

## Back To The 80s: President's Doted Wife

### Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Burned the Kitchen

Cheng Su left decisively, leaving Mother Qi staring in astonishment, pointing at the doorway and trembling without stopping, before finally mustering a sentence, "What, what kind of attitude is this?"

It was indeed an eye-opener; a new bride dared to show her disdain on the very first day?

Everyone knew she had a fiery temperament, but no one expected her to still be so temperamental even after crossing the threshold into the family.

She was furious!

"It's fine. She's young. We'll teach her slowly over time. Besides, isn't she going to make breakfast?" Father Qi didn't seem to care much. It's natural for a new bride to be shy; they could teach her gradually.

Mother Qi's face darkened. It was precisely because of the old man's attitude that the Qi family had ended up with such a daughter-in-law. Her Taiguo had been wronged.

She looked at her eldest son, Taiguo. His face was impassive, and he said nothing, leaving her guessing what he might be thinking. But to Mother Qi, it seemed he was displeased.

Indeed, how could he be happy with such a bride?

Father Qi asked Taiguo when he planned to return to his military unit.

"I'm leaving tomorrow," Taiguo replied succinctly.

His holiday time was already strict. Such a big event as marriage would allow him more leave, but he didn't want to take it, so he had only scheduled three days of wedding leave.

And Cheng Su, she did not seem to have any desire for him to stay.

"Then you..."

"What's that smell?" Taiguo interrupted his father's words, wrinkling his nose as if something was burning.

"Is someone burning firewood?" Mother Qi also smelled it.

Taiguo looked outside and upon seeing smoke, he stood up abruptly.

A sharp scream altered his expression.

"Fire... Ah."

Taiguo rushed out, and as soon as he stepped out of the main entrance, he saw someone rushing out of the separate kitchen, while thick smoke billowed inside.

"What, what..." Mother Qi and the others also came out and couldn't help but cry out loudly at the sight, "There's a fire!"

Taiguo had already sprinted to the well in the courtyard, swiftly drawing water and dashing to the kitchen.

The fire wasn't too big, merely burning the woodpile next to the stove, spreading along it.

Pshhh.

With a splash, a bucket of water was thrown, and Taiguo emerged from the kitchen, with his father following close behind, having brought more water.

Father and son worked together, bucket after bucket, quickly extinguishing the flames.

Clang.

Taiguo dropped the iron bucket on the ground, then turned to look at Cheng Su.

Cheng Su was covered in soot, her face betraying the shock she still felt, with her fair complexion streaked with black ash, looking utterly disheveled.

Feeling Taiguo's gaze, she glanced back at him, somewhat sheepishly, but quickly straightened her back.

It was true that in her previous life she had been an orphan, but she had grown up in an orphanage and had a benefactor to support her, so she had never done such rural work. The most traditional way of cooking with firewood, she had only experienced it during camping with classmates and had never really dealt with it before.

This time, as a daughter-in-law making breakfast, she thought it would be straightforward, but who knew...

"Oh my Lord, what a calamity, you wretched woman, even making breakfast you managed to burn down my kitchen, are you useless or what?" Mother Qi, after seeing the kitchen that survived the ordeal, was heartbroken and cursed Cheng Su relentlessly.

A stream of profanities, spat out with splashes of saliva, hit Cheng Su's face. The volume was so intense; it only lacked amplification from a loudspeaker aimed directly at Cheng Su's ears.

Poor Cheng Su, she dug at her ear and took a step back, saying, "I'm just not very skilled yet, it won't happen next time."

"There's a next time?" Mother Qi shrieked, "You burned half the kitchen in one go, will the entire house be burned down next time?"

"From what I see, sister-in-law did it on purpose, didn't she? By burning it intentionally, she won't have to work in the kitchen again," a young girl's voice suddenly chimed in.

## **Chapter 7: Chapter 7 Dissatisfaction**

Cheng Su turned around, and behind her stood a young girl in a plaid dress with her hair down, looking at her with a face full of sarcasm.

This was her sister-in-law, Qi Fengping, who was a twin to her brother-in-law, Qi Jianguo. She had always been quite dissatisfied with Cheng Su, and now she had the chance, naturally, she wanted to have a go at her.

Cheng Su laughed in annoyance, "Oh, my dear sister-in-law, are you somehow a worm inside my stomach? To think you know what I'm thinking. Unfortunately, you've misunderstood this time."

She was certainly not a weak person.

Qi Fengping's delicately plucked eyebrows shot up. Did she just insult her by calling her a worm?

Just as she was about to retort, Mother Qi had already preempted her, "Fengping is right, you did this on purpose. Well, well, playing tricks as soon as you enter the door. I'm telling you, no way! This isn't the Cheng family, you're already married into our Qi family. Thinking of using tricks to be lazy, impossible."

With no words, Cheng Su rolled her eyes. So, in this day and age, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law convicted people without allowing them to explain themselves?

"Enough, it was an accident. The day is hot, and it's windy and dry, it's not impossible for a fire to start by accident. Is it worth all this fuss? Quickly clean up, it's getting late." Father Qi chimed in, "Besides, what's done is done. Fortunately, nobody got hurt. Taiguo's daughter-in-law, you didn't get burned, did you?"

His words carried concern, and Cheng Su felt a slight warmth in her heart. She smiled faintly, "Dad, I'm fine, I was just a little panicked when the fire started, that's why I ran out."

"That's good, next time you'll have to be more careful. This weather is hot, and the wood is all dried out, it's easy to catch fire," laughed Father Qi.

"Yes!" Cheng Su sighed softly, grateful there was someone reasonable.

She glanced at Qi Taiguo, his gaze deep and also looking her way, the corner of his mouth curling up with a tinge of sarcasm.

Cheng Su found it pointless and turned away, her gaze settling on the kitchen. It wasn't that she was being pretentious; she truly did not excel at starting fires.

Mother Qi and Qi Fengping watched Father Qi protect Cheng Su, and they couldn't help feeling jealous, especially Mother Qi. Her irritation with her daughter-in-law grew even more, looking at her as if she could barely see her straight.

"I'll just eat some of the leftover cakes from yesterday's feast and then head out to the fields," Father Qi was not one to waste time. Seeing the sun high in the sky, he added another sentence.

"Dad, I'll go with you!" said Qi Taiguo.

"Great, then old lady, Taiguo and I will head out to the fields first!" Father Qi was happy to spend time with his son, who rarely came back.

Mother Qi glared at Cheng Su, "Hurry up and clean up the kitchen, go to the woodshed to gather more wood for a new fire, and take all the wet wood out to dry."

Cheng Su responded and entered the kitchen again.

But seeing those walls blackened with soot and the water on the ground, and the pile of wood still dripping with water, her mouth twitched slightly in dismay. This mess was like nothing she had ever seen; she missed the gas stove, and she longed to return to the twenty-first century.

But the reality was harsh; she couldn't go back!

Cheng Su sighed deeply, and her face fell. It seems she would have to slowly learn to navigate life in this era!

"What are you standing there for? Do I need to tell you everything before you move? What use are you? Are you a block of wood that only moves when kicked?"

Lost in thought, Cheng Su was jolted by a push from her mother-in-law from behind.

When Mother Qi came in and saw the chaos, she hissed through her teeth as if in pain, "In all my years, I've never seen someone able to set the kitchen on fire just by cooking. Fengping, Fengping, come over and help quickly..."

## **Chapter 8: Chapter 8 The Pig's Good Fortune**

On the second day of marriage, Cheng Su struggled in the kitchen with lighting the fire and cooking; after several failures, she finally learned under her mother-in-law's instruction and danced with joy.

Mother Qi looked at her skeptically and said, "You didn't cook at your parents' house, did you?"

Cheng Su's eyes flickered slightly as she vaguely replied, "How could that be? It's just that I'm not used to it here yet."

Of course, she could cook; she just didn't know how to light a fire. In her previous life, she worked in a hotel, had tasted countless delicacies, and was interested in cooking during her rest days. In her spare time, she'd even go to the hotel kitchen to exchange tips with the chefs, and most importantly, she had a friend who was a gourmet food expert—from whom she had learned much.

So, not only could she cook, but her culinary skills were pretty good. She could make complex dishes if she put her heart into it.

Unfortunately, all that was in the past, and here, upon seeing the kitchen, she had no desire to create.

"It's better that you don't, hurry up and get lunch ready, your man and your father-in-law should be back from the fields soon!" Mother Qi huffed and left the kitchen.

The Cheng family ancestors were the vile capitalists, and she knew this daughter-in-law had some pride, thinking she was still the capital's pampered rich girl who had always been waited on, really thinking she couldn't cook. Good that she could; otherwise, what use would a woman be if she couldn't even make a decent meal?

When it came to making lunch, there wasn't much to do. She stewed a pot of rice that was slightly burnt, and as for the vegetables, there was plenty left over from yesterday's

banquet. In the countryside, leftovers from banquets would be shared with neighbors or those who helped out, and some would be kept for the household.

Cheng Su looked at the large plate of mixed vegetables placed on the stove. Indeed, mixed vegetables. To save trouble, they had been dumped together on one plate, and now, a few flies were joyfully dancing on top. As for the smell, she shooed the flies away and took a sniff.

Oh my, what is that smell? It's a bit spoiled!

Well, it was May, the weather was hot, and the Qi family didn't have a refrigerator, so was it any wonder the meat and vegetables had gone off overnight?

Cheng Su would never eat these stale and slightly spoiled leftovers—and besides, consuming spoiled food wasn't good for one's stomach and could easily lead to illness.

She looked around and, seeing the slop bucket in the corner of the room, dumped the whole plate of food into it.

In those days, nearly every household in the countryside raised pigs, and both the Qi family and her own "parents' house" were no exception. Mother Qi took great care in raising the Qi family's two big fat pigs; she had seen them herself. It was only May, and those piglets probably weighed over a hundred pounds already.

So, if people wouldn't eat this spoiled food, the pigs certainly would.

Listening to the sound of the fat pigs oinking from the pigpen not far away, Cheng Su hummed lightly, "Today, you guys are in for a treat."

After disposing of the spoiled vegetables for the pigs, Cheng Su scoured the kitchen and didn't find any meat, but there was still plenty of cabbage and radishes left over from yesterday's feast.

She improvised and made a dish of stir-fried cabbage with hot peppers, prepared a radish and egg pancake, and found a smoked strip of meat in the cupboard. It was still good, so she sliced it and stir-fried it with garlic and hot pepper, filling the air with a delicious aroma.

The three dishes didn't take long to prepare; by the time Cheng Su finished, she heard the voices of Father Qi and Taiguo in the courtyard.

They had returned; the timing was just right.

Cheng Su glanced at the dishes she made, lifted an eyebrow proudly, and thought, now Mother Qi had nothing to complain about.

## Chapter 9: Chapter 9 The Profligate Daughter-in-law

Cheng Su did as her mother-in-law instructed, moving the dishes to the dining table and setting the meal. Looking at the bowls of white rice shaped like roosters and the several plates of food, she couldn't help but chuckle to herself.

She never imagined that just yesterday she was enjoying a delicate steak in a hotel, and today, dressed in a traditional Dacron suit as befit her era, she, as a new bride, was preparing soups and washing hands for the Qi family.

She didn't even feel anything odd about it, as if in a past life, she had done this before, so she found nothing unbelievable about it.

Could it be that in just one day, her identity and role had already mentally transformed?

How strange life's circumstances could be.

Cheng Su looked at her hands, not as slender and well-maintained as in her previous life. Would these hands continue to act as a daughter-in-law's hands, washing clothes, cooking meals, and taking care of housework and her in-laws?

She suddenly felt a wave of despondency, recalling a Japanese drama where a man said to his date, "I hope you don't work, stay at home full-time as a housewife, respect your parents, manage the household, have children..." and the female protagonist simply replied, "I can do that all by myself!"

Indeed, getting married, serving the in-laws, treating oneself like a nanny—if marriage was like that, it would be better to be alone!

So, in her time, many single persons of privilege, like her, preferred to remain single rather than settle. But in this era, not getting married wasn't an option!

Cheng Su shook her head, casting out the thoughts from her mind. Now, her status was as another man's wife.

"What is all this?" a voice exclaimed, interrupting Cheng Su's musings.

Turning her head, she saw the astonishment on her mother-in-law's face, along with the schadenfreude of her younger sister-in-law.

What is it? It's the meal, what else could it be?

"Eh, it looks pretty good, smells good too. I'm starving. Let's all sit down and eat!" Father Qi walked in, eyes smiling as he spoke.

"I saw some cabbage and radishes in the kitchen, so I made these dishes. There isn't much meat, but we can buy some tonight to cook!" Cheng Su thought Mother Qi was complaining that there were too few dishes prepared.

"Cook what? Weren't there a lot of leftovers from yesterday's banquet? Why didn't you heat them up and serve them?" Mother Qi's face darkened.

Cheng Su said, "Those? I threw them out."

"Threw them out? Where did you throw them?" Mother Qi's expression changed.

Cheng Su felt somewhat perplexed and replied, "I threw them into the slop bucket for feeding pigs. They had gone sour, were unfit to eat, so I threw them away."

No sooner had she finished speaking than Mother Qi rushed out like a gust of wind, nearly sweeping Cheng Su off her feet.

"Big sister-in-law really takes drastic measures, throwing out so much food to feed the pigs? Tsk tsk..." Qi Fengping's eyes sparkled with malicious joy.

Cheng Su, amused, retorted, "If it's already spoiled, should I have served it to you, little sister-in-law? You're not afraid of a stomachache, but I'm afraid you'd blame me for harming you!"

"You!" Qi Fengping turned beet red with indignation.

Cheng Su turned away and faced Qi Taiguo, who frowned. She asked, "Surely you don't think I shouldn't have thrown it out, do you?"

"Didn't you ask Mum before doing it?" Qi Taiguo knew his mother's frugal nature and now, with Cheng Su having thrown away a whole plate of food, he feared his mother would be furious. It seemed too wasteful.

"Should I even have to ask about that? If the food's spoiled, what else am I supposed to do?" Qi Taiguo's remark left Cheng Su astounded. Surely he didn't expect them to eat it?

As she pondered this, her mother-in-law came storming back in, yelling and pointing at Cheng Su, "Oh, the misfortune! How could the Qi family be saddled with such a wasteful daughter-in-law!"

## **Chapter 10: Chapter 10: To Be Continued**

Over the years, Qi Taiguo's stipend had always been sent back home, so the Qi family's finances had significantly improved compared to the past. Now, with Taiguo getting



married and being the eldest son, the family naturally placed great importance on the event, resulting in a lavish banquet that was very lively.

There were a lot of leftovers after the banquet. Last night, Mother Qi had already distributed quite a bit to others, and the family kept a lot for themselves too, thinking they would not need to buy meat or vegetables for a few days and could save some money.

She was a person terrified of poverty, always frugal. It was common for her to eat leftovers until they could no longer be eaten, and she planned to do the same this time. No one in the family would have any objections.

Who from a poor family background had the right to complain whether the food was leftovers? Despite the era of reform and opening up improving the lives of the common people compared to the past, there were still not a few who went hungry.

The Qi family lived a relatively comfortable life thanks to the monthly stipend from Taiguo, but even so, they did not eat meat every day. They would buy meat only now and then for a special treat.

But now, Cheng Su had spoiled Mother Qi's perfect plan, dumping the leftovers into the slops bucket.

Mother Qi, seeing the bucket brimming with leftovers, was so heartbroken that she beat her chest and wished she could scoop them all back out.

This prodigal daughter-in-law, such a wasteful woman, it's just too much, she has no idea how hard life is!

"Tell me, why did you do this?" Mother Qi glared at Cheng Su, unable to contain her anger.

Startled by her fury, Cheng Su frowned and said, "I saw that the dish had gone bad, it was sour, so I threw it away."

"Elder Sister, although it's May and the weather is indeed hotter, it's been only one night. How could it go bad so quickly? You wanted to eat fresh food, so you deliberately threw it away, didn't you?" Qi Fengping interjected, "Our Qi family is not a capitalist household; we've never lived lavishly. However, even though your ancestors were accustomed to a life of luxury, wearing gold and silver, you're not rich now, are you? How can you not know the value of thriftiness?"

Cheng Su's expression darkened as she replied, "Little sister-in-law, since you call me 'Elder Sister', you should speak more politely. This intentional or unintentional talk, I don't have as many thoughts as you. I simply noticed that the food smelled and tasted

spoiled, and I threw it away to prevent sickness. I was just considering everyone's health!"

Qi Fengping pursed her lips and rolled her eyes.

"You talk better than you act. Why didn't you ask me before doing something like that?" Mother Qi was still pained over the wasted food and didn't mince her words.

"I thought that such a small matter didn't require your approval. It seems I was wrong!" Cheng Su replied.

Listen to that sarcasm. Who was she mocking?

Mother Qi still wanted to lecture her on the duties of a daughter-in-law, but Father Qi spoke up, "Alright, if it's spoiled and inedible, then let it be thrown away. We raise pigs at home, and they can eat it and fatten up, and in the end, we'll still eat the pork."

A twitch appeared at the corners of Cheng Su's mouth.

"Let's all sit down and eat, otherwise the food will get cold," Father Qi invited everyone to the table, then turned to Cheng Su and praised, "Taiguo's wife has cooked quite well, it's delicious!"

"Dad, this rice tastes burnt!" Qi Fengping noticed the burnt smell and glanced at Cheng Su.

Cheng Su said nothing.

Mother Qi saw that there was fried bacon with garlic on the table and felt pain in her heart anew. She said through gritted teeth, "We ate so much meat yesterday, why make bacon? One doesn't know the cost of firewood and rice unless they manage a household..."

"Enough!" Father Qi frowned with a stern look, warning her with a glare.

Seeing this, Mother Qi grew even angrier, her face darkened further, but she could only sarcastically chastise Cheng Su, and then picked faults while eating.

For Cheng Su, the food was nearly impossible to swallow, and she didn't say another word throughout the meal.

On this first day as a daughter-in-law, with the mother-in-law relationship so strained, how would she manage in the days to come?

