

## Ghost 149

Chapter 149: grand reopening chaos

The red silk was barely tied to the door when chaos began.

From dawn, the street outside The Whisper Bowl was already blocked. Lanterns swayed from freshly carved beams, the new TWB wooden logo gleaming in the morning sun. The scent of broth, spice, and roasted meat drifted far beyond the alley, pulling people in like a tide.

"Is it open yet?" "I heard nobles eat here." "They say the taste is the same every time!" "Look at the uniforms—so neat!"

The line twisted and doubled back on itself.

Inside, Lian An stood in the center of controlled madness. Her sleeves were tied up, apron spotless, eyes sharp. This was her battlefield.

"Table three—hotpot base ready!" "Five bowls to the left!" "Careful with the trays!"

The twins, now wearing their TWB Head uniforms, ran like practiced swallows—fast, precise, shouting orders louder than people twice their age.

"Don't spill!" "Smile when you greet!" "Say it properly—'Welcome to the Whisper Bowl!'"

The new man managed the counter, counting coins so quickly his fingers blurred. Behind him, the ledger filled page by page. He swallowed hard, half-excited, half-terrified.

"This many customers... is this real?"

Upstairs, the scholar-manager—now officially appointed—stood with a ruler in hand, correcting posture like a strict teacher.

"Back straight. Bow at this angle. Speak clearly. Again."

The former slaves and hired workers moved in synchronized rhythm. Five days ago, they were clumsy and silent. Today, they looked like a trained force—clean, confident, alive.

Outside—

"Move! Make space!" "No pushing!" "Who brought a goat?!"

Yes. A goat.

Someone's grandmother had brought a goat to "offer luck" to the restaurant. It bleated loudly, startling customers and knocking over a basket of buns.

The crowd gasped.

Before panic spread, Yao Qing swooped in, hands on hips.

"Take the goat OUT. We serve customers, not livestock!"

The crowd burst into laughter.

Above them, unseen—

Fen Yu floated upside down from a beam, giggling.

"Chaos suits this place."

Wei Rong crossed his arms.

"If a ghost army attacked now, no one would notice."

Li Shen sighed.

"This is what mortals call 'prosperity.' Loud, messy, unstoppable."

Then—

A ripple went through the crowd.

"Who are they?" "Why do they look... noble?"

Through the entrance walked the Duke and Duchess, dressed in plain commoner clothes, sleeves rolled up, smiling warmly. Beside them came Lian Hua, eyes bright with excitement, and Lian Rou, calm and observant.

They did not announce themselves.

They joined the work.

The Duchess rolled dough with practiced hands.

The Duke carried trays without complaint.

Lian Hua laughed as she helped serve drinks, nearly tripping once.

Lian Rou quietly corrected mistakes, guiding workers with gentle authority.

Customers whispered.

"This family... they're different." "So polite." "So warm."

Then—

Another stir.

A tall man entered, face calm, presence commanding—even in commoner clothes.

The Emperor.

Only a few knew. Most didn't.

He said nothing, simply took a broom and helped clear a spill near the door.

Someone whispered, "That husband of Sister Lian... he's really devoted."

Fen Yu snorted.

"Devoted? Or trapped?"

Lian An pinched the air sharply.

Behave.

The ghosts sulked.

Then disaster struck.

A pot boiled over.

Soup splashed.

A trainee panicked, dropping a tray.

For one breath, silence.

"Step back," Lian An said calmly.

She moved.

Fast. Precise. Controlled.

She adjusted the fire, wiped the spill, reassigned tasks in seconds. Her voice never rose. Her eyes never wavered.

The room breathed again.

Applause broke out—spontaneous, loud.

"She's amazing." "That's the owner?" "No wonder this place thrives."

In the corner, Merchant Yu Mian watched, stunned.

He leaned toward Yao Qing.

"She doesn't act like a commoner."

Yao Qing smiled thinly.

"She acts like someone who carries responsibility."

Yu Mian nodded slowly.

"...I chose the right partner."

Above, the ghosts exchanged looks.

"This place is going to shake the kingdom," Li Shen said softly.

Wei Rong smirked.

"Good. Let it."

Fen Yu clapped.

"And let's cause less trouble. Maybe."

Lian An glanced around—at the crowd, the noise, the laughter, the sweat, the life.

Chaos.

Beautiful chaos.

The Grand Reopening of The Whisper Bowl had begun.

And nothing would be the same again.

The chaos slowly settled into a steady, living rhythm.

Inside The Whisper Bowl, the air was thick with warmth and rich aromas—broth simmering gently, spices blooming in hot oil, freshly baked buns stacked in bamboo baskets. Every table was filled. Laughter rose and fell like waves.

Customers ate with bright eyes.

"This taste... exactly like last time." "Not oily, not heavy—perfect!" "I came from two streets away just for this."

What impressed them even more was the staff.

The servers moved smoothly between tables, sleeves tied neatly, aprons spotless, hair secured properly. Not a single bowl was served carelessly, not a single plate placed with noise. When someone spilled soup, a cloth appeared instantly. When a child dropped chopsticks, a fresh pair was offered with a smile.

"So clean," an elderly man murmured, watching a server wipe the table twice before placing new dishes.

"They even wash their hands before serving again," a woman whispered to her companion.

"I've never seen such hygiene in a restaurant," another said in awe.

Near the counter, a customer deliberately tested them.

"Miss, my tea cup smells strange."

The server bowed politely.

"My apologies. I will replace it immediately."

She didn't argue. She didn't hesitate. She brought a new cup—and poured the tea fresh, in front of him.

The man blinked, then laughed.

"Alright, alright. You passed."

Applause followed.

Upstairs, the scholar-manager observed quietly, satisfaction flickering across his usually stern face. The workers stood straighter now. Confidence had replaced fear.

In the kitchen, Lian An paused only for a moment, watching the scene through the steam.

Her lips curved faintly.

This was what she wanted.

Not just good food—but respect.

Outside, people continued praising.

"This place treats customers like guests." "These workers are trained better than palace servants." "No wonder nobles eat here."

Even the laborers who once complained now sat among the crowd, eating happily, nodding in approval.

Above the beams, unseen, Fen Yu floated lazily.

"They're praising us again."

Li Shen replied calmly,

"They're praising order."

Wei Rong crossed his arms.

"And discipline."

Lian An turned back to the stove, heart steady.

The Whisper Bowl was no longer just a restaurant.

It was a standard.

And everyone could feel it.

Outside The Whisper Bowl, the line kept growing.

At first, people waited patiently. Then curiosity turned into excitement, and excitement into loud chatter. More customers arrived after hearing the noise, asking what was happening, why so many people were standing in line.

"It reopened today." "The food is even better than before." "The service is unbelievable."

Word spread faster than steam from the kitchen.

People began giving reviews out loud, not even waiting to leave.

A middle-aged merchant wiped his mouth and said proudly,

"I eat out every day. This is the cleanest place I've seen in my life."

A young woman laughed, placing coins on the table.

"The staff bows, smiles, and actually listens. Take this—your service deserves it."

Silver clinked softly.

Another customer added tips deliberately, pushing the coins toward the server.

"For washing hands before touching food. I noticed."

Soon, it became a pattern.

Tips appeared on tables.

Extra coins were slipped into baskets.

Some even left notes praising specific servers.

"Your training shows." "Your hygiene is excellent." "Please open one near my home."

The servers were stunned at first, then moved faster, straighter, prouder. Their voices grew clearer. Their steps lighter.

The queue outside curved down the street.

People waiting didn't complain.

Instead, they reviewed the food before even eating.

"If this many people are waiting, it must be worth it." "I'll wait an hour if needed." "This place feels... trustworthy."

Inside, Lian An glanced toward the entrance, hearing the noise swell like a tide.

Her friend leaned close and whispered with disbelief,

"They're tipping... willingly."

Lian An exhaled softly.

"Because they feel respected."

Above, unseen, Fen Yu grinned.

"They're feeding us silver now."

Li Shen corrected calmly,

"They're investing in reputation."

Wei Rong added,

"A long line is better than a loud advertisement."

The bell rang again as another group entered.

The Whisper Bowl buzzed—

not with chaos,

but with confidence.

And outside, the queue only grew longer.