

## The 80s 601

Chapter 601: You Shameless Stinking Chicken

Chiang Qing was suddenly splashed all over by her and immediately screamed, "Ah! You shameless woman, what are you doing?"

It was too much. Chiang Qing had never been humiliated like this in her life. Cheng Su, how dare she splash her!

"What am I doing, splashing you, this brazen hussy. I've spoken to you nicely time and again, but you wouldn't listen, insisting on degrading yourself by pushing your face forward for me to strike. You have no shame, and you still dare to ask me why?" Cheng Su scoffed coldly, "I warned you before, whoever dares mess with my husband, I will fight with her to the bitter end. And you, why are you so disobedient, huh?"

"Get out, leave now, you shameless woman, or I'll report you for causing a disturbance in my home." Chiang Qing was trembling with rage.

"Go ahead, report me, it would be good for everyone to see how shameless you are, knowing full well a man is married and still throwing yourself at him. Can't you find someone else when you're in heat? Or did your mother teach you to only go after other people's husbands because that's more thrilling?"

Her words hit right at Chiang Qing's sore spot, and her complexion immediately turned horribly ugly.

"Cheng Su, enough! If you're so capable, keep your husband close and stop worrying about others snatching him, you uncultured country woman who can't even show her face in society!" Chiang Qing snapped with a dark face.

"I may be a country woman, but at least I know decency and shame. You're educated, a lady of high society, but do you know decency and shame? Pah! You don't know jack!" Cheng Su coldly responded, "I don't need to keep an eye on my husband. If Qi Taiguo ever told me he liked you, I would divorce him right away to make room for you. But the truth is, you are one-sided, and you've even managed to get my husband banished to the frontier. You think you're so great simply because you like him? The Chiang family likes so they must snatch, and if they can't have it, they must destroy?"

Chiang Qing was taken aback, "What do you mean by that?"

What does she mean by banishing to the frontier?

Cheng Su snorted, "You don't know? Thanks to your 'affection,' now Old Qi has to be far away from me, all thanks to you and your high-ranking father. You, Chiang Qing, are a calamity, it's only Old Qi's bad luck to have encountered someone like you."

Having said her piece, she was ready to leave, then added, "Chiang Qing, I'm telling you once more, if you still can't understand plain words and insist on harboring any romantic notions towards Old Qi, I won't hesitate to lose face and report to the organization that you have a problem with your conduct, that your whole family has a problem with their conduct. Let's all drop this pretense of dignity."

As Cheng Su tried to leave, Chiang Qing, still cold from the dousing, blocked her, "Don't you walk away, explain what you mean by banishing to the frontier?"

Why did she feel something was not right?

"If you want to know, ask your dear father why he had to extend his reach so far as to put Old Qi's name on the list of people being rotated to the frontier," Cheng Su said, looking at her with not a hint of warmth, "Miss Jiang, Doctor Chiang, consider this me begging you, please spare Old Qi this time. We are just ordinary commoners. Whatever you like about him, I will make him change, that should be enough, right?"

Chiang Qing ignored her words, her mind fixated on the sentence about her father placing Qi Taiguo's name on the personnel rotation list.

Why would her father do such a thing?

No wonder, today when Qi Taiguo saw her, he had such a cold look in his eyes. So this was the reason.

Chiang Qing sat blankly on the sofa, startled by a loud 'bang' as Cheng Su slammed the door on her way out. The draft that followed made her already damp body shiver from the cold.

## Chapter 602: Where to Go

Cheng Su stepped out of Chiang Qing's house and took a breath of fresh air outside, feeling that although the air was chilly, her heart was warm.

Why?

Because it felt great!

In her past life, she had seen shrewish women cursing in the streets, and news of wives physically fighting their husband's mistresses, and in TV dramas, there were always scenes of throwing water. Today, she didn't fall into clichés and had her own performance.

So this is what it feels like to be exhilarating!

Although she did not pull Chiang Qing's hair or scratch and claw while straddling her, just verbally abusing her with vulgar and poisonous words felt amazingly satisfying!

When she got home, Qi Taiguo sat on the sofa holding a book. Cheng Su knew it was the knowledge of weapons he had been reading for a while, but his mind was clearly not on the book now.

She hung her handbag on the nail on the wall and walked over, waving her hand in front of him.

Qi Taiguo came back to his senses and smiled, "You're back!"

"Yeah."

Cheng Su sat down, took the book off his knees, and said, "With your mind elsewhere, why keep reading? Better to close your eyes for a nap, it might help calm your mind."

Qi Taiguo smiled, shifted a bit, and made room for her to sit beside him, then put his arm around her.

"Are you worrying? Ning Ge said, it's just a nomination. Chief Ning will fight for you. It's not necessarily true that you'll have to go to the frontier," Cheng Su said.

Qi Taiguo twirled a strand of her hair around his finger and said, "In fact, if the higher-ups need me there, I will obey unconditionally. As a soldier, no matter what happens, we do not have the right to refuse."

Cheng Su of course knew that those soldiers who spent their days in the military might not even be able to catch a last glimpse of their own parents when they passed away, let alone attend their funerals.

As a soldier, the first thing to learn is to obey orders unconditionally!

"I know, but you weren't expecting this arrangement, right?" Cheng Su sighed.

Qi Taiguo nodded, "I've been in the army for over a decade and have never encountered such unreasonable behavior. A commander taking revenge for personal reasons is truly laughable!"

Cheng Su felt a shiver down her spine at the chill in his voice.

He's always been a soldier, and even though they've lived together a long time, and he can be warm-hearted, deep down he's still stern.

Qi Taiguo is a man with a strong sense of self-respect, stubborn, and the actions of Chiang Qing's father undeniably challenged his bottom line. It's likely that from now on, Qi Taiguo would be even less willing to show any goodwill to Chiang Qing.

That also meant that Chiang Qing would only grow further and further apart from Qi Taiguo, thanks to her father's doing.

How can a man with a military background, who has immense pride, allow Jiang Conghe's actions to trample all over his self-respect? The proud Qi Taiguo surely wasn't going to fawn over the Chiang Family, was he?

In your dreams!

Cheng Su felt a bit pleased, as this meant Chiang Qing had even less of a chance of getting close to Qi Taiguo again, unless she incapacitated him and kept him by her side.

"It's not settled yet, don't worry too much; it's not worth it. It could affect your judgment," Cheng Su comforted him.

"Yeah. Regimental Commander Mai said the same, without the official document, there's no need to worry, just keep doing what we're supposed to. So, I still have to go for training mid-month," Qi Taiguo pursed his lips and said, "I'm just thinking, if the official document does come through and I really have to guard the frontier for three years, what will you do?"

Cheng Su pursed her lips. Living apart was a great taboo for marital relations and also the greatest killer.

And the idea of living in the harsh cold of the frontier had never crossed her mind. If they were truly to be separated for three years, where would they go from there?

Chapter 603: Can you stop glorifying yourself?

Chiang Qing changed into a new set of clothes and headed to the military base. She wanted to ask her father why he had done this, why he had sent Qi Taiguo to the border.

Did he want to drive her to death?

Didn't he know that by doing so, a person like Qi Taiguo would only drift further away from her, and never bow his head?

Chiang Qing's face was cold as she thought of Qi Taiguo's icy gaze, feeling a chill spread from the soles of her feet to her heart.

She quickened her pace but was abruptly stopped by someone.

"Yo, who is this little girl?"

Chiang Qing's footsteps halted abruptly. She looked up, stunned, then her face grew colder. "It's you! Get out of the way!"

Well, if it isn't the Ning Family's brat, Ning Ge, the one collaborating with that vile Cheng Su. Looking at that face, no wonder he's an illegitimate child born of a mistress.

A cold smile hooked at the corner of Chiang Qing's mouth. A whore and a bastard son, what a matching pair!

"What's the rush? We're from the same place after all. Let's have a chat, and if you don't want to talk here, we can go for a drink and chat slowly," Ning Ge said with a deliberately ambiguous smile.

"Who wants to drink with you? Who do you think you are? Get lost!" Chiang Qing said, impatiently lifting her foot, ready to walk past him.

Ning Ge blocked her again. "I consider myself a person, don't you know that? But I guess it makes sense, creatures like you can't compare to us humans."

Hearing the sarcasm in his words, Chiang Qing's face turned utterly cold. "Ning Ge, what do you mean by that?"

Ning Ge just shrugged his shoulders.

"It doesn't mean much. Just offering you some friendly advice, since we come from the same place. Turn back while you can. Your dad, my older brother, they're in the same line of work after all, even if they have their own political views. At the end of the day, they serve the country!"

"What are you trying to say? Are you implying we're family?" Chiang Qing sneered.

Ning Ge lifted his index finger. "No, no, don't flatter yourself like that, okay? I have no desire to covet someone else's husband; it's embarrassing. If I had such family members, I'd disown them without hesitation!"

So he'd come to make a fuss on someone's behalf? For that wretch Cheng Su?

Chiang Qing narrowed her eyes, sized up Ning Ge, and started to laugh. "I covet someone else's husband? And you, Young Master Ning, you covet someone else's wife. Do they know about it?" Without waiting for his reply, she continued, "Or to put it another way, does Cheng Su know about it?"

The smile on Ning Ge's lips faded, and his eyes turned fierce.

"Better watch your mouth; I'm not one to spare women from a beating," Ning Ge said coldly, glancing at her.

Having been provoked repeatedly, Chiang Qing was already irritated. Seeing this, she said, "What's the matter? Angry because I hit a nerve? Embarrassed and furious?" She looked down at him contemptuously and added, "So, we're both equally bad, nobody should talk about the other, and don't try to act like the hero who rights wrongs. Cheng Su isn't here to see your gallantry."

Ning Ge looked at her steadily for a while and then laughed. "Seems like you're the one who's embarrassed and furious. What's wrong? Rejected by Qi Taiguo and feeling upset, deliberately bringing up your father to save face? Your Chiang Family is just so-so. But it's funny about your Chiang Family, your mother climbed her way up by stealing someone's husband, and you're following suit. Indeed, birds of a feather flock together!"

"You're out of line!" Chiang Qing, furious, raised her hand to slap his face.

If Ning Ge really got hit like that, how could he face others? He quickly raised his hand and effortlessly grabbed Chiang Qing's slender wrist, slowly applying pressure, watching her face turn white, he chuckled, "Don't do that, honey. Resorting to violence so rashly isn't ladylike. So, you see, don't just pick up the bad habits as they'll only harm others and yourself, and you'll regret it in the end!"

Ning Ge's grip grew tighter and tighter until Chiang Qing's face turned pale, with tears welling up in her eyes, on the verge of falling.

"Let go!" Chiang Qing's voice trembled as she demanded, trying to pull her hand back, but he clamped down on it even harder.

Her hand hurt so much that tears fell. Chiang Qing shouted, "Ning Ge, do you still want to hit a woman? My dad won't let you off, and your elder brother will suffer too."

"Tsk tsk, a woman can only do so much. At every turn, she calls for daddy. Chiang Qing, are you a three-year-old child who can only cry when you can't get candy? Beaten and then running to adults for help—I thought you had some tricks up your sleeve, but that's it!" Ning Ge glanced at her, his grip loosening with a push, causing Chiang Qing to stumble back two steps.

Her wrist was a patchwork of blue and red, soon to turn into a bruise.

Clutching her hand, Chiang Qing glared at him and said, "Ning Ge, I haven't offended you, haven't provoked you, what are you trying to do?"

"Nothing much!" Ning Ge shrugged and spread his hands as he spoke, "I just bumped into you and wanted to have a chat, but who knew you had such a filthy mouth? The young master here got unhappy, and just like that... this happened!"

This scoundrel!

Chiang Qing clenched her teeth; she should never have entertained this scoundrel.

Without another word, Chiang Qing walked around him and left.

"Chiang Qing, don't shame yourself. By harming others and yourself, sometimes in life, you just have to accept your fate," Ning Ge called after her from behind.

Chiang Qing paused mid-step, turning back to give him a cold glare. "Young Master Ning, don't meddle in others' business, better take care of your own!" With that, she left without looking back.

"Benefactor, to turn back is to reach the shore!" Ning Ge shouted after her, his eyes devoid of any warmth.

The Chiang Family, acting so arrogantly won't do!

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Arriving at Cheng Su's house, she and Qi Taiguo were about to leave, and before Ning Ge had a chance to sit down, Cheng Su grabbed him and started asking questions.

"What happened?"

"What was that just now? I heard someone say that you had a dispute with Chiang the Fox? Did you hit her?" Cheng Su asked.

Ning Ge was taken aback: "Damn, you have informers too? Who's talking?"

"You had a dispute with her on the only way to the courtyard, with people coming and going, and it being the end of the workday—who wouldn't see?" Cheng Su retorted irritably.

It was Guiying; she had just finished work and saw Ning Ge grabbing Chiang Qing's hand from afar. Seeing the expressions on both their faces, Guiying hurried back to inform Cheng Su.

She knew that Ning Ge was close to Cheng Su, and there was also some inexplicable feeling between Chiang Qing and Commander Qi. Worried that they might be having a conflict, Guiying felt obliged to tell her.

Cheng Su, fearing Ning Ge might actually hit a woman, was in a rush to leave.

"You didn't really hit her, did you?" Qi Taiguo also looked at Ning Ge.

Ning Ge snorted, "Am I that kind of person? Why would I hit a woman!"

Then what's the deal? I heard you grabbed her hand!" Cheng Su narrowed her eyes, "Don't tell me you two were being romantic!"

"How could that be? That kind of woman, would I, the young master, fancy her? She wanted to hit me; would I just stand there and do nothing?" Ning Ge touched his face, "My handsomely chiseled face cannot be slapped by a woman!"

Seeing his ruffian look, Cheng Su rolled her eyes and said, "Then how did you provoke her so that she would want to slap you?"

Ning Ge sat down, shrugged, and said, "Nothing much, I just found her unpleasant. The Chiang family is too arrogant for my liking, so I just gave her a lesson!"

Qi Taiguo and Cheng Su exchanged glances. Oddly enough, even though he spoke with a joking tone, why did it seem like there was a chill in his words? Was it an illusion?

#### Chapter 605: Are You Trying to Drive Me to Death?

Beijing, Jiang Conghe returned home with a dark expression, his face as black as the bottom of a pot. Upon entering the living room, he heard Lu Shufen shouting and scolding.

"We raised you all these years, and you talk like this, do you have any conscience? Huh? Who is forcing you to die? If we wanted to kill you, why would we waste all our efforts over the years?"

Jiang Conghe furrowed his brow, turned the corner of the living room past the yellow pearwood screen depicting the Magu offering longevity, only to see her on the phone, yelling into the receiver, with a handkerchief in her other hand, wiping away tears.

One didn't need to guess who was on the phone—it could only be that stubborn daughter of theirs. Who else could it be?

Seeing his wife crying and sobbing made the anger inside Jiang Conghe even greater. Just that day, he had a confrontation with Ning Gang, exchanging veiled jabs, all because of that infamous Qi Taiguo.

Ning Gang had actually crossed off Qi Taiguo's name on the list for border defense duty, for one simple reason: Qi Taiguo had just been reprimanded for misconduct during a mission, and according to regulations, should be under observation, unfit to bear the heavy responsibility of guarding the border.

As for Jiang Conghe, he seized this point, arguing that exactly because Qi Taiguo had been at fault, he should be sent to the border to undergo retraining and introspection. Young people were impetuous, and the border could temper their hot-headedness.

Once he said this, Ning Gang retorted that it was too trivial, the border defenses were inherently critical, and to send someone just for training instead of defending was preposterous, as if it were a training ground.

The two men quarreled over this, and eventually, the personnel list had to be finalized by higher-ups in the organization.

Jiang Conghe was furious. He was bent on sending that kid far away so he would be out of his daughter's sight, not expecting to hit a snag at this step.

But this Ning Gang, was he valuing Qi Taiguo too much? Qi Taiguo had some merits and potential, but was he really that good?

"I can't reason with you. If you want to die, then die, but don't talk about it in front of me, consider it as if I raised you in vain." Lu Shufen cursed angrily, hung up the phone with a snap, and started crying into her hands.

The sound of her crying brought Jiang Conghe back to his senses, he asked, "Was that Qingqing, what happened?"

"Who else would carve up my heart like this but her? What else could it be about, if not for that Qi boy, ready to live or die for him. She's saying we're forcing her to her death!" Lu Shufen said with teary eyes:

"How are we pushing her? Isn't it all for her own good? But she thinks we're trying to kill her. Is it better to let her fly into the flames, to jump into the fire pit, before we can be said to care for her?"

Jiang Conghe's face turned ugly: "I think this girl is becoming more and more willful!"

"I can't control her anymore." Lu Shufen sobbed.

As Jiang Conghe was about to speak, the phone rang. He answered, "Hello?"

On the other end, Chiang Qing's voice came through: "Dad, did you submit Qi Taiguo's name for the border defense rotation? Why would you do that, Dad?"

"Are you questioning me or what?" Jiang Conghe replied coldly.

"Dad..."

"I am your father. I don't need to report my actions to you, nor seek your opinion, nor is it your place to question your elders. All the education you received over the years, was it eaten by dogs? Utterly outrageous!" Jiang Conghe rebuked.

"Dad, I'm begging you, the border is so far, so harsh, please pull him back. Consider it a plea from your daughter." Chiang Qing pleaded desperately on the phone.

"If I pull him back, will you return? Will you stop longing for him?" Jiang Conghe's eyes narrowed.

Chiang Qing choked, after a moment she said, "If you don't pull him back, and he goes to the border, I'll apply to go along."

Jiang Conghe exploded in anger, "How outrageous!"

"Outrageous then outrageous, since you're determined to drive me to death. It doesn't matter where I die. You decide, Dad!"

Beep, beep, beep!

The busy tone came through the phone, Chiang Qing had hung up, leaving Jiang Conghe so enraged that he smashed the phone in his hand.

Chapter 606: Falling into a Devil's Snare

Jiang Conghe smashed the phone down, and Lu Shufen got a fright. Forgetting to cry, she asked, "What happened? What did that girl say?"

"What else could it be? It's still the same thing, she even dared to threaten me. She said if I don't get Qi Taiguo's name off the list, she'll apply to transfer there too. It's infuriating." Jiang Conghe raged.

Lu Shufen was dumbfounded and started crying again, "Such a sin, our daughter, she's truly ruining herself. Now what do we do, Old Chiang? I think this girl is possessed, could it be a ghost has taken over her? Heaven, I must go to Fragrance Hill Temple to pray for her tomorrow. Wuu wuu..."

Listening to his wife's crying and thinking about Chiang Qing's resolute words just now, Jiang Conghe felt so angry he could grind his teeth. What was so good about that poor lad, worth her defiance? Could it be that Qi Taiguo deliberately played a game of retreat as advance? If that was the case, then this man's thoughts were too deep!

Having put down the phone, Chiang Qing lay down on the desk and started sobbing. There were nurses on duty in the Health Center who, seeing this, looked at each other in bewilderment. What had happened?

After crying for a while, Chiang Qing poured herself some water and washed her face with the cold water, thinking carefully about the situation.

She had made up her mind. If her father didn't plan to remove Qi Taiguo's name, and he really went to the frontier to defend the border, then, no matter what, she would also apply for a transfer there.

And after defending for three years, Qi Taiguo would surely split up with Cheng Su. That would be her opportunity. Anything was possible in three years, this too was a chance.

Thinking this, Chiang Qing started to feel a faint sense of anticipation.

Actually, wouldn't it be better if the name wasn't withdrawn?

No, the frontier is too harsh and cold, it was said there are frequent disturbances at the border. It's too dangerous.

Chiang Qing stood up, wishing she could tell Qi Taiguo immediately that she wouldn't just stand by, but remembering Qi Taiguo's cold and indifferent face, her body shivered, and she sat down despondently, lost in thought.

He had misunderstood her. As long as they cleared up the misunderstanding, everything would get better, Chiang Qing thought dully.

At this moment, Chiang Qing appeared dull and vacant. Was this the proud and aloof doctor people knew? It was just the so-called love that had blinded her eyes, even her heart was shrouded.

No wonder they say that a woman in love has the intelligence of zero. At this moment, Chiang Qing was nothing more than a fool on the verge of madness.

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The next day, Chiang Qing rushed into Qi Taiguo's office.

Seeing her, Qi Taiguo's face darkened as he said harshly, "Get out!"

Chiang Qing's heart ached, but she had to explain her intention, and so she pleaded through the door, "Don't worry, I already talked to my dad, he will cancel your name from the list. You don't have to go to the frontier."

"I told you to get out, did you hear me?" Qi Taiguo snapped coldly.

"Qi Taiguo, listen to me. It really wasn't intentional, I had no idea my father would make such a decision. If, if it really can't be canceled, I, I will apply to transfer there with you. My dad loves me the most, he won't have the heart to let this happen," said Chiang Qing, unconcerned by his iciness, speaking hastily.

Veins popped on Qi Taiguo's forehead, this woman was thoroughly insane. Was there any way to transfer her away?

Too annoying!

Seeing the coldness in Qi Taiguo's eyes, Chiang Qing felt an immense heartache. Why couldn't he understand and accept her feelings?

"Believe it or not, I've said my piece," Chiang Qing threw out the words and ran out.

Qi Taiguo let out a long sigh, his brows tightly furrowed. What could he do to get rid of this person?

#### Chapter 607: Provocation

Despite knowing that Qi Taiguo could likely be transferred to border defense, the decision to go or not, and where to go, was not theirs to make, but rather up to the arrangements of their superiors.

Therefore, life had to go on as usual because people still needed to wear clothes and eat. Just because one might be transferred far away, did that mean life should not continue?

However, the rumor that Qi Taiguo might have to guard the border somehow spread. During the full-month celebration of Chunhua's daughter Yuer, the topic was brought up.

Chunhua's household wasn't very wealthy, and for their daughter's full-month celebration, they didn't throw a lavish banquet but simply invited a few close families over for a meal—men at one table, women at another, even using the space of Cheng Su and Guiying's home.

The one who started the conversation was none other than Hualing.

Things hadn't been going well for Hualing either, as her relationship with Chen Shouwang had its ups and downs. Although they had reconciled after their argument before the New Year, she still felt as if something was amiss.

And during the New Year when they visited her in-laws, her mother-in-law would constantly hint, in no uncertain terms, that it was time for them to have a child since they had been married for quite some time.

Her mother-in-law even obtained, from who knows where, a bowl of dark, unknown medicine, claiming it was Talisman Water from the Divine Lady, guaranteed to aid fertility, which scared Hualing enough to provoke a scene and make her insist that Chen Shouwang return with her to her parents' home.

Hualing did want to have children; however, both of them had undergone checks and found no issues. Yet the child was not forthcoming—what could they do?

Especially when everyone in the same building, on the same floor, seemed to be having children. Chunhua had given birth, and even though it was a girl, she was her own flesh and blood, whereas Guiying was heaving every morning by the sink, that acidic smell made Hualing's own stomach churn with envy.

As for Cheng Su, she had decided not to have children for the time being, even avoiding getting pregnant on purpose.

Hualing hadn't been so anxious before, but seeing others' children popping out one after another made her restless.

Previously, Hualing had never initiated intimacy, but for the sake of having a child, she had set her embarrassment aside and became proactive; yet frustratingly, the child still did not come. So it was that her period had just started again these past few days.

Therefore, Hualing was very agitated and less tolerant of seeing others comfortable and happy.

Hearing from Chen Shouwang that Qi Taiguo might have to go away for border defense, Hualing felt that Cheng Su's good times were coming to an end. She watched the couple, always so affectionate and cheerful—would they still be like this after years of separation?

But as for Cheng Su, it was uncertain whether she was really magnanimous or simply indifferent. Look at her smiling like a blooming flower, discussing children with Guiying and others.

Children were now a taboo subject for Hualing, unbearable to hear.

"You must be looking forward to getting a break, Cheng Su. Didn't you say you wanted to wait a few years before having children? Now your wish has come true!" Hualing suddenly remarked sharply.

The laughter and chatter at the dinner table abruptly ceased.

"What do you mean by that?" Cheng Su's eyes narrowed slightly.

"Isn't it obvious? I heard that your husband, Commander Qi, might be sent to guard the border. If he goes, he'll be away for years. If you're living apart, won't you have to postpone having kids for a few more years?" Hualing smiled and said, "Doesn't that suit you just fine?"

The others frowned upon hearing this, each one thinking to themselves, why must Nurse Hua stir trouble when everyone was enjoying a pleasant conversation?

Obviously, everyone knew about this situation since they were all part of the same military community, and the list for border defense not only included Qi Taiguo but others as well. Living in the same compound, it was natural for word to get around.

All those seated were family members, and who among them would wish for a long-distance marriage? Of course, they knew their husbands in the military needed to serve the country and wouldn't create any significant trouble, but it was nonetheless harmful to marital relationships.

Everyone turned to see what Cheng Su would say.

## Chapter 608: Retaliation

Cheng Su was pinching a small cup, contemplating a drink. It was glutinous rice wine, specially brought by Chunhua's Grandma from her hometown, claiming it was brewed by herself. In their area, when a woman gave birth, she would drink this kind of wine, which was great for cooking chicken and eggs to nourish the woman. It was also nice for entertaining guests.

After downing the glutinous rice wine in one gulp, Cheng Su said, "The red-headed document hasn't come down yet, and whether we're really going is still up in the air."

That was true.

Hualing pursed her lips and said, "The name has been put forward, how could there be any changes? Besides, Commander Qi is such an outstanding candidate, and he's made notable military achievements before. Once he goes and comes back this time, I bet he won't miss out on becoming a battalion commander!"

Those were nice words, but they carried a peculiar flavor to the ears, a hint of jealousy and a touch of sourness, just not very pleasant to listen to.

Cheng Su replied, "Well, if it's about becoming a battalion commander, then I'll take that as your blessing!"

She completely ignored Hualing's insinuation about having children.

But Hualing was not one to give up, "So you tell me, if Commander Qi is going away for years, and you two are separated, does that mean you'll have to postpone having kids for a few years? Isn't that exactly what you're hoping for?"

It sounded as if Cheng Su didn't want children at all.

Although, to be honest, Cheng Su didn't really want children at the moment, hearing Hualing say it like that made her uncomfortable.

"You don't know about the privileges of being a military spouse—we get the right to visit. If I really wanted to have children, I'd just calculate the right date and go for a visit, wouldn't that solve it? There are plenty of lucky ones who hit the jackpot on the first try, aren't there?" Cheng Su glanced at Hualing.

That hit a nerve for Hualing indeed, hadn't she been married to Chen Shouwang for quite some time without any news?

Seeing everyone at the table eating and stealing laughs, Hualing's face turned beet red, thinking to herself that Cheng Su was shameless, discussing such private matters openly, without a hint of embarrassment. She was truly crude.

Cheng Su, however, had no such thoughts. Everyone present was either married or a mother; what was the harm in such spicy talk? Besides, she didn't say anything too inappropriate, all of it was quite hinted at, right?

You, Hualing, brought up having children. To have children, one must sleep together, and everyone knows that. What's there to be afraid of discussing?

Knowing Cheng Su was sharp-tongued, Hualing didn't want to continue the conversation. But Cheng Su wasn't ready to let her off the hook and said, "Speaking of which, any news on your end?"

"Not at all. Just this morning, I saw Nurse Hua making Brown Sugar Ginger Tea—must be good news!" Guiying chimed in before Hualing could respond.

Hualing glared at Guiying, Nobody asked for your comment!

Guiying awkwardly lowered her head.

"There's no rush for that. You and your husband are both healthy and together every day. It's only a matter of time for children!" Cheng Su said with a smile, "Not like us. Old Qi and I have agreed to wait a bit before having kids. I'm really not in a hurry."

Those seemed like kind words, and everyone agreed, but Hualing felt a surge of anger in her chest. What nice words? Cheng Su was clearly mocking her!

Cheng Su poured herself another cup of glutinous rice wine, holding it to mask the coldness on her lips. If you insist on making me upset, then don't blame me for returning the favor.

"Let's drop this topic. Hey, have you guys heard? That Cao Zhiying's wife, the one who wears those two gold earrings, got robbed on her way home from work, and even had her ears bloodied."

"I've heard. The public safety is getting worse by the day, sigh..."

The subject was thus changed, and as Hualing watched Cheng Su easily join in the conversation, with everyone gathering around her to talk, her heart seethed, as if she had spat out several liters of blood.

#### Chapter 609: Not Allowed to Shirk Responsibility in the Future

After the gathering at Chunhua's Household had dispersed and everyone had helped with the cleanup and returned home, Cheng Su's Household also had set up a table. Even though it had been tidied up, things were still a bit messy. Since she disliked disorderliness, she simply rolled up her sleeves and cleaned everything up once more, inside and out.

Qi Taiguo had drunk quite a bit and was too lazy to move, but seeing Cheng Su roll up her sleeves, he also stood up to help sweep and mop the floor, until everything was clean. Then, they both washed up before lying in bed to talk.

Cheng Su brought up the matter of Hualing stirring up trouble and grumbled, "She just can't stand to see me live in peace. Just when things have been quiet for a while, she has to pick on me. Tell me, do you think it's because she can't have kids that she's taking it out on me?"

Before Qi Taiguo could reply, she continued, "That's enough, really. Her infertility has nothing to do with me, so why take it out on me? It's just inexplicable."

"Didn't you just say these past few days she might have been feeling irritable? Getting upset with her is exactly what she wants," Qi Taiguo consoled her.

"That's true," Cheng Su pursed her lips, then turned to look at him.

"What is it?"

Blinking, Cheng Su said, "However, one thing she said does make some sense."

"Hmm?"

"I mean, just if, and I'm talking hypothetically here, if you really have to be stationed at the border for three to five years, we'd definitely have to live apart, and then having children really would be an issue!" Cheng Su said.

The new year had passed, and she was twenty-one, while Qi Taiguo was already twenty-nine. According to her own way of thinking, both of them were still very young, but by the standards of the time, Qi Taiguo was of the age where many were already fathers.

If, by some misfortune, he was deployed to the border, then their plans to become parents would have to be pushed back a few years. But was that really okay?

Cheng Su didn't have a particular longing for children at the moment, but Qi Taiguo probably did, right? Not to mention the Qi family, who all had their eyes on her belly.

"So what now?" Qi Taiguo turned to look at her too.

Cheng Su bit her lip and said, "What do you think about us having a child now?"

"Didn't you not want to have one right now?" Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow.

"Yes, but if you really get selected, and you go away for a few years, and you never know when you'll come back, I'm not in a hurry, but you aren't either?" Cheng Su pouted, "I'm just afraid that you'll blame me later, when everyone else's kids are in elementary school and yours doesn't even exist."

Qi Taiguo laughed, stretched his arm from under her neck, pulled her into his embrace, and said, "I've already agreed to wait for you, what is there to blame? You're such a fool."

"Who knows? You're good at talking after the fact," Cheng Su scratched his chest.

"Actually, that's exactly why we can't have kids right now," Qi Taiguo said.

"Why?"

"If you got pregnant and I was sent to the border, wouldn't I have to leave you and our child behind? That's no good. Pregnancy is tough, giving birth is tougher, and raising a child is too exhausting. If you had to endure it all alone, how would you manage if you couldn't cope? I wouldn't feel assured or bear to let you do that. So, it's best if you get pregnant and have the baby while I'm here!" Qi Taiguo spoke from his heart, sharing thoughts he had been having over the last few days.

A wave of warmth swept over Cheng Su's heart, and she buried her head in his chest, saying, "This is your own words, don't you go back on them in the future!"

"Hmm," Qi Taiguo drew out the drawer, took out that box with only three condoms left, and said, "I won't go back on my word. So, how about taking good care of me tonight?"

"Scram, you little brat!"

But Qi Taiguo had already pressed down on her, and Cheng Su soon couldn't resist anymore. Her hands scrambled around, grabbing at the condoms Qi Taiguo had taken out, and she felt that something was not right, but before she could figure it out, he had snatched them away and...

#### Chapter 610: Lifting a Weight Off My Heart

Ever since Cheng Su had paid Chiang Qing a visit for a "lesson," whenever they chanced upon each other in the courtyard, Chiang Qing avoided Cheng Su. In her eyes, Cheng Su was a lunatic shrew!

However, in Cheng Su's view, this was good. She knew to avoid her, which was best. It saved Cheng Su from making a scene, for she was a cultured person who preferred to avoid undignified behavior whenever possible.

She had also heard that in the military, Qi Taiguo had a strong aversion to Military Doctor Chiang and avoided her like the plague.

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su was extremely pleased!

With the factory attracting business first, business at the Joy Soon Loy Restaurant flagship store was getting better, and the fast food shop at the train station had carved out a path for itself. Business was improving gradually, everything was developing according to her plan, and the days were going splendidly. How could she not be delighted?

Apart from the weighty concern of her and her husband's reassignment to the border, Cheng Su felt that smooth sailing like this was the way life should be.

By mid-month, Cheng Su and Ning Ge, along with Zhou Jun from the Capital's Red Third Generation, signed a distributorship contract, officially ushering Joy Soon Loy Jam into the northern market.

Once the contract was settled, Zhou Jun's funds arrived quickly. Cheng Su and Ning Ge held another meeting and decided to develop several new kinds of jam. For this purpose, they even specially hired two more technical personnel to set up a research and development department.

After the company cafeteria was built, Cheng Su specially hired a team and, after practicing in the kitchens of Joy Soon Loy Restaurant for a few days, they were transferred to the factory. Meals were provided for free as part of employee welfare, which made everyone very happy. Moreover, the food was of good quality. With such great benefits, the employees' morale was boosted, and monthly performance rapidly increased.

The cafeteria chefs were only responsible for cooking, and for meat and vegetables, Song Xiaojang was still in charge of the unified purchasing. But with the sudden addition of the train station shop and the factory's remote location, Song Xiaojang was concerned about not being able to deliver food on time, so he suggested adding another person.

Cheng Su was aware that one person could not be everywhere at once, so she accepted the suggestion. Coincidentally, Cao Xiaohu's younger brother, Cao Xiaohui, who had just finished junior high and stopped attending school at seventeen, was introduced to them. He was a bright lad tasked with helping Song Xiaojang.

With the number of employees growing, Cheng Su could not manage them all by herself. So, she began to implement the hierarchical management model that had been planned earlier.

First, for the restaurant, different departments were established. Old Song was the head chef and he got an assistant. Qiulan was promoted to manager, and He Yue was made the supervisor. Another supervisor for the food runners was promoted, and a salary increase was, of course, inevitable. Their year-end bonus would also be higher than that of the other employees.

Hierarchical management's most important aspect is to clarify the responsibilities, rights, and benefits of each position. Everyone has their place, discharges their duties, is accountable for their actions, and works within their roles, strictly following the rules and regulations. Rewards and punishments are consequently clear, and accountability goes without saying. Whenever there is a problem at any point, the first person to be held accountable is naturally the boss.

As a result, the management became clearer, more defined, and well-organized.

And Cheng Su's intention was to eventually segregate the fast food section of the restaurant into a separate storefront, no longer mixed with the main restaurant.

Time passed, busy and fulfilling, and in the blink of an eye, the day for Qi Taiguo to lead the training arrived.

On the day before departure, the list of personnel being rotated to the border was finally set. Thanks to Ning Gang's efforts and perhaps Jiang Conghe relenting for his daughter's sake, Qi Taiguo's name was removed from the list, meaning he no longer had to go to the border.

Both Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo breathed a huge sigh of relief. No matter what, the heavy burden that had been on their minds was finally lifted.