

## Culinary 211

### Chapter 211: Advancing into the Top Ten! Surprises Keep Coming! Consecutive Raffles!

"Junior Brother, your culinary skills are really impressive."

「In the restaurant.」

Xie Baomin, who had brought along several chefs from Fishing Platform to help out, bit into a Meat Dragon and was immediately transported back to the tastes and soft textures of his childhood. As a child who grew up in the hutongs of Beijing, Xie Baomin had eaten plenty of such delicacies. Vegetable Python, Meat Dragon, flower rolls, salted rolls, sugar triangles, sugar-fried dough, vegetable nests, mixed-grain steamed buns, and various other foods had accompanied his growth. But as an adult, busy with work and family, opportunities to enjoy such foods had become less frequent. Sometimes he thought about making them himself, but he would get sidetracked whenever he got busy.

His junior brother really had it easy!

Having a bite of Meat Dragon followed by a sip of the savory soup his junior brother had prepared was an absolute delight!

The savory soup Lin Xu made was somewhat similar to Spicy Soup. It used Pork Bone Broth as a base and included ingredients like shredded kelp, wood ear mushrooms, diced gluten, dried daylilies, and vermicelli noodles. He then added table salt, Light Soy Sauce, Dark Soy Sauce, and a generous amount of pepper powder to enhance the flavor. Finally, he thickened the soup bit by bit, achieving a thick and smooth consistency. A bit of Chili Oil was drizzled on top. Stirring it evenly and then taking a spoonful brought a refreshing spiciness that could instantly dispel the sleepiness of waking up early, as if rejuvenating the body. It was delicious! This soup paired with the Meat Dragon was a match made in heaven.

While they were eating, the three members of the Shen Family walked in.

"Dundun, did you miss me?!"

Upon seeing Dundun, Shen Jiayue went straight to ruffle the little guy's head, but Han Shuzhen stopped her. "Always acting like a wild woman. No wonder Dundun dislikes you... Come here, Dundun. Let Granny hold you."

It was clear Director Han now completely treated Dundun as her own grandson. Both parents, one using company shares as a lever for marriage and the other using Dundun's name, were finding all sorts of ways to hint at Lin Xu:

Hurry up and get engaged! Hurry up and get married! Hurry up and have a chubby baby for us to take care of!

"Oh, Master Xie is here too?" Shen Guofu hurried over to greet him and took the opportunity to check out the breakfast. From the photo, it looked like Meat Dragon, but he didn't know the exact filling and had to see it for himself.

"Boss Shen, welcome, welcome. Hurry and try this Meat Dragon; it's really delicious..." Xie Baomin said, then added quietly, "The meat filling is super generous!"

This comment immediately tickled Shen Guofu's fancy. Driving all the way from the West Fourth Ring to the North Fourth Ring, starving first thing in the morning—wasn't it all for this delicious food?

However, it seemed a bit inappropriate to just sit down and eat. He asked pretentiously, "Lin Xu, today's the last day of business. Is everything ready?"

"We're preparing the dishes. My senior brother brought over some chefs from Fishing Platform to help, so it shouldn't be a problem."

Lin Xu opened the cabinet, brought out the remaining Vegetable Python and Meat Dragon, and then served a bowl of soup to his father-in-law, mother-in-law, and Shen Jiayue.

Seeing this while playing with Dundun, Shen Jiayue immediately came over. She picked up a piece of Meat Dragon to taste, and her eyes lit up. "Wow, this tastes amazing! I thought it would taste like a meat bun, but it's exactly like the meat rolls my grandma used to steam."

Shen Jiayue had lived with Old Lady Yu as a child. She frequently ate sugar triangles, meat rolls, and Noodles With Black Bean Sauce, and had vivid memories of these delicacies. The so-called meat roll was made just like Meat Dragon. However, it needed to be cut before steaming, like flower rolls, and then steamed. Meat Dragon, on the other hand, was steamed whole and cut when served. Both methods had their pros and cons. Cutting it into meat rolls before steaming allowed the steam to directly contact the meat filling, cooking it more thoroughly. Steaming it whole, however, infused all the meat's aroma into the dough, making the dough more flavorful.

"Mmm... This Meat Dragon and soup are a perfect combo! Xu, honey, what kind of soup is this? It's so delicious!" Shen Jiayue held her bowl, took a sip of the soup, and then bit into the meat-filled Meat Dragon. She relished the delicious breakfast, sure it would keep her energized all day!

"I made it based on recipes from the Central Plains, but it's not true Spicy Soup. Spicy Soup uses Beef Bone Soup, while this one uses Pork Bone Broth."

"Honestly, I don't get it, but as long as it's tasty, that's all that matters. Dad, don't just eat the meat; try some with vegetarian filling too. Mom, stop cuddling Dundun and come eat! Don't you have a morning meeting?"

Sigh! Everyone's so troublesome. I have to manage the whole family; it's so tough for me!

Han Shuzhen placed Dundun on the checkout counter, wrapped the little guy in a blanket, then washed her hands and came over to eat. "You little brat, why all the yelling? You think I can't read the time?" She glanced at the Vegetable Python, then picked up a piece of Meat Dragon to eat.

Shen Jiayue was a little puzzled. "Don't you like the egg and chive filling? Why aren't you eating it, Mom? Don't tell me Dad's got you hooked on meat now?"

Nibbling on the Meat Dragon, Han Shuzhen mumbled, "It's inappropriate to eat chives before the morning meeting."

"But you're wearing a mask, though. Others won't smell it."

"I'm afraid I'll smell it myself... Hurry up and eat your food; stop chattering so much."

After a fulfilling meal, the family members each went off to work.

Before Shen Jiayue left, she specially brought two pieces of Meat Dragon for Tan Yajun.

Mhm, Uncle Tan should try such a delicious treat too. That way, when the new shop opened, he could continue ordering Lin Ji's Food box meals, increasing Xu's income.

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It's a pity there are still too few partners. Otherwise, Lin Ji's business would probably be even busier. But there's no rush. Once the new shop opens, and with Dad's company also ordering, things will pick up. Besides, he's quite fond of the meats from the shop; ordering boxed meals from here is the perfect way for him to satisfy his cravings.

After the Shen Family left, a well-fed Xie Baomin came to the kitchen to start helping out.

"Let me handle all the Crispy Meat tasks today. I'll take care of these, and you, Junior Brother, just focus on rolling out noodles. We can divide the rest of the work."

Since it was the last day, there would undoubtedly be plenty of customers coming for noodles. So, they decided to have Lin Xu stationed at the cutting board, fully responsible for making hand-rolled noodles.

While everyone was busy, Wei Qian walked in with a kitchen knife. "Lin Xu, you didn't even tell me it was your last day open! I only found out when I saw it online..."

Lin Xu asked curiously, "What about your work?"

"I swapped shifts with someone. It's not busy over there, so swapping shifts is pretty common."

As he spoke, Wei Qian entered the kitchen. Seeing Lin Xu preparing Pickled Pork, he took over without a second thought. "You focus on something else. I'll handle the Pickled Pork and Steamed Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce."

「Meanwhile.」

In the Yanjing TV Station's travel channel office, Zeng Xiaoqi was munching on a bun and sipping soy milk while checking the popularity of the Lin Ji's Food topic online. Motivated by the prize money, netizens had transformed into budding writers, posting numerous anecdotes about Lin Xu under the Lin Ji's Food topic. This not only attracted more netizens but also ignited their creative enthusiasm. Now, there were not only stories in the invincible, transmigration, regression, and behind-the-scenes genres, but even romance, mecha, and Myriad Realms-style anecdotes had appeared, making Zeng Xiaoqi nearly choke with laughter several times as she read them.

While she was eating, Channel Director Zhen Wensheng walked in.

"How was the interview at Lin Ji yesterday?"

"The food at Lin Ji is absolutely delicious! Director Zhen, I want to propose creating a food program for our channel, inviting high-caliber chefs to cook. What do you think?"

"A food program?" Zhen Wensheng looked somewhat surprised. After a moment of thought, he said, "Food is indeed an evergreen topic. You can write up a proposal first, and we'll discuss it with the station heads later. I have a new idea I'd like us to plan first."

"What idea?" Zeng Xiaoqi even stopped eating her bun, looking at Zhen Wensheng curiously.

This Channel Director had not only founded the Beijing Travel Channel from scratch with limited resources but had also built it into the second most-watched travel channel nationwide, surpassed only by the CCTV Travel Channel. To think he has a new idea now! It must be something big.

"After you all left yesterday, I thoroughly reviewed the information online. I also learned about the culinary competition held at Fishing Platform a few days ago. Although our station only covered it as a small news item, its social impact was quite broad. Therefore, I plan to collaborate with travel groups like China Travel, National Travel, and Capital Travel, as well as the Travel Association and the Hotel Association. We'll invite ten international hotels from Yanjing to host another culinary competition!"

What? Another culinary competition? Zeng Xiaoqi was puzzled. Fishing Platform just hosted one. Wouldn't holding another one so soon be redundant?

"What if those hotels don't want to participate?"

Zhen Wensheng smiled at her concern. "Don't worry about that. When the time comes, I'll personally go to Fishing Platform to extend the invitation. As long as Lin Xu agrees to participate, the other restaurants will definitely be eager to join. After all, who wouldn't want to defeat the champion from Fishing Platform?"

Defeat Boss Lin? Zeng Xiaoqi immediately felt less interested. She was still hoping Lin Xu would help by appearing on her food show. If he were defeated, how much appeal would he have left? Besides, Director Zhen is so enthusiastic right now, it's not the time to raise objections. I'll just wait and see if he can even persuade Fishing Platform and Lin Xu.

In the hotel industry, Fishing Platform was notoriously proud. They didn't participate in any social groups like five-star hotel alliances, platinum hotel federations, or various hotel associations. They also steered clear of public disputes and hype, preferring to quietly maintain their position as the industry leader. Getting such an establishment to participate in a culinary competition would be quite difficult. If they wanted to host one, they could simply organize it themselves and wouldn't deign to compete with or learn from outside chefs.

However, looking at it from another angle... if Lin Xu were to win the championship in this competition too, wouldn't my food program become a hit before it even aired?

Thinking of this, Zeng Xiaoqi started to feel a little excited about the culinary competition Zhen Wensheng was organizing.

At 10:30 in the morning, all the ingredients in the shop were ready.

Lin Xu looked at Niu Chuan and said, "Go ahead and start rolling the noodles. We'll have the noodles you make for lunch today."

Niu Chuan, who was enthusiastic about making hand-rolled noodles, readily agreed. He picked up a rolling pin and began to roll out the dough, feeling increasingly adept at the task.

Sometimes he even felt his noodles were indistinguishable from the boss's. His only real struggle was with preparing the Dough; it would either be too firm or too slack from too much water, making it difficult to achieve the perfect consistency that Lin Xu always managed.

Soon, bowls of hand-rolled noodles were ready.

Just as everyone picked up their bowls to eat, a system notification sounded in Lin Xu's mind:

"Ding! Host has guided Niu Chuan in making a total of one hundred bowls of hand-rolled noodles, completing the side quest [Skill Training]. You've earned one lottery draw for an Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique. Employee Niu Chuan has gained the Excellent Level Hand-Rolled Noodle Technique (excluding Dough Technique). Congratulations, Host."

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With everyone in the store practically eating hand-rolled noodles for every meal, this skill training task was finally completed.

Lin Xu instantly breathed a sigh of relief.

Now, the task that needed to be finished quickly was still the crab bun that Shen Jiayue wanted to eat.

But there was no rush for that task—the Fishing Platform visit could wait until later.

After all, the Fishing Platform had all sorts of ingredients, so he could take advantage of that and score some for free.

"Boss, you were right! The more you roll the dough, the more you grasp the essence of hand-rolled noodles. Just now I felt like I suddenly had an epiphany, understanding hand-rolled noodles in a new way, and my control over strength has improved... Thank you, boss!"

If it was any other restaurant, this sort of technique definitely would never be passed on to others.

But our boss not only teaches us in person, he also patiently explains the key points of making hand-rolled noodles every day.

The boss is really a good person!

Lin Xu smiled and said:

"Hard work pays off. There's no real trick to cooking—you just have to do it with your heart. Sooner or later you'll get it."

"Yeah, yeah, boss! I'll keep working hard!"

Another basic cooking technique acquired. Wonder what he'd get from the upcoming draw.

Lin Xu glanced at Dundun, who was sprawled out on the cashier desk, hugging the little fish pillow Shen Jiayue bought for it, sound asleep. He planned to play with the little guy after lunch and then do a prize draw.

Let's see what it would be this time.

No other dishes were made at lunch today—everyone was too busy, and since they couldn't have these tomorrow anyway, everyone wanted to eat a bit extra.

Lin Xu picked up a piece of crispy meat and, while eating, said:

"After today's shift, Che Zai and the rest of you should take a two-day break. The day after tomorrow, just take the subway directly to the Fishing Platform. When you reach the main gate, give me a call, and I'll bring you in."

The shop was about to close soon.

All these things had to be handled properly.

"What about us, boss? Are we going to the Fishing Platform too?"

Song Tiantian asked curiously.

"You're not going. The Fishing Platform's management mode for waiters isn't suitable for you. Sister Jing signed you up for a related training workshop. You'll be trained over there for a month."

Training?

Hearing that word, Song Tiantian immediately asked:

"Physical training?"

"No, it's a service industry training related to catering. It's a workshop organized by the Tourism Hotel Association. The details will be discussed with you by Sister Jing after lunch."

While they were talking, Dou Wenjing came in with two office staff.

These past couple days, she had hired two employees and sorted out the company's social insurance. She had also helped herself and Lin Xu enroll for social insurance and transferred the shares of Pudgy Dundun Catering Management Company to Shen Jiayue and Shen Guofu.

"Sister Jing, noodles or rice? If you want noodles, I'll roll them right away!"

Niu Chuan was getting addicted to noodle-rolling.

When he saw Dou Wenjing, he greeted her proactively.

"I was going to have rice, but seeing you all eating noodles made me realize I can't have them tomorrow. Let's do noodles. The three of us will each have a big bowl. I want Braised Eggplant and Pork Sauce. What toppings do you two want?"

After the two office staff listed their desired toppings, Dou Wenjing said:

"At 3 p.m., when things aren't busy, everyone please head next door. The company will formally sign employment contracts with you and help you enroll for social insurance."

Oh dang!

Finally can sign the employment contract!

Che Zai and the guys were all genuinely happy.

Because signing meant they'd get to stay at the shop and continue developing with the boss.

And even more surprising—they even got social insurance!

The boss really was generous.

In the restaurant industry, it's rare for owners to enroll staff for social insurance. Even if they do, it's often conditional, like after one year on the job.

For a boss to do it right from the start—well, it's not unheard of, but super rare.

With finding work getting harder and harder, having a reliable boss was truly a blessing. If they weren't busy soon, Che Zai and Xu Xinhua really wanted to crack open a bottle of Erguotou and celebrate.

But no rush.

They'd have tomorrow and the day after off.

They could drink as much as they wanted in the dorm.

After lunch—

Lin Xu played with Dundun at the door for a while, then took the opportunity to do a prize draw.

"Congratulations, Host, you have received the Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique—Bone Removal."

Bone Removal?

This skill's not bad.

As long as it's not a slaughterhouse-style technique, it's fine.

He was just about to play with Dundun a bit more when the customers swarmed in:

"Boss Lin, did you really scare off Thanos with a rolling pin?"

"Did Iron Man actually invent an anti-rolling pin suit?"

"Have the ingredients in our store really been kept in the black hole of the universe?"

"Can you really withstand a million volts of electricity?"

Lin Xu: ?????

What kind of crazy plotlines are these?

After greeting everyone, he washed his hands and hurried back to the kitchen.

These food-related discussions had gone so off-track, seriously.

It was still super busy over lunch.

From 10:50 a.m., a steady stream of customers made the place bustle like a marketplace, plus quite a few people there to shoot store-review videos.

"Folks, today's July 26th. Just last month, Lin Ji's Food had just opened. Look at how far it's come in a month—how did Boss Lin make that happen?"

"Family, I bought Lin Ji's food, and honestly, it tastes amazing!"

"Oh my god, Lin Ji's Tiger Skin Chicken Feet are absolutely next level—highly recommend everyone come try them!"

"Everyone says this is the hottest spot online right now. The owner supposedly rolls atom bombs by hand—can't say if that's true, but the food really tastes great."

"..."

The store was noisy as ever, but nothing could stop these store-review streamers and food bloggers from chasing after the novelty.

Everyone thought it was just hype, but after tasting the food, they realized it actually was fantastic.

These people's arrival added another wave of traffic to Lin Ji's Food. The topic picked up new plot-creators riffing on Lin Xu's story.

At exactly 1 p.m.—

In the middle of all the lunchtime chaos, Lin Xu suddenly heard the system notification sound:

"Lin Ji's Food topic has officially reached number one on the Food Chart, and entered the Top Ten topics of the Yanjing Region, thus completing the main quest [Rise to Fame], rewarding host with three Perfect Level dish draws, one Perfect Level Cooking Learning Card, and one Cuisine Upgrade Card. Congratulations, host."

Top ten already?

The system message made Lin Xu instantly light up with joy.

Who'd have thought the quest would be completed just as the shop was about to close up.

Three Perfect Level dishes, one Perfect Level learning card, plus a Cuisine Upgrade card. These rewards... sheesh, they're generous.

Too bad there were still too many customers in the shop right now.

Can't hug Dundun and do prize draws yet.

But he could use the Cuisine Upgrade Card first.

Lin Xu now had the Sugar and Vinegar Technique, Boiled Technique, Dry-frying Technique, and the Sauce Explosion Technique he learned from his senior brother yesterday.

Which of these four techniques should he upgrade?

He thought it over seriously for a moment.

In the end, he chose the Boiled Technique.

Relatively speaking, boiled dishes were more popular. Whether it's Boiled Beef or Boiled Fish, each had a lot of fans.

"Consumed one Cuisine Upgrade Card. Superior Level Boiled General Technique has now been upgraded to Perfect Level Boiled Technique. Congratulations, Host."

Now, with this technique—

There would never be any stress cooking these dishes again.

p.m.

Once the customers started to clear out, Lin Xu changed into his chef's uniform, washed his face, then came to the cashier desk, scooping the snoring Dundun up in his arms.

Kiddo, time for you to shine again!

After a little playtime, Lin Xu went for a prize draw, picking the rumored higher-chance three-roll combo.

Soon—

The system notification sounded in his mind again:

"Congratulations, Host, you have received Perfect Level dishes—[Yangzhou Fried Rice], [Braised Pork Trotter], and [Winter Melon Candy]."

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Winter Melon Candy? Lin Xu's expression was somewhat surprised.

The first two, Yangzhou Fried Rice and Braised Pork Trotter, were quite good, but what was the deal with this Winter Melon Candy at the end?

He rubbed Dundun's head, about to ask the little one what was going on.

A torrent of experience flooded into his mind. After processing the recipes for Yangzhou Fried Rice and Braised Pork Trotter, he began to examine the one for Winter Melon Candy, which really seemed like a filler item.

Winter Melon Candy is a dessert snack made from fresh Winter Melon. The process involves a series of steps, including dehydration and candying. It's known for benefits such as clearing heat, detoxification, protecting the liver and kidneys, and stabilizing blood pressure.

It was a good thing, indeed. But what use was it to me?

Was he planning for me to sell it as a high-priced health supplement to retired elderly folks?

My dear son, are you unhappy and stirring up trouble for me because I've been too busy lately and haven't had time to play with you?

Just as Lin Xu was about to complain to Dundun a bit, he suddenly recalled how he had grumbled about Dundun many times when he'd received the knife-sharpening Technique. As it turned out, the very first round of the competition had required that exact Technique.

Could it be that this Winter Melon Candy will also be useful in the future?

The entire process of making Winter Melon Candy was quite lengthy, taking about three to four days. Lin Xu planned to buy a Winter Melon tomorrow and start making it.

After all, he didn't need to come to the shop starting tomorrow. He also didn't need to clock in at the Fishing Platform, so he had plenty of free time.

When he was running his own business, he could work from dawn till dusk. But now that he was an employee, he naturally had to slack off when possible; he couldn't betray the fellowship of wage-earners.

After making this decision, Lin Xu played with Dundun for a while using a cat teaser before returning to the kitchen to get busy.

At three o'clock, his team from the food cart went to the bakery next door in twos and threes. They were there to officially sign their employment contracts and confirm their wages as permanent staff.

When they returned, everyone was beaming, clearly very satisfied with their contracts.

"Thank you, Boss!"

"Thank you, Boss!"

"Thank you, Boss!"

Seeing Lin Xu, each of them expressed their gratitude. Lin Xu replied with a smile, "You've earned it. Keep working hard, and things will definitely get even better in the future."

Although the new Lin Ji's Food would hire some head chefs, and possibly even appoint a professional executive chef, Lin Xu still trusted his original team from the food cart the most. After all, they had spent

so many days together, day in and day out. They not only understood each other well but also had excellent, unspoken coordination.

After signing the contracts, these employees buzzed with renewed energy in the kitchen.

"This afternoon will be our last meal in this shop. Junior Brother, is there anything you'd like to eat? I don't have much to do this afternoon. Just tell me what you want, and I, your Senior Brother, will make it for you."

The thought that Lin Xu would soon be working in Building Two, and that the dish "Home" would also be sold there, made Xie Baomin unable to suppress his excitement.

The obscure Building Two was finally going to make some noise! He hoped its revenue could surpass Building Ten's. Then he'd see how Dongdong could still swagger about in the weekly morning meetings.

Having just processed the recipes for three dishes, Lin Xu wasn't particularly interested in eating. However, since his Senior Brother had offered, he said, "Just make that Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken you mentioned before. I've had Geleshan Spicy Chicken and Guizhou Spicy Chicken, but never Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken. I'd like to try it."

Geleshan Spicy Chicken involved picking chicken pieces from a mound of dried chilis, while Guizhou Spicy Chicken owed its flavor to the Sticky Rice Cake chilis beloved by Guizhou natives. This Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken, however, piqued Lin Xu's curiosity. He wanted to try it.

Xie Baomin smiled and said, "No problem. But Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken needs freshly slaughtered tender roosters. We don't have any in the shop. Why don't I go buy a couple?"

"I'll go," Lin Xu offered. "I'm more familiar with the nearby markets."

"Alright. After you buy the chickens, get some thin-skinned chilis too. They're essential to Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken; you can't leave them out."

Thin-skinned chilis? Lin Xu committed the name to memory, grabbed his car keys, and headed out.

Driving his G-Wagon, he arrived at the Spring Wind Market. He found a stall that butchered roosters fresh and bought three evenly-sized, tender ones.

There were many people at the shop today; one rooster definitely wouldn't be enough. So he bought three. Two for them to eat at the shop, and one to pack for Classmate Shen to take. His Senior Brother rarely cooked, so he had to let his father-in-law and mother-in-law have a taste.

After buying the roosters, he went to Uncle Shen's stall. "Uncle Shen, do you have any thin-skinned chilis?"

"Yes, I got some in this morning." Seeing Lin Xu carrying the freshly bought roosters, he asked with a smile, "Are you planning to make Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken?"

"That's right. Uncle Shen, you know this dish too?"

"I just saw it on a short video... Oh, by the way, Boss Lin, don't forget to film your videos after the shop closes! My wife has become a big fan of yours. She tries to cook whatever you demonstrate. Just yesterday, she ruined over ten pounds of Lotus Root trying to make those White Jade Lotus Root Strips you showed, but she couldn't get it right."

While picking out chilis, Lin Xu explained, "Those White Jade Lotus Root Strips weren't meant as a tutorial. It was just to demonstrate the difficulty of the Technique and prove my championship title was legitimate... What did your wife do with the ruined Lotus Root?"

"What else could she do? She found another recipe and made Lotus Root Powder out of it."

Well, at least it wasn't wasted, Lin Xu thought.

After picking the chilis, Lin Xu went to pay, but Uncle Shen flatly refused the money. How could he possibly charge such a regular customer for a few chilis? Besides, these thin-skinned chilis were only a few bucks a pound, nothing valuable.

Lin Xu didn't insist too much. "Alright then. Don't stock too many vegetables tomorrow, Uncle Shen. When the new shop is about to open, I'll let you know in advance to get your inventory ready. I'll be counting on you for deliveries then."

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"No problem, no problem, I'll make sure you get the best ingredients."

「Back at the store.」

Xie Baomin glanced and said with a smile, "This chicken is indeed good, and the quality of the thin-skinned chilies is nice as well. Just wait, it will be ready soon."

After saying that, he took the chickens to the sink and carefully washed off any remaining pinfeathers, as well as the outer membranes from the Chicken Feet, wings, and combs.

Then he snipped off the tips of the Chicken Feet.

After washing everything, he chopped the chicken into pieces, placed them in a basin, and rinsed them twice to wash away the blood.

"Actually, the standard Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken isn't washed; they cook it right after slaughtering. But that requires free-range chickens from Zaozhuang, which we can't get here, so I rinse them twice to clean off the blood."

Xie Baomin's mother grew up in the southwestern Shandong region and was best at making Spicy Chicken.

In the past, when transport was inconvenient, every time she felt homesick, she would go to the market, buy a rooster and some thin-skinned chilies, and make Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken for the family. Over time, Xie Baomin also learned how to make it.

At that time, he had just graduated from junior high school.

After learning how to cook, he was genuinely excited for a long time.

Then he plunged into the kitchen and tried various Cooking Techniques, such as frying and deep-frying. He nearly set the kitchen on fire several times.

To prevent a fire at home after he started working, his determined parents sent him to a restaurant as an apprentice.

He happened to be noticed by Master Gao, who took him on as an apprentice and brought him to the Fishing Platform. He systematically taught him culinary skills, and he has been working there ever since.

After his Apprenticeship, Xie Baomin once made this dish in front of his master, and it was picked apart for many faults.

He wasn't discouraged. Instead, he refined the dish according to his master's methods and found that the taste improved significantly. This dish then became his specialty.

Whether it was a family gathering or an extra dish for the kitchen staff, if he was cooking, Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken was sure to be on the menu.

Xie Baomin washed the chicken pieces while reminiscing about the past.

After thoroughly rinsing the chicken, he drained the water.

Then he set up the wok and began cooking.

Once the oil heated up, he first fried some Sichuan peppercorns until fragrant and removed them. Then, he added slices of ginger, Star Anise, bay leaves, and cinnamon, frying until aromatic before adding the chicken pieces and starting to stir-fry.

This step is to render the moisture from the chicken, making the meat firmer and more fragrant.

When cooking Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken, this step is crucial.

You have to be patient and stir-fry the chicken until it crackles and pops.

"With professional stoves, it's easy to fry well, but with a home stove, this step takes about ten minutes."

Xie Baomin held the wok handle with his left hand and a ladle with his right, stirring leisurely.

Before long, the fragrance of the chicken began to waft through the store.

Nearby, Lin Xu busied himself, hesitating about whether to learn this dish.

He only had one Perfect Level Cooking Learning Card. If he used it, he wouldn't have another, and there likely wouldn't be many tasks in the coming month.

If he needed a learning card later but didn't have one, it would be better to save it.

Having thought this through, he decided to give up on this dish.

After all, he would be with his senior brother every day. He could learn anytime he wanted. There might be other dishes that, if missed, he might never be able to learn again.

When the chicken was first added to the hot oil, the oil instantly became cloudy as the surface moisture from the chicken quickly mixed with it.

But after a period of frying, most of the moisture from both the chicken and the oil had been cooked out, and the oil at the bottom of the wok became clear again.

The chicken pieces were fried until they crackled.

This indicated that the hot oil was rendering the fat from the chicken skin.

By now, the surface of the chicken was golden brown and exuded a rich, savory aroma.

Xie Baomin poured some dried chili into the wok.

He continued to stir-fry to release the spicy fragrance of the dried chilies.

Then, holding a jug of Rice Vinegar, he filled a ladle and poured it around the edge of the wok, deglazing the pan.

SIZZLE...

The Rice Vinegar reacted with the hot oil, and a tangy, aromatic steam immediately rose.

This was one of Xie Baomin's signature dishes.

As he cooked, he explained the key points of making this dish, "Deglazing with Rice Vinegar is a distinctive feature of Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken. The evaporating vinegar helps carry away any off-flavors from the chicken and adds a subtle ester fragrance to the dish. If you make this, don't skimp on the vinegar—use plenty, as that's key to the flavor."

The vinegar volatilizes quickly in the hot oil, so you don't have to worry about the chicken tasting sour.

In fact, after the vinegar evaporates, the dish only becomes more fragrant.

After deglazing with the vinegar, Xie Baomin stir-fried a few more times, then added some Light Soy Sauce, followed by salt, sugar, more Light Soy Sauce, and Dark Soy Sauce.

He continued to stir-fry, allowing the flavors to fully integrate with the chicken pieces.

Once the Dark Soy Sauce began to impart its color and the chicken pieces turned an appetizing reddish-brown, Xie Baomin added some water to the wok.

The water didn't need to be excessive, just enough to cover the chicken pieces.

After adding water, he covered the wok and started simmering.

Although Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken sounds like a stir-fry, and its preparation is similar to sautéed chicken, the dish actually includes a simmering step.

"First, you stir-fry to draw out the moisture and firm up the chicken. Then, you simmer it so the meat becomes fall-off-the-bone tender and absorbs all the flavors. That's the secret to Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken's deliciousness."

Xie Baomin explained as he cooked.

Listening to the explanation, Lin Xu's mouth began to water.

「Fifteen minutes later.」

He lifted the lid of the wok; the water inside had mostly evaporated.

Xie Baomin added some diagonally sliced small hot peppers, further intensifying the chicken's heat.

He tossed them in, then continued to reduce the sauce, allowing the flavor of the freshly added peppers to permeate the chicken.

## Chapter 216: Senior Brother's Specialty Dish - Zaozhuang Spicy Chicken! Rewards for Closing the Store?

When the aroma of the small chili peppers drifted from the pot, Lin Xu added the chopped Shandong Green Onions, garlic, and thin-skinned chili peppers, continuing to stir-fry until their flavors were well released. It was then time to turn off the heat and serve the dish.

With three different kinds of chili peppers, it was no wonder the dish was called spicy chicken.

Smelling the enticing spicy fragrance, Lin Xu suddenly felt a bit hungry.

Hmm, it should go great with rice, right?

Xie Baomin divided the spicy chicken into a large portion and a small one.

The larger portion was scooped into a small basin and sprinkled with some cilantro leaves. Then, the chicken kidneys were neatly arranged on the very top of the chicken. Only then was the Zaozhuang spicy chicken dish considered complete.

"When eating chicken in Southwest Shandong, restaurant owners always arrange the kidneys on top of the meat like this," Xie Baomin explained. "Only the most honored guests get to eat them—this is the good stuff."

Traditional Chinese medicine advocates eating specific organs to benefit corresponding parts of the body. That's why many men at barbecues went for pork or sheep kidneys, and when eating chicken, they chose chicken kidneys.

There's no need to be so suggestive, Senior Brother. I don't eat chicken kidneys—these three pairs are all yours... No, that's not right, I have to save a pair for my father-in-law. He's middle-aged too; he probably needs a bit of a boost as well, Lin Xu grumbled inwardly.

Then he took out the to-go containers and started packing food for his father-in-law. He loaded the chicken pieces into the box, topped them with cilantro leaves, and finally placed a pair of plump, evenly-sized chicken kidneys at the very top, hoping his father-in-law would like it.

After he finished packing, Shen Jiayue happened to get off work.

Lin Xu also packed a few other dishes and some rice into a bag and handed it to Shen Jiayue, saying, "Since your parents aren't coming to eat, you can take this food home. The big box contains the Zaozhuang spicy chicken that Senior Brother made. It tastes super awesome."

Although he hadn't tasted it yet, it was his Senior Brother's specialty dish, so the flavor was guaranteed to be excellent,

Lin Xu thought.

"Thank you, Senior Brother. I'll be heading home then!" Shen Jiayue said.

She left Lin Ji's Food, carrying the bag of food, and the staff of Lin Ji's Food began their dinner.

"Come on, everyone, try the Zaozhuang spicy chicken I made," Xie Baomin announced. "Even my relatives from Zaozhuang praise my cooking skills."

TSK TSK... Senior Brother, can't you just be a bit more modest and wait for us to compliment you? Lin Xu mused.

With a bowl of rice in hand, Lin Xu carefully avoided the chicken kidneys arranged on top and picked up a chicken wing, placing it in his bowl.

"Junior Brother, why aren't you eating the kidneys?" Xie Baomin asked. "You're the boss; you should have this..."

"You eat them, Senior Brother," Lin Xu replied. "You've been working hard all day; you should replenish your strength."

Upon hearing this, Xie Baomin no longer stood on ceremony and popped a chicken kidney into his mouth. "Mmm, delicious!"

Meanwhile, Lin Xu was enjoying the intensely fragrant and spicy chicken wings. The wings were spicy and aromatic. The chicken meat was slightly firm from being stir-fried, yet it was more tender and fell off the bone easily due to the stewing process. It was exceptionally fresh, tender, and its spicy flavor stimulated the appetite.

Really nice!

Lin Xu had originally thought one bowl of rice would be enough for the afternoon. But with such delicious spicy chicken, how could he not have another?

He picked up another piece of chicken to try. After simmering, the spicy flavor had thoroughly infused the meat, which was chewy without losing its tenderness. It was not only perfect with rice but also great with alcohol.

The others were also eating with great enjoyment.

"Master Xie's cooking skills are truly exceptional."

"The chicken is rich in spicy flavor and yet isn't dry. It's much tastier than ordinary Fried Chicken."

"Master Xie makes everything delicious..."

Xie Baomin humbly replied, "Actually, I haven't even shown my full cooking skills. If I were in Zaozhuang, using local free-range chicken and homegrown chilies, the taste and texture would be even better. The three types of chilies in Zaozhuang spicy chicken need to be locally grown to be truly delicious. And the green onions added at the end should be the slightly sweet Shandong Green Onions to make the spicy chicken genuinely Zaozhuang-style."

"Junior Brother, the renovation starts tomorrow," Xie Baomin said, then asked curiously, "What about all this kitchen equipment? It fits in a small kitchen, but for a professional one, it seems insufficient."

"We'll keep the refrigerators and freezers and sell the rest second-hand," Lin Xu replied. "Dismantling and reinstalling this equipment tends to cause problems. Besides, the dishwashers and such are too small for a large restaurant; they won't be enough."

He had actually already contacted a merchant who bought second-hand kitchen equipment, and they were scheduled to come tomorrow to take it away.

Luckily, Lin Xu hadn't added much to the shop himself—just two jacketed kettles and two steam cabinets. All the other equipment had been arranged by the system, so selling it second-hand would be pure profit.

While they were eating, the customers began to arrive. For this last meal service, they seemed even more excited than the staff.

The team at Lin Ji's Food had to quickly finish their dinner and get into busy mode.

They were busy until 8:40 p.m. Once again, all the dishes prepared by Lin Ji's Food sold out, and the restaurant officially entered its closure period for renovation.

Xie Baomin was just about to leave with the chefs from Fishing Platform when Dou Wenjing, who had been working overtime next door, suddenly came in. She was holding a stack of red envelopes and handed them out to the staff in the shop and the chefs from Fishing Platform who had come to help.

"You've all worked so hard," Dou Wenjing said. "This is just a small token of appreciation, please accept it."

Lin Xu hadn't thought of this, but Dou Wenjing, as the general manager, hadn't forgotten. She had waited until now to come over on behalf of the company to distribute the red envelopes. This gesture not only aimed to bring good luck but would also help make Lin Xu's efforts to recruit staff from Fishing Platform smoother. Indeed, Lin Xu hadn't hidden his plan to poach staff from her; after all, it was unrealistic to rely only on the few people in the shop to run a large restaurant. They needed chefs with signature skills.

"Thank you, Manager Dou!"

"Manager Dou, you're too kind!"

After receiving the red envelopes, everyone helped Lin Xu tidy up the kitchen. They brought the unused cooking oil, seasonings, and other items to the room where Lin Xu was staying. They also moved the refrigerators and freezers to a rented warehouse next door, plugged them in, and put the master brine inside to freeze.

It would be a pity to throw away this old master brine; by freezing it now, they could thaw and reuse it after the new shop was renovated.

Once everything was tidied up, they closed the door and left.

Lin Xu, holding Dundun, quietly watched everyone turn off the lights and lock up.

The moment the roller shutter door came down, a prompt from the system suddenly sounded in his mind: "Host's revenue during the business period has surpassed one million, completing the Hidden task: [Monthly Income of One Million]. You have earned one Perfect Level soup prize draw. Would you like to draw immediately?"

Soup? Lin Xu thought. It really is time to upgrade the soups in the restaurant.

Lin Xu rubbed Dundun's head and started the prize draw!

Chapter 217: Senior brother, this crab is almost drowned, shall we steam it?

Although the Nori Egg Drop Soup was very popular with customers, after the store upgrade, relying on this dish alone wouldn't meet demand. He needed to add new soups.

Originally, Lin Xu planned to reap some benefits from the Fishing Platform. Unexpectedly, the system gave him a reward—and it was even Perfect Level!

So, what was he waiting for?

"Draw prize!"

On the screen in his mind, the prize wheel was filled with the names of various soups: Wensi Tofu, Clear Soup with White Fungus, Boiled Cabbage in Broth, Golden Soup Fish Maw, Shrimp Soup, and so on.

Lin Xu found himself drooling over them, wishing he could feature them all in his store.

Once the prize wheel started spinning, he excitedly pressed the draw button.

Soon, the system's notification sounded in his mind:

"Congratulations to the Host for obtaining the Perfect Level soup dish—Crucian Carp Tofu Soup."

Lin Xu: What in the world?!

The wheel had displayed so many famous soups. Yet, the result was such a common, home-style dish. Surely the difference between a seller's advertisement and the actual product on an online marketplace wasn't usually \*this\* stark, right?

System, I seriously suspect you of false advertising!

Actually, this soup wasn't bad either. It was a popular item in many restaurants. It just fell a little short compared to those famous dishes he had seen before the draw.

He remembered his senior brother had previously made Milk Soup Tofu in the store, and it was incredibly delicious. Now, he had finally mastered a similar recipe. He could have a competition with his senior brother sometime to see whose dish tasted better.

"MEOW."

While he was thinking, Dundun, perched on Lin Xu's shoulder and gazing at the night scenery outside, let out a soft meow.

Lin Xu patted the cat as if holding a child. "Do you want to go home? We'll leave right away."

The attendant locked the roller shutter door, handed Lin Xu the keys, and then passed him a handbag containing all of Dundun's toys. "Do you need us to help you take it upstairs?" he asked.

"No need, I can manage. You guys should head back."

Carrying Dundun in one arm and the bag in the other, Lin Xu leisurely returned home.

「After arriving home」

Dundun immediately ran to the cat tree to sharpen his claws for a while. Then, he chose a smaller cardboard box, stuffed his chubby self into it, and began to sleep.

Lin Xu covered him with a small blanket, went to the bathroom for a shower, changed into the lounge clothes his mother-in-law had bought him, and tossed the dirty laundry into the washing machine.

After finishing these tasks, he didn't go to bed immediately. Instead, he sat down at his computer, opened the video footage he had shot previously, selected the store-related content, and re-edited it into a commemorative video for Lin Ji's Food.

The video's content was quite varied. It included his photos with customers, scenes of the packed store during peak hours, bloopers from previous video shoots, and brief appearances by Shen Jiayue and others.

Once the video was finished, he immediately chose to upload it. As it entered the review stage, he shut down the computer, hung up the freshly washed clothes from the machine, then lay in bed, chatting on his phone with his Shen Baobao.

"That Zaozhuang spicy chicken was very popular. My dad's eyes lit up when he saw the chicken kidneys. 'Let me try some,' he said, picking them into his own bowl."

Finally having the chance to chat, Shen Jiayue couldn't wait to start sharing her parents' embarrassing stories.

Lin Xu was struck by this. It seemed that sometimes, his future in-laws didn't advocate for 'spare the rod and spoil the child' out of principle, but simply wanted an outlet for their frustration.

Who would have thought this girl would share her parents' embarrassing stories with her boyfriend?

If this conversation continues, I'll end up knowing all of my future in-laws' secrets! he thought, and quickly steered the conversation elsewhere. "I haven't had time to make the Crab Buns I promised you. But I can start once I get to the Fishing Platform. My senior brother said their kitchen just received a batch of premium crabs, a seasonal delicacy. They'll be perfect for me to practice with."

Shen Jiayue felt a little sheepish. She'd only mentioned it offhand, but days later, Lin Xu still remembered and was even explaining his plans to her. I'm so lucky to have such a wonderful boyfriend!

She said with a smile, "You work so hard; honestly, it's okay if you don't make them."

It's not that I'm dying to make them either, but why does everything related to you have to trigger a reward task? Lin Xu smiled helplessly.

Making the Crab Buns would reward him with an Excellent Level seafood dish. Although it was only Excellent Level, upgrading it would be quite easy once he mastered the dish. For instance, using a dish upgrade card or having his senior brother explain the recipe could trigger the dish's upgrade mechanism.

To prevent the task from failing, he gave her an advance warning, "If they don't taste good, you can't dislike them, okay?"

"Of course not! As long as you make it, anything will be delicious."

Okay, with that assurance, I'm much more confident about completing the Crab Bun task.

While the two of them were chatting, the discussion thread for Lin Ji's Food was buzzing with excitement.

The prize draw had just concluded.

The top twenty netizens with the most likes all received the promised prize money.

This made other netizens envious, and they also started looking forward to the next bounty.

Fat Guy with a Slim Waist: Are there more bounties like this? My mind is overflowing with jokes about Boss Lin; they're constantly swirling in my head!

Shuangyashan Wensheng: Me too, me too! Ah, it's such a pity I found out too late. My 'Boss Lin Battles the Egyptian Queen' didn't get many likes, so I missed out on the grand prize!

Liang Mountain is So Dry: My 'Boss Lin's Night Attack on the Ultraman Saintess' also went unrecognized—it's a pity people nowadays don't appreciate true quality.

I Can't Stand By as a Keyboard Warrior: Who can understand the pain of ranking 21st?

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I AFK Too Much: Are you ranked 21st on the list upstairs?

My Keyboard Warrior Ethics Won't Allow Me to Stand By: No, I'm not. Just imagining myself in that position makes me feel terrible. Do you guys think the person who's now ranked 21st is already crying their eyes out in the bathroom?

Grave Burying Zhishen: However, that's not the case. The person who ranked 21st wrote another skit that's now 7th, and they're busy counting their money.

My Keyboard Warrior Ethics Won't Allow Me to Stand By: ?????

I AFK Too Much: ?????

Liang Mountain Drought: ?????

While netizens were animatedly discussing this, Panda, who had just spent over fifty thousand yuan, suddenly posted another status update:

"To those who missed the big prize, don't be discouraged. Come to my livestream and buy products at low prices. Customers who place an order at ranks like 6, 66, 166, 266, and any other 'double six' ranks, will receive a full cash rebate gift package. Link: [https...](https://...)"

Taking advantage of the cash giveaway and the fact that Lin Ji's Food was a hot topic, Panda cunningly posted an ad to funnel traffic to his livestream.

Soon, many netizens flooded into the livestream he and Wu Kexin were hosting.

「It was just past four in the morning.」

Lin Xu, who had planned to sleep in, woke up out of habit.

He glanced at the time and dozed for a little longer, but after confirming he couldn't get back to sleep, he reluctantly got up. After washing up, he went downstairs, meandering toward Cao Ji's mutton soup shop at the entrance of Yingchun Street for breakfast.

From afar, he could see a large soup pot outside Cao Ji's mutton soup shop. It was filled with ingredients like sheep bones and mutton, its rich aroma wafting down the entire street.

Next to the large pot were two basins.

One basin contained sliced mutton, while the other was filled with ingredients like sheep's lung, liver, head meat, and blood—collectively known as "sheep offal."

The shop's owner, Mr. Cao, was making mutton soup with a large colander.

He would grab a handful of cooked meat and place it on an electronic scale to check the weight. Then, he'd put it into the colander, dipping it into the bubbling pot for a while. He jostled it up and down, allowing the boiling mutton soup to heat the meat and draw out its fragrance.

Then, he served it in a bowl, poured in a large spoonful of thick, white mutton soup, and sprinkled it with chopped scallions and cilantro. A bowl of mutton soup was ready.

While he was busy, shouts for more soup rang out now and then from inside and outside the shop.

Soup refills were free at the mutton soup shop, and nearly everyone who ate there would drink two or three bowls.

This was especially true for those who spent their days in air-conditioned rooms. They found that having a couple of bowls of hot mutton soup not only made them feel revitalized but also effectively prevented air-conditioning sickness.

On the other side of the shop's entrance stood a griddle for shaobing.

Mr. Cao's wife was busy making crispy pancakes.

After kneading the well-risen dough slightly, she spread some shortening on it. Then, she divided it into individual pieces, rolled them out, sprinkled them with sesame seeds, and baked them on the griddle until done.

The freshly made crispy pancakes had a flaky exterior that crumbled at the touch, while the inside was soft and tender.

Seeing Lin Xu arrive, Mr. Cao greeted him with a smile, "Morning, Boss Lin. What will you have?"

"A large bowl of sheep offal soup and two crispy pancakes."

After ordering, Lin Xu realized there were no seats left outside. He chuckled and said, "Mr. Cao, your business is getting better and better."

"That's all thanks to the customers you brought. Our Yingchun Street is practically becoming Beijing's food street. People come to 'check in' online every day."

Just as he was looking for a seat, Uncle Yu's voice called out from inside, "Boss Lin, over here! I saved a seat just for you."

Lin Xu walked in and saw Uncle Yu in a tank top, a full bowl of mutton soup before him. Judging by the sweat on his brow, he'd likely finished the meat and was now savoring another bowl of broth, making sure he was completely full.

"Come, come, have a seat. It's cooler inside with the air conditioning," Uncle Yu invited enthusiastically.

Lin Xu had just sat down when a waiter brought over a large bowl of sheep offal soup and a small bamboo basket containing freshly baked crispy pancakes.

The rich aroma of the crispy pancakes immediately made his mouth water.

"So, are you completely shut down now?" Uncle Yu asked with a smile.

"Yes, completely shut down. But even though the shop's closed, I can't stay idle. I have to go to Fishing Platform to help my senior. For the next month, I'll be part of the workforce too."

He had thought that once he opened his shop, he would never have to work for anyone else in his life. Who knew that just a month later, he'd find himself transformed into a wage earner? Fate really was unpredictable.

Lin Xu tasted the sheep offal soup. He then picked up the salt cellar on the table, added a pinch of salt to his bowl, stirred it, and tasted it again. The soup's flavor had indeed become much brighter.

This type of mutton soup is typically served unsalted, allowing customers to add salt to their liking.

Besides salt, one could also add pepper powder and mutton fat chili.

Ah, Mr. Cao's mutton fat chili here was truly exceptional.

Every table had a large bowl of congealed mutton fat chili. It looked unremarkable, and one could barely smell anything even when holding the bowl close.

But once a piece was scooped into one's bowl, the congealed chili instantly melted. It transformed into a lustrous red Chili Oil, releasing a rich, spicy aroma intertwined with the unique umami of mutton.

Indeed, the aroma alone was enough to make one crave it, let alone the taste.

Uncle Yu lifted his bowl of mutton soup, blew on it gently, and took a small sip. "Wow, working at Fishing Platform is quite prestigious! But don't forget about us regular customers. Hurry up with the renovation and reopen—we're all waiting to eat!"

"Absolutely," Lin Xu assured him. "Our company's Jing will oversee the renovation progress, so I won't have to worry about that. As soon as it's done, I'll bring in the staff."

Lin Xu stirred his bowl with a soup spoon, dispersing the Chili Oil.

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Then he scooped up a piece of lung and popped it in his mouth. It was soft and mixed with the rich, savory flavor of the lamb soup. It was just perfect!

Eating lamb offal is all about enjoying the different textures and flavors from various parts of the lamb.

Take a bite of the lamb offal, then a bite of the crispy, crumbly flatbread.

Meanwhile, grab a spoon to scoop up some steaming hot soup. The taste is really refreshing.

There's no need to rush eating the meat in the bowl. Start with the soup, and when it's nearly finished, add more soup to the bowl, along with an extra sprinkle of cilantro. Then continue eating both meat and soup together—it's delightful!

Unfortunately, Lin Xu didn't have the habit of drinking soup; otherwise, he would definitely have another bowl of such delicious soup.

Look, Mr. Yu has already had his bowl refilled twice.

After a satisfying meal, Mr. Yu insisted on paying, and they left the lamb soup shop one after the other.

At this moment, Lin Xu remembered about making winter melon candy. He looked at Mr. Yu, who was wiping sweat with a tissue, and asked, "Sir, do you have any white-skinned winter melons in your shop?"

Winter melons come in two types: green-skinned and white-skinned. The white-skinned variety grows slowly and is large, making it hard to sell, so it has largely been replaced by the smaller, faster-growing, higher-yielding green-skinned winter melons.

But in terms of taste, the white-skinned winter melons have a better texture.

Mr. Yu shook his head. "Not today. All the ones delivered today were green-skinned. The white-skinned ones are becoming rarer. Do you need some? If so, I can get them for you tomorrow."

Lin Xu said, "Please get some. I'm planning to make some winter melon candy while it's not too busy."

"Winter melon candy? I love that! Can you make extra? I'll pay for the processing and cover the cost of the ingredients too. Wait for it tomorrow; I'll have someone send a small truckload of white-skinned winter melons over in the morning."

When they arrived at the shop's entrance, Mr. Yu went to his supermarket. Meanwhile, Lin Xu opened his shop door, checked again to ensure nothing was missed, then locked up and went upstairs to play with Dundun.

Since there were no white-skinned winter melons, he decided to go work at Fishing Platform today. It was also a good opportunity for Dundun to get familiar with the environment there.

Indeed, to increase the sales at Building Two, Xie Baomin specifically instructed Lin Xu to bring Dundun along to continue leveraging its specialty.

He didn't know that Dundun was a Divine Artifact; he thought it was just for show.

To make Dundun comfortable at Fishing Platform, Xie Baomin had taken the small cushion and cat litter box that Dundun used for sleeping on the cash register the night before.

It was a good thing too, because Lin Xu didn't want to leave Dundun at home alone.

So he agreed to it.

「Around eight in the morning.」

When Dou Wenjing came to work, Lin Xu was carrying Dundun downstairs.

At the shop's front door, after giving the shop keys to Dou Wenjing, he tossed the advertisements stuffed onto the windshield into a trash bin and then carried Dundun into the car.

He put on sunglasses, started the car, and headed straight to Fishing Platform.

Today, Lin Xu officially began working.

When Lin Xu arrived at the entrance of Fishing Platform, Xie Baomin was already waiting. Xie Baomin had a processed entry pass in hand. He opened the car door, sat in the passenger seat, and placed the pass behind the windshield.

With this pass, the large G-Class SUV could now easily enter and exit Fishing Platform.

After parking the car at Building Two, Lin Xu got out with Dundun and followed Xie Baomin into the restaurant of Building Two.

On the front desk, the small cushion that Dundun used to sleep on was already laid out. Next to it was a pink pillow—a perfect fit for Dundun, the tough guy.

Just as he entered the door, a twenty-six or twenty-seven-year-old woman in professional attire came over with a smile. Seeing Dundun in Lin Xu's arms, her eyes lit up, and her steps quickened. "Wow, are you Dundun? What a cute little cat, can I hold you?"

She was very beautiful, with her hair tied up at the back of her head and light makeup on her face. Her smile was warm and inviting, making anyone feel at ease.

Lin Xu didn't mind Dundun being held by others and said with a smile, "Sure, but my cat might not agree..."

Before he finished his sentence, Dundun straightened up in his arms, leaning his upper body toward the front desk manager like a child begging to be picked up.

Lin Xu was speechless. My dear boy, must you embarrass me in front of outsiders like this!

"I am Shu Yun. Welcome to Building Two, Mr. Lin."

"You know me?"

"You helped our Building Two win the championship. Everyone at Fishing Platform knows you! If we didn't know you dislike big fusses, we would've had a welcoming line."

Lin Xu had been slightly worried that Dundun wouldn't adapt well. But there he was, comfortably curling up in Shu Yun's arms, looking rather content.

"Let's leave Dundun at the reception then. I'll go with my Senior Brother to check the kitchen."

"Sure, Mr. Lin. I'll take good care of him."

Passing through the serene and classy dining area, Lin Xu was led by Xie Baomin to the kitchen of Building Two.

The spacious kitchen was almost mistakable for a factory workshop, featuring a dry goods storage room, a pickled goods storage room, a fresh goods storage room, a roast meat preparation area, and a vegetable washing station.

As he walked along, Lin Xu felt like Old Lady Liu entering the Grand View Garden—truly an eye-opener.

He made a round, greeted the chefs, and then arrived at his own cooking station.

Indeed, to better prepare the dish 'Home,' not only did Lin Xu have a dedicated station, but also an extra-large worktable.

After acquainting himself with the environment, Lin Xu remembered the Crab Bun he had promised Shen last night and curiously asked his Senior Brother, "Senior Brother, where is the seafood kept here? I'd like to check it out and maybe get some inspiration for the new shop."

Xie Baomin led him to the seafood area. This was divided into freshwater and seawater areas, housing various kinds of lively seafood.

"These are some of our regular offerings. If we have customers with special requests, we also make advance orders. For example, last year, we had a customer who wanted to eat a Giant Grouper, and we had a sixty to seventy catty Giant Grouper shipped directly from Hainan."

Giant Grouper? This was beyond Lin Xu's knowledge.

"Senior Brother, what's a Giant Grouper?"

"It's a huge type of Grouper, big in size and good in texture. It's perfect except for being pricey."

While looking around, Lin Xu noticed the crabs in the freshwater section. "Are these the June Yellows?"

"Yes, this batch of June Yellows is top-notch. Not only are they big, but they're also rich in roe. They're suitable for direct consumption or as a filling in dishes like Crab Yellow Tofu..."

As he was speaking, Lin Xu pointed at several motionless crabs in the water and said, "Senior Brother, these crabs seem to have drowned. Shall we steam them?"

Chapter 220: Are You Offering Hada Here? Making Crab Soup Dumplings!

"So... you went around in circles just because you wanted to eat crab?" Xie Baomin's expression was sly; he found his junior's actions somewhat amusing. If he wants to eat them, he should just say so directly, he thought. Why beat around the bush?

Lin Xu shook his head. "It's not that I want to eat them, it's that I want to use them. A few days ago, I promised Yueyue I'd make her Crab Buns, but I haven't had the time. Seeing these crabs just reminded me."

"You know how to make Crab Buns?"

"I know a thing or two."

Lin Xu possessed the Filling Adjustment Technique, the Dough Technique, and the Filling Technique, backed by his experience in making Excellent Level Shengjian Soup Dumplings; he was indeed capable of making Crab Soup Dumplings. However, the process for Crab Buns was more complex and difficult than for Shengjian Buns.

For instance, the aspic jelly needed for the filling couldn't be made with ordinary water. It required a rich chicken soup, and after simmering, the pork skin needed to be finely minced and added back into the soup. Only such aspic jelly, when incorporated into soup dumplings, would produce that rich and savory broth.

Additionally, the wrappers for Crab Buns weren't made using usual dough-making methods. Instead, it involved combining a dough made mostly with boiling water (scalded dough) with a smaller portion of dough made with cold water. This mixture created a dough that could be stretched significantly while still maintaining sufficient elasticity. The wrappers used for Crab Soup Dumplings in "Tongue Point," which could be inflated like a balloon, referred to precisely this kind of dough.

Seeing that his junior wasn't joking, Xie Baomin grabbed a landing net, fished out five or six large crabs from the pond, and asked, "Is this enough?"

"That's more than enough! But Senior, could you please put them back for now? I haven't even made the aspic jelly yet."

This senior is more impatient than I thought.

"Right, I forgot Crab Soup Dumplings need aspic jelly... and it seems it has to be an aspic jelly made with chicken soup, right? Well, go prepare it then. Just come and get the crabs whenever you're ready to use them."

After speaking, Xie Baomin tossed the crabs from the net back into the pond. The crabs, having narrowly escaped death, quickly swam away, proving by their actions that they had not drowned.

Returning to his own stove, Lin Xu requested some raw pork skin. He put it in a pot with scallion, ginger, and cooking wine to boil for a while, then placed it on the chopping board and used a kitchen knife to scrape off the impurities and fat from the pork skin. After scraping, he washed it twice with hot water.

Then, carrying a soup pot, he strolled to the soup station to get some chicken soup. "Do you have any chicken soup?" he asked. "I'll need about half a pot."

The assistant chef in charge of soups saw Lin Xu and immediately said, "Yes, yes, yes, Chef Lin! Do you need Chicken Soup or rich chicken soup?"

Wow! Fishing Platform truly lives up to its name, Lin Xu thought. They even have two types of chicken soup prepared! This place is a paradise for culinary creators!

"Rich chicken soup will do."

The assistant chef took the pot and went inside to fill half of it. Lin Xu carried it back to his stove, put the pork skin into the rich chicken soup, added a scallion knot and several slices of ginger, brought it to a boil, and then reduced the heat to a simmer.

This was a slow process, but Lin Xu was in no hurry. Crab Soup Dumplings couldn't be delivered; they had to be steamed and eaten fresh. So, the best plan was to wait for Shen Jiayue to get off work and come over to eat them. If he started steaming them then, he would have plenty of time.

"Chef Lin, a customer has pre-ordered a dish you make. They're coming at 11:30 a.m. to eat. If there's anything you need to prepare, you can do it in advance, but please don't delay the customer's mealtime."

Just as he had turned down the heat on his stove, the head chef of this section came over with an order slip to inform him. Lin Xu took it and looked. It was an order for "Home." The price at Fishing Platform was actually 699 yuan per serving, and this was supposedly a special introductory price...

No wonder Wei Qian thought the Nori Egg Drop Soup at the old shop was cheap. These prices are worlds apart.

"Junior Brother, your arrival has really made a difference," Xie Baomin said, delighted. "It hasn't been long at all, and several tables have already been booked for your dishes." He hadn't expected business in Building Two to pick up so soon after his junior brother started working there.

That's hardly my doing; it's all Dundun's ability. Bringing it to Fishing Platform was just a stroke of luck on your part... Lin Xu muttered inwardly. Just as he was about to get the ingredients for "Home," Xie Baomin spoke again, "Start preparing it in a bit. Make a couple of portions so everyone can learn. You should also explain the key points of making this dish, especially the Dragon Beard Candy. Many in the main kitchen have never encountered it before..."

Lin Xu didn't refuse. He collected the ingredients and began to prepare the dish.

Last time, because it was for a competition, he had made a larger portion. Now, however, it was to be a dessert dish for the restaurant, so the quantities needed to be more refined. Lin Xu adjusted the arrangement, making the bird's nest design even more unique and appealing.

Building Two had many renowned chefs. When Lin Xu first began to boil the sugar, most of them were somewhat bored. But when Lin Xu took the still scalding-hot sugar from the pot with his bare hands and began to make the Dragon Beard Candy, everyone's attention was instantly captured.

As expected of Chef Lin! they thought. His hands are actually impervious to such scalding heat!

In the culinary world, prowess is respected. And being impervious to heat is a manifestation of prowess.

Watching Lin Xu skillfully pull the strands for the Dragon Beard Candy, the other chefs felt eager to try. They thought this Dragon Beard Candy seemed very similar to dragon beard noodles. The so-called dragon beard noodles involved pulling noodle dough into extremely thin strands. These noodles cooked almost instantly in boiling water and were very suitable for the elderly or young children.

Today, Lin Xu had boiled a lot of sugar. He had only used a small portion of it just now.

Once Lin Xu finished making the Dragon Beard Candy, the other chefs couldn't restrain themselves any longer. They each grabbed a small, still quite hot, lump of sugar and began to mimic Lin Xu's recent actions, rolling the sugar into a long strip and then joining the ends to form a loop, like a bracelet.