

The 80s 971

Chapter 971: Bizarre Divorce Demands

Cheng Su returned to the Qi family, and Qi Taiguo asked her how her father-in-law and mother-in-law were. Cheng Su replied, "They asked us to have a meal before we leave."

Qi Taiguo nodded and said okay.

"How's the eldest sister?" Cheng Su asked softly.

"Not much, she's just in a daze." Qi Taiguo's eyebrows raised.

"Do you think there'll be any changes?" Cheng Su asked again.

Qi Taiguo shook his head and said, "I don't know either." After a pause, he asked about Xiao Yun.

"She's at an age where she's very understanding. Her parents' divorce will definitely have a huge impact on her," Cheng Su sighed.

And such an impact is very likely to cause changes in the situation.

However, as her father advised her, she plans not to intervene.

Upon hearing her words, Qi Taiguo's face looked even worse.

The next day, Zhang Jisheng came again to plead, not hesitating to kneel at the Qi family's door to admit his mistakes, but Qi Fenglian seemed to have made up her mind not to see him, and he was eventually driven away.

On the third day, Zhang Jisheng came again, this time with his parents, to discuss divorce matters.

And this family once again shocked Cheng Su.

They agreed to the divorce, and the child could stay with Qi Fenglian, but they had conditions: if they wanted to visit the child, Qi Fenglian couldn't stop them, and if they wanted to take the child back for holidays, she couldn't refuse.

This condition could be agreed to.

But the Zhang family raised another demand, which was that since they were getting a divorce, they would have to split the assets. That is, Zhang Jisheng wanted half of the money Qi Fenglian earned from working this year, arguing that since they helped take care of the child, they deserved something for their efforts.

Cheng Su felt embarrassed for Zhang Jisheng over this demand.

A grown man, not only giving his wife nothing in a divorce but also asking for a share of her assets, really made Cheng Su want to laugh out loud.

Every year there are oddities, and this year there are especially many.

This Zhang family is utterly disgusting, proving that one can truly be shameless.

The Qi family was stunned and furious over the Zhang family's demand, even Mother Qi, who was against Qi Fenglian's divorce, jumped up and pointed at Mother Zhang and the others, yelling, "Do you have any shame? You want to split the money Fenglian earned herself? Shameless! Is your heart black? Huh? Want to split money, huh! Zhang Jisheng, you're dreaming!"

Zhang Jisheng's face was flushed purple. He hadn't thought of it initially, but his old mother and the others said they'd asked the second brother, who mentioned something about marital property law, and since he'd want money to marry a new wife in the future, they should split it.

"The law states that the money earned by a couple should be shared equally!" Mother Zhang said shamelessly, "Besides, if we hadn't helped her take care of the child, how would she earn money? So we should get a share."

She asked Jisheng, and he said Qi Fenglian's monthly salary was several dozen yuan. She had been at it for a year, so there should be a few hundred yuan saved. Split a little, and it'd be enough to marry a new bride!

Humph, seeing her divorce so decisively, her son, with money, could completely marry a young maiden again. As for her, an old woman, who would dare to want her, especially with two kids!

The more Mother Zhang thought about it, the more she felt her idea was right, luckily she asked her younger son.

Qi Fenglian was so infuriated by her in-laws that she couldn't speak, her finger trembling as she pointed at Zhang Jisheng. Just last night, she had considered just letting it go for the sake of the two children.

But it turns out, it was all her wishful thinking. They had already calculated against her, ha-ha.

Chapter 972: Bloodsucking Leeches

The Zhang family was certain that if Qi Fenglian wanted a divorce, she could only agree to the demands they made. If she didn't agree, well, that was fine too—without the signature, the marriage couldn't be dissolved.

If she agreed, then there would be money to take another wife, and with a new wife, could they really not have another grandson?

Cheng Su watched the faces of these people, feeling so disgusted that she wanted to throw up yesterday's meal. How could people be so shameless?

This whole family was nothing but a bunch of leeches!

"We've been working, and all the money Zhang Jisheng earned was given to you, and you still want to settle accounts with me?" Qi Fenglian was so angry she felt like spitting blood.

She truly must have been blind back then to have married into this kind of family.

"That was the cost of raising your children, not payment for our hard work," Mother Zhang retorted, having already thought of what to say.

"Those are also Zhang family's grandchildren. Do you really need to be paid for helping to take care of them? Aren't they from the Zhang family?" Mother Qi shouted.

"Yes, they are from the Zhang family, but you're trying to take them away," Mother Zhang fought back without yielding.

"Zhang Jisheng, do you really want to go over accounts and divide things up?" Qi Fenglian didn't look at her mother-in-law, but pointed at Zhang Jisheng and asked.

Zhang Jisheng was full of dread and meekly said, "Fenglian, how about not divorcing? I'll listen to whatever you say, I'll change..."

Answering a question with an unrelated answer, dodging left and right.

"Yes, don't divorce, then everything remains within the family, no need to divide," Mother Zhang immediately said.

They thought they were certain to win, forgetting that the family still had Qi Taiguo and Cheng Su.

"If you divide, then the Zhang family also has to pay child support and maintenance fees. Both children and the elder sister must be supported," Cheng Su interjected, "Support them until they're eighteen. For two kids, food, clothing, living, and schooling costs, right now five yuan per month for one is enough, ten yuan for both, increasing year by year."

Mother Zhang was stunned, quickly did a mental calculation, and was shocked by the numbers, which far exceeded what they would get now.

"How can this be, it's you who insisted on the divorce!" Mother Zhang was a bit flustered.

Cheng Su sneered, "What, you guys figured out how to split marital assets, but didn't think about the child support and maintenance fees? Zhang Jisheng just handled the seed, carrying on the Zhang family name from generation to generation, and in the future, they will hold the ancestral banner and buy you water. You mean you don't need to pay for their upbringing? How is there such a cheap deal in the world?"

Her biting sarcasm made the faces of several Zhang family members present turn red.

Meanwhile, Mother Qi glanced at her daughter-in-law, thinking her sharp tongue was truly formidable.

"Bring over the agreement, write it down. The boss of my elder sister is me. I pay her salary, ten yuan a month. You want to divide? Fine, write in the support and maintenance fees too. If you don't pay, we'll sue you in court," Cheng Su said, slapping the table.

"What ten yuan, it's clearly tens of yuan a month!" Mother Zhang shouted.

"Yes, I was willing to give her tens of yuan. Now I think she hasn't done her job well, especially since she's taken so much time off. I need to deduct her salary; it's completely justified," Cheng Su stared at Mother Zhang coldly, "You have the right to manage Zhang family affairs but not to meddle in mine!"

"You, you..." Mother Zhang was so angry her whole body trembled.

From the time her grandson was born, she knew this daughter-in-law of the Qi family was not to be trifled with, a real thorn in her side, and now seeing this, it was indeed true, sharp-tongued and fierce.

"Zhang Jisheng, I warned you long ago, my elder sister is a pushover, but Qi Taiguo and I are not, we're the difficult ones. You didn't listen, insisting on challenging our bottom line. Do you think nobody in the Qi family can stand up to you?" Cheng Su shouted once more.

Chapter 973: Old Qi's Revenge

With Cheng Su and the others around, the Zhang family naturally got nothing good out of it. The divorce agreement fell apart once more, and a group of them left in defeat.

As soon as they left, Qi Fenglian started to cry: "Why am I so unlucky to be stuck with someone like this."

The family was speechless.

Qi Taiguo, with a cold face, said he was going out, and then he disappeared.

Cheng Su frowned, and it wasn't until late at night that Qi Taiguo came back, his face flushed and reeking of alcohol.

"Where did you go to drink so much?" Cheng Su asked as she brought over hot water to wash his face and hands and feet.

Qi Taiguo grabbed Cheng Su's hand and, with clear eyes, said, "I don't want the Zhang family to have it easy. I want them to suffer greatly."

They owe that to our big sister!

Cheng Su was stunned, knowing he must have done something, but she said nothing.

As for the Zhang family, they had been cursing at the Qi family all along, and Mother Zhang hated Cheng Su and the others so much that she was almost ready to curse them with an effigy.

After a night like this, the next day, the youngest son of the Zhang family, Zhang Jiguang, and his wife Wang Li hurried back home.

"Why are you back? Aren't you supposed to be at work?" Mother Zhang was pleased to see her youngest son and his wife.

"Work? What work? Because of your good son, we've both been fired. It's your doing!" Wang Li shouted at her mother-in-law: "Of all the people to provoke, you had to provoke a disaster. Fooling yourself is one thing, but harming others?" The latter was a veiled insult.

When it came to this daughter-in-law, Mother Zhang didn't dare treat her like Qi Fenglian, so despite being yelled at, she didn't dare to retaliate but asked her son, "What happened?"

"Where's my brother?" Zhang Jiguang asked with a dark face.

"In the room."

Zhang Jiguang went into the room and dragged out Zhang Jisheng, who was still sound asleep.

"What exactly happened?" Mother Zhang asked, puzzled, pulling at her son for answers.

"What happened? Isn't it all because of your precious son? It's bad enough he's causing a divorce, but now he's made it so we both lost our jobs. What other reason do you need!" Wang Li's voice was sharp.

When she got to work, she was notified that she didn't need to come anymore, without even providing a reason. Upon further inquiry, she found out that it was the sister-in-law's brother who had intervened to arrange her dismissal.

Not only was her husband's secure job gone, but they were also told that since his older sister wasn't having a good time, no one in the Zhang family should either!

God, who does such things, and what kind of people are these? Yet the fact remains, an official with higher rank trumps all, and somehow, overnight, they lost their jobs!

That was supposed to be a secure job!

Mother Zhang understood immediately; she remembered what that brute Qi Taiguo said that day, and her face went pale.

This is revenge, revenge from that cold-faced executioner Qi Taiguo. He's out to ruin the Zhang family, to ruin Jiguang and them.

This is revenge against her, against the Zhang family!

"It's all your lousy idea, and you too. I told you not to meddle, but you wouldn't listen. Now look what happened, you've hit a stone wall!" Wang Li pointed at her mother-in-law and Zhang Jiguang, scolding them: "You tried to steal a chicken only to end up losing the bait, serves you right."

Mother Zhang staggered, her lips trembling: "How could this happen, how could it happen like this?"

"Come on, go with me to the Qi family to apologize, no matter what conditions they propose, agree to them." Zhang Jiguang, with anger, pushed Zhang Jisheng angrily, saying, "Qi Fenglian wants a divorce and two kids, then give them to her, go, hurry up!"

Zhang Jisheng looked dumbfounded. The in-law family was clearly about to thrive, but at such a critical moment, he screwed it up.

It was only now that he realized what he had lost.

Chapter 974: Severance

Qi Fenglian didn't expect she would get divorced just like that. As she walked out of the Civil Affairs Bureau, her steps were somewhat unsteady and floating.

More than ten years of marriage and affection ultimately resulted in a divorce paper. Who was at fault?

The past moments flashed before her eyes like a movie—former love, mutual support, as if they were just yesterday. In the end, it all turned into glaring anger.

Whose fault was it? She didn't know.

All she knew was that after walking out of the Civil Affairs Bureau, from then on, she could only rely on herself, and her two children could only rely on her too.

So, she couldn't fall. For the sake of her two children, no matter how bitter or tired, she could only grit her teeth and keep going because it was her own choice.

"Fenglian..." Zhang Jisheng called out to her.

Qi Fenglian's body stiffened, and she stopped in her tracks.

"Fenglian." Zhang Jisheng walked up to her and said, "I'm sorry."

He owed her an apology; he had to say it.

Qi Fenglian's nose tingled, and she looked ahead, saying, "What's the use of saying sorry now? We're already divorced!"

"Fenglian, I, I know, it's my fault, I was wrong, I..."

"Don't say it!" Qi Fenglian interrupted him, saying, "Saying anything is useless now. Take care of yourself in the future!"

"Can I, in the future, see the children?" Zhang Jisheng anxiously asked, grabbing her.

Qi Taiguo's move made the Zhang family panic. They hurriedly came to apologize and offer compensation. They unconditionally agreed to the divorce between the two and didn't even mention dividing the property. Zhang Jisheng also had to pay alimony every month.

"If you're a decent father, of course, I'd let you see the children. After all, you're their dad. But I hope you conduct yourself with integrity. I don't want the children to have a father they're ashamed to speak of." Qi Fenglian looked at him and said.

Zhang Jisheng looked down in shame.

"I'm leaving! Take care!" Qi Fenglian walked away without turning back.

Behind her, the sound of Zhang Jisheng's crying reached her ears. Tears followed in her eyes as she quickened her pace and even broke into a run.

The uproar over Qi Fenglian and Zhang Jisheng's divorce finally died down.

With the divorce, she had to consider the future situation for her and her children.

Qi Fenglian had to continue working, otherwise, where would the living expenses for the three of them come from? As for Zhang Jisheng's alimony, it was uncertain if it would be given on time or at all. She dared not pin her hopes on him.

Therefore, Qi Fenglian would still go to work in Qing City.

So, the two children could only be entrusted to her parents. Xiao Bao was still young, but he could walk and babbled a few words. He was a well-behaved child and easy to take care of.

As for Xiao Yun, she was already in elementary school and used to help with housework at home. Now, at her grandma's, she could help take care of her brother after school.

Of course, entrusting them to her parents meant she naturally had to give money, so she still needed to provide living expenses to Mother Qi each month.

Cheng Su, however, was a bit worried that the children wouldn't adapt. Xiao Bao was still young and could be excused, but Xiao Yun was already older, sensible, and sensitive. The last thing she wanted was for her not to adapt and overthink things.

"I'll transfer her to a school in Qing City next semester," Qi Fenglian planned for herself, "And when Xiao Bao is older, I'll also send him to kindergarten to start afresh away from that place."

That's all she could do.

But, is it really feasible?

Seeing the fear and apprehension in Xiao Yun's eyes, Cheng Su felt uncertain inside, yet she knew it was an unavoidable matter.

Chapter 975: The Hardest Part Comes After

Just divorced, the children are still very fragile and sensitive. Qi Fenglian didn't dare to leave immediately. Fortunately, her direct superior is Cheng Su, so asking for leave is manageable. If it were anyone else, she would've lost her job long ago.

"Taiguo's wife, sorry to trouble you, but you see, during these days I'm not working, don't give me a salary, and I don't want the year-end bonus either. Once the kids have stabilized their emotions and gotten used to it, I'll go back to work. Do you think that's okay?" Qi Fenglian said hesitantly to Cheng Su. "Sister, how could I not understand? Don't worry too much, the children are the most important, especially Xiao Yun. She needs more enlightenment; I've noticed she's become more introverted these past few days!" Cheng Su replied with a gentle smile.

The thing that Cheng Su finds most heartbreaking about Qi Fenglian's divorce is the two children, especially Xiao Yun. Seeing her cautious and timid demeanor makes her feel an indescribable sadness.

This child is too smart and too sensitive. She knows that she won't have a home in the future, so things will always be different, and she can only be cautious.

Cheng Su suddenly understood those couples who don't divorce for the sake of their children. She understood Hualing and her parents' choices, probably because of this.

Seeing such a cautious atmosphere at home made Cheng Su very uncomfortable. Having dealt with Qi Fenglian's issue, Qi Taiguo still had two days of leave, so he accompanied her to visit her family.

The two weren't in a hurry to travel, and they walked slowly, talking intimately, always discussing Qi Fenglian's situation.

"Divorce is easy, but the days ahead are difficult. I hope Sister didn't make the wrong choice and can truly become independent and strong for the children," Cheng Su said. "Otherwise, if we support her now, the divorce will be for nothing if she's unable to sustain herself and gets sweet-talked by Zhang Jisheng into remarrying. It would all be in vain."

Upon hearing this, Qi Taiguo furrowed his brows and said, "She wouldn't, would she?"

"A woman's heart can be soft, especially with children involved," Cheng Su sighed. What she didn't say was that Qi Fenglian's personality wasn't strong; she was a bit soft and not the type to be resolute.

"If you don't want such a thing to happen, there is a way: Zhang Jisheng could remarry immediately. In that case, there really would be no turning back!" Cheng Su added.

Qi Taiguo snorted coldly, "If Zhang Jisheng keeps that attitude, whoever marries him is jumping into a pit of fire!"

"Not necessarily!" Cheng Su raised an eyebrow.

"Hmm?"

"It depends on the type of person who marries him." Cheng Su glanced at him and said, "If it were someone with a completely different, more spirited personality than Sister, do you think he'd dare to act carelessly? Would that old lady dare to act carelessly?"

Qi Taiguo was stunned for a moment, picturing the scene, and nodded, "You're right. If a feisty person came along, the Zhang family would never have peace!"

His smile was cold, and he was quite looking forward to that scenario. He thought it would best to have chaos there; otherwise, they wouldn't know the meaning of regret.

But whether they regret it or not, it has nothing to do with them now. The hope is that Sister doesn't make any foolish decisions. After finally escaping the pit of fire, it's not worth it to go back for a few sweet words.

As for the current hardship, endure it, and it will pass. If fate allows, she might meet a man who genuinely cares for her and is responsible in the future.

Seeing his sneaky smile as if watching a show, Cheng Su knew what he was thinking and couldn't help but shake her head. She quickened her pace and entered the house: "Dad, Mom, we're back!"

Chapter 976: Maternal Disdain

Qi Fenglian's divorce gradually settled, but her situation caused quite a stir, and since her previous husband's Gaotian Village wasn't far from Huangtian Village, news traveled fast in this day and age. So, her story became widely known.

Especially seeing Qi Fenglian staying at her parents' home with two kids, everyone in Huangtian Village peeped intentionally or unintentionally.

Mother Qi was bombarded with questions by the curious; they asked if Qi Fenglian had truly divorced and what led to it, and she was irked beyond measure!

"What's the big deal about a divorce? If you can't live together, then don't. It's not like you can't live without a man, what's so juicy about it? Are you bored or what, poking your nose into other people's affairs!" Mother Qi snapped back at such inquiries.

But once she returned home, her face fell long. After all, a daughter's divorce isn't pleasant and is shameful; she felt humiliated.

Particularly, seeing Xiao Yun playing with the chicken ticked her off, and she scolded her twice, scaring Xiao Yun till her eyes went red.

Seeing this, Cheng Su immediately called Xiao Yun over, saying she wanted to take her to the town and buy her some clothes.

Father Qi saw it clearly too and pulled Mother Qi aside to scold her: "Whatever frustration you encountered outside, don't take it out on the kids at home, especially knowing this is the most sensitive time for them."

Seeing Xiao Yun's frightened look, Father Qi felt deeply pained. She was his first granddaughter, now going through her parents' divorce, naturally stirring pity.

Yet this foolish woman still lashed out at her, as if she had lost her mind.

"I've lost all my face!" Mother Qi huffed.

Father Qi knew instantly what she meant and lowered his voice: "Fenglian is still at home, why say such things? Aren't you just stabbing at the heart? She's your own daughter! If even you turn your back, where will the three of them go? I'm telling you, behave yourself these days."

Mother Qi wore a sullen face.

"If you feel so disgraced then don't go out, shut out the outside world. Let's see who talks about you then, with time they'll stop!" Father Qi added.

"Who knows when these days will end?" Mother Qi snorted lightly.

Qi Fenglian, hugging Xiao Bao, hid behind the door, tears streaming down as she bit her lip tightly.

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The Qi family's atmosphere passed in such cautious awkwardness, and Qi Taiguo's leave was suddenly over, he had to return.

As Qi Taiguo needed to go back, Cheng Su naturally had to follow; she originally returned for the Elder Sister's matter, and there were still many affairs to handle in Qing City.

Mother Qi was very reluctant, saying: "Every time you come back it's in such a hurry, when can you stay a bit longer?"

"I'll come back during my next family vacation."

"Come back for the New Year? The relatives heard you got promoted and are very happy; let's invite a couple of tables during New Year and let everyone share the festivity." Mother Qi suggested again.

In her heart, she thought if she lost face due to her daughter's divorce, then she'd regain it through her son, making everyone envy that she gave birth to a good son.

"Mom, I've already mentioned, this time I came back by taking an early leave, so it's very unlikely I'll have time during the New Year. I'll come after the New Year!" Qi Taiguo said patiently.

Unwilling to give up, Mother Qi wanted to persuade further, but Father Qi pushed her aside, saying: "The army follows rules, you can't come and go at will, even as a leader you have to abide by them. Step aside and don't create trouble for him." Then said to Qi Taiguo: "Don't listen to your mom; come back when you can, if not, just give a call, it's all the same!"

"Dad, I got it." Qi Taiguo smiled and hesitated for a while, then said: "Dad, please look after Elder Sister more."

Father Qi solemnly nodded.

Chapter 977: Adorable People

When Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo returned to Qing City, it was only a little more than half a month left until Chinese New Year.

As soon as they got back to Qing City, the weather turned bad, with sleet falling and it was so cold people shivered, Cheng Su almost wanted to drape a quilt over herself.

And such bad weather also forced the nearly completed restaurant project to come to a halt.

The foreman overseeing the project came to talk with Cheng Su, and Dazhi also came, both informing Cheng Su that at this pace it's impossible to have it remodeled and opened by January, after all, the building isn't topped out yet, so how to renovate?

Cheng Su felt quite regretful, but she also knew she couldn't force it, as this was not something that could be changed by human will, and people are the most important.

I guess plans can't keep up with changes, so the opening date could only be postponed.

She felt regret, but Old Song seemed more open-minded. In his words, rather than hurrying to complete the construction, it's better to take time and do it well, to build a nice new restaurant.

Cheng Su thought for a bit and agreed, not worrying about it anymore.

As the year-end approached, the university went on winter break, and Cheng Su returned to the school to attend a closing ceremony, officially starting her holiday, with considerably more free time at hand.

While she had more time, she was not idle. For the year-end profits settlement in various industries, financial personnel naturally handled it, so Cheng Su and Song Xiaojang visited several factories together, ordering the necessary kitchen utensils, tables, and chairs for the restaurant's opening.

On the twentieth of the twelfth month, the Goodwill Place family courtyard and the army unit seemed just like New Year celebrations, with everyone wearing new clothes. And those young soldiers, especially the young ones, were dressed in brand new, crisply pressed uniforms, their young faces full of joyful smiles with some hidden shyness and anticipation.

At ten in the morning, the soldiers were tidying themselves up meticulously, from clothes to hair arrangements, each one very earnest.

"Quick, help me adjust my tie, don't make the knot too big, it doesn't look good."

"Hey Wu boy, check if my military cap is straight?"

"Oh Pan Gang, you rascal, you stepped on my shoe, I just cleaned it, did you do it on purpose?"

"Do you think my hair is too long, should I trim it a bit more?"

In the dormitory barracks, such conversations among the lads were endless, each one full of nerves.

Why? Because today is the matchmaking event, the day for those unmarried soldiers to meet prospects, how could they not be excited, expectant, shy, and nervous?

For the possibility of a future partner, they certainly had to present their most decent, best, spirited, and neat side for them to see. Otherwise, if dirty and scruffy appearances scared off those beauties, what then?

It is said that first impressions are very important, affecting their lifelong decisions, they had to be careful about it.

Qi Taiguo went around the dormitory, finding it amusing, and upon returning said to Cheng Su, "I see they're not this cautious even with the Chief coming, didn't expect them to care about their image in front of the girls."

Cheng Su also found it interesting, really adorable people, and laughed, "Of course they need to be careful, they want to marry, it's a lifelong matter. If it were you, you'd also be careful, otherwise, if you're interested in someone and they reject you for your appearance, wouldn't you feel cheated?"

Qi Taiguo shrugged, saying, "I wouldn't know, I never had such experience."

Upon hearing this, Cheng Su turned around, squinting at him, "Really never?" She couldn't believe it, that he hasn't attended a single matchmaking event in his over ten years in the military.

Chapter 978: Old Qi's First Love

Qi Taiguo was spinning one of Cheng Su's eyebrow pencils in his hand. Hearing what she said and noticing her half-smiling expression, he couldn't help but cough.

"I've been engaged to you long ago, what do those social gatherings have to do with me?" he said.

Cheng Su raised her eyebrow: "Why does it sound like someone's a bit sour?"

Qi Taiguo chuckled.

"Be honest, did you fancy anyone back during those gatherings?" Cheng Su pressed.

"No, I'm an engaged man."

"Really, I don't believe it!" Cheng Su declared. "Even if you're engaged, you weren't willing at heart. You must have liked someone, spill it. I promise I won't get mad." At most, a little jealous.

Qi Taiguo squinted at her: "Really won't get mad?"

Cheng Su nodded, but felt a pang of jealousy inside, so there really was someone.

"I only attended once, and quite a lot of girls seemed to like me, but upon hearing I was engaged, dropped it!" Qi Taiguo said with pride. "As for me, I wouldn't say I fancied anyone, but I did see a girl who wasn't bad."

"In what way not bad?" Cheng Su's eyes slightly narrowed.

Qi Taiguo reminisced: "Long hair down to the waist, big eyes, curved eyebrows, dimples when she smiled, and fair skin, quite elegant."

Cheng Su subconsciously imagined, fair skin and beautiful— that's the image of a goddess. Comparing herself at that time, she feared she was just a little bean sprout or a spicy pepper!

No wonder he was unwilling!

"Oh wow, a goddess! Did the goddess fancy you?" Cheng Su asked again, her tone turning even more sour.

"Back then, if a girl fancied a guy, she would give him a red star she was holding; if the guy accepted it, it was a done deal. I had a few given, including from her..." Qi Taiguo said with unparalleled pride, his tone soaring, but seeing the cold look in Cheng Su's eyes, he abruptly stopped.

Cheng Su pursed her lips and smiled: "Go on, why did you stop?"

"You said you wouldn't get mad." Qi Taiguo's voice lowered, his neck retracted, thinking to himself how women's words couldn't be fully trusted.

Hmm, when they say they want it, they don't; when they say they don't, they do. Understood!

"I'm not mad." Cheng Su huffed, just a bit jealous.

Qi Taiguo studied her face, seeing she really didn't seem angry, then laughed: "Oh, so you're jealous?" his heart instantly filled with sweetness.

"Who's jealous!" Cheng Su turned her head: "Thinking everyone is as superficial as those you had before!"

Qi Taiguo grinned happily and leaned in to kiss her: "I knew you'd be jealous. Come here, let hubby give a kiss."

After a few kisses, Cheng Su finally smiled and pushed him away: "Shoo, shoo, go away, you've messed up my makeup. Go think about your first love."

"Still jealous, huh?" Qi Taiguo wanted to lean in again.

Cheng Su blocked him, chiding: "Stop fooling around, we need to go to the troop soon!"

Qi Taiguo left it at that and lay back on the bed, saying: "It wasn't anything like a first love. I knew I was engaged, so I wasn't interested in anyone else. I just thought she was okay, easy on the eyes, that's all!"

"Didn't rejecting her make her sad?" Cheng Su asked, snatching the eyebrow pencil from him.

"I wouldn't know. But she later married one of our comrades..." Qi Taiguo said, suddenly freezing, not continuing.

Cheng Su didn't pay much mind, drew an eyebrow, checked the mirror, and suddenly asked: "Were you ever regretful back then? Did you ever think of breaking off our engagement?"

Chapter 979: I Like the Way You Are Now

Cheng Su finished drawing her eyebrows but didn't get a response from Qi Taiguo for a long time. She turned her head, unsure what he was spacing out about, and kicked him gently.

"Hmm, what's going on?" Qi Taiguo snapped back to reality.

"I should be asking you what's going on," Cheng Su pouted and said, "I asked you something, and you didn't reply. Are you thinking about your first love?"

"Nonsense!" Qi Taiguo sat up, pinching her chin, and said, "I have you now, why would I think about someone else?"

"Then why didn't you reply?" Cheng Su huffed softly.

"Want to hear the truth?" Qi Taiguo answered without waiting for her to respond, "Actually, back then, I really wasn't satisfied with this marriage because it felt so disgraceful. I even thought about calling it off, but then I knew that was impossible, so I just stopped thinking about it."

Cheng Su fell silent. Previously, when the original owner saw Qi Taiguo, she was arrogant and even said things like he was a son-in-law bought by the Cheng family. Anyone would feel embarrassed, let alone someone with his strong masculine personality.

"I was immature back then. Did you resent it?" Cheng Su asked.

Qi Taiguo laughed, "Weren't you young then? How could I blame you? After we got married, you grew up fast. You've been great!" He paused and added, "It's said that once a person gets married and starts a family, their character changes. It's true. I really think your character has changed a lot from before and after our marriage; it's completely different."

Cheng Suxin's heart skipped a beat, and she looked at him and asked, "Do you like the me now or the me from before?"

Qi Taiguo didn't answer immediately. He carefully pondered. He knew women could change their minds quickly, and giving the wrong answer might upset her. So, he didn't dare to reply right away.

"Tell the truth!" Cheng Su saw through his thoughts with one look.

Qi Taiguo spoke cautiously, "The you now is better. I really like you and love you." This way, she shouldn't get mad. Everything he said was nice.

But Cheng Su laughed, saying, "So you didn't like the old me. Hmm, I understand!" Having said that, she turned away to continue finishing her makeup.

She wasn't upset and seemed quite pleased?

Qi Taiguo looked confused, thinking that indeed a woman's heart is like a needle in the sea—impossible to predict.

He didn't realize why Cheng Su was happy. She was glad that he liked her married self. That was her true self. Before the marriage, it was the original owner. This body originally housed two souls.

And women are inherently jealous and want their men to only like them. Hearing Qi Taiguo say this naturally made her happy.

After finishing her makeup, Cheng Su put on jeans and a sweater, slipped into ankle boots, put on a large down jacket, and took Qi Taiguo's arm, ready to leave.

Just then, the phone rang.

Cheng Su had to answer it. The call was from Ying Xiaoya, saying she wasn't coming to the gathering this time.

Cheng Su was momentarily stunned, then heard her joyous tone and tentatively asked, "Did Xiao Pinshan confess to you?"

On the other end, Ying Xiaoya stammered shyly, taking a long pause before affirming, "He confessed to me and doesn't want me to go. I... I also don't really want to go, so..."

She got what she wished for, so naturally, she didn't want to attend the gathering. Cheng Su just replied, "Alright, I'll cancel for you!" As for their story, there would be plenty of chances to hear it later.

After hanging up the phone, Qi Taiguo asked what happened.

Cheng Su told him about Xiao Ya not coming to the gathering. Qi Taiguo wasn't bothered, just holding her hand as they headed out.

Chapter 980: No Pain Without Comparison

Hualing saw Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo all dressed up, ready to go out, and couldn't help but pause, asking, "Where are you going?"

She looked at Cheng Su, dressed appropriately, with makeup on, and then at Qi Taiguo, who also looked sharp in his military uniform. The two were perfectly matched in height, truly a sight to behold.

Qi Taiguo was promoted to Deputy Battalion Commander and seemed even more spirited and attractive, with an undeniable presence that couldn't be ignored.

Such a man belongs to Cheng Su.

As for Cheng Su herself, she's not lacking either, running a business and attending university, living well. Her aura is great too; a young woman in her early twenties, her complexion still radiant and fair.

Hualing instinctively touched her own face. Without looking in the mirror, she knew her skin was dull and filled with hostility.

Back then she said Cheng Su was a country bumpkin housewife, but now it seems she's the one who resembles a bumpkin?

"The army is hosting a social event today, didn't you know?" Cheng Su invited with a smile, "Come along and watch the excitement, I heard there's a performance, and the cafeteria has some extra dishes."

A social event!

Hualing remembered, everyone was talking about it before, and Chen Shouwang mentioned it too. Later she got annoyed listening to it and lost her temper, so he didn't dare bring it up again.

Now Cheng Su invited her to watch the excitement...

Hualing glanced at her own bulky home clothes, thought about her skin, and her expression changed, "I'm not going, you guys go!"

With that, she quickly went into the room and slammed the door shut.

Cheng Su and Qi Taiguo exchanged a glance, both shook their heads, and slowly walked downstairs.

"It seems Hualing isn't ready to let go." Qi Taiguo said.

Cheng Su gave him a look, "Such a big issue can't be let go of all at once, take it slow, haste makes waste; she needs time!"

She could understand Hualing's feelings, such matters definitely take a long time to resolve, and forgiveness can't happen instantly.

"If she never lets go, I reckon their marriage is just for show." Qi Taiguo sighed.

"Isn't that right, she..." Cheng Su began, then stopped, because ahead, Chen Shouwang hurried back with a lunchbox.

Chen Shouwang was taken aback to see them both, seemed too embarrassed to look at Qi Taiguo, and forced a smile, "Going to the social event!"

"Yes! You should bring Hualing along and check it out, staying home all the time isn't good!" Qi Taiguo said.

Chen Shouwang smiled, "I'll ask her, not sure if she wants to go!" With that, he said no more and quickly walked past them to go home.

Cheng Su waited until his figure disappeared completely and then scoffed, "If only he knew today's consequences back then, self-inflicted pain."

"Enough, let's go!" Qi Taiguo tugged her hand, heading toward the army.

When Chen Shouwang returned home, he saw Hualing sitting on a small stool with a sullen face, feeling uneasy, carefully placing the lunchbox on the table, saying, "I brought food back, you should eat something."

Hualing looked at his cautious demeanor, and the corner of her mouth curled coldly, feeling both sad and bitter inside.

Others have cheeks like Tao Hua, while she is like a wilted yellow flower, unbearably ugly, nowhere near the former beauty.

Others have husbands who are dashing Deputy Battalion Commanders. Hers? Timid as a mouse, submissive, not like a man, even demoted, ha, he'll never rise again in this lifetime.

Hualing finally understood the meaning of "without comparison, there is no harm."