

RTAMM 611

Chapter 611: Did Not Mind Watching the 'Fun' Grow

Was she going to, like her previous lifetime, be lonely and alone till the end of her life?

At this juncture, Qiao Nan was extremely glad that Miao Jing had persisted in the past. Her happiness today would then exist.

Naturally, regarding the strange and cold rejection that Miao Jing had toward her in the past, Qiao Nan could accept all of that now.

“Yes, that’s my dad’s good fortune. Nevertheless, I’m more blessed than my dad.” Zhai Sheng did not mince his words. His words were as shameless as him.

Qiao Nan was amused by Zhai Sheng’s words. “If your dad hears you, most likely, he will be driven mad to the grave. Nevertheless, this matter has been exposed. What are your thoughts?”

“Thoughts?” Zhai Sheng flipped the book in his hand. There was a flash in his eyes. “I don’t need to think about it. Zhai Hua will do it.” Zhai Hua was someone who could not control her temper. It was also more appropriate for her to do this. “You don’t need to worry. If Zhai Hua gets out of hand, my dad will watch over her.”

“What you mean is that Chief Zhai will allow Sister Zhai Hua to do something?”

“My dad feels quite deeply for my mom.” He was also a man. Hence, at certain times, the son certainly could understand the father better than the daughter could. “From what I see, it seems like my dad does care about my mom. He’s also not as good to Qi Minlan as we thought.”

At the very least, if it was him, he would not marry her mother if he really loved Qi Minlan. Moreover, the status of the Qiu family would not be so low today.

“Brother Zhai, regarding the matter between Chief Zhai and Qi Minlan, I’ve heard some of it recently. When Qi Minlan was with Chief Zhai, Chief Zhai had not assumed the position of the chief yet. He was competing with Officer Shi for the role, right?”

“Yes.”

“That means Chief Zhai assumed the role only after he married Auntie Miao and had Sister Zhai Hua and you?”

“Yes.”

“...” Qiao Nan fell silent. According to the sequence of the matters, coupled with the understanding that she had about the situation of the Shi family and Qi Minlan’s character, Qiao Nan formed a scary thought, ‘Chief Zhai is really quite an ‘evil’ and petty man.’

“...” Zhai Sheng had already guessed that Qiao Nan would think of it but he did not expect Qiao Nan to react so quickly. “Recently, when Shi Qing stays in your house, she told you quite a lot.”

“Shi Qing has a high IQ, but as for EQ... Hahaha. Before I knew her, she’s arrogant and cold. After knowing her, she’s silly and sweet.” There was no need for her to inquire about many things in the Shi family as Shi Qing would just spill the beans and tell her everything. Shi Qing was completely unaware that dirty linen should not be aired in public.

Perhaps she had endured it for too long at home, and it had not been easy for her to find someone that she could confide in. As such, the chatty potential in Shi Qing had been completely unleashed.

“Forget it. Let’s not talk about it. I feel that I’m talking bad behind her back.” Qiao Nan stopped herself and was unwilling to overthink. All these matters happened to Zhai Yaohui’s generation. It would not benefit her much if she knew too much. She just needed to understand a little.

“Don’t worry. I’ll cover up for you. Your father-in-law won’t know that you said all this.” Zhai Sheng did not mind. His father had done these things after all. Would he be afraid of others’ talking about it?

It was just that Qi Minlan was too silly for over the past twenty years, or she was overconfident and did not see through his father’s true colors.

“Alright, since I already know the situation, I’ll ask you another matter, Brother Zhai.” Seeing that Shi Qing’s ears were nearly touching hers, Qiao Nan pushed her face away with one palm so that Shi Qing would stay further away from her.

“Commendation letter?”

“Yes, what’s the matter with that letter? The army couldn’t possibly write a commendation letter for me formally just because I taught a few days of English at the army camp? Principal Meng said that he had confirmed with the Department of Education that there’ll even be additional marks for the college entrance examination because of this letter!” This matter was no different from having something good fall into your lap. She nearly fainted because of this.

If one could derive such great benefit from participating in the events in the army, all senior high school students in our great and proud Chinese nation would definitely use all ways and means to fight for the chance to enter the army and work hard to get these additional marks from then onward.

“This has got something to do with the secret mission of the army. We can’t announce it to the public at this moment. Of course, it won’t be that easy to receive that commendation letter, but you deserve it. Hence, you don’t need to worry. Nan Nan, people say that a man with a virtuous wife has fewer troubles. For me, with a virtuous wife in the family, I’m blessed so much more. Nan Nan, this time, you’ve helped me a great deal.”

If Song Yin had not coincidentally heard the conversation between the two foreigners and picked it up well enough to repeat it to them, it would not have been so easy to carry out the mission this time. Most importantly, the few cities near the borders would have also suffered disorderly from gun-shooting by terrorist organizations.

Due to the great danger and possible negative impact of this matter, they had to strive for victory despite the danger. Subsequently, Qiao Nan received a letter of commendation. Song Yin, a junior soldier then, had also been credited third-class merit.

“If you can’t say it, then don’t. As long as there’s no mistake in this, it’s fine.” If there had been a blunder, many people in the school would most probably be waiting to watch her become a laughingstock. Furthermore, it would also affect the reputation of the army. “Alright, there is no other issue. Why don’t we hang up?”

With Shi Qing staring at the phone, Qiao Nan really could not continue with the conversation anymore. She would feel uneasy no matter what she said.

In particular, when Zhai Sheng talked about a man with a virtuous wife having less trouble, Qiao Nan covered the phone receiver tightly, in case it was heard by the sharp-eared Shi Qing.

Listening to Qiao Nan's sullen voice, which was obviously muffled due to her covering the phone receiver, of course, Zhai Sheng could guess the situation at the house of the Qiao family. "Okay, let's chat again when we meet next time."

"Bye, Brother Zhai." Qiao Nan hung up the phone at her fastest speed. "Alright, there's nothing to listen to now. Shouldn't you go and do your homework?"

"Crap." Shi Qing snorted in dissatisfaction. "You're too petty."

"I never said I'm generous. If that's your impression of me, I can only say that's just your delusion, my child."

"Alright." Shi Qing leaned her head against Qiao Nan's shoulders like a cat. "Do you want to chat with me? The topic you spoke about regarding my auntie, what did that mean?"

"You heard it?" Qiao Nan felt sullen. Clearly, she had covered it so tightly.

"I didn't hear any of those words that I shouldn't hear, but I did not miss any of the words that I should either." Shi Qing's eyes lit up. "Did you mean Chief Zhai did not have such deep feelings for my auntie and it's my auntie's one-sided thinking? Come, come, come. Chat with me."

"You're so eager to chat?"

"Of course I am! She and Qiu Chenxi caused my dad to submit the resignation letter earlier and made him leave the army so soon. Although you have advised me before that it may be better for my dad to leave earlier and rest because of his health, I'm still reluctant and unhappy!"

Chapter 612: Sick in the Mind

The fact that her father was willing was one matter, but forced to submit his resignation letter was a separate matter.

Since a young age, she had suffered too much under Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi. This time, the matter was right before her, so how could Shi Qing not want to know about it?

Qiao Nan thought for a while. "I only have a rough guess."

"Guess, what guess? Didn't Brother Zhai already silently confirm your guess? The facts can't deviate too much from your guess. Hurry."

"I think Chief Zhai was most likely able to win against your dad and assumed the position of chief many years ago because he wanted to aggravate your auntie. Or put it in a different way, he was motivated because of your auntie. He knew best what your auntie cared about most. In order to make your auntie feel bad, Chief Zhai purposely took on this position. To put it in ugly words, all these years, the Zhai family and the Qiu family have always been in contact. It was as if they were relatives. Although the Qiu family benefited much from the glory of the Zhai family, when your auntie sees the Zhai family leading such a good life and is well respected by others—that even her own spouse had to bow, bend his waist, and lower his neck to the Zhai family—how do you think your auntie feels?"

"If, if she was the one and not Auntie Miao who married Chief Zhai in the past, she, in fact, needed not to depend on the glory of others. All these actually belonged to her," Shi Qing said in a gloating tone. "The more the Qiu family gains from the Zhai family, the more auntie feels unjustified, and the worse she will feel. This is because she thinks she can get more than this. Therefore, she did not gain much. In fact, she lost even more. Won't this drive my auntie to the grave?"

That auntie of hers liked to take advantage of others the most. After doing so, she still acted as if she looked up to them and gave them face.

Reversing the situation now, the Zhai family gave the Qiu family benefits on her account. Wouldn't that drive her auntie mad?

"Isn't that so?" Qi Minlan basked in glory in the recent few years of her life. She was the childhood friend of Chief Zhai and was also on quite good terms with the chief's wife.

However, no matter what, despite all the glory, she relied on the Zhai family and could only shine with their help.

In short, the more Qi Minlan gained from the Zhai family, the more dissatisfied she was. She would feel worse at heart and also be tortured by the many 'ifs' in her heart.

"This is possible!" Shi Qing clapped her hands. "Given what you said, Chief Zhai and my auntie are actually not on such good terms. He even set up such a psychological barrier and tortured her for so many years. Why did he?"

Shi Qing did not really understand this point. Didn't they say that Chief Zhai and her auntie were very much in love many years ago?

If Old Master Zhai had not forced Auntie Miao in between the two of them, Chief Zhai would have married her auntie long ago.

In the end, Chief Zhai was the one who chose to dump her auntie and marry Auntie Miao. The revenge sequence was now reversed?

"You have to ask your dad about this. Qi Minlan is your auntie. It's not convenient for me to say certain things. Also, if you hear it from your dad, it will be more convincing. Of course, I'm not sure if your dad is willing to tell you."

The confidential topics that involved the Shi family and the Zhai family, Qiao Nan would not delve into them too deeply. It was inappropriate.

"Fine, then quickly return to your bedroom and do your homework. I'll give my dad a call. If I don't get this clear today, I'm afraid I won't be able to sleep tonight. I won't be able to study well in school tomorrow." Shi Qing robbed the place of the host and chased Qiao Nan into her bedroom. She even helped Qiao Nan close the door in case Qiao Nan heard anything.

Qiao Nan, who was pushed into the bedroom, tweaked her lips. The speed that Shi Qing kicked someone to the curb when they'd outlived their usefulness was not slow at all.

Shi Peng had never brought up these matters that happened when he was young. Now that his daughter was interested and seemed to have found out something, Shi Peng told her what happened in the past to prevent unnecessary trouble.

When Shi Peng and Zhai Yaohui were young, they were opponents competing with each other.

At that time, Shi Peng was more popular than Zhai Yaohui, and most people felt that Shi Peng would be the victor. They felt that there was a higher chance that Shi Peng would win against Zhai Yaohui.

Qi Minlan was an opportunistic individual. When she heard that the support for her biological brother was higher, although she bore a different surname from Shi Peng, she also felt good. She looked down a little on Zhai Yaohui then.

Before this matter, Zhai Yaohui and Shi Peng were young talented men advancing on equal pace, and their future was very promising.

If Shi Peng had won, he would have left Zhai Yaohui far behind in the 'race'.

As such, the relationship between Qi Minlan and Zhai Yaohui would have been pulled apart as well.

Because of this, Qi Minlan's attitude toward Zhai Yaohui became uncertain. When she was outside, she would always address Zhai Yaohui as her brother, not the brother that she was in love with, but her biological brother.

At that time, Zhai Yaohui eventually gave up on Qi Minlan and married Miao Jing. The greatest reason why the Shi family did not create a fuss, and even refused to listen to Qi Minlan's nonsense about stopping the marriage, was, in fact, Qi Minlan.

The month before Zhai Yaohui married Miao Jing, the Shi family discovered that Qi Minlan had an intimate relationship with another man. They met up frequently and the relationship was abnormal.

Zhai Yaohui started as a patrol officer in the army. In terms of observation skills, even Shi Peng had to take his hat off Zhai Yaohui.

So many things were happening to Qi Minlan, and even the Shi family discovered it. Would that escape Zhai Yaohui's eyes?

Hence, one month later, when they heard that Zhai Yaohui was going to marry Miao Jing, the Shi family did not have any reaction. They just did not attend the banquet.

The Shi family suspected that Zhai Yaohui had discovered something about Qi Minlan and thus listened to Old Master Zhai and married the lady that Old Master Zhai brought back from the countryside.

The Shi family was in the wrong. The Zhai family did not announce the reason publicly and took on the burden as the scapegoat who turned their back on the Shi family. The Shi family should feel guilty instead. Zhai Yaohui was the one who protected the reputation of the Shi family and Qi Minlan.

If others knew that Qi Minlan had been in a relationship with another man behind Zhai Yaohui's back one month before stopping the marriage, the reputation of the Shi family would be ruined. Furthermore, Shi Peng would be dragged into this matter and also lose his rights to compete for the position of the chief.

In order to compete for that role, Shi Peng could not have any flaw in his resume and experience.

It could be said that because of Qi Minlan's ignorant ways when she was young, she nearly destroyed the entire Shi family and also Shi Peng, her biological brother.

It was not that the Shi family was generous enough to not take issue with Zhai Yaohui's 'turning his back for a new lover'. It was because they were guilty-conscious in the first place and had to hide their tails.

"I see. This matter is so complicated." Shi Qing was stunned beyond words. "My auntie is so shameless. She's already in a relationship with someone else and still wanted to stop a marriage. Is she sick in the mind?"

"She's not sick in the mind. She thought that the one that Zhai Yaohui loved was her, and that even if Old Master Zhai wanted him to marry Miao Jing, Zhai Yaohui would disobey Old Master Zhai because he could not bear to part with her."

Chapter 613: Take Revenge

“Who would have known that Zhai Yaohui not only did not retort, but he also married Miao Jing as soon as he could and then gave birth to two children? Your auntie could not take that lying down and wanted to find ways to vent her fury.” Shi Peng’s tone was full of mockery. He had never understood why Qi Minlan had so much confidence in the past to take all these things for granted.

“Despite that character of my auntie, Grandpa still dotes on her and Qiu Chenxi so much. They’re too formidable!” Shi Qing could not stop herself from clapping her hands and lamenting ‘formidable’. Most likely, very few people in the world could do such an extreme thing. Her auntie was truly a ‘talent’!

Shi Ping could criticize Qi Minlan because they were of a similar seniority and was her elder brother. However, at the mention of Old Master Shi, Shi Peng could not do the same. “Qing Qing, perhaps there were some moments when your grandpa was muddleheaded and did not do right, but he’s, after all, our elder. We should respect him. Whatever he says, you can choose not to listen and not do. Nevertheless, you shouldn’t make things look ugly on the surface at the very least, right?”

“Dad, I know what you mean. When I see grandpa next time, and if grandpa scolds me because of Qiu Chenxi, I won’t retort. I also won’t take it to heart.” It was just that she would then not be close to her grandfather henceforth.

“It’s good that you understand.” Shi Peng nodded as he felt more assured. “You’ve already known about Qiao Nan. Learn well from her. Understand?”

“I know.” Qiao Nan had such a ‘top-grade’ mother. After knowing Qiao Nan for so long, Qiao Nan had never confided in her regarding how she had suffered before. No matter how much Qiao Nan disliked them, she would not mention the matters related to her mother and Qiao Zijin. She would never talk bad about them behind their back.

If she had not requested her father to investigate, she would have never found out.

In the future, she would also not argue with her own grandfather or discuss with others about him.

She would rather distance herself away from him. Her grandfather was old and muddleheaded. There was no need for her to take his words to heart. Talking sense into old folks would be akin to making things difficult for herself.

“It’s good that you understand. I’m hanging up. Study well and don’t trouble the Qiao family too much.” The Shi family was, of course, heartened that his daughter was sensible.

Since Qing Qing came to Ping Cheng, she had been growing up very quickly.

Perhaps Qing Qing came to the right place and met the right people. Hence, she could grow up so quickly.

“Nan Nan...” When Qiao Dongliang arrived home after work, he saw Shi Qing looking listless and slumping on the sofa. She looked so pitiful. Her look frightened Qiao Dongliang. “Nan Nan, Nan Nan?”

“Dad, what happened?” When she heard Qiao Dongliang’s voice, Qiao Nan walked out hurriedly. She was also shocked by the sight of Shi Qing slumping on the sofa. “Shi Qing, what are you doing? Have you been robbed of money or...” Beauty?

“That... Should we call the police?” Qiao Dongliang was taken in and he was scared out of his wits. This was someone else’s daughter. If that happened, wouldn’t the parents’ hearts ache so much?

“Dad, what’s there to call the police for? If she really meets with robbery, the one who should call the police to save their own life is that unlucky fool.” Encountering a formidable and violent woman like Shi Qing, even if he did not die, he would be half dead. Qiao Nan sat down. “Dad, I’ve put away the meat and vegetables in the fridge. Will you prepare them?”

“That...” Qiao Dongliang looked at Shi Qing. What should they do about this situation?

Qiao Nan patted her chest and expressed that she would resolve it. “She just gave her father a phone call. There’s no major issue.”

“I’ll go and cook then.” After confirming that Shi Qing did not leave the house or encounter any danger, Qiao Dongliang was then willing to leave. He had to be more careful as this was not his own daughter.

“Alright. Hurry up and get up. You’re scaring my dad.”

“But my dad frightened me. I’ve never known that my family is so complicated, especially that auntie of mine. She did something so ridiculous and yet she still has the shame to appear before the

Zhai family. What kind of person is that?” If it were her, she would not have the shame to face anyone from the Zhai family.

“Human is a very strange being. In the future, you just have to remember one sentence: There are all kinds of fishes in the sea.” Qiao Nan did not react too greatly although she was a little surprised too when she heard that Qi Minlan and Zhai Yaohui had such past when they were young.

“Qiao Nan, do you think...” Shi Qing took a glance in Qiao Dongliang’s direction and then lowered her volume much. “Qiao Nan, tell me. My auntie is already in a relationship with another man. Why is she so shameless and keeps appearing before Chief Zhai? Doesn’t she feel embarrassed or ashamed?”

If it was her, she could not wait to simply dig a hole and bury herself in it.

Qiao Nan took a sip of water and wiped her sweat. “There’s nothing strange about this. Perhaps Qi Minlan thinks that she had covered this matter up very well and no one knew that she had done something that let Chief Zhai down. Since no one knew, and Chief Zhai did not know as well, then she doesn’t need to feel guilty. She can act as the victim and continue to keep in touch with the Zhai family.”

In other words, from Qi Minlan’s perspective, she did not need to feel guilty. It was the Zhai family, especially Chief Zhai, who needed to.

“I’m speechless.” Certainly, she believed that her auntie had the habit of acting smart. “Qiao Nan, can I borrow the phone in your house?”

“You’re going to call Qi Minlan?” Qiao Nan raised her eyebrows. “Have you thought about what to say and how to seek revenge on the mother and daughter?”

Shi Qing did not reply. She only continued to dial the phone number of the Qiu family. “Hello? It’s me. I’m Shi Qing. Right... Auntie, it’s me. I have something to tell you. Don’t misunderstand. I’m not here to see Qiu Chenxi making a fool of herself. My situation is not any better than that of Qiu Chenxi. I can’t laugh at her... I’m here today just to tell you the name of a person. That person is called Feng Wei. Hahaha... Don’t be angry. Fine, I’m hanging up.”

After Shi Qing said the name Feng Wei, she swiftly hung up the phone. She was not willing to say another word at all.

This was because she knew that when she said this name, it was enough to frighten Qi Minlan.

“Qiao Nan, since I’m aware of what’s happening in this world, this is the first time I feel that life can be so happy and smooth!” Having been stood up by her auntie-daughter pair for so many years, she had finally taken her revenge. “This won’t do. I’m so hungry. I want to eat three bowls of rice today!”

“Do you wish to stuff yourself to death? One and a half bowl!” Qiao Nan chided. “It’s not a good habit to gouge.”

“Alright, one and a half bowl then. I’m in a good mood and I am not picky.”

“Hello? Hello, Shi Qing? Where did you hear that from... Hello? Hello!” In contrast with Shi Qing’s happiness, Qi Minlan’s expression changed greatly. She held on to the phone and refused to put it down, wanting to get to the bottom of the matter. However, at that moment, Shi Qing had already hung up and only left a beeping tone for Qi Minlan.

Chapter 614: Badly Entrapped

“Madam...” The auntie in the house quickly grabbed the phone. “Madam, this is already the third phone of the house this year.”

“So what if this is the third phone? Doesn’t our Qiu family have money? Can’t I afford to smash this?! I am smashing the things in my house. You’re just an auntie. Why are you interfering in this?” Qi Minlan’s face turned black. She wanted to snatch back the phone and smash it to the floor.

The matter between Chenxi and Zhai Sheng was not going smoothly. Zhai Sheng was recuperating for such a long time but had never allowed Chenxi to visit him in the camp.

Furthermore, when Zhai Sheng left the army camp to carry out a mission, he did not even inform them. This caused Chenxi to wait in vain at the entrance of the army camp for another three days.

Seeing her daughter’s skin turn increasingly dark day by day, Qi Minlan was full of heartache. Facing this, she could only endure and hope that Zhai Sheng could tell the deep feelings her

daughter had for him, and that he would be moved. In that case, all the suffering her daughter went through would be worth it.

Who would have known that all these turned into a joke in the end!

Qi Minlan's temper worsened by the day. Furthermore, Qiu Qin had been away from home often. Sometimes, he would return home very late at night. Occasionally, he would not even come home to sleep!

Nothing was going smoothly in the family. Her own man was of no use at all. He was away from home all the time. Qi Minlan, who felt that everything was not going well for her, had even wanted to pray at the temple.

The situation was already as such, yet her niece had to call her and create trouble.

Feng Wei, Feng Wei!

How would Qi Minlan forget this person!

Until today, Qi Minlan still felt that, if Feng Wei had not appeared at that time, if the ignorant her then had not been taken in by his beautiful lies, she would have married Zhai Yaohui and become the wife of a chief. Miao Jing would not have been able to take her place then.

Regarding the matters in the past, it was not that Qi Minlan did not feel anything about it. It was just that her perspective toward them was different from others.

When she knew that her own brother's chances of success were higher than Zhai Yaohui's, Qi Minlan looked down a little on Zhai Yaohui in her heart.

Zhai Sheng's temper was very similar to that of Zhai Yaohui. He was very aloof and did not like to interact with others. A man like that was, in fact, not very popular with women. Even Qiu Chenxi's persistence toward Zhai Sheng was because of the role of the chief that was currently held by Zhai Yaohui.

Initially, the statuses of the Zhai family and the Shi family were on par. Both families were compatible and Zhai Yaohui was quite outstanding too. As such, Qi Minlan was together with Zhai Yaohui as a matter of course, and the two became a couple that everyone silently acknowledged.

Thereafter, when such a situation occurred, Qi Minlan was unhappy.

Zhai Yaohui would very soon be defeated by her brother. In the future, the statuses of the Zhai family and the Shi family would not be on par. Hence, they would not be compatible with each other anymore.

If Zhai Yaohui really married her, she would be marrying into a family of a lower status. Yet, Zhai Yaohui still did not treat her that well or coax her.

Zhai Yaohui did not know how to sweet talk but Feng Wei knew. Furthermore, Feng Wei also had a reputable family background. Very soon, Qi Minlan was happily coaxed by that honey-tongue of Feng Wei.

Naturally, the more time Qi Minlan spent with Feng Wei, the less time she spent with Zhai Yaohui. It was during that time that Old Master Zhai appeared and brought Miao Jing.

When Qi Minlan knew about Miao Jing's existence, it was already nearing the end of the marriage talks between the two, under the arrangement of Old Master Zhai.

Initially, it was not that Qi Minlan could not bear to leave Zhai Yaohui. She just felt that Zhai Yaohui was cold and aloof although he clearly liked her. She had not said that they would break up, so why was Zhai Yaohui fit to marry another woman? It was as if she had been dumped.

Hence, when Qi Minlan made things difficult for Miao Jing, it was purely because she was angry that she had lost face.

It was only when Zhai Yaohui won against Shi Peng and became the chief that Qi Minlan truly regretted being fickle-minded in the past. She should not have been cajoled and muddled by Feng Wei. She then lost the good fate that she had with Zhai Yaohui.

Qi Minlan did not want Zhai Yaohui to find out about this past of hers because they could not even be friends with each other if Zhai Yaohui knew.

Moreover, although Zhai Yaohui had married Miao Jing, Qi Minlan had not given up on Zhai Yaohui.

It was illegal to break up an army marriage. However, if Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing did not like each other and he requested for divorce on his own accord, it would have nothing to do with her.

Unfortunately, once the matter had 'derailed', it was not so easy for Qi Minlan to let it return to its original state anymore.

Qi Minlan hated the appearance and lies of Feng Wei. After so many years, Qi Minlan finally had her own family and daughter. When she heard the name of this man who ruined her lifetime happiness, how could Qi Minlan not feel angry and not flare up?

If Shi Qing said these words in front of Qi Minlan, the latter would definitely flare up uncontrollably and give Shi Qing a slap.

"Mom, what's happening again?" Qiu Chenxi, who had turned so much darker due to the sun, was so furious that she refused to leave the house.

When she found out that Zhai Sheng was not in the army camp and had left to carry out a mission, that she had wasted three days acting pitiful with self-torture, Qiu Chenxi returned to Ping Cheng in a rage.

In order to move Zhai Sheng, Qiu Chenxi suffered so much and she had not been having fun for a long time. As such, Qiu Chenxi requested the chauffeur to change directions on the way home and headed to the shopping mall that she usually frequented to do some shopping.

Who would have known that Qiu Chenxi met a friend when she was at the shopping mall?

When the friend saw Qiu Chenxi's face, she laughed and said, "Qiu Chenxi, did you go traveling to South Africa recently? This dark..."

Because of these words, Qiu Chenxi was so angry that she refused to leave the house until she regained her fair skin.

“Shi...” Qi Minlan had wanted to talk bad about Shi Qing but held back quickly. “No, nothing. There’s nothing. I just feel a little troubled. You don’t need to bother about me. I’ll be fine after I vent out my anger.”

As a mother, Qi Minlan would not tell Qiu Chenxi everything.

“Really?” Qiu Chenxi did not believe her.

“Really. Didn’t you want to find some face-brightening masks? I’ve got some for you. You can go and try them.” Qi Minlan changed the topic. Feng Wei, this name—she hoped that no one would ever mention it again.

If the matter between Feng Wei and her were known to others and got into the ears of the Zhai family, then those little feelings between Zhai Yaohui and her would be gone. They might even turn from friends to foes.

“Alright.” Qiu Chenxi did not believe Qi Minlan’s words at all. “Auntie, come to my room and help me take something.”

After the auntie placed the phone back, she looked at Qi Minlan to seek the latter’s permission.

Qi Minlan gave her a stare. “What are you looking at? Chenxi asked you for help. Are you deaf?”

“Yes.” The auntie ran to Qiu Chenxi’s side and went into Qiu Chenxi’s bedroom. “Miss, what do you want me to help you with?”

Chapter 615: Shopping with Boyfriend

“Help?” Qiu Chenxi snorted. “You’re so clumsy. Do you think I dare to hand my face to you? Let me ask you. Who was on the phone with my mom earlier? Who provoked her and made her flare up so badly? She nearly smashed another phone.”

Qiu Chenxi heard that conversation of Qi Minlan.

Yes, the Qiu family was wealthy. Those few bucks for the phone would not make a difference to them. However, the family's wealth was not so great such that Qi Minlan could smash the phones like they were cups.

During the year alone, Qi Minlan had smashed two phones. As such, the elderly couple of the Qiu family had taken some issue with Qi Minlan, this wastrel daughter-in-law.

Qiu Chenxi and Zhai Sheng's marriage had become unsuccessful. Besides, the Shi family could not help Qiu Qin much in his career. All of a sudden, the status of Qi Minlan and the Qiu family was on par. When the elderly couple was dealing with Qi Minlan, they were naturally less cautious than before.

Qiu Chenxi's surname was Qiu. The cost of the phone that Qi Minlan smashed would be borne by the Qiu family. From this point alone, Qiu Chenxi's held the same view as that of the elderly couple of the Qiu family.

"Miss Shi Qing was the one who called," the auntie dared not hide the truth and said honestly.

"Shi Qing dared to bully my mom?" Heaven had overturned!

"I don't know. I did not hear anything of the conversation between Madam and Miss Shi Qing." The auntie dared not say anything. Besides expressing that the phone call was from Shi Qing before Qi Minlan flared up, she stated that she did not know anything else.

"Alright, you may leave."

"Oh, I'll go and work then."

Once the auntie left, Qiu Chenxi's face turned black.

At the sight of her tanned skin in the mirror, Qiu Chenxi felt so angry that she simply smashed the mirror.

If Shi Qing had not given her such a bad idea, how would she become so tanned now such that others even laughed at her?

On hindsight, Shi Qing had most likely suggested her that day to intentionally harm her. Acting pity with self-torture did not work. It even caused her to become tanned and ugly.

At the sight of her now, would Brother Zhai still like her?

This was her territory and Shi Qing still dared to try such tricks with her. If she did not think of a way to deal with Shi Qing and let Shi Qing know her power, then her name would not be Qiu Chenxi!

“Brother Zhai, where are you bringing me to?” Qiao Nan was sitting in Zhai Sheng’s car, feeling a little uneasy.

“Don’t move. Fasten your seat belt.” Zhai Sheng held on to the steering wheel and reminded Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan’s face turned red. She recalled that one year ago, she and Brother Zhai also had a similar conversation. “Where exactly are you bringing me to?”

“To shop for clothes.”

“I don’t want to!” Why would Brother Zhai bring her shopping without an apparent reason? It was not as if she did not have any clothes to wear. “My dad will feel unhappy and angry about it.” Her father still could not accept the Zhai family now, especially the expensive gifts from Brother Zhai. “I think my dad hopes that the two of us can be equal. Brother Zhai, I really don’t need them.”

Zhai Sheng did not bother this time. “If you really don’t want to, it’s also fine. You can call my mom after we go back and return the clothes to her. That will do.”

“Auntie Miao asked you to buy them for me?” What was the reason?

“Of course it’s my mom.” His mother was muddleheaded and unaware of everything. His father and Zhai Hua were aware but they did not stop him either. It was only right that he brought Nan Nan out to shop for clothes.

“If it’s Auntie Miao, then Sister Zhai Hua should be the one here looking for me, no?” She was a lady. Was it appropriate to let Brother Zhai bring her out to shop?

“Zhai Hua is not available. As soon as my mother requested, Zhai Hua immediately declined.”

“I understand now.” Qiao Nan fastened her seatbelt. This topic was certainly initiated by Auntie Miao. Since Sister Zhai Hua pretended that she was not available, Brother Zhai became the one who brought her out shopping in the end. “Brother Zhai, I have to be home by four o’clock in the afternoon. Then, I’ll go to school with Shi Qing. I can’t be late.”

“Don’t worry. I won’t let you be late.” Zhai Sheng drove to the entrance of one of the shopping malls and stopped there. “I heard that this mall is not bad. They have quite a lot of apparel. You can take your time to pick.”

Qiao Nan took a glance at the modern and tall building and frowned.

“Let’s go in.” Zhai Sheng led Qiao Nan in then moved toward the counter that had more dresses.

At the sight of the rows of apparel with different designs, true enough, Qiao Nan was having a headache.

“What’s wrong? Do you see something you like? If you do, bring them in and try.” Zhai Sheng did not really know how to pick clothes. He also did not have any experience accompanying ladies for shopping. Most of the clothes that Miao Jing wore were tailor-made. Moreover, most were cheongsams. [1 .Cheongsam: a close-fitting women’s dress with high neck and slit skirt, normally worn by Chinese ladies]

Given Qiao Nan’s age and identity, cheongsams were not suitable for her.

As for Zhai Hua, she was too boyish and hardly wore dresses. She had a lot of pants at home. All the dresses were at the bottom of her pile of clothing. Let alone bringing her out to shop, Zhai Hua simply provided the auntie in the house the design and size, and the auntie helped her buy the clothing back in bulk. It would be convenient to wash and wear then.

“Good day to both of you. Do you wish to buy clothes? Do you have any design or style in mind? We have quite a lot of nice clothes on the counter. You can take your time picking them.” The salesperson walked over very quickly and attended to Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng affectionately.

“Miss, is your boyfriend accompanying you here to buy clothes? You’re so blessed. Look at this dress. This is a new arrival at our shop. It’s very beautiful and it’s very popular among ladies. Your figure is very good. Why don’t you go in and have a try?”

The attitude of the salesperson was very good. Qiao Nan was feeling quite embarrassed. “That... I like the kind that’s simple and elegant with uncomplicated designs. The best is the type with a clean-cutting. Do you have any recommendations?”

“This type of clothes...” The salesperson was a little stunned. Young ladies like Qiao Nan all loved pretty clothes that could doll themselves up like a butterfly. Qiao Nan’s taste was not common from a commercial perspective. “Then, please wait for a while. I’ll help you find them.”

“Sure.” Qiao Nan nodded.

The salesperson walked around and finally took out three pieces of clothing that barely fitted Qiao Nan’s description. “Miss, what do you think about these three?”

Qiao Nan looked more awkward at the sight of these three pieces of clothing. The truth was that Qiao Nan did not like any of the designs. Nevertheless, the salesperson was very enthusiastic. Qiao Nan could only say, “Can I try them?”

“Of course you can. You can take all these three pieces in to try.” The salesperson passed all three pieces of clothing to Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan shook her head and declined. She only picked one of them. Zhai Sheng forced the other two pieces into Qiao Nan’s hands. “Let’s try all three.”

“Alright.” Qiao Nan did not feel good about rejecting Zhai Sheng. She could only try on the three pieces of clothing one by one.

In the end, after Qiao Nan tried on the three pieces of clothing, the salesperson and Zhai Sheng was surprised that the one Qiao Nan picked earlier looked the best on her among the three.

Chapter 616: Very Good Taste

The salesperson smiled and said, “Miss, you have a very good taste. You know how to pick clothing very well.”

The salesperson looked at Qiao Nan with admiration. “You may not know. We, Chinese, are very conventional in our thinking. We feel that it’s not auspicious to wear white and light-colored clothing. It’s as if we’re wearing funeral clothing. Many don’t like them. After the goods arrive, they will just be displayed there as they are not easy to sell. I didn’t expect the effect of wearing white-color clothing to be so good. It looks so pure.”

The salesperson was not trying to praise the cleanliness of that piece of clothing. She was expressing that this piece of white clothing complimented Qiao Nan’s style and charisma when the latter wore it. She looked very pure, as if one was looking at crystals.

“Thank you.” Qiao Nan passed the other two pieces of clothing back to the salesperson.

The salesperson’s attitude was very good and she tried her best to recommend. Qiao Nan would feel extremely embarrassed if she did not buy at least one piece of clothing from her. Fortunately, she finally found a piece that suited her. She thus did not have to go against her wish and buy one that was completely unsuitable.

Zhai Sheng took over the remaining clothing in Qiao Nan’s hands. “This one then. Where do we pay?”

After all, the clothing had been sold. Furthermore, it was a piece of clothing that very few would take a liking to normally. Hence, the salesperson was smiling very brightly. “Please wait a while. I’ll write you an invoice. You can then go over there to make the payment.”

Zhai Sheng made the payment and then helped Qiao Nan carry the bag with the clothing.

Qiao Nan wanted to take over but Zhai Sheng did not allow her to. “This clothing is not heavy.”

“Precisely. As it’s not heavy, I can carry it myself.” Being used to self-sufficiency, Qiao Nan had never asked someone to help her carry stuff before.

Zhai Sheng did not take issue with her. He only said nonchalantly, “You have to get used to it eventually.”

Qiao Nan was amused. “Are you sure that I have to get used to it eventually?”

Zhai Sheng was stunned for a while. “At the very least, you can get used to it when I’m around.” Right, the time he spent in the army would often far exceed that at home. Thus, he could not always keep Nan Nan company by her side and share her woes. Nevertheless, when he was around, Nan Nan could rely on him. “Are you going to look at other clothes? You only bought one. It’s hard for me to explain to my mom.”

“Auntie Miao didn’t specify how many you have to buy for me, right? One should not get a reward without any contribution. What’s with Auntie Miao? Why did she make you bring me out to shop for clothes?” Actually, she should have declined.

However, given the previous example of Zhu Baoguo, Qiao Nan would accept these few pieces of clothing first.

Previously, Qiao Nan saved Zhu Baoguo’s life from a group of hooligans. The Zhu family used such a way to repay the ‘debt’ that they owed Qiao Nan.

“No contribution? All the grandchildren of the Zhai family have to come from your womb in the future. Your contributions are going to be great.” Having found out Qiao Nan’s preference, Zhai Sheng simply started looking out for Qiao Nan.

It was a pity that, when he looked around, he found that there were very few clothes that matched Qiao Nan’s preference in the whole shopping mall.

“Brother Zhai, bring me to a place.” Qiao Nan knew that Brother Zhai would not give up if they only bought one piece of clothing. Qiao Nan might as well suggest going to another place.

“What place?”

“You’ll know when you’re there.”

When Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan were leaving, they bumped into one person coincidentally. However, only that person saw them, whereas they did not see that person.

Qiu Chenxi had been hiding at home and refusing to leave the house. Qi Minlan wanted to buy a few clothes to coax Qiu Chenxi. Of course, she had to coax Shi Qing too so that she could ask Shi Qing how she knew about Feng Wei. Who would have known that before Qi Minlan bought any clothing, she saw Zhai Sheng bringing Qiao Nan to the shopping mall? Most importantly, the bag Zhai Sheng was carrying in his hand obviously contained ladies' apparel.

Additionally, the two of them had been heading to shops that sold apparel for young ladies. Qi Minlan knitted her brows. Zhai Sheng was buying clothing for Qiao Nan. Could it be...

According to Qiao Nan's navigation, Zhai Sheng drove the car and stopped at a place. "The textile shop?" Could it be that Nan Nan wanted to purchase fabric and tailor her own clothing?

"Yes, this textile shop has a comprehensive range of fabric styles. They have everything. It's also cheaper if you buy more. Instead of buying at the shopping mall, I'd rather pick some fabric and tailor-make the clothing myself." The 21st century was different from the late 20th century. In the 21st century, one piece of clothing was cheap. It could not even cover the cost of the manpower.

At this time in China, purchasing fabric and finding a tailor to tailor-make clothing was a very popular practice.

"Do you know how to?" It was quite hard for Zhai Sheng to imagine that Qiao Nan also knew how to tailor clothes.

"Do I?" Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. With her mother around, there were very few things that she did not know.

She had always been picking up Qiao Zijin's old clothing to wear. Her body frame was smaller than that of Qiao Zijin. When they were children, Qiao Zijin's old clothes were too big. Hence, she would make do and just wear them. When she was older, Qiao Nan started to alter the clothes with needlework before wearing them.

There was still a huge difference in cost between buying a bolt of fabric and clothing. Having been restrained often by Ding Jiayi, tailoring clothing on her own was still the most cost-effective way when Qiao Nan occasionally wanted to wear new clothing.

Hence, when it was the 21st century, a lady like Qiao Nan, who knew how to buy fabric and tailor her own clothing, was already very rare.

“Brother Zhai, I know a little of all of these life skills. One day, if someone praises me, should I thank my mom’s stinginess toward me?” Qiao Nan tried to cheer up amidst the sorrow.

Zhai Sheng did not reply but his eyes were full of heartache.

Clearly, he and Nan Nan stayed in the same quad. Why didn’t he discover Nan Nan, like her, or even protected her earlier? Instead, he had let Nan Nan suffer for so many years.

Regarding the unreasonable behavior of Ding Jiayi that was beyond the comprehension of a normal human being, Zhai Sheng already did not wish to examine this kind of strange living being anymore. It was just that his heart ached so much for Qiao Nan for having Ding Jiayi as her mother.

Qiao Nan perked up and laughed. “Brother Zhai, it’s much cheaper to buy the fabric than ready-made clothing. It’s rare that I have such an opportunity. I have to make up for what I have lost when I was a child. Do you mind helping me pick more pieces of fabric? I feel like buying back all the pretty fabric in the shop.”

“Just buy as much as you wish. I drove here, so we can bring them back easily.” Zhai Sheng was prepared to do this even if Qiao Nan had not said so.

If not for the fact that the clothes in the shopping mall were not to Qiao Nan’s liking, Zhai Sheng would have simply bought seventy-two sets of new clothing for Qiao Nan. This was derived based on four sets of clothing per annum for the full eighteen years that she had lived.

At this era, the cost of fabric was truly cheap. Qiao Nan was not polite with Zhai Sheng as well. It was rare that she did not restrain her shopping desire and madly shopped for once.

Fortunately, Zhai Sheng drove here. Otherwise, there was so much fabric that the two of them really could not bring them back. They would then have to request the owner to deliver them.

Turning her head and looking at the bolts of good fabric in the car, Qiao Nan felt soothed as she sighed. “Retail therapy is truly the best way to relieve stress.”

It was just that, next time, she would spend her own money when she felt like shopping till she dropped.

“Ah, are you moving someone’s textile shop home? You bought so much fabric. Qiao Nan, you don’t intend to study anymore and want to specialize in tailoring business?”

Chapter 617: Bumped into Someone

When Shi Qing saw the heaps of fabric that the two bought, she was wide-eyed and tongue-tied. “Brother Zhai, when a woman spends money to shop, there’s no rationality to speak of. Qiao Nan doesn’t have, but don’t you?”

“I don’t need to have.” Zhai Sheng became the coolie. He was carrying the fabric into the house, making a few trips.

Qiao Nan sat down and drank some tea. “I felt quite happy while I was buying them. But once I stopped, I was really exhausted.”

“You were exhausted? I thought you shopped till you became crazy? By doing this, aren’t you afraid that the Zhai family will form negative perceptions of you?” She was not even married into the family and yet she didn’t help Zhai Sheng save when she spent his money. Was Qiao Nan unafraid that the Zhai family would be unhappy with her because of this and make things difficult for her in the future?

Qiao Nan’s face was sullen. She expressed that she had considered all these. “In the Zhai family now, most probably, Auntie Miao is the only one who is unaware of the relationship between Brother Zhai and me. The matter between Brother Zhai and me has to be announced eventually. There are some things that I have to pay attention to now. It’s also for the sake of the Zhai family. Furthermore, when Auntie Miao suggested that Brother Zhai bring me shopping, Chief Zhai and Sister Zhai Hua definitely didn’t object to it. If I really declined, they might not view me positively either.”

It was not good to decline the request from an elder.

If she rejected and overdid it, it would seem that she did not know what was good for her.

“Given the spending power of the Zhai family, although I bought so much fabric, the cost may not even exceed their budget to buy ready-made clothes for me.” Qiao Nan had calculated the sums well.

“So, you actually helped the Zhai family save money?” Shi Qing started to agree with Qiao Nan’s words. People with her background did not approve of extravagance and wastefulness. Nevertheless, no households would deliberately flash their poverty to disgust others. Qiao Nan had too few clothes in her possession.

“I didn’t save much, but neither was I wasteful.” Qiao Nan looked at the fabric that she had selected and bought. “Moreover, the clothes made from these bolts of fabric will not be just for me. I know about making a gift for people with something given to me.”

“Won’t this be too difficult? Are you able to handle it? Why don’t I help you cheat a little?” Shi Qing shook her head continuously. She felt that the mission Qiao Nan picked was too difficult. If she did it well, she would strike a beautiful victory. If she failed, then she would appear to be acting smart and embarrass herself in front of others.

There was too big a stake in this gamble.

“No need, I know how to. However, if you really want to help me, can you get me a sewing machine? I won’t borrow it for free. I’ll make you one set of clothing. How about that?” She did not need to cheat. If she really wanted to, she would be very embarrassed to say that she was someone from the 21st century. The people from the 21st century would feel ashamed because of her.

“No problem.” Shi Qing showed an ‘OKAY’ sign with her hand. “Still the same words. If you can’t handle it, I can help you cheat a little.”

“Fine.”

After Zhai Sheng finished moving the items, he drank the cup of water that Qiao Nan got for him. “I’ll go home first. If you need any help, call me.”

“Okay.” Qiao Nan sent Zhai Sheng off with her eyes. “Did you go out today?” Once she returned home and sat down, the first thing Qiao Nan did was to glance at Shi Qing. Brother Zhai was around earlier. It was thus not convenient to ask about certain things. It was convenient to do so now.

“You’re so sharp. Look.” Shi Qing took out the packaging bag and casually poured out the clothing in it “What do you think about this piece of clothing?”

“One word, tawdry. Two words, disgustingly tawdry.” Shi Qing’s clothing was too flashy and gaudy. There were too many decorations and the flowery design was complicated. If Shi Qing wore this, she would look like a live flower basket. It was really not very nice.

“My auntie gave this to me.” Shi Qing used one hand to hook the clothing up with disdain. “This is my auntie’s taste?”

“It must be intentional of her to give you such clothing. The clothing that Qiu Chenxi wears is quite stylish. Even if it’s not, at the very least, it’s pricey. This one, though...” Qiao Nan did not continue further, in case Shi Qing’s expression turned uglier.

Shi Qing sneered. “Isn’t that so? She treats me as a fool who can be conned. It’s not as if I’ve not seen what Qiu Chenxi wore before. She wants to find out something from me and yet she dared to use this kind of thing to bluff me. I really have such a good auntie. She adopts this kind of attitude when she is pleading others. It’s so rare of her.”

“Pleading? What’s she pleading you for?” What matter could make Qi Minlan so polite to someone?

“What else can it be? But when she opened her mouth today, I realized that I predicted something wrong.” Shi Qing sat up and looked at Qiao Nan energetically. “I’ve mentioned to you about the first matter before. It’s because of Feng Wei. She asked me how I know about Feng Wei, who the Feng Wei that I know is, and how old he is. After confirming that I know about Feng Wei’s matter, she then begged me not to reveal the matter to anyone. You guess. Why else did she look for me?”

Initially, the scope of this ‘guess’ was really too wide and it was not easy for Qiao Nan to guess.

But once she came into eye contact with Shi Qing, Qiao Nan reached out her hands and pointed at her own nose. “Because of me?”

“What else could it be!” Shi Qing slammed the table as she felt both excited and aggravated. “When you’re shopping together with Brother Zhai, she bumped into both of you. But judging from your behavior, Brother Zhai and you definitely did not discover her. She felt odd and specially came here

to ask me why you were shopping with Brother Zhai. Brother Zhai not only bought clothing but also carried the shopping bags for you. She asked me what the relationship between the two of you is. Qiao Nan, my auntie is starting to suspect that you're Brother Zhai's girlfriend!"

Having said that, Shi Qing could not help breaking out in a cold sweat for Qiao Nan.

If her auntie knew about it, there was no difference from Qiu Chenxi knowing about it.

The mother-daughter pair refused to give up on the position of the chief in the Zhai family. Moreover, Zhai Sheng was so strong and outstanding. He also had great contributions. Hence, the probability that he would take on the role of the chief was more than eighty percent.

Hence, once her auntie confirmed that Qiao Nan was the one that Brother Zhai was in a romantic relationship with, given the power of her auntie and Qiu Chenxi, it was not difficult at all for them to create trouble for Qiao Nan such that she could not even remain in Ping Cheng if the Zhai family did not protect her well enough.

Qiao Nan felt fear and trepidation. "Then, how did you reply to her?"

"What's there to be afraid of? I'll be here to protect you. Will I let them bully you?" Shi Qing patted her own chest hard. "I don't need to say much. I just needed to casually tell her about the situation in the Zhai family. She should understand then."

Auntie Miao and Brother Zhai quarreled with each other, and Qiao Nan was the one who persuaded them to reconcile. The Zhai family was grateful to Qiao Nan and wanted to buy her something. There was nothing strange about it. This was also a way they commonly used to express their gratitude. "But with this, my auntie will hate you more. She can't wait for the relationship between Brother Zhai and Auntie Miao to become worse. Who would have known that when the mother-son pair had issues, you made them reconcile? Of course, compared to the fact that you're Brother Zhai's girlfriend, this little grudge is nothing."

Chapter 618: Odd Situation

"Thank you." Qiao Nan heaved a sigh of relief.

"Too polite of you." Shi Qing lifted her chest. "Right, today, my auntie acted pitiful in front of me. I found out about a situation and felt that something was amiss. Help me analyze it and see if I've been paranoid."

“What’s the situation?”

“My auntie noticed that my uncle-in-law hasn’t been going home very often lately. He seems so busy and doesn’t even come home to sleep on some days. She told me that she doesn’t have anyone to discuss with whenever she encounters any difficulties. The life that she leads in the Qiu family is not as good as what my dad and I imagined. Hence, she can only rely on Qiu Chenxi and hope that Qiu Chenxi will be successful in the future, that Qiu Chenxi will marry into a good family. This is so that she won’t need to be at the disposal of the Qiu family anymore.”

Qiao Nan touched her chin. “Do you want me to help you analyze the main points in the first or second half of the conversation?”

“Right, I know that you’ll definitely be able to tell!” Shi Qing gave a pat on Qiao Nan’s shoulder. Qiao Nan grimaced in agony. “Big sister, what kind of strength is that? You beat and won against Zhu Baoguo, didn’t you? Do you want to beat me down as well?”

“Sorry, I’ll help you rub and massage. I was momentarily too excited and didn’t control my strength too well.” Shi Qing looked apologetic as she helped Qiao Nan massage her shoulders conscientiously. “Qiao Nan, do you also think that my uncle-in-law’s behavior is a little odd? There’s something amiss, right?”

“There’s definitely something wrong. Qiu Chenxi’s father also works in the government sector. It’s not as if they have taken on any major projects. There isn’t any natural disaster or man-made misfortune happening either. How could there be so many matters to busy himself with? Even if that’s so, it will, at most, be for intermittent periods. I’ve not heard of situations that will continue for such a long time. You all are in this field. How busy your uncle-in-law is, won’t your dad know once he investigates it?”

The jobs in the government sectors were considered cradle-to-grave jobs. The job was stable, the salary was not low, and the benefits were comprehensive.

It was obvious that there was something amiss about the situation of Qiu Chenxi’s father who often stayed overnight outside and did not go home.

Typically, if a man did not even go home and was not truly tied up with work, most probably, they had a mistress outside.

“That’s right. I’ll find out after I get my dad to investigate. I will do that then.”

“You’re so concerned about the relationship between Qi Minlan and her husband?” Qiao Nan was quite surprised. Wouldn’t Shi Qing be happier if Qi Minlan’s life worsened?

“I really don’t care about their relationship. But given the situations of our two families, our interests and benefits are closely connected. I’m not worried about others, but once there’s a problem with their marriage, the situation in the Qiu family will impact the Shi family negatively. I’ll definitely have to preempt my dad so that he will be prepared.”

Shi Qing did not wish to tell Qiao Nan how disgusting the Qiu family was after they became in-laws with the Shi family. Nevertheless, the Shi family had to guard against such situations.

“Alright, I’ll tidy up these bolts of fabric. You call your dad quickly.” Qiao Nan stood up and tidied up the fabric. In actual fact, the owner of the textile shop had packed them properly, and when Zhai Sheng brought them into the house, he also did not mess them up. They had thus greatly lessened what Qiao Nan needed to do. “Have you finished making the call?”

“My dad is aware of it now.” Shi Qing’s face looked grave. Obviously, this matter was more serious than what Qiao Nan thought.

Qiao Nan sighed. Why was it so troublesome to get married? “Alright, don’t think about it anymore. This matter is not within your control. It’s already four o’clock. We’ll be late if we don’t make our way to school.” If not for the fact that her house was located near the school, they would have been late.

“Okay.” Shi Qing knew that sitting and worrying about the problem would not help solve it. Hence, she listened to Qiao Nan and obediently took her schoolbag.

After Shi Peng picked up Shi Qing’s call, his attitude was very serious. He was extremely cautious too. First, he made a phone call to confirm Qiu Qin’s work situation.

When he found out that Qiu Qin recently did not receive any major projects, and neither was he arranged for any overseas or outbound work trips, Shi Peng could not help but take the situation reflected by Shi Qing seriously.

Qiu Qin did not keep his secrets well. Without much effort, Shi Peng already found out the identity of that woman who was with Qiu Qin.

The woman was younger than Qiu Qin by about seven or eight years old. She was just slightly over thirty in age. In terms of looks, she was not prettier than Qi Minlan.

Qiu Qin bought a suite property outside under the name of this woman. However, the property was not huge. It was not lavishly renovated either. From the information that Shi Peng gathered, that house was not as well-renovated as the house of the Qiu family. Nevertheless, it seemed quite cozy and nice.

In a photo, Qiu Qin was smiling very happily. When he was having dinner with that woman, the dishes on the table were also simple, dishes that an ordinary couple took during meals.

The more ordinary the woman was, the older she was, and the simpler their life was, the more Shi Peng would worry.

Qiu Qin married Qi Minlan because of the benefit that he could gain. It had almost nothing to do with love.

Given that the family status of the Shi family was higher than that of the Qiu family, and she also had Zhai Yaohui, this childhood friend, Qi Minlan had been adopting a very arrogant attitude toward the Qiu family for more than twenty years.

As a man, Shi Peng had never felt that Qiu Qin, who did not have feelings for the young and beautiful Qi Minlan in the past, had developed any feelings for her after seeing such an arrogant and domineering Qi Minlan after marriage.

As such, the matter was really grave.

Shi Peng, who was having a headache, could only investigate the situation of this woman further. Although this woman did not ask for much when she was together with Qiu Qin and also looked ordinary, it did not change the fact that she was breaking up someone else's family.

A woman that broke up someone else's family and became the third party was definitely not a good woman.

The past two weeks had been a very hard time for Qiao Nan. It was now Shi Qing's turn for these two weeks.

Even Zhu Baoguo was suspicious and asked Shi Qing a few times. "Hey, did your 'relatives' come?"

"Do you need to be so exaggerating? When the 'relatives' come for ladies, won't it last for a week at most? Yours is almost ten days now, isn't it?"

"Oh dear, if your 'relatives' came for half a month, why didn't you lose so much blood that you had to be hospitalized?"

Of course, in exchange for Zhu Baoguo's additional 'concern' was Shi Qing's punch. "You're a grown-up man. You're so chatty and naggy. Whether my 'relatives' are here or not has got nothing to do with you. Even if my 'relatives' love to come 365 days a year, you don't need to bother too!"

Nevertheless, after punching Zhu Baoguo once, Shi Qing felt more relaxed.

"Hahaha." Zhu Baoguo sneered. "A gentleman does not fight with a lady. If there's a next time, don't blame me for being impolite!" He had not had a chance to show off the skills that he had picked up over the summer vacation in front of Shi Qing.

"Cut your crap. I'm in a bad mood." Shi Qing turned her head, looking sullen. She could not see eye to eye with Zhu Baoguo, and vice versa. The unlucky thing was that, from this semester onward, Teacher Liu actually arranged her to be deskmates with Zhu Baoguo. He let her take Qiao Nan's previous seat!!!

Chapter 619: Being Followed

Zhu Baoguo snorted. She made it sound as if he was dying to speak to her. What a narcissistic.

On Friday, when it was time for them to go back home, the first person Qiao Nan ran into at the school gate was not Shi Qing but Zhu Baoguo. Zhu Baoguo leaned against the school gate. "No

need to search for her. Shi Qing dashed out of the classroom as soon as the school bell rung today. I suppose she must have reached your house by now.”

“Oh, thank you.” Qiao Nan nodded. It seemed like Shi Qing did not have an easy time these two weeks because of what happened with Qi Minlan and Qiu Qin.

“Xiao Qiao, do you feel that you have changed recently?” Zhu Baoguo stopped Qiao Nan, looking upset.

Qiao Nan stopped in her tracks. “Zhu Baoguo, you should learn to grow up. Have I changed? Is it because as we are no longer in the same class, and neither are we deskmates, that you feel we have grown apart and that I have changed?” These two years, Zhu Baoguo had not been making much improvement in his emotional intelligence. “Zhu Baoguo, if you continue to be like this, I will have to ask your dad whether he only made you go through physical training during the summer break. If not, why is it that you have grown physically stronger, but you still have low intelligence?”

“Xiao Qiao, am I just like a child in your eyes?” Zhu Baoguo’s expression changed when he thought of what Wang Yang said to him.

Qiao Nan was stunned momentarily. “What’s wrong with you? You seemed agitated. Is it due to Shi Qing?”

“Just answer me directly, yes or no?”

Qiao Nan pursed her lips and looked serious. “Zhu Baoguo, you shouldn’t be asking me this question. You should ask yourself instead. It has been two years. Do you think you have been behaving like a child or an adult?”

“I understand now.” Zhu Baoguo took a deep breath. “Shi Qing has run back home. I will send you back.”

“No, it’s only a short distance away. You don’t have to send me back.” Zhu Baoguo was not angry, and he did not ask any other questions. However, he looked depressed and grim, which was to Qiao Nan’s surprise.

All along, Zhu Baoguo had always been someone who could not hide his emotions.

“I will send you back.” Although Zhu Baoguo did not blow his top, his temper had never been good. For a moment, Qiao Nan even seemed to feel that Zhu Baoguo resembled Zhai Sheng.

“Alright.” Qiao Nan gave in at the different side of Zhu Baoguo that she saw. “Thank you.”

The two of them walked back in silence. Zhu Baoguo looked straight ahead. His eyes were brooding and dark. Qiao Nan had no idea what he was thinking about. Qiao Nan felt a little awkward and she did not know what to say.

Thankfully, Qiao Nan’s house was not far from the school, and they reached her house in no time. Qiao Nan stood at the doorstep. “Zhu Baoguo, thank you for sending me back. Go back home. Don’t let Elder Zhu worry about you.”

There was a flicker in Zhu Baoguo’s eyes. He wanted to ask Qiao Nan whether she would be worried about him.

“I will go in now.” Qiao Nan knitted her brows. She could not help but feel that Zhu Baoguo was behaving strangely today. Gone was the Zhu Baoguo who used to shoot his mouth off in front of her. He seemed to be another person altogether.

Perhaps she was wrong. Zhu Baoguo had grown up. It was just that she had not realized it.

Zhu Baoguo turned to leave after he watched Qiao Nan enter the house.

After Zhu Baoguo left, Chen Jun, who had been hiding in the dark and staring at Qiao Nan, came out from the dark corner with an ominous look.

Qiao Nan came from a humble family background, and her family had trouble one after another, yet she was surrounded by a lot of escorts.

He had long wanted to catch Qiao Nan alone, but it had been three months and he still could not find the opportunity to catch her by herself.

Chen Jun took a deep breath at the thought of the situation at home. He did not believe that there would always be someone with Qiao Nan. He would definitely find a chance to catch Qiao Nan alone.

Even if he did not have a chance, Qiao Zijin would be able to do it.

“You’re back.” Shi Qing had just hung up the phone when Qiao Nan stepped into the house. Shi Qing looked calm and relaxed. She seemed to have clarified her doubts. “Did Zhu Baoguo send you back?”

“How do you know?” In fact, it was just a short distance. There was no need for him to send her back.

“I asked him to send you back. If he dared to go back on his word, he was being ungrateful. Besides, wasn’t he worried that I would let him have a taste of my fists?” Shi Qing said in an overbearing stance.

Qiao Nan put down her schoolbag and looked at Shi Qing, feeling puzzled. “Why did you insist that he sent me back home? I am not in danger.” It was no wonder that Zhu Baoguo insisted on sending her back today. It turned out that it was due to Shi Qing. “By the way, I heard that Zhu Baoguo’s fighting prowess has improved after a summer break. Have both of you exchanged blows?”

She had thought that after school reopened, Zhu Baoguo would want to exchange blows with Shi Qing as soon as he saw her.

“No.” Speaking of which, Shi Qing felt perplexed as well. She had been waiting for Zhu Baoguo to challenge her, but to her surprise, Zhu Baoguo did not mention exchanging blows with her. “Besides, don’t be too happy. I insisted that Zhu Baoguo sent you back home as I have a strange feeling recently. You should not underestimate my sixth sense. Sometimes, it’s quite accurate. Now that my auntie has her own troubles to deal with and Qiu Chenxi is in a similar situation as her, who is the one going after you?”

“Your auntie... Forget it. Your auntie’s matter aside, you said that I have offended other people. What do you mean?” Qiao Nan put the Qiu family’s matters aside. She was more concerned about her problem.

Shi Qing thought for a moment. “Especially in the past two months, whenever I went out with you, there was always a feeling of being followed. But if I went out by myself, I didn’t have this strange

feeling of being stalked by someone. If I am not wrong, that person is after you. I have tried to find this person, but this person is quite capable. I suppose the person knows of those anti-tracking techniques. I always failed to track him down!”

Shi Qing was angry at herself.

When she was in the army camp, she had been through all sorts of training, but she failed to catch the person who was hiding in the dark. She was such a disgrace to the people in the army.

“Anti-tracking?” Qiao Nan pondered for a while at the terminology. “Average people will not stalk people. I suppose only specially trained personnel will be trained in this aspect?”

“Yes.” Shi Qing nodded. “The intelligence-gathering personnel and detectives in the army will be equipped with stalking skills. As for the anti-tracking skills, in general, it is a skill that spies or undercover will master.” Average people would not be able to have exposure to these professional skills.

“Why do I feel that I seem to have forgotten something!”

Chapter 620: Confirmed to Have an Affair

From Shi Qing’s analysis, Qiao Nan could roughly guess who had been stalking her recently.

“Do you know who the person is?”

Qiao Nan knocked her forehead in exasperation. “That person must be Chen Jun. Besides him, nobody whom I knew by their names is capable of doing this.”

“Including Zhu Baoguo?”

“Including Zhu Baoguo.”

Shi Qing was surprised. Zhu Chengqi should have taught Zhu Baoguo about anti-tracking. “Who is that?” She was surprised that Qiao Nan knew someone else apart from Zhu Baoguo and Brother Zhai who was in a similar field.

“Haven’t I said that it was Chen Jun?” Chen Jun’s father was the deputy commissioner in the police station. Other people might not have these skills, but it was not surprising that Chen Jun was skilled in them.

“Who is Chen Jun, and where is he from?” Since she came to Ping Cheng, and after she was acquainted with Qiao Nan, she had never heard of this name before.

Qiao Nan poured herself a glass of water to hydrate herself. “I didn’t expect that Chen Jun has not given up yet. It’s normal that you don’t know who Chen Jun is. In fact, it was due to Zhu Baoguo that Chen Jun is after me. It is very right of Zhu Baoguo to send me back today.”

If not for Zhu Baoguo, she would never have met Chen Jun again.

Shi Qing could tell that there seemed to be some story about Chen Jun. She was intrigued. “Come, sit next to me. Tell me what the situation is.”

Qiao Nan sat down and told Shi Qing about the situation between Zhu Baoguo and Wang Yang briefly. “I told you this so that you know what is happening. But this is the Zhu family’s private affairs. In fact, I should not have told you at all. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

“I understand. You are too much. Do I need you to remind me? I am not a blabbermouth.” Shi Qing patted her chest and assured Qiao Nan that she would not tell anyone else. “By the way, I can’t tell that Zhu Baoguo has been through such things. Compared to the Wang Yang that you mentioned, I feel that Qiu Chenxi is really kind.”

Shi Qing curled her lips. She felt that what she said was strange.

“If you compare it as such, it does seem so.” Qiu Chenxi was only after Brother Zhai. What Wang Yang wanted was way too much than her. He almost took Zhu Baoguo’s life.

“Well, let’s not talk about Qiu Chenxi. What does the Zhu family matters have to do with you?”

Qiao Nan had no choice but to tell Shi Qing about the relationship between Wang Yang and Chen Jun.

Shi Qing's face turned black. "Honey trap? To think that they came up with such schemes... Now, I seem to understand."

"Wang Yang's plan has been exposed by me. Hence, Chen Jun's family is affected, causing Chen Jun to blame everything on me. He knew that Brother Zhai is in a relationship with me, so he threatened me to break up with Brother Zhai and make use of Brother Zhai's affection for me to help the Chen family. Back then, he gave me more than a month's time to agree to his conditions. It was about the time when you transferred to our school. The deadline he gave me was before the summer break. I just got to know you and exams were just over. I was so busy that it slipped my mind."

After the exams, she was taken by her master to the camp to teach English to the soldiers.

By the time she left the camp, Shi Qing had moved in with her.

Even if Chen Jun went according to what he said and wanted to settle accounts with her during the summer break, he had no opportunity to do that.

His main intention was not to drag her down with him. His first priority was to make use of her relationship with Brother Zhai to help the Chen family do well and for his father to be promoted to the commissioner position in the police station.

Not to mention the deadline given by Chen Jun, Qiao Nan had totally forgotten about the whole matter. If Shi Qing had not discovered that someone was following her recently, Qiao Nan would not have remembered what happened with Chen Jun.

"This person is really shameless." Shi Qing wrapped her arms around her chest and paced about the house. "If I run into this person, I will definitely give him a harsh beating such that his parents no longer recognize him."

"No." Qiao Nan shook her head. "China is a legal society and you are Officer Shi's daughter. You can't break the law knowingly. Besides, the biggest problem is that you don't have any valid reasons to beat him. If things go wrong, we may be implicated. I heard that Chen Jun's father has been detained and interrogated. Chen Jun is down and in deep trouble that he fears no fall."

Shi Qing frowned. "Do we just let it go? But you have to endure being followed by him every day. Can you live this kind of life?" If it were her, she would definitely not be able to endure it.

"I have to think about it." It was indeed a tricky situation.

"Why don't you take your time to think about it? When you have a solution, I will help you with it." Just like what Qiao Nan said, it was indeed unsuitable for her to do anything now. She did not have any valid reasons and she could not do so in a fit of anger, lest her father was affected by her actions. Her father was about to leave the army. He could not afford to be embroiled in such a scandal. "Qiao Nan, what's so strange about you that these troublesome people will always mess with you?"

"Hehehe..." She wanted to know as well. "Forget it. I may have known quite a few troublesome people, but I have met some good people as well."

"That's true. For instance, me." Shi Qing praised herself blatantly. "Today is a special situation. With me around in the future, Chen Jun will not have a chance to corner you. The most important thing is that Chen Jun should be a college student. Even though his father is being detained and interrogated, it can't be that bad that he has to quit school, right? The school has started. Unless he doesn't care about his own future, it doesn't make sense that he can stay in Ping Cheng."

"This is quite strange." Qiao Nan counted with her fingers and hit her forehead with her hands, coming back to her senses. "He should be in his third or fourth year this year. I remember that the third-year and fourth-year university students have to go through an internship."

"Well, it seems that there is..." It was no wonder Chen Jun would appear in Ping Cheng at this time. He must be doing his internship.

"Alright, as you said, when we go to school, we will take the same route. We spend most of our time in school regardless. Let's put this matter aside first." Anyway, it was Chen Jun who was after her, not the other way round. Chen Jun was the one who wanted to go to all these efforts to follow her. No matter what, he would not be able to achieve his plan. She should not bother with it.

"Qiao Nan, the Qiu family is in a mess right now." After putting aside the topic of Chen Jun, Shi Qing remembered the phone call that she had just now. "My uncle-in-law indeed has an affair. He has another woman outside, and he is very much in love with her. I heard from my dad that the mistress is not as beautiful as my auntie. Her looks are ordinary, but she is younger than my auntie."

Shi Qing was very surprised that Qiu Qin would forsake Qi Minlan, who was pretty-looking, for an ordinary-looking mistress. What exactly was on his mind?

“The woman is not beautiful?” Qiao Nan arched an eyebrow. “Actually, it is not news whether the third party is prettier than the wife or not. Now that the Qiu family is in a mess, does it mean that your auntie knows about the woman?”