

RTAMM 2521

Chapter 2521: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (22)

“Uncle Zhai, a woman named Qi Minlan cornered me today, saying that she’s Brother Zhai’s fiancée. She doesn’t like me and wants me to move out of the Zhai family’s house. Uncle Zhai, what should I do?”

Old Zhai’s eyes widened. “Who? What did Qi Minlan say?”

“That can’t be. Miao Miao, is this a misunderstanding?”

She was a child whom Grandma Zhai had doted on for years, and Grandma Zhai didn’t want to believe that Qi Minlan was as demanding and arrogant as Miao Jing was describing her to be.

Feeling Grandma Zhai trying to protect Qi Minlan, Miao Jing was no longer willing to speak any further.

Miao Jing could feel the Zhai family’s attitude toward Qi Minlan.

Zhai Yaohui’s gaze toward Qi Minlan was the same as that toward her. They were both his younger sisters.

Uncle Zhai clearly liked her more while Auntie Zhai liked Qi Minlan more.

No wonder Qi Minlan dared to say that she was Zhai Yaohui’s fiancée and that the elders had already approved of it.

Since that was the case, Miao Jing wasn’t going to be such a shameless person.

The future daughter-in-law of the Zhai family, Qi Minlan, had already clearly expressed her dislike and unwillingness to see her.

Actually, she could understand Qi Minlan's mindset. She had spent the Zhai family's money, which would eventually be Qi Minlan's. It was only right for her to be upset.

She had been staying here for almost a year and was almost completely literate. It was time for her to get a job to support herself.

Miao Jing looked at Grandma Zhai and smiled. "Perhaps it was really a misunderstanding. Uncle Zhai, I'm almost done with the courses you applied for on my behalf. I think that I'm ready to get a job."

"It's hard work to take on a job..." There wouldn't be a need for Miao Miao to work and earn her keep once she married Yaohui.

Grandma Zhai agreed. "Miao Miao..."

Miao Jing insisted. "No, the reason I wanted to be literate was so that I could get a job and support myself. Compared to the past, I think I'm in a much better place to find a good job now. Uncle Zhai, thank you for giving me such a good opportunity. I'm returning to my room to study so that I can get ready to look for a job tomorrow. Auntie Zhai, I'll return to my room."

"Miao Miao..."

Grandma Zhai felt the distance in Miao Jing's words and felt particularly uneasy. "Old Zhai, I didn't mean anything else. I just think that Minlan is a good girl and wouldn't do such a thing."

Old Zhai huffed. "That's what you think, but isn't that like saying that Miao Miao lied to us?"

"Then, isn't that a misunderstanding?"

Old Zhai shook her head. "You've always thought that Qi Minlan is good, but I've never thought so. That girl puts on an act in front of you, but she knows many other boys too. Although she's never crossed that line, she's had many ambiguous relationships and her heart isn't for Yaohui."

If Qi Minlan was really a good girl, he would definitely hope that his son would marry her and live a blissful life together in the future.

“That’s impossible. Minlan isn’t that kind of girl.”

Old Zhai laughed out of anger. “So, you think that I’m someone who’ll try to ruin the reputation of a child?”

There were some things he didn’t want to mention for fear of upsetting his wife.

Since his wife liked Qi Minlan, he would simply play along. Anyway, Qi Minlan hadn’t coaxed his wife for nothing. That boy from the Shi family had also benefited from him.

Since it benefitted all of them, no one owed each other anything. There was no need to repay anyone.

Grandma Zhai hit Old Zhai. “You know that’s not what I meant. How could I trust an outsider more than my husband?”

“But that’s exactly what you meant. I can understand Miao Miao’s attitude. I think that Miao Miao told the truth. Your reaction made Miao Miao believe that you acknowledge that Miao Miao is Yaohui’s fiancée. Qi Minlan already said that she doesn’t want to see Miao Miao in our house. Given Miao Miao’s personality, do you think she’ll stay on for much longer?”

“Is that why Miao Miao is in a hurry to get a job?”

“If she doesn’t get a job, how will she have the money to move out?”

Miao Miao had always been sensitive but independent. It was hard not to be that way considering she had grown up in such circumstances.

“Do you remember the accounts book in Miao Miao’s room?”

“Yes.” Grandma Zhai had unwittingly come across it while cleaning Miao Jing’s room one day.

That book clearly recorded how much she had spent in the Zhai family over the past year.

“Once Miao Miao starts working, we’ll start receiving money from Miao Miao from time to time.”

Miao Miao had no parents, and even after coming to the Zhai family’s house, she had never felt secure and neither had she ever dared to take their words at surface level. She had taken great care to protect herself.

Now, Qi Minlan’s appearance had probably confirmed Miao Miao’s thoughts.

Grandma Zhai felt upset and aggrieved. “But I treat Miao Miao pretty well. Why...”

“Because she doesn’t have any parents or relatives she can rely on. She has only herself. If she doesn’t try to protect herself, how else will she survive in this world? It’s good for her to do so. She might very well have been ‘sold off’ by her second auntie if I hadn’t picked her up.”

And the reason Miao Jing didn’t have any parents and had such a sensitive and independent personality was due to Father Miao saving Old Zhai twice.

Only if Grandma Zhai thought that Father Miao deserved to die for saving Old Zhai and that his death had nothing to do with the Zhai family did she have the right to say that Miao Jing’s personality was bad.

But Grandma Zhai was not such a person. “Old Zhai, what should I do? Miao Miao must be angry at me. You know that Miao Miao is much more important than Minlan in my heart. I acknowledge Miao Miao. I just think that Minlan is a child too...”

Grandma Zhai was laden with guilt.

It was because of Old Zhai that Miao Jing had become an orphan, and yet, she had been lamenting about Miao Jing’s personality. She couldn’t be so shameless! “Why don’t I apologize to Miao Miao and explain the situation to her? I really like Miao Miao!”

Over the past year, she had already identified Miao Miao as her daughter-in-law.

But why had today’s incident happened? And she had even hurt Miao Miao!

Old Zhai hugged Grandma Zhai. “Don’t be in such a hurry. Miao Miao won’t listen to you no matter what you tell her now. The way I see it, we’d better let Yaohui settle the matter. Miao Miao is his wife, not ours. It wasn’t good for Qi Minlan to act like that today, but it should be Yaohui getting justice for Miao Miao.”

After all, the root of the problem was Qi Minlan, and Qi Minlan was to be blamed for it all.

Chapter 2522: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (23)

Although Old Zhai had no idea how Miao Jing had managed to escape the situation, he was clear that Qi Minlan wouldn’t leave the matter lying down just like that given her temper.

If Qi Minlan dared to do such a thing and dared to act like such a hooligan, she would definitely get bolder if no one taught her a lesson in time.

In Old Zhai’s opinion, Shi Peng was the only one who hadn’t been brought up astray in the entire Shi family.

He didn’t have much opinion toward Shi Peng, so he definitely would not try to deal with Shi Peng.

But it was entirely Old Master Shi’s fault for bringing up a daughter like that.

Old Zhai knew that Old Master Shi didn’t have much patience but was ambitious. That was why he had tried all methods to get his daughter to marry his son. As such, Old Zhai decided to deal Old Master Shi a hard blow in his career.

Because of Old Zhai’s actions, Old Master Shi very gloriously went into ‘retirement’ without even being able to retain a desk job.

Since he wanted to retire, it was best that he do so cleanly and leave all opportunities to the new generation. He had better prove his intentions with his actions rather than his words.

Old Master Shi was stunned. He had been thinking of riding on Old Zhai's laurels and progressing even further in his career after becoming in-laws with the Zhai family.

Who would have known that he had been forced to retire just like that?

Old Master Shi hid his frustration and anger behind a smile and went to look for Old Zhai. "Brother Zhai, has there been a misunderstanding? If there is one, we can clear the air. Besides, our Minlan and Zhai Yaohui..."

"You'd better not say that my son is in a relationship with your daughter. My son has someone in mind. If my future daughter-in-law misunderstands my son and breaks up with him because of your words, what will happen to my son? I'll acknowledge only one person as my daughter-in-law."

Old Zhai had already guessed that Old Master Shi would come to look for him and didn't try to hide the truth from him. "Don't you know that the two of them have been in a conflict lately? It's because a shameless woman cornered my daughter-in-law and claimed that she was my son's fiancée. She even tried to chase my daughter-in-law away. Not only was my daughter-in-law angry, but even I was infuriated when I heard about it. Do you think that we as parents don't know who our son's partner is? Does she think that she, an outsider, knows better than us?"

Most importantly, that had been terribly shameless!

Over the past ten years, Qi Minlan had kept quite a few boys by her side. In fact, she seemed to be rather close to all of them.

Since Qi Minlan was already close to other boys, how could she be so shameless as to pester his son?

After all, ten years had gone by. Otherwise, Old Zhai would very well have charged Qi Minlan with having promiscuous relationships given her behavior.

Over the past ten years, there were many who had been charged with that. Some were true, while others weren't. But if he were to charge Qi Minlan with that, it would definitely not be unjustified.

Old Master Shi was confused at first, but he slowly understood the situation. "Yaohui has a partner?"

And it seemed like Zhai Yaohui's partner wasn't his daughter, Minlan.

Of course, Old Master Shi was not entirely unaware of the Zhai family's situation.

Old Master Shi knew that a young lady from the countryside had moved into the Zhai family's house and had been living there for the past year.

But Old Master Shi trusted the Zhai family and knew that it couldn't be an accident that a young lady had moved into their house.

Who would have known that this trust could be broken so easily? Because he had been so trusting, something serious had happened!

Old Master Shi thought that that lady was just someone from the countryside who had lost all her relatives.

Could there be any good in getting a girl who had no family to rely on and couldn't even bring any dowry when she got married?

The Zhai family was either blind or stupid. In which way did Minlan lose to that lady that the Zhai family would rather take that lady as a daughter-in-law than his Minlan? They had to be crazy!

But whether Old Zhai was crazy was not the main point.

As a scheming person, Old Master Shi knew that Zhai Yaohui's attitude was the key.

The one getting married was Zhai Yaohui and not Old Zhai anyway. It didn't matter whom Old Zhai liked. Only Zhai Yaohui's attitude mattered.

Old Master Shi took a deep breath. "Is that so? I know that Zhai Yaohui has been busy in the military and has done very well for himself. The next time he returns, I'll see if I can have a chat with him. Times are different now. There are many things that parents can't make the decision in anymore. We should listen to our children's opinions and thoughts."

Old Zhai smiled. "Yes, times are different. Our children's opinions are the most important. It's just as well. My son has been in the military for almost a year now and hasn't been back since. No matter what, I think he should be returning soon. But he won't be spending much time at home. If you really have anything to tell him, you'd better hurry up. Otherwise, you might have to wait for another year. My future daughter-in-law has already been decided, and Yaohui is busy with his career. It's best not to have any more delays. Even a year or two is important for young ladies at the peak of their youth."

Qi Minlan had better get married as soon as possible so that she wouldn't cling to his son or create trouble for Miao Miao.

Old Master Shi couldn't find it in him to even force a smile out.

He returned home sullenly. He already had an answer in his heart as to why he had been forced to retire at his age and to hand over his position and opportunities to the younger generation.

But that answer made him infuriated and dissatisfied. Because of that, he called his daughter back.

"Dad, why did you suddenly call me back?"

Over the past year, Qi Minlan had remained mad at Zhai Yaohui. But she was even angrier that Zhai Yaohui had remained in the military and that she hadn't gotten the chance to meet him.

Qi Minlan wasn't even sure if Zhai Yaohui was still mad at her or whether he simply had no chance to appease her.

Qi Minlan was willing to coax Zhai Yaohui, but she had to have the chance to meet him to do that.

Besides, she couldn't be sure of Zhai Yaohui's attitude even if she were to meet him. On the other hand, Miao Jing was living comfortably in the Zhai family's house as though she was the rightful mistress of the family.

That was why Qi Minlan hadn't been able to hold it in anymore and had impulsively looked for Miao Jing, wanting to get her to leave voluntarily.

As soon as Miao Jing left, Qi Minlan would no longer have to worry about Zhai Yaohui.

Anyway, she would become the only woman by Zhai Yaohui's side once Miao Jing left.. Then, Zhai Yaohui would eventually forgive her no matter how angry he was.

Chapter 2523: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (24)

“Let me ask you. What have you been up to?”

“What did I do?”

Qi Minlan was confused. “You asked me to study hard because I can't lag behind Zhai Yaohui as he gets better. Otherwise, there will be people trying to drag me down.”

Then, Qi Minlan felt a little guilty. “Dad, have people been gossiping around again? Don't trust them. They want me to fail. That's why they're speaking ill of me and trying to pull me down. I'm only with those boys because of my studies. If I don't try my best and study with others, how will I ever improve?”

“What? You're still with your male classmates?” Old Master Shi had gone down that path too. It was just that it had not caused him any trouble at that time.

As someone with experience, Old Master Shi didn't think that friendship between females and males could remain platonic.

Studying?

Old Master Shi didn't believe that in the least.

She went to such a huge school with so many students. There were so many people she could discuss her studies with. Why did it have to be with those boys?

He didn't think that there were no female students who were good at their studies in the entire school.

If that was the case, that was a lousy university!

“Dad...” Wasn’t her dad talking about this matter? “Dad, you can be direct with me. Why did you call me here?”

It was better to clear the air once and for all. If she continued guessing in this manner, she might very well expose herself unwittingly.

“Have you created any trouble for others lately?”

Even if Qi Minlan didn’t admit to it, Old Master Shi was prepared to expose her.

Why?

He was mentally exhausted.

Old Master Shi wasn’t even sure why he had been forced out of his position, and now, his daughter had taken the initiative to admit to having secret relationships with other men outside!

Before he had solved the initial problem, another had appeared!

He had a son too. If his son’s fiancée even had a solo interaction with other men, he would definitely find a way to get his son another partner.

The country was so vast, and there were so many female comrades. Would his son have to worry about not being able to find a good young lady?

But now that this young lady was his own daughter while the man was another man’s son, Old Master Shi couldn’t care so much.

“Make trouble for others? No, I’ve always been very law-abiding. I...” No, she had indeed brought people along to corner that countryside girl.

Qi Minlan eyed Old Master Shi carefully. “Dad, why are you suddenly asking me that out of the blue? Did something happen?”

“Why? Nothing much. It’s just that your dad has been fired. If you do something more, your brother might even be kicked out of the military!” Old Master Shi slammed the table furiously.

As expected, the woman that Old Zhai said had gone to create trouble for his future daughter-in-law was no other than his own daughter!

Old Master Shi had been hoping that he would be able to boost his career by getting Qi Minlan to marry Zhai Yaohui.

Who would have known that he would have taken a loss before even getting to take advantage of his daughter and son-in-law?

Qi Minlan’s expression changed. “Dad, what do you mean? What happened?”

“What happened? I’m retired and can rest well at home from now on. Are you happy? I’m warning you not to make trouble for anyone now. Otherwise, the one sitting here and talking to you will be your brother. If anything happens to your brother, you know very well what will happen to our family. Do you think we’ll be able to live so comfortably?”

Old Master Shi felt aggrieved that his career had been destroyed, but no matter how he felt, he knew that there was no way of reversing the situation.

But that didn’t matter. He still had a son. As long as he protected his son, the Shi family wouldn’t crumble.

As such, Old Master Shi instructed Qi Minlan to behave.

As long as no one tried to create trouble, they would count it as the Shi family’s good fortune.

Qi Minlan took a deep breath. “I understand. But Dad, I was wronged. What rights do they have? Do you think I can’t even compare to a countryside girl? They’re bullying me! It’ll be embarrassing for me if word gets out.”

The Zhai family no longer treated her as well as they did in the past. Even Auntie Zhai no longer invited her over to the Zhai family's house.

She couldn't even enter the Zhai family's house while that stupid girl, Miao Jing, seemed to have planted her roots in the Zhai family's house. The Zhai family was bullying her!

Old Master Shi agreed with Qi Minlan. "But what can we do? They have more power than me and have a higher status. There's nothing we can do even if they bully us. We can only hope that your brother will do us proud and outshine Zhai Yaohui in the military. As long as your brother makes it, we'll be able to prove our worth and be equal with the Zhai family. Then, we won't need to live our lives depending on the Zhai family."

Qi Minlan clenched her fist. "Yes, the Zhai family is such a bully. We have to depend on my brother now."

As long as her brother was successful, she wouldn't even have to care about Zhai Yaohui.

The Zhai family didn't like her, but neither did she like Zhai Yaohui.

It wasn't as though Zhai Yaohui was the only man left in the world. When that time came, she wouldn't even wait for Zhai Yaohui to dump her. She would dissolve the engagement herself.

Humph! Who would like Zhai Yaohui who was like a wooden block with no feelings? She didn't!

Zhai Yaohui, who had been branded as a wooden block, had no idea about Qi Minlan's thoughts. After a year of training in the military, he seemed to have gotten more toned and matured.

Seeing that her son was finally back, Grandma Zhai shed tears of joy.

On the other hand, Miao Jing, who was at home too, was pondering about finding a job and moving out. The moment she saw Zhai Yaohui, she quickly hid in a corner.

A year ago, Zhai Yaohui had given off the warmth and kindness of an elder brother, at the very least.

But now, Zhai Yaohui seemed to have gotten much more aggressive and cold because of the time he had spent in the military. It felt as though he was a carnivore waiting to devour his prey.

Miao Jing felt goose bumps all over her body the moment she eyed Zhai Yaohui.

“You’re finally back. Why do you behave like your dad and forget that you have a home to return to once you go to the military? Your dad’s situation was special and he was away for a few years. But you didn’t even come back to visit your dad and me during the new year holidays. If not for Miao Miao, we wouldn’t even have been able to celebrate it!”

With that thought, Grandma Zhai’s gaze toward Miao Jing grew even more regretful.

Without her son by her side, it had been Miao Jing spending time with her, and yet, she had even suspected Miao Jing, saying that Qi Minlan was a good person.

She wondered if Miao Miao was still upset at her

Chapter 2524: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (25)

Zhai Yaohui sensed that the atmosphere had changed, and he could feel his mom’s guilt toward Miao Jing as well as Miao Jing’s distance from their family.

It was as though they had returned to the past when Miao Jing had first come to the family and didn’t know them at all.

But it had already been a year. How could Miao Jing still have such a distant relationship with his family?

Zhai Yaohui wondered if something had happened.

But Zhai Yaohui was in no hurry to satiate his curiosity for fear that he would complicate the situation even further because of how sensitive Miao Jing was. “I just entered the military and there are too many things I have to learn. That was why I was busy. Don’t worry. I’ll take it slow.”

Zhai Yaohui knew that time waited for no man.

If he didn't work hard in the military, he would quickly lag behind.

Zhai Yaohui didn't have many memories of his father and only knew of his father's existence.

But as he grew older and started to understand the world around him, Zhai Yaohui was rather proud of having a father like Old Zhai.

He had once told himself that he would be just like his father once he grew up, becoming a soldier and hero who protected his country and people.

Now, Zhai Yaohui no longer thought of being a hero.

But as a man, he was still ambitious in his career.

He was his father's son. If his father was able to do it, why couldn't he?

While in school, Zhai Yaohui had always come out as the top student. There was no one who even came close to him.

But that changed in the military.

Shi Peng had entered the military before him and had already attained achievements while studying. Shi Peng was even more impressive than he was, and he didn't even hesitate to risk his life to complete his mission.

They were about the same age, and yet, Shi Peng had already been sent to the hospital for emergency rescue twice due to injuries he had sustained in missions.

Because he had met someone who was just as hardworking and had even started earlier than him, Zhai Yaohui was even more motivated. It's as though the blood in his veins was being pumped relentlessly.

This was the goal he had always been looking for. This was the goal he was going to surpass.

After setting Shi Peng as his goal, Zhai Yaohui gave his all in the military and was extremely serious in his training, giving much thought to military strategies.

Thankfully, Zhai Yaohui was still young, and his physical abilities became his biggest capital.

In such tight arrangements, not only was he physically fitter than all his peers, but his performance was also eye-catching.

Many praised Zhai Yaohui and even gave him more opportunities, and it wasn't just because he was Old Zhai's son.

They all admired and acknowledged Zhai Yaohui because of his own efforts and hard work.

In this state of madness, time was crucial to Zhai Yaohui.

If not for the annual leave that the military granted to new recruits, and his superiors insisting on Zhai Yaohui returning home, Zhai Yaohui would have spent the new year in the military to attain even more achievements.

After all, their enemies would never stop invading the country just because it was the new year.

“Humph!” Grandma Zhai didn't believe a word that her son said.

Her husband was the first man in the Zhai family to enter the military, so Grandma Zhai already knew what lay ahead for the rest of the men in the Zhai family.

She had been ignorant in her youth and had been taken in by her husband. But now, did her son think that he would be taken in again?

“To both of you, the military is much more important than your family. It's really bad luck to be married to you!” They would never be able to give their wives a normal life like other husbands.

Somehow, the entire Zhai family's gazes fell on Miao Jing to see her attitude the moment Grandma Zhai said these words.

The Zhai family had been chatting normally like any family would at a reunion, and Miao Jing felt incredulous that she was suddenly thrown into the spotlight. Why were they looking at her? She wasn't intending on marrying a soldier. So what if women became military spouses? That had nothing to do with her! She didn't need to know much about it, nor give any opinions on it.

Zhai Yaohui felt embarrassed. He had clearly been led astray by his parents.

Upon hearing his mom's words, his first reaction had been to look at his sister, Miao Jing! Had his training in the military turned him into a fool?

"Mom, I'll chat with you later. I have some things to talk to Dad about." Zhai Yaohui retracted his gaze and looked at Old Zhai.

Old Zhai nodded, leading Zhai Yaohui into his study. "What's the matter?"

"I heard that the military intends to choose a talent and send him for further training."

They talked about talent and training, but everyone understood that the leaders were looking for successors to the old revolutionaries of Old Zhai's generation.

After all, no one could climb to the top in just one day. They had to learn the ropes along the way.

They couldn't wait until the very last minute to choose their successors. They had to pick them out early.

"Yes, that's true."

It was alright for him to let his son know about this, but Old Zhai also believed that those who cared about this would have learned of this matter too.

However, Old Zhai was definitely not going to try to use his connections to help his son into that position. All he would do was to confirm the rumors that his son had heard.

Thankfully, Zhai Yaohui had no intention of asking his dad to do so either. “Alright, I understand.”

“Do you want to fight for it?”

“Shouldn’t I?”

If not for such a good opportunity, people of his generation would have to wait two to three more decades to rise into a position like his father’s.

Even if he succeeded this time, he would have to wait another ten years to be in an equal position as his father.

Compared to twenty to thirty years, ten years didn’t mean much.

“Alright. You can make your own decision in this matter. I won’t decide for you.”

Similarly, he wasn’t going to provide any help.

Zhai Yaohui smiled confidently. “Dad, I’m your son. Didn’t you pave the way for yourself too? If you could do it, I can do it too. I don’t have to rely on your connections just because I’m your son. Dad, I’ll prove to you that I’m your equal. Perhaps, I’ll be even better than you.”

Old Zhai smiled. “Alright, I’ll wait and see how you prove that you’re better than me.”

“Now that we’re done talking about work, shall we talk about your personal affairs?”...

Chapter 2525: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (26)

“...”

“How’s it going between you and Miao Miao? Miao Miao’s a few years younger than you and you should dote on her and take care of her. Even though she’s younger than you, women’s time is precious. When will you give me a definite answer?”

Zhai Yaohui wanted to ask what his father meant.

It was true that Miao Jing had been with their family for a year, but the number of times he had spoken to Miao Jing could be counted with both hands. Could he possibly have any feelings for a young lady like that?

“Do you mean that you have no feelings for Miao Miao?”

After giving it some thought, Zhai Yaohui nodded hesitatingly, ignoring Miao Jing’s black and dark eyes that had appeared subconsciously in his mind.

“Alright.” The way Old Zhai didn’t force his son but answered immediately scared Zhai Yaohui.

Zhai Yaohui looked at Old Zhai cautiously. “Dad, are you trying to dig a hole for me?”

Old Zhai laughed. He was his father.

If he were to dig a hole for his son, would his son be able to avoid it even if he knew about it?

And he even wanted to be a chief like him. How naive!

“Digging a hole for you? Listen to what I have to say and then tell me if it’s a big hole.”

“Alright. I’ll listen.”

“After the new year, you’ll be twenty-six, right?”

“Yes.”

“Miao Miao’s twenty.”

Zhai Yaohui was stunned. “Do you mean Miao Miao was only nineteen when she came?”

“Otherwise? Don’t tell me that you can’t even count now because you’ve been in the military for a year. You’re my son and I treat Miao Miao like my own daughter. You can make your own decision and I won’t interfere. Now, I can only try to help Miao Miao. Although she’ll only be twenty after the new year, it’s about time for her to get married. The most important thing in a woman’s life is to find a good partner who’ll treat her well for the rest of her life. I should be worried now that I’m trying to marry my daughter off. I wonder if you have anyone good to recommend to me. I should have a few people to choose my son-in-law from.”

‘You don’t want to marry her, right?’

‘You’d better not regret it when someone wise enough marries her!’

Zhai Yaohui frowned. “Dad, stop fooling around. Miao Miao’s... She isn’t that old. She’s still young. There’s no need to hurry. Marriage is for a lifetime. If you really... If you really want to choose a partner for Miao Miao, you can take a look around, but you can’t hurry or rush through it. If you have someone in mind, you have to let Miao Miao interact with that person. Besides, you guys can let me know too. I’m a soldier and I’m quite good at reading people. If he’s really good, he’ll be able to become the son-in-law of the Zhai family. Otherwise, we might harm Miao Miao and throw her into a fire.”

“Is that so?” Old Zhai replied. “You’re right. If I really find someone suitable, I’ll let you know and you can help evaluate him.”

“Okay.” Zhai Yaohui realized that he had started to panic when he gave his reply.

Zhai Yaohui was confused. Was it because he was upset that he had left the military that his emotions were acting up?

“Oh right, I saw tension between Mom and Miao Miao. What happened?”

Old Zhai deliberately said, “What else could it be? You know how good-tempered your mom is. Your mom treated that bad girl, Qi Minlan, like a treasure. It must have been Miao Miao’s fault that there was a conflict between the two of them. She must have angered your mom.”

“That’s impossible. Miao Miao isn’t such an insensible person.”

“Then, are you saying that your mom deliberately provoked Miao Miao?”

He was such a fool. He trusted Miao Miao so much, and yet, he still insisted that he had no feelings for her and only treated her as a younger sister.

Which man would trust his younger sister more than his mother?

Zhai Yaohui sighed. “Dad, are you doing this on purpose? You know that’s not what I meant. My mom’s so kind. She’ll never make trouble for others. Miao Miao’s quite like Mom in that sense. What I mean is that there could be a misunderstanding between the two of them.”

“No, there was no misunderstanding. It was really your mom’s fault that she provoked Miao Miao.”

“I don’t believe you.”

Old Zhai told Zhai Yaohui all about how Qi Minlan had cornered Miao Jing. “Your mom used to dote on Qi Minlan like her own daughter. She always thought that Qi Minlan was just like her. That was why she didn’t believe what Miao Miao said. But Miao Miao’s headstrong and naturally felt uneasy that your mom didn’t believe her. Miao Miao’s already starting to look for a job. I guess that Miao Miao will probably move out of our house once she finds a job to support herself.”

“...”

Zhai Yaohui had never thought that the conflict between his mom and Miao Jing would be a result of Qi Minlan. “Doesn’t Miao Miao like to study? Why won’t she continue for another few years?”

“Miao Miao said that she doesn’t intend on studying for such a long time. She simply wanted to be better equipped to find a job and survive.”

That was true. If Miao Miao intended to continue her studies, she would never think of moving out of the Zhai family's house.

Zhai Yaohui asked, "Dad, why don't you try to persuade Miao Miao?"

His mom was kind and thought the best of everyone, especially young people.

Based on that alone, Miao Miao's mindset was probably closer to his father's than his mother's.

Besides, Miao Miao had been living in such dilapidated conditions in the past. It was his father who had saved Miao Miao from that.

Based on that alone, he felt that his father would definitely have a different place in Miao Miao's heart.

Old Zhai refused. "What should I try to persuade her? She's almost twenty years old. She's not an ignorant two-year-old child. This is her life and I'll respect her decision. It's just like how your mom and I won't make decisions about your marriage for you. I won't stand in your way and I won't interfere in Miao Miao's life either. I'm treating both of you fairly. Do you understand?"

Understand?

Nonsense!

Zhai Yaohui's head hurt. It didn't seem like his dad was trying to dig a hole for him by trying to matchmake him with Miao Jing.

His dad had already said that it didn't matter if he wasn't interested in Miao Jing. His dad would simply introduce other men to Miao Jing, and he was even asking him for some recommendations.

But it didn't seem right to say that his father wasn't trying to dig a hole for him either. His father was complicating things!

Zhai Yaohui regretted returning from the military. If he had known that there would be so many things for him to worry about after coming home, he would have stayed in the military to analyze more military strategies and topographic maps.

Fighting wars was much easier than handling these matters at home.

“Are you tired? If you’re tired, you’d better get some rest.. There’s no need to waste time with me here in the study.”.

Chapter 2526: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (27)

It was just as well. If his son left now, he might bump into Miao Miao and have a chat with her.

He had already reminded his son of whatever he had to as a father.

If she really moved out and found a suitable man, his son would really stand no chance at all.

Old Zhai understood Miao Jing’s temper. If she met a suitable man, she would definitely give up on the man she liked just to be with a suitable man.

Then, it didn’t matter what his son thought or felt anymore.

Sigh. What was the point of having a son? He had to worry about everything. No wonder his wife liked daughters more. Look how little they had to worry about Miao Miao.

Old Zhai was hoping that his son would have a chance encounter with Miao Jing and be able to strike a conversation with her once he left the study.

With more interaction, there would be a greater chance of them falling for each other.

What Old Zhai hadn’t expected was that Miao Jing had already returned to her room a long time ago so as to avoid Zhai Yaohui. There was no chance of that ever happening.

Of course, neither had Old Zhai expected his emotionless son to take the initiative by knocking on Miao Jing's room door.

"Who's that?" Miao Jing kept her accounts book. "Hold on."

Miao Jing ran to open the door, and when she saw that it was Zhai Yaohui, she felt a little panicked. "Brother... Brother Zhai, is something wrong? If something's wrong, we can talk downstairs."

She felt uneasy chatting in her room or in the corridor.

"Nothing. I just wanted to have a chat with you." Zhai Yaohui didn't want to chat downstairs.

If his parents were to see him chatting alone with Miao Miao, they might have some ideas of their own.

"Oh, you can be direct." As long as he didn't enter her room.

"Have you gotten used to living in our home? If anything bothers you, you can let me know."

Miao Jing shook her head. "Uncle and Auntie are very good to me. It's not like I have anything to do with your family. The person who saved Uncle at that time was my dad, not me. I'm very grateful to you guys for supporting me throughout the past year and even giving me a chance to study."

They had given her a roof over her head for free and had also given her a room of her own. What was there to nitpick about?

She would be too heartless if she were to complain about anything.

"I heard that someone caused trouble for you lately. I have to apologize for that." If not for him, Qi Minlan wouldn't have stirred up trouble for Miao Miao either.

But Zhai Yaohui was truly disappointed that Qi Minlan hadn't grown as a person over the past year. "She's too pampered and spoiled, but she isn't actually a bad person."

“...” Miao Jing tightened her grip on the door handle, forcing a smile out. “Whether she’s a good person or not has nothing to do with me. I don’t know her. I’ll let bygones be bygones. Anyway, she didn’t really do anything to me. Alright, I understand.”

It was true. Qi Minlan and Zhai Yaohui had grown up together and were childhood sweethearts.

She was simply a person who was leeching off the Zhai family. How could they compare with each other?

Thankfully, she had never thought of comparing herself to Qi Minlan, and neither had she ever believed Uncle Zhai and seen herself as Zhai Yaohui’s partner.

If she were really so self-unaware, she would truly be shameless.

Thinking about Grandma Zhai’s words and hearing Zhai Yaohui’s words, Miao Jing understood that it was Qi Minlan who was family with the Zhai family. She was the outsider.

Since there was someone in the family who disliked her, it was only right for her to leave the family.

Miao Jing was thankful that she had already planned on moving out of the Zhai family’s house. Otherwise, she would be so embarrassed for having dug a hole to bury herself.

The Zhai family had been gracious with their words, unlike Qi Minlan who had been brutally straightforward.

Alright, she understood. She would move out of this house as soon as possible. Actually, she felt rather embarrassed that she had disturbed them for such a long time too.

“Is there anything else, Brother Zhai?”

Zhai Yaohui frowned, feeling that Miao Jing’s answer sounded a little weird.

But he couldn’t pinpoint where the problem was. Zhai Yaohui, who usually excelled in the military, was clueless now. “No, do you have anything you want to tell me?”

“No.” Miao Jing shook her head quickly. “Brother Zhai, I still have other things to do. Look...”

It wouldn't be easy to move out of the Zhai family's house. There were too many things to take care of.

Over the past year, the Zhai family had bought several more outfits for her. Should she bring them along with her when she moved out?

Even if she didn't bring them along with her, she had recorded the prices of these outfits and would definitely return the Zhai family whatever they had spent on her.

Rent around the area wasn't especially expensive, but it was still unaffordable to Miao Jing, who had not yet found herself a job.

Apart from rent, she still had to pay for her meals. She had to have some leftover cash after paying the rent to survive.

Sigh, it was so troublesome. That wouldn't do. She would have to do her sums.

There was still the problem of finding a job. She would have to settle that tomorrow.

Even if she couldn't start straightaway, she had to find a way to make a living and start saving up her money.

Miao Jing felt overwhelmed in the face of all these problems.

“Alright. I won't disturb you anymore. We're a family. Miao Miao, if you have any problem, you must let us know and not handle it alone. Two heads are better than one, after all. There's no need to feel embarrassed with us.”

Miao Jing nodded perfunctorily. “I understand, Brother Zhai.”

The Zhai family treated her well, but Brother Zhai's future wife didn't like her and didn't want to see her.

Since the Zhai family had been so kind to her, she couldn't possibly cause tension between the Zhai family and Qi Minlan, right?

They had given her a fresh start in life. It would be terrible if she were to pester them and stir up trouble for them. She would never do something like that!

As Miao Jing closed the door, Zhai Yaohui had the urge to ask if she truly understood everything. It didn't seem like the case.

But as her brother, Zhai Yaohui felt too embarrassed to knock on Miao Jing's door the second time now that she had already closed the door.

If he were to do that, it would make it seem as though there was truly something going on between him and Miao Jing.

He didn't want the others in the family to have such a misunderstanding.

As such, Zhai Yaohui decided to return to his own room even though he felt a little uneasy.

Chapter 2527: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (28)

In and of itself, it was good that Miao Jing wanted to get a job to support herself.

On the contrary, Old Zhai would truly have gotten upset if Miao Jing had expressed her desire for the Zhai family to support her while she lazed around at home.

As such, Old Zhai immediately helped her make arrangements the moment she expressed her desire to find a job after her course.

With Old Zhai around, it was no trouble at all for Miao Jing to find a job with good welfare.

People who worked in factories at that time were similar to people who worked civil service jobs in the postmodern era.

Anyone who could get a job providing rations was impressive enough.

And with Old Zhai's arrangements, Miao Jing became a person like that.

In the past, Second Auntie Miao had never liked Miao Jing and always felt that Miao Jing could never create more wealth for the family nor bring any benefits to them.

That was why she disliked Miao Jing and felt that Miao Jing was wasting their family's food.

If someone had told Second Auntie Miao a few years ago that Miao Jing would one day become a factory worker, Second Auntie Miao would definitely have treated Miao Jing well. In fact, she would probably have treated Miao Jing only slightly worse than her own daughter, Miao Lanlan.

Hearing that the factory was willing to pay her eighty yuan with rations every month, Miao Jing was over the moon.

She had thought that it would be difficult to live in the city even though she was now literate because she was from the countryside.

But it didn't seem that difficult, after all.

"Leader, can I ask you something?"

The leader looked at Miao Jing lovingly. This was the chief's relative!

Even if she asked him a hundred, or even a thousand questions, he would answer them kindly with a smile, let alone just one question. "Go ahead."

"Are there any dormitories available for workers?" What Miao Jing wanted to know was when she would be eligible for one.

A roof over a head was important to her since she didn't have a home to return to.

"We do..." The leader was rather hesitant. "You know that we have quite a lot of people in the factory and the dormitory isn't that big. The workers have to sleep in bunks."

This Comrade Miao in front of him was the chief's relative and had been living in the chief's house.

There was no way their dormitory could compare to the chief's house.

Would Comrade Miao be able to get used to their workers' dormitory after living in the chief's house?

It wouldn't be easy to give Comrade Miao an individual room for herself either.

It would be quite troublesome if other workers in the factory were to learn of it.

But Comrade Miao would probably not request to move in now that he had told her of how average the conditions were, right?

"That's alright. As long as there is a dormitory, that's nothing. I'm used to sleeping in bunks. So, can I apply to live in the dormitory?"

"You can..." But Comrade Miao, shouldn't you ask the chief for his opinion before I put in your application?

But Miao Jing didn't even give the leader the chance to say that. "That's good. Leader, please arrange it for me. Oh right, if you put in my application now, when will I be able to move in?"

That was great! It was indeed good to be a worker. She even had a dormitory to live in!

In this case, she wouldn't even have to worry about having nowhere to live after moving out of the Zhai family's house, or that she wouldn't be able to afford the rent.

Miao Jing couldn't even be bothered about when the factory would offer her an individual room in the workers' dormitory.

That would come in a few years' time. She had better solve her immediate problems first.

Now that she had solved the problem of her accommodation, Miao Jing felt relaxed and joyful.

The factory leader had never expected Miao Jing to be such an impatient person.

But Miao Jing was Old Zhai's relative, and since she had already gotten the job, Old Zhai would probably not prevent her from staying in the workers' dormitory.

With that thought, the leader quickly arranged a slot for Miao Jing in the workers' dormitory.

Even up until Miao Jing received the key to the workers' dormitory, she was still in disbelief about how everything had gone so smoothly.

She had a job and a place to live.

Because her two biggest problems had been solved, the unhappiness that Qi Minlan had caused her was no longer important.

Miao Jing couldn't help but think about how Qi Minlan didn't want to see her.

Once she moved to the workers' dormitory and Qi Minlan married Zhai Yaohui, they would never have to meet each other again. That would be great!

Now that she was moving away for sure, there was no longer the need for Qi Minlan to hate her or create any more trouble for her, right?

Upon returning to the Zhai family's house, Miao Jing hummed as she packed her clothes in a good mood.

“Miao Miao, what’s wrong?” Grandma Zhai had heard from the auntie that Miao Jing was packing her things. She rushed up, and just as expected, that girl was indeed packing up her things. “Miao Miao, where are you going? Don’t tell me...”

That she was heading back to the village and intended to live with Second Uncle Miao’s family again?

Thinking about how Old Zhai had told her that Second Auntie Miao had tried to marry Miao Jing off to the family that could bring them the most benefits, Grandma Zhai tried her best to stop Miao Jing from acting impulsively. “Miao Miao, that was just a misunderstanding. No, what I meant to say was that I believe you. I think that you’re better than Minlan. It’s just that you’re both good ladies... No, I like you much more and I trust you more too. So, Miao Miao, don’t get upset...”

Miao Jing stopped in her actions. “Auntie, don’t worry. You’ve misunderstood the situation. I understand very well what kind of people my Second Uncle Miao’s family is. I have no intention of going back after getting out with much difficulty.”

“Then?”

Miao Jing laughed. “Didn’t Uncle Zhai help me find a job? There’s a workers’ dormitory in the factory and we have assigned beds. Look, I even received my key. I’ve decided to move to the factory so that it’ll be more convenient to get to work and concentrate on my work. Auntie, don’t overthink it.”

“You’ve taken care of me the most over the past year. Don’t worry. When I have time, I’ll definitely come back to visit you.”

Since she no longer cared about Qi Minlan, Miao Jing naturally no longer took issue with how Grandma Zhai had not believed her at that time.

Chapter 2528: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (29)

Thinking back to that incident now, Miao Jing thought that her actions had been laughable.

Qi Minlan was their future daughter-in-law. What was wrong with Auntie not believing her? Otherwise, why would they be a family?

But that didn't matter. She had no intention of saying anything, much less of fighting with Qi Minlan.

Grandma Zhai was only reluctant to let her go because Miao Jing had spent time with Grandma Zhai over the past year, relieving her loneliness.

Although Old Zhai claimed that he was retired, he was still very busy.

Old Zhai had no time to accompany Grandma Zhai, much less Zhai Yaohui.

It was only because of Miao Jing that Grandma Zhai was no longer as bored. When they had nothing else to do, both of them would sit together, have a chat, watch television, or discuss some problems. That was how they managed to pass their time.

That was why Grandma Zhai didn't want Miao Jing to leave.

If Miao Miao moved away, she would be the only one left in this huge house.

At the thought of a life like that, Grandma Zhai thought that it would be better for her to move out along with Miao Jing.

“But the workers' dormitory will be cramped with so many people in a room. It can't be as good as staying at home. Is your factory nearby? If it is, you should just stay at home. If it's far, I'll just ask your Uncle Zhai to get you a bicycle. If you don't know how to ride a bicycle, I'll get your Brother Zhai to teach you.”

No matter what, Grandma Zhai wanted Miao Jing to stay, whether it was for her husband, for her son, or for her sake.

Miao Jing refused. “It's not that cramped. I've taken a look at it. It's actually quite good. You don't have to worry about me, Auntie. Uncle Zhai knows the living conditions I lived in before moving to your house. Compared to that, the workers' dormitory is much better and much cleaner. The walls are white and clean, and there are bunks. I've never even slept in bunks before.”

At the mention of the workers' dormitory, Miao Jing's tone was filled with excitement and anticipation.

Miao Jing was truly delighted to be moving into the dormitory and earning her own keep.

It was exactly because of that that Grandma Zhai was upset.

She knew just how determined Miao Jing was about moving into the workers' dormitory, and how Miao Jing would never change her mind no matter how much she tried to persuade her.

After packing her things, Miao Jing smiled and comforted Grandma Zhai. "Auntie, thank you for taking care of me for the past year. Without your help, I'd never have gotten to where I am today. In the future, I'll definitely repay all of you. I'll visit you and Uncle when I have a break."

It was just as well. Once she moved to the dormitory, she would be able to avoid Zhai Yaohui.

It was true. If she were Zhai Yaohui's fiancée and knew that her fiancé was living with another young lady of marriageable age, she would be upset and uneasy too.

Understanding that, Miao Jing left in a relaxed state and headed to the workers' dormitory with her belongings.

Just as she was leaving, Miao Jing bumped into Qi Minlan.

Seeing the beautiful city dweller, Qi Minlan, Miao Jing took a deep breath and put on a smile.

That was right. That was the kind of girl who was suitable for Zhai Yaohui, unlike her. When she stood by Zhai Yaohui's side, they didn't even look like they had ever lived together.

"You're..." Qi Minlan naturally recognized Miao Jing. Seeing the bag in Miao Jing's hands, she wrapped her arms around her chest. "What's going on?"

Qi Minlan had already guessed the situation and her lips were already curled up, and yet, she insisted on asking that question. Miao Jing was upset but replied righteously, "I'm moving out of the Zhai family's house."

"Oh?" Hadn't she insisted that she wouldn't move out? Why was she suddenly willing to do so? Was it just a show? "Why are you suddenly willing to move?"

"The Zhai family's house isn't my house. It isn't strange for me to move out."

"Is that so? It isn't your house, but you still lived there for more than a year. Why have you suddenly become so self-aware? Don't tell me you were chased out by the Zhai family?"

"No." But that wasn't far from the truth. She had already been chased away by the Zhai family's future daughter-in-law. If she really waited until Uncle Zhai or Auntie Zhai chased her away, then she would be too shameless.

She had better take the initiative to move away before that happened.

Qi Minlan gave it some thought. If the Zhai family truly wanted to chase this countryside girl away, they wouldn't have allowed her to stay there for a year. "Are you leaving for a month or a year? Don't come back after just a few days! That'll be truly annoying!"

"Don't worry. I won't," Miao Jing replied sincerely. "I've found a job. I've got a place in the workers' dormitory in the factory and can make ends meet for myself. I feel quite bad for disturbing the Zhai family for such a long time. I won't disturb your family in the future."

Our family?

Qi Minlan looked strangely at Miao Jing and tested her cautiously. "It seems like it isn't just me. Have those in the Zhai family started to dislike you as well?"

Miao Jing shook her head. She knew that Grandma Zhai and Zhai Yaohui didn't dislike her. It was just that they trusted and liked Qi Minlan more. "Alright, I'm leaving. Don't worry. Apart from coming back to visit Uncle and Auntie Zhai occasionally, I'll only appear to give you a red packet when you get married to Zhai Yaohui."

Since Qi Minlan didn't want to see her, she wouldn't make things difficult for everyone.

Her departure would be a win-win situation for everyone.

Seeing that her most hated enemy was leaving just like that, Qi Minlan was overjoyed to the point that she couldn't regain her senses. "Are you serious?"

Could it be that Zhai Yaohui had chased this countryside girl away for her?

Yes, that was completely possible!

She had heard that this countryside girl's father had saved Uncle Zhai and was Uncle Zhai's benefactor.

A year ago, Uncle Zhai had specially gone to the village to pick Miao Jing up and had been supporting her ever since.

That was why Uncle Zhai probably had the most feelings for Miao Jing in the entire Zhai family.

When she had cornered Miao Jing, Uncle Zhai had retaliated by dealing her dad a huge blow.

Initially, she had been rather worried that this incident would cause everyone in the Zhai family to have a bad opinion of her. But it turned out that Miao Jing had only gained the favor of Uncle Zhai alone. Auntie Zhai and Zhai Yaohui still liked her the most!

She had already said that she had grown up with Zhai Yaohui and that Auntie Zhai treated her like a daughter. There was no way she would lose out to Miao Jing, who came from the countryside!

Chapter 2529: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (30)

Humph! It was good that they had chased her away!

If Miao Jing had been more self-aware, she would have left a long time ago. Then, she wouldn't have gotten in trouble at all.

If Miao Jing had taken the initiative to leave, she would perhaps have been willing to treat Miao Jing like a normal relative even after her marriage to Zhai Yaohui.

But even though Miao Jing was finally self-aware now, her father had already borne the brunt and had already been forced to retire.

It was all too late.

Once Miao Jing stepped out of the Zhai family's gates today, she had better not think of ever entering ever again. She would never allow it as the family's mistress.

Thinking about how Auntie Zhai and Zhai Yaohui had gotten justice for her by chasing Miao Jing away, Qi Minlan returned home to take a shower and doll herself up. After putting on a beautiful dress, she headed over to the Zhai family's house to make her presence known.

Over the past year while Zhai Yaohui had been in the military, she hardly had any chance to meet Auntie Zhai, much less spend time with her.

Now that that annoying person was finally gone, she had to improve her relationship with Auntie Zhai.

Miao Jing's appearance was enough to worry Qi Minlan. What if another Miao Jing appeared if she didn't take the initiative now?

Compared to other men, Zhai Yaohui was not bad. Even her elder brother had always complimented Zhai Yaohui's performance.

If she were to miss out on Zhai Yaohui, it would be hard to find someone similar.

Before heading over to the Zhai family's house, Qi Minlan notified Old Master Shi of the situation.

When Old Master Shi heard about it, he agreed with Qi Minlan. “You’re right. You have to forge stronger ties with the Zhai family, and you’d better stop all those messy relationships on the side. If your brother finds someone like that, I’ll be driven to my grave from anger. I’d never allow a woman like that to marry into our family.”

“Dad!”

Qi Minlan felt aggrieved that her own dad had mocked her. “I’m just friends with them. There’s nothing going on between us. Dad, why do you think so poorly of my friendships? Do I seem like that kind of person?”

“Hehe...” Old Master Shi sneered. “If you really dared to do something like that, do you think I would have tolerated it until now? At least, you have some self-control.”

If Qi Minlan really went overboard, the most embarrassed one would be Old Master Shi, her father, and not the Zhai family.

Even so, Old Master Shi could not stand Qi Minlan being a social butterfly and surrounding herself with so many men.

Old Master Shi would never allow such a woman into his family.

Initially, Old Master Shi had thought that the Zhai family had brought a countryside bumpkin to keep Qi Minlan and the Shi family in check because of Qi Minlan’s situation.

Now that he knew that the Zhai family had chased Miao Jing away for his daughter’s sake, Old Master Shi couldn’t help but wonder if it had all been a misunderstanding.

That was true. Everyone was different. He minded, but that didn’t mean that the Zhai family would mind.

Minlan was his own daughter, and if he as a father didn’t see anything wrong with it, there was no reason for him to be worried about it, especially since the Zhai family didn’t take it to heart either.

That being said, the past was the past. There was no point in bringing it up.

But if Qi Minlan really wanted to get married to Zhai Yaohui, she had better end those relationships.

Old Master Shi might not be able to guess the Zhai family's requirements of Qi Minlan before marriage, but he was sure he wouldn't be wrong about their expectations after marriage.

Unless they were crazy, they would never allow their daughter-in-law to spend all her time with male friends outside.

"Alright, I know that you don't like hearing these things either. Anyway, you'd better remember not to let this situation happen again. If you do it again, the Zhai family might take issue with it now even if they didn't in the past. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

She wasn't a fool.

Even without her dad's reminder, she wouldn't commit the same mistake again.

She had been upset and furious for quite a while after learning that Uncle Zhai had forced her dad out of his position.

Now that the situation had finally taken a turn for the better, there was no way she was going to let such a good opportunity go to waste.

She had already thought it through. She would either get married to someone as brilliant as Zhai Yaohui or remain single her whole life.

She was good friends with Lanlan, and she had already agreed to let Lanlan be a bridesmaid at her wedding with Zhai Yaohui and to find Lanlan a good partner.

She had already made a promise. If she couldn't even keep that promise, she had better not attend any of her friends' gatherings in the future.

“Alright, go on to the Zhai family’s house. You know how much Old Zhai and Zhai Yaohui care about your Auntie Zhai. When you’re there, don’t try to explain yourself. Just do your best to coax your Auntie Zhai.”

Auntie Zhai was the Zhai family’s soft spot. Coaxing her was more effective than completing a hundred other tasks.

“Dad, I know.” She wasn’t a three-year-old kid. There was no need for her dad to repeat his words over and over again.

The father and daughter chatted for a long while before Qi Minlan finally left and headed to the Zhai family’s house joyfully to knock on their door.

Coincidentally, the one who had opened the door was Zhai Yaohui, who had just returned.

Even though Qi Minlan knew that this was only a coincidence, this made Qi Minlan feel like Zhai Yaohui had been waiting for her and had specially been waiting to open the door for her.

With that thought in mind, Qi Minlan blushed, realizing that she liked Zhai Yaohui even more now. “Brother Zhai, why didn’t you tell me that you’re back?”

Actually, what Qi Minlan wanted to ask was why Zhai Yaohui didn’t look for her or ask her out on a date now that he was back.

“Why are you here?”

“I’m here to see Auntie Zhai.”

Hearing that Qi Minlan was here to see his mom, Zhai Yaohui could only take a step back and allow her in. “Mom, Qi Minlan is here to see you.”

“Brother Zhai, it hasn’t been long since we met. Why are you addressing me by my full name? You can just call me Minlan.” There was no need to be that polite.

Zhai Yaohui gave no response but simply yelled for his mom. "I'm sorry. Have a seat and have some tea. I'll go get my mom."

"Why don't I go with you? Auntie isn't in the best of health. Could she be feeling unwell? If that's the case, we'd better send her to the hospital."

She wasn't going to wait there alone foolishly.

Chapter 2530: Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui (31)

Anyway, this was her in-laws-to-be's home, basically her home in the future. Where could she not go?

"No, just sit there for a while."

With that, Zhai Yaohui left Qi Minlan behind and ran off to find his mom.

As Zhai Yaohui entered his parents' room, he saw his mom lying on the bed and facing the window. This gave Zhai Yaohui a huge scare. "Mom, why are you lying in bed at this time? Are you feeling unwell? Why didn't you tell me? I'll send you to the hospital."

Qi Minlan had been right. His mom was lying in bed in discomfort.

"I'm not going to the hospital." Grandma Zhai pushed her son's hand aside. "I'm not in physical pain. I feel uneasy in my heart. I need some medication for my heart. But even the doctors in the hospital won't be able to cure me of this. Don't bother me. I want some time alone."

She was still feeling upset and depressed, but someone had come to stir up even more trouble for her.

"Heart problems? What problems? Mom, since when did you have heart problems?" Zhai Yaohui thought for a long while but couldn't think of anything that could have caused his mother any heartache, so much so that she was lying in bed in broad daylight. This was unprecedented.

Grandma Zhai didn't want to reply to Zhai Yaohui. The thought of Zhai Yaohui made her even more frustrated.

What could Zhai Yaohui do other than try to coax his mom? "Mom, what's wrong? Why are you upset?"

Grandma Zhai sat up and looked furiously at Zhai Yaohui. "Miao Miao moved away! Ever since Miao Miao moved out, I've been so lonely. Who will chat with me, cook with me, and accompany me in the future? You and your father are always so busy. I'm so frustrated staying at home. I want Miao Miao back!"

As she said that, Grandma Zhai's eyes welled up with tears.

Over the past year, Grandma Zhai had truly accepted Miao Jing completely and gotten close to her.

When Miao Jing had still been around, Grandma Zhai had not felt such a deep bond with Miao Jing and had not thought that she needed Miao Jing that much. But it turned out that Miao Jing had been such an essential part of her life over the past year, and she had forged so many precious memories with her.

That was why Grandma Zhai was even more regretful that she only understood that now.

"Miao Miao left? When did she leave? Where did she go? Didn't you say that Miao Miao's course is over?"

Zhai Yaohui didn't think much about it, thinking that Miao Jing had only left for a few hours. Wouldn't she come back at night? Why was his mother acting in this way?

But thinking about it again, would his mother be so upset if that was the case?

His mother wasn't one to make a mountain out of a molehill. "Where's Miao Jing? Don't tell me she returned to her second uncle's house in the countryside?"

Hadn't his dad said that Miao Miao's uncle and auntie weren't good people and even treated Miao Miao badly?

Miao Miao had finally widened her knowledge and had the ability to settle down in the city. Wouldn't it be a waste of all her efforts and hard work if she were to move back now?

Seeing her son's reaction, Grandma Zhai finally said, "Miao Miao found a job and said that she's moving into the workers' dormitory. She won't be coming back other than coming to visit me from time to time."

Grandma Zhai dared not hope that Miao Jing would visit too often.

She had already left and was no longer living with them. How could she expect Miao Jing to visit her often?

She might not even return once a month, much less every day to spend time with her.

Anyway, that was just about as frequent as her husband returning home. As for her son, he returned about once a year.

"Why did she suddenly move to the workers' dormitory when she can stay at home?"

Grandma Zhai was infuriated. "Don't you know that there's nowhere that can compare to one's home no matter how dilapidated it is? Miao Miao didn't think of our home as her home. That's why she left. Miao Miao will probably find a partner for herself very soon if the people at the factory learn that she's still single."

The more she said, the angrier Grandma Zhai got. "Do you believe me when I say that I'll receive Miao Miao's wedding invitation before you find yourself a partner? Do you think I should attend her wedding when that time comes?"

The daughter-in-law she had wanted for her family would marry into another family. How could she ever be happy over that?

In short, it was all her son's fault. Her son hadn't been able to keep such a good young lady like Miao Miao by his side. How useless!

Hearing that Miao Jing was going to find someone to get married to, Zhai Yaohui felt a little uneasy. “Mom, don’t get too worried. It’s not so easy to get married. Don’t you think that Miao Miao will be afraid of marrying the wrong person? If-if that day ever comes, we’re still Miao Miao’s family. We’ll have to look out for Miao Miao. If that man is a good man and can give Miao Miao a good and comfortable life, we should support her. If that guy is a bad one, then we have to save Miao Miao from jumping into the fire. It’ll be a long time before she gets married. We don’t have to be so worried.”

Grandma Zhai sneered. “Are you prepared to give Miao Miao a dowry as her elder brother when she gets married?”

“I could do that...”

Hahaha.

Grandma Zhai sneered inwardly. She had given birth to her son and knew exactly what his tone meant.

Although he had said it easily, his tone didn’t match his words.

It would be a joyful occasion if his younger sister got married. Even if Yaohui couldn’t force a smile out, he should look less murderous at the very least.

Who was he trying to cheat?

Did he think that his mother was a fool?

As the mother and son continued with their chat, Qi Minlan, who had been waiting downstairs, got bored.

She had waited for a long time, but neither of them had come downstairs yet.

As the minutes ticked by, Qi Minlan didn’t even hear any sound of anyone coming downstairs, much less a figure.

Qi Minlan was extremely familiar with the Zhai family's house and wanted to head upstairs.

The Zhai family's auntie was stuck in a dilemma. She had always thought that Qi Minlan was Zhai Yaohui's marriage partner, but Miao Jing had shown up a year ago.

Seeing how Grandma Zhai had gradually taken a liking to Miao Jing over the past year, the auntie was almost sure that Miao Jing would be her future mistress.

But just then, Miao Jing had moved away and Qi Minlan had come to visit the Zhai family all dressed up.

So, was she supposed to stop Qi Minlan from going upstairs or not?

In her moment of hesitation, Qi Minlan decisively walked up the stairs, her heels clicking against the hard floor.