

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

### Chapter 76: Chapter 76: Doubt

Cheng Su composed herself, exhaled, and said, "It's not even dawn yet; why aren't you sleeping? Uh, did I wake you? You weren't here for the past few days, so I took over a small restaurant. We're short on staff, and now I need to head over there."

What, took over a restaurant?

"You're running a business?" He looked at her with full surprise. Wasn't she supposed to be looking for a job? How had she suddenly started a business?

Cheng Su nodded, "It's been open for some time now." She had already made quite a bit of money.

Qi Taiguo watched her, then after a moment, said, "Wait here."

He turned, went back into the room to close the door, leaving Cheng Su puzzled. Shortly after, she saw him come out wearing long trousers and said, "Let's go!"

"What?" Cheng Su was stunned.

Qi Taiguo was already at the door, kicked off his slippers and put on his sports boots, looking back at her, "I'll take you there." He needed to see what she was up to!

Cheng Su raised an eyebrow, slightly surprised.

Heading out early in the dark morning made Cheng Su feel a bit scared, but having someone to accompany her, especially a strong man, naturally made her happy.

But seeing the bandage on his arm, she hesitated, "You should sleep more. Your arm is still injured, and you've just returned from a mission. Rest more."

"Nagging," grumbled Qi Taiguo as he opened the door and glanced at her, "Are you coming or not?"

Cheng Su uttered an 'Oh,' and followed him out the door.

It was past five, and the sky hadn't completely brightened. Cheng Su took out her flashlight as soon as they exited the building. Qi Taiguo saw it and gave her a deep look.

She's prepared quite well.

They reached the main road, where the sky was a deep navy, only a sliver of white light faintly visible. Although the road was a major one, fitted with streetlights, they were spaced tens of meters apart, and some were faulty, flickering intermittently.

The two walked one behind the other in silence.

Qi Taiguo had only walked a short distance when he began to feel uneasy. When he wasn't around, did she make this walk every day? Did running a restaurant require getting up so early?

Doesn't she know fear? A woman walking alone in the dark, where does she get such courage?

Unable to help himself, he glanced at her sideways. Qi Taiguo couldn't quite name the feeling in his heart, but he found it all very strange.

"At my restaurant, we're also short-staffed, with just me, and Qiulan, Platoon Leader Lu's aunt from upstairs, working there too. But as I am the boss, I definitely need to get there early to prepare," Cheng Su broke the silence, initiating a conversation.

"There are plenty of jobs out there, why choose this one? You're out before daylight, you sure have the nerve," Qi Taiguo huffed lightly, not expecting her to be so bold or to have started her own business.

Uh...

"I've considered that issue, but being an entrepreneur naturally means getting up at the crack of dawn. The problem is the lack of convenient transport. If I had a bicycle, it would be nice. It isn't far if you ride, oh, it's near the school on East Main Road... What's wrong?" Mid-sentence, Cheng Su noticed that the man beside her had stopped walking.

Qi Taiguo asked, "A bicycle?"

"Yeah." Cheng Su was somewhat confused. What about a bicycle?

Qi Taiguo pursed his lips. So, she made noodles and pretended to care, treating his wound with concern, all to get him to buy her a bicycle?

If Cheng Su could see through his thought process, she would probably scream in frustration: What a huge misunderstanding.

Busy from dawn to dusk since the opening, she had made more money than his entire fortune; she hadn't even thought about that detail.

But Cheng Su didn't possess the ability to see through someone else's thoughts, she just looked up at the sky and exclaimed, "Oh no, it's getting light, let's hurry up!"

She rushed ahead, and the doubts Qi Taiguo had been about to voice became lodged in his throat; he swallowed them and followed behind her with a scowl on his face.

There would be time to settle scores with her later!

## **Chapter 77: Chapter 77 Where Did You Get the Money?**

Although he had been prepared, Qi Taiguo was slightly stunned watching Cheng Su throw herself entirely into her tasks upon arriving at the restaurant.

She was actually handling everything by herself.

With his eyes wide in shock, Qi Taiguo watched as Cheng Su, seemingly wound-up like a clock, didn't stop moving for a second.

Before coming to the army, her father had said she would look for a job, and she had said the same, but in his mind, he thought it would be like other women; either working on the assembly line in a factory or doing odd jobs for private bosses.

Yet he hadn't expected that the job she mentioned would actually be running her own business?

Watching Cheng Su wash and clean efficiently, throwing several large pork bones into the soup barrel to stew, and then washing cucumbers, her hand holding the knife moved like machinery, cutting at a fast pace.

Qi Taiguo felt as if his eyes were blurring.

If he had not seen it with his own eyes, he would never have known that Cheng Su could be so nimble and serious.

"Do you want to head back first? I'll marinate this basin of cucumber salad and then head to the market to purchase supplies. You should go back," said Cheng Su, sneaking a glance at Qi Taiguo, who was standing still like a pillar, and spoke out.

It was time for Qi Taiguo to leave, but upon hearing this, he was pushed by some inexplicable force and said, "I just got back yesterday, and today I can take a day off."

Cheng Su made a sound of acknowledgment, looked up at him, and asked, "Do you want to help then?"

Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow and didn't say no. He asked, "What can I do?"

"You're strong, help me smash these cucumbers flat," Cheng Su saw his agreement and unceremoniously commanded.

Today's lunch menu included cucumber salad. The weather was hot now so eating these cold dishes was refreshing, and cucumbers were cheap, so they were often on the menu.

Following Cheng Su's instructions, Qi Taiguo flattened the cucumbers. Looking at her bowed head, he pursed his lips and asked, "Weren't you looking for a job? Why did you start a business?"

He never knew she was into business. Could she make money, or would she face loss?

"Working for others is just going back and forth between two points, not very interesting. With the current reform and opening up, the economy is growing, and the opportunities are too good. Going into business seems like a better choice," responded Cheng Su without turning her head.

Upon hearing this, Qi Taiguo watched her intently.

He had already looked around the restaurant; the place wasn't big but the environment was decent enough. There, under the trees in the courtyard, tables were set up.

And inside, on the wall, hung a big menu with clear prices.

"Originally, I planned to do breakfast as well, but look, just to do lunch, I have to come over so early. If it were breakfast, I'd need to open the doors at four in the morning," Cheng Su said.

Her ideas were ambitious, but reality was harsh; she had underestimated her own capabilities. Just handling the lunch rush was hard enough, not to mention breakfast.

Therefore, with a shortage of manpower, she could only do lunch for now and decide on the rest later.

Qi Taiguo watched as she put on gloves, adding salt to the big basin of cucumbers, kneading and squeezing continuously until some juice came out, pouring it away, and then adding seasoning—vinegar, sugar, chili oil...

Before long, the cucumber salad was set aside, and Cheng Su removed her apron, saying, "I'm off to the market now."

"Didn't you say Platoon Leader Lu's aunt was coming to help? Why haven't I seen her yet?" Qi Taiguo asked.

"She starts at eight," Cheng Su replied, tidying her apron, grabbing her usual canvas bag, pulling the small cart for carrying vegetables, and preparing to leave. "How did you have the money to start this business? This restaurant, it's someone else's property, right?" Suddenly Qi Taiguo realized a problem.

Cheng Su was known for being carefree with money. He was well aware that she didn't have any savings; starting a business required capital. Where did the money come from?

## **Chapter 78: Chapter 78 Confession**

Where did the money come from?

Cheng Su thought for a moment, and then told Qi Taiguo in detail how she had raised the funds and took over the restaurant.

When he heard that she had sold her dowry jewelry, Qi Taiguo was completely stunned. Looking at her fingers, indeed, they were bare—the ring his mother had given her during their marriage was gone.

"You sold the ring?" Qi Taiguo frowned.

That ring, it was one he had bought for his mother, and even when giving it to Cheng Su, he had been quite reluctant to part with it. It was only after his father had convinced her several times that she agreed to give it to Cheng Su. It was supposed to be an heirloom, yet she had sold it?

"Yes, the transfer fee was ninety, and I didn't have enough capital!" Cheng Su carefully glanced at him and said, "And you were not at home, so..." Was he upset now?

"That was something my mom gave to you. Even during tough times, she never sold it..." Qi Taiguo pursed his lips. Seeing Cheng Su looking at him, he said, "Forget it. You should have waited for me to come back."

"The restaurant needed a quick transfer, you went on a mission without a word, and I had no idea when you'd return, I couldn't wait, so I took emergency measures." Cheng Su hesitated for a moment and continued, "That ring, is it very important to you? If it is, I can go to the store and see if it's been sold. If not, I'll buy it back!"

It's important to me, but isn't it important to you?

Qi Taiguo's heart stirred with such a question, but looking at Cheng Su's expression, where was there any care? He felt a bit dispirited and slightly bitter as he said, "Didn't you also care a lot about that ring?"

During the wedding ceremony when his mother placed the ring on her, she had been so delighted, but now she had sold it so readily.

So, was her so-called affection merely pretense? Be it objects or people.

Qi Taiguo's expression darkened.

Cheng Su said, "Once I've earned enough money, I could buy back a hundred or even ten times more, and moreover, when I urgently need money, I won't consider this."

Qi Taiguo didn't speak.

Cheng Su continued talking about the stash of money he had hidden, making Qi Taiguo's heart skip a beat and his ears heat up as he stammered, "What stash? I just like to keep it there."

Cheng Su gave him an unbelieving look.

Feeling somewhat embarrassed, Qi Taiguo said, "If you don't believe it, forget it!"

Cheng Su said, "When opening the restaurant, I was short on funds, and after calculations, it was your money that solved my pressing needs. But don't worry, I've already replenished it, not a single note is missing from you!"

After her restaurant started making money, she had already replaced the funds she had used.

Yet, Qi Taiguo felt somewhat discontented. She spoke with such clear boundaries, was it necessary?

"I haven't blamed you for anything, what's the hurry? Even if you didn't replenish it, I wouldn't have said anything. You are my wife, providing for the family is my responsibility," Qi Taiguo said.

Cheng Su laughed lightly, "Is that so? Then I won't be polite about it anymore!"

"Mhm!"

The two didn't speak further because they had already arrived at the market, and Cheng Su was too busy to chat idly, heading to the usual vendors she patronized to buy vegetables and meat, quickly filling up the car.

On the ride back, Qi Taiguo conscientiously helped her with the cart. By the time they reached the restaurant, Qiulan had already arrived. She was startled to see Qi Taiguo.

"Why has Commander Qi come as well?" Qiulan was somewhat uneasy in front of Qi Taiguo.

Since they knew each other, Qi Taiguo nodded at her and said, "I just came to take a look."

Cheng Su then said, "Enough talking, let's hurry up and get ready."

Qiulan quickly agreed and joined Cheng Su. Together, they washed and chopped, bustling about preparing for the lunch crowd.

## **Chapter 79: Chapter 79: Restless**

Watching Cheng Su wrap up the entire lunch rush, Qi Taiguo finally understood how busy she had been. He also realized that when she talked about diverting money to fill in the gaps, she wasn't lying—it was probably true. After all, the business at the eatery seemed to be booming.

After eating lunch at the small restaurant, Qi Taiguo, clutching the pawn ticket and the banknotes Cheng Su had given him, left. As he stepped out of the restaurant, he turned for one last look.

Cheng Su was quickly chopping radishes at the table she called her workbench. Her wrists were agile, her knife skills were impressive—it was as if she were seasoned through and through.

She hadn't even fully rested before she began feverishly preparing for the next day's sales. Those radishes—weren't they meant to be pickled?

No wonder she'd earned the money back so quickly!

Qi Taiguo tightened his grip on the banknotes and strode away with a pursed lip.

But it wasn't until he arrived at the pawnshop that she had mentioned that he realized: Why was he helping her redeem those two items? When had they ever been that close?

"Hey, are you pawning something?" The small window at the pawnshop opened, and the boss stuck out half his head to ask.

Qi Taiguo handed over the pawn ticket: "Here to redeem some items."

Cheng Su had also asked him, and seeing that he indeed had time today, she had him come to help with the redemption. After all, she was truly busy. If she came here to redeem the items and then went home, it would be too late.

"That was quick." The boss took the pawn ticket, looked it over, and muttered, "Wait a moment!"

After paying the money, Qi Taiguo took the two items belonging to Cheng Su back to the military residential compound. By then it was the afternoon. The weather was exceptionally good, and several people had moved stools out into the courtyard to sit, chat, and knit.

"Hey, did you know? Commander Qi's wife was nowhere to be found these past few days!" A woman in a cloth shirt whispered mysteriously.

"Without you saying it, I also remembered; she hasn't been seen for several days." Another person chimed in.

"Look, for so many days with Commander Qi away on a mission, she's been missing; no idea what mischief she's been up to."

"Tsk, tsk, don't say that, they just got married."

"Who says it's not possible? I could tell just by her demeanor that she's a restless one. Just look, the moment Commander Qi goes on a mission, she disappears—could she have a lover on the side!"

"Hehe, you would know."

"Commander Qi really is pitiful."

"Cough, cough... shush!"

The chatter ceased, and the group of women looked up to see the man standing behind them, their faces a mix of shock and panic.

Qi Taiguo's face was as dark as the bottom of a pot, and he walked past them without expression, but his heart was already churning with shock and outrage.

During the days he hadn't been home, had that woman not been home either?

Seething, he threw the items he had redeemed from the pawnshop into Cheng Su's room and sat down on the bed, thinking about the idle gossip he had just overheard, his anger rising in waves.

He had known she was restless, but could she have dared to neglect their home? Did she not take him seriously at all?

Qi Taiguo wished he could confront Cheng Su at the eatery immediately, but remembering how busy she had been today, his rage seemed to be doused all at once.

That's right, could she have been staying at the eatery? With all the preparations she had for her business, having seen how occupied she was, it actually made sense for her to stay there—it would be convenient.

With that thought, Qi Taiguo's anger gradually subsided—he would wait for her return.

Hanging up Cheng Su's dress, Qi Taiguo glanced around the tidy room, which seemed to have been infused with Cheng Su's scent—even the air seemed to carry her touch.

This was originally his territory, but it had now been taken over!

Qi Taiguo returned to his room to write the report for his mission. Just as he was finishing up, he heard the outside door being pounded.

Upon opening it, he saw Wan Dahe at the doorway, who said urgently, "It's bad, Commander Qi, you need to go downstairs and see—your sister-in-law is downstairs having an argument with Platoon Leader Zhong's family!"

### **Chapter 80: Chapter 80: She Doesn't Abide by Women's Virtue?**

Cheng Su overestimated herself, thinking hard work was commendable, yet forgetting the darker side of human nature.

In her previous life, she could stay away from home for days on end without sleep or food for the sake of a project, a wedding venue decoration, striving for perfection.

Now, merely for convenience, staying at her workplace for two days, leaving early and returning late for work, she was gossiped about as being unfaithful, as being restless.

My God!

How can people's hearts be so dark!

She forgot that it's not the twenty-first century, but the conservative 1980s, where a woman who doesn't come home for no reason and without explanation invites suspicions and idle thoughts.

Having been busy all day, she came back only to hear such unbearable gossip; even with a good temper, she couldn't tolerate it.

Who would want others to tarnish their reputation, especially concerning a woman's virtue?

Cheng Su and the gossip-monger quarreled.

"Which eye of yours saw me fraternizing with someone else, your left eye or your right eye, or do you have an extra 'heavenly eye' on the back of your head?" Cheng Su snapped coldly, "If you don't know the facts, don't talk nonsense. What kind of family upbringing did you have? Don't you worry that your loose tongue might get you into trouble?"

He Xing, wife of Platoon Leader Zhong, turned from green to white.

"I haven't even been in this compound for more than a month, and yet you seem to know me so well, detailed and intimate. You really are something else; nobody does it better than you!" Cheng Su continued sarcastically before He Xing could reply, "But I advise you to keep some virtue in your words and not spread unfounded rumors that make everyone look bad."

"You, I—who's talking about you?" He Xing shot back.

"Everyone is listening, do you think they are all deaf fools? Wasn't it you who said I was fooling around outside? Or maybe you've been drinking in broad daylight and babbling nonsense?" Cheng Su narrowed her eyes.

"I, you..." He Xing didn't expect Cheng Su to be so quick-witted, leaving her flustered with a barrage of words; it took her a moment before she responded, "It was Chunhua who said you haven't been home for two days."

Chunhua, who was watching the commotion, was startled and quickly said, "I just said you weren't at home," though her face betrayed some panic.

Cheng Su glanced at her indifferently and said, "I opened a small diner at the school to do some business, I had to start early in the morning, busy until the afternoon. Because it wasn't convenient, and with Old Qi away, I stayed at the diner. Anyone who didn't know could've asked Qiulan. I'm living a hard life, not as leisurely as you, sitting around and shooting the breeze after a full meal."

Her comment left several faces turning blue.

But inside, Cheng Su was seething; not returning home had led to such ugly rumors.

"It's getting late, I'm hungry, why don't I go home and cook dinner instead of arguing here about nothing?" Taiguo walked over and scolded Cheng Su.

Seeing him, Cheng Su's brow furrowed; she was upset upon hearing these rumors, but what about him? Did he also think she had been unfaithful?

She obediently followed Taiguo home.

"That, um..." Cheng Su was somewhat uneasy, unsure of what he might think.

"We all live in the same compound, seeing each other daily. Why argue with her? Think it looks good?" Taiguo said sternly.

Cheng Su couldn't accept this, retorting, "Should I just tolerate it when people walk all over me, accusing me of being unfaithful? Excuse me, but this concerns my reputation, and I don't have your capacity to shrug it off."

"You still care about reputation? Who told you to not come home? Who knows what you might be doing out there?" Taiguo glared at her in dissatisfaction.