

## **Culinary 271**

Chapter 271: Where Are Mom and Dad, Home Is Where They Are! Reaping the Benefits of Helping Mom!

Dundun was very cooperative. He first walked over tentatively and then started to play with Lin Hongqi.

Watching his busy mom and his dad playing with Dundun, Lin Xu couldn't help but feel emotional. The moment his parents arrived, this two-bedroom, one-living-room apartment immediately felt like home.

Indeed, home is wherever your parents are!

After his reflection, he washed his hands and went to the kitchen to start cooking.

Hmm, everyone's hungry. I've got to hurry and make something for Mom and Dad to fill their stomachs.

He took out the beef and green chili peppers from the fridge, and also the Chinese broccoli that had come with the shrimp he'd bought earlier.

He decided on the menu: spicy stir-fried beef, garlic-flavored Chinese broccoli, and Nori Egg Drop Soup, all served with the rice that was already simmering in the pot. Perfect, the meal was settled.

After Lin Xu stir-fried the aromatic and spicy beef, he set a pot of water to boil, adding peanut oil and salt to it.

Once the water boiled, he briefly blanched the neatly prepared and cleaned Chinese broccoli.

After blanching, he removed it from the water, drained it, and arranged it on a plate. While the Chinese broccoli was still hot, he poured some garlic sauce over it and gave it a quick stir. The garlic-flavored Chinese broccoli was ready.

Compared to Boiled Chinese Broccoli, garlic-flavored Chinese broccoli had a stronger taste, more in line with the dietary habits of Northern people.

With the two dishes ready, Lin Xu brought them to the dining table, served two bowls of rice, and then said to his parents, "Let's eat first. We can continue with the chores after the meal."

After saying that, he returned to the kitchen and made two bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup.

Lin Hongqi and Chen Meijuan washed their hands and sat at the dining table.

"Hmm, this dish smells really good," Lin Hongqi said. "Meijuan, our son's cooking skills are even better than yours."

"That's for sure," Chen Meijuan replied. "If our Xu can work at Fishing Platform, how could his skills be anything but excellent?"

The couple chatted leisurely while they ate.

Lin Xu cleaned up the kitchen and picked up his phone to check the video he had uploaded before leaving the house.

The video had already been approved and garnered a good eighty to ninety thousand views.

The comment section was never short of silly netizens.

I'm a Cosmic Black Hole: Today's ingredients weren't chilled in a black hole, I can attest to that!

Member No. 111 of the Meow Meow Sect: Dundun is so lucky, having someone to peel shrimp for him. I've never had such treatment in my entire life.

Don't Argue, If You Do It Means You're Fat: I've counted carefully. Today, Boss Lin used a total of 199 garlic cloves for the garlic sauce. Dare to challenge me?

Lin Daiyu Opens the Willows: Ahhhhh! I actually got a spot at the live event! I want to go watch the match! Can anyone help me?

Hello, My Name is Willow: Leave it to me. I can guarantee you'll get to go to the event.

Lin Daiyu Opens the Willows: Really?

Hello, My Name is Willow: Not only can I get you to the event, but I can also treat you to a free meal at Fishing Platform.

Lu Zhishen Buries Flowers: It's just surfing the internet. What's with the simping?

Hello, My Name is Willow: [Picture] With this level of cuteness, who wouldn't simp?

Lu Zhishen Buries Flowers: ...

Lu Zhishen Buries Flowers: Yuyu, I'll figure out a way to get you to the event right now! We have couple-themed nicknames; it's destiny! You've got to give me a chance, Yuyu!!!

Lin Daiyu Opens the Willows: ?

After watching Lin Daiyu, Lu Zhishen, and Willow love and fight in the comment section, Lin Xu liked each of their comments, then opened WeChat to send Shen Baobao a message.

"My parents have arrived and are eating now. What would you like to eat tonight? My mom will cook it for you."

As soon as the message was sent, Shen Jiayue, who was sitting in front of her computer, replied immediately.

"Just your typical Central Plains home cooking is fine. I want to try the food you used to eat, is that okay?"

"Sure, you can come over after work. My dad even prepared a red envelope for you."

When she saw the words "red envelope," Shen Baobao's eyes lit up.

"Your parents are so kind! I can't wait to be part of our family."

Our family...

Seeing these words, Lin Xu couldn't help but chuckle silently.

Mustn't let her father see this. Otherwise, he'll start sulking again.

After putting down his phone, Lin Xu said to Chen Meijuan, "Mom, your daughter-in-law says she wants to eat our Central Plains home cooking tonight."

Upon hearing this, Chen Meijuan instantly replied, "No problem. I'll begin preparations as soon as I've tidied up here."

As soon as she finished speaking, Lin Hongqi turned and asked, "Is there any rice left? These two dishes are really perfect with rice. I wasn't feeling hungry at first, but after eating, one bowl just wasn't enough."

Before, they had only read online how good their son's cooking was and thought it was an exaggeration.

They hadn't expected it to be truly delicious, even better than what netizens described.

More rice was served.

Lin Hongqi continued eating while discussing with Chen Meijuan what to cook for the evening meal.

"Although our daughter-in-law said she wants home-style dishes, we can't be too casual about it," he said. "There must be chicken, fish, and meat—both hot and cold dishes, a full spread."

He remembered the photos he'd seen online from his son's first visit to the Shen Family. There had been at least thirty dishes on the table: king crab, tuna, lobster—everything imaginable. The Shen family had shown their son so much respect; naturally, they had to reciprocate that respect for their future daughter-in-law. Only then would the future family be stable.

After the meal, Lin Xu went to the kitchen to wash pots and dishes.

Once Chen Meijuan had tidied up the house, she and Lin Hongqi headed to the market.

When the two of them returned, each was carrying two big shopping bags filled with ingredients.

Lin Xu saw a large Carp, a freshly slaughtered rooster, crucian carp, Pork Ribs, pork belly, front leg pork, beef, tofu, White Radish, and Carrots, among various other ingredients.

Chapter 272: Wherever Mom and Dad Are, That's Home! Helping Mom Pays Off!

"Son, come and give me a hand. Chop this foreleg pork into mince."

At Chen Meijuan's command, Lin Xu—dietary consultant at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse, special chef of Building No. 2, and a food blogger with hundreds of thousands of online followers—obediently put on an apron and began chopping the meat with a kitchen knife.

Yeah, no matter how many titles or identities one holds, in front of Mom, you just have to listen and do as told.

While Lin Xu was chopping the meat, Chen Meijuan was cleaning a three-pound Carp.

"Why didn't you let the vendor clean it?"

"We can't do that; it wouldn't be fresh by the time we brought it home... It's a shame the market doesn't sell Yellow River Carp. I don't even know if the braised Carp will taste good."

Lin Xu quickly offered a flattering comment, "It will definitely taste good! I've never had enough of it in my entire life. Yueyue will love it the moment she tries it."

While the mother and son were busy in the kitchen, Lin Hongqi took out his laptop from his bag, connected to the internet, and logged into various group-buying platforms to check the ticket sales for the scenic spots. Summer vacation was the golden period for tourism. If they didn't seize the opportunity, this year would be an almost complete waste of effort. After checking, he also looked up the approval progress for a 4A-level scenic area, which was still under review. He wondered when it would be approved. If it could be approved before the end of summer vacation, there would still be time to promote it.

Unfortunately... Such proceedings are incredibly slow and cannot be rushed; one can only wait patiently.

After handling the online tasks, he picked up his phone and contacted the person in charge of the scenic area to ask about the status of its different sections.

Hmm, even though he was in Beijing now, he couldn't just ignore the scenic spot.

Now that it was finally showing signs of improvement, he had to be wholeheartedly responsible and ensure every tourist had a great time.

「In the kitchen.」

After Lin Xu finished chopping the meat, Chen Meijuan had already cleaned the Carp thoroughly, scored it, and marinated it with scallion, ginger, and cooking wine. She put the fish in the fridge. Then, she took the minced meat Lin Xu had chopped, seasoned it with scallion and ginger water, ginger juice, light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, and salt, then vigorously worked the mixture until it became springy and elastic.

Next, she cut some cabbage leaves and blanched them in water. After blanching, she immersed them in cold water to cool. After squeezing out the excess water, she laid the cabbage leaves out on the cutting board, placed some of the meat mixture on them, rolled the leaves up, and neatly arranged them in a dish to steam.

Once out of the steamer, they could be eaten directly. Alternatively, the steaming liquid from the dish could be discarded, a little Steamed Fish Sauce poured over, then sprinkled with scallion and ginger shreds, and finally drizzled with sizzling hot oil. Such cabbage rolls had a rich, savory soy flavor that was very appetizing. The Lin Family made this dish almost every Chinese New Year.

After finishing the cabbage rolls, Chen Meijuan sliced some lotus root using continuous cuts, stuffed it with more of the minced meat, and planned to later coat it in batter and fry it to make her son's favorite crispy stuffed lotus root.

Once these two dishes were prepared, Chen Meijuan beat a few eggs and then made some paper-thin omelets in the frying pan. After cooling them slightly, she placed them on the cutting board, wrapped the remaining meat mixture inside, shaped them into long rolls, and then steamed them for an hour. Whether eaten hot or cold, they were extremely delicious.

Once all the minced meat was used, Chen Meijuan took out the soaked pork ribs, seasoned them with oyster sauce, minced garlic, scallion, and ginger, and prepared to fry some garlic-flavored pork ribs later.

"Last time, I saw an online discussion about a girl who traveled thousands of miles to her boyfriend's parents' home for the New Year, only to find they had prepared just a few cold dishes. It sparked a huge debate online. At that time, I told your dad that when you bring a girlfriend home, no matter how busy or tired we are, we must personally prepare a huge feast. We can't let our future daughter-in-law feel slighted."

TSK... Mom, if only you'd said this when Yueyue was here. She would have been absolutely moved to tears.

Lin Xu smiled and said, "Your daughter-in-law isn't that fussy. As long as it tastes good, she'll be happy."

Seeing his mom pick up a white radish, he curiously asked, "What dish are you preparing with that?"

"Steamed Shredded Radish with Rice Flour. Isn't this your favorite dish? It's a perfect chance for Yueyue to try it too."

Upon hearing it was this dish, Lin Xu took the white radish and said, "I've been wanting to learn how to make this. Let me do the cutting. How fine should it be?"

"The finer, the better."

The finer, the better? Upon hearing this, Lin Xu immediately put his Wensi Tofu slicing skills to the test. He quickly peeled the white radish, sliced it diagonally into nearly transparent slices, then arranged the slices and evenly cut them into extremely fine shreds.

As he was almost finished, Chen Meijuan, who was nearby preparing to boil some pork belly, saw his work and exclaimed in shock, "Are you showing off your knife skills here, son? Why did you cut them as fine as hair?"

Didn't you say the finer, the better? After finishing the rest of the radish, Lin Xu curiously asked, "Can't these be used?"

"They'll break easily when you salt them to draw out the water."

"Then tell me the method, and I'll give it a try. If it works, we'll continue steaming; if not, we'll fry them into radish balls."

Chen Meijuan hadn't expected her son to be so eager to learn nowadays, so she said, "First, rinse them. Then, use salt to draw out their moisture. Rinse them twice more and squeeze out the excess water. Blow-dry them with a fan, drizzle with a little cooked oil, and mix evenly. Finally, sprinkle with some dry starch and steam them. Give it a try. If it doesn't work out, I'll do it after I finish boiling the meat."

With the steps his mother taught him, Lin Xu put the radish shreds into a basin. He first rinsed them with clean water and drained them. Then, he sprinkled some salt over the shreds and gently tossed them, letting the salt's strong dehydrating properties draw out the moisture.

Soon, the radish shreds in the basin softened and wilted, and a good amount of radish water accumulated at the bottom. Lin Xu pinched a shred to test. Though the radish shreds had become somewhat transparent, they hadn't broken. It seemed they were still intact enough for steaming.

When the salting was almost done, he scooped out the radish shreds, rinsed them twice with clean water to wash away the excess salt, placed them in a clean white cloth, and squeezed out the remaining moisture. After squeezing out the water, he spread them out in a basket and used a fan to completely dry them.

Then he poured them into a basin, drizzled a little cooking oil, and mixed them evenly, ensuring every shred of radish was coated with oil. After that, he sprinkled some cornstarch on them. After mixing everything evenly again, he shook off the excess starch.

It was then ready to be steamed.

Chen Meijuan, who was nearby, watched him and said in amazement, "It really worked? Son, your skills are improving remarkably."

Once the steamer was free, he began the steaming process. This kind of radish shred didn't need to be steamed for too long, just five to six minutes after the steam built up.

When the time was about right, Lin Xu lifted the pot lid. He carefully carried the steamer basket with the radish shreds out, then poured the shreds onto a tray, spreading them out to let the surface steam dissipate quickly. This would ensure the texture was perfectly dry and delicious when eaten.

While he was busy with this, a system notification suddenly sounded in his mind:

"Host has inadvertently created an Excellent Level lost dish—Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips—under the guidance of your mother. Awarded the Superior General Cooking Technique: Powder-Steamng. Congratulations, Host."

HUH?????

I was just helping out, and I somehow managed to create a lost dish? This happiness came too suddenly!

Chapter 273: Braised Big Carp! So Delicious that Baobao Calls Shen Baobao Mom!

Lost culinary dishes...

Lin Xu looked at the finely steamed radish strips and fell into deep thought.

The presentation of these radish strips is truly beyond reproach, like scattered strands of white jade laid out on a plate. If they were arranged neatly, the presentation would likely be even more perfect.

But I've already cut them this finely and it's only Excellent Level—how fine would they have to be for Perfect Level?

Lin Xu didn't know how other dishes became lost.

But the probability is high that the disappearance of this one is due to knife skills.

I'll have to find a way to improve my knife skills, and then try cutting the radish strips again to see if the Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips will level up again.

If it does level up, it will confirm that this dish is indeed related to knife skills. It will also imply that the loss of the dish was due to the high barrier of entry for knife skills.

As he was musing to himself, Chen Meijuan heated up the wok and poured oil into it. She began to fry the marinated carp and pork ribs, as well as the lotus slices she had prepared earlier.

When the oil reached medium-high heat, she took the carp out of the bowl, cleaned the scallion and ginger stuffed inside and on its body, held the fish tail with her left hand, and dipped the fish head into the hot oil. With a spoon in her right hand, she ladled the hot oil from the wok over the fish.

When frying fish, especially larger ones, it's easy for them to sink to the bottom of the wok if placed directly into the oil. Under the heat, the fish skin can easily stick to the bottom and tear, resulting in a less attractive final dish. To prevent this, you can first ladle hot oil over the fish skin to fry it lightly before placing the fish into the wok. This way, the skin won't tear.

When making braised carp in soy sauce, the fish doesn't need to be fried for too long. It can be removed from the wok once the outer skin becomes golden brown.

She set the fish aside to drain the oil, and then began to fry the ribs.

Garlic-flavored pork ribs are a well-known fried dish. For it to be delicious, a generous amount of minced garlic must be added during the marination process so its flavor fully penetrates the meat. However, during frying, it's essential to remove the minced garlic from the surface of the ribs. Otherwise, the minced garlic can easily burn and make the fried ribs taste bitter.

As soon as the ribs were out of the wok, Lin Xu couldn't wait to grab a piece and taste it.

Hmm, the outer shell is crispy and fragrant, while the meat inside is tender and juicy, filled with a rich garlic flavor—delicious.

"How old are you and still acting like a child, not afraid of getting burned?" Chen Meijuan couldn't help but laugh as she watched her son.

Every Chinese New Year when frying dishes, Lin Xu would hover around the stove, tasting this and that, filling up before mealtime even arrived.

After finishing the ribs, Chen Meijuan mixed up some batter. She used chopsticks to dip the lotus slices into the batter before tossing them into the hot oil. You shouldn't touch them right after adding them to the hot oil to avoid the batter coming off. Wait until they float up, then flip them over.

The ribs and lotus slices weren't to be eaten immediately, so they were fried lightly to be thrown back into the wok for a quick refry right before the meal. This way, both the texture and flavor would become perfect.

After frying these ingredients, Chen Meijuan also made several other dishes. For example, she used a rice cooker to make soy sauce braised chicken with the large rooster. She also fried the cooked pork belly and then prepared a dish of pressed meat with the dried radish greens she had brought.

At four twenty in the afternoon, after preparing scallion, ginger, and dried chili pieces among other things, Chen Meijuan started on the braised carp. This dish is quite common in the Central Plains, but to make it delicious, there's also a trick to it.

Chen Meijuan added some cooking oil to the wok and, once hot, began to stir-fry some slices of pork belly.

Indeed, fish will only taste good if you add lard or pork belly slices. Only then does the fish gain a rich aroma and taste even better.

The pork belly should be stir-fried a bit longer to render out the fat. Once the pork belly began turning slightly golden, she added scallion, ginger, garlic, and dried chili to continue stir-frying, bringing out the aroma. She then added light soy sauce and dark soy sauce, along with salt and a couple of blocks of sugar for added umami.

Once everything was stirred evenly, she poured in a small basin of water. She brought the water to a boil over high heat, let it cook for a moment, and then added the fried carp.

After the soup in the wok came to a boil again, she reduced the heat to a simmer and let it cook slowly. While simmering, she continually ladled the soup in the wok over the fish, allowing the meat to cook more thoroughly and helping the soup thicken by hastening its evaporation.

Twenty minutes later, there was barely any soup left in the wok. The fish was thoroughly cooked and trembling slightly, indicating it was almost ready.

That's when Lin Xu received a phone call from Shen Baobao:

"Can you come down and help me? I brought some things for your uncle and aunt, and they're a bit heavy to carry..."

Too heavy to carry? Did she buy a set of furniture or what?

Lin Xu, with the keys in hand, took the elevator down.

Downstairs, he saw the gifts Shen Baobao had bought for his parents—a luxurious foot bath with features like automatic heating, sterilization, and foot massage, along with a beauty device. Besides that, there was a deep red ladies' handbag and a dark grey men's handbag, both from Hermès.

The foot bath and beauty device are manageable. But those two bags...

The red envelopes Mom and Dad prepared might be a bit too thin.

"Is your dad scary? Should I call him 'uncle' or 'Mr.' the first time we meet? Would it seem too casual to start calling them mom and dad right away? Ahhh, I'm so nervous, Xu, can you hug me first..."

Chapter 274: Braised Big Carp! So Delicious That Shen Baobao Starts Calling Mom!

Shen Baobao was very excited. It felt like she was about to face a life-and-death challenge.

Lin Xu smiled and hugged this adorable treasure in his arms, soothing her softly, "Don't be scared, I'm here. My parents are very nice, not fierce at all... And there's a big table of dishes upstairs, just waiting for you."

When it came to food, the Shen Baobao in his arms finally relaxed a bit. "But what if they think less of me for eating too much?"

Lin Xu patted her back. "No, they won't. My mom knows your appetite well enough. You can eat six large buns with Pork Grease filling; she would be unhappy if you ate too little today."

"Stop it! It's all your fault for tempting me with those photos back then."

The couple shared sweet nothings for a few minutes downstairs before carrying their things upstairs.

When they reached the door, Lin Xu knocked.

The door swung open, and Chen Meijuan and Lin Hongqi appeared.

"Yueyue, you're here! It's hot outside; come in and cool off," Chen Meijuan said warmly.

After entering, Shen Jiayue presented two packages. "These are gifts for you. I hope Uncle and Auntie will like them."

"Oh my, Yueyue, you shouldn't have! The color of this bag is so lovely; I'll carry it every day," Chen Meijuan exclaimed.

Yes, these were gifts from my daughter-in-law. I'll have to show them off to the neighbors later.

Lin Hongqi took the handbag his daughter-in-law had bought. From a nearby drawer, he immediately took out a bulging red envelope. Judging by its thickness, it likely contained more than 20,000 yuan.

He handed it to Shen Jiayue. "Yueyue, according to the customs of our hometown, we give a red envelope for the first meeting. This is for you; I hope you like it."

Thanks to the heads-up from Lin Xu, Shen Jiayue knew a red envelope was waiting for her. However, she hadn't expected it to be this big. She had thought it would be the symbolic kind, like the New Year's money elders give, maybe just 1,000 or 2,000 yuan.

"This... isn't this too much?"

"Not at all, my girl. Take it quickly."

"Oh..."

Shen Jiayue accepted it and casually slipped it into her bag. After exchanging a few more pleasantries with Lin Hongqi and Chen Meijuan, she went to play with Dundun.

Chen Meijuan, meanwhile, called Lin Xu to help serve the dishes. Dinner began.

Soon, a series of dishes were brought to the dining table: Green Beans with Garlic Paste, Steamed Radishes with Rice Flour, Pig Ears Mixed with Cucumber, Spicy Potato Strips, Crispy Lotus Root Sandwiches, Garlic-Flavored Pork Ribs, Sweet Potato Balls, Pan-Fried Hot Peppers, Fish-Fragrant Eggplant, Braised Chicken with Soy Sauce, Stuffed Cabbage Rolls, Egg and Meat Rolls, Steamed Radish Greens Bowl, Braised Big Carp, and Diced Meat Stir-Fried with Wild Mushrooms.

The table was loaded with a full spread.

The tempting aromas made Shen Baobao almost lose interest in playing with Dundun.

Ahh, it all smells so amazing! I really want to try everything! I have to hold back, be reserved. I can't leave my in-laws with the impression that I'm wild and crazy. But this wait for dinner to start is truly torturous!

It felt like three years had passed when, finally, a heavenly call reached her ears, "Stop playing. Come wash your hands for dinner."

"Oh... Dundun, I'm going to eat now. I'll come back and play with you after I finish."

Dundun, on the cat tree, gave her a disdainful glance. Playing with me? I'm too embarrassed to even point out what you were really doing!

Shen Baobao followed Lin Xu to the bathroom. They rinsed their hands together, then lathered up with soap. As they cupped their four hands together, Lin Xu asked softly, "Did you really want to sneak a piece and try it just now?"

Shen Jiayue nodded, rubbing Lin Xu's hands as she said, "Yes, yes! All these dishes smell so tantalizing. I nearly drooled all over Dundun."

Heh... No wonder Dundun was giving her such a disdainful look earlier, Lin Xu thought.

Once they had finished washing and dried their hands with a towel, they went to the dining table.

Lin Hongqi and Chen Meijuan were already waiting. When Lin Xu and Shen Jiayue joined them, the family of four finally sat down together.

"Yueyue, eat whatever you like. This whole table was prepared for you," Chen Meijuan said.

"Thank you, Auntie," Shen Jiayue replied politely, then picked up her chopsticks.

With such a feast, which dish should I start with? I really want to try that big Carp in the middle, but wouldn't it seem impolite to go for it directly?

As she was contemplating this, Lin Xu picked up a large piece of Fish from the Carp and placed it on the plate in front of Shen Baobao. "This is my mom's specialty dish. Try it and see how it tastes."

Mother-in-law's specialty? Shen Jiayue's appetite grew even stronger.

She carefully picked out the bones, then lifted a piece of Fish with the Fish Skin still attached and put it in her mouth. Her eyes immediately lit up.

Wow! This Fish is so delicious! The Fish Skin had been braised until it was thoroughly infused with flavor, meltingly tender and rich, so delicious it made you want to swallow your tongue. And the Fish meat itself remained incredibly tender. The fine texture was bursting with a delicious broth. Each bite filled her mouth with freshness and fragrance. So yummy!

"It's so fresh! How did you braise this Fish to make it so delicious?" Shen Jiayue asked after taking another mouthful. It was just as delicious.

"Eat more if it's good," Chen Meijuan said. "You can even have the dish placed in front of you if you prefer. We're family, so no need for formalities. Eat what you want, how you want."

"Thank you... Mom!" Shen Jiayue had intended to say "Thank you, Auntie," but the word "Mom" slipped out.

Chen Meijuan was overjoyed. She hadn't expected her daughter-in-law to change how she addressed her so quickly. She promptly served Shen Jiayue another piece of Fish. "Good girl, eat more."

After saying that, she used her phone to transfer 50,000 yuan to Shen Jiayue. "You must accept it," she said. "This is from Mom as a reward for calling me Mom."

"Oh... Thank you, Mom!"

My mother-in-law is so good to me. Then it's only right I call her Mom ahead of time, isn't it?

After calling Chen Meijuan "Mom," Shen Baobao turned to Lin Hongqi, who was looking at her eagerly, and called out, "Dad!" This delighted Old Lin so much that he downed his glass of liquor in one gulp. Using his own WeChat, he then transferred Shen Baobao another 50,000 yuan as a "name-changing fee."

This formality, usually reserved for the wedding ceremony, had unexpectedly occurred before the engagement. This is wonderful! Lin Hongqi thought happily.

After transferring the money, Lin Hongqi refilled his cup and said, "Yueyue, would it be okay for us to invite your parents to have lunch together tomorrow?"

Before the engagement, both sets of parents should sit down for a chat to get to know each other. After all, it's a union of two families, and proprieties must be observed, he mused.

"Sure! I'll let my parents know when I get back," Shen Jiayue agreed.

Hearing his daughter-in-law agree, Lin Hongqi looked at Lin Xu and asked, "Where do you think would be an appropriate restaurant to invite your parents-in-law for lunch?"

Which restaurant? Lin Xu smiled. "I think this home-cooked meal is exactly what my parents-in-law will love. It has a warmth you just can't find in restaurants."

Upon hearing this, Chen Meijuan also felt that eating at home would be nice. "Then let's eat at home," she said. "It makes talking easier... It's just that our home is a bit small; I wonder if your parents will mind."

Shen Jiayue quickly chimed in, "They won't, they really won't! In fact, when I was little, the place my parents rented wasn't much bigger than this kitchen. They struggled to save money for a house but were conned out of everything. My father cried secretly at night and was in a slump for a long time before he finally pulled himself together..."

Upon hearing this, Lin Hongqi sighed softly. "Your father must have faced many hardships along the way. I'll have to share a few extra drinks with him tomorrow."

After deciding that lunch tomorrow would be at home, everyone continued eating.

Shen Jiayue felt that every dish was delicious. The Sweet Potato Balls, crispy on the outside and semi-molten on the inside, were fragrant, sweet, and delightful. The deliciously fried Pork Ribs, with their strong garlic flavor, were so good one couldn't stop eating. And the Steamed Shredded Radish with Rice Flour; it was not only pleasantly chewy but also carried a hint of garlic's sharpness, making it incredibly tasty.

She tried every dish. The more she ate, the more she admired her mother-in-law. She was truly amazing to be able to cook such a grand table of home-style dishes. Lin Xu was so lucky to have grown up eating meals like this!

As she ate and marveled, Lin Xu, who was beside her, discussed tomorrow's plans. "The pan-fried bun shop has been renovated, and all the equipment is ready. We're officially opening tomorrow morning."

Yes, tomorrow that "Invest in Opening a Shop" task will be officially completed. After getting the reward, I'll upgrade my Basic Knife Skills again and remake the Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips to see if I can elevate the dish even further. If possible, this dish might just make an impressive splash in the competition!

Chapter 275: Ziqiang Shengjian Opens for Business! Booming Sales! The Way Lost Cuisines Should Be!

"Yueyue, eat more fish. It's good for your beauty."

"Have more of the lotus root sandwiches too; they don't taste as good once they cool off."

"Try the cabbage rolls I made. They're light and perfect for summer."

"You should also taste the radish greens in the pork belly. It's different from the southern pickled greens. Whether you eat it with steamed buns or mixed with rice, it's incredibly fragrant..."

At the dining table, Chen Meijuan truly adored her daughter-in-law to the core. She couldn't resist piling Yueyue's bowl with all the tasty dishes. Shen Jiayue, in turn, cherished this affectionate, familial care.

"Mom, you should eat too! The food is amazing. I feel like I'm going to overeat again today."

Before the meal, she had constantly reminded herself to be reserved and ladylike, anxious not to make a bad impression on her in-laws. However, once they started eating, she lost all control, completely immersing herself in the joy of the delicious food.

After the meal, they tidied up the table. Lin Xu then cut up a fruit plate. Everyone sat in the living room chatting until dark, and only then did Shen Baobao get up to leave.

「The next day.」

At six-thirty in the morning, when Lin Xu got up, he found that his parents had already returned from the market with a wide variety of vegetables, even more diverse and plentiful than the day before.

"Stop looking, wash your hands and have some breakfast," Chen Meijuan said. "Worrying you might be homesick, I specially simmered some Spicy Soup, baked a few Scallion Oil pancakes, and fried some bread for you."

They did so much this early! Could they have gotten up at four? Lin Xu wondered.

He washed his face in the bathroom and then joined his parents for breakfast. The Spicy Soup was authentic, particularly the beef inside. It was no longer the thin slices comparable to those in Lanzhou noodles found at breakfast stalls, but cut into small, satisfying cubes.

After a couple of spoonfuls of Spicy Soup, Lin Xu picked up a piece of the fried bread his mother had made. This 'fried bread' was a type of deep-fried dough, similar to Youtiao, but smaller and easier to make, pairing perfectly with hearty breakfasts like Spicy Soup.

A bite of the fluffy, delicious fried bread.

A sip of the fragrant, appetizing Spicy Soup.

A wonderful day had officially begun.

After breakfast, Chen Meijuan started preparing for lunch, while Lin Hongqi rolled up his sleeves to help. Lin Xu changed his clothes, carried Dundun downstairs, and headed for the Ziqiang Shengjian shop at the west entrance of Yingchun Street.

Calling it a shop was a bit generous—it was just a small stall, less than six square meters, with a window opening onto the street. Along the street-facing side was a full counter, its exterior displaying the prices and types of Shengjian buns: pork and shrimp, pork and corn, pork and shepherd's purse, and so on. A cash register sat on the counter, and next to it was a semi-enclosed stainless steel tray, presumably for the finished Shengjian buns. Behind this tray, against the wall, were two large commercial-grade electric griddles. Further in, beyond the griddles, was a long worktable with a refrigerator and a freezer on its right side.

When Lin Xu arrived with Dundun in his arms, the shop was already open. Wang Ziqiang, dressed in his new uniform, was kneading dough at the worktable. He wore a baseball cap matching the shop's theme color and meticulously worked the dough. After kneading, he covered it with a moist cloth and set it aside to proof. Then, he picked up a cloth and began wiping down the worktable. Having experienced the roller-coaster of being dismissed and then finding a new job, Wang Ziqiang cherished this opportunity deeply. He had arrived even before his official start time, afraid of being let go again.

Seeing Lin Xu, he quickly greeted him, "Morning, Boss."

"Morning, Master Wang. Is everything ready?"

"All set. We can start selling as soon as the dough has proofed a bit more."

While the two were talking, Song Tiantian, also in her work uniform, emerged from the subway station. Noticing Lin Xu at the entrance, she hurried over. She was tall, so her uniform had been custom-made. It actually looked quite good on her: a white T-shirt paired with black pants, a wine-red apron tied at her waist, and a matching wine-red baseball cap. She looked very neat and professional.

Hurrying over, Song Tiantian asked, "Boss, am I late?"

"No, no. I just came over to check things out."

Lin Xu had come to see the shop and, incidentally, to let Dundun help attract some business. After all, with a new shop opening, Dundun's presence should prevent things from being too quiet. He hadn't bothered with any grand opening ceremonies; once ready, they would simply start. Such pompous activities seemed pointless to him. As for ensuring an auspicious start, boiling a couple of extra meat chunks for Dundun was far more effective than any empty formalities.

After wiping the tables, Wang Ziqiang asked curiously, "Boss, are we really not handing out flyers or having promotions? It'll be hard to attract customers to such a quiet shop."

Hard to attract customers? He clearly hasn't witnessed Dundun's divine power, Lin Xu thought with a smile.

He said, "No need. The folks on Yingchun Street are mostly old neighbors. I'll post an update online, and business will pick up quickly. Don't worry."

Before long, when the semi-leavened dough for the Shengjian buns was almost ready, Lin Xu placed Dundun on the cash register counter. He then took a few photos of Ziqiang Shengjian with his phone and posted them under the Lin Ji's Food online topic: "Invested in a little Shengjian shop in my spare time. Master Wang, who makes the Shengjian buns, has years of experience and superb skills. Tiantian is still the cashier. Friends around Yingchun Street, come and give it a try. If you don't like it, it's on the house!"

As soon as the post went live, replies from netizens started pouring in.

Speedy\_Sky\_3G: "OMG, you opened a new shop?"

Chapter 276: Ziqiang Shengjian Opens for Business! Booming Sales! The Look of a Lost Culinary Delight!

I'll be a dog if I stay up late: Just about to sleep. Boss Lin, are you venturing into another field again?

Eating noodles without garlic is like not eating garlic at all: The user above, maybe change your nickname? No need to curse yourself like that.

What bad thoughts could a little kitty have: I'm just about to pass by that place; I'll buy a few to taste. Anything recommended by Boss Lin must be good.

Chirp chirp again and again, Mulan raises chicks: Never thought Boss Lin would step into the investment world in one go! How many fields has he crossed already?

What bad thoughts could a little kitty have: Dude upstairs, you finally showed up! Give us the URL!

Heavenwing 3G is so fast: URL, please!

I'll be a dog if I stay up late: URL, please!

Eating noodles without garlic is like not eating garlic at all: URL, please!

...

After Lin Xu sent it, he also posted it on his Moments and in his group chats.

Soon, Uncle Yu from nearby strolled over. "I was wondering who opened a Shengjian Bun shop here," he said. "Turns out it's Boss Lin. I must support you."

He looked at the prices and chose four types of Shengjian Buns, one of each. After making his selection, he immediately paid with his phone.

Just as he finished paying, the system notification sounded in Lin Xu's mind:

"The Host's invested Shengjian Bun shop has welcomed its first customer, completing the side task [Invest and Open a Shop]. You have earned one Double Points Card valid for 72 hours and one Basic Cooking Techniques Upgrade Card. Congratulations, Host."

Finally completed...

After hearing the notification, Lin Xu instantly used the Technique Upgrade Card on his Basic Knife Skills.

"Consuming one Basic Cooking Techniques Upgrade Card, Excellent Level Basic Knife Skills have officially upgraded to Superior Basic Knife Skills, triggering Skill Task: The Host is required to use Superior Basic Knife Skills to make a dish within five hours and receive praise from at least five people; otherwise, Superior Basic Knife Skills will be downgraded to Excellent Level Basic Knife Skills."

Another Skill Task triggered? Last time, I barely completed the task for the dipping sauce with the plain boiled mutton. Luckily, Guo Xinghai was curious about my dipping sauce, which just barely allowed me to finish the task. Today it's triggered again... Looks like I'll have to go back and make Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips again later. Let's see how this long-lost dish will differ after the Knife Skills upgrade.

While he was thinking, Wang Ziqiang had already prepared a pot full of Shengjian Buns with various fillings. After arranging them one by one in the electric griddle, he began frying them.

Lin Xu snapped back to reality and stood at the shop entrance, chatting with Uncle Yu.

When the Shengjian Buns in the pan began to sizzle, Geng Lele arrived at the shop entrance, leisurely riding a shared bike.

"Haha, I told you it would be opening day today! Brother Ziqiang still thought it was impossible. He was waiting to bring a flower basket, set off firecrackers, and come for the celebratory meal."

A typical opening ceremony would indeed be like that: hire an event company for some performances, friends and family come to give gifts, and then everyone is treated to lunch. But for the opening of a Shengjian Bun shop, doing all that was completely unnecessary. With that kind of effort, he might as well have hired a few people to queue up at the door.

Before long, a few more customers arrived. Some had heard that Lin Xu invested in this shop; others were simply passing by, saw people at the door, and came over to see what was going on.

As soon as the Shengjian Buns in the pot were ready, they were quickly snatched up by these customers.

Geng Lele took a bite immediately and couldn't help but exclaim, "Wow, I feel like Master Wang's skill has improved! The savory flavor of the filling is so intense."

Uncle Yu also nodded and said, "Exactly! Fresh and fragrant, this flavor is really good. The old neighbors of Yingchun Street are in for a treat."

Wang Ziqiang, while busy, added, "The boss specifically instructed that we must make new fillings every day and prohibit overnight fillings, so it's normal for the flavor to be fresh."

Although he didn't say it outright, he hinted at the practice of the Shengjian Bun shop opposite Haidian Middle School, which used overnight fillings. This was actually quite common in the catering industry.

Particularly in shops selling steamed buns and dumplings, if the filling wasn't used up, it would be refrigerated and mixed with new filling the next day.

But Lin Xu didn't do that. When he decided to open the shop, he had set the standard of "no overnight fillings." Making them fresh daily ensured the freshness of the fillings. While keeping customers satisfied, it also maximized food safety.

After one pot of Shengjian Buns sold out, not only did the customers not disperse, but their numbers actually grew.

"These Shengjian Buns are so good, I need to buy four more."

"I've got to get six to let my colleagues taste the delight of Yingchun Street."

"I used to hardly ever be able to eat breakfast, but who knew these Shengjian Buns would actually whet my appetite."

"The flavor is so rich; it feels like eating them in Shanghai itself wouldn't be much different."

"Master, can you hurry it up? I still need to get to work."

Wang Ziqiang hadn't expected his boss to have such strong drawing power. He quickly sped up the filling process and also turned on another electric griddle to preheat.

Seeing him somewhat overwhelmed, Lin Xu walked in, washed his hands, tied on an apron, and started making buns with him. To ensure his buns weren't different from Wang Ziqiang's, he also used the Soup Dumpling Category Upgrade Card on the Shengjian Buns, upgrading his Excellent Level Shengjian Bun Technique to the Superior Level.

"Yo, Boss, you can make these too?"

"My girlfriend wanted to eat some a while ago, so I practiced a bit."

The customers outside who heard this thought: I'm just lining up to eat a Shengjian Bun. How did I also get a serving of Boss Lin's "dog food"? You two, one spreads dog food online, the other offline. Can't you spare a single bone for us single dogs?!

It was currently the peak of rush hour. People bustled to and from the subway station. Very soon, everyone was attracted by the delicious aroma of the Shengjian Buns.

Chapter 277: Ziqiang Shengjian Grand Opening! Booming Business! Just How a Lost Cuisine Should Look!

There was even a queue at the door.

For business to be this good on the first day completely exceeded Wang Ziqiang's expectations.

"What's so surprising? When Boss Lin's noodle shop first opened, it was the same—they'd sell out if you came even a little late."

"Yeah, back then it was just Boss Lin by himself. Customers had to help him clear bowls, wipe tables, and even operate the dishwasher. So many memories."

"Some people wouldn't even bother to pick up an oil bottle they knocked over at home, but in Boss Lin's shop, they were all bustling about, just to get a taste of that bowl of hand-pulled noodles a bit sooner."

"I hope the new restaurant opens soon; I'm waiting to eat."

"Exactly, waiting to eat! Nowadays, cheap takeout is all pre-packaged meals, and the expensive stuff is all flash and no substance. Lin Ji's Food is still the best."

"..."

Many in the queue were loyal fans of Lin Ji's Food. They were all eagerly waiting for Lin Ji to finish renovations and open for business soon.

A little after nine o'clock, the flow of customers had decreased somewhat, and Wang Ziqiang had also adjusted to the pace.

Lin Xu removed his apron, washed his hands, and then, carrying Dundun, headed back home.

Right, I can't just stay here making Shengjian Buns; there's another dish waiting for me. Besides, it's getting hotter outside. Dundun is even starting to pant; we need to get back to the air-conditioned room quickly.

Before leaving, he asked Wang Ziqiang to pack some Shengjian Buns for him. He planned to take them home for his parents to try.

「Arriving back at home,」

Dundun immediately leaped from Lin Xu's arms. It scooted over to its 'macho pink' water bowl, stuck out its tiny, crimson tongue, and began to drink. After finishing the water, Dundun jumped onto the cat tree to diligently wash its face. The cool breeze from the air conditioner visibly cheered up the little creature.

Lin Xu, holding the bag of Shengjian Buns, walked into the kitchen. He found his dad peeling apples while his mom was deep-frying pumpkin blossoms.

Each cleaned pumpkin blossom, with its pistil removed, was dipped in the prepared batter and then tossed into oil heated to medium-low. As soon as they hit the oil, a delicate floral fragrance wafted out.

"Your dad and I went to the market for groceries this morning, and unexpectedly, we found someone selling pumpkin blossoms, so I bought some. When you were little, your favorite was pumpkin blossoms dipped in salt and pepper. Let Yueyue try them today too."

When the blossoms were ready, Lin Xu was about to pinch one to taste, but his mother stopped him, "These are for Yueyue. Wait until she arrives, and we can all eat together."

Lin Xu sighed inwardly. We're not even married yet, and I've already dropped a notch in the family hierarchy. My future standing in this family looks pretty precarious. It seems from now on, I can only feel familial warmth from my in-laws.

TSK...

I used to think that switching allegiances was just a tactic in games; I never expected to encounter such a scenario in real life.

"Come try the Shengjian Buns from our shop. They taste really good. Business was booming right from the opening."

As he spoke, Lin Xu noticed some peeled apples nearby. Just as he was about to pick one up for a taste, Chen Meijuan spoke again, "Those are green apples I bought specially. They're sour enough to set your teeth on edge; they're only good for making apple soup."

Lin Xu gave an embarrassed chuckle. He had been accustomed to rummaging through the kitchen for snacks since childhood.

Lin Hongqi soaked the peeled apples in water and said to Lin Xu, "Xiaoxu, Yueyue already calls us Mom and Dad now. Her parents are coming over today, so remember to call them Mom and Dad too, alright? If you don't, they might be unhappy."

Since his future daughter-in-law had already made the switch, his son had to do the same to avoid displeasing the other family.

"I will," Lin Xu responded.

While Chen Meijuan and Lin Hongqi started trying the Shengjian Buns, Lin Xu casually picked up a long, thick White Radish.

Alright, you're the one.

Something this big is obviously perfect for an elaborate dish.

After washing the White Radish, Lin Xu took a kitchen knife, sliced off the top and bottom ends, leaving only the more uniformly thick middle section, about twenty-odd centimeters long. After removing the ends, he made a vertical cut along the White Radish, giving the originally round vegetable a flat surface. He then sliced the other three sides similarly. The once pristine white and round White Radish had now become a square prism, roughly ten centimeters to a side and about twenty-odd centimeters long.

Just as he finished, his mother lightly smacked him on the back. "What are you doing, cutting vegetables like that? Such a waste!"

Such a large White Radish had been reduced by half in an instant. Chen Meijuan's heart ached at the sight; after all, they had paid good money for it.

Lin Xu didn't want to use this Dubai Knife Technique either. But to make the dish more visually appealing, he had no other choice.

"I'm planning to try a new dish, and this is the only way. Whether it turns out good or bad, you and Dad have to praise me," he said.

"What are you talking about? Even if you just gave us a raw White Radish, we wouldn't mind," she responded.

Lin Xu placed the square White Radish on the cutting board, measured it with his knife, and then sliced. With one clean cut through, a long, thin slice of White Radish, almost translucent, was ready. It indeed looked even thinner than what he had cut the previous day.

He continued slicing. Once the entire White Radish was sliced, he straightened the pieces, aligned them, and then began to julienne them.

Chen Meijuan watched in amazement from the side. She felt her son's Knife Skills had improved again. The julienned White Radish strips were truly almost as fine as strands of hair.

After all the White Radish strips were cut, even with Lin Xu's Superior Knife Skills, his forehead was beaded with sweat. These Knife Skills were incredibly physically demanding. They required not only complete concentration but also constant adjustments of the wrist and palm angles; the slightest deviation would result in flawed strands.

He carefully slid his knife under the cut White Radish strips and then transferred them into clean water to soak and rinse. While washing, he was careful not to make any overly vigorous movements, fearing he might break the delicate strips or mess up their alignment.

Hmm, for a dish with long, thin strands like this to look good, it must be arranged neatly. That way, no matter how it was plated, it would look outstanding.

After rinsing them once, Lin Xu prepared a bowl of saltwater and carefully placed the White Radish strips inside. At this stage, he couldn't use salt granules to draw out moisture, as that would cause the strips to break.

After soaking in the saltwater for about ten minutes, the White Radish strips had noticeably softened and even gained a bit of resilience.

He scooped them out, rinsed them twice more, then placed them in a colander, carefully spreading them with his hands. Then, he took them to the balcony to air dry, aiming to remove as much surface moisture as possible.

During this time, Lin Xu took out a bag of Potato Starch, poured some out, and sifted it through a fine-mesh sieve. What's known as Tai Bai Fen is simply Potato Starch. Using Potato Starch instead of cornstarch would give the steamed White Radish strips a more beautiful color. Sifting it through a fine-mesh sieve was to make the Potato Starch finer.

Once the surface of the White Radish strips was dry, he filled a small kitchen spray bottle with some cooking oil and carefully sprayed it onto the surface of the strips. This would prevent them from becoming damp and sticky from absorbing steam during the steaming process.

After spraying the oil, he gently tossed the White Radish strips to distribute the oil evenly, then placed them in a bowl filled with Potato Starch and carefully tossed them again to coat each strand. Next, he removed them and gently shook off any excess Potato Starch.

He laid them on a dry steaming cloth and steamed them over high heat for five minutes.

After five minutes, when he lifted the pot lid, the sight of the silvery-white strands inside surprised Lin Xu, while Chen Meijuan and Lin Hongqi gasped in amazement. They had initially thought their son was wasting ingredients, but he had made the White Radish look so beautiful.

Lin Xu carefully removed the White Radish strips from the steamer and arranged them neatly on a plate. They looked somewhat like freshly pulled Dragon Beard Candy.

Yes, this is how a lost culinary masterpiece should look!

A thrill went through him. I've finally nailed this dish.

However, he soon faced another dilemma. For such a visually stunning dish, what was the best way to season it? Ordinary steamed julienned radish only needed some sesame oil and garlic sauce. But using sesame oil and garlic sauce on this dish would ruin its aesthetic appeal.

As he pondered, Lin Xu's gaze fell upon the small oil spray bottle he had used earlier. An idea suddenly flashed through his mind...

Chapter 278: The Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips are So Delicious! Making Pickled Pepper Fish Skin!

"Isn't this too beautiful?"

Chen Meijuan put down the Shengjian Bun, joyfully grabbed her phone, and took a photo of the silver strips on the plate to post on her Moments. "My son's cooking skills are really good, can you guys tell these are radish strips?"

She had just posted it when Shen Jiayue, who was sitting in the third-floor parlor waiting for her parents, saw it.

Today, this young lady wore a loose-fitting red T-shirt, a pair of blue wide-leg denim jeans, and white sneakers. She dressed this way because food stains wouldn't be noticeable on the red T-shirt, and if she ate too much, the loose T-shirt could also hide her small belly.

Even though Shen Baobao's tummy had always been flat, and her ab lines were still visible, she always felt like her body would instantly become chubby after eating a lot.

Seeing the photo Lin Xu's mother had posted, she immediately grabbed her phone and went to find her parents. Her high ponytail bounced as she walked, her excitement palpable, as if she were about to see Lin Xu.

"Are you two ready yet?"

"Ready, ready."

The words had barely faded when Shen Guofu emerged from the master bedroom on the third floor. He had specifically gotten a haircut yesterday and shaved his beard cleanly today. Dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and black trousers, he exuded the distinct aura of a big boss.

"What do you think of this outfit, sweetie? I won't embarrass you, will I?"

Shen Jiayue gave her father's outfit a once-over. "You look like a real estate agent... Dad, why aren't you wearing those Polo shirts anymore?"

"Didn't you say they were old-fashioned?"

Hearing that, Shen Baobao immediately pushed him back into the room. "Not old-fashioned at all! My dad is the super, super, super, super handsomest! I always thought Mom married into our family because you knew how to make money, but later I realized she must have been after your good looks, right, Dad?"

"Right, right, right! My daughter couldn't be more right!" Shen Guofu said, mimicking the tone of Li Yunlong. "Back in the day, your old man Shen was a renowned handsome young fellow in the capital. The matchmakers practically wore out our doorstep..."

He was in the middle of speaking when he caught sight of Han Shuzhen emerging from the makeup room in a floral maxi dress. He quickly darted into the adjacent walk-in closet.

Bragging is one thing, but it wouldn't be worth getting an earful for it.

After Shen Guofu went to change his clothes, Shen Jiayue, holding her phone, waved it in front of her mother, who was doing up her hair. "Mom, guess what this is made of?"

Han Shuzhen glanced at it. On the plate were neatly arranged fine strips. "Is this... Dragon Beard Candy?"

She remembered the Dragon Beard Candy her son-in-law made looked just like these silvery strips.

"Haha, wrong! These are radish strips! It looks like there's a new dish today, specially prepared for you two!"

Radish strips? Could they really be cut so finely? My son-in-law's culinary skills are truly incredible.

While tying up her hair, Han Shuzhen said, "Sweetie, when you dine with Lin Xu's parents this time, you must be polite, understand? Don't be all boisterous and informal like you are at home, or they might take a disliking to you..."

"Mother Lin likes me so much; she would never find fault with me."

Han Shuzhen was startled. "Mother Lin? You've already started calling her that?"

Han Shuzhen felt as if a little cabbage she had painstakingly raised had been plucked up by the roots. Even though this little cabbage was often disobedient and quite infuriating, the thought of...

Before Han Shuzhen could dwell on it, Shen Baobao quickly interjected, "I only started calling her that so Lin Xu would start calling you 'Mom' sooner! If I change how I address her, he'll change how he addresses you too. Don't you want to hear him call you 'Mom'?"

PHEW... Thank goodness I'm so brilliantly clever, otherwise Mom would have started overthinking and getting secretly upset again. This Baobao has truly sacrificed so, so much for this family!

Beside her, Han Shuzhen blinked.

Then it dawned on her. That's right! If her daughter changed her form of address, her son-in-law would too.

The thought of her sensible son-in-law calling her "Mom" made the flicker of melancholy in Director Han's heart vanish instantly.

Yes, trading a crooked little cabbage for a fine, upstanding little piglet—this deal was definitely not a loss!

「Elsewhere.」

Lin Xu took the peeled garlic, put it into a juicer to make garlic juice, diluted it with some cooled boiled water, then added a bit of salt and a touch of sugar to enhance the flavor. After stirring until everything was dissolved, he poured the mixture into a clean spray bottle.

Then he carefully sprayed it over the radish strips on the plate. The radish strips were still warm. As soon as the sauce was sprayed on, the heat intensified and released the garlic aroma.

While he was spraying, a system notification suddenly echoed in his mind: "The Host, with exceptional skill and ingenuity, has created the Superior lost dish 'Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips,' earning one Perfect Level soup-category lottery draw. Would you like to draw now?"

A soup-category draw?

Lin Xu felt a surge of excitement.

My gamble paid off! This dish really did level up along with my Knife Skills. Of course, applying the sauce with a spray bottle must have been a bonus factor too. That way, there's no need for a dipping sauce dish on the plate, which makes the presentation even better.

He glanced at Dundun in the living room, who was completely engrossed in playing with a little mouse toy.

I'll do the lottery draw after I'm finished with everything else. A draw without Dundun's participation might just get me some useless, dust-collecting recipe. It's better to have the little guy help pick something we urgently need.

With that thought, he finished spraying the sauce and set the spray bottle down.

"Hmm, that smells wonderful," Chen Meijuan remarked from the side.

Her son was becoming more and more impressive! To even think of using a spray bottle to add flavor to steamed radish strips—what a clever idea!

After being sprayed, the radish strips still looked like threads of white jade, yet they now carried an enticing garlic aroma. Not only did they look appealing, but they also smelled mouth-wateringly tempting.

Lin Hongqi remarked with emotion, "Back in our hometown, a few yuan could get you a whole bagful of white radishes. Processed like this, wouldn't a single plate sell for over a hundred?"

Chapter 279: The Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips are So Delicious! Making Pickled Pepper Fish Skin!

Lin Xu adjusted the radish strips on the plate with his chopsticks and then said with a smile, "I don't know about other places, but at Fishing Platform, this dish wouldn't cost less than five hundred and eighty-eight yuan."

The higher-end the restaurant, the more they favored this type of dish. Even though a serving of steamed radish strips sold for several hundred yuan, it also required a tremendous amount of effort.

Lin Xu placed the dish in front of his parents. "Give it a try and see how my skills are."

As soon as Chen Meijuan heard that such a dish could sell for five to six hundred yuan, she quickly said, "It's just radish, after all. It would be a waste for your dad and me to eat it. Save it for your parents-in-law later; they'll probably love it."

After speaking, she gazed intently at the dish on the plate.

What mother doesn't want to taste her son's culinary skills?

But her son had just been sweating so much over the cutting; if they ate it, he would have to cut and prepare it all over again. It was better not to, to avoid tiring him out.

Although Lin Hongqi didn't speak, he clearly felt the same way.

Such a labor-intensive dish. It was better not to try it, to avoid him having to make it all over again later.

"This dish needs to be eaten hot," Lin Xu said with a smile as he passed the chopsticks over. "If it cools down, the radish strips will become as tough as cotton string, impossible to chew. Eat it quickly; I'll make another batch later."

Only after his parents started eating did he pick up a mouthful with his chopsticks to taste.

The first bite revealed the spiciness of garlic, but it wasn't overpowering—it was just right.

He chewed gently.

The finely shredded radish was slightly firm yet tender, not at all tough to chew. The texture was somewhat similar to Bamboo Noodles but even more resilient. The thin layer of Potato Starch coating the strips added a delightful soft chewiness, making the overall texture of the radish even richer.

"Delicious!"

If he hadn't watched the entire process, Lin Hongqi would never have believed this was made from White Radish. The texture and flavor were simply too delightful.

Chen Meijuan also looked surprised. The anticipated raw radish flavor was completely absent. Instead, the delightful combination of springy and soft textures left a profound impression on her.

The texture of this dish was fantastic. The subtle garlicky spiciness and saltiness were also just right.

The family of three enjoyed the dish, finding it extremely tasty.

After having a few bites, Lin Xu saw that his mom had bought Lotus Root in the morning and said, "Later, I'll make some White Jade Lotus Root Strips. Everyone else has tried this dish, so you two should try it as well."

White Jade Lotus Root Strips? Wasn't that the dish with which her son had won the championship? It was said to be incredibly delicious, a dish many people couldn't get even if they were willing to pay for it.

Chen Meijuan and Lin Hongqi were filled with anticipation. They had long wanted to taste their son's handiwork.

While his parents were eating, Lin Xu put down his chopsticks and went outside.

The matter of the prize draw had been weighing on his mind. He'd better get it over with. The sooner it was done, the sooner he could relax.

In the living room, Dundun, who was chasing a self-entertaining little mouse all over the place, was scooped up into Lin Xu's arms.

"Son, it's time for you to lend a paw again. I'll steam a piece of fish for you to try later."

Dundun lifted a paw and patted Lin Xu's hand. An understanding was reached.

Holding the chubby little fellow, Lin Xu silently chanted in his mind, Lottery!

The lottery wheel immediately appeared in his mind, filled with the names of various soups and broths. The lottery wheel quickly began to spin in his mind.

I hope I get a popular hotel soup, Lin Xu silently wished before pressing the lottery button.

Soon, a system notification sounded in his mind: "Congratulations to the Host for drawing the Perfect Level soup dish—Corn Soup."

Corn Soup? Lin Xu glanced at Dundun. What gives? Why didn't you pick something like beef soup?

Dundun rolled his eyes. You wanted a popular hotel soup, and I got you a popular hotel soup. What, not satisfied? Believe it or not, this kitty will give you a swat!

He deftly leaped from Lin Xu's arms and resumed chasing the self-entertaining little mouse.

Corn Soup it is, then, Lin Xu mused. This soup is supposedly quite popular in hotels. Besides, the new restaurant doesn't have any sweet soups yet, so this will fill that gap nicely.

He returned to the kitchen.

Chen Meijuan and Lin Hongqi had already finished the shredded radish. Since their son had said it wasn't good cold, they quickly ate it all to ensure his efforts weren't wasted.

After they finished, Chen Meijuan was filleting a plump Grass Carp, scraping Fish Mince from the flesh with a kitchen knife, apparently preparing to make Fish Balls. Meanwhile, Lin Hongqi was tending to a clay pot on the stove, skimming foam from the surface. Inside, an old hen was stewing with wild Mushrooms, and a rich, savory aroma was already wafting through the kitchen.

I'll have a bowl of that soup to try once it's ready, Lin Xu thought. The delicious aroma was truly tantalizing.

He picked up a Lotus Root, peeled it, then sliced and shredded it, preparing to make the dish he had won the championship with—White Jade Lotus Root Strips.

Just as he finished shredding the Lotus Root, he saw his mother wondering what to do with the Fish Skin left over from scraping the Fish Mince and said, "Give the Fish Skin to me. I'll try making Pickled Pepper Fish Skin."

He didn't actually know how to make this dish; he just saw the ingredients and couldn't resist the urge to practice.

He took a kitchen knife and scraped off the reddish flesh still clinging to the Fish Skin. After washing it twice, he used the knife to cut the Fish Skin into strips. One side of the Fish Skin strips was white, while the other bore the intricate pattern of Fish Scales, looking quite beautiful.

Once the strips were cut, he boiled a pot of water. He poured some Cooking Wine into the water to eliminate any fishy smell. Once the water boiled, he added the cut Fish Skin and scalded it for thirty seconds. On a professional restaurant stove, ten seconds would have been sufficient. However, with the weaker flame of a home stove, it took a while for the water to return to a boil after the Fish Skin was added.

Chapter 280: The Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips are So Delicious! Making Pickled Pepper Fish Skin!

So it needed to blanch for a while longer. Moreover, freshwater fish tend to have more parasites, so it's better to blanch it a bit longer to avoid undercooking.

Thirty seconds later, Lin Xu used a slotted spoon to lift out the fish skin and plunged it straight into icy water to cool. This step had to be quick; only then would the texture of the fish skin be crisp and refreshing.

Once the fish skin was completely cooled, Lin Xu took out a pack of pickled peppers his mother had bought from the market. He poured the pickled pepper liquid into a larger bowl and began to season. There was already salt in the pickled pepper liquid, so there was no need to add more. He added a small spoonful of sugar, several freshly cut lemon slices, slices of ginger, several cracked garlic cloves, a small handful of washed cilantro roots, a few chili rings cut from small hot peppers, and several pickled pepper halves. Finally, he added the cooled fish skin. After mixing well, he covered it with plastic wrap and placed it in the refrigerator to marinate. By mealtime, it should be well-marinated.

"Xu, your cooking skills are getting better and better; you even know how to prepare fish skin now! I used to worry that raw fish skin wouldn't taste good, so I always fried it," Chen Meijuan said, watching Lin Xu marinate the fish skin, her face filled with pride. Her son was becoming more capable by the day.

Lin Xu smiled and said, "I've actually never made this kind of dish before, but the principles of cooking are similar. As long as the flavor isn't too extreme, it shouldn't taste bad."

Next, Lin Xu prepared the White Jade Lotus Root Strips. He also sliced a white radish and made another dish of Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips. Just as this dish was ready, the Shen Family arrived.

Lin Xu and his parents took the elevator downstairs to greet them. After all, it was his parents-in-law's first visit, so the etiquette had to be impeccable.

Downstairs, the three members of the Shen Family had just alighted from an Alphard minivan. Zou Cheng, who had delivered the Mercedes G63 last time, was carrying the gifts from the trunk: a case of 2005 Flying Moutai, a case of red wine whose name Lin Xu couldn't recall, a hundred-year-old ginseng with intact roots, a high-end shawl woven with gold threads, a string of prayer beads blessed by high monks, and a box of exquisite cigars wrapped in gold leaf. Last time Lin Xu visited the Shen Family, he brought six gifts. This time, Shen Guofu also brought six.

"Hello, in-law!" Lin Hongqi said, extending his hand to shake Shen Guofu's.

"Hello, Brother Lin!" Shen Guofu replied, and they exchanged simple pleasantries.

Meanwhile, Chen Meijuan was greeting Han Shuzhen.

After the polite small talk, Shen Guofu was about to carry the gifts when Lin Xu stepped forward. "Dad, let me do it."

"Ah, come here, son. This is a little token from Dad for you calling me that," Shen Guofu said. He then took out a small red envelope from his pocket that seemed almost empty.

However, when Lin Xu took it, he felt a card inside. A bank card?

"Carrying a bundle of cash is just too old-fashioned, so I put it directly on the card for you. The PIN is Yueyue's birthday; you can withdraw it later."

A bundle? How much is this token, Father-in-law?

Lin Hongqi chimed in, "In-law, if you give too much, our Xu can't accept it."

"It's not much, just a hundred thousand. Xu, quickly call her Mom; your mother-in-law is getting anxious," Shen Guofu urged.

Lin Xu hadn't expected his father-in-law to be so eager.

He called out to Han Shuzhen, "Mom!"

"Ah, good child! Here's Mom's token for you," Han Shuzhen replied, taking an identical small red envelope from her bag. It also contained a bank card.

After Lin Xu took it, she said, "It's the same as your father-in-law's card; the PIN is Yueyue's birthday too."

Once the tokens were given, Shen Guofu turned to Zou Cheng and said, "You can head back first. We can carry these things upstairs ourselves; I'll call you after dinner."

They were definitely going to drink today. That was why President Shen hadn't driven himself but had arranged for a car directly from the company.

Zou Cheng agreed, greeted Lin Xu, and then drove away.

The two families, carrying the gifts, headed into the building, chatting as they walked.

Once upstairs, as soon as they entered, Dundun wagged its tail and pounced into Han Shuzhen's arms.

It let out a coy little mew: "MEOW~~~"

"Aww, my little baby, were you missing Grandma? Last time Dundun came to our place with Xiao Xu, my mother adored this little one! She held onto this little fella and wouldn't let go," Han Shuzhen cooed.

Lying in Han Shuzhen's arms, Dundun gave Shen Baobao a provocative look. Hmph! Now let's see how the Yueyue Demon King can bully this kitty!

Nearby, Shen Guofu and Lin Hongqi hit it off immediately.

"Brother Lin, you're in really good shape! Unlike me, I get winded just walking a short distance," Shen Guofu remarked.

"I was just like you when I had an office job," Lin Hongqi replied. "But ever since I started managing the scenic area, I make at least two trips up the mountain every day. I'm fitter now than I was in my twenties."

Hearing this, Shen Guofu turned to Han Shuzhen and said, "Shuzhen, let's find some time to stay at our in-laws' scenic area for a while. We can climb some mountains, forage for wild vegetables, that sort of thing."

Having lived in a concrete jungle for years, Shen Guofu had long yearned for life in the mountains and countryside. However, with his busy business and many commitments, finding the right time to get away wasn't easy.

"Sure, let's go. We can leave whenever you have time," Han Shuzhen replied, sitting on the sofa and gently scratching Dundun's chin. "Actually, I'd like to stay at the scenic area's cliffside hotel for a bit."

Dundun, thoroughly enjoying the attention, squinted its eyes and purred contentedly.

After they chatted for a while, lunch began. The table was laden with various dishes, making even Shen Guofu, the "little foodie prince," drool in anticipation.

Lin Xu took the marinated fish skin from the refrigerator and poured it onto a plate. Then he brought over the White Jade Lotus Root Strips and Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips he had prepared.

"Dad, Mom, you should try this dish—the Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips I made today," Lin Xu said.

Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips? Shen Guofu thought, looking at the visually appealing dish. He asked curiously, "Are you sure this is made from radish strips? It looks just like rice noodles..."

On the way over, he had been guessing endlessly but never imagined such an elegant dish could be made from white radish. Seeing it now, his interest was thoroughly piqued.

The dishes were now all laid out. Lin Hongqi was opening a bottle of National Cellar 1573 he had bought from Uncle Yu's supermarket the previous night. After opening it, he poured some for Shen Guofu. Lin Xu hadn't planned on drinking, but seeing his father-in-law in such high spirits, he poured a glass for himself as well.

Once everyone was seated, they began to eat.

Shen Guofu was the first to try the Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips. "Wow, this flavor! Is this really made from radish strips?" he exclaimed. "It's chewy yet tender, and the seasoning is perfect. This dish is excellent!"

He couldn't stop praising it.

Shen Jiayue and Han Shuzhen were also quite surprised. They simply couldn't associate such a delicious dish with plain white radish.

While the Shen Family tasted the Steamed Rice Flour Silver Strips, Lin Hongqi and Chen Meijuan also tried the White Jade Lotus Root Strips their son had made. The refreshing first bite and the crisp texture amazed them. They had never imagined their son could make lotus root so delicious. His culinary skills were truly extraordinary!

After tasting the dishes, Shen Guofu raised his wine glass and began drinking with Lin Hongqi. As the junior, Lin Xu also joined them for a drink. The men ate slowly as they were drinking, but Shen Baobao had no such inhibitions, wielding her chopsticks non-stop.

Soon, while Lin Xu was sipping chicken soup from a small bowl, Shen Baobao started to feel too full to eat anymore. She rubbed her little belly, feeling stuffed again. But Grandma's cooking is just too good! Even Mom, who always prides herself on being such a refined lady, is gobbling down her food!

"Umm... I'd really love a bowl of sweet soup!" Shen Baobao sighed. Since I'm already full, having some soup isn't too much to ask, right?

No sooner had she spoken than Lin Xu said, "You want soup, huh? Then I'll make you some corn cream soup."

Corn cream soup? Shen Baobao's eyes lit up. "Yes, yes! Go ahead and make it. I'll take a short video!"

Lin Xu got up and asked curiously, "What's the video for?"

"Yan Sister is setting up live streaming equipment at the Fishing Platform banquet hall, and she hasn't eaten yet. I want to make her jealous!" Shen Baobao replied mischievously.

Lin Xu was speechless. "..."

Why do I already hear my sister-in-law's furious shouting even though Baobao hasn't even started filming yet?