

RTAMM 551

Chapter 551: Draw the Line

Qi Minlan could not take it lying down. Did Brother Zhai intend to draw the line with her?

“Abandoned? Qi Minlan, this is a serious statement.” There was a disconsolate look on Zhai Yaohui’s face. The simple and pure young lady back then was gone with the passage of time, and in replace was a worldly and coarse woman who was only concerned with fame and money. “If I remember correctly, at the very least, before I married Miao Miao, you always introduced me to others as your brother, am I right?”

Back then, Zhai Yaohui and Qi Minlan did not have a long relationship. Their families knew that they were dating, but to outsiders, especially whenever Zhai Yaohui fetched Qi Minlan, she would introduce Zhai Yaohui as her brother to her classmates at school and to her friends.

“I have already explained it. At that time, I was still studying, and I was too embarrassed to go public.” Qi Minlan blushed. She refused to admit it.

“It was when you just graduated. Are you sure it was because you were shy? In the past, I never questioned you, but it doesn’t mean that I felt nothing at all. You always feel that it is Miao Miao who snatched everything from you, but the truth is because of Miao Miao, I am able to see the truth.” Zhai Yaohui looked at Qi Minlan coldly. “I have no wish to say those unpleasant words, but if you want to listen, I don’t mind saying them. It’s been so many years. It is enough.”

He never felt that he should be apologetic toward Qi Minlan for marrying Miao Miao.

All these years, he had been taking care of the Qiu family, and he had allowed Qiu Chenxi to be with his son. He did not do this simply to compensate Qi Minlan.

With regards to this matter, even though Qi Minlan never acknowledged their relationship in front of outsiders, but deep down inside, he knew that this was a fact. The only reason that he had to compensate for Qi Minlan was that he was the one who initiated the breakup.

That was all.

Shi Peng was part of the reason why he took care of the Qiu family and treated Qi Minlan well.

“Brother Zhai, do you doubt my feelings for you? How can you say such irresponsible words in order to shirk responsibility and not to help Chenxi? If I was not serious about you, why would I go crazy and insist that my family disrupted the marriage when I knew that you were going to marry Miao Jing?” There was a flicker of guilt in Qi Minlan’s eyes. She shouted at the top of her voice, “Brother Zhai, even if you really don’t want to help, you shouldn’t say this to upset me or slander me. It’s okay if you won’t help. She is my daughter and has lots of suitors. Brother Zhai, I am so disappointed with you today. I didn’t expect that you would be so irresponsible. Back then, I was young and ignorant. I have made the wrong judgment. I shouldn’t have given my heart to you! Since you have said so today, I will no longer have any relationship with you in the future. If I bump into you or the people from the Zhai family, I will take a detour. Brother Zhai, I am bitterly disappointed in you!”

Qi Minlan turned and stood up, walking in small steps toward the door.

Zhai Yaohui pursed his lips. Qi Minlan would not take big strides but she was definitely not like those daughters from the respected families who would take small, lady-like steps.

The more Qi Minlan behaved in this manner, the more determined Zhai Yaohui was. “It’s good this way. Back then, I was the one who initiated the breakup. This time, you are the one who decided to break off all relations. In this way, we no longer owe each other anything.”

Since both of them had decided to sever ties, regarding Qiu Chenxi leaving the army, Zhai Yaohui would never intercede for her.

At the same time, unless Qiu Chenxi was able to gain Zhai Sheng’s affection, Zhai Yaohui would no longer do anything to create an opportunity for her and disregard his son’s feelings.

Qi Minlan who failed at the ruse of self-injury to win Zhai Yaohui’s confidence turned blue with anger. “Brother Zhai, are you still the same Brother Zhai from the past? Why would you say such heartless words? Is it Miao...”

“It has nothing to do with Miao Miao. Don’t blame everything on others. Qi Minlan, it is not the responsibility of one party that we didn’t end up together, but you never seem to have reflected on yourself.” Zhai Yaohui interrupted Qi Minlan. “I hope you bear in mind what you have said. I will cooperate as well.”

“Mom, you are here.” Just when Qi Minlan and Zhai Yaohui were on the brink of breaking into a quarrel, Qiu Chenxi appeared. “Mom, you have to help me and have a good talk with Uncle Zhai. I was wronged. I was provoked by others and I was framed. I didn’t mean it. I don’t want to leave the army. I don’t want to leave that person.”

Qiu Chenxi cried until she was out of breath. She looked like a pear blossom bathed in the rain. Such a weeping beauty was indeed very pitiful and would gain the sympathy of others.

Qi Minlan, who almost fell out with Zhai Yaohui, heard her daughter’s words and calmed herself down. She did not expect that not only had she failed to achieve her purpose, but she also ended up arguing with Zhai Yaohui.

In the past, Zhai Yaohui would not treat her in such a manner. He would accede to every plea of hers.

It must be due to Miao Jing, that vixen. She must have spoken to Brother Zhai and bewitched him such that he forgot about their feelings for each other since a young age.

“Chenxi, don’t cry. Wipe your tears. I gave birth to you. Others may not cherish you, but I will. Tell me slowly who framed you. I will not spare that person.” Qi Minlan raised her voice deliberately such that Zhai Yaohui would hear her.

Qiu Chenxi appeared at the right time. Otherwise, it would be shameless of her to ask anything of Zhai Yaohui since she had already said those words.

“Mom, in fact, I am not sure. The political commissar did not say anything to me. He only told me to leave the army in half a month’s time and not to come back again. I don’t know what mistakes have I committed that I have to be given such severe punishments. Mom, I am innocent.” Qiao Nan’s lesson plan had long been burned by her.

One must catch adultery in the act and catch a thief with the loot.

Since the evidence was gone, there was no way she would admit that she had stolen from Qiao Nan.

Furthermore, she did not steal the lesson plan. It was Qian Yanyan who stole it. Why did she have to be her scapegoat? No way!

“What about your uncle? His niece was bullied, yet he did not do anything? Bring me to your uncle!” If Brother Zhai would not help her, she would look for her brother!

“Uncle is in the army as well.” Qiu Chenxi wiped her tears and led Qi Minlan to where Shi Peng was.

Zhai Yaohui sipped his tea and sneered.

It had only been a few days since Shi Peng came out of the hospital. Even the people in the army knew that unless it had to be handled by Shi Peng, they would not bother him and wanted Shi Peng to have a good rest instead.

Like what his father said, he had made the wrong judgment back then. He thought that Qi Minlan was a good lady he could spend a lifetime with. Perhaps Qi Minlan had always treated him as a foolish but good-looking rich guy.

Chapter 552: Difficult to Care for Patient with Chronic Illness

“Qiao Nan, I saw with my own eyes that my auntie pulled a long face when she came out from Chief Zhai’s office. It seems that Qiu Chenxi still has to leave the army, then? I thought Chief Zhai would accede to every plea of hers, I was proven wrong. It was nothing but an exaggeration.” Shi Qing was perplexed.

Qiao Nan closed the dictionary and stretched herself. “You must have some confidence in our national leaders.”

“What do you mean? When did I have no confidence in Chief Zhai?”

“By ‘leaders’, I do not mean Chief Zhai. I am referring to those who support and believe in Chief Zhai. If Chief Zhai was easily led by a woman, do you think he would be able to be in that position? Luckily, you are not Chief Zhai’s political enemy. Otherwise, you will die a terrible death.”

It was normal that Chief Zhai was not swayed by Qi Minlan.

“Then, the chances that Brother Zhai and you can be together will be higher.” If her auntie was not able to sway Chief Zhai, there was no way that Qiu Chenxi could be with Brother Zhai.

Qiao Nan clutched her head in exasperation. “Actually, the biggest obstacle between Brother Zhai and I has never been Chief Zhai. Fortunately, I am still young and in high school. Brother Zhai and I have an agreement that before I graduate from high school, we will not talk about this. So don’t mention it again, and let me have some peace of mind for the next two years. What’s more, walls have ears. If someone overhears our conversation and Qiu Chenxi learns of it, with her temper, she will definitely stir up trouble. You must remember that in one and a half years’ time, we will have to sit for the college entrance examination.”

Seeing that Shi Qing seemed to have something to say, Qiao Nan gave her a reminder. “Shi Qing, don’t forget. Apart from Chief Zhai, your dad is Qi Minlan’s biggest support in the army.” Since Chief Zhai would not help her, she would definitely look for Shi Qing’s father to help her solve the problem.

“Oh, no, how can I forget about this? Qiao Nan, you must go with me. Hurry! My dad is not feeling well. I am afraid my dad will be bullied by the mother and daughter.” Shi Qing jumped up. She was too focused on watching the good show that she had forgotten about her father’s problem.

“He’s your dad. Why should I go?” Qiao Nan widened her eyes, staring at Shi Qing who pulled at her.

“Of course you have to go. We are friends and classmates. You have to help me,” Shi Qing said bluntly. She had just started to study complicated human relations and was not familiar with these areas. She was not good enough to deal with her auntie and Qiu Chenxi.

But Qiao Nan would be able to do it! She had to help her!

By the time Qiao Nan and Shi Qing rushed there, the siblings, Shi Peng and Qi Minlan, were already in a quarrel.

Shi Peng had not fully recovered, and he would always have relapses. After the quarrel with Qi Minlan, Shi Peng’s complexion was very pale and cold sweat had broken out on his forehead. He seemed to be knitting his eyebrows in pain and agony.

“Auntie, that’s enough! Don’t go overboard! You should know that my dad is not feeling well. All you think about is your daughter! Have you forgotten that your brother is sick!” Seeing this situation, Shi Qing was so angry that she wanted to fight it out with Qi Minlan.

“What attitude is that! Since you know that I am your auntie, how dare you have no regards for your senior! Didn’t your parents teach you how to behave?” Qi Minlan was used to her overbearing ways in the Shi family. Nobody dared to point fingers at her and lecture her. Besides, Shi Qing was her junior.

“Yes, you are the senior, but is this how you treat my dad? Chief Zhai…”

Qiao Nan pulled at Shi Qing, stopping her in mid-sentence.

As the saying went, one should not hit a person in their face, and neither should they expose a person’s shortcomings when scolding them.

If Chief Zhai used to accede to every request of Qi Minlan in the past, today, Qi Minlan was shamed terribly.

“Office Shi, I am here with Shi Qing to remind you that it is time for you to go to the military doctor for a follow-up visit. Shi Qing has expected that you would definitely forget about it because of work and neglect your health, so we came to remind you. Hurry, let’s go. We should not keep the military doctor waiting. There are a lot of patients in the army. We can’t waste other people’s time, and we must take care of our health.”

It was not worth it to quarrel with Qi Minlan and affect his health. Shi Peng still had a daughter.

He had to take care of himself for his daughter’s sake.

“Alright.” Shi Peng took a deep breath. He did not intend to argue with Qi Minlan, but his sister was too unreasonable. “Okay, the two of you shall accompany me to the military doctor right now. I have finished some of the medicinal pills. It’s time to get some.”

“Dad, I will help you.” Even though Shi Qing was furious that Qi Minlan had aggravated her father’s condition and that she had to let Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi off, but her father’s health was

much more important. She was only in a moment of anger. Right now, it was more important to get her father to leave first.

She would deal with Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan later!

“Officer Shi, this way.” Qiao Nan and Shi Qing each stood on one side of Shi Peng and helped him get up.

Qi Minlan stopped Qiao Nan and coldly said, “Is that so? My brother needs to go the military doctor? I am his sister. I can take care of him. Thank you for your kindness. You must be Qiao Nan. I heard that your results are quite good and that you are the top student among the cohort in the final exams. Your results are half a point higher than Qing Qing’s. You must know that since a young age, Qing Qing has never been in second place. You are indeed capable. Qing Qing has been sulking for a long time because of this.”

It turned out that this was the Qiao Nan whom Chenxi had mentioned to her a couple of times. She paled in comparison to Chenxi in terms of looks. Apart from her results which were worth a look, she had nothing to be proud of. It was no wonder that Chenxi was sure that the woman Zhai Sheng liked would never be Qiao Nan.

“You...” Shi Qing knew that Qi Minlan was trying to sow discord between Qiao Nan and her. She wanted Qiao Nan to have the impression that she bore a grudge against her due to the half a point difference. She was also reminding Shi Qing that it was Qiao Nan who broke her record of being in the first place. She was telling Shi Qing that both of them could only be enemies and never friends.

She did not expect that her auntie would do this to her. It was no wonder that her auntie was so heartless toward her father as well!

Qiao Nan looked at Shi Qing to reassure her. Qiao Nan then showed a polite and distant smile to Qi Minlan. “Of course, Madam Qi and Officer Shi are siblings. You are the best person to take care of Officer Shi. I am sure Madam Qi knows more about Officer Shi’s condition. As it is a chronic illness, the military doctor wants us to observe his condition and report it to him in time. Previously, Comrade Qiu was busy in the army. I have nothing else to do except conducting the class. Back then, Shi Qing has yet to come to the army, so I helped update the doctor. Now that Officer Shi has so many relatives with him, I can do my homework peacefully. The military doctor has said that given Officer Shi’s condition, he has to go back for follow-up once a week.”

Chapter 553: Spend Lots of Money

“Furthermore, the person who takes care of Officer Shi must update the military doctor of his condition in detail. I have noted down Officer Shi’s condition for this week. I will tell you right now. In the future, I will have to trouble Madam Qi to come to the army once a week.” Qiao Nan smiled brightly, looking as if she was glad that she no longer needed to take on such a troublesome task.

“Madam Qi must be from Ping Cheng. It’s just nice that Comrade Qiu is in the army. Both of you can take care of Officer Shi. You are his relatives, and most importantly, it is convenient for you. With both of you staying by his side to take care of him, Shi Qing and I can focus on our studies.”

“Every, every week?” Qi Minlan was stunned. She glanced at Qiu Chenxi.

Qiu Chenxi shook her head quietly, suggesting that she did not know the details of Shi Peng’s condition as well.

After Shi Peng returned to the army, aside from asking him for help, she had not been in contact with him. She had no idea of his condition.

Qi Minlan took a deep breath and looked at Qiao Nan with suspicion. “Is it that troublesome? As an outsider, you know much more than me. We will decide what to do in the future later. For now, since you know the details, you should come along with us so that you can update the military doctor. You can demonstrate it once. I will then know what to do in the future.”

Her brother’s health condition had always been like this. It was a recurring problem and it seemed like he could not get better.

If not for her brother’s health, he would not have been stuck in his current position and had no hopes for promotion. Because of him, she could not be the wife of the chief of the army, and neither could she be the sister of the chief of the army.

All along, her brother was alone in the army. There was nobody beside him who cared about his health.

If her brother’s illness required such frequent follow-ups and updates, why did she not hear of it in the past? She did not believe Qiao Nan’s words!

“That’s good. Let’s go together,” Qiao Nan replied with a smile. She did not seem to be caught off guard. “Officer Shi, Shi Qing, let’s go.”

Shi Qing knitted her eyebrows. Qiao Nan had cooked up the whole story. How were they supposed to continue with the lie when they visited the military doctor? Given her auntie’s character, she would stir up more trouble if she found out the truth.

Shi Peng pinched Shi Qing’s hands, hinting at her to ease her worry.

“Military doctor, Officer Shi is here for his follow-up. Previously, you wanted me to observe his condition for a week, so I will update you now.” As soon as they reached the sickbay, Qiao Nan was the first to speak up. While she was speaking, she looked toward Qi Minlan as if asking her to listen carefully and take note of what she was doing so that she would be able to do it in the future. “This week, Officer Shi felt weaker. If he spends a long time under the sun, he will feel dizzy. He cannot stand for prolonged periods of time, and he needs to drink lukewarm water. Occasionally, he will suffer from night sweats and cold sweats. Given these circumstances, what should we pay attention to?”

“Hmm...” The military doctor hesitated for a few seconds.

Given the reaction of the military doctor, Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan had misunderstood that Shi Peng’s condition had worsened. Meanwhile, he was thinking hard as to what medicine he should prescribe for Shi Peng.

“Military doctor, you said that since the operation, Officer Shi’s wound has not completely healed. Although the conditions in the army are harsh, Officer Shi has relatives in Ping Cheng. Should we give him some tonics? You don’t have to worry. If there is a need to give him ginseng or velvet antler, Madam Qi and Qiu Chenxi are able to afford them. Their family is well-to-do. The most important thing is that you must find a way to make sure that Officer Shi can recover. As for any other treatments, we will do our best to cooperate.”

Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi turned green at Qiao Nan’s words.

Ginseng, velvet antler—they were familiar with these tonics and the Qiu family had a stock of them. But these tonics were expensive!

In particular, for Shi Peng's condition, it would definitely be insufficient to take these tonics once or twice. If he had to take these tonics for a long period of time, he would be a bottomless pit. The Qiu family might be well-to-do, but they could not afford to spend so much money on him.

"By the way, I heard that bird's nest is very nutritious. It is not only good for women but men as well. It seems that blood bird's nest is the best?"

"Yes." Qiao Nan led the military doctor by the nose. Whatever Qiao Nan said, he would go along with her. "But the blood bird's nest is expensive. The price is several times that of ordinary bird's nest. I heard that the price is still going up."

"Oh, it doesn't matter. As long as Officer Shi can recover, money will not be a problem. Is that right, Madam Qi?" Qiao Nan said generously. After all, she would not be the one who spent the money.

Qi Minlan kept her mouth shut, almost choking on her own saliva.

Money would not be a problem?

Money was the biggest problem!

She did not even get to eat ordinary bird's nest frequently, let alone blood bird's nest. It was too expensive. It was only a small piece, and when it was cooked, it would only amount to a small bowl, yet it was close to a hundred dollars. Eating bird's nest was tantamount to eating banknotes!

She did not even bear to spend the money on herself, let alone for her brother. Was Qiao Nan crazy?

Qiu Chenxi did not know about Shi Peng's health condition, but she knew that those tonics that Qiao Nan mentioned were very expensive. Take for instance the ginseng. Those that were harvested after many years and had a resemblance to the shape of the human body could be astoundingly expensive.

Shi Peng was the only relative that the Qiu family had in the army.

In the unlikely event that Shi Peng's health deteriorated and he needed to have these expensive tonics, it would cost the Qiu family a bomb. For a moment, Qiu Chenxi's heart ached for those

nutritious foods that she never had in her entire life. There was no way that the Qiu family would spend the money on an outsider.

Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi had never thought of getting the money they spent on Shi Peng from the Shi family. That was because the Shi family was not well-to-do. They had spent a huge sum of money on Shi Peng's hospital fees. Besides, there was no way they could save up money as Shi Peng needed to go to the hospital frequently.

Therefore, the Qiu family had no ways of getting whatever money they spent on Shi Peng back from the Shi family.

Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi looked sulky.

After a long while, Qi Minlan said, "It is not easy to get these tonics. If my brother really needs them, we must definitely get them. Qing Qing, Chenxi and you can stay in the army camp to take good care of your dad. I will go back first to think of ways to get these tonics. Since we are getting them, we must get those of good quality so as to ensure that your dad has enough nourishment to recover as quickly as possible. But you should know that aside from money, it takes time to look for the tonics that are of good quality. They are also rare in quantity. Hence, it will possibly take a longer time. I will inform you as soon as I have good news. Chenxi, you must behave yourself. Don't create trouble for your uncle. You must take good care of him, do you understand?"

Chapter 554: Have to Spend a Bomb

Qi Minlan went to the army camp as she heard that her daughter would be expelled from the army.

She did not expect that in the blink of an eye, because of what Qiao Nan said, the Qiu family almost had to spend a bomb on Shi Peng!

Qiu Chenxi looked sulky as well. She had always been taken care of by others, but the tables had been turned on her. Furthermore, she did not have the ability to take care of her uncle. She did not have ginseng, velvet antler, or blood bird's nest.

Actually, Qiu Chenxi knew what her mother, Qi Minlan, had on her mind. Her plan was for her to leave the army first and put things off as long as possible.

However, Qiu Chenxi could not accept that she was the one who was being left behind to deal with the repercussions.

There were so many people in the army and they all knew of her relationship with her uncle. If her uncle was not feeling well and needed someone to take care of him, as his niece, there was no way that she could escape this responsibility.

If Shi Qing asked her for ginseng and velvet antlers, how was she going to get them for her? She did not know magic.

“Chenxi?”

“Alright.” Qiu Chenxi responded to Qi Minlan reluctantly.

Qi Minlan gave Qiu Chenxi a meaningful pat on her shoulder. “Chenxi, you must take good care of your uncle. I will go back first. Contact me if there’s any news.”

“Mom, I understand.”

After giving the instructions, Qi Minlan carried her leather pouch and left in a hurry in her pair of stiletto heels, seemingly fleeing from the army camp.

Qi Minlan did not ask Shi Peng to help Qiu Chenxi so that she could continue to stay in the army.

She was afraid that if she asked her brother for the favor and aggravated his condition, not only was she unable to settle her daughter’s problems, but the Qiu family might also have to spend a bomb to get the tonics for Shi Peng.

That would be a huge loss for them.

“Comrade Qiu, don’t worry. Officer Shi is so kind-hearted. Nothing will happen to him. At most, his constitution is not as strong. He will definitely get better when he has the tonics and nourishment.” Out of ‘kind intentions’, Qiao Nan ‘comforted’ Qiu Chenxi, who was all alone by herself.

“Yes, he will get better.” Her uncle was a bottomless pit. He was an investment that would only sustain losses and pay no returns.

If her uncle could recover fully and perform well in the army in the future such that he would get the position of the chief of the army from Uncle Zhai, it was worth it to buy tonics like ginseng and velvet antler for him even though it would be tough on her family.

But if he could only get slightly better...

She would rather give these tonics to her grandparents so that they would live for a few more years.

“Alright, I still have classes today. There’s a lot to prepare. Now that the two of you are with uncle, it should not be a big problem. Qing Qing, take good care of uncle. If anything crops up, you must come to look for me. I can’t possibly neglect so many students in the army because of uncle. You can rest assured that when I finish preparing for the class, I will definitely help you take care of uncle.”

Since Qi Minlan had left, Qiu Chenxi had no wish to stay behind.

“Are you that busy? There is still an entire afternoon. It should not take you long to prepare for the lesson. How about you come over an hour later?” Shi Qing sneered. Qiu Chenxi must have been sleeping for the entire morning.

Preparing for the lessons?

Given what she taught in class previously, there was no need for Qiu Chenxi to prepare for the lessons. What she prepared was so terrible!

“A-an hour? It would not be possible. As you know, I have been away from school for a long time, and my major is not education. I am not familiar with this particular area of knowledge, but I am willing to contribute my time whenever the army needs me. I am willing to do what the army has arranged for me. Hence, I have to spend some time to work on it. Qing Qing, you must understand that I need to put in hard work. Uncle, I am sure that you will be able to understand, right?”

“Yes,” Shi Peng said faintly. His sister had already left in a hurry. He did not expect that his niece who was not as close to him to care for him.

“Uncle, I will go back to prepare for class. When I am done with this cumbersome task, I will come back to take care of you. Uncle, since you don’t feel well, you must rest more. Don’t strain or overexert yourself. I, I will visit you when I have the time.” Qiu Chenxi sighed with relief that she could leave. Like Qi Minlan, she left the sickbay in a hurry.

As for the military doctor, he went along with Qiao Nan throughout the conversation and answered the two questions that she asked. He did not say anything else.

“Doctor Wang, please excuse our behavior.” Shi Peng smiled faintly, lest Doctor Wang felt embarrassed.

Doctor Wang took a deep breath. “No, not at all.”

It seemed that Officer Shi had a complicated relationship with his family. Even though he was puzzled, fortunately, he did not need to give much response. Otherwise, they might have been discovered.

“In the future, I will have to trouble Doctor Wang once a week until I leave the army.”

“It’s no trouble. This is what I should do.” Doctor Wang dared not say otherwise. In fact, since Officer Shi was not feeling well, he should come for follow-up once a week. It was just that Officer Shi refused to do so. He was more than happy that he was willing to come to the sickbay.

“Doctor Wang, how’s my dad?” Shi Qing asked anxiously.

“I have done a checkup. The operation is a success. It’s just that Officer Shi needs more rest. It will only be a matter of time before he feels better.” Doctor Wang was much at ease when the topic was something that he was familiar with.

“What about those tonics that Qiao Nan mentioned just now? Should I buy them for my dad? Don’t worry about the price. Just tell me whatever my dad needs to recover. As long as they are good for my dad, I will get them for him.” Shi Qing pressed on.

“This...” Doctor Wang was speechless. He did not know how to respond to her question.

Fortunately, Qiao Nan helped him with it. “For those who are in good health, ginseng will be a tonic, but for those who are in poor health, ginseng is a drug, detrimental for the health. It bullies the weak and fears the strong. It is a pity that everyone knows that ginseng is nutritious, but they don’t know how to use it appropriately. As for the bird’s nest, as long as one can afford it, it is suitable for everyone.”

Qiao Nan deliberately spoke of ginseng, velvet antler, and bird’s nest such that Qi Minlan and her daughter would be scared away by her. She did not expect that Shi Qing, the daughter, would pay particular attention to it.

This was the difference between someone who really cared and someone who did not.

“Is that so?” Shi Qing was perplexed. She looked toward Doctor Wang.

Doctor Wang nodded quickly. “This is indeed the case. Given Officer Shi’s condition, it’s not suitable for him to have ginseng, but you can have those tonics that are warm and invigorating in nature.” However, it was one thing to know what was suitable, and another thing to be able to afford it.

Bird’s nest was good for the body. As for blood bird’s nest, it was very rare and exceptionally good for the body.

Nowadays, those that were sold on the market were usually fake. It was difficult to get genuine blood bird’s nests.

Chapter 555: To Put On a Full Show

If one could not tell the difference, even if they spent a huge sum of money to get them, they might be fake, ones that were dyed artificially.

Doctor Wang dared not prescribed such stuff.

Shi Peng smiled and touched his dear daughter on the head. His younger sister and niece were not important to him. For him, the one he held dear was his daughter, Qing Qing. “Okay, there’s no

hurry. Doctor Wang has said that as long as I rest well, I will get better. I don't need to have those tonics and I will be able to recover. I am tired. Help me go back and rest."

"Alright, Dad, I will help you back," Shi Qing answered her father and went to support Shi Peng on one side.

Qiao Nan hesitated for a moment before she supported him on the other side.

Even though Qiao Nan supported Shi Peng by his side, it still took him great effort to walk. Qiao Nan was finally certain that on the journey to the sickbay, Shi Peng indeed felt uncomfortable. He was not pretending to be sick to deceive Qi Minlan. He even needed someone to support him to walk.

"Dad, if you feel uncomfortable, you must tell me." On the way back, Shi Qing acted like an old woman and kept nagging her father nonstop. She urged him to listen to her and to rest well. There was a worried expression on her face.

"Alright." Shi Peng agreed to all of her instructions.

Qiu Chenxi, who hid behind a big tree, noticed that similar to his journey to the sickbay, Shi Peng still needed Qiao Nan and Shi Qing to support him on his way back. He still looked pale and frail. Shi Qing, particularly, was talking nonstop. Even though Qiu Chenxi could not hear what she was talking about, she could probably guess it.

Seeing how tensed and worried Shi Qing was, Qiu Chenxi wondered whether her uncle was really in such a bad condition.

She felt gloomy at the possibility of that.

She had run into serious trouble in the army. Her uncle had yet to help her to solve her problem, but he had submitted his resignation report and was riddled with illness.

She was her uncle's relatives, yet when she ran into trouble, he refused to help. She could not understand why she had such a useless uncle.

She had to blame it on her luck!

Shi Qing and Qiao Nan helped Shi Peng back to the office. The latter sat down and said, “Qing Qing, bring two glasses of water here. Look, both of you are perspiring profusely that your clothes are almost wet.”

“Okay.” Shi Qing was feeling thirsty as well. She went to pour some water for them.

After Shi Qing left, Shi Peng looked at Qiao Nan and said suddenly, “Qiao Nan, you are still young. You do not have enough experience. In the future, you must remember. Since you have started it, you must put on a full show. Do you understand?”

Qiao Nan paused momentarily. She noticed that Shi Peng’s expression and gaze had changed totally. Qiao Nan knitted her eyebrows.

It took Qiao Nan a long while before she said, “Did Qiu Chenxi or Qi Minlan give us a back thrust?”

“In your case, you shouldn’t make such a stupid mistake.”

Qiao Nan lowered her eyes and listened quietly.

“You are young, and it’s true that there’s nobody to teach you, but you have to bear in mind that given your situation, you have no chance to make mistakes,” Shi Peng said sternly. Qiao Nan could sense the seriousness of his words. It was as if a huge weight was suddenly pressed down on her shoulders.

“Thank you, Officer Shi. I understand.”

“But I want to thank you for what happened today. Without you, the mother and daughter wouldn’t leave easily. It’s true that I don’t feel well.” After lecturing Qiao Nan, Shi Peng went on to thank her.

If not for Qiao Nan, Shi Peng knew that Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi would not have left so easily. Instead, they would be pestered by them for a long time.

The bystander was always clear-minded. This was very true.

Of course, Qiao Nan was clever to be able to react in the shortest possible time and make the best decision for them.

“No, I want to thank Officer Shi for giving me an unforgettable lesson. I was too careless.” She might be smart, but Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan were not stupid either. It turned out that this was the reason why Qi Minlan pinched Qiu Chenxi’s shoulders when she left.

Qi Minlan was telling Qiu Chenxi to observe Officer Shi’s condition after she left so as to determine whether Officer Shi was really sick or was feigning illness. She was telling Qiu Chenxi not to be fooled easily.

“At your age, you should have the chance to make mistakes and learn from them, but there are things that I don’t have to spell them out for you to understand. I’m sure you are capable of that. Since you have made a choice, you have to face the path you have chosen. Unless you decide to give up, you can only walk forward with your teeth set no matter how difficult it is. The path that you have taken has already been set and it is destined that in the future, there is no room for any mistakes.”

Given the Zhai family’s status and position, she would have to deal with complicated human relations in the future.

If one did not pay attention, one would fall into the abyss.

If Qiao Nan did not handle them well, not only would she be damned to perdition, but she would also bring great disaster to the Zhai family.

What happened with Qiu Chenxi was merely a small test. It was simply to let her try her hand at dealing with complicated human relations.

Fortunately for Qiao Nan, though she did not understand, she subconsciously knew that she had to help Officer Shi back to his office. Otherwise, Qiao Nan’s effort today would go down the drain. As for Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi, they would go from bad to worse and make things difficult for them.

Seeing that Qiao Nan kept her silence, Shi Peng was curious. “Do you regret it? You may not have the room to make mistakes, but you still have the chance to regret your decision.”

“No regrets. I’m just slightly nervous and startled.” Qiao Nan shook her head. She could not give up Brother Zhai because of such a small incident, or more accurately, a small setback. If she did, she would spurn herself for her whole life.

“Since you are nervous and startled, it means that you understand and know what I mean. Recently, you have been guiding and giving Qing Qing good advice. Treat this as my show of gratitude toward you.” Actually, Zhai Yaohui should be the one to guide his daughter-in-law. This had nothing to do with him.

However, Qiao Nan was indeed smart, and she was especially kind to Qing Qing.

No matter what the reason was, as the elders, he should give Qiao Nan timely advice.

In fact, Shi Peng thought highly of Qiao Nan’s reaction and attitude today. She was able to hit the tender spots of Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan, forcing them to leave awkwardly.

“What show of gratitude are you talking about?” Shi Qing, who came back with the drinks, was puzzled.

Seeing that his daughter was back, Shi Peng could not help but sigh. He had already lectured other people’s daughter-in-law. There was no reason that he did not lecture his own daughter. Besides, Qing Qing was interested in learning about it as well. “Qing Qing, do you know what your biggest mistake was today? Why did Qiao Nan stop you from speaking twice?”

“I made a mistake?” Shi Qing asked unbelievably. “What have I done wrong?”

It was her auntie and Qiu Chenxi who were overbearing and aggressive. How was it her fault?

“Qiao Nan, teach her.” Shi Peng, who wanted to teach his daughter, was speechless at her expression.

Chapter 556: Heart Aches for Qiao Nan

If he was too harsh, he was afraid of hurting his daughter's heart. If he said it too lightly, he was afraid that his daughter would not understand.

To put it bluntly, no one could tell that Shi Peng was, in fact, his daughter's 'slave'.

Qiao Nan, who was suddenly 'nominated', rolled her eyes. He just mentioned about giving her a 'favor' and she had to return it so soon?

It was impolite not to reciprocate.

Officer Shi was truly a true-blue Chinese!

"The mistake you made today is that you nearly changed our original advantageous situation of being morally ethical to a disadvantageous situation of being disrespectful to our elders. You know China's culture very well. We're very particular about filial piety. Qi Minlan is your biological auntie. If you scream and shout at her outside, those who don't know the reason will certainly assume that you're in the wrong at first sight. Your dad is a patient, but your auntie is a woman. If you shout at your auntie, in the eyes of other people, your dad is helping you bully Qi Minlan. In the end, Qi Minlan will receive the full pity of others, not to mention suffering bone and nerve injuries. Your dad's political enemies will catch a handle of him and make a mountain out of a molehill because of it. Also, as for you, your name will make it big in the army. Whether this is a good or bad thing, you should know."

Making a mountain out of a molehill—this saying was not just all talk.

If some politicians played the tactics well, even the smallest matter could be transformed into strong wind or huge waves, or even storms or tornadoes.

"Qing Qing, you should learn more from Comrade Qiao Nan." His daughter looked confused although Qiao Nan had explained it so clearly and logically. Shi Peng had to admit that he had sheltered his daughter too well in the past. As such, when his daughter stepped into society, she would be easily bullied and shortchanged by others.

It was useless to have high intelligence quotient. Putting aside the textbook knowledge, the people who did well in the society were always those with high emotional intelligence.

“Clearly, my auntie was in the wrong, yet this could still happen?” Shi Qing widened her eyes and tugged the corners of her mouth. She sneered continuously.

The wrong became right and vice versa. Wasn't it pointing to black and calling it white?

“Shi Qing, hearing what you said, I feel that you're a child that just came out from the ivory tower.” Undoubtedly, it was a blessing to have such parents. On the contrary, once the parents' protection was lost when she left the ivory tower, the hardships and sufferings that Shi Qing would encounter would be a multiple of those in her childhood.

“No choice. I just have one daughter. I've spoiled her. In the school, her surname is Shi. She's intelligent, her results are good, and the teachers like her. Thus, no one will bully her.” So far, all of what Shi Qing had experienced was school life.

“Don't act mature in front of me. Don't forget that you're the same age as me!” Shi Qing would not concede defeat.

“Same age does not mean the same level of intelligence.” Qiao Nan retorted.

Qiao Nan went to school a year earlier while Shi Qing skipped a grade when she was in the first year of junior high school. Hence, they were of the same age.

“Alright, don't bicker anymore. Qing Qing, you should already understand why now. Don't you owe Qiao Nan a word of thanks?” Shi Peng did not know whether to laugh or cry. Clearly, Qing Qing was always quite mature and act like an elder person. Why did she seem so childish in front of Qiao Nan?

Did she lose herself because of love? It should not be. Qing Qing was not even like that in front of Zhai Sheng.

“I've given her such a thick Oxford Dictionary. Haven't I thanked her enough?” Shi Qing was really feeling sullen. It was fine that she could not compete with Qiao Nan on her grades. Why did she also lose to Qiao Nan so much in relationship matters?

“Certainly. Compared to the two superficial words 'thank you', I prefer something more practical,” Qiao Nan said in a worldly-wise manner.

“Sour.” Shi Qing gulped down the cup of water into her tummy. It was as if she was trying to extinguish the fire of anguish in her caused by Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi. “Dad, after today’s matter, auntie and Qiu Chenxi won’t come and kick up a fuss again, will they?”

Her father had to rest. Before he left the army, he was definitely going to be busy.

If he had to deal with the trouble created by Qiu Chenxi and auntie every now and then, how could her father get well?

“At the very least, we should be safe for a period of time,” Shi Peng said coldly. Visiting him meant that the Qiu family would have to spend a lot of money. Qi Minlan was already used to taking and not giving. His parents also thought that they could benefit from Qi Minlan because of the latter’s relationship with Zhai Yaohui. They believed that the Shi family would eventually need to rely on Qi Minlan, the daughter who was married to others.

At the thought of this, there was a flash of sarcasm in Shi Peng’s eyes.

In the past, didn’t the Qiu family also accept Qi Minlan and let Qiu Qin marry Qi Minlan because of this reason?

Shi Qing was in such fury that she clenched her fist and slammed it hard on the table. “Qiao Nan, promise me that you must not let Qiu Chenxi get her way. You have to marry Zhai... Anyway, your marriage with him has to be successful. You have to drive Qiu Chenxi and auntie to their graves. They are most complacent now, but isn’t that because Qiu Chenxi nearly got engaged to Brother Zhai? Now, she already lost the affirmation of all the members of the Zhai family. I would like to wait and see how arrogant she can be.”

So, the greatest reason that her grandparents were so good to Qiu Chenxi was the Zhai family?

At the thought that this was quite far-fetched and that her grandparents still wanted to make the effort and harbored such an idea, Shi Qing felt sad and pitiful.

That infuriated look on Shi Qing’s reddened face made Shi Peng and Qiao Nan understand that this young lady who just walked out from the ivory tower was beginning to be enlightened.

“Alright, it’s late. You all should go back and do your own things. There’s no issue at my side now. Qiao Nan, do well for the class tonight. I think there are only a few classes left. Don’t let it have a strong start but a weak finish.” Due to this event, Qiao Nan earned a very good reputation in the army.

Besides the political commissar and the Zhai family who addressed Qiao Nan as Comrade Xiao Qiao, all the other people in the army, from junior ordinary soldiers to battalion commanders, addressed her as Teacher Xiao Qiao respectfully.

Considering Qiao Nan’s age, able to make battalion commanders address her as a teacher was definitely an experience and merit that others of her age could not achieve.

“Thanks, Officer Shi, for the reminder. Will do.” Qiao Nan took a deep breath. Her expression turned more serious.

Initially, she came to give classes due to her master. However, after hearing Officer Shi’s words, she felt that she had to shoulder more pressure. Seemingly, if she did not teach well, it would affect the case of her marrying into the Zhai family in the future. It would even affect the number of people who would be affirmative and accepting of her.

Clearly, it was a very simple matter but it had become so complicated. Qiao Nan did not know what to say.

At the sight of Qiao Nan looking unhappy when she left, Shi Qing stayed back for a while. “Dad, you kept telling Qiao Nan all these. Aren’t you afraid of frightening her badly? She’s just an eighteen-year-old lady. Too much pressure will crush someone.” At the thought of Qiao Nan’s situation, Shi Qing felt her heart aching for Qiao Nan. It seemed that Qiao Nan had a difficult road ahead of her.

Chapter 557: Touching

If not for the sake of being together with Brother Zhai, Qiao Nan’s life could, in fact, be very carefree and happy.

“Qiao Nan has better tolerance of stress than you. It’s clear from your auntie’s matter that she’s actually very quick-witted and agile in handling problems. She’s quite a bright young lady. The Zhai family is very blessed to be able to meet such an intelligent lady. Unfortunately, you’re not a man.”

It was fine that his daughter was not intelligent enough. Unfortunately, his daughter could not ‘kidnap’ the intelligent lady from another family.

Shi Qing pulled a long face. “How do you know I definitely won’t be able to kidnap a bright and intelligent son-in-law back?!” She was a girl. Of course, she could not be together with Qiao Nan. But she could find a husband that was similar to Qiao Nan! Would that not do?

“Is that so? Then, I shall wait and see. Your emotional intelligence is a little low. Find me a son-in-law who’s better in emotional intelligence. Then, our Shi family will be able to burn incense and thank our ancestors. When the time comes, if the other party is also an only child, you will then give birth to two children and one of the children will take our surname. Then, our Shi family will really have someone to carry on the family line.”

Why was there a need for a son? Would this not do as well?

Shi Qing tugged the corners of her lips. “You’re happy about this. Will grandpa and grandma be pleased?” The child given birth by their granddaughter was not the real paternal great-grandchild!

“I’ll acknowledge the grandchild. I’m happy to do so!” Shi Peng did not even wish to talk about the situation of the Shi family. “Alright, Qiao Nan has already gone back. You should go back soon too. One is marked by the company one keeps. I hope you will be influenced by Qiao Nan and improve your emotional intelligence. I can’t be vicious to you but Qiao Nan can. In the future, regardless of whether Qiao Nan’s advice to you sounds good or not, you have to reflect on them carefully. Don’t reject everything because of your bad temper. With that bad temper of yours, besides Qiao Nan, most likely, I can’t find you another friend who can subdue you.”

Shi Peng understood her daughter very well.

If Qiao Nan’s grades were not better than his daughter, and the way Qiao Nan handled situations was many times more mature than her, his daughter would have raised a rumpus. His daughter listened to Qiao Nan now as the latter was better than her in everything. She was thus subdued.

At the thought of his daughter’s intelligence and physical strength, Shi Peng was, in fact, most worried whether he could really find a son-in-law.

It was not easy for a talent such as Qiao Nan to appear. For another similar individual to appear, and it had to be a man, it was simply searching for a needle in the sea.

Even if he could not be a paternal grandfather, it was fine if he could be a maternal one.

Previously, Zhai Sheng was a suitable candidate. Now that Zhai Sheng belonged to Qiao Nan, Shi Peng started to feel worried for his daughter.

After Qiao Nan finished memorizing one-fifth of the Oxford Dictionary, her 'teaching career' in the army was also coming to an end. "Okay, this is my last lesson with you, so let's cherish our final class."

The two sentences in English spoken by Qiao Nan stunned the audience for a moment. They could not understand most of the words. Nevertheless, Qiao Nan had taught the word 'last' before. Hence, everyone knew the meaning of that word.

There was also once when Qiao Nan taught everyone to daringly try to guess the meaning of the sentence based on the standalone words that they had learned so far.

In addition, Qiao Nan had been teaching in the army for some time. Hence, everyone could quickly guess what this sentence possibly meant. "Teacher Xiao Qiao, you're leaving?"

"Yes, the army's event is about to come to an end."

"Then, what do we do if we wish to continue learning English? Actually, what we've learned is very, very little..."

"Yes..." If Teacher Xiao Qiao was gone, they would forget everything that they had learned if they did not practice it for some time. It had not been easy for them to pick up English. What should they do?

"After all, we've known each other for half a month. I have something to give you." Qiao Nan was happy. She had only taught them for less than a month and the soldiers' reactions were really adorable. She remembered that she did not even feel so worried and sad when she graduated from elementary school. "Due to time and resources constraints, I didn't prepare a lot of gifts. They are

handmade and definitely not expensive. I know that some of you are very interested in learning English but lack the opportunities to do so. Some of you want to learn not just how to pronounce but also to pronounce accurately. Hence, a few days ago, I've sent something to all your company commanders in the army, a set of alphabet cards and a cassette on pronunciation which I recorded on my own. There are many people in the army. With the help of my friends and the counselor, I only managed to produce a few sets. There was not enough to go around. Everyone, please share them."

"Of course, those who are interested can also prepare your own materials during the learning opportunities organized by the company commander. It's just a set of alphabet cards. The gift is very simple. I hope everyone doesn't mind."

"Don't mind."

"Teacher Xiao Qiao, you gave us something. We don't have anything for you."

"Yes, we should be the one giving you something. Why did you give things to us instead?"

At this juncture, many people felt sad and unhappy. There was a feeling in their heart that they could not express clearly in words.

Everyone recalled the first lesson when no one seemed to look up at this Teacher Xiao Qiao who looked petite, skinny, and weak. They even thought that the army was joking with them, asking in their heart why they invited a child to teach them the English language.

Unexpectedly, the half a month that was initially believed to be boring and hard to pass by was actually over without them even realizing it.

Most importantly, everyone knew that although this gift of Qiao Nan was not costly, the thoughts in it were more precious than gold. Even money could not buy it.

Having been soldiers for many years, besides family members, they rarely felt so touched by such sincerity from outsiders.

This group of big and tall grown-up men was so touched by the words as well as the sincere and thoughtful gift of Qiao Nan. They were so dumbfounded that they could not utter a word for some time.

Nevertheless, they did not know that they were not the only ones who were touched. Qiao Nan also felt the same way.

She had only given them some handmade and cheap alphabet cards and these already made the receiving party so touched. This was completely different from the culture in the 21st century, the timeline she came from, which was full of material desires.

When Qiao Nan, who was used to being treated indifferently, saw the soldiers who were so easily contented, her eyes turned slightly red and she almost cried. “Today is my last lesson. We’ve maintained a happy atmosphere for such a long time. I hope it will not be an exception today. Let’s work toward having a happy ending.”

“Teacher Xiao Qiao, you really can’t stay for a longer period of time?” someone asked with a sullen voice. “A student’s summer vacation should be about two months, right?”

Chapter 558: Take Over Everything

“I can’t.” Qiao Nan shook her head regretfully. “I’m a senior high school student. My studies are heavier. Others may have two months of summer vacation but not me. Our school’s lessons resume half a month earlier and we have to participate in training classes. The school also gave us a lot of homework. I’m really sorry.”

For an ordinary student, one-third of the summer vacation had passed. But for Qiao Nan, half of the vacation was already over.

After hearing Qiao Nan’s words, everyone fell silent.

Obviously, even if Teacher Xiao Qiao was willing to remain in the army camp to teach them English, she was unable to do so.

Would they allow Teacher Xiao Qiao to sacrifice her studies for the sake of their small passion? That would be repaying kindness with ingratitude!

Everyone had good intentions. However, the reality was that it was not feasible.

Perhaps it was because Qiao Nan said this before the commencement of the class that the atmosphere was not as good as before thereafter. Nevertheless, everyone was paying attention and more conscientious. It was the last lesson and everyone especially cherished the last moments.

“Thank you for everyone’s cooperation. You’re dismissed!”

Qiu Chenxi was aware that today was Qiao Nan’s last lesson.

Upon hearing that the atmosphere in Qiao Nan’s class was apparently not as good as before, Qiu Chenxi laughed. So what if Qiao Nan was very good? She did not belong to the army and would have to leave the place sooner or later.

After Qiao Nan was gone, she would be the only English teacher left in the army.

At that time, no matter how many people’s hearts Qiao Nan was able to win over, everyone would eventually acknowledge her, Qiu Chenxi, as the only teacher. Qiao Nan would definitely be forgotten.

When she thought of the wrong move that she had made previously in order to shorten the distance between the lousy soldiers and her, and to gain the favors of Uncle Zhai and Brother Zhai, Qiu Chenxi felt very regretful.

During the past half a month, Qiu Chenxi realized that there was a huge difference between the soldiers addressing her as Comrade Qiu and Qiao Nan as a teacher. Although Qiao Nan was very young, she insisted the soldiers call her teacher.

Everyone was, in fact, one another’s comrades. In addition, the address ‘comrade’ was clearly not casual but seemed to have become so in her case. It was unlike when they addressed Qiao Nan as a teacher. Although Qiao Nan was very young, there always seemed to be some respect in their tone when they addressed her as such.

At the thought of the differential treatment, Qiu Chenxi’s face turned pale.

She was a college graduate from a reputable college but, in the army, she was being treated worse than a senior high school student. That was so absurd!

The students in Qiu Chenxi's class had left long ago, but she deliberately waited and refused to leave. She wanted to wait until Qiao Nan came over.

When she saw Qiao Nan, Qiu Chenxi went up to her with quickened steps. "Qiao Nan, I heard that today's lesson was your last. It's really such a pity. But you don't need to worry. The effort that you've put in and the foundation that you have built will definitely not be wasted. I'll continue to teach the soldiers."

When the leaders came to observe the situation in the army camp and saw that everyone had improved, she would be the only one teaching English in the army then. As such, she would be the only one who would take the credit for the progress made in the army!

Qiao Nan wanted to compete with her?

She was too green!

The feeling of having your hard work benefiting others was not that good.

However, this time, she would enjoy the fruits of the labor thanks to Qiao Nan!

"Really?" Qiao Nan immediately knew that Qiu Chenxi was deliberately waiting for her.

"Of course." Qiu Chenxi lowered her voice. "Qiao Nan, you're the one who refused a toast only to drink a forfeit. I've already given you so many chances. Very soon, you'll know the outcome of being at odds with me. You're a smart person and should not make foolish decisions. If you're willing to give up on Brother Zhai and tell me about that woman, I can give you one last chance."

She did not like other women targeting Brother Zhai, especially Qiao Nan, who was favored more by the Zhai family than that woman who was hidden.

"Thank you for giving me another chance but I don't need it." Qiao Nan laughed. Until this moment, Qiu Chenxi refused to give up her evil designs. She completely understood this point. However, she could not understand why Qiu Chenxi was so confident about taking over her students.

“Comrade Qiu, I hope you can still smile when tomorrow comes. It’s very late. I need to go back and rest. When I leave tomorrow, I still need to go through half a day of journey on the car. I have to rest well today. Goodnight.”

“Stubborn.” Qiu Chenxi snorted scornfully.

It was fine that Qiao Nan was not tactful. Anyway, she would be the one picking up the bargain.

“Qiao Nan, hurry, the car should already be waiting for us.” Shi Qing, who was driven and swift in actions, had already finished packing her own luggage. In actual fact, she did not bring much to the army camp. She often came to the army and already had all the clothing ready in the camp. She just needed to bring herself.

“I’m ready.” Qiao Nan zipped the bag and wiped away the sweat on her forehead. “The weather is terribly warm. I’m sweating all over with just a little physical activity. How uncomfortable.” At this moment, Qiao Nan wished that she had something like an air-conditioner.

The problem was that air-conditioner was an extremely rare commodity during this era.

Shi Qing patted Qiao Nan and asked her to move away. “Look at how weak you are. Forget it. I’ll help you carry your bag. Qiao Nan, you’re definitely outstanding in other aspects but you’re too weak physically. To put it bluntly, what if you and Zhai..., no, you and that person argue? You can’t win against that person with your lung capacity, let alone physically.”

“Arguing relies on intelligence, not lung capacity. It’s not as if they’re competing on tongue-twisting, that the one who can’t continue with the tongue twister will lose.” Qiao Nan was speechless as she pursed her lips. She felt that Shi Qing’s analogy was too unreal.

“You’re really not taking the car of the Zhai family back? Auntie Miao invited you a few times.” Shi Qing looked sullen. Clearly, Auntie Miao liked Qiao Nan a lot and even saw the latter as her own daughter. Why did Qiao Nan tell her that Auntie Miao was the biggest and most difficult problem that she and Brother Zhai had to overcome? It was unbelievable.

Qiao Nan walked over to Shi Qing and expressed that they could leave now. “Not going. Master was the one who sent me here. If the people from the Zhai Family send me home instead, I’m worried that my dad will let his thoughts go astray.”

“Your dad knows?”

“Yes, he does.”

“You’re such an obedient daughter.” She dared to tell her father about her puppy love. So daring! But she liked it. “Your dad didn’t object to it?”

“He didn’t agree either. The difference is too great.”

“It’s a normal reaction. Then, who in the Zhai family knows?”

“Sister Zhai Hua knows.”

“Sister Zhai Hua will definitely be supportive. She’s not a problem. PASS.” Shi Qing gave Qiao Nan’s shoulder a nudge. “What’s the situation with Chief Zhai?”

After looking at the busybody Shi Qing from the corners of her eyes, Qiao Nan replied with a headache, “Asking me this kind of question, aren’t you afraid that you’ll be hurt after hearing the answer?”

“Ah, I’ve already been hurt before. My brain has long fallen to the ground. There is a scar as large as a bowl. How long do you want me to feel hurt?” Shi Qing deliberately pretended that she did not care. Alright, she was asking for it. It was fine if Qiao Nan did not say. If she did, her heart would ache.

Chapter 559: The Ten-Mile Military Song Send-off

However, after the heartache, she still wished to know the answer. “Come on, to the point. One word, know, or two words, don’t know!”

“Know.”

There was an expression of shock on Shi Qing's face. "He didn't object?!" Σ(ಠ_ಠ;) (She was spewing expletives)

If Chief Zhai had objected, then Qiao Nan would have already been kicked out of the army even though Elder Lin brought her there. To her knowledge, there were many interactions between Qiao Nan and Brother Zhai through this opportunity. This was earth-shaking news.

Qiao Nan rubbed her temple as she felt her head ached. "It seems that he's adopting an attitude similar to that of my dad."

"It's not bad." Shi Qing breathed a sigh of relief for Qiao Nan. "This one is the head of the family. As long as he acquiesces, you will be able to overcome the other one eventually. Your current situation is quite optimistic."

"I'm unable to feel optimistic." Qiao Nan could not understand. After Shi Qing was saddened, why was she so enthusiastic about the matter between Brother Zhai and her? "Hurry, don't let my master wait."

"Young ladies are young ladies. You take your time when you pack up." Lin Yuankang smiled bitterly as he shook his head. Nevertheless, that indulging look in his eyes was obvious when he looked at Qiao Nan. No one would believe that Lin Yuankang was chiding Qiao Nan for arriving late. He even seemed very proud to have this little female disciple.

It was normal for a woman to let a man wait. It was also normal that a man waited for a woman.

"Nan Nan, quickly put the luggage in... Oh, Shi Qing is carrying them. Hurry up and put the luggage in the car boot. We have to go back. Otherwise, the sky will be dark when we reach Ping Cheng. Your dad will then be worried again."

"Okay." Shi Qing swiftly put away the luggage in the boot. She then voluntarily sat together with Qiao Nan at the back passenger seat and let Elder Lin take the front seat.

Just as the engine of the car started, all of a sudden, Qiao Nan could hear a loud and resonant song from behind.

The sun sets in the west with a red glow in the sky.

Soldiers return to the camp from shooting practice, return to the camp.

Red flowers on the chests form a picture of rosy clouds.

Happy songs fill the air.

...

Mi suo la mi sao

La suo mi dao ruai

Praise our shooting it is the best.

One, two, three, four.

“Return from the Shooting Practice?” Shi Qing scratched her head. Why did the people in the army suddenly sing this song without an apparent reason? It sounded quite pleasant.

Qiao Nan seemed to have thought of something. She opened her eyes and quickly rolled down the window of the car. She then stuck her head out of the window. She saw the neat and gentle camouflage green colors which exuded a sense of security arranged in a formation. It was as if she was looking at a stretch of hills. As the only rose among the thorns, the female counselor was standing at the side. She gave Qiao Nan a thumbs-up when she saw Qiao Nan looking back, silently telling her that this was the gift that the army would like to give to her. It was to thank Qiao Nan for coming as well as to send her off. Moreover, they looked forward to Qiao Nan’s return.

Shi Qing also followed suit and stuck her head out to watch. “This song is especially sung for you?”

Qiao Nan did not reply to Shi Qing. She was waving her hands hard at the most adorable people in the country.

Qiao Nan was waving with such force as though her arms were going to break. At the sight of this, the soldiers could not help raising their voices and singing even louder. Although the car had been

driven to a considerable distance away, Qiao Nan could still hear the song 'Return from the Shooting Practice' vaguely and intermittently. Nevertheless, it sounded so pleasant!

"You're going to cry?" Shi Qing sniffed and asked.

All these years, Shi Qing had been to the army camp frequently and was already used to it. The army camp was like her second home. Nevertheless, she had never seen this happening. Hence, Shi Qing had never felt this way before.

It was only on this occasion that Shi Qing could feel the same as Qiao Nan. "I feel so wronged. In the past, many people addressed me as their little junior, but why didn't anyone sing for me whenever I left?"

"Don't feel wronged. Do you think Qiu Chenxi will be able to hear this army song when she leaves the camp?" Qiao Nan blinked away the tears in her eyes. When she first came to the army, the female counselor was unknowingly trying to find out some of her hobbies.

She had thought that the female counselor purely wanted to understand her situation. She thus told her that she actually did not like to listen to pop songs. She liked listening to military songs most. In fact, she was never tired of listening to the song 'Return from the Shooting Practice'.

When she was a child, Ding Jiayi was unwilling to bother about Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan did not know why she had to receive such unequal treatment although she was clearly also her mother's daughter. At that time, Qiao Nan felt like crying as she felt unhappy.

Ding Jiayi did not care about Qiao Nan. Only Qiao Dongliang did.

Qiao Dongliang did not have any experience of raising a child, and neither did he know how to appease a child.

Each time this happened, to appease Qiao Nan, Qiao Dongliang would carry Qiao Nan and sing to her, again and again, all the military songs that he knew of.

When Qiao Nan heard the part 'Mi suo la mi sao, La suo mi dao ruai' of the song, her tears would always turn into laughter. She would nod and clap. Her thin and tiny body, which was in Qiao Dongliang's arms, would follow the rhythm of the song and move in momentum.

“This certainly won’t do!” Shi Qing slapped the back of her seat hard. “This won’t do. When I arrive at home later, I’ll definitely call my dad and ask him. If Qiu Chenxi gets to listen to a song and I don’t, when I go to the army camp next time, I want to challenge them!” They had really forgotten the power of their little junior. They were not taking her seriously, were they?

“If that’s the case, shouldn’t you feel at ease? You, this little junior, is quite scary when you show your power. Even Zhu Baoguo was defeated by you. I believe there are many others whom you have defeated in the army. As grown-up men, they were beaten down by a young lady. It’s so embarrassing. After all, Qiu Chenxi was once their teacher who has taught them a few lessons. If you are given the same treatment as her, at the very least, it will prove that you’re much more important than Qiu Chenxi. Do you think this makes sense?” Wasn’t it easy if Qiao Nan wanted to console Shi Qing? Just a few words would do the trick.

“There’s some logic here.” Shi Qing nodded in a straightforward manner. Anyway, as long as she was not treated worse than Qiu Chenxi, she did not care about anything else.

“Once we’re away from the camp, the weather feels so hot. I feel like the drooping flowers scorched by the sun. I’m going to nap for a while. Wake me up when we reach Ping Cheng.” Qiao Nan was able to fall asleep easily in the car. Lin Yuankang was old and could not withstand the fatigue of traveling. His situation was not any better than Qiao Nan’s.

“Fine. Both master and disciple are old and weak, ill and disabled.” When she saw Lin Yuankang and Qiao Nan leaning on their seats and resting with their eyes closed, Shi Qing sneered at them.

“Hahaha.”

“Ha.”

The old and the young master-disciple pair sneered. They did not take issue with Shi Qing. They had well-developed brains, unlike Shi Qing who had well-developed limbs.

On the other hand, Qiu Chenxi had assumed that she could dominate the army upon Qiao Nan’s departure and take credit for all of what Qiao Nan taught. Never did she expect the political commissar to give her direct blow on the head that left her dazed and seeing stars. “Political commissar, you... What did you say?”

Chapter 560: 'Fated' to Meet

“I believe I have made myself clear.” The political commissar put down the pen in his hand and looked at Qiu Chenxi in a serious and cold manner. “Furthermore, the army has already preempted you about this matter ten days ago and asked you to be prepared for it. If you didn’t receive the message, fine, I’ll get that person here to clarify how he passed you the message!”

“No, political commissar, now that Qiao Nan has left, I’m the only one in the army who knows how to teach English. How could you all...” Yes, ten days ago, she did receive the message that the political commissar would be expelling her from the army and asked her to leave.

However, if both she and Qiao Nan were gone, there would be no one left to teach English in the army.

Taking advantage of this fact, Qiu Chenxi was waiting for Qiao Nan to leave so that she could secure her place in the army. No one could make her leave then.

She did not expect that although Qiao Nan had already left today, the political commissar actually insisted that she left. How, how could this be!

The political commissar clenched his fists lightly and gave a knock on the table with his knuckles. “Of course we can. The matter of you being expelled from the army was done in accordance with the procedures. There’s no mistake in this. If you’re not convinced, you can also ask the Qiu family to investigate. What I have done did not let down the country, party, or organization. I also did not let down the army!”

“Political commissar, you have misunderstood me. I do not doubt you. It’s not easy for the army to have organized such an event. The outcome seems to be quite good. There’s no reason to give it up halfway. I don’t have any other capabilities but my English is quite good. I just want to contribute to the army. Political commissar, what do you think about this?” She was not daring enough to doubt the political commissar’s capability, but if they allowed her to stay in the army, the army would have an English teacher free of charge. It would be a win-win situation. What was bad about it?

As for Qiao Nan, no matter how well she could teach, the political commissar could forget about it.

She had graduated from college but Qiao Nan was still schooling. Furthermore, Qiao Nan was in her critical years of senior high school studies.

When Qiao Nan had the opportunity to come to the army camp to teach English again, the people in the army would have long forgotten everything that Qiao Nan had taught them previously.

“There’s nothing to consider.” The political commissar declined firmly. “Comrade Qiu, I hope you don’t misunderstand me. This decision is nothing personal. You must know that the army is a very big and structured organization. It’s everyone’s unanimous decision to let you leave the army. Alright, we’ve settled most of the administrative matters. You can take your belongings and leave the camp. You should know the rules of the army. People who do not belong to the army can’t stay here.”

“Everyone’s unanimous decision? Who were involved?!” Qiu Chenxi gritted her teeth. She was truly unaware that so many people wanted her to leave the army.

After she joined the army, she abided by the rules and regulations. She had not done any bad things. Why couldn’t they all see eye to eye with her and wanted her to leave instead?

“Regarding this... You don’t need to know. Alright, hurry up and leave.” The political commissar waved his hand. There were only that many people in the army, and only a handful of them could decide on Qiu Chenxi’s whereabouts. Qiu Chenxi was asking a silly question. Of course, she was pretending to be sillier.

“...” Tears welled up in Qiu Chenxi’s eyes. It was as if they would roll down her eyes at any moment. “Political commissar, is there really no way to reinvestigate this? I really like the army very much. I like the atmosphere when everyone is together. I can’t bear to leave the army and my many dear comrades here. Political commissar, can we think of other ways? You tell me. I’ll think of ways to do and resolve it. Won’t that do?”

The political commissar looked at Qiu Chenxi ridiculously. “You like the army? You’ve joined the army for about six months, right? Besides this month, did your total time spent in the camp even add up to a month? Do you know that your situation is the complete opposite of the other comrades in the army? Not to mention six months, even if it’s a year, the total amount of time that you spent in the army is just a month. Many comrades in the army did not even go home for more than half a month. You like the army? Pardon my poor eyesight. I really can’t tell.”

The young lady from the Qiu family was strong-tempered, delicate, and precious. He could understand this.

However, could she not lie through her teeth? Who was the shameful one?

“Alright, wipe your tears. In the army, and in my eyes, you’re just an ordinary comrade. There’s nothing about gender and family background. These tears are useless on me.” They might work a little on those new recruits outside. In front of him, shedding a few tears was very unsightly.

Qiu Chenxi looked down and gritted her teeth, feeling unjustified. “But, political commissar, I’m not going back. If I make a call back to the Qiu family to fetch me now, it’ll most probably be dark by the time they arrive.” She did not know whether the ‘everyone’ mentioned by the political commissar included the Zhai family. Nevertheless, that uncle of hers, who favored an outsider instead of someone on his own side, was certainly involved.

Despite clearly knowing how important Brother Zhai was to her, he refused to help her and even bullied her along with the others.

She had started to suspect if her uncle felt any sense of guilt each time she called him uncle!

Since her uncle was biased toward Shi Qing and Qiao Nan, then he should not blame her for making any decisions in the future that did not benefit the Shi family. Since her uncle was not kind to her, she would not be loyal to him.

An eye for an eye. They would take turns then!

The political commissar took his pen and started to work on official matters. “You don’t have to worry about this. You can sit in one of the army vehicles that are going to Ping Cheng today. After all, you’re a former comrade of our army and even taught us a few days of English. With this, the army will definitely take care of you. We won’t make things difficult for you.”

The political commissar had already said this. Regardless of whether Qiu Chenxi was willing to leave, she could no longer find any excuse to stay for another day.

“I see. Then, I’ll thank the political commissar and the organization for the arrangement.” Qiu Chenxi tried hard to soothe her expression. If she definitely had to leave, she would certainly not waste any more tears on the people who were not worth it.

She was kicked out today, but one day, she would make these people in the army invite her back in a respectful and courteous way!

“Don’t mention it. This is what we should do,” the political commissar said, sounding aloof, but he did not miss that look of resentment in Qiu Chenxi’s eyes.

“Political commissar, I’ll leave first. Goodbye. I hope that if there’s fate, we will meet again.” Qiu Chenxi sneered and left a vicious statement: We would wait and see in the future!

The political commissar was both angry and amused. Having seen so many young people, Qiu Chenxi was definitely not the first one to be expelled but she was the first one who dared to threaten him.

He was curious though. What good luck did the Qiu family run into? Were they going to be extremely successful in their official careers? Or was it that they would be the only ones in the whole China who could have a say?

“Fine. We’ll meet again if it’s fated to be.” No issue. He would wait and see if such a day would come for the Qiu family.