

## **RTAMM 691**

### Chapter 691 The Cross Fire Between the Men

Shi Peng, who was having fragrant rice in his mouth while picking up and gulping in hot and piping dishes expressed that, twenty years ago, even Comrade Deng (1. Deng Xiaoping was a Chinese politician who was the paramount leader of the People's Republic of China from 1978 until his retirement in 1989.) said that all cats that catch rats are good regardless of the species.

Childish?

How was this childish? He was happy doing this!

“Yes, very fortunate.” Qiao Dongliang first laughed happily, then at the sight of Zhai Sheng, he was reminded that Zhai Sheng would kidnap his daughter to the Zhai family one day. In fact, Zhai Sheng had been thinking of doing just that all the time. Qiao Dongliang could not bring himself to feel happy at the thought of this.

“Dad, have your meal.” Sensing the strong cross fire between the few old and young men, Qiao Nan pretended to feign ignorance.

She peeped at Shi Qing, who had shrunk her neck and moved to one side to have her meal abidingly. Qiao Nan then glared at her. She expected better from Shi Qing. Knowing that these few men were not obedient and liked to bicker, why couldn't she come and help?

Shi Qing smiled in embarrassment. Uncle Qiao was her elder; she could not intervene.

Her father was also her elder. She would be thankful if her father were to intervene less in her matters. When was it her turn to take her father in hand?

As for Brother Zhai, she had never poked her nose into his affairs.

Since she could not convince any of these three men, she might as well move aside and finished her meal. That was the most practical thing to do.

Once Shi Qing surrendered, Qiao Nan was the only one left who could mediate the atmosphere between the three men.

“Eat.” Qiao Dongliang could choose not to give Zhai Sheng face, but he could not do the same to his daughter.

As he took the bowl of rice from Qiao Nan, Qiao Dongliang deliberately sat beside Qiao Nan to increase the distance between Zhai Sheng and her.

The two had been in a relationship for two years. He could not stop them, and neither could he persuade them not to do so.

Nevertheless, before the Zhai family accepted Nan Nan, he had to hold them back. At the very least, he must not let Nan Nan be taken advantage of by Zhai Sheng.

They were both men. Qiao Dongliang thus understood Zhai Sheng more than Qiao Nan did. One had to dote on his own daughter. He had to protect Nan Nan well.

At the sight of this, Zhai Sheng’s face turned black while Shi Peng gloated and smiled.

Zhai Sheng shot a look at Shi Peng. He knew well in his heart the evil humor of his master. He thus pretended to remind a certain someone unintentionally. “Qing Qing, I heard that someone is wooing you in the school recently? Your grades are not a problem usually. You have to grab the opportunity in terms of relationship.”

Shi Qing was pretty and good in her studies. After getting to know Qiao Nan well, she had also enthusiastically started to blend in with the student life in Ping Cheng High School. Of course, it was impossible that no one would be wooing Shi Qing currently.

“...” Shi Qing, who had been silently eating her meal and whose name was suddenly called, stared with her pair of innocent eyes. She did not understand why she had been ‘arowed’.

“Qing Qing?” Shi Peng was quite surprised. “Is there such a matter? Someone is wooing you?”

“Is there?” Shi Qing straightened her neck and questioned back.

Qiao Nan had a headache. “Anyway, I didn’t hear about it.”

Why was it so difficult to have a meal?

“Eat, eat.” It was just a meal. Qiao Dongliang also sensed that it was going astray.

Furthermore, that was not the initial topic. Qiao Dongliang felt very apologetic to have implicated Shi Qing. Hence, he had to temporarily put away his animosity toward Zhai Sheng and eat his meal abidingly.

However, besides Zhai Sheng, everyone felt exhausted after having this meal.

“...” Shi Qing held her slightly overfilled tummy, looking sullen. “Qiao Nan, I’m going back first.” She had to think of how to aid her digestion when she was back home. Otherwise, she would feel bloated.

“Walk a few more rounds in the courtyard.” Qiao Nan reminded. Just by the sight of her, Qiao Nan knew that Shi Qing must have eaten too much.

“Okay.” Shi Qing nodded obediently and then ran out. Shi Qing also felt warm due to the weather.

“Nan Nan, you send Zhai Sheng back.” Qiao Dongliang, who was also suffering a little from indigestion, looked listless.

“...” Qiao Nan pouted and looked at Zhai Sheng. Brother Zhai had a happy meal but everyone else suffered.

Qiao Nan had already been considering whether she should prepare some indigestion medicine at home, in case of recurrence of such situations. Everyone’s tummies were upset except for Brother Zhai’s.

Zhai Sheng, who was in a good mood, only pulled Qiao Nan closer to him. He then walked toward the entrance on his own. “Alright, you don’t need to take today’s matter to heart. There’s no major problem.”

“Really?” Qiao Nan was a little doubtful.

Even if there was no one else with them now, Zhai Sheng still cared very much about how others would see Qiao Nan. He was not as daring as when he was alone with her in the house of the Qiao family. The two were walking very closely side-by-side but they did not hold hands. This was in case others would gossip about Qiao Nan if they were to see them. “Officer Shi is considered as half my master. You’ve not seen it before, but I’ve always been getting along with him in this way.”

It was not an exaggeration to say that their interactions were similar to a tit-for-tat competition.

“...” Qiao Nan could not sort out her thoughts about the problem between Zhai Sheng and Shi Peng. As long as Zhai Sheng said that they were behaving normally, she would not question further. “It’s already so late. After you’re back, won’t Chief Zhai and Auntie Miao be angry?”

“They won’t.” Zhai Sheng clenched his fist and placed it beside his lips as he smiled. “Nan Nan, don’t worry so much. There’s still one year. One year later today, our marriage report would have been approved.”

“Fine. You’ll say no problem to whatever I ask you. Brother Zhai, did something good happen? You’re in such a good mood.” Qiao Nan had no other way with Zhai Sheng.

“Yes.”

“What good things?”

“Zhai Hua had a quarrel with her boyfriend.”

“...” Qiao Nan held her head. She was not aware and could not possibly be aware of the good things that Brother Zhai encountered. However, Brother Zhai was definitely not his normal self today. If they were still having dinner, she would certainly have indigestion too.

At the sight of Qiao Nan’s sullen face, Zhai Sheng rubbed her head. He did not explain further. It was not an appropriate time to say it now. “You’re afraid of the hot weather. Go back first.”

“Okay.” In front of Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan had always been acting according to his orders. It was as if she was a soldier under his wing. “Brother Zhai, drive slowly when you’re on the road home. I’m going back.”

“Okay.” After he saw Qiao Nan enter the main door and close it, Zhai Sheng got into his car and drove off.

When Zhai Sheng arrived home, of course the Zhai family members had not gone to bed. Zhai Hua was especially pulling a long face. She had been enduring her anger as she sat on the chair and stared at the main door resentfully until Zhai Sheng was back.

Once Zhai Sheng arrived home, Miao Jing asked in a concerned manner, “Do you want to take a shower first? Hua Hua, she...” She had been in this position, sitting and staring at the door, for a long time.

She asked Hua Hua what happened but she refused to say anything. Hence, she could only feel worried.

#### Chapter 692 Held a Grudge On Behalf of Qiao Nan

“Mom, there’s no issue.” Zhai Sheng changed his shoes and removed his shirt. He only took a glance at Zhai Hua before returning to his bedroom to bathe.

After bathing, when Zhai Sheng came out from the toilet in his boxers, Zhai Hua had been waiting with a long face for some time.

Zhai Sheng knitted his brows. He took out a T-shirt from his closet and put it on. He then sat on the bed and looked at Zhai Hua in the eye. “Speak if you have something to say. Scram if you don’t.”

“Zhai Sheng, am I still your biological sister? Just because of Qiao Nan, you’re not giving me any face?” Zhai Hua was really unhappy. Since she was a child, she had never asked Zhai Sheng for any help. Yet, she was rejected the first time she did. On top of that, it was a matter regarding Wei De. Zhai Hua’s unhappiness was thus amplified.

Zhai Hua flared up but Zhai Sheng was not afraid of her. “Is that so? Then, should I settle old scores with you? To count how many times you have plotted against me, your biological younger brother, because of an outsider?”

Having said that, Zhai Sheng’s sullen face seemed to have lingering anger.

Zhai Hua was a little guilt-stricken. “Isn’t that over already? As humans, we have to move on. Let bygones be bygones. Is settling old scores meaningful?”

“Do you think this excuse of yours will work?” Zhai Sheng crossed his arms and shot an eagle eye at Zhai Hua. “Zhai Hua, you should know that your tactic doesn’t work on me. I’ve already told you before that I don’t really look up to Wei De.”

Yes, Zhai Sheng not only knew that Zhai Hua was in a relationship but also knew that her boyfriend was actually a junior soldier in the army.

“What’s not good about him!” Zhai Hua was unconvinced. “Just because he’s an ordinary soldier and not even a platoon leader, you are judging him just by this point alone and disapproving of my relationship. Then, what about Qiao Nan? How good is Qiao Nan? Yes, you’re the one who lent the Qiao family money, but it’s still a fact that they are in so much debt. In comparison, Wei De has never used my money or owed me any! On what grounds can you be together with Qiao Nan while I can’t be with Wei De?”

Zhai Sheng sneered. Could one Wei De be compared to his Nan Nan? “Wei De has joined the army for a number of years. If not because of you, given Wei De’s situation, he would have retired long ago. Nan Nan is just a student now. If you give Nan Nan the period of time that Wei De spent in the army, do you think Nan Nan’s situation will be the same as today wherein you could look down on her?”

Zhai Hua could not answer that question.

Zhai Hua knew how hardworking and intelligent Qiao Nan was.

Furthermore, Qiao Nan’s personal qualities would suffice. In addition, she had Lin Yuankang as her master. When Qiao Nan graduated from school and stepped into society, Qiao Nan would definitely not going to be a nobody like now. She would be a woman of substance.

This was the truth that was irrefutable.

In short, although Qiao Nan was still a student now, Zhai Hua was certain that the road ahead of Qiao Nan would not be bad even if she did not rely on Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family.

“In terms of family situation, yes, Wei De and Nan Nan are similar. But when you talk about the individual, how can Wei De be compared to Nan Nan? Still the same saying, if you want me to help, impossible. He didn’t know how to grab the opportunities and resorted to cheap and dark tricks. I can’t take such a soldier under my wing. If you really think that Wei De is so good, I’ll give you a chance. Dad already knows the matter between Nan Nan and me for one to two years. I didn’t keep dad in the dark as I feel that Nan Nan is good. Dad guessed it too. Until now, dad hasn’t done anything overboard to deal with Nan Nan and

me.”

“You should understand dad’s stand. At least, Nan Nan, as an individual, is acceptable to dad. Similarly, since your Wei De is so outstanding, he should not be afraid of being tested by dad. Dad is at home. Go and tell dad now that his only daughter is in love and her partner is Wei De. See dad’s reaction then. If you’re afraid that dad won’t agree, don’t be anxious. Dad did not agree to my relationship with Nan Nan in the beginning too. As long as Wei De is a true talent as you said, he will be able to gain dad’s approval eventually.”

Hence, there was no use for Zhai Hua to work on him. He would never agree to let an individual like Wei De come under him.

“Having said so much, you’re just bearing a grudge that Wei De attended Qiu Chenxi’s classes instead of Qiao Nan’s classes during last summer when Qiao Nan taught in the army camp. You don’t see eye to eye with Wei De as you’re on Qiao Nan’s side.” Zhai Hua avoided answering Zhai Sheng’s question and was stubborn with her own views. “You feel that Wei De is not giving you face but you can’t blame Wei De. He still thinks that Qiu Chenxi is your fiancée. The reason he attended Qiu Chenxi’s classes was actually because of you. He wanted to give face to the Zhai family.”

“You believe this kind of excuse?” Zhai Sheng sneered. “No wonder Nan Nan said that a woman in love has no rationality to speak of.”

Hence, he and Nan Nan were truly in a false relationship

“In what way am I irrational!” Zhai Hua refused to admit.

Zhai Sheng let out a deep breath. In his heart, he felt increasingly dissatisfied with Wei De. “Let me ask you. If you were Wei De and in Wei De’s shoes, do you think it’s more important for you to work on improving your own qualities and abilities or bother about that superficial issue of giving face?”

“...” Zhai Hua was speechless once again because there would only be one outcome leading to this question of Zhai Sheng.

If Wei De thought that superficial matter such as giving face was important to both Zhai Hua and the Zhai family, it could only mean that Wei De was, in fact, someone who looked good but had no substance right from the start.

At that time, Qiu Chenxi's situation had hit rock bottom. Only about twenty people attended her classes.

As such, it would not make any difference to have just one more student in her class. Even if Wei De had intended to increase the numbers, it would not have any effect.

Wei De looked good but had no substance. Moreover, he did not use his brain. The way he gave face was not worth anything.

Instead of wasting his time on Qiu Chenxi, he might as well go to Qiao Nan and learn something. Not to mention others, he could avoid being out of touch with his comrades so that he would not be completely ignorant about what others had learned.

With this, Wei De might even gain something. On the contrary, he would not achieve anything by attending Qiu Chenxi's classes.

Wei De could not even analyze such an obvious situation. It could only mean one thing: Wei De lacked intelligence.

Nevertheless, Zhai Hua praised Wei De in front of Zhai Sheng, saying Wei De was very smart, had a good foundation in the military skills, and was willing to serve the citizens and contribute to the army. It was just that he lacked an opportunity all this while.

Zhai Hua described Wei De as if he was so rare and out of this world, yet he did such a stupid thing. That did not tally at all, did it?

If Wei De was not stupid and brainless, and yet, he insisted on attending Qiu Chenxi's classes until the end, the reason would be something worth pondering over.



## Chapter 693 Poor Personal Qualities

Zhai Hua was infuriated, yet she could not find anything to retort Zhai Sheng with. “Are you going to look down on Wei De just because of this matter? This is already bygone. It has been a year since then. There’s nothing much to bring up anymore. Won’t it do as long as Wei De cherishes his opportunities from now on? You must know that people will change. It’s wrong of you to discriminate. Did the leaders of our organization teach you to be like that?”

Zhai Hua had a phobia regarding this matter as well.

Nevertheless, Wei De had explained it many times to Zhai Hua, and Zhai Hua finally accepted it.

Since Zhai Hua had accepted Wei De’s explanation, she could not accept Zhai Sheng’s suspicions toward Wei De.

“Then, how much change has occurred in Wei De that will be obvious to me and even make me acknowledge him?” Zhai Sheng was annoyed.

If one wished to progress, sure, they just had to show their performance.

“He lacks personal qualities and did not perform well enough. Regardless, I still have to give him a chance? Are you saying that, as a soldier, he doesn’t need to do anything but wait for the opportunity to fall from the sky and into his bowl? Am I the one discriminating against him or do you need me to give him special treatment?” Zhai Sheng snorted loudly. “Zhai Hua, do you know what you’re doing now? You’re getting in through the back door!!!”

At the end of the conversation, Zhai Sheng’s tone sounded even angrier.

When Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua joined the army, the Zhai family had never gone through the back door or pulled any strings for this pair of siblings, not to mention for Wei De.

Zhai Sheng could assume the role of regiment commander at such a young age because, firstly, he was outstanding enough. Secondly, Shi Peng had the heart to nurture him for the position. Zhai Sheng was at the current stage of his career mostly based on his own effort. It had almost nothing to do with the Zhai family.

When Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua joined the army many years ago, they did not receive any special treatment either.

Yet, Wei De, who was not related to the Zhai family in any way, wanted Zhai Sheng to let him in through the back door. How could Zhai Sheng not feel angry?

Wei De was an outsider. Zhai Sheng did not wish to talk about it but Zhai Hua was his own family member. This fact intensified his fury. “Zhai Hua, didn’t you say that Wei De is a capable individual? I’ll give you another suggestion. Transfer him to Zhu Chengqi’s troops. Gold will shine no matter where it is. If I don’t have a good sense of judgment, there will surely be someone who does and is able to see Wei De’s capability. When that time comes, Wei De, this prodigy, will have met his lucky star. He can then go very far. He doesn’t need to continue to endure the suffering at my

place.”

He had boasted so greatly about his abilities, yet, at the end of the day, Zhai Sheng had to help him open up the back door. Zhai Sheng definitely would not agree to this.

“You, can’t you take it that you’re helping me, your sister? You’re twenty-four years old but I’m already twenty-six. Wei De is older than me by a year. Me, me and him...” Zhai Hua was not worried about being left on the shelves. She was not anxious to get married either. However, with her age, how long more could she dawdle? With Wei De’s age, she could not delay any further.

Wei De told Zhai Hua that if he could show any results, he would not be ashamed to ask the Zhai family for Zhai Hua’s hand in marriage and would have the confidence to make Zhai Hua happy.

He was a man. He desired pride as well. His own wife was a deputy battalion commander but he was only an ordinary soldier. Most probably, he would have to retire from the army that he was most passionate about in a few years’ time.

Coupled with the family status of the Zhai family, Wei De truly did not have the confidence to be together with a woman like Zhai Hua.

Nevertheless, he really loved Zhai Hua. For the sake of their future and so that they could be married earlier, he was prepared to give up his life and everything else to fight for a military achievement and to rise through the ranks.

Wei De even said that, unless he assumed the role of a company commander, he would continue to strive for it. Even if he had to marry late, have children late, and garner the resentment of his parents, he would drag his feet until he was over thirty years old and married Zhai Hua only after he became a company commander.

“Wei De has four sisters and he is the only son. His parents are not young anymore and they are waiting to carry...” Zhai Hua could not bring herself to say the word ‘grandchild’. It was too embarrassing.

Zhai Sheng’s fingers gave a few hard knocks on the table. “So, you’re basically asking me to get him in through the back door and give him a chance. Previously, you put in so many good words for him. Is it meaningful? He’s not capable but I have to help him cheat and then fulfill your wish to be a couple? Zhai Hua, why don’t you ask me to bring him along in my mission and let him follow closely behind me so that he could pick up some military achievements before simply promoting him to a company commander? Both of you can then get married. Thereafter, he can continue to do the same in the future?”

Ridiculous!

“Zhai Hua, you have such thoughts and ideas. Do you still remember what your surname is? You don’t have the confidence to bring this matter up to Dad. Hence, you could only come and find me. Zhai Hua, no matter how you justify it, you can’t hide the fraud behind this. Zhai Hua, I’m very disappointed with you. Do you know why I am unwilling to give Wei De a chance and even more unwilling to see both of you together? Zhai Hua, reflect on it. Think about what you have become after you’ve been with Wei De for two years!”

When Zhai Sheng returned from the army, he had thought that this matter was already over.

He did not expect that Zhai Hua had not given up. She even chased to the house to talk about the matter regarding Wei De.

Zhai Hua was speechless after being questioned by Zhai Sheng. That stubborn face of hers was flustered in embarrassment. She gritted her teeth but could not say a word.

Zhai Hua was not confident. She was well aware that this matter was not honest and not something to be proud of. It was not presentable.

Zhai Sheng was her biological younger brother. They had been on good terms since they were children. Therefore, she dared to look for Zhai Sheng and plead for an opportunity for Wei De. However, before Zhai Yaohui, her biological father that she had never been that close to since she was a child, Zhai Hua would not even mention a word about Wei De.

“Zhai Sheng, it’s also because I have no other alternatives. Given this situation, I can only come and ask you for help.” Zhai Hua revealed a smile that looked worse than a cry. “I know it’s not good for me to do this. It’s even considered as flouting the disciplinary rules and merit of the army and organization.”

“It’s good that you know. Didn’t you say that Wei De aims to be a company commander? And when he’s a company commander, he will then ask for your hand in marriage and marry you? I only have one word in regard to opening a back door for him: impossible. Nevertheless, if he really has that aspiration and achieves his goals based on his diligence and effort, not to mention that he’s now twenty-seven years old, even if he becomes a company commander at the age of thirty-seven, I’ll help you with this when it comes to dad and mom!” This was the greatest help that he could render as a younger brother.

Zhai Hua smiled bitterly. “I can wait. I’m not afraid of getting married when I’m older but Wei De’s parents can’t wait. Wei De’s mother is in poor health and she was hospitalized recently. Wei De sent all his money to his mother to pay for the medical expenses. Wei De is very worried about his mother. His mother has been yearning to see her grandchild being born while she’s still alive.”

She did not mind but she had to consider the elderly in the Wei family. What if, what if Wei De’s mother were to pass away due to a major illness?

Chapter 694 Beg Someone Else Instead

As a daughter-in-law, she could not possibly let the elderly leave the world with regrets, could she?

“So serious?” Zhai Sheng lowered his eyelids.

“Yes!” She had given all the money that she had on hand to Wei De for his mother’s surgery. Not a single cent of it was left. Could it not be serious?

“If his mother is really so ill, even if I pull the strings for him, will he be able to rise to the position of company commander, marry you, give birth to a child at the fastest speed, and even ensure that the first grandchild is a son when his mother is alive?”

“No, no, no. It’s not like that. Wei De is a soldier. He doesn’t have the outdated thinking of favoring males over females. Even if it’s a daughter, he will love her all the same.” Zhai Hua had seen many families who favored males over females. Hence, she was very concerned about this aspect.

Zhai Hua felt the Zhai family also had such biased thinking.

Otherwise, why would her parents give birth to Zhai Sheng after her?

After Zhai Sheng was born, her grandfather was very good to Zhai Sheng. He was more enthusiastic to impart his capabilities to Zhai Sheng than to her.

Zhai Hua and Zhai Sheng were on very good terms. They were also biological siblings. Hence, Zhai Hua felt that there was no need for her to take these issues to heart.

“Then, have you assessed the duration that I mentioned just now? Given Wei De’s current situation, he wishes to be promoted from an ordinary soldier to a company commander. Even if he’s very lucky and makes many contributions quickly, it’s impossible to achieve this objective in less than three to five years. After you give birth, that will be six years later. If his mother’s illness can drag on for six years, I can promise you that he can come and ask for your hand in marriage when he’s a platoon leader. He doesn’t even need to wait until he assumes the role of a company commander. What do you think?”

“You, at the end of the day, you just refuse to help me, right?” Zhai Hua stomped her feet in anxiety.

Wei De was also strong-tempered. He was not willing to let her help. She had spent a great deal of effort to convince him to let her do so.

She had settled Wei De. Never did she expect that things would go so awry at Zhai Sheng’s end, when Zhai Sheng should be the one that was the easiest to handle. She had already promised Wei De. What if Wei De misunderstood her or flared up if she failed at this?

Instead of feeling angry, Zhai Sheng laughed. “Having said so much, you just want to let Wei De take the easy route and help him pull strings, don’t you? Zhai Hua, it seems like you’re not that confident about Wei De. Or perhaps, the truth is that he doesn’t have much capability. He can’t even assume the role of a platoon leader through his own effort in three to five years’ time. Zhai Hua, you have really taken a liking to a ‘talented’ soldier!”

“You!” Zhai Hua was so angered by that sarcasm of Zhai Sheng that she was speechless. “Fine. Take it that I’m wasting my breath. If you don’t help me, so be it. I don’t believe that Wei De and I can’t get married soon without your help!”

“Fine!” Zhai Sheng looked relaxed. “Then, Wei De and you have to put in more effort.”

When Zhai Hua left Zhai Sheng’s bedroom, she slammed the door loudly, creating a big commotion.

Zhai Yaohui, who coincidentally came out from the study room, heard the loud bang when the door closed and frowned. “Zhai Hua, how did you close the door!”

The house rules of the Zhai family did not allow Zhai Hua to behave in such a way, such as slamming the door so hard. Even when Miao Jing was angry previously, she did not slam the door this hard.

“I, my hands were suddenly...” Zhai Hua’s face turned pale. She only felt that she had been down on her luck today.

She had already promised Wei De. She thought that, given her relationship with Zhai Sheng, Zhai Sheng would definitely help her if she were to make this request.

Furthermore, after she was married to Wei De, Wei De would be Zhai Sheng’s brother-in-law. Everyone would belong to the same family in the future. Actually, the Zhai family would eventually benefit as well if they were to help Wei De more.

She had never expected that Zhai Sheng would reject her flatly without hesitation as soon as she brought up the matter.

She had followed Zhai Sheng from the army camp to home, gave him so many reasons, and spoke about difficulties. However, Zhai Sheng still refused to be more understanding. In the end, it was all in vain.

The person who was supposed to be the easiest to settle did not behave as planned. Zhai Hua was extremely anxious. She was afraid that Wei De’s mother’s health would take a turn for the worse.

When she vouched in front of Wei De before, Wei De told Zhai Hua that he was willing to take this shameful path for the sake of her mother and Zhai Hua.

If things went smoothly, he would immediately call his mother to tell her that he had a girlfriend and they would get married in a few years' time. He would appease his mother and calm her mood for the time being.

After all, her son already had a girlfriend. Would it take long to get married? Upon his marriage, a son would be in sight.

Now that Zhai Sheng did not agree, Zhai Hua could not explain it to Wei De.

As it was rare that she did something as such, Zhai Hua already felt very bad and awkward at heart. It was fine that she did not succeed. But when she vented a little of her frustration and showed some temper, she was caught red-handed by the head of the family.

At this moment, Zhai Hua felt that no one would be more unlucky than her in this world.

“A spur of the moment? Do you think your excuse makes sense?” Zhai Yaohui did not believe that the other Zhai family members had such a tendency.

When Zhai Yaohui said this, it made Zhai Hua recall the tone and words of Zhai Sheng when the latter spoke to her just now. Father and son were simply alike. Their strong sense of righteousness and justice made it sound as if she was the only villain in the whole of the Zhai family. “Dad, there won't be a next time.”

“Okay,” Zhai Yaohui replied. He took a glance at the door of Zhai Sheng's bedroom. Obviously, the two siblings had quarreled.

As parents, when his children quarreled, Zhai Yaohui would not intervene too much. According to past experiences, the siblings would reconcile very quickly without the need for any persuasion.

As relatives, friends, and lovers, how could there possibly be no arguments as interaction time increased? Hence, Zhai Yaohui did not take this matter to heart.

“Dad, I'll be leaving first, okay?”

“Okay,” Zhai Yaohui replied. He then saw Zhai Hua walk toward the main entrance. “It’s already so late. Where are you going?”

Zhai Hua was momentarily stunned. She then recalled that it was already seven o’clock when Zhai Sheng arrived home. After having such a long conversation with Zhai Sheng in his bedroom, it was now eight o’clock in the evening.

She really had been in a confused state after being angered by Zhai Sheng and had forgotten the time. “I’m going back to my room to bathe and sleep.”

Having said that, Zhai Hua did not bother about Zhai Yaohui’s reaction. She just lowered her head and returned to her room.

Zhai Yaohui looked at the clock. “Sleeping at eight o’clock?” He did not know what the siblings were bickering about that caused Zhai Hua to go to sleep at eight o’clock.

Enduring the anger and worries in her heart, Zhai Hua bathed and lay in bed early. However, she did not sleep even after a long time. Instead, she was in a daze, sighing continuously.

At the sight of the moon that was high up in the sky and resembled a sword, Zhai Hua felt even worse. She felt very bad. Although the fan was clearly blowing at her directly, her heart was on fire. She tossed and turned as if she was cooking some pancakes.

Zhai Hua hoped that she would see the dawn of light soon. She had to think of a way to settle Wei De’s matter. Although begging Zhai Sheng didn’t work, she could still beg someone else!

#### Chapter 695 To Persuade or Not

Finally, Zhai Hua survived until the morning. She then got up from the bed and washed up. After combing her hair in a slipshod manner, she wanted to head to the house of the Qiao family.

As she grew up with Zhai Sheng, she knew that if she could not beg Zhai Sheng and yet wanted him to help, putting her father aside, the only person that she could look for now was Qiao Nan.

In Zhai Hua’s heart, Wei De’s words impacted her more than that of her parents. Similarly, Qiao Nan’s words would definitely matter more to Zhai Sheng than that of Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing



Unfortunately, before Zhai Hua could leave the house, she saw Zhai Sheng drive away from home.

Zhai Hua then quickly got hold of the auntie. “Where is Zhai Sheng going so early in the morning?” He even drove out. Did Zhai Sheng have anything on?

“I think he’s going to the house of the Qiao family to assist in something.” Last night, when Zhai Sheng informed Miao Jing, the auntie happened to hear a little of the conversation.

“The house of the Qiao family...” Zhai Sheng was going to the house of the Qiao family now. In that case, she certainly could not make her way there now. If she were to bump into Zhai Sheng, she could not talk to Qiao Nan about the matter. She was also fearful that Zhai Sheng would interrupt and object before she could even speak about the matter.

“Miss, is there any matter? If not, I’m going marketing.”

“Nothing, go ahead.” Zhai Hua let go of the auntie. She sat at home and waited quietly for Zhai Sheng to come back. Once Zhai Sheng was back, she would then look for Qiao Nan.

Anyway, it was the summer vacation. She still had a few days of leave. She did not believe that she could not get hold of Qiao Nan.

“Child, learn well in the future.” Coming out from the land authorities, the two elderly teachers looked at Qiao Nan with smiling eyes.

On the other hand, Qiao Nan felt very embarrassed throughout the event. Her little face was as red as an apple. Although Zhai Sheng had counseled her on this before—to take someone else’s things at no cost—this was the first time it happened in Qiao Nan’s two lifetimes. “I, I will.”

How could the two elderly teachers not tell how embarrassed Qiao Nan was?

The more embarrassed Qiao Nan was, the more it proved how good-natured she was.

To be able to give the house to such a child, the elderly couple really did not feel shortchanged. Their children could also make some publicity from this matter and derive some interests for their own company.

“Then, Principal Meng, we’ll be leaving first.” After settling the matter regarding the house, the two elderly teachers were going to leave Ping Cheng and return to their hometown.

In actual fact, the elderly couple was busy with the affairs in Ping Cheng for the sake of their children. They only intended for one thing, and that was to return to their place of origin.

“Take your time.” Principal Meng was full of high spirits recently. He even seemed to be floating as he walked. “Qiao Nan, congratulations.”

“Thank you, Principal Meng.” Qiao Nan gave a bow to Principal Meng. She had to trouble Principal Meng to make the trip today.

Principal Meng waved his hand casually. “No issue. In half a month’s time, you have to make another trip on your own to collect the title deed. Keep it properly thereafter.”

“Rest assured, Principal Meng. I will certainly do so.”

“Then, fine. If there’s nothing else, I’ll leave first.” Principal Meng looked at Zhai Sheng a few times before leaving.

Initially, Principal Meng even called the house of the Qiao family specially to ask if he should pick Qiao Nan up. Qiao Nan said to meet him directly at the entrance of the land authorities as someone would drive her there. At that time, Principal Meng was surprised. After thinking, he assumed that Shi Qing would be the one sending Qiao Nan to the place.

It was only until their arrival that Principal Meng discovered that a big ‘boss’ had sent Qiao Nan over.

Principal Meng was well aware of who Zhai Sheng was. The Zhai family members were rare prominent characters that the people in Ping Cheng were proud of.

Throughout the entire process, Principal Meng had been quietly observing Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan.

Although Zhai Sheng had not said much all this while, Principal Meng discovered that Zhai Sheng was the one who took care of all the complex and mundane administrative matters for Qiao Nan throughout the entire procedure.

Even the stamp duty that was needed came from Zhai Sheng's pocket.

Even though Zhai Sheng mentioned briefly that Qiao Nan's money was with him, Principal Meng was able to tell from the look of surprise on Qiao Nan's face that the money belonged to Zhai Sheng. Qiao Nan did not pass her money to Zhai Sheng

Zhai Sheng was so concerned about Qiao Nan's matter. He was traveling to and fro, forking out money and putting in so much effort. What was the reason?

The relationship between the two of them was not ordinary!

At the thought that Qiao Nan was going on to her third year, as the principal, he felt that he should persuade Qiao Nan that it was not good to be involved in a romantic relationship at such a young age. However, when he thought about Zhai Sheng's identity, Principal Meng could not bring himself to say that.

To Principal Meng, the process of the transfer of ownership today was undoubtedly slow and difficult.

The good thing was that throughout such a long procedure, Principal Meng confirmed that Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng had been together for some time.

Nevertheless, he had seen himself Qiao Nan's performance while she was in her second year. This had clearly proved that although Qiao Nan was in a romantic relationship at such a young age, she knew what she was doing. At the very least, her studies were not affected because of the relationship. In particular, the college entrance examination this time was sufficient to prove this point.

Since he had confirmed that Qiao Nan would not neglect her studies due to the relationship, as her principal and an outsider, Principal Meng certainly would not say much.

In the past, Principal Meng even pitied Qiao Nan and felt that Qiao Nan was certainly unfortunate and pitiful.

However, Principal Meng discovered today that Qiao Nan was the truly fortunate one. Not to mention having received a house for free, Qiao Nan would become Cinderella if she married Zhai Sheng.

“Brother Zhai...” When everyone had left, Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. “I’ve only repaid you a few hundred yuan for my dad’s surgery expenses. Now, I’m going to owe you more.” When was she going to pay back all her debts to Brother Zhai?

“No hurry. There’s a lot of time. You can return it slowly.” Of course Zhai Sheng would not take issue with it. If he did, he would not have guessed that Qiao Nan was not aware that stamp duty was needed for the transfer of ownership. That was the reason he prepared the money beforehand.

In the previous life, Qiao Nan had not purchased a house before. She also had not gone through any transfer of ownership. Hence, she did not have any knowledge in this area.

Fortunately, Zhai Sheng was around. Otherwise, Qiao Nan would have to seek Principal Meng’s help today.

“The sun is quite strong now. I’ll send you back.” Zhai Sheng opened the door of the car and asked Qiao Nan to get into the car. He personally sent Qiao Nan back. Henceforth, the small courtyard could really be called the house of the Qiao family. Moreover, it was the house of Qiao Nan alone. “The fastest time the property title deed will be ready is a week. I’ll accompany you to collect it when the time comes.”

“Do you have time?” Qiao Nan asked. “If not, I can go alone as I already know the way there.”

“Yes,” Zhai Sheng replied without hesitation.

“There’s no issue at the army?” It did not seem so. Officer Shi had already left the army. Even if someone had replaced him, as the regiment commander in the army, Brother Zhai would not have the time to leave the army.

Zhai Sheng patted Qiao Nan's head. "Don't forget. There's still the political commissar."

## Chapter 696 My Little Devil

There was the political commissar at the camp. Nothing would go wrong.

The most important thing was that Zhai Sheng did not want to go back as he had no wish to see the man named Wei De.

"Oh." Qiao Nan tidied her hair. For the past two years, Zhai Sheng had the habit of tousling her hair as if she was a dog. She had been used to it and would no longer retaliate. "Then, now you are..."

"I won't disturb you from your studies." Zhai Sheng sighed. True enough, his future wife was too young, still in school. In fact, she was busier than him and had no time to date. He had indeed been in a false relationship. "Also, don't be distracted by Shi Qing. You are in the humanities class, whereas she is in the science class. Both of you won't have much to discuss or learn together."

He felt gloomy that Shi Qing spent more time with Qiao Nan than he did. Even though Shi Qing was a woman, he still felt unhappy about it.

Qiao Nan curled the corners of her lips. "Brother Zhai, have you forgotten that when Shi Qing first arrived in Ping Cheng, she was my love rival." Shi Qing's original intention was to fight for Brother Zhai's affection.

"Ha." Zhai Sheng sneered. Shi Qing was a troublemaker. He did not care what Shi Qing's original intention was, but right now, she was his love rival!

He must show her what he was capable of. Otherwise, she would not have any self-awareness.

"Okay, go back and study hard." There was still one more year to go. He would submit the marriage report in June, and by July, he would be able to be engaged to Nan Nan.

Qiao Nan knew that Zhai Sheng must be thinking of submitting the marriage report and their engagement next year. She could not bear to remind him that Auntie Miao was still kept in the dark about their relationship.

After keeping it from her for such a long time, Qiao Nan no longer knew how to tell Miao Jing about their relationship.

“Brother Zhai, I will go back now. Be careful when you drive back home. The weather is very hot now. You can have a nap when you are back at home. You will feel energized after the nap.” As a study maniac, Qiao Nan tried her best to allocate rest time for herself even though she usually spent most of her time on her studies. She could not go without ninety minutes of an afternoon nap.

Otherwise, summertime would be even more unbearable for her.

“Alright, keep your things well.” Zhai Sheng reminded Qiao Nan not to forget about the family register.

“I will.” She would not keep it with herself. Once her father reached home today, she would return it to him.

“By the way, there is one more thing that I have to tell you before I leave.”

“What is it?”

“If Zhai Hua comes looking for you, no matter what she says to you, you don’t have to care or agree to help. Do you understand?” There was a flicker in Zhai Sheng’s eyes. He knew what Zhai Hua would be up to.

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Since a young age, all the men that Zhai Hua knew were her friends. She was not interested in any of them.

Because of this, Zhai Sheng knew that now that Zhai Hua was in a relationship, she would invest all her feelings into the relationship.

Since Zhai Hua was not able to get his help, she would definitely not give up.

Right now, apart from his family, his Achilles' heel was Nan Nan. As long as Zhai Hua still had her wits about her, she would definitely seek Nan Nan for help.

“Oh.” Qiao Nan felt puzzled. “Why will Sister Zhai Hua look for me? Is she here to quarrel with me?”

Ever since what happened last time, Qiao Nan had never seen Zhai Hua. It was a bad experience, and the two of them had a tacit understanding to avoid each other. When Miao Jing wanted to send stuff to the Qiao family, Zhai Sheng would volunteer to go, while Zhai Hua would come up with excuses so as not to go.

“Didn't you ask me about her relationship yesterday? She will come looking for you because of her boyfriend. Since I refused to help her, she can only ask you for help.” Zhai Sheng had no intention to keep it from Qiao Nan. Unless Zhai Hua did not look for her, she would find out eventually. However, he was sure that she would look for Qiao Nan.

“Oh, I understand.” Qiao Nan curled the corners of her lips, feeling helpless. If possible, she did not wish to see Zhai Hua.

The experience of their last meeting was unpleasant, and she intended to come for such a reason this time. Indeed, desperate times called for desperate measures. Sister Zhai Hua must be at her wits' end.

She had yet to be welcomed by the Zhai family, so how could she possibly help in such matters?

“Rest assured. I will not be muddleheaded, and it's not up to me to promise her anything. Is Sister Zhai Hua at her wits' end?” It was an unwise move to ask her for help.

Zhai Sheng sneered bluntly. “She is indeed stupid. She has been carried away by love and no longer sees reasons. Alright, I have no wish to talk about her. I will make a move first. If you find it a bother, you can pretend that you're not at home.”

After saying that, Zhai Sheng felt it was quite unrealistic to do. Things would be awkward for Qiao Nan and Zhai Hua if she climbed over the wall into the Qiao family's residence and saw Qiao Nan in the house.

“Forget it. Shi Qing is in luck. After I leave, bring your books and go to the Shi family’s residence to study. Do you understand?”

Shi Qing was in luck? What was he talking about?

“Alright, I will go to Shi Qing’s house to do my homework.” She would do all she could to avoid Sister Zhai Hua.

After she watched Zhai Sheng leave, Qiao Nan turned to go back home. She put the documents aside and carried a stack of homework in her hands, getting ready to go to Shi Qing’s house.

Qiao Nan was just about to go out when Shi Qing ran into Zhai Hua at the doorway of the Qiao family’s residence. “What brings you

here?”

Zhai Hua shot an angry look at Shi Qing. “Such a heartless girl. Have you forgotten who brought you around and trained with you when you were in the camp and your dad had no time for you?”

Shi Qing still harbored grudges for what happened a year ago. Besides, she was not the party concerned!

“These are two different matters. As long as you still listen to reasons and are a good sister and soldier, I will treat you nicely. It’s nothing personal. Sister Zhai Hua, don’t try to use this on me.” Shi Qing explained that she only did what was right.

Zhai Hua looked upward, at a loss for words. “Step aside. I am not here to look for you. I am here for Qiao Nan. You can rest assured that I am not here to quarrel with her.” Today, she would not quarrel with Qiao Nan. Instead, she would sing her praises. Qiao Nan was the only person who could help her.

“Then, what are you doing here?” Shi Qing sized up Zhai Hua. “Are you here to apologize to Qiao Nan? Your apology is a year late.”



“Hey, my little devil. I am in a hurry. I have a serious matter to talk to Qiao Nan about. I am busy. If you are afraid that I will bully Qiao Nan, you can sit by the side. I won’t chase you away!” She had waited for a long while before Zhai Sheng left and Qiao Nan came back home.

If Zhai Sheng returned home and realized that she was not at home, given his intelligence, he would guess that she was here to look for Qiao Nan.

Therefore, she must persuade Qiao Nan to help her before Zhai Sheng realized that she was not at home and came to stop her.

### Chapter 697 What Was Your Boyfriend Lacking In?

Zhai Hua was in a rush, but Shi Qing was out to make trouble for her. Zhai Hua was so frustrated that she wanted to give Shi Qing a punch.

When Shi Qing was young, she was a cute and obedient younger sister. Why did she turn out to be like this when she grew up?

“Alright, I will listen by the side.” Shi Qing did not intend to leave. She had to keep a watch on Zhai Hua. Qiao Nan was too soft-hearted. She was defenseless in front of the Zhai family.

Since Shi Qing had said so, Zhai Hua could not send her away. The three of them entered the Qiao family’s residence.

As the owner, Qiao Nan had no choice but to pour three cups of tea for her guests and herself. “Sister Zhai Hua, what brings you here today?”

“Can you do me a favor?” Zhai Hua put the cup aside and sounded anxious.

Shi Qing was amused. “Sister Zhai Hua, are you kidding? Last time, you looked down on Qiao Nan and felt that she was taking advantage of your family. It is good enough that Qiao Nan did not ask your family for help. Now, you want her to help you. Did I hear it wrong or did you make a mistake?”

It had only been a year. Was Sister Zhai Hua hitting herself in her own face?

Zhai Hua blushed. She knew that she was eating her own words. But she had no other choice.

Furthermore, it was not that Qiao Nan was capable hence she sought her help. It was because Zhai Sheng valued her that she had to ask her for help. “This is what happened. Recently, I am in a relationship, but my boyfriend is not given the chance to prove himself. I hope you can bring this up to Zhai Sheng. In the future, we will be one family. It will be good to take into account each other’s feelings. The most important thing is that my boyfriend’s mom is not in good health. She is getting on in years and wishes for nothing but to see her grandson in this life.”

Qiao Nan curled her lips. “Sister Zhai Hua, according to what you said, you just have to marry your boyfriend, right?”

“That’s right. The two of you can get married. Qiao Nan cannot help you with that.” Shi Qing nodded.

“How should I put it?” Zhai Hua was embarrassed to talk about Wei De’s temper, especially in front of outsiders. “My boyfriend is an arrogant man. Qiao Nan, you should be able to understand his situation. I come from a good family background and he has high self-esteem. He is worried that if he marries me, other people will say that he is unworthy of me and the Zhai family. At the same time, he also wants to prove his ability and let my family know that he will definitely give me happiness. Therefore, his plan is to wait until he is promoted to company commander before we talk about marriage.”

“Sister Zhai Hua, you are the deputy battalion commander now, aren’t you?” Qiao Nan touched her chin. It was no wonder that Brother Zhai would remind her in advance. It turned out that Sister Zhai Hua wanted her boyfriend to get in through the back door with Brother Zhai’s help.

Zhai Hua flushed in embarrassment. “Yes.”

Qiao Nan was blunt. “When he just started to date you, was your rank higher than his? Why is it that he did not feel the need to be promoted to a company commander before dating you? And now that the two of you are discussing marriage, why would he suddenly have this idea? It is not an easy task to get promoted from an ordinary soldier to a company commander. It not only takes time, but he must also have the ability, the opportunity, and military achievements. Not to mention company commander, is he a platoon leader now? Since he is in a relationship with you, he must be older than you. He has been in the army for such a long time. If he is not a company commander, he should be a platoon leader at the very least, but is he?”

If there was not much difference in their ranking, Brother Zhai would not be so heartless and remind her in advance to reject Sister Zhai Hua's request.

Zhai Hua was at a loss for words.

Given Wei De's performance in the army, Zhai Hua was unable to speak up for him in front of others.

She was baffled as well. Wei De had good fighting prowess and he was smart. Why was it that he was still an ordinary soldier after such a long time in the army and had yet to be promoted to platoon leader?

Wei De would always say that he lacked the opportunity to make military achievements.

As long as he was given the opportunity to be under Zhai Sheng, he would be promoted faster than Song Yin, who was promoted a year ago.

"Sister Zhai Hua. Qiao Nan is asking you a question. Since you want her to help, why don't you answer her question?" Shi Qing was anxious. Was Sister Zhai Hua sincere about seeking Qiao Nan's help?

Qiao Nan drank some water, clearly in the know of what was going on. "Shi Qing, you don't have to force Sister Zhai Hua. Judging from her response, I think I know her boyfriend's situation in the army."

He was not trustworthy enough to be entrusted with important tasks.

Since he was in the army for a long time, he should have been assigned countless missions.

Sister Zhai Hua's boyfriend must have mediocre performance in the army. That was why he was still not promoted to platoon leader. "Sister Zhai Hua, judging from this situation, he will be discharged from the army in a few years. Am I right?"

Not everyone who joined the army could stay in the army until old age, or in the case of Officer Shi, had to resign due to poor health.

“I see...” Shi Qing was dumbfounded. “He is not a platoon leader, and if he continues in this way, he will be discharged soon. Sister Zhai Hua, why are you interested in such a man? It’s no wonder that he didn’t listen to Qiao Nan’s class back then, and only attended Qiu Chenxi’s class. Did he go to Qiu Chenxi’s class because of her looks and figure? Is he someone who lets lust befuddles his mind?”

Shi Qing was shocked. Why would Sister Zhai Hua take a fancy to such a lousy man?

Was she blind?

“Sister Zhai Hua, in this case, you asked too much of Brother Zhai. I am not able to help you talk to Brother Zhai regarding your request. As far as I know, Brother Zhai’s aides are capable and skilled. You can’t possibly want Brother Zhai to pass off fake products as genuine?”

To put it bluntly, if anything happened, he would be the one bad apple that could spoil the whole bunch.

“No, the situation is not like what you think. He is capable. He just lacks the opportunity.” Zhai Hua blushed, refusing to admit that Wei De was so useless.

Shi Qing rolled her eyes. It had been so many years, yet he was not even a platoon leader. How could Zhai Hua say that he was capable and only lacked the opportunity? Shi Qing could not tell that he had any abilities.

If such a person was considered capable, then there would not be any blockhead in the world.

Qiao Nan looked at Shi Qing, urging her to control her emotions and not to say hurtful words. “Sister Zhai Hua, you said that your boyfriend lacks an opportunity. Can I ask you a question?”

“Go ahead.” As long as Qiao Nan was willing to help, she would not mind even if she asked a hundred questions.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips and leaned back. “Sister Zhai Hua, does your boyfriend lack an opportunity or a chance to work under Brother Zhai?”

## Chapter 698 Understood the Changes in Zhai Hua

Zhai Hua had yet to say anything when Shi Qing blurted right away, “Is there a difference between the two?”

“Of course there is a difference.” Qiao Nan looked at Shi Qing, but she was, in fact, looking sideways at Zhai Hua. “The difference between the two is similar to a student from The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China and a student from the Ping Cheng High School when both are sitting for the college entrance examination. If he only lacks a chance, he will be like the student from The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Through the college entrance examination, he will prove his abilities and be given a brighter and better path to take. If it is the latter, it will be like the student from Ping Cheng High School, whom I spotted the exam questions for. Among the two of them, who do you think is able to do better in college entrance examination?”

“Of course it has to be the student from Ping Cheng High School!”

With Qiao Nan’s help in spotting the questions, it was similar to cheating. Although spotting questions in advance was not as bad as cheating, it was similar to playing tricks.

It had been proven that all the Ping Cheng High School students whom Qiao Nan helped spot questions for had good results in the college entrance examination.

As for the students at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, their results were the reflection of the teachers and their hard work.

“Do you understand now?”

“Yes, I got it...”

After Shi Qing nodded, Qiao Nan looked at Zhai Hua, who had been silent for a long time. “Sister Zhai Hua, have you thought about it? Which category does your boyfriend belong to? Does he lack the opportunity or the chance to work under Brother Zhai?”

Brother Zhai was given important and difficult missions in the army. However, he was quick to respond to situations and challenges, and he was always able to carry out the missions successfully.

In other words, as long as he followed Brother Zhai and followed his instructions to complete the task successfully, he would be able to accumulate military achievements even though he did not make any big contributions.

In this case, if Brother Zhai was willing to be lenient, it would not be a problem for Sister Zhai Hua's boyfriend to be promoted.

Zhai Hua sat there for a long time, keeping her silence.

“Sister Zhai Hua, if you have not thought it through, why don't you go back first and give it a thought? You can tell me later. As for his mom, it should not be a big problem. At least, his mom will still be fine when you have thought it through. You have enough time.”

She had no idea if the old lady was faking her illness or not.

However, she did not suffer from a terminal illness. She was certain that she would not die in a few years' time.

Shi Qing did not look very pleased after she pondered over what Qiao Nan said.

It seemed that Sister Zhai Hua had picked a useless boyfriend who only wanted to work under Brother Zhai so that he could stand to gain.

“Don't... don't misunderstand. These are my own thoughts. It has nothing to do with him. Don't associate it with him. He is innocent.” Zhai Hua was embarrassed at the disdain in Shi Qing's eyes. However, she still tried hard to put in a good word for Wei De. “I hope our relationship will have a good outcome soon so as to fulfill his mom's wish. It really has nothing to do with him. I made all the decisions myself.”

“It doesn't matter who came up with this idea. The important thing is, Sister Zhai Hua, do you have an answer in your heart? If it is the former, you don't need my help. Considering your relationship with Brother Zhai, I believe he will not refuse your request. If it is the latter, Sister Zhai Hua, I feel that there is no reason for me to help you.”

“But...”

“I have said that it doesn’t matter who came up with this idea. If you did, I can only say that you’ve changed a lot recently. With the Zhai family’s upbringing, I thought you would not come up with this or bring this up to others. This is very unlike you.”

The Zhai family, including Auntie Miao, did not like to get in through the back door. Nobody in the Zhai family would like to enjoy the fruits of other people’s labor.

Shi Qing blinked at Qiao Nan. So it was actually the man who wanted to get in through the back door but he was too embarrassed to say so? He wanted Sister Zhai Hua to be his scapegoat and let others cast weird glances at her?

Qiao Nan turned to look at Shi Qing, gesturing for her to be sensitive to Sister Zhai Hua’s feelings and not to be too blunt.

This man was, after all, Sister Zhai Hua’s boyfriend.

Even though this man did not have a good temperament and he had nothing to do with them, Sister Zhai Hua had to make the judgment for herself.

“Sister Zhai Hua, it’s such a hot day, Shi Qing and I are going to take a nap. If you have other things to say, you can look for me after you sort out your thoughts.” Qiao Nan was getting ready to send her off.

Zhai Hua never visited unless she needed something. Qiao Nan felt uneasy as well.

When Zhai Hua did not need her help, she would be treated as someone who was after the Zhai family’s money. When Zhai Hua needed her help, she would talk to her nicely.

Sister Zhai Hua’s attitude was dependent on Qiao Nan’s value to her. This kind of interaction made people feel uncomfortable.

“Alright, I will go back and think about it.” Zhai Hua took a long while before she sighed and was willing to leave.

It was not that she could not answer this question. To her, Wei De was definitely the former, not the latter.

The problem was that Wei De was the one who decided to do this. It would not be good for her to decide for him, and people might misunderstand that she was the one who made the decision. Hence, she decided to leave and have a talk with Wei De before deciding on how she should tell Qiao Nan.

“Alright, Sister Zhai Hua, I will walk you to the door.”

Qiao Nan had finally sent Zhai Hua away. She lay down on the sofa, feeling drained. “Goodness! Meeting the people from the Zhai family is much harder than my studies.” Human beings were so complex that they could not be understood through deciphering and guessing

“What is Sister Zhai Hua doing? Why would she like someone who is so lousy that he can’t even be a platoon leader? Even my deskmate, Zhu Baoguo, is a hundred times, or a thousand times better than this man. If Zhu Baoguo goes to the army and spends seven or eight years there, let’s not say that he will be a regiment commander like Brother Zhai, but it will be easy for him to be a battalion commander.”

It proved that the man was too lousy and underperforming in the army. He had to rely on his girlfriend to seek help from others in order to have a bright future. This was an eye-opener for her.

Qiao Nan curled her lips. “In the past, I didn’t understand why Sister Zhai Hua changed her attitude toward me from time to time. Sometimes she was good to me, sometimes she was not. When she learned of my relationship with Brother Zhai, she never objected and was supportive of us.”

After what happened today, she was able to understand the reason behind Sister Zhai Hua’s changing attitude and her fleeting mood.

Chapter 699 Upset

“Why?” Qiao Nan had figured it out but Shi Qing was clueless.

“The problem lies with her boyfriend.”

Qiao Nan let out a long sigh. She would not give her support and encouragement for no reason. Sister Zhai Hua was so nice to her because her boyfriend was not as outstanding as her. In fact, he was in a similar condition as the Qiao Nan from two years ago.



If Brother Zhai could be with her and she was accepted by his family, then Sister Zhai Hua could introduce her boyfriend to her family. She did not need to worry that her family would object to their relationship or separate them.

To put it bluntly, she was merely being used to test whether the Zhai family would accept Zhai Hua's boyfriend or not.

Shi Qing was dumbstruck. She did not expect it would be for this reason. "You have been such a great help to Sister Zhai Hua and her boyfriend. Why would she act up from time to time and suspect you or look down on you?"

"That, I can't tell as well." Sister Zhai Hua was suspicious of her and would look down on her and pick on her. In the future, someone else would do the same to her boyfriend as well. By right, Sister Zhai Hua would not do so after bearing this in mind.

"Could Sister Zhai Hua's boyfriend possibly be a lousy man who likes to badmouth you in front of her?" Sister Zhai Hua had changed under his bad influence. In that case, it was possible that what she guessed was true.

Qiao Nan finished the water in the cup. "I can't tell. After all, I have never seen her boyfriend, and I don't understand their situation. In fact, if not for you, I wouldn't know that she is dating. I also wouldn't know that her boyfriend went to Qiu Chenxi's class during the English summer class a year ago, and that he did not come to my class."

Qiao Nan would not comment on someone she did not know.

"I have seen that man before. He is not a good person. You are right. The Zhai family will not do something like that. Sister Zhai Hua wasn't like this in the past. It's very likely that she's been influenced by that man. That said, he must have a nasty temperament." After being in the army for such a long time, he did not make it to the platoon leader, and yet he wanted to get in through the back door with his girlfriend's help.

If it was her, she would rather not date or marry, than having a lousy man. "Qiao Nan, why does Sister Zhai Hua like that man? Should we tell Brother Zhai so that he can bring her to an ophthalmologist?"

Since when did Sister Zhai Hua have such poor eyesight?

As a soldier, should she not have perfect eyesight?

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. To you, the man may be a pile of dung, but to Sister Zhai Hua, he is a piece of gold.” Qiao Nan was very unwilling to describe the soldiers as dung, but she did not have a good impression of Zhai Hua’s boyfriend.

As long as the man was upright, given the Zhai family’s upbringing, Sister Zhai Hua would definitely have the answer to her question just now. She would not hesitate to say that the man lacked an opportunity, rather than a chance to work with Brother Zhai.

This showed that it might not be purely Sister Zhai Hua’s idea. The man might be the one who suggested it.

“This analogy is great!” Shi Qing clapped in agreement. “You are indeed from the humanities class. The analogy is simple but profound. It is an apt description. Such is indeed the situation.”

“Alright, stop singing my praises. I estimate that there will be more to come. Sister Zhai Hua will not give up.”

“But you won’t agree to it as well.” Shi Qing smiled. “Why do I feel that you seemed to be too calm when Sister Zhai Hua brought up her request today? You seemed to have known what she was going to say and was prepared for it.”

“Yes, when Brother Zhai sent me back just now, he had reminded me and told me not to agree to her request. I asked her that question as I wanted to give them a chance. As long as they are upright, there is no need for them to ask a favor of me. I believe Brother Zhai will be willing to give that man a chance to prove himself. I hope Sister Zhai Hua will not give me a disappointing answer when she is back.”

It did not matter if she was disappointed or not. What mattered most was Brother Zhai.

Even though Brother Zhai was not present today, he knew what was going on.

Shi Qing looked upward helplessly. “All of you seem to have so much trouble in dating. Not only do you have to keep it a secret from everyone, and hide and sneak around as if you are in guerrilla warfare, but there is so much else to worry about as well. Suddenly, I don’t want to date anymore. I feel that being single is a good idea. What should I do?” She would be free of worries if she did not date.

Qiao Nan was not worried. She seemed to have a lot of experience. “You haven’t met the one who makes your heart flutter. When that person appears, you won’t be worried about all these.”

In this life, she only wanted to find a man who was down-to-earth and lead a simple life with him. As for falling head over heels in love, that was something that would only happen in novels.

But in the end, she met Brother Zhai, who was the turning point in her life.

“Hey, stop being so mushy. I refuse to be your audience.” Shi Qing was unhappy. She had just thought of a possibility and was about to tell Qiao Nan. But now that she looked so smug, she decided to keep it to herself.

Qiao Nan was basking in happiness. If she told her too much information, she might be too smug and arrogant that she might put on airs.

What Shi Qing thought of was related to Zhai Hua and her boyfriend.

No matter whether Zhai Hua’s boyfriend was capable or not, or whether he was narrow-minded, given Zhai Sheng’s relationship with Zhai Hua, it was impossible that he would refuse her upfront.

But Zhai Sheng’s attitude was firm, leaving no room for discussion. Could it be due to Qiao Nan?

Shi Qing was not the only person who thought that way. Zhai Hua, who returned to the Zhai family’s residence, had the same thought as well.

There was obviously room for discussion. Zhai Sheng did not need to be so firm and determined and to stick to his original decision. Zhai Hua could not help but suspect that Zhai Sheng already knew that the rare times she treated Qiao Nan with indifference were due to Wei De.

That young brat had this temper from a young age. When provoked, he would not retaliate right away. But when there was a chance, he would take his brutal revenge. He might not retaliate right away, but that didn't mean he let the other party off. Instead, he was unwilling to waste his time. When there was a chance, the vicious Zhai Sheng would never be softhearted. He would make sure that the other party paid for what they had done.

Today, Zhai Sheng used this tactic that he usually used on others on Zhai Hua. In return, Zhai Hua felt nothing but anger.

#### Chapter 700 Zhai Sheng's Disappointment

Zhai Sheng knew that, at times, Zhai Hua would treat Qiao Nan nicely. Similarly, she would be indifferent to her occasionally.

Even though Zhai Sheng had already fought with Zhai Hua regarding what happened with the clothes, they were siblings after all. Zhai Sheng could not possibly be ruthless toward Zhai Hua. At most, he would give her a few blows when they fought with each other.

Since all these happened after Zhai Hua started to date Wei De, he already showed due respect to her feelings by not doing anything to Wei De.

Right now, Wei De wanted to get in through the back door on account of Zhai Hua's relationship with him and to do something that the Zhai family would never do. It would be impossible for Zhai Sheng to tolerate Wei De any longer.

Zhai Sheng knew that all he had to do now was to do nothing. It was harsher than punishing Wei De to run ten laps or do a thousand sit-ups.

Corporal punishment would merely make Wei De feel embarrassed in front of his comrades.

But if he did not give Wei De any extra chances, he would only be able to watch by the side as he missed all the opportunities. In that case, those who entered the army at the same time as him or later than him would become platoon leaders, whereas he would remain a veteran in the army. This was the worst punishment for him.

Zhai Sheng could not bear to retaliate against Zhai Hua, but he went all out to deal with Wei De, who had yet to be a part of their family.

In short, as Zhai Hua's personality changed after being with Wei De, Zhai Sheng was not willing to have such a useless brother-in-law.

If he was incapable, he should have a good moral character at the very least.

On the contrary, Wei De did not have the ability and he was the one who had a bad influence on Zhai Hua. He would not tolerate Wei De and Zhai Hua for that!

"You are finally back. Have you given up?" Zhai Sheng put down his book and looked at Zhai Hua, who came into his room.

"Hehehe, Qiao Nan and you must have telepathy." It was no wonder that Zhai Sheng did not chase after her today. It turned out that he had already guessed what she was up to. "Have you told Qiao Nan in advance and forbade her from helping me?"

"Nan Nan is not your boyfriend. I don't have to tell her what should be done and what shouldn't be done. She knows what the best course of action is." The more Zhai Hua behaved in this manner, the more Zhai Sheng held Wei De in contempt.

Zhai Hua was annoyed. "Stop saying useless stuff. Tell me, what is the maximum leeway that you will allow?"

Zhai Sheng was a blockhead. If he did not agree to it, he would not change his mind no matter what she said.

If not, she would not hit her own face and asked Qiao Nan for help.

"Zhai Hua, even though you acted in that way toward Nan Nan, I have never stacked the deck against Wei De. That is his blessing and because of our family upbringing. Do you understand?" Zhai Sheng's expression darkened. Zhai Hua did not have any self-awareness even now.

Zhai Hua took a deep breath. "Is there no room for negotiation?"

Zhai Sheng turned grim. "Zhai Hua, you should be asking yourself."

Zhai Hua was speechless.

Zhai Hua's intention was for Zhai Sheng to help Wei De along the way. But Zhai Sheng was so decisive. If it was in the past, Zhai Hua would try another method after failing to seek help from her brother.

Given the Zhai family's status, she would definitely have other ways.

Honestly, Zhai Hua was at her wits' end.

In regard to Wei De's matter, Zhai Hua did not dare to ask Zhai Yaohui or Old Master Zhai for help. She did not dare to ask others for help as well.

The reason was that she knew very well that what she did was not justified. Besides, if this matter was known to others, Wei De would be looked down upon by the Zhai family. In fact, what Wei De did was indeed not glorious.

Hence, Zhai Hua dared not bring up this matter to Zhai Yaohui or Old Master Zhai.

It was possible to ask others for help. Actually, she could ask the newcomer who was there to take over Shi Peng's position for help. As long as Zhai Hua was willing to bring it up, he would definitely help her.

But Zhai Hua did not dare to do so.

Once she did, Zhai Sheng would definitely know about it. He would not feign ignorance. It was good enough if he merely put a stop to it. If he made a ruckus about it, and her father and grandpa learned about it, they would definitely have a bad impression of Wei De and would even order her to break up with him.

Zhai Hua asked Zhai Sheng to help her on account that they were siblings. But she knew that what she did was too much and it was not something that the Zhai family would do.

She understood very well that she was witless in front of others. That was why she could only seek help from her brother.

Zhai Hua asked her brother to help her and kept saying that he disregarded their relations and bullied her because he sided with Qiao Nan, who was only an outsider.

“Humph.” Zhai Sheng sneered at Zhai Hua’s silence. “Zhai Hua, I am not disappointed with Wei De. I am disappointed with you. It’s true that our parents did not bring us up, but how did the old master teach us? Have you forgotten all his teachings? As a soldier, where’s your pride and unyielding character? When we were young, what did Old Master Zhai teach us? I have no opinion that you want Wei De to be promoted so that he will be able to hold his head high in front of the Zhai family and that you can tell everyone proudly that your choice is right. But you are corrupted in your way of thinking, and you go against your principles without any limits. Zhai Hua, this is what I can’t accept!”

“Even if Wei De is just an ordinary soldier, to me, he is just a mediocre person. But looking at your behavior now, do you know how I view him? He is simply a woodworm! He is incapable and so he egged you to behave in this way. Don’t tell me that you came up with this plan and Wei De was against it. I’m a man. If Wei De really disagreed with you, he had his way to stop you from asking me for help. Zhai Hua, what you have done today and in the past has given me a terrible impression of Wei De. No matter how many reasons you come up with, I will not accept them and I will not help people like him!”

Zhai Sheng had the urge to use his authority to send Wei De out of the army.

As he had said, Wei De was a mediocre person. He was incapable and did not have any achievements. Hence, he could not be promoted.

But the thing about mediocre people was that they were timid and lazy. Thus, despite not having any achievements, they made no mistakes as well.

Under such a situation, given the Zhai family’s usual working style, Wei De could spend his time in the army until the day he had to be discharged from the army.

The Zhai family would not abuse their authority to help a person, and neither would they make life difficult for them.

However, Zhai Hua’s behavior had provoked Zhai Sheng such that he had the impulse to do otherwise.