

## The 80s 146

### Chapter 146: Working to Repay Debt

The restaurant had been open for nearly a month, and business had already stabilized. With the help of Qi Taiguo and Ning Ge, Cheng Su and the others felt much more relaxed. By one in the afternoon, they had already sold out all the pre-made dishes, and any new customers could only order stir-fried dishes à la carte.

"You guys sit, I'll stir-fry a couple of dishes for us to have lunch," Cheng Su wiped down a table, then went back into the kitchen.

Qiulan, who was quick to pick up on what was needed, poured two cups of tea for Qi Taiguo and Ning Ge before busying herself with other tasks.

Soon enough, Cheng Su had prepared three dishes, and they all had a simple meal. After the last two tables of customers left, Qiulan took care of cleaning up, while Qi Taiguo and Ning Ge chatted. Cheng Su went to calculate the day's earnings at the cash register.

"Your wounds have almost healed, when are you leaving? Do you need to call home?" Qi Taiguo asked as he lit a cigarette.

Ning Ge's eyes flickered, he replied, "Big brother, I still owe sister-in-law money, how can I just leave? I've thought it over. The restaurant still needs hands, so I've decided to work here temporarily to pay off my debt."

Qiulan, who was wiping a table, heard this and glanced over, then lowered her head again with a faint curl of her lips.

Qi Taiguo hadn't known about any loan, and when Ning Ge suddenly mentioned it, he was taken aback.

"Sister-in-law didn't tell you? I borrowed some money from her, and now I haven't paid it back yet," Ning Ge said with an awkward smile.

Qi Taiguo looked incredulous, "You're completely broke?"

"I already told you I was robbed, destitute. Otherwise, why would I have the cheek to freeload at your place?" Ning Ge explained.

"So you do know what it means to freeload?" Cheng Su joined them, giving Ning Ge a sidelong glance.

Ning Ge touched his nose and said, "That's why I've decided to work temporarily in your restaurant, to help pay off the debt."

"Wrong!" Cheng Su shook her index finger, "You're eating and living at our place, so working offsets that part of your debt. But the rest of what you owe me, you still have to pay back."

"Are you Zhou Bapi or what?" Ning Ge's eyes widened.

Cheng Su's eyes narrowed slightly. He immediately backed down, resigning himself, "Fine, fine, you're the boss, I'll listen to you." Though inwardly he muttered to himself, hasten to recover the stuff and get out of here sooner rather than later.

Qi Taiguo, no longer concerning himself with Ning Ge, looked at Cheng Su, "Did you finish with the accounts?"

Cheng Su nodded with a smile, "I haven't started selling beverages yet. Later, I need to make a new batch of spiced brine. You and Ning Ge go and buy some alcohol to bring back."

Since they ran a restaurant, there would always be someone ordering à la carte. If they enjoyed their meal and got into a drinking mood, they might order a drink or two.

Thinking of alcohol reminded Cheng Su that it was nearly August, when grapes were in season. She could also make some homemade grape wine to drink, which was beautifying, healthy, and nutritional.

"That's great, cook a couple of special dishes tonight and I'll have a drink or two with Big Brother to celebrate," Ning Ge said with a smile on the side.

"Are you healed enough for that?" Cheng Su gave him a look.

With the money handed to him by Cheng Su, Qi Taiguo took a reluctant Ning Ge with him out the door, while Cheng Su continued to be busy working.

To make a good spiced brine, one needs a lot of different spices. Common ingredients include Sichuan pepper, star anise, cinnamon, licorice, black cardamom, fennel seeds, scallion, ginger, and rock sugar, all blended together to make various marinades for meat or vegetarian dishes. This preparation could save a lot of effort in the future.

The most important thing was that the spiced brine could be reused. Over time, the brine would become more fragrant and better with age, and the food prepared with it would taste more delicious.

Therefore, Cheng Su had bought all the necessary ingredients early and was now ready to make the brine.

She washed all the spices, and along with the well-prepared pig bones, she put them in a pot to boil over high heat. While tending to the fire, she read a book, waiting for the spiced brine to be ready. By the time it was done, Qi Taiguo and the others had returned.

They placed various drinks and beverages on the shelf of the cash register, and then as dusk fell, they all finally headed home.