

Culinary 63

Chapter 63: So, it's still good to be single! New Drinks!

The delicate, snow-white milk, with its jelly-like consistency, melted the moment she put a spoonful in her mouth. A rich milky fragrance mingled with a subtle spiciness, perfectly complemented by its silky-smooth texture...

So delicious! Shen Jiayue even felt somewhat reluctant to finish it.

BOOHOO, this is a delicacy personally made by my Xu Bao. I really want to preserve it forever.

「Online.」

Under the social media post Shen Jiayue had shared, various responses kept flooding in.

"AAAAH, I wish I had a boyfriend like that!"

"This truly is someone else's boyfriend! I'm so jealous of the lady boss!"

"Another day spent envying the lady boss. When will I ever experience such sweet love?"

"He even sought an apprenticeship for the lady boss... wait, isn't Boss Lin's master a State Banquet Master? Does that mean this Ginger Milk Pudding is also State Banquet-level? Ah, I really want to try it!"

"Lady boss, can I trade ten of my boyfriends for one of yours?"

"I'll trade fifty for one!"

"Geez, is the person above outing themselves as a player?"

Shen Jiayue ate the delicious Ginger Milk Pudding while reading these comments.

"Hmph! I'm not trading! My Xu Bao is a priceless treasure; I wouldn't trade him for anything!"

「In the store.」

Grandpa Gao picked up a piece of century egg with his chopsticks and tasted it. "Hmm, not bad. Since the lotus root itself is tasteless, using less vinegar can bring out its sourness. However, century eggs have their own distinct flavor, so they require more vinegar to achieve that refreshing taste."

Does that mean... I used too little vinegar? But adding more would give it an overpowering sharpness.

"Don't use store-bought vinegar; use Chili Vinegar. You can even make the Mixed Noodles sauce, so you should be able to make Chili Vinegar too, right?"

Lin Xu nodded. The standard Mixed Noodles sauce was, in fact, an improvement based on Chili Vinegar.

Grandpa Gao pointed at a vinegar pot on a table outside and said, "From now on, use Chili Vinegar for all cold dishes. Even the vinegar for customers to use themselves should be Chili Vinegar. Its acidity is mild, and it doesn't have the harshness of raw vinegar, making it more suitable for Northern dietary habits."

We can do that?

It was almost noon, so it was too late to make Chili Vinegar then. Lin Xu planned to prepare a pot in the afternoon and replace all the vinegar in the restaurant with it.

At ten fifty in the morning, as Lin Xu and the employees were having lunch, Panda came in with several employees from his studio. "Yo, are we too early?"

Song Tiantian put some more food in her bowl and then carried it to the cashier counter, asking, "What's the Big Panda having today?"

Panda glanced at his employees and said, "Get them five chicken feet each, a large bowl of marinated meat rice, and a bottle of North Pole... I'll just have a small bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles."

Song Tiantian asked in confusion, "A small bowl? Is that enough for you?"

Panda smiled and responded, "Last night, with nothing else to do, I signed up for a gym class. I plan to work out and lose some weight. Otherwise, I always feel so clumsy."

"TSK TSK TSK, you're just afraid Miss Wu will think less of you, aren't you?"

At the mention of Wu Kexin, Panda immediately became flustered. "You... just hurry up, print the order, and eat your rice before it gets cold."

「Not far away.」

Hearing their conversation, Lin Xu sighed softly.

Who could have predicted that Panda's decision to lose weight for love would affect the restaurant's business the most?

Previously, this Big Panda would consume, at a minimum, two bowls of rice, ten chicken feet, and a plate of cold dishes, along with drinks like soda or beer, costing over a hundred yuan per meal. But now, a twenty-five-yuan bowl of Tomato Egg Noodles was all it took. His spending had plummeted.

So, it really is better to be single.

Panda took the printed order, and upon seeing Xu Xinhua, curiously asked Lin Xu, "Boss Lin, is this a new hire?"

Lin Xu nodded. "This is Master Xu, who just started today. Master Xu, this is President Panda—his online name is Panda Brother, and he's the leader of our restaurant's fan club."

This little restaurant has its own fan club? Xu Xinhua was a bit surprised, but he still stood up and greeted Panda. "Hello, President Pan. I'll be in your care from now on."

Panda laughed. "President this, president that, no need for such formalities! Actually, I should be the one thanking Boss Lin. If you hadn't provided the scenic spot, I would have lost a lot of money this time. Now, not only did I not lose any money, but I actually made tens of thousands."

The scenic area tickets were inexpensive, and the food and drinks weren't costly either. After settling all the expenses, Panda found he still had seventy or eighty thousand yuan left over. The business venture that was almost guaranteed to lose money had unexpectedly turned a profit, leaving him quite pleased.

Of course, the scenic area had also earned a significant amount. When he contacted his family the previous night, Chen Meijuan mentioned they would make at least one hundred thousand yuan, and that didn't even include the profits from selling local specialties and mountain products. Moreover, hosting this event had significantly boosted the scenic area's reputation. It was said that several companies were already contacting the scenic area about group tickets, planning to take their employees for team-building activities.

"Boss Lin, since you have a new employee, does that mean new dishes will be introduced soon?"

Although Panda hadn't been in Beijing for the past few days, he had been closely following every development at the restaurant online. Previously, when Lin Xu was making Crispy Meat, he had promised that due to staff shortages, he couldn't add new Crispy Meat dishes and beverages yet. Now that a new employee had been hired, shouldn't the Crispy Meat and beverages be on the agenda?

Lin Xu smiled and said, "This afternoon, we'll try introducing a new cooling drink to test the waters. Our kitchen team also needs some time to get in sync. As for the Crispy Meat, we'll discuss it once everyone has settled in and is working well together."

Upon hearing this, Panda immediately posted an update in the Lin Ji's Food topic, writing, "Latest news: The restaurant is launching a new cooling drink this afternoon! If you want to try it, make sure to come early. I have a feeling it'll be a limited supply."

After posting, he opened WeChat. TAP TAP TAP. He sent a message to Wu Kexin: "Lin Ji is introducing a new beverage this afternoon. Do you need me to buy one for you in advance?"

"Really? That's great! I was planning to go to the restaurant this afternoon for a live stream anyway. I can discuss some things with Boss Lin then, and I'll treat you to a meal, haha."

「At three in the afternoon.」

Lin Xu poured the vinegar from all the vinegar pots on the dining tables into a large wok and prepared a large batch of Chili Vinegar. Compared to the Mixed Noodles sauce, making Chili Vinegar was simpler. Fry the Scallion and Ginger until fragrant, pour in Chen Vinegar, then boil and simmer. Add a few teaspoons of white sugar to enhance the flavor, then remove from heat and let it cool. Once it had cooled completely, remove the Scallion and Ginger, and it was ready to use.

After making the Chili Vinegar, Lin Xu took out the dried black plum, dried hawthorn, Aged Tangerine Peel, osmanthus, licorice, and yellow Crystal Sugar he had previously purchased from the storage room and began to prepare Sour Plum Soup. This was a very popular traditional drink for beating the summer heat. However, many commercially available Sour Plum Soups were simply made from artificial flavorings and sweeteners. They only tasted cloyingly sweet and lacked any genuine refreshing or cooling effect.

"Black plum reduces greasiness, osmanthus resolves phlegm and disperses stagnation, licorice clears heat and detoxifies, hawthorn lowers lipids and blood pressure, Crystal Sugar boosts qi and moistens the lungs, and Aged Tangerine Peel regulates qi and strengthens the spleen... Are you preparing Sour Plum Soup?"

Grandpa Gao, upon seeing the ingredients for Sour Plum Soup, easily listed the properties of these medicinal components. Anyone who didn't know better would think he was a retired traditional Chinese medicine doctor.

"I've long promised everyone a new beverage. Now that the pressure in the kitchen has lessened, I'll make a pot and try selling it. If it goes well, we'll officially add it to the menu tomorrow."

As the master and apprentice talked in the kitchen, in a white Porsche 911 on the North Fourth Ring elevated highway, Wu Kexin, looking worried, asked Chen Yan, who was driving, "President Chen, this is quite a big deal. What if Boss Lin doesn't agree?"

Chen Yan smiled and said, "Don't worry. Yueyue is a shareholder in our company. If he doesn't agree, we'll have Yueyue step in. Either way, our next store visit needs to blow everyone away!"