

RTAMM 441

Chapter 441: Punished Himself to Sleep in Study Room

“The scene that you saw yesterday was really just a misunderstanding. She came to me solely to discuss the engagement between Zhai Sheng and Chenxi. If the two of them are already engaged, Minlan will not come to look me.”

“So, are you saying that it’s my fault?” Miao Jing gave Zhai Yaohui a ridiculous look.

“This is not a question of who is in the wrong. In fact, nobody is wrong. Minlan is only concerned about her daughter’s happiness. Zhai Sheng is not young anymore. We can put our mind at ease if we decide on their engagement now. What I want to say is that yesterday, when we were in a discussion, Minlan accidentally slipped when she stood up, hence I lent her a helping hand.”

Zhai Yaohui felt helpless. Qi Minlan fell right in front of him. Even if he did not know her and she was just a stranger who happened to fall in front of him, he would certainly help her.

But Miao Miao happened to be there at the time. From her perspective, he and Qi Minlan looked as if they were in an embrace.

“Miao Miao, we have been married for so many years. Isn’t there any trust between us? I am a soldier. I have absolute loyalty to the country, and I have the same attitude toward marriage as well. You should believe in me.” This was what Zhai Yaohui was most disappointed about.

“Trust?” Miao Jing said with a bitter smile. “I want to believe you as well, but have you provided me the sense of security so that I can have absolute trust in you?” No, never.

Minlan?

What an affectionate way of address!

Chenxi?

It sounded as if he was addressing his daughter.

“Miao Miao, what’s with this attitude? Didn’t I explain clearly to you?” Zhai Yaohui frowned.
“Miao Miao, you were too much yesterday. You left the army without a word, and you didn’t go back home! You stayed outside throughout the night and you didn’t inform us!”

Miao Jing was both amused and angry. “Fine, I have gone overboard, whereas it was purely a misunderstanding between Qi Minlan and you. Since you have the final say, why did you bother to explain to me? You can do as you say. I don’t wish to talk to you.”

With that, Miao Jing went back to their room.

Zhai Yaohui sat down and massaged his temples. He was advanced in years. He only went without sleep for a night and he already felt exhausted.

“Madam, where are you going with the luggage?” Initially, when the auntie heard the quarrels, she dared not come out of the kitchen. When she came out later, she saw Miao Jing with the luggage, looking as if she was leaving.

“You?” Zhai Yaohui looked up and witnessed this scene. “What are you doing? Where do you want to go? After imposing on the Qiao family for a night, do you intend to continue to disturb them?”

Miao Jing sneered. “What’s good about the Zhai family is that apart from this house, we have other apartments. I don’t feel comfortable living here. I will stay at some other places. In that way, both of us will feel more at ease.” Right now, whenever she saw Zhai Yaohui, she would be reminded of the scene that she saw that day.

She knew what kind of person Zhai Yaohui was.

Since he was married, whether he liked it or not, Zhai Yaohui would never mess with other women outside.

However, Qi Minlan had always been a thorn in her heart, especially since Zhai Yaohui insisted that his son married Qi Minlan’s daughter. It was as if he kept pressing on the thorn in her heart. It not only made her uncomfortable, but it also caused her tremendous pain.

In the Zhai family's residence, there were many childhood memories of Zhai Yaohui and Qi Minlan.

In the past few years, Miao Jing always followed Zhai Yaohui around and neglected her children. Apart from keeping a watch on Zhai Yaohui, she did all these so as not to be reminded of the painful past.

Miao Jing took her luggage and had no hesitation in leaving.

When she passed by Zhai Yaohui, she stopped and reminded him, "It's good that you still remember you are a soldier. I am your wife. I will misunderstand upon witnessing such a scene. How do you think others, or even Qiu Qin, will react if they see that as well? Will they misunderstand? This is between you and Qi Minlan. I don't care if there's any misunderstanding. But if there's any speculation of your behavior and it affects our children, Zhai Yaohui, I won't forgive you!"

After saying her piece, Miao Jing intended to leave right away.

However, when Miao Jing walked past Zhai Yaohui, he turned, bent down, and lifted Miao Jing onto his shoulders. Luckily, Miao Jing had maintained her figure. Otherwise, even though Zhai Yaohui was a soldier, it would be tiring for him to lift her up at his age.

Zhai Yaohui lifted Miao Jing in one hand and the luggage in another hand. He brought her back to their room and left her on the bed.

"You..." Miao Jing's face was flushed as she was draped over Zhai Yaohui's shoulders. She was so angry that she felt like biting someone. "Zhai Yaohui, it's useless! Zhai Sheng is at home. Do you think I can't make it out of the house?"

Zhai Yaohui did not answer. He opened the closet silently, took a few pieces of his clothes, his pillow, and blanket. Miao Jing gave him a puzzled look. "There's no need for you to leave. I will sleep in the study room."

They were husband and wife. Why should they live in two separate houses? They were doing fine!

Seeing that Zhai Yaohui took the initiative to give in to her, Miao Jing did not know whether she should cry or laugh.

She waited for Zhai Yaohui to leave the room before punching at the bed. Zhai Yaohui did not like her, so he was not willing to spend time and efforts on her. Zhai Yaohui still did not understand why she wanted to leave the Zhai family's residence to stay at other places!

Zhai Yaohui did not understand women. He only knew what was on Qi Minlan's mind!

"Where's Mom?" Zhai Sheng came back at the right time. Zhai Yaohui happened to come out of the room with his pillow, blanket, and clothes, looking pitiful as he walked toward the study room.

However, Zhai Sheng did not feel any sympathy for Zhai Yaohui.

"Inside the room."

"What is it between Qi Minlan and you?"

Zhai Yaohui pursed his thin lips into a straight line. "What do you mean by that? There's nothing between us. Your mom has misunderstood us. She fell and I lent her a helping hand. That's all. Zhai Sheng, you are a man and a soldier. You can't possibly let your thoughts wander like your mom and think that there's something going on between the both of us?"

If this was the case, his son was insulting him as a father and as a soldier!

"Dad, don't you think that there's something very problematic with your way of thinking? Mom has been with you for so many years. Don't you know her temper? Do you think it was merely because of a misunderstanding that she blew her top?"

Chapter 442: Exchange Information

"What's the problem?" Zhai Yaohui was perplexed. He did not do anything. He merely lent Qi Minlan a helping hand yesterday. Why did Zhai Sheng make it seem like it was a big problem and he had to do something to solve it and that it was a source of worry and anxiety for Miao Miao?

"Qi Minlan and you have your own family. Even though what happened between the both of you was in the past, shouldn't you pay more attention to it? You know there is a knot in Mom's heart.

Why can't you be resolute and decisive like a soldier and cut off all dealings with Qi Minlan and the whole Qiu family? Why must you make Qiu Chenxi a part of our family? Are you bent on making Mom uncomfortable?"

"What you said is all because of Qiao Nan?" Zhai Yaohui's face hardened and he stiffened his eyebrows. His comments were shocking!

Zhai Sheng paused momentarily and adopted a stern countenance. "Yes, I don't want anyone to be a hindrance between Nan Nan and me."

"Hehehe..." Zhai Yaohui smiled. "As a son, you should know your mother's temper best. Do you dare to repeat what you just said in front of your mom? I am sure that when she knows the truth, she will hate Qiao Nan as much as she likes her."

Zhai Sheng gritted his teeth. His father was a sly old fox. "It seems like you already know it. What do you want and what do you mean by this?"

His father knew that he liked Nan Nan, yet he tried means and ways to create an opportunity for Qiu Chenxi and him. What exactly was wrong with his father?

"Let me make things clear. I like Nan Nan, and in the future, she is the only one that I will marry. I have already prepared the marriage report. I only need to submit it to make it official. It is impossible for you to threaten me to be with Qiu Chenxi."

"Do you want me to keep this from your mom?" Zhai Yaohui sat down, looking very confident of himself.

Miao Miao was the only woman he could not understand in his life. However, he knew his son best.

"Don't beat about the bush."

"I want you to reconsider your engagement with Qiu Chenxi. Qiao Nan is not suitable for you. Qiu Chenxi is a better choice."

"Impossible!" There was no room for discussion.

“Fine, maybe I should let your mom know of the current situation. She may be appeased, and I won’t need to sleep in the study room.” He was married, a man with a wife, so why should he sleep alone?

Zhai Sheng leaned back slightly, but he kept his back straight. “If it has to be like this, then we will have to make a life and death struggle. You knew about this long ago, yet you only wait until now to tell Mom. Given her stubborn character, not only must you sleep in the study room, but I suppose you will also be banned from her room for three years. I am different from you. You have been married to Mom for twenty-five years. To put it bluntly, the time you have with Mom will decrease day by day, whereas Nan Nan and I are still young. Even though our days together will decrease day by day as well, as long as we persist, we still have a long time ahead of us.”

“In addition, we are different from you. There’s Qi Minlan between the two of you. Both of you do not have many happy memories together. Contrariwise, Nan Nan and I like each other. I have experienced the true love that you do not understand. Dad, in fact, I feel sorry for you. You cannot be with Qi Minlan, and you are cold and indifferent to Mom. Dad, do you really intend to dedicate your whole life to the army and spare no time for yourself?”

Zhai Sheng was a man. He knew what Zhai Yaohui’s weaknesses were.

“Young brat, I am on good terms with your Mom!” Miao Miao liked him very much and he was very good to Miao Miao. They had a happy time together.

“Well, you have the final say. It’s useless to deceive me. You have to convince yourself.” Zhai Sheng noticed that Zhai Yaohui’s expression had changed. He knew this was his Achilles’ heel. Zhai Sheng relaxed further. “With my understanding of Mom, she came back with you as she didn’t want to make it difficult for Nan Nan. She is still giving you the cold shoulder. She will not want to stay in this house and will definitely find a way to move. By that time, do you think I should find her a place that she likes?”

He knew his mother best.

“Dad, when do you think Mom will be appeased? Even if she stays in this house, when will she let you into the room? When you are away for work, do you think she will go with you? She has been taking care of your meals and your daily life for twenty-five years. If she is no longer by your side, do you think you can adapt?”

“Young brat!”

Zhai Yaohui was so angry that he felt like giving Zhai Sheng a few smacks on his bottom just like when he was still a child.

Whatever he had taught Zhai Sheng had been used on him instead. Zhai Sheng hit him where it hurt. His attacks were vicious, quick, and accurate!

He taught Zhai Sheng these tricks in order to deal with the enemy, but he ended up using them on his father!

“What do you want?”

“Dad, our position should be reversed. I should be the one to ask what you want.”

“Let’s exchange information. You should know why your mom flared up.”

“Deal.” Zhai Sheng agreed. “Tell me, how did you find out about Nan Nan and me?”

Just now, he was caught unaware by his father and hence he had yet to come to his senses. Now that he thought about it, his father should have found out about them not too long ago.

Otherwise, his father would never allow his mother to be close with Nan Nan.

“You’re too careless. Qiu Chenxi is raised by the Qiu family. She has her means. She came up with ways to get hold of the list of people whom you contacted using the telephone in your office. The list almost ended up in Qiu Chenxi’s hand.”

“So, this list is now with you.”

“Of course.” Zhai Yaohui sneered.

Qiu Chenxi might have her means, but she has forgotten that Zhai Yaohui was in charge of the army.

She could think of ways to deceive Zhai Sheng, but she could never hide it from Zhai Yaohui, the sly old fox. As soon as the list of people whom Zhai Sheng contacted was compiled, it was sent to Zhai Yaohui straightaway. As for the list that Qiu Chenxi had, it was a different list that was sent by Zhai Yaohui.

Between his son and his friend's daughter, Zhai Yaohui could still get his priorities straight.

Zhai Sheng turned grim. "Thus, you think that she is suitable for me because of her capabilities? This is tantamount to planting a spy around me!" He should have expected that Qiu Chenxi would not give up easily.

He was so close to clearing every obstacle standing between Nan Nan and him. He had helped Nan Nan settle the problem with Qiao Zijin, but he had created another problem, which was Qiu Chenxi, for Nan Nan.

Qiu Chenxi could be much tougher to deal with than Qiao Zijin.

"It's your turn." Why was Miao Miao angry? What could he do to appease her?

Chapter 443: Chief Zhai Is Here

"Why is Mom angry? You should be very clear about it. The only advice that I can give you is that if you want Mom to forgive you, stay further away from Qi Minlan in the future. It'll be best if you don't meet her again. Moreover, next time, don't be involved with anyone, except Qiu Qin, from the Qiu family. Within a month, Mom will definitely forgive you."

The crux of the problems stemmed from Qi Minlan. His father did not need to understand. It would suffice that he knew what to do.

"My relationship with your Auntie Qi is that of a platonic friendship. You... What you've said is equivalent to not saying anything." Moreover, he was tricked into giving information!

Sly little fox!

“Auntie!”

“Chief.” The auntie walked out in trepidation. “Is something the matter?”

“It’s almost eleven o’clock. Prepare a bowl of Miao Miao’s favorite Yang Chun noodles. Remember to not overcook it. Miao Miao loves to eat those that are cooked just right and not too salty. The soup has to be light and prepared with chicken stock. Understand?”

“Understood. I’ve done this for a few years. I remember all this.” The auntie nodded and prepared the Yang Chun noodles with ease. She then served it to Miao Jing who was in her bedroom.

“Madam, it’s your favorite Yang Chun noodles. Chief asked me to prepare this especially for you.”

When Miao Jing, who was initially a little hungry, heard that this bowl of noodles was prepared upon the instruction of Zhai Yaohui, she burned with anger. “Not eating. I don’t wish to have noodles. I want to eat rice!”

“That’s fine. What dishes does Madam wish to eat? How about I prepare them for you now?” The auntie’s temper was good. She asked meticulously.

“I wish to eat... Forget it. I’ll just eat the noodles. We can’t waste food.” Miao Jing sighed. Why was she venting her anger on auntie? Clearly, Zhai Yaohui was the culprit. As she was unable to settle her scores with Zhai Yaohui, how could she torture auntie instead?

“Madam, then hurry up and eat them. It will turn soggy after a while and you won’t like them anymore.” Auntie happily put down the noodles. “Madam, I don’t know what wrong did Chief Zhai do, but Chief Zhai is very concerned about you. Yesterday, when Chief came back alone and didn’t see you, he was so anxious that he did not sleep for the whole night. It was only when the chauffeur who sent you to the Qiao family told him that you were there did he feel more at ease. Yesterday, Chief Zhai just sat in the living room for the whole night.”

“Really?” Miao Jing felt quite bad after hearing that.

After thinking, just as what Qi Minlan thought, she felt that Zhai Yaohui was most likely concerned about her because they had been married for so many years. It was not because he truly loved her. Clearly, this was the Yang Chun noodles that she liked. However, at this moment, it tasted so bland in her mouth.

“Nan Nan.”

“Dad, you’re back?” On the contrary, the atmosphere in the Qiao family was more harmonious.

“Has Madam Zhai gone back?” At the sight that Miao Jing was no longer at his house, Qiao Dongliang heaved a huge sigh of relief. In this lifetime, besides Ding Jiayi, he had never tried to stay under the same roof with another woman.

In fact, Qiao Dongliang felt more uneasy than Qiao Nan about this.

“She has gone back. Chief Zhai came to pick her up personally.”

“Oh, Nan Nan, don’t misunderstand. Dad was not the one who let the matter out.” Although Qiao Dongliang felt he should inform Chief Zhai since he apparently knew that Madam Zhai was at his house and that Chief Zhai was anxious, he could not bring himself to do that as he felt that he would be betraying Madam Zhai if he were to do so.

“Dad, don’t worry. I won’t think of it that way. I believe Auntie Miao will not as well. Yesterday, when Auntie Miao came to our house, it was the chauffeur of the Zhai family who sent her here. I believe Auntie Miao would definitely not let the chauffeur wait for her for the whole night. She must have asked the chauffeur to go home. The next day, when the chauffeur reported to the Zhai family, Chief Zhai then found out that Auntie Miao was at our house. That’s not strange.”

“That’s good, then.” Qiao Dongliang let out a breath of relief. If this resulted in a misunderstanding, it would be difficult to clarify. “Nan Nan, are you hungry? Dad will cook a meal for you.”

“Okay, I’m hungry.” After having her meal, she had to go back to bed to make up for the lost sleep. Fortunately, Chief Zhai and Brother Zhai came and took Auntie Miao away. Otherwise, if Auntie Miao stayed one more night at her house, she would definitely doze off during every evening self-study session when she returned to school.

“What do you want to eat? Dad will prepare for you.”

“Dad, I’ll eat whatever you prepare.”

Without Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin, Qiao Dongliang and Qiao Nan's life was very simple. The dietary preferences of the father and daughter were similar. Besides, Qiao Nan was not picky at all. Even if Qiao Dongliang prepared something that she did not like, she would eat them.

At the thought that when Ding Jiayi prepared meals for Qiao Zijin, Qiao Zijin not only picked what she wanted to eat but also refused to eat this or touch that, Qiao Dongliang was very ashamed as he realized now that not every child was as difficult to bring up as Qiao Zijin. In fact, it was very easy to raise Nan Nan.

If not for the fact that he misunderstood that Ding Jiayi had endured lots of hardships raising Qiao Zijin, Qiao Dongliang would not have given in to Ding Jiayi so much previously.

"Ah good, Dad will prepare accordingly." After Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin left, Qiao Dongliang would think of his wife and elder daughter occasionally. Nevertheless, Qiao Dongliang felt more relaxed and carefree most of the time. His life with Qiao Nan was also becoming increasingly smoother.

"Nan Nan, eat them while they're hot. Eat more. Judging from how you look, you definitely didn't have a good rest when Madam Zhai was here yesterday. After you have your meal, go to bed and rest for one to two hours. Rest well and regain your energy today so that it'll be easier for you when you go to school tomorrow."

"Dad, you're so good." As Qiao Nan ate the piping hot meal, she felt moved and happy when she heard the words of concern from Qiao Dongliang.

He was no doubt her biological father. He actually could tell that she did not sleep well at all last night.

If not for the fear of falling sick due to hunger, which she did in her previous life due to gastric problems, she had wanted to forgo this meal. She did not sleep well for an entire night and felt that she could bury her face in the rice bowl at any point in time.

Qiao Nan believed that as soon as she could finish up this meal, she would be able to go back to her bed and have a comfortable nap.

Who would have known that one minute after her meal, a visitor that would 'perk her up' came.

“Who came at this hour?” Qiao Dongliang urged Qiao Nan to go to sleep quickly. He would tidy up the table. Before Qiao Nan could get up from her seat, they heard the sound of someone knocking on the door. “Don’t tell me Madam Zhai came back again?”

Impossible. Chief Zhai was already at home. Why would Madam Zhai come again?

“That should not be possible,” Qiao Nan said with some doubt.

“Why don’t you go and rest first? I’ll go and open the door. Even if there’s a guest, as a father, I should be the one attending to them.” As long as the person was not from the Zhai family, Nan Nan would be able to take her nap with ease.

“Alright.” The three family members of the Zhai family were all at home. Why would they come to her house? Most likely, the visitor was looking for her father.

Just as Qiao Nan lay on the bed, before she could cover herself with the blanket, she heard the estranged voice of her father. “Nan Nan, come out quickly. Chief... Chief Zhai is here!”

Chapter 444: Please Break Up

Qiao Nan jumped in shock. “Dad, what did you say? Who came?” As she said that, Qiao Nan wore her clothes and shoes.

“Chief... Chief Zhai, good day.” Coming into close contact with Zhai Yaohui, Qiao Dongliang was so emotionally affected that his face turned red. He actually gave Zhai Yaohui a ninety-degree bow.

“You’re Qiao Nan’s father?” Zhai Yaohui was quite satisfied with that perfect standing posture of Qiao Dongliang.

“Reporting to Chief Zhai, yes, I am!”

“Can I go into the house before we talk?”

“Yes, Chief Zhai!”

When Qiao Nan came out, she saw her father looking like an obedient soldier. He was standing up in a prim and proper manner, while Zhai Yaohui, with a serious look on his face, was like the chief that was reviewing the parade. “Dad, Chief Zhai... Chief Zhai, please come in and have a seat.”

“Thank you.” When he saw the main party concerned appear, Zhai Yaohui simply placed all his attention on Qiao Nan. “Qiao Dongliang, right? I wish to speak to your daughter alone. Can I?”

“Yes, Chief.”

“...”

“...”

At the sight of Qiao Dongliang behaving like a junior soldier falling into his position and standing outside with his back facing them, Qiao Nan was speechless for a moment. Zhai Yaohui was extraordinarily silent as well.

In actual fact, Zhai Yaohui had seen many people like Qiao Dongliang. All the soldiers in the army behaved this way. But because this was the house of the Qiao family, he felt that this was a fresh experience. “Do you know why I am here today?”

“I don’t know.”

“Don’t know?” Zhai Yaohui did not believe her. “You should know clearly what you have done. If not for the sake of Zhai Sheng, I wouldn’t come to the house of the Qiao family.”

Qiao Nan clenched her fists and changed from the nervous state she had been in. She lifted her head and looked at Zhai Yaohui. “I’m not sure about that as well. Chief Zhai, please feel free to speak your mind.”

“Zhai Sheng and you are not compatible. I hope you can take the initiative to break up with Zhai Sheng. Furthermore, I’ve found someone suitable for him. They’re going to be engaged very soon.”

“I reject.” Qiao Nan shook her head. “It’s pointless unless Brother Zhai tells me this himself.”

“Won’t it be too embarrassing for him to come and tell you directly?”

“I’m not afraid of embarrassment. I’m just afraid of not understanding what happened and being like a muddleheaded ghost.”

At the sight of Zhai Yaohui’s eyes that were increasingly sharp and piercing, Qiao Nan bit her teeth and endured.

She initially thought that Auntie Miao would be the one telling her all these. Never did she expect that it would actually be Brother Zhai’s father, Chief Zhai. Moreover, she did not expect that Chief Zhai, who was busy with a myriad of state affairs, discovered the relationship between Brother Zhai and her before Auntie Miao did.

Zhai Yaohui was surprised that Qiao Nan dared to be so firm in her replies to him despite her young age.

“Chief Zhai, is there any other matter?” If there was none, he could leave.

“Aren’t you afraid that I’ll do anything to the Qiao family?” She had the guts to chase him away.

“You’re Brother Zhai’s father. Given my understanding of Brother Zhai, unless he has grown up the ‘wrong way’, you would not do that. You would not bother to either.”

“...” The corners of Zhai Yaohui’s lips moved. He was both amused and speechless by the interesting way that Qiao Nan put her point across.

“Chief Zhai, do you have any other matter?”

“You’re not treating me to a cup of tea?” Zhai Yaohui let out a breath, feeling slightly more relaxed.

“...” Qiao Nan frowned. “Chief Zhai, you may not know. When Auntie Miao first came to my house, she shunned my lousy tea leaves, saying that she was not used to drinking it. Since then, I’ve only given her plain water. Do you want any?”

“Plain water, then.”

“Sure.”

Qiao Nan really poured a cup of plain water and placed it in front of Zhai Yaohui.

Zhai Yaohui asked for a drink. This clearly meant he did not wish to leave yet.

Although this was Qiao Nan’s territory, Zhai Yaohui was now taking an active role, and Qiao Nan the passive one.

Hence, after pouring the drink, Qiao Nan sat facing Zhai Yaohui and maintained her silence. She waited for Zhai Yaohui to speak first.

After drinking a mouthful of plain water that he had not drunk for many years, Zhai Yaohui felt a little odd. After some time, he continued and asked, “Does Miao Miao come to your house very often?”

“How could that be?” Qiao Nan shook her head. “Auntie Miao is more often with Chief Zhai. When she occasionally has the time, she will come to my house.” If Auntie Miao came to her house every day, she would not be able to take it.

“I see.” At the sight of the plain water in his hands, he thought about how many cups of plain water could Miao Miao possibly come over to the Qiao family to drink? It was clear enough. “Did Miao Miao sleepover at your house yesterday?”

“Yes. My dad went back to the small courtyard of the Qiao family. Auntie Miao squeezed with me on the same bed,” Qiao Nan replied.

“You’re really quite smart.” Before he could question further, Qiao Nan had explained everything clearly to him. It made him feel much more at ease.

Zhai Yaohui could not accept Miao Jing being under the same roof as another man. He further could not tolerate Miao Jing sleeping in a bed that belonged to another man.

Qiao Nan raised her eyebrows. She straightened her back and sat rigidly. "Yesterday, Auntie Miao slept with me. But during the day yesterday, who were you with and what did you do, Chief Zhai? Could you also let Auntie Miao feel as comfortable as you do now?"

One might steal a horse while another might not look over the hedge. Chief Zhai should not do that.

"Miao Miao even told you this? What else did she say?" Zhai Yaohui was both nervous and surprised. Nevertheless, the expression on his face seemingly did not change, still looking indifferent. Even his tone was nonchalant. It was so normal as if he was talking to Qiao Nan about the taste of the cup of water.

If not for that moment of flash beneath Zhai Yaohui's eyes, it would have been hard for Qiao Nan to know that Zhai Yaohui was, in fact, very concerned about her reply.

Qiao Nan crossed her arms. "Chief Zhai, are you trying to beat around the bush with me? Why don't we be more direct? What do you want to know? I'll see if I want to reply to you."

After fussing for such a long time, Chief Zhai's main purpose was not really to request her to break up with Brother Zhai. It was about Auntie Miao's matter.

It was not quite right. According to Brother Zhai and Auntie Miao, Qi Minlan was the one that Chief Zhai loved. He was forced to marry Auntie Miao by Old Master Zhai. But given the situation, no matter how she looked, she felt that Chief Zhai actually cared very much about Auntie Miao.

"See if you want to reply?" Zhai Yaohui snorted slightly. "You're talking so boldly?"

"That's right. It's Brother Zhai and Auntie Miao who gave me the courage," Qiao Nan replied courteously with a smile. One was the son that Chief Zhai valued most importantly, while the other was the woman that Chief Zhai cared about most. Qiao Nan suddenly discovered that she was quite lucky to be holding on to the two lifelines of Chief Zhai.

Although Chief Zhai found out about Brother Zhai and her before Auntie Miao did, given the current situation, Chief Zhai did not seem like he would become an obstacle between them.

Zhai Yaohui, whose face stiffened, felt that the smile on Qiao Nan's face was extremely annoying. This was because he would occasionally see this smile on the face of his son, Zhai Sheng.

Chapter 445: Both Have 'Old Lovers'

Zhai Yaohui closed his eyes for a while. His eyes then revealed a flash that was as sharp as that of a falcon. "Right, let's be frank. It's rare that Miao Miao can get along with you. Therefore, I want to ask you some things about Miao Miao. You have to reply honestly."

"What do I gain out of this?"

"You dare to ask me about what you will gain?" Zhai Yaohui felt ridiculous. Who would have the gall of the leopard to dare to ask the chief of a country that!

"Chief Zhai, don't tell me you think that I'm obligated to reply to your questions? You may not know that besides my family members, I'm, in fact, quite difficult toward others." Qiao Nan smiled.

"Hahaha." Zhai Yaohui sneered. "Then, what do you wish to gain out of this?"

"Unless Auntie Miao realizes it herself, or Brother Zhai and I tell Auntie Miao the truth on our own accord, Chief Zhai, you should pretend that you don't know anything!"

Zhai Yaohui put down the cup in his hands. "So, you're not that good to Miao Miao and want to lie to her?" There was coldness in Zhai Yaohui's eyes.

Instead of being angry, Qiao Nan smiled and glanced sideways at Zhai Yaohui. "No choice. Someone caused Auntie Miao to have a knot in her heart regarding such matters. Yesterday, when Auntie Miao came, she even told me that when I find a man in the future, I shouldn't marry someone whose status is much higher than that of mine and also not to marry a soldier. It's too much of a hardship. Chief Zhai, should I discuss with Brother Zhai about how to repay this 'someone'?"

"I agree to your terms."

Zhai Yaohui hit the nail on the head. After all, he had not intended to tell Miao Jing about this. Hence, he could find out information from Qiao Nan for free and not lose anything.

“Then, what does Chief Zhai wish to ask?” Qiao Nan secretly heaved a sigh of relief. Auntie Miao had just taken a great blow because of Chief Zhai and Qi Minlan. She was utterly despaired. If the matter between her and Brother Zhai was exposed, Qiao Nan was worried that Auntie Miao might not be able to take it well and would do something silly.

Zhai Yaohui thought carefully about which words to use. After some time, he only managed to ask a very ordinary question. “What is Miao Miao angry with me about?”

“Miao Miao misunderstood me, but I’ve already explained to her. However, Miao Miao did not seem to accept it. Zhai Sheng told me that Miao Miao gets along well with you. Do you know what Miao Miao is thinking about? Did she mention anything to you?” Having finished his question, Zhai Yaohui did not know whether to laugh or cry. He had become too confused out of anxiety. Was it appropriate to pose such questions to Qiao Nan, a young lady?

“It is fine if you don’t know.”

Having been treated as a ‘tree in a hole’ by Miao Jing for so long, how could Qiao Nan not know anything? “Chief Zhai, what are you anxious about? Did anything accidentally happen between Qiu Chenxi’s mother and you and Auntie Miao saw it?” There would only be a few matters that a woman would be concerned about.

Brother Zhai said that it was impossible for Chief Zhai to have an extra-marital affair. In that case, it was merely physical contact then.

“You’ve already said it yourself. That was an accident!”

“Chief Zhai, I wish to share with you a secret regarding Auntie Miao. Would you like to know?”

“I don’t want to know about it. Tell me the important things that matter.” Things such as secrets could be revealed later.

“Are you certain you don’t want to know? The matter concerns Auntie Miao and another man.”

“Who’s this man?!” Zhai Yaohui clenched his fists, his green veins nearly exploding.

Qiao Nan lifted her legs. She did that a few times before she could prop it up in a cross-legged position. “Chief Zhai, I don’t think you know this. In the past, when Auntie Miao was still in the village, there was a Chinese teacher in town who was considered primary classmates with Auntie Miao. He liked Auntie Miao very much. If Old Master Zhai did not engage Auntie Miao to you, Auntie Miao would most probably not be the wife of a chief. She would be the wife of a teacher who had taught numerous students. That teacher had actually proposed marriage to Auntie Miao’s family long before.”

Zhai Yaohui was astonished because he completely did not know about this matter. “Where did you hear that from? Don’t tell me you’re weaving a lie?”

“This matter can’t be lied about. As to why you didn’t know... Chief Zhai, you have to reflect on yourself and shouldn’t be asking me this. The greatest regret in that teacher’s life is not marrying Auntie Miao. However, this teacher did well in life too. He became a school principal in the end. Auntie Miao is considered as the most successful and famous person in their area. This teacher recently contacted Auntie Miao to invite her back to her hometown and old school to do some sort of promotion for the school. That principal even said that Auntie Miao’s hometown has changed greatly and Auntie Miao may not even recognize it now. When she goes over, he can be the tour guide to bring her around. Chief Zhai, what do you think of this matter?”

Although Zhai Yaohui did not reply, his face turned completely black, feeling as if the greatest enemy was approaching him. But that was enough of a response for Qiao Nan. He only had two words to say: No way!

No way at all!

“Chief Zhai, Auntie Miao has already promised that principal. She’ll be going back after the May Day holiday.”

“How dare she!” Zhai Yaohui stood up immediately. No wonder Miao Miao packed her luggage and said that she would be moving out for a few days. So, it was because she had a date with her old lover!

“Why wouldn’t she dare? Chief Zhai, don’t forget that you have always been keeping in touch with Qiu Chenxi’s mother. Both of you have been discussing when Brother Zhai can marry Qiu Chenxi. You know, that principal has a son. After he saw Sister Zhai Hua’s photo, he liked Sister Zhai Hua so much. He said Sister Zhai Hua looked exactly like Auntie Miao when she was young. He wanted to be in-laws with Auntie Miao. Auntie Miao is considering whether to marry Sister Zhai Hua into their family.”

“Bah!” Zhai Yaohui did not respond. However, Zhai Hua, who had finally completed her mission and ran out of the camp to the Qiao family, could not help uttering expletives when she heard this.

Qiao Nan simply jumped in shock. “Zhai... Sister Zhai Hua, why did you come?” It was true that one should not talk behind someone’s back.

“Nan Nan, did my mom really say that she will marry me to the son of that nonsense principal?” Zhai Hua was anxiety-stricken. She already had someone she loved. Besides, they were already in a relationship. She did not want to marry a man that sprang out of nowhere, one whom she did not know.

Zhai Yaohui shrank his chin. “Hua Hua, don’t worry. I will definitely not let you marry that person. Dad is certainly on your side.”

Zhai Hua was not only unhappy but also rolled her eyes directly. “Dad, you’re the first one that I’m worried about. You did this matter before. Didn’t you suggest that Zhai Sheng should marry Qiu Chenxi? You and Mom are really a couple. Your temperaments are the same. You both like to do things such as selling your son and daughter. If you want to get married, go ahead by yourselves!” Why did they have to sacrifice Zhai Sheng and her!

Zhai Yaohui was anxious. He had wanted to make his daughter take his side and help him persuade Miao Miao. “How can that be the same? Qiu Chenxi comes from good family background. She is good in her studies and also intelligent. She even grew up together with Zhai Sheng. They are very compatible together.”

“Chief Zhai, the son of that principal is tall and very good-looking.”

Chapter 446: Not Against It

“Besides, he comes from a scholarly family, having an IQ of 120. He is scholarly while she is athletic. Aren’t they a perfect match?” Qiao Nan continued.

“No, this is absolutely impossible. That person will never have any relations with the Zhai family. Dream on!” Zhai Yaohui’s face darkened. He was just like the weather in June, where one could expect a shower anytime.

“Why?”

“Why?”

Qiao Nan and Zhai Hua asked in unison. They wanted to know why Zhai Yaohui was so firm in this matter.

“Because...” He would never let Miao Miao see that man often. If they were in-laws, they would get to meet during festivals and they would then be in each other’s thoughts!

Before he could bring himself to say this, Zhai Yaohui suddenly understood Qiao Nan’s intention in telling him this. “Are you telling the truth?”

“Some of them are the truth while some are lies.” Qiao Nan stuck out her tongue. She was too daring to lie to Chief Zhai.

“Which of them are truths and which of them are lies?”

“The part about the principal and Auntie Miao is true. The part where Auntie Miao wanted Sister Zhai Hua to marry the son of the principal is false. The principal friend has this intention, but Auntie Miao has said that if Sister Zhai Hua is to marry in the future, it will have to be someone Sister Zhai Hua likes.”

“She is indeed my dear mom!” Zhai Hua was so happy that she hugged Qiao Nan and pecked on her cheeks.

Zhai Yaohui calmed down slightly. “Is that true?”

“It’s a hundred percent true.” Qiao Nan wiped off the saliva that Zhai Hua left on her face. What was wrong with Auntie Miao and Sister Zhai Hua? One liked to hug people while she slept while the other liked to kiss people.

In this way, Zhai Sheng’s sister had become the first person to peck on Zhai Sheng’s future wife’s cheeks.

Zhai Yaohui let out a long breath. "I understand now."

"Do you really understand?" Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows and there was a sparkle in her eyes.

Zhai Yaohui was angry and amused. "Don't be too happy. Although I understand, it doesn't mean I will help Zhai Sheng and you. Even without Qiu Chenxi, I have the same thoughts as Miao Miao. Both of you are not suitable for each other."

"I'm not in a hurry. Since Auntie Miao likes me, I'm sure I will get her approval someday. More importantly, I am still young. Even though I don't think that one's external conditions can override everything, I will do my best to meet your conditions in order to win your approval and blessing. Anyway, Brother Zhai is not after a princess. He is looking for a soulmate, someone who can stand side by side with him to face the world. Although there is some difficulty, I think I am up to it."

"You sound very confident."

"Without this self-confidence, how could I dare to be with Brother Zhai?"

Zhai Hua was impressed with the way Qiao Nan spoke to Zhai Yaohui. She was not afraid of his status and she never cowered in front of him. She seemed to be of his equal and dared to voice out her opinions. At her age, Zhai Hua would never dare to confront her father.

Nan Nan was a heroine.

Zhai Yaohui finally understood the reason Zhai Sheng wanted him to look for Qiao Nan. It seemed like he had fallen for Zhai Sheng's tricks again.

Qiao Nan was indeed smart. It was no wonder that Zhai Sheng liked her so much.

However, he maintained his stand. At least for now, Qiao Nan was not suitable to be the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family and she could not marry Zhai Sheng. "Why are you in a daze? Go back with me." Zhai Yaohui looked at Zhai Hua. She had just returned to Ping Cheng and should stay at home instead of hanging out at the Qiao family's residence. What was wrong with all of them?

“No!” Zhai Hua leaned back in a relaxed posture, refusing to leave the Qiao family’s residence. “I rushed back from the army since I was worried about you and Mom. I am exhausted to the bone. In order to complete the previous mission, I haven’t been sleeping for three days. I’m too tired to move now. I have to rest at Nan Nan’s house for a while.”

Her father would not be able to make up with her mother within such a short time. She did not want to be sandwiched between both of them. Since it was her father who created the trouble, he should suffer for the mistakes that he made.

He was not young anymore, yet he had to seek advice from a young lady. It was so embarrassing!

“Up to you.” Zhai Yaohui left for the Zhai family’s residence.

Qiao Dongliang walked Zhai Yaohui to the door. He had thought of going back home after sending Chief Zhai off, but he remembered that Chief Zhai’s daughter was still in his house. He thought for a while, looked up to the sky, and heaved a sigh. Since it was still early, he decided to look for Old Yang to chat with or to have a game of chess.

Zhai Hua found a comfortable position by leaning back against the sofa. She was in high spirits. She motioned for Nan Nan to sit beside her. “Nan Nan, my dad has left. Come and sit over here.”

“I can’t.” Qiao Nan had a bitter smile on her face.

“What’s wrong?” Zhai Hua sat up and looked at Qiao Nan with a perplexed look on her face. “Are you not feeling well?”

“No, my legs are weak. I can’t move.”

“Your legs are weak... Were you frightened by my dad? Hey, Nan Nan, you are so incredible. When my dad was there, I couldn’t tell that you were scared. I thought you were so much stronger than me and that you were not afraid of him.” Zhai Hua laughed until she cried. It turned out that it was only a false show of bravery.

“No matter what, I couldn’t show him my weakness. How could he question me in an interrogative manner in my house?” Qiao Nan patted her thigh, refusing to back down to Zhai Yaohui. At least, she must not reveal any sign of weakness before the ‘enemy’ left.

“Come here, I will give you a hand.” Zhai Hua helped Qiao Nan over to her side and sat down. “But it’s good to have the confrontation, lest my dad keeps on meddling with Zhai Sheng’s affairs. By the way, were you telling the truth just now? When my mom was young, did someone hint to her that he liked her and ask for her hand in marriage even before my dad?” She had never heard of this.

“It’s true.” She did not fabricate it.

“But my mom never told me about it.”

“Sister Zhai Hua, you have to do some reflection.”

“After telling my dad to reflect on himself, you are telling me to do so as well?” Zhai Hua stretched her hands out in a bid to tickle Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan grabbed her hands and fixed her gaze on Zhai Hua. “Sister Zhai Hua, I am serious. You have to do some reflection and the same goes for Chief Zhai and Brother Zhai.”

Zhai Hua felt uncomfortable at Qiao Nan’s words. “Nan Nan, are you joking or are you serious?”

Chapter 447: Found His Way into Her House

Qiao Nan loosened her grip on Zhai Hua’s hand and leaned back. “You’re very clear what kind of person my mom is. People are vain. We only know to value what we don’t have. Auntie Miao is a good mother, but she has lost herself because of Chief Zhai. When I look at your family of four and the happy days that all of you can have, and how your family has ended up to be, I feel sad and find that it is such a pity.”

Zhai Hua turned silent at Qiao Nan’s words. She was lost for words.

In the past, she never felt anything wrong with the way her family members got along with one another. Zhai Sheng and she had gotten used to the fact that her mother would follow her father around and neglect her children. In retrospect, had they been too independent such that her mother felt that she was not needed, and hence could only follow her father around?

It was not easy for her to transform from a village girl to be married to a family that came from a revolutionary background and became the wife of the chief of the army in a few years' time. Not everyone could adapt well to the huge transformation.

After thinking about it, Zhai Hua said, "Shall I go back now to accompany my mom?"

"You must chat with her and share a bed with her!" Since she was hugged by Auntie Miao through the night, Sister Zhai Hua must have a taste of how it was like to be hugged by Auntie Miao as well.

"I can eat and chat with her, but I would rather not share a bed with her. Since a young age, she has never shared a bed with me." Zhai Hua could not help but tremble. "Well, enough of this. I must go back to accompany and persuade my mom. I must help her lecture my dad. Every day, his dubious dealings with his old lover, Qi Minlan, never stopped and even insisted on having Qiu Chenxi as his daughter-in-law!"

It was great that there was a turning point in the engagement between Zhai Sheng and Qiu Chenxi. Her father finally understood. Zhai Hua did not idle at the Qiao family's residence. Instead, she stood up feeling energized and rushed back to the Zhai family's residence.

Qiao Nan bid her goodbye and reminded her to close the door on her way out.

Qiao Nan did not sleep well for a night. She could not wait to plop down on her bed to sleep. Besides, after the talk with Zhai Yaohui, she felt physically and mentally exhausted.

Fortunately, it was only once in a blue moon. Otherwise, her body would not be able to take it.

Qiao Nan took off her jacket and shoes and lay down on her bed. She fell asleep in no time.

Qiao Nan had only been asleep for about half an hour when someone pushed the door open and went into Qiao Nan's room. Seeing that Qiao Nan was in a deep sleep, Zhai Sheng closed the door quietly and took off his shoes and jacket. He hugged Qiao Nan in his arms and lay down to sleep.

By the time Qiao Nan woke up, she could smell the aroma of nicely-cooked dishes.

Qiao Nan got dressed, washed her face, and yawned as she came out. “Dad, what is it that you are cooking? It smells nice... Brother Zhai?” Qiao Nan blinked her eyes in confusion. Why was Brother Zhai at her house? Why did all the people from the Zhai family come to her house today?

“Nan Nan, you are awake. Wash your hands and get ready to eat.” Qiao Dongliang, who came out with the dishes, felt way more awkward than Qiao Nan. Just now, when Zhai Sheng and Qiao Dongliang were busy cooking in the kitchen, Zhai Sheng kept asking Qiao Dongliang about Qiao Nan’s eating preferences, whether she liked to have her dishes salty or plain. Qiao Dongliang felt very uncomfortable and awkward.

Qiao Dongliang knew Zhai Sheng’s intentions toward Qiao Nan. If Zhai Sheng was not a soldier or a regiment commander, Qiao Dongliang would have sent him away.

Qiao Nan walked to stand by Qiao Dongliang’s side. “Dad, why is Brother Zhai at our house?” When did he arrive? She had no recollection at all.

Seeing that Qiao Nan stood by his side instead of ignoring him and standing by Zhai Sheng’s side, Qiao Dongliang gave Zhai Sheng a smug look and said, “I don’t know. When I reached home, he was already here. Didn’t you open the door for him?”

“No, I did not. When Sister Zhai Hua went back, I asked her to close the door for me and I went to sleep right away. Yesterday, Auntie Miao stayed for the night. I didn’t sleep at all, so I was very sleepy. Dad, you have no idea when Brother Zhai came as well? When you came back, what was Brother Zhai doing?”

Qiao Dongliang’s face darkened. “I saw him coming out of your room.”

Was that the truth?

“He said he was here to see you. But seeing that you were sleeping, he did not disturb you.” Qiao Dongliang did not really trust Zhai Sheng’s words. He went into Qiao Nan’s room and checked that she was fine and fast asleep before setting his mind at ease.

Afterward, he kept a close watch on Zhai Sheng.

Last time, Qiao Nan had revealed some of her feelings about Zhai Sheng to Qiao Dongliang. Initially, Qiao Dongliang found it hard to believe.

But seeing that Zhai Sheng kept asking about his daughter's hobbies and eating preferences, Qiao Dongliang had no other choice but to believe her words.

Zhai Sheng was already an adult, while Nan Nan was still young. Qiao Dongliang felt that Zhai Sheng's behavior was a disgrace to the soldiers.

"Nan Nan, come and have your meal." Zhai Sheng did not mind that Qiao Nan stood by Qiao Dongliang's side instead of his. He was in high spirits because of the sweet nap just now.

"Brother Zhai, is it fine for you not to be at home?" Qiao Nan took the bowl and chopsticks from Zhai Sheng.

"Certainly, there isn't any problem. Haven't you solved it?"

"Is it really solved?" She could not help but doubt his words.

"Don't worry, just dig in. You slept for so long during the day. Will you be able to sleep at night?" Zhai Sheng placed some vegetables into Qiao Nan's bowl. Had he found his way into her house and claimed ownership?

"Don't worry. In fact, I am a good sleeper." But given her current situation, she could not sleep for too long.

Qiao Dongliang cleared his throat loudly while glaring at Zhai Sheng. He felt anger boiling inside him.

"Dad, is your throat uncomfortable? I will get you a cup of tea." Qiao Nan did not realize that it was, in fact, a 'silent fight' between the father-in-law and son-in-law.

Qiao Dongliang drank the tea that Qiao Nan poured for him. Not only was his throat comfortable, but he also felt better now. "Daughters are better than sons. Daughters are more considerate." Nevertheless, he was angry that someone was after the apple of his eye.

“Uncle Qiao, is that so? Shall I pour you a cup of warm tea?” Even though Qiao Nan was still very young, Zhai Sheng had set his sights on marrying her. He found nothing wrong with that. However, if he and Nan Nan had a daughter in the future and someone did the same to his daughter, he would beat the person to a pulp!

Qiao Dongliang rolled his eyes and waved his hand. “No, the cup of tea that Nan Nan poured for me is just nice. You don’t have to bother yourself.” What a joke. The drink that his daughter poured for him was definitely sweeter than the drink poured by somebody’s son!

Chapter 448: A Face Full of Disdain

That night, Zhai Sheng not only stayed at the Qiao family’s residence to accompany the father and daughter for dinner but also dawdled to watch the evening news together with them. He was only willing to leave when it was half-past seven.

Once Zhai Sheng left, Qiao Dongliang immediately closed the door. “Nan Nan, do you really know Zhai Sheng or are you both just having fun? You’re a girl. You can’t play with this kind of matter. Moreover, you’re now just a first-year senior high school student. Nan Nan, please don’t do anything foolish at this moment. Are you and Zhai Sheng...”

He had not wished for a son-in-law but the son-in-law appeared. It was too annoying!

“Dad, don’t worry. I assure you that I will definitely do well in my studies. Just watch after me. If there’s an issue with my academic results, I promise you that I will certainly not meet Brother Zhai unless my grades improve or even before I graduate from senior high school. Will that do?” Qiao Nan smiled and leaned beside Qiao Dongliang. Her voice was soft and sweet.

“Really?”

“Yes!”

Qiao Dongliang sighed. “Alright, Nan Nan. Dad will believe you once. Remember what you told Dad today. If your grades suffer because of this, don’t blame Dad for being heartless. Nan Nan, you know the wealth and status of the Zhai family. Actually, Dad doesn’t want you to go through hardships. In fact, being simple and ordinary is the reality. It’s also happiness.”

The entry status of the Zhai family was too high. He was afraid that before Nan Nan could get into the family, she would be stumbled by the high standards of the Zhai family and suffered a major and merciless setback.

Qiao Dongliang was aware that, recently, the few members of the Zhai family were seemingly on good terms with their family. In particular, today, all the four family members of the Zhai family came to his house one after another.

However, that was only because Madam Zhai liked Nan Nan. When the party who liked Nan Nan was changed to Zhai Sheng, the situation would be very different.

The Zhai family could accept a goddaughter like Nan Nan but may not be willing to accept a daughter-in-law like her.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips for a moment. “Dad, I’m doing this because of Brother Zhai. In this world, besides Dad, Brother Zhai is the only one who’s good to me. A man that’s so good to me and also so outstanding, Dad, tell me, how many women in this world will not be tempted?”

“Dad, don’t look down on me. I’ll definitely work hard. When I’m successful in the future, I won’t let the Zhai family use my family background as an excuse to stop me from being together with Brother Zhai.”

“Such arrogant words. You’re not afraid of being a laughingstock?” Qiao Dongliang was both angry and amused. Mostly, his heart ached that Qiao Nan had to work so hard.

“What’s there to be afraid of? I’ll walk my talk.” Furthermore, she had already said this to Chief Zhai in the exact same manner.

Qiao Dongliang touched Qiao Nan’s head. “Nan Nan, you’re still young. There’s nothing wrong in working hard. Dad won’t advise you regarding other matters, but Dad just hopes that you will promise me one thing. As a lady, you have to love and protect yourself. I heard that you also learn this at school. Do you understand what Dad means?”

Until now, Qiao Dongliang could not forget that piercing feeling in his heart the moment he saw Zhai Sheng coming out of Qiao Nan’s bedroom. It was as if his precious treasure had been taken away by someone.

“Dad, what are you talking about? Brother Zhai is a gentleman. I’m not stupid either.” Qiao Nan blushed. She had been dating Brother Zhai for a few months. Besides holding hands and having little hugs, they had never kissed.

Even in this era, it was very rare to have such a pure love and dating relationship such as that of Brother Zhai and her.

“It’s good that you understand.” Qiao Dongliang also felt embarrassed.

Regardless, he had to say that. Nan Nan was still young, not knowing much about such matters. Zhai Sheng was much older and perhaps even knew things that he should not know. He had to protect Nan Nan properly in case Nan Nan got bullied!

In short, Qiao Dongliang was worried that Zhai Sheng was older and his body was mature. He might not be able to control his physical needs when he was together with Qiao Nan.

“You’re back?” In the house of the Zhai family, Zhai Yaohui said coldly when he saw his son coming back in a happy mood, “I thought you’re not coming back today.”

“Sooner or later.” After he married Nan Nan, they would have their own home and he would no longer come back to the house of the Zhai family every day.

Zhai Yaohui snorted and slammed the table in anger. The two of them was not even in marriage talks yet, but Zhai Sheng already intended to move out after marrying the daughter-in-law. That was so ill-disciplined and out of control. Was it his family marrying a daughter-in-law or was it his son marrying into another family?!

Miao Jing, who just came out to get water, saw this and was stunned. “What’s the matter? Is the daughter Qi Minlan gave birth to with others so good? You like her so much and keep calling her Chenxi. I gave birth to a son for you, but you are so annoyed at him that you scolded and shouted at him?”

Zhai Yaohui’s expression turned stiff. “I didn’t mean that. Besides, didn’t I already promise you that I won’t interfere in the matters between Zhai Sheng and Qiu Chenxi anymore? They could get together if they want to. Otherwise, I’ll definitely not say another word.”

“You’ve been wishing and hoping for Qiu Chenxi to be your daughter-in-law for almost twenty years. Now, you’ve changed your mind in one day. How will I know when you’ll suddenly go back on your promise?” Miao Jing expressed her doubts in Zhai Yaohui’s integrity.

In the past, before she appeared, didn’t Zhai Yaohui also tell Qi Minlan that he would definitely marry her? However, in the end, Miao Jing was the one who married into the Zhai family!

Zhai Yaohui said something?

Whatever Zhai Yaohui said in the Zhai family had no weight!

“...” Clearly, Miao Miao, who was normally so good-tempered and accommodating to him, tended to explode like a volcano recently. Her temper was extremely bad. It was like the firecrackers which burst immediately upon lighting them up. Zhai Yaohui felt helpless, missing the Miao Jing in the past. “I’m a soldier and I take promises very seriously. How will I not keep my promise!”

Miao Jing laughed sarcastically at Zhai Yaohui until the latter’s face turned black.

Miao Jing was not referring to other matters. It was because Zhai Yaohui was the one who said it himself to let Qiu Chenxi marry Zhai Sheng.

If Zhai Yaohui was serious about all his promises, then what about his previous words to the Qiu family and Qi Minlan? Wouldn’t that count?

That serious look of Miao Jing made Zhai Yaohui’s head hurt. Fortunately, this was his own wife who gave birth to two children for him and supported him for many years and was not a soldier under his wing. Otherwise...

Zhai Hua, who was eating an apple, broke into a laughter that was as ugly as the sound of a duck. She felt that her mother’s aura and might were powerful today. It would be good if her mother had done this earlier. “Mom, since we have time now, why don’t the two of us have a chat to bond with each other?” In particular, they could talk about the matter regarding that principal. How about that?

Miao Jing looked at Zhai Hua with disdain. “I don’t want to chat with you. What are you going to talk to me about? Training the soldiers or carrying out your mission? I don’t like to chat about the things that you’re interested in. You also don’t understand the things that I’m interested in. It’s meaningless.”

Zhai Hua, who finally wanted to become a filial daughter, was actually shunned to this extent by her mother. She crumbled to the ground, wanting to vomit blood.

Chapter 449: The Mighty Miao Jing

“Zhai Sheng, didn’t you just come back from the Qiao family? How’s Nan Nan?” Miao Jing felt a little guilty. She knew that while she slept well last night, Qiao Nan did not.

At the thought of the look on Qiao Nan’s face this morning, Miao Jing even started to suspect if the way she looked when she slept had deteriorated recently. Otherwise, why would Qiao Nan become like that?

When Miao Jing mentioned Qiao Nan, Zhai Yaohui gave Zhai Sheng a glance. He was very displeased. This lad was keeping it from Miao Miao because of Qiao Nan.

Zhai Sheng ignored the interrogative eyes of Zhai Yaohui. “Quite good. Uncle Qiao knows how to take care of Nan Nan well. He even prepared soup for Nan Nan. Nan Nan is studying in senior high school now and the stress level is high. The good thing is that Uncle Qiao is very attentive. With Uncle Qiao taking care of her, there shouldn’t be any major problems.”

Most importantly, Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi were not in Ping Cheng. This greatly reduced Nan Nan’s stress among other factors. She was not only more relaxed but was also in a much better state than before.”

Miao Jing smiled. “That’s good.”

Zhai Yaohui frowned. Three vertical lines appeared on his forehead. Miao Miao was too simple and honest. She had no idea that she was kept in the dark by these two kids, Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan.

As if he had guessed Zhai Yaohui’s thoughts, Zhai Sheng threw him a glance and hinted at Zhai Yaohui not to kick him to the curb after he had outlived his usefulness. Zhai Yaohui snorted coldly and retracted his gaze. If the person that he had promised was Zhai Sheng, there would not be any problem.

However, he had an agreement with Qiao Nan. As the chief of the army, how could he not keep to his words and lie to a young lady?

Zhai Yaohui flipped the newspaper that he did not manage to read at all. “Miao Miao, I’m meeting Qiu Qin tomorrow. Are you coming with me?”

“It’s not good for me to go. It won’t be nice if I disturb Qi Minlan and you from reminiscing about the past.” It was another meeting with the Qiu family. Of course, she would not go!

In the future, as long as Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan were present, she would not join in the fun. Since she could not afford to provoke them, she would just avoid them.

This time, after Miao Jing sorted out her thoughts, she particularly detested Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi. Even Qiu Qin was affected.

In actual fact, ever since Miao Jing sorted out her thoughts, she did not understand why Qiu Qin did not seem to have any feelings in regard to the relationship between Zhai Yaohui and Qi Minlan. As a woman, she did not feel at ease and was extremely unhappy about it. However, Qiu Qin was even willing to marry his daughter to Zhai Sheng. Was he still considered a man?

“Qi Minlan won’t be going. It’ll just be Qiu Qin and me tomorrow.” It was rare that Zhai Yaohui was patiently explaining this to Miao Jing.

Miao Jing hesitated for a while. “What do you wish to talk to Qiu Qin about? Qi Minlan will not be there, yet you want me to go along?”

“Since none of you are willing to, then let’s forget about the matter between Zhai Sheng and Qiu Chenxi. However, the two families have been talking about this for years. Even if it’s not going to happen, we should formally discuss this with the other family to express our apologies. It’s not good to hold back Qiu Chenxi.”

Zhai Yaohui was accustomed to having a proper closure in everything. Even if the matter did not work out eventually, they should formally inform the other party and not leave any doubts or areas of uncertainty.

If the Qiu family misunderstood their intentions and Qiu Chenxi did not find another boyfriend, they would be holding her back during her prime years. That would not be good.

It was not an issue if they did not become in-laws, but they should not become enemies.

Miao Jing lifted her face and looked at Zhai Yaohui in disbelief. “You... Have you really decided?” After talking to Qiu Qin, then Zhai Sheng really did not need to marry Qiu Chenxi anymore.

“Yes.” Having been through many difficulties to regain Miao Jing’s attention, Zhai Yaohui became more relaxed and changed his seating posture. He even straightened his back as if he was a child on his first day at school who was trying to leave a good impression on the teacher.

“If you’re really certain and won’t have any regrets, let’s settle this matter, then. However, you only asked to meet Qiu Qin. It’s not appropriate for me to be present as well. Qiu Qin may feel awkward with too many people around. That won’t be nice.” No matter what, this was a rejection of marriage.

“Alright, then I’ll go alone tomorrow.”

“Mom, you’re so powerful!” Zhai Hua gave Miao Jing a thumbs-up. This was totally unexpected. Her father liked Qiu Chenxi so much and simply treated her like his own daughter. In the end, her father actually changed his mind because of her mother and discarded the idea of letting Zhai Sheng marry Qiu Chenxi.

Actually, her mother had a very important place in her father’s heart. Why couldn’t she tell?

During the weekend, Qi Minlan looked into the mirror as she applied facial products on her face. Although the products were branded and expensive, there was not a single expression of happiness on her face.

Qiu Qin was dressed in his jacket and coat. He picked up his car keys and was prepared to go downstairs.

Qi Minlan knitted her brows. “It’s so early in the morning and you’re going out in your car. Where are you going? Are you not having breakfast first?”

Qiu Qin was aware that Qi Minlan had been throwing a fit for two days. When he thought about the happy and glorious look on Qi Minlan’s face each time she returned from the house of the Zhai

family in the past, Qiu Qin actually felt quite pleased to see the hurtful expression on Qi Minlan's face when she came back on this occasion. "No, I have a meeting with someone to discuss something."

"Man or woman?" Qi Minlan could meet Zhai Yaohui in private, but she would definitely not allow Qiu Qin to be on close terms with any woman.

"Man." Moreover, it was someone that Qi Minlan knew and wished to meet.

"Fine, go ahead. Don't forget to go to work. My parents are back this morning. They want to come by to discuss the marriage between Chenxi and Zhai Sheng. We can't delay this matter any longer. Even if we can't do it now, no matter what, we should ask Zhai Sheng to register and file the marriage report to confirm the marriage."

To a soldier, once they had gone through this procedure, Chenxi would already be considered as Zhai Sheng's wife although there was no formal marriage certificate. She would be the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family and the wife of the future chief.

Qiu Qin laughed. "What's the matter? When you met Zhai Yaohui in the camp last time, did he already tell you when Zhai Sheng and Chenxi will be engaged?" If that was the case, why would Zhai Yaohui request to meet him today?

"No, he didn't." After applying the hand cream on her hand, Qi Minlan finished off and smiled at herself in the mirror. "However, Brother Zhai has treated me very well since young. He always keeps his promise. As he has said he'll let Chenxi marry Zhai Sheng, then no one in the Zhai family can oppose him."

Many years ago, she was clearly the one who knew Brother Zhai first and he had said that he would marry her.

If Old Master Zhai had not been saved by Miao Jing's father, and if he had not insisted Brother Zhai to marry Miao Jing to repay the kindness, Miao Jing would still be planting vegetables in the village.

In the past, she was definitely the one that Brother Zhai liked but he married Miao Jing because of Old Master Zhai. They even had Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua. Now, Zhai Sheng certainly had no choice but to listen to Brother Zhai to marry Chenxi and not another woman.

“Really? Then, I wish both of you mother and daughter all the best in your dreams.” Taking the car keys, Qiu Qin left without even looking back.

The sweeter Qi Minlan’s tone was when she mentioned Zhai Yaohui, the colder Qiu Qin’s expression and eyes looked.

She was married to him for more than twenty years, yet she was always so snobbish and arrogant when she faced him!

Chapter 450: Would Not Hold Up the Lady in Your Family

The most unacceptable thing to Qiu Qin was that Qi Minlan always pretended to be gentle and lovely in front of Zhai Yaohui. He really did not understand why he married such a woman. “Right, I have something on today. I won’t be back tonight. You all don’t need to wait for me to have dinner. Settle it yourselves.”

“You’re not coming back again?” Qi Minlan was so furious that she simply took the cosmetic products and smashed them at Qiu Qin’s ankle. This was the fifth time this month. What was keeping Qiu Qin so busy?!

In comparison, Zhai Yaohui, a man with such high status and power, would either keep Miao Jing by his side or stay at home with her. He would never stay out until late into the night and not be by Miao Jing’s side. Qi Minlan’s expression turned even uglier at the thought of this.

Initially, such a formidable man that was hard to come by should be her husband.

Why should Miao Jing, that village girl, be leading such a good life after snatching away her happiness?!

“Don’t come back. Don’t come back. If you’re capable, don’t come back forever!”

“Mom, what are you doing? Is it meaningful to vent your anger on these things?” Qiu Chenxi, who heard the noise, picked up the items and placed them in front of Qi Minlan’s vanity table. “Mom, where’s Dad going so early in the morning?”

“How would I know? He said he is meeting someone,” Qi Minlan restrained her anger and said nonchalantly.

Qiu Chenxi knitted her brows. “Mom, do you know who Dad is meeting? Why do I keep feeling that Dad is often not at home recently? Could Dad be...”

“No, your dad doesn’t have the guts to do so.” Qi Minlan gave a scornful smile.

Old Master Zhai liked Miao Jing. Brother Zhai had to give her up and married Miao Jing. Qiu Qin also had a similar situation. She was married to the Qiu family because her in-laws liked her. Although Qiu Qin disliked her, he also married her abidingly. After she gave birth to a daughter for him, would Qiu Qin dare to treat her badly?

Qi Minlan prevented Qiu Qin from getting too close to other women, but she never thought that Qiu Qin would betray her or even had an extra-marital affair behind her back. “Your dad is meeting a man today. I have your dad in my hands. Don’t worry.”

“...” Qiu Chenxi sighed. “Mom, actually, it’s quite good that you found a man like that whom you can hold in your hands. Mom, when you looked for Uncle Zhai the day before, what did he say exactly? I feel that Zhai Sheng has changed. He’s different from before. He must have found someone that he likes.”

“Haven’t you been investigating? What’s the outcome?” Qi Minlan actually did not believe this. In the past, besides being close to her, she had never seen Zhai Yaohui give face to any other young ladies despite many tried to get close to him given his personal qualities and family background.

She seemed to be the only one who received Zhai Yaohui’s gentleness.

Zhai Sheng’s temperament was exactly the same as that of Zhai Yaohui.

If Zhai Sheng was not even willing to marry Chenxi, given Zhai Sheng’s bad temper, it was impossible that he would come into contact with another woman or take a liking to someone else.

“Nothing.”

“Won’t that do? Be rest assured. Mom will definitely help you fulfill your wish. Zhai Sheng can’t escape.” Since Miao Jing snatched her man, she would let her daughter snatch Miao Jing’s son.

When Zhai Sheng and Chenxi became very sweet to each other and were very much in love, she would definitely ask Chenxi to go back to her house frequently and do her confinement there when they had a child. She would also take care of her maternal grandchild. Miao Jing could forget about touching even the collar of her grandchild!

“Mom...” When she heard Qi Minlan talking about visiting parents’ home and grandchild, Qiu Chenxi blushed in embarrassment and stomped her feet nonstop.

“Alright, what’s there to be embarrassed about in front of Mom? I’ve already told you before that a man at Zhai Sheng’s age is actually quite impulsive. You just have to grab one opportunity to be alone with Zhai Sheng and become Zhai Sheng’s woman earlier. If you really become pregnant with his child then, that’ll be the best. Even if you don’t, it’s fine too. What’s done can’t be undone. Chenxi, you have to work hard yourself. Didn’t you buy a lot of new clothes recently? Wear them!”

“Mom, I’m not talking to you anymore. I’m going back to my room.” Qiu Chenxi was both angry and anxious. She did not mind being taken advantage of and becoming Zhai Sheng’s woman earlier.

However, Zhai Sheng always kept a distance from her when only the two of them were occasionally alone together. They did not even touch each other’s hands, let alone sleeping together!

Initially, Qiu Chenxi still retained her woman’s dignity and waited for Zhai Sheng to take the initiative. She even thought about rejecting Zhai Sheng the first two times that he initiated to be close to her.

He would not cherish something that he could obtain so easily.

At the third time, she would then allow Zhai Sheng to hold her hand and progress further.

Even Qi Minlan did not know that Qiu Chenxi had fantasized about this when she was just sixteen years old.

She’s twenty-two years old this year. They had not even hold hands, let alone further progression. Qiu Chenxi was too embarrassed to tell her mother about this matter.

The mother and daughter ended their 'happy-too-early' conversation. Qiu Qin also rushed to the meeting place as per prior agreement. He saw Zhai Yaohui sitting there, waiting.

Qiu Qin could not help feeling a little nervous. "Chief Zhai, so sorry. I'm late by five minutes and made you wait. Actually, I could go to your house."

"There is no such need. As for the reason, you should know. I don't want my wife to be unhappy." Zhai Yaohui was not angry. He was here to 'withdraw' the marriage agreement and was the one in the wrong. It was just waiting for five minutes. Zhai Yaohui still had this bit of patience.

"Yes, yes, yes." Qiu Qin dared not put on any airs in front of Zhai Yaohui. That was precisely why he had never revealed any unhappiness in front of Zhai Yaohui no matter how unhappy he was inside. He had a very high tolerance level.

At the sight of Qiu Qin's behavior, Zhai Yaohui pursed his lips.

As a man, Zhai Yaohui looked down a little on people like Qiu Qin who was spineless and yielded to power. However, in the corporate world and society, this kind of people was considered smart. No matter what happened, they would definitely not leave any troubles or handle. Everyone would meet and part amicably.

"The reason I requested to meet you today is to discuss Zhai Sheng and Qiu Chenxi's matter."

Qiu Qin relaxed his frown. He realized the change in the way Zhai Yaohui addressed his daughter. It was as if he was keeping a distance. "Chief Zhai, please feel free to be frank in your words. I'm already prepared for this."

"In another year's time, it will be the 21st century. This is an era of democracy. Even if we want to matchmake our children, they also have to be willing parties. We can't follow the old ways and advocate feudalism and old traditions, and let the parents decide the children's marriage. Zhai Sheng is still young. He must focus his time and energy on the army. However, Qiu Chenxi is a young lady. It's different."