

The 80s 621

Chapter 621: No Room for Complacency

With the addition of Xiao Pinshan to the team, Cheng Su and the others felt much relieved, as Xiao Pinshan had certain experiences and had managed before, his joining quickly standardized the company's management model.

Currently, Joy Soon Loy Jam is developing new products and marketing strategies, all of which are on the agenda, and the main products—strawberry jam and pineapple jam—also need quality improvement and market expansion.

Cheng Su was busy yet fulfilled, going back and forth daily between home, the company, and the two restaurants.

Meanwhile, Qi Taiguo, who was leading training exercises, showed no sign of slackening, having formulated training tasks more than twice as rigorous as before, causing the soldiers beneath him to complain incessantly. They whispered among themselves that Commander Qi must be hungry, or missing his wife, which was why this year's training was so tough.

During the snowmelt, they practiced bare-bodied mud crawling, carried twenty kilograms on a ten-kilometer run, underwent resistance training, did fixed-position holding of AK47s with rocks hanging from the barrels for two hours, conducted shooting drills, and engaged in field training that required a twenty-kilometer run in under three minutes in case of a hit, hung upside down, practiced inversion, engaged in sparring...

And so on, the training was as harsh as that for special forces.

Even Gao Linbing, who went along, was finding it difficult and took the opportunity of a break to slide over and sit down beside Qi Taiguo.

"Old Qi, are you blowing off steam, feeling unwell, or just missing your wife?" asked Gao Linbing.

Qi Taiguo furrowed his brow, "What do you mean?"

"Otherwise, why is this year's training plan so intense? What's got you provoked? The lads are saying that Commander Qi is going crazy!" said Gao Linbing, nodding towards the soldiers sprawled not far away on their backpacks.

"Nonsense! As a soldier, this level of physical training is a must. It's not that harsh. I think they've gotten too slack in their regular routines," replied Qi Taiguo with a darkened face.

"Don't give me that. I know this year is more than twice as tough as last year," Gao Linbing rolled his eyes.

Qi Taiguo said with a stern face, "We can't keep doing the same drills every year. What's the point of training then? The tougher the difficulty, the stronger the willpower that is forged, and in the future, they'll have a stronger body and will to carry out missions assigned by superiors, and to save their own lives in harsh conditions. Besides, I'm training right along with them."

It was precisely this that made Gao Linbing feel Qi Taiguo must have been provoked by something. He was the commander, the one leading the training, and didn't necessarily have to undergo the same rigorous exercises as the soldiers, yet Qi Taiguo participated in every activity, doing as much as the soldiers or even more.

"That's true, but is there a need to be so relentless?" asked Gao Linbing.

Qi Taiguo glanced at him, "In future missions, achieving honor and saving lives will make them more grateful for today's hardships, for today's muscle soreness." He paused, then added, "Right now, the nation is stable, but no one knows if we'll be sent on peacekeeping missions, or sent to support wars in other countries. Old Gao, if we don't excel ourselves, we'll quickly be eliminated. We can't afford to slack off."

Old Gao was taken aback.

Qi Taiguo had already stood up, hoisted the heavy backpack, and shouted, "Assemble, continue!"

The young soldiers quickly got up, shouldered their packs, and lined up.

Gao Linbing also jumped up, cursing, "Damn it, if we're to compete, we'll compete. Can't let the youngsters outdo us, can we?"

The heavy and uniform footsteps echoed through the dense forest, startling the birds that had just returned, sending them fluttering wildly, and their calls carried far and wide, making some timid animals hide in their dens, not daring to emerge.

Chapter 622: I'm Just Setting the Stage for the Drama

February has only twenty-eight days, and it passed in the blink of an eye. Once March arrived, the drizzle began to fall. Birds flew back from the South, and spring was here.

Cheng Su didn't know whether Joy Soon Loy Jam Company had hired a new manager or not, but she felt somewhat relieved. With the weight off her shoulders, she felt tired and, as it was spring, even more sleepy.

In the afternoon, around three to four o'clock, Cheng Su left the company yawning, heading home early, but first, she made a detour to the train station fast food shop.

The chefs at the fast food shop were skilled, and with Old Song from the main store coming over to give guidance, the food, despite being fast food, was quite good.

Apart from the transportation hub, there were many shops around the train station. Some people who had tried the fast food shop found it to their liking and returned to patronize it more.

Cheng Su noticed that it had been over a month since the shop opened, and she wanted to get the account books to calculate the balance of income and expenses.

However, when Cheng Su arrived at the fast food shop that day, there were people gathered at the entrance. She frowned as she approached and heard the sound of an argument.

"Everyone knows someone died in this shop; do I even need to say it? I'm not making up rumors."

"You're clearly just jealous of Joy Soon Loy's good business and are deliberately trying to scare people off."

"Exactly, spouting nonsense with no shame at all."

"Who's spouting nonsense? The whole street knows that the former shop owner was beaten to death by her husband. Who knows if her restless spirit is still around? Ouch, I wouldn't dare eat here!"

"If there's a restless spirit, it should haunt you! Do you think it's far from us? You knew the former owner. She didn't know us, and we've never wronged her. But you, who knows if you've offended her!"

"You..."

"Xiaoying, stop arguing with her, let's go inside." This was Qi Fenglian's voice.

Cheng Su pushed through the crowd and saw her two waitresses, Xiaoying and the others, arguing with the auntie from next door. Qi Fenglian stood by with a cold expression, pushing and pulling Xiaoying and the others back into the shop.

"What's going on here? Don't you want to open for business anymore?" Cheng Su shouted, "Aren't you going to get ready?"

Changing color, the waitresses looked somewhat aggrieved and said, "President Cheng, it's her, she's been saying our shop is unclean."

"A mouth belongs to others, let them say what they will. Just because she says it's unclean, does that make it so? She's not the Jade Emperor, nor is she from the food hygiene authority. Has anyone gotten sick or had trouble from eating our food?" Cheng Su mockingly chided a few words and gave the auntie a cold glance, continuing, "If you've done nothing wrong, you won't be scared of a knock at the door at midnight. Have you done anything bad? If not, don't rush to clear your name like others. There's natural justice, it's not up to you to hurriedly claim all sorts of things."

The auntie's face darkened; she wanted to retort but then heard Cheng Su say, "Also, don't treat this place like a vegetable market. Go argue somewhere else. This shop serves fast food; it's not a stage for your drama. If someone causes trouble here, just call the police station. Director Liu from the police has eaten our food!"

That was a reminder to the auntie that if she caused trouble, they would call the police. As for Director Liu, he had indeed eaten at this shop. Cheng Su knew him, having met him once at County Chief Ying's, and although they weren't very close, she would use any support she could.

The auntie's complexion shifted, and without a word, she was pulled back into their own shop by her husband.

Cheng Su snorted coldly, casting a sweeping glance as the spectators slowly dispersed. Only then did she walk into the shop with poise.

Chapter 623: A Sentence that Leaves Someone Speechless

Cheng Su entered the restaurant, and her face immediately turned stern as she coldly glanced over everyone. She sat down, expressionless, and said, "Speak, what happened?" Xiaoying and the others were visibly nervous, looking from one person to another and bowing their heads, not daring to utter a word.

Qi Fenglian stepped forward and said, "It's Aunt Zhu from next door. She's jealous because our business is doing well. She goes around telling everyone that someone died in our restaurant before, and now people who are faint-hearted don't dare to come in and dine."

Cheng Su frowned.

"Exactly, their business is suffering, so they're envious of our shop. They catch anyone trying to come in for a meal and tell them our place is unlucky, and they even say that eating our food could make you sick because of bad spirits," Xiaoying said, both aggrieved and angry.

"So you argued with her?" Cheng Su's face remained expressionless.

The others lowered their heads and it was Qi Fenglian who spoke up, "We didn't really argue, just had a few words."

"Didn't really argue, and yet it drew so many onlookers eager to watch the excitement?" Cheng Su said coldly.

Qi Fenglian's face instantly flushed red, and she pursed her lips.

Xiaoying and Jin Zhi became even more anxious. Sister Lian, being the boss's Elder Sister, was reprimanded like this. Wouldn't the likes of them be scolded to death?

Could it be that they would be fired?

No way, the business is doing so well. President Cheng had also said before that the better the business, the higher the bonus would be in the future. None of them wanted to leave.

"From a distance, it looked like a grand opera was being staged here, with people packed inside and out," Cheng Su said with a scoff.

Qi Fenglian lowered her head.

Seeing the group with their heads down and a look of fear and unease, Cheng Su took a deep breath and tried to keep her voice even, "Remember, our shop is in the food business, not a stage. Whatever people want to say, let them. Can they really talk a hole into the walls? If it's really too much, just report it to the police and say she's causing trouble for no reason."

"Will she be scared?" Xiaoying muttered.

"Even so, you can't just argue with her at the entrance. With all this arguing, do we even want to continue doing business? Our doors are open to make money. With all this commotion, how are customers supposed to come and dine? We're playing right into her hands. She has no business and has time to argue, but do we have that luxury? Time is money!" Cheng Su scolded lightly, turning to Qi Fenglian, "Sister Lian, as a supervisor, you should understand this even more. Arguing is futile and won't

solve anything. Instead, it'll only intensify the conflict. What if it escalates to a fight? What then if someone gets hurt?"

Qi Fenglian was so admonished that her face turned completely red, and she said, "I, I know I was wrong."

"With people like her, pay no attention. She can say what she wants, but can she keep it up forever? Can she afford that kind of time?" Cheng Su said coldly. "Anyway, if someone causes trouble, just call the police."

Qi Fenglian nodded hurriedly in agreement.

Cheng Su then let Xiaoying and the others get back to work, while she took Qi Fenglian out of the restaurant to quietly explain how things should be handled. Upon hearing Cheng Su's words, Qi Fenglian nodded in agreement like a pecking chicken.

Cheng Su noticed Aunt Zhu snooping around the entrance, stealing glances at them, so she took Qi Fenglian over.

God Zhu was startled and stuttered, "What, what do you want?"

Cheng Su chuckled sinisterly, looking at their quiet restaurant as if waiting for flies to buzz, and said, "Aunt Zhu, we are neighbors, seeing each other day and night. It's better to accumulate some good karma. My restaurant has been properly sanctified with a ritual, quite clean indeed. But you, always talking about death, better not bring misfortune upon yourself. Souls know everything! You run your business, and I'll run mine. Let's live in peace and all will be well and auspicious, right?"

Aunt Zhu turned red and then pale, frightened and at a loss for words.

Qi Fenglian watched from the side, full of admiration for her sister-in-law's ability to leave someone speechless with just a few words.

Chapter 624: Narrow Road of Enemies

Having retrieved the ledger from the fast food shop, Cheng Su took the bus home, feeling completely worn out after reprimanding the staff and discussing some matters with Elder Sister. She was quite exhausted, both mentally and physically.

Looking at this matter, it seemed the staff at the new shop, including Elder Sister, weren't quite seasoned. None could keep their composure well.

It was just some idle chatter, but what if troublemakers came to make a scene?

Cheng Su pinched the bridge of her nose and sighed deeply. It looked like the fast food shop would need closer supervision for some time to come, training the staff was still a long way off!

Thinking this way, she felt herself dozing off.

"Cheng Su."

Someone called out, and Cheng Su opened her eyes to spot the person--she smiled, "Luh Kai, what a coincidence, running into you again?"

"I always take this bus home," Luh Kai settled in beside her and glanced at her, "What's wrong, you look tired? Your complexion doesn't look too good!"

Cheng Su mustered a tired smile and said, "I just came from the fast food shop. There was some trouble there, gave a few people a talking-to."

Luh Kai immediately said, "What happened? Do you need any help?"

"No need, it's a minor issue, and it's temporarily solved," Cheng Su shook her head, "It's the neighbors from the shop next door. They're jealous of our booming business, so they spread rumors that someone died in our shop and it's bad luck. Can you believe that? With that spare time, they should focus on their own business instead!"

Luh Kai remarked, "People are like that, they can't stand to see others do well. Just ignore them. So, having any regrets? I did warn you, this shop might be trouble."

Cheng Su scoffed lightly, "Any trouble? Not at all, I don't have any regrets. On the contrary, I think I hit the jackpot. Our business is thriving now, and I believe it won't be long before the shop starts turning a profit."

Luh Kai admired her forthrightness and teased, "Then perhaps it's Uncle and I who should have regrets!"

Cheng Su laughed out loud.

The bus was moving swiftly, and as it took a sharp turn, Cheng Su, unprepared, found herself bumping into Luh Kai.

With quick reflexes, Luh Kai held onto her shoulders, "You okay?"

"I'm fine. This driver drives like he's drifting," Cheng Su laughed.

Luh Kai withdrew his hand, asking, "What's drifting?"

Uh.

Cheng Su gave a vague explanation, "It's like driving really fast and then just sliding past in a flash."

"I sure hear a lot of interesting words from you," Luh Kai laughed.

Cheng Su stuck her tongue out, and Luh Kai caught a glimpse, then awkwardly turned his head away.

Her tongue was pink and playful.

"Hey, this is my stop. You should come by our restaurant for a meal when you're free!" Cheng Su, hearing the driver call the stop, said to Luh Kai.

"Oh, take care of yourself," Luh Kai raised his hand.

Cheng Su got off the bus and walked away without looking back, unaware that Luh Kai on the bus was watching her until the vehicle was out of sight.

"Sister-in-law Qi, you're back too?" Someone called out from behind.

Cheng Su turned around and saw it was a neighbor from the courtyard, she smiled and said, "Yes, you're off work too?"

"Yep!"

Cheng Su chatted with her as they walked back to the courtyard, arriving at the entrance just as Chiang Qing was returning.

Talk about a narrow escape from an enemy!

Upon seeing her, Chiang Qing's pupils constricted, and a sharp, cold light flashed in her eyes.

Cheng Su was startled at first, but when she looked again, the light had vanished, replaced with indifference, disgust, and an elusive sense of something else.

Stay away from that crazy woman, a sudden memory of Ning Ge's words popped into Cheng Su's head, but by then Chiang Qing had already brushed past her shoulder and walked away.

Cheng Su frowned, Crazy? More like paranoid!

Chapter 625: A Calamity Arrives

Chiang Tian stepped off the train and stood on the platform, vigorously patting the dust off his clothes with both hands, a look of disgust as he surveyed his surroundings.

Enough of this, what a dump. I can't believe Chiang Qing can put up with it, all broken and old, and they even talk about developing trade and commerce here, pff, nothing but a heap of ruins.

Chiang Tian looked down and patted his clothes again, suddenly exclaiming in dismay as he spotted a black paw print at the hem of his coat, all too conspicuous.

It must have been that filthy little brat just now, damn it, so dirty. People this poor shouldn't even be taking the train.

No, this godforsaken Qing City doesn't even have an airport, it's too damn broken down.

Or maybe, I just hop back on the train and go home. Who would want to come to this crappy place anyway?

As soon as Chiang Tian thought of it, he took a few steps, but then he remembered the promise his sister had made, gritted his teeth, and turned back around.

Whatever, I'm here now, so I might as well make the best of it. I'll just stay for a few days. Who knows, this tiny, broken city might even surprise me!

Chiang Tian picked up his luggage bag, pulled out a pair of round sunglasses and put them on, and walked off the platform with his head held high, heading straight for the exit.

Chiang Qing waited absentmindedly, her expression listless.

"Sis, Sis." Chiang Tian waved his hand from a distance, seeing that she showed no reaction, he called out louder: "Chiang Qing!"

Chiang Qing shuddered, and lifting her head, her brother had arrived.

When Chiang Tian walked over and saw her, he frowned as if he'd seen a ghost and said, "What's happened to you? Why do you look like a complete mess?"

The Chiang Qing before him was far from the delicate beauty she once was, her complexion pale and sallow, her eyes lifeless, brows furrowed, her face embittered and extremely unattractive.

Chiang Qing touched her cheek, she really hasn't been herself lately, sleepless at night, no appetite during the day, just wandering through her days like a ghost, nothing felt right.

What Ning Ge said was indeed not wrong, she was a bit mad, yes, Chiang Qing herself felt she was going insane.

How did it come to this?

She was the Proud Daughter of Heaven, a high princess, how could she become such a resentful woman, so ugly.

Because of him, because of her, it's all because of them that she turned into a thorny rhododendron.

"Sis..." Chiang Tian waved his hand in front of Chiang Qing, a hint of worry in his eyes. Chiang Qing's situation seemed quite dire, this wasn't right, should he call mom to come over?

Their big sister was the apple of their parents' eyes, any trouble with her would be dreadful.

"You're here, let's go!" Chiang Qing turned around.

Chiang Tian caught up with her, asking cautiously, "Are you alright?"

"What could be wrong with me? What could I possibly have?" Chiang Qing's voice was a bit sharp.

Chiang Tian's throat tightened as he looked at her apprehensively.

Something was really off!

Chiang Qing, feeling weary, pressed her hand to her forehead and said, "I'm fine, just a bit of a headache. Come on, I'll take you to the hotel to settle in."

"Stay in a hotel?"

"What else? You can't possibly stay at my place, there's no room for you there, and..." Chiang Qing frowned, adding, "You remember what you promised me."

"Yeah, I know, it's about handling that what's-it-called Su, right? I might as well see for myself how this Su creature is so formidable that it's giving you such a headache." Chiang Tian said flippantly, then continued: "But sis, do you really think that plan will work? No matter how you slice it, those two are a couple and..."

"What do you know?" Chiang Qing's gaze sharpened, she murmured: "You don't understand him, he's the type who can't tolerate a speck of dust in his eyes, his male chauvinism, how could he let his wife embarrass him? If you plant a thorn in his heart, it'll slowly grow into a briar."

Indeed, if she couldn't be happy, they shouldn't expect to be either.

Chapter 626: How's the handover going?

Cheng Su woke up first thing in the morning with a twitching right eyelid. Pressing gently on the fluttering skin, she couldn't help thinking, "Could this be a sign of some impending trouble?"

After breakfast, feeling lethargic, Cheng Su made a phone call to the factory, deciding not to go in that day. She planned to go to the restaurant instead to check on the accounts. If any issues came up, she instructed them to contact her at the restaurant.

It was all bustle at the Joy Soon Loy Restaurant. Upon seeing Cheng Su arrive, Old Song approached to discuss a few issues. With the arrival of spring and the weather warming up, the number of diners

coming out in the evenings was increasing. The busy evening service meant they were short-staffed, and if anyone took leave, they would struggle even more to cope. He suggested they might need to hire another chef.

Cheng Su saw no reason to object, naturally. If they were short on staff, they certainly needed to hire.

Old Song nodded with a smile. Just as he was about to step away, Cheng Su stopped him, "I heard that Liao Shifa's place had some big trouble, that they're about to go out of business?"

The smile on Old Song's face froze, and after a long while, he gave a heavy nod.

Understanding his unease, Cheng Su offered some comfort, "Don't take it too hard. No banquet under the sun lasts forever. The closing of Liao Shifa's place has nothing to do with you."

"I know. It's just... it feels like such a waste. It's really sad," sighed Old Song.

"That's why we must ensure our ingredients are fresh. If they aren't, it's better to throw them away than to use them. No matter how strong the flavors used to mask it, nothing can hide the true nature of spoiled ingredients," Cheng Su said sternly. "On this point, I hope you will remain vigilant."

The issue at Liao Shifa's place was serious—they had used spoiled ingredients and tried to mask them with heavy flavors, thinking they would fool everyone. This led to several cases of food poisoning. Once the reports went out, it caused quite an uproar.

Ever since Old Song had left Liao Shifa's, the business wasn't as good as before. According to Song Xiaojang, Liao Shifa even came to Old Song asking if he would come back to help in the kitchen. However, Old Song, disheartened, refused.

At the time, Liao Shifa accused him of being ungrateful, which nearly led Song Xiaojang to chase him out with a broom.

Cheng Su had simply laughed it off at the time.

Who would have foreseen that Liao Shifa's establishment would later suffer from a mass food poisoning incident? Was it simply bad luck for them?

As the saying goes, one should always be decent and kind.

Liao Shifa's business had already been struggling, and now, with this scandal about using rotten meat, they had no business at all. Recently, they were preparing to put up the shutters for good.

Such a large restaurant, one of the top in Qing City, to end up like this, it was indeed a cause for sighs.

"Don't worry. As long as I'm here, no ingredients that aren't fresh will make it to the tables," assured Old Song confidently.

Cheng Su nodded and added, "Communicate more with the floor staff. See which ingredients are not selling and have them promote those more."

"I'm aware of that and will actively communicate with the floor staff," Old Song nodded in reply.

This was an unwritten rule of the food industry, promoting ingredients that weren't selling was also a business strategy.

Cheng Su was satisfied. Suddenly struck by an idea, she said, "Old Song, what do you think about us taking over Liao Shifa's place?"

Old Song was startled. Take over Liao Shifa's place?

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"You know that my ambition is not limited to our current development. My ultimate goal is to run Joy Soon Loy as a proper restaurant. But our current location is too small. Unless we buy up the surrounding area and create a contiguous space, it will be tough to expand. And renting is not a long-term solution—what if the landlord decides not to renew our lease?" Cheng Su explained.

If she couldn't secure lease renewals from several adjacent businesses, wouldn't that tie her own hands?

Chapter 627: Not Enough Capital

The location of Fa Kee is great, and the storefront is spacious enough. The two-story establishment is quite broad, allowing for the placement of thirty to forty tables on just the first floor; it's an old restaurant that has operated for many years.

If one could take it over, with a bit of renovation and the brand I have now, wouldn't it be possible to get the business going?

As Cheng Su pondered this, she felt increasingly convinced it was feasible.

Old Song became a bit excited after hearing this, but after his excitement faded, a sense of reality set in. He said, "Well, if you want to take over Fa Kee, that's going to require a significant amount of capital."

Such a large restaurant, along with all the facilities inside, while great to purchase all together as they could be reused, which would save a lot of hassle, also required a substantial amount of capital to acquire.

Cheng Su frowned at this revelation. She had been excited but had not yet considered this aspect.

Not only does doing business require capital investment, but it also necessitates operational cash flow. Cheng Su was now a successful businesswoman, seen by many as wealthy.

But that money wasn't at hand; it was tied up in cash flow!

Especially since the shop at the train station had only recently opened. The good thing was there was no rent to pay there, but the operational expenses could reach thousands, if not, then certainly a few hundred.

The cash in hand she had, which had taken quite some effort to accumulate, amounted to ten thousand, and now only around seven or eight thousand remained.

Seven or eight thousand in capital wouldn't even be enough to buy one floor, would it?

Cheng Su felt somewhat embarrassed. It was like the saying, "Even a clever housewife can't cook without rice." She wanted the restaurant, but she didn't have the money!

"Uh, if Fa Kee was to be sold, I wonder how much they would want for it?" Cheng Su asked, trying to laugh it off.

"With the number of people affected by the food poisoning incident being not small and the compensation required being significant, if they wanted to sell quickly, it probably wouldn't be too much. Should I go and ask?" Old Song proposed.

Cheng Su thought it over and said, "Would it trouble you? You rejected him before; he might still bear a grudge. I can have someone else inquire about it." Old Song felt touched by her concern and said, "It's okay, no one knows the ins and outs of Fa Kee better than I do. I'll ask. I can probably negotiate the lowest possible price."

That made sense.

"Then I'll trouble you to make the trip. However, if Liao Shifa really tries to play tough, don't be courteous with him. Joy Soon Loy isn't dependent on them. With County Chief Ying pushing hard for the development of Qing City, if we can get a piece of land, we could build our own place, as many floors as we like, which would be even better," Cheng Su stated.

Knowing she was worried about him possibly getting ill-treated, Old Song agreed with a smile.

After conversing a bit longer, Old Song went off to busily attend to his tasks, while Cheng Su stayed to go over the accounts with Li Dan.

By eleven o'clock, the restaurant began to bustle, with people coming in steadily to purchase and eat meals. Some were individual orders; when they couldn't handle all the orders, Cheng Su herself stepped up to help take them.

As soon as Chiang Tian walked into the restaurant, he surveyed the place. Not bad at all—this rundown spot, this small restaurant, was doing quite a good business.

"Old Song, baked chicken gizzards for table eight, add more cilantro," a female voice drew Chiang Tian's attention.

The woman was donning a ponytail, tall and slender, wearing a pink light sweater and slim-fit jeans—a style he hadn't seen before, quite nice looking, making her legs appear slim and lengthy, perfect for resting on one's... Below, she wore a pair of grey ankle boots that matched her outfit.

Her appearance wasn't dazzlingly beautiful, but her complexion was fair, her mouth slightly curved in a smile that made her look comfortable to be around.

Is that her? Cheng Su, the person who's been keeping his sister awake at night, wasn't some sort of magical creature with three heads and six arms—what special charm did she have to hold a man's constant grip?

Chiang Tian's eyes narrowed slightly as he made his way toward her.

Chapter 628: The Prodigal Son

"Welcome, sir, are you alone, or are you meeting friends here?" Cheng Su asked Chiang Tian with a smile.

"Such a lovely smile," Chiang Tian murmured as he watched Cheng Su.

"What?" Cheng Su didn't catch that clearly. She sized up Chiang Tian, who was dressed very neatly and looked quite unfamiliar; he probably hadn't dined at their restaurant before.

Chiang Tian found a table and sat down. He glanced around; everyone was eating with fast-food trays. Tsk, that one there, like a construction worker, was grabbing the edge of his tray and shoveling rice into his mouth with his chopsticks.

It was simply too crude—what kind of people were these?

"Is there a quieter spot available?" Chiang Tian called Cheng Su over and asked, undisguised disdain in his eyes, "It's too noisy here."

The places he had frequented were either high-end restaurants or star-rated dining venues, all elegant and clean. It was his first time in such a humble eatery.

Such a poor place, without even a decent restaurant—how could his sister stand it? It was dirty to death, seriously beneath her dignity.

Cheng Su paused but still responded with a smile, "Yes, there is. Please, follow me, sir."

She had seen clients like him before, by the hundreds. Fastidious, with an air of arrogance and superiority.

She led Chiang Tian to a newly decorated room on the other side and handed him the menu while taking the opportunity to say, "Please take a look, sir. What would you like to eat? Our specialty dishes are quite popular among returning customers."

Chiang Tian flipped through the menu and casually ordered two dishes. Just then, Qiulan came over, smiling at Cheng Su, "Sister Su, let me handle this; you go take a break."

Qiulan's voice was clear and crisp; Chiang Tian looked up, and his eyes lit up.

This woman was rather charming indeed—a delicate and pointed face, fair and tender, with jet-black hair, and a nice figure to boot.

Glancing a bit more, he saw Qiulan turning sideways, revealing her shapely buttocks. She must be a virgin, right?

Chiang Tian licked his lips, not expecting such a small city to have its attractions.

Cheng Su handed the order to Qiulan and went back to the main hall to manage the cash register, unaware of the customer's inappropriate gaze.

Qiulan repeated the dishes ordered by Chiang Tian. He watched her with a smile and asked, "What's your name, miss?"

Caught off guard by the interruption, Qiulan was momentarily stunned. Looking over, she saw Chiang Tian greasy and powdered, with a frivolous air. Her face flushed as she said, "Please wait a moment, sir. I'll have the kitchen prepare your dishes right away."

Without answering Chiang Tian's question, she turned to leave.

"Alright then, thanks, beautiful," Chiang Tian casually touched her hand, finding it surprisingly smooth.

Qiulan, blushing with shock, had been working at Joy Soon Loy for quite some time and encountered people of all types. She had dealt with rude and flirtatious language before, but this was the first time someone had so brazenly touched her hand.

This man's behavior was just like that of a playboy, wasn't it?

Qiulan took the order straight to the kitchen, instructed someone to bring the tableware, and did not see Chiang Tian's eager look.

After giving the order to the kitchen, Qiulan went behind the counter to take a big gulp of water, trying to suppress the fright inside her.

"What's wrong? The customer from just now didn't trouble you, did he? People like him are very picky; just try to avoid conflict," Cheng Su said with concern upon seeing her dismayed expression.

Qiulan hurriedly replied, "Ah, no, no trouble." He had just taken advantage of her.

"That's good then."

Cheng Su then went back to her calculations, and a young girl came over to call, "President Cheng, the customer at table two in the Osmanthus Room is asking for you."

Huh?

Chapter 629: Let Me Come Over and Flirt with You

The guest at table number two in the Osmanthus Room, wasn't that the person she had just shown to their seat?

Cheng Su felt somewhat baffled, why were they calling her over?

With a head full of questions, she approached the table, where Chiang Tian was idly tapping his bowl with chopsticks, creating a clinking and clattering noise.

Cheng Su was left speechless; this wasn't a beggar, so what was with the bowl tapping? It was truly uncouth.

"Sir, did you want to see me?" Cheng Su walked over.

"Sit!" Chiang Tian pointed to the chair opposite him, eying Cheng Su up and down.

Cheng Su felt somewhat angry under his gaze. What was with this guy, scrutinizing her like that? She silently sized him up in return and, in doing so, sensed that something was off.

He looked familiar, but where had she seen him before?

And by the way he seemed so amused by her, it felt like he knew her.

"Sir, do you know me?" Cheng Su disliked guessing and asked directly.

"Cheng Su, my name is Chiang Tian," Chiang Tian said.

Chiang Tian, Chiang...

Cheng Su's eyes widened with realization; she was very sensitive to the surname Chiang. Chiang Tian, what was his relationship with Chiang Qing? Right, doesn't he look a bit like that fox, Chiang Qing?

"What is Chiang Qing to you?" she asked.

"She's my sister."

Of course.

Cheng Su's mouth curled into a cold smile, asking, "Mr. Chiang, what brings you here?"

"Nothing much. I've long heard that my sister fell in love with a man, and I just wanted to see for myself what kind of a three-headed, six-armed creature he was to make her so desperate." Chiang Tian shrugged and said, "But I heard he's gone out for training."

"My husband doesn't have three heads or six arms, just a regular guy. But you've come at a good time, Mr. Chiang. I think your sister is quite sick, and as her brother, you should advise her to stop. It's not good for her to blindly charge into walls until she's bleeding and embarrassed everyone," said Cheng Su sharply.

"No wonder my sister was defeated by you, you really have a sharp tongue. But that's okay, I like it; it's fiery and flavorful," Chiang Tian winked and licked his lips.

This was a blatant provocation!

"You..." Cheng Su glared at him.

Chiang Tian sat back down and said, "As for my sister, she's always been stubborn. Whatever she sets her eyes on, she's never failed to get it. Even if I compete with her, I've never won."

Cheng Su narrowed her eyes: "So what? You want me to graciously step aside?"

Huh, she's actually pretty clever!

Chiang Tian became intrigued and said, "You are quite intelligent. How about it, think it over? You can make any demand you like."

Cheng Su laughed: "I see, so you came here to negotiate on behalf of your sister?"

"No, no." Chiang Tian waved his finger, leaning forward and said, "Actually, my sister sent me to hit on you!"

Cheng Su was stunned: "What?"

"You, you're quite to my taste, fiery enough for my liking. I could play around with you, but let's not talk about titles; rules in the Chiang family are strict," Chiang Tian said. "If you're with me, I won't let you lose out. I heard you and the Ning Family boy are in that jam business, right? How about this, if you come with me, I'll open another company for you in Beijing, how about that?"

Cheng Su spat out a mouthful of tea right in Chiang Tian's direction, drenching him from head to toe.

Chiang Tian, who detested dirtiness, immediately started to shout in dismay, frantically wiping his face with a handkerchief from his pocket while yelling, "How could you be so careless, woman? It's disgusting."

Watching his face turn green, Cheng Su thought to herself, Chiang Qing is crazy, but her brother is even crazier. Such absurd things he says. Is he dumb, foolish, or just bursting with confidence?

Chapter 630: Playing Dumb

Chiang Tian was frantically wiping off the tea from his body, feeling like his whole being was out of sorts. It was Cheng Su's tea that had sprayed out, after all—disgustingly dirty.

"Mr. Chiang, I'm very busy, so please excuse me." Cheng Su put down her teacup and stood up.

One is mad, the other is dumb; she couldn't be bothered to waste her words on him.

"Hold on." Chiang Tian grabbed her hand, saying, "I haven't finished speaking yet!"

Cheng Su directly used the chopsticks from the table to knock his hand away, saying, "Don't get handsy."

Chiang Tian released her hand in pain.

"Mr. Chiang, if you're here to joke around, that's fine, but I don't have that much time to play with you. You can go if you don't want to eat; consider it my treat." Cheng Su stated formally.

"You're annoyed just like that?" Chiang Tian raised an eyebrow, "You're not as magnanimous as you claim; you get pissed off just from a couple of jokes!"

Cheng Su snorted with laughter, "I don't believe I'm familiar enough with Mr. Chiang to be joking around."

"Don't be like that! I was really just joking with you." Chiang Tian put on a smile.

Cheng Su looked at his shameless face, finding it somewhat incomprehensible; his temperament seemed childlike; she couldn't quite understand him.

"Sit down." Chiang Tian tried to push her to sit back down.

Cheng Su avoided his hand and sat back down, looking at him coldly.

"Actually, I came here behind my sister's back. My sister is really stubborn; she's driven my parents to their wits' end and made me lose face. I just wanted to see for myself what kind of person has completely bewitched my sister." Chiang Tian said half-truthfully.

He picked up the tea, eyes downcast, thinking his sister's idea was truly lame. What was this about him wooing Cheng Su? With his handsome face, even that young girl had blushed at his glance! But Cheng Su was totally indifferent to him.

Chiang Qing doesn't understand the opponent.

In just one round, Chiang Tian knew that Cheng Su was a hard nut to crack; at least she wouldn't betray her marriage so easily, and certainly not frivolously mess around with a man, especially a stranger.

His sister was too naive!

But now that he was here, he couldn't just go back without doing anything, could he? After all, he came for his uncle's support!

"My sister is just a little high-strung; don't mind her. What I said earlier was true, though. I genuinely want to collaborate with you," Chiang Tian added.

"Collaborate?" Cheng Su was even more confused.

"You're looking for distributors for your jam business, aren't you?" Chiang Tian said, "I've got some capital and am thinking about investing. I want to get into this business too. In the world of business, there are no permanent enemies, right? Making money is the ultimate goal, isn't it?"

"So, you want to invest in our family's jam business?" Cheng Su's eyes narrowed slightly.

"Don't believe me? Go ask around about the Chiang Family, ask about Chiang Tian, whether I'm in business or not," Chiang Tian said with a smile.

If he could get in through this angle, he'd have a reason to contact Cheng Su. Day by day, with his skills at seducing women, even if Cheng Su didn't take the bait, he could still cause trouble for her and her husband. In the long run, what man could stand it?

Sister, sometimes you really need to date more. Only by blending truth and deception can you become inscrutable.

Cheng Su laughed and said, "I see."

"That's exactly it." Chiang Tian smiled innocently.

"It's rare for Mr. Chiang to favor such a small place as Qing City. With such sincerity, fine, I'll have our vice president discuss it with you," Cheng Su also smiled harmlessly.

Chiang Tian's smile faltered—the vice president, wasn't that Ning Ge?