

The 80s 811

Chapter 811: Shortlisted

Both Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo had their goals set, and all of a sudden, they became busy. Cheng Su had to focus on the Joy Soon Loy Jam competition, while Qi Taiguo was preparing to go study.

They both left early and returned late, only meeting in the evenings. But even so, their relationship didn't worsen; instead, they became more in sync due to mutual encouragement and support.

The company's application for the competition was quickly finalized. Initially, there weren't many spots, as they only selected five companies. But since Cheng Su's company specialized in jam and their strawberry jam was quite famous, they quickly got shortlisted.

"Even Friendly made it," Ying Xiaoya said after checking the organizer's shortlisted information.

Cheng Su wasn't surprised; the jams from Friendly weren't bad, and the company had a certain level of fame, so getting shortlisted was quite normal.

"Our previous small skirmishes don't count; now it's time to truly compete with their company." Cheng Su's eyes sparkled with confidence.

Ying Xiaoya was also excited, proudly saying, "Previously, their company's jams were slightly inferior to ours; this competition, they definitely won't match up to us!"

Cheng Su glanced at her, wagged his finger, and said, "That's not the mindset we should have. People can improve. Previously, Friendly couldn't compare to our Joy Soon Loy, but that doesn't mean now or in the future they can't. We must always maintain a humble attitude in our actions, knowing there are always bigger mountains out there. Many people fall due to arrogance."

Ying Xiaoya stuck out her tongue and said, "You've lectured me again!"

Xiao Pinshan laughed after hearing this: "President Cheng is right. Friendly's jams couldn't compare to our Joy Soon Loy before, but now, I've researched the market, and their sales volume has grown

significantly over the same period." He said, handing Cheng Su a report, "I think they must have put a lot of effort into this area, so it's not surprising if their jam matches ours."

Cheng Su took it, flipped through it, and said with a deep gaze, "Find some time to buy the jams from Friendly and the other shortlisted companies so we can study them together."

"Yes."

Cheng Su carefully studied the report, and Ying Xiaoya leaned over to look, saying, "Previously, Friendly tried dirty tricks to deal with our company, damaging their reputation. How did they bounce back so quickly?"

"That's why you shouldn't underestimate your opponent, or you might trip up at any moment." Cheng Su glanced at her and said, "Wan Fuyu was able to grow his company so big, so you shouldn't underestimate his abilities. Take the last incident as an example—he knows how to bend and adapt, and such people can be the most dangerous opponents. As long as there's a breath left in him, he'll make a comeback. See, isn't this the case now?"

Ying Xiaoya couldn't help but feel ashamed and blushed, saying, "You're right; I was too arrogant." No wonder her parents told her to learn more from Cheng Su's way of being and perspective—she truly has such vision and foresight.

"But I heard that Gu Lijuan, who was with Wan Fuyu, is no longer by his side, supposedly driven away by his original spouse!" Ying Xiaoya's eyes lit up with gossip, "Wan Fuyu may have skills, but to kick someone out like that is, well, cough cough, quite something, considering Secretary Gu helped him a lot!"

"Mind your own business, don't be a gossip." Cheng Su glanced at her with a hint of disapproval, "If you have time, check with Yanmei to gather information on the other competing companies. I want a detailed report."

As they say, know your enemy and yourself, and you'll run a hundred battles without defeat, so she wanted to see the strengths and weaknesses of all the competing companies.

Ying Xiaoya stuck out her tongue and went to follow her instructions.

Chapter 812: Intensive Research and Preparation

The Cherry Jam competition was set for June 28, and with less than half a month until the competition, having confirmed the company's spot in the contest, Cheng Su began to work intensively on jam-making with several technicians as soon as Ning Ge and Old Liu returned with cherries procured from Qingcheng.

Cheng Su had previously mentioned she wanted each technician to come up with two sets of procedures for making jam. Everyone submitted their proposals one by one. Upon reviewing them, she noticed that the plans were quite similar, and the ingredients were almost identical, mostly based on the company's existing jam-making processes.

Cheng Su also devised her own plan. She said, "Now that we have the cherries, let's all use your proposals to make jams and have everyone evaluate and vote. We'll write down the pros and cons, and then we'll collect the advantages and refine them in a unified manner. We must revise them to create the best, most perfect set of jam-making procedures. What do you say?"

"Okay!" There were no objections; instead, there was some enthusiasm and readiness to get started.

Everyone dressed up neatly and began to work. Since there were several sets of plans, they followed them sequentially. Cheng Su also followed through with her plan, which was different from theirs, as she removed the cherry pits first.

This procedure was also troublesome; cherries are small, and the pits had to be removed first, which took quite a bit of time.

Moreover, the pit was not removed during cooking but by first slicing the cherries with a small knife and then digging out the pits. One might ask, how many cuts are needed to excavate enough cherries to fill a bottle of cherry jam? How much manpower and material resources does it require?

To address everyone's doubts, Cheng Su explained that to perform well in the competition, the procedure must be refined and perfect. Mass production methods can't compare to small-scale precision, otherwise, how does quality over quantity come about?

So, when it comes to large-scale cherry jam production in the future, it certainly won't involve slowly removing pits from each cherry one by one before cooking; instead, the pits will be strained out after boiling.

Cheng Su had another point that differed from everyone else: the selection of ingredients. Qingcheng had several kinds of cherries, and Ning Ge, being generous, had bought several varieties for everyone to choose from.

In selecting ingredients, everyone opted for large, bright red, sweet cherries without a hint of sourness, which were particularly sweet.

However, Cheng Su did not. She also chose large ones, but not all sweet. She chose ones that were red with a hint of yellow-green, which tasted sweet with a touch of sourness, where the sweetness surpassed the sourness.

Several technicians were a bit puzzled and even curious. Isn't sweetness good enough? Why does this boss insist on choosing fruits that aren't fully sweet?

However, they also knew that it was the success of Cheng Su's pineapple jam that allowed the company to thrive. They could even say that this jam trend was led by her.

Therefore, they dared not question her or underestimate her, knowing she was considered a pioneer in jam-making. There's definitely a reason behind her choice of ingredients, and she would surely explain it in due time.

Thus, they all silently followed their own procedural plans, waiting to see the real results when the jam was finished.

Cheng Su did not explain either; she had no intention of explaining now. Once the cherry jam was made, and everyone had tasted it, they would naturally understand the differences.

But actually, just think about it: if the fruit is all sweet and then sugar is added, the resulting jam would be purely sweet and cloying. After eating too much, it would become sickening.

Whereas the sweet and sour combination, when cooked, would naturally result in a product that is sweet and sour. Which one would be more appealing?

Chapter 813: Wolves in Front and Tigers Behind

It's mostly known that Cheng Su's company will be competing. As the same brand, Joy Soon Loy Restaurant is naturally happy, because if they win the competition, it might boost their own restaurant's brand. Therefore, they dare not disturb Cheng Su, and Old Song and Qiulan make all the decisions, big or small.

After adding more staff to the fast food shop, it's enough to handle some insufficiencies and chaos.

Thus, Cheng Su puts all her effort into researching and making the jam.

The saying goes, "When one thrives, all thrive; when one fails, all fail." Everyone in Joy Soon Loy Jam is paying great attention to this competition. After all, it's the first time their company is entering this competition; whether they can achieve significant brand recognition depends on whether they can secure a good ranking!

To know themselves and the enemy, not only do they make their own jam, but Cheng Su and several technicians tried a lot of jams produced by competing companies, to the point where they were tired of eating jam and felt nauseous at the sight of sweets.

While Cheng Su and her team were busy, Qi Taiguo was not idle either. He asked Ning Ge to obtain the list of people going for the study training this time, analyzing who were Jiang Conghe's people.

"This one called Yao Qingjun is someone Jiang Conghe values in the Jinling Military Region. You need to be careful; he's a martial arts expert, the champion of three consecutive Armed Police martial arts competitions, and is petty and vengeful," Ning Ge pointed at a person's photo.

Qi Taiguo looked over, and that person had a buzz cut, with an aura of ferocity and authority. At a glance, he didn't seem easy to deal with.

"This one, Wan Zhisen, from the Xiaoxiang Military Region, deputy company commander, is a sniper expert, with a background in special forces. Don't be fooled by his sunny appearance; this person is actually quite dark, scheming and crafty, can twist you around to your death. I've also heard that Wan Zhisen is Jiang Conghe's favored son-in-law," Ning Ge pointed at a young man aged twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

"Even in Xiaoxiang, he can have connections with Jiang Conghe?" Qi Taiguo frowned.

"Jiang Conghe taught him, but this person is somewhat arrogant. I think he might not necessarily be used by Jiang Conghe. So, you really need to be careful of this smiling tiger, Wang Hua," Ning Ge's finger pointed to another person's photo.

Qi Taiguo flipped through the data and surprisingly discovered that he was from the Yanjing Military Region, a deputy group instructor.

"On the surface, Wang Hua has nothing to do with Jiang Conghe, but Wang Hua's sister-in-law is married to the nephew of a brother of Jiang Conghe. Wang Hua's double promotion within a year was Jiang Conghe's work, and at that time, Jiang Conghe hadn't yet been transferred back to Yanjing!" Ning Ge sneered, with a hint of irony in his smile, Jiang Conghe's reach was too long.

Qi Taiguo's face darkened.

"Instructors hold your performance scores. An unfair treatment, and if given the chance, will erase your achievements, so don't let him catch any weaknesses. Be extremely cautious; if you die in there, he'll just sign a 'killed in action' report, and that's it. It's killing without a trace," Ning Ge snorted with a cold laugh.

"So this time going for study, is it really wolves in front and tigers behind?" Qi Taiguo also broke into a cold smile.

"Scared?" Ning Ge raised an eyebrow.

"The word fear is not in Qi Taiguo's dictionary," Qi Taiguo glared.

"Better safe than sorry, of course, don't be afraid of anything. Additionally, there's Instructor Fu Heng, and he's one of our big brother's people. Jiang Conghe won't mess with you openly, but hidden threats rely on you to be vigilant," Ning Ge said.

Qi Taiguo nodded solemnly, a hint of determination flashing in his eyes.

Chapter 814: Working Together as One

Their minds focused on business and research, Cheng Su's company has produced a new jam, seven sets of plans, seven glass jars, each jar labeled with a number, filled with red cherry jam, as if the air was tinged with sweetness.

Each of them tasted the jam and wrote its pros and cons on a homemade large blackboard, for example, the pros and cons of Jam Number One, writing them separately, then marking with tally marks; Jam Number Two's pros and cons were noted similarly, and so on, repeating where necessary.

Next, they gathered all the factory employees, handing out disposable small bowls and spoons, lining up to taste the jam, marking their tasting experiences as tally marks under the respective numbers. If they had additional thoughts, they registered them with Mai Yanmei.

Cheng Su herself tasted carefully, tasting bit by bit, while noting the sensations on her taste buds in her notebook.

By midday, the blackboard was filled with tally marks, and separate ideas noted by Mai Yanmei also included many personal impressions.

Next came the statistics, the best in taste was Jam Number Seven, balanced sweet and sour, not cloying, which was Cheng Su's jam.

The second in taste was Jam Number Three, made by Technician Zhu, who chose fully sweet fruits but added citric acid, hence the taste was also refreshing.

As for the others, while sweet enough, they were too cloying if eaten in excess, but the one with the best consistency was Jam Number Four, and the one with the most fragrant fruit aroma was Jam Number Five.

Upon reviewing it all, Cheng Su had a clear idea in mind, noting the pros with the most tally marks. It was a coincidence as several advantages were spread across four individuals, with Technician Zhu's Jam Number Three having captured two pros.

"As I said earlier, whoever's plan is used to make the jam and wins an award will be rewarded. Now that we've gathered the pros together, there are advantages and disadvantages. So everyone, don't rush, we'll refine the formula proportions and ingredients, and when we win the award, everyone will be rewarded," Cheng Su said.

"President Cheng, rewards are secondary. The main thing now is the competition; can our company's jam rank? What I mean is, everyone shouldn't fight for credit; working together to make the best jam is the real success. I admire Old Liu and Old Zhu greatly," Technician Zhu said with a smile towards his colleagues.

Both humbly glanced at Cheng Su and said, "Xiao Zhu is right, President Cheng, rewards can wait. For now, let's focus on making the jam great!"

Cheng Su appreciated this kind of enthusiasm; the most important aspect of a team is unity. If one strives for personal credit at the expense of the overall picture, this team will not succeed.

Conversely, when the entire team works in perfect unity, integrating strengths and weaknesses, they achieve more with less effort.

"Great, it's best if you think this way. I stick to what I said; once the award is won, everyone will share in it," Cheng Su encouraged.

Everyone responded in unison with agreement.

"Let's continue the meeting. First, our jam; I believe we should first adopt these pros, then redesign a plan to make the jam. Also, I've tasted Friendly's recently launched orange jam, which is their best-selling jam. Have a look..." Cheng Su reviewed her notebook, sharing her thoughts with everyone for discussion.

In the office, everyone engaged in intense discussions and reviews around the jam-making process, and workers passing by dared not tread heavily for fear of disrupting their thoughts.

Some passing by overheard and showed a knowing smile; with such a team, why worry about the company's development?

Chapter 815: Father-in-Law Breaks His Leg

As the competition day approached, the team led by Cheng Su became increasingly tense. They developed one sauce after another, only to overturn them again and again. There were always problems and shortcomings in the process, yet new ideas kept coming in.

However, Cheng Su felt this was a good thing. Discovering problems and solving them now were certainly better than spotting shortcomings during the competition. Since they were competing, they had to aim for the highest standards and strive for perfection.

Because of these strict demands, Cheng Su lost a lot of weight in just a few days for this competition, which made Qi Taiguo extremely distressed.

At this tense moment, calls came in from the hometown saying that Father Qi was knocked down to the ground by a cow. Since he didn't dodge quickly enough, although the cow didn't directly hit him, it stepped heavily on his foot.

Older people's bones are brittle, and this step caused a fracture, scaring Mother Qi into tears and prompting her to call Qi Taiguo.

"Mom, stop crying. It's good that he's okay. Fractures can heal over time," Qi Taiguo said with a frown.

Mother Qi said something else over the phone, which made Qi Taiguo's face turn slightly cold. He replied, "Alright, alright, I'll take a leave tomorrow to go see what's going on, okay? If there's nothing else, let's end the call; it's already dark, and it's hard to see on the road at night."

After hanging up, Cheng Su asked, "How is it, what's going on?"

She didn't catch the whole conversation, but she did hear that Father Qi seemed to have broken his foot.

Qi Taiguo said, "It's just a broken foot. He's fine otherwise. I'll take a leave tomorrow afternoon to go back and have a look, and also tell them that I need to leave for training."

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su said, "Then I'll go back with you to have a look."

Qi Taiguo felt warm inside. He knew she still cared about his family, but he also knew she was at a critical stage for her company's competition and couldn't afford any delay.

"There's no need. It's just a broken foot; it'll heal in a few months. Your company is competing too, and it's a tense time. You shouldn't get distracted. Just push through with it," Qi Taiguo said while tucking her hair behind her ear.

"But..."

"Besides, I'm going back tomorrow afternoon, and I'll return the day after. The back-and-forth is troublesome, and you've been tired enough lately. Look at your face; there's barely any flesh left," Qi Taiguo pinched her cheek and said, "The competition day is fast approaching too, you need to be well-rested to prepare. So don't fuss over going with me, I'll explain everything to my parents!"

To be honest, Cheng Su just wanted to visit Father Qi. As for Mother Qi, she didn't feel much at the moment.

If it weren't for Father Qi breaking his foot, she wouldn't think about going back.

"Then tomorrow morning, I'll buy some good supplements for you to take back for Dad. Even though it's just a fracture, he's older, and it's a bone injury, which is never easy," Cheng Su thought for a moment and said.

It was a gesture of filial piety, and Qi Taiguo had no reason to refuse. Instead, he felt she was sensible and filial.

"That's a good idea. Let Dad see how good and filial his daughter-in-law is," Qi Taiguo said with a smile.

Cheng Su rolled her eyes at him and said playfully, "I'm not doing it for the reputation, look at what you're saying."

Qi Taiguo chuckled, nibbled on her earlobe, and said, "Can I cherish this reputation? Am I allowed to have this vanity?"

"Get out of here."

Cheng Su pushed him away, only to be pulled back into his arms. The two of them laughed and played together.

Chapter 816: Truly Unfilial

Cheng Su prepared a lot of valuable supplements for Qi Taiguo to bring back to his in-laws, and additionally gave him one hundred yuan, telling him to buy something nice for his father-in-law.

Qi Taiguo had mixed feelings and said, "Susu, I'm sorry you've had to endure this."

She specifically mentioned buying for her father-in-law, without mentioning her mother-in-law, as she always felt distant from her.

From this, one could see her nature, typical of returning what one received in kindness, unfortunately, his mother did not understand this principle.

Qi Taiguo carried bags of items back to Huangtian Village, while Cheng Su herself went back to the company to discuss the best way to make the Cherry Jam with several technicians.

It was already June now, the weather was hot, and the days were long; Qi Taiguo returned home at six o'clock, but the sky was still bright.

Father Qi was sitting at the doorway, his foot was wrapped up like a zongzi with a couple of splints, and because of the hot weather, he was only wearing a vest and shorts up to his knees, with a pair of crutches placed beside him.

And Mother Qi was scattering a bucket of chicken feed on the ground, clucking to call the chicks over.

Qi Taiguo was tall and sturdy; he could see this scene over the courtyard wall and could not help but call out.

"Dad, Mom, I'm back!"

Hearing Qi Taiguo's voice, Father Qi was taken aback, looked up, and was somewhat surprised to see his son had really returned, wanting to stand up.

Unexpectedly, Qi Taiguo quickly stepped forward, dropped the things, and pressed him back, saying, "Dad, your foot is like this, don't stand up."

"You, why are you back?" Father Qi asked in astonishment, then realizing something, he glared at Mother Qi: "Did you tell the children? I've always told you not to inform them. You, old lady, always treat my words like the wind past your ears!"

The latter part of his words carried a bit of sternness.

Mother Qi, feeling guilty, said, "You fainted from the pain, I was just afraid something might happen, so I told them."

"You just keep arguing!" Father Qi was so angry his beard was bristling.

"Dad, Mom was just worried about you, and besides, something happened to you, of course, you should tell me, how can you keep it a secret?" Qi Taiguo persuaded.

"Exactly, exactly!" Mother Qi was very happy, the eldest son was on her side.

"It's just a twisted ankle, it'll be fine after a few days, what's the big deal? Your mother is just making a fuss. With how busy you are in the army, how can you always be taking leave?" Father Qi was also happy to see his son, appreciating his filial heart, but he was more concerned about his son's future, saying this while glaring at Mother Qi again: "It's all because of your thoughtless mother."

Mother Qi pursed her lips, muttering, "Clearly, he's happy on the inside." Her eyes then glanced at the items placed by Qi Taiguo's feet, looking behind and asking, "Taiguo, your wife didn't come back?"

"She's busy at the company and couldn't get away, so I didn't let her come back, but all these supplements are what she bought for me to bring back." Qi Taiguo explained.

Mother Qi pulled a long face, displeased, and said, "What? Company is busy, is that more important than your dad having an accident? Really, no filial piety at all."

Qi Taiguo furrowed his brows, feeling annoyed; it was no wonder Cheng Su felt distant from her, with such an attitude, how could they become close?

"Mom, Cheng Su wanted to come back with me, but I didn't let her!" Qi Taiguo said discontentedly and then said to Father Qi, "Her company is about to participate in a competition, and she's busy with the competition every day. She's lost weight. She heard about your foot fracture last night and also said she wanted to come back with me to visit you. I just saw her tired, and besides, I have to leave tomorrow, so I didn't let her go through the trouble of coming and going again!"

Chapter 817: Not of One Heart with Her

Mother Qi was already dissatisfied with Cheng Su, and her son kept speaking up for her, praising her everywhere, which only made her feel even more sour and dissatisfied.

Her temper flared up, and she forgot how she'd been cold-shouldered by her son before, never learning her lesson. She interjected sharply, "Taiguo, you don't need to make excuses for her. I think she clearly doesn't care about this family. Always about making money, and when her father-in-law had an accident, she wouldn't come back to take care of him. What's the use of having such a daughter-in-law? I think..."

"Shut your mouth!" Father Qi suddenly roared, throwing the cane at hand towards her, cursing, "If you keep spouting nonsense, you can just roll back to the old house to live. Whether you're having a high fever or dying, don't even think about coming back to live, you can stay there until you die of old age."

Mother Qi's face changed, and she immediately looked at Qi Taiguo with grievance: "Look at your dad, look at him, has he been possessed by something or what?"

"I think you're the one who's possessed, you ungrateful old fool. I don't think you've considered the good of this family at all. Can't go a day without stirring trouble, can you?" Father Qi was furious.

"You, Taiguo..."

"Dad, don't get angry. It's rare for me to come back. Let's talk about something happy." Qi Taiguo first comforted Father Qi, then looked at Mother Qi and said, "Mom, if you don't even believe what I say, then I have nothing better to say. Cheng Su even knew to buy health supplements for Dad, proving she cares for him, but why didn't she think of buying anything for you? Mom, don't you understand?"

Mother Qi was taken aback.

"That's just how she is; if you're nice to me, I'll naturally be nice to you. But Mom, have you ever been nice to her even a little bit? No, and you still keep spreading rumors about her. She doesn't come back, and she's justified in that. Who wants to go out of their way to be snubbed?" Qi Taiguo said plainly.

"Don't mind her, she doesn't know any better." Father Qi glared at Mother Qi, thinking what a brainless old fool she was. Could she not hear that her son was upset and disappointed?

"You, you all, who even cares about her stuff, who cares if she's nice to me or not!" Mother Qi threw the chicken feed in her hand and stormed into the house.

Qi Taiguo was truly disappointed, sighed, and said, "Dad, seeing Mom like this, what meaning does it have even if Cheng Su comes back?"

Father Qi sighed too and said, "Your mom's temper is just like that. The more you go against her, the more stubborn she gets. Just ignore her. Are you leaving tomorrow?"

Qi Taiguo pulled over a chair to sit down and said, "I just came back to see you. Tomorrow morning I have to return to the army. Also, in July, I have to go for training for three months..."

Mother Qi was angrily sulking in the room. After waiting for a long time, Qi Taiguo still didn't come in to soothe her, feeling both annoyed and heartache.

Things have changed, this family has changed, everyone's heart is turned toward outsiders!

Mother Qi wiped her tears, perked up her ears, listening to Qi Taiguo speaking outside.

Something about Cheng Su having bought the restaurant property now and her company in a competition. If they win, the business may grow bigger and bigger, and so on.

Mother Qi pursed her lips, no matter how capable she was, she didn't listen, had her own ideas, not on the same page with her, hoping for her to be filial was impossible.

If only they could change daughters-in-law...

The thought had just arisen when she heard her son continuously praising Cheng Su outside, gritting her teeth, knowing her son seemed enchanted by Cheng Su. How could they change daughters-in-law!

Who knows what kind of spell this kid was under, hmph!

Chapter 818: Disciplining My Sister

It's rare for Qi Taiguo to join the family for dinner, so he had a lot to say. He either talked with his father, inquired about the academic progress of his younger siblings, or exchanged a few words with Mother Qi, who was getting quite restless.

"Jianguo, you're taking the college entrance exams next year, right? How are your grades, is your studying going well?" Qi Taiguo asked his younger brother.

Qi Jianguo, feeling a bit awkward, answered while holding his rice bowl, "It's okay."

Qi Taiguo nodded in response and said, "While studying is important, you need to balance work and rest. Don't let yourself get burnt out. Whatever you do, there should be moderation. You don't need to worry about the tuition fees, as long as you get into college, my wife and I will support you financially."

Qi Jianguo nodded, "Thank you, Big Brother."

"But I guess you won't be the first college student in our family!" Qi Taiguo said smugly.

Everyone knew Cheng Su was also aiming for college, so Father Qi asked, "Has your wife already gotten accepted?"

"It's still uncertain if she got in, the scores haven't been released yet. But I think it's soon. She seemed to handle the exams quite well; it shouldn't be a problem," Qi Taiguo said with a smile, then looked at Qi Jianguo and said, "Your sister-in-law has been through the college entrance exams, if there's anything you don't understand, feel free to ask her!"

"Big Brother, Sister-in-law only finished her first year of high school before dropping out and then later repeated her studies. No matter how smart she is, it's not like she'll reach the sky, right? Are you so sure she can get in?" Qi Fengping couldn't help but interrupt.

Qi Taiguo gave her a sidelong glance and said indifferently, "Whether your sister-in-law can get in or not is uncertain, but one thing is certain: she's definitely more diligent, hardworking, and smarter than you!"

He didn't have much hope for this little sister to get into college. Even if the family had some money, at least completing high school and becoming an elementary teacher in the future would give her some confidence.

Qi Fenglian, stung by his remark, gritted her teeth and threw down her chopsticks, "I'm not eating!"

"You girl, what tantrum are you throwing?" Mother Qi shouted, but Qi Fengping ignored her and slammed the door as she went out.

Qi Taiguo's face darkened; was Fengping getting too spoiled?

"It's all because of you, this woman's spoiling, that she's got such a bad temper," Father Qi glared at Mother Qi.

"Don't blame everything on me; it's not like I taught her that way," Mother Qi retorted.

Father Qi snorted coldly.

Qi Taiguo glanced at Qi Jianguo and said, "Jianguo, as for Fengping, I don't expect her to attend college, but you are the hope of this generation. You must live up to it."

"Big Brother, I will study hard!" Qi Jianguo adjusted his glasses and said.

Just as they were talking, Qi Fengping came out of the room. She was wearing a figure-hugging white dress, her hair down, and lipstick on her lips, clearly dressed up carefully.

She looked at everyone, then went straight through the hall to leave.

"Stop!"

Qi Taiguo called her, glancing at his watch. It was almost eight o'clock; where was she going this late?

"Where are you going at this hour? It's pitch black outside," Qi Taiguo asked coldly.

Qi Fengping felt a chill in her heart, turned around, and pouted, "There's an outdoor movie at the threshing ground tonight, can't I go watch it?"

"You are in your second year of high school. You should spend more time studying, not watching movies. Go back to your room," Qi Taiguo scolded.

"I can't even watch a movie? Big Brother, you are so overbearing!" Qi Fengping protested.

Qi Taiguo said nothing, just stared at her with a sharp gaze that made Qi Fengping tremble and her legs shake. She let out a loud cry and ran back to her room, crying.

Chapter 819: A Good Son-in-Law

Qi Taiguo listened to the crying coming from Qi Fengping's room, his brows furrowed tightly, and his face was very unpleasant.

Mother Qi couldn't bear it and said, "It's just a movie, if she wants to go, let her go. Why are you being so harsh to her?"

"Mom!" Qi Taiguo forcefully placed his chopsticks on the table and looked at her, saying, "Little Ping is already eighteen, she's a grown girl. Look at what she's wearing

, and what's on her lips? It's okay to dress up, but at this time dressing like this, what is she planning to do?"

Mother Qi choked and said, "What girl doesn't like dressing up?" Cheng Su also dresses up beautifully, not to mention this young girl as fresh as a scallion.

"Yes, one should dress up, but putting on lipstick in the middle of the night?" Qi Taiguo remarked with implication, "Mom, Dad, you should discipline her more often, don't let her cause any trouble, she's only eighteen and still studying!"

Father Qi's face changed, he understood Qi Taiguo's underlying meaning, which was to say Qi Fengping shouldn't secretly date anyone, as she's still young and might cause a scandal.

Thinking about it, this girl started to learn how to dress up earlier, her lips often painted bright red, sometimes even giggling foolishly.

Mother Qi suddenly realized, mumbled with her lips, "Nonsense, your sister is not like that."

Qi Taiguo picked up his chopsticks again, saying, "At this time, if a girl is not properly looked after, scandal might follow in the future."

Mother Qi wanted to argue back, Father Qi then scolded, "Eat your meal!"

Qi Jianguo dared not make a sound, with the elder brother around, there was no place for him to speak in this house.

...

Qi Taiguo got up before dawn, greeted Father Qi who also got up early, and ran all the way to Cheng Su's parents' house.

Mother Cheng and the others were also already up, busy in the yard, caught off guard when they saw Qi Taiguo.

"Is it Taiguo? Oh my, so early, what brings you here? When did you come back, come in quickly." Mother Cheng wiped her wet hands on her apron, pulling him inside.

"My dad broke his foot bone, I took leave yesterday afternoon and came back, and I have to leave soon, so I came early to see if you were up." Qi Taiguo replied with a smile, "It's just me, Susu didn't come back with me."

"How's your dad? A fracture isn't a small thing, it takes a hundred days to heal bones and muscles!" Father Cheng asked, then urged Mother Cheng, "Go make some pancakes and cook some porridge, let the son-in-law have breakfast before he leaves."

"Okay, I'll do it right away!"

Qi Taiguo quickly replied, "Mother-in-law, no need to go to the trouble, we're cooking at home too."

"We have to eat anyway." Father Cheng said with a smile.

Qi Taiguo had to let them go, then pulled out a cigarette and offered it to his father-in-law, sitting on a small stool to chat.

Although Cheng Su didn't specifically ask him to visit her parents, being stationed at the army for so long, now home for a rare visit, the distance between their homes was short, not paying a visit would seem improper.

So, taking advantage of the morning exercise, he decided to come by.

Qi Taiguo mentioned Cheng Su's company participating in a competition, hence she's very busy and couldn't come back, but will visit them when she has the time.

Father Cheng said a few words about the importance of work when Cheng Zhi, with sleepy eyes, rushed out with a schoolbag, hesitated seeing Qi Taiguo, respectfully called him brother-in-law, then was in a hurry to leave for school.

Qi Taiguo stopped him, took out a couple of Great Unity RMB bills and tucked them into his hand, saying, "Use it wisely."

Cheng Zhi almost jumped with joy, "Thanks, brother-in-law!" He waved and ran off.

"Why are you giving him money? He'll just waste it!" Father Cheng feigned anger but had a smile and satisfaction in his eyes. The son-in-law was good to his daughter's family, which showed he was thoughtful and sensible, a good son-in-law indeed.

Chapter 820: Insisting on Being Stubborn

Qi Taiguo had breakfast at his father-in-law's house and then returned, stuffing fifty yuan into Father Cheng's hand before leaving, saying it was from Cheng Su.

"I'm going now. Next time, I'll come back with Susu to visit you if I have time," Qi Taiguo said.

"Okay, okay, take care on the road, be careful," Father Cheng and the others reminded him.

"Alright!"

Father Cheng and Mother Cheng watched until their son-in-law's shadow was out of sight before turning back inside, saying, "This time, it seems Taiguo has made a lot of progress; he looks more stable and reliable."

Mother Cheng listened to the praise in his words, gave him an annoyed look, and said, "This progress comes with a price, alas."

Father Cheng understood what she meant, knowing it was about the child's situation, and sighed, "Growth comes with a price, that's inevitable. I just hope everything goes smoothly in the future without any more disturbances."

Qi Taiguo hurried home again, and Mother Qi, who had just prepared breakfast, asked when she saw him return, "Where did you go so early? Come and have breakfast!"

"I've already eaten, at my father-in-law's house," Qi Taiguo said. "I'm heading back to Qing City, so you don't need to set a place for me."

Mother Qi's face immediately fell upon hearing this. Where did he go so early? Turns out he went to his wife's family to curry favor!

Hmm! He doesn't even stay at home for a full day, rushing off to his in-laws' place early in the morning, as if the Yue family is more important than his own!

"You're leaving already? You didn't stay long; is the house filled with nails that you can't sit still?"
Mother Qi said sourly.

"Taiguo can't leave the army easily. You shouldn't have told him about my foot problem, making him rush back and forth," Father Qi reiterated the old complaint and added to Qi Taiguo, "You go ahead; don't worry about the house."

"Okay!"

Mother Qi was so angry she glared. She thought, had she known her son would come back just to please his in-laws, she wouldn't have told him!

She sat there sulking, feeling more blocked the more she thought about it. Out of the corner of her eye, Qi Taiguo appeared, carrying a backpack, and she quickly stood up and said, "Then stay for lunch before you go!"

"Mom, it's really hard for me to leave the army. I have to go back and be on duty again. I'll find time to visit you all later!" Qi Taiguo said.

Mother Qi looked reluctant.

"Go on, go. The army is important," Father Qi urged him out the door.

Qi Taiguo responded, took out another fifty yuan, and pushed it into his father's hand, saying, "Cheng Su asked me to give this to you. Buy some good food to strengthen yourself, get some big bones to make soup and strengthen your walking strength."

"What are you giving me this for? You already gave me some during the new year; I don't need it!"
Father Qi refused.

"Just take it; it's a token of thought. It's not much money. I'm leaving now!" Qi Taiguo pushed it back, picked up his bag, and left.

Mother Qi looked on expectantly, chasing him to the door, but Qi Taiguo didn't look back, and her nose immediately tingled with sourness.

It wasn't until he was out of sight that she returned to the house with red eyes. Seeing this, Father Qi said, "Now do you understand how it feels?"

"What do I understand?" Mother Qi glimpsed the few Great Unity RMB notes in his hand, her face turning dark.

"If you keep being stubborn like this, Taiguo will definitely become more distant from you. By then, you'll have no tears left to cry. Do you still not understand his attitude this time around?" Father Qi glared coldly at her.

Mother Qi pursed her lips: "I know, I know, not even close to his own mother, just going to please his in-laws early in the morning!"

Seeing her stubbornly getting into a deadlock again, Father Qi lost his temper, propped up his cane, and went inside, leaving behind the words, "Then you keep being stubborn!"

Mother Qi sat on the threshold, wiping her tears.