

Culinary 82

Chapter 82: "Little Guy, Do You Want to Go Home with Me?"

"The host yearns for increased fame, thereby triggering the side mission [100,000 Fans]. Host must release no fewer than three vlog videos within ten days and increase their fan count to 100,000. Upon completion, a reward of one Perfect Level Stir-Fry Lottery draw will be granted."

Three vlogs, 100,000 fans? Lin Xu suddenly realized that ever since today's new challenge was set, not only had the main mission become more challenging, but the difficulty of the side missions had also escalated significantly. Releasing three vlog videos is manageable; I just need to record the cooking process for three dishes with my phone. But acquiring 100,000 new fans... that requirement... Even professional video bloggers would likely find it difficult to achieve, let alone an amateur like him. In fact, many full-time vloggers worked hard for half a year and still hadn't broken through the 100,000 fan milestone.

However, with the increased difficulty, the reward had become much more tempting. A Perfect Level Stir-Fry, huh? If I could get my hands on that, wouldn't it sell like crazy?

In Wu Kexin's live stream room, Lin Xu's phone call sent the fans into a frenzy.

"Is Xinxin really going to shed the crown of the queen of mess-ups?"

"Is this drama, or what?"

"Seeing Xinxin's reaction, it doesn't seem scripted. She's too genuine. If it were acting, then the Oscars definitely owe her a statuette."

"Boss Lin seems to have made the call unintentionally."

"By the sound of it, does Boss Lin intend to become an internet celebrity?"

"Might be to attract traffic to his store, who knows? Anyway, he's my rival for life!"

"Right, right, right, I forgot this is our turf. Draw your swords, Boss Lin!"

The silly netizens happily spammed the sword-drawing meme.

In front of the camera, Wu Kexin, following Lin Xu's method, picked up a slice of marinated pork belly, sprinkled some dry flour on both sides, then dipped it back into the batter to coat it fully before tossing it into the wok.

"SIZZLE..."

The hot oil enveloped the batter and began to fry.

Wu Kexin watched the activity in the pan with delight. Aha! It actually didn't lose its coating! Boss Lin is really amazing, solving a problem that troubled me for half the day with just a few words!

"My family, today I finally didn't flop!" she exclaimed, thrilled. If she had time later, she resolutely planned to seek guidance from Boss Lin and redo the dishes that had flopped before, aspiring to soon rid herself of the title of queen of mess-ups.

「In the store.」

After hanging up the phone, Lin Xu took out a piece of pork loin—which he had instructed one of the junior cooks that morning to boil in plain water—shredded it, and put it into a take-out container before heading back to the residential complex at the rear. He planned to change his clothes and, by the way, bring some more food for that little stray cat.

Arriving next to the holly bushes where he previously placed the food container, Lin Xu found the chubby British Shorthair blue cat, astonishingly sleeping soundly exactly where he had set the food down. Fortunately, the holly bushes in the complex were dense enough; otherwise, with the little guy's sprawling sleeping posture, he would definitely have been discovered by the residents.

Upon smelling the scent of meat, it leaped up from the ground, eagerly meowing softly, "MEOW~"

Lin Xu placed the container in front of the little fellow, who dove right in and started to gorge itself. It seemed ravenous!

"Other little strays look for food when they're hungry, but you? When you're hungry, you just lie down here and sleep deeply?"

Lin Xu rubbed its round head, dumped out the water in the container, poured in a bowl of fresh water, and then went upstairs to change his clothes.

「At four in the afternoon.」

Xu Xinhua had braised all the pig's ears. Lin Xu took a few pieces, intending to cut them into thin strips. However, only after picking up the pig's ears did he realize that slicing them was not as easy as he had imagined, since the base of the ears was incredibly thick. To cut them into strips, they had to be thinly sliced first.

I don't seem to have any skills related to knife work...

He tried cutting a few times but wasn't satisfied with the results, so he opened the points store and begrudgingly exchanged points for a Knife Skills Technique.

"The host has spent 200,000 points to obtain Excellent Level Basic Knife Skills Technique."

In the points store, Knife Skills were divided into Basic Knife Skills and Floral Knife Skills; exchanging for the Qualified Level of either cost 80,000 points, while the Excellent Level demanded 200,000. He had originally planned to save up points to exchange for the Wealth-Attracting Divine Artifact. But after exchanging for Basic Knife Skills, he needed to save up another week's worth of points to exchange for the Wealth-Attracting Divine Artifact.

Never mind, I'll focus on solving the current problem first.

After the exchange, slicing the pig's ears became much easier. Lin Xu first sliced the thicker parts at the base of the ear thin and then separated the pig's ear, cutting it into strips about ten centimeters long. After cutting, he placed them in a mixing bowl for cold dishes. He then cut some green onion strips, mixed in some cold sauce and Chili Oil, stirred them together, and was just about to let Chef Gao try it when, unexpectedly, Chef Gao took a call and hurried away.

This... Does this mean no more fleece to be had? I've only fleeced him once; isn't this a bit too stingy?

With chopsticks, he tasted the cold pig's ear. It was indeed delicious—full of crunchy cartilage, squeaking as he chewed, becoming tastier the more he chewed.

Since the flavor was good, Lin Xu decided to introduce it as a new dish in the restaurant. He also sent a message to Ou Hua: "I've got a new cold pig's ear dish. Do you want some for your group meal?"

"Yes, yes, yes, I really love that dish! Make more of it tomorrow, Boss Lin."

With the addition of the cold pig's ear, the menu for the group meal was finally set in stone. Nine dishes and one soup—absolutely perfect.

"Host has created a menu that satisfies Ou Hua, completing the side mission [Arrange a Group Meal]. You've earned one Excellent Level Basic Cooking Techniques lottery draw. Would you like to draw now?"

"Draw!"

Considering that the Dough Technique he got last time was quite handy, Lin Xu earnestly prayed this time before choosing to draw.

"Congratulations to the host for obtaining the Excellent Level Basic Cooking Technique—Filling."

Filling? This technique, paired with the Dough Technique—isn't this all I need to steam buns? Lin Xu's face lit up with surprise.

「Eight-thirty in the evening.」

After cleaning up the kitchen, the restaurant officially closed for the day. Lin Xu carried a bowl of cooked pork tenderloin and a bowl of clear water to the residential area. As soon as he reached the holly bushes, the British Shorthair blue cat came waddling over, its plump little rear end swaying. When it reached Lin Xu's feet, it rubbed its round, plump head against his pant leg.

"What's the matter? Hungry again?"

Lin Xu put the bowl he was holding on the ground, but the little guy didn't take a single bite and continued to rub against his legs. After rubbing around, it lay on the ground, rolled over, and exposed its soft belly.

This adorable sight nearly melted Lin Xu's heart. He squatted down and, while rubbing the little creature's belly, said, "Little buddy, do you want to go home with me? If you have a home, you won't have to endure the cold or go hungry outside."

The blue cat immediately nuzzled Lin Xu's hand with its large head.

Is this... an agreement?

Lin Xu quickly placed the meat and water from the bowls into the holly bushes for the other strays, then scooped up this still-coquettish 'gas cylinder' off the ground and headed upstairs to his home. The little creature clung to Lin Xu's shoulders with its paws and leaned its head against his neck, occasionally nuzzling him—a very affectionate gesture.

Entering the elevator, Lin Xu pressed the button for the top floor. Seeing how well-behaved the little guy was, he entered the system to check how long it would take to exchange for his desired Wealth-Attracting Divine Artifact.

But as soon as he opened the points store, he realized something. The Wealth-Attracting Divine Artifact section had dimmed, and a line of text appeared on the page: "[Already claimed, cannot be re-exchanged]"

Already claimed? When did I claim it? I remember it was fine when I finished work; it's only been a few minutes, and now...

Lin Xu glanced at the 'gas cylinder' snuggled on his shoulder. A thought suddenly crossed his mind: Could this little guy be the Wealth-Attracting Divine Artifact arranged by the system?