

## Culinary 471

Chapter 471: Exchange for an Upgrade Mission! As everyone knows, the Northeast's four major stews make five dishes!

"Do you want to redeem the upgrade task that requires 700,000 points?"

Lin Xu was flustered by the sudden influx of customers. Noticing an extra one million points in his account, he immediately accessed the system, opened the training section, found Ji Minghui's name, and chose the Hand-made Noodles Skill upgrade.

Soon, a system screen popped up asking if he wanted to make the exchange.

"Yes!"

The system's prompt sounded again:

"Host has spent 700,000 points to obtain the noodle section chef Ji Minghui's Hand-made Noodles Skill upgrade task. Would you like to read the task details now?"

"Yes!"

"Please guide Ji Minghui in making one hundred bowls of hand-made noodles within three days. Upon completion, the host will be rewarded with one draw for the Excellent Level Basic Cooking Techniques, and Ji Minghui will be awarded the Perfect Level Hand-made Noodles Technique."

(Note: Starting from the day of the skill upgrade, if the employee leaves the job within three years, the upgraded skill will be automatically deducted. If he stays longer than three years, it won't be affected.)

What's with this reminder at the end? To fully acquire the upgraded skill, do employees have to work at Lin Ji for three whole years? TSK TSK TSK... System, oh system, you're really quite ruthless! Thinking back to when even his master's name appeared on the list of chefs recognized by the system, Lin Xu felt that this so-called Cooking God system should be renamed the Streetlight System instead. But this was also good, as it prevented some employees from leaving right after learning something new, which would have cost him a lot of points.

Putting his thoughts aside, Lin Xu said to Ji Minghui, who was next to him working on the dough, "Master Ji, I think there's still room for improvement in your hand-made noodles technique. How about this: for the next few days, you make hand-made noodles for everyone for lunch and dinner. I'll share some tips and tricks for hand-made noodles with you."

Ji Minghui nodded eagerly upon hearing this. "Yes, yes, that would be great! I've been wondering how I could be helpful. There's nothing better than getting guidance from you, Boss. I heard from Master Niu that it was after your pointers that he suddenly had an epiphany and got the hang of it."

Niu Chuan, who was nearby, agreed, "Indeed. The Boss only guided me for a few days, and I got the hang of it. Though I'm not as good as the Boss at making hand-made noodles, I've improved so much compared to before."

The group worked like an assembly line. Niu Chuan and the other noodle masters rolled out the dough and handed it to Ji Minghui. After Ji Minghui rolled it into sheets, he passed it to Lin Xu. Lin Xu then adjusted the sheets to a perfect state before cutting them into noodles and placing them in a pot next to him to start cooking.

They were busy until two in the afternoon. Only then did the customers who came to clock in gradually leave.

By that time, most of the ingredients in the store had sold out. In the braised food section, the newly introduced pressed pig's head was the first to run out. Next to sell out were Tiger Skin Chicken Feet and various duck products. By one o'clock, the braised food section, led by Xu Xinhua, had entered its closing phase ahead of schedule.

Although, calling it 'closing time' wasn't quite accurate. They had simply hung a 'sold out' sign at the window and were then busy in the braised food section, cleaning up ingredients and trying to prepare another batch before dinnertime.

Having finished his tasks, Lin Xu wiped the sweat from his forehead and went downstairs. He needed to figure out where that sudden one million points had come from.

"Tiantian, did anyone sign up for a card today?"

"Yes, Boss, but most people just did it to secure an early number. Only General Manager Chen topped up one million. Even the bank called to inquire."

The recent 'cut-off action' had tightened scrutiny on large financial transactions. Consequently, when one million suddenly appeared in the restaurant's account, the bank promptly contacted them to clarify the details.

My sister-in-law? What's she doing topping up one million all of a sudden? Is she planning to max out the store's membership card?

Lin Xu took out his phone and sent a WeChat message to General Manager Chen expressing his gratitude: "Sister Yan, you're so generous! Truly the darling of our family!"

Chen Yan replied, "Hmph, let's see if your wife still accuses me of freeloading... This afternoon, I want to drink the beauty-enhancing Jade Soup, and I also need some collagen-rich dishes to go with my meal. You figure it out."

After topping up one million, his sister-in-law was clearly much more assertive.

Lin Xu was, of course, eager to accommodate his "number one sister" and quickly replied, "No problem, I'll make sure you're satisfied!"

After thanking his sister-in-law, he picked up Dundun, who was sleeping nearby.

A million in a day, and there's also a Perfect Level Mushroom dish draw. Since my son is right here, I might as well do it now and see what dish I get.

After interacting with Dundun for a bit, he silently thought, "Draw!"

Following a series of operations, the result of the draw was quickly revealed:

"Congratulations, Host, you have won a Perfect Level Mushroom dish—Braised Chicken with Mushrooms."

What? Braised Chicken with Mushrooms? This really surprised Lin Xu. He had thought getting Mushroom Balls or Mushroom Soup would be astonishing enough, but he never expected to win this renowned Northeastern dish, famous both domestically and internationally. He's truly my good son, the one who ate chicken legs this morning—he really delivered!

Lin Xu put Dundun back on the service counter and asked Song Tiantian with a smile, "Tiantian, does Braised Chicken with Mushrooms hold a high status among you Northeasterners?"

"Of course! Among the four great stews of the Northeast, Braised Chicken with Mushrooms is ranked first."

Oh? There's a concept of the Four Great Stews of the Northeast? I need to find out more. Maybe someday I can complete the collection of the Northeast's great stews. Then, when Northeasterners feel homesick and come to the restaurant for a hearty meal, I'll surely gain a new group of regular customers.

Lin Xu continued to ask, "What are the Four Great Stews of the Northeast?"

He needed to clarify this; perhaps someday he could complete the collection of the Northeast's Four Great Stews. Then, when Northeasterners felt homesick and came to the restaurant for a feast, wouldn't that secure him a whole new group of customers?

As soon as the Four Great Stews of the Northeast were mentioned, Song Tiantian immediately rattled them off:

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"Braised chicken with mushrooms, pork ribs with green beans, pork with vermicelli, catfish with eggplant, big bones with pickled vegetables..."

Lin Xu: ???????

Tiantian, were your PE school's math teachers also physical education majors? Didn't you realize that there's an extra dish in the 'four great braised dishes'? But then again, the Four Heavenly Kings are also five people, so it's quite normal for the Northeast's 'four great braised dishes' to have five. If you add dishes like iron pot braised goose, there might be even more.

Seeing the longing on Song Tiantian's face as she spoke of her hometown food, he said with a smile,

"Are you homesick? When things calm down, I'll have Che Zai buy a few free-range chickens, some high-quality Hazel Mushrooms and potato flour noodles, and make braised chicken with mushrooms to comfort your homesickness."

"Thank you, boss. I'll work hard!"

Leaving the service counter, Lin Xu headed toward the braising section.

With the Mid-Autumn Festival approaching, once the business was on the right track, he planned to discuss with Dou Wenjing and Shu Yun about giving the staff time off so everyone could take turns visiting their hometowns.

Although a long holiday was out of the question, allowing the staff to gather with their parents and family for a reunion meal was definitely possible.

Arriving at the braising section, the pig heads needed for the afternoon had already been prepared.

Considering that yesterday's leftover pig heads and the four from this morning were not enough for the customers' orders, Che Zai had increased the quantity and was now soaking eight well-prepared pig heads in a basin.

Increase the quantity. All dishes must increase in quantity.

In the past, when the roadside shop sold out, everyone would just say business was good. But now, with such a large storefront, selling out would mean a lack of professionalism in planning.

After all, selling out means there was an insufficient preparation of dishes, and it also means missing out on money that could have been earned.

From a businessman's perspective, money not earned is like losing money.

However, it's hard to gauge the customers' buying limit on the first day of business after renovation, as this was still just a trial operation.

Only after fully opening could they know the amount of ingredients to prepare each day.

The braising liquid for the pig heads had now become a master stock, with a thick layer of fat floating on the surface, all of which was rendered from the pig heads.

The fat in the braising liquid makes the braised ingredients more luscious.

Moreover, with the fat sealing it, the braising liquid can maintain a long-lasting temperature, making the braised food softer and easier to debone.

But too much fat can prevent odors from escaping during the braising process. This causes the flavors to be reabsorbed by the ingredients, leading to a decrease in quality.

Lin Xu scooped out the excess fat and poured it into the braising liquid for Tiger Skin Chicken Feet.

Tiger Skin Chicken Feet have less fat, so some lard usually needs to be added during braising.

Now, this was solved. Fat could be scooped directly from the stockpot for the Braised Pig Head. The braising department no longer needed to go upstairs for lard, thus achieving an internal circulation of fat.

After putting the pig heads in to braise, Lin Xu then went upstairs to start working on another popular dish for the day, Crystal Pork Hock.

While busy, he remembered the dish ordered by his sister-in-law.

The shop had many dishes rich in collagen. For example, the Braised Pig Head that had just started simmering and the Crystal Pork Hock currently being made were both rich in gelatin. But as for something to accompany rice... these two clearly weren't enough. What about making a special pork hock dish just for his sister-in-law? Thinking of the Crystal Sugar Pork Hock he mastered, he realized it was also mediocre with rice, since that dish is almost a dessert.

Muttering to himself, Lin Xu opened the system and searched for the dishes he had mastered in the skills column to see if they could meet the needs of his top-ranking sister-in-law.

While scrolling through, he saw the Perfect Level braised dish rewarded after completing the last mainline task—Braised Pork Trotter.

Back then, Dundun helped him draw three Perfect Level dishes.

He had already made Yangzhou Fried Rice and winter melon candy quite some time ago.

Only the Braised Pork Trotter remained unmade. Initially, he hadn't found the right opportunity, and later, he had been so busy that he completely forgot about it.

Now, recalling the dish, Lin Xu immediately made a decision.

"Che Zai, do we have any pork trotters in the shop?"

"Yes, yes, boss, how many do you want?"

How many? If it was just his sister-in-law eating, two would probably be enough. But once she eats, his Shen Baobao would definitely want some too, so he'd need to add two more. His mother-in-law was so concerned about her appearance; she wouldn't miss out on such a collagen-rich dish. He'd have to add even more.

After some rough calculations, Lin Xu said,

"Bring me ten. I'll make some Braised Pork Trotter for the family to try, and if they taste good, we'll add the dish to the restaurant's menu later."

"Alright!"

Soon, Che Zai came over carrying ten Pork Trotters.

Seeing Lin Xu was busy, Che Zai, without a word, put the trotters in a pot for a preliminary boil and then used a blowtorch to scorch their skin.

Pork Trotters are divided into fore trotters and hind trotters.

The fore trotters are less bony and meatier, suitable for eating the meat, while the hind trotters have less meat and are more bony, better for making soup.

After scorching the trotters, he soaked them in hot water.

When Lin Xu had put the Crystal Pork Hock into the pot to stew, the trotters had about finished soaking.

He lifted the soaked trotters from the basin and scrubbed them clean of any blackened residue with a steel wool pad, restoring the trotters to their original white appearance.

Once all were clean, he vertically split the trotters at the hoof joints.

This step is essential when preparing Pork Trotter dishes because there are often hairs and impurities trapped between the two halves of the toes that are hard to remove without splitting them.

After cleaning out the middle of the split hoofs, he chopped the trotters into uniformly sized pieces.

Once all were chopped, Lin Xu put the trotters into the pot, then added clean water, Scallion and Ginger, and Cooking Wine to blanch them.

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Among the various cuts of pork, Pork Trotters have a slightly stronger gamey smell, so blanching is an essential step. Moreover, they need to be boiled a bit longer during blanching to be thoroughly cleansed.

Just as the water began to boil, Shen Baobao suddenly sent a message:

"Xubao, what are you up to?"

"That big spender who topped up a million wants a dish rich in collagen, so I'm blanching Pork Trotters, planning to make Braised Pork Trotter. Eat more later since he's treating."

"HAHAHAHA, sure thing, sure thing!"

Although her own family was wealthy, Shen Baobao felt a thrill of anticipation at the thought of feasting on someone else's dime when she saw Lin Xu's message.

Wahaha, no wonder people used to enjoy freeloading off the rich in tough times; the feeling really is different.

Even though she had eaten her fill at lunch, she strangely felt hungry again.

Thinking that her mom also loved this kind of dish, Shen Baobao immediately sent a message:

"Make plenty! My mom loves it too."

"Our parents will both be there. Don't forget to thank the big spender at dinner."

"GAHHAHA, of course not! I really can't wait for tonight so I can take my parents to freeload off that \*fat cat\*!"

Lin Xu: "..."

"Freeloading" is one thing, but "fat cat"? Better to avoid such terms. After all, there's no need to speak so ill of successful people—it's like cursing oneself.

After the water in the pot boiled and the scum was skimmed off with a spoon, he boiled them for about five more minutes, until the Pork Trotters were thoroughly blanched. Lin Xu then removed them from the pot, rinsed them with warm water, and placed them in a basket to drain.

Next, he heated oil in a wok.

He added a handful of Crystal Sugar to the wok and stir-fried it slowly over low heat to caramelize it.

Once the sugar had caramelized to the right color, he added the prepared Scallion and Ginger, Sichuan peppercorns, Star Anise, cinnamon, bay leaves, and several dried chili segments. He stir-fried them until fragrant, then added the Pork Trotters and poured in some hot water.

Then, he began seasoning.

He added two small spoonfuls of salt, a few pieces of Crystal Sugar, and a small piece of Aged Tangerine Peel to the wok.

After bringing the contents to a boil over high heat, he transferred everything into a pressure cooker, sealed the lid, and cooked it under pressure for an hour.

To make delicious Braised Pork Trotter, long hours of stewing are necessary. To save time and energy, restaurants generally use a pressure cooker for this.

「Five o'clock in the afternoon.」

The online fans who couldn't check in at noon swarmed in again.

Compared to lunchtime, there were many more familiar faces in the evening.

These included Wu Kexin and Panda, sent by Chen Yan to do a live stream review of the restaurant; Yue Liyue, who was also live streaming; and Brother Qiang, who had gotten off work early today.

They first toured the restaurant, carefully showing their viewers the decor, before returning to the ground floor lobby. There, they happened to meet Geng Lele, who had signed out on leave for herself. Everyone sat down together at a dining table, eating and interacting with the online viewers.

While Wu Kexin was eating the soft and mildly spicy Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, she relayed a question from the bullet comments, "Are you guys eating for free? Has Boss Lin started paying streamers now too? Ha, that's a good question from this viewer!"

Sucking on a chicken foot, she continued, "Boss Lin hasn't paid us; his reputation doesn't need that kind of promotion. And this meal isn't free either. Our boss deposited a million here at noon, and she'll settle the bill when she arrives."

Hearing this, the live chat exploded.

"Truly a model boss from China!"

"A boss that good should hire more employees!"

"A million in cash for employees to eat, drink, and have fun? Can we get a dozen bosses like that?"

I wish I had a boss who could see through my tough exterior...

"Does your boss need someone to carry bags or shine shoes?"

"Can I be a cleaner at your company?"

"..."

After answering the question, she looked at Geng Lele and asked, "Why didn't you come at noon?"

"I had an exam; it was the last placement test before school starts. After I finished, I saw Brother Xu say that the shop was swamped, so I just bought some pan-fried buns near the school gate to eat."

Ever since Yang Lin took charge of the pan-fried bun shop at the school gate, Geng Lele had gained at least three pounds.

This girl would go to the shop whenever she had a craving, trying one flavor after another. After she became friendly with Yang Lin, he even specially made her pan-fried buns that were crispy on both sides.

"Yang Lin asked me to bring him some pig's head meat when I go back. Don't forget to remind me to get it to-go later, okay?" Geng Lele added.

"Sure, we'll remind you," Wu Kexin replied.

Just then, Shen Baobao entered the restaurant.

The streamers greeted Shen Jiayue, who was also present:

"Hi, Sister Yue!"

"Come join us, Boss Lady!"

"The new dishes are amazing! Boss Lin really went all out."

"..."

Shen Jiayue greeted everyone individually and also said hello to the viewers in the live stream before gracefully making her way upstairs.

Although she didn't mind being on a live stream, she wasn't particularly fond of being stared at. Especially while eating; it always felt a bit strange. Besides, the Braised Pork Trotter ordered by the big spender was upstairs. With Yan Bao not here yet, it's the perfect chance to sneak a couple of bites!

However, just as she reached the top of the stairs, Chen Yan arrived, practically on her heels.

"Brother-in-law!" Chen Yan called out to Lin Xu. "Hurry up and bring out the dish I ordered! I paid for this, you know. No one else gets a single bite."

Shen Jiayue snorted. "As if anyone wants your food... Xubao, don't forget to steam a Longevity Peach for me later. I need it to celebrate the birthday of a certain single-and-lonely 'old woman' over thirty."

Chen Yan: "..."

Why does my cousin always manage to hit my weak spot so perfectly?

Chen Yan cleared her throat. "I wasn't referring to \*you\*, dear cousin. We're practically sisters! Even if I didn't have enough for myself, I'd make sure you got to eat."

Her birthday was coming up, and President Chen was genuinely afraid Shen Baobao would actually get her a massive Longevity Peach.

"You said it!" Shen Jiayue replied. "I won't be polite then."

Chen Yan: ??????

I was just being courteous! You actually took me seriously?

In the kitchen, Lin Xu lifted the lid of the pressure cooker. A cloud of steam, rich with the fragrance of spices, billowed out.

The Pork Trotters inside were rosy and glistening with collagen; even the broth had thickened considerably.

He poured the Pork Trotters from the pressure cooker into a wok. Using chopsticks, he picked out the Scallion, Ginger, Sichuan peppercorns, Star Anise, bay leaves, cinnamon, and other aromatics. Then, he turned up the heat to reduce the excess broth.

Once the sauce had thickened, he drizzled in some Scallion Oil, gave it a quick stir, and then transferred the Pork Trotters to a serving dish.

The Pork Trotters were so tender they trembled. When scooping them with a spoon, one could feel the rich, sticky collagen in the sauce.

After plating, he garnished the dish with a pinch of fresh coriander leaves and then brought it out.

Chen Yan and Shen Baobao, who had just been discussing weight loss methods, were instantly captivated by the sight of the dish.

That glistening skin, that rich, rosy color—it looked incredibly appetizing.

"Rice, Xubao! Where's the rice?" Shen Baobao exclaimed. "Hurry up, I'm starving!"

"I'll need at least two bowls, Brother-in-law!" Chen Yan declared. "Make sure there's plenty. If there isn't enough, I'm not paying!"

Lin Xu gave a wry smile.

Weren't you two just talking about dieting a moment ago? Is this the plan? Eat your fill now and worry about losing weight later?

Chapter 474: Mr. Chen Will Pay for Everyone's Expenses! Brother-in-law, I Want to Throw a Suckling Pig Party!

"Wow, this Pork Trotter is so soft and tender, absolutely delicious!"

"Yeah, yeah, it's perfect with rice!"

The tycoon Chen and the food-loving Shen Jiayue each held a bowl of rice, eating joyfully, as if the conversation about dieting a few minutes earlier had involved someone else entirely.

The Pork Trotter was stewed until incredibly tender. You could lift a piece with chopsticks, and without even needing to bite, just a gentle suck would make the skin slide right off the bone.

Upon chewing, the gelatinous skin and rich broth even felt pleasantly sticky in the mouth. This texture, combined with the savory and slightly spicy flavor, would unconsciously make one scoop up more rice.

And the faintly sweet aftertaste made the Pork Trotter flavorful but not greasy, leaving an endlessly delightful aftertaste.

As for the broth in the bowl, one could scoop a little and mix it into the rice, letting the rich, viscous sauce completely envelop the grains. One spoonful into the mouth...

It was truly deeply satisfying.

With a spoonful of rice warming the stomach, the only thought that surfaced was:

"I need two more bowls of this rice!"

As for dieting?

Sorry, I can't think about that right now. Let's talk after I'm full!

Before long, Lin Xu brought over the Jade Soup that Chen had specifically requested. Noticing that only the two 'plastic sisters' were still at the table, he curiously asked, "Yueyue, why haven't our parents arrived yet?"

Shen Baobao, shoveling rice into her mouth, mumbled indistinctly, "My dad secretly drank some liquor at noon, so he can't drive. Driver Xiao Zou is also a bit slow; they're still stuck on the elevated highway and haven't gotten off yet."

Upon hearing about the liquor, Lin Xu remembered the food he had arranged for a delivery person to take to his father-in-law at noon.

I wonder if my mother-in-law will blame me for this later?

Perhaps it's better if I don't send my father-in-law dishes that pair well with alcohol at noon in the future.

That way, he won't get too drunk and affect his work.

「Downstairs.」

As more guests arrived, Shu Yun and Song Tiantian came out together to greet everyone. At the restaurant entrance, they happened to see Zeng Xiaoqi arriving, ready to 'check in'.

"Manager Shu, I've come to freeload a meal! What delicious food do you have today? I saw the online discussions! They pushed our topic's popularity back into seventh place!"

When "The Flavor of Humanity" first aired, Lin Ji's Food had briefly reached seventh place in trending topics, but it was surpassed by a topic about the heatwave the next day.

Now, Lin Ji's Food had once again climbed to seventh place, which thrilled Zeng Xiaoqi.

Taking advantage of a less busy day at the station, this beautiful presenter had given herself an early day off. She came to Lin Ji's Food to 'check in' and also to discuss the show's recording schedule with Lin Xu.

"Welcome, Reporter Zeng! There are two places for freeloaders now. Wu Kexin, Yue Liyue, and others are doing a live broadcast on the first floor, interacting with fans while eating. As for upstairs, Chen and the boss's wife are enjoying the Braised Pork Trotter that the boss made. I just snuck a piece—it was incredibly tasty!"

Upon hearing that Wu Kexin and the others were live-streaming, Zeng Xiaoqi took Shu Yun's hand and headed inside, saying, "Come on, come with me to say hello."

Wu Kexin and the others were live-streaming from a corner table. This spot didn't disturb the other diners and also allowed their fans to get a genuine feel for the interior layout of the new Lin Ji restaurant.

Seeing Zeng Xiaoqi, Geng Lele, who was eating Crystal Pork Hock, quickly waved her over, "Over here, over here! We specifically saved some pressed pig's head meat and Crystal Pork Hock for you; we couldn't bear to eat them ourselves!"

As "The Flavor of Humanity" grew more influential, Geng Lishan became more dedicated to the show. He now spent a significant amount of time each day at the Travel Channel, participating in the program's planning and recording.

Geng Lele was very grateful for this, because her grandfather had finally started to interact with the outside world instead of locking himself in his study all day.

Zeng Xiaoqi and Shu Yun walked over. After smiling and greeting everyone, Zeng Xiaoqi waved at the live broadcast camera, "Hello, hello, I'm Zeng Xiaoqi! Thank you for supporting Lin Ji's Food, and don't forget to follow 'The Flavor of Humanity,' the show that Boss Lin and I create!"

Her appearance immediately sent the live chat into a frenzy:

"Whoa, the star presenter from the Travel Channel is also here checking in at Lin Ji!"

"She and Boss Lin seem to have a good relationship; they even do a show together. It looks more like she's here to freeload a meal."

"Sister Xiaoqi knows that beautiful manager too!"

"Not only does she know her, but they're holding hands! They're obviously very close."

"So, it's true that beautiful women are drawn to each other, huh?"

"Damn, now that you mention it, it really is like that! Boss Lin is surrounded by beautiful women."

"What kind of 'winner-in-life' script is this?"

"..."

Today, Zeng Xiaoqi was wearing a white knee-length skirt and a short-sleeved chiffon blouse. Standing next to Shu Yun, who was dressed in her light grey professional attire, they indeed made for a delightful sight.

After her greeting, Zeng Xiaoqi tasted the Crystal Pork Hock and pressed pig's head meat, immediately praising them effusively, "I must talk with Boss Lin sometime about having him make these dishes on the show so the audience can learn too. The flavor is just fantastic!"

She's a true media professional, always thinking about how to drive traffic to the show.

Noticing comments in the live chat mentioning her, Shu Yun also took the initiative to greet the viewers, "Hi everyone, I'm Shu Yun, the general manager of Lin Ji's Food. To thank everyone for supporting Lin Ji, any viewer in the live stream with a fan badge who dines at our restaurant will receive a complimentary appetizer."

These so-called fan badges were special visual titles in the chat, obtained by contributing a certain amount in donations.

Upon hearing this, Wu Kexin's live stream immediately experienced a small surge in donations.

Chapter 475: Chen Pays the Bill for the Entire Venue! Brother-in-law, I want to throw a Suckling Pig Party! \_2

The amounts weren't large; they just met the standard for fan titles. However, with many small donations, the total amount became quite significant.

Wu Kexin hadn't expected the beautiful manager to spark the fans' enthusiasm for tipping with just a few words. No wonder Boss Lin personally went to Fishing Platform to recruit her, she thought in admiration. This woman is truly impressive.

Zeng Xiaoqi chatted with everyone for a while and then excused herself to discuss something with Lin Xu upstairs.

「Upstairs」

Shen Jiayue and her cousin Chen Yan were on their second bowl of rice.

"Oh? Xiaoqi, come and try the braised Pork Trotter Lin Xu made! It's full of collagen. I felt my skin improve the moment I ate it."

"Really? Then I won't hold back!"

Upon hearing about collagen, Zeng Xiaoqi, who had initially wanted to restrain herself, immediately sat down, casually rolled up her sleeves, and began eating with her rice.

In fact, the women knew that Pork Trotter wouldn't replenish the collagen their skin needed—eating it was likely to just add some fat. The reason they repeatedly mentioned collagen was merely to find an excuse to eat meat.

Chen Yan called out to a waiter not far away, "Ask Master Wei to add another dish that goes well with rice for us!"

"Right away, Boss Chen!"

Everyone in the restaurant knew Chen Yan had topped up her account with one million yuan, so not only was Lin Xu, the owner, courteous to her, but the waiters also treated her with great respect.

Before long, a dish of Stir-fried Pork Intestines was served.

Seeing the bright red chili peppers and Pickled Peppers inside, the spice-loving Zeng Xiaoqi's eyes lit up immediately.

She tried a piece and immediately gave a thumbs-up, "Delicious, and spicy enough!"

"Ha! Xiaoqi still loves spicy food as much as ever," Shen Baobao remarked.

Shen Baobao tried a piece of the Fatty Intestines and nodded, "Indeed, it's great. Crispy and chewy, richly sour and spicy. It's almost as good as Lin Xu's cooking."

Upon hearing this, Chen Yan immediately asked, "Brother-in-law can make Stir-fried Pork Intestines too?"

Zeng Xiaoqi, who was busy eating her rice, also looked curiously towards Shen Jiayue. She felt the Stir-fried Pork Intestines were already delicious; she couldn't imagine it being inferior to what Lin Xu made. Just how delicious could his cooking be?

Shen Baobao tried another piece before saying, "Not only can he make Stir-fried Pork Intestines, but he can also make Fried Fish Fillets. We ate them back home at the scenic area. When frying the fish fillets, they had to be out of the pan in mere seconds—any longer wouldn't do..."

Listening to her cousin's description, Chen Yan subconsciously wanted to ask her brother-in-law to cook it for them to try. But thinking that Lin Xu was busy rolling dough at the moment, she decided to let him off for now and try it tomorrow or the day after. Delicious food shouldn't all be eaten at once. There would be plenty of time in the future. Given she'd topped up her account with a million, she might as well enjoy it slowly.

I should have stayed a few more days at the scenic area; I always feel like I missed out on so many delicacies... The more Zeng Xiaoqi thought about it, the more she regretted leaving early that day. If I had stayed just a couple more days, I could have tried the spicy river snails, the delicious Stir-fried Pork Intestines, and the amazing Fried Fish Fillets! What a regret!

She took a mouthful of rice and said, "I wonder if the stove on our show's set can handle it. If so, we should have Lin Xu showcase a couple of his flash-fried dishes for us."

As they were speaking, Lin Xu walked out of the kitchen. The afternoon crowd wasn't as intense as at noon, so he could afford some time to accompany his fiancée.

Approaching the dining table, he saw Shen Baobao sipping Jade Soup in small mouthfuls, with half a bowl of unfinished rice beside her.

"Lin Xu, you're just in time," Zeng Xiaoqi said. "Can the stove on our filming set handle Stir-fried Pork Intestines?"

"That stove's flame is too weak; it might be a bit difficult."

After sitting down, Lin Xu naturally picked up Shen Baobao's remaining half bowl of rice and, using chopsticks, tried a piece of the Fatty Intestines.

Hmm, this must be Superior level. Although it's not up to Perfect Level, it's definitely a signature dish in any ordinary restaurant, he thought.

Seeing him voluntarily eat her cousin's leftover rice, Chen Yan couldn't help but grin. It used to be Yueyue flaunting their affection all the time, but now Brother-in-law is getting quite skilled at it too. What a shameless young couple!

She sighed to herself, then served herself a small bowl of Jade Soup to try. The Jade Soup she could never get enough of before now tasted completely bland; only a lemony flavor permeated the soup... AAAAARGH! My mood for enjoying delicious food is totally ruined!

Lin Xu took a couple of mouthfuls of Shen Baobao's leftover rice, then said, "I see the roasting oven in the kitchen is usable now. Since we're not too busy these next few days, I'll buy a couple of suckling pigs to try roasting. Sister Yan, you haven't tried it yet, right? It'll be a perfect opportunity for you to taste it."

The already frustrated Chen Yan: "!!!!!!!!!"

Damn it, he's tempting me with roast suckling pig! Which young woman could resist the allure of roasted suckling pig?! she fumed internally.

She immediately said, "Thank you, Brother-in-law! Make sure to roast a few when the time comes. Xiaoqi, bring President Zhen along, and Mr. Lishan and the others too. Let's all try it—my treat!"

Hmph, even though I don't have a sweet love like Tiantian's, I've got money! When the time comes, we'll have a suckling pig party in the largest VIP room upstairs. I'll have the company's staff, friends, and family all come to experience my brother-in-law's skill at making suckling pig.

Speaking of suckling pig, Chen Yan looked down at her Xiongiong. They say 'you are what you eat,' in the sense that eating a specific part of an animal benefits the same part in your body. So, if I eat suckling pig, will my 34D 'little white rabbits' also become plump and round like my cousin's seem to be?

Zeng Xiaoqi hadn't expected Lin Xu to know how to roast suckling pig and immediately said, "Great, great! Lin Xu, you've got to hurry. I haven't tried your roasted suckling pig yet. It must be delicious, right, Boss Chen?"

Chapter 476: Chen Pays the Bill for the Entire Venue! Brother-in-law, I Want to Throw a Suckling Pig Party! \_3

Chen Yan: "..."

Stop asking, stop asking. If you ask again, believe me, I'll cry right here in front of you!

Just as she was about to complain about how someone's entire family had devoured four roast suckling pigs in two days without informing her, her uncle and aunt's voices drifted from the stairway entrance.

"No more drinking at lunch, you hear! Look at how much it delays things."

"No more, no more. It's all Xiao Zou's fault. I said I wanted a lavish meal for lunch today, and he ended up preparing a whole spread of dishes that go well with alcohol. It would've been a real shame not to have a little something to drink..."

To avoid throwing his son-in-law under the bus, Shen Guofu conveniently placed all the blame on his secretary.

Yes, our Old Shen here is a trustworthy BOY.

"Dad, Mom, come quickly and have some braised Pork Trotters!"

Shen Jiayue, who had nearly finished her meal, stood up to serve the Jade Soup. She even thoughtfully brought over two bowls of rice, which greatly surprised Han Shuzhen, who was in the middle of criticizing Old Shen.

Did this girl do something wrong? Her attitude is so unnatural!

It always feels unsettling when my daughter suddenly acts like this.

"Yueyue, did you mess up again? Tell Mom the truth; I won't blame you..." Han Shuzhen whispered, pulling her daughter aside.

"Oh, no, I didn't do anything wrong! Sister Yan is treating us today, so please eat more. It's a rare chance to feast on a 'fat cat's' dime, so Dad, Mom, don't be polite!"

Shen Guofu: "..."

Han Shuzhen: "..."

Seeing his in-laws' expressions growing increasingly grim, Lin Xu quickly stood up and said, "Dad, Mom, what would you like to eat? I'll make something for you."

Shen Guofu glanced at his daughter, then said, "I drank a bit too much at noon and don't have much of an appetite. Just make me a sour soup. Your mom wants chicken soup noodles. If you're not too busy, make a bowl for her too. If you are busy, then never mind."

Not busy, not busy at all. Even the most pressing matters have to be put aside at a time like this. Otherwise, our Shen Baobao is going to be in for it. This girl... while her courage in confronting the bourgeoisie is commendable, they are her parents, after all. Couldn't she pick a different target for her struggles?

Back in the kitchen, he quickly prepared a bowl of hot and sour soup and a bowl of chicken soup noodles.

When he came out again, he saw his mother-in-law gnawing on Pork Trotters while chatting about beauty tips with Zeng Xiaoqi. Meanwhile, Shen Guofu was holding a bowl of rice, heartily eating it with Pork Trotters and Fatty Intestines.

Is this what having no appetite from drinking too much looks like? I bet you ordered the sour soup just to have something to wash down the rice, right?

"Xiaoxu, I just heard Xiao Yan say you're planning to make roast suckling pig?" Shen Guofu asked after polishing off his rice and casually refilling his bowl.

"Yes, I'm planning to, but the earliest would be the day after tomorrow."

He was currently busy making hand-rolled noodles and simply didn't have the time. He'd have to wait at least until Ji Minghui's skills were upgraded.

With about thirty or forty staff members in the restaurant all eating hand-rolled noodles, Ji Minghui's Rolling Technique would likely be upgraded by tomorrow evening.

By then, Lin Xu would also be free to work on other dishes.

"Notify me in advance when you do. I'll invite a few friends to come and eat together."

"Alright, Dad. I'll get back to work then."

"Go on, don't mind us."

「The next evening.」

As the staff at Lin Ji's Food were just starting to eat the hand-rolled noodles made by Ji Minghui, a notification chimed in Lin Xu's mind:

"Host has guided Ji Minghui in making one hundred bowls of hand-rolled noodles, completing the teaching and training task. Reward: one draw for an Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique. Employee Ji Minghui's Superior Rolling Technique has officially upgraded to Excellent Level. Congratulations to the Host."

Just as the notification faded, Ji Minghui, who was rolling noodles nearby, suddenly exclaimed, "Boss, I just had a moment of clarity! It was as if I instantly understood the key to rolling dough! Is this what Master Niu meant by having an epiphany?"

As he rolled the dough again, the rolling pin felt like an extension of his arm, moving with effortless skill, completely free of the previous awkwardness.

The sensation was simply wonderful.

Lin Xu smiled and said, "Then, starting tomorrow, the pastry section is officially yours to manage. And while you're making hand-rolled noodles, don't forget to help everyone else improve too."

"I will, Boss!"

Ji Minghui was overjoyed, but Lin Xu was even happier.

He could finally step away from making hand-rolled noodles and focus on other things. The suckling pig party he'd promised Sister Yan could also be held as scheduled.

During the meal, he instructed Che Zai, "Contact Old Huang for me and have him deliver ten freshly slaughtered suckling pigs tomorrow. When they arrive, get Wei Qian to check them. We don't want any frozen or dead pigs."

Hearing this, Wei Qian asked curiously, "Are we planning to make roast suckling pig?"

"Yes, we haven't even tried out our duck roaster yet. We'll roast some suckling pigs tomorrow to test it out. If it goes well, we'll add roast suckling pig to the menu after the grand opening."

"Great! A roaster that big definitely needs to be put to good use to increase profits."

After giving all the instructions, Lin Xu brought down a small piece of deboned steamed fish. The evening rush hour hadn't started yet, so he let Dundun finish his dinner. He also planned to have Dundun help him draw a prize.

Although an Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique wasn't the most exciting prospect, the draw still had to be made. What if it turned out to be a useful technique?

Downstairs, Shu Yun was playing with a ball with Dundun. Seeing Lin Xu come down with food, she scooped Dundun up from the floor.

"Time for dinner, little darling. We can play more after you've eaten."

"Thank you for your hard work, Manager Shu, looking after my child even while you're working."

"Ha, looking after your child for you was precisely why I took this job... Hmm, what kind of fish is this? It smells so fresh."

Lin Xu replied, "This is cold-water fish my father-in-law specifically bought for Dundun. Why don't we have a Boiled Fish feast someday? Dundun can't finish it all anyway."

"Isn't that just stealing a child's food?"

"No worries, he definitely won't mind. Besides, after he finishes this cold-water fish, the tuna will be arriving soon."

Ever since Dundun had helped secure an order worth over a hundred million, Shen Guofu had taken extra special care of the little fellow, acquiring a hoard of expensive ingredients that even made Shen Baobao, the self-proclaimed proletarian fighter, jealous.

After Dundun contentedly finished the fish, Lin Xu held him in his arms and silently commanded in his mind, "Draw!"

Right, I've been waiting all this time just for Dundun to finish eating and help me draw a technique I urgently need.

Soon, a notification sounded in his mind:

"Congratulations to the Host for obtaining an Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique—Roasted Pancakes."

Roasted Pancakes? What kind of technique is that?

Just as he was puzzling over it, a flood of experience poured into his mind. After Lin Xu processed the information, a look of pleasant surprise involuntarily spread across his face.

The so-called Roasted Pancakes was a collective term for all types of baked flatbreads, such as Sesame Pancake, high-oven pancake, and crispy pancake.

In other words, Lin Xu could now make these kinds of pancakes.

With Roasted Pancakes, couldn't I make Beef Steaks and let customers try pancakes stuffed with meat?

Ha ha! Feeding Dundun really does bring pleasant surprises!

Chapter 477: Sesame Pancake with Beef, Five Are Not Enough for One Meal!

After learning the technique for making Sesame Pancakes, Lin Xu immediately started preparing the Beef Steaks.

Beef Steaks, also known as "Beef Piles," involved using cooked Tendon to stack cooked beef in a container. This mixture was then pressed into the shape of a water bucket.

In the past, vendors who sold Beef Steaks often pushed them on single-wheeled carts, which is why this beef was also called "Cart Beef."

The tightly pressed beef was then sliced into thin pieces, offering a fragrant and robust flavor and texture when eaten.

When inserted into a freshly baked Sesame Pancake, the heat from the pancake would bring out the beef's aroma again. Each bite was indescribably delicious.

Back when he was in junior high, Lin Xu's favorite thing to do was to buy a Sesame Pancake stuffed with beef on his way home from school.

The vendors would use a specially made knife to skillfully slice the beef from the pile. The slices were so thin they could be blown away by the wind.

After slicing enough, the vendor would weigh the beef slices. Then, he'd grab a hot Sesame Pancake from the neighboring stall and stuff all the slices into it.

With a Sesame Pancake and half a jin of beef, he would walk home, eating as he went.

By the time he got home, he had usually eaten enough to happily play computer games under the guise of studying English.

Unfortunately, after the city started clearing out street vendors to improve its appearance, these Beef Steaks became a rare sight. Even if one was found, the accompanying Sesame Pancake stalls that used to be partners were gone.

Even if someone bought it, vendors no longer showed off their skills like before.

They would hurriedly slice a pile of beef, weigh it, and quickly bag it for the customer. It was as if they feared the customer would change their mind if they took even a few seconds longer.

"Lin Xu, what are you thinking about?"

When Shen Jiayue saw Lin Xu holding Dundun and lost in thought after work, she thought something had happened and quickly asked with concern.

Upon seeing the Yueyue Demon King, Dundun immediately jumped onto the counter. With a twist of his plump body, he scurried into his little house, as if afraid of being caught if he moved too slowly.

Lin Xu came back to his senses and said with a smile,

"Nothing, just remembering a favorite food from my junior high days."

Upon hearing about food, Shen Baobao's eyes lit up instantly,

"Can you make it for me to try?"

Eating the food Lin Xu loved in junior high... does that mean we practically knew each other back then? If we had been classmates, I could have bullied Lin Xu openly! If I missed him, I'd find a secluded corner, push him against the wall, and kiss him fiercely. Hmph, if he dared to resist, I'd kiss him even more!

The thought of playfully tormenting a junior high Lin Xu, much like she did Dundun, brought an involuntarily domineering smile to Shen Baobao's face.

"Sure. This dish needs to be prepared a day in advance, so I'll start now."

After saying that, he went back upstairs and instructed Chezai,

"Call Mr. Hu and ask him to send fifty jin of beef shank and twenty jin of Tendon. I'm planning to make a dish with beef."

Upon hearing this, Chezai immediately took out his phone and made the call.

Beef? Tendon? Is he planning to make five-spice beef?

Shen Jiayue was a bit curious but didn't ask.

Because she wasn't really interested in what the dish was; she just subconsciously wanted to try whatever Lin Xu liked.

Soon, Chezai hurried downstairs. Within minutes, he returned on the elevator with a simple handcart. It was loaded with the beef shank and Tendon Lin Xu had ordered.

"Boss, the beef has arrived."

Upon hearing this, Lin Xu immediately dumped the beef from the bags into a basin and began soaking it in plenty of cold water.

Beef Steaks differ from typical stewed beef.

This dish is prepared by first boiling the beef in plain water. After it's cooked, it's sprinkled with a special seasoning powder and then pressed into shape in a container.

To prevent the boiled beef from having a gamey taste, it is necessary to soak the blood out of the beef as much as possible before cooking.

Only then will the savory fragrance of the meat be intense.

While soaking the beef, Lin Xu also cut the large pieces into smaller ones with a kitchen knife.

This not only facilitated soaking but also helped when fitting the pieces into the container for pressing later.

After finishing these tasks, Lin Xu started soaking the Tendons.

In the making of Beef Steaks, Tendon serves as a binding agent.

This soaking wasn't to remove blood from the Tendons, but to allow them to stretch out as much as possible. This would make them easier to cook thoroughly in a pressure cooker later.

"What's Brother-in-law busy with in the kitchen?"

Chen Yan was wearing a youthful jumpsuit that day, her hair in a ponytail, and white canvas shoes on her feet. At first glance, she looked almost like a freshly graduated college student.

"He's making a dish he used to eat in junior high. I don't know exactly what it is."

"Then what do you know?"

"I know that a certain solitary senior is trying to look young today... OUCH! Don't pinch, don't pinch! Yan Bao, your outfit is really nice! It's youthful and fashionable. You look two years younger than me."

The sisters were playfully arguing when they saw Chezai pulling several boxes of fruitwood charcoal into the kitchen with a handcart.

"Chezai, what is this?"

"The boss ordered fruitwood charcoal. He said he needs high-quality fruitwood charcoal for roasting suckling pig tomorrow."

Roast suckling pig?

Chen Yan immediately perked up.

She hadn't expected her brother-in-law to actually follow through with making roast suckling pig.

Truly, he was the conscience of the family.

After finishing his preparations, Lin Xu washed his hands and came out of the kitchen. Seeing that the big investor, Chen Baiwan, had finished work, he said,

"You two just tell the waiter what you want to eat. I've already had dinner."

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Chen Yan asked curiously, "When will the beef you're preparing be ready, brother-in-law? Can we wait and eat it?"

"Then you'll have to wait a bit longer."

"No problem. Just tell me, roughly how long will it take to be ready?"

"By tomorrow noon..."

Chen Yan was dumbfounded. Brother-in-law, you're starting to tease me too, aren't you?

She suddenly stood up.

"You guys chat. I'm going to find Tiantian and get a refund for the card."

Shen Baobao quickly hugged her.

"Don't return it, don't return it! I was just joking, Yan Bao. Don't forget about the roast suckling pig tomorrow..."

Naturally, Chen Yan wasn't really going to return the card. She just wanted to let this unscrupulous couple know that she was now Lin Ji's major financier, not the despised cousin desperate to get married.

「It was seven in the evening.」

The restaurant was packed with customers.

Lin Xu removed the slightly swollen Tendons from the water and transferred them into a large pressure cooker.

He then added water to cover the ingredients.

He sealed the lid and began the pressure cooking.

As the binding agent for the Beef Steaks, the Tendons had to be thoroughly cooked, even to a slight mushiness, so that they could fill the gaps between the beef pieces, making the meat chewier and bouncier.

After pressurizing the Tendons, Lin Xu changed the water for the beef and continued to soak it.

While waiting, he gathered a large amount of spices, dried chili, salt, Flavoring, and other seasonings to prepare the seasoning powder needed for the Beef Steaks.

For the Beef Steaks, no spices or seasonings are added during the cooking process. They are only sprinkled on after the beef is cooked and placed in the container.

Arguably, the taste of the Beef Steaks heavily depends on the seasoning powder.

In the past, the recipe for the seasoning powder was a closely guarded secret of each household, passed down only to the males and even only to the eldest son.

They feared it would leak to outsiders.

This directly led to the loss of many culinary seasoning recipes and traditional medicinal prescriptions, causing irreparable damage.

Lin Xu placed a pan used for drying ingredients on the stove and sequentially added cinnamon, bay leaves, Angelica dahurica, White Cardamom, tsao-ko, Sichuan peppercorns, Star Anise, Cloves, and Fennel among a dozen other spices, then slowly roasted them over low heat.

Before grinding, the spices needed to be roasted on the stove to bring out their fragrance. This process ensured that the resulting powder would be more aromatic, allowing its scent to better penetrate the beef when sprinkled on.

Soon, the scent of the spices wafted from the pan.

Lin Xu removed the pan from the flame and continued to roast the spices slowly on the edge of the stove.

This step required patience: roasting slowly over low heat to allow the spices' aromas to emerge from within.

When the spices were nearly done, he added two dried chilies to the pan.

The Beef Steaks typically had a five-spice flavor. Chilies were added not for heat but for aroma, so two were enough; any more and the spiciness would dominate.

After finishing the roasting, he poured the spices into a processor, added salt and a bit of sugar for enhancing the flavor, and ground everything into a powder.

"Wow, that smells amazing! Are you preparing to make 'Thirteen Spices'?"

After finishing two dishes, Wei Qian came over, drawn by the aroma of the seasoning powder Lin Xu was grinding, and couldn't help asking.

Lin Xu smiled.

"This is the seasoning powder for the Beef Steaks; it can't be used as 'Thirteen Spices'."

"Beef Steaks? Like the ones we often saw sold from carts on the streets in our hometown? You're making \*that\*? I definitely have to try some!"

Wei Qian remembered the Beef Steaks from his childhood being very flavorful. However, the ones he had bought in recent years had little taste. This was especially true for those from the annual fair, which were mostly meat scraps and sometimes even included chunks of meat from other animals, incomparable to the pure beef products of the past.

Seeing Lin Xu prepare this delicacy now sparked his craving.

"This dish goes well with Sesame Pancake. Since you're making Beef Steaks, are you also making the Sesame Pancakes?"

"Yes. We're preparing the Beef Steaks today, and we'll make the Sesame Pancakes tomorrow."

"Hey! Then I'll be waiting to eat."

After the seasoning powder was ready, the beef was also soaked enough.

Lin Xu took the beef pieces out of the basin, let them drain, and then placed them into a soup pot, adding as much clean water as possible.

This method of cooking beef in plain water didn't require blanching, but it did need to be brought to a boil so the foam could be skimmed off. Therefore, extra water was added to make skimming easier and less finicky.

Soon, the water in the pot boiled.

He skimmed the foam with a ladle, then adjusted the heat to medium-low and began cooking.

After about forty minutes, the beef's aroma was fully released, and the pieces were easily pierced with chopsticks, indicating they were thoroughly cooked.

For Beef Steaks, the meat didn't need to be overly tender, just cooked through.

This way, the pressed beef would be firmer, and the texture would be chewier.

While Lin Xu was taking out the meat, Zhuang Yizhou, who was idle at the moment, came over to help. Zhuang Yizhou placed the cooked meat pieces into a large iron basin. Lin Xu then, while the meat was still hot, sprinkled a layer of seasoning powder over its surface.

Once Lin Xu had sprinkled it evenly and placed the piece in the basin, Zhuang Yizhou would then retrieve the next piece of meat.

Because the meat had been soaked, the pieces didn't look very ruddy.

But Lin Xu knew that the next day, once the Beef Steaks were compressed and sliced, the vibrant red hues inside the meat would be revealed. That would be the moment the Beef Steaks made their stunning appearance.

After all the meat was removed, they brought over the depressurized pressure cooker, fetched a small vat, and began to press the meat.

Into the bottom of the thoroughly cleaned vat, Lin Xu first scooped a spoonful of mushy Tendons, then arranged a layer of meat coated with seasoning powder.

He then poured another spoonful of Tendons over it, pressing down on the meat slightly to fill the gaps, then added new meat pieces.

Chapter 479: Beef Stuffed Sesame Pancakes, Five are Not Enough for One Meal! \_3

Layers of beef and Tendon were placed in alternation.

After placement, a wooden lid slightly smaller than the mouth of the jar was placed on top and pressed down with a barrel of water, squeezing the broth out instantly.

Lin Xu held a small spoon and scooped the squeezed-out broth back into the pressure cooker.

It was a pity to discard this broth. It was better to mix it with the remaining Tendons in a container to make Tendon jelly.

This delicacy, rich in collagen and low in calories, was a favorite among ladies. It couldn't be wasted.

After completing these tasks, he carefully moved the water jar into the cold storage and then sealed the mouth of the jar to prevent dust from entering.

The Tendons were then mixed with spices and poured into a slightly deeper tray, also placed in the cold storage to cool and solidify.

"Boss, how should we handle this beef broth?" Dundun asked, curious.

It would be a pity to throw it away, but keeping it without knowing what to do with it wasn't ideal either.

Lin Xu said, "Let's keep it and make beef soup tomorrow morning."

"Okay, I'll mention it to tomorrow's morning shift master chef later."

「The next morning,」

Lin Xu woke up at six as usual.

After stealthily kissing his beloved Baobao who was still dreaming, he went to the shop and first stopped by the cold storage.

The Tendon jelly was ready. When removed, it appeared semi-translucent, resembling jelly, with indistinct Tendon silhouettes within. However, when sliced, they would clearly be visible.

He then opened the cloth sealed at the mouth of the jar, took out the bucket that had been left overnight, and vigorously pulled out the wooden lid that had been completely embedded in the aspic.

The Beef Steaks inside were clearly visible.

He and the morning shift master chef flipped the small water jar onto a tray and then carefully moved it aside. The beautifully stacked Beef Steaks appeared before their eyes.

"Wow, this is so beautiful."

"Boss, your cooking skills are truly amazing!"

The morning shift master chef and a few helpers couldn't help but compliment him.

Lin Xu smiled and picked up a slicing knife to slowly cut through the surface of the Beef Steaks.

A slice of beef connected by Tendons fell off.

At the cut of the beef slice, the glossy red color elevated the Beef Steaks' visual appeal even more.

He used the cleaver to cut all around the top layer of the Beef Steaks. Only then was the true presentation of the Beef Steaks revealed.

The glossy red beef, layered on top of one another with gaps filled with semi-transparent Tendon, looked extremely beautiful.

He pinched a slice and placed it in his mouth.

The aroma deeply embedded in the meat slowly diffused, stimulating the appetite.

Upon chewing, the texture was tender yet firm, the taste rich, and a faint marinated flavor lingered, enhancing rather than overpowering the meaty aroma, making it even more delightful.

Delicious!

It was no wonder it was a famous snack in North China.

The taste, the flavor... it was only missing the Sesame Pancake.

At that thought, Lin Xu immediately took the mixing bowl to start making dough, preparing to bake some Sesame Pancakes in the shop's oven to relish the snack and also to let the staff taste this treat.

He poured half a mixing bowl of Medium Flour, dissolved Yeast Powder and sugar in warm water, and then used this water to mix the flour in the bowl into dough clusters, eventually kneading it into a dough with moderate hardness.

The amount of yeast was double what was usually used for steaming buns, so that the Sesame Pancakes would expand quickly during baking.

After the dough was kneaded, he covered it to let it ferment.

While waiting, he set up a frying pan, placed a handful of salt and a small handful of Sichuan peppercorns in it, and used low heat to roast the Sichuan peppercorns to release their fragrance. Then, using a rolling pin, he crushed all the salt and Sichuan peppercorns.

The Sichuan peppercorn salt to be added to the core of the Sesame Pancake was now ready.

Sesame Pancakes need to have a core, and it must be a salty one, as it tastes more delicious that way.

After the Sichuan peppercorn salt was prepared, he took the dough from the bowl and kneaded it again.

This step didn't require waiting for the main dough to fully rise, as the amount of yeast was substantial. The final proofing would happen after the Dough was made, allowing the Sesame Pancakes to expand more completely and achieve a fluffier, more delicious texture.

After kneading the dough again, he shaped it into long strips, first pinched off walnut-sized pieces of dough, then set aside a small piece of dough.

He then began to make the Dough.

First, he flattened the pieces of dough with his hands, then pinched a thumb-sized piece from the reserved dough, dipped it in vegetable oil, then in the Sichuan peppercorn salt.

He placed it on a flattened piece of dough, wrapped this small ball coated in oil and Sichuan peppercorn salt completely with the larger piece of dough, sealed it, and rolled it into a round shape again.

After wrapping each piece, Lin Xu fetched half a bowl of water and half a bowl of White Sesame seeds, then prepared the baking tray.

He picked up two of the round dough balls, dipped them in the water, and then dipped them separately into the White Sesame seeds.

He pressed the sesame-coated sides of the two dough balls together, gently squeezing, transforming the spherical dough back into the shape of flat cakes.

After squeezing, the sesame seeds adhered more firmly, and the Dough was ready.

He placed the Dough on the baking tray with spaces in between, filling it up, then placed the tray in the closed oven for proofing.

Well, the kitchen temperature was too high. If the Dough were directly exposed to the air, it would easily lose moisture and the surface would crack. So placing it in the oven would maximize moisture retention.

「Forty minutes later,」

The Dough had nearly doubled in size. The Dough, which had originally been spaced far apart, was now almost touching.

Lin Xu took the Dough out of the oven and preheated the oven.

After preheating, he put the baking tray back in to start baking.

"The temperature is set; it will automatically turn off in fifteen minutes. If I haven't returned, remember to pull the baking tray out."

"Okay, boss, I'll remember."

Lin Xu washed his hands and returned home. Shen Baobao was still sound asleep, even drooling a bit.

"Baobao, it's time to get up for breakfast."

"I don't... I want to sleep... don't bother me..."

"I made Sesame Pancakes. If you get up late, there won't be any left."

The beloved Baobao on the bed, who was so sleepy she couldn't even open her eyes, suddenly bolted upright. "Sesame Pancakes? Where are the Sesame Pancakes?"

This craving look was on par with Dundun smelling meat.

Lin Xu leaned against the bed, finding clothes for her while saying, "They're baking in the oven. Last night's beef is also ready to eat. We'll use the hot Sesame Pancakes to wrap the beef. It was the delicacy I loved the most back in middle school."

Shen Baobao completely woke up, getting dressed while saying, "Hurry up and squeeze the toothpaste for me! I need to rush to the store to eat the Sesame Pancake with beef, and also wake Yan Bao up to tempt her a bit. Since you woke me up, I won't feel right until I wake someone else up too."

Lin Xu: "..."

What sins did my sister-in-law commit in her past life to be tormented by you repeatedly? But calling her over is fine too. She was craving beef yesterday; it's perfect to enjoy with Sesame Pancakes this morning.

After washing up, he and Shen Baobao returned to the store.

Right as they entered the kitchen, the oven's timer went off.

Putting on oven gloves, he had just opened the oven when a rich aroma of dough wafted out.

These Sesame Pancakes were not too large, just the right size for stuffing with meat.

After pouring the Sesame Pancakes onto a tray, he began baking the next batch.

"Wow, it smells so good!"

Only after smelling the aroma of the Sesame Pancakes did Shen Baobao truly wake up.

Seeing the golden-brown Sesame Pancakes and the large pile of Beef Steaks, she immediately came over and started filming with her phone.

After shooting, she sent it to Chen Yan, then took the Sesame Pancake stuffed with beef that Lin Xu handed her and took a delighted bite. "Wow, this texture is just too fantastic, isn't it?"

The crispy and soft Sesame Pancake, holding thin slices of beef—one bite, and the fatigue of waking up early was instantly swept away.

"Xu Bao, I want to eat five... no... I want eight!"

"Fine, I'll make as many as you want to eat."

Lin Xu also made one for himself, and after tasting it, felt it was indeed nice.

Although these weren't the large, impressive Sesame Pancakes found on the streets, the flavor was delightful, especially with the beef stuffed plumply inside. Biting into it was truly satisfying!

Shen Baobao quickly devoured a small Sesame Pancake completely.

As she pulled out her phone, she mumbled, "This is too delicious! No way, I need to retract the picture. I'll tell Yan Bao after I've eaten my fill, so she won't compete with me..."

The power went out just after I finished updating at noon. The hour of writing time I had painstakingly saved up was lost due to the power overload... I hope this heatwave passes quickly; these frequent power outages are really hard to bear! With this Chapter, the book has also reached 900,000 words.

Since it went on sale, I've been updating an average of 12,000 words daily. Doesn't that deserve a full subscription reward, guys?

Chapter 480: Sisterly Affection Exists, But Not Much! Manager Shu, Why Did You Start Working Here?

"There are plenty of Sesame Pancakes, definitely enough for you."

Lin Xu was both exasperated and amused as he looked at his greedy little Baobao, who actually wanted to retract the photo she had sent earlier just for a few Sesame Pancakes.

Have you forgotten that you already ate the whole Sesame Pancake?

So much time has passed, how could it possibly be retracted...

Just as he was muttering to himself, he saw a "Message successfully retracted" notification appear on Shen Baobao's phone screen.

This... This is unscientific! WeChat messages can be retracted within two minutes. From the moment Shen Baobao sent the message to when she finished eating the Sesame Pancake and retracted the message, it was... it was still less than two minutes? I never would have thought... In the past, Guan Er Ye warmed his wine to slay Hua Xiong; today, Shen Jiayue speedily devoured her Sesame Pancake. Although today's Sesame Pancakes were small and designed for elegant presentation on a plate, they were, after all, stuffed with so many slices of beef. Eating everything clean in just over a minute, wouldn't you choke?

"Quick, quick, make me another one! This little Sesame Pancake goes so well with the beef. It's really delicious."

Shen Baobao didn't know the immense shock she had caused Lin Xu with her speed-eating mode. Seeing Lin Xu standing there dumbstruck, she couldn't help but urge him on.

"The beef soup will be ready soon. Why don't you try some?"

"No need, no need. I have to hurry and eat my fill of Sesame Pancakes before Yan Bao arrives, otherwise she'll start fighting me for them again."

Lin Xu: "..."

If the message has been retracted, what's there to fight for? In her dreams?

But since Shen Baobao wanted to eat, he took a Sesame Pancake that emanated a rich fragrance, placed it flat on the tray, and used the beef-slicing knife to gently score its side.

When making the Sesame Pancakes, the core of the dough was oiled, which meant the layers inside would separate easily.

As he sliced the side of the Sesame Pancake, its layers naturally separated, and the aroma of the Sichuan peppercorns wafted out.

Lin Xu pinched the sides of the Sesame Pancake, making the opening wider. He then grabbed a handful of sliced beef and stuffed it inside until the entire pancake bulged. A beef-stuffed Sesame Pancake was ready.

Shen Baobao eagerly took it. Holding it with both hands, she took a large bite, her face instantly lighting up with the blissful expression of someone tasting delicious food.

"This way of eating is really satisfying. Lin Xu, did you often eat this when you were in junior high?"

"Yeah, at least three times a week. Back then, my parents were both working, Grandma had just retired and was re-employed, and relatives would often sneak me pocket money, so I was relatively well-off."

Junior high was a time when Lin Xu had quite a bit of spending money.

Back then, he often bought computer games and even claimed they were English courses for school.

If it hadn't been for the day his mom, Chen Meijuan, bragged to the neighbors about how much Lin Xu loved studying and clicked on the "English materials" icon on the computer, the joy of secretly playing computer games might have continued until high school graduation.

"When they found out I was secretly playing games, my mom and dad gave me a good beating, and my computer was mercilessly confiscated..."

"Hahaha, you had to study hard, otherwise how would you have met me?"

Shen Baobao took another bite of her Sesame Pancake and nuzzled Lin Xu's shoulder with her head.

Thank goodness Mother-in-law discovered the secret on the computer. If Lin Xu had been allowed to keep playing, he definitely wouldn't have gotten into Central Finance and thus wouldn't have met me. Everything is truly fated. Next time I see Mother-in-law, I must give her another set of cosmetics or something to thank her for bragging back then, which motivated Lin Xu to strive and come into my life...

While the young couple was enjoying their beef-stuffed Sesame Pancakes and chatting, Chen Yan suddenly made a video call.

After connecting, Chen Yan's sleepy face appeared on the screen.

"What did you send me, Yueyue, that you then retracted? Did you accidentally send me a private photo meant for your husband?"

Shen Baobao, chewing her Sesame Pancake, mumbled unclearly, "No, no, just an emoji. Are you still half asleep, Yan Bao? If you're sleepy, go back to sleep. Good skin comes from good sleep..."

Hearing her say this, a hint of confusion flashed across Chen Yan's face.

My cousin who used to love public displays of affection and boasting, why has she changed today? Something's off! Very off!

Seeing her cousin's mouth moving as she chewed, Chen Yan curiously asked, "Yueyue, what are you eating?"

"Nothing much, just bought some snacks... You better go to sleep, Yan Bao."

Just then, a kitchen helper's shout came from not far away, "Boss, this batch of Sesame Pancakes is also ready. Should I take them out now?"

Sesame Pancakes?

Chen Baiwan, who had been under a blanket with the AC on, intending to go back to sleep, immediately lost all trace of drowsiness upon hearing the words "Sesame Pancakes."

"You guys are secretly in the shop making Sesame Pancakes to eat?"

"Nah, nah, nah, it's just staff meals, nothing tasty."

Chen Yan turned over, her fair neck and shoulders becoming visible. Yet this sophisticated lady was completely unaware, her mind entirely focused on the Sesame Pancakes.

"Are these Sesame Pancakes meant to be eaten with that beef from yesterday?"

"Yes... The reception is bad... Yan Bao... Can you hear me? This damn network... Why isn't it working again?"

The video call dropped.

On the other end, Chen Yan furiously punched her pillow.

"Eating good food without inviting me, and trying to stop me in every way! That darn Yueyue! Just you wait and see how I deal with you today!"

She sprang up from the bed and started getting dressed.

Meanwhile, Shen Baobao slipped her phone into her pocket and skipped over to Lin Xu, "Quick, quick, quick! Give me three more Sesame Pancakes. I need to eat my fill before Yan Bao arrives so I can go to work. Otherwise, I'll have to coddle that poor, lonely old soul."