

## RTAMM 621

### Chapter 621: Tireless in Destroying People

“Of course, after my dad found out about this, he handed the information to my grandpa and the latter gave them to my auntie without any hesitation. Given my auntie’s temper, she can’t possibly take it lying down. She went into a big fight with my uncle-in-Law.” Shi Qing could easily imagine the situation at the Qiu family right now.

“Don’t be too quick to rejoice in other people’s misfortune. I think your grandpa is tireless in destroying people. Did your grandpa mention where the information was from when he gave them to Qi Minlan?” Qiao Nan hit Shi Qing’s head. Shi Qing was too quick to rejoice and had overlooked the details.

Shi Qing was shocked. “He seemed to say that...”

“That it’s from your dad?” Qiao Nan looked upward. “I have to say that your dad is right to leave the army. This is a wise decision. Has your grandpa given up on your dad completely?”

Just because Qi Minlan and Chief Zhai used to be with each other when they were young, Old Master Shi felt that Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi were his safest bet for a good future. He did not care that Shi Peng was his son who would stay with him whereas Qi Minlan was married into another family.

“It’s fine if he gives up on my dad!” Shi Qing’s expression turned cold. “My dad did not depend on my grandpa for the position that he is in today. When my grandpa was young, he met a good comrade and he saved my grandpa’s life on the battlefield. If not for his comrade, he would not have achieved any meritorious deeds or been commended. After my dad joined the army, he proved his worth through hard work. He is in his position today solely due to his own efforts. Otherwise, my dad would not be in poor health. If he had a capable father like Chief Zhai, he would not need to slough his guts out!”

Speaking of Old Master Shi, he was indeed lucky.

Old Master Shi grew up during the turmoil of war. He joined the army at a young age and became a soldier.

It was a pity that he did not have the correct mindset. He joined the army as he felt that the meals would be provided for in the army, so he did not have to worry that he might starve to death during the tumultuous times.

On the battlefield, Old Master Shi never dared to go to the front line, fearing that he would be hit by the enemy's bullets or that the bombs would blow him to pieces. It was not long before the organization had a mission and selected a group of people for the mission.

The reason why Old Master Shi signed up for the mission was simple. If he joined the group to carry out the secret mission, at the very least, he would not need to charge the enemy lines and brave the storm of shots and shells.

It was during this mission that Old Master Shi's group was discovered by the enemy.

After a fierce battle, the squad was almost completely annihilated. In the end, though his former comrade was injured, he carried an unconscious Old Master Shi on his back and went back to the army with an important piece of information.

With the important piece of information, the party organization achieved a major victory and managed to lower the number of casualties.

The soldiers in the squad who died were posthumously conferred the title of martyrs, and the two people who survived naturally became the greatest heroes.

It was also from that time that Old Master Shi's status in the Red Army began to rise. He was no longer an average soldier.

The piece of information was brought back by his comrade and his life was saved by him. Old Master Shi did not do anything but ended up with second-class merit.

After the liberation, the three generations before Old Master Shi were poor. During that period of time, this was considered a good social status. As such, the Shi family was able to survive the particular period unscathed.

Given Old Master Shi's temper, he was lucky enough to be able to secure his position in the army.

He was also blessed to have Shi Peng as his son.

Shi Peng was the complete opposite of Old Master Shi. He strove for excellence and was willing to take risks and do the things that Old Master Shi dared not do in the turbulent times. Shi Peng had multiple scars from the battles that he fought, including gunshot wounds. All these were proof that he gave his all while serving in the army, never shying from the dangerous missions that he carried out.

Shi Peng was not in good health as he had worked too hard when he was young.

Because of Shi Peng's achievements in the army, Old Master Shi would always brag about his son to his former comrades.

That was how the Shi family managed to build a reputation for themselves in this field.

For this reason, what Shi Qing said previously was very true. Most of the things that Old Master Shi had today were given to him by others. He did not put in any effort at all.

If Shi Peng wanted to advance in his career, he would have to rely on himself. Zhai Yaohui might be capable, but Old Master Zhai was not to be undermined as well.

With Old Master Zhai around, Zhai Yaohui had a much easier time in the army than Shi Peng.

Even though Zhai Yaohui had his father help him, when it was time to fight for the position of the chief of the army, Shi Peng had higher chances of securing the position. It showed that Shi Peng had put in extra efforts and had outstanding achievements.

As such, it did not really matter if Old Master Shi was supportive of Shi Peng or not.

"I am not worried about anything, but that Qi Minlan will make trouble for your dad. Your dad is not in good health. Will he be able to take it if Qi Minlan creates trouble for him?" Qiao Nan reminded Shi Qing that Officer Shi was in poor health and that he needed to rest. It was absolutely unsuitable for him to stay in a noisy environment. It would not be good for his illness.

Shi Qing could not take it lying down. “My dad has not let her down. Why must she create trouble for him? She should direct her anger at the man who betrayed her. What has it got to with my dad?”

“Because it was your dad who discovered the affair.” Qiao Nan was not able to give her a clear explanation.

Once a woman became confused, she would not vent her anger on the man who betrayed her. Instead, she would push the blame to someone else.

It would either be the woman who seduced her husband or the busybody who discovered the affair and told her about it.

“There’s another thing to note. Shi Qing, you yourself have forgotten about it as well. You have said that your grandpa has no artifice. Since he is of little help to your dad, he is of not much help to Qi Minlan as well. Your dad has already submitted his resignation letter. It will not be long before your dad is removed from his officer’s title. By that time, who else can Qi Minlan rely on in the Shi family? Qi Minlan is used to living in luxury. Without the Shi family’s power, if Qi Minlan is no longer the daughter-in-law of the Qiu family, what is she left with?”

Once Qi Minlan divorced Qiu Qin, not only would she no longer be the wife of the government official, but the alimony that she could get would not be significant as well.

“Do you mean that even though my uncle-in-law has a mistress, my auntie will not divorce him?” Shi Qing was flabbergasted. “Impossible! Her temper is so nasty. She could not tolerate sharing her husband with anyone else. Now that this has happened, how could she possibly tolerate it? If she bears with it, she will suffocate to death.”

Since a young age, her auntie would not allow herself to suffer any injustices.

Chapter 622: Qiao Nan, The Hardworking Snail Girl

“You don’t believe me? We shall see.” Qiao Nan did not explain further. Be it now or in the future, it was rare that marriages were based simply on love.

Shi Qing did not believe her, but what happened afterward was just as what Qiao Nan had predicted.

Not long after, the people in the related field knew about Qiu Qin's affairs. As the official in the government, his affair was a bad reputation for the country and the government, and he was given a verbal warning.

The higher-ups had ordered that Qiu Qin must handle his affair as soon as possible. As for when Qiu Qin would be able to return to work, it would have to depend on the situation.

Of course, if Qiu Qin did not handle it well, he might not be able to continue with his work.

Seeing that Qiu Qin was ordered to stay at home, Qi Minlan went to Shi Peng straight away and wanted him to settle this problem as soon as possible so that Qiu Qin could return to his work without any delay.

Shi Qing might not have anticipated this, but Shi Peng was already ready for the turn of events.

When Shi Peng received the news that Old Master Shi gave all the information to Qi Minlan and told Qi Minlan that the information was from him, Shi Peng, who was in bad health, admitted himself into the hospital of the military region right away!

Without Shi Peng's consent, Qi Minlan could not enter the hospital, not even if she was his family.

Furthermore, there were guards stationed around the hospital. The security was much stricter than the average hospital.

As expected, Qi Minlan, who went to the camp to look for Shi Peng, ended up like her daughter, Qiu Chenxi, when the latter went to the camp to look for Zhai Sheng. Despite creating a ruckus and screaming like a shrew, she was denied entry and barred from the hospital.

Shi Qing was speechless upon hearing the news.

Why did her auntie not have a different response? She was so predictable that Qiao Nan could tell what her next steps would be. She was such an embarrassment.

Qiao Nan, who had already expected that this would happen, was not the least surprised. “Now is not the time for you to be angry. In my opinion, how about you stay in the camp for a while as the patient’s family or simply transfer back to the school in Mo Du? Don’t stay in Ping Cheng anymore.”

Officer Shi was smart enough to hide in the military hospital such that Qi Minlan could not find him, but Shi Qing was different. She was just a student.

If her auntie came looking for Shi Qing, no matter how she avoided her, she would bump into her sooner or later. That was what happened to her a year ago when her mother came to her school to look for her.

The monk could run away, but the temple would not run with him. Shi Qing had big trouble now.

“Am I afraid of her?” Shi Qing snorted disdainfully. “It’s fine if she wants to stir up trouble. Since she is willing to let everyone in Ping Cheng know that her husband has an affair and doesn’t want her anymore, and she doesn’t find it embarrassing, why should I be scared of her and hide from her? The adults should settle their own problems, yet she comes making trouble for the juniors. Only my auntie will be capable of doing such shameless things.”

Though desperate times called for desperate measures, one could not do such things.

“It’s good that you are mentally prepared.”

“I am mentally prepared, but what about you? Has Brother Zhai gone back to the army this weekend?” Brother Zhai and Qiao Nan should be in a relationship, but their behavior did not seem as if they were in love.

Shi Qing searched through her memories. Indeed, Brother Zhai had been Qiu Chenxi’s ‘fiancé’ for so many years. However, Qiu Chenxi never bragged to her that Brother Zhai brought her out to have fun, gave her gifts, or spent time with her doing something together.

Apart from telling her that Brother Zhai was very outstanding, Qiu Chenxi never seemed to have bragged about their time spent together.

“Qiao Nan, are you unhappy with such a boyfriend?” Usually, things would not look as good up close. When Zhai Sheng was out of her reach, Shi Qing had always felt that Zhai Sheng was perfect in every sense and that it was her greatest regret not to be with him.

Now that they lived in the same city, Shi Qing finally realized that no matter how outstanding Zhai Sheng was, he was just an average man who had his shortcomings as well. Nobody in the world could be perfect.

“No.” Qiao Nan finished doing the test paper and put it aside. “If I tell you that I am busier than Brother Zhai, will you believe me or not?” Brother Zhai’s work might be dangerous, but she was just as busy as Brother Zhai. In fact, she was more occupied with her homework than him.

“Alright...” Shi Qing cast a glance at the stacks of homework that Qiao Nan had finished and the Oxford dictionary that she had already read halfway through. She was lost for words.

At school, they were in different classes. Hence, Shi Qing had no idea what Qiao Nan’s learning attitude at school was.

However, Shi Qing could vouch for Qiao Nan that, on weekends, she studied as hard as she did at school. She would have four classes in the morning and four classes in the afternoon. She would also have three self-study sessions, in the morning, afternoon, and in the evening.

At eight o’clock at night, she would go back to her room and do some reading for two hours.

Once it was ten o’clock, no matter what she was doing or reading, Qiao Nan would stop whatever she was doing and go to bed. She would be fast asleep in a minute’s time.

At about six o’clock the next morning, Qiao Nan would wake up...

At the thought of this, Shi Qing let out a long sigh. Qiao Nan’s daily lifestyle was similar to her lifestyle when she was training in the army, except that Qiao Nan was studying while she was training. The time spent and the efforts put in for both were the same.

The difference was that, there would be instructors around in the army camp. If one was to disobey the orders, they would be meted with double the punishment.

But what Qiao Nan did at home was a conscious effort of hers. There was nobody making sure that she followed her own schedule.

Qiao Nan was so strict with herself that she was like a robot. Shi Qing covered her face in exasperation. It was no wonder that her father wanted her to learn from Qiao Nan. But no matter how she learned from her, she could never be as self-disciplined as Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan was not a human!

In comparison to Qiao Nan, the life she had in Mo Du, especially when she had her summer break, was no different from wasting her life away.

“Qiao Nan, you are inhuman!”

Qiao Nan, who had put her homework aside, was perplexed. What had she done to incur Shi Qing’s wrath? “Why am I inhuman? I didn’t bully you.”

“You are abnormal!” Shi Qing continued with her ranting.

Qiao Nan checked herself thoroughly. “Am I the dragonfly who undergoes incomplete metamorphosis or am I the butterfly that undergoes complete metamorphosis?”

“Complete metamorphosis!!” Shi Qing shouted. “Qiao Nan, you seem like you’re going to break out of your cocoon and become a butterfly, spreading your wings and soaring to great heights.”

Qiao Nan was constantly learning, reading, and taking on extra tasks. She was like a butterfly that was still in its caterpillar form, whereby it underwent the process of spinning itself a silky cocoon, molting into a shiny chrysalis.

This process was very painful and difficult. It was as if confining oneself to a restricted range of activities.

However, given enough time, the rain would stop, and the sun would be out. By then, the ugly caterpillar would break away from its cocoon and become stronger.

[0] The Snail Girl is a traditional Chinese folktale whereby a young farmer chances upon a large river snail and brings it home with him and takes great care of it. It turns out that the river snail can



take the form of a lady. She will come out of her shell to prepare meals for the farmer while he is farming in the fields. It is used to describe someone who is hardworking and kind-hearted and does not ask for returns.

Chapter 623: Jack of All Trades

The caterpillar that was ugly and would always be stepped upon by people would spread its beautiful wings and soar to the sky!

No, Qiao Nan was not a caterpillar. Right now, Qiao Nan should be described as the gold hidden in the sand, its dazzle hidden from others.

When the sand and huge waves were gone, the gold would dazzle brilliantly.

Qiao Nan felt uncomfortable at Shi Qing's gaze. She could not help but look at herself in the mirror. "Do I have wings?"

"Hehehe..." Shi Qing was overcome with emotions for a short moment, but it turned into nothing the next instant. "Qiao Nan, I just found out that you are still a fool. Sure enough, people with high intelligence and emotional intelligence would have times when they are foolish!"

With that, Shi Qing felt much better.

Though Shi Qing was overcome with emotions, Qiao Nan, who was like a fool at times, proved that, like Shi Qing, she was just an ordinary person. In other words, Shi Qing was not too far behind Qiao Nan. They were actually similar to each other.

Shi Qing finally felt at peace.

Since young, Shi Qing had good grades and was a genius as compared to others. It was natural for her to feel somewhat upset when she met her peers who had better grades and was more outstanding than her in every aspect.

Shi Qing had been dealt with a strong blow from the first formidable opponent she had met in her life.

“It’s nine o’clock. It doesn’t matter that you are not going to sleep. I will sleep first.” Shi Qing yawned and lay on her bed. She covered herself with a thin blanket and fell asleep in no time.

Qiao Nan went according to her study plan. She did her reading until ten o’clock before she went to bed.

Qiao Nan stood up from her chair and noticed the mathematics exercise sheet that was placed haphazardly on Shi Qing’s study table.

Qiao Nan took the exercise sheet and looked through it randomly. Among all the test papers that the teachers gave her to practice, Shi Qing did not complete a single test paper. She would pick certain questions or question types to do. For the same type of questions, she would either do one of them or pick a question according to its difficulty level. She would do the difficult questions and leave the easy questions empty.

Shi Qing left many questions empty in her exercise sheets.

But only those who understood mathematics would know that Shi Qing was a clever child. It did not matter that she did not finish all the questions. After all, this was just for practice. It was not a real exam. It was brilliant of Shi Qing to choose the challenging questions to tackle and to spend her time on other more important work.

Qiao Nan sighed after a long while. People like Shi Qing were the real genius. Her winning factor was her intelligence. As for her, she had to rely on her diligence.

Even though Shi Qing was no longer in the same class as her, Qiao Nan could not help but feel tremendous stress when she saw her exercise sheet.

No matter what, she would do her best to complete her high school and cherish the learning opportunity that was rare to come by.

The next day morning, Qiao Nan and Shi Qing both woke up at six o’clock. Nobody had the habit of sleeping late. They got up early in the morning and ran around the community.

“Did both of you buy the breakfast today?” It was already seven o’clock when Qiao Dongliang woke up. By then, the dining table was already filled with soybean milk and deep-fried dough sticks.

“Well, Shi Qing and I went for a run. Dad, have your breakfast before going to work. Don’t be in a hurry. Go slow on the bicycle.” Qiao Nan took a bowl for Qiao Dongliang and poured the salty soybean milk into the bowl.

Qiao Dongliang took in the fragrant smell of the beans and the sight of the white and smooth soybean pudding. He was in a good mood this morning. “Will Shi Qing and you stay at home to study today? You should relax and go out for a walk once in a while. You should not keep staying at home.”

“No, I won’t be studying today. I will have a rest this weekend. I will do some handiwork and relax.” It was rare that Qiao Nan did not have any study plans for the day.

“That’s good. Since it’s the weekend, you should have some fun with Shi Qing.” After drinking the last mouthful of soybean milk, Qiao Dongliang stood up, getting to leave. He took half a stick of deep-fried dough sticks with him. “I woke up slightly late today. There is work to be done in the factory. I have to finish them by today, so I will probably come home late tonight. Nan Nan, Shi Qing and you can decide what you want for dinner. Just leave some for me. I will reheat them when I am back.”

“Okay.” After Qiao Dongliang finished eating, Qiao Nan put away the dishes, washed them, and put them to dry.

After Qiao Dongliang left, Shi Qing stood next to Qiao Nan. “What are you doing today? Why didn’t you mention it previously? Did you change your mind and intend to look for Brother Zhai and go on a date with him?”

“No, I won’t be going out today.” She was not joking with Shi Qing. She really had something on today.

“What do you intend to do?” Qiao Nan had decided not to go out, not to date, and not to study. What did she have in mind? “Qiao Nan, do you want to watch television?”

Qiao Nan knocked on Shi Qing's forehead. "Have you forgotten that Brother Zhai gave me a lot of fabric last time? I received them during the weekend, but I haven't been doing anything with them since then." If left for a long time, the fabric might turn moldy.

"Do you intend to make clothes?"

"Well, haven't you bought me a sewing machine? We can't possibly waste it." Qiao Nan took her hat off to Shi Qing. In fact, she was just joking in the beginning. If it did not work out, she would simply spend some money to borrow a sewing machine from someone else.

Children from rich families were indeed different. At the mention of it, Shi Qing bought the sewing machine straight away. But in this way, it would be easier for Qiao Nan.

"Do you really know how to do it?" Shi Qing had indeed asked Shi Peng to buy her a sewing machine and send it to the Qiao family's residence. However, she did not have high hopes that Qiao Nan would be able to make clothing using the sewing machine.

"Of course." Qiao Nan shot Shi Qing a disdainful look and took out all the fabric that they bought last time.

Qiao Nan shot a few looks at Shi Qing before she used the chalk to mark neat lines on the fabric.

"Do you really know how to do it?" Shi Qing could tell that Qiao Nan was indeed skilled in making clothes and she felt more at ease. "But from what I see, other people will usually measure the shoulder width, the chest, and the waist. Why didn't you do that?"

"There's no need for that." Qiao Nan smiled. In the future, the clothes were manufactured in batches in the factory. Nobody would make fitting clothes that were tailored to someone's build. They would make the clothes according to a general guideline and the clothes came in different sizes, S, M, and L. She had a rough idea of the body build of the person she was making the clothes for. Even though it would not be very fitting, it would not be far off.

After making the markings on the fabric, Qiao Nan cut the fabric into her desired size. Her movements were natural and deft, as if she was a seamstress who had years of experience. She did not have any hesitation at all.

Qiao Nan was fast with her hands. Shi Qing, who sat by the side, was dizzy from the quick movements of her hands. She was completely shaken by her skills. “Qiao Nan, are you the snail girl 1 written in the story?”

## Chapter 624: Love It

Otherwise, why was it that Qiao Nan seemed to know everything?

In the past, apart from Zhai Sheng, Shi Qing had never admired anyone, especially people of the same gender. But after she met Qiao Nan, she was dumbstruck by her hidden skills and intelligence. She was full of admiration for Qiao Nan.

She was perplexed. Qiao Nan only had twenty-four hours a day and her day was packed with study plans. She almost did not have any free time. Why was Qiao Nan so well-versed and skilled in many other areas, whereas she was far behind her?

It was no wonder that Qiao Nan would occasionally tease her for being slightly better than Zhu Baoguo, that she might be athletic but was too simple-minded.

If she was benchmarked against Qiao Nan, she was indeed clueless in many areas.

After cutting the sample, Qiao Nan started to sew the clothing using the sewing machine, stepping on the foot pedal. “If you are interested, I can teach you. In fact, this is not very difficult. As long as you have time, and you want to make your own clothes, it is quite simple.”

“I had better not. Back then, I exhausted myself while trying to catch up to Brother Zhai. If I want to be an all-rounder like you, I will die trying. I will leave the tailoring to you. I am fine with being athletic and clumsy in tailoring.” Actually, Shi Qing had a phobia of pointed things. She would have goosebumps all over her body at the thought of using needles. To her, it was far easier to take injections.

“Alright, I will continue with the sewing. You can feel free to do anything you like.”

“I, I will do the examination papers. The science class has far more examination papers than the humanities class.” Shi Qing took her hat off to Qiao Nan. Since she had nothing to do, and she was, after all, a student, she would do her homework so that her teacher would be pleased with her.

Qiao Nan spent the whole morning using the sewing machine. She finally stopped sewing at around eleven o’clock in the morning.

Initially, Shi Qing had thought that she would be disturbed by the pedaling sounds of the sewing machine, but to her surprise, she was not the least bit distracted. In fact, when she was engrossed in her work, she could not even hear any sound.

“Shi Qing, come over and try it out.”

Qiao Nan’s voice could be heard from outside the room. Shi Qing put down her pen. “You’re done?”

“Well, I have done two sets of clothing. They are for you. You can try them on in the room. If they are fitting, you can wash them yourself and I will iron them. If not, I will alter them for you.”

“Are all of them for me?” Looking at the two sets of new clothes in her hands, Shi Qing was excited and amazed. Since a young age, her parents were the only ones who would buy new clothes for her. Her grandparents would not bother themselves with that. Qiao Nan was the third person in her life to give her new clothes. “Are, are they suitable for me?”

Shi Qing took a hesitant look at the clothes in her hands. They looked different from the clothes sold in the market.

The pattern and designs were very simple.

Among the two pieces of clothing, one was a suit, comprising of a top and bottom, while the other was a dress.

“Try them on and you will know whether they are suitable or not.” Qiao Nan had confidence in the clothes that she made.

“Alright!” Qiao Nan had worked hard to make two pieces of clothing for her. Even if they were not as pretty, she had to wear them.

When Shi Qing came out wearing the suit and checked herself in the mirror, she was surprised at herself. “Good... It looks good on me!!!”

The style of the blouse was simple, but it gave off a brisk and neat feel. It looked cool but there was a soft touch to it. The blouse was styled in a neutral fashion, but the feminine touch was not lost. The design at the waistline accentuated Shi Qing’s slender curves.

The waistline was not tight, but it revealed her slender waist. It looked very good on her.

The pants were of the same style as the blouse. It had a straight-cut design. Shi Qing seemed to have long and slender legs with this particular design, and more importantly, her legs looked very straight and of the perfect proportion!

Shi Qing did not expect that the suit would match her so well and look fabulous on her. It looked so much better than the expensive clothes that she bought at big shopping malls. She was certain that she could not find a second pair of the same style in Ping Cheng, Mo Du, or even the capital.

Otherwise, her maternal grandparents would have bought them and sent them over to her. “Qiao Nan, you are an expert in making clothes. This is so pretty. I love it!”

With that, Shi Qing dashed into her room. Qiao Nan had yet to take another look at the suit to check if she needed to redo or make alterations. “Where are you going?”

“I’m going to try on the dress!” Unlike her slight hesitation just now, Shi Qing could not wait to put on the dress and see how she looked in it.

Shi Qing wore the dress and stood in front of the mirror. She was surprised at herself that she turned speechless.

The dress was simple and without any prints. The skirt was beige in color. Its color was no different from the mourning attire. There was no padding at the shoulders area, and it fell nicely on her shoulders, making Shi Qing’s shoulders seem round and looking petite overall.

The dress was narrower in the waist area, accentuating Shi Qing's small waist.

The chest area was able to highlight Shi Qing's figure. Even though the dress was not custom-made, it was better than custom-made ones!

Over at the left shoulder area, Qiao Nan used lace that was of the same color tone to make a flower. It looked fresh and beautiful as the gardenia that blossomed under the sun.

Shi Qing lowered her head and sniffed. "There's a fragrance?"

The flower was made from lace. How could it smell so nice?

Qiao Nan gestured with her hand and winked at Shi Qing. "Don't you find the fragrance familiar?"

"Liushen... Florida Water? 1

"Bingo!"

"Brilliant!" Shi Qing gave Qiao Nan a thumbs-up. "I'm not going to change out of the dress. It's so beautiful! I have to go out. It's a waste to stay at home in this dress. I will go to the camp and show it to my dad!!" Shi Qing looked like she wanted to show off her treasures to everyone. Now that she had beautiful clothes, she could not wait for everyone to see her in those clothes.

"Don't fool around. Change out of it. You need to wash and iron it. It will definitely look better than how it is now." She just finished the dress and did not have time to iron it. Ironed clothes gave off a smarter vibe. One would definitely look better in ironed clothes.

"No, there's no need to wash it. It already looks very pretty and clean." Shi Qing was unwilling to change out of the dress.

"The weavers might have stepped on the clothes that you are wearing. It's not clean at all. I only asked you to try it on. You have to change out of them. Aren't you afraid of contracting skin disease? Are you foolish?" Qiao Nan shot a disdainful look at Shi Qing. When she was being willful, she was like a child who had to be coaxed.



“Are you lying to me?” Shi Qing looked at her dress. The fabric was white in color. If it had been stepped on by others, it would not have remained white.

## Chapter 625: Test Piece

“Even if nobody stepped on it, do you think the fabric woven with a machine is clean? It is dusty, stained with machine oil, and was handled by many people. Can you imagine the clothes you’re wearing were handled by many people, and they could most likely be men?” Qiao Nan suddenly thought of the tactic that Tang Mengran used on her during the military training and used it to deal with Shi Qing.

As expected, Shi Qing’s expression changed. “Are, are you doing it on purpose?” With that, Shi Qing felt goosebumps on her neck.

“It’s up to you to believe it or not.” Qiao Nan was amused. “Since the clothes are for you, it’s yours. Both of them are yours. They won’t run away. What are you worried about?”

“That’s true.” Shi Qing finally agreed to change out of the clothes after being coaxed by Qiao Nan. She changed into the clothes that she wore previously.

“You are indeed the daughter of a rich family who is clueless about everything. Even if you buy expensive clothes from the market, you will still need to wash them before wearing them. After all, the clothes are manufactured using machine. It will be safer to wear them after a wash. Can you have some common sense?”

“Sure, you can teach me.” Qiao Nan could teach her whatever she did not know or understand.

“Aren’t I teaching you right now?” Qiao Nan was amused. Shi Qing was good at following somebody’s cue.

“Will you make more clothes?” Shi Qing had not expected that Qiao Nan would make clothes by herself and that she would give her not one but two new clothes. It was an unexpected surprise.

“It’s eleven o’clock already. I will stop for now to have lunch.” Qiao Nan patted her stomach. Her back and neck were sore from sitting at the sewing machine for the whole morning. “Wash the rice and vegetables for me. I will cook them later. I will walk around the yard. My bones are too stiff.”

“Sure.” Shi Qing nodded quickly. If she knew how to cook, she would have washed the vegetables and prepared dishes. Qiao Nan had given her two pieces of new clothes today. She had to thank her for what she did. Not to mention a meal, she would be very glad to cook for her for a month.

Qiao Nan went to the yard to walk around while Shi Qing washed the rice and vegetables.

Shi Qing was full of praise for Qiao Nan while she dug into the dishes that she prepared. “Qiao Nan, when I first arrived in Ping Cheng, I felt that you’re the happiest woman in the world to be able to be with Brother Zhai. But now, it seems that it is Brother Zhai’s good fortune to meet you. Why am I not a man? If I were, given your abilities, I would definitely fight for your affection with Brother Zhai.”

Back when Shi Qing just arrived in Ping Cheng, she would always sing Brother Zhai’s praises. Right now, she was full of praise for Qiao Nan. It was a huge change. Qiao Nan found it worthwhile to give her two sets of clothes today.

“Will you continue to make clothes in the afternoon?”

“That’s for sure. There are so many bolts of fabric. I must hurry up and make the clothes lest they turn moldy.” She had decided to spend at most two days to finish making all the clothes.

Thankfully, Qiao Nan was highly-skilled. Otherwise, nobody would be able to make such high-quality clothes in such a short time.

Qiao Nan sat in front of the sewing machine in the afternoon for a consecutive six hours and managed to make four sets of clothes.

She intended to give these four sets of clothes to people from the Zhai family. Hence, she did not wash them. Instead, she ironed them, folded them, and put them aside.

“Qiao Nan, what about yourself? All these are for others?” Shi Qing looked through the clothes that Qiao Nan made and realized that she did not make any clothes for herself.

“Don’t worry. I will save the best for tomorrow. Tomorrow, I will make two sets of clothes for myself.” Qiao Nan flicked her hair. “It’s been ages since I last made clothes using a sewing machine. I was worried that I am not as good as I used to be. But now, I am certain that my skills are still there. There will not be any problem. Tomorrow, I will be able to make the best clothes for myself.”

Shi Qing paused momentarily and yelled, “It turned out that the first batch of clothes you made for me was to test your skills!”

Qiao Nan smiled brightly. “Of course. You couldn’t be thinking that I made yours first because I have a crush on you, right? Young girl, you think too much.”

Shi Qing felt like giving Qiao Nan a punch to her face. “Forget it. A great person is big-hearted and magnanimous. I won’t take issue with you. I will let you off on account of the beautiful clothes that you gave me.”

“I will have to thank you for letting me off.” Qiao Nan yawned. “People become tired when they are full. This problem can’t be changed.”

“Why don’t you take a nap? You haven’t taken a nap today, have you?” Shi Qing asked.

Qiao Nan looked at the clock. “It is only half-past six. My dad is not back yet, so I won’t sleep. What’s more, I haven’t done any reading and revision today. I have to do serious work now.” Qiao Nan took out her books and placed them on the study table. She started to work hard on her revision.

Shi Qing stared at Qiao Nan who was so hard-working. Her father had made the right choice by leaving her at the Qiao family’s residence. She had no reason to be lazy.

Since Qiao Nan did her homework, Shi Qing followed suit as well.

It was around half-past seven when Qiao Dongliang finally came back home.

Qiao Dongliang had said to leave some food for him and that he would reheat them.

However, Qiao Nan put his dinner into the refrigerator, lest they turned bad.

When Qiao Nan heard that Qiao Dongliang was back, she put down her pen and went to reheat his dinner right away. “Dad, you should take a hot bath first. I will heat up the dinner for you. By the time you come out of the bath, the dinner will be ready. It won’t be too hot and you can have them right away.”

“Uncle Qiao, if not, do you want to have a glass of water first?” Shi Qing was unable to sit still as well. Qiao Nan reheated dinner while she poured water for Qiao Dongliang. Both of them worked in harmony.

“Thank you.” Qiao Dongliang, who had worked overtime, felt that all his fatigue had vanished and he felt energized. “I have to trouble both of you. As the elder, I should be the one who takes care of you both.”

“Uncle Qiao, don’t say that. I am the one who is imposing on you. My auntie is married and she stays in Ping Cheng. I have relatives here but I chose to stay with you. It shows that Qiao Nan and you have been very nice to me. I should be embarrassed to impose on you. What’s more, Qiao Nan takes great care of me and gives me a lot of guidance. This is what I should do. Back then in the army camp, Qiao Nan was very good to my dad.”

When her father submitted the resignation letter, he was in a bad mood, and so was she.

She was only concerned that she was unhappy but had forgotten that her father suffered the most.

She knew her father was not in good health, yet she did not take good care of him.

On that day, if not for Qiao Nan bringing the meals for them, both of them would have gone hungry. It was alright for her, but her father who was unwell could not stand the hunger.

Even though it was just a meal, but it was enough for Shi Qing to remember her kindness.

“Good. Qiao Nan and you are well-behaved kids. All of you are very sensible.” Qiao Dongliang was elated. “Then, I will have to trouble both of you. I smell of sweat and smoke. I will bathe and change my clothes lest you can’t stand the smell.”

The high-spirited Qiao Dongliang bathed at his fastest speed. After all, he had once served in the army.

## Chapter 626: Shi Qing and Zhai Hua in a Quarrel

Some habits, once developed, would stay for life.

The house looked plain and simple, and there were only the three of them in the house. However, Qiao Dongliang felt such days were particularly blessed and warm.

Everyone said that daughters were sweet and caring.

Qiao Dongliang, who did not have any sons, would often comfort himself that he had two sweet and caring daughters.

It was until this moment that Qiao Dongliang really understood what it meant to have two caring daughters. It was a brand new feeling. There were no quarrels, only harmony and peace.

When Nan Nan and Shi Qing were together, the atmosphere was very harmonious, but when Zijin was with her, it would be a different situation. Was the problem with Nan Nan or Zijin?

After asking himself this question, Qiao Dongliang looked at himself in the mirror. He could not say anything that was against his heart. The problem was with Zijin. Nan Nan was a well-behaved child.

“Dad, have your dinner. Don’t be in a hurry. I will do my reading now. You can immerse the cutlery into the water basin after your meal. I will wash them tomorrow.”

“Okay, you can go with Shi Qing to do your reading. You don’t have to help around here.” Qiao Dongliang was in a good mood. After his meal, Qiao Dongliang washed the dishes right away. He could not possibly leave them for Qiao Nan to wash tomorrow.

Listening to the two children who were reading and doing their work quietly in the room, Qiao Dongliang felt calm and relaxed. He spent some time watching the evening news before switching

off the television. He stretched himself, feeling tired. “Nan Nan, don’t stay up too late with Shi Qing. Both of you should go to bed early.”

“Oh, okay. We will sleep at nine o’clock today.”

“Okay, I will sleep now.” Qiao Dongliang went to sleep after getting an answer from Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan made good on her words and went to bed at nine o’clock sharp.

Shi Qing and Qiao Nan shared the same room, and her daily routines were the same as the latter’s. Those who did not know might have thought that Shi Qing was Qiao Dongliang’s other daughter, and that she was Qiao Nan’s sister.

During the weekend, Qiao Nan worked to make a dress for herself. When it was about ten o’clock, Qiao Nan made a phone call to the Zhai family. “Hello, Sister Zhai Hua?”

“Nan Nan, you must be calling to look for my blockheaded brother. But unfortunately, he is not at home today.”

“Has he gone back to the army camp?” Brother Zhai did not mention it to her.

“No. Something regarding the previous mission cropped up. Zhai Sheng had to report to the higher-ups personally. He will be back tonight. But today is the weekend. You will need to go to school in the evening. It is such a coincidence.” Zhai Hua snickered. “When he comes back, I will tell him that you’re looking for him.”

“No need.” Qiao Nan waved her hand. She put down her hand after realizing that Zhai Hua could not see her at all. “Sister Zhai Hua, are you free now? Or can you come to my house? I have something to give you.”

“Sure.” Zhai Hua agreed right away. She drove the car and reached the Qiao family’s residence in fifteen minutes’ time. “Nan Nan, I have reached your home. What is it that you want to give me?”

Before Qiao Nan could answer, Shi Qing came out in the dress that she fell in love with yesterday and showed off in front of Zhai Hua. “Sister Zhai Hua, what do you think about my dress?”

Zhai Hua looked carefully at Shi Qing. “Although I don’t really like to wear a dress, this dress looks fine. I would like to wear as well. Where did you buy it from?”

“It’s indeed pretty, right? There’s no way that you can buy it!” Shi Qing was excited that she finally had a chance to show it off to others. “This dress has been ironed. It looks very sophisticated, but in fact, it is very cheap. It’s only about ten yuan. Do you believe it?”

“I don’t believe you.” How could the beautiful dress with such sophisticated style cost ten yuan? Even if she did not like to wear dresses, she could hang them at home and it would be pleasing to the eye. She wanted ten pieces of them!

“Haha, have a sniff.” Shi Qing stood close to Zhai Hua, and Zhai Hua bent down to smell the dress. “There’s a fragrant smell. But it’s Florida Water, not perfume.”

“There’s only Florida Water at Qiao Nan’s house. But look at this flower. It is so realistic. With the Florida Water, don’t you think it looks like a real flower? Don’t you find it difficult to tell the real from the fake?”

Zhai Hua stretched out her hand and touched Shi Qing’s forehead. “You’re not running a fever. Have you been agitated?” The flower was beautiful, but she could tell that it was not real. With her perfect eyesight, she could easily tell fake flowers from real flowers. Shi Qing must be kidding.

“Asking me whether it looks like a real flower is useless. Let’s find a hornets’ nest and have you stand under the nest. We shall see if the hornets will chase after you. If so, it can pass off as a genuine flower.”

“Sister Zhai Hua, I can understand that you are envious and jealous. I won’t take issue with you.” Shi Qing snorted with a look of indifference.

When Shi Qing was in the army, she would always run into Zhai Hua and they would go for training together. They were on close terms with each other.

After Shi Qing started to like Zhai Sheng, she would learn about his updates through Zhai Hua. Hence, they were close and could chat easily like friends.

“The little girl must be asking for punches.” Zhai Hua narrowed her eyes. Shi Qing knew her temper very well. Such a young girl like her was not likable.

“Don’t be upset. There are some for you.” After showing off her dress, Shi Qing stood aside. “Today, Qiao Nan said that she has something to give you, so she asked you to come here. What’s the hurry? You will definitely have a share of the good stuff.”

There was a flicker in Zhai Hua’s eyes. She tried to probe to get an answer. “I suppose the dress isn’t cheap? Is it that the Qiao family doesn’t have that much money?” She would not assume the worst of others but she had to protect her family’s interests as well.

“Gauging the heart of a gentleman with one’s own mean measure.” Shi Qing immediately understood what Zhai Hua meant. “Not only is Qiao Nan giving you clothes, but she has also made new clothes for your family of four. These clothes do not cost much, but they are not cheap either. The gift in itself may be insignificant, but the goodwill is deep. You know very well what happened half a month ago when your mom had a quarrel with Zhai Sheng and she came complaining to Qiao Nan. The unlucky person is Qiao Nan! Afterward, Auntie Miao asked Brother Zhai to bring Qiao Nan to buy new clothes. Back then, you deliberately declined helping your mom and gave the task to Brother Zhai. Qiao Nan didn’t buy any clothes at all. Instead, she bought a lot of fabric back. She made the dress that I am wearing as well as the clothes that she intends to give to your family!”

Shi Qing was slightly annoyed and somewhat disappointed. “Sister Zhai Hua, don’t bring the bad habits in your field to the Qiao family’s residence. You are too contradictory. I thought you agreed to their relationship and wanted to help Qiao Nan and Brother Zhai. But looking at your attitude today, it doesn’t seem like it. Qiao Nan is a good girl. Let me tell you. In the past, I felt that Qiao Nan must have done a lot of good deeds in her previous lives to be so blessed in this life that she is able to be with Brother Zhai. Now, I don’t think so at all. Sister Zhai Hua, do you know who is the one who is blessed with good fortune?”

Chapter 627: Brother Zhai, the Lucky Man

Zhai Hua looked at Shi Qing with a ridiculous look. “Don’t tell me it’s Zhai Sheng?”

“Of course it’s Brother Zhai!” Shi Qing was displeased. “You may not believe it, but let me analyze it for you. If your family did not meet Qiao Nan, would Auntie Miao be able to sort out her thoughts? Though Auntie Miao hates my auntie and Qiu Chenxi, she would force Brother Zhai to marry Qiu Chenxi for the sake of Chief Zhai. By then, your family would have to suffer. If Brother Zhai did not meet Qiao Nan, even though it’s against his wishes, he would certainly go according to



Chief Zhai and Auntie Miao's arrangement and marry Qiu Chenxi. Let's not talk about whether other people in the Zhai family would be happy or not. Do you think Brother Zhai would be happy after marrying Qiu Chenxi?"

But all these had changed because of the appearance of Qiao Nan.

Auntie Miao had sorted out her thoughts and stopped having any contact with Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan whom she hated. She no longer wished for Brother Zhai to marry Qiu Chenxi.

"When all of you finally got to know Qiao Nan, Brother Zhai has long since fallen in love with her, and eventually, Auntie Miao was willing to voice her opinions and no longer suffers in silence. Brother Zhai has found someone he loves and knows what it is like to be in love and what he is striving for. Anyway, you can tell for yourself the difference in your family before and after getting to know Qiao Nan. Has the Zhai family been faring better or worse? Who is the person who has the good fortune? Whose family is blessed with luck?"

Zhai Hua grew silent.

As part of the Zhai family, she knew very well of the changes in her family. She did not need Shi Qing to remind her. She could not deny that what she said was the truth.

The only thing she did not expect was that Shi Qing, that young girl, used to like Zhai Sheng, but right now, instead of going against Qiao Nan, she was siding with her love rival.

Was Qiao Nan so smart that she was able to manipulate Shi Qing? Or was it true that Qiao Nan had won Shi Qing over with her good personality?

"Young girl, have you forgotten that when you were being punished in the army by your father, who was the person who accompanied you and helped you become who you are today? Who is Qiao Nan to you? Is there a need to yell at me, as if you are protecting your daughter, just because of her? Are you closer to me or to her?" Zhai Hua slapped Shi Qing's shoulder, feeling displeased.

She practically watched the young girl grow up. How could she favor an outsider instead of someone on her side and lecture her on top of that?

"In the past, I was closer to you, but right now, I am closer to Qiao Nan. You are unreasonable and impersonal. You don't admit that you have received a benefit." Shi Qing went on to list Zhai Hua's

shortcomings. “From the elderly’s point of view, Qiao Nan can bring fortune to her husband and the Zhai family. Auntie Miao insisted on buying clothes for Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan did not want to waste the Zhai family’s money, and she didn’t want the Zhai family to feel that she is greedy. Hence, she bought fabric instead of new clothes. After buying the fabric, she made the clothes herself. The bolts of fabric were for her, but she had all of you in mind. She made new clothes for all of you and has yet to make any for herself. You do not appreciate her effort and suspect that Qiao Nan took money from Brother Zhai and the Zhai family to please the Zhai family. You’re way too much!”

Zhai Hua pursed her lips. This young girl must be very happy at lecturing her?

She must show her who was in charge!

After listening to the conversation for a while, Qiao Nan pursed her mouth and her attitude was not as enthusiastic as before. Her tone turned cold. “Sister Zhai Hua, I made the four pieces of clothes by myself. They did not cost much. The fabric was given by Brother Zhai. However, with the Zhai family’s position and status, I suppose they are too casual and you may not have the occasion to wear them. Just forget that I call you over today. Take it that you are here to visit Shi Qing.”

Qiao Nan knew that Zhai Hua might act friendly to others, but in fact, she was only being sociable. When Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi stood at the doorway of the Zhai family’s residence and maligned her for stealing from them, she had already sensed that.

Back then, she had thought that she had the wrong impression and that she had been thinking too much. After all, Zhai Hua had been very supportive of her relationship with Zhai Sheng and never objected to it. Hence, Qiao Nan had forgotten about that incident.

However, the conversation between Shi Qing and Zhai Hua had reminded Qiao Nan of the unpleasant memories.

She did not have the wrong impression. In fact, Sister Zhai Hua did not like her. She had been wary of her and was trying to sound her out.

She might seem to be supportive of her, but she was guarding against her.

The one thing that she had learned from Ding Jiayi was never to be friendly to someone who gave you the cold shoulder.

Even though the party concerned was Zhai Hua, Qiao Nan still adopted the same attitude.

“That’s right. We should not waste the clothes on people who don’t find it suitable. As soldiers, we don’t waste resources. Sister Zhai Hua, you should go back home. We will give the clothes to other people.” The Zhai family might not appreciate the clothes, but the Shi family loved them. There was no point in putting the clothes to waste.

Shi Qing and the people from the Shi family had more than enough clothes. However, Shi Qing could not stand Zhai Hua’s attitude and hence she helped Qiao Nan spite Zhai Hua.

“This young girl...” Zhai Hua felt funny and annoyed. While she was lecturing Shi Qing, she grabbed the clothes from Qiao Nan. “If my mom and Zhai Sheng know that you have made clothes for all of us but I don’t bring them back, I will be in trouble. It is up to us to decide if we have the occasion to wear them. Thank you in advance.” With that, Zhai Hua left the house at the fastest speed. She carried the clothes to her car and drove off.

“This person is really...” Shi Qing looked at the visible exhaust trail left by Zhai Hua’s car. Shi Qing was angry at Zhai Hua who left in a hurry with the clothes after saying such mean words. “Qiao Nan, don’t take Sister Zhai Hua’s words to heart. She doesn’t understand you. She is mistaken about you.”

“It’s okay.” Qiao Nan let out a long sigh. “Perhaps Auntie Miao’s concerns are well-founded. I am not suited for Brother Zhai. In the eyes of others, Brother Zhai is totally out of my reach and I don’t have any true feelings for Brother Zhai. Actually, the Zhai family has indeed paid for the fabric.”

Thinking of the scene just now, Qiao Nan could not help but feel humiliated.

She told herself that, if she had to prepare gifts for others in the future, she would have to pay for them herself. Making a gift for people with something that was given to her would only invite troubles for herself.

If she had been able to pay for the fabrics by herself, perhaps Zhai Hua would not have judged her in that way.

“You mustn’t think that way. If you do, that proves you have been affected by Sister Zhai Hua.” Shi Qing did not know how to comfort others. She felt uneasy at Qiao Nan’s discouraging words.

“Alright, don’t worry. I am not so vulnerable, and I will not back down easily.”

## Chapter 628: Zhai Hua Felt Guilty

“I have always been aware of the gap between myself and Brother Zhai. The reason why I study so hard is to change my destiny through education and to shorten the gap between Brother Zhai and me. No matter whether I will end up with Brother Zhai, I feel that this is what I can do at least and I will succeed in the end.” Qiao Nan calmed down and smiled. It did not matter that she was looked down upon by others. It was fine as long as she did not look down on herself, and that she believed in herself.

“Yes, don’t worry about how others think. You must insist on being yourself.” Hours ago, Shi Qing had felt that Qiao Nan was a stick in the mud, wondering why she must be so rigid in her studies. She could have taken it easy, yet she insisted on forcing herself to go according to a fixed schedule. There was no need for her to do that.

But after seeing the situation today, Shi Qing finally understood.

Qiao Nan was not her. Qiao Nan could not afford to lose. In order to secure a good future, she had to win and work extra hard. She could not slack off. “Qiao Nan, since you have already made yourself a set of clothes, let’s go in and do our reading. You don’t have to be in a hurry to make some clothes for yourself. As for those that you have completed, forget it, I don’t want to mention it.”

Qiao Nan worked so hard for the whole morning, and the clothes were taken away by Sister Zhai Hua. Shi Qing felt that Sister Zhai Hua did not deserve them.

If she knew that Zhai Hua would behave in such a manner, she would rather go against her conscience and take the clothes for herself, than letting the Zhai family gain from it.

Initially, she had thought that, in the Zhai family, there was only Auntie Miao who had a strange temper and would complain to Qiao Nan after she tried to snatch her boyfriend.

It turned out that Sister Zhai Hua had the same temper as Auntie Miao. She would behave as if she was supportive of Brother Zhai and Qiao Nan, but at times, she would say hurtful words when people least expected it.

Qiao Nan could tell that Shi Qing had her best interests. Gone was her defensive manner that she adopted toward Zhai Hua. She turned to smile softly at Shi Qing.

In fact, she was lucky. Even though Sister Zhai Hua was not what she expected, Shi Qing was indeed a good friend.

Over at the Zhai family, Miao Jing noticed that Zhai Hua had come back home carrying something in her hands. “Where have you been? Clothes? Don’t you dislike buying clothes? All the clothes in your wardrobe were bought by the helper.”

Miao Jing was curious. It was rare that her daughter would go out to buy clothes for herself. “Do you have a boyfriend?” If not, why would Hua Hua buy clothes for herself?

Zhai Hua almost slipped at Miao Jing’s question. “Mom, don’t kid around. I, I don’t have a boyfriend. I didn’t buy these clothes. Qiao Nan gave them to us. Half a month ago, you asked Zhai Sheng to bring Qiao Nan to buy clothes. She is very sensible. She bought some fabric and said that she prefers to make the clothes by herself. She has made four new clothes for us. Do you want to take a look?”

Originally, Zhai Hua did not have a high expectation of the clothes that Qiao Nan made.

However, after she saw how Shi Qing looked in the dress that Qiao Nan made, she was interested to look at the clothes that Qiao Nan made for them.

The clothes were packed separately. Zhai Hua did not look at the pattern but picked out the clothes that were meant for her based on the color and her intuition.

It was a light blue dress. The cut of the dress was similar to Shi Qing’s dress. It was simple and neat, without those floral patterns that Zhai Hua disliked.

The dress was without any other patterns and prints. It was cut and sewed neatly. Although the design was simple, Zhai Hua found it pleasing to the eye. The more she looked at it, the more she loved it.

“This dress, hmm... is very special.” As a woman who liked to dress up, Miao Jing had better taste than Zhai Hua. “Is this really made by Nan Nan?” It was so beautiful. “It may not have any patterns and prints, but the tailoring is very exquisite. It is better than the clothes I bought outside and those that I custom-made. This is a first. I have never seen such tailoring before.”

“Mom, you haven’t seen it before?” She had thought that as she would always stay in the army, the helper did not buy her the clothes that were in vogue.

“I haven’t seen it before. Where’s mine? Let me take a look.” This time, Miao Jing’s interest was piqued. Clothes were irresistible to women.

Like Zhai Hua, Miao Jing picked the clothes that were meant for her based on the color.

Miao Jing’s clothes was dark purple in color. However, due to the material of the fabric itself, it had a pearly luster to it.

Miao Jing tried on her clothes immediately. It gave her a sophisticated, yet low profile look. Her clothes was an improvised version of the cheongsam, comprising a top and bottom. It combined the classical Chinese style with a simple and modern style.

Miao Jing had never seen or wore such clothes that could harmoniously blend the Chinese ancient style with the modern style. But she was delighted.

“Nan Nan has skillful hands. The clothes she made are amazing. They are as good as those made by the tailors. If she uses good quality fabric, it will be unbelievable.” Miao Jing, who had a lot of clothes, could tell at one glance that the clothes made by Qiao Nan were brilliant. Furthermore, these clothes were handmade by Qiao Nan. Hence, they were unique and one of its kind. They could not be found on the market.

That alone was enough to make up for the fabric that was of lower quality.

Besides, the fabric that Zhai Sheng brought Qiao Nan to choose from was of a certain quality. Although they were not the best, they were not far off.

Miao Jing was so thrilled at the clothes that she tried them on right away.

Miao Jing might have given birth to two kids, but she had maintained her figure and was in top condition.

The set of clothes also accentuated her figure.

Miao Jing had beautiful calves. The skirt came to rest at her knee, revealing Miao Jing's slim calves while covering her relatively thicker thighs. The skirt made Miao Jing seem to have longer legs.

Seeing that Miao Jing had tried on the clothes, Zhai Hua did not pretend to be reserved. Since Qiao Nan was not at their house, she decided to try on the dress that Qiao Nan gave her.

Zhai Hua rarely wore such feminine and soft dress, but the hemline of the dress was smooth and cascading. It would sway and lift slightly at any tiniest movement. It was like dancing butterflies. One could not help but want to move about.

This was very suitable for Zhai Hua who could not quiet down for a minute but was still conscious of looking beautiful.

It proved that Qiao Nan put in a lot of effort when she was making the clothes for the Zhai family and for Zhai Hua. She had designed them while taking into account the personality and strengths of each and everyone in the Zhai family.

#### Chapter 629: Made Her Look Like a Heartless Person

Zhai Hua was very pleased with the dress and knew that Qiao Nan had put in a lot of effort into the dress. But this also made her attitude and what she said at the Qiao family's residence to be ungrateful.

Even though this might be harsh, but she was definitely being heartless.

Staring at herself who looked different in the dress, Zhai Hua had conflicting emotions.

If she wore such a beautiful dress from Qiao Nan, it would seem that she owed her. She was open and above board. She would never owe others anything. What should she do now?

Zhai Hua felt even more upset at the thought of Shi Qing's accusations. She had practically watched her as she grew up. She cared about her as much as she did her brother, Zhai Sheng. However, she was so ungrateful. She had spent so much time with her, but after staying at the Qiao family's residence for a short period of time, she grew to like Qiao Nan and side with her.

If Shi Qing had not sided with Qiao Nan and spoken up for her, she would not have felt so guilt-stricken.

Qiao Nan made the clothes for the Zhai family before making clothes for herself. It could be seen as trying to please the Zhai family, but it also proved that she had the Zhai family in mind.

Qiao Nan made use of her skills to prepare presents that were suitable for the Zhai family instead of accepting the gift from the Zhai family. In fact, Zhai Hua understood her kind intentions.

It was inappropriate to say that Qiao Nan was trying to win favor or influence them using somebody else's property. The fabric was not worth much. Instead, the design and handiwork would cost about half of the price of the fabric that Qiao Nan bought.

For people who appreciated style and tailoring skills, the clothes that she and her mother wore were worth a significant amount of money. Qiao Nan would be able to earn a lot from selling them.

Since Qiao Nan made those clothes, she must have known their worth.

In any case, Qiao Nan did not sell them and gifted her hard work to Zhai Hua.

Oh, this ended up in a mess...

Shi Qing was to be blamed for shooting her mouth off. If she had not pointed it out, even if Qiao Nan knew what was on her mind, she would have pretended to be clueless. But now that Shi Qing had pointed it out, Qiao Nan could not pretend not to know.

Qiao Nan would marry Zhai Sheng eventually and become one family with them. It seemed that she did not teach Shi Qing well. She did not let her know that she should not meddle in other people's family affairs.



“What’s on your mind? You are staring into the mirror. Are you so fond of the dress that Nan Nan gave you?” Miao Jing, who was clueless, teased Zhai Hua. Zhai Hua had never stared at her new clothes in such a manner before.

“Miss Zhai Hua looks so beautiful.” The helper praised Zhai Hua from the bottom of her heart. “This dress may look ordinary, but it gives a special feeling. It is so much better than the clothes that we bought at the market. The young lady has good tailoring skills. She will make a good wife in the future.”

As the helper of the Zhai family, she knew who Qiao Nan was.

Although the young lady named Qiao Nan rarely came to Zhai family’s residence, the four owners of the Zhai family had a very good impression of her. Apart from Chief Zhai, Madam Zhai and the children liked Qiao Nan very much.

Therefore, the helper would not be so foolish as to say anything bad about Qiao Nan in front of Miao Jing and Zhai Hua. Besides, she really felt the clothes were much more beautiful than those that were sold on the market.

“Are they beautiful?” Miao Jing turned to check out the back of the suit in the mirror. She was very pleased with the clothes. “Auntie, I will change out of them later. Please help me wash and iron it. I will wear it tomorrow.”

“Me too!” Zhai Hua interjected.

“Sure.” After they changed out of the clothes, the helper washed and ironed the clothes before putting them into their wardrobes. The pretty dresses hanging in the wardrobe looked fabulous after being cleaned and ironed.

“What’s up with you?” Miao Jing noticed that Zhai Hua seemed to be distracted after she changed out of the dress and was concerned about her.

“N-nothing.” Zhai Hua did not dare to tell Miao Jing what happened when she went to take the clothes.

She would not be able to answer to her mother if Qiao Nan changed her attitude toward the Zhai family. What should she do when Zhai Sheng was back?

Should she end her leave in advance and go back to the army to take part in the training?

That was a good idea. She would do just that!

“Mom, I have had enough rest. I will go back to the army ahead of time. There are so many other comrades in the army who seldom go back home. Their total amount of time spent at home in one year is shorter than the time I spend at home this time. We should not allow ourselves to enjoy such privilege just because we hold higher positions in the army. I decide to share joys and sorrows with my comrades. I will return to the army.”

Zhai Hua knew that it was about time for Zhai Sheng to come back home, so she decided to flee before he came back.

If Zhai Sheng came back and discovered what was going on, it would be too late for her to escape.

She wanted to break down and cry. Qiao Nan was the outsider, while she was their family, yet she had to hide from her brother because of an outsider. Even if her brother would marry Qiao Nan eventually, he should not side with her before they married and be annoyed with his sister.

Though they were family, her brother was all ready to take it out on her for the sake of Qiao Nan. In that case, Zhai Hua could not go home and had to hide in the army for the time being.

Her brother was so heartless to side with the young lady.

The two of them grew up together. She was her elder sister, yet her younger brother had never showered her with such concern.

“Why are you going back this early? You have a few days of leave. Why don’t you stay at home for a few more days? You haven’t been home for ages. Your brother came home more frequently than you.” Miao Jing could not bear for Zhai Hua to leave. Ever since the last recent talk with her children, she no longer felt awkward with them, especially Zhai Hua.

Her daughter was able to understand her difficulties and was willing to chat with her, but she still refused to go shopping with her.

She wanted to build a good relationship with her daughter, but her daughter was like a wild lad who only had the army in mind. She could not bear to part with her.

“Mom, you are the wife of the chief of the army, and you are the mother of Zhai Sheng and me. It seems that you have to keep up with the times.” Zhai Hua slapped on Miao Jing’s shoulder, having no regards for her elder. But Miao Jing did not take issue with her.

“Fine, in our family, the three of you are able to keep up with the times, except for me. The three of you are soldiers, but I’m not. Why do I need to keep up with the times?” Miao Jing felt funny and annoyed. She would always use this excuse to evade the issue.

“But you are a family member of the cadres in the army,” Zhai Hua said with a smile. “Mom, you must be worthy of your status as a family member of the cadres.”

“Just go. Since you are willing to go to the army, there’s nothing I could say. The three of you take the army as your home. Your dad, Zhai Sheng, and you are the same. All of you don’t have time for me. But it doesn’t matter. Nan Nan will accompany me. If Nan Nan did not need to study now, I wouldn’t care if all of you are back at home or not,” Miao Jing said grumpily.

#### Chapter 630: Scolded the Wrong Person

Looking at her uncaring daughter and the beautiful clothes that Qiao Nan gave her, Miao Jing felt that, in comparison, Qiao Nan was much better and closer to her than her daughter.

Zhai Hua felt guilty at the mention of Qiao Nan’s name. “Mom, as you have said, Qiao Nan is still a student. Her priority should be on her studies. She doesn’t have the time to entertain you every day. Her studies are more important. Alright, I will go back to the army camp.”

If she delayed any further, Zhai Sheng would be back.

If her mother saw Qiao Nan, what she had done today would be discovered.

“The army has not called to say that you need to hurry back to the camp, so what’s the hurry? Hua Hua, you’re indeed...” Miao Jing did not know whether she should laugh or cry. Had she given birth to a son and a daughter or two sons?

The national policies had stated that a household could only have a maximum of two children. Moreover, they were party members. They most probably could only have one child.

She was able to have a son and a daughter. She supposed that her son and daughter would not be able to have more than one child.

Zhai Hua was smart. She had left the Zhai family's residence for ten minutes before Zhai Sheng came back home.

Upon reaching home and not seeing Hua Hua around, Zhai Sheng felt strange. "Where is Hua Hua? Is she still sleeping?" She was a soldier, but she was like a lazy bum when she was back at home. She did not behave like a soldier at all.

"Sleep? She has rushed back to the camp." Miao Jing still felt gloomy that Zhai Hua had left in a hurry. "We have not received any phone call from the army, yet she insisted on canceling her leave and went back. She seemed strange when she left."

"The camp didn't call to look for Hua Hua, yet she canceled her leave and went back?" Zhai Sheng suspected that something was going on. "What has she done today?"

Since they grew up together, Zhai Sheng knew that Zhai Hua would only flee in such a hurry when she had done something wrong.

Ever since they grew up, Zhai Hua rarely behaved in that way, so Zhai Sheng suspected that Zhai Hua must have done something wrong to behave like how she was in the past.

"No, she should be happy that she has received a gift." Miao Jing was perplexed as she could tell that Zhai Sheng was asking whether Zhai Hua had done anything wrong.

"Received a gift? Where is the gift?" Zhai Sheng changed out of his pair of shoes and sat down. "You should know the custom in our family. Zhai Hua could not have made such a mistake."

"It is different." Miao Jing relaxed and smiled. "She didn't do anything wrong. The gift was from Nan Nan, and she personally made it herself. She gave new clothes to all of us. Hua Hua's clothes and mine have been washed. Your dad and you were not around then. The clothes are over there. Do

you want to take a look? Nan Nan's tailoring skills are indeed good. The style is much better than the clothes I bought outside. I have never seen such styles before."

"Nan Nan gave us clothes?" Zhai Sheng picked the clothes that had a less mature color and took a closer look. "It's made from the fabric that I gave her last time." Back then, he had felt strange because the fabric Nan Nan chose were in a neutral fashion, and some of them were in a masculine fashion.

He had thought that Qiao Nan wanted to make clothes for Qiao Dongliang. Even though he felt jealous, he did not wish for Qiao Nan to tire herself out from making too many clothes.

He did not expect that she would make clothes for him as well.

"Mom, you said that Zhai Hua received the clothes from Nan Nan?"

"Yes, she went to get them personally." Miao Jing did not know what had happened and told Zhai Sheng everything she knew.

"Mom, let me make a phone call to thank Nan Nan."

"You're right. I am too happy that I have forgotten about it. You must thank Nan Nan on my behalf. Hua Hua and I love the clothes that she gave us. I am not sure whether your dad and you will like them though."

"Alright, I understand." Zhai Sheng brought his clothes back to his room. He waited until Miao Jing had left before making a phone call to the Qiao family's residence.

Shi Qing, instead of Qiao Nan, picked up Zhai Sheng's phone call.

Shi Qing saw that the phone call was from the Zhai family. She picked up the phone and hung up without another word.

Zhai Sheng had yet to say 'Hello' before he heard the dial tone on the other side of the phone.

Zhai Sheng knitted his brows and made another call.

“Sister Zhai Hua, don’t be too much. Qiao Nan is still in a bad mood. You should know your limits.” Shi Qing was annoyed that the phone kept ringing. She lashed out unhappily.

“Nan Nan is in a bad mood? What was the reason?” Zhai Sheng said coldly, his expression darkened.

“B-brother Zhai?” Shi Qing was so shocked upon hearing Zhai Sheng’s voice that she almost fell out of her chair. “I, I’m sorry. I thought it’s Sister Zhai Hua. Brother Zhai, is anything the matter? I will get Qiao Nan on the phone.”

“No need. Tell me why Nan Nan is in a bad mood. What does it have to do with Zhai Hua?” It turned out that Zhai Hua had gotten into trouble, and she had angered Nan Nan.

“Well...” Shi Qing seemed to be in a difficult position. “Brother Zhai, I’d better get Qiao Nan on the phone.”

She was just an outsider. It was inconvenient for her to tell Brother Zhai what happened just now.

“Qiao Nan, Brother Zhai is on the phone. Both of you can have a talk. I, I will do my homework. Also, it’s almost time. We need to go to school at four o’clock.” Shi Qing reminded Qiao Nan before going back to her room.

Qiao Nan took a deep breath and prepared herself. “Hello, Brother Zhai?”

“Did Zhai Hua anger you?”

“It’s not a big deal. You don’t have to worry,” Qiao Nan said softly, advising him not to be rash.

Since Qiao Nan was not willing to tell him, Zhai Sheng could not bear to force her either. “I have the clothes that you gave us. The style is good. When I’m not wearing the military uniform, I will wear them. I like it. Thank you. I am thanking you on behalf of my mom as well. My mom said that she and Zhai Hua love the clothes that you gave them. As for my dad, he is not back yet.”

Qiao Nan gave a faint reply. “It’s good that they like it.”

Initially, Qiao Nan should be happy that the presents she prepared were well-received and appreciated. However, she did not feel happy at all.

Zhai Sheng could tell that Qiao Nan sounded weird. “Nan Nan, I have to go back to the army camp tomorrow. I have wrapped up the previous mission, so I can no longer stay in Ping Cheng.”

“Oh, then you must pay more attention to your health back at the army. If... if you have any missions, don’t be afraid that I will be worried. Just let me know.” It was better for her to know in advance than learn of it only when Brother Zhai was injured.

There was gentleness in Zhai Sheng’s eyes, warmth and tenderness steeping in his voice. “Sure. There will be happenings at the Qiu family in the near future. You must be careful when you are at school. Don’t get yourself involved.”

“Alright, I understand. Shi Qing will accompany me when we go to school. It should not be a big problem.”