

## Culinary 41

### Chapter 41: Deal Settled! Earn Lin Xu a Title!

HISS... Lin Xu felt a sharp pain in his waist.

He feared his mother would continue to jump to conclusions, so he quickly said, "It's not Jiayue. Panda ran into some business problems and needs a scenic area that can accommodate thousands of visitors. Our family's scenic area should be fine, right?"

Enduring the pain in his waist, Boss Lin quickly explained Panda's current predicament. After finishing, he handed the phone to Panda. "You talk to Mom. I need to check if my waist is swollen from that pinch."

Panda suppressed a laugh, took the phone, and said, "Hello, Auntie, I'm Panda. You remember me, right? The one who wore the panda suit..." He stepped aside to discuss the visitor reception issue with Chen Meijuan.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu lifted his chef's coat and found that his waist had been pinched red by a certain beautiful woman who was both embarrassed and angry.

"Ow! Does it hurt?" Shen Jiayue's mind had gone blank from her mother-in-law's words. For some reason, she had felt the urge to pinch Lin Xu a couple of times, not expecting to leave such a large red mark. She quickly extended her fair, delicate hand and gently rubbed the spot for him. "I'm sorry, okay? Why didn't you dodge?" A guilty look appeared on Miss Shen's face.

This is my Xubao, whom I've been feeding snacks for four years. What if I actually hurt him?

Lin Xu smiled. "I just wanted to let you vent, didn't I? It's alright, it doesn't hurt anymore. Hurry up and eat."

Panda quickly reached an agreement with Chen Meijuan. He then called the person in charge at the school and strongly recommended the Longqi Mountain Scenic Area in Yinzhou City. After more than ten minutes of discussion, the school agreed to change the scenic area.

Once everything was settled, Panda sighed helplessly. "Damn it, I was just flipping some tickets online. How did I end up in charge of a tour group?"

Over a thousand teachers and students, needing accommodation and meals for three days, with an average budget of less than three hundred yuan per person. During the off-season, many scenic areas would welcome such a group. But in the peak season, they wouldn't bother. The low budget wasn't the main issue; the critical problem was the three-day stay requirement, which effectively blocked individual tourists. During the peak tourist season, this could lead to significant losses. This was why Panda had been unable to find any scenic area willing to take them on.

However, now, this major worry was finally resolved.

Panda picked up his bowl and, while wolfing down the braised pork rice, asked Lin Xu, "Boss Lin, I'll be taking the high-speed train to your place later. Is there anything you need me to bring back for you?"

Although they had an agreement, the contract still needed to be signed in person. After all, this involved over a thousand teachers and students. If anything went wrong, no one could bear the responsibility. Moreover, when the tourists arrived tomorrow, he would need to coordinate with the school's representative. A personal trip was necessary, both for practical reasons and as a matter of courtesy.

Lin Xu smiled and said, "My mom just left this morning. There's nothing I need you to bring."

Panda quickly finished his meal and left the restaurant. He was short on time; he had to go home to pack a change of clothes and also buy some pastries or gifts from Huguosi Temple for Lin Xu's parents. Given his good relationship with Boss Lin, he couldn't show up at their home empty-handed.

After Panda left, Shen Jiayue also finished the rice in her bowl. "Wow, I'm so full!" In the morning, she had eaten six steamed buns and a container of egg soup. At noon, it was a large portion of braised pork rice and Chicken Claw Lotus Root. Now, in the evening, she had consumed a big bowl of rice and so many other dishes. Shen Jiayue felt like her stomach was about to burst.

She walked to the kitchen doorway and said to Lin Xu, who was busy inside, "I won't keep you company tonight. It's my first day at work, and my parents will definitely have a lot of questions. I need to go home early to deal with them and do some exercises to burn fat."

Yes, I can't keep indulging in delicious food. I need to get back to working out hard at the gym. Shed the fat. Become a healthy girl with toned abs!

Lin Xu asked, "You ate dinner so early. What if you get hungry in the middle of the night? Want me to pack a few Chicken Feet for you to snack on later?"

Shen Jiayue, who was psyching herself up, initially wanted to refuse. But then she considered that if she got hungry at night, there was nothing to eat at home besides fruit. So, she reluctantly replied, "Alright then, just two or three will be fine."

Lin Xu bent down and took a takeout container from the cupboard. He packed ten Chicken Feet into it, placed the container in a bag, and handed it to Shen Jiayue. "Do you need me to bring you breakfast tomorrow morning?"

"No need. The housekeeper is making me a tuna sandwich tomorrow. I already told her today."

After five o'clock, more customers started coming into the store. Yue Liyue and his roommate, as well as Li Qiang and his colleagues, had all arrived. Everyone, as promised, got to enjoy the Steamed Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce that Lin Xu had treated them to.

Yue Liyue raved about the dish, feeling it was even more delicious than those made by chefs in Guangdong. He even declared that from now on, he would only eat this dish as a way to remember his hometown.

There was one more portion of Pork Ribs in the steamer, which Lin Xu had saved for Mr. Gao. But for some reason, the old gentleman still hadn't appeared. The Pork Ribs had been steaming for so long that even under the warmer, they were about to become overcooked. Lin Xu had no choice but to give them to another customer.

「At the same time.」

In the back kitchen of the Chinese restaurant in Building No. 2 of the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse, Mr. Gao, who hadn't gone to Lin Ji's Food for dinner, was inspecting the kitchen, accompanied by several middle-aged chefs. He wasn't wearing his usual flashy T-shirts or shirts. Instead, he wore a white

chef's uniform embroidered with the national emblem, his expression serious as he surveyed the busy young chefs.

"Master, you've been coming less frequently lately. What have you been busy with at home?" Executive Chef Xie Baomin asked with a fawning smile.

"I recently encountered a promising talent. I'm considering whether to take him as my disciple."

"A promising talent?" Xie Baomin quickly grabbed Mr. Gao's sleeve. "Master, I'm short of promising talents here too! Could you introduce him to this place? We can discuss the terms. Once you take him as your disciple, he'll be my junior disciple, and I'll definitely look after him."

Mr. Gao chuckled and shook his head. "You had such great talent when you were young, but it was completely stifled by the rigid rules here. I won't let him repeat that mistake. Besides, he earns over 30,000 yuan a day; he might not even consider this place."

Over 30,000 yuan a day? Xie Baomin mentally calculated. That's almost a million a month!

He said softly, "Master, is my junior disciple's cooking really that good? Next month is the State Guesthouse's annual young chef competition. We've lost to Building No. 10 for two consecutive years; we can't lose again this year."

The Fishing Platform State Guesthouse had eighteen buildings in total, each with its own Chinese restaurant. Every year, around late July or early August, the chefs from each building's Chinese restaurant would gather for a competition among the young chefs.

Mr. Gao looked at Xie Baomin with disapproval. "Resorting to outside help just because you can't beat them? Even if you won, what would be the point?"

"Building No. 10 brought in outside help! They gave him the title of 'consultant,' and he brazenly competed. If you agree, Master, I can get my junior disciple a consultant's title too."

Mr. Gao had initially wanted to refuse. But then he thought about Lin Xu, a small restaurant owner with no impressive titles to his name, while his girlfriend, who drove a sports car, clearly came from a wealthy family. What if that girl's parents thought being a chef wasn't a respectable profession and looked down on Lin Xu... No, that wouldn't do! I have to help this kid earn a respectable title.

Mr. Gao said to Xie Baomin, "Alright. As long as they bring in outside help again this year, I'll bring your junior disciple over and annihilate them!"