

Culinary 59

Chapter 59: The Opportunity to Take Advantage of the System? A Chef that Comes Knocking!

What's going on?

The system's prompt tone conjured up a string of question marks in Lin Xu's mind.

I didn't plan on becoming an all-around chef. How come a task got triggered?

He thought about it. Last time, when Shen Jiayue wanted soup, it triggered the Soup Update reward task. This time, she wanted to eat Snacks, and it triggered another reward task for making Snacks.

Could it be... that all the reward tasks are related to this cute and beautiful girl of mine? If that's the case, in the future, if I want a certain dish, can't I just guide her to mention it to trigger the task and then shear the system's wool?

Lin Xu thought he should give it a try later. If it works, then I can add a few dishes I really like.

But for now, it was better to complete the task of making Snacks first. This task wasn't hard. After all, it was a reward task and inherently came with a reward attribute. Just use the Superior Cooking Learning Card to find a master at making Snacks, and an Excellent Level Snack would be within grasp.

Easy!

Lin Xu let out a light breath. He picked up a rabbit-shaped Snack and took a bite. It was fragrantly soft and slightly chewy, with a hint of Milk Powder lightly sprinkled on the surface, carrying a milky fragrance and a tender texture. It wasn't too sweet, but extremely satisfying. As he slowly chewed, his mood unconsciously brightened.

Delicious! As expected from the State Guesthouse; the flavor, texture, and presentation are all impeccable.

After eating two pieces, Lin Xu returned to the Seasoning Oil, continuing to stir it in the pot. When all the ingredients in the pot were fried until thoroughly dry and golden brown, giving a light, airy feeling when stirred, it meant the Seasoning Oil was ready.

He turned off the heat and carefully moved the soup pot to a corner of the kitchen to cool naturally. At this point, the leftover food scraps couldn't be removed yet. They needed to sit in the soup pot for a full day and night, allowing the oil to fully absorb the fresh and fragrant flavors from each ingredient before being scooped out and drained. The drained scraps didn't need to be discarded; they could be frozen in the refrigerator. Later, some could be taken out, chopped, and mixed into fillings, which would significantly enhance the flavor.

「Around five o'clock.」

Shen Jiayue bustled into the store. She first scanned a thousand yuan at the payment terminal by the door. Then she said eagerly, "I told my parents I'm cooking tonight, and they're planning to come home from work to taste my skills... Quick, quick, quick, pack me some food; I have to hurry home and get ready."

Lin Xu was curious. This girl's family seemed to have several nannies; she was used to having everything done for her and never had to worry about meals or household chores.

What's gotten into her today? She's actually volunteering to cook? Is she trying to be the virtuous wife type?

"My dad said if I cook a meal, he'll buy me a new car. If I take the dishes from here, plate them at home, doesn't that count as me cooking them?"

Your use of 'counts as' is quite telling, Lin Xu silently snarked to himself about Shen Jiayue, then it dawned on him.

A new car just for cooking one meal? A dad like that is so enviable, isn't he? But my own dad isn't bad either. Before the end of last year, he said he'd buy me a car worth about 300,000 yuan to drive whenever I wanted after graduation.

But now, because he was doing business in Beijing and didn't have a vehicle registration quota, the car Lin Hongqi had promised was temporarily unattainable.

Lin Xu pointed to the prepared ingredients and said with a smile, "Tell me what you want to eat, and I'll pack it for you."

Shen Jiayue thought carefully, then said, "Chicken Feet with Black Bean Sauce, Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce, Lotus Root Slices, and Tiger Skin Chicken Feet—I'll take one of each, plus three bowls of rice and three bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup."

Lin Xu gently tapped her nose and warned, "Don't talk like Yue Liyue. Be careful, or you might get used to it and not be able to change back."

"Oh, that won't happen!" Shen Jiayue cutely puffed up her cheeks. She thoroughly enjoyed these casual gestures of affection from her Xu Bao.

Lin Xu took out several takeaway containers and began packing the food. Worried there wouldn't be enough for them, he deliberately added extra to each serving.

"For the Pork Ribs with Black Bean Sauce, after you get home, put them on a plate and steam them for three minutes after the water in the steamer comes to a boil. This will bring out the black bean flavor. The Chicken Feet can be steamed a bit longer. The longer they're steamed, the softer and more tender they become." Lin Xu busied himself packing the dishes while explaining.

After everything was packed, he took out the two boxes of Snacks left by Xie Baomin and had Shen Jiayue take them along as well.

"I'm heading back now... steam the ribs for three minutes after the water boils, and the longer the Chicken Feet are steamed, the better..." Shen Jiayue mumbled Lin Xu's instructions to herself as she walked away.

Soon, the restaurant started to fill up with customers. Lin Ji's Food officially opened for business.

"Order 535, three bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup; order 536, two bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup; order 537, five bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup—Boss, that's ten bowls of Nori Egg Drop Soup in total."

Che Zai looked at the newly printed orders on the kitchen printer and reported the quantity of Nori Egg Drop Soup needed to Lin Xu. Then, grabbing utensils according to the orders, he began serving customers their Chicken Feet, Lotus Root, braised meat rice, or other varieties of rice with toppings.

Lin Xu started boiling water and cracking Eggs to make the Nori Egg Drop Soup that customers had ordered. After he finished, he busied himself rolling out noodles and serving rice, so busy he couldn't catch his breath.

This hustle continued until eight in the evening before it let up. Once the place emptied out, everyone cleaned up their respective areas and locked up for the day.

When Lin Xu returned to the residential complex behind the restaurant, Che Zai and Song Tiantian also headed to the subway station together, ready to take the subway back to their rented shared apartments to rest.

Che Zai rode the subway all the way to the vicinity of the North Sixth Ring. After exiting the subway station, he arrived at a somewhat run-down residential complex. This was where he and some friends from his hometown shared an apartment. The rent was cheap, and almost everyone living in the building worked in the food and beverage industry.

He took the newly installed elevator to the seventh floor. His roommates hadn't returned from work yet, which was something Che Zai was quite proud of. Now, he was the highest earner in their shared apartment and, ironically, also the one who got off work the earliest. His roommates often said he'd struck gold.

He pulled out his keys. Just as he was about to open the door, the door of the neighboring apartment opened first.

"Brother Che Zai, did you talk to your boss? Is he still hiring?" A man in his thirties emerged from the next apartment. He wasn't particularly tall but was solidly built. At the moment, he looked exhausted, like a frostbitten eggplant.

"Brother Jianhua, I can't really say. Although our restaurant is hiring, you only know how to make Cantonese roast meats. Even if you came, there wouldn't be a way for you to use your skills."

"But I can do other things too! As long as your boss gives the nod, I'm willing to do anything." Xu Jianhua's expression was urgent. He had been formally notified of his dismissal that day. He urgently needed to find another job, or he would have no way to pay his mortgage back home or his child's school fees. He was pestering Che Zai because he had heard Che Zai's workplace paid better than others in the industry. Who wouldn't want to earn more if they could? That's why he was hoping Che Zai could put in a good word for him to see if he could get a job at Lin Ji.

Che Zai opened his mouth and said helplessly, "How about this: tomorrow, you go directly to our restaurant and talk to the boss. See what he says. If it works out, then we can be colleagues."

Upon hearing this, Xu Jianhua's expression immediately brightened with joy as he said, "Great! What time do you get up tomorrow? I'll go to work with you and treat you to breakfast."

Che Zai chuckled and waved his hand, saying, "No need. We have breakfast at the restaurant, and it's even more lavish than what you can get outside. Tomorrow, I'll take you to eat at our place. You can taste how delicious a breakfast made by a State Banquet master is!"