

Culinary 481

Chapter 481: Sisterly Affection Exists, but Not Much! Manager Shu, How Come You're Working Here?

Lin Xu was silent.

Who asked you to let her tease you?

By now, the beef soup in the pot was ready. He served Shen Baobao a bowl, then filled a few baked buns with meat, placed them on a plate, and brought them over.

Just as Shen Baobao had finished eating and was about to drive to work, President Chen's white Porsche 911 slowly stopped at the shop entrance.

"Where's that little rascal Yueyue? Where did she go?"

Chen Yan came into the shop, puffed up with anger, clearly intending to give her younger cousin a piece of her mind.

But when Lin Xu handed her the meat-filled baked bun, this ageless beauty instantly succumbed.

Damn it! He's tempting me with delicious food again!

"Yueyue said you like the buns extra crispy, so I baked these a little longer. Eat slowly, Sister Yan, don't choke," Lin Xu said, then brought President Chen a bowl of beef soup.

Yes, baked buns with beef soup—the perfect combination.

After Chen Yan finished one baked bun, Lin Xu added, "The roast suckling pig will only be available this afternoon. Boss Huang, the delivery guy, specifically went to the outskirts of Beijing to get a freshly slaughtered one for me. It takes a bit more time."

"No problem, brother-in-law. Give me another baked bun... no, make it three."

"Alright."

The baked buns were cooked to perfection, crispy on the outside and soft and fluffy on the inside. Each bite carried a faint fragrance of Sichuan peppercorns, complementing the generously stuffed beef. Such a large mouthful was incredibly satisfying.

A couple of bites of baked bun, followed by a sip of beef soup.

The morning crankiness her cousin had provoked finally subsided.

"Brother-in-law, do you all eat this well every morning?"

"Not necessarily. We eat whatever's available. Our staff aren't picky eaters."

Chen Yan was speechless.

Eating more lavishly than the customers—who would be picky in that situation? It looks like I can't sleep in anymore. I'll have to get up early every day to eat breakfast at the shop. Experts online say skipping breakfast is like slow suicide. Gorgeous as I am, I can't just wither away prematurely. Otherwise, that little rascal Yueyue might actually bring delicious food to my grave just to spite me!

At eleven in the morning, Lin Ji's Food once again bustled with activity.

「Meanwhile, at Fishing Platform.」

Mr. Jin, who had been on a business trip to the Northwest for more than half a month, drove to the entrance of No. 2 Building with a few friends. They got out of the car, their faces full of anticipation.

"I've been on this business trip for over half a month, and all I could think about was the food at No. 2 Building, especially that Braised Pork Belly I had last time. It was absolutely divine!"

Looking at the familiar entrance of No. 2 Building, Mr. Jin lightly pursed his lips. He rarely anticipated a meal this much. However, this business trip had been under poor conditions, and the memory of the previous Braised Pork Belly was so vivid, it filled him with high hopes for today's meal.

He walked up the steps to the entrance. Just as he stepped inside, a young woman in a cheongsam greeted him, "Welcome."

Huh? Wasn't it usually Manager Shu? Why the change?

He asked curiously, "Where is your Manager Shu?"

Hearing his question, Gu Junli knew he was a regular customer of No. 2 Building. With a professional smile, she replied, "Manager Shu has resigned. I am Gu Junli, the current front desk manager of No. 2 Building."

Resigned?

Mr. Jin was somewhat taken aback. Manager Shu was personable and highly competent. On every visit, he never had to worry about a thing; she would arrange the best seating, his favorite tea, and even help select dishes. For such an excellent front desk manager to resign... did she leave to get married, or was she unhappy with her job?

The thought of having to get accustomed to a new front desk manager inexplicably irked Mr. Jin.

"Why did she resign? Was she treated unfairly at work?"

Gu Junli shook her head. "Manager Shu was a star manager here at Fishing Platform, a benchmark for all front desk managers. Her superiors would never have let her be wronged. She left to pursue better opportunities."

"Oh?"

Better opportunities? Fishing Platform should be at the pinnacle of the industry, shouldn't it? Where else could she possibly go? After this meal, I'll ask around. If I get the chance, I'll support Manager Shu's new venture and try to find out why she switched jobs.

Mr. Jin wasn't one for gossip. But Manager Shu voluntarily leaving Fishing Platform, a place others were desperate to get into, was rather baffling.

He said to Gu Junli, "Please arrange a window seat for me, and a pot of Maojian Tea. I had some incredibly delicious Braised Pork Belly here last time; I'd like to order that again."

As he spoke, he began to walk further inside, intending to find a seat himself.

However, at that moment, Gu Junli said with an apologetic expression, "I'm sorry, sir, but all the seats with a view of the lotus pond have been reserved. If you'd like a window seat, it would have to be on the other side."

The other side?

Mr. Jin glanced at the south-facing window seats, where direct sunlight streamed onto the tables. You want me to sit there? Are you trying to bake me as dark as someone from Africa?

Gu Junli then added, "The Braised Pork Belly, being a surprise dish at No. 2 Building, was removed from the menu a couple of days ago. Would you like to order something else?"

Surprise dishes couldn't remain on the menu indefinitely, or the other buildings would raise objections. So, Xie Baomin would take them off for a few days each month. This way, other head chefs couldn't find fault, and No. 2 Building could continue selling them. Having offended too many head chefs, this was the only method he had to maintain the exposure of new dishes.

Mr. Jin frowned, not expecting this meal to be so problematic. He had arrived in high spirits, but now, much of his appetite had vanished.

Forget it, he thought. I'll just make do with a meal for now and find a place to treat myself properly this afternoon.

Chapter 482: There is sisterly love, but not much! Manager Shu, why did you come to work here?

He found a seat, glanced at the menu, and casually ordered a few dishes. Then, with a disinterested expression, he began to chat with his friend about his recent business trip.

After a hurried and careless lunch, he looked at Gu Junli and asked, "Do you know where Manager Shu has gone for a higher position?"

"Yes, it's Lin Ji's Food on Yingchun Street, located at No. 34 Yingchun Street."

Lin Ji's Food? Mr. Jin thought. Never heard of it.

He had assumed Shu Yun would be poached by high-profile places in Beijing like Eight Great Towers or Da Dong's Restaurant, but it turned out to be an unheard-of establishment. This unremarkable name sounded just like any roadside diner. Manager Shu couldn't have been scammed, could she?

Since he had nothing much to do that afternoon, he decided he might as well check out this so-called Lin Ji's Food.

「Meanwhile.」

Having escaped the pastry section, Lin Xu could finally start cooking. After a busy period, he went downstairs to bring Dundun some food. Just as Shu Yun, who had finished seeing a table of guests out, approached him, she said, "Boss, your Braised Pork Belly is a huge hit! Many customers who've tried it are praising it. Could you make more this afternoon when it's not too busy? To prevent us from running out for the customers."

That morning, Lin Xu had simmered a pot of Braised Pork Belly in a clay pot to test the waters. He had thought it would be difficult to sell, but surprisingly, before even half-past twelve, more than ten portions had been snapped up. Customers who missed out were even complaining. This dish couldn't be prepared on the spot; it needed to be made in advance. So Shu Yun had come over to ask Lin Xu to prepare more for the afternoon.

"Alright, I'll prepare thirty portions this afternoon," Lin Xu replied. "However, I won't be making other dishes, as I need to free up time to prepare roasted suckling pig for our Chen Baiwan."

Hearing about roasted suckling pig, Shu Yun curiously asked, "Can I try some too?"

"Sure. I actually roasted two extra, planning to let all of you try some."

Back at Fishing Platform, Shu Yun wouldn't have been such a foodie, but ever since arriving at Lin Ji and getting used to Lin Xu's cooking, she had become quite the glutton. For example, she ate three of the beef-filled griddle cakes for breakfast in one go that morning. Now, hearing about roasted suckling pig, her cravings flared up again. After all, this was the delicacy that even Chen Baiwan had been talking about for days.

When Dundun finished eating the meat, Lin Xu suddenly remembered the Tendon Jelly he had made the previous night. He said to Shu Yun, "Last night, I used the leftover Tendon to make some Tendon Jelly. I can't be bothered to sell it, so later on, you, Sister Wenjing, and the others can all try some."

Tendon Jelly?

Seeing Shu Yun's puzzled expression, Lin Xu explained, "It's a low-fat delicacy rich in collagen."

!!!!!! If you're talking about that, then I'm wide awake! Shu Yun thought excitedly.

After Lin Xu returned to the kitchen, she grabbed her phone and sent messages to Dou Wenjing, Zeng Xiaoqi, and Chen Yan, sharing the news about eating Tendon Jelly that evening.

Not long after the messages were sent, Chen Yan called Lin Xu. "Brother-in-law, please save some of that beautifying Tendon Jelly for me; it's my absolute favorite!"

"Sure, sure. It's not anything valuable, and the recipe is simple. I'm planning to teach Yueyue how to make it soon. If you want to learn, you can too."

"Really? In that case, I'll have Tiantian transfer twenty thousand from my card first as my tuition fee."

TSK, TSK, TSK... Lin Xu mused. I originally thought that one million would be enough for my sister-in-law to eat at the restaurant for a few years. But if she's going to be this generous, I feel it might not even last until the end of the year.

「At five in the afternoon.」

While Lin Xu was standing in front of the roast duck oven trying to make roasted suckling pig, Mr. Jin drove his Maybach slowly towards Yingchun Street with a few friends.

Yeah, that lunch was really unsatisfying, Mr. Jin thought. He planned to check on Shu Yun and then go for a good meal at Yanjing Hotel's Chinese restaurant.

One of his friends remarked from the car, "I haven't heard of any good restaurants on Yingchun Street. It's all just roadside diners. That Manager Gu couldn't be bluffing us, could she... Huh? Lin Ji's Food?"

As the car reached the middle of Yingchun Street, Mr. Jin saw the newly renovated Lin Ji's Food by the roadside. Looking at those four characters, he couldn't help but frown.

Everyone knows Mr. Lishan abhors this kind of storefront calligraphy. These characters were probably copied from his other works... Could this be a scam restaurant?

Seeing a parking space by the roadside, he pulled over. After parking the car, he and his friends got out and strode into the restaurant.

First, I need to see if Shu Yun is inside. If she is, I'll get to the bottom of it, he resolved. I had originally come to show support for Shu Yun's new place, but now that it involves my idol, Mr. Lishan, this matter has to be cleared up immediately.

He pushed open the door and entered. The interior decor was refreshingly novel. His friends were all visibly impressed.

"Not bad, Old Jin, much better than imagined."

"When did Yingchun Street get such an upscale restaurant?"

Mr. Jin looked around. The place does look good, he acknowledged, but so what? If that calligraphy outside isn't explained, this issue won't be over today!

Just then, he saw Shu Yun holding Dundun and admiring the fish in an aquarium. He walked over, a hint of displeasure on his face, "Manager Shu, what brings you to a place like this?"

"Mr. Jin? What brings you here? Please, have a seat, quickly! Xiao Dong, go brew a pot of Maojian Tea with spring water, the kind the boss serves to family..."

That's Manager Shu for you... Mr. Jin's anger subsided considerably. He hadn't expected her to remember a customer's old preferences even after changing jobs.

He pointed towards the shopfront and asked Shu Yun, "The owner here... how is he treating you?"

Shu Yun was taken aback, then smiled and said, "Very well. I've even become his son's godmother... Mr. Jin, it's too noisy down here. Let me take you upstairs to chat. It's also a good opportunity for you esteemed guests to try some dishes from our restaurant."

Mr. Jin wanted to press the issue about the calligraphy on the sign. But Shu Yun's warm smile and what she had just said made it difficult for him to proceed.

Godmother? Is the owner trying to tie Manager Shu down using the child?

Shu Yun placed Dundun back on the service counter and then led Mr. Jin and his group upstairs. The second floor had the kitchen and booth seating, noticeably quieter than the main dining hall.

Just as they sat down, a server came over carrying a teapot. Shu Yun took it, poured tea for everyone, and then instructed the server, "Bring two appetizers to start, then one Crystal Pork Hock and a pressed pig's head. Have Chef Wei make two of his signature small dishes, and also one Braised Pork Belly."

"Yes, Manager Shu."

Mr. Jin was a VIP at Building No. 2, Shu Yun thought. Since he's here today, I must make sure he becomes a fan of Lin Ji's Food.

Soon, the dishes were served. Mr. Jin had a mind full of questions, but his friends were unaware of these concerns. The dishes were exceptionally presented and smelled enticing. His friends couldn't resist trying a bite and were instantly captivated.

"Damn, this Crystal Pork Hock tastes really good! Old Jin, you have to try it. It tastes even better than what we had for lunch."

"It's not just the hock that's delicious; this pressed pig's head is also very well made."

"The Lotus Root is crisp and refreshing, even more delicious than what you'd get at a Huaiyang restaurant."

"Old Jin, don't just stare, hurry up and try some..."

Mr. Jin picked up his chopsticks and tried a bite. The dishes were indeed excellent; in terms of quality, they were on par with Fishing Platform.

As he was sampling the food, the Braised Pork Belly was served. Seeing the glistening, red pieces of meat, Mr. Jin was instantly reminded of the Braised Pork Belly he had eaten last time at Building No. 2. The appearance was identical, and the aroma was exactly the same. It was the very Braised Pork Belly he had been craving for over half a month. He had missed out on it at Building No. 2 at noon, only to unexpectedly encounter it here in this restaurant.

"This is Braised Pork Belly personally cooked by our boss," Shu Yun introduced with a smile, then placed the bowls of rice, just delivered by the server, onto the table. "It's available in limited quantities each day. The Braised Pork Belly Mr. Jin had at Building No. 2 last time was made by him."

A dish like Braised Pork Belly is best enjoyed with rice.

Mr. Jin was still in shock. He never would have guessed that the Braised Pork Belly he'd eaten at Building No. 2 last time was made by the owner of this place.

Well, since I'm here, I might as well eat first, he decided. I'll ask about Mr. Lishan's calligraphy after I'm done...

Chapter 483: What a Treasure Trove of Surprises This Restaurant Is! Silverfish Omelette!

"Manager Shu, was your boss a chef at Building No. 2 before?"

Mr. Jin was quite puzzled. Why had the Braised Pork Belly he'd eaten at Fishing Platform been made by the owner of this restaurant? Weren't the chefs there selected through rigorous procedures? How could an outsider be allowed to cook there?

"Our boss is Fishing Platform's culinary consultant and also a junior to Chef Xie from Building No. 2," Shu Yun replied. She didn't say much, briefly introducing Lin Xu's identity before excusing herself.

In her eyes, Lin Xu's status wasn't important. His exceptional cooking skills and sincere heart were enough. As for other titles and identities, those were just icing on the cake.

After Shu Yun left, Mr. Jin picked up his rice bowl and smiled. "I went to Fishing Platform at noon with great interest, only to end up leaving in haste and without any enthusiasm. But this restaurant, which I originally just glanced at on a whim, has turned out to be such a pleasant surprise."

Not only did he get to eat the Braised Pork Belly he longed for, but the other dishes were also noteworthy. Take the pressed pig's head, for example—a dish high-end restaurants, conscious of their image, wouldn't typically prepare. But this restaurant did. They not only perfected the flavor but also elevated its presentation to rival any main course. Truth be told, if Shu Yun hadn't mentioned it, no one

would have guessed this rosy, neatly presented dish was made from pig's head, an ingredient often snubbed by haughty chefs.

Another cold dish, Crystal Pork Hock, was so bright and shiny it resembled a piece of art. Without even tasting it, a single glance made one feel chilled and refreshed.

As for other dishes, such as Ginger Lotus Root, Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, sautéed Beef Tongue, Vinegar Cooked Fish Slices, and Salt-Baked Pork Belly, each had its own distinctive features.

"This visit was worth it, wasn't it, Old Jin?" one of them remarked.

"Indeed! I never expected to find such a place on the North Fourth Ring," another agreed.

"I just flipped through the menu. The prices here are much lower than at Fishing Platform, and the food is just as good. We should come here for our next gathering."

"Today was too rushed. Next time, we absolutely have to try their signature dishes."

Mr. Jin had initially planned to question if this restaurant was faking Mr. Lishan's calligraphy. But now, it seemed unlikely. Could the owner of such a restaurant be just anyone? Never mind anything else, his status as a culinary consultant for Fishing Platform alone was enough to astound his peers.

He picked up a trembling piece of Braised Pork Belly and placed it in his bowl. Not rushing to eat, he instead used a spoon to crush the meat and mix it with the rice. Once thoroughly combined, he scooped up a small spoonful. The chewy pork skin, the jelly-like fat, and the rice grains coated in rich meat juice—it was an incredibly satisfying mouthful! What is perfection? This is it.

"Old Jin, did you find any good food in the Northwest this time?"

Mr. Jin replied, "The most famous dish in the Northwest is undoubtedly the roasted whole sheep. I've had it several times, and I can never get enough. It's far superior to the roasted whole sheep served in Beijing restaurants."

Delicious roasted whole sheep requires freshly slaughtered, fatty sheep. Restaurants in Beijing, however, typically use bulk-purchased frozen or chilled sheep, a clear step down in quality from the start. Furthermore, these establishments in Beijing, in their blind pursuit of profit, opt for smaller sheep. While these cook faster, they aren't as fatty, resulting in dry meat. It's a world apart from the succulent meat of the large, fatty sheep roasted in the Northwest.

After reminiscing, he said, "It's a shame we don't have such good lamb in Beijing. Otherwise, I'd absolutely have to gather everyone to try a whole one."

As they were eating, the nearby elevator door opened. An elderly man in practice clothes emerged, holding two framed scrolls. "Where is my young friend Lin?" he called out, looking around. "Isn't the restaurant open already? Why was I told it would only open this weekend? I've been waiting at home all this time..." Mumbling to himself, he headed towards the kitchen.

Mr. Jin's eyes widened. "Isn't that Mr. Lishan? How could he..."

Remembering the sign outside, a wave of relief washed over Mr. Jin. Thankfully, he hadn't voiced his doubts upon entering; otherwise, he would have made a complete fool of himself. The owner of this restaurant was truly formidable—connections to Fishing Platform and an acquaintance of the most renowned calligrapher, Mr. Lishan. This was astounding! Beijing's culinary scene was in for a major shake-up!

Geng Lishan had barely come upstairs when Geng Lele and Zeng Xiaoqi followed.

"My grandfather doesn't grasp the difference between a soft opening and the grand opening," Geng Lele explained. "He thinks Brother Xu tricked him, so he's here to demand an explanation."

Lin Xu, who had apparently come to the kitchen entrance, added, "It's my fault. When Mr. Lishan asked a few days ago, I said we'd open on Saturday and forgot to clarify."

At the kitchen entrance, Geng Lishan, who had come to "demand an explanation," listened intently as Lin Xu further clarified the difference between a soft opening and a grand opening.

"A soft opening is to build some buzz and make sure we're not empty on the grand opening day. That's why we 'warm up' beforehand. Not all dishes are available yet; the full menu will only be ready for the grand opening."

Only half-understanding, Geng Lishan responded, "Well, it was still wrong of you not to notify me! I was waiting to come and do the on-site calligraphy, and now that chance is gone."

The old man was quite endearing, Lin Xu thought.

Lin Xu smiled. "Your presence alone is a great honor, sir. How could I possibly dare to ask you to work? There's a suckling pig roasting in the oven right now. Perhaps you could help me check on it later?"

At the mention of food, Geng Lishan's attention immediately shifted. "I'm hardly qualified to 'check' your work! I'm just here to offer my congratulations and enjoy the meal. Here, take these. Gifts from me and my granddaughter..."

Lin Xu accepted the two scrolls, amused. One gift from each of them. He really is a straightforward man, Lin Xu mused.

Chapter 484: What a Treasure Trove of Surprises This Restaurant Is! Silverfish Omelette!

He knew that Geng Lishan had felt somewhat embarrassed about buying a computer for Geng Lele last time, so this time he had brought two pieces of calligraphy.

Untangling the silk thread wrapped around the scroll, Lin Xu unrolled it to reveal two pieces, one reading "Business Flourishes" and the other "Harmony Brings Wealth."

Zeng Xiaoqi, along with Mr. Jin and his companions who were eating in the distance, couldn't help but feel envious.

This was indeed Master Lishan's precious calligraphy. To gift two pieces at once was remarkable. If they were auctioned, they could fetch at least three to four million. With fans of Master Lishan bidding, the price might even double.

The extent of such a generous gift was indeed enviable.

"Old Jin, did you just hear what that young man said? They've got roast suckling pig too. You know the general manager here, right? Ask her if she could spare one for us," someone said.

Roast suckling pig to entertain a great calligrapher!

Just the thought of it seemed extraordinary.

Upon hearing this, Mr. Jin also felt tempted.

He waved over a waiter who was nearby, "Hello, could you call your Manager Shu over here for me? Thank you, miss."

As he spoke, he slipped the waiter a 100-yuan tip.

Soon, Shu Yun came upstairs.

"Manager Shu, the young man at the entrance of the kitchen is your boss, right? He just mentioned they made roast suckling pig. Did they make a lot? Could you spare one for us?"

Shu Yun hadn't expected such a request.

Was Mr. Jin interested in the staff meal at the restaurant?

Last time in Building No. 2, he had taken a fancy to the Braised Pork Belly she was eating. This time, was he eyeing the roast suckling pig prepared for the boss's family and friends? Why was he always after dishes not on the menu?

She wasn't in a position to decide on her own and said, "I'll ask about it. The boss's relatives and family are here today, so it's hard to say if we can spare any."

When she approached Lin Xu, Shu Yun whispered Mr. Jin's request to him.

Spare a roast suckling pig? The quantity isn't quite enough, considering my father-in-law is bringing friends today, my mother-in-law's close friends will be here, and there's a large group of Chen Baiwan's employee friends and so on...

What's more, since Mr. Jin frequents the Fishing Platform, he must be familiar with the roast suckling pig at Building No. 10.

And since I didn't have a Cooking Learning Card when I first learned to roast suckling pigs, my best creations are only Excellent Level, which is somewhat insufficient to impress.

Thinking this, Lin Xu said to Shu Yun, "It's not enough, and I'm still in the practicing stage for roast suckling pig... How about this: send over a dish to them, and while you're at it, tell them they can pre-order roasted whole lamb. Roast suckling pig will take a while longer."

Yes, the roasted whole lamb is Superior level, at least. That's more presentable than the suckling pig. Besides, I haven't tried using the roasting oven for a whole lamb yet. If someone pre-orders, I can make money and practice at the same time!

Hearing her boss's words, Shu Yun got a plate of dry-fried green beans from the kitchen and walked towards the booth.

Mr. Jin felt disappointed when he saw this, "Looks like they can't spare it..."

After arriving, Shu Yun first apologized and then said, "Our boss says that he is still practicing the roast suckling pig, so he won't present something imperfect to our esteemed guests. However, our kitchen's oven can make roasted whole lamb. Mr. Jin, if you'd like to try, you can pre-order it."

What?

They have roasted whole lamb?

Mr. Jin's emotions rollercoasted. Just moments ago he was lamenting that Beijing's roasted whole lamb wasn't up to par, and now here was a recommendation.

What a coincidence!

Out of curiosity, he asked, "Manager Shu, have you tried the roasted whole lamb from your restaurant? How is it?"

Shu Yun had indeed tried it.

Before the soft opening, when Lin Xu made roasted whole lamb at his villa, he had specially hired a delivery person to send some over. Almost all the management team had tasted that lamb, crispy on the outside and tender on the inside.

Recalling it now, Shu Yun smiled and said, "It was the best roasted whole lamb I've ever had."

Who would have thought that during a family gathering, the boss wouldn't forget to send a portion to his employees? The delightful surprise and the feeling of being valued had deeply touched her, Dou Wenjing, and the others.

Upon hearing this, Mr. Jin said, "Then let's pre-order one. By the way, Manager Shu, can I open an account here? I'll deposit five hundred thousand yuan for now. If the lamb is delicious, I'll probably order several more."

There would be gatherings with friends, with classmates, with business partners, with family... Since he'd found something delicious, naturally, everyone should come and try it.

And obviously, just eating roasted whole lamb wouldn't be enough; they'd have to order other dishes too.

With food and drinks, depositing five hundred thousand yuan for now should do. After eating, just swipe the card and go. How simple!

After Shu Yun left, the group picked at the dry-fried green beans on the table and tasted them.

"Wow, these green beans are made very authentically."

"Exactly, the texture is rich, and it doesn't have that raw green bean taste. Delicious."

"I originally thought you could only get such tasty dry-fried green beans at small roadside stalls. I never expected a grand restaurant could make them so flavorful."

"This truly is a treasure of a restaurant, full of surprises at every turn!"

Lin Xu chatted with Geng Lishan at the entrance for a while, then had Shu Yun take everyone to a private room upstairs.

He himself returned to the kitchen, continuing to watch over the suckling pigs in the roasting oven.

Although he had made them several times at the villa using the charcoal grilling method, this was his first time trying the hanging-oven method, so he needed to stay by its side to prevent any mishaps.

At the main entrance downstairs, Chen Yan, dressed in a short skirt and tall boots, her hair tied in a ponytail, strode into the restaurant with her company's staff.

Seeing Song Tiantian, Chen Yan asked, "Is the suckling pig ready?"

Chapter 485: What a Treasure Trove of Surprises This Restaurant Is! Silverfish Omelette!

"Not yet, but it should be soon. Ten minutes ago, they said they had already hung the marinated suckling pig in the roasting oven... Boss Chen, you look so young... I mean, so hot today!"

She originally wanted to say "so young," but thinking it inappropriate, she changed it to "hot" at the last minute.

Chen Yan said with a smile, "I'll wear these kinds of clothes a few more times before I turn thirty. Once my birthday is over, it'll seem like I'm trying too hard to look young."

Yeah, before my birthday, I can still claim to be in my twenties. But after my birthday, I'll officially be thirty. According to my mom, by thirty, you're supposed to be a middle-aged woman doing laundry, cooking, and taking care of children. Trying to look too young then would be out of place, and my parents would approve even less.

"You guys go on up first. I've reserved the biggest room on the third floor. I'll wait a bit for my uncle and aunt."

Not long after, Shen Baobao got off work. Upon seeing Chen Yan, she rubbed her eyes in disbelief.

"What kind of vixen is this? How dare you impersonate my Yan Bao!"

Chen Yan rolled her eyes at her, "Pfft, you sent me a message this morning and then unsent it. Afraid I'd eat your sesame cakes, were you?"

"No, I was afraid I'd disturb your sleep... Yan Bao, are you dressed so daringly for a date?"

"A date? Don't be ridiculous! I'm just playing up the 'young girl' look a bit more before my birthday... I heard from Shu Yun that last night, my brother-in-law even made that beautifying Tendon jelly. Don't you dare fight me for it later; I need to eat more so I can look absolutely radiant on my birthday."

"You're already so pretty..."

Hearing her cousin praise her like that, Chen Yan immediately perked up. "Really? Then tell me, what's pretty about me?"

"Uh... I was just being polite, you know, offering a compliment. Could you not put me on the spot like this... Ouch, ouch, stop pinching! Yan Bao, everything about you is perfect, especially this face! Come here, let this boss lady give you a kiss! MWAH!"

In front of the roasting oven, Lin Xu watched as the suckling pigs inside turned golden yellow, then gradually deepened to a golden-red.

Judging from their color, these suckling pigs look quite good. I just don't know how they'll taste yet.

When the time was about right, he opened the oven and, using a long rod equipped with a hook, carefully lifted the suckling pigs out one by one.

After all ten roasted suckling pigs were out, Lin Xu was just about to remove the supports and hooks to prepare for plating when a system notification suddenly rang in his mind:

"Host has completed the Hidden Task 'Mass Production' by successfully making ten Excellent Level roasted suckling pigs without any Skill, earning the Superior dish — Silverfish Omelette. Congratulations to the Host."

Holy cow! I didn't expect there to be a reward for roasting ten suckling pigs at the same time. What a pleasant surprise.

He removed the supports and hooks, then carefully placed the suckling pigs on large plates lined with lettuce leaves. He instructed the kitchen helpers to prepare the accompanying dipping sauces and then ordered the dishes to be served.

After the roasted suckling pig was served, the other prepared dishes were also brought to the table one by one.

Lin Xu had a kitchen hand fetch some Silverfish from the aquarium tank below. He poured them into a basin and added Scallion and Ginger, Cooking Wine, and pepper powder to marinate them.

Silverfish don't require much preparation; a couple of rinses and they're ready for marinating.

While the Silverfish were marinating, he cracked a few Eggs, adding salt, Light Soy Sauce, Water Starch, and minced Scallion.

The Water Starch was added to make the fried Egg more tender and smooth, and also to help it solidify more easily.

He beat the Egg mixture with chopsticks. Once the Silverfish were sufficiently marinated, he began to fry.

He heated the wok and poured in cooking oil.

After the oil had fully coated the wok, he poured out the hot oil and added some fresh, cool oil.

Once it was hot again, he poured the prepared Egg mixture into the wok.

When frying, he didn't flip it immediately. Instead, he gently shook the wok, allowing the Egg mixture to spread evenly and form a slightly thick omelette.

When the omelette began to set and the Egg mixture was almost firm, he scattered the Silverfish over the top.

The Silverfish couldn't overlap, to ensure they cooked through.

Once they were arranged, he used a spatula to press down gently, ensuring the Silverfish adhered completely to the Egg.

This looks a bit like a pizza topped with Silverfish.

Once the Egg mixture was fully set, he held the wok firmly and, with a skilled toss, flipped the omelette over so the side with the Silverfish faced down.

After it landed securely in the wok, he drizzled a little cooking oil around the edges.

This was done to intensify the aroma of the Silverfish and, with the oil, to prevent them from burning.

When the savory aroma of the fish wafted from the wok, he flipped the omelette again.

After frying it for a short while longer, he removed it from the wok and plated it.

It wasn't long before this Silverfish Omelette was served in the private room upstairs.

"Well now, this dish really tests one's flipping skills! One careless move, and you'd be picking fish off the floor."

Geng Lishan picked up a piece of Egg with Silverfish using his chopsticks, tasted it, and immediately gave a thumbs-up. "The savory notes of the Egg and the Silverfish combine perfectly! And the Scallions in the Egg mixture are fried just right, giving it a rich, fragrant Scallion flavor. Truly excellent!"

Young friend Lin really brings surprises at every turn. The dishes on the table today are all impressive: the roasted suckling pig is notable, the Crystal Sugar Pork Hock is unforgettable, the Crystal Pork Hock is cooling and refreshing, and the pressed pig's head is savory and delicious. But what impressed me the most was the beef in a sesame seed bun.

The small sesame bun was already sliced open on the side. Picking it up and stuffing it with slices of beef instantly reminded Geng Lishan of his youth, of riding a bicycle to the rural New Year's market during the Spring Festival to write couplets.

Back in those days, couplets were all handwritten on the spot.

When he went, he even had to tuck the ink bottle into his jacket to prevent it from freezing.

Upon arrival, he'd set up a table, spread out the red paper, and start writing. Selling couplets for ten cents a pair, he could earn several hundred yuan at a single market, all through painstaking effort.

When he got tired, he'd buy a beef-filled sesame bun from a nearby stall, eat it while it was hot, and then continue writing.

Isn't the Geng Family's improving life in Beijing all thanks to those couplets I wrote back then? I never expected young friend Lin to have prepared such a delicacy. Is this his way of reminding me not to forget my humble beginnings? It must be. Lin Xu is too embarrassed to say it to my face, so he's using this subtle way to remind me. He's really gone to a lot of trouble!

Just as Geng Lishan was lost in these reflections, Lin Xu pushed open the door and walked in.

Before Lin Xu could ask how the meal was, the esteemed calligrapher suddenly said, "Lin Xu, I have received your reminder. From now on, I shall be a humble student in the world of calligraphy, no longer arrogant about my talents, no longer reliant on my status..."

Lin Xu was utterly nonplussed. Old sir, what on earth did I do this time to cause such a misunderstanding? Can you please give me a chance to explain?

I must be sick. If I don't write ten thousand words a day, I feel like I'm drowning in debt... I originally wanted to take it easy today, but my OCD compelled me to write another 5,100 words. Today's quota of ten thousand words is fulfilled. Brothers, I'm asking for your Monthly Tickets!

Chapter 486: Making a Low-fat Dish for My Mother-in-Law to Show Off - Stuffed Winter Melon with Chicken Breast!

Lin Xu knew very well. His dish had definitely been overinterpreted by the renowned calligrapher again. Although the feeling of being misunderstood by a celebrity was quite nice, it was, after all, a misunderstanding. It was better to clarify things to prevent people from calligraphy or cultural circles from knocking on his door for a challenge in a couple of days.

He said with a smile, "There was no special arrangement for today's meal. Just enjoy your food and drinks."

Although the others were somewhat surprised, they didn't think of it as a misunderstanding. After all, one was a long-established great calligrapher, and the other a genius chef. The two had always treated each other as equals, so it was quite normal for them to engage in witty banter.

Only Geng Lele watched her grandfather with a knowing smile, afraid the old man would impulsively drag Brother Xu off to behead a chicken and burn yellow paper to become sworn brothers. Fortunately, that scene didn't occur.

Geng Lishan didn't say anything more, just remarked that he would "keep it firmly in mind," before taking small sips of the Crucian Carp Tofu Soup the waiter had served him.

"Does Sister Yan need anything else?"

The large private room was filled with Chen Yan's friends and employees. Chen Yan, a sophisticated woman dressed like a trendy young diva, sat in a conspicuous position and waved her hand at Lin Xu. "Nothing else is needed. Just remember to serve a beauty-enhancing Jade Soup when we're about to finish... Oh, right, and pack me a portion of Tendon Jelly. I'll snack on it tonight while I'm on my phone."

Lin Xu was speechless. Is she planning to live on collagen?

But since the patron had given her order, he agreed. "Alright, alright. I'll check the next room and then start preparing it for you. If you need anything else, just let the waiter know. Everyone, please eat and drink your fill."

Having said that, he was about to leave when Zeng Xiaoqi, who was sitting by the door, tugged his clothes.

"What's up, Sister Xiaoqi?"

"Get me a portion of that beef Tendon Jelly too. I want some as well."

"Alright!"

Lin Xu leaned in and whispered to the beautiful Zeng Xiaoqi, much like an underground agent making a clandestine contact, before leaving the private room.

Right. If he didn't leave soon, the other women dining inside would probably also ask for Tendon Jelly to go. Because when Chen Baiwan had given the order just now, Lin Xu had seen Wu Kexin, Weiwei, Dou Wenjing, and the others all brighten up, clearly tempted as well.

Looks like Tendon Jelly is going to be a permanent fixture. Even if it didn't make money, he'd still have to satisfy this group of beauty-conscious women around him first.

Leaving the large private room, Lin Xu walked a couple of steps to the door of a private room named "Everlasting" and asked the attendant standing there, "How much have they drunk inside?"

"They've finished two bottles of liquor and have just started on the third."

Lin Xu nodded, understanding. Once his father-in-law drinks a bit more, it'll be time to notify his mother-in-law to come and clear the scene. This will prevent this group of middle-aged men from damaging their health with excessive drinking.

He pushed the door and went in. The room reeked of alcohol, and the atmosphere was lively.

Tan Yajun, usually reserved and cultured, had taken off his high-end dress shirt. He was wearing just a white tank top underneath, which he had rolled up to his chest. If he had a cattail leaf fan, he'd look just like one of those old men cooling off at the entrance of an alley.

His father-in-law was also very unrestrained, having lifted his collared T-shirt to reveal a belly that was a size smaller than before. Ever since he started exercising under Han Shuzhen's supervision, Shen Guofu's belly had not only shrunk, but his overall health had also improved considerably. He was currently showing off his weight-loss tips to his buddies.

Lin Xu really wanted to speak the truth for his father-in-law: there were no secrets to it, just sheer endurance. If it weren't for his mother-in-law's unyielding, military-like discipline, Old Shen, with his tendency to overeat, would have likely gained at least another thirty pounds.

"Aiyo! My son-in-law is here! Are you done with work, Xiao Xu?"

"Not yet, but even if I'm not, I still had to come in and offer a toast to all the uncles here."

These words brought a satisfied and proud smile to Shen Guofu's face. Look at the son-in-law I, Old Shen, picked! Absolutely perfect!

After speaking, Lin Xu picked up an unused new glass from the side cabinet, then took the bottle of Red Star Er Guo Tou from the table and poured himself a glass. Shen Guofu and his friends had transformed from poor kids in the alleys into leading figures in various industries, with fortunes of at least eight figures. However, when they got together, they still chose the Er Guo Tou, the same liquor they used to drink half a jin of with just pickled vegetables back in their younger days. To others, this was just a low-grade liquor. But for them, it was a memory of their youth.

Who knew how much pressure and unspoken grievances from all these years were contained within this Er Guo Tou.

Tan Yajun, seeing Lin Xu intending to make a toast, quickly said, "Xiao Xu, none of us here are strangers. You probably have things to do later, so don't go around toasting everyone one by one. Let's all raise our glasses together and drink up!"

The others, hearing this, also picked up their glasses. Those with empty glasses quickly refilled them.

Lin Xu held his glass and clinked it with everyone's in turn, then said, "Our restaurant has just opened, so there might still be some shortcomings. I hope all you uncles will give us plenty of suggestions!"

With that, he downed the Er Guo Tou in his glass in one gulp.

Shen Guofu's friends, seeing this, also immediately drained their glasses.

After drinking, they commented one after another:

"Old Shen's son-in-law can really drink!"

"The food here is perfect; there's nothing to criticize."

"The only drawback is that it's **too** delicious. I'm afraid I'll gain two pounds from this meal alone."

"Me too. Every dish is perfect; I just can't stop eating."

"Eating such delicious food every day, how has Old Shen actually lost weight?"

Chapter 487: Make a Low-Fat Dish to Impress the Mother-in-Law - Stuffed Winter Melon with Chicken Breast!

"There must be some trick to it, spill the beans!"

"..."

While everyone was surrounding Shen Guofu asking for weight loss tips, Lin Xu greeted them and then headed out the door.

Once outside, he took a few sips of tea handed to him by a waiter and then made his way to his mother-in-law's private dining room.

Han Shuzhen had been looking for an opportunity to introduce her treasured son-in-law to her close friends. Since they were having roast suckling pig today, she had notified everyone to come early.

Now, a group of brightly dressed aunties was seated around a table set for ten, enjoying exquisite dishes and sipping on fine red wine, looking very content.

As Lin Xu entered, Shen Baobao was just offering a glass of red wine to these aunties.

Seeing her dear Xu finally arrive, Shen Baobao immediately handed him the wine glass, saying, "I can't hold my liquor. I'll go rest in Sister Yan's room for a bit. You accompany Mom and toast the aunties."

"All right."

The aunties at the table stared at Lin Xu, completely stunned.

"Oh my, Shuzhen, your son-in-law is so handsome!"

"Yueyue is truly blessed to have such a handsome husband who cooks so well. She'll enjoy endless happiness."

"It's truly enviable."

"I wonder when my daughter will find such a perfect husband."

"Shuzhen, you're just fortunate. First, marrying that wealthy Old Shen, and now Yueyue is so lucky too..."

Han Shuzhen smiled and chimed in. Then, noticing Lin Xu's face was a bit red, she asked curiously, "Have you been drinking?"

"I just toasted my dad over there. Mom, how are you all finding the food? If any of the aunties have feedback, please encourage them to share it. We're in our trial operation, so now is the time to identify any issues."

As soon as she heard her son-in-law had been drinking in the next room, Han Shuzhen was displeased. "Your dad should have stopped you! The restaurant is so busy; what if you got drunk? I'll deal with him when we get back!"

Then, she asked with concern, "Do you want to sit down and rest for a while?"

Lin Xu took a seat next to his mother-in-law, in the spot Shen Baobao had just vacated. He used Shen Baobao's chopsticks to eat a few bites of food, which finally helped him manage the aftereffects of the potent spirit.

In the future, it might be wise to drink less of such high-proof alcohol.

It's too potent.

After a few bites, he raised Shen Baobao's glass of "red wine" to toast the aunties. As everyone lifted their glasses, Lin Xu realized his cup actually contained cola.

I knew it! After that last time with red wine, this girl still dared to overreach so badly.

She had sneakily poured herself a glass of cola to pass off as wine.

Luckily, I didn't swirl the glass before the toast, otherwise the fizzing would have been incredibly embarrassing.

He downed his "red wine" in one go, prompting Han Shuzhen to exclaim with a pang of concern, "Silly boy, red wine is meant to be savored slowly. Why drink so much at once? That wine is strong. Do you need to slow down?"

No need to slow down at all. In fact, I could go for another!

Who would have thought that after the kick from the potent spirit set in, an ice-cold cola would be so incredibly refreshing?

He ate another couple of bites of food.

Auntie Zhou, sitting beside him, suddenly asked, "Xu, I wanted to ask you, how do you make winter melon taste good?"

As soon as she spoke, the other aunties turned their heads toward Lin Xu, eager to hear what the chef would suggest—if it was something they could replicate at home.

Stewing it with pork ribs is good, or with large soup bones too, Lin Xu mused, knowing the auntie wanted to know how to keep it low-fat while still enhancing the flavor.

He thought for a moment and said, "You can steam it. After it's cooked, simmer a little sauce using Steamed Fish Sauce and drizzle it on top. The winter melon will taste exceptional."

He had seen Zhu Yong practicing this exact method just yesterday, apparently for that delicate Lin Taisen.

Steam it?

The aunties' eyes lit up.

If there was a dish that was both delicious and could help them maintain their figures, how wonderful would that be!

Han Shuzhen was also somewhat tempted.

Who wouldn't love such a low-fat delicacy?

She asked, "Is it complicated to make? Could you prepare a serving now? It would be great for your aunties here to see it for themselves. I've been singing your praises so much, they're probably tired of hearing it!"

It's actually not complicated at all,

And since Lin Xu also wanted another cola, he stood up and said, "It's quite simple. I'll go make a serving right now. I'll prepare this dish again when I go to the TV station to record my show in a couple of days. That way, even people with no cooking experience can learn how to make it."

Hearing this, everyone became enthusiastic.

"We appreciate your effort, Xu."

"At Lin Ji's grand opening, Auntie will give you a big red envelope!"

"With a tutorial, we can make it ourselves at home."

"..."

Lin Xu stepped outside, where the waiter immediately took a bottle of ice-cold cola from a nearby cabinet and handed it to him, saying, "The missus asked me to prepare this. She was worried you might get drunk."

Lin Xu smiled, twisted off the cap, and took a large gulp.

Phew... So refreshing!

He said to the waiter, "When they finish the third bottle of liquor in my father-in-law's private room, remember to let my mother-in-law know."

"Certainly, Boss. The missus gave the same instructions just a moment ago."

What a thoughtful sweetheart.

Sipping his cola, Lin Xu headed downstairs. He was off to the kitchen to prepare the low-fat winter melon dish that even his mother-in-law was somewhat keen on trying.

As he descended the staircase and was about to head to the kitchen, he bumped into Shu Yun, who was coming up from the first floor. She reported, "Boss, Mr. Jin just reserved a whole roasted lamb. He also opened an account and deposited 500,000. Several of his friends also deposited 100,000 or 200,000 each. In total, they've added 900,000 to their accounts."

See? This was the advantage of poaching the star manager from Fishing Platform.

Chapter 488: Making a Low-Fat Dish to Impress the Mother-in-Law - Stuffed Winter Melon with Chicken Breast!

It just so happened that he ran into a regular customer, which brought nearly a million more in deposits to the restaurant.

"Thank you so much, Manager Shu. I'll have Che Zai buy some lamb right away," Lin Xu said.

Shu Yun said with a smile, "Buy a couple more."

"Why?"

"Because when they were reserving the roasted whole lamb at the counter just now, Uncle Yu was there teasing Dundun with little dried fish. Hearing about the roasted whole lamb, he also placed an order for one, planning to have another family gathering before school starts."

"And the other one?"

"The other is ordered by Manager Zhen from the TV station; he plans to host a banquet for all his colleagues from the travel channel here tomorrow night."

Tsk tsk tsk, after the travel channel's viewership went up, Manager Zhen has become more and more motivated.

Lin Xu said to Shu Yun, "If there's no problem with the roasted whole lamb tomorrow, we should officially launch it in the restaurant."

"Alright, Boss... Are you preparing to cook again?"

"My mother-in-law and the others want to try a low-fat dish made with Winter Melon, so I'm planning to go to the kitchen and whip it up for them to try."

Shu Yun had originally planned to just say hello and then go back, but when she heard about a low-fat dish made with Winter Melon, she couldn't help but be tempted. "Can I try it too?"

"Sure."

Lin Xu had just helped the restaurant increase its revenue by nearly a million and had been planning to prepare a more challenging dish to reward Shu Yun. To his surprise, she took an interest in Winter Melon.

Then he'd make hers along with it. After all, this stuff is cheap; the cost is negligible.

He entered the kitchen.

Lin Xu went to the storage room where there was an opened Winter Melon. With a kitchen knife, he cut off a thirty-centimeter-wide section from the middle of it. After taking it out, he first removed the skin

and then the seeds. Finally, he laid the Winter Melon flat on the cutting board and, measuring about ten centimeters in length per piece, cut the Winter Melon into even segments. After dividing them, he then cut each segment into Winter Melon slices about three to four millimeters thick.

Once they were all cut, he put them in a basin and sprinkled them with salt to begin marinating. When Winter Melon meets salt, it quickly dehydrates, becoming soft and resilient, and can easily be rolled into Winter Melon rolls.

While the Winter Melon was marinating, Lin Xu took a large piece of Chicken Breast, removed the fascia, and minced it. Then he added ginger juice, Light Soy Sauce, Dark Soy Sauce, Sichuan peppercorn powder, pepper powder, and oyster sauce to the minced meat. Chicken Breast itself doesn't have much taste, so it needs some flavor enhancers. After mixing in the seasonings with his hands and stirring until the mixture was springy, he added an egg white, a bit of dry starch, and a large handful of minced Scallions.

Once mixed again, the ingredients needed for the Winter Melon Stuffed with Chicken Breast were ready.

「Ten minutes later.」

Quite a bit of water had seeped out into the basin of marinating Winter Melon, which had also turned soft and pliable. Lin Xu poured out the water, added fresh water, and rinsed the Winter Melon slices twice to wash off any excess salt.

After draining the water, he started assembling. First, he rolled the Winter Melon slices according to their natural curvature into trumpet-shaped rolls. Then, using a spoon, he filled the Winter Melon rolls with the Chicken Breast mixture and arranged them in a dish with the wider end facing outward. When arranging them, he started from the outer edge of the dish and worked his way inward, layer by layer, so that the Winter Melon rolls formed a flower-like pattern. To prevent them from splitting while steaming, the seams of the Winter Melon rolls had to be pressed underneath as much as possible, ensuring the steamed rolls turned out beautifully.

Since he had prepared a bit too much Winter Melon today, Lin Xu made two large dishes and one small dish in total. After preparing them, he put them in the steamer to start cooking.

While they were steaming, he chopped some small red chilies and prepared some Water Starch. These were necessary for making the sauce to pour over the steamed Winter Melon rolls; the dish wouldn't be complete until the sauce was finished and drizzled on top. To achieve a low-fat result, he wouldn't add any oil to the sauce and would use fewer seasonings.

「Ten minutes later.」

The Winter Melon was steamed and ready. When taken out of the steamer, a delicious aroma wafted through the air. Each Winter Melon roll, wrapped around a ruddy piece of Chicken Breast, looked quite attractive.

Carrying the plates carefully, Lin Xu poured out the excess liquid from them, and then he began making the sauce. He set up a wok, added two bowls of water, and after bringing it to a boil, he added half a ladle of Steamed Fish Sauce, followed by some sliced red xiǎomǐ là chili rings. He turned up the heat and let it simmer for a bit to bring out the aroma of the Steamed Fish Sauce and the fresh spiciness of the chilies. Then, he added a bit of Dark Soy Sauce for coloring, making the sauce look more appealing. Lastly, he poured in the Water Starch. Once the sauce in the pan thickened, he added a small handful of Wash-free Shrimp Skin.

With that, the savory, spicy, and appetizing sauce was ready.

Lin Xu carefully ladled the sauce onto the Winter Melon and instructed a waiter to take the two large plates of Winter Melon Stuffed with Chicken Breast to the grand private room upstairs and to his mother-in-law's private room.

As for the small plate, he carried it downstairs himself and handed it to Shu Yun, whose face lit up with surprise. "Wow, it's so beautiful!"

The Winter Melon rolls themselves were already quite attractive. Now, with the ruddy sauce sprinkled with xiǎomǐ là chili rings and Wash-free Shrimp Skin, even someone who had just eaten their fill would be tempted to pick one up with their chopsticks and try it.

"Thank you, Boss! I need to take a photo to show off on my Moments, bragging about the boss personally cooking to reward an employee. This is so motivating!"

Lin Xu said with a smile, "The cost of making Winter Melon Stuffed with Chicken Breast is pretty low. If customers like it, you can just add it to their order; Chef Zhu in the kitchen is good at making this dish."

When he later saw Lu Lu, he'd really have to thank this female version of Tyson. If it hadn't been for her, he wouldn't have thought of using Winter Melon to make these stuffed rolls.

As Shu Yun picked up her chopsticks to taste it, Lin Xu went to the marinated meat department on the first floor and found Xu Xinhua and the others having a meeting.

"Our homemade Tiger Skin Chicken Feet still can't match the quality of what the boss makes. It would be great if we could make them exactly like his, so we wouldn't always have to wait for the boss to do it..."

"I heard that after the boss gave pointers to Chef Ji, he quickly mastered the knack of making hand-rolled noodles."

"How great it would be if the boss could give us some pointers too. Then the marinated meat department wouldn't have to bother him at all."

"Yeah, always having to wait for the boss to do it makes us seem so useless..."

Lin Xu was taken aback. Do these guys enjoy being exploited—er, I mean, love their work **that** much? Since that's the case, I won't hold back.

Mr. Jin's recent deposit had brought the system points back up to one million.

It's time to redeem a new training task. I was planning to continue redeeming them for the upstairs employees, but since the people in the marinated meat department are so enthusiastic, I should take care of Xu Xinhua, this veteran employee, first.

Entering the system store, he clicked on the teaching and training tab. After finding Xu Xinhua's name, Lin Xu noticed that this chef, who came from a background in roasted meats, had unknowingly improved his Tiger Skin Chicken Feet Skill to the Excellent Level.

Making thousands of Chicken Feet every day really does lead to rapid skill improvement.

Lin Xu pressed the redeem button.

"Would you like to spend 500,000 points to redeem the upgrade training task for Tiger Skin Chicken Feet?"

"Yes!"

Redemption successful. Beginning task reading: Please instruct Xu Xinhua on how to make one thousand Tiger Skin Chicken Feet within three days. Upon completion, you will be rewarded with one lottery draw for Basic Cooking Techniques, and employee Xu Xinhua will obtain the Superior Tiger Skin Chicken Feet Skill.

Just like that, five hundred thousand points were gone.

After reading the task, Lin Xu walked into the marinated meat department and said to Xu Xinhua, "Master Xu, you want to learn how to make Tiger Skin Chicken Feet, right?"

"Ah? Boss, can I really learn?" Xu Xinhua hadn't expected the boss to suddenly arrive and looked a bit embarrassed.

Lin Xu said, "I'll teach you tomorrow. Once you've completely understood it, making Tiger Skin Chicken Feet will be your responsibility."

「At the same moment, in the private room upstairs.」

The visually stunning and high-quality Winter Melon Stuffed with Chicken Breast had just been served, causing a stir of exclamations from everyone...

Chapter 489: The King Covers the Land Tiger, Little Chick Stewed with Mushrooms! Boss, add more vermicelli!

"Oh, it's so beautifully done! It looks just like a flower."

"Who would have thought Winter Melon could be prepared like this?"

"Shuzhen, when your son-in-law gets here, you must ask him for the recipe. The presentation alone makes it worth trying; I can hardly bear to eat it."

"Are you done taking pictures? Let's start eating before it gets cold."

In the private room, Han Shuzhen's girlfriends couldn't stop praising the Stuffed Chicken Breast with Winter Melon that had just been served. They had never imagined that the unremarkable Winter Melon from the market could look this beautiful, and the method must have been quite simple, because it hadn't taken long from the time Lin Xu left to when the dish was served.

Finally, after everyone had finished taking photos, Han Shuzhen picked up a Winter Melon roll, placed it in her bowl, and took a bite. The Winter Melon was tender, its fragrant taste mingled with the umami of dried shrimp and the rich flavor of Steamed Fish Sauce. This combination of savory notes created a sensation akin to eating seafood. A subtle, fresh spiciness in the aftertaste playfully stimulated the appetite, causing one's hunger to unconsciously grow.

After tasting the Winter Melon, she then tasted the meat stuffing inside. The Chicken Breast, typically a bit dry, became remarkably succulent after absorbing the sauce's umami and the Winter Melon's fragrance.

So delicious!

Beyond its exquisite taste, the most important thing was the lack of guilt associated with eating it. It was made with virtually calorie-free Winter Melon and low-fat Chicken Breast. Far from causing weight gain, eating a lot might even lead to weight loss.

"There's not even a trace of oil, yet it tastes so good. This culinary skill is truly unmatched!"

"Exactly! I knew it wouldn't be bad, but I never expected Winter Melon to taste this good."

"This is culinary alchemy, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary!"

"I absolutely have to learn how to make this later; it's simply fantastic!"

Listening to everyone's praises, Han Shuzhen's smile never left her face. When she had asked Lin Xu to cook, she'd done so on a whim, thinking it wouldn't matter if it didn't turn out well. She hadn't anticipated such a huge surprise from her son-in-law. It had a beautiful presentation, tasted delicious, and was also low-fat and healthy.

This was exactly the ideal kind of delicacy!

In the past, when others praised her children for their filial piety, she could only offer a polite smile. Now, she could finally hold her head high. This sense of pride made Director Han even happier than the prospect of eating low-fat, healthy, delicious food.

「Meanwhile, in another private room.」

Chen Baiwan and the others, who had just claimed to be nearly full, were visibly shocked when the beautifully prepared Stuffed Chicken Breast with Winter Melon was suddenly brought in. Their expressions clearly read, "It can be made this beautifully?"

Wu Kexin immediately took out her phone to snap a photo. She planned to ask Lin Xu for the recipe to replicate it in her next live stream, hoping to finally shed her title as the "queen of disastrous broadcasts."

"This is a low-fat, low-calorie delicacy our boss specially prepared for everyone, using Winter Melon and Chicken Breast. You can all eat it without worry. It won't make you put on weight."

The head waiter of the third-floor private room was quite eloquent, highlighting the dish's key features because he knew what everyone wanted to hear. Low-fat? Low-calorie? Won't cause weight gain? These words struck everyone's hearts like a sledgehammer.

Shen Baobao stood up with a flourish, was the first to pick up a piece with her chopsticks, and placed it in her bowl, saying, "You all keep taking pictures. I'll taste it first to check the seasoning."

With her taking the lead, the others eagerly joined in. After one bite, everyone couldn't help but marvel at the flavor and texture of the Stuffed Chicken Breast with Winter Melon. It had to be said, the finely diced chili in the sauce was a perfect touch, not only garnishing the dish beautifully but also adding an appetizing hint of spice to the succulent Winter Melon.

"Next time we record the show, I absolutely have to get Boss Lin to feature this dish."

Ever since sitting down to eat, Zeng Xiaoqi had found almost every dish so irresistible that she wanted Lin Xu to demonstrate it on the program. From the classic cold appetizer, Ginger Lotus Root, to the pressed pig's head and Crystal Pork Hock, and even several classic poached dishes, she was sorely tempted by each one. There was no helping it; Lin Xu's culinary skills were simply amazing. Even without crayfish, she couldn't stop eating. Now, having tasted the Stuffed Chicken Breast with Winter Melon, the next episode's menu gained another item.

The beautiful host even considered learning to make it herself. If she learned how, she could make one every day. Rewarding herself for a day's hard work with such an attractive, tasty, low-fat, and low-calorie dish would be much better than ordering takeout, wouldn't it?

「In the kitchen.」

Just as Lin Xu returned, Che Zai, who handled procurement, said, "Boss, the fattened lambs for the roast will be delivered around 9:00 p.m. That won't delay the marination, will it?"

"It won't," Lin Xu replied.

All three whole roasted lambs were for the following evening. Marinating the lamb for twelve hours was sufficient, so there was plenty of time; no need to worry about it not being thoroughly marinated.

Che Zai added, "Boss Huang messaged. He said a batch of free-range chickens from the mountains will be delivered to Beijing tomorrow afternoon and asked if we want any."

Free-range mountain chickens?

Lin Xu recalled the Stewed Chicken with Mushrooms recipe he had drawn two days prior and asked curiously, "Did you buy the Hazel Mushrooms and Potato Flour noodles?"

"Yes, yes, bought them! Top-grade Hazel Mushrooms, the kind without stems. Boss Huang said if they're not delicious, we can take his head and kick it like a ball."

Lin Xu was momentarily speechless. How could anyone kick something so gory? Old Huang must know I wouldn't actually do that, which is why he dared to say it, right? If it were his fun-loving senior brother or Head Chef Dai, they'd probably torment him mercilessly.

"Since we have Hazel Mushrooms and Potato Flour noodles, let's order some chickens. Tomorrow evening, we'll make Stewed Chicken with Mushrooms to eat. Make sure to get enough; we can't run short."

Chapter 490: The King Covers the Land Tiger, Little Chick Stewed with Mushrooms! Boss, add more vermicelli!

"All right!"

After giving instructions on buying chickens, Lin Xu took out all the remaining tendon jelly from the cold storage. He first cut it into strips, then into slices, and finally packed it into takeaway boxes. The tendon jelly was packed box by box, then placed into takeaway bags along with disposable utensils and a small container of specially prepared dipping sauce. These were the special small gifts prepared for the ladies.

He had originally planned to have his helper order more tendons. But after calculating the cost, he felt it wasn't quite right because, for the same effect, Pork Skin was much cheaper than Tendon. Moreover, compared to Tendon, Pork Skin could also be made into Crystal Skin Jelly, which was just as presentable as Crystal Pork Hock. So, it was better to switch to Pork Skin.

Thinking of this, he instructed his helper, "Bring in a few more boxes of Pork Skin these next few days; I'm planning to try making some Crystal Skin Jelly."

Yes, not only did he plan to make it, but Shen Baobao and his sister-in-law even wanted to learn. If these two learned, they would likely throw themselves into enjoying the cooking process, just as they did with the fruit curd last time. The demand for Pork Skin would skyrocket. So, it was better to stock up more to avoid affecting the restaurant's normal supply.

「The following evening.」

As the lamb was slowly turning in the roaster, Boss Huang also delivered the free-range chickens ordered by the restaurant.

"Boss Lin, you didn't even mention you're roasting a whole lamb! I'm going to order one later, to invite your senior brothers over for a feast here," Boss Huang exclaimed.

Boss Huang was over fifty years old. As a high-end food supplier for several hotels and restaurants in Beijing, he had his own insights into maintaining a stable customer base. For instance, now that he heard the restaurant was offering whole roast lamb, he immediately ordered one. He planned to use this roast lamb to entertain the head chefs from Fishing Platform. Doing so would support Lin Ji's business and, at the same time, help him maintain his relationships with the head chefs from Fishing Platform. It was a perfect example of killing two birds with one stone.

Lin Xu said, "No problem, I'll reserve one for you tomorrow evening."

Boss Huang brought over several free-range roosters from the mountains, about seven or eight months old. Although not particularly large, they were all sturdy. This indicated the chickens hadn't been force-fed for rapid growth. When taken out of the bag, the chickens were still warm, indicating they had been freshly slaughtered and promptly delivered.

He soaked the chickens in water to wash off the excess blood and to give an extra cleaning to parts that were harder to get thoroughly clean, like the Chicken Feet, combs, and necks.

While the chicken soaked, he also soaked some potato flour noodles in warm water. In the stews of the Northeast Region, it was common to add noodles, which could absorb the broth and make the dish richer in content.

He soaked a few too many potato flour noodles today. Song Tiantian had heard they were having chicken stew with mushrooms that afternoon, so she had even eaten one less bowl of rice at lunch and specifically asked Lin Xu to add more noodles.

In her words, "Without potato flour noodles, chicken stew with mushrooms just doesn't have that authentic Northeastern flavor!"

After the potato flour noodles were soaked, Lin Xu took out the Hazel Mushrooms that Boss Huang had personally vouched for. Hazel Mushrooms were a specialty from the Northeast. They were often eaten dried, and their dried form resembled tea tree mushrooms. But in terms of flavor, they were even more savory and delicious. In Northeastern cuisine, Hazel Mushrooms held a prestigious status. Adding them to many dishes could elevate the flavor to another level.

He put the dried Hazel Mushrooms in a bowl, added clean water, and gently rubbed them several times, trying to remove as much debris as possible from the gills beneath their caps. During washing, he had to stop if the water turned yellow, as this liquid contained the mushrooms' umami compounds. Washing it away would diminish the flavor of the stewed chicken.

After draining the Hazel Mushrooms, he put them back in a bowl and soaked them in warm water again. By the time he finished with these tasks, the chicken had also soaked sufficiently.

Lin Xu took the chicken out of the water and placed it on the cutting board to start chopping. When making chicken stew with mushrooms, the chicken pieces couldn't be too small. Otherwise, it wouldn't reflect the generosity of Northeasterners and would instead seem stingy. But they couldn't be too large either, as they wouldn't cook through properly. Typically, chopping them into walnut-sized pieces was ideal.

He first cut off the chicken neck and head, chopped them, and placed these pieces in a bowl. Then, he split the chicken body along the backbone into two even halves, finally chopping everything into uniform chunks.

After finishing the chicken, he cut some large slices of ginger and some scallion sections. He also got out a few Star Anise. With that, all the ingredients needed for the chicken stew with mushrooms were ready.

Just as he was about to start cooking, Wei Qian came over. Curious, he asked, "Lin Xu, do you absolutely have to use Hazel Mushrooms for chicken stew with mushrooms? Would regular shiitake mushrooms work?"

"That's fine. When you're cooking for yourself, there's no need to be so particular. Using shiitake mushrooms is perfectly okay."

"And if there are no potato flour noodles, can you substitute with potato chunks?"

"You can do that too... you could even replace the Scallion and Ginger with chopped green and red peppers, and you would end up with Shandong's famous braised chicken."

Nearby, Ma Zhiqiang chimed in, "If the potato chunks are bigger, and the chicken pieces too, after stewing you could boil some belt noodles with it, and you'd have the Northwest's famous Big Plate Chicken."

Wei Qian was dumbfounded. Are these two putting on a comedy act with this back-and-forth?

Lin Xu set a large iron pot on the stove, ready to start cooking this Northeastern dish. The reason for using an iron pot was that the quantity of food today was large; a regular wok simply wouldn't hold it all. Additionally, when making a Northeastern stew, it just didn't feel authentic without using a large iron pot.

He poured soybean oil, popular in the Northeast Region, into the pot. Once the oil was hot, he added the scallion, ginger, Star Anise, and garlic, frying them until aromatic. Then, he turned the stove burner to its highest heat and poured in the chopped chicken pieces.