

Ghost 118

Chapter 118: training chaos

The sun had barely risen when the Whisper Bowl exploded into noise.

The moment the last bowl of porridge was finished, Empress Lian An, her best friend Yao Qing, the twins Lin and Lian, the new man Wei Jie, and forty newly freed workers gathered inside the main hall.

Today was the first day of full training.

Today was the beginning of a new empire.

Today was chaos.

The restaurant was closed for the next seven days, the doors locked, posters pasted outside. The main hall was cleared. The tables were pushed aside. A long wooden bench had been set up for writing lessons. The kitchen flames crackled.

But the people—not so obedient.

Fumbling hands. Nervous feet. Blank stares.

The freed slaves, still wearing the new winter clothes, sat stiffly, unused to comfort. The fifteen stall vendors who accepted the job offer stood in a line behind them, unsure if they should breathe loudly or quietly.

And the scholar Han Shi...

Well...

Han Shi had already lost his patience, and it had only been ten minutes.

He stood in front of the writing boards, veins popping on his forehead. "NO—NO—NO! That is NOT how you write peace! Who wrote this?! Why does it look like a chicken stepped in ink and danced?!"

One trembling man raised his hand. "M—me?"

"It shows!" the scholar snapped. "Even the chicken would be ashamed!"

Fen Yu, the female ghost watching from above, giggled so hard she almost fell through the roof beam.

Li Shen, the scholar ghost, sighed with sympathy. "Teaching mortals is truly suffering."

Even General Wei Rong rubbed his spiritual forehead.

Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the hall—

LIN! THE SOUP! DON'T—

SPLASH.

Too late.

A pot of soup slipped from Lin's hands and spilled all over the clean floor. Steam rose. A sweet, meaty smell filled the air.

Lian, her twin brother, screeched: "LIN! HOW ARE YOU SO CLUMSY?!"

"You shouted in my ear! That's why!" Lin yelled back.

"YOU ARE ALWAYS LIKE THIS!"

"YOU ARE ALWAYS ANNOYING!"

The new man, Wei Jie, moved calmly between them. "I'll clean it," he said.

"No, let THEM clean," Empress Lian An said sharply, her arms folded as she approached. She looked at the spilled soup, then at the twins. "If you spill something, clean it. If you make a mistake, correct it. No running from responsibilities."

Lin swallowed. "Yes, Your— I mean, Sister An..."

The Empress nodded and moved on.

She walked into the kitchen where three of the new trainees were chopping vegetables. One chopped too fast, slicing the carrots unevenly. One chopped too slowly. One almost cut his fingers off.

"STOP."

Her voice made them freeze.

She took the knife gently from the nervous woman's hand and demonstrated slow, smooth slices.

"Cooking is not punishment," she said calmly. "It is rhythm. Balance. Respect the food."

The woman nodded seriously and tried again—hands still shaking.

Then one man behind her dropped an entire basket of onions.

"WHY SO MANY!" he cried, eyes burning.

Fen Yu cackled loudly. "Because you're weak!"

The Empress ignored the ghost and turned to the trainees. "Mistakes are fine. But learn from them."

Behind her, Yao Qing shouted from the hall:

"WHO PUT RICE IN THE TEAPOT?!"

Empress Lian An took a deep breath.

Yes.

This was going to be a long day.

Taking Orders 101: Yelling, Crying, and Begging for Patience

After the chaotic breakfast, Yao Qing clapped her hands. "Everyone gather!"

The workers rushed to assemble.

"Now," she announced, "today we will teach how to take orders properly."

She pulled over a table, sat down, and crossed her legs elegantly. "Imagine I am a customer. You must greet me, smile, ask what I want, and write clearly."

A brave stall vendor bowed. "Greetings, Honored—"

"SMILE," Yao Qing said.

The man smiled.

Terribly.

It looked like he stepped on a nail.

Fen Yu burst into laughter again. "HE LOOKS LIKE HE NEEDS A DOCTOR!"

The Empress covered her face briefly. She regretted this already.

"Try again," Yao Qing said calmly.

"Greetings, honored guest. What would you like to eat?"

Yao Qing lifted her chin and spoke like a picky noblewoman. "Your attitude is too stiff. Try again."

Another girl stepped forward. "Greetings, Honored guest!" She smiled—too wide.

Han Shi muttered, "Why are their smiles so frightening..."

Ghost Li Shen sighed. "Mortal training is truly tragic."

The Empress stepped in. "No need to exaggerate," she said softly, demonstrating the correct tone. "Just be warm. Natural."

They all stared at her like she was the sun.

Then tried.

Failed.

And tried again.

The Empress clapped her hands. "Enough for now. Let's cook."

Han Shi nearly cried with relief.

Empress Demonstrates Dishes

The kitchen became silence.

It was the first moment of peace since morning.

The Empress tied her apron, washed her hands, and began preparing the six signature dishes and four snacks.

Knife in hand, she moved gracefully.

Slicing.

Mixing.

Stir-frying.

Her movements were swift yet soft.

The trainees watched in awe.

Even the ghosts stopped moving, entranced.

Even Wei Jie, the stoic one, blinked with admiration.

Yao Qing whispered, "Every time I watch you cook, I understand why this restaurant became famous."

As the aroma filled the hall, the workers straightened, inspired.

When she finished, the Empress stepped back. "Now you all try."

Chaos resumed instantly.

One trainee added too much salt.

Another put sugar instead of spice.

A third set something on fire.

"FIRE! FIRE!"

Lian An calmly covered the flame with a lid.

"NO PANIC," she said. "Learn."

But the twins were yelling again, the scholar was yelling again, and the ghosts were laughing so loudly Han Shi nearly fainted from rage.

It was beautiful chaos.

Yu Mian Arrives—And Witnesses the Madness

A sudden sound of carriage wheels made Wei Jie glance outside.

"Empress, the merchant Yu Mian has arrived."

Lian An straightened. She wiped her hands, fixed her hair, and walked out.

Yu Mian stepped inside—dignified, handsome, wearing deep blue robes embroidered with silver clouds. He expected a calm restaurant.

He got—

Soup on the floor.

People crying.

Scholar screaming.

Twins arguing.

Ghosts laughing (though he couldn't hear them).

Slaves sweating nervously.

Vegetables EVERYWHERE.

Yu Mian blinked once. Twice.

"...What... is this?"

The Empress bowed slightly. "Training."

Yao Qing rushed forward, breathless. "They're learning very fast!"

Yu Mian stared at a man who was placing bowls upside down. Another who spilled tea on his own feet. Another who was chasing a chicken.

Yu Mian whispered, "Fast?"

But then he looked around again—and saw something else.

He saw sincerity. Hard work. Determination. Hope.

People who had nothing, learning to build a future.

He smiled slowly. "This is excellent. Proper training before opening outlets... Impressive."

The Empress nodded. "We cannot send people unprepared. They must learn to write, take orders, cook, and treat customers well."

Yu Mian nodded deeply—and saw the uniforms folded neatly on the side table.

"What are those?"

The Empress picked up one:

White shirt

Black apron

Black skirt or trousers

Gloves

And—

The logo stitched on the side:

TWB — The Whisper Bowl

Yu Mian froze. "Uniforms? With logos?"

"Yes," the Empress said. "Every worker will wear one. Every outlet will have the same design. Customers will recognize us immediately." She lifted the shirt. "This is identity. Respect. Order."

Yu Mian was stunned.

"This... this is revolutionary! No restaurant gives uniforms!"

Lian An smiled. "We are not a normal restaurant."

He nodded vigorously. "Indeed!"

Then she added, "Each outlet will also receive wooden boards with the TWB logo engraved. Anyone who runs our outlet must display it openly. It will prove authenticity and prevent thieves from copying us."

Yu Mian nearly dropped his fan. "That— That is BRILLIANT!"

He turned to his subordinates. "We are partnering with a genius."

One subordinate whispered, "I told you, Sir... she is different."

Yu Mian agreed.

VERY different.

And very clever.

He bowed deeply to the Empress. "Today, I am more confident than ever that this partnership will change the kingdom."

The Empress nodded. "Then let us begin the real work."

Training Continues — With Even MORE Chaos

Yu Mian stayed a bit longer to watch.

The scholar Han Shi was barking at students, "You wrote 'rice' instead of 'guest'! How will you serve people if you tell them 'Please rice here'?!"

Fen Yu laughed so hard she rolled across the air.

Lin yelled at Lian: "WRITE CLEARLY! YOUR WORDS LOOK LIKE WORMS!"

Lian yelled back: "LIN, YOUR WORDS LOOK LIKE WET MUD!"

One trainee spilled soup on Yu Mian's shoe.

He froze.

Everyone froze.

The Empress calmly handed him a cloth. "This is why we train."

Yu Mian wiped the shoe, nodded seriously, and whispered to himself:

"This will be a legendary brand..."

Ending: A Day of Exhaustion, Laughter, and Hope

By the time the sun started to set, everyone was exhausted. The scholar collapsed onto a bench. The twins lay on the floor in dramatic poses. The trainees were half-asleep but smiling.

The merchant left with satisfaction.

The uniforms were approved.

The logo idea was accepted.

The outlet plan was now stronger.

The Empress stood in the middle of the hall, watching the exhausted crowd.

Yao Qing came to her side. "Today was insane."

"It was," Lian An answered softly. "But it was good."

"We're building something huge, aren't we?" Yao Qing said.

"Yes," the Empress whispered.

"A legacy."