

Culinary 40

Chapter 40: Mom, let me tell you something, don't get excited!

"DING DING DING! I'm off work!"

Just as Lin Xu finished dinner, Shen Jiayue, dressed in her business attire, pushed open the shop door. Her steps were light, her high ponytail bouncing with each one, perfectly reflecting her mood upon seeing Lin Xu.

Sob, sob, sob, I finally get to see my Xu Bao! I really want to rush over and hug him.

Shen Jiayue was having quite the internal monologue. However, before she even reached Lin Xu...

"Hmm? What's this delicious smell? Did you add a new dish today?"

Lin Xu wiped his hands and said, "Since it's someone's first day at work, I made a new dish to treat you... So, tell me, how was work?"

"Boring to death! I thought working at an audit office would involve outwitting companies, finding issues in their finances through tiny clues, but I spent the whole day just getting familiar with office software..."

While she was talking, Lin Xu took a plate of steamed Pork Ribs in black bean sauce from the steamer, sprinkled some minced Scallion on top as a garnish, then placed it on the dining table next to Shen Jiayue.

Shen Jiayue, the working girl, immediately stopped complaining.

"Ha! Is that steamed Pork Ribs in black bean sauce? I love this dish! Can I have a bowl of rice? The sauce mixed with rice is super delicious. I could eat two big bowls!"

Lin Xu: "..."

Is this still the Shen Jiayue who would run five laps on the track after eating a small bag of chips? Why is she so unrestrained now?

While he was getting the rice, Shen Jiayue couldn't wait and had already tried a small piece.

"Wow, it's so smooth and tender, chewy and springy! These Pork Ribs are steamed even better than those at the old famous restaurants in Yangcheng!"

Xu Bao made this for me! Sob, sob, sob, I'm so happy!

After the rice was served, Shen Jiayue didn't start eating right away. Instead, she took a photo and posted it under the Lin Ji's Food topic:

"Officially a working girl as of today! Boss Lin specially made a new dish to treat me [heart][heart][heart]"

Not long after she posted it, various responses flooded in:

"Wow! It's steamed Pork Ribs in black bean sauce!"

"I thought Boss Lin only did home cooking. I never imagined he's good at Cantonese cuisine too."

"I heard this dish requires a lot of control over the heat; it's easy to overcook. Boss Lin is really amazing!"

"Another day of envying the boss's wife."

"Me too!"

"I was about to say, 'Boss Lin, draw your blade!' but then I remembered this is his turf."

"Even if you draw your blade, we're not afraid! Boss Lin is a pro with knives."

"..."

Shen Jiayue, however, wasn't paying any attention to these messages. She was completely immersed in this dinner made with love.

Just as she was really getting into her meal, Panda and the others walked in, their faces gloomy.

"Four small bowls of braised pork rice, twenty Chicken Feet, a plate of Lotus Root, eight bottles of beer..."

After placing their order, Panda scanned a QR code to pay and handed the receipt to a nearby waiter. Then, he sat down at an empty table, constantly scrolling through his phone, looking for a suitable scenic area nearby. When he found one that seemed suitable, he called the number provided.

"Hello, does your scenic area have the capacity to accommodate groups of over a thousand people? ...No? Oh, never mind then."

"Hello, I'd like to ask about your group ticket prices. I have more than a thousand people wanting to visit for three days... Accommodations are full? Okay then."

"..."

Panda grew more disheartened with each call. Summer tourism was just too overwhelming right now. Smaller scenic areas lacked the capacity, those with capacity were booked full, and the ones that had room were way over budget. Unbelievable!

Seeing his regular customers come in, Lin Xu took a plate of steamed Pork Ribs in black bean sauce from the steamer and brought it over. "I made a new dish today. Here's a plate for you guys to try."

Panda, looking dejected, said, "Right now, Boss Lin, no dish you send over is going to cheer me up... unless you're offering a scenic area..."

This made Lin Xu quite curious. "What's up? Are you planning to venture into the tourism industry now?"

"Don't even mention it. Recently, a scenic area in Changping approached us to sell group tickets, and we sold them to a private middle school in Hengshui. They were supposed to leave tomorrow, but the scenic area wouldn't honor the group tickets and refunded the money to me. I discussed canceling the trip with the school, but they disagreed, saying the students had been looking forward to it for months."

Lin Xu then asked, "Do they have any specific requirements for the scenic area?"

Panda thought seriously for a moment. "Not really. They just want a place with mountains and water where the students can relax for a few days. They need the scenic site to have decent food and lodging, to be safe enough, and preferably have a variety of activities. Normally, these requirements are easy to meet, but right now, it's the beginning of summer vacation, and all the tourist spots are packed."

Lin Xu took out his cellphone and checked the distance from Hengshui to Yinzhou City. It was only about 300 kilometers. That distance should be acceptable, right?

He looked at Panda and asked, "Panda, do you know what my family does?"

Panda was taken aback. "What do they do?"

"My family runs a scenic area."

"HISS... Really? Where is the scenic area?"

Lin Xu opened Meituan, searched for Longqi Mountain Scenic Area in Yinzhou City, and casually handed his phone to Panda. "This is my family's scenic area. The whole mountain has been developed, and there's also a reservoir nearby for speedboating and stuff. Don't worry about the capacity; the gentle

slopes in the valley of the scenic area have tent camps set up where you can watch the stars at night. The whole camp can accommodate thousands of people, and we can quickly set up more tents if necessary."

"WHOA!" Panda exclaimed. He really hadn't expected Lin Xu's family to own a scenic area. He glanced at the ticket prices on Meituan. "29.9? That cheap?"

Lin Xu gave a bitter smile. "The approval letter for a 4A tourist attraction from the province hasn't come through yet, so we don't dare set the prices too high for fear that tourists might not visit."

As the two were talking, Shen Jiayue somehow wandered over, bowl in hand. When she saw the photos of the tent camps under the starry sky on Meituan, she was immediately enchanted. "Wow! That's so beautiful!"

She nudged Lin Xu with her elbow. "When did your family develop this scenic area? You didn't even tell me."

Seeing her clearly excited expression, Lin Xu asked with a smile, "Want to go?"

"Yeah."

"Then, when we have time, I'll take you there to check it out."

"Okay! I want to sleep in a tent and fall asleep counting stars."

At this point, Panda could no longer pay attention to the lovebirds showing off their affection. After quickly reading through the introduction of the scenic area, he rushed to ask Lin Xu, "Boss Lin, can the scenic area accommodate us tomorrow?"

This question really stumped Lin Xu. He thought for a moment and said, "I'd better call my mom and ask. She should have just gotten home not long ago."

Soon, the call connected.

"Mom, are you home yet?"

"Yeah, just got home not long ago. I was just worrying about the summer promotion with your dad. What's up, son? Is there something you need?"

Lin Xu took a deep breath and said to Chen Meijuan on the phone, "Mom, I need to tell you something. Please don't get too excited..."

He hadn't even finished his sentence when Chen Meijuan's suppressed voice came through the phone, "Is it that Shen Jiayue is pregnant with your child? Am I going to be a grandma?"

Shen Jiayue: "..."

Lin Xu: "..."

Panda: "..."