

I'M THE CULINARY GOD

Chapter 7 - 007 These customers are easy to deal with, it's a real help when they are busy!

Twelve o'clock noon.

The number of customers in the restaurant had clearly increased, with almost all the seats occupied.

When Lin Xu came out to serve the noodles, he was about to clear away the empty bowls from the table. But a customer stopped him, "Hold on, Boss, let me finish taking photos before you clear them."

Take photos? Lin Xu looked at the empty bowls on the table, licked clean. *Why would you take photos of this? To let people guess what you had for lunch?*

"It's a check-in thing! Someone started an empty bowl challenge, and everyone in the restaurant is doing it. As a Lin Ji boy who also ate here last night, I definitely need to take the lead, right?"

Lin Xu was speechless. *What kind of nonsense is this? Have all the fumes from the kitchen fried my brain? Why can't I suddenly communicate with the customers?*

But if they wanted to take photos, he couldn't stop them.

"Carry on with your work, Boss. I'll put them in the dish basket after I'm done; you don't have to worry about a thing."

"Us too, we'll bring them over after taking photos."

"Right, right, go cook the noodles, Boss. There are so many people waiting to eat."

Lin Xu just couldn't figure it out. *What's so good about taking photos of an empty bowl?*

But since everyone seemed enthusiastic, he didn't say anything more. He returned to the kitchen and got back to work.

More and more customers kept coming. There was even a short queue for a while. Despite the crowd, everyone followed the rules quite well. They quickly cleared their places after eating, then went to one side to take photos of their empty bowls.

So, the empty bowl check-in trend online featured various photos and short videos of empty bowls, like someone holding an empty bowl up to the restaurant's sign for a photo, or holding an empty bowl in front of Lin Xu.

"#LinJi'sFood #BossLin's cooking is unbeatable. Joining the empty bowl bandwagon to prove that I'm a well-behaved Lin Ji boy who eats his meals."

"#LinJi'sFood #WAHAHAHA, I got it, I got it, checking in! Lin Ji girl reporting for duty [Salute][Salute][Salute]"

"#LinJi'sFood #Sneaking a photo of Boss Lin while checking in. I'm a well-behaved Lin Ji girl; did you behave and eat your meals today?"

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Panda never expected that a casual post from him would trigger an empty bowl check-in craze in the restaurant.

After sitting behind the cash register for more than half an hour, the feeling of being stuffed finally began to subside a little. He put away his phone, ready to go back to his e-commerce studio to continue processing orders.

But just as he was about to stand up, a man dressed like a sales representative suddenly approached, handing over a business card. "Boss, I supply beverages and alcohol. Do you have any trading companies you're partnered with?"

Panda glanced at the business card, then placed it on the table. *It seems Lin Ji really doesn't have any trading company partnerships. The store doesn't have a cold drink cooler, nor does it sell beverages. Whenever customers wanted something to drink, Lin Xu would bring out noodle soup for everyone. And come to think of it, the noodle soup is indeed pretty good. Especially when it's cooled down a bit; it's smooth and savory, with a rich noodle aroma.*

Panda snapped out of his thoughts and said to the salesman, "No, we've just opened and haven't gotten around to those things yet."

Lin Xu was busy, and since Panda had nothing else to do, he decided to pretend to be the boss and probe this salesman.

"That's great! Our company specializes in this, with a full range of drinks and alcoholic beverages, partnerships with all major brands, and we even provide free beverage coolers. All you need to pay is a small deposit..."

As the salesman continued his pitch, he took a supply agreement from the bag he was carrying and handed it over.

While the salesman was busy with that, Panda suddenly smiled. *Free? These days, who doesn't know that the most expensive things often come for free?*

He interrupted the salesman, "How much is the deposit?"

"It's not much, just a little bit. Boss, just sign this agreement, and we'll deliver the goods immediately. Your business is doing so well, you should..."

The salesman beat around the bush, not answering the question. Instead, he urged Panda to sign.

Panda chuckled internally. *Even if I sign it, it's useless; I'm not the boss here.* But the more insistent the salesman became, the more Panda felt something was off.

He picked up the agreement to take a look. Panda's brows furrowed instantly. "A regular refrigerated display cabinet costs just over a thousand on the market, yet your deposit is two thousand five hundred? And if we default on payment after signing, we have to pay a tenfold penalty... No wonder you guys are out doing business at noon. With terms like these, you're bound to run into trouble sooner or later."

He returned the business card to the man. "Your company is a bit too rich for my blood. You'd better find someone else to partner with."

The man wouldn't give up and made one last effort, "Boss, all those terms are negotiable; none of that is important..."

Panda waved his hand impatiently, signaling him to leave. Then he took out his phone and dialed a number. "Monkey, what was the name of that trading company we worked with before the New Year? You know, the one where the boss personally delivered goods to small shops and restaurants with his electric tricycle."

A man's voice came through the phone, "It's the Jingou Trading Company, and the boss is Ou Hua. I ran into him at Xidan not too long ago. Boss Ou is really successful now; he's switched from an electric tricycle to a box truck and has several salespeople under him... Why do you ask? Are you thinking of getting into fast-moving consumer goods again?"

Panda replied, "I'm not doing fast-moving consumer goods; it's tiring and doesn't make much money. Send me his number. I have a business opportunity for him."

Soon after, a phone number appeared on his screen. He dialed the number. After exchanging a few pleasantries, Panda got straight to the point, "Boss Ou, my friend opened a restaurant over on Yingchun Street, and business is booming. If you have time, you should bring over a couple of refrigerated cabinets quickly to secure a spot. Bring plenty of stock; I guarantee it'll be profitable for you."

Panda had worked with fast-moving consumer goods trading companies before. He knew quite well that this sector always targeted the end market. Companies that tried to rip off their clients right from the start were rarely honest businesses. The quality of such companies varied wildly, and it was easy to get cheated. So, he decided to find a more reliable one for Lin Xu.

At half-past one in the afternoon, the restaurant was still packed with customers.

Lin Xu said apologetically to several customers waiting in line for noodles, "I'm sorry, everyone. All one hundred and fifty bowls of Tomato Egg Noodles we prepared for lunch have sold out... I'm truly sorry."

The customers let out a collective wail of dismay. "AHHHHHH... I took three subway transfers to get here! Why didn't you prepare more, Boss?"

"Same here! I finally finished my work and was really looking forward to a good meal."

"Several friends recommended this place to me all morning, and you're sold out just as I get in the door?"

"Boss, could you prepare more for the afternoon?"

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Lin Xu took off his apron. His chef's whites were thoroughly soaked with sweat. Panting, he said, "Don't worry, everyone! I'll prepare even more this afternoon. I'll make sure you all get to eat!"

Just as he was speaking, the door was pushed open. A middle-aged man in his forties walked in. "Who's the boss here? I'm Ou Hua. Panda said you were out of drinks and asked me to bring some over. I've also brought a couple of refrigerated cabinets. Where do you want them?"

Lin Xu was pleasantly surprised. *Wow! He even took care of this for me? These customers are amazing; they really pitch in when you need help!*