

RTAMM 151

Chapter 151: Brother Zhai was Different

For some unknown reasons, Zhai Sheng's anger rose. Hence, his tone to Qiao Nan was unprecedentedly serious and formal. Qiao Nan was so scared that she could not help sitting up in a prim and proper manner.

“You must know that the people in the current society are very complicated. You are a young lady and must be alert of your own safety. After attending biological class, you should know that men have an invasive nature toward women. You have also seen the usual news on the television. You can't always perceive the world and outsiders in your own lenses, especially those men.”

“Bro-Brother Zhai, don't you think you made it sound too serious? Are you talking about those rape cases on the news? No, impossible. That would not happen to me.” Qiao Nan was embarrassed for a while. Although Zhai Sheng was concerned out of his good intentions, she kept feeling that Zhai Sheng had gone overboard in his description.

This world was a little messy. There were a lot of messy cases.

She was not bad-looking and do have some admirers.

But in her previous life, she was almost forty years old. She could only say that she was still a virgin before she was driven to the grave by her mother!

“Do you think that it is impossible?!” Zhai Sheng's fury turned into a blaze at the sight of Qiao Nan's laissez-faire attitude.

Without saying a word, Zhai Sheng sat beside Qiao Nan and wrapped his two arms, which were as strong and sturdy as steel, around Qiao Nan's little waist. He circled Qiao Nan into his arms and made his hug seemed like a little cage that was small, yet big enough to imprison Qiao Nan so that she could not escape.

“Tell me, if I were to do anything to you now, will you have the strength to resist?”

“No.” After being hugged by Zhai Sheng in this way, Qiao Nan was stunned. Her head was in a daze. She felt that the thing called ‘sanity’ had flown out of her body. She said in a silly manner, “Brother Zhai, you won’t.”

Zhai Sheng was both amused and angry. “Why not?” He was also a man!

“Brother Zhai, you are a soldier!” Would soldiers also commit a crime?

“Who told you that there is an absolutely good guy in this world?” Zhai Sheng suddenly realized that Qiao Nan really liked soldiers a lot. She was nearly blinded by her trust and worship toward soldiers. In regard to this, Zhai Sheng felt a faint sense of joy but also some pressure.

As a soldier, Zhai Sheng always knew that he definitely would not have much time to accompany his wife and children if he was married in the future.

Even if something happened at home, he might not be able to return and needed to rely on his wife alone to bear the situation. Even when his child was sick, unlike other families, there would not be a father to shuttle the child around.

Although Zhai Sheng was still young, he often heard his subordinates discussing such matters.

Hence, Zhai Sheng had heard more than once that some women could not tolerate such loneliness. As a result, they did many things that embarrassed themselves and others.

Given this situation, it became difficult for the army personnel to find marriage. Many women declined even before meeting up as soon as they heard that the other party was from the army.

In view of this, Qiao Nan would not decline the idea of being the spouse of a soldier at the very least. But in other words, Qiao Nan also did not have any resistance toward soldiers, did she?

“But Brother Zhai is different!” Qiao Nan said with certainty.

From Qiao Nan’s perspective, if a man was holding pornographic reading material, then he must be having dirty thoughts.

However, if the man was Zhai Sheng, reading pornographic materials aside, even if he were watching pornographic films, Qiao Nan would first assume that Zhai Sheng was hunting down those sex crimes!

This was the psychology of an obsessed female fan.

It was a pity that Zhai Sheng did not really understand this currently. When he knew, it was...

Zhai Sheng could only express that it was a very 'satisfying' thing to be able to marry a crazy fan.

At this juncture, Zhai Sheng could not experience such a fortunate feeling. He was both amused and angered by the absolute trust Qiao Nan had on him without any apparent reason. "No matter what, you are going to listen to what I said!"

"Yes!" Brother Zhai was her benefactor and creditor. He was also the future chief. Of course, she must listen to Brother Zhai's words!

After receiving the answer he wanted, Zhai Sheng loosened his arms around Qiao Nan and placed Qiao Nan on the seat beside him. "Then, do you remember what I told you just now?"

"Remember." Qiao Nan nodded her head to show her obedience. "It is really an accident today!"

In the aggregate of her two lifetimes, not to mention other male strangers, even Chen Jun, who was her boyfriend, had never seen her drying her lingerie before.

"It is best that this type of accident does not occur twice." Especially in front of other men.

"It won't." Qiao Nan heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed that Brother Zhai was not angry anymore. "Brother Zhai, are you hungry? What do you want to eat today?"

"The ingredients are there. You can take a look and cook accordingly." Zhai Sheng's eyes turned to glance at the ingredients he placed on the floor earlier.

"Oh, okay." Qiao Nan stood up without a word and carried the ingredients brought by Zhai Sheng to the kitchen.

After Qiao Nan entered the kitchen, Zhai Sheng knitted his brows and kept thinking that his reaction today was a little odd, particularly the inexplicable anger he displayed toward Qiao Nan. In actual fact, this was indeed an accident, and Qiao Nan did not do it on purpose.

Qiao Nan was oblivious to Zhai Sheng's dilemma. She was whole-heartedly focused on the ingredients for cooking. The fish Zhai Sheng brought today was quite fresh. It was as if it had just been killed before he came.

After some consideration, Qiao Nan stewed a fish soup.

Qiao Nan was aware that Zhai Sheng wanted to help her nourish her father by bringing over the ingredients every day. Otherwise, it would not be so coincidental that the ingredients he brought each time were just right for the purpose.

Given Qiao Dongliang's current condition, he would be able to take in some dry food after consuming another one or two days of liquid food.

Having understood Zhai Sheng's good intentions, Qiao Nan was not wishy-washy about it.

The Qiao family was already riddled with problems. Even though she had borrowed money from Brother Zhai, he would not pressure her for payments. However, her father's medical expenses were running out, and she could not possibly borrow from Brother Zhai again, could she?

She did well in the middle school examination, and her tuition and miscellaneous fees were waived. However, she still needed to pay the money for her meals.

As for Qiao Zijin's problem, she would leave it to Ding Jiayi to worry.

Qiao Nan was in a fix over the necessary expenditure for her schooling. Qiao Dongliang definitely needed a period of rest after he was discharged from the hospital.

Therefore, for the next two months or so, the Qiao family's finance would be in deficit. There would only be expenses and no income.

At the thought of this problem, Qiao Nan gave a huge sigh while she was stewing the fish soup. Given her current situation, it was too difficult for her to make money. She had to take care of her father. Even if she were to work during the two months of vacation, it was probably not enough to pay for a few days' worth of medication for her father.

At this moment, Zhai Sheng walked in. "Why did you sigh when things are fine? Right, I have something to tell you."

Chapter 152: Something Was Happening

Qiao Nan was shocked by Zhai Sheng's sudden appearance. On the contrary, Zhai Sheng behaved as if he was entering his own kitchen. He immersed the used bowl into the water and finished washing it in a couple of swift actions. Thereafter, he helped Qiao Nan place the bowl away properly. "Brother Zhai, what is the matter? Tell me. I'm listening."

"I have an uncle who is old and his eyesight is not good. Nevertheless, he has some original documents on hand that need to be translated. Can you help? Of course, we will not let you work for nothing in return."

"There is no need to pay me." Hearing that it was Zhai Sheng's relative, Qiao Nan immediately rejected any sort of monetary benefit. "It is just a favor. If I have the capability, then it should not be an issue. However... Brother Zhai, you know that I am still young and will be attending senior high school. Is your uncle willing to let me handle such an important task?"

There were probably very few people in this world that would task a sixteen-year-old girl with translation work. Furthermore, she was not an overseas Chinese, and neither did she grow up in America or other western countries.

"You do not need to be nervous. This uncle of mine already intended to find someone to help him. If you are not the one, there will be others. The money will be given to someone eventually, so you do not need to decline. Take it if you deserve it." At the smell of the fragrant fish soup, Zhai Sheng felt thirsty and a little hungry despite having just finished a bowl of soup earlier.

Admittedly, although Qiao Nan was very young, her cooking skills were quite good.

Qiao Nan hesitated for a while. She was really in need of money. After consideration, she nodded her head. "That is fine. Of course, if my translated work is not good, most likely Brother Zhai will also lose face. If that happens, I will not accept any money."

Regardless of the language, there was no better way than practicing to become more familiar with it.

For the past year since Qiao Nan 'came back', the English knowledge that she often used was of the junior high school standard. She was worried that her initial standard might have regressed over the past year.

"There is no such good thing as being paid for not doing the job properly. You think too much." Zhai Sheng glanced at Qiao Nan expressionlessly. If that was the case, he might as well give the money directly to Qiao Nan.

"That is good." Qiao Nan heaved a sigh of relief. She was really quite concerned about whether this was Zhai Sheng's excuse to 'gift' her money.

"I will be sending the documents over tomorrow. There is something that you must pay attention to. As these documents have been sitting there for too long, you will have to complete it as soon as possible."

"Is it so urgent?" Qiao Nan was a little shocked. "Sure, my dad has my mom and sister to take care of him. I have quite a lot of time."

Since the other party was in such a hurry, then wouldn't she not only be able to help the uncle but also do Brother Zhai a favor at the same time by quickly finishing up the translation?

At the thought of this, Qiao Nan was motivated. "Brother Zhai, why don't you send over the documents today? The fish soup is almost done. I will send it over to my dad and should be back by one o'clock. Anyway, I have nothing to do now. It is better to have it earlier by half a day. Isn't your uncle anxious about it?"

"Sure," Zhai Sheng agreed after thinking for a while.

When Zhai Sheng brought home the pot of fish soup, Zhai Hua, who rarely rested at home, closed her eyes and extended her neck as she got up to follow the fragrance. Her sense of smell was as acute as that of a dog's.

“Brush your teeth. Otherwise, you won't get to drink!” At the sight of Zhai Hua's sloppy look, Zhai Sheng pursed his lips. Qiao Nan was still the best. She looked so clean and fresh at all times. Sometimes, when he looked at Zhai Hua's behaving like this, Zhai Sheng could not figure out whether he had an elder sister or an elder brother.

“Hmph!” Zhai Hua gave a snort and cleaned herself up with lightning speed. She then scooped a bowl of fish soup and sat on the sofa to drink it. “This soup is so tasty. It is fragrant and light. Most importantly, there is no fishy smell. Zhai Sheng, you have yet to tell me which nearby hotel in the quad has hired this veteran chef. The culinary skills are superb.”

Zhai Hua was not yet sick of the shredded chicken porridge she had for the past two days. Today, Zhai Hua was mesmerized by the fresh fish soup.

After downing two bowls of fish soup, Zhai Hua comfortably leaned on the sofa and said, “It would have been better if this veteran chef was hired a few years earlier. Then, I didn't need to cook for you when the two of us were at home. We could do takeaway. It is so convenient.”

Zhai Hua had never thought of herself as a woman. In the army, she was more motivated than any other men.

However, every time she was home, Zhai Hua could not discard her obligation as Zhai Sheng's elder sister. She had to roll up her sleeves and cook soup for Zhai Sheng.

It was not easy being an elder sister.

It could be said that Zhai Hua's culinary skills and experience were accumulated all because of this younger brother.

“Certainly, it would be much better if it was a few years earlier.” It was rare that Zhai Sheng was singing the same tune as Zhai Hua.

“What do you mean?” Zhai Hua slammed the table and jumped like a tigress. “Do you disdain me and my culinary skills? Don't forget that I was the one who kind of raised you up!”

Mother Zhai had a very good relationship with Father Zhai. She was very dependent on Father Zhai.

Due to the job nature of Father Zhai, he was not able to stay at home for long periods. Mother Zhai would always follow Father Zhai wherever he went. The Zhai's residence would then be left with the two children: Zhai Hua and Zhai Sheng.

Since Zhai Hua was the elder sister, she naturally had to take better care of Zhai Sheng. Hence, it was not exaggerated to say that Zhai Sheng was brought up by Zhai Hua.

Zhai Sheng gave Zhai Hua a glance. "It has been hard on my tummy to be tortured for so many years."

"Scram!" Zhai Hua's face was red with embarrassment as she kicked toward Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng turned his body away at the speed of lightning; his movements were as agile as a leopard. Zhai Hua did not even manage to brush the collar of his shirt.

Seeing that Zhai Sheng's physical agility had improved, Zhai Hua snorted unhappily. When they were still a child, she was still able to suppress Zhai Sheng with physical force. Now, she could no longer do so. This wretched child had progressed too quickly!

Knowing that she was no match for Zhai Sheng, Zhai Hua stopped kicking a fuss. Each time the sister and brother exchanged fighting moves, it was always only for a brief moment. "When are you going back to the camp?"

"Another few more days." Zhai Sheng's slight smile disappeared and his expression became stiff.

"Hey, it is rare." Zhai Hua raised her eyebrows. "Zhai Sheng, tell me honestly. Is there something happening?"

"What is happening?"

"Don't play dumb in front of me. Count with your fingers. Why do I feel that the number of days you have been coming back and staying at home for the past one year is more than the total number of days you have been back for the past five years?"

“Is that true?”

“Yes!” Zhai Hua sat beside Zhai Sheng. “Why is it? Do you have something you want to chat with me about?”

“No.”

No matter how she interrogated, Zhai Sheng’s expression remained composed and nonchalant, making Zhai Hua feel very helpless. “I heard that you brought Uncle Lim’s documents back home. You hardly have a chance to rest, so why do you want to get involved in this? You know the situation of the Lim family. There are a lot of people watching them.”

Chapter 153: I’m Going Back with You

“Our Zhai family is not short of this little sum of money. Don’t take up such a job in the future. If you have the time, you might as well have more rest.”

Zhai Hua was very clear that as soldiers, they accepted missions. The soldiers who were carrying out the mission were not acting like humans, but machines. It was very normal for them to be out in the cold with hunger and sleepless nights.

Therefore, whenever there was time, Zhai Hua would try her best to relax and have a good rest to replenish her physical strength and energy once she reached home.

“Don’t worry. I know what I am doing.”

“It is good that you know what you are doing. I have something on today and have to be out for a while.” Having that said, Zhai Hua drank another bowl of fish soup. Thereafter, she returned to the bedroom to change her clothes and prepare to leave the house.

“Zhai Hua,” Zhai Sheng called her before she could leave.

There was a flash in Zhai Hua’s eyes. She looked at Zhai Sheng and teased him, “What is it? Do you want me to say goodbye to you?”

“Zhai Hua, you have been going out quite often recently, and you have many new clothes. When did you learn how to wear a dress?” Zhai Sheng narrowed his eyes and asked in a serious tone as he looked at Zhai Hua’s dress which was longer than her knees.

“The fact remains that I am a girl. What is so strange about wearing a dress, then?” Zhai Hua’s face was red. “There is no time. I can’t be bothered to spar verbally with you. I’m leaving!”

Zhai Hua ignored Zhai Sheng’s reaction and left the Zhai’s residence at the fastest speed.

Zhai Sheng, this wretched child, was too sensitive!

“Dad, drink the soup.” On the other hand, in the hospital, Qiao Nan poured out the fish soup and fed Qiao Dongliang in small mouthfuls.

The moment Qiao Nan poured out the fish soup, the seducing fragrance instantly took over the smell of the disinfectant in the entire ward.

The ward mate praised, “Big Brother, the culinary skills of your family’s younger daughter is really good. The smell of this fish soup mesmerizes everyone.” He had never smelled such a fragrant fish soup in his entire life.

Shouldn’t fish soup be bland, almost tasteless, or too fishy?

“Do you also want a bowl?” Qiao Dongliang laughed proudly. “The food made by my family’s Nan Nan is really delicious.”

“No need. This was made specially by your younger daughter to nourish your body.” The ward mate smilingly declined. He would be embarrassed to drink Qiao Dongliang’s soup.

As they stayed in the same ward, the ward mate often heard Ding Jiayi mentioned about money, so he knew the Qiao family’s situation was not good. It must have been difficult for the young lady to find the means to get these ingredients for Qiao Dongliang’s nourishment.

“Uncle, drink a bowl too.” There was a lot of fish soup today. Qiao Nan scooped a bowl and served it to the ward mate beside Qiao Dongliang. “Uncle, try my culinary work. You are most probably the one who usually chats with my dad to relieve his boredom.”

The hospitals in the 1990s were unlike those in the 21st century where each ward came with television to relieve the patient’s boredom.

The ward mate became a glutton when he smelled the fragrance of the fish soup. Since Qiao Nan had already placed the bowl of soup before him, he would not refuse. “Then, I shall be thick-skinned and drink a bowl of your soup. Your dad and I keep each other company and relieve our boredom. Without your dad, I will be so bored. Yummy! This soup is really tasty and fragrant!”

The ward mate drank a mouthful and his eyes lit up. “Young lady, where did you learn your cooking skills from? Even the taste of the food made by the master chef from the hotel near my house is not better than yours!” The ward mate simply gave Qiao Nan a thumbs-up. “Big buddy, you are so fortunate. This is so tasty. You are so blessed to be able to have this at home. You are much luckier than those who eat at restaurants every day.”

“Hahaha.” Qiao Dongliang, who hardly ate out, assumed that his ward mate purposely said this to please Qiao Nan, so he smiled without saying a word.

He did not know how Nan Nan’s culinary skills were in comparison to the chefs outside, but it was a fact that what Nan Nan cooked was delicious.

Qiao Zijin—who was sitting by the side, stretching her neck and watching—swallowed her saliva and was contemplating how she could open her mouth to get a bowl of fish soup to drink.

She did not understand why Qiao Nan and her father were willing to pour a bowl of fish soup for a stranger instead of giving it to her. She was the one who was their family member.

“Nan Nan, why don’t you drink a bowl yourself?” Qiao Dongliang felt much better after downing a bowl of fish soup.

“No need.” Qiao Nan shook her head. “Dad, you should drink more.”

“Nan Nan, do we still have a lot of fish soup? If there is leftover after Dad drinks them, let me drink so that you can save the hassle of bringing them back,” Qiao Zijin expressed that she would like to have the soup instead if Qiao Nan refused.

“...”

“...”

“...”

The other three people in the ward simultaneously went silent. Qiao Nan’s pinkish lips were pursed into a straight line. She sighed and said, “Thanks Sister for your concern. But you do not need to worry. There will not be any excess for me to bring home.”

What she brought over was just enough to fill three bowls.

She felt that fish soup was basically all liquid and did not have any fulfilling ingredients. She was worried that her father would become too full with liquids and miss a proper meal, so she only brought a quantity equivalent to three bowls.

She had just given a bowl to Qiao Dongliang’s ward mate. This meant there were only two bowls left. With Qiao Dongliang’s current condition, he would not have a problem finishing them. Furthermore, the bowl in Qiao Nan’s hands was the second one that Qiao Dongliang was drinking. There was no more soup left.

Both Qiao Dongliang and the uncle beside him were patients. It was appropriate for them to drink the fish soup.

However, Qiao Zijin was a healthy young lady, yet she wanted to have a share of the fish soup meant for the patients. At the thought of this, Qiao Nan also felt that Qiao Zijin’s action was so inappropriate that she could not tolerate it.

Qiao Nan did not say anything else, but Qiao Dongliang felt a little embarrassed. The pride the younger daughter had earned for him was seemingly destroyed and discarded thoroughly with those words from his elder daughter.

Qiao Dongliang's ward mate was a little embarrassed too. No matter what, it did not seem right to finish drinking the half a bowl fish soup that was left, neither did it seem right not to finish it.

After Qiao Dongliang's elder daughter spoke, he kept having the feeling that he was depriving the child of another family of food.

"Dad, I have something on today and need to go home earlier. I will come and see you again tomorrow." Qiao Nan packed away the bowl and thermal food container, hurriedly preparing to go home.

"Sure, quickly go home if you have something on. Don't worry about things at my end." This dispelled the embarrassing atmosphere, and Qiao Dongliang's expression became more at ease.

"Dad, there is nothing much for me to do here as well. Why don't I follow Nan Nan back home? Half the day is almost over. Mom should be off work soon to come and keep you company." Qiao Zijin stood up quickly.

After accompanying her father in the hospital for half a day, Qiao Zijin was nearly bored to death. At least, Qiao Dongliang had a ward mate to chat with him, and both of them chatted so enthusiastically. They were so familiar with each other now as if they had been good friends for donkey's years. However, Qiao Zijin was totally uninterested in the content of their conversation. She could only stay idle as she sat by the side.

Particularly, when both of them were enthusiastically chatting in front of her about how good Qiao Nan was, she felt really bad. It was as if she fared lousily as a person.

Clearly, Qiao Nan had been resting and having fun at home while she was having it hard by keeping her father company. Why did all the credit go to Qiao Nan as if Qiao Nan was the only good daughter around? Was it because she had prepared a few meals for her father?

Chapter 154: Good Seedling

Qiao Zijin could not be bothered to listen to the praises that Qiao Dongliang and the ward mate had for Qiao Nan. Although she was sitting by the side, it was as if she was transparent. Qiao Zijin was really very bored sitting there.

Qiao Zijin was also not interested in reading a decent book. She had been studying nine out of the twelve months in a year. The school holidays were hard to come by, and she refused to read such books.

However, if Qiao Zijin read other types of books, she was afraid Qiao Dongliang would chide her. Hence, Qiao Zijin could only sit there, idling for the past few days.

Even when Qiao Dongliang needed to go to the restroom urgently, Qiao Zijin was of no help. It was either the ward mate or the ward mate's family who helped Qiao Dongliang there.

Qiao Zijin felt that she would rot if she continued sitting there in this way.

Qiao Zijin was only considering the problem from her perspective, so she did not realize that she sounded very abrupt and unfilial when she said this.

Qiao Dongliang was hit by a car and operated twice on the surgery table. He was literally fighting between life and death.

Furthermore, Qiao Dongliang's injury had not fully recovered. His wound might bleed if he moved too vigorously.

If not for the occasional help of the ward mate or the ward mate's family member, it was quite difficult to take good care of Qiao Dongliang given the family's current situation.

Under such conditions, it was necessary for Qiao Zijin to stay around to attend to any emergency situations. If anything happened and there was no next-of-kin by Qiao Dongliang's side despite him having spouse and children, was it not acceptable?

Qiao Dongliang's face turned black and no longer knew what to say to Qiao Zijin.

His elder daughter, Qiao Zijin, was not only having a sweet tongue and bitter heart for Old Ding but also for him.

At this time, Qiao Dongliang was thinking who else Qiao Zijin cared about in the family of four beside herself. Her character seemed overly self-centered and cold-blooded.

“Dad, why don’t we do this? Mom will keep vigil at night. Sister and I will take turns during the day.” Her father might be willing to teach, but it also depended on whether Qiao Zijin was willing to learn. If they took turns each day, Qiao Zijin should have no complaints, right?

Qiao Nan knew that Qiao Zijin was targeting her with her earlier words.

“Then, who should stay today?” Qiao Zijin’s expression was more relaxed and her tone was better.

“I will, but I need to go home to take something first. I will be back soon. Before I come back, Sister, you have to remain in the hospital to take care of Dad,” said Qiao Nan as she thought about the job that Zhai Sheng was going to pass to her.

“Sure.” It was rare for Qiao Zijin to be so big-hearted.

“Dad, I will go back first, then.” Having that said, Qiao Nan brought along the thermal food container and went back to the Qiao residence as soon as possible.

Seeing Qiao Nan in a fluster, sweating profusely while catching her breath, Zhai Sheng, who was waiting at the entrance of the Qiao’s residence, knitted his brows. “No need to be in a rush. You could walk slowly.”

“Brother Zhai, did I make you wait for a long time?”

“No.” Zhai Sheng did not mention that he had waited for Qiao Nan for almost half an hour.

“Brother Zhai, come in first.” Qiao Nan opened the door and soaked the thermal food container in the water. “Have you brought over the documents?”

“They are all here.”

“Okay, Brother Zhai. I still need to make a trip to the hospital. I am really sorry to have troubled you to come.” Qiao Nan took a look at the documents and locked the bulk of it in her bedroom, bringing only some with her. She also brought the English dictionary along just in case.

“Are you going to the hospital to take care of Uncle Qiao?”

“Yes, I am taking turns with my sister to take care of my dad during the day.” Qiao Nan nodded as she carried the documents and left the house with Zhai Sheng. “Brother Zhai, I will be leaving for the hospital first. I will bring these documents to the Zhai’s residence when I finish translating them.”

“Sure.” Zhai Sheng did not manage to speak much to Qiao Nan. She ran off with the documents in her arms.

“Alright, you’re here. Then, I will go back and come again tomorrow.” When Qiao Nan reached the ward, Qiao Zijin immediately stood up and left. She only said a quick bye to Qiao Dongliang.

“Nan Nan, you are warm and sweaty. Go to the restroom to wash and wipe your face with a towel first.” Qiao Dongliang’s heart went out to his younger daughter when he saw that she had been rushing everywhere.

Why didn’t he discover that Nan Nan was so much more filial than Zijin in the past? She was so obedient and sensible. Indeed, those who complain the loudest get the most attention.

“Okay.” Qiao Nan put down the documents carefully. She took the towel and ran to the female restroom to wipe away the sweat on her face and body.

“Nan Nan, what did you bring over?” After Qiao Nan came back, she started to stare at a pile of papers and seemed to be writing something with the pen in her hand. This was unlike the Qiao Dongliang who kept his silence when Qiao Zijin was around. He was now extremely concerned about Qiao Nan’s situation.

“It’s some original documents. Brother Zhai asked me to help with them,” Qiao Nan said as she translated the documents.

True enough, Qiao Nan was unable to recall some words that she had not been using for a long time. She only managed to clarify them after a careful search of her memories.

Having done so much translation work, Qiao Nan had, in fact, long understood that it was much simpler to translate Chinese words into English.

For Chinese to English translation, although there might be occasional errors in the grammar or sentence structure, the contents could still be understood and would not deviate much from the original. On the contrary, English to Chinese translation was more difficult. A wrong sentence structure would result in a vastly different meaning.

Therefore, when Qiao Nan accepted translation jobs, initially, she would only take on Chinese to English translation. It was only until she was more familiar and confident would she dare to take on the English to Chinese ones.

Unfortunately, the assignment she accepted was a highly difficult one that required translation from English to Chinese. Qiao Nan could not help feeling nervous about it.

“My goodness, there are so many small tadpoles-like characters. Is this a foreign language?” Curious, the ward mate stretched his neck to glance over. His eyesight was good and actually spotted some of the contents.

Looking at the words on the papers, it was a pity that the words knew him, but he did not know them.

“I say, buddy, isn’t your younger daughter too awesome? She can even understand the tadpole-like language. Didn’t you mention that she is just about to enter high school? I reckon even the college students may not understand those tadpole-like words.” The ward mate was amazed. What talent! It was no wonder Qiao Dongliang had been telling him that his younger daughter’s grades were good, and she was the scholar of the provincial middle school examination. At one glance, he knew that she was someone with substance!

“I... I am not quite sure either.” Not only the ward mate, but Qiao Dongliang was also shocked when he saw the bunch of tadpole-like words which made his eyes sore. “Maybe... maybe the content is actually not that difficult?”

“Alright buddy, don’t be modest. Your younger daughter is obviously not an ordinary person. She will make it big in the future. You will be able to enjoy life one day.”

In comparison to the elder daughter who would rather sit there, idling and dozing off, the younger daughter was diligent to the bones and so enthusiastic in learning.

“There is only half the day left, and your younger daughter is still keen to learn. She is very clear-minded. Given her attitude, she will be able to truly learn, unlike most children. If they are forced to study, they may receive a borderline diploma in the end but with a laissez-faire learning attitude.”

Chapter 155: This Is a Bomb

The ward mate's words stunned Qiao Dongliang, leaving him in deep thoughts.

After some time, Qiao Dongliang looked at Qiao Nan and asked, “Nan Nan, do you really understand what is written in these documents?”

“Most of it.” Qiao Nan, who was totally engrossed in the translation work, did not even lift her head. She was reading the documents meticulously and thoroughly. When she had the gist of it, she made a few drafts, organized the sentence structures in her mind, and then penned down the translated contents in Chinese.

As Qiao Nan was very conscientious, both Qiao Dongliang and the ward mate suddenly stopped chatting. They quietly maintained the silence. All of a sudden, those in the entire ward could only hear the sounds of Qiao Nan flipping the papers and scribbling down words as the tip of her pen touched the surface of the papers.

After two hours, Qiao Nan had written a page full of words.

Both Qiao Dongliang and the ward mate had been staring at Qiao Nan all this while. Strangely, they did not feel bored at all.

As they watched Qiao Nan transformed the tadpole-like language which was alien to them into the Chinese language that they were familiar with, both old men were very amazed, especially the ward mate whose eyes were full of awe and novelty.

When Qiao Nan stopped writing, Qiao Dongliang asked with a dumbfounded look, “Nan Nan, are you helping someone translate a foreign language into Chinese?”

“Yes.” Qiao Nan rolled her neck. She was too focused earlier and having maintained the same posture for two hours, her body was very stiff now.

Qiao Nan immediately stood up to twist her neck, shake her hands, kick her legs and turned around in circles.

In her previous life, Qiao Nan was very particular about making this a habit. As such, she was quite healthy and did not suffer from occupational illnesses.

“Nan Nan, do you really know how to do this?” Qiao Dongliang sighed, feeling something amiss. “Nan Nan, do you know the Zhai family’s situation? Our family may owe the Zhai family money, but you are still a child. Don’t be anxious about it. Dad will pay them back. It is not that Dad does not believe in you, but this is just too difficult. At the very least, we should not do them a disservice, should we?”

To Qiao Dongliang and the ward mate, translation was a job that was beyond them.

In his lifetime, Qiao Dongliang did not expect there would be someone in his family who could translate.

As said by his ward mate, this job was not for everyone. Even college students might not be able to do it, not to mention a high school student.

Qiao Dongliang was very worried. Given the status of the Zhai family, the items required by them would probably be of great importance. What if his younger daughter failed to do a good job and caused trouble?

At the thought of what she had just translated, Qiao Nan was also a little hesitant. Speaking of these contents, Brother Zhai was really confident in her!

Qiao Nan pulled the corners of her mouth and said with some hesitance, “Dad, don’t worry. Brother Zhai is very good in English. After my translation, Brother Zhai will definitely review it first and decide whether the translation is passable. There shouldn’t be too much of a problem.”

“That is good, then.” Qiao Dongliang heaved a sigh of relief. Qiao Nan managed to assure him.

Qiao Dongliang was not worried now, but Qiao Nan was. She was especially worried about the documents that she brought here, as well as the translated content.

This was not an ordinary translation job. Damn, she took up a time bomb.

Fortunately, she was not someone prominent. Otherwise, with such documents on hand, she would have been targeted umpteen times by others.

Brother Zhai was challenging the limits of her heart!!

If not for fear of causing Qiao Dongliang and the ward mate suspicious, Qiao Nan would have quickly tucked the documents into her arms and hid the two copies of English and Chinese contents.

Although Qiao Nan had gone through two lifetimes, she was not so courageous. She was just an ordinary citizen and had never been involved in any major or strategic situations. She felt a little ashamed.

The more she thought of it, the more Qiao Nan felt uneasy. She could not wait to go home immediately and return everything to Zhai Sheng.

She could help with some things, but not everything. Was this an ordinary translation work?

As mentioned by her dad, what if she screwed up the matter due to a wrong translation? If that happened, she would not only do Brother Zhai a disservice but also ruin the Zhai family's reputation. Even worse, she might become a sinner of the country. Damn!

"Why are you here? Where's your sister?" Ding Jiayi, who rushed to the hospital from work, said when she saw Qiao Nan instead of Qiao Zijin. Her tone was not good.

Yesterday, Qiao Dongliang had clearly told Ding Jiayi to come to the hospital early to change shift with Qiao Zijin if she wanted Qiao Zijin to go home earlier to rest.

Ding Jiayi was afraid that it would be too hard and boring for Qiao Zijin to take care of Qiao Dongliang. Hence, she rushed to the hospital directly from work so that she could take over the shift from Qiao Zijin.

With nary a word, Qiao Nan quietly put away all the documents so that her mother could not see any of it. “Sister and I will take turns every day to take care of Dad.”

“That’s fine.” Ding Jiayi nodded her head satisfactorily. “Since you’re here, then I shall go home to take a bath and have dinner. I’ll come later to take over from you.”

Now that Qiao Nan was the one taking care of Qiao Dongliang, Ding Jiayi was no longer so anxious. She wanted to go home to wash up and take a nap to replenish her energy. Thereafter, she would come and take over from Qiao Nan around nine or ten o’clock.

“Since you are already here, don’t go home. Nan Nan, you should go back.” Qiao Dongliang saw through Ding Jiayi’s mind instantly. He shouted directly at Ding Jiayi to stop her.

In the past, Qiao Dongliang had always turned a blind eye to such situations. Now, no way!

“What are you doing? I’ve been at work all day and I’m sweaty all over. My clothes stink. Don’t you mind if I take care of you like that?”

“I do not mind,” Qiao Dongliang replied, looking stiff. “Nan Nan, go back. It is rare that your mom is off work early. You should go back early too. Don’t wait until the sky is dark. It will be unsafe then.”

“Sure, Dad, then I shall go back first.” Qiao Nan was so anxious as if her butt has caught fire. Qiao Dongliang’s words released Qiao Nan from the ordeal.

Qiao Nan silently held all the documents tightly in her arms, bid goodbye to all the adults in the ward, and ran off with a speed rivaling that of a rabbit.

“You... you’re really...” What could Ding Jiayi say when Qiao Nan had already left? She was also worried that if she left, Qiao Dongliang would be angry and request for Qiao Zijin to stay overnight again.

Qiao Nan, who left the hospital, did not bother about how bad Ding Jiayi’s mood was. She was only consumed by her own anxiety.

Upon reaching the quad, Qiao Nan ran straight to the Zhai’s residence.

Fortunately, Qiao Nan had been keeping with her the keys of the Zhai's residence's back door. It was thus easy for her to enter the residence. "Brother Zhai, are you in?" For the first time, Qiao Nan entered the main residence of the Zhai family instead of the storeroom. She went to the house and shouted, "Brother Zhai, I am Qiao Nan. I am looking for you urgently. It is very important!"

"What is the matter?" Qiao Nan suddenly heard Zhai Sheng's voice from behind her. She had a fright and turned around quickly.

When Qiao Nan looked up, her head was dizzy. She flushed and felt some warm liquid dripping uncontrollably from her nose.

Chapter 156: The Male Charisma That Caused Irrationality

Zhai Sheng was wearing a pair of high waist camouflaged shorts and a white cotton singlet top. His singlet was wet and slightly plastered to his body. It was most probably due to the sweating from his exercises. This made Zhai Sheng's well-defined eight-pack abs extremely pronounced, giving Qiao Nan a clear view of his abdomen.

Zhai Sheng's current attire basically showed all of his legs that were below his waist.

Even the long-legged Korean 'oppas' from the 21st century were not as eye-catching as Zhai Sheng.

Qiao Nan already knew that Zhai Sheng was tall, but she did not expect that his legs were so long and he was that tall...

In particular, when she saw Zhai Sheng with his two arms exposed and the sweat flowing down his neck, she felt her nose warming up. She quickly lifted her head, muttering 'Amitabha' and other similar charms in her heart to clear her mind.

The Zhai Sheng at this moment was obviously a mobile masculine-hormone-dispensing machine. He was too tempting.

Qiao Nan never felt like a lecherous girl before. In her previous life, she was someone with a pure heart and few desires up till her death. Qiao Nan never had a day where she yearned for a man, and neither did she think of sexual-related services.

However, when she saw Zhai Sheng today, she felt the impulse to jump on him. When she looked at the sweat flowing down Zhai Sheng's neck, she even had the desire to lick them dry.

The realization hit Qiao Nan hard with a bang, her face beet red.

“What is the matter?” There were beads of sweat at the tips of Zhai Sheng's hair. Zhai Sheng was used to the training in the army. Hence, he had never slackened off even when he was home. “Come in with me to the house first.”

Zhai Sheng wanted to go closer to Qiao Nan, but when she saw Qiao Nan's eyes avoiding him and seemingly afraid of looking at him, he hesitated.

Did the smell of sweat on his body make Qiao Nan feel repulsive?

In the army, everyone stinks. Who didn't sweat a few times a day? The smell of the sweat was so strong and repulsive. Zhai Sheng was already used to this. However, Qiao Nan was not a soldier in the army. Moreover, she was just a young lady and probably not used to this smell.

“Wait for me for a moment. I will go and take a shower.” Zhai Sheng, who had been used to such sloppiness, was always meticulous before Qiao Nan. He misunderstood the reason why Qiao Nan dared not look at him. Once Zhai Sheng entered the house, he went to his bedroom and took a bath within five minutes. He changed into clean ones before coming out.

This time, Zhai Sheng was not wearing the white cotton singlet which revealed his arms and abs, but a long-sleeved shirt which covered him up well.

At the sight of Zhai Sheng all tightly wrapped up, Qiao Nan's eyes were full of regret.

If she had known that Brother Zhai would be changing into this, she should have taken a few more glances earlier. What a loss!

In the past, Qiao Nan did not understand why men were so interested in those magazines which pictured women in revealing attires. They tended to carry and read them all day long, occasionally letting out lewd sounds. Now, Qiao Nan understood them a little.

Who would have thought that the day would come when she would actually like to 'look' at a man!

"Cough..." When she realized that her thoughts were straying to the point of being censored to those below eighteen years of age, Qiao Nan's face became as red as an apple. She was too embarrassed to look at Zhai Sheng. "Brother Zhai, did you pass the wrong documents to me? Are these not things that I am not supposed to see?"

Qiao Nan had her head bowed. She only dared to look at the tip of Zhai Sheng's shoes and not anywhere else. She was fearful that her thoughts would go astray when she saw other things and became a lecherous woman.

She was never like that in the past!

"You have already translated a part of it?" Zhai Sheng's muscular arms reached out. He placed the original document and its translation together. As he read them, there were frequent flashes of surprise in his eyes.

During the past year, he did not have many opportunities to interact with Qiao Nan. He knew Qiao Nan's English was not bad, but she was only a student who was entering high school. Qiao Nan's standard of English had far exceeded his expectations.

Zhai Sheng's initial thoughts were that the Qiao family was in need of money, and Qiao Nan's mother was a capricious character. Given the situation, Qiao Nan certainly did not have sufficient money to continue with her studies.

He could not simply give her money, so he found Qiao Nan a relaxing way to earn money lest Qiao Nan refused.

If Qiao Nan's translation did not meet the mark, he would definitely guide her along to help her correct and edit her work.

However, after he saw the translated work, Zhai Sheng realized that he would be of no use now.

“It is quite well translated. Qiao Nan, your standard of English seems to be better than the average college students. Do you have anything to tell me?” Zhai Sheng’s eyes, as black and deep as a gem with glistening waves of light, narrowed. His long and slender body leaned backward slightly. Both his arms were crossed as if he was a lazy leopard concealing the shrewdness in his eyes.

If the prey loosened their guard because of this relaxed posture of Zhai Sheng, there would be an outburst of strength and lethality from Zhai Sheng’s powerful and strong muscles. Zhai Sheng would pounce and break the neck of his prey with one bite.

Qiao Nan shivered, her face turning pale. She was scared. “Brother Zhai, can I not tell? Anyway, I have not done anything bad, neither have I harmed anyone.”

She was too careless. What type of character was Brother Zhai? If he could not discover this little flaw, how could he have become one of the country’s premier characters in the previous life?

“You don’t want to tell me? Well, you can choose not to.” Having realized that he had scared the young lady, Zhai Sheng relaxed a little and put away the tactic he used on his enemy. He softened his tone. “But you must know, Qiao Nan. I may not ask you today, but it doesn’t mean someone else will not suspect anything when they discover it tomorrow.”

“Brother Zhai, don’t worry, I understand. If these documents were not given by Brother Zhai, I would not have translated them. Usually, when I am in school, I would at most use some advance vocabulary occasionally but not much. I have never done anything bad!”

Qiao Nan quickly assured Zhai Sheng that she was very careful and alert before others. She dared not give herself away too much lest someone became suspicious of her.

Being reborn—that was such an incredulous thing. If anyone knew about it, she would definitely be captured, sent to the lab, and dissected like a white mouse.

She was so blessed and lucky to have a second life. Qiao Nan could only cherish her life a hundred—no, a thousand times more than her previous life.

To her, only Zhai Sheng was unique. In front of Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan would unconsciously be her real self without any reservation.

How could Zhai Sheng not understand the meaning of Qiao Nan's words?

Somehow, Zhai Sheng, who usually did not like listening to glib words, had a sweet feeling in his heart after listening to Qiao Nan's words. It was a very pleasant feeling.

That being said, he was the only one who had a unique existence in Qiao Nan's heart, was he not?

The corners of Zhai Sheng's mouth curled upward slightly into a little smile. "It is good that you know what you are doing."

Chapter 157: The Boiling Frog

"You do not have to be too modest this time. Just translate as you would do for any translations. If anything comes up, I would take responsibility for it. Of course, if you come across any parts that you do not understand, feel free to ask me."

"Brother Zhai's English standard is much better than mine. It would be all the better with your help." Qiao Nan smiled but shook her head in the next instant. "That's not right. Brother Zhai, that's not what I am here for today. I am not here to ask you questions. Brother Zhai, it is inappropriate for me to see such important documents!"

This was state secrets. Oh my, she was just a young lady and had no rights to see these documents!!

"As I have said, you do not need to be so anxious. Since you can tell that these documents are important, you just have to do it your usual ways and don't mention it to others. Nothing would go wrong." Zhai Sheng was calm and composed, unlike Qiao Nan who was anxious and nervous.

Zhai Sheng knew right from the start what the contents of these documents were.

Since he entrusted this task to Qiao Nan, he had the utmost confidence in her.

He believed Qiao Nan knew what she was doing, what she could do, and what she could not do. He did not need to remind her or make any requests since she would do a good job.

“Brother Zhai, don’t put it that way. I am under a lot of stress. I am timid by nature, so I would not reveal it to anyone. However, I am worried something might happen at home, and I will not be able to keep an eye on the documents. I might not be worthy of your trust.” Qiao Nan was proud and happy that her Prince Charming would entrust her with such an important task and had unwavering trust in her, but Qiao Nan was worried that she might not be able to live up to his expectations. Brother Zhai had such high hopes in her.

She was just a simple and ordinary sixteen-year-old young lady.

Zhai Sheng lifted his cup, had a drink, and said in an unhurried voice, “It is fine if you really cannot do it. You can return the documents to me. Even though I am quite busy these days, I can burn the midnight oil for a few days and translate the documents. Since I am home today, maybe you can go back home to take the documents and give them back to me. I will wait for you.”

“...” Qiao Nan turned pale with a look of self-reproach on her face. “Brother Zhai, you are so busy... As soldiers, you have a difficult job, so you should have a good rest whenever you are at home. It is not good for you to burn the midnight oil. If not... never mind, I will translate them.”

She had taken up this task in order to help Brother Zhai. If Brother Zhai was to take back the documents and do the translation himself, wouldn’t she be creating more troubles for him?

“It is okay. You do not need to force yourself to take up this task.” Zhai Sheng said in a righteous voice. “As a soldier, one must have the resilience and determination. Otherwise, how can one be a soldier? You should not feel burdened to help me. To me, staying up for a few nights is nothing.”

“No, no, no, I am not forcing myself, and I am not burdened to help you. Brother Zhai, didn’t you mention that I am doing a good job with the translation? I want to practice more since it is such a good opportunity. Besides, I have Brother Zhai right here with me. You are my teacher. I can ask you directly whenever there is any part I do not understand. I believe my English will improve in no time.” Qiao Nan snatched the documents from Zhai Sheng.

Initially, the reason why she returned the documents was that the documents contained important information. Secondly, Qiao Nan found it strenuous to translate the documents. She did not want to end up like what her father said—that she did not manage to do a good job and made a mess out of everything.

Since a young age, Ding Jiayi had always looked down on her. She would always tell Qiao Nan that she was stupid and incapable, unable to do a job well. Everything would turn into a mess in her hands.

Qiao Nan might not believe her mother's words that she was such a lousy person. Although she was not as lousy as what her mother said, she might not be competent enough to translate the documents.

Even though she was not the scum of society, she was not the country's elite as well. She was merely a student who just entered high school!

At the thought of the contents, Qiao Nan knitted her eyebrows, feeling helpless. "Brother Zhai, I can still handle this portion, but I have read through the rest, and they are too difficult. I suppose you won't be having an easy time resting at home these few days. I hope I won't be a bother to you. I will definitely come over frequently to ask you questions regarding the documents."

"It is fine, you can ask me any questions." Zhai Sheng smiled secretly. When dealing with Qiao Nan, it was right of him to retreat in order to advance.

Because of this translation, Zhai Sheng got to spend about ten more days with Qiao Nan.

Before she realized his true intentions behind this arrangement, Qiao Nan was already like a frog that was being boiled by Zhai Sheng.

"Brother Zhai, you are so smart!" These few days, Qiao Nan was all praises for Brother Zhai who answered all the problems she met whilst doing the translation. The words she used most often were exclamations such as 'Ah', 'Oh', and 'Emm'. "Brother Zhai, people like you are so inconsiderate. There is no way that other people could earn a living."

Brother Zhai could earn a living with his good looks, yet he insisted to do it based on his own capabilities.

Other people might be all brawn no brains or all brains no brawn, but Brother Zhai had the brains and the brawn. It was too depressing for them.

As someone who had been through rebirth, she could not stand equal to Brother Zhai at all.

Qiao Nan thought to herself in dejection. With an all-rounder like Brother Zhai, he should be the one who aroused people's suspicions. She could not even match up to him, so why would he discover that there was something strange about her?

"I won't be fooled by your flattery. Work hard in your translation." Zhai Sheng relaxed his eyebrows. For those who knew Zhai Sheng well, they could tell that he was in a good mood now.

"Oh." Qiao Nan, who was slow to react and never had any doubts in Zhai Sheng's words, took his words for real. She had thought that he really meant for her to work hard on her translation.

Since Qiao Nan had spent too much time on the task, and it was close to completion, she decided to stay at the Zhai family's residence with Zhai Sheng to finish the translation. After working on it for the whole day, she finally finished all the translation. "Brother Zhai, it is all done. Do you want to check it again?"

"No need." Zhai Sheng shook his head. He was by Nan Nan's side when she did the translation. He saw how she translated them sentence by sentence. There would not be any problem. "You have worked hard these past few days. You should go back to rest. After I hand in these documents, the money will be paid accordingly."

These few days, Qiao Nan had been shuffling between the hospital visits to look after Qiao Dongliang and staying at the Zhai family's residence to work on the translation with Zhai Sheng by her side.

Seeing that she had to shuffle between these two places, Zhai Sheng could not help but feel worried at the sight of Qiao Nan who looked frail and weak. He was worried that her frail body could not take the toil. "You have been eating well these days, but why is it that you are still so thin and skinny?" Zhai Sheng pinched Qiao Nan's frail and thin-looking arms.

As expected, there was not much flesh on her arms. Still, it was soft and smooth, unlike his arms.

It was summer now. Qiao Nan was wearing a short-sleeved top.

As usual, Zhai Sheng's hands were warm, scalding even, when he touched her arms. It was so hot that the part he touched was almost numb.

Qiao Nan blushed and stuttered, “I-I was born like this. N-no matter how much I eat, I still look the same. Brother Zhai, you do not understand. This is an era where thin women are considered beautiful.”

Chapter 158: Have You Made up Your Mind

“Most women want to be like me, but they couldn’t!” Take Qiao Zijin for example, she dared not eat too much so as to maintain her figure.

“It is not healthy to be too skinny. Good health is the most important. You should eat more.” Zhai Sheng disagreed with her. “With your physique, you could not even donate blood to the hospital.”

“...” Qiao Nan’s countenance changed. Zhai Sheng was right.

When she went to the hospital a year ago, they said she was malnourished. The hospital would definitely not allow someone like her to donate blood.

“Brother Zhai, I will leave those documents with you.” Qiao Nan had been feeling uneasy these few days. Luckily, she had finished the translation and handed the documents to Zhai Sheng. She could finally heave a sigh of relief.

“Oh, you have worked hard. You should go back to rest.” Zhai Sheng nodded and handed a bag full of things to Qiao Nan. “As the saying goes, you can get your nourishment through what you eat. You have been racking your brains these few days, so you should have some nuts. They are good for you and the brain.”

Qiao Nan curled the corner of her lips. Was Brother Zhai digging at her or concerned for her? It should be out of concern.

Qiao Nan carried the big bag of things home. She opened it up and realized that Zhai Sheng had given her a lot of food and nuts. There were walnuts, pecans, and even macadamia nuts that were considered as very rare in the 90s.

With nary a word, Qiao Nan hid all the nuts in her room and took out the walnuts. She crushed the outer shells one by one, took out the walnuts inside, and grounded them into powder. Afterward, she put it into the porridge she was preparing for Qiao Dongliang.

Over the time, Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had come to realize that Qiao Nan was being very 'stingy'. Whenever she whipped up something delicious, only Qiao Dongliang got to eat them.

No matter whether it was Ding Jiayi or Qiao Zijin, neither could get a morsel of food from Qiao Nan.

It was then that Ding Jiayi realized that it had been a long time since she had the food Qiao Nan prepared.

"Dad, have some of the porridge. There are walnuts inside."

"Oh, it smells nice." Qiao Dongliang had stayed in the hospital for close to half a month. Other than looking frail at the beginning, he seemed to have a better complexion under the care of Qiao Nan. If not for the fact that he was in the hospital and bandaged, Qiao Dongliang would not look like a patient at all.

A few days ago, colleagues from Qiao Dongliang's factory came to visit him, particularly the colleague who was with them when he had the accident and was sent to the hospital. He was surprised by Qiao Dongliang's speedy recovery.

Qiao Dongliang would always tell his visitors that his speedy recovery was all thanks to his younger daughter. They doubted his words, thinking that it was all exaggeration. It must have been Ding Jiayi who took great care of him. The younger daughter could never have done it so well.

But this colleague of his believed his words. As compared to Qiao Nan, the sister-in-law did not behave like an adult at all.

"Uncle, have a bowl of porridge too." Qiao Nan scooped a bowl of porridge for Qiao Dongliang's ward mate.

"Thank you, I will not stand on ceremony with you." The ward mate smiled and took the bowl of porridge from Qiao Nan. He had yet to drink it, but he became hungry with only a sniff of the fragrant porridge!

Whenever Qiao Dongliang had to go to the toilet and Ding Jiayi was not around, the ward mate and his family would help take care of Qiao Dongliang. After all, it was inappropriate for Qiao Dongliang's two daughters to help out.

Seeing how happy the uncle was with the porridge she prepared, Qiao Nan made it a point to bring more of the porridge and would always give a bowl to the uncle. It was a way of repaying his kindness.

The ward mate had a mouthful of the porridge and gave Qiao Dongliang a thumbs-up secretly. The porridge tasted really good. This brother had the gourmet's luck.

"Young lady, it must have been tough on you. He is already a grown-up, yet he still behaves like a child, greedy for food." The ward mate's wife could do nothing about her husband and looked at Qiao Nan apologetically, "I must thank you. Not only does your dad recover well, but this uncle also gets to have good food thanks to you."

"You should not stand on ceremony, Auntie. All of you helped to take care of my dad. I should be the one saying thank you to the both of you," Qiao Nan spoke politely and courteously.

"Such a well-behaved young lady." The ward mate's wife was surprised at Qiao Nan's polite manner.

She had seen Qiao Dongliang's wife for quite a few times. She always had a sullen face as if someone owed her a thousand yuan, the type who would never mingle or greet others.

She had seen people who were not as quick-witted, but this was the first time she saw someone as daft and dense as Ding Jiayi.

As a mother, Ding Jiayi was not as dependable as the younger daughter. Her husband was injured, yet the younger daughter had to take care of everything and cooked all sorts of good food for Qiao Dongliang.

What was the mother doing in the Qiao family?

If not for the young lady who was very likable, she would not want her husband to be on such friendly terms with Qiao Dongliang. They had helped to take care of Qiao Dongliang, yet Qiao Dongliang's wife did not bother to thank them. Even if she was not after any gratitude, one should not behave in this way either.

The ward mate's wife was boiling in anger at the thought of Ding Jiayi.

"Nan Nan, you should head back home first. Your mom should be here anytime."

"No need, I will wait for Mom to come before leaving." Previously, she was busy with the translations and had no time to take care of her father. Now that she had finished the translations, she could not possibly ask someone else to take care of her father. They did not owe her anything.

"It is alright, Nan Nan. You are a young lady after all. It is safer to go back earlier. You do not have to worry about your dad. Uncle and Aunt will help out." With a smile on her face, the ward mate's wife urged Qiao Nan to go back home earlier.

Of course, if it was Qiao Zijin, they would not treat her this way.

Qiao Zijin had similar temperament as Ding Jiayi. They were also similar in their looks.

"Go back home." Qiao Dongliang waved his hands. It had been half a month. He no longer needed people to look after him like before.

Qiao Dongliang surmised that after a few more days in the hospital, he could discharge from the hospital and rest at home. In that way, he could save as much as he could.

Besides, he already asked the doctor-in-charge about his conditions. Given his recovery progress and conditions, he could rest and recover at home.

Qiao Dongliang was proud, yet guilty when he was reminded that he owed it to the younger daughter for having a speedy recovery.

Whenever the younger daughter was bullied and wronged in the past, as her father, he could not do anything for her. But now that he was injured and had to stay in the hospital, he owed it to Nan Nan for saving his life.

He felt sorry toward this child.

Since Qiao Dongliang had said so, Qiao Nan decided to go back home.

As soon as Qiao Nan left, the ward mate's eyes sparkled, and he asked Qiao Dongliang anxiously. "Brother, what do you think of the matter that I brought up to you last time? Have you made a decision? I really like Nan Nan. You can put your heart at rest. If you agree to it, I will treat Nan Nan like my own daughter. If you do not believe me, you can ask my wife. You could ask her whether she likes Nan Nan. We really enjoyed her company these few days."

Chapter 159: Let's Be In-Laws

"Of course I like her. Why would I dislike such a well-behaved and obedient child like Nan Nan? I really like her. My husband might be too anxious. But I feel that this matter is feasible." The ward mate's wife was in total agreement with what her husband said. She looked at Qiao Dongliang eagerly, hoping that he would agree.

Seeing the look of eagerness and anticipation on their faces, Qiao Dongliang did not know what to do.

If other people were to overhear their conversation, those who did not know what happened might think that he was going to sell his daughter.

"Brother Zhou, this is not feasible." Qiao Dongliang shook his head. "I have no say in this matter. During these few days, you must have known about our situation at home. My wife is very unreasonable. As her father, I could not protect Nan Nan. She had to endure a lot of hardships and suffer a lot of grievances. This concerns Nan Nan's whole life. Besides, she is still young and we are not in the olden times where elders have the say in their children's marriages. I do not ask for much. I just hope that Nan Nan will find someone who loves and cherishes her. Of course, Nan Nan will have to love that person as well."

With that, Qiao Dongliang shook his head, not knowing whether he should cry or laugh.

He did not know what to do with the Zhou Bing couple.

This ward mate of Qiao Dongliang was called Zhou Bing. Unlike Qiao Dongliang who had two daughters, he had three sons!

Zhou Bing's youngest son was called Zhou Jun. He was a soldier, twenty-three years old this year. He was older than Qiao Nan by seven years.

Though the Zhou Bing couple liked sons, they were mischievous and naughty. They had been hoping to have a daughter.

But they had three children, and all were sons.

By then, the country launched a national planning policy, and so they gave up on trying for a daughter.

Zhou Bing's eldest son and second son had been married. They already had children and were old enough to address the Zhou Bing couple as 'grandpa' and 'grandma'. However, the youngest son was still single. The Zhou Bing couple was worried sick about their son and was thinking to find a wife for their youngest son.

Their youngest son was a soldier, so the Zhou Bing couple could hardly get to see their son. If he settled down and got a wife, it might be hard on the daughter-in-law as she would not get to see him often. She would have a harder time than their two daughters-in-law. The Zhou Bing couple was quite apologetic toward their future daughter-in-law.

Most importantly, it was not easy to be the wife of a soldier. It was not easy to find one who was willing as well.

Their village once had a scandal. The son in one of the families went out for business for around three months. Yet, the daughter-in-law was two months pregnant!

The Zhou Bing couple heard of the scandal and could not help but worry for their son. If their future daughter-in-law was fickle and was not willing to stay with their son for her whole life, wouldn't it be a disgrace to their son?

They were both worried and anxious about their youngest son's marriage. On one hand, they were worried that their situation would make it difficult for the lady. On the other hand, they were troubled that the lady might not have a good personality and would disgrace their son. If so, how was he going to work in the army?

Zhou Bing ended up in the hospital because of his son's marriage as well.

They arranged a blind date for their son. Though the matchmaker was all praises for the lady, Zhou Bing was worried, so he wanted to find out more about the lady's personality and whether she was suitable to be the wife of a soldier.

If she was suitable, it would be good for everyone; if she was unsuitable, it would not be good to force each other together lest things ended up badly for both of them.

Never would they have known that there was something wrong with the lady. She was not the well-behaved girl the matchmaker had said. In fact, she was in a relationship while she was still studying and was expelled from the school as a result.

But the lady seemed to have learned her mistakes. Ever since then, she had made a change for the better. She was just like what the matchmaker described, good and well-behaved. Apart from going to work, she would stay at home and was no longer wild and rude like she used to be.

Still, after knowing what happened, Zhou Bing dared not take in the lady as their daughter-in-law.

Because of the fact that the lady's family was in a hurry to marry her off, and that Zhou Jun was a good catch, they kicked up a fuss with Zhou Bing when they learned that the Zhou family objected to the marriage, complaining that they were on the losing end. They said that both of the families had already agreed for their children to marry each other, but the Zhou family broke their promise and backed out of the marriage. This was an insult to their daughter!

It wouldn't do! They had to marry each other!

In the end, both families got into a fierce quarrel. The lady's family even raised their hands on the Zhou family. During the tussle, Zhou Bing was pushed onto the pavement. He fell to his knees and hurt himself badly. He fractured his knees and was sent to the hospital.

Everyone from the Zhou family was mere peasant, but Zhou Jun had made a mark for himself in the army. Though he was only twenty-three years old, he was already the company commander.

People in the rural might not be knowledgeable, but they knew that a company commander was someone who worked for the government. The highest rank government official whom they had seen was only a mere village chief!

In the eyes of the villagers, Zhou Jun was like a golden phoenix that soared out of the village!

It was because of this that the lady's family insisted on the marriage. But now that Zhou Bing was injured, they were very frightful. They were worried that they might land in jail and had to fork out a big sum for Zhou Bing's medical fees. Thus, they said that though their daughter suffered the humiliation of being rejected, Zhou Bing was injured as well, so they would call it quits.

Zhou Bing was relieved that they could finally be rid of such a troublesome family. Although he was injured, he could not be bothered to argue with the lady's family. He could only blame himself for being unlucky. Once bitten, twice shy, he had learned his lessons.

However, the Zhou Bing couple never thought that it would be a blessing in disguise—that they would find a suitable daughter-in-law candidate during his hospital stay.

In the past, the Zhou Bing couple might not be able to tell whether a lady was good or not, but as there were two daughters in the Qiao family, they could easily tell by making comparisons.

When it was Qiao Zijin's turn to look after Qiao Dongliang, she would always look around, her attention elsewhere. Most importantly, she could not settle down and give her father full attention. She would chat with the doctors, particularly young male doctors.

The Zhou Bing couple would always frown at her behavior.

On the contrary, despite being more beautiful than Qiao Zijin, Qiao Nan would always stay in the ward whenever it was her turn to look after Qiao Dongliang.

She would be the first person to notice and attend to his needs. If Qiao Dongliang was thirsty, she would pour a cup of warm water for him. If he wanted to use the restroom, Qiao Nan would ask them for help.

Qiao Nan never initiated a conversation with the male doctors. Contrariwise, it was the male doctors who made some small talks with Qiao Nan.

But Qiao Nan would always stay in the ward and only talked about Qiao Dongliang's condition with the doctors. If the male doctors did not take the initiative to ask, she would keep her silence.

Even if the male doctors struck a conversation with her, Qiao Nan would only talk about her father's conditions, and she would not appear to be overly eager or earnest.

Qiao Zijin would always look around, finding opportunities to speak with the male doctors, whereas Qiao Nan was calm and focused on taking care of her father. Qiao Zijin could not even take care of herself, whereas Qiao Nan was better than her mother in looking after her father. It was all thanks to Qiao Nan that Qiao Dongliang made such a speedy recovery.

Qiao Zijin paled in comparison to Qiao Nan. The latter stood out more in all aspects.

Chapter 160: Daughter Is Better Than Son

Steady, generous, self-respect, self-regard and good at taking care of others.

Where else could they find such a good daughter-in-law?

The Zhou Bing couple was worried that if they did not grab hold of the chance now, they might not find such a good lady in the future. Hence, they were so anxious in arranging the marriage between their son and Qiao Dongliang's daughter.

“Brother, do you have any issue with the fact that my son is a soldier? My son is quite capable. Although he is only twenty-three years old, he is already a company commander. He is the youngest company commander in the army. I understand that it might not be easy being the wife of a soldier, but from what I heard from my son, the wife is now allowed to go with the army. My wife and I are still young. If need be, we have two daughters-in-law who can take care of us.”

If Nan Nan was their daughter-in-law, she would just need to follow wherever Zhou Jun went. She would not need to stay in the village to wait on both of them.

“Brother Zhou, you are mistaken. I used to serve in the army as well and have nothing against soldiers. However, Nan Nan is still young.” Nan Nan was only 16 years old. She had just started high school. “Both of you must have known that Nan Nan is very studious and her results are excellent. She just started high school this year. Given her intelligence, she would be able to study in the college in the future. It would take another eight years before she graduated from college.”

When Nan Nan graduated from college, she would be twenty-four years old. However, Zhou Bing’s son, Zhou Jun, would be thirty-one years old by then.

“There is no hurry. They can be engaged first. It is good that Nan Nan is very studious. Their children will be very bright as well and would definitely be college graduates!” Zhou Bing’s wife had sparkles in her eyes. She had grown to like her young daughter-in-law more and more.

It was alright that she was young. Zhou Jun was not in a hurry to marry as well. He could wait for a few more years.

Even though Qiao Nan might be the youngest in the Qiao family, she was the most sensible person among all of them. Qiao Nan’s mother could not even match up to her daughter. It was unreliable to judge someone based on their ages. Her mother could not even compare to her daughter at all.

Qiao Dongliang was helpless and did not know what else to say to the Zhou Bing couple who was very enthusiastic about the marriage. “Brother Zhou, it really cannot work. Your son and my daughter do not know each other. What if they do not fancy each other? Wouldn’t I be breeding chaos by agreeing to the marriage? As for what will happen in the future, let’s just leave it to the future. If both of them are destined to be together, I would not object.”

Qiao Dongliang never thought that people would request Qiao Nan to be their daughter-in-law when she was only sixteen years old.

If not for the fact that he got along well with them during his hospital stay, and that they were on such close terms that he already greeted them as ‘Brother’ and ‘Sister-in-law’, Qiao Dongliang would have reprimanded them.

Nan Nan was only sixteen years old. She was still a child. How could they make such a request!

At the same time, Qiao Dongliang felt proud as well. Nan Nan was too outstanding. The way she handled matters was so mature and sensible that she did not seem like girls of her age. But this was exactly what made the Zhou Bing couple disregard the fact that she was young.

If not for Nan Nan who was so outstanding, there was no need for Zhou Bing's son who was already the company commander at twenty-three years old to be engaged to Nan Nan in a hurry.

But he did not care whether their son was a company commander or not.

Just as he had said, it was not that important for his future son-in-law to be very successful. What was important was that he must love, cherish and treasure Nan Nan.

In the Qiao family, Nan Nan might have to suffer and toil for over twenty years, but after she was married, her husband would cherish and love her for the rest of her life.

“Alright, we have an agreement. If Nan Nan takes a liking to my son, you cannot go back on your words.” Since Qiao Dongliang had made it so clear, there was nothing Zhou Bing could say. If he was to insist, it might make the situation awkward for them both.

Besides, Zhou Bing knew that he might have been very enthusiastic about getting a wife for his son, but his son might feel otherwise.

When he said earlier that he was going to get a wife for his son, he objected to it and was the least interested in it. Therefore, his son did not know that the lady and her family had kicked up such a fuss over the marriage.

Zhou Bing thought for a while and sighed. It was too bad that such a good lady was not their daughter-in-law.

To put it bluntly, since Nan Nan was still young, it was the Zhou family who stood to gain from it. If they were to marry each other, Zhou Jun would be considered as a cradle robber.

Zhou Bing's wife patted Zhou Bing's hands a few times. She blinked at him, hinting to him not to be so anxious. After all, there was still the chance that Qiao Nan would be their daughter-in-law.

Zhou Bing frowned. It was impossible.

Nan Nan was such a good catch. She would have a lot of admirers in the future. What they could do now was to make the first move.

Zhou Bing's wife gave a meaningful smile. Zhou Jun was her son, how would she not know the kind of ladies that her son preferred?

Every man would fall in love with Nan Nan the first time he set his sights on her. Even if it was not love at first sight, he would adore and love her as well. No one would dislike Nan Nan. Eventually, they would grow to have feelings for each other.

Qiao Dongliang did not seem like someone who would go back on his words. As long as their son would cherish and love Nan Nan, Qiao Dongliang would not have any objections to their marriage. By then, Nan Nan would still have to be their daughter-in-law.

Zhou Bing had no idea what was going through his wife's mind. There was nothing he could do since she intended to keep him in suspense.

Three days later, Zhou Bing finally realized what his wife meant by her words then.

"Dad, how are your injuries?" Zhou Jun learned of the news that Zhou Bing was injured, and that he had been staying in the hospital for half a month. "Dad, Mom and you have gone too far this time!" Zhou Jun was worried and angry at his father at the same time.

He had already told them that he was still young. It was not suitable to settle down and get a wife.

He wanted to work on his career and get his promotion. If he was to marry now, he could no longer focus on his work in the army.

Many of Zhou Jun's army comrades used to be very ambitious and career-minded. However, after they were married, though they still wanted to serve the country and work hard for the promotion, they could not do so because of their wives.

While some of them could not help it as they had no other choices, some simply asked for it!

Zhou Jun had a bad headache at the thought of these sisters-in-law.

But Zhou Jun never thought that his dad would do this as well and landed himself in the hospital.

“Young brat, you never show up for the whole year, and this is what you say to your dad when you are here?” Zhou Bing pulled a long face. He was unhappy.

Sons were really different from daughters. Whenever Nan Nan was here, she would ask about her father’s condition and whether he was in pain, showing concern for him. She also prepared nutritious food and soup for him.

But his son only knew to admonish him as soon as he arrived. Had their roles been reversed? Who exactly was the father and who was the son?

Most importantly, he did all these for his son, Zhou Jun.

As expected, sons were not as good as daughters.

Zhou Bing had been frustrated these few days. Zhou Jun’s harsh attitude only worsened his mood. There was so much difference between how a son treated their parents and how a daughter treated their parents. No wonder Qiao Dongliang refused to agree to the marriage. If it was him, he would not agree to marry off his daughter as well.

“It’s you?” Qiao Nan who came into the ward right then was shocked when she saw Zhou Jun.