

## The 80s 781

### Chapter 781 Sowing Discord

Zhang Jisheng pricked up his ears, listening to Cheng Su's instructions about someone who would come to the store tomorrow and needed to wait, and so on.

Could it be that as soon as his wife left, he found someone to replace her?

Zhang Jisheng felt a sense of urgency.

Although he didn't quite like Qi Fenglian leaving home to work so far away, the salary that Cheng Su offered was indeed substantial—several dozen yuan a month! Where in their county could they find such an amount, when even having a dozen yuan was considered impressive!

Several dozen yuan a month added up to several hundred a year, and he heard there were year-end bonuses and profit-sharing and not particularly hard work. Plus, they provided food; it was rather comfortable.

If someone were to take her place, that would be a loss!

While Cheng Su was in the bathroom, Zhang Jisheng darted over to Xiaoying and asked, "Yingzi, are you hiring someone new here?"

Xiaoying nodded: "Yeah, we hired someone this afternoon, starting work tomorrow!"

Zhang Jisheng's brows furrowed.

After eating at the store, Zhang Jisheng left, while Cheng Su asked Xiaoying if it was common for Zhang Jisheng to bring people in for meals like this.

She remembered that the renovation crew also got meals, especially when working overtime.

"Not really, but he comes by himself," Xiaoying honestly replied, and after thinking, added, "He also has meal vouchers."

Cheng Su smiled faintly, "It's nothing, I was just asking."

Elder Sister had to work two shifts and rarely came home for dinner, so it was convenient for her husband to eat here. A meal was no big deal, but what Cheng Su disapproved of was his manner.

Just take the things he said when he first came in; he treated the shop as if it were his own, inviting his coworkers to eat!

Cheng Su shook her head as if trying to shake off her inner discomfort.

But speaking of Zhang Jisheng, he finally got to talk with his wife.

"How's Xiao Bao?" Zhang Jisheng asked bluntly.

On the other end, Qi Fenglian sounded very tired with a heavy nasal voice, "The fever has gone down, but the child has lost weight!"

Zhang Jisheng further inquired about what the doctor said.

Qi Fenglian replied to each question, saying, "I need to wait until Xiao Bao is completely better before I can go back. These few days you'll just have to make do with food on your own." The child really had become too thin, almost like he wasn't being fed enough.

Zhang Jisheng then said, "As soon as his fever is gone, you come back. Let the parents take care of him, otherwise, you might lose your job!"

Qi Fenglian was taken aback: "What do you mean by that?"

Zhang Jisheng snorted, "You don't know yet, do you? The moment you left, your sister-in-law went ahead and hired a new person, starting tomorrow! If you keep staying at home, your position will be taken by someone else!"

Qi Fenglian was stunned. They had hired someone?

"...Hello? Hello? Did you hear what I just said? Anyway, you better come back soon. Your sister-in-law isn't simple, she knows what she's doing," said Zhang Jisheng.

Qi Fenglian came back to her senses and said, "Don't make unfounded comments if you don't know the full story. It's perfectly normal to hire someone. The fast food business is good, and we're short of staff, so it's time to hire!"

"Deceive yourself if you want, but why would she hire someone exactly when you leave? Eighty percent she's trying to push you out," he retorted.

Qi Fenglian grew irritated, "Cheng Su is not that kind of person. You always see the worst in people; why would she want to push me out? I am her Elder Sister and have always been dedicated. If she really wanted to push me out, as the boss, she could just say so. And what about you—always so negative about everything? Have you forgotten how much Cheng Su has helped us with work? And you're here sowing discord!"

Zhang Jisheng, angered, shouted, "You, you just don't recognize a good heart! Fine, consider my advice useful or not, I don't care; it's up to you!"

Dudu, as Qi Fenglian listened to him hang up the phone without hesitation, she held the receiver in a daze. Did she really not care?

## Chapter 782: Repay You in the Future

Cheng Su took Shi Ling for a health check and then had her help out in the store. The little girl, Xiaohua, was asked to sit by the cash register.

Shi Ling was fearful that Cheng Su wouldn't want her, so she worked very hard, not minding what she did. From the kitchen to the front, she insisted on doing everything, making Xiaoying and Jin Zhi a bit at a loss.

Cheng Su just smiled and said there was no need for that. Once the health check was done, she allowed her to stay. When Shi Ling breathed a sigh of relief, she still didn't dare to relax. And since the store's business was visible and straightforward, she didn't find it tiring to work.

Despite advising her not to work so hard, Cheng Su let her be and turned to chat with Xiaohua who was sitting beside her, asking her if she went to school or if she knew how to count numbers.

Xiaohua shook her head and said, "I haven't gone to school, but Mom taught me how to count and do addition and subtraction." She then recited what she had learned to Cheng Su.

Cheng Su looked at her with pity. If fate had been kinder and the family's circumstances better, a child of her age would have been in kindergarten for several years already and should be attending primary school at six or seven, instead of being uprooted from her home and leading a wandering life.

Therefore, one of the reasons she had previously contemplated postponing having children was this.

Once successful in her career and with better material conditions, they as parents would have a good life, and so should the child. Everyone should lead a similar life.

She had once heard that the psychological preparation for being an ideal prospective mother should be that even if you only have yourself, you can take care of both yourself and your child's life, and then it's the right time to have a child.

Moreover, she hoped she could accompany her child as they grew and not be consumed by her career, neglecting him and missing out on the chance to be part of her child's upbringing.

Otherwise, wouldn't it be like Chunhua, where you have to choose between earning money and taking care of your child? Balancing the two is very difficult.

Cheng Su gazed into Xiaohua's dark, bright eyes, feeling a softness in her heart.

After the lunch rush, she went to the stationery store and came back with several picture books specifically for Xiaohua and even took the time to teach her how to read and do arithmetic.

From a distance, Shi Ling watched and said to Xiaoying, "President Cheng, she's really a good person."

Xiaoying, with an air of shared pride, said, "Of course, our President Cheng is a good boss, kind-hearted, and very compassionate."

After watching for a while, Shi Ling lowered her head and immersed herself in her work.

Two days later, Shi Ling's health check report came out, and she received her health certificate and officially started working at the fast food restaurant.

Now that they were settled, they wouldn't stay at a hotel anymore. Cheng Su let them, mother and daughter, stay in the attic of the fast food store at night. But mindful of an incident that had occurred in the store before and worried it might unsettle her, she explained the situation to her.

Shi Ling said, "That doesn't matter to me. In these two days, I have felt that our store is very positive. If you hadn't told me, I wouldn't have even known about such an incident. It's fine. Now that you are willing to take in my daughter and me, having a place to stay is already wonderful. Who am I to complain?"

"If you feel uncomfortable, you can rent a place to stay, at least you'll have somewhere to settle down. About the money, I can give you an advance on your salary," Cheng Su said.

Shi Ling was extremely grateful and quickly said, "Thank you, President Cheng. Finding a boss like you is such a fortune for my daughter and me. In the future, I will definitely repay you."

"Talk of repayment is unnecessary, just take care of yourself!" Cheng Su patted her shoulder and said, "Let's settle on that then. After the lunch rush, you can look around nearby if you have time. You can't always live in the store, after all!"

Shi Ling nodded, silently vowing to herself that one day she would repay Cheng Su.

## Chapter 783: Nearly Exposed

"Report, surveillance point one is secure!"

"Surveillance point two is secure!"

Through the walkie-talkie came steady reports. Qi Taiguo stood at a high position on the mountain, observing the villa below with an unobstructed view and silently nodded. He pressed his walkie-talkie and said, "Check all blind spots again, don't miss any. Set up a hidden exit for evacuation route A, double-check evacuation route B for any obstacles, and do the same for evacuation route C."

"Yes!"

Qi Taiguo slipped the walkie-talkie into the pouch on his shoulder, then picked up his binoculars to look down from his vantage point, checking each spot one by one.

The meeting was held in this villa, so the security had to be tight and careful, especially for the meeting room, which must have no blind spots and not give anyone the chance for a sniper shot.

Otherwise, if any head of state met with an accident, it would be a huge loss of face.

After scanning from afar to nearby, Qi noticed a small path on the left side of his own little mountain peak that led outside—if one didn't look carefully, it would go unnoticed.

Only after receiving messages of safety from his comrades did Qi Taiguo descend from the peak; he had to discuss the defenses with the other commanders next.

By tonight at the latest, they had to be tightly secured because tomorrow, the formal alliance would take place.

Once down at the villa, Qi Taiguo went to the meeting room, intending to check it personally.

Passing through the guestroom corridor, Qi Taiguo felt a blur before his eyes and instantly looked up, his brow slightly furrowed as he paused.

He looked around. The entire corridor was empty except for himself, not a shadow in sight.

But he had clearly just seen a shadow.

Qi Taiguo pursed his lips and moved forward, silently inspecting the area.

When he came to a storage room, his heart pounded like a drum, intuition telling him there was something inside.

As his hand reached for the doorknob, someone came out from the next room, pushing a cart.

It was a cleaning lady, who was startled upon seeing Qi Taiguo.

Qi retracted his hand and asked, "What are you doing here?"

This floor was for heads of state to rest, and every spot had been checked—it should be that no one else was here.

Frightened by Qi Taiguo's imposing manner, the cleaning lady trembled slightly and raised her dry mop, her voice shaking as she said, "Someone said there was a leak in this room, and it's been fixed by the engineers. I, I am here to clean."

Qi entered the room, looked around inside and out, and finding no other abnormalities, said, "Go ahead!"

The cleaning worker hurried away as if escaping.

Qi Taiguo shook his head, wondering if everyone, including himself, was overly tense because of the importance of the meeting.

It was said that this meeting would feature top-secret content from a certain country, and to prevent espionage, the room of that head of state was under strict surveillance, 360 degrees with no blind spots.

Qi took another look, waited a while to ensure that there were no other abnormalities, and then continued to walk forward, disappearing into the corridor.

Half a quarter hour after he left, the door to the storage room Qi Taiguo had tried to enter moved, and a man wearing a flat cap and dressed in an engineer's uniform stepped out, holding a dark blue toolbox in his hand.

He looked around the corridor and quickly left with the toolbox.

The man with the flat cap arrived behind a secluded house, removed his cap, took a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, and took a deep drag, blowing out a perfect ring of smoke while cursing, "Damn, that was fucking close, nearly got caught. Why did it have to be Old Qi who came!"

He lifted his face, his beautiful peach-blossom eyes squinting. If Qi Taiguo had been there, he would have been astonished because this man was none other than his most familiar acquaintance, Ning Ge!

#### Chapter 784: Old Qi's Acuteness

Ning Ge pinched out the cigarette in his hand, crushed it under his foot, and then put his duckbill cap back on and picked up the toolbox to head towards the engineering department of the villa.

He walked through the garden, passed the pavilions and towers, seemingly wandering aimlessly, but if you looked closely, you would find his gaze frequently checking each corner of the main building and every hidden spot in the garden.

What was he trying to do?



Qi Taiguo came out of the meeting room, stood under the window sill, and took out a cigarette and started smoking.

He cast his gaze downwards and fixed his eyes on a corner, where a man in blue overalls and a cap was carrying a toolbox.

For some reason, he felt this person looked familiar.

Qi Taiguo furrowed his brows and moved his steps, just about to get a clear look, but the person had disappeared.

His eyes scanned around, but he could not find the person anywhere.

Why did he always feel something was off?

Qi Taiguo cared a lot about this feeling; his experience from multiple missions told him that such a feeling was a bad sign.

"All units be aware, if you spot any suspicious individuals, conduct a full search upon discovery," Qi Taiguo said into the walkie-talkie.

"Yes!"

Most of the missions Qi Taiguo had been on before were filled with gunfire and direct confrontations; he rarely dealt with security tasks like this one.

With such security assignments, there wasn't the rush of moving through fire like usual, but alertness had to be maintained all the same because there might be spies lurking, waiting to strike.

Therefore, Qi Taiguo found everything suspicious.

This was somewhat frustrating; he preferred actual combat to such missions where, like a wild cat, one had to remain continuously on high alert.

"Old Qi!"

Someone slapped his shoulder, and Qi Taiguo, like a startled bird, swung a sharp elbow backwards.

"Hey, hey, it's me!" the person stepped back, hands raised.

Qi Taiguo turned around and saw it was Ren Yang, a fellow company commander from a different military region assigned to the mission, who was about the same age as him.

"Oh, it's you," Qi Taiguo relaxed and pulled out a cigarette to offer him.

Ren Yang took it, lit it, and said, "Who did you think it was, the enemy?"

Qi Taiguo looked back towards the garden below and said, "Sorry, I'm just a bit too on edge."

"First time on this kind of mission? I get it. I've been there too, finding everyone suspicious and everything problematic," Ren Yang laughed, joining him at the window sill to overlook the garden below, "You'll get used to it after the first time."

Qi Taiguo gave a wry smile and said, "Honestly, I'd rather be fighting a war."

"All the lads in the military feel that way. Security work like this does seem like overkill, but it's good for training your vigilance," Ren Yang raised an eyebrow, "I've heard about your past deeds. You earned more military merits in direct combat than you would in tasks like these."

"It's not all about the military merits, just that it feels more satisfying, I guess!" Qi Taiguo replied.

"True!"

The two of them smoked and chatted while looking down at the swaying coconut palms in the garden, which was tough for Ning Ge, hidden in the bushes—damn, why was he so unlucky?

How long were these two going to chat, and did they know how many mosquitoes were here?

Ning Ge swept a glance left and right, then looked up at the window where Qi Taiguo and his companion were, gritted his teeth, and crawled from beneath the pavilion behind him.

Damn it, if he hadn't been worried about Qi Taiguo noticing him, why would he have to crawl like a snail? That guy's keenness was just too intense!

Chapter 785: To Go or Not to Go to the Dark Alley?

Qi Fenglian returned to her hometown, Cheng Su had no choice but to help out in the fast food restaurant at the train station, leaving early and coming back late every day, barely seen during daylight hours. Chunhua and the others were all very puzzled, wasn't she supposed to be secluding herself to study and prepare for the university entrance exams?

Cheng Su was left without options; even though there was Shi Ling at the store, handling the cash and general management still required someone's oversight.

In the past, they had thought Qi Fenglian alone could handle everything, but now it became clear that just one supervisor wasn't enough. Once someone took leave or needed to rest, they would be hamstrung.

Cheng Su quietly observed the several employees in the store; Shi Ling was the newcomer, eager to establish a solid footing, hence, exceptionally hardworking, volunteering for all sorts of tasks.

Xiaoying was nimble, most adept at reading expressions and situations, with a quick mind.

As for Jin Zhi, she was more reserved, but also quite thoughtful.

All were quite decent people, but to pick one that could be trusted to temporarily handle the cash and take charge, careful scrutiny was still necessary.

"Xiaohua, time to start learning your letters." Cheng Su shifted her gaze and called out to Xiaohua, who sat obediently by her side.

Zhang Jisheng hadn't been going to the train station fast food restaurant to have dinner lately. Why? Because Cheng Su was there, he felt awkward and uncomfortable, so he dined out instead.

Eating at the fast food restaurant didn't cost much, but just looking at Cheng Su made him lose his appetite, so why bother?

That evening, the foreman, Dazhi, treated everyone to dinner at a restaurant. After a few drinks, the talk turned crude.

After leaving the restaurant, Zhang Jisheng's coworkers draped an arm over his shoulder and jocularly patted his hand, saying, "Brother Zhang, your wife hasn't been home these past few days, right?"

Zhang Jisheng belched from the alcohol and replied, "The kid was sick, so she went back home."

"Hehe, it must get pretty lonely at night, eh?" The coworker laughed suggestively.

Whether it was the alcohol or something else, Zhang Jisheng's face tinted red, and he stammered, "We're an old married couple, we already have two kids, what's there to be lonely about? Isn't it just all the same?"

"Nonsense, you're in the prime of your life now!" The man chuckled slyly, leaned closer, and said, "Brother Zhang, do you want to come and relax a bit with us?"

Zhang Jisheng was taken aback, somewhat confused.

"We're going to the back alley; it's cheap, there are ones that cost just a few yuan."

Giving such a clear hint, Zhang Jisheng was no stranger to such people.

In every city, there are always some back alleys where transactions are conducted. Sometimes, as Zhang Jisheng walked home from work at night and passed by some alleys, he would also see some stylishly-dressed, sexy women standing in the lane, beckoning to the passing men.

Zhang Jisheng would always hurry past, afraid that the scandalous Goblins would ensnare his soul, while Qi Fenglian had repeatedly warned him, saying those people were dirty.

Thus, Zhang Jisheng had never been to any back alley; in other words, he'd never frequented prostitutes.

But in the construction crew, they were all men, and moreover, men who were far from home with wives waiting back in their hometowns. Couples like Jisheng and his wife, both working in the same place, were rare.

A man's vigor is strong; when they start missing women, it was only natural to head to the back alleys.

Zhang Jisheng blushed and, catching sight of Cheng Su's uncle following not far behind, shook his head even more vehemently, saying, "No, no, I won't go."

"Oh come on, what's there to be afraid of? I'll take you for a bit of fun; they're better than the old lady at home." The coworker grinned mischievously.

"Really, I won't go, I'm leaving first." Zhang Jisheng waved his hand dismissively and walked away briskly.

Laughter erupted from the crowd behind him.

That night, Zhang Jisheng dreamt all night of those little Goblins wearing tank tops.

Chapter 786: You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat it Too

Qi Fenglian returned to her parent's home, a child in tow and fury churning in her belly.

As always, Father Qi was busy weaving bamboo baskets, while Mother Qi was washing clothes by the well in the courtyard. They both seemed surprised to see Qi Fenglian arrive.

"Fenglian, why have you come back?" Mother Qi stood up and dried her soaking hands on her apron, asking without a second thought, "That Thai daughter-in-law doesn't need you to work for her anymore?"

Father Qi gave her a warning look.

Mother Qi looked sheepish.

Qi Fenglian was defeated by her mother's words and said, "Mom, what are you talking about? Xiao Bao has had a high fever for the past few days, and I rushed back because of that!"

"He's got a fever?" The elders quickly turned to look at the child she was carrying on her back.

"Oh my dear grandchild, what's happened to you, how did you get so skinny?" Mother Qi exclaimed loudly.

Father Qi glanced over and frowned as well.

Tears welled up in Qi Fenglian's eyes. "What else could it be, it's the doing of his grandmother. Dad, Mom, I just can't understand how someone can only care for their grandchild from outside the family and not bother to feed their own? And to think she would always boast about how dear her eldest grandson is."

Hearing the tone of her words, Father Qi, noticing Granny Pan peering over from next door, said, "Let's talk inside."

Qi Fenglian sniffled and went inside to put the child down, and Mother Qi took over, loudly saying, "Look how light he is, look how light! What a sin!" "What happened?" Father Qi, seeing the child's listless disposition, couldn't help but ask.

A flicker of resentment passed through Qi Fenglian's eyes, as she said, aggrieved, "My husband and I went to work in Qing City, leaving the child with his paternal grandparents, and he's been fed nothing but formula. Dad, you know how expensive this stuff is, and yet, with Baobao being so young, I had to leave him to work. There was no choice, even if it was costly, he had to eat it for the nutrition."

"We bought formula and instructed his grandmother to feed him, but she went ahead and fed it to her grandson from the other side of the family, leaving not enough for Baobao. Just a spoon or two of formula mixed with a whole pot of water. Tell me, without proper nutrition, how could the child not lose weight?" Qi Fenglian began to cry.

"This damned evil witch, with such a heart of darkness, neglecting her own grandchild and favoring someone else's. Has she gone mad? Oh, my poor Baobao, Granny feels so heartbroken." Hearing this, Mother Qi also cursed vehemently.

"Are you certain it was given to the other grandchild?" Father Qi interjected, "We don't want to make a mistake."

"A mistake? Xiao Yun told me herself, and her grandmother even told her not to tell me," Qi Fenglian said resentfully.

"This witch has truly gone mad. She doesn't think how hard it was for us to have this grandson, not cherishing him and mistreating him like this. I must confront her and set things straight," said Mother Qi defensively, not considering that Baobao was also an external grandchild to her; she only saw the suffering of her daughter's child.

"Just calm down," Father Qi glared at her.

Mother Qi's face darkened and she said, "Old man, that's your own grandson, look at how skinny he's become?"

"That's still a matter for the Zhang family to deal with. If Fenglian wants to work outside, these two old people are the ones who need to look after the child. What grounds do we have to argue? If you want to take care of the child yourself, then you can't work outside. If you depend on the elders, you have no right to complain. You can't have it both ways," said Father Qi calmly.

Qi Fenglian stood in shock, then lowered her head and started to cry softly.

#### Chapter 787: Elder Sister's Resentment

Mother Qi stared blankly at her daughter, who was crying out loud, holding her grandson and feeling a bit at a loss. She looked at her husband and said, "Are we just going to stand by and watch her mistreat Baobao?"

She also didn't understand the Zhang family's wicked old hag, who had been yearning for a grandson and finally got a great-grandson. Wasn't she supposed to cherish and pamper him, wishing to give him all the best things in the world? But now, it seemed not to be the case; the old hag was more concerned about her step-grandchild, preferring her own grandson to eat less so that the step-grandchild could have the formula!

What kind of nonsense was this, who does that!

"Is Baobao only eating formula now?" Father Qi asked.

Qi Fenglian wiped away her tears and said, "He also eats porridge and meals, but everyone says that formula is high in nutrition."

"Nonsense, people need food like iron needs steel. The most nourishing thing is rice. Can the foreign devils' stuff be better than our rice?" Father Qi glared at her and said, "Formula is a luxury item; it doesn't necessarily raise a child to be healthy. In fact, in my opinion, it's not as good as rice porridge. All the children in the countryside are raised tough, aren't they?"

"Yes, yes, when you all were little, didn't you also grow up eating sweet potatoes and porridge? And you were all raised to be strong and healthy," Mother Qi agreed.

Qi Fenglian's face turned slightly red as she said, "When I went to Qing City, I forcibly weaned Baobao off breast milk, thinking about feeding him formula. I..."

She couldn't continue.



After pulling out some tobacco, Father Qi rolled it in paper, licked the edge to seal it, and lit it with a match. He took a drag and said, "All in all, it's really the in-laws who are not doing their duty. If formula isn't filling, won't rice mush and gruel be filling?"

Qi Fenglian's eyes reddened again, filled with intense resentment mixed with a sense of helplessness.

"It's really a sin, he's their own grandson after all. I can't believe that old hag and her family can do such things," Mother Qi was extremely angry.

"Enough, enough, don't talk about that anymore," Father Qi frowned irritably at her and then turned to Qi Fenglian, "When you go back, you must speak nicely to your in-laws. And don't be too fixated on that formula. The main thing should still be the gruel. Xiao Yun is grown up now; let her help look after the baby. She's a good girl and surely won't treat her own brother unfairly."

Qi Fenglian nodded and said, "Dad, Mom, I really regret it now. Why did I choose such a family in the first place?"

"The kids are already born; what's the point in saying this now? When a problem arises, the only thing we can do is solve it. You want to earn money and take care of the children at the same time, where is there such an easy thing?" Father Qi sighed, "Fenglian, you have to know what's good for you."

Qi Fenglian dabbed the corner of her eyes and said, "Dad, I know all that. If it wasn't because I wanted to escape this crab cage, why would I bear to leave Baobao and the others behind? Just seeing Baobao sick and unclear, it's like someone gouged out my heart. But if I don't go, I guess my life would just stay the same forever."

It was to break out of that prison that she had the heart to be so ruthless.

Father Qi took another puff of his cigarette, his words on the tip of his tongue but he hesitated, and what he was about to say changed.

"You'll have to talk to Jisheng about this. If he speaks up, it will be better than if you say it. Normally, just be generous, buy some nice food and useful things for your in-laws, give them some money. They surely won't really neglect the two children, after all, they are their own grandchildren!" Father Qi said.

Qi Fenglian nodded and said, "Now Jisheng's salary, all of it goes to his mother, and the expenses are all mine. Even so, she hasn't taken good care of Baobao and the others. When they grow old one day, they better not expect us to beg them."

It was the suffering of her son that made her the most upset and uncontrollably angry. The money was given with the expectation that they'd take to heart raising the children, but upon returning home, what she saw was two skinny children.

#### Chapter 788: You're Also One That Won't Be Domesticated

After staying at her parents' house for a while, Qi Fenglian said she wanted to head home, and Mother Qi followed her out.

"Mom, what is it?" Qi Fenglian wasn't in a good mood and didn't pay much attention to the old lady's expression.

Mother Qi first carefully glanced inside the house and, seeing that Father Qi hadn't come out, pulled Qi Fenglian aside and asked, "Have you been to Taiguo's place?"

"No, what happened?" Qi Fenglian didn't understand.

Mother Qi hesitated before asking, "Nothing much, it's just that your eldest brother hasn't called me for a long time."

Qi Fenglian paused, then said, "Maybe he's busy in Taiguo!"

"Even if he is busy, doesn't he have time to make a phone call? We have a phone at home, and he has one in his office, he clearly just doesn't want to call me. I know your eldest brother has been influenced by that woman and doesn't even acknowledge his own mother anymore!" As she spoke, Mother Qi began lifting her clothes to wipe the corners of her eyes.

Qi Fenglian furrowed her brow and said, "Mom, don't you think such words sting? How could Taiguo not acknowledge you? You shouldn't jump to conclusions like that."

"Then why hasn't he called back? Last time I said I was sick, he showed no concern at all," Mother Qi retorted.

At the mention of this, Qi Fenglian's complexion soured, and she said, "Mom, that's where you did wrong. At your age, you can't joke about your health. What if something really happened? How would our family deal with the guilt? Don't do such things again in the future!" Mother Qi snorted, "I think this house would rather see me dead, no one cares about me."

"Mom, if you keep this attitude, people in the house will indeed start to distance themselves from you. Maybe Taiguo is angry that's why he doesn't call back," Qi Fenglian sighed and said, "Mom, you should also stop meddling in Taiguo and his wife's affairs. Whatever they want to do, let them be. Why intervene and disrupt the peace at home? They're married and already have a child. What are they going to do next, get divorced? Taiguo is a soldier, how could he get divorced? Mom, just think of Cheng Su's good points!"

Mother Qi found these words particularly grating and said coldly, "I don't have any control over them anyway. Go on, walk away, you're just another one I can't count on!"

Qi Fenglian shook her head, heading home. Thinking of Zhang Jisheng's words, she went by the convenience store to call the fast food restaurant.

The call was answered by Cheng Su. Qi Fenglian explained her situation and that she'd only be able to return in a couple of days.

"Well, then you should stay with Xiao Bao for a couple more days, the child is what matters most," Cheng Su said understandingly.

Qi Fenglian heard this and felt a sudden twinge in her heart. She asked, "Is the store managing alright without me?"

When she heard Cheng Su say that it was okay and that they had hired a new person to help, she exclaimed, "Why so sudden? You never mentioned it before."

Cheng Su shared his concerns, "It's like this; when you need to take time off, there's no one to manage the store. I can come over, but what if there comes a time when I can't get away? We can't just abandon it, can we?"

Qi Fenglian tentatively asked, "So should we promote someone to handle the cash and manage?"

"Let's wait and see how things go; it might be time to promote someone, otherwise who will step in when you take a break?" Cheng Su said, "Let's talk about this when you come back, shall we? It's almost time to open up for the day!"

Qi Fenglian hung up the phone feeling downcast and pursed her lips as she walked back to her in-laws' home.

With the child still a worry on one hand, and her work something she couldn't let go on the other, if she were absent for too long, who would remember her?

Behind her, Baobao suddenly cried out, and Qi Fenglian quickly patted his buttocks to soothe him, her heart feeling a wave of sorrow.

You can't have your cake and eat it too; you just can't.

What should she do, when her life seemed so desperate?

## Chapter 789: Spy

Since Qi Fenglian couldn't return for the time being, Cheng Su had no choice but to extend her time helping out at the fast food restaurant. Thankfully, there was still a telephone, allowing her to remotely oversee the main Joy Soon Loy store and company business. Although it kept her busy, she was still able to manage everything.

While Cheng Su was busy and tense, the mission for Qi Taiguo was equally stressful. As the heads of state settled into the villa, he watched over them like an owl, terrified that even the slightest issue might arise.

The conference went smoothly and was nearing its conclusion without any trouble—right when Qi Taiguo was about to breathe a sigh of relief, chaos broke out in the villa.

First, during the press conference, an unidentified gas appeared in the meeting room, causing pandemonium. All the important individuals were immediately arranged to be evacuated.

While the situation in the meeting room was still unresolved, Qi Taiguo felt a pang on his shoulder as a sentry in a guest room was attacked: "Spy, there's a spy lurking."

Qi Taiguo's head buzzed, and he instructed his companions through the walkie-talkie to block all exits while he himself sprinted toward the attacked guest room.

The guest room that had been attacked belonged to a certain country holding top-secret content; their bodyguards were guarding it, but now, they lay sprawled at the door.

Qi Taiguo radiated an intense aura as he barged into the room, where two of his own men were scattered on the ground in disarray.

One moved slightly, and Qi Taiguo rushed over. His comrade pointed towards the window and then passed out.

It was only then that Qi Taiguo noticed the window wide open, the gentle breeze causing the curtains to flutter softly.

There was the sound of rapid footsteps running towards the room, and Qi Taiguo heard a burst of garbled English exclaim loudly. Without a second thought, he dashed to the window.

Looking down, he saw a nimble figure just having scaled down the drainage pipe and jumped to the ground.

Qi Taiguo's eyes widened abruptly as he yanked the curtain and leaped onto the pipe, climbing down swiftly like a gecko.

The "foreign devils" had already pounced over and naturally saw what was happening; they too jumped down, while others ran out from the building, trying to encircle the target.

Climbing was something Qi Taiguo had done frequently in past training missions. This year, during the team's training, he had set up tree-climbing exercises. As the commanding officer, determined to lead by example and maintain strict personal discipline, he had climbed a few times himself.

Therefore, scaling down a pipe wasn't really a big deal for him.

The guest room was on the second floor, and in the blink of an eye, only about two or three meters remained to the ground. Qi Taiguo jumped, curling himself into a ball as he landed.

Without waiting to catch his breath, he unfurled his limbs and sprang up from the ground, chasing after the shadow ahead like a moose.

Far ahead, the figure wore dark blue work pants and a duckbill cap, running with agile and well-practiced movements.

Qi Taiguo, seeing the direction of the escapee's run towards the back mountain, knew it would become even harder to catch them once there and consequently hastened his steps.

Thanks to the devilishly tough training he had undergone that year, Qi Taiguo's abilities had significantly improved. With this burst of speed, he quickly closed the gap to just five meters from the target.

"Stop, you can't escape!" Qi Taiguo yelled, simultaneously drawing his pistol from his waist.

Hearing Qi Taiguo's shout, the runner hesitated for a brief moment, then sped off even faster.

Bang.

The gunshot from Qi Taiguo hit the ground just beneath the escapee's feet, spraying dirt up from a hole.

The figure hesitated again, and in the critical moment of flight, that hesitation allowed Qi Taiguo to grab hold of the hat and yank it off, causing the person to turn around.

"You!" Qi Taiguo's eyes widened, his face filled with shock.

Chapter 790: What Exactly is Your Identity?

Qi Taiguo stared at the person in front of him with eyes full of horror, as shocked as if he had been struck by lightning, "How is it you, how? Ning... Ge, what are you doing here?"

Unexpectedly, absolutely unexpectedly, the so-called spy he was chasing turned out to be that young man Ning Ge.

How is this possible, how could it be?

Ning Ge snatched his hat back from his hand, dropped a sentence, "I'll explain to you later," and continued to run forward.

Qi Taiguo was dumbfounded and chased after him, then heard the sound of footsteps chasing from not far behind, and yelled lowly, "There's a hidden path on the back mountain peak, take that way!"

Ning Ge seemed a bit incredulous, made a gesture, and ran even faster.

Qi Taiguo gritted his teeth, turned around, and ran in a different direction, with the people behind him following closely.

No matter what Ning Ge's identity was, whether he was really a spy, or something else. Right now, he couldn't let him get caught.

Just take it as, he violated the rules this one time!

With Qi Taiguo's help to cover, Ning Ge quickly shook off his pursuers and found the secret path that Qi Taiguo mentioned, plunging into it without hesitation.

Relying on his previous training, Ning Ge quickly emerged from the back mountain to a main road. He looked back once, pressed against the thing in his chest, bit his lip slightly, and took off running.

The chaos at the mountain villa was quickly settled, merely a false alarm, but that certain country that lost the top-secret documents, unable to catch the person, scolded the bodyguards in a flurry before quickly leaving by car.

Qi Taiguo and his team were responsible for the security, and naturally, they would be held responsible for this incident. However, the guest room, due to privacy concerns, was not guarded by their people but by the bodyguards of the other party.

Hence, even though they would be punished by the commander and held accountable for the incident, the specifics would have to be discussed later. After all, as for the lost object, none of them knew what it was.

Fortunately, since the chaos occurred toward the end of the conference, to prevent another incident, most of the important figures had already left.

Qi Taiguo and the others were summoned by the commander to attend a meeting. Each person had to submit a detailed report, and Qi Taiguo's report was especially crucial since he was the one chasing the 'spy.'

"Was that person really that good? You didn't catch him?" Ren Yang followed Qi Taiguo out of the conference room and asked.

Qi Taiguo's gaze flickered, and he looked up with an expression of annoyance, "Couldn't catch him, that person ran extremely fast, and is very good at finding hiding places. I suspect he has received professional training."



These last words were true. Watching Ning Ge move with such fluidity and not a hint of sloppiness, he wouldn't believe for a second that Ning Ge hadn't received professional specialized training.

"So many people from different countries came this time, who knows who he belonged to; it might not even be one of ours," Ren Yang said in a low voice.

"Who knows!" Qi Taiguo was still annoyed and said, "This time I lost the chase, which dragged everyone down. It's my fault."

"Hey, why talk about that? Who says missions always succeed? And besides, they say something was lost, but who knows what it was, or if it was true? As long as we protected the people and no one got hurt or killed, it's a success!" Ren Yang said nonchalantly, then whispered, "And besides, they say it's a spy, but who knows for sure? I heard there are secret organizations that specifically train agents for theft, assassination, and the like."

Qi Taiguo's heart tightened, and he pursed his lips. Could it be that way?

Ning Ge, what exactly is your identity?