

Culinary 701

Chapter 701: Braised Rice Can Actually Be This Delicious! Cinderella's Crystal Shoes? _3

Soon after, Lin Xu skimmed the fat from the braised sauce into a bowl and started to take out the braised chicken.

After getting used to it yesterday, now even Xu Xinhua could handle this job.

The neighbors looked at the freshly cooked braised chicken with delight on their faces and started reporting how many they wanted to buy.

After they left in twos and threes carrying their braised chicken, other neighbors came over too, wanting to buy and try the braised chicken.

Old Yanjing folks were used to living in courtyard houses, and whenever they ate something tasty, they liked to spread the word. When other neighbors heard, they went, oh come on, you're the only one who can afford braised chicken? I want some too!

After taking it home and finding it actually tasted great, they became Lin Ji loyalists.

Once all the chicken was taken out, Xu Xinhua scooped out the chicken livers that had been soaking in fresh water for most of the morning to drain them, then poured them straight into the braising sauce used for the braised chicken.

He let them simmer in the braising sauce over low heat.

No need to bring to a full boil, just keep it around eighty to ninety degrees Celsius.

When cooking liver and other tender ingredients, if you use high heat and boiling, it'll turn the food tough and dry.

But if you simmer it on low heat, even when it's cooked through, it'll stay tender and soft.

After putting the livers in, Lin Xu glanced over and dumped in all the fat he'd skimmed off before:

"Liver doesn't have much fat, so you've got to add some in so it tastes richer."

After saying that, he took his empty bowl upstairs.

At eleven in the morning, the customers arrived at Lin Ji's Food again.

Seven days of the National Day holiday—some people go out to play, some go home to visit family, but others simply go nowhere, choosing to catch up on all the sleep they missed during workdays, lying in bed in their rented rooms.

Once they wake up, too lazy to order takeaway, they think of those places they never had time to eat at. After washing up and putting on clean clothes, they take the subway to check off all the restaurants on their "to try" list.

Lin Ji's Food is one of those places.

"A small bowl of oil-poured noodles, half a braised chicken, and a small serving of ginger lotus root."

"Three hometown fried noodles, one pressed pig head meat, and one dry-fried green beans."

"Two bowls of tomato egg noodles, three bowls of noodles with braised eggplant and pork sauce, a large serving of beef in baked flatbread, one egg yolk baked pumpkin, and one black bean pork ribs."

"One steamed sea bass, one stir-fried yellow beef, and three bowls of rice."

"..."

The customers each called out what they wanted to eat.

After ordering, they'd glance at the dishes on other tables and ask the servers what those were if they saw something they liked.

At Lin Ji, you don't have to worry about waiters making random recommendations, because they've tried every dish on the menu—more than once, in fact.

Sometimes customers can't decide what they want, so they just describe their favorite flavors and let the waitstaff recommend something.

Since opening, no one's ever regretted their order.

While waiting for their food, everyone's favorite topic was Dundun.

Nobody would've guessed that the little guy, who usually looked so cocky in front of customers, could actually be so obedient.

Quite a few people went to the service desk to take selfies with Dundun.

The little one put on his stinky, stuck-up face again.

He didn't refuse, but don't expect him to cooperate either.

Zeng Xiaoqi and the others finished lunch, didn't have anything to do, so they went with Shen Baobao and Dou Wenjing to the nearby cinema to watch a movie.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu kept busy in the kitchen until almost noon. Then he came downstairs to check on the chicken livers.

There were dozens of pounds of chicken liver.

If they tasted good, they'd start selling immediately.

If not, he'd get the upstairs chefs to help figure out a way to use them up.

"How's the taste?"

As he stepped into the braised section, Lin Xu saw Xu Xinhua eating a chicken liver.

"Tastes fantastic! The liver's super tender. For a second I was worried there'd be blood oozing out, but it's cooked through—there's not a trace of blood."

Really?

Xu Xinhua handed him a small basin full of freshly scooped chicken livers.

Lin Xu picked one up to taste—it really was tender.

Chicken liver has a delicate texture. The strong umami explodes in your mouth, and with the braising sauce and just the right level of saltiness, these chicken livers are truly well made.

No wonder—it's the perfect level braising sauce from the braised chicken. Of course it's good.

Too bad he was already full; otherwise, he'd grab a hot baked flatbread and stuff the liver inside—eating it all warm and toasty would be heaven.

"Then go ahead and plate them for sale. When you plate them, cut them up a bit—don't serve a big clump that customers can't eat properly."

"I got it, boss, no worries."

Lin Xu took out a few more livers from the bowl, sliced them up, then carried the plate to the service counter and handed it to Shu Yun:

"New braised chicken liver—try it, and have the servers recommend it to the customers."

He ruffled Dundun's head and went back upstairs to continue working.

Shu Yun picked up a piece of chicken liver with a toothpick and tasted it—her eyes lit up instantly.

It was delicious. Those who went to the movies would definitely miss out on such a tasty new dish.

She handed the plate to Song Tiantian, asking the front desk manager to go find the floor supervisors on the first, second, and third floors, so they could not only inform everyone but also taste the chicken liver themselves and know what to expect.

Just as Song Tiantian left, a tall, handsome figure appeared at the door.

Ren Jie, who hadn't been around for days, walked in.

Normally, he'd head straight to find a seat, but today he drifted over to the service desk instead—a bit out of character.

Shu Yun looked curiously at this police officer who looked like a male model and greeted him with a smile:

"Hello, Officer Ren! Here to eat or looking for our Manager Chen... Chef Chen?"

Chef Chen is thousands of miles away right now—no way he could come meet you.

Chapter 702: Braised Rice Can Be This Delicious! Cinderella's Crystal Shoes? _4

Ren Jie smiled, first gently scratching Dundun's chin, then asked with a smile, "Is Chef Chen busy upstairs?"

"No, she took advantage of the National Day holiday to head back to her hometown."

Shu Yun felt that after coming to Lin Ji, she hadn't learned much else, but she was becoming smoother and smoother at lying. She had intended to say Chef Chen was on vacation. However, considering that the service industry was looking forward to recovering its losses during the seven-day National Day holiday, how could they let someone take a vacation at such a critical time? So she told a lie.

"Went back to her hometown?"

Ren Jie was somewhat surprised. This junior chef, returning home when the restaurant is at its busiest... isn't she afraid of being fired?

He casually asked, "Where is Chef Chen's hometown?"

"The Hulun Grassland."

Ren Jie was taken aback. "For real? She's from the Hulun Grassland?"

Shu Yun took out her phone, opened the "Good Sisters' Cups Stay Full" group chat, and scrolled to the vanity photo Chef Chen had posted yesterday. She showed Ren Jie the full-screen image. "Look, she just got home and already changed into a Mongolian robe. Pretty, isn't it?"

Ren Jie looked and agreed that it indeed looked much better than that ill-fitting chef uniform.

Thinking about a girl from the grasslands braving the journey to make her way in Beijing alone, she must have endured a lot of hardship and suffered many grievances. That's why you never see this kind of smile at the restaurant.

Only when she's back home can she let down her guard and her insecurities to peacefully enjoy the warmth of family.

Because of his preconceived notions, Ren Jie had already concocted a whole narrative in his mind about a grassland girl's struggles and hardships in Beijing. The more he thought about it, the more moved he felt. If only he had met the junior chef sooner.

After another glance, Ren Jie curiously asked, "This photo doesn't look like it was taken with a phone."

Shu Yun was momentarily stumped. Didn't Chef Chen say Officer Ren was just a local beat cop? This kind of observational skill doesn't seem like that of a regular officer from a local station.

Taking a deep breath, her mind racing, she said, "Yesterday, soon after Chef Chen got home and changed into her Mongolian robe, a group of photographers happened to be nearby doing some location shooting. Since her birthday is coming up, she asked one of them to take a picture of her as a birthday gift to herself. The artistic conception and composition of the photo are quite good, right? It cost her five hundred."

After speaking, Shu Yun internally regretted her words. I shouldn't have spun such an elaborate tale. If he keeps asking, I won't know how to get out of this.

However, Ren Jie didn't dwell on it at that moment. Instead, he inwardly grumbled, Five hundred for one photo? That's more expensive than a traffic police snapshot.

Speaking of traffic police, the image of the white sports car he had seen at the entrance popped into his mind. He hadn't seen that car this time and wondered if it had been improperly parked recently.

"What would you like to eat, Officer Ren? I'll have someone arrange it." To prevent further questioning, Shu Yun calmed herself and decided to change the subject.

Ren Jie pointed to the walkie-talkie hanging on his waist. "I'm on patrol nearby, so I can't eat now. Maybe after I'm off duty... Manager Shu, I have a little question I'd like to ask you, but I feel it might be a bit presumptuous..."

Presumptuous? What does he mean?

Curious, Shu Yun asked, "Just say what's on your mind, Officer Ren. Chef Chen and I are good friends privately. Just say it; no need to beat around the bush."

Ren Jie cleared his throat and asked softly, "I was wondering... what shoe size does Chef Chen wear?"

Shoes? Shu Yun was surprised. What's going on? Why would a police officer suddenly ask about shoe sizes?

She raised an eyebrow. "Officer Ren, why are you asking about our Chef Chen's shoe size?"

Ren Jie looked somewhat embarrassed. "I've noticed she always wears the same pair of shoes. The weather is getting cooler, and her birthday is coming up. So, I thought I would buy her a new pair. I just want to make sure I don't get the size wrong, which is why I'm asking you."

So that's it, Shu Yun thought. She said, "Our Chef Chen wears size 39 sneakers."

Only after saying it did she realize. Is this young cop mistaking our number 00001 member, Chen Baiwan, for Cinderella? But this Cinderella is far from being downtrodden. Her wealth even surpasses that of you, the 'Prince'.

Tsk, tsk, tsk... I'm really looking forward to what happens next!

Chapter 703: Isn't This More Exciting Than Watching a Movie? Lin Ji's Food Braised Delicacies Section is on the Rise!

"Manager Shu, when is Chef Chen's birthday?"

Oh? Asking for shoe size and now for the birthday. If I didn't know that our Chef Chen also secretly liked you, I really wouldn't dare reveal too much.

Shu Yun said with a smile, "It's on the 23rd of this month. The restaurant will host a birthday banquet for her, and if Officer Ren is free, he's welcome to join us."

Ren Jie nodded eagerly, "Definitely, I will definitely attend."

As he spoke, he kept scratching Dundun's chin, making the little guy purr contentedly.

But since he was on patrol, he couldn't stay long.

After chatting casually for a bit, Ren Jie said, "Thanks for the information, Manager Shu. I have to get back to my patrol. See you!"

After finishing, he looked down and said to Dundun, "I'm off then. I'll scratch you next time."

"Wait a moment, Officer Ren."

Shu Yun called out to him, then picked up the intercom at the front desk and said, "Bring down a few small sesame flatbreads, stuffed full of beef, as fast as you can."

There was an intercom connecting the front desk and the second-floor kitchen. However, with many employees and an automated ordering system, it was rarely used except in urgent situations. For instance, Officer Ren was here asking about Chef Chen's personal details. A police officer, still on patrol this late, likely hadn't eaten yet. Letting him go hungry wasn't an option.

Soon, a young staffer came down the stairs with a bag, saying, "Manager Shu, here are the beef-stuffed flatbreads you asked for. There are eight. Is that enough? I can get more if it's not."

Ren Jie hurriedly said, "That's plenty, thank you so much... I don't have my membership card with me. Should I scan to pay?"

Shu Yun chuckled, "No, no, no! If Chef Chen found out we took your money, there's no telling how she'd deal with us. Please, just take them and eat. Have something to tide you over; they're not worth much anyway."

Ren Jie decided he would bring his membership card next time to pay for them, so he didn't decline further. He thanked her again and left Lin Ji's Food, bag in hand.

Once outside, he didn't immediately start eating the flatbreads. Instead, he took out his phone, opened WeChat, and with a quick TAP-TAP-TAP on his screen, sent a message to his mom:

"Mom, I think I'm falling for a girl. She's not a local, her education isn't very high, and she's in the culinary industry that you guys look down on..."

Right after sending it, his mom replied:

"What about the overseas graduate with a master's degree Aunt Wang introduced? She's beautiful, obedient, and you wouldn't even meet her. You know where your father and I stand on this."

Ren Jie frowned and continued to text, "But I like her!"

"What did she do to make you like her so much?"

What did she do?

Ren Jie recalled his encounters with the assistant cook.

There was nothing earth-shattering, nor heart-wrenchingly memorable. Just eating and chatting, that's all. Every time he saw the assistant cook so carefully maintaining her Head Chef persona, he found her adorable. He wanted to pinch her pretty cheeks and say, 'Stop pretending, I know you're just an assistant cook.' But then he'd think that this might be her only way to satisfy a bit of vanity, so he'd resist exposing her and even help her maintain the facade.

Now, looking at his mom's message, Ren Jie replied, "She treated me to a meal."

"You'd cast your parents' words aside just because she treated you to a meal? Jie, when you insisted on joining the army, your parents didn't stop you. After you were discharged, you went to the police

academy, and your parents didn't say anything then either. But marriage is a serious matter; you can't be so willful anymore."

Seeing this message, Ren Jie took a deep breath and replied coldly, "I want to make my own decisions about my marriage. I'm on patrol and need to get back to work."

He pocketed his phone, picked up the bag of beef-filled flatbreads, and was about to walk on when a Highlander with temporary license plates suddenly turned and pulled up beside him.

The window rolled down, revealing Captain Sui Fusheng's weather-worn face: "Get in!"

Ren Jie opened the door and sat in the passenger seat. Just as he closed the door, Sui Fusheng reached for the bag, glanced at the beef flatbreads inside, and nonchalantly took one, biting off a large chunk. "It has to be Lin Ji's, right? These little flatbreads are so exquisite yet delicious, a perfect match for the beef... Why aren't you eating? Did you already eat at the restaurant?"

Ren Jie replied with slight distress, "I impulsively told my mom I like the assistant cook. She's pretty firm: no one with a 'low education' is allowed through our family's door."

Sui Fusheng took another bite, leaving just a corner of the flatbread. "So don't have her enter. You have your own little place, don't you? That's enough to get married in. Lots of people drifting in the big cities just wear new clothes, treat friends to a meal in a rented apartment, and call it a wedding. Life can be much simpler if you're not too hung up on formalities... Man, this flatbread is delicious! I'm having two more. I'll treat you to grilled skewers tonight."

Their relationship was like that of a mentor and friend, and they got along harmoniously.

Ren Jie took one flatbread out to taste. It was indeed delicious. Especially since he'd been so busy he hadn't even had time for a bite to eat, having a flatbread like this was incredibly comforting.

"Captain, what do you think I should do?"

"Why think so much? What if she's the one who decides a detective's life—always facing danger—is too much and doesn't want to be with you? The boat will probably sink when it reaches the bridge anyway. Just let nature take its course."

While Ren Jie was troubled, a completely different scene was unfolding on the Hulun Buir grasslands.

After seeing Mr. Gao off, Chen Yan mounted the most beautiful white horse in the camp and galloped across the grassland. She was a senior member of the Equestrian Club and an experienced rider.

Chapter 704: Isn't this more exciting than watching a movie? Lin Ji's Food Braised Dishes Department is perking up! _2

In the past, I always rode horses at the club. The grounds were small and crowded, so it wasn't satisfying at all. But today was different! Galloping freely on the vast grasslands—it was exhilarating! Overwhelmed with joy, I even found myself belting out, "Heroic riders, bold and strong..."

"Weiwei, is President Chen always so... freewheeling?"

The new employees at the company were horrified to see President Chen riding around like a madwoman, a stark contrast to her usually commanding and cool demeanor. Who could have imagined that the lady CEO had such a quirky side?

Weiwei smiled and said, "She's always been this quirky. She's always determined to lose weight, yet she eats more than anyone else at mealtimes."

As she was speaking, her phone buzzed from the bag she carried over her shoulder.

It was President Chen's bag. She had handed it to Weiwei for safekeeping while riding, afraid that the phone and other items might fall out.

Opening the bag, Weiwei pulled out the phone, which displayed an incoming call from "Shu Yun with her Exaggerated Cup Size."

President Chen had mentioned that anyone tagged with such a nickname was an insider, and it was okay to answer the call on her behalf.

She answered, and Shu Yun's gentle voice came through the receiver: "President Chen, I've got something to tell you."

"Hello, Director Shu, this is Weiwei. President Chen is currently out riding on the prairie."

"We'll talk when she's done horsing around then. Just ask her to call me back. It's nothing urgent."

After hanging up, Weiwei looked at the phone, somewhat puzzled. Exaggerated cup size... What cup size did Director Shu exaggerate?

Before long, everyone else had returned to camp for lunch. Weiwei stood on a gentle slope outside the camp, watching Chen Yan happily cantering back toward the camp on her horse.

"Weren't you going to ride for two hours? It's been less than half an hour," Weiwei called out.

As the white horse approached, Chen Yan deftly jumped down, then grabbed the reins and patted the horse's head twice—a common way riders bond with their horses.

Seeing no one around, she then adjusted her Xiongxiang. "Not wearing a sports bra—it's been swinging around! Having large Xiongxiang is really a hassle."

Weiwei was speechless. You only dare to seek validation from us flat-chested folks. See if you dare show off in front of the boss's wife! Really, with no large Xiongxiang in the company, the D-cups reign supreme. Next time, we absolutely must recruit a couple of E or F-cup female streamers to bring down the arrogance of a certain D-cup lady.

Weiwei took the horse's reins and then passed the red Hermes bag to Chen Yan. "Director Shu called for you. I'm not sure what it's about."

"Little Yunyun called me?"

Chen Yan pulled out her phone, opened WeChat, and @Shu Yun: "You called? What's up?" What couldn't be said in the group chat that required a call? She should just say it and let the women with smaller chests in the group have a good laugh!

Soon, Shu Yun replied with a message: "Ren Jie just came by the store asking about your shoe size."

The moment the message was sent, Zeng Xiaoqi, who had been lurking, posted a surprised emoji: "What's going on? Is he planning to buy you shoes?"

Dou Wenjing followed up: "The Prince, worried Cinderella might have big feet, specifically asked for her size before buying the Crystal Shoes... Tsk tsk tsk, a certain millionaire Cinderella should remember to wash her feet often, so she doesn't end up stinking out her Prince."

Chen Yan sneered. Humph, jealousy! Doudou is definitely jealous.

Just as she was about to retort, Shen Baobao also chimed in: "Am I about to get another brother-in-law?"

What does she mean, 'another'? I've only ever dated one person, alright? She can't treat one instance as if it were a hundred!

Curious, Shu Yun asked: "Weren't you guys watching a movie? It's not very considerate to be on your phone in the theater."

"No, we came out early. The movie portrayed wealthy people so poorly that even I, as a wealthy person, couldn't stand it. I've really had it with these inexperienced scriptwriters and directors who rely solely on imagination."

Chen Yan didn't dare to chat in the group and directly called Shu Yun. "Let's talk about this over the phone to avoid unsettling certain individuals... To set the record straight, I've only ever dated once."

Within less than half a month, the other person went abroad to study, and then we completely lost contact. Yueyue has been ribbing me about it for years."

On the other end of the phone, Shu Yun laughed. "I'm not Officer Ren, why are you giving me such a detailed explanation?"

She described Ren Jie's visit in detail and then said, "Now that he's taking the initiative, are you still going to keep playing Cinderella?"

I... Chen Yan suddenly panicked. Why did I have to pretend to be the head chef at Lin Ji's Food back then! I really regret it!

After thinking it over, she said, "I'll text the little policeman first, and then explain it to him in person when I get back."

After hanging up, she found Ren Jie's phone number and quickly typed out a message: "Ren Jie, this is Chen Yan. I'm currently at Hulun Prairie. When I get back to Beijing, I'd like to talk to you about something."

Just as he finished his sesame cake and was drinking mineral water, Ren Jie saw the message and instantly perked up. So you're finally not going to pretend to be the head chef anymore, huh? Good. It's been quite exhausting for everyone to carefully play along with your act. Since you're being open and honest, I might as well reveal my true identity. The captain was right; as a criminal police officer constantly navigating life-and-death situations, I should inform her in advance. This will avoid putting the little assistant chef in a tough spot later.

Thinking of this, he replied: "What a coincidence, I also have something to tell you. Let's talk when you get back. We can have a good chat then."

「In the store.」

Shu Yun hung up the phone. Seeing the queue outside the braised food counter, she said to Song Tiantian.

Chapter 705: Isn't this more exciting than watching a movie? Lin Ji's Food Braised Dishes Department is perking up! _3

"Send another server to the marinade section to help with packing. I didn't expect opening that little window would boost business so much."

When Lin Xu first proposed setting up the marinade section on the ground floor, many in the restaurant objected. They felt the kitchen was already spacious enough and a separate marinade section was unnecessary.

But now, seeing the queue of people outside waiting to buy marinated food, Shu Yun was filled with admiration.

The boss really has foresight.

If this small window is managed well, it could definitely make more money than the marinated meat shops outside.

Eventually, the Marinade Section might become the most profitable part of the restaurant.

"I'll take two roast chickens, a pound of chicken livers, and a pound of that pressed pork head. Don't forget the dipping sauce; I can never get it right at home."

"I want one roast chicken, a pound of chicken livers, and three pounds of chicken feet. Can you make it quick? Lunch is starting soon, and I need to get back to prepare."

"I'd like two pounds of chicken livers, three pounds of chicken feet, and a duck product platter. I'm staying in today; planning to rewatch the *Demon Realm* trilogy during the holiday."

"..."

Once word got out about the delicious roast chicken, it wasn't just the older neighborhood regulars lining up for marinated food; even younger people enjoying their holiday break joined the queue. They'd buy some marinated food to take home, watch a movie, play some games, and unwind.

Upstairs, Lin Xu finished his tasks, wiped his hands, and planned to go downstairs to check on the chicken liver sales. If they were selling well, chicken livers could become a flagship product. According to the ordering system, not many chicken livers were being ordered inside the restaurant. Most diners, especially those in the upstairs private rooms, were still primarily ordering roast chicken—every table upstairs had one.

"Boss, you're a genius! Opening that little window has dramatically boosted business for the Marinade Section."

As he was coming down the stairs, Shu Yun approached him to report on the Marinade Section. Lin Xu looked through the glass door of the Marinade Section and saw quite a few neighbors waiting outside.

He said with a smile, "I was just trying to make things more convenient for the neighborhood residents. I had no idea it would be this effective."

Since the neighbors were all queuing outside, he decided to go say hello.

Entering the Marinade Section, everyone inside was busy. The chicken livers, which had previously been a slow seller and a point of concern, were now down to less than ten pounds. And the duck products, which usually only needed to be marinated once a day, were almost gone. The stock of other marinated items had also dwindled considerably.

At that moment, Xu Xinhua was busy arranging the duck products. Nearby, fresh chicken livers soaked in a sink; he was apparently planning to marinate another batch in the afternoon.

Upon seeing Lin Xu enter, Xu Xinhua said, "I really didn't expect business to boom like this, Boss! We need to restock everything, including chicken feet. If we don't hurry and marinate more, we might not have enough for the restaurant this afternoon."

Tiger Skin Chicken Feet had always been a signature dish at the restaurant, and they sold very well. Ever since they acquired the large pot, Tiger Skin Chicken Feet were usually made once a day and then kept warm in a thermal cooker. But with the take-out window opening today, all the flagship products became bestsellers, leading to stock shortages.

Lin Xu said, "Then keep at it. Are you short-staffed? If so, I can call a couple of kitchen assistants down from upstairs."

"We're good, the few of us can manage, but..." Xu Xinhua hesitated before asking, "Could we get a couple of chefs for cold appetizers? Since we're already selling marinated food, and the profit margin on small cold appetizers is so high, there's no reason we shouldn't get into that business."

HUH!

He hasn't even mastered marinated food, and he's already thinking about cold appetizers.

Is he planning to make every other department obsolete?

Lin Xu said, "Let's focus on the marinated foods first. Once we've built a reputation for those, then we can talk about cold appetizers."

Even though cold appetizers have high profit margins, they can't be our flagship product. They might sell like crazy for a few days when they're new, and then interest could completely die down.

Uncle Ge used to say, 'Take too big a step, and you'll pull something.' That applies to running a restaurant too.

You can't just chase every profitable venture; you have to consider the overall situation.

「That evening.」

As the staff prepared for their dinner, Xu Xinhua, who usually had the kitchen assistants fetch his meals, came upstairs himself, his face beaming with pride:

"Well, well, steamed buns this afternoon, are they? Not Chives filling, I hope? I wouldn't dare eat Chives; don't want to offend the customers of our Marinade Section with the smell."

"I could use some of those pickled vegetables, but no chili, please. Spicy food makes you drink more water, and more water means more bathroom trips, which really disrupts the Marinade Section's operations."

"Is there any light soup? After being surrounded by the aroma of various braising stocks all afternoon, my throat feels coated. I need something light to clear it. Keeping up this pace is exhausting."

"..."

The Marinade Section was finally thriving, and Master Xu's face glowed with pride.

Finally, I'm starting to look the part of Head Chef of the Marinade Section!

The next step is to upgrade this 'Head Chef of the Marinade Section' title to 'Executive Chef of the Marinade Section'!

Wei Qian and the others had been enjoying their meal, but now they felt a sense of pressure.

Damn it, if you guys in the Marinade Section keep this up, we'll start selling marinated food upstairs too!

Dou Wenjing nudged Zeng Xiaoqi with her elbow: "This morning, when you came to the restaurant for your meal, you were just like Master Xu, so smug your nose was in the air. You probably didn't even know your own name, did you?"

Zeng Xiaoqi: "..."

I was just a little pleased with the video I made. How could I have been **that** arrogant?

Slander! This is absolute slander!

She took a bite of her steamed bun; this meat-filled bun really hit the spot.

Too bad the soup today was just so-so. It was Zhuang Yizhou's Pingqiao Tofu Soup. While fresh and delicious, it was a bit too light to go with the buns.

A hot and sour soup would have been more appetizing and a better match.

Just as she was mulling this over, Lin Xu, having finished his work, came over. He sat next to Shen Baobao, took a bite of a bun, and sipped some tofu soup, murmuring to himself,

"This soup isn't a good match. Next time, I'll make hot and sour tripe soup. A tangy and spicy soup goes much better with steamed buns."

"Great idea! Oh, right, Xu Bao, Sister Yan might be getting a boyfriend!"

"Really? Tell me everything!"

The moment this topic came up, Dou Wenjing, Zeng Xiaoqi, Shu Yun, and Shen Baobao all perked up, ready for gossip. Only Geng Lele, who had come to scrounge a meal, remained indifferent: "Boyfriends, girlfriends, it's all so dull. Isn't studying far more interesting?"

「Meanwhile, at the Longqi Mountain Scenic Area in Yinzhou City.」

A different scene was unfolding. Shen Guofu stood at the highest point of the Star Sky Base, gazing through binoculars at the lush pasture in the distant valley, muttering to himself,

"This view reminds me of the photos Sister Yan posted on her social media feed from the Hulun Great Grassland. Going for a horse ride there isn't easy, but here..." "Hey, honey, what do you think about me investing in a Horse Farm here?"

Han Shuzhen, beside him, couldn't help but grumble: "Weren't you just here to sightsee? Why the sudden urge to invest in a Horse Farm? If you build one, who's going to manage it? The in-laws are already swamped with the scenic area, let alone a Horse Farm..."

Shen Guofu smiled: "Who will be in charge? We've had the perfect candidate in mind for ages!"

Chapter 706: Uncle: I can't even raise chickens properly, and you want me to raise horses? Hot and sour tripe soup!

Yinzhou City.

The farmhouse restaurant within Longqi Mountain Scenic Area.

As the sun began to set, tourists, who had been out enjoying themselves all day, began arriving in twos and threes to eat.

On the grills set up in the courtyard, several whole roasted lambs, golden brown, were sizzling with oil. When Lin Xu's second uncle-in-law, Shi Wenming, came over to baste them with clarified oil, tourists frequently asked, "Chef, is this really Boss Lin's roasting technique?"

While asking, they also took out their smartphones or cameras to film short videos.

As he basted, Shi Wenming said, "This is indeed the roasted whole lamb method my nephew taught me. Even the dipping sauce is sent from his place, Lin Ji, in Beijing. You'll see when you taste it."

At his words, all the surrounding tourists looked on with anticipation. Since this was the method taught by Boss Lin, and the dipping sauce was also shipped from Lin Ji in Beijing... Doesn't that basically mean Boss Lin is personally making roasted whole lamb for us?

After Shi Wenming finished basting, he turned to the waiters attending to the grill and said, "Keep an eye on the rotisserie speed; slow it down if it's too fast. The lamb is almost ready, so just a gentle rotation will do."

It was National Day, and the scenic area's business was booming. Consequently, Shi Wenming suggested to Lin Hongqi and Chen Meijuan that they recruit some helpers. He worried that if he were on his own, he'd burn out before the holiday even ended.

Chen Meijuan recruited some nimble women from nearby villages as servers and hired a few village banquet chefs to bolster the kitchen staff.

Shi Wenming finally had the bearing of a head chef.

After returning the basting oil to the kitchen, he wiped his hands and went to a newly opened private room adjacent to it.

Inside were the honored guests for this National Day holiday: Shen Guofu and his wife. They were accompanied by Chen Meijuan, Chen Meide, and Chen Meiliang—the three siblings—as well as other relatives like Second Aunt Lin Hongxia and Eldest Uncle Lin Hongjun.

Lin Hongqi was simply too busy to even think about eating.

Shen Guofu said as he poured Shi Wenming a glass of wine, "Brother Wenming, your rustic dishes are truly exceptional! My son-in-law may be a culinary consultant at the Fishing Platform State Guesthouse now, but when it comes to home-style country cooking, you're the most authentic."

These relatives were truly genuine. The previous day, when their high-speed train still had half its journey to go, a whole crowd of them had gone to the station to meet Shen Guofu and his wife. As soon as they met at the station exit, everyone was full of solicitous questions and warm welcomes, making Shen Guofu feel deeply respected. This greatly pleased Shen Guofu, who had always enjoyed a bit of fanfare.

Upon their arrival at the scenic area, Old Mrs. Lin and Old Mrs. Chen were already waiting. The entire extended family had a boisterous lunch together, after which they all accompanied Shen Guofu and his wife on a walk up the mountain, treating them as if they were long-lost kin.

Of course, Shen Guofu was also very generous. He distributed a variety of valuable gifts—fine leather goods, cigars, pipes, barware, antiques, calligraphy and paintings, wrist malas, and Buddhist prayer

beads—handing them out as freely as if they were water. Even Shi Wenming's daughter, Shi Mollie, received a pink, diamond-studded hair clip, which delighted the little girl so much that she kept calling him "Good Uncle Shen!"

Shen Baobao had stayed here for a week on her previous visit and remembered all the relatives' names and preferences clearly. So, before this trip, Shen Guofu had specifically chosen gifts tailored to each person. There was something for every adult and child. His daughter had been so thoroughly pampered by the whole family during her visit; this time, he, Old Shen, absolutely had to show his appreciation.

Shi Wenming raised his wine glass, clinked it against Shen Guofu's, and said, "It's Second Brother who provides such excellent ingredients. Whether it's the eel, the crabs, or this soft-shelled turtle, they're all absolutely first-rate."

Chen Meijuan's second brother, Chen Meiliang, chuckled, "It's all from our own reservoir. Just cast a net casually, and you'll haul them in."

After three rounds of drinks, Shen Guofu raised his glass and said, "I've noticed the valley area within the mountains is quite large and relatively flat. So, I'm thinking of investing in a Horse Farm. If we do, it could become the first Equestrian Club in the Central Plains. It would be quite distinguished and could also boost tourism. What does everyone think?"

Chen Meijuan had initially assumed her son's father-in-law was just visiting to eat, drink, and have some fun. She hadn't expected him to actually want to invest in the scenic area.

Such a significant investment was naturally a good thing, but if they built a Horse Farm in Yinzhou, would people actually come to ride? She'd heard that raising horses was incredibly expensive. If it lost money, wouldn't that be letting her in-law down?

Just as she was about to voice her concerns, Shen Guofu continued, "This isn't an impulsive idea. The environment here is excellent. It's encircled by mountains, naturally suited for raising horses. And the grounds are expansive enough for riders to gallop to their hearts' content."

He went on to list numerous benefits of raising horses, leaving his audience rather mystified.

Finally, Shen Guofu raised his glass to Chen Meiliang and said, "Second Brother, investing in a Horse Farm is a major commitment, and I wouldn't be comfortable without a family member overseeing it. Everyone else in our family has their own work. You, Second Brother, live like a carefree spirit. How about you do me the favor of getting things started and managing it for me?"

Chen Meiliang was momentarily stunned.

He had merely come over to have a few drinks, chat, and then planned to return to his little cabin by the reservoir for a good sleep. This request had caught him completely off guard.

However, as Yinzhou City's once-famous "Chicken King," Chen Meiliang did feel a flicker of interest in raising horses. It was mainly because he hadn't had much contact with horses before. Although his net worth had once surpassed the ten million mark during his heyday, his prosperity had been too brief. He hadn't even had time to pick up the bad habits of the wealthy, like indulging in debauchery, before he went bankrupt.

Hmm, as long as you go bankrupt quickly enough, the vices of the rich can't catch up to you.

Shen Guofu sat down beside Chen Meiliang and said, "After my daughter returned last time, she specifically mentioned you. She said that you, Second Brother, are a lot like me. I've also gone bankrupt several times, burdened by enormous debt. But I just couldn't accept defeat, so I gritted my teeth and persevered until I pulled through. You, on the other hand, Second Brother, after experiencing such turmoil, seem to have gained true perspective and detachment, living like a carefree spirit. To be honest, I truly envy you."

Chapter 707: Uncle: I can't even raise chickens properly, and you want me to raise horses? Hot and sour tripe soup!

Chen Meiliang had accumulated a hefty amount of debt, but the fact that he managed to pay it all off in just a few short years was quite impressive. Many others like him, after declaring bankruptcy, would drown their sorrows in alcohol, living in a drunken stupor. Even if debt collectors came knocking on their doors on New Year's Eve, they would just keep on drinking.

Chen Meiliang laughed, "You're flattering me. I'm just a chicken farmer who went bankrupt... There's no problem with me helping out at the Horse Farm, but I can't even raise chickens properly. I won't end up harming the horses, will I?"

"There will be veterinarians, there will be veterinarians! Since you've agreed, Second Brother, come on, let's all toast to this as a family!"

Building a Horse Farm isn't an easy feat. Even if you have the capital, you still need connections, paperwork, qualifications accredited by the Equestrian Association, and so on—all of which require meticulous preparation.

Since Chen Meiliang had agreed, he didn't play coy. He spoke to Chen Meide, "The boundaries of the scenic area were rather vaguely defined at the time. Big Brother, you and Hongqi should get this sorted out as soon as possible. No matter the cost, we must include all the valleys within the scenic area." This was a potentially contentious area, so it needed to be secured first.

Chen Meiliang went on to suggest, "Let Guofu handle the investment through the Bureau of Commerce, and let Hongqi smooth things over with his former unit. With an investment of several hundred million, anyone who's not a fool would welcome it warmly. It'll make the paperwork much easier later on."

"Ask Lin Xu in Beijing to get in touch with Chairman Liu who visited us last time. See if the Travel Association can offer any support. We need to have a firm grip on the Travel Association's connections."

"Guofu should be quite familiar with the equestrian clubs in Beijing, right? Poach some people from there. It's too slow to train our own talent from scratch; it's more convenient to use those trained by others."

"When the Horse Farm starts construction, try to get as many VIPs as possible from Beijing to attend. The bigger the buzz, the smoother my operations will run here."

He spoke at length, leaving all the relatives present, each and every one of them, dumbfounded.

Goodness gracious. Zhuge Liang did so much meticulous preparation before agreeing to come out of seclusion. And you? After a single drink, your thinking is already this organized?

Chen Meiliang casually finished the Liquor in his cup and said, "That's all I can think of for now. I'll draft a charter when I get back. While Guofu is still here, let's communicate and discuss as much as possible."

Shi Wenming was about to refill his drink, but Chen Meiliang stopped him, saying, "It doesn't matter how much you drink when there's nothing serious going on. But now we have important business, so no more drinking. Drinking more would cloud my thinking."

After saying this, he continued discussing the Horse Farm with Shen Guofu.

「Meanwhile, at Lin Ji's Food on Welcome Spring Street in Yanjing City.」

Rush hour had arrived. Amid the bustle, Lin Xu didn't forget to instruct the delivery boy, "Buy a few raw pork stomachs tomorrow. I'll make some hot and sour shredded Pork Stomach soup for everyone to try. If it turns out well, we'll add this soup to the restaurant's menu. Remember to get fresh pork stomachs from Old Hu, not the frozen ones."

"Alright, I'll get in touch with Boss Hu right away."

Hot and sour shredded Pork Stomach soup is made with Pork Stomach.

Pork Stomach, which is the pig's stomach, is highly valued for its therapeutic food benefits. Pork Stomach itself has a tender, smooth, and crunchy texture. The soup it produces is thick and creamy white, making it an indispensable high-end ingredient in many dishes. For example, a famous Cantonese dish called Pork Stomach Chicken involves stuffing a chicken into a Pork Stomach for cooking.

"Boss, are we making hot and sour shredded Pork Stomach soup?" Ma Zhiqiang asked, pleasantly surprised.

This soup, popular in both North China and the Northwest Region, was something he occasionally craved. However, unlike in North China, many people in the Northwest Region use beef stomach to make their hot and sour shredded stomach soup. Although beef stomach can also be used for the soup, it falls somewhat short compared to Pork Stomach. Beef stomach has a layer of what could be described as fuzz on its surface, so texturally, it isn't as smooth, tender, and palatable as delicious Pork Stomach.

Lin Xu said, "Let's make some to try and see how it pairs with stir-fried noodles."

"It'll definitely pair well! The other day, although we made Hot and Sour Soup to go with the stir-fried noodles, it still lacked something compared to hot and sour shredded Pork Stomach soup."

Hot and Sour Soup is a vegetarian broth, so its umami and aroma aren't particularly rich. Compared to a soup made with Pork Stomach, it indeed falls short.

At the dining booth outside the kitchen, after hearing Shu Yun's explanation, Shen Baobao, Zeng Xiaoqi, and Dou Wenjing regretted going to see the movie even more. A supremely boring film not only made them miss the delicious marinated chicken livers but also the most exciting gossip. If we had been there, we definitely would have recorded it and shared it in the group chat! Then, a certain D-cup girl approaching thirty would surely be begging us to take it down.

As they were chatting, Geng Lele, who was playing with her phone nearby, slapped the table and exclaimed, "Number two now!"

"What's number two?"

Geng Lele showed her phone to the gossiping girls, "Number two on the Yanjing Region trending search list."

After a day of brewing online, the video of Shen Baobao feeding Dundun had accumulated 1.5 million views. Countless pet lovers flocked to the video, watching Dundun, hailed as the "cat of dreams," over and over.

So well-behaved and sensible, so cute and pretty! With its glossy fur and plump body, who wouldn't love such a kitten?

Because they loved Dundun, they watched Lin Xu's other videos and quickly became hooked, dubbing themselves 'Lin Ji Boys' and 'Lin Ji Girls.' Then, they followed the topic, browsed related discussions, and posted under the topic to boost its popularity, step by step becoming ardent supporters of Lin Ji.

Many people who had never even been to Beijing learned that in the North Fourth Ring area of Yanjing, there was a Welcome Spring Street, and on that street was Lin Ji's Food, where every dish was considered a classic.

Chapter 708: Uncle: I can't even raise chickens properly, and you want me to raise horses? Hot and sour tripe soup!

Thanks to this video, attention to the Lin Ji's Food topic skyrocketed, and its popularity significantly increased; it had just smoothly climbed to second place on the trending list.

Shen Jiayue blinked and said, "Doesn't this mean we're only one step away from first place?"

Zeng Xiaoqi took the phone, glanced at it, and then said, "One step is one step, but reaching the top isn't easy. There's still a seven or eight million popularity gap with first place. I reckon it's a long shot."

Having been a topic host for two years, she knew the ins and outs of topic popularity very well. This kind of ranking depended not only on strength but also on luck. Sometimes, you might painstakingly orchestrate a big move, only for some celebrity's sneeze to generate more buzz, surpassing your popularity to an extent that's impossible to recover from.

However, Shen Baobao was very certain. "Dundun always brings good luck; maybe we really can surpass them in popularity."

That video of Dundun's pantomime could definitely push our spot on the trending list even higher. But that video can't be released now. We need to let the feeding video ferment a bit more.

Moreover, Lin Xu's account always updated every other day. She'd have him update at the perfect time tomorrow to experience what it felt like to top the popularity chart.

「The next morning.」

After preparing the braised chicken in the stewing section, Lin Xu went upstairs and saw the Pork Stomach soaking in a basin.

Although Pork Stomach is considered pork offal, it's quite expensive. This is especially true for the "maw," the thickest part of the stomach, which is firm and crunchy—an essential ingredient for the famous dish "Oil-fried Double Crispy." The "double crispy" in the name refers to the satisfying crunch of the pork maw and the crisp texture of duck gizzard. Only the choicest parts of these two ingredients can create such a superb delicacy. A single serving of Oil-fried Double Crispy requires the maws from about six or seven Pork Stomachs and seven or eight duck gizzards. This alone highlights the rarity of the dish.

However, he wasn't making Oil-fried Double Crispy today; Lin Xu's current culinary skills weren't up to the task. Comparatively, making a shredded pork stomach soup was more practical.

"Is breakfast ready?"

"It's ready. Today we have Eight Treasure Porridge made from pumpkin and sweet potato, served with beef potstickers. Boss, are you eating now?"

As he spoke, the morning shift cook was about to dish out the porridge.

Lin Xu said, "Not yet. I'm going to wake up the missus first."

With that, he glanced at the Pork Stomach soaking in the basin and headed out.

He had initially intended to clean the Pork Stomach right away, but on second thought, it seemed better to do it after breakfast. Like large intestines, Pork Stomach has a strong odor, and even after washing, the smell lingers on the hands for quite a while. Rather than eating breakfast with hands reeking of the strong smell, it was better to deal with the Pork Stomach after the meal.

Arriving upstairs, he pushed open the bedroom door. Shen Baobao was still sound asleep under the covers. Her sleeping posture was awful: one leg was stretched out from under the blanket, and the other was kicked up onto a chair beside the bed.

Lin Xu leaned over the bed and gently nudged her. "Time to eat, Baobao, eat... Mmph—"

He hadn't expected the girl to be pretending to sleep; Lin Xu, caught completely off guard, was successfully ambushed.

"Hmph, I've been waiting for you for ages! You came in and didn't call out to me immediately; instead, you were secretly observing me..."

Shen Baobao gave a sly smile, then sat up in bed and pointed to the nearby wardrobe. "Little Linzi, attend Her Majesty while she dresses!"

"Yes, Your Majesty! Which outfit would you like to wear?"

"That purple 'seduction' lingerie set, and the jeans with the white T-shirt... WAHAHA, this is so much fun! No wonder Yan Bao is so keen on cosplaying as the head chef. However, I'm the head chef at Lin Ji's Food; she's, at best, the head chef's assistant!"

Lin Xu took the clothes the girl wanted from the wardrobe and tossed them onto the bed. "Hurry up and get dressed. We're having Eight Treasure Porridge and beef potstickers today. If you're late, the potstickers won't be crispy anymore."

As soon as food was mentioned, the usually imaginative Baobao immediately reined in her wandering thoughts, picked up the clothes, and started putting them on.

After washing up, the girl put on a pair of white slip-on casual shoes and went downstairs in the elevator, arm in arm with Lin Xu.

When they arrived at the restaurant, the young couple had breakfast together. The Eight Treasure Porridge was perfectly cooked, with a rich sweetness from the pumpkin and sweet potato. Paired with potstickers and a small cold dish, it was quite a good meal.

After breakfast, Shen Baobao carried a piece of beef tenderloin, steamed by the back kitchen, downstairs to mend fences with her 'son'.

Meanwhile, Lin Xu took out the soaked Pork Stomach.

Full and satisfied, it was time to tackle this premium ingredient with its strong odor.

At the slaughterhouse, when pigs are processed, ingredients like Pork Stomach and large intestines are typically turned inside out and given a preliminary wash. The Pork Stomach was currently in this inside-out state, so he could scrub it directly without needing to flip it again. He dumped the water from the basin, placed the Pork Stomach inside, and added two handfuls of salt to begin scrubbing. The surface of the Pork Stomach has a slimy membrane, the main source of its odor, which needs to be thoroughly washed away. After scrubbing with salt, he rubbed and washed it with flour several more times, continuing until the surface no longer felt sticky to the touch.

This process was similar to washing large intestines but with some differences. For example, large intestines can be cooked immediately after cleaning, but Pork Stomach must be blanched first. This is because, besides the slime, the surface of the Pork Stomach has a white film that can only be removed by blanching. Only when this film is gone can the odor be completely eradicated.

Lin Xu brought a pot of water to a boil, then placed the Pork Stomach in. As soon as it entered the pot, a white layer appeared on the maw area; this was the odorous white film. He carefully scraped it clean with a kitchen knife. Only then would the Pork Stomach be safe to eat. After this side was cleaned, he carefully flipped the Pork Stomach over, used flour and salt to rub and wash the other side twice, and also tore off any attached fat.

Once they were completely cleaned, he placed the Pork Stomachs into a pot one by one, added water to fill half the pot, then put in Scallion segments, ginger slices, a splash of Liquor, two pieces of Angelica dahurica, and a few white cardamom pods, and began to cook them.

Many video tutorials show shredded pork stomach soup being made with braised Pork Stomach, but this is incorrect. Braised Pork Stomach carries a rich aroma from the braising liquid, and if used for soup, it would fill the soup with the flavor of the braising spices, completely masking the Pork Stomach's own fresh, savory taste. As for raw Pork Stomach, making soup directly with it would result in a strong offal taste. The best method is to parboil the Pork Stomach in plain water until it's just cooked through. This not only eliminates its unpleasant odor but also allows the Pork Stomach to maintain a tender and smooth texture.

Once the water in the pot boiled, he carefully skimmed off the scum, then covered the pot, reduced the heat to low, and simmered for ten minutes. Reducing the heat to low was to ensure the Pork Stomach's

texture became more tender. If cooked constantly over high heat, the Pork Stomach would turn out rather tough, and the resulting shredded pork stomach soup would have a slightly inferior texture.

While the kitchen was bustling, Xie Baomin was on the North Fourth Ring Road, driving his Cayenne and speeding towards Yingchun Street with Su Peipei in the passenger seat and Su Yuchun in the back.

"Dachun, your sister and I have some errands to run. Just wait for me at Lin Ji, and don't go saying anything inappropriate, alright?"

"Don't worry, brother-in-law. I definitely won't tell Lin Xu you're going to see a doctor!"

Chapter 709: Isn't this soup too perfect with fried noodles? Is there any exercise that is not tiring but strengthens the body?

Soon, the pork stomach in the pot was cooked until just done. Lin Xu turned off the heat, but he didn't immediately remove the pork stomach; instead, he let it continue to soak in the pot.

This was to make the pork stomach's texture even more tender and smooth, while also enhancing its flavor. However, it shouldn't soak for too long, as the pork stomach would absorb too much water, causing the texture to deteriorate. Generally, soaking it for about fifteen minutes after cooking was sufficient before taking it out to cool. When making Hot and Sour Pork Stomach Soup, the cooked pork stomach shouldn't be used immediately; it must be completely cooled. This way, the pork stomach would be flavorful and tender, and the resulting hot and sour soup would be more delicious. If it was sliced while hot, it would be hard to cut the pork stomach into thin strips, and the taste of the hot and sour soup would also suffer.

"Soak it for fifteen minutes, then take it out and put it in the walk-in to cool. Don't soak it for too long," Lin Xu instructed an assistant chef beside him, then planned to go downstairs to check on the status of the braised chicken.

Leaving the kitchen, just as he reached the stairwell, he saw his senior apprentice brother, Xie Baomin, and his sister-in-law, Su Peipei, coming up the stairs to the second floor with Chun Brother.

"Brother Baomin? You didn't go out for the holiday?"

"We went to Pinggu for a trip," Xie Baomin said dejectedly. "It felt like the mountains were even more crowded than Sanlitun. We had to queue up at every farmhouse restaurant, and there was traffic everywhere. We barely managed with some bread at noon so we wouldn't starve." He hadn't anticipated such an ordeal from a trip to the outskirts of Beijing. And that didn't even include going to popular places like Changping or West Mountain; the crowds there would probably be even bigger.

Everywhere was a sea of people. Ironically, the city center was less crowded. When they came down from the North Fourth Ring flyover, there was, surprisingly, no traffic jam.

Su Peipei asked with a smile, "Did you and Yueyue not go out?"

"No, everywhere's crowded. We can go after the holiday; it's not too late then."

They reached the second floor, where Lin Xu greeted Chun Brother, "Hey, Chun Brother, have you eaten?"

"My sister and brother-in-law have eaten. I haven't eaten yet. I went to their house a bit late, and they'd already scrubbed the pot clean..."

Xie Baomin chuckled speechlessly and then asked Lin Xu, "Do you still have breakfast here? If so, could you serve some for Chun Brother? He's been rambling the whole way here."

Today, he had an appointment with a urology specialist who wasn't traveling. If dietary therapy was already failing, then it was time to try a scientific approach. He had initially asked Chun Brother to come over so that he, as their uncle, could take his two nephews to the swimming pool. However, the kids had made plans with classmates and didn't need supervision, so Chun Brother ended up without breakfast. Considering this, Xie Baomin decided to send Chun Brother here to his junior apprentice brother. This guy had a knack for saying embarrassing things and had been pestering him about Lin Ji's fried noodles since he arrived. It seemed like a perfect opportunity to treat him today and also let the kids try the food here. He was always complaining that the meals he, a State Banquet head chef, prepared weren't tasty. Today, it was time for a change of pace.

"We've got plenty of breakfast left. Chun Brother, please hold on a moment... Chezai, bring out the leftover Eight Treasure Porridge and potstickers from this morning, and add some refreshing pickled vegetables."

Lin Xu had made a bit too much breakfast today. He originally planned to save some for Zeng Xiaoqi and Dou Wenjing, but now that Chun Brother was here, the two ladies would miss out.

Before long, Chezai walked over from the kitchen, carrying a small basin of Eight Treasure Porridge. An assistant chef followed him, holding a platter with the remaining potstickers and pickled vegetables.

"Chun Brother, see if that's enough. If not, I'll have someone grab a few Shengjian Buns from Ziqiang Shengjian," Lin Xu offered.

Chun Brother curiously asked, "Is Ziqiang Shengjian really a business you invested in?"

"Yes. Chun Brother, have you heard of Ziqiang Shengjian?"

"You bet I have!" Chun Brother exclaimed. "Right before the holiday, a few of our school's athletes even snuck out during their P.E. class, climbing over the wall to buy them. I caught them red-handed."

WOW! Chun Brother turned out to be a seriously responsible teacher.

Lin Xu curiously asked, "What did you do after catching them?"

Normally, they ought to be sent to the guidance office and then write a self-reflection, right? I remember back in middle school, that's pretty much how the school dealt with students climbing over the wall. If it was something more serious, they'd use the scariest tactic of the middle school era—calling the parents.

Chun Brother took a big slurp of the Eight Treasure Porridge. "What else could I do? I just joined them. Those Shengjian Buns were really tasty. It's just too bad it's so far from our school; they weren't very hot by the time we ate them."

This way of handling things is really... unconventional. It seems like Chun Brother is a teacher well-liked by his students.

Lin Xu said, "Regardless, they shouldn't be climbing over the wall. Going that far for food is even less appropriate. How about this? I'll talk to the company later and see if we can open a branch right outside your school. That way, they won't have to run back and forth. If they want to buy some, they could even discreetly get it through the school railings."

Chun Brother's eyes widened. "Damn, that would be awesome! Thank you so much, Lin Xu! This Eight Treasure Porridge is cooked perfectly. Sister, why don't you and your husband have some more?"

You've been holding that basin and drinking for ages, and only now you remember us? Xie Baomin was already accustomed to his brother-in-law's ways. He turned to Lin Xu and said, "Just let Chun Brother stay here with you. Your sister-in-law and I have some errands to run. Our whole family will eat here for lunch today. Chun Brother told the two kids that your fried noodles are incredibly delicious, and they're really excited to try them."

Lin Xu looked at his senior brother's resigned face and felt a strong urge to laugh. The head chef of the State Banquet, capable of conquering the stomachs of international leaders, yet failing to win approval from his own family—to be honest, that was quite demoralizing. Thankfully, the other head chefs at the Fishing Platform had no idea about this. If they knew, they would definitely set off a barrage of fireworks to celebrate.

Chapter 710: Isn't this soup a perfect match for fried noodles? Are there any sports that are not tiring but can strengthen the body? _2

"Damn it, you dog, even you have your day?"

After Xie Baomin finished speaking, he and Su Peipei headed towards the staircase, while Lin Xu arranged for a kitchen helper to get some Shengjian Buns from Ziqiang Shengjian.

Since Dachun liked them so much, Lin Xu decided to let him eat his fill.

Once everything was arranged, Lin Xu went downstairs to check on the Pot Roast Chicken. When it was almost done braising, he turned off the heat and let the chicken soak in the double-layered pot.

By eleven o'clock, the Pot Roast Chicken was officially ready.

In addition to the Pot Roast Chicken, other braised dishes were also being prepared intensively, aiming to set a new sales record for braised products today.

Just yesterday, the small window of the braised products section had increased its revenue by tens of thousands of yuan. Shu Yun, representing the store, gave each person in the braised products department a five-hundred-yuan bonus. This made the already enthusiastic members even more motivated.

The customers were also very supportive. It was still a while before the Pot Roast Chicken would be out of the pot, but neighbors in twos and threes had already gathered at the window, watching the braising process with great interest.

Old Man Sun, who had bought Pot Roast Chicken twice in a row, was outside chatting with the neighbors, "Other places' roast chicken is either bland or too salty. Only Boss Lin's Pot Roast Chicken is perfectly seasoned, the meat satisfyingly chewy and flavorful. His skill is truly impressive."

The other neighbors also chimed in with constant praise.

Lin Xu smiled from inside the window and said, "You all flatter me. The main reason is that the chickens we select are better. We use free-range chickens, which have firm meat that doesn't easily absorb seasoning. If you were to use Three-yellow Chicken in the same brine, it would also end up too salty."

The firmer the meat of any ingredient, the harder it is for flavors to penetrate. That's why it needs to be braised for two hours and then soaked for three more; this allows the flavor to fully permeate the chicken.

If you were to use meat with a looser texture, like the commonly found Three-yellow Chicken or the White Feather Chicken used for frying—whose meat is as porous as a sponge—the brine's flavors would soak in too easily, making the chicken overly salty.

Typical braised meat shops, in pursuit of profit, prefer cheaper chickens. These chickens often have looser meat, which takes less time to braise, thus saving on costs.

With Lin Ji's process of braising and then soaking, which took over five hours, those other braised meat shops could have made two batches of Pot Roast Chicken.

Of course, because Lin Ji's Pot Roast Chicken takes longer to make and uses better ingredients, the price is naturally much higher. A single Pot Roast Chicken from Lin Ji was priced slightly higher than two ordinary roast chickens combined.

If it weren't for Lin Ji's established reputation and the local residents' fondness for it, the sales of the Pot Roast Chicken might not have taken off.

After chatting with everyone for a while, Lin Xu went upstairs to prepare the ingredients for the morning.

"Lin Xu, your breakfast is really tasty. It's been a long time since I've enjoyed breakfast this much."

Dachun finished the last spoonful of Eight Treasure Porridge on his plate, scraping the bowl clean with his spoon. The potstickers on the plate had already been polished off, and even most of the Shengjian Buns that had been brought over were eaten.

Though there were still a few left in the bag, given the rate he was eating, it was only a matter of time before they were all gone.

Such a hearty appetite is truly enviable.

Lin Xu said with a smile, "Brother Chun, feel free to come to the shop more often when you're not busy. You don't have to come only with my Senior Brother. He's so busy he sometimes can't be bothered with these things."

Dachun picked up a Shengjian Bun. He first bit a small hole in it to suck out the savory broth, then took a bite that consumed half the bun. "My brother-in-law, busy? All he does is think about food therapy and dietary supplements all day. I told him long ago that studying that stuff is completely useless. Running ten kilometers a day is more effective than any special diet."

His words were indeed true. Statistics show that people who religiously follow food therapies and dietary supplements don't tend to live exceptionally long lives. Conversely, those who are passionate about fitness and exercise often live well into their eighties or nineties. The saying "life lies in movement" wasn't just empty words. Everyone understood the principle, but who could actually stick to it? Weren't young people nowadays keen on collecting all sorts of workout videos, only to let them gather dust in their favorites folder?

Thinking about this, Lin Xu gave Dachun a surprised look.

That pack of Moringa Seed my Senior Brother had... this guy must have taken it deliberately, right?

"I bought a deluxe treadmill online a few days ago," Dachun continued. "I plan to place it on the balcony of my brother-in-law's house so he can exercise even after work."

On the balcony? Lin Xu thought. That treadmill would most likely end up as a clothes drying rack. Especially in winter, drying quilts and such on a treadmill is especially convenient. Those deluxe models are particularly good because their frames are sturdy enough not to tip over.

Lin Xu knew all too well how these things ended up. The reason was simple: before developing the scenic area, his father, Lin Hongqi, had impulsively bought a treadmill. After that, everything in the Lin Family home, from quilts and bedsheets to insoles and socks, found a new place to air out. You could even place a piece of cardboard across the treadmill to dry some preserved vegetables or whatnot; it was exceptionally handy.

I hope Senior Brother's treadmill doesn't meet the same fate.

As he was thinking this, Dachun said, "To make sure he doesn't skip his workouts, I'll connect the treadmill to my phone. If he hasn't run his target distance by ten P.M., I'll call and harass him. I bet his physical fitness will improve."

Tsk, tsk. With this training regimen, Senior Brother could probably run a half-marathon next year without any problem. It's great to have a brother-in-law like that. And yet, Senior Brother always seems to find fault with him.

Around ten in the morning, Lin Xu took out the several Pork Stomachs he had cooked that morning from the cold storage, ready to make Hot and Sour Shredded Pork Stomach Soup.

The ingredients for this soup are very simple and flexible. Basically, any ingredient that doesn't clash with sour and peppery flavors can be used.

However, besides shredded Pork Stomach, the most common additions are usually shredded Scallion and Ginger, shredded carrots, and shredded wood ear mushrooms. Occasionally, shredded Bamboo Shoots, glass noodles, or shredded daylily flowers might also be added.