

The 80s 751

Chapter 751: Even More Affectionate

Cheng Su and another hand in hand returned home, coming face to face with Chunhua. Seeing their tightly clasped hands, Chunhua couldn't help but smile ambiguously while also letting out a sigh of relief.

Yet, Chunhua did know where Cheng Su had gone on her business trip. Thinking of the reports she had seen over the past few days, she couldn't help asking her if she had been at the epicenter.

Cheng Su didn't want to talk much about her experiences over those days and didn't want Chunhua to worry, so she casually mentioned that everything was safe.

Seeing that Cheng Su didn't want to elaborate and that she was safe, Chunhua knew better than to pry further. Instead, she curiously asked her how she ended up together with Commander Qi.

Cheng Su's face showed a tender smile as she said, "Oh, him? He became an undercover agent."

"Ah?" Chunhua was completely puzzled.

"Anyway, that's how it is." Cheng Su pinched Yuer's little chubby cheek and said, "I should freshen up first; the train ride was tiring."

Chunhua sounded an "Oh" and couldn't help but wonder to herself—what had happened to Cheng Su that she seemed like a different person after this trip?

When Taiguo returned, he first went to the military base to report back and end his leave. Before leaving the house, he said to Cheng Su, "Let's wait for me to come home before cooking dinner, you should rest a bit!"

Cheng Su agreed, but as soon as he left, she briskly washed a rag and wiped down everything inside and outside the house, putting things in order and doing the laundry where necessary.

She had also moved Taiguo's bedding back to the main bedroom and changed to a new set of covers. Looking at the neatly made bed, her heart softened.

As long as they were both alive and by each other's side, what hurdle couldn't they overcome?

After tidying up the room, Cheng Su took another look around. There wasn't much food at home, just eggs, so she took her market basket and went out to buy groceries, leaving a note for him in passing.

The farmers market was as lively as ever, with smiles of contentment on everyone's faces. Under the same sky, some cry while others laugh.

Indeed, how can one not smile at such a beautiful life?

Cheng Su bought a few of Taiguo's favorite dishes and a bag of apples before heading home.

Taiguo had already returned. Seeing her come back, he started, "I told you not to busy yourself and to rest, why don't you listen?"

"I'm not tired. I bought a few groceries and will cook for you in a bit," Cheng Su said. "Let's celebrate a new beginning."

Taiguo was startled, then smiled and nodded, "Good, I'll help you!"

The two of them first boiled some water to wash away their fatigue and then went on to clean the soaked bedding. Taiguo hung the bedding up to dry, while Cheng Su started to cook.

After Taiguo had hung the bedding and come back up, he immediately joined her in the kitchen to help with the washing and chopping. The couple chatted and laughed, occasionally exchanging glances, more affectionate than before.

Chunhua stood at the kitchen doorway, marveling at the sight.

Hualing came back from work in a bad mood and, seeing Chunhua sneaking around the kitchen doorway, couldn't help but ask, "What are you doing here?"

She looked inside, and Cheng Su and the others turned their heads to wave and greet her, then turned back to continue their conversation.

A bit embarrassed, Chunhua pulled Hualing away, saying, "These two went out and came back different somehow, even more loving than before. Tsk, it's really strange!"

Hualing was currently at odds with Chen Shouwang, and couldn't stand to hear others speak of loving relationships, so she replied sarcastically, "You could also be lovingly cooking soup with Old Liang! And what's this lovey-dovey act, they simply made up, that's all!" Saying that, she stormed back to her home.

Chunhua choked on Hualing's sharp comment and, fuming, spat towards her door: "Deal with your own quarrels, no need to take it out on me. Really now!"

Chapter 752: The Neighbors are Arguing Again

Hualing sat down huffily, kicking away the stool Chen Shouwang usually sat on. From the doorway, the laughing voices of Cheng Su and Taiguo passed by, grating on her ears.

When other couples argued and then reconciled, their affection seemed even greater, as if they were newlyweds after a brief separation. But what about her own home?

After an argument with Chen Shouwang, there was no talk of reconciling; not a day had passed peacefully before they started quarreling over some trivial matter again.

These last few days had been even more infuriating; that dead man had intentionally taken night shifts to avoid her, disappearing for days on end.

Hualing was so angry she clawed at her hair, feeling that life had become unbearable.

From the door came the sound of a key turning, and Hualing's face darkened.

Chen Shouwang entered, saw her, and lowered his eyelids before hanging the keys on the door.

"Oh, you still know your way back? I thought you might have set up another home out there for all I knew, but you still remember this place is home, don't you!" Hualing couldn't help but make a sarcastic comment upon seeing him.

Chen Shouwang's heart skipped a beat, and he frowned, saying, "Don't speak so unpleasantly. What's this about having another home? Why does everything you say have to be so confrontational?"

He hadn't seen her for a few days and had been thinking they should sit down for a proper talk, but the moment he returned, he was met with such cold remarks, and his desire to talk evaporated instantly.

"What's so unpleasant about it? Did I say anything wrong? You're gone for days and nights; do you think this place is a hotel or something?" Hualing felt wronged.

"Wasn't I on night duty?" Chen Shouwang said.

"Night duty? Are you on duty twenty-four hours a day now? Since when did Platoon Leader Chen become so dedicated and diligent?" Hualing scoffed.

"You..." Chen Shouwang took a deep breath, saying, "I've just come back, and you want to argue, is that it?"

"What's wrong, are you angry because I've hit a nerve? Chen Shouwang, don't think I underestimate you, but with the way you are, unable to even coax your wife, what great things can you achieve?"

Listen to that sarcasm, like a cold knife stabbing straight into the heart.

Chen Shouwang glared at her coldly, suddenly feeling utterly exhausted. He threw his clothes forcefully to the ground and went into the room.

Hualing jumped, startled by his gaze, which was as cold as if he wanted to devour someone.

When Chen Shouwang came out again, he had changed into a fresh set of clothes and headed for the door.

"Where are you going now?" Hualing asked in a shrill voice, grabbing him.

Chen Shouwang turned back with a cold laugh, "I'm just an eyesore to you here, so why should I stick around and annoy you? It doesn't concern you where I go, as long as I'm out of your sight."

With those words, he shook off Hualing's hand forcefully, grabbed his keys, and slammed the door behind him as he left.

Hualing stumbled from the force of his action, and by the time she steadied herself, Chen Shouwang had already vanished. Furious, she chased to the door and yelled, "Chen Shouwang, if you have the guts, never come back!"

She slammed the door and then burst into loud sobs.

Hualing's shouting disturbed the neighbors. Upon hearing it, Chunhua said to Liang Shurong, "Listen, they're at it again. With her terrible temper, she'll blow up this family sooner or later!" And she had just been letting off steam at him a moment ago!

Liang Shurong said, "Don't talk nonsense. It's common for spouses to argue, don't meddle in others' business!"

Chunhua pouted and kept quiet.

Cheng Su also heard the commotion, turning to Taiguo, "Shall we go and see?"

"Better not, we just got back ourselves, and we don't know the full story. Let's not get involved," Taiguo said, shaking his head.

Cheng Su hummed in acknowledgment, sliced the apple, and said, "I'll make some caramelized apples for you. Can you get the maltose jar for me?"

"Sure!"

Chapter 753: Understanding to Let Go

Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo shared a night of tenderness, yet Cheng Su's body hadn't fully recovered within a month, so the two simply kissed and cuddled, but it was very affectionate.

Early in the morning, Qi Taiguo went to the military base for training. After he left, Cheng Su couldn't fall asleep, so she simply got out of bed and decided to use yesterday's chives and pork to prepare the filling and dough and made a large plate of dumplings.

She then took the dumplings to the kitchen to boil them. Hualing was washing up by the sink. Cheng Su greeted her with a "Good morning" and started washing the pot.

Hualing glanced over and saw Cheng Su's mouth curve into a small smile, her eyes brimming with a spring-like warmth. Despite her slightly pale complexion, it was negligible in light of her radiant spirit that could spark envy in others.

"Did you make up with Commander Qi?" Hualing asked sourly.

"Yeah!" Cheng Su hung up the washing brush and responded with a smile.

"You're so easy to comfort," Hualing snorted.

Cheng Su's hand paused for a moment before she laughed and said, "There isn't really anything about being easy or hard to comfort, it's all about coming to terms with things!"

"Really? I thought you were on the verge of divorce before, and now you've come to terms with it? Everyone says you two went out together, what happened?" Hualing asked curiously.

Cheng Su turned on the gas stove, then turned to look at her and said, "You know there was an earthquake at the place I was traveling to, right? A lot of buildings collapsed. I almost got buried in there, too. We both barely escaped death. In the face of death, everything else seems so insignificant, except for life itself. Hualing, you work in the hospital, so you should have seen the most of life and death, don't you understand?"

Hualing was taken aback and replied, "What's there to understand? Everyone dies eventually, we all go through birth, aging, sickness, and death, and everything is impermanent, isn't that just how it is?"

"It's precisely because everything is impermanent that I feel people should treasure the present. You never know what will happen in the next second, or whether you'll suddenly lose the other person, and be separated forever," Cheng Su said softly.

Hualing fell silent.

"It took a major disaster to make me realize the most important thing is life itself. When you open your eyes every morning and see your partner's face, knowing they're by your side, that's what matters most. So, there's no question of comforting or not comforting, it's about seeing things clearly and having an epiphany!"

Listening to this, Hualing couldn't help but sneer, "I don't believe you aren't a bit resentful. Even if you don't resent Commander Qi, don't you think of his mother and your child when you see him?"

Cheng Su's face paled slightly, and Hualing, seeing this, suddenly felt that she might have gone too far. She quickly said, "I didn't mean to bring up your sorrow on purpose. I just mean that what has happened will always exist, there will always be cracks..."

"I understand what you mean," Cheng Su replied. "Like you said, what's happened has happened, and we can't go back to before it happened. Since that's the case, why dwell on it? We have to look forward, right? My heart still aches, and I regret it, but what's done is done. If I hold on to it, I'd be letting down not only my family but also myself."

"The Buddha said that people must learn to let go. Obsessing over trifles only brings suffering upon oneself. Hualing, life is short, and I don't want to spend the rest of mine hating, regretting, and feeling guilty. That's too bitter. There's still so much beauty in life worth creating, isn't there?"

Biting her lip, Hualing scoffed, "So you've forgiven your mother-in-law and won't pursue it further?"

Cheng Su lowered her head, "What else can I do about it? As you said, if we can't get along, we'll simply minimize contact."

She had no way to pursue the matter. From now on, it would be best to just maintain a respectful distance, as long as everything appeared fine on the surface.

Chapter 754: Donation

After breakfast, Cheng Su left a note for Qi Taiguo and went to the factory.

Everyone was there, and seeing Cheng Su appear, Ying Xiaoya and the others joyfully flung themselves at her, checking her over and chatting at length.

Xiao Pinshan was full of guilt and regret, stepping forward to apologize, "If it wasn't for my suggestion, President Cheng, you wouldn't have made the trip. Thankfully, everything turned out well, otherwise I couldn't make amends even if I died ten times over!"

Cheng Su laughed, "You were just thinking of the company's development. Besides, this was a natural disaster, who could have predicted such an event? Don't put pressure on yourself. It makes me happy that you're so dedicated to our company!"

Xiao Pinshan smiled gratefully.

Cheng Su looked at Ning Ge, who was lounging in a large chair with his legs crossed on the table, and hurled a book at him from the side.

"Look at how you're sitting! Have you no decorum? I, your sister-in-law, have returned, and you don't even offer a word of comfort!" Cheng Su glared at him.

Ning Ge cast a cold glance her way, huffing, "Aren't you very capable? You even dared to stay in the disaster area, what need have you for comfort? My comfort isn't a panacea, it won't do much!"

"What are you saying? I haven't offended you, have I?" Cheng Su said.

"Don't mind him, he's been on fire these past few days!" Ying Xiaoya pulled Cheng Su to her side, eagerly asking, "Quick, tell us, how have the past few days been? Zhu Lifan and the others came back but didn't provide many details. You're really not injured, are you?" Ying Xiaoya pulled Cheng Su to her side, eagerly asking, "Quick, tell us, how have the past few days been? Zhu Lifan and the others came back but didn't provide many details. You're really not injured, are you?"

"No. I stayed there just to volunteer, that's all!" Cheng Su said with a smile, and then gave a brief account of her and Qi Taiguo's actions in the disaster area.

As she mentioned the orphans, several of the women began to tear up.

"It's so pitiful," said Xiaoya.

Cheng Su also wiped the corner of her eyes, looking at Ning Ge, "That's why I want to make a donation to the people in the disaster area in the name of our company. It's not a large sum, but it's a gesture of our goodwill. What do you think?"

Ning Ge straightened up a bit, saying, "If there's a call for donations, then donate."

"Good!" Cheng Su smiled, "So, how much do you think would be appropriate?"

"That's up to you!" Ning Ge appeared indifferent.

Cheng Su turned to Ying Xiaoya, "Xiao Ya, check the accounts to see how much liquid funds we have, what our upcoming expenses will be, and let me know once you have it tallied up. Then we can decide."

Ying Xiaoya said, "Okay!"

After thinking for a moment, Xiao Pinshan added, "This idea is quite good. Actually, directly delivering supplies there would be better, and our company could get some publicity out of it."

"This donation is just to show we care. As for publicity, it's secondary," Cheng Su said.

She knew the kind of publicity such acts would bring, but her motive this time really wasn't that; she wanted to help after witnessing firsthand the helplessness of people in the face of a natural disaster.

Xiao Pinshan felt somewhat abashed, "Yes!"

With a faint smile, Cheng Su added, "Also, regarding the publicity you mentioned, the rescue efforts there are almost over. We have missed the prime opportunity. So, let's not dwell on the publicity aspect. It's enough to show our goodwill."

Xiao Pinshan nodded, "I was too profit-oriented. We will do as President Cheng says!"

"It's normal for a businessman to be profit-oriented. You have our company's interests at heart!" Cheng Su reassured him.

Xiao Pinshan's lips curled into a slight smile, but inside he greatly admired Cheng Su's generous spirit, thinking that while everyone else sought fame for such deeds, only her gestures were truly heartfelt.

Chapter 755: Mental Illness Is a Good Disguise

Ying Xiaoya quickly did the accounting, and now their company needed to develop a new sauce and also wanted to put some advertisements on the market, so their cash flow was not that plentiful.

After a unanimous vote and discussion, it was decided that the donation would be set at two thousand yuan.

Now, in the mid-1980s, two thousand yuan wasn't a large sum, but it wasn't insignificant either, especially as a donation.

Cheng Su was willing but also knew she had to "cut her coat according to her cloth," so two thousand yuan was already the limit for the company at the moment.

However, she personally dug into her own pocket and added a hundred more, Ning Ge saw this and contributed two hundred, Ying Xiaoya, not having as much, gave fifty, and Xiao Pinshan, seeing this, also gave thirty, after all, he had a family to support and children to raise.

And Zhu Lifan and the others who had experienced the earthquake, upon hearing about this donation, gave varying amounts, ultimately raising more than two thousand five hundred yuan.

Cheng Su instructed Ying Xiaoya to send the remittance, while she herself was pulled outside by Ning Ge for a talk.

"You're really okay?" Ning Ge looked at her closely.

"I'm fine." Cheng Su spun around: "All in one piece."

Ning Ge snorted: "You always were bold!"

Cheng Su shrugged her shoulders: "Nearly died, what's there to be afraid of?"

Ning Ge glared.

"Lu Shufen has been dismissed!" Ning Ge suddenly said.

Cheng Su's smiling face froze, Lu Shufen, the woman who caused her to lose her child.

She lowered her eyelids: "Why bring up such people?"

"To make you feel better inside." Ning Ge said: "Jiang Conghe was ordered to appease you guys, I reckon that these appeasing personnel will arrive in a few days. The news of Chiang Qing, that lunatic's illness has spread, now everyone knows she's mentally ill, all the misdeeds she and her daughter have done are well known throughout the Beijing circles!"

Cheng Su scoffed: "If that's the case, I fear they'll blame it on her illness for causing things to turn out this way!"

Mental illness is the best guise to mask crimes!

In her past life, she saw plenty of such cases. Murder someone, claim to be mentally ill and not in the right mind; kidnap a child, say it was a bout of mental illness, unable to distinguish reality. In short, all wrongdoings were attributed to mental illness, allowing for a clean slate and reduced punishment.

Ning Ge raised an eyebrow: "You guessed right, the one who said Chiang Qing was sick was Jiang Conghe. To regain some ground, he even exploited his own daughter's illness. He never considered her reputation."

Cheng Su was stunned, then let out a cold laugh: "Such people, in their pursuit of success, will indeed stoop to any low." Speaking, she furrowed her brows: "If that's the case, then Jiang Conghe is ruthless, even using his own daughter's illness. With such unscrupulous methods, I fear more dirty tricks will come."

"Indeed." Ning Ge stroked his chin.

Cheng Su pursed her lips; those who are unscrupulous are the most terrifying because they are cruel and merciless.

And Jiang Conghe suffered a major setback this time, he would likely blame all the faults on himself and his wife. As for her own side, it was one thing, but on Qi Taiguo's part, as a military man, even though Jiang Conghe was not his direct superior, he was still a senior Chief. Pulling some strings behind the scenes to make his life difficult wouldn't be a big problem.

As if seeing through her thoughts, Ning Ge said: "Don't worry, for the time being, Jiang Conghe wouldn't dare to touch Big Brother Qi. He hasn't even cleaned the Suzhou muck off himself yet, how would he dare act rashly? Is he not afraid of losing his command?"

Cheng Su sighed: "Little men are the hardest to guard against, he is like a lurking Poisonous Snake, you never know when he'll leap at you and take a bite, that's the troublesome part!"

Seeing the worry in her brows and eyes, Ning Ge's face turned somber.

Chapter 756: The So-Called Condolences

Ning Ge had just told Cheng Su that someone from above might come down to visit and comfort the troops, when Qi Taiguo's side received the visitation team. The visitors brought many condolence goods, along with various fruits, under the guise of superiors comforting the soldiers of the army.

As the head of the condolence team handed some precious supplements to Qi Taiguo and patted his shoulder, he said, "Commander Chiang highly appreciates Comrade Qi Taiguo's bravery and skill in battle and hopes that you will continue to make great efforts for the country..."

Everyone looked at Qi Taiguo, and they all knew what this was about, but it was just using the condolence for the whole army as an excuse.

Qi Taiguo's lips were pressed tightly together as he sneered inwardly.

This sort of lip service completely bypassed the private matter, meaning it was thoroughly covered up, not mentioned at all.

Indeed, how could it be mentioned? Such an embarrassing matter.

"Thank you for the superior's care!" Qi Taiguo's face showed no excess emotion, just an air of cold hardness.

The condolence team was taken to visit the troops and rest, while in the blink of an eye, Qi Taiguo had the so-called condolence gifts sent to the canteen by a soldier, saying it was for everyone's benefit.

He wouldn't take such things home; he found them disgusting.

Gao Linbing came over and said, "Don't take it to heart. Such condolences are really just formalities. They wouldn't actually admit their wrongs in public."

After all, how could a high-ranking official display their own mistakes and confess to a mere company commander?

So this condolence was actually just for show, representing an attitude of the military.

Qi Taiguo's face was grim as he said, "I know, but I just find such condolences even more disgusting!" It would have been better if they hadn't come at all, rather than leaving one feeling disgusted.

Gao Linbing patted his shoulder and sighed, saying, "I don't even know what to say, but from now on, I'm afraid your path will be more difficult."

Having offended a high-ranking official like Jiang Conghe, one could expect petty retribution.

Qi Taiguo's heart chilled as he said, "It's fine, I'm psychologically prepared!"

If he was afraid of such petty revenge, he would have never offended them or rejected Chiang Qing's so-called courtship.

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Back at home, Cheng Su was preparing dinner when Qi Taiguo announced his return and took off his military uniform, sitting on the sofa.

Putting down the tomato in her hands, Cheng Su came over and sat down, telling him about Ning Ge's words.

"They've already come today!" Qi Taiguo sneered.

Cheng Su was taken aback, "They came? What did they say?"

Qi Taiguo repeated the official pleasantries and added, "I threw those supplements into the canteen; I didn't bring them home."

"Hmm, we don't care for those things anyway, bringing them home would just be an eyesore!" Cheng Su wasn't concerned and said, "I think this Jiang Conghe is a ruthless person, Taiguo, you need to be careful."

Seeing the worry on her face, Qi Taiguo replied, "It's nothing, I'll be careful. After all, 'the heaven is high and the emperor is far away'; he can't do much to me right now."

Cheng Su came closer, holding his hand, saying, "I know. I just worry that this person has a dark heart and holds grudges. As a Chief, if he gives you any underhanded tactics during a mission, that would be troublesome!"

What she feared was not Jiang Conghe's overt sabotage but his ability to insidiously use his authority to deliberately send Qi Taiguo to his death, which wasn't outside the realm of possibility!

Qi Taiguo saw her fear clearly and comforted her, saying, "Don't worry, I will definitely strive to rise higher and ensure you no longer have to worry."

It was because his military rank was too low that he could be manipulated; he understood that only by holding a higher position could he ensure his and his family's safety.

Chapter 757: Pretending to be Pitiful

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Mother Qi was finally brought back home after that illness, as Qi Jianguo and the others all begged Father Qi, saying it was too unsafe for a sick person to live alone in the old house.

And since Cheng Su had also made a phone call earlier, Father Qi stepped down gracefully and allowed Mother Qi to move back home.

The illness came on suddenly and fiercely; after two days of fever-reducing IVs, Mother Qi had become a shadow of her former self, extremely weak.

But being at home, Mother Qi felt her heart finally settle, even though she suffered a bit, at least she didn't have to live alone in the old house anymore.

Once she stabilized, she started to blame Cheng Su; it was all her fault she suffered so much. Her eldest son had made a terrible mistake marrying her—such a daughter-in-law was no good at all. If only it was that doctor...

Mother Qi thought, and her heart skipped a beat.

No, no, that wouldn't do, Taiguo was already married, not single!

If he had been single, having a doctor as a daughter-in-law, with a family so wealthy, and a father who was a high-ranking official, having the Yue family as in-laws, her son's future would have been guaranteed to be much brighter.

What a pity...

Then Mother Qi thought of her son again, that old fool wouldn't let Jianguo tell Taiguo about her illness, saying it would disturb their lives, hmph.

That old fool, his heart was completely with Cheng Su and her side!

It was infuriating!

Mother Qi got so angry she started coughing, thinking to herself, if Jianguo couldn't tell him, couldn't she do it herself?

Seeing Father Qi was not paying attention, Mother Qi slipped some money and a phone number into her pocket and sneaked out.

It was time to make dinner; when the call reached Cheng Su's house, Cheng Su had just scooped some rice. Hearing the ringing, she went to answer it.

"Hello, this is Su."

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the line, Cheng Su frowned and asked again who it was?

Mother Qi cursed her bad luck; why had it to be Cheng Su answering the call? But still not willing to give up, she gruffly asked, "Is Taiguo there?"

Cheng Su recognized her mother-in-law's voice, then said, "Hold on." She also called for Qi Taiguo.

Qi Taiguo came out of the bathroom, "What is it?"

"Phone call!" Cheng Su lifted her hand, put down the receiver, and turned back to cooking.

Qi Taiguo furrowed his brows, already guessing who was calling.

He picked up the phone, greeted the caller, then his mother's crying could be heard on the other end.

"Mom, what's the matter?" Qi Taiguo asked after a pause.

Mother Qi started coughing and said, "It's nothing. I just wanted to tell you not to worry about my illness. I'm old, bound to have this pain or that. It's nothing, cough cough..."

"You're sick?" Qi Taiguo's brows drew even tighter.

"It's nothing serious, just a high fever, but it's gone now!" Mother Qi hastily added.

"If you're not feeling well, then rest at home. Why run out to make a call?" Qi Taiguo said.

Mother Qi began to cry again, "I know you still blame me, Taiguo. I'm your mother. Are you really so heartless? Your dad is heartless, sending me to live in the old house. Are you just as heartless? There's no point in me living anymore."

Qi Taiguo pinched the bridge of his nose and said, "Mom, if you keep crying, I'm hanging up. Calls are expensive. You should go back!"

Mother Qi was silenced, her crying stopping abruptly.

"Take care of yourself. As for Dad, I'll talk to him. As for Susu and me, we're doing fine, don't worry." Qi Taiguo said his goodbyes and hung up, facing Cheng Su who had a questioning look, "It's nothing, she said she was sick, had a fever, but it's gone now. What's for dinner tonight?"

Cheng Su made an acknowledging sound and pointed to the seasoned ribs she had prepared.

Meanwhile, Mother Qi stood staring at the phone for a while, then wandered back home, disconsolate.

Even after mentioning her illness, Taiguo didn't seem to soften at all. Her son had become heartless!

Chapter 758: Exposed

Qi Fengping hummed a tune as she returned home, only to see Mother Qi wiping away tears. She couldn't help asking, "Mom, what's wrong?"

"Nothing." Mother Qi lifted her clothes and said, "Your elder brother is too harsh, he's not human. I told him I was sick, and he was still cold-hearted and indifferent."

"You called elder brother?" Qi Fengping frowned and said, "Didn't Dad tell us not to tell elder brother?"

"Your dad just sides with outsiders. Just because he said not to call, should we listen? He's not the Jade Emperor. His words aren't imperial edicts," Mother Qi snapped coldly.

"All right, all right, you're right," said Qi Fengping with a nonchalant shrug of her hands.

"Look at what you're saying, right or wrong, did I say something incorrect?" Mother Qi shot her another glance and said, "And you, you little wretch, I haven't settled the score with you yet!"

Feeling somewhat guilty, Qi Fengping said, "Settle what score? Ah, haha, did you cook dinner?"

"Don't try to dodge it. You were the one who doused yourself with cold water, playing the martyr. I told you not to go, but you insisted on leaving, and I was confused with fever by the time you still hadn't come. You nearly killed your own mother!" Mother Qi grew angry at this point.

If that deadbeat girl had been reliable, she wouldn't have suffered for so long!

Qi Fengping laughed awkwardly and went over to hug her mother's arm, cooing, "Mom, if it wasn't serious, Dad wouldn't have softened his heart to let you come home, right? Now everything is safe and sound, isn't it? You've moved back in!"

"Your dad, just as hard-hearted..." Mother Qi's voice abruptly stopped.

Qi Fengping looked up, only to see Father Qi standing at the door with a gloomy face, glaring at them.

Oh no!

Caught in the act!

"Dad..." Qi Fengping stood up.

"Is what she said true? Did you really make yourself sick on purpose?" Father Qi, gasping for breath, pointed at Mother Qi and asked.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Mother Qi dodged his gaze, looking towards Qi Fengping, "Pingping, go cook."

"Oh!"

"Stop right there!" Father Qi shouted loudly, "You're not leaving this house until you both explain yourselves!"

He simply couldn't believe his ears. After all that disgraceful behavior before, was she now resorting to the pain charade just to come home?

How despicable of her!

Despair, after all the days of worrying and regret!

To think it was all false, all her own scheming!

"Yes, I did pour buckets of cold water on myself, deliberately made myself sick, so what? Who made you so heartless, insisting on sending me to live in that old house? Was that even fit for human habitation? Would I even think of such a thing if it wasn't for you?" Mother Qi shouted.

Father Qi stumbled, scoffed coldly, "Fine, fine, you're right! You really are something, aren't you? An eye-opener indeed. What won't you stoop to next? Murder and arson?"

Such disappointment, utter disappointment!

This woman, to achieve her end, what wouldn't she think of, what wouldn't she dare do?

"Mind your own business!" Mother Qi retorted with a stiff neck.

Father Qi gave her a deep look and said, "I shouldn't worry, I dare not worry. You're right, you're the only smart one in the family. Let me tell you, too clever by half leads to folly. One day, you'll trip over your so-called cleverness, and you'll regret it!"

With that, he turned and walked out.

"Mom..." Qi Fengping called out weakly, what now?

"What are you panicking for? Is he really going to kick the two of us out of the house? Go cook!" Mother Qi said loudly, as if to bolster her own courage.

Watching her husband's resolute retreating figure, Mother Qi pursed her lips and spat out, "Regret what? What's there to regret?"

Chapter 759: She Is Always Your Mom

Qi Taiguo spoke with defiance about Mother Qi, but his heart was still slightly soft. Uncertain whether she had moved back into her room, he made a call from his office to his home, intending to speak with Father Qi.

However, the news Father Qi brought to him left him stunned.

"Your mother, don't expect her to change. I think she's getting more confused as she gets older. It's enough that you know in your heart," said Father Qi angrily over the phone, "What was she thinking doing something like that? It's fortunate it was discovered in time; otherwise, she could have done serious damage to her brain. Such a fool! Your wife had called earlier to persuade me, to let her come back home. I was actually considering it, but then she... Sigh."

"Dad, did she really do that on purpose?" Taiguo asked, almost choking on the words.

"I heard it with my own ears. It was Fengping's bad advice," Father Qi disclosed.

Qi Taiguo sighed, showing a bitter smile, and said, "Dad, I got it. Let's not talk about it anymore!"

"Mm, let's not. You don't need to worry about family matters; your dad is here. If there's anything serious, I'll call you!" Father Qi said.

"Alright."

After hanging up the phone, Qi Taiguo sat in his chair, lost in thought. How had his mother's temperament come to this?

To exploit the family's soft-heartedness, she went so far as to mistreat her own body... Sigh.

After learning of his mother's actions, Qi Taiguo felt sullen for a while, and a sense of disappointment crept in as well.

At dinner, Cheng Su noticed his disheartened expression and couldn't help feeling curious, thinking he was worried about his mother-in-law. She suggested, "If you're not at ease, why not go back and check on her yourself? Or maybe call dad to ask about the situation?"

Seeing the look of concern she offered, Qi Taiguo felt even more embarrassed. He put down his chopsticks and said, "I've already made the call. But..."

He let out a long sigh.

Cheng Su knew there had to be more to the story.

"Dad said mom deliberately made herself sick with a self-inflicted hardship trick, just to move back home!" Taiguo said with a wry smile as he relayed Father Qi's words, "I can't understand how she could think to do such a thing."

Cheng Su fell silent, knowing that a son cannot scorn a poor mother, just as one cannot speak ill of one's father. The principles are the same.

These are words Qi Taiguo could say, but she couldn't.

Yet, his mother-in-law was really rash. It wasn't even the end of April yet, with the cold spring weather still lingering. If the discovery had been delayed, she would have certainly ruined her health.

She quietly continued eating.

Thinking she might be upset, Qi Taiguo said, "Let's not talk about this anymore. I heard from dad that you had also called home earlier? I wasn't aware of that?"

"Mm, I did during the disaster relief," she replied.

"Thank you," Qi Taiguo said gratefully, smiling. She must have still held some resentment, yet she made the call anyway.

Looking at him, Cheng Su sighed, "She is still your mother, no matter how annoyed I am, I can't erase this fact, nor can I have you sever your relationship with her. As long as I'm in a relationship with you, I can't pretend I don't see it." She couldn't just stand by and watch, nor could she watch him suffer.

After all, she was doing it all for him!

Qi Taiguo felt even more ashamed and said, "Someday, she'll know your worth."

Cheng Su silently picked up some food with her chopsticks and said, "Whether she knows I'm good or not isn't important anymore. Daughter-in-law and mother-in-law will never be like real mother and daughter. I've come to terms with it, and so should you!"

Listening to this, Qi Taiguo sighed, knowing that the rift between his wife and his mother was beyond repair. But who was there to blame?

Chapter 760: Sister Wang's Intentions

Time passed swiftly, and by mid-April, Joy Soon Loy had developed its new jam utilizing apples from the Shu region. This time, Xiao Pinshan personally led a team to the orchards there to sign a supply contract.

As the weather grew warmer, pineapples once again became sought after, and Joy Soon Loy's pineapple jam became a leading product. Pineapples at the beginning of early summer were delicious, which meant that production of the jam ramped up and sales were swift.

The pineapple supply had always been handled by Sister Wang's family, thanks to Cheng Su. Their family had now become a major supplier, with several companies seeking them out for produce.

Therefore, remembering the favor from Cheng Su, Sister Wang offered Joy Soon Loy a price that was significantly lower than that of other companies.

However, that day Sister Wang personally came with the delivery truck, waiting specifically for Cheng Su.

After their business had expanded, Sister Wang rarely made deliveries herself, so her personal visit came as somewhat of a surprise to Cheng Su.

"It's all thanks to your advice that our family's situation has improved so much, and the business is doing well. We will never forget the great kindness you have shown our family," Sister Wang said to Cheng Su with gratitude.

Cheng Su smiled and replied, "Sister Wang, what are you talking about? I just made a casual remark, how could that possibly amount to the 'great kindness' you're speaking of?"

"Whether it's kindness or sentiment, we know it in our hearts. We are not ungrateful people. We thought everything was going well, that life was looking up, but we never expected..." Sister Wang's eyes reddened slightly as she spoke.

Startled, Cheng Su quickly asked, "What happened? Has something gone wrong?"

"Just last month, our truck flipped while collecting goods, and it plunged into a ditch along with the driver," Sister Wang burst into tears as she spoke.

Cheng Su exclaimed in shock, "Oh my goodness, how is the person? Is he alright?"

"Barely saved his life," Sister Wang sobbed.

Relieved, Cheng Su sighed, "As long as he is alive, that's what matters."

"He's alive, but his leg is broken. Since we're the owners, naturally, we have to compensate," Sister Wang explained. "We've covered the medical costs, but we also have to pay damages."

There was no helping it; this was a work-related injury. Seeing Sister Wang cry so desolately, Cheng Su said, "Good and bad luck happen to everyone; it is just fate. Take solace in the fact that he survived..."

"What's to solace, it might have been better if he had died..." Sister Wang gritted her teeth, her head bowed, as if she found it difficult to say.

But Cheng Su understood perfectly, feeling a chill in her heart.

She grasped the implication of Sister Wang's words: following a car accident, some responsible parties would prefer if the injured person died, because then a lump-sum payment would settle it. However, with serious injuries, compensation can continue indefinitely without end.

Therefore, she had also seen news reports of people who, after causing an accident, deliberately reversed to run over the victim again, ensuring their death.

"It's not that I'm heartless, but after paying out, when the money's gone, they come knocking on our door again, using the accident as leverage. They point out the victim was a good person, a key support, and they come back time after time asking for more," Sister Wang wiped her tears and continued, "If we don't give, they accuse us of being heartless, but it can't go on like this, it's a bottomless pit!"

Cheng Su agreed, saying, "Have you tried negotiating with them?" as she passed another cup of water to her.

"Later we did negotiate a lump-sum compensation, but they're asking for ten thousand yuan," Sister Wang said, biting her lip.

Ten thousand yuan wasn't a small amount. Seeing Sister Wang speak of this matter and considering she had purposefully stayed to wait for her, Cheng Su suddenly had a thought and tentatively asked her intentions, "So, what brings you here this time? Is the money not enough?"