

The 80s 321

Chapter 321 The Old Brine is Ruined

Carrying a joyous mood, Cheng Su left her home and headed to the restaurant, but as soon as she entered, she felt that something was off.

Everyone in the shop was standing in the courtyard, not yet starting their bustling tasks, which was unusual for this hour. Moreover, Old Song's and Qiulan's complexions were particularly poor.

What happened?

Cheng Su cleared her throat loudly, and everyone turned their heads. Upon seeing her, their expressions changed.

"It's almost ten, right? Why are you all still standing here? What happened?" Cheng Su asked with a smile.

Old Song and Qiulan showed expressions of embarrassment, and the crowd parted slightly, revealing a large stainless-steel bucket in the courtyard—the one used for storing brine.

This bucket of brine was old brine, started when Cheng Su first established the restaurant. Given its repeated use, the flavor of the brine had only improved. Even Old Song, a descendant of the Imperial Chef, could not replicate this particular brine. Brined dishes were especially popular at Joy Soon Loy.

Therefore, this bucket of old brine was one of the secrets behind Joy Soon Loy's success and a rather important asset.

"It was my mistake. When closing up last night, I did not cover the bucket of brine properly, allowing a cockroach to get in," Old Song said to Cheng Su, his face full of shame.

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su's complexion drastically changed, and she quickly stepped forward. There on the surface of the old brine floated a cockroach the size of a thumb, an extremely jarring sight.

"It's not Master's fault. I cleaned up the kitchen, and I was the one who put away the brine. I was also the one who didn't secure the lid properly," said Lin Ertong, the new kitchen worker, his face turning red with strain.

"Silence! I am the head chef, and it is my responsibility to check that all ingredients are properly stored in the kitchen. You certainly have made a mistake, but the greatest fault lies with me," Old Song rebuked.

"I was the last to check the locks, it's my fault for not inspecting thoroughly," Li Qiulan said, her face pale.

"Stop arguing. It's my fault," Old Song sighed.

"No..."

"Chef Song..."

"Enough," Cheng Su raised her hand to intervene. "Let's stop trying to take on this responsibility. We don't have much time before the rush hour, everyone get back to work, to your posts."

"What about this brine..." Qiulan started to say hesitantly.

"Pour it out," Cheng Su said regretfully.

"Pour it out?"

"What a waste!"

"Just scoop out the cockroach, and it can still be used," the dishwashing auntie even suggested.

As soon as she said this, both Cheng Su and Old Song simultaneously said, "This cannot be done."

Cheng Su and Old Song exchanged a look and both saw seriousness and determination in the other's eyes, silently nodding in agreement.

Cheng Su looked at the auntie, then turned to everyone and said, "In the food business, what we value most is the hygiene of our ingredients. This concerns the reputation of a shop. Why do those century-old establishments have such an excellent reputation? Apart from taste, there are many other commitments they make that we are not aware of— impeccable hygiene, quality ingredients—these are the guarantees of quality."

"We could remove this cockroach from the brine and continue using it, and no one would know. But while others may not know, our conscience does. Cockroaches are filthy creatures; they crawl through sewers and all manner of dirty places. Now it has fallen into the brine that goes into people's stomachs—it has been contaminated. How can we possibly serve such tainted food to our customers?" Cheng Su continued. "Although Joy Soon Loy is just a small shop, even a small shop should maintain its quality. If we turn a blind eye this time, what about the future?"