

## **RTAMM 371**

### Chapter 371: Dismantle the Television and Bring It Home

“These things belong to us now. We have the right to decide how to distribute them. You don’t need to interfere too much.” Ding Jiayi’s face stiffened. All of what Zhai Sheng said was targeted at Zijin.

If she were Zhai Sheng’s auntie, then Zijin would be his younger sister. How could Zhai Sheng bully his own family member in this way?

This would not do. She must not only let her sister interact with Zijin but also Zhai Sheng. Given Zhai Sheng’s current status, if he acknowledged Zijin as his sister, then Zijin really would not have any worries in the future.

“Zhai Sheng, it’s more convenient since you drove here. You’ve said it yourself that your uncle’s bones have not fully recovered. It’s not convenient for him to ride a bicycle during winter time. Why don’t you drive and fetch your sister, Zijin, over? Our whole family can then get together and have a good meal.” This ‘bright’ idea flashed in Ding Jiayi’s mind as she sized up Zhai Sheng.

She was acknowledging kinship with the Zhai family, but they were not real relatives since they were unrelated by blood.

Zhai Sheng was young and already successful. He was so much better than that stinky soldier called Zhou Jun whom she met previously.

The Zhou family was villagers, whereas Zhai Sheng’s father was the chief of the army.

Zhou Jun would, at most, climb to the position of battalion commander or regiment commander. Zhai Sheng was different. Zhai Sheng might possibly assume the role of the chief when Chief Zhai relinquished his role.

If Zhai Sheng became her son-in-law through marriage with Zijin, then would she still need to work so hard? This was the best method of securing a life free of worries!

“Zhai Sheng, you’re already at this age. Do you have any girlfriend? Let Auntie tell you. Don’t be in a rush to find a wife. Your family’s conditions are excellent and you will definitely find a good one. You’re still young and don’t really know how to judge a woman’s character. Don’t worry. Auntie will definitely put this matter on my mind. I assure you that I’ll help you find a good wife.”

“Shut up!” Qiao Dongliang’s face turned crimson. He was already clenching his fists and wished that he could punch Ding Jiayi till she fainted so that she would not be so embarrassing in front of others.

Right from the start, Ding Jiayi had always been performing a one-man show. Be it Miao Jing or Zhai Sheng, neither of them acknowledged her. They could not even be bothered to look at her.

Unfortunately, Ding Jiayi did not have any self-awareness. She did not know how to observe and decipher other people’s thoughts, and she even poked her nose into their affairs.

When he heard that Ding Jiayi was going to introduce a girlfriend to Zhai Sheng, Qiao Dongliang immediately understood what Ding Jiayi was thinking of. He was so annoyed that wanted to punch Ding Jiayi right then and there.

Zhai Sheng was expressionless, but he said as a matter-of-fact, “Uncle Qiao, when you’re young, your judgment of character was not very good. It’s good that your judgment has been gradually improving.”

Qiao Dongliang felt embarrassed. He smiled bitterly. “Zhai Sheng, you don’t know my situation in the past. It’s not that Uncle didn’t have a good sense of judgment. It’s because I had no choice at that time.”

“Uncle Qiao, as a man, you should know that it’s better to do without than to have something substandard. No matter what, you have Nan Nan, this daughter, because of that.” Zhai Sheng tugged the corners of his lips. True enough, life was never perfect.

“Zhai Sheng, come and help Uncle bring these items to the room.” Qiao Dongliang did not even have the energy to smile. ‘Better to do without than to have something substandard.’ Not everyone was qualified to say these words.

“Sure.”

Zhai Sheng saw Qiao Dongliang take out a pair of keys from his pocket as he opened a room that was locked in the small quad. This room was ventilated, facing the sun. It's also very dry. At first sight, it was a good place for storing things.

Zhai Sheng and Qiao Dongliang cooperated and shifted all the items to this room within five minutes.

When the two of them left the room, Qiao Dongliang locked the door tightly without any hesitation. As for the key to the door, beside him, only Qiao Nan had one pair in her hands.

“Zhai Sheng, it's all thanks to you previously. I'm unable to return the money to you yet, but it's rare for you to pay a visit to my house. Uncle will show off my culinary skills and cook something nice for you today.” After putting the key away in the pocket of his shirt, Qiao Dongliang then smiled as he felt more at ease.

“I'll have to trouble Uncle Qiao then. I'll help you.”

Once they were set on this, the old and young men started to get busy in the kitchen. Qiao Nan and Miao Jing continued to stay in the bedroom to chat.

In the end, Ding Jiayi, this lady owner, had a lot of spare time instead. It was as if she was an extra person who had nothing to do. She could only sit by one side dryly and turn on the television to watch the shows. She asked in boredom, “Old Qiao, Zijin told me before that there's no television in this house. When was it installed?”

In a short span of six months, Old Qiao had earned so much money that he was able to afford a television?

Qiao Dongliang halted his hands that had been washing the vegetables. Watching Zhai Sheng who was busy by his side, he really did not wish to answer this question. “Why do you care? Just watch if you wish to. Otherwise, switch off the television!”

“Old Qiao, come out. I have something to discuss with you.” Ding Jiayi noticed that the small quad was not only installed with a 25-inch color television but also a phone.

If she had not always known Qiao Dongliang's salary, Ding Jiayi would have suspected whether Qiao Dongliang had saved up some money privately behind her back.

“What’s the matter this time?” Afraid that Ding Jiayi would be an embarrassment in front of Zhai Sheng again, Qiao Dongliang could only leave Zhai Sheng alone in the kitchen impolitely and moved Ding Jiayi aside to talk.

“Old Qiao, did you buy and hit any lottery recently? How much did you win? Don’t hide it from me. We’re a couple. I have a share too!”

“What nonsense are you talking about? We’re so tight on money now. Do you think it is possible for me to buy lottery and such things?” Wasn’t that the same as gambling? Zijin and Nan Nan would be attending college in the blink of an eye. He had been worrying about the tuition fees for the two daughters all this time. How would he have the spare money to buy such stuff?

“Then, why was this big color television suddenly installed in this house? There’s also a phone! We don’t have any of them in our house!” Did he treat her as a blind person? Which of these items did not cost money? And which of these was cheap?

“What has this got to do with you! Anyway, I didn’t buy any lottery, and neither did I win anything. If there’s nothing else, I’m going back to the kitchen,” Qiao Dongliang said impatiently.

“There must be something!” Ding Jiayi held on to Qiao Dongliang. “Old Qiao, you see. It is the most critical period for Nan Nan’s studies now. Do you wish to spoil Nan Nan by installing the television here? Do you still want Nan Nan to enter college? Why don’t we swap this television with the one in our house in the quad? That one is working too. What do you say? As for the phone, why don’t we move it to our house too? This place is lent to you by the school and is not our real home. You’ll be leaving after two years. It’ll be troublesome to shift so many things then. It’ll also be such a waste to leave them here.”

“Dismantle the phone and bring them home. It’ll be more convenient if Zijin’s school teacher wishes to contact me in the future. That way, I could understand Zijin’s situation better!”

## Chapter 372: Let’s Divorce

“No.”

“Why?!”

Qiao Dongliang squinted at Ding Jiayi. "I remember that Zijin likes to watch the television shows more than Nan Nan. Nan Nan is usually at school. I'm often the one who uses the television. When Nan Nan is back, she will spend more time reading. There's no difference in having the television here. Nan Nan will behave in the same way regardless. But Zijin is different. She gets distracted easily and her grades cannot be compared to Nan Nan. If you bring this television home, Zijin will be staring at the television screen whenever she's at home. I can't harm Nan Nan, and neither can I do that to Zijin."

"Isn't that simple? I'll supervise Zijin so that she will not watch it. Let me use this television." If their house had such a big television, she would be so proud of it.

"No." Qiao Dongliang sneered. "After such a long conversation, it's still all for your own benefit in the end. Let me tell you, all the things in his house belong to Nan Nan. You can't even touch a block of wood here, not to mention the television."

Zhu Chengqi spent so much money to install so many things in this house for Nan Nan, not for him. Zhu Chengqi actually wished to acknowledge Nan Nan as his goddaughter.

Everything he had earned previously was all given to Zijin. He had already let Nan Nan down.

Nevertheless, Ding Jiayi still wished to help Zijin fight for Nan Nan's belongings. As long as he was alive, this would not happen!

"You!" Ding Jiayi was furious. She was completely unafraid of Qiao Dongliang about money. She did not even care about the 'divorce threat' that Qiao Dongliang just mentioned. "Zijin said that we're still married and not divorced. Whatever you earned is considered matrimonial estate and I'm entitled to half of it. I have the right to take half of it. Not only will I take the television and the phone, but I'll also take away half of the things in that room!"

If Old Qiao did not take into account their relationship, then she could only talk to him about the law.

Qiao Dongliang's face was cold. His heart was even colder. "Matrimonial estate? It looks like Zijin has been teaching you quite a lot recently."

Ding Jiayi swallowed her saliva to embolden herself. "If you're really not willing to let me take the television and phone away, fine. How much money did you spend on these things? Give me half of the sum. Then, I won't bother about it anymore."

Old Qiao's heart was completely biased toward that wretched girl. Indeed, that wretched girl's grades were much better than Zijin's.

If Old Qiao could not afford to allow both daughters to continue their studies, would he sacrifice Zijin because of the wretched girl? If that were the case, she had to save up more tuition fees for Zijin before Old Qiao could do that.

Qiao Dongliang sighed. "You wish to take half of it and be so calculative with me? It's not that you can't. Tomorrow, the officers in the Civil Affairs Bureau will return to work. We'll divorce first before talking about the matrimonial estate. Will you go? Even if you're going, this television and phone were not purchased by me. They belong to Nan Nan only. It will not be considered as part of our estate. However, I will cough up half the value of these two items even if I have to sell my blood and give them to you. Will that do?!"

"After divorce, Zijin will follow you and Nan Nan me. The small courtyard and the Qiao residence will all belong to you. I won't take half of it. Nan Nan will not care about it either. I'm taking care of Nan Nan and will, of course, find ways to raise her. When Zijin attends college, she needs to spend quite a lot of money. But I have to take care of Nan Nan too. In that case, after settling our divorce, I'll give you a monthly allowance of one hundred yuan until Zijin graduates from college."

"O-Old Qiao. It's only the seventh day of the Lunar New Year. You... what do you mean by all these? You... you don't want me anymore?" Ding Jiayi was stunned. They were merely talking about the television. She did not understand why Qiao Dongliang would link the topic to divorce.

All this while, Ding Jiayi had never thought of getting a divorce. She really could not bear to leave Qiao Dongliang.

Qiao Dongliang was still so intimate to her on the eve of the Lunar New Year. It was just seven days later and this man did not care about her anymore?

"It's not that I don't want you anymore. You're the one who doesn't want me. At the mention of money, your eyes are all red and you're so calculative with me. Have I made myself clear? If we don't divorce, we won't ever get this clear. We can only clear this matter after a divorce. If you don't wish to live with me anymore, that's fine. I won't force you. We'll go on our separate ways soon. Perhaps you can even find another man seeing that you're still young. When the time comes, you have to rub your eyes and find someone you truly wish to be with. This time, no one is forcing you to get married. You don't need to pick the wrong person in a hurry anymore."

Qiao Dongliang felt extremely sick and tired, especially when he was together with Ding Jiayi. It was much more tiring than working.

“No, I don’t wish to get a divorce. I’m not divorcing.”

“Then, that television and phone, do you still want half of them?”

“I...” She could not bear to part with such a huge sum of money, yet she did not wish to divorce. Could she think of a way to get the money first, and then do away with the topic of marriage later?

“Old Qiao, don’t be so annoying. You’re just angry that I’m materialistic. You should think about what you are doing. Your heart only has Qiao Nan as your daughter now. Yes, I’m a woman and I’m not capable of earning as much money as you do. If I rely on myself alone, I can’t raise Zijin up at all, and neither can I support her in her studies. The more this is the case, the more I have to plan for Zijin so that she will not be shortchanged.” Ding Jiayi would not concede defeat. If Old Qiao was not so biased, would she need to worry so much and cause her marriage to suffer?

“I’m biased toward Nan Nan? I did a lot for Nan Nan? Ding Jiayi, you still have the face to say this. Who did I spend my savings over a decade on? Come on, tell me! Not to mention spending all my savings, I even left the whole Qiao residence to Zijin and you. Am I biased toward Nan Nan or Zijin? Do you have any conscience? Is this house ours? It’s borrowed!” Qiao Dongliang was utterly disappointed. His elder daughter was selfish, and his wife, Ding Jiayi, was basically blind and heartless.

“Every time I think of the things that I have done for Nan Nan, I can’t hold my face up as her father!” Qiao Dongliang scratched his face hard and caused many red lines to appear on it.

“Old Qiao, I can’t even recall the number of times that you’ve brought up divorce. Old Qiao, are you serious?” Ding Jiayi ground her teeth. It was only right that Old Qiao was good to Zijin. But every single cent that Old Qiao spent on the wretched girl was a waste. Zijin should be spending that money instead.

“I’m serious.” Qiao Dongliang revealed a smile that was uglier than a cry.

Divorce.

This word was typically used by the woman, especially for the sake of threatening their husband. However, in their household, the situation was reversed. He was the one who had been threatening Ding Jiayi with this, hoping that Ding Jiayi would change her temperament and restrain herself a little.

Sorrow. This was Nan Nan's and his sorrow.

“Old Qiao, I don't know if you have other thoughts. If your heart is not with me anymore, I can't stop you. You want to divorce? Fine. But I have a condition.”

Chapter 373: Write an IOU for Divorce

“Give me half the money you spent on the television and phone first. You've agreed that the small courtyard of the Qiao family will be Zijin's and mine. Give me the money. Tomorrow, wait for me at the Civil Affairs Bureau. We will divorce. Will this do? You're not stopping me from finding another man? It should be... I should not stop you from finding another woman!”

That set of television was worth a lot of money. Old Qiao wanted to use divorce to threaten her. No way!

This was the first time that Ding Jiayi agreed to divorce. Qiao Dongliang really did not know if he should feel happy or angry.

In the end, Qiao Dongliang took a deep breath. “You want money. Sure. Still the same saying. I will give you the money after we are divorced. If we're not divorced, you won't get a single cent.”

They had been a couple for so many years. Did she really treat him as a fool?

“No way, I want to see the money first. Give me the money today and I'll go to the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow.”

“I'll give you the money first? What if you don't appear after taking the money and refuse to get a divorce? What should I do?”



Ding Jiayi bit her teeth. “Do you think I really treasure you so much? Why will I refuse to divorce after taking the money? If you’re worried that I won’t turn up at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow after getting the money, I’m also worried that you won’t give me the money after I’m divorced with you!”

“If you continue to talk in this manner, we can’t continue with this conversation.” Qiao Dongliang pursed his lips and refused to talk further with Ding Jiayi. “If we don’t divorce, you won’t have anything. I won’t give you any more money. You have to settle Zijin’s tuition and miscellaneous fees on your own.”

“You... You told those people not to lend me money. How do you expect me to settle this?!”

“You can do whatever you like. Since you’ve already known about the situation, this means that you’ve obviously made the trips and used my name to borrow money again. Ding Jiayi, let me tell you, whether we’re getting a divorce or not, don’t you ever wish to borrow money in my name again! I will not give it to you even if I get a single cent. Our relationship is only reduced to talks about money. We really can’t go on with such lives. If you don’t want to divorce, that’s fine too. Anyway, the law dictates that if we are separated for two years, the court will deem that our marriage has ended even if you refuse to divorce by then. We’ve already lived separately for six months. There’s still one year left. Before Nan Nan graduates, we will be able to settle the issue between us.”

Ding Jiayi knew the law. He was not ignorant either!

Ding Jiayi’s lips shivered. She only wanted to use divorce to get money from Old Qiao and would decide on what to do later. This time, it seemed that Old Qiao was determined to divorce her. Why? Why did it come to this?

“Tell me, how do you wish to proceed with the divorce? Do you want to take half the money tomorrow when we settle the divorce or wait for one year? I’ll be candid here. One and a half years later, I won’t provide you with a monthly allowance anymore. Zijin will already be eighteen years old. I’ve fulfilled my duty as a father. At that time, even if we go to court, the judge can’t interfere with this.”

Ding Jiayi refused to speak but Qiao Dongliang became increasingly serious.

Ding Jiayi had squandered all his savings. She even bullied his younger daughter and tarnished his reputation. She made him lose all his dignity in front of his former comrades.

Aside from being unfaithful, she had done all the bad things that a woman could ever do to a man.

Qiao Dongliang was sick of it. He could no longer maintain such a relationship.

If he forced himself to do so, he might not be able to live for more than a few years.

“Then, what if you refuse to give me the money after we divorce? What should I do?” There was a tremble in Ding Jiayi’s tone. She asked as her face turned as white as a sheet.

“This...” Qiao Dongliang was stunned. It was the truth that he did not buy the television and phone. At this moment, Qiao Dongliang really could not cough up that huge sum of money to give to Ding Jiayi.

“This is a simple matter to resolve.” Zhai Sheng, who was coming out as he wiped his hands, had a flash in his eyes. He said calmly, “Uncle Qiao, you can write her an IOU. I’ll be your guarantor. If Uncle Qiao is unable to give you the money after the divorce, you can simply take this IOU to the Zhai’s residence and ask me for the money.”

“This is our domestic affair. What has it got to do with you!” Ding Jiayi was furious beyond her senses. This ‘nephew’ of hers not only did not lend her a helping hand at this critical juncture but also pushed her into the hole. It was really...

“Uncle Qiao, what do you think?” Zhai Sheng ignored Ding Jiayi. He was looking only at Qiao Dongliang and let Qiao Dongliang make a decision.

“This could do.” Qiao Dongliang nodded. “Now that the issue about the money has been settled, are we still meeting at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?”

At this juncture, Ding Jiayi was caught in a dilemma.

Ding Jiayi clenched her fists, perspiring profusely. She was in a fix. She wanted both her husband and money. She could not give up on any of these two. “Fine, write me an IOU now. We’ll divorce at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow. Give me the money. We should get the unpleasantness out of the way as well. Tell me honestly how much this television and phone cost. If the prices are not real, what I’ve said today is void but I’m still taking the money!”

Qiao Dongliang simply looked at Zhai Sheng.

Zhai Sheng smiled. "Uncle Qiao, there should be receipts for the newly purchased television and phone. Can you find them?"

"There should be some receipts. I'll go and find them. Most probably, they are in the big carton boxes that came with the television. I didn't look at it carefully earlier."

"Sure, go look for it. You just need to bring over the plastic bag and the papers in the boxes."

"Okay." Of course, Qiao Dongliang was quick to find the things in his own house. He immediately brought over what Zhai Sheng asked for.

Zhai Sheng directly took out two receipts from the plastic bag. "The costs of the television and the phone are clearly stated on the receipts. Take a look at it yourself."

Ding Jiayi took over the receipts and looked at the individual prices on these two receipts.

Compared to the television in the small courtyard of the Qiao family, this set was much better albeit only slightly pricier.

"Uncle Qiao, write the IOU." The prices were right before them. It was much easier to settle the remaining matters.

"Writing the IOU is not a problem." But he certainly did not have so much money. Did he really have to let Ding Jiayi take this IOU to Zhai Sheng to ask for money after they divorced at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?

Just the thought of it made Qiao Dongliang feel ashamed.

"Don't worry." Zhai Sheng smiled. A problem that could be resolved with money was not considered a problem. It was easy to settle this sum of money.

“Then, fine.” Seeing the look on Zhai Sheng’s face, Qiao Dongliang felt much more assured. Anyway, he had already borrowed more than a thousand yuan from Zhai Sheng. There was no difference in borrowing another thousand yuan. He would repay him gradually and would clear his debts eventually.

With nary a word, Qiao Dongliang took out a pen and paper and wrote the IOU as per what he and Ding Jiayi had agreed upon. Finally, he signed his name. “It’s your turn now.”

Ding Jiayi looked at the contents of the IOU. She also signed it after confirming that there was no issue with it.

After Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi finished signing it, Zhai Sheng also put his sinewy handwriting on the paper.

“Hold on to this IOU. After we settle the proceedings tomorrow and you’ve taken the money, pass it back to me then.”

#### Chapter 374: You Make the Choice Whether to Divorce

After finalizing the IOU, Qiao Dongliang did not dawdle. He would not withhold what he should give Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi’s hands shivered, but she took the ‘money’ and held on to it tightly.

“There are guests in my house today. It’s not convenient for you to stay put. If you wish to entertain your guests, that’s fine. Go back to your small courtyard to do so. I’ll definitely not join you.” Qiao Dongliang gave a deep sigh of relief as if he had just resolved a huge matter.

Not to mention Ding Jiayi, even Qiao Dongliang did not understand why they would end up divorcing when everything seemed fine earlier.

Having been a couple with Ding Jiayi for so many years, Qiao Dongliang might not have to do this to end the marriage as long as Ding Jiayi was willing to change or even restrain herself.

However, the honest and upright Qiao Dongliang was really unable to tolerate Ding Jiayi's behavior today.

What Ding Jiayi did today not only embarrassed herself but also Qiao Dongliang. It made Qiao Dongliang unable to lift his head as an individual.

"I..." Ding Jiayi still shamelessly wished to address Miao Jing as a 'sister' and drag Miao Jing out of the house with her. However, Miao Jing had followed Qiao Nan to her room earlier and had not stepped out of it since. She did not bother about Ding Jiayi as well. Ding Jiayi was still suffering from having negotiated with Qiao Dongliang about the divorce.

The emotionally confused Ding Jiayi sniffed. "I'm leaving. I'll host my sister. I don't need you to tell me what to do. I'll certainly host my sister at my own house!" Having that said, Ding Jiayi held on to the IOU and ran out of the small quad.

"Sigh." Ding Jiayi finally left, but Qiao Dongliang's mood was not any better. He looked extremely downhearted.

He was already a middle-aged man and he was divorcing. Most depressingly, his wife was gone, his money was gone, and even his house was gone.

Qiao Dongliang felt confused and was at a loss as he thought about how he could support his daughter given his situation.

"Uncle Qiao, I'll send the money to you tomorrow." Zhai Sheng poured a cup of tea for Qiao Dongliang. "Uncle Qiao, perhaps this is better for you, Nan Nan, and her. It may be better for your family of four."

"What is better for our family of four?" Qiao Nan, who came out to get a cup of water for Miao Jing, heard the last sentence of the conversation.

"Nan Nan, I'm going to divorce your mom," Qiao Dongliang said in an earth-shattering manner.

At this moment, in the small courtyard of the Qiao family.

“What? You and Dad are going to divorce? Mom, you’re crazy!” Qiao Zijin screamed. She smiled sarcastically. “Mom, don’t joke with me. If you really want to divorce, Dad will not be afraid. We’re the ones who need to worry, yet you used this to threaten Dad? Are your brains flooded? I only asked you to go and take the things, but you’re actually divorcing Dad. Mom, what is wrong with you?”

She did not bring back the things but was going to have a divorce.

Qiao Zijin was spinning in anxiety. “Mom, if your mind was not in the right state today, you should not have gone there then. You... you! I really don’t know what to say. You’re crazy. You’re really crazy!”

“Alright, don’t kick up a fuss anymore. Do you think I feel happy about this? Am I the one being crazy? It’s your Dad. He insisted to divorce me. Did I have a choice?” Ding Jiayi was so regretful but the matter had been cast in stone. Unless Old Qiao could not give her the money tomorrow, they would definitely divorce.

“Mom, you can continue to lie if you wish to. Everything was going well. Why did Dad suddenly mention divorce? Do you think I’ll believe you? Weren’t you just taking some dry goods? How did you provoke Dad?” At the end of the conversation, Qiao Zijin was having a headache.

If she had known that this would happen, she should have thought of a way to resolve it herself. Her mother was doing her a disservice. She had to be even busier now.

She was only supposed to take a little stuff. Qiao Zijin really did not understand how it resulted in her mother getting a divorce with her father. Her mother was truly a genius!

“I... Didn’t I do all those things for the good of our family? I just wanted to grab the opportunity to find a path for your dad and me. Who knew that your dad would turn crazy and want to divorce me! How much is his dignity worth for anyway? Are pride and dignity more important than money and our future? Relatives like the Zhai family are not within our reach usually. A rare opportunity like this is hard to come by. If I didn’t go forward to interact with them, I’d be truly crazy then.” She did not do anything wrong. Everything that she did was for the sake of this family.

It was Old Qiao who wanted his pride too much. He not only failed to understand her good intentions, but he also kicked up a fuss.

“What exactly happened?” Qiao Zijin asked with a stiff face.

“It’s like this...” Ding Jiayi spoke about the matter regarding Miao Jing. “Tell me, should I give up such a good opportunity? Zijin, tell me. This time, was it not your dad who was overly concerned about his dignity? It’s already fine that he’s so full of pride, but he even wanted to divorce me. It’s so infuriating.”

“Alright, don’t talk about it anymore.” Qiao Zijin rubbed her own forehead. “It’s not like this was your first time knowing that Dad wants to keep his dignity. He wants to keep his dignity in front of his former comrades, and the more so in front of the Zhai family. The feelings that he has for the soldiers and the army, don’t you know it better than others? Dad was also cornered by you.”

It was, of course, a good opportunity to be associated with the Zhai family.

However, the pretext was that the Zhai family had to be willing to.

Qiao Zijin knew all along that she was too close to Wang Yang and was stooping to flattery. The difference was that she was willing to curry favor and Wang Yang was willing to accept it.

If Wang Yang did not defer to her tactics, she would then retreat in the face of overwhelming odds and leave some dignity for herself. Similar to the Zhai family, a family of high status like the Wang family would not yield to constant pestering. If pestering was of any use, the relatives of the Zhai family would have queued to the other side of the earth. It would never be the turn of the Qiao family.

“Dad even wrote you an IOU. Are you really going to divorce with Dad tomorrow?”

“What can I do if I don’t? If I don’t, where can I get the money to let you continue your studies? You’re now in senior high school and I already can’t afford it. When you attend college... I don’t even wish to think about it. Your dad said that if he and I divorce, he’ll not only give me a sum of money but also a monthly allowance of a hundred yuan. Judging by this, I still need to find a job.” At the mention of finding a job, Ding Jiayi felt so miserable that she wanted to cry.

Ding Jiayi suffered much when she was working previously. She finally found an excuse to revert to a full-time housewife again.

After the divorce, Ding Jiayi’s future life would not be easy anymore.

“You already know this, yet, you still want to divorce?!” Given that meager ability of her mother, she could neither earn much money nor suffer hardships. The one hundred yuan monthly allowance from her father was not enough for them to rely on!

Blamed by the elder daughter, Ding Jiayi, who was in an extremely bad mood, also exploded. “Alright, don’t complain anymore. Who did I do all these for? Wasn’t it because of you that your dad and I became like this? Your dad is unhappy that I’m biased toward you and spare all my thoughts for you. That’s why he wanted to divorce me! You’re blaming me? Fine, I’ll let you decide on this matter. There’s money if I divorce your dad. There’s no money if I don’t. What do you want me to do? I’ll listen to you. Won’t that do?”

### Chapter 375: Why Didn’t You Tell Me?

“You will listen to me? If I refuse to let the two of you get a divorce, then you won’t go to the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?” Qiao Zijin felt exasperated too. She could not understand how the situation turned out this way.

“If you tell me not to go, then I won’t.” There was a flash in Ding Jiayi’s eyes. “But your dad said that I won’t receive a single cent if I don’t turn up. He also said that you are already eighteen years old and are considered an adult. Thus, he has fulfilled his responsibilities as a father. If I don’t go, he won’t give us a single cent in the future.”

“Then, what are your thoughts on this?” Qiao Zijin sat down and gave a huge sigh. “Mom, you’re really too much. How did you kick up such a big fuss and force Dad to divorce you?”

“Was it me who kicked up a fuss? Obviously, your dad has been thinking about it for a long time.” Ding Jiayi was not pleased. “This is not the first time that your dad mentioned divorce to me.”

“...” Qiao Zijin bit the back of her thumb again and again.

It was not that she could not bear to leave her own father. She could not bear to let go of the money that he earned. She obviously had a share in it, but all of it would be spent on Qiao Nan instead.

“Zijin, where are you going?” At the sight of Zijin standing up and walking toward the door, Ding Jiayi was so frightened that she held on to Qiao Zijin. “Zijin, Mom did so many things for you. Don’t tell me you’re going to find your dad now and leave me in the lurch?”



Qiao Zijin sneered. "Follow my dad? What will I gain? Even if I follow him, he will only spend all his money on Qiao Nan. Don't worry. I'm going out to find someone, but not Dad."

"Who are you going to look for?"

"Of course I'm going to look for someone who can help our family. Mom, don't worry. I know what to do." Pulling away from Ding Jiayi's hands, Qiao Zijin left in a determined manner. She left Ding Jiayi on pins and needles and waiting alone at home.

On the eighth day of the Lunar New Year, Qiao Nan prepared breakfast for Qiao Dongliang early in the morning. "Dad, don't be anxious about this matter. Actually, you can be there at a later time. Mom may not be there so early." It was also a question whether her mother would turn up today.

Her mother would agree to divorce for the sake of a meager gain, but it was doubtful whether Qiao Zijin would agree to it.

The topic of divorce. After a night of peace, Qiao Nan wondered whether today's divorce would occur. It was truly questionable.

Qiao Nan was shocked that it had not been an empty threat. He was really going to divorce her mother.

"I'll feel more at ease if this matter is resolved earlier. After going through such long torture with your mom, I'm exhausted. In the future, Dad just wishes to protect you and lead a peaceful life. Nan Nan, when you attend college, can Dad stay with you too? Will you mind?"

Qiao Nan was not the only one who wished to run away from the city that Ding Jiayi was staying in. Even Qiao Dongliang was nearly driven mad by Ding Jiayi.

"Why would I mind? It's fine as long as Dad doesn't feel uneasy about it." Qiao Nan shook her head. Right. After her parents divorced, the small courtyard of the Qiao family would be given to her mother and Qiao Zijin. Her father had nothing else in Ping Cheng. He would only be left with her, his daughter.

If she left, there would be no point for him to continue staying in Ping Cheng.

“I’m contented to hear that. Stay at home. Right. If that Chen Jun comes, just pretend that you’re not at home. Don’t open the door and let him enter the house. Understand?”

“Chen Jun?” Why did her father mention Chen Jun all of a sudden? He only met him once. “Dad, nothing happened. Why did you mention this suddenly?”

“What Zhai Sheng said is right. The moral values of humans are degenerating day by day in this society. You’re a young lady and should be more cautious. You can’t go wrong with that. Why will anyone visit a lady’s house on the first day of the Lunar New Year? I’ve been thinking and I feel that there’s something odd about Chen Jun. He’s eccentric and doesn’t seem upright.”

“Brother Zhai? Dad, you told Brother Zhai that Chen Jun visited our house on the first day of the Lunar New Year?” When did that happen? Why didn’t she know about it?

“You don’t need to care about this. Remember what Dad told you, okay?” The focus here was not Zhai Sheng. Most importantly, it was to ignore Chen Jun.

He only met Nan Nan two to three times, yet he dared to visit their house without giving any prior notice. He was too casual.

“Fine, I won’t see him. I promise you that I won’t open the door for anyone who comes today unless you’re back. Will that do?” Qiao Nan was amused.

Qiao Dongliang was holding the money that was sent over by Zhai Sheng. He nodded. “Good. I’m leaving. Watch after the house.”

After sending Qiao Dongliang off with her eyes, Qiao Nan acted according to Qiao Dongliang’s instructions and shut the door of her house tightly. She then went into the house and continued to read.

Knock, knock, knock...

Someone was knocking on the door.

Before Qiao Nan could stand up, she heard Zhai Sheng's voice. "Nan Nan?"

Upon hearing that it was Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan returned to her seat and ignored Zhai Sheng as she held her book.

Before Qiao Nan could flip a page of the book, a person appeared and blocked the ray of light from shining on her book. All of a sudden, there was darkness before Qiao Nan's eyes and her body felt light. Someone had carried her.

When Qiao Nan regained her senses, she was already sitting on a 'human sofa' and not the stool. "Since you're at home, why did you pretend that you're not? Why did you ignore me?"

Qiao Nan's face turned red. "My dad told me not to open the door for anyone who comes today. He asked me to pretend that I'm not at home because there are too many baddies nowadays!"

Zhai Sheng pinched Qiao Nan's face. "Are you angry?"

Qiao Nan lifted her chin and looked at Zhai Sheng. "Angry? What am I angry about?"

"Fine, you're not. Then, I want to tell you that I'm angry." Zhai Sheng's face looked stiff. He even gave a pat on Qiao Nan's bottom.

"Why are you angry? Now you're playing the blame game with me." Qiao Nan was fuming. "Brother Zhai, how could you ask my dad about me behind my back? You should respect me and should not casually spy on my privacy. Brother Zhai, I really didn't know that you're this kind of person!"

"There's nothing that you can't share with others. Why can't I know about it? Unless you have a guilty conscience?" Zhai Sheng also knitted his brows.

"If you really wish to understand, you can ask me directly!"

"If I ask you, will you tell me about Chen Jun?" Zhai Sheng was both amused and angry. "When the time comes, you will only treat Chen Jun's existence as irrelevant and unimportant. You will think that it's unnecessary to tell me. Is that right?"

“...” Qiao Nan was speechless. She only managed to say after much struggle, “Still, you shouldn’t have done that. Moreover, how did you know that I’ll definitely not tell you? If Chen Jun looks for me again, I’ll definitely let you know. Otherwise, what if you misunderstand me?”

Qiao Nan had long thought about it. Most probably, Chen Jun targeted her because of Wang Yang.

Since she had already told Uncle Zhu about this matter, he should be able to fully resolve it.

If Chen Jun did not appear before her again, this meant that the matter had been resolved. Not bringing it up to Brother Zhai would not be an issue then, lest Brother Zhai became distracted. He already had plenty of things on his mind to worry about.

#### Chapter 376: Absolute Loyalty

Upon hearing that Qiao Nan was worried that he would misunderstand, Zhai Sheng’s expression looked more at ease. “At least, you still have some conscience.”

“I’ve always been full of conscience!” Qiao Nan said with displeasure as she snorted.

“Why do you have to tell me only when Chen Jun comes again?” Based on what Uncle Qiao said, Chen Jun was definitely up to no good. There was no reason for Nan Nan not to tell him.

Qiao Nan sighed. “If Chen Jun comes again, that means Uncle Zhu is unable to resolve this matter. To prevent the situation that you will hear false rumors about Chen Jun and me from others, I’ll definitely let you know first to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding between us.”

“You’re quite rational.” Again, Zhai Sheng looked happier. “Why did you mention Zhu Chengqi? What has Zhu Chengqi got to do with Chen Jun?”

“The matter is like this...” Qiao Nan narrated the situation of the Zhu family to Zhai Sheng. “So, I’m guessing that most likely, Chen Jun is wooing me because of Wang Yang.”

There was a sharp look in Zhai Sheng's eyes. "You're so certain? You seem to understand Chen Jun very well, don't you?"

"..." Qiao Nan's body turned a little stiff. "This has got nothing to do with whether I understand him or not. This is a woman's sixth sense. If you're present at that time, you'd definitely feel the weird atmosphere between Chen Jun and Wang Yang. When Chen Jun came to my school previously, he was very eloquent and soon after, both the male and female students addressed him as their senior. There's no reason for him to be so quiet in front of Wang Yang. I even made clear a few times Wang Yang's identity and his relationship with the Zhu family. He didn't even utter a word to Wang Yang. Do you think that was normal?"

Zhai Shang gently squeezed Qiao Nan's slender arms so that she would relax.

As a soldier, Zhai Sheng could, of course, tell whether Qiao Nan was telling the truth. Furthermore, the tiny body in his arms that was extremely soft suddenly turned as stiff as a stone.

If Zhai Sheng did not feel anything, he would be letting down his identity as a soldier. "Yes, it's quite odd. What do you intend to do?"

Qiao Nan relaxed a little. "I don't have many plans. I've already told Uncle Zhu about this. He should be able to settle this properly."

"What if Zhu Chengqi can't resolve it?"

"Look for you." These three words jumped out of Qiao Nan's mouth as a matter of course.

The ferocious aura that Zhai Sheng had been keeping a leash on for an entire night after learning about Chen Jun's appearance completely vanished with the comfort of these three words from Qiao Nan. "Tell me. Do you think it's because his father wants to be promoted from the deputy commissioner to the commissioner?"

"I think so. I'm not too sure as well. I heard this from my classmates and it may not be accurate. But if I guessed it correctly, Chen Jun certainly wishes to help his father climb up the ranks. His family doesn't lack money."

"How did you know that his family doesn't lack money?" When he heard Qiao Nan's random understanding of the Chen family, Zhai Sheng could not help feeling jealous.

Qiao Nan raised her voice. “You’re asking this question because you’re not around on the first day of the Lunar New Year. My sister’s eyes are so sharp. She’s a shrew in front of me and a little white rabbit before Chen Jun. I don’t know how to tell from the clothes, but I know how to watch my sister’s expression.”

The corners of Zhai Sheng’s lips curled into a slight smile. “Fine, I’ll let you pass for Chen Jun’s matter. Then, how about Zhu Chengqi? He’s very good to your family. There are even color television and phone?”

Qiao Nan had been telling him not to announce their relationship to others and keep it a secret.

Otherwise, the first thing that Zhai Sheng would do as Qiao Nan’s boyfriend would be to install a phone.

Who knew that he was a few steps behind an old man on the two matters regarding the phone and television.

“Uncle Zhu wished to acknowledge me as his goddaughter, but I didn’t agree.”

“Acknowledge you as his goddaughter?” Zhai Sheng was a little surprised. “You’re sure of it?”

“Is there a need to confirm? Uncle had already made himself clear. What’s the matter? Didn’t you ask my dad about Chen Jun? How could you not ask him about this matter?” Qiao Nan turned her head to look at Zhai Sheng. Unexpectedly, Zhai Sheng hugged her so tightly that Qiao Nan could not even turn her head. Hence, she was unable to see Zhai Sheng’s expression.

Sensing Zhai Sheng’s possessiveness and awkwardness, Qiao Nan’s face turned red.

Nevertheless, she came to a realization soon after and asked in surprise, “Don’t tell me that after my dad mentioned about Chen Jun, you’re jealous and didn’t find out more from him regarding Uncle Zhu wanting to acknowledge me as his goddaughter?”

Zhai Sheng did not respond. He continued to hug Qiao Nan as his voice came from behind, “Nan Nan, you know my situation. No matter what my identity is, my entire heart is with you. Nevertheless, I also ask that you give me absolute loyalty. Can you do it?”

Zhu Sheng admitted that he had been jealous after knowing about Chen Jun's appearance in Qiao Nan's life. He felt so jealous that he did not even ask Qiao Dongliang about the situation with Zhu Chengqi.

He was a soldier and the time that he could spend with his family was too little. In addition, Nan Nan was very young.

Before the individual Chen Jun appeared, Zhai Sheng had always been very confident about their relationship. However, it was only when such a rival appeared that Zhai Sheng felt a little insecure.

"Sure, why not?" Qiao Nan did not move as she sat in Zhai Sheng's arms. Her tone was also extraordinarily firm. "Brother Zhai, don't think that I'm young and don't know what I'm doing. I've always been very serious about this matter ever since I nodded in agreement. Brother Zhai, don't worry. I'll fulfill my responsibility to you. No, I mean, I'm serious about you!"

Zhai Sheng leaned forward and placed his face on Qiao Nan's shoulder. The breath that he exhaled out from his nose constantly made Qiao Nan's soft and tender neck feel itchy. "You said this yourself, Nan Nan. Since you've already said this, I won't give you a chance to regret it no matter what happens in the future. Do you get it? When you reach legal age, we'll collect our wedding certificate. Army marriage is different from other marriages. We can't divorce. Do you understand?"

Once Nan Nan was married to him, they would be 'entangled' for life.

"Yes, I understand." Qiao Nan took a deep breath, her face slightly pale.

Marrying Zhai Sheng was a gamble, a gamble on Zhai Sheng's character. After all, divorce was not allowed in such a marriage. However, if Zhai Sheng had another woman outside in the future, given the status disparity between Zhai Sheng and her, she was not even qualified to request for a divorce unless Zhai Sheng gave his permission.

Nevertheless, she was willing to take the gamble.

"It's good that you understand." Hearing Qiao Nan's affirmative answer, Zhai Sheng's stiff body finally relaxed a little. Zhai Sheng was very clear that Qiao Nan was still young. Although she made a promise today, she might change her mind tomorrow. He was somehow acting like the big bullying the small, having the intention to 'kidnap' Qiao Nan.

However, since he had decided on his target, of course he had to act quickly, mercilessly, and accurately!

“If such happenings occur in the future, I hope that you can take the initiative to report to me directly. Don’t wait for me to ask you. You must adopt an active attitude. Understand?”

Chapter 377: Climbing Over the Wall to Kidnap Other People’s Daughter

Qiao Nan bit her lip, took a deep breath, and stubbornly turned her body toward Zhai Sheng.

This time, Zhai Sheng didn’t stop Qiao Nan and loosened his hands. Qiao Nan successfully turned and looked at Zhai Sheng. “Then, how about you? There’s something happening on your side too. What do you have to say about it? It’s already a society that advocates equality between male and female. Don’t tell me you are strict with others but lenient toward yourself?”

“Of course not.” Zhai Sheng held on to Qiao Nan neither too tightly nor loosely. “Since it’s my request of you, of course I’ll be able to fulfill it as well.”

“Then, how about Qiu Chenxi?” Qiao Nan knitted her brows unhappily. “Do you have anything to explain to me?”

“Zhai Hua told you?”

“Don’t bother about who told me. Just tell me, do you have anything to explain to me?” Qiao Nan avoided the question. “I’ll take this opportunity and use Qiu Chenxi’s matter to find out exactly what kind of matters and circumstances that I have to let you know, and what kind of matters that actually don’t need me to explain to you clearly about.”

“My dad and mom initially wanted me to be engaged to Qiu Chenxi and to marry her after she graduates from college.” Zhai Sheng did not wish to mention Qiu Chenxi. He did not feel anything, not even brother-sisterly love, for Qiu Chenxi. There were no feelings between the two and thus nothing for him to talk about.

Qiao Nan’s face turned stiff. After all, the chief and his wife already had a suitable daughter-in-law candidate in mind.



The relationship between Brother Zhai and her was already not that smooth without the existence of this person. Now, they would have a more difficult future given that his parents already had a model daughter-in-law in their hearts.

“You don’t have to give me this kind of expression. You’re very smart and have successfully settled your mother-in-law.” He planted a kiss on Qiao Nan’s forehead, his tone full of joy.

“Settled? When did that happen? Why don’t I know about it? Your mom doesn’t want you to marry Qiu Chenxi anymore?” Auntie Miao’s mind had changed so quickly?

“Yesterday, Qiu Chenxi’s family of three visited the house of the Zhai family.”

“To discuss your marriage?” At this moment, Qiao Nan felt more displeased. There was nothing between Chen Jun and her to begin with, but Brother Zhai was already jealous about it and even questioned her in an interrogative manner. Qiu Chenxi and Brother Zhai were almost getting married and finalizing the banquet seating arrangements. “Wait. That’s not right. Yesterday, Auntie Miao was at my house.”

Since Auntie Miao had already agreed to the marriage between Qiu Chenxi and Brother Zhai, she should have rushed home given that she was in Ping Cheng. Furthermore, Brother Zhai, the party concerned, was also at her house.

“So, do you understand my mom’s attitude now?”

The party concerned in the marriage was absent. One of his parents, Miao Jing, was also absent. The engagement between Zhai Sheng and Qiu Chenxi had obviously fallen through. Moreover, Old Master Zhai was not even back. Without Miao Jing, even if Old Master Zhai was around, it would not be easy for the Qiu family of three to enter the Zhai family’s residence.

“Don’t feel happy about it too soon. Auntie Miao doesn’t like Qiu Chenxi now, but it doesn’t mean that she’ll accept me.” Qiao Nan dared not be too optimistic. “Auntie Miao was seeking my opinions. She said you have fallen in love with a lady with poor family background and asked me what she should do. Auntie Miao’s current impression of me is not bad but if she knows about the two of us... Do you think Auntie Miao will dislike me even more?”

“Don’t worry. I will think of a way to resolve this. Now, aside from me, you just need to focus on your studies. I will settle my dad and mom.” As long as Qiao was willing to, the rest of the matters were not issues at all.

“It’s already the eighth day of the Lunar New Year. When are you going back to the army?” At the thought of Zhai Sheng’s situation, Qiao Nan asked gently.

“Tomorrow.”

“No wonder...” It was no wonder that Brother Zhai came again today although he was just here yesterday. No wonder the Qiao family visited the Zhai family yesterday to discuss the marriage between Qiu Chenxi and him. “It’s not possible for me to send you off.” Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. Before the relationship between Brother Zhai and her was exposed, she could not send Brother Zhai to the army like what girls usually did for their boyfriends.

“No problem. It’s the thought that counts.” Zhu Baoguo held on to Qiao Nan’s hands tightly. “After I return to the camp, write to me whenever you have spare time. Call me directly if there’s any matter. You can also formally acknowledge Zhu Chengqi as your godfather. You won’t be shortchanged. You will then be siblings with Zhu Baoguo in the future.” That way, he would have one less trouble.

“How will I be shortchanged if I acknowledge Uncle Zhu as my godfather?” If one could shortchange her so easily, would Wang Yang try to get close to Zhu Chengqi enthusiastically all this while?

“Don’t look down on yourself too much. Perhaps, someday, Zhu Chengqi will gain something because you are his goddaughter.” Nan Nan would be his wife in the future. She would be the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family. Zhu Chengqi might not necessarily gain nothing by becoming Nan Nan’s godfather.

“Alright, I won’t chat with you anymore. Since you’re returning to the army tomorrow, you should go home and keep your family company. You will arouse your parents’ suspicions if you keep going out. What if you bump into Auntie Miao when she looks for me?” Qiao Nan gave Zhai Sheng a push and tried to make him leave.

Zhai Sheng let go of Qiao Nan. “Sure, send me off.”

“Sure, I’ll send you off.” Qiao Nan did not haggle with Zhai Sheng over such a short distance. She stood up to send him off.

However, when she reached the entrance, she was stunned at the sight of the tightly shut door. “The door is not open?” Then, how did Brother Zhai get in earlier?

Zhai Sheng bent his waist and rested his hands on Qiao Nan’s shoulders. He then kissed her left cheek. “Remember to write to me, especially about Chen Jun. If Zhu Chengqi can’t settle it, tell me, okay?”

“Okay.” Qiao Nan nodded in a silly manner.

After receiving a reply and having taken his advantage, the corners of Zhai Sheng’s lips curled into a smile. He turned around and stepped a couple of times on the wall, held on to it, and smoothly flipped over it in the blink of an eye.

When Zhai Sheng landed, there was not much noise. It was only when Qiao Nan heard the sound of the car engine that she knew that Zhai Sheng had really left.

“...” An imaginary row of black lines appeared on Qiao Nan’s forehead. Brother Zhai actually climbed over the wall to enter her premise. He truly lived up to the name of a soldier with that agility of his. However, given his identity as a soldier, was it really appropriate for him to climb over the wall of someone’s house and kidnap other people’s daughter?

Dumbfounded, Qiao Nan stood at the main entrance for three minutes. The main door suddenly opened with a bang. “Nan Nan, why are you standing here? Did you know that I’m coming back?” Qiao Dongliang was surprised when he opened the door and stepped in.

“I just happened to come out to relax, in case I’ve sat and read for too long. It’s not good for my health and eyes. Dad, you’re back so soon?” Qiao Nan gave a guilty laugh.

“Don’t talk about it anymore.” Qiao Dongliang’s face turned black as he waved his hand. “Your mom agreed to divorce but wanted to wait one and a half years for the court to make its judgment.” He even woke up early and made a special trip to the small courtyard to fetch Ding Jiayi. True enough, Ding Jiayi played some tricks on him again.

Qiao Nan stared unblinkingly. “Did Mom really say that? To let the judge decide one and a half years later?”

“Yes, your mom is, again, dragging her feet and refusing to divorce. Does she think that I will soften my stance after one and a half years? This time, she really guessed it wrong.” Once he had made up his mind to divorce, he would even be able to wait ten years, not to mention one and a half.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips and pondered. This time, she did not know if her mother guessed it wrong, but she knew that her father had definitely guessed it wrong.

If the unsuccessful divorce today was due to her mother’s excuse of being unwell or any other matters in order to delay for a period of time before settling this, then her mother’s true intention was not to divorce.

However, today, her mother said to wait for one and a half years for the judge to decide. This clearly showed that her mother had some thoughts about divorce.

How did this happen?

It was impossible that her mother was truly willing to do so. Furthermore, there was Qiao Zijin.

Her father was the family’s source of income. Without her father, did Qiao Zijin still wish to continue with her studies? It was impossible that Qiao Zijin would let her parents leave each other. With Qiao Zijin holding her back, her mother should have been convinced not to divorce instead of having thoughts to do so.

Qiao Dongliang really wished to divorce, and Ding Jiayi had the intention to do so. Even Qiao Zijin could not hold her back.

The situation that Qiao Nan did not dare to wish for had occurred. She was stunned. Happiness came too sudden. It was simply unbelievable.

“Dad, then are you going to give Mom and Sister living allowance every month? After one week, Sister and I will be returning to school. How about my sister’s tuition fees?” The matter between her parents could not be so easily settled with just a word of divorce.

“Your mom said she doesn’t need me to bother about it.” This was something that Qiao Dongliang felt strange about. He had thought that since Ding Jiayi refused to go to the Civil Affairs Bureau, she would then take the opportunity to ask him for money first.

“Dad, don’t think too much. Let my mom be.” Qiao Nan poured Qiao Dongliang a cup of tea.

Having been mother and daughter for two lifetimes, Qiao Nan really could not decipher the trick that Ding Jiayi was up to this time.

“That’s right. She told me that I don’t need to give her money anymore. I feel less worried now. Nan Nan, study well. Dad will earn your tuition fees for college.” Qiao Nan forced a smile at Qiao Dongliang. He was serious about divorcing with Ding Jiayi, but he could not bring himself not to care about Qiao Zijin. This was a very difficult decision for Qiao Dongliang.

“Thanks, Dad.” Qiao Nan did not wish to drown Qiao Dongliang’s enthusiasm at this moment.

“Right, Nan Nan. Did Zhai Sheng come today?”

“No, no. Why did you ask, Dad?” Qiao Nan felt guilty and did not tell the truth.

“No? When I came back, I clearly saw Zhai Sheng’s car. Your mom didn’t go to the Civil Affairs Bureau, so the money that Zhai Sheng lent me is still in my hands. Maybe I’ll return it to him tomorrow?” Qiao Dongliang was still unable to repay the money that was borrowed from Zhai Sheng previously and he already felt bad about it.

He would feel worse if he borrowed more as it would only increase his debt.

“You saw Brother Zhai’s car? Perhaps he had some other matters to attend to and happened to pass by this area. You might have made a mistake as well. Return the money tomorrow? I’m afraid that can’t be done. Brother Zhai will be going back to the army tomorrow.”

“Going back to the army? Why didn’t I know?” Qiao Dongliang looked sullen. “I didn’t hear about this. Nan Nan, how did you know?”

“Yesterday! Brother Zhai came to our house yesterday, didn’t he? It was him who told me. He told me... He told me that he’ll be returning to the camp and asked me to write to him if I encounter any problems in the future. He said that if I have any questions in my studies, I can ask him too. Dad, didn’t Brother Zhai tell you?” Qiao Nan was stammering as she spoke.

Qiao Dongliang had a look of realization. “So, it’s like that. Nan Nan, your Brother Zhai is too polite. There are many important matters to look after in the army. Don’t disturb him if you don’t have any problems. As long as your mom doesn’t come and create trouble for us, we should not have too much of a problem in the future. It’s just that I don’t know when I can return him the money. I don’t feel at ease carrying this debt.”

“Brother Zhai will go back to the camp but he will be back eventually. Most likely, he will look for us first at that time. You can then return the money to him.”

“That’s fine too.” Qiao Dongliang nodded. “However, when you encounter anything that you don’t understand in your studies, shouldn’t you ask your teacher instead of Zhai Sheng? You don’t have to go to all that trouble since your teachers are closer and within your reach?”

“...” Qiao Nan laughed awkwardly. “Most likely... Brother Zhai will most likely be busy. Nevertheless, there are some questions that only Brother Zhai can help me with. The teachers at school may not be able to do so. Dad, you’ve finished your cup of water. I... I’ll go and get you another cup.”

If her father continued to question her, she would let the cat out of the bag.

On the ninth day of the Lunar New Year, Qiao Nan had originally thought of waking up earlier to return to the quad. Although she could not do it outright, she could still send Zhai Sheng off secretly just by being present.

However, Qiao Nan caught a cold that morning. She was not sure if it was due to the many happenings in recent days.

At the sight of Qiao Nan’s runny nose and constant sneezes, Qiao Dongliang refused to let Qiao Nan leave the house regardless of her reason.

Qiao Nan, who was lying on the bed, sighed regretfully. Brother Zhai was probably disappointed by her absence today...

There was the sound of someone knocking on the windows, and then came someone's voice shouting for Qiao Nan. "Nan Nan, Nan Nan..."

"Brother Zhai?" Qiao Nan jumped out of the bed immediately and put on an exterior coat. She then opened the windows. "Brother Zhai, didn't you return to the camp?"

"You have a cold?" At the sight of Qiao Nan's face, Zhai Sheng said gently, "Quickly go back to the bed and cover yourself properly with a blanket. Don't let the condition worsen. I'm going to return to the camp. I just wanted to see you before leaving. Alright, I'm leaving. Take good care of yourself."

"Okay." At the very least, she had seen Zhai Sheng. Although it was a brief meeting, Qiao Nan felt much more at ease. Fortunately, her father was out. Otherwise, Brother Zhai would have bumped into him.

Having fulfilled her wish, Qiao Nan felt more comfortable and returned to her bed. In a daze, she nearly fell asleep.

This time, Qiao Nan had left the windows opened and unlocked. Before Qiao Nan could react, Zhai Sheng bent his waist, did a somersault, and landed in her bedroom.

After entering Qiao Nan's bedroom, Zhai Sheng was too preoccupied to look around. He walked to Qiao Nan's bedside at lightning speed. "I've just bought the cold, fever, and cough medicine for you. Put them away properly. Remember to take good care of yourself. Don't let the medicines run out before I'm back."

Zhai Sheng had bought all kinds of medicine that Qiao Nan could think of.

Qiao Nan could even sell such a big bag of medicine.

Tears welled up in Qiao Nan's eyes. She then sniffed. "Brother Zhai, quickly return to the army. Don't worry. I'll be fine."

## Chapter 379: Mrs. Regiment Commander

“It’s only a minor cold. I will recover soon. Actually, I don’t catch a cold often. Don’t worry about me. I’ll certainly be fine. You bought me so much medication. I most likely won’t even be able to finish them by this time next year. Brother Zhai, you... you have to pay attention to your own safety too.”

“Alright, I know.” Zhai Sheng had, in fact, ‘squeezed out’ time in his busy schedule to visit Qiao Nan. He also spent some time to buy medicine for her. “Nan Nan, have a good rest. Remember to take your medicine. I’m leaving and will come and see you again when I’m back the next time.”

Having that said, Zhai Sheng dared not delay any further. He jumped out of Qiao Nan’s bedroom and shut the windows meticulously. He hopped into his car after he left the small quad and headed immediately for the army.

Qiao Nan, who was lying on the bed, held on tightly to the blanket. She then rubbed her face on the corner of the blanket that was pinched by Zhai Sheng before. She put away the medicine from Zhai Sheng properly before falling asleep peacefully.

Perhaps Zhai Sheng’s appearance was more effective than any kind of cold medicine. When Qiao Dongliang returned home from grocery shopping with cold medicine in hand, he found Qiao Nan looking much better. “Nan Nan, wake up and take your medicine. If you’re still sleepy, take your medicine first before continuing to sleep.”

“Dad.” Qiao Nan sat up and rubbed her eyes. She took the cold medicine with warm water. “Dad, I’m still feeling lethargic.”

“No worries. Continue to sleep.” Qiao Dongliang helped Qiao Nan lie down and covered her fully with the blanket. He was about to leave when he noticed that the windows in her bedroom were opened.

Qiao Dongliang halted his steps and wanted to ask Qiao Nan if she had opened the windows.



However, when Qiao Dongliang turned to look, Qiao Nan had already fallen asleep. Qiao Dongliang shook his head and closed the windows for Qiao Nan. He then left the room and prepared a meal for Qiao Nan to ensure that she had something to eat when she woke up.

“Happy Lunar New Year, Regiment Commander Zhai.” Zhou Jun was the first person that Zhai Sheng saw when he reached the camp.

Zhai Sheng entered his office, took off his coat, and hung it on the coat hanger. “It’s so early and you’re already looking for me. Is there any matter?”

“You’re in such a good mood, Regiment Commander Zhai. Is it because we’re going to have a Mrs. Regiment Commander soon?” Zhou Jun asked in a happy tone. Zhou Jun had found someone he liked. He could not wait for all his brothers in the camp to find a marriage partner whom they could get along with. He had the same wish for his senior supervisor, Zhai Sheng, too.

“If there’s a regiment commander, of course there’ll be a Mrs. Regiment Commander,” Zhai Sheng said as if he were implying something. “Talk about serious matters. Why did you look for me?”

“Regiment commander, I’d like to request you to pick a day of leave for me.” During the Lunar New Year, Zhou Jun had wanted to visit Nan Nan. Regrettably, something happened at home and he had to spend a total of ten days traveling. After he settled his household matter, Zhou Jun did not have any spare time to visit Qiao Nan.

Zhai Sheng knitted his brows. “Do you think I can approve this request?”

“Just half a day. I’ll be back as soon as possible. Will that do?” Zhou Jun, a 1.8-meter tall man, was acting pitiful in front of Zhai Sheng. It would really be pitiful of Zhou Jun if he could not settle the matter regarding his wife-to-be given that his age was already in the late twenties.

“No.” Zhai Sheng rejected. He had never gained any private benefit under the guise of serving the public, so why would he allow Zhou Jun to do so? “Right, I’m handing you a mission. Investigate this matter.”

“There’s a mission so soon? What is it?” At the mention of a mission, Zhou Jun’s attitude turned serious.

“Help me investigate this matter.” Zhai Sheng passed some information to Zhou Jun.

“Do we have to be the one to investigate this?” Zhou Jun felt odd when he read the materials. “Was this mission delegated from the top?” It did not seem to be.

“Go and investigate.” Zhai Sheng did not explain further. They could choose to interfere or ignore this matter, but Zhai Sheng wished to take part in this matter now.

“Yes, Regiment Commander Zhai. I promise to complete the mission.” Zhou Jun was always serious and proper toward work. He would complete the mission tasked by Zhai Sheng. After Zhou Jun left to handle the mission delegated by Zhai Sheng, Zhai Sheng called another person into his office.

However, the matter that was handed to this person was obviously much easier than that of Zhou Jun. It was only half a day and he had already handed Zhai Sheng the results of his investigation.

“Alright, you may leave now.” Zhai Sheng looked at the contents of the report and sneered. It seemed that Nan Nan’s suspicion was not unfounded. There was truly a problem with Wang Yang. He could not directly deal with Zhu Baoguo or sow discord among the members of the Zhu family. Hence, he targeted Nan Nan.

Putting down the information on hand, Zhai Sheng simply made a phone call. “Hello. Yes, it’s me. There’s something...”

“Happy Lunar New Year.”

“Happy Lunar New Year.”

Before the fifteenth day of the Lunar New Year, Qiao Zijin and Qiao Nan had started school.

After the Lunar New Year, many students of Ping Cheng High School seemed to have grown horizontally. But when He Yun saw Qiao Nan, she was so jealous. “Qiao Nan, did you go through the Lunar New Year? Other people grow fatter during the New Year, but why did you lose weight?!”

“Exactly! Your face is almost meatless now.” Tang Mengran, who gained the most weight, wished so much to take some meat off her body and give them to Qiao Nan. It would only be fair then.

“Don’t talk about it.” Qiao Nan’s face turned black, sullen. Other people could have a happy Lunar New Year as long as they did well in school, but not her.

“Why?” Fang Fang adjusted her glasses. “You’re the top student of the cohort. Don’t tell me you didn’t have a good Lunar New Year?”

“My menses came on the Lunar New Year’s Eve, and I was bleeding profusely. It was gushing non-stop on the ninth day of the Lunar New Year. I was also taken ill by a serious cold. I simply stayed in bed for three days.” Qiao Nan licked her fingers and counted. Who would be more unlucky than her during the Lunar New Year?

“Hahaha. No wonder.” Tang Mengran felt more peaceful at heart. Menses was the most annoying thing. Damn, the pain was already torturing, not to mention the continuous bleeding. Moreover, Nan Nan had it on the night of the Lunar New Year’s Eve. That was even more torturing. In other words, Nan Nan did not enjoy the Lunar New Year at all.

“Pitiful child.” Tao Zhenqin rubbed Qiao Nan’s head and smiled as she gloated.

“Xiao Qiao, you arrived earlier than me.” A few lackeys were following behind Zhu Baoguo as they strode into the classroom. “Right, you’ve got a letter from my dad. I don’t know what’s written in there. It’s so secretive. He forbade me from reading it. As if I care.” Zhu Baoguo snorted.

“It’s from Uncle Zhu?” Qiao Nan took the letter but did not open it immediately. “Alright, shrink your neck. Since Uncle Zhu won’t let you read it, I’ll definitely not open it in front of you. Most likely, Uncle Zhu found the book that I requested him to. Anyway, you’re not interested in these books.” What did Zhu Chengqi want to tell her that Zhu Baoguo could not know?

## Chapter 380: Zhai Sheng Took Actions

“Both of your families are really good friends with each other. Qiao Nan, you know Zhu Baoguo’s father?” Zheng Lingling asked in surprise. She had thought that Qiao Nan was joking when giving such reasons so that she would not be seen to have a close one-to-one personal relationship with Zhu Baoguo. Unexpectedly, the two families were really on good terms.

“It is true all this while.” Qiao Nan put away her schoolbag. “Have you all gone to the dormitory yet?”

“We did.”

“He Yun reached the school the earliest today. The sun is strong and she has taken all our blankets to dry in the sun.”

“Thanks, He Yun.” Qiao Nan was quite happy that the blanket was drying under the sun. The blanket in the dormitory had been untouched for one month. If this were not done, there would be a musky smell when they slept with it.

“Don’t mention it.” He Yun smiled big-heartedly. “You’ve helped me so much in normal times. It’s rare that I can be of some help. Next time, if I reach the school later than all of you, please be more self-aware and help me dry the blankets under the sun.”

“I’ll go back and take all the blankets down later,” Qiao Nan said with a conscience.

“I know that Nan Nan is the best.” He Yun gave a thumbs-up. She really did not wish to return to the dormitory after she finished her meal.

The school life in Ping Cheng High School was quite dynamic. After the students paid their tuition fees, the class monitor of respective classes made arrangements to collect and distribute the textbooks. They would commence self-study in the evening and start attending lessons the next day.

Seeing that the sun was not that bright anymore, Qiao Nan tasked the mission of tidying up her desk to Zhu Baoguo and made a trip back to her dormitory. She then took down all the blankets that were drying under the sun.

After placing them properly, Qiao Nan opened the letter that Zhu Baoguo passed to her.

As Qiao Nan read its contents, she finally understood why her mother was willing to delay one and a half years before getting a divorce. Even if her father was not willing to give them any money, she and Qiao Zijin would not care. Wang Yang was the mastermind behind this matter.

With Wang Yang as the backing, of course Qiao Zijin would not bother about her poor father.

After reading the letter, Qiao Nan tore it without a word and flushed it down the pipe until she was certain that not a single piece of paper was left.

It was nothing bad that Wang Yang was willing to help her father support Qiao Zijin and her mother. However, was Wang Yang's family situation that good? Were they so wealthy that they were willing to support other people's wife and daughter?

Beside Qiao Nan, Zhu Chengqi, who just received this news, had the same thoughts too. "If the Wang family is so rich, they don't need to disburse that sum of money requested by the Wang family previously then." He would let Wang Qinglin gradually think of a solution himself. Wang Qinglin wanted to have achievements in his career, yet he was not willing to fork out money. That wouldn't do.

"Chief Zhu, that sum of money has already been withheld."

"Withheld? Who did it?" Zhu Chengqi lifted his head in surprise. Not many people dared to withhold the money from Wang Qinglin. After all, those people had to give some face to the Zhu family.

"It was done by the Zhai family. To be precise, it was done by Zhai Sheng."

"Zhai Sheng?" Zhu Chengqi put down what he was doing. "Do you know the reason?" Wang Qinglin had always been quite smooth and slick in his dealings with people. How did he offend Zhai Sheng? If he did not remember wrong, he had tried to let Wang Yang bond with Zhai Sheng before. However, he did not know why Wang Yang, who was so capable of pretending to be a good kid, failed to gain any benefit from Zhai Sheng.

At the thought of his son having been 'toyed' by Wang Yang for so many years, whereas Zhai Sheng would always make Wang Yang suffer a setback, Zhu Chengqi lamented. There was a big difference between his son and other people's son.

"I'm not sure. If the information that I received is not wrong, Zhai Sheng not only withheld Wang Qinglin's money but also seemed to be investigating the Chen family."

"The Chen family? That Chen Jun?" Was it the Chen Jun that he knew?

“The Chen family which has a deputy police commissioner in Ping Cheng.”

Zhu Chengqi made a few light knocks on the table with the pen in his hand. “Alright, I understand the situation now. You may leave.”

“Then, how about Wang Qinglin?” Did Chief Zhu still want to take action to teach Wang Qinglin a lesson?

“There’s no need to do so now.” Since someone had already taken the action to teach Wang Qinglin a lesson, he did not have to rush into it. Zhu Chengqi just wanted to teach Wang Qinglin a lesson, not to crush him. After all, Wang Qinglin was his brother-in-law. His sister, Zhu Qin, was still Wang Qinglin’s wife.

“I’m leaving then, Chief Zhu.”

Wang Qinglin had wanted to rise to the top of his career wholeheartedly. He was in this position today because of Zhu Chengqi, his elder brother-in-law. Everyone gave Wang Qinglin some face no matter what he did as they knew that he was Zhu Chengqi’s brother-in-law. They would make things convenient for Wang Qinglin if it was within their means.

With Zhu Chengqi as his elder brother-in-law, only Wang Qinglin himself knew how much he had benefited. He was often able to yield twice the results by doing half the work.

However, the ever successful him actually ran into some trouble on this occasion.

Wang Qinglin wished to achieve something prominent and successful while he was young, riding on his relationship with Zhu Chengqi. The speed at which he climbed the career ladder was definitely not slow.

Recently, Wang Qinglin was interested in a project as he saw the value in it. As long as he secured it, he would be able to make a great achievement. The biggest problem was the sum of money that was needed for the project. The rest of the problems could easily be settled.

For the sake of this, Wang Qinglin had been working on it long before the Lunar New Year. Basically, it was almost settled. Once the sum of money was disbursed and approved, he would then be able to commence work.

However, Wang Qinglin suddenly received a call. “What? The money was not disbursed? There were problems with certain parts of the project during the examining process? Are you sure? Didn’t you tell me before the Lunar New Year that the money would be disbursed within three months?”

“...”

“Impossible. Did anyone make a mistake? Can you help me check on this?”

“...”

“... It’s like that? Will this matter be easier to settle if I look for my elder brother-in-law?”

“...”

“Sure, I’ll settle my elder brother-in-law’s end. Once I’ve done that, you have to take faster actions. Take it as doing me a favor and disburse the loan. I’ll treat you to a meal next time. Ah, yes, let’s agree on this. I’ll have to trouble you, then.” Wang Qinglin hung up in a happy tone. Once the beeping sound was gone, Wang Qinglin’s face was all black.

This matter was only missing a nail on the board, yet someone dared to obstruct him at this juncture.

After pacing for a while in his office, Wang Qinglin simply picked up his phone and made a call home. “Zhu Qin, it’s me. I have something to tell you. Last year, I told you about a project, didn’t I? It was already confirmed, but someone just told me today that someone held back the money. Do you think you should call the house of the Zhu family to inform Dad?”

“Who has the guts to hold back your money?” Zhu Qin was astonished. “The matter about this project had initially been settled, yet they had to stir up so much trouble. I’ll tell Dad. Dad will bring this up to brother. Thereafter, brother will certainly pull some strings. Most likely, there won’t be any more problems then.”