

The 80s 711

Chapter 711: Cry, Make a Fuss, Then Threaten to Hang Oneself

Crying, making a scene, and threatening to hang oneself were Mother Qi's usual dramatic tactics, and she was true to form now, slapping her thighs while wailing loudly—a real spectacle.

In the countryside, there was never any shortage of people keen to watch the excitement. At the sound of weeping and wailing, they all hurried over, claiming to break up the fight, but really, they just wanted to see the commotion.

"Talk it out nicely, what's there to quarrel about?" Someone went to grab the pole from Father Qi's hands.

"You hit me, go on, hit me! Kill me, I don't want to live anymore." Mother Qi, seeing someone coming to mediate, became even more fearless.

"Don't think I won't dare to. You just cannot enter the house today," Father Qi said with glaring eyes: "You troublemaker, you've disrupted a perfectly fine home. Go away, to the old house, you're not allowed in the Qi home."

"How have I disrupted anything? You just listen to rumors. What have I done? I refuse to go, what can you do about it?" Mother Qi shouted loudly: "Qi Shuhua, you heartless man, I bore and raised your children, managed the household, and took care of your parents for so many years. You chase me away; you're utterly heartless!"

"Are you leaving or not?" Father Qi grabbed the pole, intending to hit her.

"I'm not going, I won't leave. If you have the guts, sue me in the county, see if you can win. I have my share in this home, I'll stay however I like," Mother Qi stood up and tried to go inside.

Father Qi pushed her back: "If you dare to enter, I'll divorce you right here and now!"

Mother Qi's complexion drastically changed, and pointing at him, she said, "You, you've gone mad!"

"Uncle Qi, please talk it out. You're both over a hundred years old when put together, why talk about divorce?" The villagers pleaded.

"There's nothing left to talk about. She's just a sh*t-stirrer, mindless, doesn't appreciate what's good for her, and doesn't deserve to be called a mother. A perfectly good home, a good daughter-in-law, she just had to stir up trouble until our son and his wife are about to divorce. Tell me, what do I need such a wife for?" Father Qi was truly furious; this wife of his needed a lesson—to understand what's good for her.

"What does their divorce have to do with me?" Mother Qi yelled: "It's not like I told them to get a divorce!"

"You still dare to say!" Father Qi grabbed the pole, saying: "You know what you've done! Should we tell everyone here and see who's wrong? Pah! Don't make everyone laugh at us; I'm embarrassed on your behalf. Leave, right this instant!"

Mother Qi felt a bit guilty, seeing the prying eyes of everyone, she dared not speak out. If she really said it, she might as well not show her face!

"Jianguo, go, take her bedding to the old house!" Father Qi ordered the youngest son.

Qi Jianguo hesitated, looking at his elderly mother, his heart reluctant, he said: "Dad, Mom must know she was wrong, let's not move her things. Mom, aren't you?" Then he signaled to his mother with his eyes.

"Are you not even listening to me now? Don't forget who paid for your education over the years!" Father Qi shouted.

Qi Jianguo's neck shrank as he looked towards Mother Qi.

"Fine, fine, Qi Shuhua, you blind old fool, I'll move, but don't regret it. Even if you beg me, I won't come back. You just enjoy your good life with your darling son and daughter-in-law!" Mother Qi snatched the blanket from her son and, crying, walked toward the old house.

Qi Jianguo clenched his teeth and followed her.

The crowd watched and, though they didn't understand the full story, from what they heard, it was certainly a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conflict!

This daughter-in-law of the Qi family was something else, managing to make a fuss so big that she'd pushed the mother-in-law out!

"Uncle Qi, think about it, at your age, why go through all this hassle?" Someone tried to console Father Qi.

Father Qi then said: "It's nothing, all of you go back, go back, there's no issue!"

As the crowd dispersed, Father Qi watched for a while, snorted disdainfully, and firmly shut the courtyard door.

Chapter 712: Sent to live in the old house

Mother Qi cried all the way to the Qi family's old house, a large-tiled house nestled against the mountain, and quite ancient. When she arrived, a roof tile fell off and smashed on the ground right in front of her, scaring her so much she dared not even cry.

As Qi Jianguo said, the old house had indeed been cleaned, yet it couldn't hide the destitution and dilapidation. As she pushed open the door, a musty stench rushed to greet her. Though the inside had been cleaned, spider webs still draped heavily from the beams above.

After all, it was a house that hadn't been lived in for over a decade, not only giving off a musty smell but also an icy chill, devoid of any signs of life.

Mother Qi shivered all over, and when she lifted her eyes, several portraits hung on the walls. They were paintings of the Qi family's ancestors, figures like great-great-grandfathers, sporting Qing Dynasty braids, looking gloomy and terrifying.

Tears welled up in Mother Qi's eyes again. How could anyone live in this wretched place?

That damn Qi Shuhua, how could he be so heartless?

Qi Jianguo carried blankets into the room, and when Mother Qi followed and saw them, she burst into tears.

The large kang bed, made from bricks, only had a single wooden plank for a bed—was that even considered a bed?

"Mom, what happened... Dad didn't say, what did you do to make him so angry?" Qi Jianguo couldn't bear it and gently asked.

"What could I have done? Your father is out of his mind, possessed, led astray by ghosts and your older sister-in-law," Mother Qi sat abruptly on the bed, lifting her clothes to wipe her tears.

What had she done? Was popping a few condoms really that big of a deal to warrant such treatment from everyone?

"Mom, Dad is not an unreasonable man. Speak up, if you did something wrong, admit your mistake, and I will bring you back there later," Qi Jianguo urged.

"I'm not wrong, I won't go back, your father is heartless, and I don't need him. Can't I live without him?" Mother Qi sobbed, saying, "It's just pitiful for you two young ones; it's all your older brother and sister-in-law's fault—they are heartless, they are unfilial. Jianguo, in the future, you must never follow in their footsteps, your mother only has you now."

The more Mother Qi thought about it, the more heartbroken she became, and her tears flowed ceaselessly.

Qi Jianguo pursed his lips and said, "Mom, stop crying. You sit here, I'll go back and bring you some food."

He could see that his father was serious this time; he really intended to make Mom live in the old house. He didn't know when she would be allowed to return; she still needed to eat.

"Your father..." Mother Qi called out to him, her face turning purple with embarrassment, unable to find the right words.

Qi Jianguo, a literate man, could see his mother's hesitation and said, "Don't worry, Mom, I will speak well to Dad."

Mother Qi sighed and then snorted.

With a sigh, Qi Jianguo spoke a few words and left.

Mother Qi watched him go with longing eyes, gazing at the weeds overgrowing in the front yard, and the house behind her that was old and dilapidated. This place was already a bit distant from the densely populated area of the village; and now, looking around, it seemed as if she was the only living soul here.

She glanced towards the neighboring house, even more run-down, half-collapsed, exposing its beams in utter ruin.

Mother Qi felt a chill come over her in waves, and fear crept into her heart. Why had she been so impulsive as to come here?

This place was so remote—if anything happened, it would be a situation where cries for help would go unanswered. Perhaps, she should call Jianguo to come live with her for a while?

Jianguo was a pragmatic child, obedient, and would surely listen to her.

Having made up her mind, Mother Qi turned and went back inside the house, determined not to go back unless that damn old man came to fetch her!

Qi Jianguo's phone call reached Qi Taiguo's house, saying that Mother Qi had been driven by their father to live in the old house.

Qi Taiguo was stunned for a moment and remained silent; he hadn't expected his father to be so decisive.

"Big brother, what exactly did mom do? Dad said, once my sister-in-law is no longer angry, mom can move back, otherwise, she'll just keep living in the old house." Qi Jianguo hesitated and then said, "The old house hasn't been lived in for so long, everything is quite old. Some places even leak, and with the frequent rain these days, a tile fell off when I went there today."

After a long pause, Qi Taiguo said, "Jianguo, you're also eighteen this year, about to take the college entrance exam, you need to learn to discern right from wrong, to know the proper judgment. Mother's temper, too self-centered and overbearing, can't be indulged. Otherwise, there won't be peace in this family."

Qi Jianguo was startled. Did that mean they were abandoning her?

"Go check on her when you have time. I won't say more, I have to go work my shift," Qi Taiguo added before hanging up the phone.

After hanging up, Qi Jianguo walked away dejectedly, thinking about his big brother's words and looking at his own clothes—all purchased by his sister-in-law—and couldn't help but sigh.

Qi Taiguo sat on the sofa in a daze.

Seeing this, Mother Cheng gave Cheng Su a push and motioned with her lips.

Cheng Su glanced over, then looked away. She had heard everything he said and didn't want to comment.

"Taiguo, what's wrong? Did your brother call you?" Mother Cheng, seeing Cheng Su unmoving, couldn't help but ask.

Qi Taiguo nodded and said, "My mom has gone back home." Then, looking at Cheng Su, he said, "My dad drove her to live in the old house."

"What? The old house, that old house of your family, it's been decades since anyone lived there, right? Is it still stable? And it's located in such a secluded place, is it okay for her to live there alone?" Mother Cheng frowned and glanced at her daughter again.

"It was the same in the past, no problem," Qi Taiguo forced a smile.

Mother Cheng went on, "Father-in-law's temper really is..." She looked at Cheng Su again and said, "That old house is so run down, it would be terrible if it collapsed. Aiyo, spit, spit, that would be truly catastrophic."

Cheng Su stood up and went into her room.

Mother Cheng was annoyed, "Look at this stubborn girl," and was about to follow her.

Qi Taiguo stopped her, saying, "Mother-in-law, let it be, she's troubled enough as it is, don't talk to her about this!"

"But that old house, how can anyone live there?" Mother Cheng hesitated.

"It's fine," Qi Taiguo smiled lightly and said, "I have the night shift tonight, you and Susu stay at home."

"Oh!"

Qi Taiguo then went to Cheng Su's door and said, "Susu, I'm on the night shift tonight, don't wait up for me, go to sleep early."

Cheng Su made a sound of acknowledgment without lifting her head.

Qi Taiguo pursed his lips, stood there for a while, somewhat helplessly, then turned and left.

Only then did Cheng Su lift her head and gently bite her lip, turning her attention back to the document in her hands; she needed something to distract her thoughts.

Mother Cheng walked in, her face stern, "You heard everything, right? Your mother-in-law has been chased to the old house to live by your father-in-law. It's been decades since anyone lived there. If anything happens, it'll be too late for regrets."

Cheng Su looked up and said, "The one who drove her out wasn't me, where she lives is beyond my control, and I have no intention of interfering."

"You..." Mother Cheng, taken aback by her retort, said, "So you're really determined not to go through life with him? If that's the case, just keep being stubborn, and we'll see how long you can hold out!"

Angered, Mother Cheng couldn't bear to look at her any longer and huffed as she went out.

Cheng Su, lips still pressed together, continued to stare at her book, but not a single word sunk in.

Chapter 714: Hualing's Reasoning

After exposing her mother-in-law's vile tactics, the relationship between Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo felt somewhat like they were treating each other with formal courtesy. They did talk, usually in brief exchanges such as whether or not one would be returning for a meal and simple replies like 'yes.'

Mother Cheng saw this clearly and it pained her deeply. She advised Cheng Su frequently, but they still kept on like this, truly driving her to the edge of madness.

Cheng Su wasn't really angry with Taiguo, but seeing her mother-in-law, she couldn't help harboring some resentment.

As for Taiguo himself, knowing he was at fault, he had no face to speak up about anything. He feared that saying too much would only make things worse and risk enraging Cheng Su to the point of pushing her towards divorce, which would be his downfall.

So, these days, the couple's politeness was as if they had just met.

Even Chunhua and the others noticed something was off.

"Sister-in-law Qi, did you and Commander Qi have a fight or something? Military Doctor Chiang and those other disasters are all gone now, you should be happy," Chunhua reasoned while holding her daughter: "Couples fight, but they make up in bed. Life has to go on, right?"

"We didn't fight."

Hualing gave her a look and said, "Not fighting? This is even more painful than fighting. Look at you two, so overly polite. Yo, no one would believe you didn't fight."

Cheng Su looked at her and asked, "Hualing, how do you get along with your mother-in-law?"

Hualing was taken aback and frowned, "Why do you ask?"

"Just asking."

"How else can I get along? Just like that." Hualing pursed her lips and said: "Anyway, we don't live together, out of sight, out of mind. I don't see what she gets up to, and she doesn't see mine, so we live in peace. But my mother-in-law, she wouldn't dare to provoke me."

It figures, she was a city college student from a cadre family. Her mother-in-law could only look up to her and wouldn't dare to meddle, though she did get a bit anxious and unreasonable when it came to having children.

Cheng Su smiled faintly.

"I heard your family had a big fight the other day, was it with your mother-in-law?" Hualing raised an eyebrow and asked, "What about?"

Cheng Su replied, "The same old things." Her tone carried a hint of weariness.

"If you ask me, why bother with her? After all, you're living with Taiguo, not her. Let her words go in one ear and out the other. You're known for being sharp-tongued, always fighting to win; but you cower in front of your mother-in-law?" Hualing snorted in contempt: "I really don't understand your thinking. A mother-in-law is just that – why treat her like your own mother? You have money; why should you have to look at her face? It should be the other way around!"

Being from a cadre family herself, her mother-in-law had to pamper her. As for Cheng Su, with her wealth, she still had to defer to her mother-in-law? She was just making life difficult for herself!

"That's why you and Platoon Leader Chen keep fighting, right? You don't have any respect for your mother-in-law," Chunhua interjected sharply.

Hualing's expression changed and she replied, "She has to be respectable to start with. Besides, I'm the one living my life. I call her mom, I'm present for holidays, what more does she want? To actually treat her as my mother and pamper her? I can't do that. Even if you do indulge someone, they won't necessarily appreciate it; instead, they'll just ask for more. Who's ever satisfied?"

After listening, Cheng Su smiled slightly and raised an eyebrow: "I didn't expect you to have this insight!"

"What's that supposed to mean, eh? You looking for a fight!" Hualing glared.

"I wouldn't dare! I'm just thanking you for the life lesson," Cheng Su said with a smile: "Thanks a lot."

Hualing snorted and said, "Crude words, but the logic is sound. You may think I'm heartless, but if you want to live comfortably, sometimes you have to be."

Cheng Su wore a thoughtful look.

Chapter 715: They All Have Troubles

Hualing brought up the matter of Cheng Su's family during dinner, her face full of sighs and lamentations.

"You see how formidable Cheng Su usually is, her sharp tongue never spares anyone, never admitting defeat, so tough, but in front of her mother-in-law, isn't she still suffering in silence, turning submissive? It shows, everyone has their weakness. There is always someone stronger to suppress her, tsk tsk."

Hualing shook her head, she had never had a good time at Cheng Su's place.

Chen Shouwang seemed lost in thought, just focusing on picking up dishes, as if he hadn't heard her.

"Hey, I'm talking to you. Why don't you respond?" Hualing couldn't help but tap his hand with her chopsticks when he didn't reply.

Chen Shouwang frowned: "What are you doing."

"I'm talking to you!" Hualing glared.

Chen Shouwang replied, "Just talk, no need to get physical, I'm not stopping your mouth."

Hualing's face darkened, and before she could speak, Chen Shouwang said, "What you're talking about, Sister-in-law Qi isn't just being weak or submissive, but rather, it's out of respect for Commander Qi, and that's why she respects his mother. You think she is..." you!

"Go on, why have you stopped talking?" Hualing narrowed her eyes and let out a cold snort.

Chen Shouwang looked away, saying, "You've already said it, she's so strong-willed, do you really think her brain is stupid? She's only soft because of Commander Qi, if it wasn't for her love for him, do you think she'd be so compliant!"

Hualing replied, "That's why her mother-in-law becomes increasingly overbearing, some people just shouldn't be indulged, otherwise a bad temper is encouraged." Just like your mother.

Chen Shouwang's face turned dark as he said, "Who are you cursing with that talk!"

Hualing looked at him coldly, "I didn't say anything specific, you're just sensitive on your own."

Chen Shouwang, somewhat angered and embarrassed, did she think he was a fool, not to understand she was using words to talk about his mother?

"You want to fight after a few days of peace!" Chen Shouwang bit his lip and said.

"Who wants to fight? I didn't name names." Hualing argued back, saying, "If you weren't guilty yourself, would you think I was talking about someone?"

"You!" Chen Shouwang abruptly threw down his chopsticks, "I'm not eating!" he said as he stood up and walked out the door.

Hualing was stunned for a moment, then, realizing what had happened, cursed loudly, "If you don't eat, then don't eat, what's with the temper tantrum, have the guts not to eat ever again!"

Chen Shouwang, hearing those words, went downstairs irritably and squatted in the courtyard, smoking sullenly, feeling both gloomy and annoyed.

It wasn't that he wanted to lose his temper; it's just that he felt very irritated inside, not because of anything specific, but because he had actually received a call from Liu Li today.

When the call came, Liu Li asked him why he hadn't been to the bar for a while, the child was also asking why that uncle hadn't come anymore, thinking something had happened, she called to inquire.

Chen Shouwang could only say he went out for training, and mentioned he was too busy taking Hualing for a health check-up.

Liu Li was silent for a moment, then said she understood and hung up the phone.

The instant the call ended, he almost heard the sobbing from the other end of the phone, so desolate and sad, that's what made him restless, and there was a bit of, heartache.

Chen Shouwang took a deep drag of his cigarette and felt someone sit down beside him. He turned his head and saw it was Taiguo.

Taiguo took out a cigarette, offered him one, but Chen Shouwang raised the one in his hand to show he was already smoking, so Taiguo placed that cigarette in his own mouth and lit it.

"Argued with the sister-in-law?" Taiguo asked.

"A few words were exchanged, what about you?"

"I'd rather she argued with me," Taiguo sighed, arguing was better than the current formality and mutual respect.

Both of them sighed in unison, smoking their heavy cigarettes, fellow sufferers in this world, you with your troubles and I with mine, all the same troubles, all because of the worries caused by the women at home.

Chapter 716: Opposing Everywhere

But speaking of Jiang Conghe and his family returning to Beijing, he didn't have time for anything else, as Jiang Conghe first went to Old Master Loo's to take his scolding. After leaving the Loo household, he was eager to report the matter to his superior, Director Wang, but Director Wang excused himself with a meeting and didn't see him.

Jiang Conghe was so anxious that he got blisters in his mouth. He hurriedly collected information from his own contacts, and indeed, the news had spread very carefully.

Rumors are mostly not credible, and how many untrue elements were added to them after they spread cannot be estimated. But one thing was enough for Jiang Conghe and his family to lose face.

That was the fact that the couple had helped their daughter snatch someone else's husband and had even caused the other woman to have a miscarriage, which already left them with no dignity.

It was like knowing it was a pitfall yet, instead of preventing their daughter, they helped her snatch the man. This was completely against all principles, unable to distinguish right from wrong, and he was a commander.

Moreover, it's not like ancient times when snatching someone was just that; now the law is clear. No matter how unfair, if the common folk have an issue, they immediately talk about taking it to the Supreme Court and making a huge fuss. This person, unfortunately, was also a military man.

If even the marriages of soldiers cannot be protected, how can soldiers in the future have peace of mind to secure the nation and keep peace?

And Jiang Conghe himself was in a high position, managing a regional army. With such a way of handling issues, who would dare entrust the responsibility of managing the military to him? What if he detrimentally affected the country?

Therefore, this was an extremely bad influence!

When Jiang Conghe found out that Director Wang wouldn't meet him, he felt that things were bad. Upon further investigation, he learned that Qi Taiguo had submitted a detailed report to the higher-ups, with an accusatory tone, filled with righteous indignation, stating that military families had not received any protection, questioning how they could dare to charge into battle. He made it sound like he had a world of grievances.

"This bastard!" Jiang Conghe was so angry that he swept all the items on the desk onto the floor.

He dared, just a small company commander, dared to challenge a commander like this, truly seeking death!

"Commander Jiang, now is not the time to pursue Taiguo. We need to sort out this matter first. Director Wang might not be sitting in his position for much longer," a loyal officer who sided with Jiang Conghe reminded him.

Jiang Conghe clenched his teeth: "Was this report submitted by Ning Gang?"

"It seems so. Director Wang sought him out to understand a lot of the inside story, but who knows if he added fuel to the fire."

"Damn it! Ning Gang, isn't he relying on his father's name? How much real military experience or capability does he have to compare with me?" Mentioning Ning Gang made Jiang Conghe blood-boiling mad.

He was older than Ning Gang. Although he had carried explosives before the liberation, he was just a poor boy. How could he compare with Ning Gang's father's background? A true Old Red Army soldier whose ancestors were of nobility.

Ning Gang, he was merely lucky to be born into a good family. Even if he gained military achievements later, it wasn't comparable to his own.

Yet, irritatingly, Ning Gang was promoted faster than he was. Jiang had only been transferred back to the Yanjing military last year, but Ning Gang had already established himself firmly.

Last time he wanted to transfer Taiguo to the border, Ning Gang meddled. Now, he was meddling again, always opposing him, aiming to strike him down.

Damn it, every single Ning deserved to die.

"Ning Gang wants to take down me, Jiang Conghe? It won't be easy. His fourth younger family member is doing business together with a woman surnamed Cheng. Is there no personal gain in that? Hmph." Jiang Conghe paced back and forth with his hands behind his back, thinking about how to turn this situation around.

Chapter 717: Director Lu Suspended from Duty

Jiang Conghe was in a state of complete disarray, while Lu Shufen was having no easier a time.

As soon as she returned to the Cultural Work Troupe, she was called in for a talk by the senior leadership, who delicately brought up her issue with Chiang Qing, saying, "The purpose of the Cultural Work Troupe is to provide comfort to front-line troops through the arts, in order to boost the morale of soldiers and alleviate psychological stress. Hence, it is imperative that our image is positive and uplifting, especially as our audience primarily consists of military personnel. However, Director Lu, your recent behavior has had a tremendous impact..."

Lu Shufen was dumbstruck.

"After discussions with the upper management, you will be temporarily suspended from your duties until the investigation is completed, Director Lu. Affairs within the Troupe will temporarily be managed by Deputy Director Xiao until the matter is resolved. Over the years, you have made considerable contributions to the Troupe, and it's time for you to rest a bit," they said.

"Leader, this is slander. Those who are spreading such rumors are clearly envious and intentionally tarnishing my reputation. It's not like that at all, I can explain!" Lu Shufen said, desperate.

What rest? Didn't she know that Deputy Director Xiao had been eyeing her position for a long time? If she were to take leave now, it would likely turn into a permanent situation, and she would soon be out of her job!

"Comrade Lu, as a director of the Cultural Work Troupe, we must pay close attention to our image. Whether or not you did such a thing, our Troupe is currently under scrutiny for our collective image, and the backlash has been extremely negative. The Yanjing Cultural Work Troupe deals with high-level leaders and fronts comfort operations for the soldiers who defend our country. Our image must be impeccable without the slightest blemish. You need to understand this issue," the leader said sternly, looking straight at Lu Shufen.

"But I... I didn't..." Lu Shufen was frantic.

"Whether you did or not, the organization will conduct an investigation and will not slander you. However, the Troupe's image cannot be tarnished, especially with major comfort events coming up this year. If our overall image is poor, who can bear that responsibility?" the leader continued gravely, "Comfort, comfort means easing the psychological stress of soldiers, enabling them to have peace of mind. But your behavior, Comrade Lu... If it gets out to those soldiers, is this comfort? No, it's a blow!"

Lu Shufen's face turned pale.

"The Troupe cannot allow such a stain to exist; our image must always be positive and uplifting. So, you should rest at home for now. Hand over your affairs to Deputy Director Xiao, and when the higher-ups have further instructions, we will notify you," the leader said impatiently, thinking to himself that this whole affair was a mess and even he had been reprimanded because of it. This Director Lu really lacked sense, how could she get involved in such a mess.

Right, back when she and Jiang Conghe were involved... tsk tsk, like father, like son, no wonder things turned out this way!

"Comrade Lu, it is natural for parents to love their children, but they must also recognize right from wrong. How can they simply give them anything they ask for? Just like the current situation... Isn't that devoid of even the basic moral standards of being human?" The leader couldn't help adding another comment.

Lu Shufen's face darkened, and she left the leader's office with a grave expression to return to her own office.

At the door, she saw Deputy Director Xiao standing in front of her office door, arms crossed, smiling the moment she noticed her.

Lu Shufen's expression turned even uglier as she approached and said, "Deputy Director Xiao, you look quite pleased with yourself."

Deputy Director Xiao gave a shallow smile and replied, "Thanks to your generosity, Director Lu, I have this pleasure today." With that, she ran her hand over the nameplate on the door that bore Lu Shufen's name and said, "This office of the leading director should have the name changed. From now on, Director Lu, you're welcome to come and provide guidance on our work."

Lu Shufen's face twisted, and she bit her lip, glaring fiercely at her.

Chapter 718: Slap the Face Hard

Lu Shufen returned home and burst into tears. Jiang Conghe was already troubled, and hearing her weeping only increased his irritation.

"What are you crying for?" he asked with annoyance.

Sitting down abruptly, Lu Shufen cried out, "I've been suspended. I won't be able to be the director of the Cultural Work Troupe anymore!"

"What?" Jiang Conghe was shocked. "What happened?"

His wife had held the director position for several years, and it had been very stable, especially since he took office. She was always in a position to be promoted even further, but now she was saying she got suspended!

His wife, the wife of Commander Chiang, had been suspended!

If word got out, could he still show his face?

"What happened?" Jiang Conghe asked with a stern face.

"What else could it be? It's that matter, the accusation that I caused that wretched woman to miscarry, they said my image is not good, that I've tarnished the reputation of the Cultural Work Troupe," Lu Shufen sobbed, covering her face.

She had been able to sing and dance since she was a child, and she thrived in the Cultural Work Troupe, eventually becoming the head director. How many people sought to curry favor with her, to have their daughters join the troupe, or to climb the ladder themselves?

And now, they were saying she'd damaged the overall image of the troupe, suspending her. It would be more straightforward if they just fired her!

"How dare they!" Jiang Conghe was so angry his eyes bulged and he snorted.

His status as a commander, and his wife gets suspended? Was this not a slap in his face?

Even if this storm passed, wouldn't people still remember this disgrace when they saw him in the future?

Jiang Conghe was extremely annoyed, feeling a burning anger on his face. He'd been careless, thinking a minor company commander wouldn't matter much, just trying to seek justice for his daughter and wife. He hadn't expected the situation to explode like this. He'd been far too careless!

"Whether they dare or not, I've already been suspended. You don't know, today Xiao Meilan came to take over from me, looking so pleased with herself. She's been waiting to see my downfall, her eyes have been glued to my position, thinking I don't know? Wuu wuu, now I'll have no face to meet anyone!" Lu Shufen wept loudly.

It wasn't just Xiao Meilan, but also those young girls in the Cultural Work Troupe, each of them looking at her with various degrees of contempt and disdain.

They actually dared!

Back when she was in her prime, they all scrambled to flatter her, and now that they saw her misfortune, they switched sides to support Xiao Meilan.

Now she truly saw these people's true colors; they changed faces faster than anyone else!

The contrast in treatment also made her feel physically uncomfortable and pained. She couldn't accept it!

"Enough, stop crying. What good will crying do now?" Jiang Conghe stood up, agitated, and started pacing back and forth in the living room. "With things being as heated as they are, it's better for you to take a break. Stay at home and keep our daughter company, take her to see Doctor Zhong. I've already made an appointment!"

Lu Shufen stopped crying for a moment and frowned as she glanced upstairs. "How is she doing?"

"How would I know how she's doing," Jiang Conghe became even more irritable at the mention of his daughter.

All of this trouble was caused by that girl. What a calamity!

"Qingqing..." Lu Shufen felt like crying again. "I don't know why, but Qingqing's illness has also become known. Today, Xiao Meilan mentioned that Qingqing might have psychological issues and even said she could introduce us to a doctor. Pah! As if I don't know what she's up to; she just wants to gloat over my misfortune!"

Jiang Conghe was taken aback. "It got out?"

Lu Shufen nodded, asking through tears, "What do we do now? Qingqing is still so young. If word gets out that she's sick, how will she face others? How will she get married?" That was her greatest concern.

Jiang Conghe's face darkened, his fingers rapidly tapping as a flicker of inspiration passed through his mind. If that was the case, could he perhaps use it to claw back some advantage?

Chapter 719: A Dream in Nanke

Jiang Conghe was calculating, while Lu Shufen was filled with worry. Their daughter had always been resistant to seeing a doctor. What if she refused to go?

"Old Chiang, Old Chiang, are you even listening to me?" Lu Shufen, getting no response, couldn't help but feel extremely annoyed.

She was unlucky enough already, having just been suspended from her job; now, she had to worry about her daughter's treatment. And there was Old Chiang, not bothering to think of a solution; really, she didn't know how he was supposed to be a husband and a father.

"If she doesn't want to go, tie her up and take her there. Otherwise, are we supposed to just watch her continue like this?" Jiang Conghe said impatiently.

Lu Shufen felt very wronged.

"What about her future? The whole street is talking about this!"

Jiang Conghe added, "We can deal with the future later. As long as our Chiang family is in good standing, are we afraid we won't be able to marry off our daughter? Besides, it's not as if the illness is incurable, and she's not..."

He took a deep breath and said, "Keep an eye on her for me; I'm going to talk to my father-in-law!"

Seeing him leave after dropping a single sentence, Lu Shufen was seething with anger but felt helpless. All she could do was go upstairs to check on her daughter, who had locked herself in her room and hadn't taken a step outside since their return. How could this be okay?

Chiang Qing concealed herself deep within a dark room and had a long dream.

In the dream, she was a respected military doctor. Born into a good family, countless people pursued her, but she met Qi Taiguo.

They met and knew each other, treating one another with respect. She admired him, and he appreciated her.

They were good friends. She admired him deeply yet never crossed the line, only confidantes.

He was married, and she, still unmarried, had eyes only for him.

She knew his marriage was unhappy, with both spouses polite but their feelings cold as ice. They were courteous to each other and never had children, but she had never heard Qi Taiguo talk of divorce.

Eventually, unable to bear it any longer, she began to reveal her feelings, trying to persuade him to divorce.

She found Qi Taiguo's hometown, was extremely good to his family. When his mother fell ill, she took care of her like a daughter, moving the old lady to tears. She also contacted family members to convince Qi Taiguo to divorce.

He remained silent, took no action, and she didn't press him. Knowing his temperament and character, she was willing to be the woman behind him.

They both held high positions, looking at each other from afar, and there was Cheng Su, his wife!

What about her? Occupying the status of the legitimate wife, enjoying the glory he brought, she always looked at her with disdain, as if watching a clown.

And later, what happened?

In that dream, what happened to them later? It seemed she was diagnosed with cancer, and her only request was for Qi Taiguo to marry her, even going so far as to kneel before Cheng Su, begging her to grant her this.

That Cheng Su, both similar and dissimilar to the current Cheng Su—where they differed, she did not know.

She remembered that look in Cheng Su's eyes, so pitiful, so disdainful.

Obviously, she was just an inept village woman, but standing before Chiang Qing, she seemed so high and mighty, with a look of disdain.

And then, she died, she died...

Waking from the dream, Chiang Qing also awoke, staring blankly out of the window.

After her death, what happened? She did not know.

It was a dream, yet it seemed so realistically that it had actually happened.

Was it a dream within Nanke?

But the dream was so much better than the present.

Someone pushed the door open and called her name cautiously.

Chiang Qing turned her head and saw the worried look in her mother's eyes and calmly said, "Mom, I'll go see Doctor Zhong."

Chapter 720: Mother Persuades to Make Peace

Cheng Su took ten days to recuperate before wanting to inspect her various businesses. Qi Taiguo did not agree, but seeing her insistence, he could only accompany her.

Not only that, Cheng Su also sent her mother home, saying that with only two men at home, it was improper for her to be out for so long. As for herself, she was capable of moving around and didn't need to be waited on.

Mother Cheng also missed home. Watching her daughter and son-in-law being so polite to each other as if they were strangers made her heart uncomfortable. Thinking that leaving might make them more at ease, she agreed.

Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo personally took her to the bus station.

Mother Cheng looked at the couple and said, "In a marriage, there are always quarrels. Your father and I were the same; we bickered our entire lives but still made it through. I may not be educated, but I understand the meaning of the saying 'It takes a hundred years to share a boat, a thousand to share a pillow.' Marriage is destiny, it's such fate that brings two people together, and it's precious. You must cherish it!"

"Mother-in-law, rest assured, I will treat Susu well." Qi Taiguo glanced at Cheng Su as he spoke.

Mother Cheng nodded and then turned to Cheng Su, saying, "You've always been headstrong. You need to restrain yourself, think of the difficulties. I'm leaving now, you should also take care of your health, eat well, and avoid cold drinks."

"Hmm."

Mother Cheng hesitated, and Qi Taiguo seeing this, said, "You speak, I'll go buy a bottle of water for Mother-in-law to drink on the bus."

As soon as he left, Mother Cheng said, "See, Taiguo is so considerate. These past few days, you've both been so courteous, it's painful to watch. Silly girl, divorce is not always the better option. If you were constantly arguing with no love left, a divorce would be understandable. But you both care for each other and yet talk about divorce, it's like stabbing each other's hearts. What's the point?"

Cheng Su replied, "Mom, I understand, we aren't talking about divorce now."

"You think I don't know? You've both tacitly agreed, probably just going through that 'cooling-off' period. I watch every day as Taiguo tiptoes around you; a huff or a glance from you, and he doesn't even dare to speak loudly. A grown man acting like a mouse around a cat, it pains me to see this." Mother Cheng snorted, "If you end up divorcing, you'll regret it sooner or later. Divorce, unless for fundamental issues, is foolish for any other reason. And if you divorce because of your mother-in-law, that's a total injustice. If it were any other man, wouldn't you still have this problem?"

"Mom, I understand all this. You don't need to say more; I'll consider everything carefully before acting," Cheng Su said hastily.

Mother Cheng knew her daughter was getting impatient but still added one more thing, "Your mother-in-law, if you don't get along with her, just keep your distance. After all this, I believe Taiguo understands what kind of person she is and won't make things difficult for you."

Cheng Suxin absent-mindedly hummed in response.

Mother Cheng saw Qi Taiguo approaching and did not say more. She told them to take care of each other before boarding the bus and leaving.

Watching the vehicle disappear into the distance, Qi Taiguo said to Cheng Su, "I took half a day off, now I have time, shall I accompany you for a walk in the city? You've been stuck at home these days and must be bored!"

"No need for a walk, I'll go check on the restaurant. I haven't managed anything for several days," Cheng Su said indifferently.

Qi Taiguo's expression darkened, then he said, "Then I'll accompany you to the restaurant?"

"No need, you go home and rest. It's rare that you have time off. I can take the bus there by myself," Cheng Su still refused.

Qi Taiguo pursed his lips.

Cheng Su pretended not to see the gloom in his eyes and hopped onto the bus and left.