

## **RTAMM 681**

### Chapter 681: Queasy

Nobody would have expected that in a school where batches of students enrolled in and graduated from, there would be a day when the school's success and achievements were because of one single student. It was too bizarre!

Oh, man!

Qiao Nan was unable to comprehend the anger and anguish that Principal Wei felt. Because of Principal Meng's phone call, Qiao Nan and Shi Qing went to school early the next morning.

When Qiao Nan and Shi Qing reached the school, it was bustling with activities. Today was the day the third-year students would receive their results, and their parents were concerned about which university they should apply to. All of them wanted to know the cut-off points for all the universities and ask their teachers which university was suitable for them.

Of course, it was up to the students and their parents to write down their choices and make their own decisions.

Qiao Nan ran into third-year students as soon as she entered the school. Qiao Nan might not know him but the student knew it was Qiao Nan at one glance. "Hello, Qiao Nan, thank you for your help in the college entrance examination."

He was very grateful to Qiao Nan. He was able to get a score that was beyond his imagination and he was able to choose his favorite school. All this was thanks to Qiao Nan.

The parents of the student looked at his son, feeling baffled. "This is...?"

"Dad, this is the student that I told you about yesterday." The male student smiled embarrassedly. His parents were just as surprised at his good results.

His parents asked for details and he told them that a week before the exams, a second-year female student helped them spot questions and she was quite accurate. The most important thing was that

he was from the science class. One of the questions during the exam was exactly the same type as the one that the female student spotted for them!

That question alone had helped him score several points and he had more time to check through the difficult sums.

With the extra time, he checked through his answers and spotted a lot of calculation errors. If he did not spot these mistakes, he would not be able to go to his ideal university.

“Oh, I see.” The parents had an impression of the student that their son mentioned before. “Young lady, thank you. You are very capable.”

“That... It was the school’s arrangements.” Qiao Nan was taken aback by the enthusiasm of the parents. “Well, let’s go to school now.”

“Yes, let’s go to school.”

As soon as the parents waved them off, Qiao Nan brought Shi Qing to the principal’s office.

In late July, the classrooms of the third-year students were the only places that were opened in the school. Qiao Nan was a second-year student. She had no other place to go except for Principal Meng’s office.

After Qiao Nan left, the parents of the student asked, “Is that young lady a second-year student? Why is she so capable that she could spot questions for you?”

Thankfully, the parents of the third-year students only learned of it after the college entrance examination was over and their children felt that they did well in the exams. Otherwise, they would have taken issue with the notion that the school had ridiculously allowed a second-year student to spot questions for third-year students. Was it not a waste of time?

“She is indeed capable.” The student had a look of admiration on his face. “Do you know what we call her in our school?”

“What?”

“Her surname is Qiao. Apart from the third-year students, the first- and second-year students address her as ‘Teacher Xiao Qiao’ whenever they see her. The second-year students usually ask for her help when they encounter difficult problems, while the first-year students ask for her study notes. As for the third-year students, you already know about it.” She helped them spot questions. “Before she spotted the questions for us, the school arranged for her to sit for a third-year equivalent exam with us. We either sat for the humanities exam or the science exam. She sat for both exams and ranked in the top five in the level.”

The male student had goosebumps all over his body at the thought of Qiao Nan’s abnormal performance.

They felt ashamed that a second-year student was better than the third-year students.

“That young lady is so intelligent?” The parents finally realized that Qiao Nan was indeed smart. Her son and Qiao Nan had taken the same exam paper. Her son sat for one paper, while Qiao Nan sat for two papers. In the end, her results were better than her son’s. They could not help but doubt that their son must have wasted his time in school. He was in his third year while Qiao Nan was only in her second year, yet she had better results than him.

“That was why the principal wanted her to spot questions for us in the last seven days. He could not put our college entrance examination at risk.” Initially, he thought that the principal had made a mistake.

“Young brat, aren’t you embarrassed? The young lady from the second year spotted the questions for all the third-year students. What were you doing in the extra one year that you had in school?” The parents had mixed feelings toward their son. On one hand, their son was the best as he did very well in the college entrance examination and was able to get into a first-tier university.

On the other hand, he might be clever, but he was not as good as that young lady.

It was beyond one’s imagination that a second-year student would spot the exam questions for the third-year students.

“There’s nothing to be embarrassed about.” The boy touched his head. “Do you know that Classmate Qiao is the provincial top student in the middle school examination? Everyone at school has been saying that she may likely be the first top student from our school one year from now.”

He was already very thankful that he was able to go to a first-tier university. She was the top student in the middle school examination. There was no way that he could be compared to her.

“The top student in the college entrance examination? She hasn’t been in her third year and she is already this capable?” The parents were taken aback by Qiao Nan’s performance. “Hey, what did she have when she grew up? She is too smart.” She was only in her second year, yet all the teachers predicted that she would likely be the top student in the college entrance examination next year.

“My son, you have to answer me honestly. Has she been of any help by spotting the exam questions?”

“Of course.” The student lowered his tone. “She has spotted several of the difficult questions in the exams. Students from other schools had to take some time to think about the questions. For us, as long as we studied hard at school and listened to her class, we could do the questions right away. I suppose it is because of her that our school has good results in the college entrance examination.”

Until now, the male classmates still felt very surreal. He had not expected that he would be so lucky and that Qiao Nan would spot several questions accurately, especially those that were time-consuming.

His parents were left speechless with wonder. “Did this family have any other way of knowing the exam questions?”

“Dad, don’t tease me. There are so many students in our school, and of course, there are a lot of parents. I don’t know about other people, but I know the young lady’s mother and sister very well.” The student told his father about the past deeds of Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi.

## Chapter 682 What a Capable Young Lady

“Given such a situation, tell me, what kind of strings could she pull? Furthermore, is it possible for college entrance examination questions to leak out? If the questions do leak out, even a senior-ranking official will be badly punished for being involved.”

This would be a matter of political unrest in the education sector.

“You’re just a child. Don’t spout nonsense.” The parent shook his head. True enough, no one was perfect in this world. With such a mother and sister, this young lady could forget about having a proper life if she was not determined to succeed.

“Principal.”

“Qiao Nan is here. Come, come, come. Quickly come in.” Upon hearing Qiao Nan’s voice, Principal Meng quickly let Qiao Nan in.

After Qiao Nan entered the principal’s office, she discovered that a gray-haired elderly couple was also present.

Qiao Nan gave a quick and gentle bow to the two of them. The elderly couple responded with a friendly smile. “Principal, you asked me to come here today. Is there any matter?”

“No matter what, you’ve assisted our students who took this year’s college entrance examination in their revision for seven days. Take a look at the estimated college admission rate of our school. After all, you’re someone who contributed to this.” Principal Meng laughed as he passed Qiao Nan a list for her to read.

Qiao Nan took the list. She was quite surprised when she read it. At this time, such an admission rate was truly considered high. Even in the future, it would also be considered competitive. “Have the admission scores for all the colleges in the nation also been announced?”

“Yes, the situation is as such.”

“Okay.”

“Qiao Nan, this time, I sincerely thank you very much on behalf of the school and students. I’ve heard from the students. You are able to spot questions very well and have been of great help to them in the examinations this time around.”

At the sight of Principal Meng grinning from ear to ear as if he was the Maitreya Buddha, Qiao Nan felt very awkward. “Principal, please don’t say that. Our seniors have done well this time mainly due to their own efforts and also the hard work of all the teachers of the third-year cohort. Actually, I didn’t contribute that much. I just spotted a few questions for them. This can mostly be credited to the hard work of the third-year cohort.”

“Is that so? Principal Meng, do you know what Qiao Nan told me yesterday?” Shi Qing, who invited herself, did not feel embarrassed to speak out even in the presence of the elderly couple who were strangers to her.

“What did she say?” Principal Meng asked curiously.

“I praised Qiao Nan for her ability to spot questions. Instead, Qiao Nan questioned me if she were to help spot questions for a student who had just been admitted to senior high school, how many marks the student would score.” When she thought of these words, Shi Qing felt that Qiao Nan’s reply was so amazing. “At that time, I was completely dumbfounded. I was happy for her but she seemed so nonchalant about it. She even posed such a difficult question. However, having thought about it, what Qiao Nan said made sense too.”

In the absence of a strong foundation in studies, it would not be of help no matter how good Qiao Nan was in spotting questions.

“Haha, everyone deserves credit. Everyone. No one is dispensable. Qiao Nan, I guess you’re going to be very busy this summer. You can’t skip the appreciation banquet. Just now, a few parents came and asked me if they can invite you for meals to celebrate together.”

Qiao Nan was so humble. She did not claim credit for herself. Instead, she was down-to-earth and credited the teachers and students of the third-year cohort.

Who would not like such a sensible and modest student?

“Principal, please don’t mind. Please help Qiao Nan decline all that you can. Though she seems quite healthy usually, she doesn’t eat or sleep well during summertime. She’ll only feel peaceful when she reads. If you ask her to run to and fro to attend those appreciation meals, she’ll lose a few pounds instead of putting on weight in the end,” Shi Qing said on behalf of Qiao Nan.

If they continued to create such dins, those meals would not be appreciation meals. It would be a form of revenge.

“Is that so?” Principal Meng hesitated for a while. “Then, when I asked you to come back during the summer vacation to help the third-year students, it must have been tough on you. Why didn’t you say so?”

Qiao Nan had never mentioned the ailments that she suffered during summer to Principal Meng before. If Shi Qing had not mentioned it today, Principal Meng would not have known.

“It’s nothing. When it’s summer, I’ll feel bad no matter where I am.” Qiao Nan waved her hands and was reluctant to elaborate.

Since Qiao Nan appeared, the elderly couple had been observing her. Whenever they heard what Qiao Nan said, they had been nodding continuously. They then hinted at Principal Meng with their eyes to let him know that that matter could proceed.

Principal Meng was overjoyed and smiled. “Qiao Nan, we certainly owed it much to you this time. Hence, our school can’t let you work in vain. Do you still remember what I previously told you about the house?”

“Yes.” Qiao Nan nodded. “But I came today to say that I can’t accept the house.”

In her previous life, she was financially squeezed by her mother and Qiao Zijin. Clearly, she had earned a lot of money but could only stay in a rented apartment that was slightly over ten square meters. Since she had been forced to move out from the quad, she was more resolute to earn and save up money and buy a property under her own name in the future. In that case, she would have a house that wholly belonged to her.

Qiao Nan longed badly for a house. However, she was not willing to take something that should not belong to her.

“You don’t want it?”

“Why not!”

The first question was asked by Principal Meng, while the second one was from Shi

Qing.

Shi Qing tugged at Qiao Nan. Someone was willing to give her a house and she did not want it? Was she a fool?

Qiao Nan took back her hand and ignored Shi Qing. She looked up, her chest lifted and her back straightened. “Principal Meng, I heard that the owners of the house have passed the management rights of the house to the school. They intend to let it benefit the people in the school. I’m already very embarrassed to borrow the house from the school for three years. Hence, I simply can’t accept this house. Even though my family’s situation may be the only one that’s unique in Ping Cheng High School, but I believe Ping Cheng High School will most likely take in students with similar plights as me in the future. When that time comes, as long as this house is still around, it will help at least one of the students, if not all of them.”

A gentleman who desires wealth makes it in good ways.

The house did not belong to her. She did not have the shame to accept it even if they were to give it to her at no cost.

Qiao Nan had considered it carefully. At this time, everyone’s salaries were really not high. Although a cradle-to-grave job such as being a teacher came with good benefits, compared to the years after 2010, there was no shortage in the supply of property in the year of 2000.

However, in another ten years’ time, lands and properties would be in great demand. The property that she was currently staying at was at a particularly excellent location. The government would invest and redevelop it in the future. That would translate to large sums of money.

Not to mention this sum of money, in another ten years’ time, there would be a shortage of accommodation for many people, including the teachers and students in Ping Cheng High School. With this small courtyard around, the school could arrange a few people to stay at the place according to the needs then. It would solve the problems associated with accommodation.

Chapter 683 She Has Good Character

Hence, the existence of this small courtyard was necessary.

As long as its ownership was not transferred to her and the school retained the rights of the management and distribution, the school could resolve temporary housing shortage issues for a few teachers.

As for her, she could not possibly continue to remain in Ping Cheng for her college studies after the college entrance examination. She would go to another place to widen her horizons and create a different future.



In other words, the probability of her staying in Ping Cheng in the future was not high, let alone to continue staying in the small courtyard that she was staying at now.

In this case, if the school were to give the small courtyard to her, it would become unoccupied again within two years. It would only be collecting dust.

“The school has been using this property very appropriately. Hence, I think it’s quite good to let the school continue managing it.” As for her, she was very grateful but she did not need to be part of their consideration. “Currently, no one else needs it besides me. A few years, or even a few decades later, we don’t know for certain what will happen. To the school, there’s no harm in retaining this house to prepare for unforeseen circumstances.”

“Qiao Nan, have you told your father about this matter? You can make the decision... by yourself?” Principal Meng was very surprised that Qiao Nan would decline such a god-send gift. In the eyes of others, to be given a property for free was such a good thing that most people yearned for.

Qiao Nan had not only encountered but also rejected it. Principal Meng did not get what Qiao Nan meant because Qiao Nan, this genius, was too intelligent and complex. Or was Teacher Xiao Qiao’s standard of language too high, and thus it was normal for ordinary people not to understand her?

After all, this was a house they were talking about. Principal Meng regretted only speaking to Qiao Nan alone over the phone.

Coming to school to discuss the house was such an important matter.

It was already this time and Principal Meng had not seen Qiao Dongliang. He was very disappointed. He knew that Qiao Dongliang was not coming. But then, did Qiao Nan ever bring this up to Qiao Dongliang?

“Have you told your father about this?”

“No.”

True enough...

“But I can make the decision.” Qiao Nan did not feel guilty or afraid. She kept her back very straight. “Principal, you said you’ll be giving that house to me and not the Qiao family. Or are you giving it to my dad and not me?”

“Of course not. It’s for you only.”

“That means, after I accept it, the small courtyard will have me as the legal owner and its occupant. Since it will be mine, I should be able to consider whether to accept it, right?”

This was a piece of real estate, not a bun or some pocket money. It was equivalent to a huge sum of money.

“I believe that my dad will support my decision. Principal, I really can’t accept this house. It’s not that I can move out if you take it back now. I still have to stay for some time, at least for a year before I could move out. When the house is unoccupied, Principal Meng can then arrange accommodation for others according to the needs of the school. The fact that there’s no problem now does not mean that there won’t be any in the future. This is something that the school is giving to me only. Hence, I should have the right to accept or decline it. Principal, I’m sorry. I can’t take it.”

She would, at most, be studying at Ping Cheng High School for another year. If she were to own a house for the sake of this one year, Qiao Nan would feel uneasy about it.

“This...” Qiao Nan’s every word reflected that she was sparing a thought for Ping Cheng High School. Principal Meng hesitated for a while. He did not know how to retort Qiao Nan, or rather, if he should still insist on giving the house to her.

Just as Qiao Nan said, no one knew what would happen in the future.

To the school, the advantages would outweigh the disadvantages if they had more assets in their possessions.

At this juncture, Principal Meng felt troubled. It seemed that it was a mistake whether to give or not.

At this moment, the elderly couple who had been smiling like a moon stood up. Their expressions were as warm and soothing as the breeze in the spring. “Principal Meng, this matter will be decided as such.”

At first, Principal Meng was stunned. “But...” Qiao Nan had already declined to accept the house in front of the two elderly.

“This young lady has a good temperament and she’s very forward-looking. She’s certainly a talent. If we have more of such youngsters in the country, we won’t need to worry about not being strong. We’re all citizens of China. We’re the same. This is Ping Cheng, a place that she was born and grew up in. A bird knows when to fly back to its nest when it’s tired. It’s quite good that way.”

The elderly grandfather expressed that Qiao Nan had to find a place to stay if she were to return to Ping Cheng.

The elderly couple was very satisfied to give the small courtyard that was filled with their beautiful memories to such a down-to-earth and honest young lady.

As for the situation many years later, the elderly grandfather expressed that they were already old and their brains were not that good anymore. They could not foresee what would happen many decades later and could not prepare for such a rainy day.

They could not possibly keep a watch on Meng Ping every day and to whom he would lend the house after they left the world, could they?

They would only intervene within their means and time. Anyway, he and his spouse felt that this young lady was quite good. They felt assured to give the small courtyard to her.

The young lady was very young but she knew a lot. She understood that one should not gain for nothing and could be objective and fair. Most importantly, she was at peace with herself and not impetuous at all. She did not have the arrogance of the youngsters nowadays.

As the older generation, they favored youngsters with temperament and behavior like that of Qiao Nan. They would not set their eyes on youngsters who were competitive in every matter. They even felt a little revulsion toward them.

“We’ll do this then. Principal Meng, once you’ve made the arrangements, we’ll sign the papers. Sorry to trouble you.” The elderly couple was exhausted after finally making a trip back via the plane.

After they settled the issue of this property in Ping Cheng, they were prepared to return to their hometown to live the rest of their lives. They were not going on long trips anymore.

Hence, they still had to rely on Principal Meng to run a few errands if they really were to transfer the ownership of this house to Qiao Nan.

“Okay, it’s decided then. I’ll send the two of you off.” The elderly couple was resolute in their decision. Principal Meng had nothing much to say either. He would not persuade them to do otherwise either. Anyway, his original thought was that it was a good arrangement to give this house to Qiao Nan. Furthermore, this house was not a property of the school but the elderly couple.

Now that the owners were very certain that they would give the house to Qiao Nan, that little strayed thought of Principal Meng earlier vanished into thin air. He just wanted to settle this matter graciously and properly as soon as possible so that both parties involved could rejoice over it.

“No need. The chauffeur has been waiting for us. Our limbs are old. We certainly can’t run anymore.” The elderly grandfather exclaimed that they did not need Principal Meng to fetch them. He held on to his spouse as the two of them make their way out slowly.

Shi Qing tugged at Qiao Nan’s shirt. “Who’s that elderly couple? Why is Principal Meng so polite to them?” It was as if he was sending off his own parents.

#### Chapter 684 Settling the Administrative Matters

“How would I know?” Qiao Nan replied softly. “I’ve not seen them before. Moreover, we don’t have many chances to enter the principal’s office.”

“Could they be the grandparents of one of the third-year students this year? They came to thank the principal specially as the student did well in the exams?”

“That’s possible.”

During the short time that Principal Meng was sending the elderly couple out, Qiao Nan and Shi Qing secretly conversed with each other. When Principal Meng was back, the two of them resumed their normal selves.

“Qiao Nan, do you know who that elderly couple was?” Principal Meng sat down, his face full of smiles. Now, when he looked at Qiao Nan, he felt that she was such a good student in every way.

Although he had not seen Principal Wei yet, he could guess how regretful Principal Wei must have felt about not finding ways to get Qiao Nan into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China previously.

Nevertheless, Principal Meng also had not expected that, when he offered some terms to recruit Qiao Nan to Ping Cheng High School two years ago, she would bring about such great changes to the school today.

“Well, I don’t know...” Qiao Nan was at a loss for words. Why did Principal Meng say the same thing as Shi Qing?

“They’re the owners of the house. They have just returned from overseas. They were at our school to take a look, and coincidentally, it was the period of the college entrance examination. They were very concerned about the school’s situation. When they knew that we’ve achieved record-breaking results this year, they were elated. Qiao Nan, thanks so much.”

“Ah?” There were two big question marks in Qiao Nan’s eyes. She did not understand why she had to be thanked again.

Principal Meng pursed his lips. He was trying very hard not to curve the corners of his lips too wide and appeared over-conceited. “I’ve mentioned to you before. Their children are Chinese. The retired teachers hold the school dear. They also place great importance on education matters in the country. Just now, the elderly couple said they wanted to sponsor our school computer labs and multimedia classrooms!”

Principal Meng was well aware that Ping Cheng High School’s excellent results for the college entrance examination this year had garnered the attention of many. The elderly couple then quickly decided to invest in Ping Cheng High School, and not other schools.

Principal Meng felt that his recent luck had been too good. Besides meeting a student like Qiao Nan, many good things kept coming to him.

Other people had all the bad things happening at the same time, while he had all the good things occurring together. He was simply overjoyed!

Because of these few computer labs and multimedia classrooms, when Principal Meng sent the elderly couple outside, he felt like he was floating, as if he was stepping on soft clouds.

“It’s not just the computer labs or the multimedia classrooms. The elderly couple, or rather, their children seem to have other plans as well.” Principal Meng took a deep breath. If he drew all these sponsorships to Ping Cheng High School, he dared to promise everyone that Ping Cheng High School would definitely become the top tier high school with wholesome learning resources in Ping Cheng and even the province.

What was it about surpassing The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China and becoming the top school in Ping Cheng? When that time came, being the top school in Ping Cheng would be an understatement. His target would be the top school in the province!

“Congrats.” Qiao Nan nodded. If that was really the case, it was great.

Not long after, Information Technology would be prevalent in the whole world and not just China.

A few years later, even the primary school children had to learn how to use a computer, let alone the high school students.

However, in the year 2000, things such as computers were very rare. A lot of money had to be spent to set up such a lab. Furthermore, it would be a few labs. If they included the few multimedia classrooms, then the sum of money required for this investment was really not little.

When the facilities in the school were good, to a certain extent, the quality of the education would also improve. It could be considered as a positive cycle.

However, regardless of how well Ping Cheng High School developed, Qiao Nan would not be able to utilize all these resources when they were ready.

Shi Qing’s mouth formed an alphabet ‘o’. All of a sudden, she did not know if she should say that Qiao Nan, or Ping Cheng High School and Principal Meng, was just too lucky.

Qiao Nan helped spot some questions and she would be getting a small courtyard for free.

This year, the college entrance examination results for Ping Cheng High School were shockingly excellent. Principal Meng was already in great limelight. He even encountered such a big investment and sponsorship. Was this a momentum that Ping Cheng High School was prepared to take as it soared?

“Same, same.” Principal Meng massaged the part of his face that was overworked from that smile of his that could not stop. “The elderly couple heard what you said but they still decided to give you the house. Qiao Nan, don’t decline. The elderly couple and their children don’t lack this little bit. Actually, their children also wish to launch some projects to build their image in China. They have their own objectives as well. It can be considered a win-win situation. Please accept this house. Next year, if you score well, they may even be able to build their name with a story about sponsoring a poor and outstanding student.”

It was a little exaggerated, but from a business perspective, as long as there was a use for it, it was possible that the other party would make use of it since the investment had been made.

It could be said that Qiao Nan did not take the house for nothing. Furthermore, it was the elderly couple who decided to give it to her.

“Don’t be humble. Don’t feel guilty either. When the retired teachers were present, you performed very well. If you did not perform well, this house might not belong to you. At the end of the day, it’s your kindness that earned you this. Of course, I’m just commenting and not advocating feudal or superstitious mentality. Nevertheless, there will always be cause and effect. It’s the same as karma.”

When Principal Meng looked at Qiao Nan, he treated her as his own niece. He not only asked Qiao Nan to accept the house but also taught Qiao Nan the reasoning behind it.

It was also because Qiao Nan had performed graciously and presentably in front of the elderly couple. She was not greedy despite her young age. She was so down-to-earth. The elderly couple felt that she was someone that was hard to come by.

If Qiao Nan was a greedy one, the retired teachers might hesitate and eventually decide to return the management rights of the house to the school. Just like Qiao Nan said, even if the teachers were not lacking in anything, they might meet a student like her who was in a poor and difficult situation.

Instead of giving the house to one that did not know how to be grateful, they would rather transfer the ownership directly to a student of Ping Cheng High School. After all, they had stayed in this place for most of their lifetime.

Just as Principal Meng said, whatever the cause would be the effect.

“This...” Qiao Nan’s face was filled with confusion. She really did not expect that the elderly couple who had just left were the ones who were going to give the house to her.

“The retired teachers don’t have a lot of time. Regarding the matter about sponsoring Ping Cheng High School, the secretaries of their children will follow up on it with us. Hence, bring your bank account and identity card along to the land authorities to settle the administrative matters tomorrow. Also, the retired teachers’ intention is to transfer the ownership of the small courtyard to you only. The good thing is that you’re an adult and have an identity card now. It’s thus fine for us to do this.”

Chapter 685 Poor Judgment of Character

“They considered it so thoroughly?” Shi Qing had been exclaiming for a long time.

“Principal?” Qiao Nan sniffed. She was choking so much that she could not speak a word.

The two elderly teachers had such plans as they knew her family situation. They were sparing a thought for her.

“Alright, dirty linen should not be aired in public. I hope you don’t blame me for being such a bigmouth. The old retired teachers are open-minded. They even stayed overseas before. They’re more forward-thinking than our typical Chinese men. Your five fingers are different in lengths. You can’t control other things. This is considered their kindness to you. The retired teachers have already spared so much thought for you. Don’t decline it anymore. One should not reject the elderly’s good intentions. Understand?”

The two retired teachers thought of giving the house to Qiao Nan precisely because Qiao Nan had worked and studied hard. She had contributed much to the development of the school.

It could be treated as financial assistance or reward. The two elderly teachers also hoped that the kind-hearted Qiao Nan could lead a better life in the future.



The problem was that, if the ownership of the house was transferred to her father, given the complex relationships in the Qiao family, this could, unfortunately, spell endless trouble if estate disputes were to occur in the future. It would not be nice then.

Prevention is better than cure.

There were some necessary preparations to be done. It was better to be the ‘villain’ first.

“Okay.” Qiao Nan sniffed and nodded.

In this lifetime, Qiao Nan’s greatest hope was to earn lots of money and then own a house that belonged to her only so that she would have a house that was hers and not related to the Qiao family.

Her next-of-kin related to her by blood had been finding ways and means to squeeze her financially. On the contrary, while relying on outsiders, she had joined others to become a property owner at such a young age.

Her own family could not even be compared to outsiders. This made Qiao Nan feel bitterly disappointed. Nevertheless, Qiao Nan felt very warm at heart when she sensed the care and concern from others.

“Alright, you should go back first before the sun becomes brighter. I’ll fetch you at your house tomorrow so that we can settle the matter of the house properly.” After knowing that Qiao Nan suffered from summer ailments, Principal Meng dared not make Qiao Nan stay longer, in case Qiao Nan would feel worse when the sun turned brighter.

“Thank you, Principal Meng.” Principal Meng and the two elderly had already made themselves so clear and considered it so thoroughly. Qiao Nan would really feel embarrassed if she kept declining.

Furthermore, Qiao Nan had other thoughts in mind after taking over the house.

“Principal, then Qiao Nan and I will go back first.” Shi Qing looked like she was in high spirits and extremely happy.

She had widened her horizons. If one were to study well and ran into good luck, they could even get a house for free.

Qiao Nan was not the reincarnation of the money doll, so why did she have a share in all the good things? Of course, Qiao Nan did not have a share of 'good mother' and 'good sister'.

It was true that no one was perfect. Qiao Nan was lacking in the aspects of 'mother' and 'sister' but her luck in other areas was extraordinarily good!

"Okay, be careful on the road."

After leaving Principal Meng's office, Shi Qing patted Qiao Nan's shoulder emotionally. "Qiao Nan, you're going to be rich. How old are you? You have your own house at such a young age. You can lift your head and chest up in the future. As for the money that you owe Brother Zhai, there's no hurry. Given the situation, you can raise the fees on those who hired you to do tuition. Won't it be easy to pay back the debts then?"

After Qiao Nan repaid all the debts that she owed Brother Zhai, Sister Zhai Hua would not be able to discriminate against Qiao Nan anymore.

Would Qiao Nan take advantage of Brother Zhai?

From certain perspectives, up until now, Brother Zhai had most probably been taking more advantage of Qiao Nan.

"Haha, you still remember that?" Because of the previous matter about the clothing, Shi Qing still bore a grudge against Sister Zhai Hua until today. On the other hand, Qiao Nan had let go of it and it did not bother her as much as before.

Nevertheless, she would still feel a little uneasy whenever this matter was brought up.

"Of course, I remember. Clearly, Sister Zhai Hua is not that kind of person. Don't tell me she has changed just because she's in a relationship now." Until now, Shi Qing still felt unjustified. Why did the big sister who, in her memory, did not have a good temper but was very kind, become so discriminating? She even hurt someone with her words.

When she heard Zhai Hua doubting Qiao Nan that day, Shi Qing was nearly convinced that the Zhai Hua before was, in fact, someone else.

“In a romantic relationship? Sister Zhai Hua is in a relationship?” Qiao Nan paused in her steps and looked at Shi Qing. “Who is Sister Zhai Hua in a relationship with?”

“It has been almost two years, almost the same duration as Brother Zhai and you. The other party is an ordinary soldier in the army. He’s not even a platoon leader. Of course, we shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. However, his achievements are really too poor. You may not even have an impression of him even if I tell you who he is. When you were giving classes in the army, he’s one of those in the over twenty soldiers left who insisted to attend Qiu Chenxi’s classes. At that time, I already found it strange. Since he’s in a relationship with Sister Zhai Hua, shouldn’t he be keen on improving himself? Why did he attend Qiu Chenxi’s classes? It’s just that it’s someone else’s matter, so it’s not convenient for me to comment. From what I know, Sister Zhai Hua likes that guy very much.”

When Shi Qing opened her mouth, the secrets that came out of it were not small.

Qiao Nan dared to bet that, regarding Zhai Hua’s relationship, the combined knowledge of all of the Zhai family members about this would not be more than that of Shi Qing alone.

Shi Qing and Zhai Hua could be considered as close pals.

Since that was the case, after so many years, why was it that Qiu Chenxi was Brother Zhai’s fiancée whereas Shi Qing had to watch from the side?

“How lousy is that boyfriend of Sister Zhai Hua?” Qiao Nan asked curiously.

“Isn’t he lousy? Anyway, it’s been two years. I don’t see anything good in that guy. I don’t know why Sister Zhai Hua is so bent on being together with him. After Sister Zhai Hua is with him, she changed so much. Qiao Nan, tell me, when Sister Zhai Hua targeted you previously, could she have been influenced by that guy? Really, Sister Zhai Hua was not like that in the past.”

The more Shi Qing thought about it, the more she felt that Zhai Hua’s change was due to that man. If that was the case, that guy was definitely not a good person. Otherwise, why did he bring all the bad influences and no good ones to Sister Zhai Hua?

“I can’t figure it out.” Qiao Nan shook her head. She was not able to analyze Zhai Hua’s situation.

She just got to know that Zhai Hua was actually in a relationship. Moreover, that boyfriend of Zhai Hua had been bent on attending Qiu Chenxi’s classes instead of hers.

As to the reason, at the very least, this boyfriend of Sister Zhai Hua definitely did not attend Qiu Chenxi’s classes just because he wanted to look at pretty girls.

Sister Zhai Hua had such a prominent family background. Regardless of whether this man was outstanding, as long as he was a man, he would certainly want to rise in the ranks and make himself more compatible with Sister Zhai Hua.

#### Chapter 686 A Light Bulb’s Self-Awareness

She, a young lady, was already striving to improve herself as she was afraid that others would gossip that she was incompatible with Brother Zhai if they were to get married in the future. She was fearful that others would say that she was with Brother Zhai for his family background.

As a man, one would certainly have the same and stronger thoughts about it.

Qiao Nan was now more curious about whether Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family were aware that Zhai Hua was in a relationship, and who her partner was.

“Same. I don’t understand what Sister Zhai Hua is trying to do as well.” Shi Qing shook her head badly. The situation of Sister Zhai Hua’s partner was not better than that of Qiao Nan. In fact, it was worse.

Qiao Nan was, after all, a student with outstanding grades. She had a bright future with various possibilities ahead of her. However, that boyfriend of Sister Zhai Hua was only an ordinary soldier in the army. He was not even a platoon leader. His personal qualities were also very different from Sister Zhai Hua’s.

If Brother Zhai could not even be together with Qiao Nan, then Sister Zhai Hua and that soldier could forget about their relationship.

“Right, do you intend to tell your dad about the school rewarding you with a house?”

“No, I don’t really feel like telling him,” Qiao Nan sighed and said selfishly.

“Afraid that Uncle Qiao can’t keep the secret?”

“Yes, actually, it’s not just my dad. Qiao Zijin and my mom too. My dad is too honest in front of them and the two of them are too scheming in front of him. It may add on to my dad’s woes if I tell him.” Qiao Zijin understood each of her family members very well. Everyone had a problem and she could not entirely blame this on her father.

“If you don’t tell Uncle Qiao, will you be able to settle the title deed?” This was an issue too.

“Not difficult.” Toward this, Qiao Nan was confident. “My identity card is with me. If I request for the family register, my dad will definitely hand it to me. Even if I don’t tell him, I’ll be able to find it.”

Previously, when they moved out of the quad, her father had taken the family register with him.

“Then, do you intend to take it yourself?”

“No, I’ll ask my dad,” Qiao Nan said after some consideration. “It’s better that way.”

“Alright.” Shi Qing nodded. If they were to tell Uncle Qiao about this matter, they were afraid that Uncle Qiao would feel burdened and eventually be cajoled by others and let the cat out of the bag. This would create more trouble for Qiao Nan. If she did not say a word about it, Qiao Nan would feel uneasy as well.

Hence, Qiao Nan would directly ask Uncle Qiao for the family register and give him some hints. As to how much Uncle Qiao could make out of it, that would be up to him.

Everyone belonged to the same family, yet they had to consider to this extent when doing things. Shi Qing felt disheartened thinking about it.

Nevertheless, at the thought of her own family situation, Shi Qing felt that her Shi family was not any better than the Qiao family.

When Qiao Nan and Shi Qing arrived home, they saw a man standing as straight as a poplar tree and as tall and sturdy as a pine tree at the entrance. He exuded a strict and formal aura in that camouflaged soldier uniform of

his.

“Brother Zhai?” At the sight of Brother Zhai, Qiao Nan was pleasantly surprised.

“Where did you go?” Zhai Sheng took off his cap. That hair surrounding the rim of his cap was drenched in sweat. His originally tanned skin looked even darker under the sunshine. In cliché terms, Zhai Sheng had turned darker.

“I went to school.” Qiao Nan opened the door and let Zhai Sheng in.

At the sight of Zhai Sheng, Shi Qing shriveled her lips unhappily. However, she did not have the courage to follow them into the house. She went back to her own house instead.

Shi Qing very much wanted to follow them. After all, she enjoyed the company of Qiao Nan and it was not because of Brother Zhai.

However, from her past experience, Shi Qing understood a principle. It did not matter if she was a light bulb to anyone else, regardless of how bright she was. However, she should not be a light bulb between Brother Zhai and Qiao Nan because Brother Zhai knew how to teach people a lesson.

Qiao Nan was amused when she saw that Shi Qing did not follow them into the house. Shi Qing only behaved in this way when Zhai Sheng was around. “Brother Zhai, what’s wrong with Shi Qing and you? Each time you come, Shi Qing will leave on her own accord.”

Shi Qing was not someone so abiding. Having been used to Shi Qing following her around, Qiao Nan was now a little not used to having her ‘tail’, Shi Qing, missing.

Zhai Sheng seemed as if he was back in his own house. He took off his soldier cap and conveniently removed his jacket. He then slumped on the sofa and revealed his upper body that was in a singlet, revealing the firm muscles on his wide shoulders and strong arms that were as thick as Qiao Nan’s thighs.

Zhai Sheng had just been sitting for a while, and the house of the Qiao family, which was not considered small, seemed to have been filled with that domineering aura of Zhai Sheng. It made one feel as though they were suffocating

“Wipe your sweat.” Qiao Nan was holding a wrung towel in one hand and a cup of warm water in another. That gentle and affectionate demeanor displayed when she was taking care of Zhai Sheng was akin to that of a wife.

Zhai Sheng reached out and pulled Qiao Nan so that she would sit beside him. He then took over the towel and wiped away the beads of sweat on his hair. Thereafter, he turned his face to lean toward Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan pursed her lips. She then tilted the cup of water toward Zhai Sheng’s mouth and the water naturally went in.

The two had been together for less than two years but their total time spent together was not more than two months. Nevertheless, the atmosphere between the two seemed as though they had been a married couple for many years. There were familiarity and chemistry.

“Brother Zhai, you’re really...” After Zhai Sheng finished his water, Qiao Nan felt embarrassed and said, “Drink by yourself after you finish wiping off the sweat.”

It was always the same. Why was it that each time Brother Zhai came to her house, his hands seemed to be temporarily handicapped?

It was fine when no one was around. Once, Shi Qing was present. As Zhai Sheng had been used to being fed, he tilted his head for Qiao Nan to feed him.

Qiao Nan had lifted the cup of water, but when she realized that Shi Qing was just behind her, she was stunned and just stuffed the cup into Zhai Sheng’s hand to let him take the drink himself.

It was also since that time that, whenever Zhai Sheng appeared, Shi Qing would abidingly leave and disappear.

But even if that was so, Qiao Nan was still not quite used to it. Why was it that when they were together, Brother Zhai was not used to using his own hands to feed himself?

“Thirsty.” Could not wait.

“...” Qiao Nan did not believe that he was terribly thirsty.

Zhai Sheng laughed gently and looked at Qiao Nan teasingly. ‘Still not feeding me?’

Qiao Nan was angry. So, she was the one at fault?

Although she was angry, Qiao Nan took over the towel that Zhai Sheng had just used. She went to wring it another time for Zhai Sheng to wipe himself again. After the heat from Zhai Sheng’s face seemed to have reduced, she then sat down without any further movement.

After wiping, the heat in his body dissipated much. That gentle frown of Zhai Sheng had also relaxed. “Aren’t you afraid of feeling warm? Why did you go to school without any apparent reason?”

Besides Shi Qing, only Zhai Sheng, who was not often in Ping Cheng, knew clearly about the ailments that Qiao Nan suffered from during summer.

“Principal Meng told me he’s giving this house to me. He’s bringing me to settle the transfer of ownership tomorrow. Hence, I made a trip to school.” Qiao Nan did not intend to keep this from Zhai Sheng at all. She told Zhai Sheng everything.

Chapter 687 A Special Way of Cooling Down in Summer

“Transfer of ownership? What’s the reason?” Zhai Sheng looked at Qiao Nan. “Just because you spotted questions for the third-year students? This house doesn’t belong to him, right?” Hence, Principal Meng did not have the right to decide on whether to transfer the house to Nan Nan.

“The owners of the house are back. I bumped into them coincidentally today but we didn’t talk.”

The suspicion in Zhai Sheng’s eyes vanished immediately. “What are your thoughts?”



“I have declined initially but Principal Meng convinced me to accept it. He even said that the owners had expressed firmly that the ownership of the house can only be transferred to me.” After thinking, Qiao Nan looked at Zhai Sheng as if she was in a dilemma. “Brother Zhai, I don’t intend to tell my dad about this, but I intend to openly ask him for the family register.”

“That’s fine too, as long as you’ve considered it carefully. Anyway, you got this house through honest means. You don’t need to be worried about other matters.” Zhai Sheng did not intend to ask Qiao Nan to decline the property. This was because he knew that Qiao Nan had already made up her mind on this.

“Brother Zhai, am I being too thick-skinned? I’ve not done anything and yet I’m getting a house for no reason. I keep feeling strange about it.” Really, she was used to being extorted. Qiao Nan was at a loss and felt uneasy when someone wanted to give her something all of a sudden.

Most importantly, she really did not have the habit of taking other people’s things without a reason.

“Don’t worry. There’s no free meal in this world.” Zhai Sheng had seen more of the world than Qiao Nan. He thought more deeply than she did. Hence, even if he had not met the owners of the house and did not understand the current situation and the causes and effects, he could also guess that there must be other reasons for Qiao Nan to be offered this house. “Didn’t you mention before that the owner’s children are overseas Chinese and they are businessmen? This kind of people certainly won’t shortchange themselves. It’s just that you don’t know what their plans are.”

“This, I think so...” Qiao Nan gave a nod. “Principal told me that the children of the elderly teachers seemed to think about returning to the country. In fact, they’re the ones who wished to give this house to me. Besides, their children will also be investing to set up a few computer labs and multimedia classrooms in Ping Cheng High School.”

“That’s right then. If the Chinese who are returning to the home country intend to develop their businesses, they’ll have to launch some projects to build their image. Since Principal Meng asked you to take it, then you should just do so.” Hearing what Qiao Nan said, Zhai Sheng understood more now.

Since those people were preparing to return to their home country to develop their businesses and wished to earn money in China, they would have to build up their image to make their business presence known in China first.

Most importantly, if Ping Cheng High School was not good enough, all these good things would not come to Ping Cheng High School. It would also not happen in Ping Cheng.

To put in bluntly, since Nan Nan helped Ping Cheng High School spot the questions, she had propelled the college entrance examination results of Ping Cheng High School tremendously. A good opportunity as such only existed for them to grab it.

To Ping Cheng High School and those few Chinese, opportunities were more important than anything else.

It was Nan Nan's existence that created this opportunity.

Zhai Sheng was very clear that Qiao Nan not only did not take the small courtyard for nothing but had also hauled in benefits that were multiple and even a hundred times more than what the small courtyard was worth for the Chinese and Ping Cheng High School.

Zhai Sheng reached out and pulled the fragrant and soft Qiao Nan into his arms and then gave her a peck on the cheek. "Nan Nan, you're too honest. You have to remember that a businessman will never do something that will shortchange himself. The one who will be shortchanged may only be you."

Having created such a huge opportunity of interest for someone, Nan Nan was already so nervous and uneasy about taking one house from them. It was as if she helping those who sold her out count the money.

"Don't, don't hug." Qiao Nan felt extremely shy. She kept having the feeling that Shi Qing would spring out of a corner at any point in time. It would be so embarrassing if someone saw them.

"Why don't you let me hug you?" Zhai Sheng was still holding on to Qiao Nan as he did not have any intention to loosen his hands. They had been in a relationship for two years and had only kissed and hugged a little. If they could not even do this, Zhai Sheng was going to suspect if he was in a fake romantic relationship.

"It's warm!!" Qiao Nan was extremely sullen. "Don't you feel warm?"

She already felt warm while she was sitting alone. She could not wait for air-conditioners to be available soon and at an affordable price.

Furthermore, Brother Zhai's body temperature was a little higher than others'. When her hands came into contact with Brother Zhai's body, she could feel the heat.

She was not being hugged by her boyfriend. She was lying on a fire stove.

After hugging for less than five minutes, Qiao Nan could distinctly feel her sweat oozing from each of the pores on her body.

"Warm?" Laughter could be seen in Zhai Sheng's eyes. He gave Qiao Nan a serious expression but his eyes had hints of a smile.

"Warm!" Qiao Nan's tone became more serious. She suffered from summer ailments. It was thus even worse for her.

"Isn't it normal to feel hot during the summer? It'll be strange not to feel hot. It's good for the body to perspire more during summer." Hence, he was trying to make Nan Nan perspire more by hugging her.

Qiao Nan had a look of bitterness on her face. "But if we're not hugging, I can feel a little cooler."

"If I don't hug you, will you be able to compare the difference and then feel cooler as a result?" Zhai Sheng raised his brows and asked.

"No..." Without Brother Zhai hugging her, even if she sat down alone, she would still feel hot as if she was having a steamboat meal.

"Isn't that right? Now that I'm hugging you, you'll feel cooler when I leave. You may even sleep better tonight."

"...Is there such a thing?" Qiao Nan looked confused. "Then, how long do we have to hug to make me feel very cold when I'm sleeping at night without you around?"

"Of course the longer we hug, the better the effect." Zhai Sheng moved his hands to Qiao Nan's waist. Qiao Nan was thin but she was not all bones. Hence, her waist was tender, soft, and very nice to touch. At least, Zhai Sheng liked it very much. "Nan Nan, eat more when summer is over. Gain more nutrients, especially during the winter. You can gain weight."

“Without needing you to say, I’ll gain weight during winter.” Qiao Nan stared at Zhai Sheng’s hands that had been moving all around her waist. She would touch her own waist every day while she was bathing and she did not feel anything extraordinary about it. Why was it that whenever he was with Brother Zhai, not to mention hugging, he had to touch and squeeze her here and there, and her waist was the part of the body that he would move his hands to most?

When he saw the look of puzzlement in the eyes of the young lady in his arms, Zhai Sheng’s eyes looked deep.

If not for the fact that it was not the right time, he would definitely make Nan Nan understand that her waist was never the part that he was most interested in.

It was just that he could not touch other places yet. Hence, he could only hold her waist to relieve his longing.

At the thought of what Shi Qing had told her a while earlier, Qiao Nan, who was in Zhai Sheng’s arms, adjusted her bottom to a position that was relatively further away from Zhai Sheng so that she would feel cooler. “Brother Zhai, Sister Zhai Hua is older than you. Does she have a boyfriend yet?”

#### Chapter 688 Made Her Stand Clear

Just as Qiao Nan moved her bum, Zhai Sheng steered her back to the original position. “If you don’t want the ‘gun’ to go off by accident, don’t move. I can’t take much stimulation.”

“...” Qiao Nan could feel the strange atmosphere. Especially when she looked at Zhai Sheng’s deep and worried eyes, she immediately had goosebumps. “You have not replied to me.”

“She should be in a relationship.” As Qiao Nan did not move anymore, the small fire in Zhai Sheng’s eyes gradually extinguished.

“Should? So you know?” Although it was something that Shi Qing was well aware of, it would be a little odd if none of the Zhai family members knew about it. “Do you know what kind of boyfriend Sister Zhai Hua found for herself?”

“I don’t know and I also can’t be bothered about it.” Zhai Sheng helped Qiao Nan smoothen the hair that was sticking to her face. “She’s an adult and should have her own space. No need to bother about her that much.”

“No matter how capable Sister Zhai Hua is, she’s still a woman. Aren’t you afraid that she will be bullied?” Qiao Nan was speaking about a common phenomenon.

Zhai Sheng’s fingertips slid to Qiao Nan’s earlobes. “No one can bully us whose surname is Zhai.”

“So confident?” Love was blind. Hearing what Sister Zhai Hua said, she had the feeling that that soldier boyfriend of Zhai Hua did not seem reliable. “One should know that when a woman is in a relationship, there is no rationale to speak of.”

“So, you’re in a fake relationship with me?” Why was it that when Nan Nan was with him, she could be so rational, calm, and self-disciplined?

Qiao Nan was both angry and shy. She bumped her head onto Zhai Sheng’s chest. “I’m talking to you about Sister Zhai Hua. Can you not always link it to the two of us?”

Holding on tightly to Qiao Nan’s waist, those hands of Zhai Sheng did not have any qualms about ‘taking advantage’. “I can’t. In comparison, I’m more concerned about our matter. You’ll be in your third year when school reopens.”

In other words, at this time next year, his marriage report would not only be submitted but also approved.

Even if Qiao Nan had not reached the legal age for marriage, the two of them had to be engaged first. From then onward, Qiao Nan would have to take on the title of Mrs. Zhai.

Previously, there was a promise between Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan that they would only discuss marriage after she had graduated from high school and entered college.

“Brother Zhai, you said it yourself. I’m going to be in my third year soon. Third year! Can you lessen my worries so that I can study well and strive for improvements every day?” Qiao Nan’s eyes were evasive. Her face was thoroughly flustered and red, looking extremely shy.

This was the first time that she was in marriage talks in two lifetimes. Moreover, this topic had continued for more than two years. Having known that Zhai Sheng had not changed his initial mind, Qiao Nan naturally felt happy and touched.

At the mention of this, she was shy about it again.

Zhai Sheng sighed. "Then, when are you going to let me worry less?"

"Since when did I not do so?!" Qiao Nan was dissatisfied. "I don't make noise or kick up a fuss. I've never blamed you for spending so little time with me. In these two years, I've been obediently studying and never caused any trouble. Even that one trouble that I encountered was attracted by you. Is there any girlfriend that's less worrisome than me?"

Which girlfriend would be as accommodating as her? Having been in love for two years, the total time her boyfriend spent with her was not more than two months.

If it were other ladies, they would have probably broken up more than ten times given such a relationship. Brother Zhai had to complain that she had not saved him enough worries. That was too much of him.

"Ha." Zhai Sheng sneered. "What about Chen Jun, Zhou Jun, and Zhu Baoguo?"

Saving him worries? In a short time span of two years, although these three men could not be considered as his rivals for her affection, they were more than annoying.

In particular, Zhou Jun was his subordinate. Hence, Zhai Sheng would feel a little awkward, more or less.

Qiao Nan pretended to be dumb as she lifted her head and looked at the ceiling.

At that sight of Qiao Nan, Zhai Sheng was filled with anger. He gave Qiao Nan's little bum a small slap as a half-hearted punishment. "Still dare to pretend!"

Qiao Nan felt wronged. "I've already made myself clear to Brother Zhou."

Qiao Nan was a little slow to react at times but she was a smart person. Clearly, Zhou Jun was so busy that he did not even have the time to go home. Despite that, he could always find time to visit her a few times in a year, so how could Qiao Nan not guess it at all?

Hence, Qiao Nan had told Zhou Jun directly that she already had a boyfriend who was also a soldier. If there was a chance in the future, she would introduce him to Zhou Jun.

“Yes, didn’t you make it clear? He tortured my troop of soldiers until their bones nearly shattered.” Zhai Sheng sounded a little better now. “How about Zhu Baoguo?”

“...That’s my younger brother. You can regard him as my son too.” Qiao Nan rolled her eyes. She really did not think that Zhu Baoguo would develop romantic feelings for her one day. Of course, this ‘silly son’ of hers might not even be aware of it himself.

Since he found out that she had a boyfriend, Zhu Baoguo had been acting awkward in front of her for the past six months.

“Your son is here.” Zhai Sheng rubbed that small and flat tummy of Qiao Nan. He had not sowed his seeds. Hence, where did the child come from? He was not keen on acknowledging such a big son like Zhu Baoguo.

“My goodness, are you at odds with me?” Qiao Nan was a little sullen and she wanted to push Zhai Sheng away. “It’s rare that you’re back. Did you come back to quarrel with me?”

“Someone told me that when a man and a woman are in love but never quarrel, that means they no longer care about each other.” Zhai Sheng did not loosen his grip on Qiao Nan’s waist. He could not devour this sweet young thing yet, but how could he let her escape from his arms?

“Which son of a bitch said that? I’m going to punch them!” Who said that a man and a woman would definitely quarrel when they were together? The time that Brother Zhai and her spent together was already so little. If they were going to waste it on quarrels, then were they still going to continue with this relationship?

“Zhai Hua.”

“...” Qiao Nan leaned into the arms of Zhai Sheng and pretended to be dead. “This, I can’t win against her.”

She wanted to ask if Brother Zhai knew if Sister Zhai Hua was in love. She did not expect that Sister Zhai Hua had been spurring on Brother Zhai to quarrel with her behind her back. What did Sister Zhai Hua mean by doing that?

Rubbing Qiao Nan's face, Zhai Sheng laughed. "Don't overthink. She's indeed unreasonable, but she's not targeting you. Judging from her look at that time, she had most probably quarreled with her boyfriend."

Zhai Hua quarreled with her boyfriend. Then, when she saw that Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan had always been so sweet together, she felt unhappy and jealous. She thus came up with such a bad idea.

"You know what Zhai Hua was thinking and you still fell into the trap?" Ah, wasn't this the so-called deep bond between siblings?

"Excessive rows are bad but some bickering improves the relationship." Zhai Sheng was positive about it. "You don't need to take to heart Zhai Hua's matter. She can't stir up any trouble with me."

The two of them grew up together. How could Zhai Sheng not understand Zhai Hua?

Such little tricks. Taking into account that they were siblings, Zhai Sheng, as the younger brother, had always been very forgiving toward Zhai Hua.

#### Chapter 689 Little Brat

If Zhai Hua had gone overboard, Zhai Sheng would usually be the first one to discipline Zhai Hua.

Although Zhai Hua was the older sister, when things happened, Zhai Sheng had always been the one taking Zhai Hua in hand.

"Fine." She had brought up Sister Zhai Hua's matter a few times today in front of Brother Zhai because she heard from Shi Qing that Sister Zhai Hua's boyfriend was a little strange.

If Brother Zhai already knew about this, Qiao Nan would not intervene without a reason.



Furthermore, she was not even legally married to Zhai Sheng yet. It was not convenient for her to be involved.

Taking a glance at the clock, Qiao Nan gave Zhai Sheng a push. "It's already four o'clock. My dad should be off work and coming home soon. Are you going back to the Zhai family?"

"Not going back. I'm staying for dinner," Zhai Sheng said in a lording manner.

"My dad will feel unhappy."

"You're being paranoid. Uncle Qiao is very happy with me." Zhai Sheng refused to admit that his future father-in-law did not favor him. "You're thinking too much. Uncle Qiao likes life in the army a lot. He's very happy to chat with me about this."

"It's only limited to this." Qiao Nan snorted. Brother Zhai had said before that when they had children in the future and if any wolf dared to come and kidnap his precious babies from his house, not to mention entering the house, he would simply take a gun and drive them away if they had the guts to take a step in through the main door!

"There are only you, father and daughter, having meals here. There won't be much of a difference with just one more person around." Zhai Sheng was determined not to leave and to remain in the house of the Qiao family.

Boiling the frog slowly. Qiao Nan could not escape from him. Qiao Dongliang, this future father-in-law, was a little difficult to manage. He did not find Zhai Sheng very pleasing.

Zhai Sheng was well aware of this.

Zhai Sheng knew that if he could address Qiao Dongliang as his father, then the marriage between Qiao Nan and him could proceed. After all, to Zhai Sheng, he did not feel that there was a major issue on the Zhai family's end.

Zhai Sheng insisted on not leaving. Qiao Nan could do nothing about it.

The two had been in a relationship for two years and Zhai Sheng had been taking issue with Qiao Nan about the number of days left before they could get married. Qiao Nan felt a little embarrassed to chase Zhai Sheng away.

Dealing with the Zhai family was difficult for Qiao Nan, but the suffering Zhai Sheng had due to Qiao Dongliang was not any less either.

True enough, when Qiao Dongliang saw Zhai Sheng upon reaching home, his expression changed. It was as if he had accidentally swallowed a dumpling without biting it, and the dumpling was stuck in his throat. He felt so bad that he could neither spit it out nor swallow it. “Zhai Sheng, you’re here?”

“Yes, Uncle Qiao. I’m here to see Nan Nan.” Zhai Sheng was straight to the point and expressed that he came to see Qiao Nan.

Qiao Dongliang’s face turned black. He nearly fainted at that arrogant attitude of Zhai Sheng. “Zhai Sheng, you’re also aware that Nan Nan will be commencing her third-year studies in the second half of the year. Her studies...”

“Uncle Qiao, rest assured. You don’t know yet, right? For the college entrance examination this year, Qiao Nan had spotted questions for the entire third-year cohort in her school. It has been announced that the results of Ping Cheng High School are excellent this year. It’s record-breaking. With Qiao Nan’s capability, it’s not a problem for her to get into top-tier universities. In fact, she could have taken the college entrance examination this year.” Despite not being physically in Ping Cheng or by Qiao Nan’s side, Zhai Sheng was clearer about Qiao Nan’s whereabouts than Qiao Dongliang was.

“Uncle Qiao, I’ve been together with Nan Nan for two years. It’s been tough on Nan Nan. After all, the time I can spend with her is too little. Uncle Qiao, you’ve been a soldier before. You should know the life of a soldier and his spouse. From my interactions with Nan Nan these two years, I’m very certain that Nan Nan will become a qualified and even an outstanding military wife in the future. You don’t need to worry about her regarding this.”

The military wife had to be self-disciplined and resilient.

Self-discipline?

Having been in a relationship for two years, Qiao Nan's grades had never slipped ever since the first year of her high school studies. She steadily surpassed the top student of the same cohort in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Wasn't she self-disciplined enough?

Resilience?

If Qiao Nan was not resilient, then no one else in the world was.

Hence, whether Qiao Nan studied in the third year was just an excuse of Qiao Dongliang to stop Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan from being together.

"That's because my Nan Nan is very self-aware!" It did not have anything to do with Zhai Sheng. It was also not due to Zhai Sheng that Nan Nan had good grades!

"Certainly." Zhai Sheng smiled. "Nan Nan is so self-aware. Uncle Qiao, you don't need to worry about Nan Nan and me. Both of us have enough self-awareness." If they did not, within these two years, Uncle Qiao would have many opportunities to become a grandfather.

"Zhai Sheng, you're here." Shi Peng, who had overheard the conversation for a while, had brought Shi Qing along to 'con' dinner from the Qiao family.

Zhai Sheng was nurtured by Shi Peng. How could Shi Peng not understand Zhai Sheng?

Zhai Sheng had the cunningness of a fox, the determination of a wolf, the patience of hunting a leopard, the prowess of a tiger, and the lethality of a lion.

Having many of such special characteristics of various animals combined, Zhai Sheng was not an ordinary man. There was nothing that he could not get his hands on in this world. There were only things that he did not want.

How could Qiao Dongliang possibly be Zhai Sheng's opponent?

Qiao Dongliang was definitely at the losing end in this father-and-son-in-law battle.

"Officer Shi." Facing Shi Peng, Zhai Sheng's attitude was better. He held respect toward

him.

“Don’t address me as Officer Shi. I’m not part of the army now. I’m just an ordinary employee.”

“Then, should I address you as Director Shi?” Zhai Sheng did not mind changing the way he addressed him. Nevertheless, when he looked at Shi Peng, there was no single sense of slight or belittling in his eyes just because Shi Peng had left the army.

Shi Peng was considered as half a master to Zhai Sheng when the latter first joined the army. Zhai Sheng knew too well how capable Shi Peng was.

Shi Peng was a very intelligent individual. He had brains, vigor, and ability.

From his perspective, when his father won against Shi Peng and became the chief many years ago, it was possible that his father had succeeded entirely based on his own capability, or Shi Peng had deliberately let his father win. It was also probable that his father had the upper hand physically due to Shi Peng’s poor health.

Now, even though Shi Peng had left the army, within a short time span of one year, he had stabilized his footing and was part of the core government leadership in Ping Cheng

He heard that Shi Peng would be promoted again soon.

Regardless of where he went, this former Officer Shi would always be a great man that could not be ordinary.

It was the blessing of the Shi family to have Shi Peng as a son. Unfortunately, the Shi family did not cherish him. They looked down on Shi Peng and thought that he could not have done anything great after leaving the army.

“Don’t be polite. It’s fine to address me as you like.” Shi Peng smiled nonchalantly as he sat down. “Old Qiao, what are we having for dinner today?”

“Look at how busy I am. I’ve forgotten about it.” At the sight of Zhai Sheng, this little wolf brat, he had been busy thinking of ways to chase him out of the house and had almost forgotten that it was dinner time.

“You go and prepare then.” As for Zhai Sheng, he could deal with him.

#### Chapter 690 Aren’t You Going to Address Your Master?

Qiao Dongliang sighed as he took a glance at Zhai Sheng. “Fine, you all chat. I’ll go and prepare. Nan Nan, come and help me.” There were five people who would be having dinner today. He had to prepare more dishes than usual.

Since everyone had arrived, of course Qiao Dongliang had to quickly prepare the meal so that everyone could eat together. The sooner they finished the meal, the sooner Zhai Sheng could leave.

“Okay.” Qiao Nan glanced at Zhai Sheng. She abidingly stood up and followed Qiao Dongliang to the kitchen.

Shi Qing, who had been left behind, felt that she was an odd one out that should not exist in the current scene.

Shi Qing stood up hesitatingly. “Why don’t I go and help too?”

“Go ahead,” Shi Peng replied smilingly.

“I’ll go then.” Shi Qing looked as if she had been granted a pardon. The fast speed that she escaped with was akin to that of a rabbit.

The two men were left in the living room. Zhai Sheng then reached out his hands and poured a cup of tea for Shi Peng. “Have some tea.”

“Have some tea? You’re not even calling your master?” Shi Peng was able to accept this cup of tea from Zhai Sheng. “You wish to kidnap one’s daughter, yet you simply entered their house openly? Aren’t you a little too daring? Are you not afraid that things will backfire? The Qiao family is not that daring.”

Zhai Sheng smiled. "It's nothing much. I was just following master's teaching. Master said before that if one wants anyone or wishes to achieve any purpose, one has to consider seriously, arrange meticulously, and then fight for it boldly and resolutely. The methods have to be swift and sweeping so that there's no chance for the enemy to even catch a breath. When the enemy comes to their senses, everything has already been cast in stone to the point of no return."

What Shi Peng taught Zhai Sheng was to rage an attack in a decisive and resolute manner.

"You remember and carried it out quite well. But don't forget that you're getting a wife, not plotting against your political opponents." It was Shi Peng's proudest thing in his life to have taught a disciple such as Zhai Sheng.

Unfortunately, his daughter was too young. It was a pity that when he had the energy, his daughter was still young and ignorant and he thus could not impart many things to her.

Now, his daughter had finally grown up but he had already run out of steam. He could not personally nurture his daughter to become a top tier female general or heroine. This was considered as the greatest regret in his life.

"Zhai Sheng, can I seek your help in one matter?"

"Shi Qing?" With one word, Zhai Sheng hit the bull's-eye.

Shi Peng looked in the direction of Shi Qing with love. "My health will always be as such. I can't improve much. Even the doctor can't tell how much longer I can live. Qing Qing is a very simple child. It's also because she's indulged by me. If there's another chance, I won't let her be so naive."

"But you still have time and energy now, yet you can't bear to be hard on her." Zhai Sheng exposed Shi Peng's lies and falsehood without reservation.

After all, Shi Peng was a slave to his daughter. He could not bear to make it hard for Shi Qing.

"Yes, I can't bear to." Shi Peng laughed. "Qing Qing is so obedient and sensible. I never think that her being naïve is a mistake."

“But if she’s going to take the same path as you, her naivety may not only harm herself but also her comrades.” Zhai Sheng disagreed. Unless Shi Qing chose another path, her naivety would not be just a concern to her alone but also many other comrades as it would impact their lives and safety.

“So, I have to rely on you.” He was destined to be a kind, and not strict, father in his life.

For the sake of letting Qing Qing become better and grow up faster, he could only find her a ‘master’.

“Don’t say this too soon. Till now, your health is still fine. You’ll be able to see the day Shi Qing succeeds and takes charge on her own.” His master, a cunning fox, was doing well in his current political circle. He was in great limelight and it was no less than when he was an officer in the army.

It was not that his master was in such poor health that he was afraid of dying too soon and could not take care of Shi Qing.

Firstly, his master was in poor health. Secondly, it was because he had no time!

If he wanted to do well in politics, he could not rise up the ranks if he did nothing and remained silent after squeezing into the political circle.

His master hoped to focus all his effort and energy on this second career, which was akin to a second romantic relationship. Naturally, there could not be two of him and he thus hoped to find a ‘nanny’ to look after Shi Qing.

Zhai Sheng did not care about what his master’s plans were. However, if his plot landed on him, then sorry, he was not going to cooperate.

“No wonder Qing Qing kept saying that you’re petty.” Having failed in his attempt to pull the strings as Zhai Sheng’s master and his tactic of gaining pity, Shi Peng was unwilling to put up with his pretense anymore. “Alright, I’ll give you a word of advice. Restrain yourself a little. If you really provoke Old Qiao, your matter with Qiao Nan will be off. Regardless of how the Qiao family treats Qiao Nan, Qiao Nan is too soft and has too much conscience. She is destined to take more pain and suffering than others. You don’t care about Old Qiao but she does. Remember. If you love Qiao Nan, don’t do too many things that will put her in a difficult position. However, when she’s hesitant and undecided, you should stand out and decide for her. Don’t let her be bullied. Understand?”

Zhai Sheng smiled too. “Master, you’re being paranoid.”

He did not need to be like a man. He was a man!

When the three in the kitchen brought out the dishes, Shi Peng and Zhai Sheng were facing each other without a word. One was looking jovial while the other looked cold and serious. There was a very strange atmosphere.

“Time to eat.” Qiao Nan was the most daring one. She took a step forward with the dishes and even placed them between Zhai Sheng and Shi Peng to disperse the strange atmosphere between them. “Although the weather is hot, it’s the end of July. It’s nicer to have the food when it’s warm regardless of the season. Quickly have it and don’t waste them. There’s not much rice and dishes. It’s almost just right for the five of us. Don’t leave any leftovers. We can’t keep food in the summertime. Overnight dishes are not good for health.”

One was a soldier who was used to weathering the wind and rain. When he was on a mission, it was so tough that he could skip three meals and even stay in the open.

As such, when Zhai Sheng had the opportunity to rest at home, he should make full use of the time to take care of himself. He should not neglect it just because it was his own body.

If his health were to really suffer due to neglect, it would be too late to regret it when he was old.

Zhai Sheng should keep that in mind. Of course, Shi Peng, who had been ill for many years, had to pay attention to his health too.

These words of Qiao Nan were deliberately targeted at these two old and young ‘patients’.

“What Qiao Nan said is right. It’s so good to have a daughter who is concerned about you. Old Qiao, you’re so fortunate.” Shi Peng, who had been rejected by Zhai Sheng, was not pleased. He started to play some tactics and tricks.

Zhai Sheng pursed his lips. He seemed to be secretly mocking Shi Peng that the latter was really too childish for saying such words at this time.