

Culinary 23

Chapter 23: Triggering the Main Quest Again! The Demon King is Online!

"Lottery!"

Lin Xu had not expected the mission to be completed so smoothly. He had just private messaged Chezai last night to invite him to work at the restaurant. Today, this guy somehow managed to bring Song Tiantian and her group over.

Now, the mission was accomplished. It was finally time to reap the rewards.

After a bit of maneuvering and prayer, Lin Xu completed the Superior level lottery.

"Congratulations, Host. You've obtained a Superior-level cold dish—Ginger Lotus Root."

What? Ginger Lotus Root? He was somewhat surprised. He hadn't expected to draw his favorite dish.

Lin Xu had disliked ginger since he was a child, but he did not detest the taste of ginger. When eating out, he always made a point to ask if the Lotus Root was made with ginger juice or ginger mince. If it was ginger juice, he would order it; if ginger mince, he would pass.

Now that he had drawn this dish, wasn't this achieving Ginger Lotus Root freedom?

Lin Xu put aside his thoughts. He returned to the kitchen and got busy again.

Less than an hour remained until dinner time. He had to hurry and prepare to avoid affecting the restaurant's business.

「At five o'clock in the evening.」

The restaurant officially started business. Lin Xu had just set up the electronic blackboard at the entrance when a few elders from the neighborhood walked in.

"Are those delicious Tiger Skin Chicken Feet sold here? Could I have ten?"

"Absolutely, this must be the place! It's right here! Young man, I'll take twenty. My son brought some back this morning, but it wasn't enough for everyone; we need more for tonight."

"I want thirty. We've got a gathering at home tonight, and I want them to taste our Yingchun Street's delicacies. They're no worse than those made on Guijie."

"Exactly, our Yingchun Street is no worse than Guijie! Young man, I'll take twenty-five."

"..."

The arrival of these elders instantly livened up the atmosphere in the restaurant. Lin Xu took out a stack of takeaway boxes and began packing the Chicken Feet with Chezai.

Before long, new customers walked in.

"Three Chicken Feet, a large bowl of tri-combo hand-pulled noodles, and a bottle of beer."

"Five Chicken Feet, two bottles of beer, and a large bowl of Tomato Cubes Noodles."

"Four Chicken Feet, a small bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles with soup."

"Eight Chicken Feet, two large bowls of Tomato Cubes Noodles, and six bottles of beer!"

As dinner time arrived, people who had been busy with their day's work flocked into the restaurant, ordering a bowl of noodles, a few Chicken Feet, and a couple of beers. Those who didn't like beer would usually buy a small bottle of baijiu from the supermarket across the street before entering the

restaurant. When the Chicken Feet were served, they would use the bottle cap as a cup, sipping the baijiu slowly while enjoying them.

The crushing workload had left these hardworking people gasping for breath. It was only during meal times that they could raise their cups and enjoy this moment of peace that belonged to them.

The evening business was still very good. But because there was an additional cashier and three waiters, Lin Xu found himself considerably more relaxed. Now he was only responsible for rolling out and cooking noodles in the kitchen. As for everything else, Chezai and the waiters had it all covered.

「At seven thirty in the evening.」

The Chicken Feet sold out again.

"No way, Boss, are they gone again?"

"Could you add another appetizer? The Chicken Feet are selling out too fast; we can't even get any."

"Exactly! With this hot weather, how about some cold dishes in the restaurant?"

Customers who hadn't managed to buy Chicken Feet, as a fallback, hoped the restaurant could offer some other appetizers.

Lin Xu said, "Tomorrow, the restaurant will introduce a refreshing new cold dish. Everyone, just wait and see."

The supply of Chicken Feet has already reached its limit. Now the only option is to increase the number of dishes to gradually alleviate the pressure on the Chicken Feet. I urgently need to do a lottery draw! If a draw resulted in eight or ten new dishes, would everyone still be so obsessed with Tiger Skin Chicken Feet?

Just as he was thinking this, a system notification sounded in Lin Xu's mind:

"Host is dissatisfied with the current situation, triggering Main Quest [Daily Gold]: Ensure the store's daily turnover reaches fifty thousand yuan within one month. Completion Reward: Three Perfect Level dish draws."

"Host is dissatisfied with the current situation, triggering Side Quest [Slightly Famous]: Ensure the topic #Lin Ji's Food# reaches the top fifty in the Yanjing Region food category chart within one week. Completion Reward: One Perfect Level steamed dish draw."

"Host is dissatisfied with the current situation, triggering Side Quest [Independent Innovation]: Create a new dish using mastered Cooking Techniques within three days. Completion Reward: One Perfect Level Dish Upgrade Card."

(Note: The Perfect Level Dish Upgrade Card can upgrade any dish the Host has mastered to Perfect Level.)

After listening to the system's notification, Lin Xu couldn't help but frown.

Goodness me. I was just mumbling a few words. Did you really have to be so accommodating? A turnover of fifty thousand? Is that really a number I can achieve? Just managing twenty to thirty thousand a day is exhausting enough. If it's fifty thousand, that would definitely land someone in the hospital, fighting for their life.

Although the task of increasing popularity is relatively simple, it's also not without its challenges. Especially now that paying for higher rankings isn't allowed, increasing topic popularity can only be achieved by gaining more followers and boosting account activity. I'm not some mega-influencer who can command an audience with a single call; I simply don't have that kind of clout. What I'm most confident about is the innovation task. With the experience from making Oil-poured Noodles before, I plan to continue innovating with noodles this time.

「At eight o'clock in the evening.」

All the noodles and toppings in the restaurant were sold out.

As Lin Xu sat resting, he remembered the task of increasing topic popularity. He picked up his phone, opened the short-video social platform, and posted an update under the #Lin Ji's Food topic:

"Hello everyone, I'm Lin Xu. Tomorrow, #Lin Ji's Food# will be introducing a new cold dish. You can try to guess what it is, and those who guess correctly will be gifted a portion of this dish tomorrow."

The moment the update was posted, netizens surfing online buzzed with excitement.

"Damn, Boss Lin just dropped into the topic?"

"The Demon King has appeared in the topic! Everyone, come and see!"

"Ahhh, another new cold dish! I'm going to eat myself to death in this restaurant eventually!"

"What kind of cold dish is it, Boss Lin?"

"Not even a hint. Truly worthy of the Demon King."

"..."

「West Fourth Ring.」

Inside a villa in the West Mountain residential area, Shen Jiayue had just completed her exercise target for the night. Sweaty, she sat on the floor, planning to rest a bit before heading upstairs to shower.

"I'm dead tired! It's all that jerk's fault for cooking such delicious food. It made me add five extra sets of strength training this afternoon... I'm never eating his cooking again!"

While she was muttering, she scrolled to Lin Xu's update under the #Lin Ji's Food topic.

"What? A new cold dish tomorrow? This..."

Shen Jiayue, the beauty, recalled what she had just said. She couldn't help but puff her cheeks.

I'm going to school for the graduation ceremony the day after tomorrow. So, it's perfectly normal for me to go find Lin Xu tomorrow and ask him what time he'll be at school, right? And if he insists on treating me to a meal after I get there, that's... also very reasonable, right?

「Elsewhere.」

In Yinzhou City, at the Longqi Mountain Scenic Area, Chen Meijuan was in her room, packing things to bring to Beijing the next day.

"Should I bring some dried mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and wood ear mushrooms for Xiao Xu? These were all harvested by Old Zhang and the others from the mountain; you can't buy them outside."

Lin Xu's father, Lin Hongqi, walked in from outside. Although he was nearly fifty, he still stood tall, his face bearing the tenacity and simplicity characteristic of Yinzhou locals.

"Let's not bring them this time. We still don't know how Xiao Xu is doing in Beijing. I want to go see first if he's actually running a restaurant."

Chen Meijuan zipped up her bag. "If he really is running a restaurant, that child is cooped up in the kitchen all day. When will he ever find a girlfriend? I'm so worried about him..."