

Culinary 26

Chapter 26 - Ginger Lotus Root Highly Praised! Plan to Close for Half a Day!

On social media, under the topic of Lin Ji's Food, Shen Jiayue's update attracted a string of replies and likes.

****Genius Girl Loves Food:**** Lotus Root!!! And it's sweet and sour! Oh my god, I'm going to skip fourth period to go to the restaurant and eat. I want a double portion!

****Panda Brother:**** On my way to the restaurant now, definitely going to have a couple of drinks at noon today.

****Lin Ji Boy Yue Liyue:**** Panda Bro, let's eat together at noon. My treat! I just finished a big order and I'm ready for some drinks before bed.

****Uncle Shen from Dongfeng Produce Market:**** This is the Lotus Root bought from my stall. Contact me if you need any!

****Striving to Save Money for Hair Transplants:**** Posting pictures of Lin Ji's Food at this hour? How brutal! Don't you know I work in Xi'erqi, the food desert?! [Angry][Angry][Angry]

There were many replies, but Shen Jiayue was too preoccupied to look at them. Right now, she was holding a chicken foot in one hand and pinching two bones from it with the other. Should she keep eating, or stop? She was quite reluctant to let go of the deliciousness.

AHHH, how did I end up meeting Lin Xu's mother? What should I do? Should I say, "Hello, Auntie?" My hands are all greasy now; is this not very ladylike? Miss Shen's mind raced with thoughts, feeling as if her brain had crashed.

"Mom, don't scare her. Let's go. Help me clean up the newly rented place; it's a mess, and I haven't had time to buy anything yet," Lin Xu said, smiling apologetically at Shen Jiayue before dragging Chen Meijuan away.

「After they left.」

Shen Jiayue felt like she had come back to life. She never could have imagined meeting his parents under such circumstances.

Hmph! It's all that darn Lin Xu's fault for making the Chicken Feet so delicious. It made me lose all my table manners.

But... these Chicken Feet really were amazing. She bit off the central part of a chicken foot, chewing with a satisfying CRUNCH. The more she chewed, the tastier it became.

"Son, do you know how hard it is to find a wife back in our hometown nowadays? If you don't cherish this great opportunity, you'll regret it later..." Chen Meijuan said, holding her handbag and prattling on as she followed Lin Xu to the entrance of the residential complex behind the restaurant.

Lin Xu gave a wry smile. "You don't have to worry about that. The address is Building 3, Unit 3, 16th Floor, Room 1604. I've sent it to you on WeChat. Here's the key. You can decide how to set it up."

He sent the address via his phone again and also transferred 30,000 yuan to his mother. After all, he was troubling her to buy things.

Seeing the transfer amount on her phone, Chen Meijuan smiled softly. "Back when you were little, whenever I asked you to buy things, you'd always try to get more money from me. Now, you're the one giving me extra money to make purchases. My son has really grown up!"

She stopped nagging him about finding a girlfriend and walked into the residential complex with her bags.

「When Lin Xu returned to the restaurant.」

Grandpa Gao was already sitting there, starting on the Lotus Root slices.

When Song Tiantian saw him, she asked, "Boss, we haven't set a price for the Ginger Lotus Root yet."

Only then did Lin Xu remember. His mom's visit had completely disrupted his workflow. He hadn't even managed to put out the little blackboard yet. He quickly brought it out and added a new item:

[Ginger Lotus Root: 16 yuan/portion]

Just after he placed the board at the entrance, Lin Xu saw Panda and Yue Liyue arriving with their respective friends.

Upon seeing the dish name on the blackboard, Yue Liyue laughed. "It really is Lotus Root! Boss, we'll each have five Chicken Feet, two bottles of beer, a large bowl of three-in-one hand-pulled noodles, and three portions of Ginger Lotus Root!"

Since they were hitting it off and Panda seemed like a good guy, Yue Liyue figured this was a good opportunity to have a few drinks.

Lin Xu welcomed them into the restaurant. After relaying their order to Song Tiantian, he headed into the kitchen and got busy.

The newly introduced Ginger Lotus Root was very popular.

"I never thought lotus root could be made this crunchy."

"The key is this sweet and tangy flavor; it's irresistible, so delicious!"

"Yeah, this sweet and sour taste is great."

"What I find most amazing is that you can taste the ginger without actually seeing any. Before, with every slice of lotus root, I'd have to pick out the minced ginger. But now, it's fine; I can take big bites without worrying."

"Chicken Feet can get a bit greasy if you eat too many. But then you have a couple of slices of this Lotus Root—wow! It's appetizing and cuts right through the grease."

The praises continued.

As the reputation of the restaurant grew, more and more neighbors chose to dine there. Gnawing on Chicken Feet, munching on Lotus Root slices, and then enjoying a bowl of hand-pulled noodles—it was sheer delight!

In the bustling restaurant, Shen Jiayue sat at her table, eating quietly. Whenever someone praised Lin Xu's culinary skills, she couldn't help but smile, feeling even happier than if she had been complimented herself.

Finally, Shen Jiayue finished all the food Lin Xu had brought her. She ate every last bite of the five Chicken Feet, the plate of Lotus Root, and the small bowl of three-in-one hand-pulled noodles.

When her plate and bowl were empty, she took out her phone and snapped a picture, posting it under the Lin Ji's Food topic.

Today's empty bowl check-in: complete! Yep, I'm a Lin Ji girl who finishes all her food too!

She had actually come over today wanting to tell Lin Xu something exciting. But seeing Lin Xu busy in the kitchen, she decided not to disturb him. After all, she was returning to school for her graduation ceremony tomorrow. It wouldn't be too late to tell him then.

After clearing her table and putting the empty bowls in the dish bin, she walked to the cash register and scanned the QR code to pay 76 yuan. That was for today's meal. Yesterday, when she came as an old classmate, it was fine to mooch food and drinks without paying. But today, things had to be settled properly. Lin Xu was running a business; if everyone ate and drank for free, Lin Ji's Food would collapse, no matter how popular it was.

"Jiayue, the boss said not to charge you. You're putting me in a tough spot," Song Tiantian, who was quite well-built, said with a troubled expression.

Shen Jiayue said cheerily, "Don't worry about it. If he criticizes you, just hit him. He's been asking for it lately, anyway."

Song Tiantian flinched and quickly shook her head. "No way, no way! He's such a good boss, I couldn't bring myself to hit him."

Shen Jiayue looked enviously at Song Tiantian's muscles. "If I were as built as you, I'd hit him eight times a day!"

Hmph! That's for not understanding romance! That's for making me eat so much! That's for embarrassing me so many times!

Shen Jiayue walked to the kitchen door and waved to Lin Xu, who was busy inside. "I'm heading back now. I'll drive over tomorrow morning to pick you up, and we can go back to school together."

Without waiting for Lin Xu to refuse, she slung her small bag over her shoulder and strode out of the restaurant.

"Boss, you're going back to school tomorrow? Then how will the restaurant open?" Chezai asked curiously during a break from cooking noodles.

"We'll be closed tomorrow morning, so you all can get some good rest. As for the afternoon... wait for my notification. If nothing comes up, we'll open as usual in the afternoon," Lin Xu explained.

Although the restaurant wouldn't be open tomorrow, it wouldn't be idle either. Lin Xu planned to move the cash register to the entrance and consolidate the cold drink coolers and other things there. Customers would pay and order upon entering. Then, they'd collect their food inside using their payment receipt. This way, dine-in customers wouldn't be affected by those waiting in line. This would also effectively prevent dine-and-dashes and similar issues.

He'd had this idea for a while but lacked the help to implement it. Now that his mother had arrived, he could take advantage of the half-day closure to get it done. His mother had managed to turn a barren mountain into a scenic tourist area; reorganizing a simple storefront would surely be a piece of cake for her.

「Elsewhere.」

Shen Jiayue arrived home. Standing at the entrance to her garage, she hesitated. Should I drive the Ferrari or the Lamborghini tomorrow?