

## RTAMM 401

### Chapter 401: Not Allowed to Smile in This Way at Other Women

Two weeks had passed and Qiao Nan was back from school this weekend. Qiao Dongliang took the initiative to ask Qiao Nan which course she chose. “Nan Nan, are you going to choose humanities or science?”

“Humanities.”

“Is it because science is more difficult?”

“No.” Qiao Nan denied. “My results are about the same for humanities and science subjects, but I’m more interested in humanities. Besides, Teacher Liu had a long chat with me. After learning of my decision, he is very supportive of me.”

“Teacher Liu? Isn’t that your form teacher? Was he the one I saw during the parent-teacher conference last year?”

“Yes.” Teacher Liu was the form teacher. It was no wonder that her father had an impression of him.

Qiao Dongliang nodded with relief. “Since Teacher Liu is supportive of you, it should be alright.” The teacher definitely knew more than him. What the teacher said must be correct.

“It’s strange that your sister had good results in the first year, but ever since she advanced to second year and chose the humanities course, her results have been falling behind. I remember she would always come in eighth place in her class in her first year. Nan Nan, is the humanities course difficult? How could her results drop so drastically?” Though it was not easy to maintain one’s standard, Qiao Zijin’s results had dropped too much. “Nan Nan, do you think your sister has chosen the wrong course?”

Qiao Nan was changing her shoes and halted in her tracks at the question. She twitched her lips and said, “Dad, I don’t think my sister has fallen very far behind. To be honest, my impression is that her performance in junior high school was worse than in high school. I was really surprised when I heard that she placed eighth in her class. Her improvement was tremendous.”

In the two lifetimes, no matter how clever Qiao Zijin was, she was neither interested nor good in her studies.

It was hard to believe that Qiao Zijin's results would improve by leaps and bounds when she was in high school.

"Is that so?" Qiao Dongliang was confused. "So, your sister's results have actually improved?"

"No idea. Dad, I am hungry. What are we having for dinner tonight?"

"I want to cook stir-fried spicy chicken tonight. The chicken was freshly slaughtered today. I will fry them now." Since Qiao Nan mentioned that she was hungry, Qiao Dongliang put Qiao Zijin's matter aside for now. There was nothing he could do about Qiao Zijin. What he must do now was to take better care of Qiao Nan so that she would not end up like Qiao Zijin.

Ring!

Qiao Nan had just sat down when the phone next to her rang.

"Nan Nan, answer the phone." Qiao Dongliang's voice could be heard from the kitchen.

Despite the long distance, Qiao Dongliang was still able to hear the phone ringing. His sense of hearing was very acute.

Ever since Zhu Baoguo gave this phone to the Qiao family, Qiao Dongliang did not have much opportunity to use the phone. It was only on rare occasions when the phone rang that he could be sure that the phone was still working.

"Hello?"

"It's me."

"Brother Zhai? What's wrong? Why are you calling me at this time?" Brother Zhai called at an opportune time. "Wait a minute. Brother Zhai, will Auntie Miao turn up suddenly like last time and

give me a big shock? Even though she did not suspect anything last time, she may discover something fishy if we keep this up.”

At the thought of what happened last time, Qiao Nan had yet to recover from the shock.

“My mom is busy right now.”

“Busy? What is Auntie Miao busy with?” What could she be busy with?

“Qiu Chenxi came to the army.”

“Why is she in the army?” Qiao Nan stomped her foot. Qiu Chenxi could be said to be her love rival. Though Auntie Miao did not like Qiu Chenxi, Chief Zhai seemed to like her very much and regard her as his daughter-in-law.

She had yet to gain the approval of her mother-in-law, and her father-in-law was already a big obstacle to them.

If Qiu Chenxi managed to make Auntie Miao have a change of heart, things would be bleak for Brother Zhai and her.

“She must be after me.” Zhai Sheng curled his lips. He could confirm that Nan Nan really liked him. As soon as she heard that Qiu Chenxi was at the camp, she seemed to be very anxious. “But I didn’t care about her. I am the regiment commander whereas she is merely an intern. She has no chance to see me.”

“Really? Won’t your dad come up with an excuse so that Qiu Chenxi can work with you?”

“Yes, but it is up to me whether to accept or not.” Nan Nan was spot on. His father liked to take things into his own hands.

“Brother Zhai, you’d better watch out. If I find out that you have been in close contact with Qiu Chenxi, that’ll be the end of us.” Qiu Chenxi came from a good family background. She was beautiful and had graduated from college. She was also about the same age as Zhai Sheng.

She had the upper hand only because Brother Zhai liked her, not Qiu Chenxi. Other than that, she had no confidence in winning against her.

Zhai Sheng could be heard laughing from the other side of the phone. His low-pitched laughter sounded like the cello. Qiao Nan could feel his breathing right beside her ear, making her ear particularly ticklish.

Qiao Nan took a deep breath. “Brother Zhai, don’t think you can get away with it by laughing. You are also not allowed to smile at other people, especially smiling in such a way to other women!”

Brother Zhai was not only good-looking and well-built, but also had a very soothing voice. He was perfect from head to toe.

If he was in the year after 2010 where the internet was the craze and people could upload their songs or clips onto the web, given Brother Zhai’s mesmerizing voice, he would be the talk of the town and well sought-after among the ladies.

“Now that I am on the phone with you, I should be allowed to smile in this manner.” Zhai Sheng switched the phone to another hand. “Nan Nan, you are usually very smart, but why is it that you are so muddle-headed now? I have known Qiu Chenxi for many years. If I wanted to be too close to her, would I need to wait until today?”

In other words, if Zhai Sheng had been willing, he would have taken a fancy to Qiu Chenxi long ago. They might even have gotten engaged and married each other. There would not be Qiao Nan in the picture.

Since it never happened, then it would never happen now or in the future.

Zhai Sheng was very clear about what he wanted. In this aspect, he had a very clear target in mind. Hence, it was impossible between him and Qiu Chenxi.

“I will accept your answer.” Qiao Nan blushed. Last week, she had just reprimanded Zhu Baoguo for being too childish, but she was not any better in front of Brother Zhai.

“I call you today because I have something to ask you. You will advance to the second year in the second half of the year. Is it time to choose the course?”

“Yes, I have chosen the humanities course.”

“Did your master give you any advice?”

“My master? Don’t mention him. He gave me the death order.”

## Chapter 402: Zhai Sheng’s Plan

At the mention of Lin Yuankang, Qiao Nan rolled her eyes. Nobody in the family interfered with her selection of either the humanities or science courses. Everyone respected her thoughts and opinions.

Even for Zhu Baoguo, the most that he did was to change his own aspirations in order to choose the humanities course so as to be in the same class as her.

Her master, whom she had known for a year, called her directly on the phone and told her to choose the humanities course.

“What about Zhu Baoguo?”

“I sent him to the science class,” Qiao Nan said helplessly. “Wait a minute. Brother Zhai, you have said so much just to ask me this question?”

Qiao Nan felt much better all of a sudden.

She was worried that Qiu Chenxi would always spend time with Brother Zhai. However, it was, in fact, the same for Brother Zhai. He was worried that Zhu Baoguo would always stay by her side.

“You should heed your master’s advice.” Zhai Sheng refused to answer her question. Qiu Chenxi would not be a threat to Qiao Nan, but he had to be mindful of Zhu Baoguo.

“Nan Nan, you are still on the phone? Who called you?” Qiao Nan was on the phone, chatting happily with Zhai Sheng while Qiao Dongliang, wearing an apron, came out from the kitchen with a plate of spicy stir-fried chicken. The fragrant smell made one salivate.

Qiao Dongliang liked spicy food, and he knew how to prepare spicy food as well, particularly Sichuan cuisine.

Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin disliked spicy food. Back then, he was married and was busy with work, so everything at home was left in the hands of Ding Jiayi. He had to put aside his favorite food and hobby of cooking.

Since moving out with Qiao Nan, Qiao Dongliang had picked up his hobby and spent more time cooking.

“Dad, they smell great.” Qiao Nan took a deep breath, the spicy scent stimulating her taste buds. “I am on the phone with Brother Zhai. He knew that I am choosing the course, hence he called to ask which course I have chosen.”

“Zhai Sheng really cares about you,” Qiao Dongliang said out of the blue, sounding depressed.

Even an outsider knew that Nan Nan was choosing her class and called to ask about her, but there was no news from Ding Jiayi. As for Zijin...

“Brother Zhai is very good to me,” Qiao Nan replied with honesty. She then grabbed a piece of chicken and put it into her mouth.

“You have yet to wash your hands!”

“Have you washed your hands?”

Qiao Dongliang and Zhai Sheng could be heard yelling at her to wash her hands.

Qiao Dongliang had been watching her, so he caught Qiao Nan, who was fond of food, eating some of the chicken before washing her hands. But Zhai Sheng was on the other end of the phone. He must have very good hearing and was as sharp as a detective to know what she was doing.

“Alright, I will wash my hands.” In fact, she felt very hungry. She was starving when she asked her father about dinner just now.

“Nan Nan, pass the phone to Uncle Qiao. I have something to tell him.”

“Alright.” Qiao Nan stretched her hand toward her father. “Dad, Brother Zhai has something to tell you.” She could take her time washing her hands.

“Hi, Zhai Sheng, what’s the matter? Well, I’m pretty good lately. Busy? Not busy. Actually, it’s good that we are busy. That way, we will not have the spare time to think too much or create trouble for people around us.”

Zhai Sheng could tell that Qiao Dongliang seemed to be troubled.

There were only a few people that Qiao Dongliang was worried about, and among them, Qiao Nan was the only one who stayed with him now.

Zhai Sheng could tell easily who Qiao Dongliang was referring to.

“No, it’s fine. Everything is alright now. Nan Nan cares a lot for me. I am very good. Yes... You must stay healthy as well. We will have dinner soon. You should go and have dinner as well. Let’s chat next time. Goodbye.”

By the time Qiao Nan came back from washing her hands, Qiao Dongliang had already hung up the phone. “Get the rice. Don’t starve yourself.”

Qiao Nan looked at the phone reluctantly and went to get the rice.

After dinner, Qiao Nan went back to her room silently.

Qiao Dongliang cast Qiao Nan strange looks. “Nan Nan, why do you turn in so early for the night? It’s only half past eight.”

“Well, the syllabus for this semester is much more difficult. I was very tired at school. I got up early and slept late. I am very sleepy. Now that I am finally home, I have to rest well. Dad, can you see my dark eye circles? I can be compared to pandas now.”

“Well, then you’d better go to sleep. Studies may be important, but your health is also very important. Now that all of you are in high school, the workload should be much heavier. You rarely get the chance to have a break, so you must rest more. Even if you only get to sleep for two more hours, it is still good for your body.” Now that Nan Nan mentioned it, she seemed to have lost a lot of weight. Studying had been very tough on her.

“Dad, I will go to sleep now. Good night.”

“Good night.” Qiao Dongliang urged Qiao Nan to go to sleep. He hoped that she would fall asleep as soon as she lay on the bed.

Contrary to what Qiao Dongliang wished for, Qiao Nan tossed and turned for more than half an hour, yet sleep eluded her.

A dainty girl like Qiu Chenxi actually chased Zhai Sheng all the way to the army. Apparently, she still liked him. She had total confidence in Brother Zhai, but she was not too sure about Chief Zhai and Auntie Miao, especially Chief Zhai. She heard from Sister Zhai Hua that he really liked Qiu Chenxi.

If there was a day when she married Brother Zhai instead of Qiu Chenxi, would he be their obstacle? Would he find her not pleasing to the eye?

In the previous life, Chen Jun’s parents did not like her as well. It was Chen Jun who managed to persuade his parents to accept her. Thinking about what happened then, she felt sorry for herself.

It might not be good to have a smooth-sailing life as one would not have the chance to learn and develop. However, her life was full of twists and turns. It was too tough on her.

She had no idea how Brother Zhai would deal with Qiu Chenxi.

With that thought in mind, she slowly drifted off to sleep.



Qiao Dongliang went into Qiao Nan's room to check on her at ten o'clock. Qiao Nan, who usually had a good night's sleep, had kicked the blanket to a side.

Qiao Dongliang sighed and covered Qiao Nan with the blanket. The children nowadays might have a better life than them, but it was not easy for them to handle the heavy workload at school.

Back then, he did not remember seeing Qiao Zijin troubled over her school work. Qiao Dongliang sighed and decided to stop dwelling over it.

Qiao Nan, who was fast asleep, was clueless. She was worried about what would happen to Zhai Sheng and her in the future. She did not expect that her father would misunderstand and think that she was losing sleep over her studies.

#### Chapter 403: Qiu Chenxi Came to Show Off

This was, in fact, a beautiful misunderstanding.

Of course, what was even beyond Qiao Nan's expectation was that she would see someone she least expected to see on the next morning.

Qiao Nan was really tired and she finally got to rest at home and had a good night's sleep. When Qiao Nan woke up the next day, it was already eight o'clock. Qiao Dongliang had left a note for Qiao Nan. He went to the Yang family's residence to help out and the breakfast was placed in the pot. Qiao Nan could have them when she woke up.

Qiao Nan had not changed her clothes. She was wearing a thin autumn shirt with an outer coat. She did not bother to comb her hair and went to brush her teeth.

After brushing her teeth and washing her face, she heard a knock on the door, and her heart skipped a beat. "Who is it?"

Who would come to their house early in the morning? She did not even have time to eat her breakfast.

Qiao Nan went to the door and raised her voice. "Who is it?" There was no response. Qiao Nan frowned. "Maybe they have got the wrong house?"

Qiao Nan was about to turn back when the knocking started again.

"Who is it?"

There was no response.

Qiao Nan laughed to herself. She was 'lucky' that someone played a trick on her early in the morning.

This time, Qiao Nan no longer asked anything. She turned and went back to the house. Whoever was at the door could knock for all they wanted. She was not in the mood to read today. She wanted to watch television. As soon as the television was switched on and the volume was turned up, she could not care much about the knocking.

The person outside the door seemed to know that Qiao Nan intended to ignore the knocking and spoke up. "It's me."

Qiao Nan almost tripped on what she heard.

It was not indicative of one's identity at all. Nevertheless, there was no way that she would know who the visitor was.

The other party seemed to realize the ridiculousness of the reply and took a deep breath before saying, "I am Qiu Chenxi."

Qiao Nan widened her eyes and dug her ears. Qiu Chenxi came to her house?

Qiao Nan refused to believe it. She opened the door and was given a shock by Qiu Chenxi who was dressed in white from head to toe.

Even though Qiao Nan only met Qiu Chenxi once, and that was a year ago, she still remembered how she looked. Qiu Chenxi's hair was longer than a year ago, almost reaching her waist. This added an ancient charm to her beautiful face.

The dress worn by Qiu Chenxi was very westernized. On top of the thick cotton was a layer of yarn, and the pattern was particularly beautiful. Covering her arms were little puff sleeves that were inspired by the western royal style. The hemline used high-quality yarn, and the linings were thick, hence they opened slightly at the bottom, looking very beautiful.

Qiu Chenxi looked as if she was a noble princess who came out of a fairy tale. Contrariwise, Qiao Nan, who only wore a coat with autumn clothing, looked as if she came out from the dark corners. They looked way too different. Qiao Nan blushed in embarrassment.

She had acted on impulse. Why did she open the door straight after hearing Qiu Chenxi's name? She should have changed into something presentable.

Her clothes might be no match for Qiu Chenxi's, but she had to wear proper clothes at the very least.

"Can I come in?" Qiu Chenxi who looked dignified just now turned sullen.

Qiao Nan had thought that Qiu Chenxi was angry at her for showing up in shabby clothes.

Not to mention that Qiu Chenxi was still her love rival for the time being, even if she was to welcome an ordinary friend into her house, it would be inappropriate to receive them while wearing her current outfit. For her to welcome Qiu Chenxi in her current outfit, she must still be half-asleep.

Qiao Nan was upset at herself, but she did not know that Qiu Chenxi was full of jealousy right now.

Because Qiao Nan had just woken up, there was a faint blush on her face. She looked especially beautiful in that way. Her dark round eyes seemed to be sparkling and glittering.

Even women would be mesmerized by Qiao Nan, let alone men.

Her natural complexion and looks could not be compared to any amount of cosmetics or expensive outfits.

Moreover, Qiao Nan had invincible youth. From that alone, Qiu Chenxi could not match up to her.

Qiu Chenxi could not help but straighten her waist and puff up her chest. She could not lose to Qiao Nan in terms of her figure.

Qiu Chenxi was taller than Qiao Nan, but Qiao Nan had better body proportion than Qiu Chenxi. Qiu Chenxi could tell it at one glance from the autumn clothing that Qiao Nan wore.

Qiao Nan was not as tall as Qiu Chenxi, but her legs were slender and long. From the shape of the autumn pants, Qiu Chenxi was sure that Qiao Nan's lower legs were longer than her thighs. More importantly, Qiao Nan did not have thick legs or bowed legs.

Her calf muscle was just nice.

From the way Qiao Nan dressed, her legs looked long and slender. Qiu Chenxi could not help but glare at Qiao Nan.

The autumn clothes that Qiao Nan wore also drew attention to her figure.

Qiao Nan had curves in the right places. She was still young and might develop more curves as she grew older.

To Qiao Nan, she felt that she looked terrible, especially with her messy hair that looked like a 'bird's nest'.

But in the eyes of Qiu Chenxi, Qiao Nan's hair that was slightly over her shoulders was draped casually over her back. The few strands of hair that were slightly unkempt highlighted her rosy cheeks and made her look even more charming and mesmerizing.

She was simply a seductive fox spirit!

"Please come in." Qiao Nan stood to the side. After Qiu Chenxi entered the house, Qiao Nan closed the door. "Miss Qiu, please have a seat. I will change into some other clothes and come out."

“Change into some other clothes?” As soon as Qiu Chenxi sat down, she turned hostile. “Given your family situation, do you think you have clothes that can compare with what I wear?” Qiu Chenxi hinted that Qiao Nan’s family situation could not be compared with hers.

“I think Miss Qiu has misunderstood. I am just afraid of catching a cold. Do you want me to talk to you while I am dressed in this manner? Sorry, I am currently in high school. It is a very crucial time for me, so I have to take care of my health. I can’t afford to make any mistakes.” Qiao Nan looked ridiculously at Qiu Chenxi.

She knew that Qiu Chenxi’s family background was better than hers.

The Qiu family was very established. Like Brother Zhai, their grandparents were veteran revolutionaries.

Although technically speaking, she could be considered as being born into a respected family, she and Zhai Sheng were still worlds apart.

Qiao Nan was not so foolish as to compete with Qiu Chenxi in terms of their outfits.

Without another word, Qiao Nan returned to her room and changed into her usual dress. She came out from the room and asked Qiu Chenxi, “Do you want to have some water?”

“It is nothing but boiled water. I prefer to have West Lake Longjing tea. I can’t drink those normal teas, let alone plain water. I bet you don’t know. Uncle Zhai is especially fond of tea, and he knows a lot about Chinese tea.”

Chapter 404: Got the Wrong Person?

“Actually, the reason why I like West Lake Longjing tea is because of Uncle Zhai’s heavy influence. I am sorry. I shouldn’t be telling you all this. You must feel very bored. Uncle Zhai is just like this. When he likes someone, he can have a lot of topics to chat about with that person. Of course, both of them need to have common hobbies and knowledge to be able to engage in a conversation. There is nothing much for Uncle Zhai to chat about with someone who does not understand Chinese tea and has never had good tea before.”

Qiao Nan smoothed her hair. It seemed like Qiu Chenxi was very hostile to her. She might have heard of something for her to behave in such a manner. “Miss Qiu, what you said sounds really familiar. When Auntie Miao first came to my house, she also complained that I did not have any good tea to serve her. However, from then onward, she would always drink the water that I poured for her. She is, after all, the wife of the chief. Although she is stern, she is very considerate of others and never makes it difficult for others.”

Qiu Chenxi turned green in anger at the mention of Miao Jing.

Sure enough, on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year, Miao Jing indeed brought Zhai Sheng to Qiao Nan’s place, didn’t she?

The Zhai family and the Qiao family did not know each other at all, so why would Miao Jing visit them on that day? What did she mean by that? Why the sudden change of attitude?

Miao Jing used to like her very much and would always call her affectionately. In the blink of an eye, she had a total change of attitude toward her. Until now, Qiu Chenxi still could not understand what caused the change in Miao Jing.

It was fine if Miao Jing did not like her, but why the sudden interest in Qiao Nan?

She did not believe that Miao Jing would take a fancy to Qiao Nan.

“By the way, Miss Qiu, let me give you a gentle reminder. Tea has a natural color and is good to drink occasionally. However, if you drink a lot of tea every day... You should know that as Asians, our complexions are yellow. Too much tea will make our skin ...”

Qiao Nan stared at Qiu Chenxi’s face that was white from the layers of powder and sighed, shaking her head.

She was curious about how Qiu Chenxi would look without makeup.

“You...” Qiu Chen pulled a long face. “Are you implying that my face is dark?”

“Do you think your face is fair enough?” Qiao Nan smiled. “Miss Qiu, it’s early in the weekend morning. Is anything the matter?”

“Let me ask you. What is your relationship with Brother Zhai?”

Qiao Nan’s finger knocked on the table and looked at Qiu Chenxi curiously. “In what capacity are you asking this question, and why do you think I will answer you?”

Qiao Nan was not sure what Qiu Chenxi had heard about her and Brother Zhai. As far as the current situation was concerned, it was impossible for Chief Zhai and Auntie Miao to accept her. Besides, she was still in high school. It was not suitable for her to expose her relationship with Brother Zhai.

She could not give a direct answer and she could not say no as well. Thus, she could only evade her question.

“I am Brother Zhai’s fiancée!” Qiu Chenxi gritted her teeth. When she first saw this little girl more than a year ago, she felt particularly uncomfortable. In the end, after spending so much effort, not only had she failed to get Lin Yuankang to be her master, but she was also robbed of the chance by this young lady who came out of nowhere.

She did not care that she was not Lin Yuankang’s pupil, but Brother Zhai was hers. No women could fight with her!

“Fiancée?” Qiu Chenxi refused to drink water, while Qiao Nan liked drinking water. “Is it true? Auntie Miao and Brother Zhai have not mentioned this. When I see them next time, I must ask them. Auntie Miao likes me a lot, but why didn’t she tell me that Brother Zhai is engaged? She should at least offer me some candies. It’s too much.”

Luckily, Brother Zhai had told Qiao Nan about Qiu Chenxi.

Otherwise, Qiao Nan, who was not wide awake early in the morning, might have misunderstood Brother Zhai upon hearing such a piece of news from Qiu Chenxi.

“Qiao Nan, stop acting in front of me. We may not be engaged yet, but we will soon. Last time, you might be able to have Lin Yuankang as your master but you will not be able to snatch Brother Zhai away from me now. Stop daydreaming. There is no way that the Zhai family will accept someone like you.” Qiu Chenxi slammed on the table and stood up angrily.

Even though she had yet to be engaged to Brother Zhai, and Miao Jing had a change in attitude toward her, Uncle Zhai was very supportive of her. She believed that Brother Zhai would listen to him.

Therefore, as long as Uncle Zhai was on her side, she would be Brother Zhai's wife eventually.

"Are you finished?" Qiao Nan appeared to be very calm, more so than when she opened the door for Qiu Chenxi. "If you are done, you can go back."

"What do you mean? You don't believe me? Do you think I am lying to you? Believe it or not, I will definitely marry Brother Zhai before the end of this year. I will be his wife before he turns twenty-five years old." Qiu Chenxi was getting angry. Did Qiao Nan think that she is bluffing?

Qiao Nan pursed her lips. "I don't know why you came to my house to say this to me. As for the future that you have in mind, I don't care whether it will come true or not, and I don't need to express any opinion as well. It doesn't matter to me whether what you said is true or not."

Qiu Chenxi might have said that she wanted to marry Brother Zhai, but there was no guarantee that it would happen.

Chief Zhai was not the only one who could make the decision at the Zhai family.

Qiao Nan could not be bothered with what Qiu Chenxi said.

Since everything was just her one-sided thinking, be it engagement or marriage, Qiao Nan did not have to trouble herself with whatever Qiu Chenxi said.

Whatever Qiu Chenxi said was useless. Brother Zhai's words were those that mattered to her.

"You..." Qiao Nan looked as if nothing happened at all. It made Qiu Chenxi wondered whether she had the wrong person. Qiao Nan might not be the reason why Brother Zhai gave her the cold shoulder.

In fact, Qiu Chenxi did not know for sure whether Zhai Sheng rejected her due to Qiao Nan. It was purely her intuition. She felt that Zhai Sheng seemed to have a change of attitude toward her and that he seemed to be influenced by someone.



Besides, since a young age, Zhai Sheng did not mix with girls. But when Qiu Chenxi went to the army and had a long chat with Zhai Yaohui, she heard from him that Zhai Sheng seemed to treat Qiao Nan differently.

Even though Zhai Sheng did not do much for Qiao Nan, but given his usual style of doing things, it was considered rare that he would do anything for other girls.

#### Chapter 405: Qiao Nan Was Cleared of Suspicion

With all these in mind, Qiu Chenxi could not believe that there was nothing going on between Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan.

Qiu Chenxi was in a dilemma.

Zhai Sheng was so opposed to the engagement of the two of them. There had to be a third party between them. But she was not sure whether the third party was Qiao Nan or not. Apart from hearing some information from Zhai Yaohui, Qiu Chenxi did not have any concrete evidence.

Qiu Chenxi tried to calm herself down. Then, she sat down again. “You mentioned that you are in high school?”

“That’s right.”

“Uncle Zhai told me that you are the top student in the middle school examination in Ping Cheng. You are pretty smart. How were your results after you entered high school?” Qiu Chenxi said with a smile, “I hope you don’t mind me asking. It’s just a casual chat.”

“I don’t mind.” Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows. What did Qiu Chenxi mean by asking so much about her results? “Thank you for your concern. After going to high school, I managed to maintain my standard.”

“Do you mean that even now that you are in Ping Cheng High School, you still maintain the first place in the level?” It was no wonder that even though Qiao Nan did not come from good family

background, Uncle Zhai seemed to appreciate Qiao Nan's hardworking attitude when he mentioned her.

Uncle Zhai was very appreciative of girls who were of humble birth but strove for self-improvement.

"For now." Qiao Nan was not exaggerating. She had ranked first among her peers for more than a semester.

"You are really amazing. I heard that Ping Cheng High School will compare the scores of its own students with those of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China's students. You are the top scholar in the middle school examination last year. How was your result compared with that of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China's students?"

Qiao Nan could not help but wonder why Qiu Chenxi asked about such details. What was her intention? "Well, according to my form teacher, my results were a few marks higher."

"I see!" Qiu Chenxi's eyes lit up, and her tone relaxed. Previously, she was like a cat whose tail was being stepped upon and all her hairs stood up. Now, she appeared to be very at ease. "I am sorry for disturbing you for such a long time. Since a young age, I am friends with Brother Zhai. We are basically childhood sweethearts. Our families have a tacit understanding, and I have always treated Brother Zhai as my husband. Recently, I have been in a bad mood because of some issues. Hence, I had some misunderstandings about you. Qiao Nan, you are also a woman. You should be able to understand my feelings. I thought that someone was going to snatch Brother Zhai away from me. I was too anxious and made the wrong judgment. I am sorry for wasting so much of your time. If there's a chance next time, let me treat you to a meal as an apology."

Qiao Nan pursed her lips. Did this mean that Qiu Chenxi had given up and believed in what she said?

"What's the matter?"

"It's alright. There's no need to treat me to a meal. I do not have the time." Qiao Nan stood up and looked as if she wanted to send her off.

Now that Qiu Chenxi had already figured out the whole matter, it was time to leave. She could not possibly intend to befriend Qiao Nan and chat with her, could she?

This time, Qiu Chenxi stood up very cooperatively and smiled politely at Qiao Nan. “It doesn’t matter. Let’s leave it to fate. You already have a hard time with your studies. I will not take up so much of your time. Have a good rest. You are Ping Cheng’s top scholar in the middle school examination. Two years later, you may be Ping Cheng’s top scholar in the college entrance examination.”

Without waiting for Qiao Nan to send her off, Qiu Chenxi walked out by herself.

Qiao Nan closed the door, knitted her eyebrows, and thought about everything that had happened just now. She did not understand what brought about the change in Qiu Chenxi. She was arrogant and hostile when she first came into the house. Why did she have a change in attitude?

It was as if Qiu Chenxi had ascertained that she had nothing to do with Brother Zhai and that she was not the person who made Brother Zhai change his attitude toward her.

How did Qiu Chenxi ascertain that?

Qiao Nan shook her head. She decided not to think about Qiu Chenxi anymore and to focus on her studies. Yesterday, she had wasted the whole night thinking about Brother Zhai. She was not a true genius. If she did not work harder, she would not be able to do well in her studies. It was not easy to rank first among her peers.

“Chenxi, you are back.” Qi Minlan knew where her daughter went. “Have you clarified everything? Does the girl have anything to do with Zhai Sheng?”

“No.” Qiu Chenxi sat down slowly. She felt more at ease at home. The stool in Qiao Nan’s house was dirty and hard. Her bottom hurt from sitting for such a long time. Luckily, it did not stain her skirt.

“What made you so sure?” Qi Minlan was quite surprised. “You must not be deceived. Since you have made known your identity, even if the girl has something to do with Zhai Sheng, she won’t admit it. After all, the Zhai family will not accept people like her.”

“No, Mom. I am not a three-year-old child. It is not easy for her to fool me. Moreover, I did not make the judgment based on her words. I made the judgment based on other circumstances. I’m sure that she has nothing to do with Zhai Sheng. She’s not the one that I am looking for.”

“What made you so sure?” Qi Minlan was worried. Back then, she had lost to a country girl who could not match up to her in terms of family background and education. Chenxi must not follow in her footsteps.

Qiu Chenxi leaned against the sofa. “Mom, this woman is quite interesting. I guess she knows that her family background is not good, so she wants to rely on her own effort to make it big.”

“What does this have to do with whether she has any relationship with Zhai Sheng?” She was asking for the reason why Chenxi was so sure, but she did not answer her question.

Qiu Chenxi sipped the fruit juice and lowered her eyes so that nobody would notice the sadness in her eyes. “There is. Mom, do you remember back when I sat for the college entrance examination and did badly because of Zhai Sheng?”

“Of course I remember!” Qi Minlan said in an upset tone. She knew that the college entrance examination was very important for her daughter.

Qiu Chenxi was very clever and pretty. Since a young age, she had good grades. On top of that, she came from a good family. Hence, when she was still in high school, she was already assured of a place in the first-tier university.

However, in order to prove herself, Qiu Chenxi sat for the college entrance examination and did badly.

Zhai Sheng was the reason behind her poor performance.

Zhai Sheng was two years older than Qiu Chenxi. Although the two families had consensus, Zhai Sheng never said anything about their relationship. There was once when Qiu Chenxi flared up upon hearing that some girls in the school were discussing Zhai Sheng, seemingly interested in him. She gave them a lashing for discussing Zhai Sheng.

The two girls were not pushovers either. They retorted and engaged in an argument with her. “What is your relationship with Zhai Sheng? You have no right to scold us.”

Chapter 406: Qiu Chenxi’s Assumption

“Zhai Sheng is my boyfriend. Am I qualified to say that?”

Qiu Chenxi indicated her relationship with Zhai Sheng, but the two girls did not believe her words. They asked that since they were in a relationship, Qiu Chenxi must get Zhai Sheng to come to school and admit their relationship in front of them. If so, they would not get in Qiu Chenxi’s way in the future.

Qiu Chenxi promised them and insisted that Zhai Sheng went to her school and admit their relationship so as to preserve her dignity.

Zhai Sheng would never agree to such a ridiculous request. When Qiu Chenxi asked Zhai Sheng whether he thought of her as his girlfriend, Zhai Sheng only replied coldly, “Since when have we been in a relationship?”

Qiu Chenxi was dealt with a strong blow. She disgraced herself and could not face the two girls for a while.

As a result, Qiu Chenxi, who insisted on taking the college entrance examination, did very badly. The college that had already reserved a place for her had doubts about her and checked on Qiu Chenxi’s previous results.

The people from the Qiu family had to step in to ask for two months’ grace period. One week before college started, Qiu Chenxi went to the college to sit for a test on the high school syllabus. It was only when her results could meet the college’s standard had she been able to study at the first-tier university.

This not only left a stain on Qiu Chenxi’s life, but the people from the Qiu family also had a bad impression of Zhai Sheng.

“At that time, I was distracted because of Zhai Sheng and couldn’t focus on my studies. My results, especially in the third year of high school, dropped a lot. However, Qiao Nan is quite capable. Last year, she ranked first in the middle school examination. Even after she started high school, she still ranked first among the level. Her results were slightly higher than that of the top student of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.”

“You mean to say...” This time, Qi Minlan finally understood what her daughter meant. “Since Qiao Nan’s performance is very good, she can’t possibly be in a relationship with Zhai Sheng?”

“That is for sure,” Qiu Chenxi said with confidence. “Zhai Sheng had a change of attitude this year. A year ago, Qiao Nan was sitting for her middle school examination. If she was in a relationship with Zhai Sheng, would she be able to focus on the middle school examination and become the top student? Zhai Sheng is often in the army. One can only see him a few times in a year. Qiao Nan is still so young. I heard that Qiao Nan went to school a year earlier than average people. If she was in a relationship at such a young age, would she be as mature as how I was when I was in high school?”

Back then, she was in her third year of high school, yet she was affected by Zhai Sheng and did badly for her college entrance examination.

Qiao Nan started school a year earlier than her, and she was only in her first year now.

She found it hard to believe that Qiao Nan would be able to focus on her studies and maintain her standard if she had a boyfriend like Zhai Sheng whom she could neither see often nor keep in touch with.

“The high school curriculum is very difficult. Because of the science subjects, many girls do badly when they go to high school. They can only manage to get back on track after choosing the humanities course. Mom, do you think that Qiao Nan could rank first in the level easily?”

It was only after she went to college, and her mother took a long time to persuade her, could she sort her thoughts and understand that apart from herself, Zhai Sheng would not have the chance to get to know another woman.

Zhai Sheng might be indifferent toward her, but there was no other woman in his life. In comparison, she was in a much more favorable situation.

“That is true.” Qi Minlan nodded. “Luckily, you listened to me during your four years of college and seldom contacted Zhai Sheng, and thus you could focus on your studies. You finally managed to finish college with flying colors. If you acted like how you were in high school, you would not be able to do well in college.”

Chenxi was so capable, yet she was affected by Zhai Sheng.

If it was a young lady like Qiao Nan, she could not possibly have that much discipline.

“Mom, the most important thing is that when I told Qiao Nan that I am Zhai Sheng’s fiancée, she didn’t have any reaction at all. I couldn’t sense any anger in her. She even asked why Miao Jing didn’t tell her or give her some candies. Mom, if she was in a relationship with Zhai Sheng, she would not have this reaction when she heard that Zhai Sheng is engaged to another woman. No matter how she tried to cover it up, I would be able to tell. But in actual fact, she did not show any displeasure.”

During Qiu Chenxi’s college years, she took up some psychological courses when she had the time in order to get along well with Zhai Sheng and understand what he was thinking about.

She tested Qiao Nan during their conversation today.

It was a pity that she was not competent enough and missed out the most important parts.

Qi Minlan touched the necklace on her neck. “Don’t say anything more. Let me think about it.”

When she was young, she had suffered a big loss.

She should have been Mrs. Zhai, the wife of the chief of the army. It never should have been the country girl’s turn. But in the end, she fell short of success and lost to someone whom she never thought of as her rival.

She must not let her daughter follow in her footsteps. She might not be the wife of the chief, but Chenxi had to take this position.

“We cannot believe what Qiao Nan said. She may not be the first among the level, and her performance may not be higher than that of the top student of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. We must investigate this matter to be on the safe side.” She could not allow any ‘accident’ to happen again.

“That’s right. We have to get uncle to help me inquire about Qiao Nan’s results. It should not be difficult, right? It is best if we can have her grades for the last two semesters as well as the ranking

lists of both Ping Cheng High School and The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.” She was not so stupid. She would not believe in everything Qiao Nan said.

“Sure, I will definitely get your uncle to find out by today.” Qi Minlan was also anxious to get to the truth of the matter. She was worried that she would not be able to have Zhai Sheng as her son-in-law, just like how she lost Zhai Yaohui to another woman. She quickly picked up the phone and dialed her older brother’s phone number. “Hi, big brother, it’s me, Minlan. I have a favor to ask of you... Well, yes, that’s it. Sure, I will wait for your good news. It will be best if you can give me an answer today. Oh, alright... Goodbye.”

After she hung up the phone, Qi Minlan patted Qiu Chenxi’s hands. “Don’t worry. Since your uncle has made a promise, we will have an answer soon.”

“Thank you for helping me and supporting me all this time, Mom.”

#### Chapter 407: Breaking Up with Me?

At the thought of her father who was not keen on her marriage with Zhai Sheng, Qiu Chenxi was not very happy. “Mom, Dad is too petty-minded. Back then, he already knew what happened between you and Uncle Zhai, so why would he rake up the past now? Why would he be jealous of something that happened so long ago?”

That was then. What happened now was a different matter.

Twenty years ago, even though her mother first started going out with Uncle Zhai, her father still chose to bend to his family’s wishes and married her mother in the end so that the Qiu family and the Qi family could cooperate and bring benefits to each other.

Decades had passed and her mother had given birth to her, but why was her father still angry about it?

“Your dad has always been like this. If Uncle Zhai didn’t... your dad would not have the chance to marry me. Forget it. Don’t mention what happened then. If your dad hears it, he will be unhappy.” Actually, Qi Minlan and Qiu Qin had a similar family background, but when compared to Zhai Yaohui, the latter paled in comparison.



It was because Qi Minlan had no hope of marrying Zhai Yaohui that the Qi family settled for the second best by arranging her marriage with Qiu Qin.

“Mom, don’t worry. I will work hard to become Mrs. Zhai, the wife of the chief of the army.” At the thought of the glorious life that Miao Jing now enjoyed, Qiu Chenxi had an ambitious look in her eyes.

She wanted to marry Zhai Sheng not only for her own future, but she also wanted to take revenge on Miao Jing for snatching Zhai Yaohui away from her mother.

Since Miao Jing snatched her mother’s boyfriend, she would marry her son.

If not for Miao Jing, she should have been the daughter of the chief of the army!

“That’s right! You must do me proud.” Qi Minlan smiled happily. After she married Qiu Qin, the best thing that Qiu Qin did was giving her a daughter like Chenxi who was clever and smart and understood her.

Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan waited anxiously for the answer. True enough, her uncle was very efficient. He got back to them with the transcripts of the first-year students from the two schools in three hours’ time.

They looked at the stacks of transcripts before them. They did not need to search for Qiao Nan’s results. They only needed to look for the top students of the two schools.

Qiao Nan was telling the truth. She came in the first place for all subjects. Qiu Chenxi finally felt reassured.

“Mom, what now?”

“Let’s compare the results.”

The mother and daughter compared the monthly results. They checked diligently to see which student of the two schools had better results.

They were very cautious, taking extra care not to miss any exams or tests. Even though there were a lot of tests and exams in Ping Cheng High School and The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, they painstakingly went through all the results.

Qiao Nan not only ranked first in Ping Cheng High School for every test and exam, but her score was also higher than that of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China's top student.

Although the score was only a few points apart, it still proved that Qiao Nan was much better than the students in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

Even if someone else scored slightly higher than Qiao Nan in the college entrance examination in the future, it was undeniable that she had very good results.

Even when Qiu Chenxi was in her prime, what she did was not as well as what Qiao Nan did for the past two semesters.

"Qiao Nan is really amazing." After looking through Qiao Nan's results, Qi Minlan could not believe it. Most girls would not have such good results after going to high school, yet she could maintain the first place for two semesters.

Qiu Chenxi smiled, apparently at ease. "Qiao Nan is so remarkable. So that's why when Uncle Zhai found out that Zhai Sheng has been helping Qiao Nan, he did not blame Zhai Sheng. Instead, whenever he mentions Qiao Nan, he seems to be very appreciative of her hard work."

Fortunately, such an outstanding Qiao Nan was not her love rival.

Otherwise, she would have been worried.

"Mom, although we are certain that Qiao Nan is not the woman who has been in close contact with Zhai Sheng recently, we still don't know who the woman is. If I can't figure out her identity and get rid of her, I can't rest assured. I don't wish for another 'Miao Jing' to appear out of nowhere." It was a terrible feeling to lose everything you worked hard for at the last minute.

"No, that won't happen." Qi Minlan smiled in a mixture of regret and pride. "Back then, if not for Old Master Zhai hindering us, I would be the one to marry Zhai Yaohui. You are luckier than me.

Zhai Yaohui likes you because of me. Hence, you will have fewer obstacles than me. With Zhai Yaohui around, Zhai Sheng's opinion doesn't matter."

However, she hoped that Zhai Sheng would be willing and more than happy to marry her daughter.

In this way, Chenxi would be able to find happiness in her marriage and would not end up like her who married Qiu Qin, despite not liking him, for the sake of the two families.

"Mom, I am lucky to have you with me." Qiu Chenxi embraced Qi Minlan. Qiu Chenxi was very clear that what her mother said was the truth.

Qi Minlan held Qiu Chenxi and patted her daughter's shoulder, smiling very brightly. "You are my only daughter. Of course I have to help you. Chenxi, you are my life and dreams. You must succeed and take back all the things that I have lost."

"Yes, Mom, I will."

Qiu Chenxi judged others by herself and felt that since her results were affected by Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan, who was younger than her, must have performed worse if what she suspected had been true.

Therefore, she put down her vigilance against Qiao Nan after realizing that Qiao Nan had been doing very well for her exams. Because of this, she missed the best opportunity to break up Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng.

"Hi, is that Brother Zhai?" During the weekend before returning to school, Qiao Nan took the initiative to give a call to Zhai Sheng behind Qiao Dongliang's back.

"Your voice is odd. Did you catch a cold again?" Zhai Sheng was sharp. He noticed right away that Qiao Nan sounded odd.

"Qiu Chenxi came looking for me yesterday, and I caught a cold after that. Brother Zhai, I still have two years in high school. What should I do?" Qiao Nan did not want to be so selfish either. Her grades were good, but she was just an ordinary person. She had worked hard to achieve these results.

If she had not been through a lifetime and was more experienced than others, she would have crumbled and suffered an emotional breakdown for having such a boyfriend and being visited by Miao Jing and Qiu Chenxi. She would not have been able to concentrate on her studies.

“Do you want to break up with me?” Zhai Sheng lowered his voice, as if a storm was coming.

“I can’t. If I break up with you, I will not be able to find another person like you,” Qiao Nan said miserably. In this lifetime, she was finally lucky enough to meet Zhai Sheng. She must be a fool if she broke up with him.

#### Chapter 408: You Are Indeed My Biological Mother

“What does that mean?” Zhai Sheng relaxed. He could accept anything but a breakup.

Zhai Sheng had lived for more than twenty years and had been through a quarter of his life. He had finally met a girl that he liked very much. He could not wait for her to grow up immediately so that he could marry her right away.

If he had to break up with Qiao Nan right now, Zhai Sheng was not sure what kind of terrible things he would do once he lost control.

In this world, no matter how calm one was, if they were agitated, they would be capable of crazy deeds!

Zhai Sheng could stay calm in all situations except when Qiao Nan was involved!

“Do you want me to treat Qiu Chenxi the same as before?”

“If you do that, then we will have to break up.” Qiao Nan had no idea how Brother Zhai treated Qiu Chenxi previously, but because of his attitude toward her, Qiu Chenxi had the idea that she would eventually marry Brother Zhai.

Qiu Chenxi could be a headache at times. She was too confident of herself.

“Alright.” Zhai Sheng appeared to be calmer and appeased.

If Qiao Nan wanted him to treat Qiu Chenxi in the same way as before in order to avoid trouble, he would be really mad at Qiao Nan. “So, what do you intend to do?”

“I don’t know. Qiu Chenxi came to look for me yesterday. I did not say anything out of the blue, and I have no idea how Qiu Chenxi came to the conclusion that I am not the girl that you like before leaving happily. She did not come again today. If Qiu Chenxi does not bother me, then it will be for the best. You should know about my situation at home. I wish to grow up as fast as possible and to be rid of both my mother and sister, going somewhere far away from them. So, all the more reason I have to study hard. The next two years are very crucial to me, and I believe you have your own ambitions and goals as well.”

“Continue.” Zhai Sheng did not deny her words. He had never liked to rely on his family. He was appointed the regiment commander based on his own effort and hard work. Of course, undeniably, he had more chances than the rest because of his family.

“Brother Zhai, let’s try not to meet up as often as we used to do for the next two years in order to avoid trouble. We can communicate through the telephone.” She also wanted to take these two years to know whether Zhai Sheng was serious about her and whether he would be able to withstand the test of time.

“What about letters?”

“I am afraid that people will intercept our letters. Qiu Chenxi has already gone all the way to the army. If we continue sending each other letters, given her courage and means, she may intercept our letters. What if she gets someone to imitate our handwriting and initiate a breakup? That will be terrible.” Qiao Nan had been watching a lot of television dramas.

“Hehehe.” Zhai Sheng smiled. “Alright, we will do according to what you said.”

Qiao Nan felt that she had gotten these ideas from the television dramas, but in fact, Zhai Sheng knew that it was possible to pretend to be someone else and write a letter to the other party.

After all, apart from the handwriting expert, nobody knew how to test the authenticity of the handwriting.

“Brother Zhai, aren’t you angry? You agree with me?” Qiao Nan did not expect that Zhai Sheng would agree with her.

Zhai Sheng tightened his grip on the phone. “Actually, we barely have the chance to see each other. If we refrain from seeing each other, it is quite unbearable for me. However, this is indeed better for you and me. We have a long road ahead of us, and for the sake of it, we must be farsighted. Nan Nan, I am glad that you have such awareness.”

“Do you really think so?” Actually, she meant that unless she graduated from high school, it was best not to meet Brother Zhai at all.

Judging from Brother Zhai’s temper, he did not seem like he would readily agree to not seeing each other for two whole years.

“Nan Nan, you seem to forget one thing.”

“What?” What did she forget?

“My mom.”

“Auntie Miao?” What about Auntie Miao? Qiao Nan was confused.

“My mom likes you very much. She even wants you as her goddaughter. So, as long as I am at home and my mom is also at home, we can meet each other without arousing any suspicion.” Zhai Sheng never imagined that there would be such a day where his mother who was the most opposed to him seeing another girl, would become his excuse to meet with Qiao Nan without being discovered by others.

Thinking of this, Zhai Sheng smiled brightly and craftily, unlike his usual demeanor.

Qiao Nan paused momentarily. “That’s right. How could I forget about Auntie Miao? She enjoys chatting with me.”

“Well, someone is coming. Let’s hang up now.” With his mother as an excuse, there would definitely be a chance for him to meet with Nan Nan in these two years.

“Well, goodbye.” As soon as she heard that someone had entered Zhai Sheng’s office, Qiao Nan hung up the phone quickly. She was especially worried that it was Qiu Chenxi.

Unlike Qiao Nan, Zhai Sheng hung up the phone calmly.

“You’re on the phone again?” Miao Jing entered the office and saw that Zhai Sheng had just ended the call. “Zhai Sheng, why do I feel that you are always on the phone whenever I see you? Is there so much work to do?” And every time it had to be communicated through the phone?

Miao Jing used to stay in the army in the past and would drop by to see her son once in a while, but she seldom saw her son on the phone.

“Yes,” Zhai Sheng replied faintly. He tried to suppress his smile. “Mom, you are indeed my biological mom!”

“Of course!” Miao Jing gave Zhai Sheng a disdainful look. “Of course I am your biological mom.” Miao Jing, who did not quite understand, was perplexed. “Did anyone tell you any nonsense?”

“No. I just feel that at crucial times, you are the most reliable and dependable.” Zhai Sheng denied. “By the way, have you seen Zhai Hua? How is she?”

“Don’t mention it. She is a young lady, after all. Why is it that she has much more missions than you? She is always outside, dealing with guns. I am...” Miao Jing’s eyes reddened at the thought of the dangerous missions that Zhai Hua undertook.

She only had one daughter and one son. If anything happened to either one of them, she would not be able to take it.

But people from the Zhai family had the love and passion for the army life. She could not do anything to stop them.

Chapter 409: Miao Jing’s Reminder

“Don’t worry. Zhai Hua is very quick-witted. She will be fine. It has been so many years. Have you seen anything happen to her before?” Zhai Sheng kept silent for a while before comforting Miao Jing.

“Yes, it’s just that nothing serious happened to her. Nevertheless, she is a young lady. I am worried that nobody will want her with her scars.” Over the years, Zhai Hua might have been fine, but she still had her share of injuries and scars. It did not look good on her to have so many scars.

As her mother, she felt sorry for her daughter.

“To soldiers, scars are their medals.” Zhai Sheng disagreed.

“What crap are you talking about!” Miao Jing could not help but use Qiao Nan’s tone of voice. “If you are so capable, no matter how difficult the mission is, you should not hurt yourself. You are clearly a rookie. Hence, you suffered those injuries. It has nothing to do with glory.”

“Rookie?” Zhai Sheng looked up toward Miao Jing. He had never heard Miao Jing used this word, but from her tone, it did not seem to be a good word. “Where did you learn it from?”

In order to be comparable to his father, his mother specially learned etiquette. She had stopped using all those swear words and dirty words.

Those who did not know his mother would have thought that his mother had a good family background.

Of course, Zhai Sheng heard this from Old Master Zhai. Old Master Zhai was worried because Miao Jing spent all her time on Zhai Yaohui and neglected her children. He always shared with his grandchildren about what happened when Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui were young, and that Miao Jing did not have an easy time.

It was all thanks to Old Master Zhai that Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua never once complained about Miao Jing.

“What do you mean by that? Stop evading my question.” Miao Jing refused to admit that she learned it from others.



Since Miao Jing refused to admit, Zhai Sheng did not probe further. He could easily guess the answer.

His mother's life revolved around his father. Apart from him, she did not have many friends and she did not have many chances to interact with others. Come to think of it, his mother led a life revolving her husband and had no time for herself.

But Zhai Sheng was elated that Qiao Nan would have such a huge influence on Miao Jing.

"But you're right. Zhai Hua and I should be more careful. Mom, is there anything else?"

"I want to talk to you about Qiu Chenxi. I have said that as long as you are unwilling, I won't force you to be with Qiu Chenxi. But your biggest problem now is not me, but your dad. If you don't intend to be with Qiu Chenxi, you must do something." Miao Jing was anxious for her son.

Miao Jing was worried that Zhai Sheng's engagement with Qiu Chenxi would be finalized without him knowing.

"Don't worry. Dad may be very happy to see us married, but the engagement doesn't count if I am not present. In the future, there is no way that we can be married if I refuse to sign the papers. If my dad could make that happen without my agreement, I would have to hand it to him."

No matter how his father intended to take matters into his own hands, his father and Qiu Chenxi could not do anything without his agreement.

"You don't understand." Miao Jing sighed. "There are some things that I have never told you and your sister. Since it's for your happiness, I don't care anymore. Actually, your dad has always liked someone else and she is Qiu Chenxi's mother, Qi Minlan. They grew up together and have always had a good relationship. Basically, they are childhood sweethearts. Your dad had been dating Qi Minlan ever since a young age. However, there was once when your grandpa was injured and was rescued by my father. He stayed at my father's house for a short while. It was during that period that he grew fond of me and insisted that I became his daughter-in-law. He then forced your dad to marry me."

In other words, without her, Qi Minlan should be the one who married Zhai Yaohui.

From the first day of her marriage, Miao Jing felt as if her happiness was stolen from someone else.

“Though your dad insisted to marry Qi Minlan, he gave in to your grandpa in the end. I am afraid that you will walk in your father’s footsteps and end up like your dad and me, always having a knot in your heart and feeling unhappy for the rest of your life.” If not for the fact that the happiness she had did not belong to her, she would not have led such a cautious life and neglected her children, putting all her attention on Zhai Yaohui.

“My dad is my dad, and I am myself.” It turned out that there was such a story between his father and Qi Minlan. It was no wonder that his father liked Qiu Chenxi so much. She was the daughter of the woman that he once liked. Did his father intend to sell his son out to make up for his regrets in the past?

“Mom, since Dad and Qi Minlan have such a past relationship, why would you accept Qiu Chenxi and be so good to her?” Qiu Chenxi was the daughter of his mother’s love rival. Instead of being nice to Qiu Chenxi, his mother should be unhappy with everyone who was related to Qi Minlan.

Miao Jing smiled bitterly. She did not answer Zhai Sheng’s question.

She had already taken the plunge by sharing her past with Zhai Sheng. If she was to go into details, it would be tantamount to throwing aside her pride and admitting defeat to Qi Minlan. “Alright, I will stop here. You should make plans for yourself. It’s good that you are certain and confident. I am just worried that you are not prepared, and the final result may not be what you anticipated.”

Despite having deep feelings for each other, Zhai Yaohui still broke up with Qi Minlan all because of his father. He ended up marrying a stranger like her and lived the rest of his life with her.

The reason why she agreed to the marriage between Qiu Chenxi and Zhai Sheng was that she felt that, at least, Zhai Sheng had better luck than Zhai Yaohui. He could marry someone he knew.

Seeing the forlorn look on Miao Jing’s face, Zhai Sheng was lost for words. He did not know what he should say to his mother.

Miao Jing’s life revolved around Zhai Yaohui and the Zhai family. If Zhai Sheng suggested that his mother leave Zhai Yaohui’s side and go back to the Zhai family residence, faced with an empty house without her husband and children by her side, she might become even lonelier, and her thoughts might run wild.

It was at this time that Zhai Sheng hoped that Qiao Nan would grow up soon so that they could get married as soon as possible.

When Qiao Nan gave birth to his child, his mother's life would not revolve around his father anymore. At least, she could help bring up her grandchildren and direct her attention to them.

Qiao Nan sneezed and rubbed her red nose. It was uncomfortable to have a cold and a runny nose.

"Nan Nan, have you eaten the cold medicine? Do you want to go to the sick bay to get some pills?" Zheng Lingling touched Qiao Nan's forehead. She felt slightly at ease after she was assured that Qiao Nan did not have a fever.

"No, I have cold medicine with me. I will have them and have a good sleep today. I should be better tomorrow."

A girl leaned close to Qiao Nan and whispered, "Qiao Nan, someone is looking for you. He is a handsome guy, but he does not seem to be from our school."

#### Chapter 410: Childhood Sweetheart

"A handsome guy who is not from our school?" Qiao Nan knitted her eyebrows. She did not know a lot of people or handsome guys. Where did he come from? "Did he say who he is?"

"No." The female classmate was over the moon, looking infatuated. To her, it was a blessing that a handsome guy would talk to her, albeit not really interested in her.

"Thank you." Seeing the infatuated look of her classmate, Qiao Nan knew there was no way that she could get any answer out of her. Instead, she used a handkerchief to cover her red nose as she walked to the pavement on the side of the classroom building. "Excuse me, you are...?"

Qiao Nan had not met many men, but they were all top-notch and very outstanding.

Take Zhu Baoguo for an instance. He was overbearing, but he inherited the good genes from his father, Zhu Chengqi. He might be a high school student, but he was taller than most adults. Chen Jun might have a personality problem, but at least, he looked bright and cultured.

Zhou Jun was upright and righteous.

As for Zhai Sheng, he was the cream of the crop.

Although she had seen a lot of outstanding men, Qiao Nan's eyes still lit up when she saw the man right in front of her.

The man in front of her seemed to be on the thin side, but Qiao Nan, who came from the 21st century, was very clear about one thing: some men looked thin when dressed, but they were, in fact, well-built. Her intuition told her that this was the case with the man in front of her.

This man was charming and urbane. He looked very much like the cultured and refined scholar in the martial arts novel who was well-versed in martial arts.

He had a handsome appearance and a comforting and pleasing aura. He was that type of men that women would easily fall for.

However, no matter how he looked, Qiao Nan could not help but frown and said, "I don't seem to know you." Or rather, she had not seen this man before. "Have you got the wrong person?" In China, there were a lot of people with the same name and surname.

Gao Yan was very surprised as well. To think that the top student whom his childhood sweetheart was full of praise of was, in fact, a pretty and quick-witted girl... She did not look nerdy at all. "Are you Qiao Nan from first year's class one?"

"Yes."

"Then, I have got the right person." Gao Yan smiled and said, "You don't know me, so please allow me to introduce myself. I'm Gao Yan, a second-year student this year. I am a student at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China."

“A second-year student at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?” That was the level Qiao Zijin was in. “And?”

“I have known Fang Fang ever since a young age. We grew up together.”

“So?” Since he was Fang Fang’s friend, Gao Yan should look for Fang Fang. Why did he look for her instead?

“I am here to thank you.” Gao Yan had a wide smile on his face. He was not full of himself, but since a young age, most of the girls he met were interested in him. Some even deliberately engaged him in a conversation, not caring whether he was in a hurry or not.

Ever since he was sensible enough, he had only known two women that he found pleasing to the eye: his mother and his childhood sweetheart, Fang Fang.

Qiao Nan could be the third woman. After all, she was the classmate and roommate that his childhood sweetheart was very concerned about.

Qiao Nan looked perplexed. “I don’t know you. What are you thanking me for?”

“Because of Fang Fang.” Gao Yan smiled bitterly. “Fang Fang often mentioned you, so you must have known that she initially wanted to choose the science course. However, when she was back from school recently, I knew that she has changed her mind to choose the humanities course.”

Qiao Nan still could not understand why Gao Yan would come all the way to her school to thank her.

Gao Yan was embarrassed to tell Qiao Nan of the conflict between him and Fang Fang.

Gao Yan was one year older than Fang Fang, and so he was a level higher than Fang Fang. Since a young age, he had been doing well in school. Fang Fang was equally smart, but she was also very stubborn. Her parents were always full of praise for Gao Yan as if he was the perfect son they had always dreamed of having. Fang Fang would be upset because of that and would give him the cold shoulder at times.

In fact, their conflict started when Fang Fang was in her fifth year of elementary school.

Fang Fang might have good results now and was equally good in the science and humanities subjects. However, when she was in elementary school, she did very well in Chinese, but could barely pass mathematics.

Gao Yan knew Fang Fang well and came up with a radical method to help her. He deliberately egged Fang Fang on so that she would give up on mathematics, saying that since girls could not do as well in mathematics as boys, she would not be able to do well in mathematics regardless of how much effort she put in.

After being provoked by Gao Yan, Fang Fang locked herself in her room for the whole day. When she left her room the next day, her eyes were red and swollen.

Fang Fang then constantly encouraged herself with famous quotes and devoted all her attention to mathematics. After half a semester, Fang Fang's results for mathematics were as good as her Chinese.

In order to prove it to Gao Yan, Fang Fang had always put more effort and time in mathematics. Even in high school, she had declared that she would choose the science course.

Gao Yan was helpless upon hearing this.

Back then, Fang Fang relied on hard work to do well in mathematics. Similarly, when she was in the first year of high school, she had to work very hard to maintain her results.

Fang Fang had beautiful eyes, but ever since the fifth year in elementary school, she had been spending so much time on reading that she had to wear glasses starting her sixth year in elementary school. She was only in her first year of high school, but her myopia was already over four hundred degrees.

Gao Yan was worried that if Fang Fang was so bent on studying in the science class, her myopia might exceed five hundred degrees even before she graduated. Worse, she might pass this problem to her next generation.

Gao Yan was full of regrets. He should not have come up with such a foolish method to help her. His method had backfired on him.

Students would be divided into two courses in their second year of high school, and they had to make a decision in their first year. In the past six months, Gao Yan had been trying to make Fang Fang change her mind to give up on the science class, but all his plans failed.

One's successes and failures were both due to the same person.

In fact, Fang Fang's firm decision to choose the science course was due to Qiao Nan.

At that time, whenever Fang Fang mentioned Qiao Nan, Gao Yan would be very angry at Qiao Nan. However, Gao Yan knew that Qiao Nan did nothing wrong at all. It was Fang Fang who was stubborn and obstinate. Nobody was to blame.

Just when Gao Yan was anxious and witless, Fang Fang came home and told him that she would not choose the science course. She said that she had decided on the humanities class.

When Gao Yan heard the news, he almost wanted to go to the temple to thank God that Fang Fang finally had a change of mind.