserved next to the kitchen, perfect for building the duck oven."

Zheng Xiaoguang quickly determined the location for the Peking duck oven and completed the design.

After confirming everything was in order, Zheng Xiaoguang started working on the construction drawings, expecting to finish by tomorrow.

Lin Xu also officially announced on social media the renovation closure time for Lin Ji's Food: "After tomorrow, Lin Ji's Food will officially be closed for renovations. Please be informed, friends, and save yourselves a wasted trip."

As soon as it was posted, the comment section exploded.

Meow Star Forever Free: Ahhh! Now what will I eat for the next month?

Spring Breeze Market's Uncle Shen: Finally, Boss Lin can take a break.

Genius Girl with Lots of Hair: Boss Lin is going to work at Fishing Platform. Everyone who loves his cooking can find him there. Remember, it's Building Two!

Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue: I actually wanted to visit. But after checking the prices at Fishing Platform—sorry, I was being too hasty!

I'm a hardcore fan of the Lady Boss: So I won't see the lady boss for a month?

Stop Arguing, Arguing Means You're Fat: You downstairs, tone it down. Being too much of a Cao Zei can get you beaten up.

Lin Daiyu pulling out willows: Exactly! There's a jerk named 'Cao Zei Not Dead' in Xin Sister's livestream that I banned. Just looking at them irritates me.

I'm a hardcore fan of the Lady Boss: Damn it, so it was you who banned me! Who are you, what's your name, and what do you look like? I'm coming to PK you right now!

Chapter 203: It's a Two-Way Rush! Want an Interview? Get in Line First!

Lin Daiyu Uproots Willows: "Still daring an offline showdown? I'll smash your damn head in! I'm right here in Sanlitun. Come get me. This is what I look like [Photo]"

I'm Lin Ji's Food Ultimate Fan: "AAAAHHH, my wife~~~"

System Notification: [I'm Lin Ji's Food Ultimate Fan] has changed their name to [Hello everyone, I'm called the Weeping Willow].

Lin Daiyu Uproots Willows: "?"

After the renovation date was set, the number of customers in the restaurant increased even more. People came not just to eat but also to take all sorts of photos. Even Lin Xu, who was in the kitchen rolling out noodles, often had to pause to take pictures with the guests.

For the regular customers, the new restaurant might offer many new dishes, all as delicious as ever. However, its kitchen would definitely not be open-plan, meaning they would never again see Lin Xu

rolling noodles or similar scenes. So, while they still could, taking a photo for memory's sake was essential. After snapping their pictures, customers would post them under the Lin Ji's Food topic, reminiscing about their first time dining at the restaurant. The entire Lin Ji's Food topic feed resembled a memoir, filled with the customers' joys and sorrows.

「In an office building in Wangjing.」

Chen Yan, the CEO of Joyful Media, sat in her spacious executive chair, legs crossed, idly flicking one of her high heels as she leisurely browsed the web. She had just returned from an employee meal at Lin Ji's Food and, feeling quite full, browsed the web to aid her digestion. Then, she stumbled upon the Lin Ji's Food topic and saw the snippets of memories shared by the customers.

The beautiful CEO immediately uncrossed her legs, picked up the phone from her desk, and dialed an internal line.

"Weiwei, set up a bounty under the Lin Ji's Food topic. By nine o'clock tomorrow night, the top ten posts with the most likes sharing their dining experiences at Lin Ji's Food will each receive a 6,666 yuan cash red envelope. Also, get Wu Kexin and her group to generate some activity under the Lin Ji's Food topic."

Chen Yan hadn't actually given any thought to what she would do once the topic gained traction. She simply saw that the buzz was quite high at the moment and that netizens' emotions were running strong. So, on a whim, she decided to try and galvanize the netizens who were posting updates.

Who knew this would trigger a chain reaction?

The customers in the restaurant, seeing there was cash to be won, grew even more enthusiastic. They not only took photos and videos inside but even the customers queuing outside began raising their phones to photograph the Lin Ji's Food storefront, then shared their own Lin Ji's Food-related moments.

"The first time I went to Lin Ji's, I thought the company was screwing with me. Such a small storefront, and they wanted me to do a live broadcast! But once I got inside, I found out the food was incredibly delicious..."

Before long, Wu Kexin posted an update, earnestly recalling her feelings during her first live broadcast at Lin Ji's, and attached a photo with Lin Xu and the other staff members. As a popular influencer herself, and with the heartfelt nature of her post, it quickly attracted a large number of likes and comments.

Seeing this, others followed suit to ride the wave of popularity, causing the Lin Ji's Food topic to trend even higher.

「By one in the afternoon.」

The buzz around the Lin Ji's Food topic grew steadily, eventually knocking #YanjingFoodShare# off its pedestal to become number one in the Yanjing Region food rankings.

"WOW, first place!"

"Thanks to all the Lin Ji boys and Lin Ji girls!"

"Haha, we Lin Ji'ers really know how to rally!"

"Logically, Boss Lin should post something like 'Grateful to my dear fans' right about now, but for some reason, those words just make me cringe."

"Same here. Those streamers have practically given me an aversion to it..."

"We're number one in the food rankings, but only sixteenth on the overall leaderboard! Don't lose steam, folks!"

"Right, right, don't lose steam, keep it going!"

"..."

「Meanwhile, the office of the Beijing Travel Channel was shrouded in gloom.」

While netizens were excitedly boosting Lin Ji's Food's popularity, a sense of despondency filled the Beijing Travel Channel office.

"What's going on? We've held the top spot on the food ranking for over a year! How did we get surpassed? Look into this Lin Ji's Food!"

Zeng Xiaoqi, the attractive host from the travel channel, looked utterly indignant. She had spearheaded the creation of the #YanjingFoodShare topic and, to boost its popularity, had even made it a habit to post about her three daily meals. Just a couple of days ago, the station had praised the topic as a great success and was even planning to give her an award for it. But right after the praise, they'd lost their number one spot in the category rankings.

Couldn't you have at least waited until the award was handed out before overtaking us?!

Information on Lin Ji's Food was surprisingly easy to find. It turned out to be an inconspicuous little restaurant on Yingchun Street, by the North Fourth Ring. Photos of the place, inside and out, were now plastered all over the internet; a quick browse online was enough to see its entire facade.

This made Zeng Xiaoqi even more indignant. Being surpassed by a large, famous restaurant would have been one thing, but to think a small eatery could overshadow the popular food-sharing topic their travel channel had built up!

How would their industry peers view the travel channel now?

Just as she was about to ask the channel director for funds to run her own reward campaign to boost their topic's popularity and reclaim the top spot from Lin Ji's Food, Zhen Wensheng, the director of the travel channel, walked in.

Zhen Wensheng was nearly fifty. In his younger days, he'd been the host of an outdoor program and was passionate about travel. When he got older and could no longer keep up with the physically demanding work, he returned to Beijing and single-handedly founded the Beijing Travel Channel. Since its launch, the channel had become an important platform for promoting Yanjing City, earning him numerous awards in the process.

"Director Zhen, I was just about to find you. Our topic..."

Zeng Xiaoqi had barely begun when Zhen Wensheng interrupted her.

"Lin Ji's Food is in Yanjing City, and our travel channel is precisely the platform for promoting Yanjing. Now that this restaurant has become such a sensation, why aren't you rushing to interview them for a feature report instead of making a fuss here? Are you planning to take the office staff to Yingchun Street for a group brawl?"

Zeng Xiaoqi was suddenly at a loss for words.

Zhen Wensheng checked his watch and said, "Hurry up and prepare for the interview. The Education Channel, Life Channel, Society Channel, and even CCTV's Travel Channel are all planning to cover it. If our Beijing Travel Channel is scooped by them, *that* will be truly embarrassing."

Upon hearing this, Zeng Xiaoqi quickly responded, "Don't worry, Director Zhen, I'll go interview them right away!"

With that, she hurried off with her colleagues to prepare.

「Inside the kitchen of Lin Ji's Food.」

Lin Xu was still working nonstop, so busy his feet barely touched the ground. He was utterly unaware that his wife's older sister's unintentional act had rocketed the Lin Ji's Food topic to first place on the food rankings. Of course, even if he had known, he wouldn't have been overly thrilled. The main quest required him to reach the top ten of the overall Yanjing Region leaderboard, and the gap was still quite large.

As he was busy, a TV interview van pulled into a parking spot not far from Lin Ji's Food. Zeng Xiaoqi and a cameraman emerged from the van.

Seeing Lin Ji's Food a short distance away, they were stunned. Zeng Xiaoqi exclaimed, "What's going on? It's almost two o'clock, why is there still such a long line? Is the food free here today or something?"

She led her team past the long queue to the restaurant's entrance and called out to Song Tiantian inside, "Hello, can we come in for an interview?"

Song Tiantian pointed at the queue. "It's too crowded inside; there's no way to get in. You should line up too. It'll be quicker that way."

Zeng Xiaoqi was growing anxious. Just as she was about to argue her case, she spotted a few familiar faces in the queue behind them—some of her colleagues from CCTV's Travel Channel.

No way!

Even people from CCTV have to queue?

Chapter 204: Accepting an Interview! Come and Try My Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes!

"Hello, everyone—I'm Xiaoqi, the host from the Beijing Travel Channel. Today, here on North Fourth Ring Road, a small restaurant that opened just a month ago is closing for renovations. This news has caused quite a stir, attracting numerous customers to come check in and commemorate the occasion. What magic does this place hold? Let's find out!"

Seeing there were already colleagues queuing up, even ahead of her, Zeng Xiaoqi made a swift decision. She decided to skip interviewing the restaurant owner and instead film the crowd lining up outside to prepare an introductory clip for her report. Not being able to beat her colleagues to the interview wasn't an issue; it was all about releasing her story earlier than them. Fortunately, she had briefly familiarized herself with information about Lin Ji's Food on the way there; otherwise, she really couldn't have competed with her colleagues from CCTV Travel.

After her opening monologue, the cameraman started filming the long queue at the entrance. Meanwhile, Zeng Xiaoqi began looking for interviewees. While reading the information in the car, she saw that customers of Lin Ji's Food online called themselves "Lin Ji Boys" or "Lin Ji Girls," so she decided to pose as one to build rapport with them.

Once the cameraman had finished filming, she found her first interviewee: a young woman in her twenties.

"Hello, I'm Zeng Xiaoqi, a Lin Ji Girl. Are you a Lin Ji Girl too?"

"Of course, I'm a Lin Ji Girl! I've posted dozens of times today... Oh, Sister Xiaoqi? I didn't expect you to be a customer here too. I'm a fan! I watch you sharing your meals every day; I'm completely addicted."

Zeng Xiaoqi: "..."

So, have I been backstabbed by my own fan?

After the pleasantries, Zeng Xiaoqi officially started the interview. She had initially just wanted to ask about people's motivations for queuing, but the fan spent the whole time praising how delicious and fantastic Lin Ji's Food was. It made Zeng Xiaoqi's mouth water, even though she had just had lunch.

She then randomly interviewed a few more people in line. And they enthusiastically recommended a bunch of the restaurant's dishes.

"Those Tiger Skin Chicken Feet are superbly marinated. You have to try them when you go in."

"The Lotus Root is delicious too, so crisp and super tasty."

"The flavor of the steamed pork ribs in black bean sauce is the best. My goodness, I can't believe those are pork ribs!"

"You absolutely must try Boss Lin's sweet and sour pork tenderloin; it's simply wonderful. I can't even describe it in words."

"The Sour Plum Soup in the restaurant is slow-cooked over a low flame—you can't find anything like it outside. Just try it, and you'll understand how good it is."

"If you like spicy food, don't miss out on the restaurant's Boiled Beef Slices; it's phenomenal!"

Zeng Xiaoqi's mouth watered as she conducted the interviews. She hadn't expected such an unassuming little restaurant to have so many delicious things on offer.

I'll definitely go in later under the guise of an interview and try some of these dishes... Her plan was perfect. However, when she finally could go inside, she discovered that all the food had already sold out.

"Sorry, everyone, all the food in the restaurant has sold out," Lin Xu said apologetically to the crowd. "Please come back this afternoon. We'll prepare more then and do our best to meet everyone's needs."

He had never imagined that a closure notice would attract so many customers. Even journalists from TV stations had shown up.

"Chezai, give these journalist friends some sour... ah, looks like the Sour Plum Soup is all gone. In that case, just get them some other drinks. I'll call Mr. Hu to send over some more meat."

He instructed his staff, then took out his phone and called Ou Hua, Mr. Hu, and Uncle Shen one by one, asking them to deliver more of the scarce ingredients, as well as other food and drinks.

With so many customers at noon, there will likely be even more in the afternoon.

He then called his senior fellow apprentice, Xie Baomin, asking him to send a few chefs over to help out. Since there were more customers, the amount of food also needed to increase. He wanted to do his best to satisfy the customers' wishes to dine at the restaurant before it closed for renovations.

After sorting these matters out, he went to the kitchen and brewed a huge pot of Sour Plum Soup using a large jacketed kettle. Only then did he manage to free up some time for interviews.

The interviews themselves were quite simple. Whether it was Zeng Xiaoqi from the Beijing Travel Channel or the crew from CCTV Travel, their aim was to promote Beijing's cuisine and enhance the city's influence. Consequently, their focus was on the restaurant itself, rather than on Lin Xu personally. So,

they asked him some simple questions, such as his motivation for opening the restaurant, the reason for its temporary closure, and its signature dishes.

Upon learning that Lin Xu was closing for renovations to upgrade to a larger, more formal restaurant, everyone curiously looked at the design renderings for the new establishment. This further heightened their anticipation for the future of Lin Ji's Food.

After the interviews concluded, Lin Xu excused himself and hurried back to the kitchen to work. There was no other way; too many ingredients needed preparing, and the afternoon preparation time was too short, so he had to make every second count.

The TV crews filmed some B-roll footage around the restaurant before finally bidding farewell and leaving. Not having been able to film any of the restaurant's actual dishes left them somewhat disheartened. After all, they had been eagerly anticipating it for much of the day while waiting in line.

Back in the interview van, Zeng Xiaoqi thought for a moment and then said to her team, "You all head back first. Edit what we just recorded and get it ready for broadcast. Give me a small camcorder and a tripod; I'm going back to the restaurant to continue interviewing."

The others were stunned.

"More interviews?"

"Yes, more interviews! I waited all this time and didn't get to film a single dish. I'm not giving up that easily! Hand me the camcorder. You all head back. I'll return after I've finished filming."

The cameraman replaced the camcorder's storage card and battery with fresh ones and then retrieved a small tripod from the trunk.

Carrying the equipment, Zeng Xiaoqi returned to Lin Ji's Food.

As someone renowned at the TV station for her relentless drive and 'never-give-up' attitude, she simply couldn't stomach this kind of setback.

## Chapter 205: Accepting the Interview! Try My Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes!

The top spot on the food charts, held for over a year, had been mysteriously surpassed. Moreover, her interview hadn't featured a single dish; she had spent the entire time just listening to customers' anecdotes.

This interview was a complete failure. A TV show isn't a radio program. What's the point of just listening to customers talk? We need to film the food, make the audience drool in front of their TVs!

That's why she chose to stay. She planned to film the dish preparation in the kitchen and then the restaurant's offerings. If time allowed, she even wanted to capture the bustling scene of customers flocking in during the evening.

"Hello, we're not open yet... Why are you back?" Song Tiantian was very curious. She didn't understand why the beautiful host who had just interviewed them had returned. Is she planning to continue interviewing our boss?

"I filmed the first part of the segment earlier. Now I'm here to shoot the second part," Zeng Xiaoqi explained, then headed towards the kitchen.

"Boss Lin, I'd like to film your kitchen staff preparing and cooking the dishes. Is that okay? I promise I won't get in your way; just pretend I'm not here."

She knew many restaurant kitchens prohibited filming because they were often dirty and disorganized. Filming such conditions wouldn't be visually appealing and could even ruin customers' appetites. Thus, maintaining an air of mystery was preferable.

But Lin Ji's kitchen was semi-open. Theoretically, filming was allowed. After all, when she had come in earlier, all the customers were taking pictures with their cell phones.

"You can film, but you need to be careful. There are open flames on the stoves, and we'll be deep-frying food here soon, which is quite dangerous."

"No problem, Boss Lin, I'll be careful."

Zeng Xiaoqi had initially planned to use a tripod but worried it might hinder everyone's work. So, she decided to carry the camera on her shoulder.

When she graduated from university and interned at a TV station, she had carried a camera on her shoulder in the news department for over half a year. Then, one time, when the on-screen reporter fell ill, she seized the opportunity, finally putting down the camera to become a reporter holding a microphone.

Years passed. Carrying the camera on her shoulder again made Zeng Xiaoqi feel like she was back in her internship days.

The kitchen was bustling. But thanks to their long-standing coordination, everyone worked busily yet methodically. Those who needed to chop vegetables chopped, and those who needed to wash ingredients washed.

As for Lin Xu, he was constantly busy: one moment adjusting the master stock, the next marinating meat slices, then making noodle toppings, preparing Dough, and concocting sweet and sour sauce. He didn't have a moment's rest.

「Before long」

A business van with a Fishing Platform pass parked steadily in front of the restaurant. The van door slid open, and Xie Baomin led a few chefs into the store.

"Junior Brother, oh Junior Brother, if you were going to close the shop, you should have just closed it. Why did you have to make an announcement? Now look, this situation is unmanageable, isn't it?"

After receiving Lin Xu's call, Xie Baomin checked the online comments and discovered that the buzz around Lin Ji's Food was alarmingly high. He immediately brought several efficient chefs from Building Two to provide support.

This popularity was both an opportunity and a challenge for his junior brother. If it wasn't handled well and customers started complaining vociferously, the reputation of Lin Ji's Food would be completely ruined.

While filming the food preparation in the kitchen, Zeng Xiaoqi saw Xie Baomin, and her eyes widened in surprise. Wasn't this the rather aloof executive chef from Fishing Platform?

The last time there was a foreign affairs event at Fishing Platform's Building Two, CCTV and Yanjing Satellite TV both went to cover it. To increase exposure for the travel channel, Zeng Xiaoqi had also tagged along. During the interview, this executive chef only spoke to CCTV and left the Yanjing Satellite TV reporters to be handled by the front desk manager of Building Two. That had infuriated the Yanjing Satellite TV reporters. So, a few days ago, when Fishing Platform invited various media outlets for a live broadcast event, Yanjing Satellite TV only sent an intern reporter who filed a small, unremarkable news piece. The travel channel hadn't even known about the event.

Seeing Xie Baomin again now, Zeng Xiaoqi could hardly believe her ears. Junior... Junior Brother? Was Boss Lin Chef Xie's junior brother?

Lin Xu smiled helplessly. "I didn't expect it to get this popular either. Thank you so much, Senior Brother. I feel bad for always troubling you whenever something comes up."

"We're martial brothers; saying that makes us sound like strangers. Oh, you have a reporter here for an interview?"

Zeng Xiaoqi smiled and greeted Xie Baomin, "Hello, Chef Xie. I'm Zeng Xiaoqi, a host from the Yanjing Travel Channel. I was at Fishing Platform last time covering the foreign affairs event..."

She was afraid Xie Baomin wouldn't remember her, so she stated her name upfront to avoid any awkwardness for either of them.

"I remember you," Xie Baomin said. "You looked quite unhappy that day because I didn't agree to your interview. I was rushing to a mobilization meeting then, so I couldn't spare the time. Today, make sure to get plenty of footage of my junior brother and promote Lin Ji's Food extensively in your report. Tonight, I'll personally cook for you."

What?! The executive chef from Fishing Platform is going to personally cook for me? This trip was absolutely worth it! Zeng Xiaoqi's face lit up with delight.

"Don't worry, Chef Xie," she said. "We plan to make this a two-part program. The first part has already been filmed and sent to the station for editing. I'm currently filming the second part, intending to feature more of the delicious food to attract viewers."

While they were chatting, Boss Hu arrived with a meat delivery and also helped Uncle Shen bring over some vegetables.

"You're closing the shop, Boss Lin, so I brought you a box of chilled chicken legs. Let's continue our partnership when you reopen!"

Old Hu was very astute. Fearing they might not continue their cooperation after Lin Xu's new restaurant opened, he brought a box of high-quality chilled chicken legs along with the meat delivery.

Chapter 206: Accepting the Interview! Try My Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes!

Big clients, well, they need careful schmoozing.

After thanking him, Lin Xu helped carry everything into the shop.

While they were busy, Ou Hua also arrived in a small van to deliver alcoholic drinks and other beverages.

"Boss Lin, I saw the online buzz is huge, so I brought you a few small kegs of draft beer. Share it with the guys when you're done. This is on me; it won't be on the bill."

"I appreciate that a lot."

After Mr. Hu and Ou Hua had left, Lin Xu contacted Uncle Shen to arrange payment for the vegetables, only for Uncle Shen to repeatedly refuse.

"Those vegetables aren't worth much. Consider them a gift."

Tsk... If you all keep this up, I'll never get to close the shop!

Back in the kitchen, he was just about to get busy again when Xie Baomin opened the box of chilled chicken thighs and examined them.

"Wow, these chicken thighs are quite nice, all uniformly sized. What are you planning to do with them, Junior Brother? I can help you prepare them."

What to do? Lin Xu hadn't really thought it through.

He said with a smile, "You decide, Senior Brother. Besides, we have to host Reporter Zeng for dinner, right? Whatever you think is appropriate, just go ahead."

Right, I'll leave the choice to you. I'm just here to learn.

At the moment, the shop had roosters for making Steamed Chicken with Black Bean Sauce and Dry-Fried Chicken Pieces.

Originally, Lin Xu had planned for Xie Baomin to make the Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken he had mentioned before. However, with a TV station reporter present, Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken seemed a bit too homestyle.

It would be better to let Senior Brother have free rein. After all, this man was the head chef at the Fishing Platform. Just one or two dishes from him would be enough to wow everyone.

Xie Baomin poured the chicken thighs into a basin and soaked them in clean water.

No matter the dish, this soaking step was indispensable. This not only helps stretch the chicken skin, making it easier to clean impurities from its pores and folds, but it also allows the blood to soak out from the meat, rendering the chicken thighs even fresher, more tender, and delicious.

Eventually, he made a decision. "I'll blanch these chicken thighs and then add them to the braising liquid for the chicken feet to make some braised chicken thighs. As for the rest, I'll make you guys a dish of Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes."

Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes? Lin Xu's eagerness to learn surged uncontrollably.

Compared to Zaozhuang Big Plate Chicken, Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes was clearly a better fit for the positioning of the future new restaurant. Plus, it tasted great and had a good texture. If he could master it, it might even become the new restaurant's signature dish!

He decided he'd secretly learn from his Senior Brother while he cooked.

All day long, that Superior Culinary Skill Learning Card had been tempting him, making him want to learn this dish and that. Lin Xu decided he would just use the card to save himself from constantly wondering what to learn next.

Xie Baomin cleaned the chicken thighs. He picked out seven or eight uniformly sized ones to continue soaking and placed the rest in a pot. He covered them with fresh water and added scallion and ginger for blanching.

After the water boiled and the froth was skimmed off, the chicken thighs were boiled for another three to five minutes to cook them through completely.

Then, they were taken out and rinsed with warm water.

Just then, Xu Xinhua was about to simmer the braising liquid to start on the Braised Chicken Feet, so Xie Baomin directly added the chicken thighs into the liquid.

This way, they would first simmer in the braising liquid for a while, and once the chicken feet were added, they would all braise together. Then, they were left to soak for another hour. The chicken thighs would fully absorb the flavors of the braising liquid, becoming deliciously tender and tasty.

Lin Xu announced, "These chicken thighs aren't for sale; we'll eat them all ourselves. Since they were a gift, there's no need to sell them."

Everyone perked up at the mention of having chicken thighs for dinner.

Zeng Xiaoqi, holding the camera and filming, could hardly believe her ears.

Oh my gosh! What kind of boss is this? He hears the head chef say the chicken thighs are good quality, and instead of figuring out how to sell them for profit, he's letting the staff eat them all! I should try one later too. Everyone says the camera operator deserves an extra chicken thigh, and I've been filming for so long, I definitely deserve a braised chicken thigh as a reward, right? But I'm even more interested in tasting the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes made by Chef Xie. I wonder when he'll start making them.

Xie Baomin didn't keep her waiting too long.

At four in the afternoon, he fished the chicken thighs out of the water. Peeling off the skin, he explained, "For dishes like chicken cubes, you need to peel off the chicken skin in advance. The resulting chicken cubes will have a better texture."

Having soaked for so long, the chicken skin came off easily. The removed chicken skin could be used to render chicken fat, ensuring nothing went to waste.

After all the chicken skin was peeled off, Xie Baomin used his kitchen knife to make an incision along each chicken thigh. The blade ran close to the bone, and then he peeled the meat back from the cut to expose the bone.

Then, using his knife, he severed the fascia at both ends of the thigh bone, and a complete chicken bone was removed.

"In the past, life was tough, and old Beijingers often couldn't afford pork. So, they'd use cheaper chicken breast as a substitute. They'd use the Sauce Explosion technique to make it fragrant, passing it off as Sauce Burst Meat Shreds. And that's how this dish, Sauce Burst Meat Cubes, eventually came to be," Xie Baomin explained as he worked.

He had been learning culinary arts from Master Gao since he was a teenager and was quite knowledgeable about the history of various dishes.

As he busied himself, he continued, "Now that living conditions have improved, the main ingredient for Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes has switched from chicken breast to the tastier chicken thigh meat. The only troublesome part is deboning it."

After deboning all the chicken thighs, he meticulously removed the fascia from each piece of chicken thigh meat.

Next, he cut the chicken thigh meat into small cubes, about 0.8 centimeters in size.

After dicing, he added light soy sauce and pepper powder to the meat, mixing it evenly. Then he added an egg white, followed by a handful of starch, mixing again to ensure each cube was lightly coated.

Finally, he drizzled a spoonful of cooking oil over the chicken and mixed it a little more. This would help the cubes separate easily during the initial shallow fry.

After marinating the chicken cubes, Xie Baomin began to prepare the sauce for the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes.

Chapter 207: Accepting the Interview! Try My Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes!

Dry soybean paste was diluted with water and filtered. Then, it was mixed with sweet bean paste, ginger juice, sugar, and a bit of cornstarch. This created the Sauce Explosion sauce frequently used in Beijing cuisine.

"This sauce can be used to make Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes, as well as Sauce Explosion Meat Shreds, which is what everyone often calls Beijing Sauce Meat Strips."

Oh? Then I must learn this even more.

With this thought in mind, Lin Xu curiously asked, "Senior Brother, what's the difference between Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes and Kung Pao Chicken?"

Xie Baomin said with a smile, "Kung Pao Chicken belongs to the lychee flavor type in Sichuan cuisine, while Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes are of a rich, salty-sweet sauce flavor type; there's quite a big difference. Also, the standard preparation for Kung Pao Chicken includes scallions and peanuts. However, Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes pair better with fresh and refreshing diced cucumber, as the sauce can become too rich if eaten in excess."

Zeng Xiaoqi listened to their conversation. It felt like the door to a new world had opened for her.

She shared her three meals every day and had tasted many delicacies, but she was completely clueless about food pairing and flavor types.

Listening to their conversation, Zeng Xiaoqi suddenly felt that it might be a good idea to start a food program on the travel channel when she returned.

While she was lost in thought, Xie Baomin had already picked up a cucumber. He first peeled off the skin, then sliced the cucumber vertically into strips, and carefully removed the seeds.

He diced the cucumber to match the size of the chicken pieces. Once all ingredients were ready, he began to cook.

Lin Xu hurriedly put down what he was doing and came over. He hadn't learned how to cook eggplant last time, so this time, he was determined to master Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes.

Xie Baomin set up the wok and added just under half a wokful of lard, explaining, "Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes is an alternative to Sauce Explosion Meat Shreds. To make the taste closer to pork shreds, it's necessary to use lard; this makes it more flavorful."

Is there such a trick? I need to note this down. Next time I make similar dishes, I can use this.

When the oil was about fifty percent hot, Xie Baomin poured the marinated chicken cubes into the wok to flash-fry them.

As soon as they entered the wok, he stirred them with a large spoon, allowing the chicken cubes to spread out naturally.

Once the chicken changed color, he added the diced cucumber to the wok, briefly passing it through the oil. This would remove the raw taste from the cucumber, making the finished dish tastier.

Five seconds after adding the cucumber, Xie Baomin placed a colander over the lard container. Then, he poured the entire contents of the wok—chicken, cucumber, and lard—through the colander.

He then placed the wok back on the stove and turned the heat to low.

He heated the residual lard in the wok, then poured in the prepared sauce, stir-frying it in the lard to release its fragrance.

Simmering over low heat, he let the sauce cook down to mellow its flavor and bring out its full aroma.

When the sauce in the wok began to bubble and thicken, he added the flash-fried chicken and cucumber. He quickly tossed them using a light flicking motion of the wok to evenly coat the pieces with the sauce.

In the meantime, Lin Xu took the opportunity to use his Cooking Learning Card.

"Learning target: Xie Baomin. Current Skill: Sauce Explosion. Would you like to learn it?"

What? The Sauce Explosion Skill? Learn, learn, learn! This is totally worth learning!

He silently commanded in his mind, Learn!

"Congratulations! The Host has acquired the Superior-level universal Cooking Technique—Sauce Explosion. The Host can now prepare all Sauce Explosion-type dishes."

WOOHOO! Lin Xu was overjoyed. I hadn't expected this at all! I actually mastered the Sauce Explosion Skill! Now I can easily make Beijing Sauce Meat Strips!

While he was still excited, Xie Baomin had already finished making the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes and served them on a plate.

The thick brown sauce, glossy with oil, evenly coated the chicken cubes, giving off a rich sauce aroma.

For the residents of Beijing who enjoy sauce, this was simply an unparalleled delicacy.

It was now four-thirty in the afternoon, and the dishes for the evening were also ready.

His classmate Shen had already returned from work and was currently playing with Dundun.

Lin Xu made a sweeping gesture and announced, "Let's eat!"

Chapter 208: Why Does His Majesty Rebel? Vegetable Python and Meat Dragon, the Indistinguishable Delicacies!

"Wow, these chicken cubes are delicious, and the sauce is so rich in flavor."

After sitting down, Shen Jiayue first tried the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes made by Xie Baomin. As someone from Beijing, her fondness for sauce had become ingrained in her very bones.

While enjoying the delicious Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes, the young girl suddenly thought of Noodles With Black Bean Sauce.

She was about to mention it, but then she thought of how tired her dear Lin Xu was. If he heard she wanted some and decided to make it, wouldn't that tire him out even more?

Better wait for the weekend to eat Aunt Liu's cooking.

Aunt Liu's skill in making Noodles With Black Bean Sauce is also unmatched. She should really let Lin Xu try it at her house one day.

Humph, after all, both Dad and Mom have given their approval.

So bringing him home for a meal over the weekend should be fine, right?

Just the thought of holding hands with Lin Xu and heading home to eat made Shen Jiayue find the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes from her senior even more delicious.

When you're in a good mood, your appetite really is better!

While she was lost in her thoughts, Zeng Xiaoqi sitting next to her was completely immersed in the deliciousness of the Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes.

The beautiful host had been making her way in Beijing since passing the self-study exams at the Communication University. Having worked on the travel channel, she had nearly tried every delicacy Beijing had to offer.

She had eaten Sauce Burst Chicken Cubes countless times before, but only after tasting Xie Baomin's cooking did she realize that perhaps renaming those other dishes as Sauce Boiled Chicken Cubes would be more appropriate.

Picking up a piece, even before it reached her lips, the rich aroma of the sauce mixed with the unique fragrance of pork fat hit her, instantly stimulating her appetite.

Into her mouth it went.

The first thing she tasted was the layer of sauce coating the chicken cubes.

The thick sauce was wrapped in a lavish layer of fat, and before even tasting the chicken, she experienced the delightful taste of the fat.

With one chew, the freshness of the chicken burst forth in her mouth. The savory flavor, mingled with the fatty pork aroma and the sauce, kept teasing her taste buds, compelling her to unconsciously reach for another piece.

Mhm, these delicious chicken cubes would be even better eaten with a spoon.

"Chef Xie, your skills are truly amazing!"

After finishing the chicken cubes and trying a small piece of crunchy cucumber, which was crisp and had a refreshing cucumber taste, the greasiness in her mouth was instantly swept away.

In the past, when she went out for interviews and dined at high-end restaurants, she had thought all chefs were more or less the same.

But after tasting Xie Baomin's cooking, she realized that the same dish could be worlds apart in taste and texture, depending on who made it.

Cooking truly is a profound art.

This further solidified her determination to start a food column.

While she was thinking about all this, she didn't stop tasting the other dishes, trying Lin Xu's sweet and sour pork loin and Steamed Sea Bass.

AAAAAH! Boss Lin's cooking skills are actually this great?

No wonder those customers were willing to wait in line.

For this taste, lining up for an entire day would be worth it!

As she was eating, Xu Xinhua came over with a large tray of marinated chicken legs.

"The chicken legs are ready, everyone have a taste. They're cooked with the broth from the Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, so the flavor should be good."

Plenty of chicken legs were there. Each person got one, and there were still plenty left over.

Lin Xu used his chopsticks to eat the meat around the lower joint of the chicken leg first and then used his hands to slowly gnaw on the bone at the joint.

The marinated meat of the chicken was full of flavor.

The chicken skin was rich with marinating juices, and a bite would fill the mouth with savory freshness.

The chicken meat inside was completely soaked with the marinade, making it incredibly flavorful.

Furthermore, because it was cooked without much high heat, the natural juices of the meat weren't boiled away, so the meat was moist and delicious.

"Wow! Tasty, tasty."

"Should we consider adding marinated chicken legs to our menu? This flavor is just perfect."

"I think we better not. Just one leg is almost filling enough. Unlike Chicken Feet, which have little meat, the more you eat, the hungrier you get. I think the amount of marinated dishes we have now is just right."

"Is this all we've tried? Pork head, marinated beef, Pork Trotter, pork tongue, pork tail, chicken gizzards, chicken liver, chicken wings, chicken skin, lamb trotters are all yet to come. If we open a restaurant in the future, we should probably set up a separate department just for marinated dishes, with various types of them on offer."

"..."

The staff discussed as they ate.

Lin Xu also realized this issue.

When we move to the Fishing Platform, I'll just assign Xu Xinhua to the marination department. He's not coming back until he learns a few signature marinated dishes!

While they were eating, Shen Jiayue suddenly asked Lin Xu, "Lin Ji's Food's topic has risen to the top of the Yanjing Region food category. Why aren't you posting an update to thank everyone?"

"What?"

"Number one?"

Lin Xu put down his chicken leg and quickly took out his phone to check.

Wow, it's been number one since around one o'clock, and I had no idea!

They had not only solidified their position at number one but had also surpassed #Yanjing food sharing# by over one hundred thousand in popularity. The top spot was now as stable as could be.

Song Tiantian, who had just finished nibbling a chicken leg, also took a look and clicked to check the second-placed topic. She then said with a laugh, "What do you think, knowing they were left so far behind by us, do you think the host of #Yanjing food sharing# is feeling bad?"

"Not feeling bad!"

Zeng Xiaoqi's reply made Song Tiantian burst into laughter. "How do you know they're not feeling bad?" she asked.

"Because I am the host of #Yanjing food sharing#."

Everyone stared, utterly bewildered.

Oh no! An enemy had infiltrated their ranks!

But seeing Zeng Xiaoqi's face covered with rice grains from eating, everyone was more inclined to believe that she had been successfully turned by the delicious food.

Seeing everyone looking at her, Zeng Xiaoqi said, "At first I was upset, but after coming here for the interview and discovering that Boss Lin is actually Chef Xie's junior, and the food is so delicious, I immediately felt relieved... Oh right, your topic host hasn't done any activities. Why don't I become the host of your topic? I have more experience!"

Chapter 209: Why Does His Majesty Rebel? The Indistinguishable Delicacies of Vegetable Python and Meat Dragon!

In order to build a network for her future food column, she planned to help manage topics, getting Lin Xu indebted to her. This way, when her column started, inviting Lin Xu would become much easier. If she could get Lin Xu to join her food column, then the higher his popularity, the higher the program's ratings would be. So, helping him boost the topic's popularity now was actually helping herself.

Lin Xu thought Zeng Xiaoqi's proposal was a good one. Now that Panda had become "Boss Panda" and was busier than ever, he indeed had no time to manage the topics anymore. And the main task of breaking into the top ten of the topic leaderboard was urgent. Switching to an experienced topic host should better accomplish the mission.

With this in mind, he added Zeng Xiaoqi on WeChat and pulled the beautiful journalist into Lin Ji's Food's high-end VIP customer group. There, he mentioned Panda and briefly explained the situation.

Soon, Zeng Xiaoqi became the host of the Lin Ji's Food topic.

As for the #Yanjing Food Sharing# topic, Zeng Xiaoqi handed it over to a colleague. This change had just occurred when Zeng Xiaoqi's fans were all stunned.

"Why hath our sovereign lord rebelled?"

"How did Xiaoqi become the host for Lin Ji's Food?"

"We were still trying to figure out how to regain first place, and she ran off to the other side?"

"Not only did she go, but she just announced she's a Lin Ji girl... Heh, women. She must have defected because the boss of Lin Ji is handsome."

"Handsome? How handsome is he?"

"Searched for a photo—definitely very handsome! No more pretending, I am a Lin Ji girl, and I'm laying my cards on the table!"

"Sisters, see you on the other side!"

When these people flocked to the Lin Ji's Food topic, they saw a post from a netizen called [Panda Brother]:

"Sorry, folks! I've been too busy with work to manage the topic. To make it up to you, until nine p.m. tomorrow, the netizens whose posts sharing their Lin Ji's Food experience get the 11th to 20th most likes will each receive a 5,555 yuan cash red packet!"

What? There was money to be had? What kind of miraculous topic was this? But why the 11th to 20th places?

These people quickly saw another reward announcement: the top ten would actually get a huge 6,666 yuan red packet.

AHHH! I'm going to eat at Lin Ji! I want to win the big prize!

There's money for the top twenty. This offered a huge incentive to the users' enthusiasm.

Panda's bold move caused the popularity of the Lin Ji's Food topic to soar once again and also ignited the customers' enthusiasm to dine in the store.

The staff meal wasn't even over when customers started coming in to place orders. Everyone quickly finished eating and began to get busy at their posts.

Zeng Xiaoqi also hurriedly picked up her camera and started to film the kitchen of Lin Ji's Food.

The evening brought even more customers, including long-time diners who visited to bid farewell through photos, as well as many new customers attracted by the Lin Ji's Food topic. Such an enticing cash red packet was sitting there. It was hard not to be tempted.

Before dinner service began, Lin Xu felt the store was well-prepared. But when the customers swarmed in, he realized he had underestimated the allure of the prize money.

If there weren't enough seats, they'd share tables; if there were no available spots, they'd get takeout.

No matter what, they had to buy a meal from Lin Ji's Food today.

While buying, they also took some photos, planning to share their dining experiences online after eating.

Meanwhile, under the Lin Ji's Food topic, many out-of-town netizens who hadn't come to the restaurant started making up stories for the prize money.

"I'm a blind taxi driver. One day, while dropping off a customer on Yingchun Street, I smelled a fragrant aroma and found my way into Lin Ji's Food for a bowl of noodles. Afterward, my sight was miraculously restored! Boss Lin is amazing!"

"One day I was being bullied by some punks when I ran into Boss Lin. He rubbed a few nuclear bombs together with his hands and told me a real man should fight back!"

"I'm Ultraman. A few days ago, I came to Earth on a mission, and my energy was critically low. Without an immediate return to the M78 Nebula, I would've been in mortal danger. It was Boss Lin's bowl of noodles that restored my energy, helped me defeat the little monster, and save Earth!"

"I'm a Great Mahayana Stage cultivator. I decided to go to outer space to check it out one day and happened to encounter Boss Lin taking a bunch of ingredients out of a black hole. He said chilling ingredients in a black hole would make them taste better."

"..."

「In the store.」

Xie Baomin, looking at the bustling crowd of customers, said to Lin Xu, "Let's do one more day tomorrow. I'll come over in the morning to give your little shop a perfect send-off."

"Then thank you, Senior Brother. Should I prepare breakfast for you?"

"Prepare some. Get some high-carb food and some meat. Otherwise, we can't last until noon. The workload here is too much now. Thankfully, the pay is high enough, or these employees would all run off."

Lin Xu had already considered the issue of workload when setting salaries, so he paid generously.

If the pay were the same as other restaurants, why would people come here to work themselves to the bone when they could have an easy job in a less busy establishment?

By a little past eight in the evening, the store had sold out of food.

Xie Baomin and his subordinates, along with Zeng Xiaoqi, also took their leave.

But the customers didn't leave. They were still taking photos and selfies in the store, even making short videos, and lining up to take pictures with Dundun by the cash register.

It wasn't until nearly nine o'clock that they began to leave in dribs and drabs, while Lin Xu, exhausted, carried Dundun home to rest.

Chapter 210: Why Does His Majesty Rebel? The Indistinguishable Delicacies of Vegetable Python and Meat Dragon!

Four in the morning.

Lin Xu woke up from his sleep, once again feeling refreshed and full of strength. Every time after a good night's sleep, he regained peak levels of energy and strength, which felt wonderful.

Having the system is truly great!

After washing up, he carried Dundun into the store. First, he drove to buy groceries, then sorted and prepped the ingredients. After finishing these tasks, he began preparing today's breakfast. Today was the last day, and the workload would be bigger, so he needed to ensure everyone had a hearty meal.

Lin Xu thought for a moment and used some yeast to ferment the flour. He then finely chopped pork from the foreleg and minced it. He added Light Soy Sauce, Dark Soy Sauce, oyster sauce, pepper powder, and Scallion and Ginger juice, then stirred the meat filling energetically. After preparing these, he placed the meat filling in the refrigerator to marinate and cool. Chilling would help the moisture integrate into the meat filling, making it more convenient to use later.

Today, Lin Xu was making a flour-based delicacy called Meat Dragon. This was a common snack in the Northern Region. The preparation wasn't complicated, but the taste was fresh and delicious, making it the best choice for a high-carbohydrate meal.

After preparing the meat filling, Lin Xu took out some eggs.

Well, not only the meat filling, but I also need to prepare a vegetarian filling to give everyone more choices.

He cracked the eggs into a bowl, added salt, and beat them with chopsticks. Then he heated oil in a pan and started frying the eggs.

There were three ways to prepare the egg filling. One method was to add the eggs to the pan before the oil heated up, then stir with chopsticks to mix the eggs and oil. This way, as the oil temperature rose, the egg mixture would turn into fine pieces of scrambled egg. The second method was to wait until the oil was hot before pouring in the egg mixture. Once the eggs started to set, he would quickly chop them up with a spatula while they were still hot. The third method was to pour the eggs into hot oil for deep frying. By using high-temperature oil, the eggs would puff up completely, then they would be chopped up on the chopping board.

The textures of the egg filling prepared by the three methods varied: the first method yielded the tenderest eggs, the third had a crispy texture, and the second method combined the characteristics of the other two.

Today, Lin Xu chose the second method. After frying the eggs into chunks, instead of chopping them up immediately with the spatula, he grabbed a handful of dried shrimp and let the residual heat in the pan bring out their flavor. He then chopped up the eggs with the spatula while mixing, allowing the dried shrimp and egg pieces to blend thoroughly. Once all the eggs were chopped up, he set them aside to cool.

For the egg and Chives filling, it was essential to let the eggs cool completely before use. Otherwise, the heat from the eggs would draw out moisture from the Chives, causing them to lose their fresh and tender texture.

After preparing the eggs, Lin Xu selected and washed the Chives he bought in the morning and set them aside for later use. The Chives could not be cut at this time; it was better to wait until the dough had risen and been kneaded once before chopping the Chives for the Filling, as cutting too early would cause the Chives to lose moisture.

At six o'clock, the dough was ready. Lin Xu sprinkled some dry flour on the worktop, then dumped the risen dough onto it, kneading it first to push out any air bubbles. After that, he divided the dough into four pieces. Having divided it, he started preparing the fillings.

Holding the base of the Chives, he vigorously shook them to remove any water droplets clinging to the leaves, then chopped them finely. He promptly drizzled some cooking oil over the chopped Chives in a bowl to lock in the moisture, preserving their fresh and tender flavor. Then he added the chopped eggs and shrimp bits, and cracked a few raw eggs into it to help the fillings cling together. Next, he added some salt and Sichuan peppercorns, drizzled some Sesame Oil, and mixed it. The egg and Chives Filling was then ready.

Lin Xu took a rolling pin and rolled out a piece of dough into a rectangular sheet. He then poured the egg and Chives Filling on top, spread it evenly, and started rolling from one edge, creating an over a meter-long roll filled with stuffing. After rolling it up, he pinched the ends and carefully placed it on a steaming tray to rest.

A Vegetable Python roll filled with greens was thus prepared.

In the past, Chen Meijuan often made Vegetable Python at home, but she used unleavened dough instead of fermented dough. The finished Vegetable Python had a thin, nearly transparent crust with fillings including scrambled eggs, Chives, dried tofu, and glass noodles inside, offering a delicious and aromatic flavor. Lin Xu could eat two or three in one go.

Today, with plenty of fillings prepared, Lin Xu made two rolls of fermented dough Vegetable Python.

After finishing that, he brought out the meat filling, added a bowl of finely chopped Scallion, poured in some Seasoning Oil, mixed it evenly, and started making the Meat Dragon.

Hmm, although these dishes look similar on the surface—both being long, steamed, flour-based foods—they have different names due to their different fillings.

The ones with vegetable filling were called Vegetable Pythons, and those with meat filling were called Meat Dragons.

Just as he was about to start making them, Che Zai and his group arrived. Today was busy, so they had deliberately gotten up early.

"Wow, such a long piece! What's this food, boss?" Che Zai looked at the resting Vegetable Python with some curiosity.

"Vegetable Python. It's filled with egg and Chives Filling. Haven't you tried it back home?"

Che Zai shook his head. "Never had Vegetable Python, but I've been called a 'vegetable dog' plenty of times while playing games."

Lin Xu: "..."

He rolled out another piece of dough, spread the meat filling on it evenly, and then rolled it up from one end before placing it back on the steaming tray to rest further.

Fifteen minutes later, he put all the Vegetable Pythons and Meat Dragons into the steam-filled steamer to start the steaming process.

During this time, Lin Xu cooked some salty soup. He was sweating a lot, so he needed to eat salty soup to effectively replenish the lost salt from his body.

Twenty minutes later, the steaming time was up. He turned off the steamer and let the Vegetable Pythons and Meat Dragons continue to steam with the residual heat for a few minutes. This passive steaming helps prevent the steamed items from shrinking due to sudden drops in temperature, making the finished rolls and buns more uniform and firm.

A few minutes later, Lin Xu put on heat-resistant gloves, opened the steamer, and took out all the steamed Vegetable Pythons and Meat Dragons. After steaming, both types of flour-based food had expanded significantly. Coiled on the tray, at first glance, they really did resemble pythons.

Lin Xu took a photo and sent it to Shen Jiayue: "Made Vegetable Python and Meat Dragon this morning. Ask your in-laws if they want some. If they do, I'll keep it warm in the steamer."

After sending the photo, he grabbed a cleaver and chopped all the Vegetable Pythons and Meat Dragons into sections.

Once cut, the rich aroma of pork and the fresh scent of egg and Chives wafted out.

"This smells so good!"

"I wasn't that hungry before, but this smell is hard to resist."

"Our boss's skills are really something else."

"Can we eat now, boss?"

Just as he had cut them open, Niu Chuan and the others gathered around.

Lin Xu said, "Go ahead, just be careful not to spill the Filling."

He then picked up a section of Meat Dragon and took a bite.

Mmm, the dough wrapper was soft and fluffy, enveloping layers of rich, fragrant meat filling. Taking a bite, the soft dough and the rich stuffing combined deliciously in his mouth—it was simply divine!

「In the West Fourth Ring Villa.」

Having just woken up, Shen Jiayue instantly became alert after seeing the photo Lin Xu sent. She climbed out of bed, still in her pajamas, and pitter-pattered to knock on the main bedroom door on the third floor. "Dad, Mom, are you up yet? Xu Bao made something delicious today, do you guys want to go eat?"

While she was calling out, Han Shuzhen opened the door. "It's definitely busy at Xiaoxu's place today, we better not go and add to the chaos. We have breakfast at home too, don't we, Guofu?"

Shen Guofu, who was brushing his teeth in the master bedroom bathroom, agreed immediately. Spitting out his toothpaste foam, he added, "Exactly, we wouldn't be of any help, just adding to the chaos. Besides, we have everything we need at home, no need to..."

As he was speaking, Shen Jiayue, at the doorway, clicked open the photo Lin Xu had sent and showed it to her mom.

Director Han immediately said, "It's definitely busy at Xiaoxu's place today, but let's go over anyway. We might be able to lend a hand if they need any help..."

Shen Guofu in the bathroom: ???????

The change in attitude was so fast! Something's up!!!!