

## Culinary 57

Chapter 57: Sour Soup Dumplings Are Ready! You Covet Her Body, You Are Despicable!

In the live streaming room.

Wu Kexin's fans watched the old man appear on camera, all somewhat puzzled.

"Who is this old guy? He sounds quite arrogant."

"Exactly. Even Boss Lin has never spoken like that."

"I hate people who throw their weight around just because they're old."

"Huh? You bunch of sheltered country bumpkins! This elderly gentleman is Boss Lin's mentor and a retired State Banquet master chef."

"What? Boss Lin's mentor? A State Banquet master chef?"

"Before he retired, this old man was the head chef at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse. Just yesterday, he fried some State Banquet-level Crispy Meat in the shop. It's said that customers almost fought each other just to get a taste."

"..."

Ever since the last live stream, many of Wu Kexin's fans had frequently commented on topics related to Lin Ji's Food.

Since Elder Gao's identity had been revealed yesterday, they were, of course, in the know.

Now, seeing everyone discussing Elder Gao, they couldn't resist chiming in to enlighten everyone.

At this point, all the questioning voices vanished.

Everyone began to discuss just how delicious the State Banquet-level Crispy Meat was.

While Wu Kexin was live streaming in the store, Lin Xu took his keys and went home to grab three portions of frozen dumplings.

These dumplings had all been frozen before being stored in sealed boxes.

The names of the fillings were written on the boxes: Pork with Shiitake, Beef with Scallion, and Fresh Meat with Lotus Root.

"Wow, Aunt Chen's craftsmanship is truly excellent! These dumplings are so beautifully wrapped."

Wu Kexin held up her phone to capture the dumplings Lin Xu had brought.

Already quite hungry, she now felt even more so.

"Aunt Chen is really good to the Demon King."

"Yeah, she carefully wraps each type, then freezes them, and even packs them away in boxes. That's true motherly love!"

"No wonder she could raise someone like Boss Lin."

"Now I have one more reason to be jealous of Boss Lin!"

"The last time I went home, my mom was away on a business trip. She'd also thoughtfully prepared a variety of foods for me—too bad they were all instant noodles."

"Hey, commenter above, are you trying to make me laugh so hard I die and you inherit my credit card debt?"

The atmosphere in the live streaming room was as lively as ever.

After Lin Xu returned, he continued to stand by the large stockpot where the Seasoning Oil was simmering, gently stirring with a spoon to extract as much aroma and moisture as possible from the vegetables and spices by deep-frying them.

"That smells so good! Boss Lin, what are you making?"

Wu Kexin came to the kitchen doorway, curiously looking at the stockpot beside Lin Xu.

The scent emanating from it was incredibly rich, even overpowering the aroma of the Braised Chicken Feet simmering nearby.

She wanted to go into the kitchen to show her fans in the stream, but worried Lin Xu wouldn't agree.

"If you want to film, come on in. I'm making Seasoning Oil."

As soon as Seasoning Oil was mentioned, fans started posting popular jokes related to it—phrases like "that watery, bland soup," "the flavor that hits you with just a pinch," or "the lady boss's toothbrush"—filling the live stream chat with amusement.

Wu Kexin walked into the kitchen, using a selfie stick to give her fans a view of the back kitchen.

The kitchen was clean and bright: no puddles of dirty water, no lingering cooking smoke, and the walls, floor, and areas around the stove were free of thick grease.

The cleanliness amazed the fans in the live stream.

She also filmed the large pot for Braised Chicken Feet, the iron basin for marinating Pork Ribs, and the Phoenix Claws marinating in fermented black bean sauce.

When the camera finally focused on the Seasoning Oil pot, the fans in the live stream were astounded.

The stockpot of oil was filled with all sorts of shriveled, deep-fried vegetables—so many, in fact, that Lin Xu struggled to stir them.

"My goodness, how much must that entire pot of oil cost?"

"I saw huge clumps of what looked like scallion leaves; did they toss in an entire bundle of Scallions or something?"

"No wonder everyone says the Seasoning Oil smells amazing. With so many ingredients, how could it not?"

"It's a shame I'm not in Beijing; otherwise, I'd go to Boss Lin's restaurant every day."

"Hey, commenter above, you wish! As a Beijing local, I've queued up three times and only managed to eat Boss Lin's food once. The other two times, it sold out before I even got to the front of the line."

"I don't even know what to say anymore. Just take my Monthly Ticket, Boss Lin!"

Nearby, Elder Gao filled a large pot almost halfway with water.

He began to cook the dumplings.

As the water was heating, he soaked some seaweed in cold water.

Then he took two large bowls.

He spread the soaked and cleaned seaweed at the bottom of the bowls, then added dried shrimp, Light Soy Sauce, aromatic vinegar, salt, Chili Oil, and a pinch of white sugar to enhance the umami.

Once the water in the pot began to hum (the sound it makes just before a rolling boil), Elder Gao, accommodating their request to have all three types of dumplings mixed together, carefully dropped the rock-hard frozen portions into the pot.

When boiling frozen dumplings, you shouldn't add them to rapidly boiling water, as the turbulence can easily break the wrappers. It's best to add them when the water is just beginning to hum, ensuring the temperature is right and the water isn't too agitated. This helps the dumpling wrappers maintain their integrity as much as possible.

When the water in the pot reached a boil, he added a bowl of cold water to temper it, preventing it from boiling too vigorously.

When it returned to a boil, Elder Gao ladled some of the hot dumpling cooking water into the two prepared bowls.

The hot liquid immediately released a tantalizingly sour, spicy, savory, and fragrant aroma from the seasonings in the bowls.

"Wow! This soup smells so good!"

Wu Kexin, momentarily forgetting about filming the Seasoning Oil, aimed her phone towards Elder Gao.

If I could have a bowl of these sour soup dumplings on a high-speed train, she thought, I could travel for a whole day and night without feeling tired at all.

Once the aroma of the sour soup base filled the air, Elder Gao used a slotted spoon to lift the plump, perfectly cooked dumplings from the pot, distributing them into the two bowls.

After portioning the dumplings, he ladled in a bit more of the cooking water, then sprinkled fresh cilantro and chopped Scallions on top, finishing with a drizzle of sesame oil.

The two bowls of sour soup dumplings were now ready.

"It's a pity the vinegar used here isn't Chili Vinegar; otherwise, the sour and fragrant notes would be even more pronounced," Elder Gao sighed, a hint of regret in his voice for not being able to showcase his full skill due to the lack of ideal ingredients.

Panda, who was outside the kitchen, thought the dumplings were already perfect. It can be even better?

The vibrant green cilantro, dark seaweed, pearly white dumplings, fiery red Chili Oil, and golden sesame oil—the colors alone were enough to make one's mouth water. Combined with the sour, spicy, savory, and fragrant aroma wafting from the bowl, it was utterly captivating.

Wu Kexin pulled an octopus tripod for her phone from her bag and quickly set it up on the table for the live stream.

Then, she pulled Panda to sit beside her in front of the camera, ready to dig in!

"According to our usual live stream routine, this is where I'd describe the food's appearance and all that... but right now, I don't want to say a word. I just want to get these dumplings into my mouth!"

While Wu Kexin was talking, Panda had already started eating.

He picked up a dumpling from his bowl, placed it on his small plate to cool for a moment, then popped it into his mouth.

"Wow! These dumplings are so fragrant..."

Seeing him start, Wu Kexin also hurriedly picked up a dumpling from her bowl, blew on it, and eagerly took a bite.

This one was Fresh Meat with Lotus Root. The savory meat filling was studded with finely diced Lotus Root, adding a delightful crunch. It was incredibly delicious.

After finishing a dumpling, she sipped a spoonful of the sour soup from her bowl.

The complex sour, spicy, savory, and fragrant taste of the soup was deeply satisfying, warming her to her very soul.

"Wow! These sour soup dumplings are so delicious! Thank you so much, Elder Gao!"

Wu Kexin thanked Elder Gao enthusiastically.

She continued to pick up dumplings and eat.

"Hey, don't just focus on eating, keep up the commentary!"

"It looks so delicious."

"Of course, it is! These were cooked by a State Banquet master chef. Never mind dumplings; if he boiled a shoe sole, it would probably be delicious too!"

"It's over. I think Xinxin has been assimilated by Panda."

"Exactly! Xinxin used to chat while live streaming, but ever since she started streaming with Panda, she just focuses on eating. I feel like I'm losing my beloved Xinxin!"

"It's fine if her eating habits get assimilated, just as long as her figure doesn't get assimilated by Panda's!"

"You're definitely just after Xinxin's figure, you perv!"

"..."

As the netizens jovially teased each other in the live stream chat, a black Porsche Cayenne pulled slowly into a parking spot in front of Lin Ji's Food.

The car door opened, and Xie Baomin, casually dressed, emerged carrying several boxes of specialty pastries from the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse's own kitchen.

He clicked his tongue. "Tsk, my little junior brother's shop sure is low-key!"

He glanced at the Lin Ji's Food sign and strode towards the entrance...