

The 80s 801

Chapter 801: The Brother-in-Law's Scheme

According to Cheng Su, regarding Zhang Jisheng's matter, it's best to pretend not to know. Qi Taiguo agreed, but deep down he felt uneasy, thinking that Zhang Jisheng must be given a lesson.

So, he informed his elder sister that he was going to have a few drinks with Zhang Jisheng that evening.

Cheng Su didn't quite agree with Qi Taiguo's approach, fearing he might act impulsively. But after thinking about it, giving a gentle warning was much better than dealing with a problem after it occurred, so she let him go.

Zhang Jisheng, upon receiving the notification from his wife, felt chills running down his spine. Of all the people in the world, the one he feared most was his military brother-in-law. Now this brother-in-law said he wanted to have a few drinks with him?

As the saying goes, no one visits the temple without a reason. His brother-in-law is usually busy with the military, a very busy person. Why would he suddenly want to come and drink with him?

Could it be that his secret had been discovered?

Zhang Jisheng's face turned pale, but he forced himself to calm down. It was impossible; he hadn't told anyone about this matter. No one could possibly know.

So, was he really here to drink?

Just as he was lost in thought, Qi Taiguo arrived, carrying several packed dishes, a bag of peanuts, and two bottles of strong liquor.

Goodness, strong liquor!

Seeing this, Zhang Jisheng felt a burning sensation from his tongue to his stomach, secretly warning himself not to get drunk and say something he shouldn't.

"Isn't the military busy? How do you have time to come over and drink with me, Taiguo?" Zhang Jisheng asked with a smile, trying to act calm as he opened the dishes Qi Taiguo had brought.

"Brother-in-law, you all have been working in Qing City for several months now. I'm usually busy, and so are you; there's no time to come home for a meal. Thinking about how it's been many years and we haven't had a good drink together, I came over since I had some time to sit with you!" Qi Taiguo replied seriously.

Zhang Jisheng responded with an "Oh," taking out two small cups to prepare to pour the liquor.

But Qi Taiguo covered the bottle's opening with his hand, saying, "What's the point of using small cups for men to drink? We should use big bowls. Go get the bowls, we'll drink with those!"

Big bowls!

Zhang Jisheng's head buzzed, but under Qi Taiguo's sharp gaze, he had no choice but to switch to bowls. He said, "Us brothers-in-law will just drink casually today. Your elder sister went back to our hometown recently, and I haven't been eating well, so my stomach feels a bit uncomfortable!"

How dare he say that? Qi Taiguo's expression darkened, thinking, isn't there some dirt behind those words?

They poured the liquor and started drinking, alternating between meat and drinks.

"My elder sister has been married to you for more than ten years. When she got married back then, I was reluctant and insisted you promise to treat her well and protect her, only then was I willing to let her leave home." Qi Taiguo reminisced.

"Ah, yes!" Zhang Jisheng replied with an awkward smile, somewhat unsure of his brother-in-law's approach.

"But after my elder sister joined your Zhang family, she hasn't had many good days. If it weren't for her unwavering loyalty to you, I would have taken her back. Look, when Baobao was born, wasn't my elder sister suffering? If not for my wife, who knows if my elder sister and Baobao would still be here." Qi Taiguo's tone started to intensify.

Zhang Jisheng frowned slightly. What was this? Coming over to dig up old grievances and question him?

But he had to respond, so he said, "It's all thanks to the Bodhisattva blessing our Zhang family! Both Fenglian and the child have great fortune."

What nonsense about Bodhisattva's blessing. If Cheng Su hadn't decisively signed for a cesarean, lives would've been lost. Bodhisattva indeed!

Qi Taiguo heavily placed his wine bowl on the table, spilling some of the liquid, and looked coldly at Zhang Jisheng.

Zhang Jisheng was startled, swallowing, "Taiguo, wh-what's wrong?"

Chapter 802: Drunken Revelations

Frightened by Qi Taiguo's cold face, Zhang Jisheng was almost scared out of his wits, his hands trembling.

Qi Taiguo, however, smirked sarcastically and said, "Yes, big sister is someone blessed with fortune." After pausing for a moment, he continued, "So, brother-in-law, you must cherish her well. Big sister almost sacrificed her life to give you a son, has endured hardships with you for over ten years, yet if you still don't cherish her, what kind of person are you?!"

Zhang Jisheng's lips twitched slightly as he said, "I, I will definitely cherish her. Your big sister is a good woman. Being able to marry her is my blessing!"

"It's good that you know! Whether the Zhang family treats her well, I don't really want to interfere, as long as they don't bully her. But if you, brother-in-law, don't treat her well when she married you, bore your children, and took care of the elderly, I will be the first to not agree!" Qi Taiguo's lips curled coldly as he warned.

Cold sweat appeared on Zhang Jisheng's forehead as he forced a smile and said, "Don't worry, I will definitely treat her well." He thought, this wine indeed isn't good wine, and this meal isn't a good meal; it's a trap.

He picked up the wine bowl and took a small sip to calm his nerves, but as soon as Qi Taiguo suddenly said something, he spewed the wine out.

"When I came in just now, I seemed to see some disreputable women standing in those alleys." Qi Taiguo said casually.

Pff!

Qi Taiguo dodged quickly, a glint flashing in his eyes.

Zhang Jisheng coughed twice and stammered, "Don't look at them, those people, they're not doing honest work."

Qi Taiguo squinted his eyes and said, "Looks like brother-in-law knows what they're doing!"

Zhang Jisheng avoided his gaze, poured more wine for himself, and filled Qi Taiguo's cup too, saying, "I heard it from my workmates."

Qi Taiguo snorted, "Those women are in the flesh trade, slept with by countless men. Who knows if they have some filthy diseases? Men must be fools to mess around."

Zhang Jisheng's face changed color. Filthy diseases?

"I, I heard a few workmates say, that if you wear those things, you're not afraid." Zhang Jisheng said in a low voice.

Qi Taiguo listened, and his expression darkened further.

"Even with protection, it's still dirty. Who knows if there are hidden diseases? People like that are the most cunning." Qi Taiguo said while glaring coldly at him, "Brother-in-law, you wouldn't be thinking about trying it, would you?"

Zhang Jisheng's hand trembled, spilling some of the freshly poured wine, his face frightened, "I, how could I? People only go to those women when their wives aren't around. I have a wife."

"Whether or not your wife is around, you shouldn't go. If you catch something, won't it be a terrible loss?" Qi Taiguo suppressed his temper, gritting his teeth, "People like that can ruin your family in a heartbeat."

"Yes, yes!" Zhang Jisheng laughed awkwardly, using drinking to hide his panic.

Qi Taiguo looked at the spilled wine on the table, his handsome face dark as the bottom of a pot, extremely unpleasant to behold.

This Zhang Jisheng clearly had a guilty conscience; claiming he had nothing to hide was something Qi Taiguo would never believe.

Qi Taiguo kept a cold face, persistently urging him to drink. Zhang Jisheng, harboring secrets and filled with fear, drank one cup after another. After finishing two bottles, he was quite drunk too.

"Brother-in-law. I heard those girls have good skills. Be honest, have you gone looking for them?" Qi Taiguo's eyes were reddened from the liquor, though he still retained a slight clarity.

Zhang Jisheng, now heavily intoxicated, heard and foolishly laughed, saying, "Good skills, Fangfang is skilled. She gives me... your big sister won't..."

"Bastard!" Qi Taiguo punched him.

The table overturned, everything was in chaos.

Chapter 803: Beat Him Up

Qi Taiguo had already mentally prepared himself and listened to Cheng Su's advice not to act impulsively. But even so, when he heard Zhang Jisheng had really done such a dirty thing, he lost his temper immediately.

He was a seasoned soldier; his punch, taken with anger, struck Zhang Jisheng, who was already dazed, causing him to pass out completely.

Qi Taiguo still wasn't satisfied, so he slapped him twice more, swelling Zhang's face, and only then did he leave, slamming the door as he went home.

It was imaginable how Qi Fenglian reacted when she got home and saw the situation; she screamed immediately.

But she woke Zhang Jisheng, who was babbling, and assumed he was just drunk. Yet the room was such a mess, with the table overturned; she couldn't tell if it was from a fight or because of Zhang Jisheng's drunkenness. Qi Taiguo had already left, so she could only let it go.

Qi Taiguo returned home, barely holding on to clarity, and collapsed, cursing, "Zhang Jisheng, that bastard!"

Cheng Su didn't understand the situation but attended to him first.

The next day, she received a call from her Elder Sister and was shocked.

When Qi Taiguo returned from the morning drill, she asked, "Did you hit Zhang Jisheng?"

Qi Taiguo's face turned cold, "He deserved it, that good-for-nothing, bastard, damn it."

Cheng Su was stunned; after all these years of marriage, it was the first time she had heard Qi Taiguo curse like this, and suddenly she formed an idea in her mind.

"Did Zhang Jisheng really do it?" she asked tentatively.

Qi Taiguo said coldly, "At first, he wouldn't admit it no matter what. But after downing two bottles of baijiu, he started confessing under the influence, damn it."

Cheng Su suddenly felt nauseous.

"Did you tell Elder Sister?"

Qi Taiguo gave a bitter smile, "How could I dare? If I really did, what would happen to her?"

"Then, what about Zhang Jisheng?" Cheng Su asked again.

"I don't know about that piece of trash. If he had any self-awareness, he'd know what to do from now on. Bastard, garbage!" Qi Taiguo was furious as he cursed and walked towards the bathroom.

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Zhang Jisheng woke up from his drunken state and found his face swollen like a pig's head and couldn't help but cry out.

"Drink, drink a couple of shots of horse urine, and you get yourself a blue nose and a swollen face. Zhang Jisheng, you really are something!" Qi Fenglian came over with a couple of hot boiled eggs and pressed them against his face.

Zhang Jisheng stared blankly, letting her roll the eggs on his face and asked dumbly, "Fell, fell and got it?"

How could that be possible? At home, could you fall like this? More like being beaten up!

"Who knows with you guys, if it's not from falling, did you and your brother-in-law get into a fight?" Qi Fenglian said irritably.

Zhang Jisheng's heart skipped a beat as he recalled last night's events, but he couldn't remember anything.

"Did I hit Taiguo?" He could only ask Qi Fenglian.

"With your build, you could beat Taiguo? More like he would beat you." Qi Fenglian snorted.

He hit me!

In Zhang Jisheng's memory, a flash of an image seemed to pass by; Qi Taiguo had hit him.

Why did he hit him?

Did he say something? Was he drunk?

Yes, only being drunk would make him not remember anything that happened. So what did he say to anger Qi Taiguo?

Did he mention that thing? Oh God, if he did, it would be strange if Qi Taiguo didn't hit him, he might even kill him!

It's over, it's over, he must have said it, how else would a fall be so serious?

Zhang Jisheng's face turned pale with regret and remorse, cursing alcohol, that harmful thing. If he had known, he wouldn't have drunk it. Now what? Did he spill the secret or not?

Chapter 804: The Jiangs and Lus Are a Thorn in the Side

Zhang Jisheng was plunged into panic; he was unsure whether he had revealed his secret and whether that's why Qi Taiguo hit him.

He waited anxiously; if he had said it, Qi Taiguo surely wouldn't let him off!

But after two days, Qi Taiguo hadn't come looking for trouble, so he felt relieved. Could it be that he hadn't let it slip?

Then why the beating? What a brute!

What he didn't know was that Qi Taiguo was not avoiding confrontation but feared that he might lose control and kill him, and more so, feared that the elder sister might catch on.

He thought to let him remain in fear and see if he'd dare to act recklessly in the future.

June arrived, the weather warmed, and Cheng Su grew tense because her first college entrance exam since her rebirth was only days away.

To ease her preparation stress, Qi Taiguo handled most of the household chores but insisted Cheng Su cook, believing in balancing work and leisure, not pulling too tight.

On June 5th, Cheng Su's birthday, Qi Taiguo bought her a big bouquet of roses early in the morning.

"We didn't have this last year!" Cheng Su raised her eyebrows.

Qi Taiguo thought for a moment and said: "Wasn't there a mission at that time? I'll buy for you every year from now on."

Cheng Su smiled, kissed him on the cheek, fetched a vase, trimmed, and arranged the roses. To be fair, last year he didn't send flowers, and she herself forgot about her birthday until later checking her household registration documents revealed it had passed.

Qi Taiguo ordered a few dishes for Cheng Su to prepare, intending to give her a proper celebration.

Unexpectedly, Ning Ge showed up coincidentally.

Since learning Ning Ge's identity, Qi Taiguo felt very complicated whenever he saw him.

Upon hearing it was Cheng Su's birthday today, Ning Ge said: "Why didn't you mention earlier? I didn't prepare a gift, I'll make up for it later!"

Cheng Su said: "That's thoughtful, why don't you stay for dinner?"

Not the least bit embarrassed, Ning Ge said: "I planned to crash the meal anyway, should I call Xiao Ya over?"

Cheng Su replied: "I'm the host; I'll invite her." With that, she called Ying Xiaoya and then took a basket to the farmer's market for groceries.

Once she left, Qi Taiguo and Ning Ge closed the door for a conversation.

"Is everything handled with that matter?" Qi Taiguo offered him a cigarette.

"Haven't you seen the news? The two countries have started a fight over an island?" Ning Ge smiled smugly.

Qi Taiguo said: "So it's done?"

"Sort of. But in our line, nothing is ever really done; there's still lots of intelligence being gathered," Ning Ge said.

"Hmm?"

"I have reason to suspect Jiang Conghe and the Loo Family aren't clean," Ning Ge's eyes flashed coldly.

Hearing this, Qi Taiguo immediately sat upright and asked: "Any evidence?"

"Evidence is scarce, well, almost none," Ning Ge saw Qi Taiguo's look of disappointment and added: "Don't overthink. The Loo Family has been established since the turmoil and has developed its networks over many years, not in a day. As for Jiang Conghe, while unreliable dealing with Chiang Qing's matter, he's still a commander; the past years haven't been a waste."

Which means, no matter how arrogant Jiang Conghe might be, he's not entirely incapable, and the networks developed are not minor, pulling them down is no simple task.

Qi Taiguo felt a bit anxious; the Jiang and Loo families were his thorn, without them stepping down, he couldn't feel at ease.

Chapter 805: The Enemy of My Enemy Is My Friend

Qi Taiguo's thoughts were clear to Ning Ge at a glance, and he understood them. Even he wanted to quickly pull these people down from power!

But he also knew that some things couldn't be rushed, and couldn't be hastened. If he rushed and caused chaos, it would only disrupt their own ranks and give the opponent an opportunity.

Sometimes, in a battle, the one with the better patience wins.

Stability is very important.

"You have to eat your meal bite by bite, and take your steps one at a time! Jiang Conghe is already fifty, while you're not even thirty yet, neither am I. Can we really be outlasted by that old man?" Ning Ge sneered, "The key now is that we have enough leverage in our hands, and when the time comes, we can strike him down with one blow. Are we afraid we won't see his grand building collapse?"

"I know, I was being too impatient!" Qi Taiguo said, "Every time I think about them eyeing us hungrily from behind, it's like a bone stuck in my throat."

"But you can only endure it. Smashing eggs against rocks may feel good, but it's yourself you're sacrificing, with the other side unaffected. It's not worth the loss, why do it?" Ning Ge said.

Qi Taiguo nodded.

"Now they've exposed themselves. As long as we dig deeper, even if it's an old well, the deeper you dig, the more likely you'll find water!" Ning Ge said with confidence.

Qi Taiguo looked over and said, "Whatever you want to do, just say the word if you need my cooperation, especially in the matters of this family, count me in!"

Ning Ge raised an eyebrow and said deliberately, "Then I want you to get close to that madwoman Chiang Qing!"

Qi Taiguo's expression changed, and he said, "What are you trying to say?"

"Relax." Ning Ge saw his aura shift and quickly tried to calm him, smiling, "I was just joking. With such a big incident happening before, I remember it well. How could I ask you to get close to her!"

"That's not funny at all, don't say it again," Qi Taiguo replied coldly.

Ning Ge shrugged and said, "I know, Chiang Qing is actually a pretty good point of breakthrough." Seeing Qi Taiguo's face worsen, he quickly added, "But I found an even better breakthrough."

"Who?"

"Jiang Dafang!"

Jiang Dafang? A hint of confusion appeared in Qi Taiguo's eyes.

"That's Jiang Conghe's ex-wife's son, his eldest son. Coincidentally, he's very interested in seeing Jiang Conghe and the Loo Family fall," Ning Ge said, reclining into the sofa.

"What do you mean?"

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend," Ning Ge said meaningfully.

Qi Taiguo furrowed his brow, "But they're still father and son."

"If your father abandoned you and your mother to seek power, causing your mother to die of overwork, would you still acknowledge him if you had any backbone?" Ning Ge retorted, "I've checked. Jiang Dafang's joint transportation company is aimed at suppressing Chiang Tian, and not only that, he's shown filial piety to Jiang Conghe, gaining a lot of business through him, pretending to reconcile with his father. He ignored him for decades, and now acknowledges him? Isn't there something fishy?"

Qi Taiguo fell silent.

"Jiang Dafang is a great point to disrupt Jiang Conghe and the Loo Family's balance. Lu Shufen absolutely loathes this so-called bastard, and Jiang Conghe wants to reclaim this son. Would the Loo Family agree? They wouldn't have before, but now, Jiang Conghe is no longer the small unit leader who needed the support of the Yue family to succeed, he's now a fully-fledged commander. Times change, and now the Loo Family is the one that has to live under someone else's nose. If these two families start fighting, how entertaining do you think it will be?" Ning Ge said, with his peach blossom eyes sparkling brightly.

Qi Taiguo looked into his eyes and thought, why didn't he notice before that this person harbored so many sinister schemes?

Chapter 806: No Pain, No Gain

Cheng Su's birthday was lively, just as Ning Ge promised, and within a couple of days, he made up for it with a gift.

It turned out to be a set of the Four Treasures of the Study, which Ning Ge said was to wish her success in high school and university.

Cheng Su loved it, and even Qi Taiguo praised it as a wonderful gift with good meaning.

On the day of the exam, Qi Taiguo personally took Cheng Su to the examination hall, kissed her cheek, and said, "Don't be nervous, you'll definitely do well."

Cheng Su nodded with a smile.

This life's college entrance exam was much like in her past life, yet a bit different. With the knowledge from her past life and nearly a year of studying, Cheng Su didn't find it too strenuous.

When she came out of the examination hall, it was still Qi Taiguo who came to pick her up. Seeing the relaxed look on her face, he couldn't help but sigh with relief.

"So, how was it? Did it go well?" Qi Taiguo asked, putting his arm around her waist.

Cheng Su hummed a response, "It should be fine."

"So does this mean I'm going to have a college student wife?" Qi Taiguo asked with a smile.

Cheng Su nodded proudly, "You'll bask in glory with me!"

Qi Taiguo chuckled, pinched her cheek, and said, "You never know how to be modest!"

"I call this confidence, okay?" Cheng Su pretended to be angry.

"Alright, alright, you're the most confident. Let's go home!" Qi Taiguo patted the back seat of the bicycle.

Cheng Su lightly hopped on.

To celebrate finishing the retake exams, they specially bought a small cake to enjoy at home.

Seeing the weather getting hot, Cheng Su came up with an idea to buy some mung beans and some buffalo milk, along with molds to make popsicles. She wanted to make mung bean ice sticks.

Qi Taiguo never complained about her cooking endeavors; when they got home, she busied herself while he went to the army base.

Making mung bean ice sticks is actually simple. Cook the mung bean paste, let it cool, pour it into molds, and then freeze it. Once it's completely hardened, you can eat it.

But the mung bean paste must be cooked thoroughly. If the water and beans separate, it turns into mung bean ice. If it's cooked into a smooth paste, the texture is much better.

"Sister-in-law Qi, what delicious treat are you making?"

Cheng Su was stirring the mung bean paste when she heard the call and turned her head to see Chunhua, also carrying large bags, returning.

She turned the gas flame down and went over to help with the bags, smiling, "It's getting hot, so I'm making mung bean paste and popsicles. Once they're done, you should try some."

"It's always nice at home; as soon as I come back, I have something tasty to look forward to!" Chunhua said with a gleeful smile.

"You seem to have been well at your hometown too; look at your fresh complexion and you've gained some weight!" Cheng Su laughed, glancing at her.

Chunhua opened the door, put down her things, and said, "The water at home is good. After a few extra bowls of rice, I've gained weight!"

Cheng Su helped her set down the bags and asked, "Did you leave Yuer with her grandma?"

Chunhua nodded and said, "When I left, she cried so hard it nearly tore my heart out."

Cheng Su felt a bit sympathetic and teased, "That's the harshness of a mom; be careful Yuer holds it against you later."

"What can you do if she holds a grudge? When she's three, I'll bring her back here for kindergarten. For now, we have to make a living somehow!" Chunhua said and then took Cheng Su's hand, asking, "So, does your factory still need workers? I want to work there!"

Cheng Su was taken aback, still not giving up?

"An operator? You'd do that? It's quite far from home and quite tiring," Cheng Su asked, probing a bit.

"I'll do it!" Chunhua gritted her teeth and said, "How can you make money in this world without hard work? I'll give it my all!"

Chapter 807: Invitation to Compete

Chunhua made up her mind, and indeed the factory was hiring, so Cheng Su agreed to Chunhua's job request.

The next day, Cheng Su took Chunhua to the factory and handed her over to Xiao Pinshan to arrange work.

Chunhua didn't expect to be arranged by someone else, rather than by Cheng Su herself. Upon inquiry, she learned that Manager Xiao was in charge of the factory, and someone as high up as Cheng Su didn't need to handle such small matters.

Chunhua clicked her tongue in admiration, having heard others speak of Cheng Su's success often, thinking it was exaggerated. But now having seen it with her own eyes, it was no exaggeration at all, even more impressive than what they had said.

Comparing people really shows a vast difference.

Cheng Su sat in the office, and not long after, Xiao Pinshan returned, saying that Chunhua had been handed over to the production department supervisor for guidance and a tour.

Cheng Su nodded and said, "Although she is someone I know, you know the rules of the operating room. If anyone doesn't follow the requirements to enter the operating room or doesn't observe hygiene, don't bother with whether I know them or not. Handle it as it should be handled. Food safety is most important."

Xiao Pinshan felt slightly relieved, as he was most afraid of such personal connections, which are difficult to handle. Now that Cheng Su had given him a heads-up, he knew what to do.

"Susu. Look at this news." Ying Xiaoya suddenly handed over a newspaper.

Cheng Su took it, seeing a big headline which said that Qingcheng was celebrating a bountiful harvest by hosting a Cherry Food Festival and the first Cherry Competition. This year's theme was the now-trending jam made from cherries, and they were already accepting registrations from various food companies.

Cherry Jam!

Cheng Su's eyes lit up slightly. Cherry Jam, considered a high-mid-level product among jams, if done well, its taste would definitely be no worse than that of famous jams like blueberry.

"Take a look." Cheng Su handed the newspaper to Xiao Pinshan.

Xiao Pinshan glanced through it quickly with excitement shining in his eyes, "President Cheng, this is an opportunity."

"Let's hear it!"

"This Cherry Jam, there haven't been any other food companies making it yet, right? Now using it to make jam, the organizers must have promotional reasons for Qingcheng, and hosting this competition, once various food companies start making it, they will inevitably need supplies from Qingcheng. For us as participants, it's a big opportunity too," Xiao Pinshan said excitedly.

"Participate? But we haven't..." Ying Xiaoya couldn't help but interject.

Cheng Su stopped her, signaling Xiao Pinshan to continue.

"If we participate, it's like we've seized an opportunity to promote our company. Imagine, if we win a place in the competition, it's a huge joy. Even if we don't win, our other jams will be known, and this publicity will naturally spread the Joy Soon Loy brand widely. Therefore, I think we should take this opportunity to participate," Xiao Pinshan said.

Ying Xiaoya stared blankly at Xiao Pinshan, her gaze carrying a bit of admiration.

Cheng Su nodded in satisfaction, Xiao Pinshan's proposal and ideas perfectly aligned with hers. How could such an opportunity be let slip away?

"Why aren't you getting ready yet?" Cheng Su smiled at Xiao Pinshan.

"Yes!"

Just then the phone rang, Mai Yanmei received the call and called Cheng Su over, handing the phone to her.

"Hello!" Cheng Su picked up the phone, surprised when she heard the person on the other end introduce themselves. As she listened further, she smiled and said, "Alright, Boss Wan, I've been looking forward to this day of facing off. Shall we see the results on the competition field?"

It was the Friendly Wan Fuyu inviting their company to participate, which was even better, as they finally had the chance to compete against each other.

Chapter 808: Giving It Their All

Since we're going to participate in the competition, there are quite a few things to prepare for, such as signing up and preparing the jam, etc., so we need to get started on them.

The requirements for the competition include using the cherries provided by the organizer to make the product. This serves as both a promotion for the cherries and a guarantee of fairness. As for the supplementary materials needed, each company has its own production methods, commonly known as secret recipes, which the participants prepare themselves.

Furthermore, the competition involves making the jam on-site, which requires strict attention to detail. Of course, in the interest of business secrecy, each participating company will have its own private space.

So, there are many things that need preparing.

First of all, before going to the competition, we need to develop our own cherry jam. This way, once we reach the venue, we'll be familiar with the process.

Therefore, all the various ingredients need to be prepared, and trial runs should be conducted repeatedly.

Cheng Su asked Xiao Ya and the others to prepare the materials for registration, while she called a meeting with a few technicians and Xiao Pinshan.

Before the meeting began, Ning Ge showed up. Seeing everyone's excitement, he was a bit puzzled. After inquiring, he learned that the company was participating in a competition and got interested himself, taking a seat to join the meeting.

"Since the competition is being held in Qingcheng, and they will be using Qingcheng cherries, we should also use Qingcheng cherries for our test batches of cherry jam," said Cheng Su.

"I agree; after all, the raw materials are the most important. By using Qingcheng cherries for our trials, we can handle the competition more effectively," echoed Xiao Pinshan.

With both managers saying so, the technicians naturally had no objections.

"So we'll need to procure cherries from Qingcheng?" Ning Ge interjected.

Cheng Su looked at him and said, "Let's leave this to you." Then, turning to the technicians, she said, "This time, Old Chen, you will accompany President Ning. Be careful in selecting the materials; the sweetness and tartness must be just right."

The technician named Old Liu quickly agreed, noting it down in his notebook.

"As for the supplementary materials, everyone should think about what we need and make sure everything is prepared. If there's anything missing, we should purchase it promptly," Cheng Su said.

"Yes!"

"Additionally, each of you should prepare at least two sets of production processes for me," Cheng Su looked at the three technicians.

The group was taken aback, exchanging glances.

"Don't share; each of you should think independently about the ingredients. It's your decision what to use. In the end, if we adopt someone's process or combine them and win the competition, there will be significant rewards," Cheng Su stated.

Upon hearing that there would be rewards, the group was eager to start working.

Money can indeed motivate people, as the saying goes.

"This competition is crucial for our company's future development. I hope everyone will give their best effort to create a great jam. Winning would be ideal," Cheng Su encouraged, "If our company wins, our reputation will increase significantly, and future orders will grow, which means your bonuses will increase too. What do you think?"

"President Cheng, we will definitely give it our all to do our best!" Technician Zhu quickly pledged, and the other two technicians also expressed their determination.

"Very well, now let's continue discussing any aspects we haven't considered..." Cheng Su glanced at her notebook, entwined her fingers, listening to everyone's opinions, occasionally interjecting a comment or two, while jotting down notes.

Ning Ge sat beside her, watching from the side. Her focus gave off an almost radiant aura.

As he redirected his gaze, he touched his nose, thinking to himself that this serious demeanor was indeed the most captivating.

Chapter 809: Progressing Together

Qi Taiguo returned home from the army and saw Cheng Su sprawled on the table, writing and drawing. He asked, "The exams are over, what are you busy with?"

"Oh, our company is entering a competition. I'm writing the plan and also thinking about the new sauce's production process," Cheng Su replied without lifting her head.

"Competition?"

"Yes." Cheng Su flipped open the newspaper to the page with the competition announcement and handed it to him, saying, "Such a competition is a great opportunity for our company. If we win, our company's reputation will greatly expand!"

Qi Taiguo looked, then put it down, and said, "So, you'll be busy again, won't you?"

Cheng Su lifted her head, gave a sweet smile, and said, "That's right!"

Qi Taiguo patted her head and smiled, "Just right, I also have something to discuss with you."

"What?" Cheng Su put down her pen and looked at him with bright eyes.

Qi Taiguo sat down and said, "The Yanjing army is advocating for innovative training development. They are now organizing an officer training program to make future elite soldier training stronger. At that time, elite soldiers from all over the country will gather for a closed-door study session lasting three months. Our unit has recommended three people to go, and I'm on the list."

Cheng Su was taken aback. A three-month closed-door training meant that they couldn't even make a phone call?

"Closed-door means no contact with the outside world?" Cheng Su asked.

Qi Taiguo nodded.

Cheng Su pursed her lips: "You want to go."

She used a statement, not a question.

Qi Taiguo said, "I do. Completing this study and training excellently will earn recognition and result in different levels of commendations, which are great for future promotion and honor accumulation. Susu, my current position is too low; it's not enough to protect ourselves."

Cheng Su's heart skipped a beat, she looked at him: "Are you saying?"

Qi Taiguo nodded, a flash of coldness in his eyes, and said, "Although I'm a company commander, compared to Jiang Conghe and the Loo Family, I'm nothing more than an ant that can be crushed at any moment. I don't care for myself, but you, I can't let you live in fear. So, I must climb higher, must acquire enough power to stand against them."

Cheng Su took a deep breath and asked, "What courses does this closed-door training have? Be honest with me, is it dangerous?"

Qi Taiguo hesitated a bit.

Cheng Su saw this, her face changed slightly, and said, "It's dangerous, isn't it?"

"There are combat tactics in the training courses, life or death regardless, so a life-and-death agreement must be signed," Qi Taiguo said.

Signing a life-and-death agreement means that if one dies during the training, they simply die!

The color drained from Cheng Su's face. She wanted to say no, but looking at Qi Taiguo's eager eyes seeking support, she couldn't say it.

She herself was relentless for her career, so naturally, he wouldn't want to stop either for his advancement.

If it were in the past, she might have said, let the promotion go slowly. But now, after the issue with Chiang Qing, both she and he understood the significance of power imbalance, so there was even less reason to refuse.

And for a couple, it's impossible for only one side to progress. The one advancing quickly, even if going slow, will one day leave the one standing still far behind, reaching a distance impossible to catch up, and finally, only separation remains.

Cheng Su didn't want them to end up like that, and neither did Qi Taiguo, so to maintain a long-lasting relationship, they must progress together.

As a saying goes: You are excellent, but I'm not bad either!

"Alright. You go!" Cheng Su bit her lip and nodded in agreement.

Chapter 810: Pulling Chestnuts Out of the Fire

That night, Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo were passionately entwined until both were exhausted, then they held each other and talked, as if this time of lovemaking were their last.

Cheng Su lay her head on Qi Taiguo's chest and said, "Everyone says being a military wife is the loneliest, because your husband is always in the army, always on missions, and sometimes you don't even see each other once a year. It's really true."

Hearing the slight resentment in her tone, Qi Taiguo kissed her forehead and said, "We're not that bad, are we? We're living together now too!"

"It's lucky we are, but it's not every day. Look, last time you were gone on a mission for a week or so. We haven't even been together for a month now, and you're already saying you're going to study, for three months, and it's a closed course, and..." Cheng Su pouted as she spoke.

Qi Taiguo said, "Even though I've said it, it doesn't mean going right away. The official reporting date is early July. By then, your exam results will be out, and I can still celebrate with you, but when you go to college, I won't be able to send you off!"

The three-month closed training, by the time he finished, would already be October. If Cheng Su got into college, she would have already reported by then.

Thinking of this, Cheng Su hugged him even tighter and said, "Whether you send me off or not doesn't matter. Just the thought of us not having any news of each other for a few months makes my heart feel stuffed."

If they could occasionally contact each other, like making a phone call, it wouldn't feel so bad. But not being able to make calls, not hearing each other's voice, not knowing the situation, that's what makes it hard.

Especially since no news would come from his side, she only had her baseless thoughts, not knowing what to imagine.

"Don't overthink it, just think of it as me going on a mission, going to train," Qi Taiguo said, "Rest assured, I'll study hard and return successfully, not disappointing you."

Cheng Su slightly raised her head and said, "You should know, I wouldn't be disappointed. It's you coming back that matters. As for the results, I don't care."

"Yes, I will definitely come back."

"Also, don't think I'm being petty, but over there, you need to be extra careful. Nobody knows who's going to study there, whether there's someone with the surname Jiang. If they're deliberately instructed to trip you up, that..." This was Cheng Su's biggest worry. Jiang Conghe is a commander, and it's really easy for him to meddle.

A hint of seriousness flashed in Qi Taiguo's eyes: "I know what you're saying, don't worry!"

He had thought about this, but even knowing the difficulties and dangers ahead, he had to take the risk.

Otherwise, if he backed off because of danger, what was the point of being a soldier?

A soldier should be ready to sacrifice for the country at any time, right?

However, Cheng Su was right. Even if he were to sacrifice, it should have value and he absolutely couldn't die in vain at the hands of some power-hungry villains.

Feeling the weight of the atmosphere, Cheng Su stopped talking about this topic and switched to chatting about family matters, discussing the preparations before his departure, ensuring everything was well-prepared.

"There's no need to prepare anything for me, the army will prepare everything," Qi Taiguo found it amusing.

Cheng Su didn't care and kept muttering, so Qi Taiguo let her be until she muttered herself to sleep, and he grew drowsy too.

"Ah!" Cheng Su suddenly woke with a start.

Qi Taiguo's sleepiness vanished immediately: "What's wrong?"

"I need to get a peace charm for you to take with you!" Cheng Su said, then closed her eyes and slept like a log again.

Qi Taiguo was amused and exasperated, kissed her on the face, and held her as they slept.