

Back To The 80s: President's Doted Wife #Chapter 51: Three Rules of Conduct - Read Back To The 80s: President's Doted Wife Chapter 51: Three Rules of Conduct

Chapter 51: Chapter 51: Three Rules of Conduct

The next morning, Qi Taiguo returned from the military with a lunch box in his hand. He used a key to unlock and enter his home, pausing for a moment in mild surprise.

The house was clearly tidied and cleaned, everywhere scrubbed spotless and put in order. The windows were open, the gentle morning sun warm and inviting as it spilled in, and a light breeze made everything feel comfortable.

Something within him stirred slightly as he looked around, emotion welling up from the depths of his heart.

The house was still the same, and so was the furniture, but somehow he felt that overnight, something had changed. What exactly was different?

"Eh, how come you're back?" Cheng Su's voice came from behind him.

Qi Taiguo turned around to see her hair tied in a ponytail, her fair face dotted with water droplets, skin translucent and glowing, clearly having just washed her face.

He suddenly understood what was different—it was the presence of another person in the house, a woman.

From now on, he was no longer a lone man, he had an additional responsibility on his shoulders, and the house would no longer be cold and empty.

So, this is what a home with a woman feels like, he mused.

"Yeah, we were out of rice and flour, so I brought back breakfast," Qi Taiguo lifted the lunch box in his hand.

Cheng Su smiled, "Thank you!"

She was grateful, but Qi Taiguo felt a bit awkward. Why so formal? He was somewhat unaccustomed to it.

He placed the lunch box on the table and said, "I'm going to take a shower. I'm all sweaty from the morning drills!" With that, he took a towel and entered the bathroom.

The bathroom too felt different, the scent wasn't the same, it had a special fragrance, Cheng Su's body scent.

Qi Taiguo stood stupefied for a while, then sighed softly. Indeed, it was no longer just his own territory; everywhere bore the mark of someone else's presence.

Turning on the water, the corners of his mouth lifted slightly—why did he feel this was not so bad after all?

After taking a cold shower, he came out to find Cheng Su already eating breakfast. She asked him, "Have you eaten yet?"

"I have," he replied.

"Then I won't stand on ceremony!" Cheng Su smiled again.

When Qi Taiguo saw her smile, his gaze flickered briefly before he cleared his throat and said, "This house used to be just mine. Because I'm often at the base, I haven't acquired many things. Look around and whatever you think is missing, go buy it."

Cheng Su swallowed the mouthful of steamed bread and said, "You really speak to my heart."

Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow, settled down, and waited for her to continue.

Cheng Su said, "Qi Taiguo, let's not talk about our past for the moment. Now we are married, and whether you like it or not, we are together, meant to share a life."

"So what? What are you trying to say?" Qi Taiguo hung the towel over his shoulder and crossed his arms over his chest.

Cheng Su smiled slightly and said, "I know you can't stand me and don't have room for me in your heart."

Qi Taiguo frowned.

"Ah, perhaps it's better not to mention that. Feelings are hard to predict. You might not feel anything for me now, but who knows about the future. Let's talk about how we'll live from now on. We'll be sharing this home as husband and wife in name. But practically... well, I think we should both make an effort to create a good atmosphere at home so it's comfortable for both of us. What do you think?" Cheng Su asked tentatively.

"What are you really trying to say?" he asked.

Cheng Su cleared her throat and said, "I mean, as cohabitants, shouldn't we lay down some ground rules?"

Chapter 52: Chapter 52 Reacquaintance

Setting three rules? What on earth is she up to now, how come I never noticed before that she had so many ideas?

But Qi Taiguo liked this kind of negotiating tone. Hmm, just like that, it doesn't feel bad.

"Let's hear it," Qi Taiguo said with an aura of authority.

A sly glint flickered in Cheng Su's eyes as she said, "In this day and age, there should be gender equality. Men can earn a living for the household, and women can also hold up half the sky. While you're striving in the military, I, well, will not just stay at home in the future and devote myself to supporting my husband and educating our children."

Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow. So, was she planning on being restless?

"Before coming here, I planned to work and pursue a career in Qing City. I won't neglect our home, but a household is maintained by both parties. So I hope, when you have time, you could also lend a hand with what you can."

Qi Taiguo's brow furrowed: "It's only natural for women to take care of household chores!"

Cheng Su retorted with scorn, "But it's no longer the Manchu Qing era. For a woman to be a housewife is normal, but if I also want to pursue a career, it's inevitable that I won't be able to manage both perfectly. I hope you can understand that!"

Qi Taiguo hit back with sarcasm, "I had no idea you were so ambitious." Deep down, he felt a bit contemptuous. All this talk about pursuing a career, but what great enterprise could she possibly build? Wasn't she just going to find a job at a factory or somewhere else?

"There's a lot you don't know. This is just as well, since you don't understand me, and I feel the same about you. Now that we're living together, let's put aside our past prejudices and get to know each other anew!" Cheng Su said, looking at him.

Listening to her, Qi Taiguo felt that she was even crazier. What did she mean by not understanding him? For years, she had always said that he was the young husband she bought. So what was the point of saying all this now, as if she was meeting him for the first time?

"What do you think?"

Qi Taiguo touched his nose: "Continue."

"Fine. To outsiders, we are husband and wife, united as one. As the saying goes, 'one's honor is the other's, and one's loss is the other's.' Your reputation is my reputation, and vice versa. Therefore, in front of outsiders, I will do my best to uphold your dignity, and I hope you will do the same," Cheng Su continued.

These words struck a chord in Qi Taiguo's heart; they did sound rather appealing.

"Don't mention that being husband and wife requires understanding, trust, and tolerance—friendship is the same. Trust is the most fundamental. Without trust, nothing can be sustained. We're just starting out, and it's necessary to gradually adjust to each other. Trust, which may be hard to establish in a short time, but I hope you can be a bit more patient, as will I."

Qi Taiguo looked at her intently, silent as if trying to see through her, and his eyes sparkled with interest. He didn't know she was so articulate, and upon closer examination, everything she said carried significant meaning.

"Anything else?"

Cheng Su hummed affirmatively, scratched the back of her ear as if she was finding it hard to speak, and after a long pause, she finally said, "That thing I mentioned before, about only when... um, that. Maybe we should take some time to get to know each other better and confirm our feelings... there are two rooms at home. During the time we live together, shouldn't we also consider sleeping in separate rooms, sort of like a trial marriage?"

Qi Taiguo scoffed. So in the end, that was her real goal, wasn't it?

She just didn't want to sleep with him. So why on earth did she insist on marrying him in the first place?

Unable to suppress his irritation, Qi Taiguo blurted out, "If you don't want to sleep with me, why did you marry me?"

Cheng Su's face heated up, and she abruptly looked up, their eyes clashing, sparks flying.

Chapter 53: Chapter 53 Please Take Care of Me in the Future

Cheng Su did not expect Taiguo to ask so frankly and directly, perhaps her rejection had wounded the man's ego?

Whatever, she couldn't be bothered to argue with him.

Cheng Su coughed twice and said, "Feelings, there's not too much to why, like is just like, want is just want, don't want is just don't want, love is just love, don't love is just don't love. Maybe by saying this, I've overestimated my own feelings."

"Are you saying that your past fondness and madness for me were all fake?" Taiguo's eyes narrowed slightly, with anger flickering in them.

For some reason, just thinking about this possibility made him quite unhappy!

"No, that was real!" Cheng Su knew the memories of this body, knew her emotions, the only change was that the body had a new owner.

"It's you who has no interest, no feelings for me!" Cheng Su looked at him and said, "Nobody wants to wait in place for a person, Taiguo, just think of the past me as dead. I've said it before, from now on, we start from scratch, get to know each other again. Maybe let's just say, let's start over and have a romance!"

A romance, what the hell?

"Marry first, love later, I am willing to give us both a chance, what about you?" Cheng Su looked at him with bright eyes.

Taiguo did not speak, as if pondering the sincerity of her words.

"You're not bad, but I'm not lacking either, so, I think we should be fair, start over and get to know each other again, we might fall for each other!" Cheng Su narrowed her eyes and said, "Or perhaps, you'd rather commit necrophilia!"

Pfft!

"What nonsense are you spouting!" Taiguo slammed the table.

Necrophilia, she actually had the nerve to say that.

So is she insinuating that he's worse than a beast, no, not even as good as a beast?

Taiguo glared at her fiercely.

Laughter bubbled up in Cheng Su's eyes and she covered the corner of her mouth with her hand, "See, you wouldn't want to do that with a body without feelings, right? The other side is like a dead fish, unresponsive, what's the fun in that? It's relief, sure, but not a shred of pleasure, nothing more than bodily satisfaction, like a dog..."

"Stop talking!" Taiguo cut her off, her words growing more and more inappropriate.

Cheng Su licked her lips.

"Don't worry, I am not a beast, and you're right, I have absolutely no feelings for you, marrying you was just because of you and your parents' insistence..." Taiguo said, all the while watching her for a reaction, trying to see if she was hurt, but she showed none, which dampened his spirits, so he continued, "If you don't want to, I won't force you."

Cheng Su inwardly sighed in relief.

"If you want separate rooms, then let's separate. In fact, you're thinking too much. I often have to go to the base and only come back to rest, so it's normal to be away from home for days, not to mention the occasional mission. How many days can I actually spend at home?" Taiguo grunted.

"Is that so? Well, feel free to come back anytime!" Cheng Su said.

Taiguo rolled his eyes.

"So do we agree on that?" Cheng Su looked at him, "As a married couple, we maintain face for each other, especially in front of outsiders. Outside, no humiliating one another in front of outsiders, any issues we discuss behind closed doors, how about it?"

"Do whatever you like!"

"And you wouldn't interfere with my career?" Cheng Su asked again.

"As long as it does not affect the harmony of the family, do as you please," Taiguo looked at her and said, "Dad always said, 'A harmonious family leads to prosperity in all things!'"

"Good!" Cheng Su extended her hand, "In that case, let's shake on it, let it be our agreement. As roommates with a secret, take care of me from now on."

Taiguo was taken aback for a moment before he finally shook her hand, thinking to himself how this person sure had plenty of tricks up her sleeve!

Chapter 54: Chapter 54: Large Purchases

Having settled the matter, Cheng Su felt as if the sky had turned a few shades bluer, and what pleased her most was that Qi Taiguo had generously given her fifty yuan—for household expenses and to purchase some necessities.

Clutching the Great Unity bills with a beaming smile, she said, "Don't worry, with me at home."

Her smiling face dazzled Qi Taiguo, who snorted, "Real money grubber," and then added, "You're not familiar with this area, let Chunhua and the others accompany you to

the farmers market and the supply and marketing cooperative when they're free, to learn the way around."

"Okay!" Cheng Su asked, "Will you be coming back for dinner tonight? I can buy some meat and make a couple of good dishes, to celebrate the start of our cohabitation?"

Qi Taiguo felt awkward hearing that word and said, "Up to you!"

"Then, come back when it's time!" Cheng Su smiled again, turned around, found paper and pen, and began wandering around the house, making a list of everything they were missing.

Without lingering, Qi Taiguo went back to the military base, but the corner of his mouth was slightly raised, so much so that when people at the base saw his content expression, they said his wife's arrival had improved his mood—that getting a wife was indeed the right thing to do.

Was it really the case?

Touching his own face, Qi Taiguo remembered Cheng Su's "three rules," and his smile subsided, 'Great, isn't it? Still out of reach.'

Forget it, he too was a proud man. If Cheng Su wanted to play it this way, then let's see who ends up winning this game!

Cheng Su didn't have so many thoughts in her head. After making her list, she asked Chunhua and the others to accompany her to the market and the supply and marketing cooperative, to get to know the routes. In the future, she would frequent these two places, so it was better to familiarize herself with them now, enabling her to go on her own later on.

Most apartment buildings at the time were only two or three stories high, without much decoration on the exterior walls. Many were simply covered with a brushing of cement and sand, and there were also low-lying factory buildings with large characters painted in red on the walls, such as "Serve the People" or "Hello, Deng Xiaoping!"

On the streets, let alone cars, even bicycles were scarce; people's attire was extremely ordinary, with dacron counted as a mid-to-upper grade fabric.

Squeak, a small bus with only about a dozen seats stopped in front of them. Cheng Su gripped the canvas bag strap and followed the others onto the bus, bought her ticket, and sat down by the window, listening to Chunhua's introduction.

The supply and marketing cooperative wasn't near the military district but rather in the city. It was about a thirty-minute bus ride to the city center, and most people opted for the bus to get there.

Watching buildings fly by her gaze, Cheng Su's mind was filled with mixed feelings. In her previous life, she was born at the end of the 1980s, and during this current time, she wouldn't have even been born yet.

Their first stop was the supply and marketing cooperative, where they exchanged grain coupons for rice and bought some items that were lacking at home. On the way back, they turned to the farmers market, where Cheng Su bought several pounds of flour. Seeing the fresh pork, she also weighed out two pounds of pork and ribs, thinking that it's a good thing it was already the mid-1980s. If it were a few years earlier, she would have needed meat coupons for purchasing the meat, which would have been depressing.

With flour and meat in hand, Cheng Su also bought several heads of napa cabbage and some leeks, then a basketful of eggs.

After a busy half-day and completing their major shopping, the group, weighed down with large and small packages, sweated their way back home. Cheng Su, not bothering to clean up, immediately took two apples and shared them with Chunhua and the others as a thank-you for their companionship that day.

"We're all neighbors, and we'll have plenty more chances to help each other out in the future—no need for such formalities!" the two of them said with a laugh.

Nonetheless, etiquette was indispensable. Cheng Su graciously thanked them over and over again before returning to her own home.

Chapter 55: Chapter 55: Spending Money Cautiously

Cheng Su was already drenched in sweat, indeed stuck to her body in an uncomfortable, sticky mess.

"This is really suffering!" Cheng Su went to the bathroom, took the enamel washbasin and filled it with a basin of cold water, then plunged her face directly into it.

After a while, she lifted her dripping wet face, let out a breath, undid her clothing buttons, bathed her body with the cold water, and then went to her room to twist on the fan and blow it towards herself, managing to wash away some of the oppressive heat.

This little fan was the most basic model, a metal fan that could swivel, and it was also the most useful and valuable household appliance in the home, reportedly a reward Qi Taiguo had gotten for completing a mission.

This made the neighbors quite envious, for example, Chunhua and Guiying were still using big palm-leaf fans to create a breeze, and back in the old home, there wasn't even a fan to speak of.

Could one imagine how unbearable the scorching heat was without a fan?

Nowadays, the weather was getting hotter and hotter, and even with the fan blowing on her, Cheng Su felt sweat beading on her forehead. If there was no fan, she truly didn't know how she would cope. In the countryside, there were mountains, and it was at least cool at night, whereas in the city, the houses were all hot.

"Once I've earned some money, I'll definitely buy an air conditioner and enjoy it every day." Cheng Su air punched as if into nothing, firming up her resolve to do business and earn money.

After pouring two large cups of cold water from an enamel jar adorned with bright red peonies, Cheng Su began organizing the things she had bought, putting everything that needed to be put away in its place and arranging the rest.

With the current low prices, she had bought a huge pile of items, but the cost wasn't considered a lot; she still didn't dare to spend too freely.

Why?

For one thing, although Qi Taiguo was a company commander, his allowance was just ninety, and he also had to support his family back home. His siblings were still in school, and just the day before, when he visited his elder sister in the hospital, he had given thirty yuan to help out. Where was there money to spare?

Secondly, although it was natural for Qi Taiguo to contribute to the household expenses as a husband, Cheng Su after all was a woman of the 21st century and had never been financially dependent on anyone. Money not earned by herself always seemed lacking in confidence when spent.

Thirdly, she was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth and had experienced poverty and hardship. Knowing the importance of money, she treasured it and always spent it where it mattered most, especially when finances were tight.

Cheng Su had a good grasp of how much money was available and what kind of life to live; she was not the kind of person to spend more than what she had.

To be precise, she would not let herself fall into an embarrassing situation, especially with finances.

"It's still better to earn your own money. Spend it however you want, and no one has the right to nag." Cheng Su muttered to herself and put the remaining few tens of yuan into her private savings box.

Until she earned her own money, the household finances had to be managed and stretched. Otherwise, always turning an open hand for money to Qi Taiguo would be a shame.

Having made up her mind, Cheng Su glanced at the time and then began to prepare dinner, in celebration of the start of her cohabitation with Qi Taiguo.

In the evening, when Qi Taiguo returned and saw a plate of braised pork ribs and a plate of dumplings on the table, along with two sets of bowls and chopsticks, he was momentarily taken aback.

"I'm back. Wash your face and let's have dinner," Cheng Su called from outside.

Qi Taiguo acknowledged with an "Mm," his mood a complex mixture of sourness, sweetness, and some indefinable feelings, but he was very clear about one thing: this was the feeling of home!

At the dinner table, Cheng Su proactively started conversations and occasionally laughed, making for a rare and smooth evening.

This was the first time the two of them lived and spent days together alone in one home, also a first experience of tranquility.