

## Culinary 38

Chapter 38: Braised Pork Rice Receives High Praise! A Divine Artifact for Attracting Wealth!

Has it already broken through 100,000?

Lin Xu was somewhat surprised.

The points were earned based on turnover; the amount of turnover directly correlated to the number of points. The fact that his points had surpassed 100,000 also meant the store's total turnover since opening had reached 100,000.

He planned to check out the points mall after the busy lunch period.

After all, I have 100,000 points now. That should be enough to exchange for quite a few things, right?

As he was thinking, Panda came to the kitchen entrance.

"Boss Lin, as soon as you started serving rice, the number of people eating noodles dropped immediately!"

Lin Xu snapped out of his thoughts and said with a smile, "Everyone's a bit tired of noodles after eating them for several days straight. It's perfectly normal for them to want to try something new now that rice is available. What are you having today?"

Panda flashed the small ticket in his hand. "A large bowl of braised pork rice, a small bowl of Oil-poured Noodles, five Chicken Feet, and a plate of Lotus Root... It's been years since I last had braised pork rice; I want to try it too."

Lin Xu asked Che to get Panda the Chicken Feet and Lotus Root. He, meanwhile, scooped rice, ladled braised pork, and finally arranged a few blanched bok choy hearts in the bowl.

Panda found a spot by the window and sat down.

He first gnawed on a Chicken Foot, then ate a couple of Lotus Root slices to cleanse his palate.

Then, he dug into the braised pork rice.

The pork belly, stewed for an hour, was richly aromatic—flavorful without being greasy. The quail eggs within had absorbed the savory flavors so thoroughly that even the yolks carried a strong meaty taste.

The rice underneath was exceptional. A slightly thick gravy coated the perfectly cooked grains, making each mouthful fragrant and moist.

Furthermore, the gravy boasted a rich scallion aroma and a hint of sweetness, making it utterly delicious.

"Wow, this is delicious! I have absolutely no resistance to this kind of meat gravy mixed with rice."

"Panda's right, this braised pork gravy with rice is something you just can't get enough of."

"Next time, you guys should try the diced eggplant; it's really good too, absolutely perfect with rice."

"I nominate Tomato Egg with rice; that's what I call authentic!"

"Then you should try the braised pork noodles. It's even better than the braised pork rice. I'm planning to get another bowl later."

With rice now an option alongside noodles, everyone had more possibilities for lunch.

The customers enthusiastically shared their personally crafted combinations, each convinced theirs was the most delicious.

In a corner, Old Mr. Gao savored the braised pork rice in his bowl, his expression serious.

The intense scallion aroma in the meat told him it had been stewed with red onion; the scent was unmistakable.

And this rich mushroom flavor in the gravy, Mr. Gao mused, it must come from the water used to soak dried shiitake mushrooms. Most people discard the water after soaking dried shiitake, unaware that many aromatic and umami compounds leach into it during reconstitution. To make shiitake mushrooms truly delicious, one has to incorporate this soaking liquid, which can exponentially boost their savory flavor. Furthermore, the slightly viscous texture of the braised pork gravy doesn't seem to come from added starch. It's likely the result of extended, natural stewing, which has rendered the collagen from the pork skin.

What remarkable skill! Old Mr. Gao thought with a sigh of admiration, his gaze toward Lin Xu now holding even more appreciation.

If this kid had been born ten or twenty years earlier, I would have insisted on passing my skills onto him. With such talent, he's truly the ideal successor.

But then, another thought struck him. Then again, if it had been ten or twenty years ago, those old codgers would probably have fought tooth and nail to claim him. It's better this way. I can nurture him slowly, let him develop, and then watch those old fools turn green with envy!

「Tianpeng Audit Firm」

It was lunchtime. A few of Shen Jiayue's female colleagues approached her.

"Jiayue, we're planning to go downstairs for clay pot rice noodles. Want to join us?"

Shen Jiayue shook her head with a smile. "No thanks, my lunch should be arriving soon."

"Really? Your mother-in-law brings you lunch too?"

The female colleagues' eyes widened. A mother-in-law this considerate is so rare! Does she have any other sons?

Shen Jiayue smiled and said, "It's not my mother-in-law. She's already on the high-speed train back to her hometown."

Oh, it's not her. The colleagues secretly sighed in relief. That's good.

"It's my husband," Shen Jiayue continued, "He's making lunch for me today."

Since my colleagues already think I'm married, I might as well go along with it, Shen Jiayue thought.

She blushed slightly as she said the word "husband." That rascal Xu Bao, I'm already calling you hubby. When are you going to call me wifey?

The colleagues were speechless. Seriously, I can't take this anymore! How on earth did she find such a husband? Her mother-in-law makes breakfast, and her husband makes lunch. Is this family deliberately showing off their happiness to everyone at the audit firm?

"Husband? So she really is married!" one colleague muttered.

"Why would such a beautiful girl get married right after graduating from college? Why couldn't she wait a bit?" a male colleague lamented.

"Wait for what? For a greasy guy like you to harass her?" a female colleague retorted.

"Hey! How am I greasy? I'm a 27-year-old man in my prime, okay?"

"You've been greasy ever since you started looking up folk remedies for hair loss."

"Damn it, were you looking at my browser history?!"

"You're the one who used my computer to search for it! I had to run a full virus scan twice, terrified your hair loss problem might be contagious."

"Damn it all..."

Not long after, the delivery guy's voice sounded from the entrance again. "Shen Jiayue! Your lunch is here!"

"Coming, coming!" Shen Jiayue chirped, skipping to the entrance as cheerful as a lark. "Thanks, bro!"

Taking the bag, she hurried back to her seat and eagerly opened the package.

Inside, she found braised pork rice, her favorite Chicken Feet, crispy and tangy Lotus Root slices, and even a small bowl of egg drop soup.

Aaaah, Xu Bao is just the best! He's so good to me!

After rice was introduced to the menu, Lin Xu found himself significantly more relaxed.

Although some customers still ordered noodles, most wanted to try the rice dishes, especially the braised pork rice.

So, even before the lunch rush peaked and subsided, he found himself with some downtime.

Since that's the case, I might as well check out the points store, Lin Xu thought.

He silently invoked the system in his mind and entered the points store.

Rows of items appeared on the screen in his mind:

[Qualified Level Stir-Frying Pan-Flipping Technique: 80,000 points]

[Qualified Level Decorative Cutting Technique: 80,000 points]

[Qualified Level Side Dish Preparation Technique: 80,000 points]

[Qualified Level Sugar Boiling Technique: 80,000 points]

[Qualified Level Dry Pot Technique: 80,000 points]

[...]

The page was filled with various Cooking Techniques.

Lin Xu's head spun looking at them all.

All these Cooking Techniques required 80,000 points to redeem.

Damn, even the Qualified Level ones are this expensive? he thought. I originally figured 100,000 points would get me a lot. Who knew these points were like Vietnamese Dong? Large denominations, but they don't stretch far at all.

Lin Xu continued scrolling down.

Below the Cooking Techniques were various Qualified Level general-purpose sauce techniques:

General Seasoning Oil, General Scallion Oil, General Sichuan peppercorn oil, General Cold Dish Sauce, General Sweet and Sour Sauce, General Fish-Fragrant Sauce, General Dipping Sauce, and so on.

These were relatively cheaper, costing only 40,000 points each.

The sheer variety of sauces made Lin Xu dizzy. He decided to use the catalog index and went straight to the "Items" exchange page to see what he could get.

Once the page loaded, he found it filled with rows of question marks. No item names were displayed.

When he tried clicking on one, a message popped up: "Insufficient permission to view."

Seriously?! Lin Xu thought, annoyed. I don't even have the clearance to see them?

He scrolled further down the items list.

Finally, he spotted an item with a name:

[Divine Artifact of Wealth: An item that can bring popularity and financial fortune to the shop.  
Redemption price: 888,888 points]