

Ghost 146

Chapter 146: family working together

The Whisper Bowl had never seen such a strange sight.

The Emperor, the Empress, a Duke, a Duchess, a noble lady, and a titled young master were all working like regular laborers—sweeping floors, carrying crates, polishing tables, hanging lanterns, and helping prepare the grand re-opening of the restaurant.

If anyone knew their true identities, half the capital would faint on the spot.

But today... they were simply An'an's family, helping her achieve her dream.

The Emperor Arrives First

The Emperor slipped into the courtyard wearing his usual commoner disguise. His eyes instantly found Lian An wiping the front counter. Even in the simplest outfit, she glowed.

Before he could greet her, a loud voice shouted—

"Brother-in-law is here!!"

Lian Hua sprinted across the courtyard and almost tackled him.

The Emperor steadied her with a helpless smile.

"Little Hua, act like a lady."

"I am acting like a lady!" she declared proudly.

Then she pointed at him.

"You came to work, right? Not to stare at my sister again?"

The Emperor choked.

The workers nearby giggled.

Lian An covered her face with both hands.

The Duke and Duchess Step Forward

The Duke set down a crate and bowed slightly.

"Your Majesty, thank you for coming again. An'an has worked hard. A little help eases her burden."

The Duchess, warm as ever, smiled at him.

"Today, you're not an emperor. You're family. Pick whichever task suits you."

Everyone stared.

The ruler of the empire...

being told by his mother-in-law to choose a chore.

The Emperor actually nodded.

"...Yes, Mother."

The Duchess brightened immediately.

"Good boy."

The Empress froze.

This... this is the first time someone has called the Emperor a good boy.

Even the Emperor looked stunned for a moment.

But he accepted it.

Because these were his in-laws.

The Emperor Chooses His Task

He walked toward the backyard garden—the place he had planted seeds earlier.

"I'll handle the herbs and vegetables," he announced.

"Without fresh ingredients, the kitchen won't function well."

Workers cheered.

"Ahh! He's so dependable!"

"So hardworking!"

"Sister An is lucky!"

The Empress wanted to hide in the storage room.

Lian Rou Takes Charge of Training

The eldest cousin, calm and composed, stood before the line of trainees.

"Back straight. Chin up. When greeting a customer, bow from the waist, not the neck."

He demonstrated. The trainees copied.

Lian Rou corrected every mistake with the precision of a seasoned instructor.

Even the Emperor glanced over, secretly impressed.

"You train well," he murmured.

Lian Rou made a polite bow.

"Sister An trusted me. I cannot embarrass her."

The Emperor nodded.

Good man. At least he is loyal to An'an.

Lian Hua Enters the Kitchen

Lian Hua rushed into the kitchen and claimed a space beside Yao Qing.

"What can I do? Tell me everything!"

"Cut vegetables," Yao Qing answered.

Lian Hua picked up the knife—

And immediately chopped with terrifying speed.

The cooks stared.

"Has she been trained...?"

"No," Yao Qing whispered, "but she does everything with passion."

Lian Hua puffed her chest proudly.

"I am helping my sister become a food queen!"

Duke and Duchess Bring Order

The Duke oversaw the renovation workers.

"That beam is slightly tilted. Fix it."

"Table spacing must be equal, or customers will feel squeezed."

"Stair handles should be smoothed to avoid splinters."

The Duchess inspected uniforms, adjusting hems and buttons.

"This sleeve is uneven."

"This stitching will unravel. Redo it."

"Presentation matters. TWB is a brand now."

The workers adored her.

"Such a gentle lady..."

"Beautiful AND skilled..."

"This family is blessed..."

The Empress felt warmth spread through her chest.

They came for her.

They supported her dream.

They didn't treat TWB as silly or unimportant.

They treated it like a legacy.

The Emperor Cannot Stop Watching Her

Every few minutes, the Emperor's gaze drifted toward the Empress.

When she instructed workers—his chest warmed.

When she carried heavy crates—his brow twitched, ready to help.

When she laughed with her family—his heart tightened.

At one point, she wiped sweat from her forehead with her sleeve.

He marched over immediately.

"Use this."

He handed her a cloth.

She blinked.

"...Thank you."

The Duke, Duchess, and Lian Rou exchanged knowing looks.

Lian Hua whispered loudly,

"He's totally in love with you."

The Empress almost threw the cloth at her face.

Lunch Break — A Chaotic Harmony

Everyone sat on the ground for a simple meal—rice, chicken broth, pickled vegetables, steamed buns.

The Emperor sat beside the Duke.

The Empress sat between Lian Hua and the Duchess.

Workers whispered:

"They look like a normal warm family..."

"So sweet..."

"Sister An deserves this!"

The Emperor heard it.

A small, private smile tugged at his lips.

If only they knew she's my queen.

Back to Work

The Emperor Fixes the Garden

His hands moved with practiced ease, arranging herb patches, creating water channels, removing weeds.

When a worker tried to help, the Emperor said gently:

"Let me. I... enjoy this."

The Duke overheard and smiled faintly.

"So His late Majesty taught you well."

The Emperor froze.

The Duke had noticed.

"...Yes," he said quietly. "He taught me that growing things... takes patience."

"And relationships," the Duke added meaningfully, "take the same."

The Emperor flushed slightly.

Inside, the Empress Organizes the Inventory

She checked spices, counted bowls, arranged storage, adjusted menus.

Her little sister watched with shining admiration.

"Sister, you're amazing!"

The Empress flicked her forehead lightly.

"You just like eating free food."

Lian Hua giggled.

Lian Rou Supervises Customer Etiquette Practice

He even made two burly workers repeat the greeting ten times.

The Emperor walked by and murmured,

"You resemble a general."

Lian Rou smiled thinly.

"I resemble someone who will not let his cousins fail."

The Emperor respected that.

Duchess Teaches Presentation Skills

She made the workers practice walking with trays gracefully.

"Balance your steps. Smile softly. You are presenting warmth."

The Emperor watched and thought:

No wonder An'an is so well-raised.

Evening Falls — And the Restaurant Is Nearly Ready

Lanterns flickered to life.

Tables gleamed.

Cooks' stations were perfectly arranged.

Trainees stood straighter than palace guards.

The Duke's inspection passed every corner.

The Emperor stood beside the Empress, watching the lively courtyard.

"You've built something extraordinary," he said softly.

She didn't look at him, afraid it would show too much emotion.

"...It's not just me. Everyone helped."

He glanced at her profile.

"But you're the heart of it."

Her breath hitched.

She quickly turned away.

"We open in two days. There's still work."

He smiled.

"I'll come tomorrow."

She wanted to say no—but her voice failed her.

"Fine."

The Chapter Ends With Laughter

Lian Hua dragged her sister inside for dinner.

Lian Rou polished the wooden TWB sign.

Duke and Duchess chatted warmly with Yao Qing.

Workers sang while cleaning.

The Emperor stood alone for a moment, watching the scene.

A family.

A dream.

A future.

And he wanted—

no, he feared—

that he wanted to be part of it.

He whispered to himself,

"Two days left... I hope it opens beautifully."

Because he would be there.

For her.

For TWB.

For everything she was building.

The day had been bright, warm, and full of the kind of harmony the Whisper Bowl had never experienced before.

The Duke and Duchess were discussing lantern placements.

Lian Rou trained the workers.

Lian Hua chopped vegetables like a cheerful tornado.

The Emperor weeded the herb garden.

The Empress directed everyone with calm confidence.

It should have been perfect.

But somewhere above the roof beams... three ghosts were sulking.

Wei Rong (the general ghost), Li Shen (the scholar ghost), and Fen Yu (the dramatic ghost girl) hovered in the air with thunderous expressions.

Fen Yu crossed her arms dramatically. "Hmph! Look at them! All bonding and smiling."

Li Shen pushed his spectacles up his nose. "Her mortal family came... Everyone is praising them... even helping her. Haaah... Does she still need us?"

Wei Rong scowled. "Our empress has a full army of humans now. What are we? Decorations?"

Fen Yu gasped theatrically. "Are we being REPLACED?"

The three ghosts stared at the Duke carefully adjusting table spacing.

Then stared at the Duchess giving workers encouragement.

Then at Lian Hua clinging to her sister's arm happily.

Then... they stared at the Emperor practically glowing every time the Empress passed by.

Fen Yu shrieked silently: "LOOK!!! Even THAT COLD MAN is acting sweet! She has so many people now! What about US??"

Wei Rong stepped forward dramatically. "We cannot stand idle! We must... PROVE our worth!"

Li Shen rubbed his ghostly temples. "This won't end well."

But it was too late.

The ghost chaos had begun.

1. Disaster in the Kitchen

Fen Yu shot into the kitchen.

She wanted to "help."

Instead, she zoomed past a pot of broth so fast that the heat wavered—

SPLASH!

The broth bubbled too violently and spilled.

Cooks jumped back, shouting, "What was that?!"

Fen Yu slapped her ghost cheeks. "Oops—OOPS—No, this isn't my fault! The POT is weak!!"

She tried to fix it by blowing cool air.

But she blew too hard.

FWOOSH!

Flames shot up from the firewood.

"THE STOVE IS ANGRY!" a cook screamed.

Lian Hua fainted for a second.

Fen Yu hid behind a hanging ladle, trembling.

2. Disaster in the Training Area

Li Shen drifted toward the trainees.

He wanted to "improve their posture."

So he poked one man's back with his ghostly finger.

The man shivered violently.

"Wh—who touched me?!"

Another suddenly straightened like a rigid soldier.

Another screamed, "SPIRIT! I FELT A SPIRIT!"

Li Shen panicked.

"No no no—stop shouting—just straighten your posture—why so dramatic!"

But he poked too many too fast.

Now the entire line was trembling like leaves in winter.

Lian Rou squinted suspiciously.

"...Why are all of you shaking like chickens?"

The trainees sobbed in unison.

"We—we don't know, Young Master Rou!!"

Li Shen facepalmed in mid-air.

3. Disaster in the Garden

Wei Rong saw the Emperor calmly watering the new herb patch.

He felt competitive.

He wanted to show he was useful too.

He picked up a watering can (that only the Empress could see floating mysteriously).

Then, misunderstanding how much water plants need...

He poured the ENTIRE bucket onto one herb plant.

The Emperor froze.

"...Why is this plant drowning?"

Although he didn't see the ghost, he felt something strange.

Wei Rong tried to "fix" it by patting the dirt dry.

His ghostly hand blasted a gust of wind.

WHOOSH!

Half the soil flew into the Emperor's face.

Workers gasped.

"WHY DID THE WIND ONLY HIT HIS MAJESTY— I mean, Brother An?!"

The Emperor stood still, covered in dirt, expression blank.

Wei Rong floated behind a vegetable patch, sweating ghostly sweat.

4. The Empress Arrives

Lian An stepped out, holding a stack of menus.

She froze when she saw:

smoke from the kitchen

trembling trainees

a half-drowned herb plant

her dirt-covered husband

and three ghosts pretending they were invisible

Her eye twitched.

"...What. Happened."

Fen Yu burst into tears mid-air. "SOB—An'an—we thought—you don't need us anymore!!"

The Empress blinked. "Why would I not need you?"

Wei Rong pointed dramatically at the Duke and Duchess. "Your family came! Your cousin helps! Your sister helps! The Emperor is here helping! You have so many humans now!"

Li Shen sniffed. "And we... are ghosts."

Fen Yu wailed louder. "I JUST WANTED TO BE USEFUL AND SHOW THAT I STILL LOVE YOU—!"

Her wailing shook the ladles.

The Empress pinched the bridge of her nose.

She approached all three ghostly idiots and placed her hands on her hips.

"You three caused this mess because you were JEALOUS?"

All three nodded aggressively.

"Yes!!" "Yes." "Very yes!!"

She sighed deeply.

Then she smiled softly.

"You fools. You are mine. You were with me when no one else was. Why would I ever replace you?"

The ghosts froze.

Her words hit them harder than any spiritual cultivation could.

Fen Yu sobbed happily. "You—you love us?"

"Of course."

Wei Rong looked away quickly. "My loyalty is... unwavering."

Li Shen sniffled. "I will... study harder."

She flicked all their foreheads.

"THEN STOP CREATING CHAOS!"

They saluted.

"Yes Ma'am!!"

5. The Emperor Approaches

He walked toward the Empress, brushing dirt off his robe.

"What happened?"

She coughed lightly. "Ah... sudden wind?"

The Emperor looked unconvinced.

But instead of questioning, he gently tapped her forehead.

"Troubles always follow you."

She raised a brow. "Not my fault."

Behind them, three ghosts glared at the Emperor.

Fen Yu whispered: "He can't see us... but I still hate him."

Wei Rong folded ghost arms. "He gets too close to the Empress."

Li Shen muttered, "Our cultivation level is almost equal to his... annoying."

The Emperor's eyebrow lifted slightly.

He felt watched.

But he said nothing.

6. Restoring Order

The Empress clapped her hands.

"Everyone! Back to work!"

She fixed the kitchen fire.

Li Shen stopped poking trainees.

Fen Yu cooled the stove properly.

Wei Rong apologized to the herb plant (it received extra sun later).

Slowly...

The chaos settled.

By dusk—

The Whisper Bowl looked normal again.

The Duke whispered to the Duchess: "This place has... interesting energy."

The Duchess nodded calmly. "Very lively."

7. A Warm Ending

The Empress sat on a bench at sunset, exhausted.

Her three ghosts hovered around her like guilty children.

Fen Yu rested her chin on the Empress's shoulder. "Don't be mad..."

Wei Rong stood guard. "No more chaos. I swear on my honor."

Li Shen adjusted his glasses. "I'll write a procedure to avoid ghost interference."

The Empress sighed.

"You three... are impossible."

But she smiled.

Because under the chaos, jealousy, and stupidity—

They were her family too.

And they would never leave her side.