

## The 80s 1011

Chapter 1011: Put an End to This Idea Before It's Too Late

Mother Qi hung up the phone angrily, thinking to herself that her son truly is heartless; his big sister is his biological aunt, yet he won't even help her with this.

No, this must be Cheng Su's doing. She heard it clearly on the phone just now; Cheng Su was right next to her son. If she hadn't spoken up, how could Taiguo refuse so directly? Taiguo isn't so cold and heartless; this child values family most.

Cheng Su really took a hit lying down, carrying such a big blame.

Mother Qi turned around and saw Father Qi standing behind her, glaring at her with a dark expression.

She felt a bit guilty at once; it was precisely when the old man wasn't around that she secretly called her son, otherwise, if he heard it, it would be trouble.

"Why are you skulking around people like that? Trying to scare someone to death!" Mother Qi said sharply but weakly.

"I'm asking you what you're doing?" Father Qi, hearing bits and pieces from the phone just now, asked with a stern face: "Did you call Taiguo to ask them to help borrow money for your big sister?"

Mother Qi evasively replied, "I didn't!"

"I heard it all; don't say you didn't!" Father Qi shouted sternly.

Being yelled at like that by him, Mother Qi's temper flared up, and she said, "If you heard it all, why bother asking? Isn't this just talk for the sake of talking? I did indeed call Taiguo, so what? Can't I call my own son and ask him for money? He is my son, I am his mother, asking him for money is only natural."

That's right, she is the one who gave birth to him and raised him; who can argue against asking for some money?

The more Mother Qi thought about it, the more she felt she was in the right, and she raised her chin in defiance.

Seeing her expression, Father Qi sneered coldly: "Asking your son for money is natural. But asking your daughter-in-law and borrowing to give to others, have you no shame? Don't spread this out, or it'll be a big embarrassment!"

"Who said I asked her? I asked my son!" Mother Qi argued stubbornly, yet it sounded weak and lacking conviction.

Father Qi looked at her as if she were a fool: "How much allowance does Taiguo get in a month? To put it generously, if it's increased by a hundred or two now, where is he getting so much money to lend you? Isn't it ultimately coming from your daughter-in-law?"

"Money earned by a couple, is there a divide between yours and mine?" Mother Qi said, "Look at Fenglian before, wasn't she handing over money to her mother-in-law too!"

"That's why she couldn't take it and wanted a divorce!" Father Qi yelled angrily.

Mother Qi was silenced, pursing her lips.

"Any man wants his self-respect. Taiguo's allowance isn't much, and what he gives to his wife is for household expenses. If you ask him to get money from her, where does that leave his dignity? You may have no shame, but don't let your son be shameless like you too. Doesn't he need pride? Will he have any standing in their home in the future?"

Mother Qi was stunned for a moment; she hadn't considered this aspect.

"And furthermore, when the conversation starts with borrowing one thousand yuan, does your big sister think our family is a gold mine? Can we casually give her one thousand yuan? Even if we could give it, when would she repay it? Can she even repay at all? If not, is your son's one thousand yuan just going to be wasted?" Father Qi continued: "Is borrowing it for building a house and getting a wife? If you don't

have a large head, don't wear a big hat. Such a shamefully materialistic family will lead to no good, it's better to let go of this idea early, hmpf!"

Mother Qi gritted her teeth in anger, yet couldn't rebut, thinking about the old man's words, wondering if her big sister could actually repay the one thousand yuan if it were lent out.

#### Chapter 1012: Putting Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes

Sister-in-law Gao reported the number for sending warmth to the Five Guarantees household directly to Cheng Su at home. Cheng Su offered her a seat and pushed a fruit tray over, discussing some details with her and jotting them down on paper.

"Sister-in-law, I've noted everything down, I'll make arrangements later, and I'll also send someone over at that time, don't worry!" Cheng Su said with a smile.

"I'm always confident in your work." Sister-in-law Gao laughed, hesitated for a moment, and said, "That Li family's person, always speaks without restraint, don't take it to heart!"

Regarding the Li family, Cheng Su thought for a moment and realized she was talking about the family member who previously suggested she should donate more. Then she replied, "If you hadn't mentioned it, I would have forgotten all about this episode. I'm fine, Sister-in-law, you shouldn't take it to heart either. There's nothing to compare between people; it's always you see me well, I see you well too."

Sister-in-law Gao knew Cheng Su was good with words, and upon hearing this, she felt quite soothed.

"I definitely won't take it to heart. If I were to compare, how could I possibly match you? I wouldn't seek disappointment myself." Sister-in-law Gao laughed.

Cheng Su chuckled, "Sister-in-law, you're teasing me again. Actually, that day I happened to be dealing with some unpleasant things, which is why I lashed out at her. Normally, would I argue with her?"

"Hmm?" Sister-in-law Gao showed a puzzled expression.

Cheng Su then shared the issues she faced at school, prompting Sister-in-law Gao to laugh, "So there was actually something like that!"

Cheng Su sighed, "Isn't that so? They just came together." After a pause, she continued, "Actually, I'm not petty, I just can't stand that kind of thinking, the way they act as if they deserve it, based on what!"

"If you were petty, then the whole compound wouldn't have anyone as generous!" Sister-in-law Gao laughed, patting her hand.

Cheng Su wasn't someone who usually acted stingy. Normally, if she bought some fruit back and saw the kids, she'd share it with them. Who wouldn't say she's generous?

"Sister-in-law, it's tough being a person, no matter how well you do, people have things to say, sigh."

Sister-in-law Gao sighed too, "Being a person is like this; just do your best and don't mind what others say. You can't control it anyway!"

Cheng Su nodded.

Sister-in-law Gao sat for a while, then left.

Cheng Su escorted her out the door. When Hualing returned from work and saw them, she asked Cheng Su what Sister-in-law Gao's visit was about.

"Nothing, just discussing details about sending warmth to the Five Guarantees household," Cheng Su replied.

Hualing responded with a "Oh," and didn't ask further questions.

Cheng Su stopped her.

"What's the matter?" Hualing turned her head to look at her.

Cheng Su pulled her into the room, thought for a moment, and asked, "If a relative of Chen Shouwang's family asked to borrow money from you, would you lend it? Especially close ones, like an aunt or uncle."

She was uncertain about Qi Taiguo's feelings. Since it's his aunt, would he want to lend?

Personally, she definitely didn't want to lend because of the aunt's character, but if they don't lend, later when her own relatives suddenly need money urgently, would she lend then? If she does, how would Qi Taiguo feel?

Thinking from another's perspective, putting herself in their shoes, only then would Cheng Su find herself hesitating.

So, she wanted to ask Hualing, what would she do?

Hualing chuckled, "I'm just a salary worker, and Chen Shouwang has only a small stipend, with a big family to support, where's the money to lend out?"

Cheng Su clicked her tongue, "Not talking about whether there's money or not; if genuinely asked, and there was money, would you lend?"

"Depends on what the situation is, life-saving, you might squeeze some out. But my thought is don't lend easily, lending opens a path. Even if lending, everything must be clearly written in black and white!" Hualing glanced at her, "What's wrong, someone's asked you for a loan?"

Chapter 1013: Uncle Falls in Love with His Widow Sister-in-law

Cheng Su felt a bit uneasy being asked so directly by Hualing, and didn't say anything.

Seeing Cheng Su not answer, Hualing said, "You must be attracting envy, right? You've made your business so successful, of course people want to cozy up to you!"

Cheng Su said angrily, "Is it a crime for me to do business, who have I offended?"

"People naturally get jealous of those who are doing well. Even I am envious of you!" Hualing sighed, touching her belly.

Cheng Su glared at her.

Hualing coughed and said, "I can't really give you advice on this matter, you're smarter than me. Whether you should lend the money or not, you know in your heart. You're just looking for a reason to persuade yourself. Between couples, I'd talk to Qi Taiguo."

Cheng Su raised her eyebrows and teased her, "Oh, you're pregnant, and suddenly clear-minded!"

This time, Hualing glared at her and stood up, "Ungrateful, I'm leaving, I'm exhausted!" She said, grabbing an apple from the table and waving it, "Consider it consulting fees!"

Cheng Su snorted, rolling her eyes in frustration.

To lend or not to lend?

In the evening, after Qi Taiguo came back, Cheng Su casually asked, "Has your mom called again?"

Qi Taiguo was stunned for a moment, "You're still thinking about that?"

"I just want to ask." Cheng Su pursed her lips and said, "There's a bit of money at home, if you really want to lend it out, lend it with an IOU!"

Qi Taiguo laughed, pinching her cheek, "Acting generous again? Clearly, you don't want to lend."

"I'm worried you're not at ease." Cheng Su rolled her eyes and said.

"It's fine, you're right. Lending money is for emergencies, not for poverty. Moreover, such a large amount, it's not that easy to just lend it out!" Qi Taiguo said, "Let's put it aside, I've already told mom we don't have money."

Cheng Su replied with an oh.

They didn't expect that in the end, the money wasn't lent out because the marriage fell through.

And the reason for the marriage falling through wasn't because the Deng family didn't get the money to build the house, but because Deng Weixia didn't want to marry the girl from that family, as he already had someone in his heart.

This someone wasn't anyone else, but his widowed sister-in-law.

Deng Weixia fell in love with his own widowed sister-in-law and confessed to the aunt, kneeling in front of her, saying he wanted to marry the widowed sister-in-law.

This stirred up like a storm, the aunt fainted on the spot, without hesitation asked to drive the widowed daughter-in-law Liu Wenjing out, believing she didn't act properly and seduced her son.

Liu Wenjing, being timid and weak, was naturally protected by Deng Weixia in every possible way, insisting he would marry no one but her, which infuriated the aunt beyond measure.

An uncle loving his widowed sister-in-law, such a scandal if spread would ruin the Deng family's reputation in the village.

She had lived her life as a virtuous woman, praised for her integrity, praised for her family's honest conduct, yet now such a disgraceful story emerged, it made the aunt so ashamed and angry she wished she could end it all.

What's worse, Deng Weixia, seeing he couldn't get his mother's approval and seeing she was adamant about marrying him to that family, made a resolute decision, and eloped with Liu Wenjing and her two children!

The aunt received the letter and fainted on the spot, in a family with no men left, aside from the widow mother and the girl Deng Weiqiu, Deng Weiqiu, losing her backbone, could only turn to her second aunt.

And the second aunt, being Mother Qi, could only seek her son's help.

Hearing this, Cheng Su felt as if struck by a thunderbolt: It's practically something out of a TV drama!

#### Chapter 1014: Revenge Mentality

Qi Taiguo hung up the phone, rubbed his temples, feeling a throbbing pain, and his head seemed to have grown bigger.

"So, how was it? What did they say?" Cheng Su leaned in to ask.

Qi Taiguo pinched the spot between his eyebrows and said, "Auntie has gone to our place. Weixia caused that mess, and she doesn't have the face to stay at home, so she's temporarily staying with us."

Well, this is something that chaste and resolute woman might do, after all, it's an uncle and widowed sister-in-law, which is considered unethical. How could they face others if this got out? If she continued to stay at home, wouldn't people break her backbone with their whispers?

Even Cheng Su herself felt embarrassed, not to mention that extremely traditional woman? She probably thought it would be better to just die rather than face such humiliation, with the situation being so intense and lacking a support pillar, she could only seek refuge.

"So, what does your mom want you to do?" Cheng Su asked him.

Qi Taiguo didn't look happy and said, "She wants me to find Weixia and bring him back. Where am I supposed to find him in this vast sea of people? How would I know where they've gone? Besides, I'm in the army; it's not like I can just leave when I want to!"

Cheng Su thought to herself, your mom's bizarre way of thinking, you're well aware of it.

"This Weixia too, how could he do such a thing! He's just a young uncle, messing with the widowed sister-in-law; I think he wants to live with his head down forever!" Qi Taiguo fumed, "Utter foolishness."

Cheng Su said, "Breaking societal norms, this goes beyond love!"

Qi Taiguo looked sideways, "Why do I feel like there's a hint of sarcasm in your words?"

Cheng Su coughed twice, uncomfortably saying, "No, you're hearing things!" Then added, "I advise you not to worry about how to find them. Since they wanted to elope, they certainly wouldn't want to be found. They'll appear when the time comes. Plus, I'm guessing their affair has been brewing for a while."

"Hmm?" Qi Taiguo sat up straight, asking, "What do you mean by that?"

"Just last year, I saw the way Weixia looked at his sister-in-law was quite unusual. I just didn't think too much about it, only felt he might have been sympathetic seeing his sister-in-law become widowed so young." Cheng Su said, "And your aunt, always saying a woman doesn't serve a second husband, she scolded me on the spot when I mentioned remarriage to Liu Wenjing. Clearly, your aunt doesn't allow or want Liu Wenjing to remarry. She thinks if she could persevere, so can Liu Wenjing, and that she can watch her son grow up this way!"

Qi Taiguo frowned, asking, "What does that have to do with them eloping?" He rarely thought about these complicated issues, so he didn't immediately see the connection.

"The more people are oppressed, the more they will rebel!" Cheng Su glanced at him plainly, "Your aunt never remarried, held on her entire life, and no one said she was wrong. But she can't impose her will on others. Who knows if Liu Wenjing never thought of remarrying? But what if your aunt suppressed her? Fine then, if you don't let me remarry, and since the young uncle loves me, then let's just be together!"

Qi Taiguo hissed and said, "How is that possible? This is completely..." Revenge!

"Revenge!" Cheng Su said, "Perhaps Liu Wenjing didn't initially intend anything with the young uncle, but what if she couldn't withstand the mother's pressure? In short, the reason she eloped with the

young uncle could be a combination of many factors, but the desire for revenge must have played a part."

Qi Taiguo's eyes showed shock.

How could people be like this!

#### Chapter 1015: Aunt's Pain

Anyway, the fact that uncle fell in love with the widow sister-in-law and they eloped really shook Cheng Su's worldview, and it was quite distressing too, since this kind of thing is never pleasant.

However, no matter how upset Cheng Su was, it's only temporary. Everyone makes their own life choices. Although they are relatives, Deng Weixia is also Qi Taiguo's first cousin, but isn't there a saying about relationships thinning after the third generation? Relatives tend to get less close over generations.

So Cheng Su didn't pay much attention to it. She couldn't even if she wanted to. Even Qi Taiguo couldn't handle it, so what was she supposed to do? She decided to treat it as mere gossip.

But it was different for the Qi family.

The aunt looked expectantly at Mother Qi who had just hung up the phone and urgently asked, "How was it? What did Taiguo say? Did he say he'd help find them?"

Mother Qi's face looked a bit unpleasant, and she said, "Well, Taiguo is in the army and can't get away. He also said that in this vast sea of people, Weixia didn't even call him, so he doesn't know where to start looking!"

The aunt's heart sank, and she began to cry bitterly.

"Why is my fate so bitter, so miserable? I became a widow at a young age, struggled to raise several children, married off Weidong and gave him a wife who bore him a son, only to find he followed his father's path and died early. Thankfully, there is a son to continue the family line, otherwise it would be cut off. But that woman..." Mother Qi slapped her thigh and wailed, "I knew she wasn't someone who

would behave well, if I had known she was such a shameless woman, I would have tied her up and drowned her in a pig cage to keep her from being a scourge. Look what this has become! Of all people, she had to seduce Weixia, does she have no shame?"

Sitting outside the door, Father Qi shook his head in annoyance and disdain, saying at the beginning, you said she couldn't remarry and should remain a widow all her life, now who's to blame?

"That damn woman, she took away my Weixia, my grandson, wailing, she deserves to be struck by lightning, let the heavens punish that wretch! How are we going to face people, how can the Deng family face anyone?" the aunt cried, gasping for air.

Mother Qi was also troubled and called out to her, "Elder sister, stop crying. When Weixia left, did they leave any words?"

"No, just said they left." The aunt wiped away tears as she spoke: "Weixia is foolish, eloped with the widow sister-in-law, even the ancestors won't tolerate him, how will he live in the future?"

Mother Qi remained silent.

With such an incident, everyone knows that even if they are found, they probably wouldn't be able to return to live in the old home, otherwise, they'd never be able to lift their heads again, living under constant scrutiny and gossip.

The aunt actually thought of this as well, the more she thought, the gloomier her heart became, her husband and eldest son both were gone early, now only Weixia and her immature grandson are her sole support.

With this occurrence, Weixia definitely wouldn't dare return to the old home, maybe never in his lifetime, so what was she going to do?

The aunt thought and thought, chest suddenly tightening with pain, blood rushing wildly to her head, her eyes flipped and she directly collapsed to the ground, fainting.

Mother Qi screamed and loudly called for Father Qi.

Father Qi hurried into the room at a glance and sensed something terrible, saying, "Quick, get someone, take her to the hospital!"

The aunt was getting old, and with this shock, if not handled properly, she might suffer a stroke and be paralyzed, couldn't let something happen to her at his house.

The Qi family was a chaotic mess.

#### Chapter 1016: Don't Go Looking for Trouble

My aunt still couldn't escape the fate of having a stroke, but because someone was with her when she fainted from the cerebral hemorrhage, it was discovered fairly promptly. She was sent to the hospital and treated; it was a mild stroke, but her mouth was crooked.

Misfortunes never come singly, that's probably how it is!

In the Deng family, the only man, Deng Weixia, has run away. Now my aunt is bedridden because of the stroke, leaving only the girl Deng Weiqiu at home. However, she has always been arrogant and ambitious, and a series of events caught her off guard. She doesn't know what to do, can't even take care of my aunt properly, let alone anything else.

There's no way to rely on Deng Weiqiu, so the task of helping to take care of my aunt fell on Mother Qi. After all, she is my aunt's younger sister, but she's also getting older. These days, she's been helping to take care of Qi Fenglian's kids, and before long, she's worn out.

"Others at this age are enjoying life as grandmothers, but I'm suffering. Oh, my old waist is really going to break!" Mother Qi complained to Father Qi while rubbing her lower back.

Father Qi glanced at her and said, "You're bringing this suffering upon yourself!"

"How can you call it self-inflicted suffering? It's just the way things are with my older sister's family now. Can I really harden my heart and ignore it?" Mother Qi retorted angrily.

"Then don't complain about suffering. You brought this upon yourself voluntarily, don't talk about anything else." Father Qi snorted. He was fed up with the troubles of my aunt's family.

Mother Qi glared at him in frustration, thought for a moment, and said, "I'll have my son's wife come home to help me, will that work?"

"What? Who are you going to ask to help you?" Father Qi almost threw away the pipe in his hand and looked at her wide-eyed.

"When something happens at home, it's only natural to have my son's wife come back to manage, am I not even allowed to ask?" Mother Qi shouted.

Father Qi laughed in anger, "Nothing happened to our family. The problem is with your sister's family. Are you asking your son's wife to help take care of your sister? Are you out of your mind?"

Mother Qi was speechless.

"I advise you not to make a fool of yourself; it's laughable," Father Qi said coldly. "You want to take care of your sister, no one would say anything about that, but don't drag your son's wife into this. Your son will be the first not to agree! Besides, your sister still has a daughter, doesn't she? She's grown up, isn't she capable of doing something?"

He couldn't stand Deng Weiqiu, always complaining about how hard or tiring things are. That's her own mother; no matter how hard or tiring it is, what does it matter?

Father Qi's sarcastic remarks made Mother Qi's cheeks burn. She just couldn't understand what's the big deal. Has her son's wife ever stayed at home since she married into the family? Whose daughter-in-law doesn't help with housework at home?

Except for Cheng Su, having fun outside, not needing to take care of the in-laws!

The more Mother Qi thought about it, the more she felt it was unfair. Cheng Su has been married into the Qi family for so long, hasn't laid a single egg, and has achieved nothing within the family. There has to be some contribution from her.

Mother Qi also forgot that although Cheng Su might not have done any housework, the Qi family's life improved. The two little ones don't have to worry about money for their studies, and the family became more affluent—all because Cheng Su was working hard outside, giving them money.

She wouldn't know that being a daughter-in-law isn't about doing housework to be called an accomplishment. Making the family's life better and better is also an accomplishment, a major one at that.

But perspective and vision limit individual understanding, so Mother Qi wouldn't know or think much about it. Therefore, she stubbornly ignored Father Qi's advice not to make a fool of herself and called Qi Taiguo, demanding that Cheng Su come back to help manage family affairs.

#### Chapter 1017: Mother and Son Quarrel

Qi Taiguo, upon receiving another call from his mother, assumed she was again urging him to find Weixia, and he had prepared a response to calm her down. Yet, he didn't expect her to mention something else.

"...It's unavoidable that you can't find Weixia, and Mom knows and understands, as does your aunt. But now, your aunt has had a stroke from the anger caused by those two unfilial sons. Their family is in dire straits; surely you can't stand by while your aunt has no one to lean on in the hospital?" Mother Qi said.

Qi Taiguo felt something was amiss and asked, "Mom, what are you trying to say?"

"I'm getting old and just after helping take care of your aunt for a couple of days, my back is sore and in terrible pain. So, you see, should your wife come back to help at home for a few days?" Mother Qi finally said.

Qi Taiguo's face darkened, "Mom, are you asking Cheng Su to help take care of Aunt?"

"Not exactly...I can go, but we can't just leave the house unattended, right? Ever since your wife married into this family, she hasn't done a single day of housework. The house is a mess right now, and your older sister's two kids need tending to. I really can't manage. Just let her help for a few days!"

Qi Taiguo interrupted without thinking, "Mom! If you're feeling unwell and hospitalized, Cheng Su can go take care of you because you're my mom. She loves me, and caring for you is only natural. But you want her to care for Aunt, how is that reasonable? She's the daughter-in-law of the Qi family, my wife, not part of the Deng family."

Mother Qi was momentarily embarrassed and said, "I'm not asking her to take care of your aunt, just to help at home for a few days. I truly can't manage it!"

"Mom, why put yourself in this messy situation? It's not like Aunt has no children. Even if Weixia isn't around, isn't there still Weiqiu? He's grown enough to care for his mother, isn't he?" Qi Taiguo's tone was stern, "Don't spoil her like Aunt does. In the countryside, where do you see kids being pampered like this?"

Mother Qi was infuriated and said, "How can you be so cold and heartless? That's your own aunt, and now that she's in trouble, as her nephew, can't you offer some help? Asking your wife to help at home for a few days isn't asking for her life or flesh."

Qi Taiguo was also angry, "There're so many people at home, can't they handle it? Cheng Su is busy with work and studies. Where would she find the time to go back?"

"She runs her own business, what is she busy with? Isn't it just directing others to work under her? I see you're just protecting her, cherishing her, not wanting her to come back." Mother Qi fumed.

"Mom, she's my wife, of course I want to protect her and cherish her," Qi Taiguo said.

"So, you're determined to stand against Mom? For your wife, you're willing to be unfilial to your mother?"

Qi Taiguo took a deep breath and said, "Cheng Su doesn't have the time to go back, Mom, stop thinking about it. As for Aunt, I will have Dad send her fifty yuan as a token of our filial piety. You taking care of

Aunt is your choice, but Cheng Su certainly won't! If you insist on being unreasonable, then don't call us anymore unless necessary!"

"You, you, you unfilial son!" Mother Qi exclaimed, slamming down the phone.

Qi Taiguo felt a massive headache coming on. Looking up, he saw Cheng Su looking at him with a faint smile.

"Susu..." he said awkwardly, unable to find the words to describe his mother's stubbornness and feeling embarrassed.

"I heard everything. Your mom wants me to go back and help with things at home?" Cheng Su had overheard the entire conversation.

Qi Taiguo nodded, "I've already refused."

Cheng Su smiled without saying a word, thinking that even if he refused, her mother-in-law would probably curse her as unfilial and unkind behind her back!

#### Chapter 1018: I Hope You Didn't Choose Wrong

Father Qi received a call from his son and was both angry and annoyed. He really hadn't expected that despite all the talk, this woman was still so thoughtless, making such demands of their son. Furious, he scolded Mother Qi, saying that if she remained so muddleheaded, she should just join her elder sister in the grave.

That was not all; Father Qi also said a few words to Deng Weiqiu, asking her to take care of her mother. Otherwise, such a grown-up girl, if she can't even take care of her own mother, how can she talk about marrying and taking care of her husband and in-laws in the future?

Deng Weiqiu, with her thin skin, went to the hospital with red eyes. Her aunt saw her and asked a couple of questions. Upon hearing her words, her aunt's face turned dark as she thought of her own and her daughter's predicament—having no one to rely on and no resources, her future looked bleak. She felt heartache and lamented about her misfortune to anyone who would listen.

When Mother Qi arrived, the aunt spoke even more, saying relatives were heartless, without any sympathy, and so on.

Mother Qi was also holding her breath, and hearing her aunt's words added to her distress. After all, she had even turned against her son for her, yet she said things like that, which was truly chilling.

Mother Qi helped for another two days and then left it to Deng Weiqiu. Naturally, she was displeased that Cheng Su hadn't returned yet.

Cheng Su couldn't be bothered with that mess of troublesome affairs. She ate and drank as she pleased, attended classes, and visited her business to inspect things.

She agreed to donate goods in the name of Joy Soon Loy Jam Company to the five-guarantee households. Xiao Pinshan came with documents for her approval and mentioned they could also use this opportunity to promote their company.

Cheng Su had already learned from Sister-in-law Gao that there would indeed be media coverage alongside this event, as it was a charity activity. She responded, "Then arrange it, and deliver it to the designated place."

Xiao Pinshan acknowledged her instructions and gave Ying Xiaoya a look before leaving.

Ying Xiaoya returned a big smile at him. Cheng Su noticed and asked her after Xiao Pinshan left, "Are things going smoothly now?"

Ying Xiaoya's smile faltered slightly: "Not smoothly!"

"Why?"

"His daughter is somewhat resistant and hostile towards me!" Ying Xiaoya replied.

Cheng Su frowned and said, "That was to be expected. After all, she's old enough to understand things."

Ying Xiaoya forced a smile, "Yes! So I can only take it slow. I believe in time, she'll accept me, won't she?"

Cheng Su didn't answer that because it was uncertain; she just asked, "And how about your family? Are Auntie and the others okay with it now?"

"How could they be! They're just not as outright resistant as before. They keep talking to me about it, saying how being a stepmother is difficult, about differences in family status, urging me to choose carefully and not regret it in the future. It's to the point where my ears are getting calluses!" Ying Xiaoya sighed with a pained expression.

"Truly, parents have a hard time; they just fear you might suffer in the future. After all, you're their only daughter. And parents, well, they can't force their children." Cheng Su said.

"I understand their feelings, but I just want to give it a try. I always feel that if you haven't even tried, what's the point in talking about success or failure?" Ying Xiaoya said softly. "I really like him and genuinely want to be with him. So, Susu, I really want to give it a shot. As for the future, I might regret it, but I also want to try!"

Since she had already said so much, what else could Cheng Su say? Perhaps this was the courage of love. She then said, "If that's the case, do as you think best. While you're not married yet, communicate and understand each other more! I hope you haven't made the wrong choice!"

Ying Xiaoya nodded and flashed a sweet smile.

#### Chapter 1019: Don't Force Your Will on Others

The short month of February quickly passed amidst the commotion. Qi Taiguo's cousin Deng Weixia eloped with a widow and never showed up again nor sent any word. No one knew if they were alive or dead, or where they had gone.

After the two of them ran away, the rest of the people still needed to live. The eldest aunt and Deng Weiqiu couldn't stay long at the Qi family home, so they returned to their hometown shortly after being discharged from the hospital.

With Deng Weixia missing, the Deng family was left with just the mother and daughter relying on each other, living a life that was miserable beyond words.

Why? The eldest aunt had suffered a stroke, her mouth was crooked, and her movements were not as nimble as before. She could only do light work, so all the labor fell on Deng Weiqiu. That girl cursed Deng Weixia and the others while working every day.

They say there are no secrets that can't be uncovered. With her cursing like that, everyone knew what had happened, targeting the Deng family with gossip. The eldest aunt was so ashamed she didn't even step out of her house, wishing she could just die to end it all.

And as for the daughter, she cursed every day, full of resentment, and feared it would delay her own marriage. How could she not be bitter? How could life not be hard?

"...To be honest, I'm worried that girl Weiqiu will just run away and leave the eldest aunt all alone, turning her truly into a pitiable lonely old woman." Qi Fenglian brought up the matter while Cheng Su was settling accounts at the fast food restaurant.

Cheng Su leafed through the ledger, calculating, while also keeping some focus on speaking with Qi Fenglian, "If that's true, then these children are truly unfilial." Meanwhile, she silently added in her heart that the eldest aunt had failed in her upbringing.

"Oh, when it rains, it pours, doesn't it? In recent years, one event after another has happened in the eldest aunt's home. I wonder if they've been hit by some bad luck. Such pity!" Qi Fenglian sighed again.

Cheng Su gave her a glance and said, "There's no such thing as bad luck; it's all man-made. If the eldest aunt hadn't forced her will onto her children, the likelihood of such things happening might have been much smaller. It's unfortunate that her imposition provoked Weixia and the others into rebellion."

"What do you mean by that? Is arranging a wife for him wrong?" Qi Fenglian did not agree with her words.

"Arranging a wife is fine, but it can't replace what he himself doesn't like. If the child doesn't like it and you like it, what use is it? Are you going to spend a lifetime with that wife? Alright, let's not talk about Weixia, it's his own narrow-mindedness. But taking Liu Wenjing as an example, it's perfectly normal for someone so young to want to remarry. But how did the eldest aunt behave? She almost went as far as labeling her as shameful for wanting to remarry. Pressuring someone not to remarry—how would that make a person feel?" Cheng Su said, "Just because you yourself don't remarry, it doesn't mean others don't want to. How can you impose your will on others?"

Qi Fenglian frowned, "Well, it seems the eldest aunt is a bit wrong in this matter."

"Sister, everyone has their own thoughts. You can express your opinions and views, but you can't demand agreement from others. That's the most basic respect. We ourselves have spoken, whether the other side listens or not is their choice, and that's also a human right. Why must we insist that our own opinion is correct? Everyone makes mistakes!" Cheng Su shrugged, so she would express her opinion on Ying Xiaoya's matters, offer advice, but never make choices for her.

Just like with her elder sister's situation, with Hualing's matter, she's always been an observer, and precisely because of that, by just observing and not participating, she can see the objective truth more clearly.

#### Chapter 1020: An Unexpected Name on the List

In March, the city of Qing City ushered in the day of the commercial land tender, and Joy Soon Loy Restaurant was also responsible for the VIP dining reception for this tender. It was heard that on the day the bids opened, a big shot would come down to inspect and research, so Joy Soon Loy Restaurant was required to do everything appropriately.

Because this concerned the restaurant's future business and reputation, Cheng Su placed great importance on this reception and personally followed up.

From understanding each VIP's dietary habits and selecting ingredients to deciding where they would dine and who would serve them, she personally communicated with the city office staff, then returned to finalize, arrange, and train the service staff and set the menu.

"Please also give me a dining list, Director Wu, so that I can conveniently print the guests' seating nameplates and such," Cheng Su said with a smile, addressing Director Wu, who was responsible for following up on this dining reception.

"The specific list isn't fully settled yet. I'll confirm it in a couple of days and send someone to deliver it to you." Director Wu said, "Among the VIPs this time, there is even a provincial secretary, so please pay extra attention."

Cheng Su said, "That's for sure. Please rest assured that at Joy Soon Loy, we always emphasize quality and certainly won't disappoint you."

Director Wu laughed and said, "In this, I trust President Cheng, Vice Mayor Jian always praises you as someone who can get things done, so we have no worries!"

This year, Ying Jian had already officially been transferred to the position of Vice Mayor, so Cheng Su was able to secure this deal because of that.

Cheng Su modestly said a few words and saw off Director Wu before calling a few management members for a meeting. There could be no mistakes in this VIP reception.

"...In terms of ingredients, Xiao Jiang, you must pay attention when purchasing; they must be absolutely fresh, the price being higher doesn't matter, ensuring freshness is most important. For the ingredients to be ordered in advance, confirm with the suppliers again, and don't end up unable to deliver!" Cheng Su instructed Song Xiaojang.

Song Xiaojang noted everything down.

"Old Song, food safety is also important. I hope you can personally chef, especially for the secretary's table, which I've set in the Spring Equinox room. This secretary likes to eat garlic; at that time, slice a single clove of garlic and marinate it in vinegar, and serve a dish..." Cheng Su instructed based on her understanding of the VIP's food preferences, looking at Old Song, and then at Qiulan: "You should take note, and follow up."

"Alright!"

Master Zheng from the pastry department had not been employed for long. He was a master of both Chinese and Western styles. Cheng Su had tried his work, and the buns and pastries were quite good.

"Some VIPs might have diabetes, so be mindful of the sugar in the pastries and prepare both salty and sweet options," Cheng Su said.

Master Zheng nodded in agreement.

"This concerns the restaurant's future business, so the requirements are stringent. I hope everyone takes it seriously. After all, if the restaurant does well, it will relate to the prospects and salaries of everyone here. I hope we can make this battle a great success." Cheng Su finished the reminders and offered some encouragement.

"Yes!"

Within a few days, Cheng Su received the VIP list delivered by Director Wu's staff, which was for the VIPs on the bidding day.

She thanked them with a smile and then opened the list to read through it, which detailed the names and unit positions of the personnel, and indeed, they were relatively high-ranking figures.

As Cheng Su read on, her smile suddenly froze, her gaze fixed on that name—Chiang Qing.

Unexpectedly seeing such an unexpected name on a list like this, could it be a coincidence?