

Culinary 48

Chapter 48: New Egg Drop Soup! State Banquet Master Makes Another Move!

"Host has successfully made fifty bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup, completing the practice task 'Practice Makes Perfect,' and has obtained the cooking technique for Perfect Level Nori Egg Drop Soup. Congratulations, Host."

It was finally in his grasp. Lin Xu let out a long sigh of relief.

These past few days, he had been practicing assiduously. He had to start from scratch every time: cracking the egg, soaking the nori, boiling the water... Every step had to be done according to Master Gao's method; otherwise, the system would deem it invalid. So, although the task required making fifty bowls, Lin Xu had made it at least seventy times.

He had never thought that a mere practice task would be so demanding.

But then again, shortcuts come with a price.

To acquire a Perfect Level cooking technique in just a few days, even if it was a bit of a hassle, it was only right.

"Tiantian, add a price tag to the Nori Egg Drop Soup, six yuan per bowl."

This soup didn't require any advance preparation, so Lin Xu announced a new menu update in the restaurant right away. An update ahead of dinner. At the very least, he could sell a few hundred more bowls.

And most importantly...

"Host has updated with a new soup, completing the bonus task 'Soup Update,' and has earned an Excellent Level Cooking Learning Card. The host may activate and use it by mentally chanting 'use Cooking Learning Card.'"

HA! The Cooking Learning Card was finally his!

Lin Xu felt a surge of joy in his heart. Next time Master Gao, the National Banquet Chef, felt the itch to cook, he would be able to learn covertly by his side.

"Wow! These chicken feet are so delicious! They're even more perfect than those made by the old famous restaurants in the Lingnan Region!"

Upon tasting the chicken feet in black bean sauce brought over by the server, Yue Liyue's face was filled with surprise. He had several good friends from his hometown, and they would often gather. This time, it was Yue Liyue's turn to treat his friends. He claimed he was going to treat them to the most authentic hometown dishes, so everyone thought they were going to a Cantonese restaurant. Instead, they ended up in this unassuming roadside shop. When they first walked in, they were quite disappointed. But now they were bowing their heads and eating voraciously, faces still showing surprise.

"Wow, this is so authentic!"

"Hey, pure fermented soybean flavor, tender and boneless, so tasty!"

"Ah Yue, bringing us here only now, that's not very nice."

"Too bad it's so far away, otherwise I'd come to eat every day."

"..."

The chicken feet in black bean sauce and pork ribs in black bean sauce were steamed to perfection. It would be difficult to find their match even in restaurants in the Lingnan Region. The friends kept praising Lin Xu's culinary skills. Meanwhile, Yue Liyue was telling them about the legendary status of the shop. Since opening, it had been packed every day, selling out every meal.

As they were chatting, Master Gao came into the shop, humming a little tune and with his hands behind his back.

"Oh, the Nori Egg Drop Soup has finally made the menu, eh?" He glanced at the electronic blackboard by the entrance and said to Song Tiantian, "One black bean sauce pork ribs, one bowl of rice, and a bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup."

"The boss said there's a new dish today and hoped you would help taste it, so we won't be entering it into the system," Song Tiantian muttered, shoveling rice into her mouth.

"A new dish?" Master Gao curiously walked into the shop. He wanted to see what new dish his appointed apprentice had introduced.

At that moment, Lin Xu was busy packing lunch with Shen Jiayue. Seeing Master Gao come in, he quickly greeted him, "Today I tried making black bean sauce chicken feet and I'd like you to give it a try and see if it meets the standard."

Master Gao was oblivious to the fact that his cover had been blown, "You're asking me to check? That's a joke. I'm just a kitchen helper; I don't understand much about these things."

Though he said he didn't understand, his eyes kept wandering over to the chicken feet on Yue Liyue's table. Clearly, he was quite interested.

Lin Xu brought out a plate of black bean sauce chicken feet from the steamer, sprinkled a bit of scallion on top, and placed it before Master Gao.

"Mmm, the aroma of black bean sauce is really comforting." Master Gao gave Lin Xu a thumbs up. "Just by this smell, I know it won't be bad. When making black bean sauce dishes, the last thing you want is to add a mishmash of seasonings that completely ruin the pure black bean sauce fragrance."

After speaking, he picked up a chicken foot with his chopsticks and tasted it. "Not bad, not bad. Even if I... even if a National Banquet Chef were to make it, it would be like this, very perfect... Oh right, bring me another bowl of Nori Egg Drop Soup. Since you've updated it, I might as well taste it again."

Lin Xu agreed with a nod and hurried to the kitchen to make it.

Not far away, Chen Yan quietly took a photo of Master Gao with her phone and sent it to Shen Jiayue, "Who is this old man? He says he doesn't understand anything, but then he gives pointers to my brother-in-law, and my brother-in-law also seems very polite to him."

Soon, Shen Jiayue replied with a message, "He's Master Gao. He always says that he used to work odd jobs in the kitchen when he was young, but my Xu Bao suspects he's a retired National Banquet Chef."

National Banquet Chef? Chen Yan looked at Master Gao with surprise. He doesn't quite seem like it. Instead, he resembles those creepy photographers who start snapping away with their cameras at the sight of a beauty over in Sanlitun.

"Really? My brother-in-law hasn't run into an old scammer, has he?" Chen Yan asked again. She now considered Lin Xu, her brother-in-law, as part of her own family. If one's own family were deceived, how could she tolerate it?

"It's true. A few days ago, I tasted the Nori Egg Drop Soup he made; it was so delicious it could make your eyebrows fall off. I haven't forgotten that taste to this day. But my Xu Bao's cooking skills are also nearly there; he can reach Master Gao's level."

"Every other word is 'Xu Bao,' yuck~ makes me feel sick..."

"I can call you 'Bao' too, Yan Bao~ my Yan Bao~~"

"Stop it, stop it, I'm getting goosebumps."

While the sisters were teasing each other, Lin Xu brought over the Nori Egg Drop Soup. Master Gao tasted a spoonful. A look of delight immediately spread across his face, "The saltiness is pure, the egg ribbons are smooth and tender, and the nori is cooked just right. This is a very perfect soup; it even surpasses me."

A genius indeed!

Just advised yesterday, and today it's made so perfectly.

With such talent, he's not just being fed by the heavens anymore; this is like being cradled in the arms of the heavens, spoon-fed mouthful by mouthful.

Apprenticeship, apprenticeship!

I need to make this happen quickly.

If those old guys find out about this, wouldn't they fight tooth and nail over him?

But how to broach the subject? Master Gao was at a loss. He couldn't just reveal his identity and bluntly say he was a National Banquet Chef and that Lin should bow down to take him as a master, could he? He needed to find the right moment, to make Lin sincerely recognize his culinary skills.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu was also pondering on the side. How could he get Master Gao to start cooking?

If he directly asked him to cook, would he refuse on the spot?

He'd heard that these kinds of masters have quirky tempers.

Once they're upset, they won't come back.

That would be too great of a loss.

As he was mulling it over, Lin Xu suddenly remembered chatting with Shen last night, and how she casually mentioned wanting to eat Crispy Meat. "Master Gao, could I trouble you with something?"

Lin Xu's words caused a stir in Master Gao's heart. The opportunity for apprenticeship. It's here! Although he was excited inside, Master Gao still maintained a pretense of pride, "What is it, Boss Lin?"

Lin Xu said, "My girlfriend mentioned last night that she wanted to eat Crispy Meat, but I can't fry it well, so I'd like to ask for your guidance."

Crispy Meat? This simple dish couldn't possibly showcase the skills of a National Banquet Chef.

Couldn't he ask for a slightly more complex dish? Master Gao inwardly grumbled for a moment, then finally responded, "I'm not particularly skilled at it, but since you want to learn, I can give you a few tips..."