

## Culinary 52

Chapter 52: I'm Mom's Close Little Cotton-Padded Jacket, Need a Raise!

"The host has become the apprentice of State Banquet Master Gao Peisheng, completing the Hidden Task 'Apprenticeship'. He received the Perfect Level beverage—Sour Plum Soup. Congratulations to the host."

"The host, through Fried Crispy Pork, has gained a master as a mentor. The already obtained Superior Level Fried Crispy Pork has been automatically upgraded to Perfect Level Fried Crispy Pork. Congratulations to the host."

"Having gained a mentor, the host has started the master-disciple tradition, receiving three Superior Level Cooking Learning Cards. Congratulations to the host."

Lin Xu was somewhat dumbfounded by the three notifications.

He had never expected this. Just by calling someone 'Master,' he could receive so many rewards. He had still been considering it. But now... no need to consider anymore, because the system gave too much!

Of the three rewards, Lin Xu liked the Sour Plum Soup the most.

The addition of this beverage seemed to cover a missing element in the store. Once it was introduced, the customers probably wouldn't complain about the lack of beverages at Lin Ji's Food anymore.

As for the Fried Crispy Pork, it would likely become the new signature dish of the restaurant.

However, to introduce these two new dishes, hiring new staff was necessary because the pressure in the kitchen was already immense.

If they introduced new items now, he and Che Zai would definitely be exhausted.

While he was muttering to himself, another notification from the system sounded in Lin Xu's mind:

"The host, worried about the pressure in the kitchen, triggers the side quest 'Recruit Talent'. Please hire at least one head chef or higher-level chef within one week. Upon completion, you will be rewarded with one Perfect Level Dish Upgrade Card."

This could trigger a task too? But a Perfect Level Dish Upgrade Card is quite nice.

Lin Xu planned to complete this task and then upgrade his Ginger Lotus Root.

All the dishes in the store were Perfect Level. This one was the only one at Superior Level, which seemed inconsistent.

"Apprentice, what are you thinking about?"

After his excitement subsided, Old Master Gao asked curiously, seeing Lin Xu silent and contemplative.

Lin Xu snapped back to reality. Looking at Old Master Gao's proud demeanor, he figured his master might want to reveal his identity, so he gave him an opening, "Master, are you really just a handyman in the kitchen?"

These words directly scratched an itch in Old Master Gao's heart.

He straightened his clothes, a look of haughtiness on his face. "I initially wanted to maintain this master-apprentice relationship as an ordinary person, but since you asked, I'll tell you the truth—I used to be the head chef of the Chinese cuisine department at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse!"

Although Lin Xu knew Old Master Gao was a State Banquet Master, hearing the words "Fishing Platform State Guesthouse" still made him gasp.

That was a place often seen only in the news! He had not expected his master to be the head chef there.

"Did you just call Old Master Gao 'Master'?"

Shen Jiayue came over with an empty plate, wanting Lin Xu to serve her some more Crispy Meat. She heard the conversation between Old Master Gao and Lin Xu, her eyes full of curiosity.

"Yes, from today onward, Old Master Gao is my master," Lin Xu said as he took the plate and began serving the meat.

Just like that, he took an apprentice? It felt so lacking in ceremony. Shen Jiayue murmured internally. But since he's XuBao's master, I should probably call him Master too, right?

She called out to Old Master Gao, "Hello, Master!"

Old Master Gao smiled and waved his hand. "In the future, if there's anything you want to eat, just ask. I'll teach your boyfriend how to make it for you."

"Mhm, thank you, Master!"

Shen Jiayue found it very interesting. Just moments ago, she was gossiping about Old Master Gao with Lele, and suddenly, he had become her XuBao's master.

But a State Banquet Master, huh? He could teach XuBao many dishes, right?

After returning with a large plate of meat, Shen Jiayue took a photo of Lin Xu and Old Master Gao busy in the kitchen. She quickly posted it under the Lin Ji's Food topic:

"Congratulations to Boss Lin for officially becoming the apprentice of Master Gao Peisheng! Before retirement, Master Gao was the head chef of the Chinese cuisine department at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse, a true State Banquet Master. Soon, you'll be able to enjoy State Banquet dishes at Lin Ji's Food, so please stay tuned!"

It had just been posted, and comments quickly began to pour in.

"Wow! Congratulations to Boss Lin, congratulations to the lady boss!"

"I often see this old man in the store. Who would have thought he's a State Banquet Master?"

"Last time he even said he was just a handyman!"

"I knew when he was making Nori Egg Drop Soup that his identity was definitely not simple."

"Who could imagine that an ordinary little restaurant like this would have a 'Sweeping Monk' in disguise?"

"Lin Ji's Food is awesome!"

"Really looking forward to what it feels like to eat State Banquet dishes at Lin Ji's! The lady boss is the best!"

"..."

It wasn't long before Uncle Shen from Yue Liyue, Li Qiang, and the others arrived.

After everyone had congratulated Lin Xu and Old Master Gao, they sat to the side and began eating Crispy Meat.

Thanks to the 'State Banquet Master' filter, this made the Crispy Meat taste exceptionally delicious to them.

When Chen Yan and the others had almost finished eating, Shen Jiayue started introducing a few key customers to her cousin, the new girl at Lin Ji's.

Chen Yan got a glimpse into the occupations of these customers: programmers, professional gamers, high school students, e-commerce sellers, a vegetable-selling uncle...

"Does this vegetable-selling uncle come here often too? Brother-in-law, this shop's prices aren't low."

Geng Lele took a small sip of Nori Egg Drop Soup and said, "Uncle Shen sells vegetables just for fun. He owns seven properties in Haidian alone."

Seven properties? Chen Yan was speechless.

She took out her phone and snapped a picture of the empty plate in the middle, asking, "If I post this, it counts as an 'empty plate check-in,' right?"

"Yes, yes! Panda started it, and I was the second person to do the check-in."

Geng Lele looked at the empty plate and suddenly said, "This empty plate doesn't show at all that it's from our Lin Ji. No, I have to design a set of dinnerware for the restaurant—the kind with words on the bottom of the plate! That way, every time someone does an empty plate check-in, they can capture Lin Ji's logo."

"Support!"

"Agreed!"

Shen Jiayue and Chen Yan both gave a thumbs-up, no longer doubting the young genius's ingenuity. They were too intimidated to doubt her now!

As mealtime arrived, more and more customers flocked to the restaurant.

Geng Lele had already gone back to start designing the dinnerware, and Shen Jiayue and Chen Yan also planned to leave the restaurant to find a place to play tennis and burn off the extra food they had eaten today.

Just as they reached the door, a new message appeared on Shen Jiayue's phone:

"Sweetie, it's an emergency! Your mom is making me drink that purple rice porridge again tonight. Can you bring me twenty Chicken Feet when you come? Just leave them in the car; I'll get them later tonight."

Ha! A new business opportunity just walked in!

Shen Jiayue quickly tapped back, "I'm Mom's 'beloved little padded jacket,' you know! How could I betray her trust like that? This will cost extra!"

Shen Guofu transferred two thousand yuan to her.

Shen Jiayue's mood immediately lifted.

She then sent over the photo of the Crispy Meat she had taken earlier.

"Dad, they introduced State Banquet level Crispy Meat here today. It tastes superb! Do you want to try it? [counting money][counting money][counting money]"

The meat-loving Shen Guofu was immediately tempted.

He quickly sent five thousand yuan.

After receiving the transfer, Shen Jiayue was just about to go to the kitchen to have her XuBao pack some Crispy Meat when her mom, Han Shuzhen, also sent a message:

"Daughter, when are you coming back? Remember to bring me a few Chicken Feet. I read online that chicken feet are rich in collagen, good for beauty and skincare..."