

Culinary 51

Chapter 51: From today onwards, you are my disciple, Gao Peisheng!

"What secret? Come on, spill it!"

Shen Jiayue's gossip gene kicked in.

Geng Lele glanced in the direction of the kitchen before whispering, "Do you know who the eighteen-year-old with white hair is? I was bored the last couple of days, so I used our school's computer lab to check his IP address..."

Shen Jiayue blinked in confusion, "How can you check IP addresses? Isn't that hacker stuff?"

Geng Lele waved her chubby little hands. "It's super easy; you can learn it in no time. You've graduated from college. You can't possibly not understand this, right?"

Shen Jiayue was speechless. Mom, I've been dealt a heavy blow. I need to go back and repeat a year of school!

Chen Yan, who had initially thought there wasn't much to discuss with a high school student, now just wanted to tear up her master's degree certificate.

Geng Lele had no idea she had just dealt a blow to the confidence of the two pretty ladies. She continued, saying, "I checked his IP only to find out that the eighteen-year-old, white-haired young man is actually Grandpa Gao, who is in the kitchen frying Fried Crispy Pork right now!"

Shen Jiayue was utterly stunned. Chen Yan looked completely dumbfounded. Song Tiantian, eavesdropping with ears perked up, was equally flabbergasted.

Shen Jiayue looked incredulously towards the kitchen. The online eighteen-year-old with white hair, whether in tone or word choice, seemed no different from someone born in the 2000s, making it impossible to connect him with Grandpa Gao, the State Banquet master chef.

But even though she was skeptical, she wisely chose not to question it. Because the beautiful Shen Jiayue was worried she might again suffer unintentional mockery from the genius girl.

"So, is this secret worth a meal?"

After Geng Lele finished speaking, she tossed her mushroom-cut hair and headed into the shop, saying, "Hello, Boss Lin! Hello, Grandpa Gao! I heard there's Fried Crispy Pork today. My homeroom teacher was thoughtful enough to give me two periods off..."

Chen Yan, a little downhearted, nudged her cousin. "Why am I, a master's graduate, not even as capable as a high school student?"

"Because this high school student just turned down special admission offers from Tsinghua and Beijing University!"

I see... That explains it.

Chen Yan breathed a sigh of relief, then asked, "What did you mean when you said you made some small money? Did you buy some stock that skyrocketed?"

Shen Jiayue laughed it off, saying, "That... is nothing worth mentioning."

She was too embarrassed to mention reselling Chicken Feet the day before.

She walked into the shop on her own. Lin Xu, I'm here!

"Hmph! Won't tell me? Later, I'm going to see which stock surged, and I'll buy in too!" Chen Yan muttered to herself and followed inside.

「In the shop.」

Grandpa Gao, whose online persona had been exposed yet again, was still earnestly explaining the essentials of frying Fried Crispy Pork to Lin Xu. "After frying, the Crispy Meat must be refried. This not only helps the Crispy Meat maintain its texture for longer but also makes the outer layer even crispier."

Having said that, he raised the oil temperature in the wok to a high heat. Then he dumped all the fried Crispy Meat into the oil and stirred it with a ladle to ensure it heated evenly.

Thirty seconds later, he scooped it out and let the oil drain.

This Crispy Meat took on an alluring golden-brown color and emitted a rich fragrance, making Lin Xu unable to resist pinching a piece and taking a bite.

"CRUNCH..."

The crispy outer layer was fragrant and delicious to chew, with a rich aroma of egg. Inside the crispy shell were aromatic slices of meat; the lean parts were tender and juicy, while the fatty parts were soft and flavorful. While chewing, one would occasionally bite into large granules of Sichuan peppercorns. They provided a tingly, numbing sensation that was incredibly appetizing!

"Wow, that sounds so crispy! Give me a piece, give me a piece!" Shen Jiayue stood outside the kitchen, as eager as a little gluttonous kitten waiting to be fed.

Lin Xu dished out a plate of Crispy Meat, sprinkled some chili flakes around the edge of the plate, and then set it on the table outside the kitchen. "You're as greedy as a cat. Come and eat."

Only after speaking did he notice Chen Yan beside her. Isn't this the customer from this morning? How did she get mixed up with our Shen Jiayue?

"This is my cousin, Chen Yan. She's also Wu Kexin's boss. Last time Wu Kexin did a live stream here, it was my cousin who arranged it."

Oh? So there was this connection.

He smiled apologetically at Chen Yan, saying, "I'm sorry, Manager Chen. I haven't had the chance to thank you properly after the live stream. Thank you for your arrangements; it caused our restaurant's popularity to skyrocket."

If it hadn't been for that live stream, the 'Slightly Famous' side quest might not have been completed yet.

"No need to thank me. If Wu Kexin hadn't done the live stream here, her comeback wouldn't have been so successful."

Chen Yan was planning to chat more with this handsome young man, who might soon be her brother-in-law, and ask if he was interested in entering the live-streaming scene. However, she then noticed that Shen Jiayue and Geng Lele had already started eating. So, she put aside the thought of chatting and picked up her chopsticks to join them.

"Wow! It's so crispy and flaky! So delicious!"

"This dipping sauce is delicious too—numbing and spicy, and especially fragrant."

"I was planning to start my diet tonight. Looks like it'll have to be tomorrow night now."

"..."

Seeing the ladies relishing their food, Lin Xu brought over a plate of Steamed Chicken Feet with Black Bean Sauce, a plate of Steamed Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce, and a dish of appetizing and palate-cleansing Ginger Lotus Root.

He then served some to Chezai and Song Tiantian as well.

This was Crispy Meat fried by a State Banquet master. It wasn't something you could eat every day. So, everyone should try it. In the future, it would be something to brag about.

While everyone was eating, Lin Xu picked up a piece of Crispy Meat and started crunching away. He wasn't usually someone who liked to eat fried food. But today, these crispy, fragrant pieces of Crispy Meat seemed to possess a kind of magic. After eating one piece, he craved another. He simply couldn't stop.

"Grandpa Gao, your skill is truly unparalleled!"

Grandpa Gao smiled and said, "In cooking, these are just humble side dishes, nothing worth boasting about. Are you interested in learning those legendary, famous dishes?"

Interested? Very interested! In Lin Xu's mind, images of Boiled Cabbage in Plain Water, Nine-Turned Intestines, Top-grade Tofu, Wensi Tofu, Braised Meatballs, Eight Treasure Immortal Duck, Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, and other famous dishes renowned both domestically and internationally spontaneously appeared.

But who to learn from? He looked towards Grandpa Gao. A thought quietly surfaced in his mind. Could it be... Grandpa Gao wants to teach me?

He tentatively asked, "Grandpa Gao, if I want to learn, would you teach me?"

Grandpa Gao said with a smile, "I can, but you have to promise me one condition."

"What condition?"

"Call me 'Master'!"

"Master?"

Grandpa Gao cheerfully responded, "Yes!" and then said, "From today on, you are my apprentice, Gao Peisheng's apprentice. I will systematically teach you cooking techniques. Whatever you want to learn from the Eight Major Culinary Traditions, I'll teach you."

Haha! The master-apprentice relationship is finally official! Even though there's no Apprenticeship ceremony and no peers witnessing it, so what? This kid is now my, Gao Peisheng's, apprentice. Those old geezers want to snatch my apprentice? Not a chance!

Lin Xu looked bewildered. Don't apprenticeships usually involve all sorts of complicated ceremonies and etiquette? Isn't this a bit too casual?

"We folks of the jianghu don't fuss over trifles. All that red tape should have been flushed down the drain ages ago! Kid, I just have one question for you: do you want to be my apprentice?"

"I do!"

"Well, that settles it!"

"But..."

Just as Lin Xu was about to say something more, a prompt from the system suddenly rang out in his head...