

## Culinary 53

Chapter 53: Panda: "I have a friend..."

「8 p.m.」

Once again, the restaurant had sold out of all its prepared ingredients.

Exhausted, Lin Xu sat by the kitchen doorway, sipping a chilled beverage from the refrigerator while browsing a recruitment app on his phone.

Kitchen staffing was limited. Adding Crispy Meat and Sour Plum Soup to the menu would require more staff, so he planned to search online while customers were still in the shop, hoping to find someone suitable. If he found someone, he could arrange an interview for tomorrow.

He opened the filter options, chose the catering category, and set the keyword to "head chef." A list of chefs with head chef experience appeared. Lin Xu clicked on their profiles, examining each one, and messaged those who seemed like a good fit.

However, he was quickly disappointed; the chefs he considered promising all wanted to work in large restaurants and weren't interested in a small, roadside eatery. They wouldn't even consider an interview.

The only one who showed interest immediately listed a string of demands without even agreeing to an interview: "I can come, but you must give me a base salary of 20,000 yuan plus twenty percent shares, and I also want full control over the restaurant's ingredient purchasing..."

Lin Xu didn't finish reading before deleting the person's profile. Man, you might as well just rob the place. It'd be quicker.

"Boss Lin, we're done eating; you guys can start cleaning up," a customer said.

"You've worked hard, Boss Lin. Can you prepare more Chicken Feet in Black Bean Sauce tomorrow? I hear everyone saying how delicious they are."

"Yes, please make more if you can! We want to try them too."

"When will you serve the Crispy Meat, Boss Lin? State Banquet-level Crispy Meat! Just thinking about it makes my mouth water."

"I'm actually hoping you'll add some drinks."

"Me too! I don't like sodas, and I don't want salty soup. I just want something sweet to drink."

"..."

Lin Xu tossed the empty drink bottle into the trash.

Smiling at these customers, he said, "Tomorrow, I'll increase the amount of Chicken Feet in Black Bean Sauce. As for the Crispy Meat and drinks, they will definitely be on the menu within a week. Don't worry, just give me a little more time."

The customers were no longer impatient. In fact, they even started a betting pool under the Lin Ji's Food online topic, speculating with other netizens about what the new drinks might be.

Once the customers had left, Song Tiantian and the others began cleaning the dining area, while Lin Xu and Che Zi started tidying the kitchen.

After finishing up, everyone clocked out.

「In the West Fourth Ring Villa.」

After showering and changing into her little dinosaur pajamas, Shen Jiayue had just settled cross-legged on the sofa to let her hair air-dry when she received a WeChat message from her dad.

She replied rapidly, "Putting them in the car would make it stink of marinade! Besides, they're wrapped in several layers, and it's pretty clean under the car. Just go ahead and enjoy them, Dad."

In the garage, the portly Shen Guofu was unwrapping the Chicken Feet and Crispy Meat his daughter had left for him. His expensive pajamas were wrinkled in several places and even had dust on them. Evidently, this was from when he'd just crawled under the car to retrieve the food, brushing against a wheel.

But now, Shen Guofu couldn't care less about his clothes. His bland dinner left him craving some flavorful food to soothe his wounded soul.

Finally, the packaging was unwrapped. The tantalizing aroma of the Chicken Feet filled the air, and Shen Guofu's irritation at his daughter for hiding the food under the car instantly vanished.

Ah, yes! This is the flavor!

He picked up a chicken foot and began to eat. Now that they had cooled, the once soft and tender texture had become pleasantly chewy, offering a unique flavor. If circumstances allowed, he would have poured himself a glass of aged liquor to properly savor these delicacies.

As he was eating, the phone on the car's hood began to ring. He glanced at the screen, saw it was his wife calling, and quickly put down the chicken foot to answer.

"Where are you? I finished my steam bath and looked all over for you upstairs, but I couldn't find you."

A shiver went down Shen Guofu's spine at Han Shuzhen's words. He cleared his throat and said, "I'm downstairs smoking a... chicken foot... Oh, no, I mean, \*eating\* a cigar... Goodness, what's wrong with my mouth today? Actually, Old Chen gave me two boxes of Cuban cigars today, worth hundreds of US dollars each. I figured I'd try one... I'll head up once I'm done smoking."

Upon hearing he was smoking cigars downstairs, Han Shuzhen muttered, "What's so great about smoking those smelly things anyway? Make sure you brush your teeth and use mouthwash before coming up. Don't bring that stench into the room."

"Alright, alright!"

After hanging up, Shen Guofu let out a long sigh of relief, then picked up the Chicken Feet and continued to gnaw away.

「Upstairs, in the bedroom.」

Like a thief, Han Shuzhen retrieved a small bag of chicken bones and two takeaway containers from the steam room. She carefully disposed of them in the trash can in the second-floor corridor.

I can't eat these again tomorrow. Otherwise, Guofu will definitely get angry...

She made her solemn decision, then turned and went back to her room to apply a face mask.

"Heehee... My mom and dad are now sneaking the Chicken Feet you make behind each other's backs. Our whole house is like something out of 'Infernal Affairs' right now!" Shen Jiayue shared the amusing family incident with Lin Xu, chuckling gleefully.

Lin Xu didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It's just a snack. Is all this secrecy really necessary? Still, since Student Shen's parents enjoy them, I might as well pack some more Chicken Feet in Black Bean Sauce for them tomorrow. Their nanny can simply steam them at home.

"Just bring them to the dinner table tomorrow and let your parents eat them openly," Lin Xu suggested. "Sneaking around like this isn't good for them."

"Okay!"

Since Xu Bao had spoken, it was time to end the 'Infernal Affairs' in her family.

「The next day.」

After ensuring there was enough rice and Steamed Pork Ribs in Black Bean Sauce, Lin Xu filled the remaining space in the steamer with Chicken Feet in Black Bean Sauce. This dish held up well to steaming and was quite popular, so he prepared the maximum possible amount.

"Xiao Xu, you still need to hire people for the back kitchen," Grandpa Gao said, standing in the kitchen with his hands clasped behind his back. Although he wasn't physically helping, he continuously offered guidance to Lin Xu and Che Zi. After all, having been a head chef at the State Banquet level, his understanding of kitchen management far surpassed Lin Xu's.

Lin Xu replied, "I'm planning to hire, but I haven't found anyone suitable yet. I'll keep looking. If worst comes to worst, I'll hire a couple of kitchen assistants as a temporary measure."

「At the same time.」

At the Yinzhou City high-speed rail station, the train bound for Beijing slowly pulled in.

Panda, having finished his work, and Wu Kexin, who had just completed her live stream, stood on the platform. They waited for the train doors to open before boarding.

Finally, back to Beijing to enjoy some delicious food!

Panda diligently stowed their luggage. Then, he took out the Yinzhou snacks Lin Hongqi had given them and placed them on the small tray table.

Wu Kexin, sitting beside him, was on the phone with her agent, Weiwei. They were discussing the success of the past two days' live streams and planning the next one.

After these past two days of interaction, Panda's long-dormant heart began to stir once more. He stole a glance at the beautiful streamer sitting beside him, pondering how to begin his pursuit.

It seems Boss Lin is the only one of my acquaintances in the entertainment circle who isn't single. Maybe I should ask him for advice on how to woo a girl? After all, he's experienced. He must know more about these things.

After thinking for a moment, Panda sent Lin Xu a message: "Boss Lin, I have a friend who's fallen for a girl. He wants to pursue her but doesn't know how. You're experienced, so what do you think is the best way to pursue a girl?"

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Author's Note:

Asking for monthly tickets! Some friends on QQ Reading have commented that Chapters 50 and 51 are duplicates. This is likely a synchronization error from Qidian. Please try clearing your cache and refreshing.

Good night, everyone!