

RTAMM 1411

Chapter 1411 Old Friend

“Alright, I will go back first. I am really sorry to spoil the fun for everyone. If there’s a chance in the future, I will treat all of you to a meal.” Qiao Nan picked up her bag and was about to leave.

Deng Wenchang, who had been keeping quiet all along, spoke up. “Before leaving, let me ask you a question. What is your relationship with the ambassador couple? How do you know them?” If he did find out the answer, he would not be able to sleep tonight. Although he had lost, he wanted to know the reason so that he would not make the same mistake next time.

He wanted to know how capable Qiao Nan was. She was married to Zhai Sheng, and Zhu Chengqi was her godfather. Shi Peng, who returned to the capital a few years ago, was doing very well in the government and his only daughter was Qiao Nan’s best friend. On top of that, it seemed that He Yi and Qiao Nan had a close relationship due to Elder Lin who had retired for many years.

Qiao Nan had too many backers and supporters. Nobody could understand the excruciating pain that Deng Wenchang felt right now.

He had always looked down on Qiao Nan. But apart from not going overseas, she had a stronger political background than him!

He had figured out Qiao Nan’s relationships with other people, but what about the ambassador couple today? How did Qiao Nan get to know them? What other strengths and backers did Qiao Nan have? All these were pitfalls waiting for him.

Qiao Nan curled the corners of her lips and sneered. “I have not been to other countries, and I did not go on overseas study. But I am hardworking. During my four years in college, I worked as a voluntary guide at the Palace Museum. I got to know the ambassador couple at that time. Previously, there were some reading materials as well as the materials regarding the evolution of English words from the Arabic language that I couldn’t find in the country. They were the ones who found the materials for me.”

It was also through interaction with friends from overseas that she got to constantly practice speaking and writing in English. Even when they returned home, Qiao Nan continued to chat with them using MSN, asking for their help to look for reading materials that she needed. They had a close relationship with each other.

The western friends were very friendly and warm. Initially, the ambassador couple felt that Qiao Nan looked young and fair. She looked similar to the dolls in their country in her pink long dress.

The ambassador couple was not DINK[1]. They wanted to have children, but it had been more than thirty years and they did not have any kids. They have tried in vitro fertilization, but to no avail. It was no surprise that when they saw a young lady who looked like the doll, they were particularly nice to Qiao Nan even when they were tourists.

Qiao Nan was not only pretty-looking and good-natured, but she also had a good attitude when she was the volunteer guide. The ambassador lost his credentials during the trip. Qiao Nan searched high and low to look for them when there were not many tourists around. It took her three hours to search all corners before she found the ambassador's documents.

After retrieving the documents, Qiao Nan merely passed them to her reporting unit so that they would return them to the ambassador.

All the people in Qiao Nan's reporting unit were very fond of her who was hardworking at work. Since it was Qiao Nan who went to great pains to retrieve the documents, they would not take her credit. They told the ambassador what happened.

That was why the ambassador couple had a good impression of Qiao Nan.

They added each other on MSN. After the ambassador couple returned to their country, they kept frequent contact with Qiao Nan. When they knew that some reading materials could not be easily found in China and it was hard to get them elsewhere as well, they told Qiao Nan to send them the list of books, and they would think of ways to get them for her.

Initially, Qiao Nan had her hesitation and doubts. Even if the book was sold in her country, it was akin to searching for a needle in the sea. After all, the current IT industry was not as developed as ten years later.

Strangely, whenever Qiao Nan needed a book, they were able to get the book for her.

At first, Qiao Nan thought that they must have the means to find the books for her. It was only until a few days ago when she saw the photos of the visiting ambassador couple did Qiao Nan realize that they came from a family of political and military background. People like them would definitely have the means to find the books for her.

“I am not that capable, and I am not as smart. All I did was to treat people with sincerity. Comrade Deng, if you are satisfied, I have to go home.”

That day, everyone could tell from Qiao Nan’s expression that Qiao Nan knew the ambassador couple. However, Deng Wenchang made crude comments, looking down on Qiao Nan. It turned out that Qiao Nan was not boasting. Instead, it was Deng Wenchang who had one’s nose in the air and was given a tight slap to his face.

Qiao Nan did not expect a reply from Deng Wenchang. She took her bag and left the place quickly to call a car to go home. If she delayed any further, the three spoiled brats might be throwing tantrums later.

Qiao Nan left without any hesitation, but all the colleagues were in shock.

“Crap. This was the first time that I learned that something good will come out of social practice during college.” This would not do. After dinner, he would have to make an overseas call right away. He must remind his son that even if he was overseas, he must take the social practice seriously. If he was lucky, he might have a good encounter like Xiao Qiao as well.

If he participated in social practice, there would be a chance of having lucky encounters. If not, he would not have the chance at all. It was obvious what decision he should make.

“Haha. Come on. Not everyone will have such a good encounter. Xiao Qiao is well-behaved and kindhearted. As the saying goes, the good would be well rewarded. Judging from today’s happenings, it is very true.” The man who said that narrowed his gaze and cast a sideways glance at Deng Wenchang. It was obvious that his comments were directed at Deng Wenchang.

“Good. It’s good that such a good comrade is from our department. Come, let’s have another drink.” He was only concerned about Qiao Nan, who had a stellar performance. As for Deng Wenchang, who performed badly, it was uncertain if he could continue to stay in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Since he might not necessarily be part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was no need for him to treat Deng Wenchang as part of the department and for Deng Wenchang to leave a blemish on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Deng Wenchang, who was ridiculed, could tell that their remarks were directed at him.

Since Qiao Nan could be big-headed and leave before the seniors in the department, he could leave as well. He would not accept that he was doomed to be worse than Qiao Nan and to be her stepping stone! Hmmp!

Deng Wenchang stood up, turning green in anger. "It's getting late. I am needed at home. Minister, seniors, excuse me, I have to go. Next time..." Deng Wenchang did not finish the sentence. He was about to say that he would treat them to dinner next time.

The reason being Qiao Nan made the same comments before she left.

Chapter 1412 Unrealistic

Even if Deng Wenchang had such an intention long ago, since Qiao Nan already said so, Deng Wenchang was unwilling to make the same remarks. It would seem as if he copied her and that he lost to her once again.

Since Deng Wenchang was born, he had never been thoroughly defeated like today. No matter how hard he tried, he could not turn the tables on Qiao Nan and he was ridiculed by his colleagues time and again because of her. The worst part was that the other party was a woman and she was younger than him and had lower educational qualifications than him!

Nobody stopped Deng Wenchang from leaving.

When Qiao Nan left, everyone watched her as she made a move. They reminded her to be careful on the way back and pay attention to safety and contact her family in the car.

When Deng Wenchang made a move to go, no one bothered about him. They did not say a word but continued with their drinks. It was as if Deng Wenchang was already old enough to take care of himself. He could not possibly want the seniors to care for him as if he was a young man and to worry about his safety.

Deng Wenchang did not drink, but he staggered as if he had finished one bottle of white wine by himself. The only way to prove that he did not have any drinks was the pallor on his face.

People inside the room were full of laughter and fun, while Deng Wenchang was all by himself outside the door.

Deng Wenchang gritted his teeth such that his gums were bleeding. He finally made his way back home.

As soon as he opened the door, Father Deng began to ask how the situation was today. He had yet to ask and he saw the pale look on his son's face and knew the outcome even without asking. "How can this be? It is impossible." The Zhai family did not do anything. It was impossible that Qiao Nan found out more information than his son.

Even if He Yi showed favoritism to Qiao Nan, his son would still be the winner.

Deng Wenchang laughed at himself. "It was useless to prepare any amount of information. We might have gone to great lengths to do research, but did we find out that the ambassador's wife is pregnant?" Qiao Nan went out for a short while before dinner. When she returned, he noticed that she had a receipt for mother and baby products in her pocket.

He remembered that before the ambassador couple left, Qiao Nan was being very careful with his wife, and she would give her gentle reminders. When the ambassador couple chatted with Qiao Nan, he faintly heard the mention of 'child'. He knew that the ambassador couple did not have any children. Therefore, he initially thought that the ambassador couple was talking about other people's children.

But after seeing the receipt that Qiao Nan had, he realized belatedly that the ambassador's wife was pregnant!

Qiao Nan was privy to such personal information. No matter how much research his family did, they could not possibly know more than Qiao Nan.

Deng Wenchang was not lauding the spirit of the enemy and belittled that of his own. But this was the harsh reality and he had to face up to it. He could not possibly deceive himself now and close his eyes and cover his ears, pretending that he did not see or hear anything.

Father Deng was dealt with a harsh blow. He did not look better than his son. "How could this happen? How did Qiao Nan know all the details? Could it be that the Zhai family knows what we are going to do, and thus used other means to pass the ambassador's information secretly to Qiao Nan?" Unless the Zhai family had invincible powers, it was absolutely impossible.

Deng Wenchang sat down on the sofa, feeling dejected. He lay listlessly on the sofa like a puddle of glue. "Alright, Dad, you don't have to make any guesses. It's not what you think. This has nothing

to do with the Zhai family. Qiao Nan is very lucky. She and the ambassador couple know each other and they have a very good relationship. Speaking of which, it was due to the ambassador couple's help that Qiao Nan had a strong foundation and knowledge in the related field. They spared no effort to help Qiao Nan find reading materials from overseas. This is why Qiao Nan could have a stellar performance."

She did not resort to any tactics to find out more about the ambassador couple. Qiao Nan and the ambassador couple had built a strong friendship over the years!

"..." Father Deng was rendered speechless. No one would have guessed that the visiting ambassador would be Qiao Nan's friend! This was a harsh blow to Father Deng.

Unless the countries had a good relationship, it was impossible to be a friend of other countries' ambassadors. Furthermore, the United Kingdom was not on very friendly terms with China. Father Deng could not help but wonder. Would the newly appointed ambassador step down once he returned to his country since he had a personal friendship with Qiao Nan?

But regardless of whether he stepped down or not, Father Deng knew that his son did not perform as expected today. Instead, it was Qiao Nan's stage, and his son merely blended into the background.

Thinking of this outcome, Father Deng was so angry that he felt like vomiting blood. "Qiao Nan has not been to other countries. Why would she be friends with them? There is a big difference in age. How can they become friends?"

"Foreigners don't care. It is fine as long as they can get along with each other. They don't mind, and as Chinese, we don't necessarily care either. Qiao Nan might not have been to other countries, but the ambassador couple met Qiao Nan who was a voluntary guide when they came to China for a holiday." At the mention of this, Deng Wenchang felt that it was the most ironic of all.

Since she was a guide, she should just do her job. She must be very free to help people look for their credentials!

Also, how could Chinese college students have so much time on their hands? The probability of having such an encounter was like striking the ten million lottery. It was almost impossible to win the lottery. She should have gone for her college lessons abidingly, yet why did she go to the extent of becoming a voluntary guide? "Dad, do you have a way to stop the places of interest from accepting student volunteer guides?"

If there was such a rule, Qiao Nan would not have done so well today!

Deng Wenchang knew that there was nothing that he could do now. But he refused to admit defeat. Therefore, he decided to take his anger out on Qiao Nan's juniors so that there would be fewer 'Qiao Nan' in the future!

Father Deng waved his hand in frustration. "This is meaningless. We can't do anything to Qiao Nan, and we might even implicate the Deng family." Usually, it was the students from Peking University and Tsinghua University that would work as volunteer guides at these places. It would be doing oneself in to hinder the development of the students from the two elite universities.

It was unrealistic!

Chapter 1413 Worried

Father Deng sighed. His heart ached at the dejected look on his son's face. "Don't think about it. It's all in the past. Instead of dwelling on the past, you might as well spend more time thinking about the future. You only lost to her this once. It does not mean that you will always lose to Qiao Nan. The most important thing is to look at the future. We have a lot of time, and we have the Peng family as our ally. We haven't lost yet!"

Father Deng pulled Deng Wenchang up, telling Deng Wenchang not to think too much. He should take a bath, have a full meal, and go to sleep. He should have a good night's rest and recharge so that he would be ready to fight the hard battle tomorrow.

After comforting his son, Father Deng went back to his room. His wife was waiting for him. "How's our son doing?"

"How can he feel good? Since a young age, I've never seen him in this state. If he were still young, I reckon he would have cried now." Father Deng was worried. Although it was summer, and summer was unbearably hot in the capital, Father Deng felt a chill inside. He covered his tummy with a thin blanket. "It would be good if we know that there is such a young lady like Qiao Nan in Peking University."

Mother Deng did not understand. "Why would that be good?" Why would it be good for their family and their son if they knew about Qiao Nan earlier? What was the link between the two?

Seeing that Mother Deng did not understand his words, Father Deng sighed with regrets.

“Wenchang is not young. These two years, he did not have the time to get a girlfriend. You should help Wenchang keep a lookout for ladies who are suitable and come from a good background. It would be good if they can aid Wenchang in his career.”

If Qiao Nan was married to his son, Qiao Nan and Wenchang would be able to work hand in hand in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry would be their stage.

Moreover, even if Qiao Nan was more competent than Wenchang, she would not make things difficult for him. Instead, she would take the backstage and support him. If so, instead of Qiao Nan, Wenchang would be the one who shone today.

In fact, it was beneficial to the Deng family to have a daughter-in-law like Qiao Nan. Unless she was too obstinate and strong-willed, she would be a good help to them. After cooperating with the Peng family, Wenchang did not seem to be doing better than before. He seemed to be in the same position, not making any improvements.

“What’s the hurry!” Mother Deng was unhappy. “Wenchang studied abroad for so many years, and he just returned two years ago. He has to work, and I only get to see him in the morning and at night for two meals a day. For instance, Wenchang did not have dinner at home today.”

The family only had one son. Her husband was busy with work and she seldom saw her son. She did not spend much time with the two men that she loved most. If they had a daughter-in-law at this time, her son would belong to someone else.

Since she had a son and he was still in his prime and she did not need to be concerned about his fertility, she was in no hurry to find a wife for her son. One had to take a long time to find a good wife. They would not take any daughter-in-law randomly.

“What did you say just now? Why didn’t our son have a girlfriend in the past two years?” She thought that her son just returned from overseas and was not in a hurry to get a girlfriend. But from what Old Deng said, it was as if something had happened to her son. Could it be that he had no time to find a girlfriend?

Her son returned from overseas study. He was highly educated and good-looking. Moreover, the Deng family was well-to-do. As long as her son wanted to get a girlfriend, the women would rush toward him just like how bees were attracted to honey.

“Nothing much. You should know that Wenchang has a hard time in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The only reason why he doesn’t have a girlfriend must be that he has to work on his career. Alright, it’s getting late. Get some sleep. Otherwise, you won’t be able to wake up in time to prepare breakfast for our son. By then, don’t complain to me that you don’t get to see your son.”

Father Deng yawned. He was reluctant to continue the impossible conversation with his wife. He switched off his bedside lamp, turned to one side with his back facing his wife, and made no further comments.

Mother Deng felt unhappy. But she knew that her husband was tired from work. She stifled her anger and switched off her bedside lamp as well, lying down to sleep.

Father Deng opened his eyes when the other side of the lamp had been turned off. He was not lying when he said that Wenchang tried his best to prove that he was more competent than Qiao Nan in the past two years. However, the outcome was not what he expected.

But it had been nearly three years since he returned to the country. He did not have a single girlfriend, and he did not have the time to have a girlfriend as he was busy with work.

When Deng Wenchang was studying abroad, he would change a girlfriend almost every half a year. However, after he returned to the country, he did not have a single girlfriend. Father Deng could not help but feel sorry for his son. His son was occupied with work every day and did not have any other entertainment. He seemed to be leading the life of an ascetic monk.

Father Deng was a man and he had other women besides his wife. His son was young and at his prime, but he did not have any woman in the past two years, and he did not even get to hold their hands. Father Deng even suspected that perhaps it was due to the fact that there was an imbalance of yin and yang that his son was impatient and not in a good state of mind recently and his temper turned nasty.

If possible, he should try to find a girlfriend for Wenchang.

It was not early for Wenchang to get a girlfriend at this age. Some men already became a father at his age. But there was no suitable candidate right now. In fact, Father Deng also hoped that Deng Wenchang would have a permanent partner.

These past few years, the father and son would always talk about one topic: Qiao Nan. Although his son was full of disgust whenever he talked about Qiao Nan, Father Deng still could not help but be worried. It was better to find a woman to distract his attention and for him to relax.

It was better to be safe than sorry.

Everything he did was for his son.

Father Deng had made up his mind. He did not intend to take his wife's words seriously. Since Mother Deng was unwilling to help her son look for a girlfriend, he would not mind asking his colleagues to keep a look out for him. Perhaps they knew a girl from a certain family who was suitable, or they knew someone who was of similar age and came from a good background. They could bring them together and create a chance for them to get to know each other.

Chapter 1414 Exchanged Blows

"..." Deng Wenchang, who was already lying on the bed, alternated between being awake and deep in his dreams. He could not tell whether he was dreaming or awake. Deng Wenchang shivered in the hot summer night. He grabbed a blanket that was left at the side and covered himself with it. Could it be that there would be a drastic change in the weather tomorrow? It was already July, so how was that possible?

"Zhai Sheng, look who's here." Zhai Hua patted Zhai Sheng's shoulder, motioning for Zhai Sheng to look at the person walking toward them. Peng Yu was responsible for Elder Lin's safety when he went overseas last time. But with Elder Lin's help, Zhai Sheng took most of Peng Yu's credit at the last minute. Many people in the army knew about it and everyone was talking about it.

The party concerned knew who spread the news around the camp.

The reason why Peng Yu did that was to win over the people in the army. People would usually sympathize with the weak in normal circumstances. No matter how one looked at it, it was Zhai Sheng who was being dishonest. Peng Yu was being bullied by him.

Although the soldiers would have a discussion among themselves, the higher-ups would not be affected by the discussion going around. They would base on their judgment when they decided who should take credit for the assignment.

Whenever Zhai Sheng and Peng Yu happened to be in the place, the atmosphere between the two of them would be interesting. People could not help but put down all the things on hand and watched how the two young and promising soldiers exchanged blows.

“Deputy Brigade Commander Zhai, are you having your meal?” Peng Yu, who looked like a scholar and had a fairer complexion than Zhai Sheng, smiled. No matter how long he stood under the sun, he still had a fair complexion. He acted very friendly to Zhai Sheng. The two of them used to grow up together in the quad in Ping Cheng. It was just that Peng Yu moved to the capital earlier than Zhai Sheng.

It was not an exaggeration to say that they were ‘childhood friends’. But it was just that Zhai Sheng and Peng Yu did not have a good relationship with each other.

Zhai Sheng swallowed the last bite of his meal and smiled. “I thought that Regiment Commander Peng has good eyesight. I didn’t know that your vision has turned worse.” Since he was in the canteen and was putting food into his mouth, he must be having his meals. If not, could he be there specially to wait for Peng Yu?

Peng Yu did not mind that Zhai Sheng was being edgy. “Is that so? It just happens that I have some questions to ask you. Can I take the seat opposite you after I get my food?”

“Well, Regiment Commander Peng, I am sorry to say that I have already taken the seat.” People who worked with Zhai Sheng could tell what Peng Yu was up to. He quickly took the seat that Peng Yu was after.

Without waiting for Peng Yu to make further comments, several other soldiers took the seats to Zhai Sheng’s left and right-hand side. They also took the seats two seats away from Zhai Sheng’s left and right-hand side, as well as the four seats adjacent to him. All of the seats in Zhai Sheng’s three directions had been taken up.

All these people formed a circle around Zhai Sheng and surrounded him as if he was a precious gem. Peng Yu had no way to get close to him.

Peng Yu smiled at this situation. “Deputy Brigade Commander Zhai, when did you become so timid?” There were so many people. He would be a fool if he made trouble for Zhai Sheng in the public without any apparent reason. The general opinion had just changed to side with him. If he was reckless now, all his efforts would be in vain.

“Do I have the guts? Zhai Sheng asked a rhetorical question, looking seriously at Peng Yu. “Perhaps compared to you, I might not seem to be as brave. Of course, you can also say that I am more steady and dependable instead of being excessively cautious.”

Zhai Sheng knew that his family had been targeted.

He only needed to do a check and he knew that it had to do with Peng Yu. Peng Yu sent a large group of men to keep a watch on Nan Nan, a defenseless woman. Now that he thought about it, Zhai Sheng could not resist the itch to give Peng Yu a beating.

Fortunately, in the end, the Deng family and the Peng family did not do anything to hurt the Zhai family. Otherwise, Zhai Sheng would not let Peng Yu go. He would not be able to talk to him right now looking perfectly fine. “By the way, is Regiment Commander Peng free? I just finished the meal and I am thinking of doing some practice to aid in the digestion.” Zhai Sheng had never exchanged blows with Peng Yu. He did not want to give up the rare opportunity today, so he asked Peng Yu to exchange blows with him.

Peng Yu smiled. “Sure. I have this intention as well. We have known each other since a young age. We are so close but we seldom interact or talk to each other. We must make use of this opportunity to get to know each other.” Since a long time ago, Peng Yu had wanted to find out how good Zhai Sheng was with his fists.

He only got to watch Zhai Sheng spar with his subordinates.

Peng Yu could not get a real grasp of Zhai Sheng’s real strength if he used others as a reference. He was afraid that he might have a wrong estimate of his abilities, and it might turn out to be a waste of time and effort.

Since Zhai Sheng made the suggestion, Peng Yu would definitely agree to it. “If you don’t mind, can you give me five minutes?” Zhai Sheng had finished his meal, but he had yet to have his meal. How could a soldier win a battle on an empty stomach?

“Five minutes?” Zhai Sheng stood up. “I won’t wait for you. I will go there first. Since I am exchanging blows with you, I have to be very serious about it. I will change into the right clothes to spar with you. You have five minutes, so take your time to have your meal. Do you know where to go to after the meal?” Zhai Sheng liked to be in control. Moreover, his opponent was Peng Yu.

Zhai Sheng would not give in to Peng Yu in terms of decisive minor details. In this life, Zhai Sheng was only willing to wait for his family and his enemies. Zhai Sheng was particularly patient with his enemies. There was once when he was still an average soldier, he did not sleep for forty-eight hours. He kept his eyes open to prevent someone from leaking the information.

It was an easy feat not to sleep in those forty-eight hours. What was worse was that there were a lot of mosquitoes. They could be considered as the mosquitoes in the autumn. Those who had been stung by mosquitoes would know that if one was stung by mosquitoes in the autumn, it would be very itchy and painful. It was sheer torture.

After lying in ambush for forty-eight hours, Zhai Sheng had numerous mosquito bites on him. When he checked himself in the mirror, he did not look like he was in an ambush. Instead, he seemed as if he just had a sumptuous meal and enjoyed himself, the reason being his face was swollen and bloated.

Chapter 1415 Verbal Confrontation

To Zhai Sheng, the process of ambushing was hard and tense. Most of the time, he would be able to take the enemy's life in the ambush. Apart from his family, everyone who made him wait had to pay a painful price for it. Zhai Sheng would not go to such extent with Peng Yu, but Zhai Sheng's habit would not change because of him. In Zhai Sheng's arrogant opinion, everyone who dared to make him wait was daring and reckless, not fearful of death.

Zhai Sheng did not care that Peng Yu had a smile on his face. He went to the training field, changed into comfortable clothes, and prepared himself as he waited for Peng Yu.

Although Peng Yu had his meal later than Zhai Sheng, he arrived at the training field soon after Zhai Sheng. He took less than the five minutes that he requested from Zhai Sheng.

"Do you need a few minutes to warm up?" Zhai Sheng looked very calm at the sight of Peng Yu. He was so cool and indifferent that it was as if they were having a friendly match to check out the other party's fighting skills.

Peng Yu smiled as he took off his clothes and flexed his arms. "There is no need for that. I am always ready to fight you." Zhai Sheng was so much better in planning military strategies than before. He was curious to find out if his skills were as good as his intelligence level, and people who sparred with him would be ashamed of their shoddy skills.

Zhai Sheng had given Peng Yu a chance to warm up, but he did not cherish it. Since Peng Yu said that he was ready, Zhai Sheng could not be bothered to repeat himself.

"Well, let's get started."

As soon as Zhai Sheng finished his sentence, Peng Yu, who had a smile on his face and looked like the boy next door, turned serious. His bright smile vanished and there was a sharp look in his eyes. He seemed like the leopard that licked his paws and was ready to battle. He performed a lethal hook, aiming at Zhai Sheng. He swung his hands in the air, and there was a fishy smell that followed.

Fortunately, Zhai Sheng was not to be trifled with. Peng Yu said that he was always ready ever since he regarded Zhai Sheng as his rival. In fact, Zhai Sheng was just as prepared as Peng Yu.

It was rare to see the two young and promising soldiers who were the future tower of strength in the army to compete with each other in a fierce fight. Many soldiers gathered to watch the fight. They were tensed up and cheered for their immediate superior respectively.

It was also right then that the new recruits who joined the army recently realized that since the day they joined the army, things were no longer the same. They played a special role now. They were soldiers!

“Great!”

“Marvelous!”

“Who do you think will win? Would it be Regiment Commander Peng or Deputy Brigade Commander Zhai?”

The two young superiors seemed to be well-matched in strength. It was hard to tell who would win.

“It had to be Regiment Commander Peng!”

“Crap. It’s impossible that a deputy brigade commander will lose to a regiment commander.” Zhai Sheng’s subordinates were unhappy. One could tell from the ranks that their deputy brigade commander was better than the regiment commander.

If the deputy brigade commander lost to Regiment Commander Peng, did it mean that he had to give up his position as the deputy brigade commander to Regiment Commander Peng? The two regiments did not get along well. Moreover, their regiment commander and the deputy brigade commander seemed to be at loggerheads.

No one could be calm and composed as they watched the match between the two men. It was all lies when people said that friendship must come first and competition second. As a man, one had to maintain one's dignity. Nobody could afford to lose.

Right then, there was a 'bang' that sounded like something heavy fell to the ground. This marked the end of the contest between Zhai Sheng and Peng Yu. Zhai Sheng threw Peng Yu heavily to the ground. Zhai Sheng also locked the hands and feet of Peng Yu in the fastest speed, trapping him firmly and preventing him from making any movements.

If the two of them were real enemies and Zhai Sheng exerted more strength, Peng Yu would have died in his hands. If this was not considered as a win, then there would be no soldiers alive in Peng Yu's regiment.

This was a private exchange between the two of them. There was no referee.

Since there was no referee, the party who lost in the contest must take the initiative to admit defeat so that the contest would be considered as coming to an end.

Peng Yu was thrown to the ground by Zhai Sheng. He had a heavy fall and his back was flat on the ground. He turned pale from the excruciating pain. If the ground was not covered with thick army green cushioned mats, Peng Yu might become disabled from the fall.

Peng Yu's demeanor changed from the pain at his back. He was further upset that he lost to Zhai Sheng in front of so many people. It was difficult for him to accept defeat.

Fortunately, Peng Yu, who had turned green in pain, smiled grudgingly without waiting for someone to speak up. "Deputy Brigade Commander Zhai, my dad always told me to learn from you when I was a kid. Back then, I felt unconvinced that I had to learn from you. Now, it seems like not only did I have to look up to you when I was a child, but I have to do so even after I grew up. Deputy Brigade Commander Zhai, you are indeed capable!"

He sounded calm at the beginning, but his tone was somewhat different toward the end.

Since Peng Yu indirectly admitted that he lost, Zhai Sheng would not be so petty-minded to make things difficult for him and insist that he admit defeat. One had to have absolute capability in the army. Being formidable was the way to go.

However, if one was too aggressive, instead of earning respect, one would create trouble for oneself and push those that he wanted to rope in toward his enemies.

Zhai Sheng was shrewd and smart. He would not commit such a foolish mistake.

Zhai Sheng loosened his death lock on Peng Yu, letting him go. “You shouldn’t say that. We are exchanging blows and learning from each other. We seek to improve as we learn from each other.” He was certainly formidable. He was stronger than Peng Yu when they were kids. Peng Yu’s father even told Peng Yu to learn from him. So many years had passed. Peng Yu had improved, and so did he.

Since they made progress at the same time, Peng Yu would always lose to him. He would not be able to bridge the gap and change the situation.

Zhai Sheng sounded as if it was a friendly match, but Peng Yu was the only person who understood the hidden meaning. “Well, let’s all work hard and improve together.” One did not state that he could only make the same progress as Zhai Sheng. It was alright that he lost to Zhai Sheng now. He was younger than Zhai Sheng by a few years. There was still a chance of him defeating Zhai Sheng in the future.

Chapter 1416 Successor

Now, Zhai Sheng won because he was a couple of years older and had the upper hand in his physical strength. A few years later, the day would come whereby Zhai Sheng would lose because he was a couple of years older!

After the exchange, they ‘made peace’ with a ‘friendly’ handshake and spurred each other on. The atmosphere was not too bad.

Throughout the entire process, Zhai Hua could not help laughing. When Zhai Sheng walked toward her, Zhai Hua threw him the towel in her hands and Zhai Sheng caught it. “Tell me. You made Peng Yu suffer so badly today. Given Peng Yu’s character, he will not call it quits like that. To help Deng Wenchang, he even arranged someone to keep a watch on us. Aren’t you afraid that Peng Yu will do something more extreme after you do this? Also, don’t forget. My son is still at your house.”

Besides considering the safety of her maternal family, she was more concerned about the safety of her son, Xiao Bao.

“Peng Yu is not so stupid. If he really does things in such a direct manner, it will be much easier to deal with him then.” However, Peng Yu had always carried out his plans in secrecy. Even for the matter this time, Peng Yu did it under the name of the Deng family. “Today, take it that I am teaching him a lesson for this matter.”

If this matter did not happen, Zhai Sheng would not be so harsh on Peng Yu.

Zhai Sheng was certain that his earlier blow would bruise Peng Yu’s back and a few parts of his buttocks. Soon, Peng Yu would realize it after he removed his pants. The area of bruising was not small and it would be quite frightening to look at. It was still fine if Peng Yu could lie in bed to rest. Otherwise, these bruises would definitely affect his movements tomorrow.

If Peng Yu did not have the leisure time to rest in bed, he would have to find someone to rub and massage these awkward areas hard with medicated ointment to dissolve the blood clots.

Regardless of the method, Peng Yu could not escape from the destiny of embarrassment and huge pain and suffering.

Was it so easy to target his wife and family?

Peng Yu did it under the name of the Deng family and did not cause any specific harm to the Zhai family. However, did Peng Yu think that he would close one eye, not take issue with him, and pretend that this matter did not happen?

If that was really the case, he could only say that Peng Yu was sometimes too naïve, ludicrously so.

Zhai Hua patted Zhai Sheng’s shoulders. The siblings grew up together. Others might not know the temper of her younger brother, Zhai Sheng, but how could Zhai Hua not know?

Although today’s exchange was initiated by Peng Yu, in Zhai Hua’s views, Zhai Sheng must have used some means to plant the idea into Peng Yu’s mind. Hence, when Peng Yu said that he wanted to exchange blows with Zhai Sheng in front of everyone, he had already lost to Zhai Sheng.

As for the subsequent exchange of blows, Peng Yu had obviously cemented the loss. He lost more miserably and suffered even more.

Zhai Sheng had punished Peng Yu so greatly for a small incident of coveting. Zhai Sheng's main objective was to make Peng Yu remember the pain and suffering and to think over the matter carefully before he plotted against the Zhai family. He was better off not fiddling around with such petty tricks. His Zhai family would not show mercy to Peng Yu in such situations.

Not to mention Peng Yu stretching out his claws, even if one strand of Peng Yu's hair flew across the boundary and polluted the air in the Zhai family, Zhai Sheng would chop away that part of Peng Yu's body with a knife on the spot!

Mmm... Very good, very good. Xiao Bao had such an uncle. She did not need to worry about others bullying Xiao Bao again in the future.

Speaking of this, Dongzi was quite good-tempered in front of her. However, to others, he was a tiger that could not be provoked. Today, Zhai Sheng had already taught Peng Yu a lesson. What action would Dongzi take after knowing this matter?

With the crowd at the doors of the Zhai family, more or less, Miao Jing was a little shocked. Miao Jing was not worried for herself but Qiao Nan had to go to work every day, and the triplets were still very little and loved to play. Miao Jing was more worried for the juniors in the family.

Miao Jing was the queen of the Zhai family. If Peng Yu dared to frighten the queen, of course, Zhai Sheng would not tolerate it and would teach Peng Yu a lesson.

After Zhai Sheng took actions, and Mother Tian almost recovered from her cold, Tian Dong expressed that he was, after all, his mother-in-law's son-in-law. His mother-in-law had been 'bullied'. If he did not do anything, Hua Hua would kick up a fuss and sleep in separate rooms after her return, wouldn't she? One had to know that he was still a green card now. After having Xiao Bao, he still wanted to give birth to a little warm cotton jacket with Hua Hua.

Where would the warm little cotton jacket come from if they were to sleep in separate rooms?

As such, without the need for Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua to do anything, Tian Dong had long planned not to let the Peng family off. According to the country's regulation, one would not dabble in politics if he was in business, and vice versa. The Peng family's situation was similar to that of the Zhai family. Father Peng did not have any siblings who were in business to earn money and aid him in his political career.

Hence, under the country's regulations, Father Peng would not be so stupid to do something so obvious. However, he had certainly done some under-the-table manipulating to accumulate wealth through unfair means.

As the big boss of the Tian Corporation, it was a piece of cake for Tian Dong to attack the Peng family through his business. Within one month, three consecutive business deals that the Peng family was involved in had been snatched by Tian Dong.

Three might not seem like a large number but these three business deals, if successful, would bring a lot of wealth to the Peng family. Looking at the losses in July, Father Peng felt so many pinches that he lost his appetite for two consecutive days. That night, blisters broke out in his mouth. It was so bad that he had to be sent to the hospital for consultation.

“Xiao Qiao, are you able to attend the overseas trip this time?” It was August. He Yi asked Qiao Nan if she wished to follow him for an overseas business trip.

“This...” Qiao Nan hesitated for a moment.

Qiao Nan would hesitate but not Deng Wenchang. “Minister He, do you think I can also follow you?” Overseas business trip should not be a minor matter. Last time, Qiao Nan was in the limelight. This time, it was unreasonable such a good opportunity was only offered to Qiao Nan.

He Yi ignored Deng Wenchang for the moment. He just smiled bitterly at Qiao Nan. “Xiao Qiao, I feel that I should remind you of the department you are working in now and your age. I think retirement mode is not suitable for you. Otherwise, someone will feel sad about this...”

Was He Yi trying to nurture Qiao Nan by bringing her overseas to widen her horizons?

Qiao Nan was guarding her triplets and not willing to leave. She only wanted to sit in the office. Was this not considered in retirement mode? Which motivated youngster whom the superior thought highly of stay in the office every day? None!

He Yi was full of expectations for Qiao Nan. He treated Qiao Nan like his successor.

Chapter 1417 – Wishful Thinking

However, if Qiao Nan remained hesitant on overseas business trips like today and could not bear to leave her kids, insisting on guarding by their side, He Yi felt that his master's good intention would be forsaken.

Given his current ability, he could completely transfer Qiao Nan to a role with less working hours and good benefits to give her more time to take care of her kids. There was no need to insist on making little junior stay in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If she were to stay, she would provoke a nuisance like Deng Wenchang easily.

“You can go home and consider it. Don't let others down, but don't let yourself down either. What you have to know is you should figure out clearly what you want. Don't choose the wrong path.” Pursue whatever you wanted to. Do not hoard the role and yet not do your best in it.

There was really no need for that.

He Yi thought highly of Qiao Nan and felt that she could eventually assume his role. However, if Qiao Nan did not have the same intent and adopted such a lukewarm attitude, He Yi would definitely not insist and continue to nurture only Qiao Nan.

Deng Wenchang could not be nurtured. If he could not nurture Qiao Nan too, He Yi could only recruit a few more newbies and pick a suitable candidate among them. He would handhold the person for a few years before passing him the baton.

After hearing He Yi's words, Qiao Nan was in a huge dilemma.

She was never a career-minded woman. However, Qiao Nan felt a little reluctant to give up such a rare and good opportunity that was before her. “Okay, Minister He, I will definitely consider it carefully.”

Sensing her own inner feelings, Qiao Nan did not immediately decline He Yi's suggestion of going on the overseas business trip.

She had to go home and discuss this matter with her three children. Yes, she was not seeking the views of her mother-in-law, Miao Jing, but discussing this with the triplets. In fact, when Qiao Nan thought of this idea, she knew that the only thing that she needed to do was not to discuss but to find ways to persuade the triplets to make them understand and agree.

Qiao Nan did not know if other three-year-old kids could participate in such discussions but Qiao Nan firmly believed that hers could!

“Minister He...” Deng Wenchang raised his voice a little. “Minister He, I am available. I wish to widen my horizons. Minister He, not sure if I will have an opportunity this time?” Obviously, Qiao Nan did not wish to go, yet He Yi insisted. Why was it that He Yi was assuming airs and refusing to give him a direct response when he volunteered himself?

He Yi smiled lightly at Deng Wenchang. “Xiao Deng, I know that you are a youngster who strives to progress and is willing to improve yourself. However, there are some rules in the department. Some matters cannot be rushed. If you really have such intentions, don’t worry. I will definitely consider you if there is a chance next time. Given your diligence, I think that day will not be too far away.”

There were important and unimportant overseas trips.

Like overseas business trips that were akin to touring. Deng Wenchang wished to go, but he, this old one, wanted to find a chance to rest. It was just nice then. On the contrary, he would not agree to bring him on the more important business trips even if he had seven or eight more guts.

At the thought of the impolite action of Deng Wenchang during the last visit by the United Kingdom ambassador, He Yi’s eyelids could not help twitching a few times. Fortunately, the other party had some personal connections with Qiao Nan and was unlike past ambassadors that he had encountered, who were extremely picky and adopted an attitude of finding quarrel in a straw.

Last time, He Yi had already given Deng Wenchang a chance. Deng Wenchang made He Yi regret it so badly that he almost wanted to sew up his mouth with a needle or turn the time back and give himself a few slaps, lest he spout nonsense again. Now, if the matter was of importance, He Yi would not treat Deng Wenchang and Qiao Nan equally just because they were both newbies unless his brain was damaged. Just because he gave Qiao Nan an opportunity to perform, it did not mean that he had to give Deng Wenchang a chance too.

He Yi had decisively killed such ‘simple and innocent’ thoughts.

Having said his piece, He Yi returned to the office and did not bother about Deng Wenchang anymore. After July, Deng Wenchang’s relationship with the team had been getting worse and worse. It had reached the stage whereby almost everyone did not want to be near him.

As such, Deng Wenchang, who had a stomach full of grievances, could not find a confidant in the department to air his woes and complaints. He had no choice but to carry out his old trick again: casting resentful and sinister sideways glances at Qiao Nan as if all the unfair treatment that he had received was all ‘thanks’ to Qiao Nan.

Such an obvious stare had fallen on her. Qiao Nan was not a corpse. She could feel it without even lifting her head.

She had been well-trained. Although Qiao Nan did not have the capability to master the skills of forming an impenetrable shield or iron cocoon around her, under such intense stare by Deng Wenchang, she could still endure, play dumb, and focus on her tasks at hand.

At dismissal time, Deng Wenchang stopped Qiao Nan. “Comrade Qiao Nan, do you have time? Let’s go for tea and have a chat?”

“Not available!” She was hesitating when facing He Yi. However, she did not even need to think when facing Deng Wenchang. She flatly declined him.

Just as Qiao Nan was leaving, Deng Wenchang quickened his steps and continued to block Qiao Nan’s way. “Qiao Nan, one cannot be so unreasonable. Don’t you think so? You should spare some mercy to others. There is a saying of not creating bad blood as we may meet again in the future. If you are too extreme, bad things can easily happen.”

Qiao Nan was both angry and amused. Did he take her for an eighteen-year-old teenage girl by threatening her in this way?

“It’s not a problem for me to relent a little. However, I am worried that if I do that, once you grab a bit of chance, you will use all ways and means to take over everything that I have and force me into an impasse. If I relent on this kind of person, aren’t I considered being cruel to myself? I personally dig a pit then. When the other party pushes me into the pit, I still have to take action to bury myself?”

“That won’t happen!” Deng Wenchang’s expression changed. He refused to admit that he was that kind of person. “Qiao Nan, don’t think of others in such a bad light. We are both youngsters and should understand each other more. I admit that my attitude toward you is very bad previously. But you can’t blame me too. Minister He is biased toward you. Anyone with eyes can tell. I am dissatisfied and vented my frustration on you. It’s not strange at all.”

Qiao Nan rubbed her forehead. "Are you done? If you are, I am going home now. I am just a fresh graduate little girl. You should know my address very well now. Since you know, can I trouble you to give way? My three children at home are waiting for me."

Chapter 1418 Discussion

Deng Wenchang's tone was not good. It even carried a tinge of threat. Even if he were to tear his mouth by brownnosing Qiao Nan, Qiao Nan would not put in any good words for Deng Wenchang in front of He Yi. She would not pass the opportunity to Deng Wenchang even if she was not going for the business trip. "These are my final words. Deng Wenchang, based on our relationship, your earlier words are too amusing. I am telling you that this is the funniest joke that I have ever heard this year."

Look for your own enemy and request for his help to give you a chance.

Hahaha!

Deng Wenchang did not know what was good for him. He persistently took her for a moron and even stood in her way. Qiao Nan warned Deng Wenchang. "We are in the department now. Tell me. If I shout, will anyone come forward to help me beat you up?"

Qiao Nan had full confidence when she said this.

In stark contrast with Deng Wenchang's rock-bottom popularity in the department, everyone in the office treated Qiao Nan like a junior of their own family. Be it sincere or not, at the very least, no one gave Qiao Nan cold shoulders.

If Qiao Nan were to give a shout, most likely, the number of people who ran out could crush Deng Wenchang to death. They did not even need to beat him up.

After hearing Qiao Nan's words, Deng Wenchang's expression changed. He retreated by three steps and maintained a safe distance from Qiao Nan, lest others misunderstand that he wanted to harm Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan's smile turned more genuine. "You should have done this earlier. Isn't this better? It's your fault that I will be home five minutes late." Having said that, Qiao Nan walked into the lift which had coincidentally opened earlier and pressed the lift button. As soon as she left the office building, she got into her family's private car and rushed home in a fast and safe speed.

Deng Wenchang punched the wall in anger. Certainly, the woman that Zhai Sheng fancied was not as simple and naive as a fresh graduate. It was not so easy to appease and cajole her. After interacting with Qiao Nan for some time, he realized that Qiao Nan did not have the amateurism of a college student. Instead, she was as slippery as a wily old fox. Although she was very quiet and low-key, she had never shortchanged herself in certain aspects.

This made Deng Wenchang, who had studied abroad and encountered many of such obstacles before, feel even more dissatisfied and furious.

As soon as Qiao Nan got into the car, she cast away all thoughts about Deng Wenchang. She only had one thing in her mind now: how to convince the three treasures in her family and make them agree to let her go on an overseas work trip for a few days. As soon as she completed her work, she would definitely return to the country and to her three children's side as soon as possible.

Although the existence of the triplets seemed to have gradually become a chain that shackled Qiao Nan, she had never regretted marrying Zhai Sheng upon reaching the legal age of marriage, becoming pregnant quickly, and giving birth to the triplets.

These three children might be burdens but they were sweet ones, something that she could not forsake. She was willing to bear these burdens. She believed that she could have a good discussion with her children and squeeze out some time for her work.

Although it was a little difficult to achieve such an outcome.

True enough, as soon as they heard that their most beloved mother would be away from home for a few days and was not even coming back at night, all the smiles on the triplets' chubby faces instantly disappeared. Their watery eyes were filled with reluctance. They pouted and asked, "Mom, can you not go?"

"Mom, I will miss you." Er Bao stretched out his little hands and wrapped them around Qiao Nan's neck. He used his action to express his longing for Qiao Nan if she were to leave

On the other hand, Da Bao said unexpectedly, "Give me a reason." That expression and tone of his was the epitome of Zhai Sheng!

"Okay." After pulling the triplets to her side, she tried hard to wrap her arms around all of them. "My three babies, let's not talk about others. You still remember your dad, don't you?"

The triplets nodded furiously. Their father was a great hero. He was a soldier of the people's liberation army. He carried guns and protected the safety of the country and all its citizens. Great-grandfather, grandfather, grandmother, and mother told them the same thing.

They had heard this many times. Also, the triplets were getting more sensible as they grew up. Even if they did not see their biological father for more than a month in a year, they had strong memories of their father. Whenever they heard the word 'dad', their eyes shone brightly.

"Da Bao, Er Bao, didn't the two of you often say that you want to become a soldier of the people's liberation army like your dad after you grow up? Once you become a soldier, you will spend less time at home. This is because that will become your career and your mission. When that time comes, although Mom will miss you, like how I miss your dad, Mom will support you no matter how reluctant I am. This is because that is something that you want to do."

Zhai Sheng's example was too prominent. As soon as Qiao Nan said this, immediately, the triplets vaguely understood what their mother's words meant.

Da Bao pouted his lips, looking aggrieved. "Will you also come back after a long time like Dad?" Their mother was going to become a heroine. Would the time that she could spend with them become as little as in their dad's case?

At that moment, Da Bao felt very empty at heart. He felt that he and his siblings were going to become children without any parents to love and care for them. It was so sorrowful.

Er Bao and San Bao were more obvious in expressing themselves. They held onto Qiao Nan tightly, deeply fearful that Qiao Nan would leave them like their father. Without a word, he was already not at home the next when they opened their eyes.

Qiao Nan forced a smile. "Of course not. How could Mom bear to be away from you for so long? Mom can't bear to do so." There were only kids who left their parents, and not parents leaving their kids. "Mom will only be away for just a few days. Mom taught you about this calendar before, right? After every night, each wakes up in the morning from your sleep, and you can write a cross below this number. At most, after ten crosses, Mom will definitely come back. If it is possible, Mom will try my best to come back earlier."

"At most ten crosses?" When Da Bao, who almost fell into bitter despair, heard that his mother would be back after ten crosses, his mood rose to the sky like a kite. His mother wouldn't be away

for as long as his father would, which was so long that he could not even recall how his father looked like anymore. The pitch of his baby voice rose again.

Ten days were not considered short, but in comparison to his father who was often not at home, Da Bao could accept his mother being away from home for ten days.

“Right, ten crosses at most!” Qiao Nan nodded furiously, deeply afraid that her children would not believe her.

After thinking, Da Bao finally nodded. “Okay, ten crosses at most!”

After settling Da Bao, Qiao Nan looked at Er Bao and San Bao,

They were triplets after all. Da Bao was the elder brother. Er Bao and San Bao were reluctant, but when they saw Da Bao nodding his head and approving, the two of them wrinkled their noses. They could only follow suit. “Mom, come back early. Will miss you.”

Chapter 1419 The Sticken Xiao Bao

After successfully communicating with the triplets, Qiao Nan could finally give He Yi an answer.

After receiving her answer, He Yi was overjoyed. He knew that Qiao Nan had not traveled overseas before. Hence, he reminded Qiao Nan to settle the administration matters such as passport application as soon as possible, in case they could not make it in time. Of course, given the department’s connection, Qiao Nan was able to settle this faster than typical people.

He Yi gave Qiao Nan many pointers and Qiao Nan noted all of them down in a book.

When Qiao Nan boarded the overseas flight with He Yi under the sinister and gloomy watch of Deng Wenchang, Zhai Sheng, who was seldom home and wanted to give Qiao Nan a surprise, received one from her instead. To him, it was a surprise but not a pleasant one. “Nan Nan went on an overseas business trip?” Why wasn’t he aware?

With the three children by her side, Miao Jing looked relaxed. “Who can you blame? As you have to carry out missions, you can only come home and stay for a few days, right?” When a soldier was out on a mission, he had to cut off all correspondences with the outside world and his family. Even if they wanted to inform Zhai Sheng, they also had to be able to find him to do so.

“Dad.”

“Dad.”

“Dad.”

The triplets greeted Zhai Sheng listlessly. This was unlike the past whereby they would scream and pounced on Zhai Sheng and make Zhai Sheng play with them by lifting them high up in the air. Sigh, their mother was away. Even the candies did not taste as sweet as usual.

Zhai Sheng was biased as he carried his chubby daughter. “What is the matter? Not happy? Dad plays with you?” Zhai Sheng was not pleased that his wife was away. However, he was their father. He could not appear to be clingier to Qiao Nan than his children did in front of them.

San Bao snorted and kicked. “No mood.”

“Pfft!” Miao Jing laughed. “Zhai Sheng, you don’t know. Today is the first day of Nan Nan’s overseas business trip. As soon as Nan Nan left the doorsteps, the triplets became like that. The words they say sound like those of little adults. It’s so funny.” Seemingly, Nan Nan’s departure had become a key.

Before today, she didn’t know that these three grandchildren of hers were so fun and interesting.

“I think this situation will change very soon.” Miao Jing spoke while drinking water as if implying something.

Zhai Sheng, who was also amused, patted his daughter’s buttocks. “Nan Nan will be back soon?”

“Nope.” Miao Jing shook her head. “Xiao Bao will usually come to our house and stay overnight for two days a week. If Xiao Bao comes and knows that his favorite auntie is away, I think he will have a more exaggerated reaction than the triplets. Nan Nan is simply the children’s queen in our family. She’s too popular with kids!”

Er Bao swirled his eyeballs. Right, when Xiao Bao came and found out that their mother was away, he wondered what his reaction would be.

What reaction?

It was as if heaven and earth had collapsed!

As soon as Xiao Bao, who was happily hopping around like a kangaroo, entered the Zhai family's residence and found out that his auntie was away, the adults seemed to have witnessed the process of petrification on him at that instance.

Miao Jing could not stop laughing at that badly stricken look of Xiao Bao; he could not recover his senses after a long time. He did not even snort or make any noise. On the contrary, Tian Dong felt embarrassed at his son's reaction. His son liked Qiao Nan very much and often talked about Qiao Nan at home.

Clearly, his teeth were not fully grown and he could not pronounce well. However, when he spoke the word 'auntie', the pronunciation was basically perfect. Even Tian Dong's mother was becoming jealous.

At the sight of his son's reaction now, Tian Dong felt both embarrassed and amused. Tian Dong touched his son's body. Sigh, upon his touch, his son fell to one side like a dough fritter. Dong was shocked, but with sharp eyes and agile hands, he managed to catch his son. He did not know whether to laugh or cry. "My mom is already very jealous when at home. If Hua Hua sees this, our family can sell vinegar soon." And it was the kind of vinegar that could kill someone and yet not suffer any punishment.

As he thought of his son's 'nothing else is meaningful now' expression, Tian Dong could not help feeling a little jealous of Qiao Nan even though he was a grown-up man. Xiao Bao was someone with biological parents. Why was he so close with Qiao Nan, his auntie?

He and Hua Hua spent very little time with Xiao Bao but neither did Qiao Nan. His retired parents should be the ones who spent the most time playing with and accompanying Xiao Bao, no?

Sore at his son favoring an 'outsider' instead of someone on one's own side, Tian Dong carried Xiao Bao and asked him, "You know that auntie is not at home now. She won't be back tomorrow too. Are you going home with Dad, or do you wish to continue staying at maternal grandma's house? If it is the latter, Dad will come and fetch you home tomorrow?"

Without Qiao Nan, this temptation, Xiao Bao would most likely go home with him. If that was the case, his parents would be happy.

Xiao Bao snorted. “Stay, stay here! Auntie!” Xiao Bao pointed at Qiao Nan’s photograph on the wall with his stubby fingers. Xiao Bao expressed that he would not be easily taken in. This was auntie’s house. There were her smell and many of her photographs. “Brother, sister.” In addition, there were three playmates that he could play with!

Go home? What going home? Not going!

The corners of Tian Dong’s lips twitched. So, although the person was not around, her photos and children could make up for it...”You’re really not going home with Dad?” Qiao Nan must be a reincarnation of some vixen. Look at how smitten his son was.

Xiao Bao swiftly pushed Tian Dong’s hands away and ran over to the triplets. In his baby voice, he greeted ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ before joining their camp of ‘looking at the things, reminded of the owner’.

Tian Dong looked at his son. Such a letdown! Zhai Sheng walked over and said something that pierced his heart. “Looking at Xiao Bao, I thought of you when you were a child. Although you were bullied by Zhai Hua, you would still follow her around thereafter and play with her.” One must know that there was a reason for Xiao Bao’s temperament and behavior; they were actually inherited.

Shot by a few arrows, Tian Dong’s heart was in so much pain that he could not recover. “Don’t say this anymore in the future.” Tian Dong looked guiltily at the four children who cuddled together. “Especially in front of Xiao Bao.” A father must have a father’s dignity.

Zhai Sheng laughed. He did not reply, but he also did not reject him clearly.

Looking at Zhai Sheng’s response, Tian Dong understood his intent. If Zhai Sheng was in a good mood, he would definitely not expose his shortcomings in front of the children and let Xiao Bao know his embarrassing childhood matters. On the other hand, if Zhai Sheng was in a bad mood, what happened earlier might repeat. Zhai Sheng would mention his childhood embarrassing matters to train the functionality of his heart and lungs.

Tian Dong could not do anything about Zhai Sheng's threat. Tian Dong was older than Zhai Hua by a few months. Hence, he was just older than Zhai Sheng for more than one year but less than two years.

Chapter 1420 Jealous

Since he was a child, Tian Dong had been eating out of Zhai Hua's hands. He also could not stir up any huge waves when facing Zhai Sheng, this younger brother.

In fact, how would the young Tian Dong, who was a child then, know what was romantic love? When Zhai Hua first bullied him, he disliked her. In fact, he detested Zhai Hua who behaved like a female tyrant!

Hence, Tian Dong thought of a way to trick Zhai Hua and avenge himself.

Never did he expect that Zhai Hua did not fall for his trap. Under Zhai Sheng's plotting, he fell into the pit that he had dug himself. Each time Tian Dong wanted to scheme against Zhai Hua, Zhai Sheng would quietly teach Tian Dong a lesson on behalf of her. As it happened more often, the little Tian Dong vaguely understood that he could not seem to win this younger brother of his.

As long as he bullied Zhai Hua, Zhai Sheng would make him suffer. If he were to play with Zhai Hua more often, Zhai Sheng would take good care of him.

Tian Dong seemed to be cut out for doing business since he was a child. Without the need to ascertain, Tian Dong immediately opted for the bright and easy path by pledging loyalty to Zhai Hua, this 'female boss'. He would be protected by Zhai Sheng, this 'dark knight', then. As such, no matter the circumstances, Tian Dong would be able to lead a good life within the group of kids.

This had increased the opportunities for Tian Dong and Zhai Hua to interact with each other. Gradually, Tian Dong discovered Zhai Hua's good points. In addition, after Zhai Hua joked that she would marry him, Tian Dong's annoyance at Zhai Hua had transformed into vague positive feelings for her after some time.

Tian Dong had left the country at a young age and stayed abroad for more than twenty years. He did not expect himself to remember what happened during his childhood too. His love for Zhai Hua did not reduce because of time and distance. Instead, it grew deeper.

From a certain perspective, Zhai Sheng was considered the matchmaker between Tian Dong and Zhai Hua.

Of course, Tian Dong was more particular about the fact that he could not win his brother-in-law Zhai Sheng since he was a child. Now that they had already grown up, Zhai Sheng still held onto his dark past. He was not sure whether it was because Zhai Sheng matured faster than other people, despite the fact that everyone grew up together; he was even a little older than Zhai Sheng.

The problem was... he could not remember any jokes and embarrassing moments of Zhai Sheng. These were non-existent in his memory. When Zhai Sheng was at the age slightly older than the triplet's current age, he was already very smart. Tian Dong was clearly the big boss of a huge corporation. Yet, he could only surrender when facing his brother-in-law Zhai Sheng, as per the current situation.

In order to safeguard his image in Xiao Bao's heart, Tian Dong not only accepted the threat but also did it willingly. "Be rest assured. Qiao Nan's mission this time is not difficult. Minister He just wanted to gradually pass the connections in his hands to Qiao Nan. That's why he insisted to bring her along. At the same time, Qiao Nan will have the chance to gain more experience. He doesn't have much time left to guide Qiao Nan. Whenever there is a chance, he will definitely hold onto it. Don't worry. Qiao Nan will be able to come back in a few days' time. Right, you will still be at home and not the camp, right?"

Tian Dong had really touched the soft spots.

Initially, Zhai Sheng was troubled that he was seldom home, yet Qiao Nan was away. When Qiao Nan came back from her business trip, the tragedy was that his leave would have ended. He had to leave before he could even hug his wife.

Looking at Zhai Sheng's expression, Tian Dong's heart trembled a little. He instantly did the action of zipping up his mouth to express that he would shut up, lest he provoke Zhai Sheng and would not be able to make up for it.

Xiao Bao insisted to stay at his maternal grandmother's house that had his auntie's smell and refused to leave. However, Tian Dong could not do the same. Zhai Hua was seldom at home. When he was not entertaining his clients, Tian Dong had to keep his parents company on behalf of his wife, lest the two elders feel lonely.

In particular, he had sent their favorite grandson away today. If their son was not coming back, the two elders at home might feel very disappointed.

Although their son was not as likable as their grandson, it was better than nothing. True enough, when they saw their son coming back without their grandson following behind, there was a slight disappointment in Mother Tian's eyes. The positive thing was that she had already expected this outcome as this was not the first incidence. Hence, Mother Tian calmed down very quickly. "When is Xiao Bao coming back?" Her grandson was away and she felt strange and upset all over.

"Tomorrow afternoon, I will go to the Zhai family's residence after work to fetch Xiao Bao home." This was already the usual routine. However, Mother Tian had always harbored twenty percent hope that in the absence of her company, Xiao Bao would cry, kick up a fuss, and request to go home.

Although she was disappointed every time, Mother Tian could not help having such hopes repeatedly.

As soon as she heard that she could only see Xiao Bao tomorrow, Mother Tian snorted uneasily. She was not willing to bother about Tian Dong, this son, anymore. "Tell me. What's so good about the Zhai family? Why is it that Xiao Bao likes to go there and play?" Forget it that her son had been snatched away by Zhai Hua. Their family had a daughter-in-law but it was no different from not having any. Her grandson, who was her only source of happiness, loved to go to the Zhai family's residence. Nothing went according to her wishes.

Tian Dong looked at and hinted at his father. Meaning, please fix all of his mother's problems.

Father Tian smiled and nodded, expressing 'no problem'.

Once he received the signal, Tian Dong smiled and gave his father a few words of consolation before going upstairs to bathe and sleep. Tian Dong had already taken his dinner at the Zhai family's residence earlier.

When Father and Mother Tian were sleeping on the bed, Mother Tian could not help nagging again. "What's wrong with our family? Is there a difference in whether Dongzi has a wife or not?"

"Of course there is." Father Tian did not feel so resentful about his current life. "If Dongzi didn't marry a wife, where would Xiao Bao come from? What is the matter? Our grandson is not at home today and you don't like him anymore? If that is really the case, let Xiao Bao stay a few more days with the Zhai family. Please don't feel upset then." His wife loved Xiao Bao so much. Without Zhai Hua, where would Xiao Bao come from?

Their grandson resembled their son. He was just slightly over one year old but he had a sweeter tongue than his son when the latter was a child. At the thought of his grandson's witty demeanor, Father Tian was sure that his grandson would be more promising than his son after he grew up.

Zhai Hua had given birth to such a good grandson for their family. He felt that Zhai Hua was a good daughter-in-law.

“Would Zhai Hua be able to give birth to Xiao Bao without our Dongzi? Furthermore, wouldn't Dongzi have a child after marrying someone regardless?” Mother Tian felt indignant.

“Without Zhai Hua, even if Dongzi has a child, it may not definitely be Xiao Bao. Can you bear with the fact that Xiao Bao is not your grandson? Also, don't say that Dongzi would get married if there was no Zhai Hua. How long did Dongzi endure for Zhai Hua before he was willing to get married?”