

The 80s 591

Chapter 591: Being Clever with Words

Once the fast food shop at the train station opened, Cheng Su took Zhang Jisheng to report for work at Dazhi's renovation team. And since they rented a house, Zhang Jisheng no longer stayed in the provided dormitory.

After sorting that out, Cheng Su took Qi Fenglian under her wing to manage the new fast food shop. She trained her for several days, and only after seeing her get the hang of it did she let go completely.

The selling price she set for the fast food was not high, on par with the surrounding shops, but she insisted on quality: the meat and vegetables were fresh, placed on the food cart, looking very appealing at first glance.

Thus, business was not bad, turning a profit of several tens or even over a hundred yuan a day, especially since it was just after the new year when many people were leaving the city to find work.

After stepping back, Cheng Su felt relieved. Indeed, being a boss meant knowing how to delegate. If one tried to do everything on their own, they would definitely be exhausted.

In just these few days, she felt very tired and was reluctant to move once she got home.

Qi Taiguo saw her rubbing her own back and couldn't help but walk over, push her hands away, and start kneading her back himself, asking, "Tired, huh? Your complexion looks haggard!"

His pressure was even, and Cheng Su lay on the couch, sighing contentedly as he massaged her, pointing to her lower back area: "Put some more strength here, it's very sore." Upon his increased pressure, she sighed and said, "These days, I've really been a bit exhausted, busy with the new shop. And I can't totally disengage from the company and restaurant either."

"I've told you to take it easy," Qi Taiguo frowned and said, "Money is endless, but if you wear yourself out, no amount of money can buy your health back."

"Mhm. Now I can finally move freely; there are people in every place. If the business expands, I'll just need to hire a few more capable hands," Cheng Su said with her eyes closed.

"How is your sister doing over there? Is she getting used to it?" Qi Taiguo asked again.

"At the beginning, it was a bit chaotic, but now she's gradually getting the hang of it. It's all about eyes-on experience; it doesn't test people. The key is to be meticulous and clear-headed, and I think my sister can handle it!" Cheng Su replied.

Initially, she had also been somewhat apprehensive since Qi Fenglian wasn't very educated and had spent many years just doing manual work at home.

Now, like working outside, handling cash, and checking accounts, Cheng Su was truly worried she wouldn't cope with the confusion and mess.

Fortunately, though Qi Fenglian was inexperienced, she was sharp and observant. She might've been a bit chaotic at the start, but after a few days of learning and practice, she gradually became competent, and her accounting was error-free.

Therefore, Cheng Su was able to let go completely.

"However, she's still a novice right now. To become a seasoned pro, she'll have to go through a rough and tumble period, and that's all up to her!" Cheng Su added.

Qi Taiguo was very pleased; after all, it was his own elder sister, and seeing her become independent, how could he not be joyful?

"You shouldn't judge my sister by her simple appearance; she's actually very sharp-witted. But like you said, to do well takes time," Qi Taiguo said, "You're clever, try to give her pointers when you have the time. If she makes a mistake, just point it out. My sister told me that knowing where she errs is the only way to correct it and perform well."

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su turned around with a half-smile and said, "Won't you say that I'm not giving face?"

"How could I? This is all for the good; if you keep silent and let her continue making mistakes, that would be the real harm," Qi Taiguo patted her bottom and said, "I know your intentions are always good."

Cheng Su rolled her eyes and scolded, "Flatterer." She then brushed his hand away, saying, "I'm going to take a shower."

"Alright, go ahead, but don't linger too long; it's cold," Qi Taiguo instructed.

The telephone rang, and he picked it up.

Chapter 592: The Sun Rises From the West

The phone call was from Mother Qi; Qi Taiguo glanced at the clock on the table—it was eight o'clock already.

"Mom, it's so late, what's the matter?" Qi Taiguo was a bit surprised.

"You all are never home during the day. If I don't call now, would anyone be there if I called during broad daylight?" Mother Qi said irritably, "Can't I make a call if there's nothing important?"

"That's not it, it's just that it's already dark, and you have to walk a long way to make the phone call. What if you fell?" Qi Taiguo said patiently.

Mother Qi replied, "I was using a flashlight!"

Qi Taiguo gave a grunt and then asked what was the matter.

Mother Qi first inquired about how well Qi Fenglian was doing at her job, then asked about the salary and if Cheng Su had upset her in any way.

Upon hearing this, Qi Taiguo's face darkened, and he repressed his anger, saying, "Mom, who do you think Cheng Su is? She has always been close with my older sister, so how could she upset her? As for how much the salary is, that's Cheng Su's business, and she has her own plans. I don't ask about it, and you shouldn't either."

Mother Qi was furious. She had just asked a casual question, and he had gotten angry. Was this son truly entranced by Cheng Su to such an extent?

"If it's nothing important, you should go back early. Phone calls are expensive; I won't keep you any longer," Qi Taiguo wanted to hang up the phone.

"Hold on," Mother Qi hurriedly called out, suppressing her temper, "If we're not talking about that, then fine. How have you been feeling recently? Is the training tough?"

Qi Taiguo replied, "I'm doing fine!"

Mother Qi hesitated for a moment, then said, "The weather's cold; you have to take good care of yourself and not catch a cold. And, how is your wife? Is she feeling unwell?"

When Qi Taiguo heard this, his previous anger dissipated suddenly. He thought, Mom is softening up, isn't she? She's even showing concern for Cheng Su now!

Great!

A smile formed at the corner of his mouth, and he replied, "We're all quite well, so don't worry. It's just that the shop has been a bit hectic with its opening recently."

Mother Qi, not entirely convinced, pressed on, "She hasn't had any loss of appetite or anything?"

Uh, what's that supposed to mean?

"It's not the harsh summer now. Who can't eat? We're eating well, so rest assured!" said Qi Taiguo.

Mother Qi's heart sank, and she had no more desire to talk, saying, "Then that's all, just make sure to take care of yourself. Also, your older sister and family in Qing City are unfamiliar with the area. As a brother, you should help them out when you can. By the way, have you found Weixia a job?"

"I've looked, but Weixia didn't want to come. He said the family needs a man and found a job in a factory nearby, so he can also take care of the home!" Qi Taiguo explained.

Mother Qi furrowed her brows, "Is that so?"

After hanging up, Cheng Su came out from her bath and asked, "Who was on the phone just now? I heard you talking."

Qi Taiguo saw she was only wearing something light and quickly grabbed the military coat from the sofa to put it around her, chiding her, "Why didn't you put on more clothes before coming out?"

Cheng Su chuckled sheepishly, "My coat fell into the tub and got wet." She then asked again who had called.

Qi Taiguo laughed, "It was Mom. She was asking how my sister was doing, said they are unfamiliar with the place here, and told us to help them out."

Cheng Su responded with an "Oh."

Seeing that Cheng Su wasn't too interested, Qi Taiguo added, "Mom also sent her regards to you—asked if you were well, ate well, and if there's anything uncomfortable, and reminded you to take care of yourself!"

Woah, is the sun rising from the west?

Cheng Su raised her eyebrows and made a comment. Qi Taiguo was somewhat embarrassed and said, "Mom cares about us too!"

But Cheng Su wasn't convinced—mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are natural enemies, and she didn't believe her mother-in-law was that well-intentioned. She didn't argue with Qi Taiguo, though. After talking for a bit, feeling overwhelmed, she went to sleep.

Chapter 593: Digging for Glowing Points from Ning Lao Si

Beijing, Ning Ge whistled as he entered the house. In the living room, his eldest brother and Old Master Ning were talking, but they stopped the conversation when they saw him return.

"How come you're only getting back at this time?" Ning Gang glanced at the time on his watch, the hands pointing at nine o'clock, and said, "You've been back for a few days now, which day have I seen you eat at home? Can't your butt stick to the chair? You're hardly ever home."

Ning Ge touched his nose and said, "I had to attend some social functions."

"Social functions from day to night, I think even the Chief isn't as busy as you are. You're running such a small business, how can you be busier than the Chief?" Ning Gang said sternly.

"Big brother, don't you know the saying 'start small to go big'? Exactly because it's a small business now, that's why I need to push hard to expand it. Who can become big in one step?" Ning Ge argued.

"Still, you should find some time to eat with your family," Ning Gang glared at him.

"Alright, alright, I'll eat at home tomorrow night, okay! I'm going to take a shower," Ning Ge shrugged and started to head upstairs.

Ning Gang shook his head and continued talking with Old Master Ning.

"I really don't understand what Jiang Conghe is up to. It seems like he's deliberately targeting Qi Taiguo. Dad, do you think maybe he suspects that Qi Taiguo is one of ours, and that's why he's intentionally suppressing him?"

Ning Ge's steps halted, he turned around, deftly flipped over, and landed on the sofa.

"Weren't you going to take a shower?" Ning Gang was startled and scolded him, "Sit properly, will you? What kind of behavior is that!"

With a wave of his hand, Ning Ge asked, "What were you just saying, big brother? Who's trying to suppress Big Brother Qi?"

"It's none of your business, go upstairs!"

"Hey, big brother, how can it be none of my business? It concerns my partner's husband. Of course, I have to hear what this is all about!" Ning Ge pressed urgently, almost wishing he could pry the words from his brother's throat.

Ning Gang gave him a stern look, but Old Master Ning said, "Let it be, let it be, it's not a secret anyway. If he wants to listen, let him listen."

With Old Master Ning having spoken, what could Ning Gang say? He went on to say, "This year, the military on the frontier is due for a rotation, and Qi Taiguo's name is surprisingly on the list. I looked into it specifically, and it was Jiang Conghe who recommended him. By all logic, it shouldn't be like this. Jiang Conghe was previously in Jinling and just transferred to the Yanjing military. How could he suddenly take an interest in Qi Taiguo? Could there be an ulterior motive?"

Ning Ge knew that Jiang Conghe and his big brother were now political rivals in the military.

"Do you think, big brother, that Jiang Conghe is trying to cut off your influence?" Ning Ge asked, frowning.

"This is what Dad and I were discussing. You, always fooling around all day, how could you understand? Off with you, get out of here!" Ning Gang said impatiently.

"Ah, come on, if that's the case, I can't leave. There's a saying, 'three cobblers with their wits combined can outdo Zhuge Liang.' Maybe I could find a crucial point!" Ning Ge joked.

"What do you think is the crucial point?" Old Master Ning asked, wanting to test him.

Ning Ge stood up, paced back and forth twice, and said, "Jiang Conghe has always been in Jinling, only transferred back to Yanjing at the end of last year. He hasn't even settled firmly in his position yet, so even if his political views clash with my big brother's, I don't think he'd be in such a rush to cut my big brother's influence. After all, it's most important to make sure one's position is secure first."

Ning Gang's eyebrows raised, and he exchanged a glance with Old Master Ning.

A glint of light flashed in Old Master Ning's eyes. He didn't expect this son, who seemed to be so frivolous, could indeed say something useful.

"Then what's your opinion?" Old Master Ning continued to probe.

He was keen to see just how many bright ideas he could unearth from his youngest son!

Chapter 594: Why Suppress?

"In my opinion, the fact that Jiang Conghe has taken an interest in Big Brother Qi is certainly worth investigating," Ning Ge said, stroking his chin and flipping through Jiang Conghe's profile in his mind.

"He's just transferred back the troops to Yanjing, yet he's reached out to meddle with the roster for the personnel change. If he were using his own people, it wouldn't be surprising. But the frontier is a harsh environment, and I've heard it's not very peaceful, even needing peacekeeping. If he wanted to plant his people, he wouldn't send them there, right?"

Ning Gang was somewhat surprised—this youngster didn't seem to be messing around just for show!

Old Master Ning's eyes shone brighter and he said, "Go on."

"Big Brother Qi has military achievements, but recently, hasn't he failed a mission? He's still under assessment, I think. To say it's a promotion—I wouldn't believe it even if I were beaten to death. But if, as you said, he knew it was your man and deliberately transferred him there, it would be like cutting off the prospects you had been nurturing for Big Brother Qi," Ning Ge's thoughts raced, completely oblivious to the contemplative looks of both the Old Master and Big Brother Ning, and said, "There is a possibility in this, but if you think about it, he's barely warmed his seat as Commander. Isn't it too aggressive to move against his opponent's people so soon? As far as I know, Jiang Conghe is a very shrewd person. This aggressiveness doesn't seem to fit his style."

As soon as he finished speaking, Old Master Ning and Ning Gang instinctively sat up straighter, staring at Ning Ge.

Unaware of their reactions, Ning Ge continued to be absorbed in his own thoughts and said, "For Jiang Conghe to climb up the ranks, he didn't hesitate to abandon his original wife. Although he did give the higher-ups a heads-up, who knows the real story behind it? After he got the support of his current wife's family, he rose rapidly and became Commander. Would he destabilize his own position to suppress a rival by going after someone whose loyalty is not even confirmed? Big Brother, you haven't had much dealings with Qi Taiguo, and it seems you haven't even decided whether he is really one of your men, right?"

Big Brother is not a frivolous person. Just because he is in business with Cheng Su, it doesn't mean he will love everything associated with her, including Qi Taiguo.

When it comes down to it, Big Brother is quite principled!

"So?" Ning Gang raised an eyebrow.

"So, I don't think Jiang Conghe is trying to suppress your side by making a move on Qi Taiguo," Ning Ge said, shaking his head.

"Then why?" Old Master Ning prompted, "Qi Taiguo, although impetuous in his last mission, still cannot have his past merits erased. After all, he is a moldable person. It's not impossible that Jiang Conghe would try to win him over!"

Ning Ge sneered, "Old Master, if you were trying to place your people, you wouldn't exile them to the frontier. To me, it seems more like Qi Taiguo has offended Jiang Conghe!"

A flicker of appreciation crossed Old Master Ning's eyes, but his expression remained unchanged, "Oh?"

"These two have never intersected. How could Qi Taiguo have offended him?" Ning Gang frowned and said, "Qing City is thousands of kilometers away from Yanjing. Why would Jiang Conghe move against Qi Taiguo?"

If it's not to suppress his own side, but rather because of an offense, it's even more puzzling. Qi Taiguo, just a platoon leader, can't even reach the current Commander Chiang, let alone Commissar Chiang from before.

Since he cannot reach him and they have no connection, how could there be an offense?

The more he thought about it, the more Ning Gang believed that Jiang Conghe was planning to target his side, starting with the wanted Qi Taiguo, gradually nibbling away the personnel he needed.

Pacing in the living room, Ning Ge suddenly had a flash of inspiration upon hearing Big Brother's words, "I've got it, I think I know now!"

Chapter 595: Settle Personal Scores Under the Guise of Public Duty

Ning Ge snapped his fingers, his eyes gleaming as he said, "I think I might know why!"

His sudden exclamation startled the contemplative Ning Gang, who couldn't help but scold, "Just speak, what's with all the hullabaloo?"

Ning Ge chuckled and took a seat, saying, "I know why Jiang Conghe wants to send Big Brother Qi to the borderlands!"

"What send to the borderlands, it was just a nomination, don't talk nonsense!" Ning Gang chided softly.

"Then you tell me, why?" Old Master Ning was very curious. What had his son discovered?

Feigning an air of mysterious profundity, Ning Ge teased, "Before we talk about anything else, let me ask you first, you've all met Jiang Conghe during the New Year's festivities and such, right? Did you notice anything amiss?"

Old Master Ning leaned back in his chair, "I didn't really attend the festivities this year, you'd have to ask your elder brother about that."

After some thought, Ning Gang said, "There wasn't anything amiss, ah!"

"Really? Think again!" Ning Ge insisted.

Ning Gang tried to recall once more but couldn't think of anything, growing impatient, he said, "What is it, you rascal, still playing coy?"

Ning Ge, finding no amusement but also not daring to bluff, continued, "Big brother, you might not know, but I do. That daughter of Jiang Conghe, what's her name? Ah, Chiang Qing, seems to have taken a liking to Big Brother Qi!"

"What?"

Ning Gang and Old Master Ning both looked stunned.

Jiang Conghe's daughter had set her sights on Qi Taiguo, a married man?

The two exchanged glances; if that was the case, then it all made sense.

It was probably because of this that Qi Taiguo 'offended' Jiang Conghe, so he was quick to send him to the borderlands!

Ning Gang found it somewhat uproarious; he had racked his brain but didn't see this point, thinking the other party was trying to suppress his side!

Little did he know, the suppression was not for justice, but for personal vendetta.

This Jiang Conghe was truly child's play, exacting personal revenge under official guise, really...

Shameless!

"Have you verified this properly? It concerns someone's reputation, don't speak without certainty!" Ning Gang looked at his younger brother.

Ning Ge rolled his eyes and replied, "You aren't in Qing City so you wouldn't know, but I do. Cheng Su told me this. That Chiang Qing is now working as a military doctor in the grass-roots unit of Qi Taiguo's forces!"

This...

"With Chiang Qing's background, why would she need to go to a small place like Qing City to work at the grassroots as a military doctor? Clearly, the old tippler's interest is not in wine! So, I wanted you, big brother, to think about what was amiss at the Chiang Family over the New Year. In my view, something definitely happened, probably because Chiang Qing confronted them. And Jiang Conghe, furious and embarrassed, was all too eager to send my Big Brother Qi to the borderlands, to pull his precious daughter back from the brink!" The more Ning Ge spoke, the more convinced he was of his own logic, almost certain of it.

"If that's the case, then Jiang Conghe's actions are quite disgraceful!" Ning Gang frowned.

"The deep love for his daughter, but at the cost of involving the innocent!" Old Master Ning shook his head and remarked.

"Jiang Conghe cares about face, knowing that if this were to get out, he'd be thoroughly disgraced, so he resorts to such despicable tactics. Pffft, his own daughter is shameless, pressing herself onto someone else, and he blames others out of anger, shameless!" Ning Ge said with disdain, "No need to say more, it's definitely Jiang Conghe taking personal revenge under the guise of official business!"

Ning Gang didn't know whether to laugh or cry, as he thought he needed to mull over and guess about the matter more thoroughly, not expecting it to be so simple. Had he overestimated Jiang Conghe?

Chapter 596: The Fourth has Some Skills

Upon hearing Ning Ge's analysis, Ning Gang and Old Master Ning were both very surprised and felt somewhat speechless.

"Big Brother, whether you acknowledge it or not, Big Brother Qi is your man. You can't just sit back and do nothing, letting that Chiang the Fox relegate him to the frontier!" Ning Ge smoothed out the key point and spoke to Ning Gang.

Ning Gang said annoyed, "Go, what relegation are you talking about? As a soldier, whether it's the frontier or the ends of the earth, as long as the country needs them, they must obey the military orders whether it's heaven or hell."

Ning Ge muttered, "Of course, but Qi Taiguo can't. If he goes to the frontier, what will Cheng Su do? With him gone to such a harsh place, Cheng Su will surely cry herself to death, lose all motivation to work, and then what will I do? It will all fall on my shoulders."

Old Master Ning listened and suppressed a chuckle.

Ning Gang spoke heatedly, "Since ancient times, generals have gone to battle far from home. If everyone clung to their husbands and refused to let them go, who would protect the nation? Everyone has a wife, children, family!"

"I know, but I just think that you, Big Brother, have the ability to help out a bit. Look, it wasn't easy for you to find someone with potential to nurture; you can't let him be suppressed just like that!" Ning Ge said with a sly smile. "Does Jiang Conghe get to nominate whomever he wants? He controls the personnel list and covers the sky with one hand!"

"He wouldn't dare! The organization has its discipline. No one should be randomly exiled because of personal grievances and vendettas!" Ning Gang's expression turned serious.

"Right, right, military discipline must be just and strict, just like my Big Brother," Ning Ge praised vigorously.

Ning Gang was so amused by him that he wanted to laugh but held it in, then pushed him away, "Go on, you're a grown man and still not serious!"

"I knew Big Brother wouldn't stand idly by," Ning Ge said with a laugh, patted the horse, and after sitting for a while, went upstairs.

Ning Gang shook his head and said to Old Master Ning, "Dad, do you think there's a big possibility that what the fourth child said is true?"

Old Master Ning stroked his beard and replied, "Whether it's true or not, there will be traces to follow. And whether it is true or not, just as the fourth said, are you going to just let Jiang Conghe do this?"

There was something right in what the fourth had said; it's not easy to find someone moldable, and we can't let him be disposed of because of this affair.

Ning Gang frowned and said, "If that's really the case, could there also be a problem with Qi Taiguo himself?"

"He should not. If that were the case, the fourth would not speak for him. He might seem reckless, but he has a very clear understanding of right and wrong. If Qi Taiguo was not upright, the fourth wouldn't just watch and even speak for him!" Old Master Ning was quite understanding of his son.

Ning Gang said with a smile, "It's rare to hear you praise the kid, Dad!"

Old Master Ning replied, "My own son, what's his temper—how could a father not know? If he weren't so stubborn, would he have ignored me for so many years? He's just very principled!"

Hearing him talk about the past, Ning Gang said, "Dad, there you go again, bringing up those distressing matters. Isn't the fourth much more sensible now?"

Old Master Ning nodded, his face full of satisfaction, "Since he started doing business, he indeed has become much more sensible. In my opinion, we might all have underestimated the boy!"

Ning Gang was surprised.

"Just look at how he talked about this matter tonight, peeling it layer by layer like an onion, and what he revealed, wasn't it all reasonable?" Old Master Ning was quite pleased.

After some thought, Ning Gang also nodded in agreement, "I never realized the kid had it in him before."

"The bystander sees the clearest. He made a good point. Three cobblers together can make a Zhuge Liang, and I have another saying too, 'When hunting tigers, one must never leave one's brothers behind.' In the future, when you encounter issues, you brothers should discuss them more together," Old Master Ning advised.

Ning Gang replied humbly, "Dad, your son understands!"

Chapter 597: Credit to You

After the Dragon Heads-raising Day in February, some areas began their spring farming, signifying the onset of early spring. As the saying goes, "The whole year's work depends on a good start in spring," Cheng Su made a fully-packed business plan for the year.

Of course, not much needs to be said about Joy Soon Loy Restaurant, as it has been operating more and more maturely, and the Jam Company is gradually getting on the right track. So, the upcoming plans for these two ventures are to consolidate and expand operations and establish their own brands. As for the fast food outlet near the train station that just opened, it will be improved slowly and steadily.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle of business, Cheng Su didn't neglect plans for self-improvement and personal investment.

She had inquired and found that this year's university entrance exam was in June, which meant that if she, a repeat student, passed the exam, she wouldn't be far from the gates of university.

Now that it was already February, only four months remained. Despite her confidence, she had never experienced the college entrance examination of this era, and the fear of being too confident, leading to a major oversight, was all too real, so she knew she needed to solidify her knowledge and review more study materials.

Time was of the essence, and Cheng Su even brought study materials back to the company. Back when she took the college entrance exam, she wasn't this nervous. But with Ying Xiaoya, a university student in the company, she could always ask Ying Xiaoya, the ready-made teacher, about anything she didn't understand!

When she returned to the company that day, Cheng Su heard Ning Ge's voice.

"President Cheng is here!" Mai Yanmei was the first to see Cheng Su.

Ning Ge was sitting at a desk, chatting with Ying Xiaoya, and when they saw Cheng Su, he raised his hand to greet her.

"You're back? Is there any good news?" Cheng Su asked with a smile as she walked over and placed her handbag down.

"Look how eager you are. I've been gone for so many days, and you haven't even asked how I am, just about the good news. Tsk, such a money-grubber!" Ning Ge clicked his tongue.

Cheng Su glanced at him askance: "Aren't you sitting here all fine and intact? What's there to ask about? You've still got all your limbs!"

Ying Xiaoya didn't forget to take a jab: "Exactly, making such a fuss."

Ning Ge raised both hands: "Alright, I won't argue with you women!"

A few women giggled behind their hands.

"There is good news, though. The deal has been struck, and, once the contract is drafted and signed by both parties, Zhou Jun will send us a remittance," Ning Ge said.

Cheng Su also knew that he was very likely to seal the deal going there, and of course, she was pleased to hear it, saying, "That's great, you'll be credited for this."

"As for the details of the contract, let me know what you're thinking, so we can finalize them here," Ning Ge continued, "Zhou Jun's side will also send someone over to discuss."

Cheng Su nodded. This was Joy Soon Loy Jam's first distributorship, so, naturally, they needed to be meticulous and draft every clause carefully.

"Then let's work on it together, so we have at least a preliminary contract ready before their people arrive," Cheng Su suggested after a moment of contemplation.

Ning Ge certainly had no objections, saying: "I really regret it, dealing with this business is so exhausting, everything requires personal attention. Look, shouldn't we hire some capable people and a team to negotiate these matters?"

Entertaining business dealings was more tiring than looking into someone's background, with too many details to tend to.

Cheng Su shot him a look: "Of course I know we need to find someone, but who has a capable team right from the start of a business? It's something that has to be built step by step. Don't worry, I'm already on the lookout. We'll hire a manager first, and the rest of the team can't be rushed—it's hard to find talent."

She had already thought about it; once she got into university, she would use her position there to recruit directly.

Ning Ge was aware that it couldn't be rushed and remembering something he'd heard before, he said to Cheng Su, "Right, I have something to tell you!"

Chapter 598: Venting Anger or Seeking a Son-in-law?

Cheng Su felt a bit baffled. Why did they need to speak outside, in the bitter cold, where the wind was so sharp it stung the skin.

"What can't be said in the office?" Cheng Su put her hands in her pockets, looking at his grim expression, she couldn't help but feel her heart leap, "What's happened?"

Ning Ge glanced over, saying, "Don't panic when you hear it."

His words only added to Cheng Su's anxiety. Was he intentionally keeping her on tenterhooks to make her anxious, or what?

"Just spit it out, what are you hemming and hawing for?"

Ning Ge replied, "I heard it from my big brother. It's about the border defense rotation, and Big Brother Qi's name is on the list."

Cheng Su was taken aback. What did that mean?

"The border gets a rotation every three years. If he really goes, it won't be until three years later that there's a chance to return," Ning Ge added.

So this meant Qi Taiguo was to defend the border? And once gone, it would be for three years?

And did this mean that she and her husband would have to endure a long-distance relationship?

Cheng Su's heart tightened. She had been here for quite a while, and had experienced Qi Taiguo going on missions several times, but those were short-term. Now, a long-term deployment?

What was she supposed to do?

Cheng Su began to feel rather helpless. She could understand Qi Taiguo going on missions, but guarding the border was something she hadn't considered.

The borderlands, harsh conditions, massive temperature differences morning and night—it's always been said that the borderlands are a place of bitter cold, this...

"Is it decided?" Cheng Su looked at Ning Ge, unable to settle her heart.

Seeing her so distraught and clueless, Ning Ge thought to himself that she had this side too. He always imagined her as someone who was calm and confident!

Yet here she was, so vulnerable, and all because of her husband!

Ning Ge sighed softly to himself. Was it because of love?

"He's just on the nomination list. You don't have to worry too much. I've also spoken to my big brother about it, to see if he can suppress it," Ning Ge consoled.

Cheng Su's eyes brightened slightly, grabbing his sleeve, "Can it still be suppressed?"

"That depends on Big Brother Qi's skills," Ning Ge shrugged.

Cheng Su's relief faded again, saying disconsolately, "I see. But why all of a sudden is he needed to defend the border?"

With a cold snort, Ning Ge said, "He brought trouble upon himself. Now he's being grilled over it by others!"

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su felt something was off and asked, "What do you mean by that?"

"Do you know who put his name on the list?" Ning Ge looked at her with a sidelong glance, not waiting for a response before continuing, "It's Jiang Conghe."

"Jiang Conghe, who is that? Jiang... Jiang?" Cheng Su muttered, an idea flashing in her mind, and her eyes widened, "You better not tell me, it's that vixen Chiang Qing's dad?"

A flicker of admiration showed in Ning Ge's eyes, "You aren't dumb."

Cheng Su glared at him, too preoccupied to bicker, and asked with a dark face, "What's going on? How did that Jiang, Jiang Conghe set his sights on our Old Qi?"

"What do you think?"

Cheng Su, not being foolish, contemplated briefly before asking, "Is he trying to teach Old Qi a lesson, or is he trying to snag a success for his vixen daughter?"

"Jiang Conghe cares about his reputation, and he loves his daughter. From what I can see right now, he's more out for revenge. I'm guessing Chiang Qing made things clear to them at home. Jiang Conghe, furious with embarrassment and fearing his daughter might sink deeper, simply decided to dispatch Big Brother Qi," Ning Ge said with a shrug.

Cheng Su laughed bitterly from anger, "What shameless people, like a stinky pot producing foul weeds. Like father, like daughter. That little vixen Chiang Qing, just wait until I get my hands on her!"

Chapter 599: Rather to Die

Qi Taiguo put down the phone, sitting with a gloomy expression on his face. Suddenly, he clenched his fist and violently slammed it onto the table. The pen bounced and rolled off onto the floor.

Utterly detestable!

The call had just come in from Cheng Su, informing him about the personnel list for the border defense rotation and their speculations.

He knew about the necessity of defending the frontier, but he never expected to find himself on that list one day.

If this was an arrangement by the higher-ups in the organization, he had nothing to say. As a soldier, he had to go wherever the motherland needed him, regardless of danger, and put aside personal and family matters, all for the protection of the country.

But what about now? Could someone in power for their own private ends arbitrarily deploy soldiers under their command as if these soldiers were their personal servants?

He, Qi Taiguo, was a warrior cultivated with great effort by the nation!

Could power really enable one to act with such impunity?

Qi Taiguo's lips tightened, and a cold, fierce light shot from his eyes.

Knock, knock!

"Come in!" Qi Taiguo took a deep breath, struggling to suppress the raging anger in his chest.

Xiao Zheng, the communications soldier, entered to report that Regimental Commander Mai had summoned Qi Taiguo to his office.

Qi Taiguo's brow furrowed, and he nodded, "I got it!"

He tidied up his desk, donned his military cap, and quickly headed out the door.

Passing through the building, Chiang Qing came towards him. Seeing Qi Taiguo, her face lit up with joy. "Commander Qi."

With fury already burning in his heart, the sight of this femme fatale, the main culprit, inflamed his wrath as if facing a mortal enemy.

Before she could steady herself, Qi Taiguo's piercing eyes glared at her coldly, his gaze sharp as ice blades, cutting straight through Chiang Qing.

Chiang Qing's steps halted abruptly, looking at Qi Taiguo with some bewilderment.

Those eyes...why were they so cold, as if wanting to tear her to pieces?

Chiang Qing's body began to tremble slightly.

Too frightening!

She had seen Qi Taiguo's tender side, his cold side, and his refreshingly sunny side, but she had never seen him like this, with eyes so sharp and merciless, devoid of any warmth.

Chiang Qing instinctively took two steps back, her lips quivered, and she was about to say something but had already forgotten what it was.

Qi Taiguo stopped in front of her and said, "Your Chiang Family really does live up to the saying 'Birds of a feather flock together.' Do you all like throwing your weight around like this? Huh, enlightening indeed!"

Chiang Qing swallowed hard and said, "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" Qi Taiguo's eyes narrowed, looking down at her with an air of superiority. "You like me, don't you?"

Chiang Qing's breath hitched. He knew, of course he knew. He'd just never responded directly, and now?

"Chiang Qing, you truly are a toxic weed, bringing misfortune to whoever touches you. Please, from now on, stay away from me by at least ten meters," Qi Taiguo glared at her coldly and continued, "It doesn't matter whether I'm married or single, nor does it matter if I end up with Cheng Su for the long haul. I, Qi Taiguo, will absolutely never like you, Chiang Qing. Even if there's no Cheng Su, there will be someone else, but that someone will definitely not be you. I would rather die than be with you, Qi Taiguo!"

His words were resolute, like a vow.

There could be someone else, but it would never be her; he utterly refused her!

Chiang Qing's face went pale. What had happened? Why had things suddenly turned out this way?

Rather die than be with her?

She laughed bitterly, spun on her heel, and with a crazed look in her eyes, watched Qi Taiguo's retreating figure.

Just you wait and see, Qi Taiguo. Just you wait!

Chapter 600: Picking a Quarrel at the Door

Cheng Su visited Chiang Qing's territory for the first time. She had heard that as a military doctor, the unit had specially allocated a single room with a bathroom for her. Although Chiang Qing had been there for several months and lived in the same courtyard, because they usually had no interactions, Cheng Su had never paid a visit to Chiang Qing before.

This was the first time she had come to see Chiang Qing—no, more like to pick a quarrel!

Chiang Qing was quite surprised by Cheng Su's arrival. She wasn't someone who should be coming over as a guest. Now what?

"Doctor Chiang, don't you welcome me?" Cheng Su, with a bag slung over her shoulder and arms folded, looked at Chiang Qing unapologetically.

This demeanor, that disdainful look in her eyes, was as if Chiang Qing had committed some unforgivable sin.

In the daytime, it was Qi Taiguo who humiliated her, and now it was his wife. Look at this attitude as if she were holding court. Did she think Chiang Qing was easy to bully?

"Sister-in-law Qi graces my humble abode, may I ask why you are here? My dwelling is simple and crude, I'm afraid it won't be able to accommodate such an esteemed Buddha like you," Chiang Qing said, blocking the doorway, without the slightest intention of inviting Cheng Su inside.

The corner of Cheng Su's mouth curled as she said, "It seems that Doctor Chiang prefers to talk at the door. Fine, since Doctor Chiang doesn't mind losing face, then I have nothing to say."

Chiang Qing's expression changed slightly. When she saw someone peeking out from the door across from hers, she bit her lower lip, stepped aside, and let Cheng Su in.

Cheng Su sneered, so she did care about face after all!

Once inside, Cheng Su's eyes quickly swept the room. It was indeed tidy, but she wasn't here to admire how capable Chiang the Fox was.

"Please have a seat," offered Chiang Qing, pointing to the sofa and casually placing a cup of tea on the coffee table.

"No need to sit. I came just to ask Doctor Chiang one question," said Cheng Su as she turned with her arms still folded.

Chiang Qing looked wary, "What question?"

"Doctor Chiang, are you smitten with our Old Qi?" Cheng Su asked directly.

Being called out on her feelings by her romantic rival, Chiang Qing was a bit stunned and somewhat annoyed, but she responded, "What if I am, what if I'm not?"

Cheng Su stepped closer, staring straight at her, "So it seems you are. Doctor Chiang, I won't even discuss Qi Taiguo's married status. He's married, and yet you still talk about liking and loving, and have done some inappropriate things. It seems you aren't someone with any sense of morality."

"Cheng Su, don't make baseless accusations, what immorality?" Chiang Qing retorted in annoyance.

"Do you need me to list your behaviors? 'Drawing a figure with its intestines spilled,' makes for a meaningless discussion. You know full well what you're thinking and what you've done," said Cheng Su with a cold smile, "Chiang Qing, you claim the right to love, and I acknowledge that. However, it's unfortunate you've directed this right at the wrong person. Who you love is none of my business, nor do I care about whose family you disrupt, but if you mess with my family, my husband, then it's not okay."

"You... When have I ever disrupted your family? Oh, what now? Afraid that you, a country girl, don't match up to Qi Taiguo, fearful I might snatch him away, and so, like a cornered dog, you come here, baring your teeth and barking wildly?" Chiang Qing fired back.

Called a dog, baring teeth and claws? Fine, I'll dance as you wish.

Cheng Su grabbed the tea from the table and threw it at her, saying, "Bah! I'm the dog? You're the bitch, a filthy chicken that gets randy the moment you see a man! Chiang Qing, what do you think you are? Just a jumping clown, a home-wrecking Fox Spirit, and yet you dare put on airs in front of me?"