

RTAMM 721

Chapter 721 Zhai Hua's Excessive Requests

This was a serious matter. Once the people from the Zhai family, especially Chief Zhai, knew about this, regardless of whether he knew of the relationship between Wei De and Sister Zhai Hua, Wei De would be blacklisted by the Zhai family without another word.

The Zhai family disliked it the most when people practiced individualism and selfish heroism when they were in a team.

“Zhai Hua has been carried away by love. Therefore, Wei De becomes fearless.” Zhai Sheng sneered, pushing all the responsibilities to Zhai Hua.

Zhai Hua was too devoted to Wei De. She would do things that she would never do in the past for his sake. Because of this, Wei De was confident and had become emboldened!

To Zhai Sheng, nobody was to be blamed other than Zhai Hua.

Without Zhai Hua, what happened with Wei De would not have happened. “Not only has she been carried away by love, but she is blind as well.”

Zhai Hua was his only sister, yet she was in love with such a man. Zhai Sheng felt frustrated that he could do nothing to stop it. He was like a panther that was congested with anger and kept pacing around. There was a ferocious glare in his cold eyes.

This time, Zhai Sheng was going to direct his anger at both Zhai Hua and Wei De.

Both of them had to be held responsible this time.

“What does Sister Zhai Hua mean by that?” Qiao Nan could not think of what to say to comfort Zhai Sheng. If she were him, she would not be able to stand it as well.

“Her?” Zhai Sheng felt anger bubble up inside him. “Ever since we started earning money, the family no longer controls us. Given our lifestyle, we seldom spend money. She has decided to give the platoon leader all her savings.”

“Does Sister Zhai Hua want to use the money to buy the position of platoon leader?” Qiao Nan understood right away what Zhai Hua’s real intention was.

The platoon leader had broken his leg, but he would still be awarded military achievements. However, there was no way that he could stay in the army. The army might arrange a job for him as compensation so that his life would not be a problem now that he had broken his leg.

If this matter was investigated, Wei De would be unable to bear the consequences of failure.

If the platoon leader and his family accepted Zhai Hua’s money, it would mean that they had expressed implied consent toward the army’s arrangement and would not bring up what Wei De did in the future.

As long as the parties concerned kept silent and nobody made noise about it, Wei De’s mistakes would be covered up and nobody would find out about it.

What Zhai Hua did might be expensive, but it was indeed useful.

The platoon leader had lost his leg and he could no longer stay in the army. Rather than offending people to seek justice—though it would not be helpful to his situation—he might as well choose to accept the money so as to solve the problem of livelihood.

Qiao Nan looked sullen. “This is similar to using money and power to force others to give in.”

It was no wonder that Brother Zhai said that Sister Zhai Hua had changed ever since she dated Wei De.

Judging from the fact that Sister Zhai Hua had adopted all the bad habits after dating Wei De, she only had dislike for Wei De. “It is lucky if she does a clean job. If there is anything that is not well taken care of, the reputation of the Zhai family may be affected. Has Sister Zhai Hua thought it through? Is she going to take such a big gamble?”

The platoon leader was definitely not the only person who was sabotaged by Wei De. If he received compensation, then what about others?

Once someone heard of this, they might be displeased that they were shortchanged. The platoon leader might not say anything, but if there was a chance, the rest of the soldiers might escalate it to Chief Zhai. By then, the consequences would be severe.

Zhai Sheng drank some tea. He felt so infuriated that his voice seemed to have turned hoarse. “Of course she has thought of it. She knows of this problem, hence she wants me to help cover it up for her. Apart from the platoon leader, the rest of the soldiers are in better condition.”

Zhai Hua only had enough money to appease the platoon leader and his family. She was unable to take care of other people.

For those that were beyond her abilities, she could only rely on Zhai Sheng’s authority to cover it up. By taking the two-prong approach, she would be able to cover up the mess that Wei De created.

Qiao Nan tapped her fingers on the table, forming a fast and urgent rhythm. “Brother Zhai, under Wei De’s influences, Sister Zhai Hua has grown to turn to money and power to solve her problems.” It was too terrifying.

Qiao Nan had no need to ask and she knew what happened thereafter.

It was impossible for Brother Zhai to agree to Sister Zhai Hua’s request. They were bound to break into a quarrel for this matter.

In order to settle Wei De’s problem, Sister Zhai Hua would keep on pestering Brother Zhai. Brother Zhai was unwilling to stay at home and face her. Therefore, he came to her house to take refuge.

“If I allow the two of them to be together, my name will be written backwards!” Zhai Sheng always thought that Zhai Hua knew her limits. He knew long ago that Zhai Hua was in a relationship and had been keeping it from her family. He never intended to investigate or keep a check on them.

Zhai Hua was an adult. She should have her own private life.

But right now, Zhai Sheng had no choice but to be strict toward Zhai Hua.

Wei De’s problem had grown beyond one’s imagination.

Zhai Sheng could no longer trust Zhai Hua to know her limits. She might behave with propriety in other circumstances, but when it came to Wei De, she would lose her rationality.

“But it’s impossible for you to stay here. I suppose Sister Zhai Hua will not give up if she is unable to get you to help her. Wei De is already awake, and he knows very well what is most important at the moment. Wei De may be the one who told Sister Zhai Hua not to stay by his side but to pester you all the way to the Zhai family’s residence.” Qiao Nan was anxious for Zhai Sheng. This matter seemed to be never-ending

Zhai Sheng smirked. “Zhai Hua and Wei De no longer have that chance.”

“No chance?” Qiao Nan was baffled.

“This will come to a conclusion in a short while.” Zhai Sheng leaned against the sofa. He closed his eyes to rest. Today, he came to the Qiao family’s residence not only to see Qiao Nan and to calm himself down, but he was also giving some time for things to develop on its own. It seemed that it was about time.

Ten minutes later, the phone rang loudly. “Hi, hello. Yes, Auntie Miao... Yes, he’s here.”

Miao Jing breathed a sigh of relief when she heard that her son was indeed at the Qiao family’s residence.

“Auntie Miao, should I put Brother Zhai on the phone?”

“Oh, okay, I will tell Brother Zhai right now... You are welcome. Auntie Miao, goodbye.”

Qiao Nan hung up the phone. “Auntie Miao seems to be very anxious. She wants you to hurry back home. Chief Zhai is blowing his top. Now he knows about Wei De’s incident?” Otherwise, why would Chief Zhai be so angry that he wanted Auntie Miao to make a phone call to get Brother Zhai to go back home?

Besides, Zhai Sheng just told Qiao Nan that there was no more chance, and the phone call came right then.

Chapter 722 To Everyone's Delight?

"Yes." Zhai Sheng admitted. "I will go back to take a look."

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"Do pay more attention to it." There was nothing that Qiao Nan could say. Now that this was out in the open, it meant that Brother Zhai had not helped cover up for Wei De. After Sister Zhai Hua was reprimanded by Chief Zhai, she might be so enraged that she pushed all the responsibility to Brother Zhai.

Qiao Nan was worried for Zhai Sheng now that things had developed to such a stage.

The Qiao family might have a lot of issues, but those were conflicts and issues within the four of them. They would not have any impact on others.

It was different for the Zhai family. Given the Zhai family's status, any problem within the family would have a far-reaching impact and had to be dealt with seriously.

Just as what Qiao Nan was worried about, by the time Zhai Sheng reached home, his family had broken out in quarrels.

Zhai Sheng had not agreed to Zhai Hua's request to cover up for Wei De.

In the end, one of the soldiers reported the issue to the political commissar.

It was reported that Wei De had an unusual relationship with a battalion commander in the army. During the mission, Wei De made a big mistake and implicated his platoon leader. The latter landed in the hospital and was in critical condition.

The battalion commander concerned had the intention to cover up for Wei De. The battalion commander did not intend to mete out any punishment to Wei De and wanted to promote him instead. The soldier hoped that the higher-ups would investigate the matter thoroughly and give an explanation to the soldiers.

The political commissar knew that this could be a serious matter.

There were only a few battalion commanders in the army, and the political commissar had heard that things were going on between Zhai Hua and Wei De.

From the report, it was obvious who the battalion commander that covered up for Wei De was.

Everyone was smart, so some things did not need to be spelled out clearly. The political commissar had figured out what Zhai Sheng's attitude toward this matter was.

Since Zhai Yaohui was not around, Zhai Sheng was the person in charge in the camp.

Now that things had been blown up, it was impossible that Zhai Sheng was kept in the dark. Zhai Sheng did not give any instructions when he left the camp. It was obvious that he had no intention to cover up this matter.

The political commissar thought about it and decided to make a phone call to Zhai Yaohui to know his views on this matter.

It was as if somebody had set off firecrackers at the Zhai family's residence.

For the past twenty years or so, Zhai Yaohui rarely disciplined his children and he rarely spent time at home. These days, he finally had more time to stay at home. However, his children had grown up into good-tempered and well-behaved adults. There was no need for him to lecture or discipline them.

But everything had an exception. Without a word, Zhai Yaohui punished Zhai Hua to kneel down.

At the request of Old Master Zhai, there was a room in the Zhai family's residence that was empty except for the painting of Chairman Mao.

Zhai Yaohui made Zhai Hua kneel in that room. "Zhai Hua, you have grown up and have learned to use your surname to bully people. Is this how you treat your revolutionary comrades in the army?"

Zhai Hua bit her lips. “Dad, I didn’t want to bully them. It’s just that things had happened. Even if someone is to be held accountable for it, it is a fact that the platoon leader has lost his leg forever. I just want to minimize the impact done and hope for the best outcome for everyone.”

Even if Wei De was punished, the platoon leader could neither save his leg nor stay in the army in the end.

On the contrary, if the platoon leader decided not to take issue, she would give him all her savings and made sure that he was awarded military achievements for his mission. He would be able to receive subsidies and other practical help. This was considered a good outcome for him.

Everyone would be happy!

“Satisfactory result? Are you referring to the platoon leader who lost his leg or Wei De and you? You are a soldier. I am surprised that you have learned to use your authority to overpower others. What is more shocking is that, to you, everything can be resolved using money. Zhai Hua, how did your way of thinking become so corrupted?” Zhai Yaohui had a chilling look, his tone turning solemn.

“That’s not true.” She did not say that everything could be solved in the world.

“Then, let me ask you. If you are implicated by others and have lost a leg and I give you 100,000 yuan instead of 10,000 yuan, will you accept the money happily and leave the army?”

“How could it be...” Zhai Hua looked upset. She might be a woman, but she had become one with the army. It was sheer torture to ask her to leave the army.

“Why don’t you continue your sentence? Do you realize that you are in the wrong?” Zhai Yaohui snorted. “You are unwilling to leave the army, yet you want other people to smile and accept your unfair treatment? Zhai Hua, when did you start to have this wrong mindset? The Zhai family will never bully others because we have the power and connections. Zhai Hua, I am so disappointed in you!”

“Disappointed? Of course you are. Zhai Sheng is the only one whom you are proud of.” Zhai Hua was so furious that she let slip of the words that she had been feeling deep down inside her heart.

Zhai Sheng, who came back at the right time, heard Zhai Hua's words. His footsteps halted and he frowned. He had never thought that Zhai Hua would have this mentality. He used to think that she was just joking.

Zhai Yaohui and Zhai Hua heard footsteps and turned to see who was there.

Zhai Hua pursed her lips when she saw Zhai Sheng walk into the room. She turned sideways stubbornly, refusing to look at him. Her words might be harsh, but it was the truth.

Zhai Yaohui let out a sigh. "When did you start feeling this way? Or have you been harboring such thoughts since a young age?"

"I..." Zhai Hua hesitated. "Since a young age, I feel that grandpa values Zhai Sheng more than me."

But back then, she did not feel as disgusted and unjust over the way she was being treated.

The smile on Zhai Yaohui's face turned colder. "Since you harbor such an idea from a young age, why didn't you say so? Even if you didn't want to tell us, what about your behavior? As a child of the Zhai family, why didn't you strive to be the best and do better than Zhai Sheng if you feel unjust? If Zhai Sheng achieves second-class merit, you should go for the first-class merit. If Zhai Sheng has been given ten merits, you should work hard to be given fifteen merits!"

"Why do I have to work so hard?" Zhai Hua was unconvinced.

"Because you are a girl, because we did not place our hopes on you, because you are not as good as Zhai Sheng. For these three reasons, you should know that you are disadvantaged by birth and therefore should work harder. If not, your political status will not be higher than that of Zhai Sheng. What's wrong with

it?"

“What about it? You know that you are not as important to us as Zhai Sheng, but when Zhai Sheng achieves second-class merits, you will achieve third-class merits; when he is given ten merits, you will only work to achieve eight merits. You joined the army two years earlier than Zhai Sheng, but you did not make use of the two years to widen the distance between the two of you. On the contrary, it was only when Zhai Sheng joined the army and had brilliant performance did you buck up and display better performance.”

Chapter 723 Unworthy to Be a Child of the Zhai Family

“Back then, the old master joked with me that his experience of rearing pigs in rural areas was quite useful. If he reared two piglets, they would not be lazy. If you have two children, they will strive to be the best. Zhai Hua, without Zhai Sheng and his good performance in the army, do you think you will be able to be promoted to battalion commander with the Zhai family’s help?” Zhai Yaohui stared at Zhai Hua, his gaze sharp and piercing like the eagle. Zhai Hua has nowhere to hide.

Zhai Hua might be the child of the Zhai family, but she was lazy from a tender age.

Old Master Zhai had noticed that and had talked to Zhai Yaohui and his wife about it.

Old Master Zhai felt that Zhai Hua was a girl and she should be pampered like a girl.

If Zhai Hua was interested in the army in the future, they would not stop her from joining the army. They should not stop her from developing her interests just because of her gender.

Similarly, if Zhai Hua was not interested in the army, they would allow her to choose the path that she was interested in by herself.

Thankfully, Miao Jing gave birth to a boy thereafter. The Zhai family pampered Zhai Hua even more while Zhai Sheng had to bear the responsibility of taking care of the Zhai family.

Although he was the younger brother, as a man, he had to lighten Zhai Hua’s load and take on more responsibilities.

The strange thing was that, after Zhai Sheng joined the family, Zhai Hua’s personality changed. She was still as lazy as before, but she would strive to work harder.

Since a young age, Zhai Sheng was particularly interested in the military and the army. He liked to spend time in the army and familiarize himself with the people in the army. They were close to him and would call him Younger Brother Zhai.

When Zhai Sheng began to show his talent and passion for the army, Zhai Hua, who did not want to lose out, began to spend her time in the army as well and grew to be interested in army life.

Zhai Hua was two years older than Zhai Sheng. Thus, she joined the army earlier than him.

Before Zhai Sheng joined the army, Zhai Hua did not have any remarkable performance in the army. But she was not among the bottom few either.

Old Master Zhai and Zhai Yaohui did not feel the need to push Zhai Hua to work hard as they felt that it was more important if Zhai Hua was happy.

After Zhai Sheng joined the army, he became famous among the recruits because of his outstanding performance. Zhai Hua, who did not wish to be outshone by him, unleashed her full potential and performed much better than before.

Old Master Zhai and Zhai Yaohui understood that Zhai Hua was pushing herself to the limits to be better than Zhai Sheng.

They encouraged such healthy competition.

However, now that Zhai Hua accused him of being biased and favoring boys over girls, Zhai Yaohui had no other choice but to rake up the past. “Your performance is not as good as Zhai Sheng’s, yet you accuse your grandpa and me of not valuing you and that we favor boys over girls? Zhai Hua, ask yourself, how have we been treating you? Are you blind in the eyes and blind at heart?”

This was not the first time that Zhai Hua heard such words. Zhai Sheng had told her the same words in the past.

Zhai Hua was not as good as others, yet she pushed the blame on her family for favoring boys over girls and valuing Zhai Sheng instead of her.

“Old Master Zhai brought up Zhai Sheng and you. Before Zhai Sheng was born, you were the only grandchild in the family. Old Master showered you with all his love and attention for two years. When Zhai Sheng was born two years later, he was not able to take away the two years of dedicated love and attention that Old Master gave you. Both of you have been brought up by the old master. Are you sure that gender is the only difference between the two of you?”

Initially, Zhai Yaohui did not like the fact that Qiao Nan came from a humble background. However, since Qiao Nan was hardworking and strove for excellence, he was willing to give implied consent to Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan.

Now that there was Wei De, Zhai Yaohui was very satisfied with Qiao Nan.

Ever since Qiao Nan started to be in a relationship with Zhai Sheng, she had never caused any trouble to Zhai Sheng or the Zhai family. On the contrary, Qiu Chenxi made trouble for Qiao Nan on several occasions because of Zhai Sheng.

After being with Qiao Nan, it had never affected Zhai Sheng’s performance in the army.

As for Zhai Hua, ever since she was with Wei De, she became too radical in her way of thinking. She was not willing to put in any effort but kept feeling that she had been shortchanged.

In comparison, Qiao Nan was definitely much better than Wei De.

Without comparison, there would be no harm done.

Now that Wei De had created such a big mess, he failed to leave a good impression on the Zhai family. On the contrary, he left a bad impression and made Qiao Nan look good in front of the Zhai family instead.

“I... I don’t accept it!” Zhai Hua gritted her teeth. “He is a man, and I am a woman. I won’t admit that I am not as good as him in other aspects, but in terms of physical fitness, I am not as good as him.” One needed to have strong physical abilities when carrying out missions.

“If you keep using the fact that you are a female as an excuse, Zhai Hua, let me tell you, you are unworthy to be a child of the Zhai family!” All those talks about gender and physical abilities were all excuses!

“So be it!” Zhai Hua was stubborn. She knew that, to her grandpa and everyone else, she could not be compared to Zhai Sheng.

She was indeed not as outstanding as they had expected. Even without what happened with Wei De, she supposed everyone would feel that she was unworthy of being a child of the Zhai family.

“Stop it.” Miao Jing was anxious. The argument grew more and more heated. It seemed never-ending.

Miao Jing darted a look at Zhai Sheng, hinting at him to step in and mediate.

From the bits and pieces of the conversation, she understood that Hua Hua had a boyfriend who was from the army and he came from humble family background. Not only that, he seemed to have gotten into trouble in the army and Hua Hua had to clean up the mess for him.

Miao Jing disapproved of the current situation.

She had her reasons for not agreeing to her children to date someone whose social status was too far apart from them.

Everyone would have relatives. Among them, there might be some who were more troublesome and would stir up trouble.

Even Miao Jing herself had encountered such incidents. Thankfully, the other party had not done anything that was way overboard and she never saw him again. As such, she gradually forgot about what had happened in the past.

Hua Hua was different. Her boyfriend was the cause of trouble. Needless to say, his relatives would be similar as well.

Zhai Sheng had calmed himself down. He looked as if he did not overhear Zhai Hua’s words.

Zhai Hua was anxious and uneasy at the calm and peaceful expression on Zhai Sheng's face. "Dad, now that things have developed to this state, it is useless to say further. We should think about how to resolve this so as to minimize the impact."

What Zhai Sheng meant was that Zhai Hua was beyond reasons now, only having Wei De in mind. No matter what they said, she would not be able to take them in.

Instead of wasting their time and efforts, they should work to resolve the problem at hand.

"What are your thoughts on this?" Zhai Yaohui calmed down slightly. At least, he could rely on his son. "The political commissar is waiting for our phone call."

"We will do as per what you told the political commissar on the phone." Zhai Sheng did not have any slight hesitation. He no longer needed to waste any effort on this.

Chapter 724 The Zhai Family's Strength of Character

Zhai Yaohui curled the corners of his lips. His son was indeed crafty. "Right, the Zhai family does not have the habit of using their power to force others. What needs to be done shall be done."

"No, I... I have given the money to him!" Zhai Hua, who was still kneeling on the floor, refused to give in. She had given all her savings to the platoon leader. How could he take her money and go back on his word to insist that Wei De be responsible for what he did?

"Hehehe." Zhai Yaohui sneered. "Your boyfriend caused someone to lose his leg. Shouldn't you pay the money for that?"

Everyone in the army would rather have a pair of strong and healthy legs than to accept the money.

Zhai Hua was hesitant and unsure. "Dad, are you saying you do not object to Wei De and me?"

"No objection." Would she listen to him if he objected?

“Dad, thank you!” Zhai Hua never imagined that this would happen. Indeed, every cloud has a silver lining.

She had thought that once this incident was blown up, her father and her grandpa would never accept Wei De. Therefore, she requested Zhai Sheng to cover it up for her.

Initially, there was no way that she could reveal her relationship with Wei De. She did not expect that what happened this time would result in her father’s implied consent to her relationship with Wei De.

Zhai Yaohui lowered his eyes. Hua Hua could never match up to Zhai Sheng. This had nothing to do with gender. “No need to thank me. It’s good that you are happy.”

“Dad, what about Wei De’s matter” Zhai Hua was still worried about Wei De’s situation.

“Zhai Hua, one should not be greedy. Since Wei De has made a mistake, shouldn’t he bear the responsibility for it?” Zhai Yaohui asked coldly.

“Yes.” Actually, Zhai Hua did not wish for the matter to blow up. However, her father finally gave his implied consent to her relationship. Zhai Hua was worried that if she asked for too much and provoked her father, he might go back on his word and object to her relationship. By then, she would lose more than she gained.

As for other issues, she had to leave it for the time being. As time passed by and after she married Wei De, the situation would improve.

“Go back to your room.”

“Dad, thank you, thank you very much. Never were you so good to me since young. You are the best today!” Zhai Hua was moved. She had thought that they would break up in a heated argument, but it ended up being much cry and little wool. She had never expected her father, who was very strict and stern, to be so kind to her. He was like a caring father who was willing to forgive her every mistake.

She was wrong. Her father cared for her and loved her.

“Alright, go back to your room.” Zhai Yaohui repeated twice for Zhai Hua to go back to her room. He had no wish to see her right now. She would only infuriate him further.

Hua Hua, who was overjoyed, did not notice her father’s expression at all, thinking that he was worried because she had been kneeling for a long time. She left happily without realizing that something was amiss.

Zhai Hua did not feel that it was humiliating to kneel down. Since young, her grandpa would punish her to kneel down in front of the painting of Chairman Mao whenever she was mischievous. It was a tradition since ages ago.

Miao Jing watched on as her daughter left happily. She was not as relieved as Zhai Hua. “Will your father not do anything about this?”

They might be able to disregard the fact that the soldier, namely Wei De, came from a humble background, but they could not disregard the fact that he had committed a grave mistake during the mission, breaching the military codes of ethics and conduct.

Given her understanding of Zhai Yaohui, he would not accept Wei De unless hell froze over. Hua Hua had rejoiced too early.

“Is there any other way otherwise?” Zhai Sheng answered her with a question. “Zhai Hua is obstinate. She would not listen to our advice.”

Zhai Hua only had Wei De in mind. No matter who gave her advice, she would not be able to take them in. Instead, she would turn angry at their criticism of Wei De and stood on his side.

“It’s almost time. Miao Miao, you should prepare the meals.” Zhai Yaohui sent Miao Jing away as well.

Zhai Yaohui agreed with what Zhai Sheng said. No matter how lousy Wei De was, Zhai Hua would not be able to take in any advice.

Zhai Yaohui did not mean to give his implied consent to their relationship. It was just that he knew Zhai Hua’s temper very well and had no wish to waste his time to persuade her. “I have told the political commissar to go by the books. Wei De has to leave.”

“I understand.” Because it was impossible for Wei De to continue to stay in the army, his father acted as if he had given his implied consent to Wei De and Zhai Hua to calm Zhai Hua down.

Zhai Yaohui relaxed slightly. “Handle this matter well. Go back to the army early next morning. Make sure that everything is done properly.”

“Yes.” As long as they had the consensus on how to deal with Wei De, nothing else mattered to Zhai Sheng.

“Sly little fox!” Zhai Yaohui snorted in displeasure. He kept his silence previously as he did not want to expose Zhai Sheng in front of Zhai Hua. Of course, he had no wish for the siblings to quarrel and bear grudges against each other. Therefore, he took the responsibility for meting out punishment to Wei De.

However, now that Zhai Hua was no longer here, Zhai Yaohui was not as polite.

Zhai Sheng did not deny. “The sly old fox will only give birth to a sly little fox. Dad, are you insulting yourself or insulting my mom?”

Unless there was a problem in between, he could only be a sly little fox.

Zhai Yaohui’s face turned black. “Don’t think that you have grown up and I can no longer give both of you a thrashing!”

Zhai Sheng moved slightly to the side. He was not afraid of Zhai Yaohui’s threats at all. “It’s good that you still remember that you are our father. Aren’t you the best person to deal with this today? As a father, you have been idle for more than twenty years. In the first two decades, you have no worries. Now is the time for you to be worried. Don’t owe others too much. By the time you want to pay the debts, you may no longer have the chance. You should do so when there’s still some time.”

His father had never disciplined Zhai Hua and him. Given Zhai Hua’s current situation, he would not have the chance to do that anymore if he did not discipline her at this point in time.

There was nothing wrong of him to let his father settle the problem between Zhai Hua and Wei De.

When it came to Wei De, Zhai Sheng would only go by the books. He would punish, reward, and reassure accordingly.

He would never cover up for Wei De or make use of this opportunity to leave the position of the platoon leader open so that Wei De would be able to be promoted to said position.

If he were to deal with it directly, given Zhai Hua's temper and personality, there would never be peaceful days in the future. He did not mind being at loggerheads with Zhai Hua. But if Qiao Nan was implicated, then the conflict between Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua would only worsen.

It was inconvenient for Zhai Sheng to deal with Wei De's matter. However, Zhai Yaohui was the elder, the most suitable candidate.

Take for instance what happened just now. Zhai Yaohui wanted to go by the books to deal with Wei De. However, Zhai Hua did not dare to direct her anger or bear a grudge against Zhai Yaohui. She would not direct her anger at her father for not helping her. Instead, she was overjoyed as Zhai Yaohui had given his implied consent to her relationship. She was not the least unhappy with her family.

Chapter 725 Confirmed' to Be Awarded Military Achievements

Zhai Sheng hurried back to the camp to settle this matter early next morning.

Before he left, he made a phone call to Qiao Nan to inform her of his whereabouts.

Although it was not a perfect outcome, Qiao Nan could finally rest assured that the matter had been resolved.

Qiao Nan had no idea that she was the main reason for Zhai Sheng to do all these to deal with Wei De. Zhai Sheng allowed the political commissar to escalate the problem to Zhai Yaohui and made sure that Wei De could no longer stay in the army on account of his relationship with Zhai Hua.

Ever since Zhai Hua made known that she was dating Wei De and wanted Zhai Sheng to help him get in through the back door, Zhai Sheng had been keeping an eye on Wei De.

Zhai Sheng had to find out everything about Wei De since he was the boyfriend of his only sister.

Furthermore, from his investigation, Zhai Sheng had only bad impression of Wei De.

He made use of the chance when Wei De was away to carry out his mission to conduct a thorough check on Wei De's life in the army.

Zhai Sheng grew to dislike Wei De as he learned more about him. In the end, he could no longer tolerate this person in the army.

Wei De and Zhai Hua were only in the dating stage, yet he had started to interfere in the Zhai family's affairs through Zhai Hua. Particularly, what infuriated Zhai Sheng the most was that Wei De had meddled in his private affairs.

It was under Wei De's influence that Zhai Hua used different attitudes on Qiao Nan when she met her.

Wei De did not come from good family background, yet he despised people who were of a similar background as him.

He heard from Zhai Hua that Zhai Sheng was in a relationship and that his girlfriend had a similar family background as his own.

If Zhai Sheng was able to marry the young lady, the Zhai family would agree to Zhai Hua's relationship with Wei De as well.

Wei De was pleased that his marriage with Zhai Hua would be able to proceed smoothly.

But Wei De was unhappy at the thought that his promising and capable brother-in-law would marry a lady who could not offer any help to the Zhai family and his career.

Furthermore, everyone had believed that Zhai Sheng would choose Qiu Chenxi, the daughter of the Qiu family, back then.

He must be out of his mind to marry the daughter of an ordinary family instead of the daughter of the established Qiu family.

On one hand, Wei De hoped that the relationship between Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan would help him get the consent of the Zhai family to be with Zhai Hua. On the other hand, he did not wish for Qiao Nan to be the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family, leaving the Zhai family with one less powerful connections like the Qiu family. Therefore, when he was discussing Qiao Nan with Zhai Hua, he would reveal his doubts and worries, remarking that he was worried that Zhai Sheng would be hurt as there was a huge gap between the two of them.

Zhai Sheng was stubborn. Back then, he did not fall for Qiu Chenxi. Now that he was with Qiao Nan, he must be serious about her.

If there was anything wrong with Qiao Nan, Zhai Sheng would be the only one who was hurt in the relationship.

It was not surprising that Zhai Hua would be wary of Qiao Nan when she heard that Qiao Nan might hurt her brother.

Fortunately, Zhai Hua knew her limits. Although she was doubtful of Qiao Nan, she did not make a move against Qiao Nan since the latter did not do anything to hurt Zhai Sheng

But for that alone, Zhai Sheng was unable to forgive Wei De.

Wei De was the kind of person who would abandon one's benefactor upon achieving one's goal.

"Regiment Commander Zhai, you are back. Have you decided on how to deal with Wei De's matter?" The political commissar was not surprised that Zhai Sheng was back at the army camp.

"Go by the books. Everything will be done according to the regulations. Go ahead and do whatever that is necessary. There is no need to be concerned about other matters." Wei De had implicated his revolutionary comrade, causing the latter to lose a leg because of his individualistic course of action. This was a serious matter. It was not difficult to kick him out of the army because of the grave mistake that he committed.

If Wei De realized his mistake, the army could give Wei De another chance.

However, judging from Zhai Hua's attitude, Wei De had not realized his mistake.

It might be true that Wei De had no intentions for the platoon leader to lose his leg.

But after learning that the platoon leader had lost his leg, Wei De was keen on his promotion and made use of Zhai Hua to try to accomplish that.

There was no way that Zhai Sheng would give Wei De another chance.

“Are you sure?” The political commissar was quite surprised. Did the Zhai family really intend to go by the books this time?

He heard that Zhai Hua liked Wei De very much and that both of them had been discussing marriage. Did the Zhai family have no intention to protect their son-in-law?

“I am sure. If not, I wouldn’t have to come back.” Since Wei De wanted to be with Zhai Hua and marry her, not only would he not be given special treatment, but the army would also be stricter to him than to the rest of the soldiers. This was the price he had to pay to be related to the Zhai family.

This was the usual working style of the Zhai family.

If Wei De had other thoughts, he could only say that he must be dreaming.

“Alright, I will make the necessary arrangements.” Without another word, the political commissar worked to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Within half a day, the people in the army knew that Wei De had received a serious demerit and was removed from the army as he had committed a grave mistake.

As soon as the news was released, those people who were indignant felt much better.

The army could not be lenient to Wei De just because he was related to the Zhai family.

While most people knew about the news, the party concerned was lying in the bed, completely oblivious to what was going on in the army. He was humming a tune, biding his time for the platoon

leader to leave the army so that he could be promoted to platoon leader because of the military achievement from his latest mission.

This year, he would be promoted to platoon leader, and in less than two years, he would be a company commander!!

“It’s time for meals.” A young nurse, pushing a trolley, delivered meals to Wei De.

The young nurse gave him a strange look. “Everyone who was sent here will have someone to take care of them. Don’t you have anyone to take care of you?”

The other patient who was admitted to the hospital with this patient was seriously injured. He had people around to take care of him, though all of them were men.

“I...” Wei De wanted to say that he did not need anyone to take care of him. Yesterday, he had told his girlfriend to go home. Even if he really needed someone to take care of him, he did not want to be taken care of by the rough men in the army. “It doesn’t matter. My hometown is far from Ping Cheng, and my parents can’t rush their way here. I also feel that making a trip here will be too tiring on them. If they know that I suffered serious injuries during the mission, it may give them a big shock. They did not expect me to have military achievements or to be promoted to a senior position. Their only hope is that I will be safe and sound.”

“Did you manage to gain military achievements?” The young nurse was shocked. “Your injuries are quite serious. Are you sure you don’t need anyone to take care of you?”

“It is nothing much. I have yet to receive the notice.”

Chapter 726 Wei De’s ‘Gratitude’

“The mission was quite difficult. There’re so many comrades. Many suffered injuries and one of the comrade’s life is still in danger. If I were truly capable, I should not have let my comrades bleed and suffer injuries.” Wei De was seemingly guilt-ridden. He displayed a sense of self-righteousness and empathy with the pain and suffering of his comrades.

The young nurse was so pleased with and stunned by Wei De’s words. “You have such high moral values and self-awareness. Nevertheless, injuries are unavoidable when you carry out such missions. It also depends on one’s luck and ability. You shouldn’t bear all the responsibility alone. Why don’t we do this? If you need any help, ask for me. I’ll help you.”

She could take more care of a hero with military achievements.

“Young comrade, thank you.” At the sight of the tender and young face of the nurse, Wei De felt extremely soothed at heart.

Women-it was true that the younger they were, the better. They were akin to fruits. When you picked fresh fruit from a tree, it was fresh, tender, and juicy. The taste was delicious.

An old woman was like dehydrated fruit. The skin was wrinkled and the flesh rotten. Consuming such fruit was akin to chewing wax. It would be tasteless.

After the young nurse left, Wei De glanced at the injury in his leg. His situation was different from that of his platoon leader. His platoon leader lost a leg. At most, he just had some bruises and would be able to get up from the bed and walk with a crutch after a few days of rest.

He did not know if Zhai Hua had managed to settle that issue.

No, he was being paranoid. Zhai Hua was the chief's daughter and Regiment Commander Zhai's biological sister. Zhai Hua would certainly be able to settle the matter properly.

As long as Zhai Hua could settle this, he would be recognized as the hero after he returned to the camp. He could just wait for his promotion to platoon leader.

The three major things that he did right in his life was joining the army, having connections in his hometown, and having wooed Zhai Hua and made her his girlfriend.

“I'm burning at the sight of his complacent behavior. Don't tell me that the army belongs to Wei De alone, that he can have no regard for laws and regulations!” Two soldiers who were attending to the injured platoon leader coincidentally walked past Wei De's ward and overheard Wei De whistling and humming songs in a good mood. He looked so complacent and relaxed. The two soldiers were so furious that they very much felt like ignoring Wei De's injuries. They simply wanted to open the door, enter the ward, hold Wei De down, and beat him up.

They had also heard the rumor that Wei De might possibly replace the platoon leader who would be stepping down.

The more that was the case, the more they felt the injustice.

How could there be a situation whereby one, after committing a mistake, would be rewarded instead of receiving any punishment? There was no law and justice in this world then.

“Don’t be anxious. He won’t be pleased for too long.” Another soldier stopped his comrades.

“What do you mean?” The person who had been held back was stunned. “Isn’t he going to rise up in the ranks rapidly?”

Wei De’s girlfriend was the army’s Battalion Commander Zhai, Regiment Commander Zhai’s biological sister.

With the protection of these two prominent characters, Wei De could really have his way in the army.

The soldier who had been questioned laughed. “We’ve been in the army for so long. Don’t we know what kind of person Regiment Commander Zhai is? Regiment Commander Zhai is not one who can’t differentiate between work and personal matters. I heard that Regiment Commander Zhai had already openly expressed that Wei De’s matter has to be dealt with by the books. Punishment should be meted out accordingly even if the party involved is Wei De. In fact, they should be stricter if that’s the case!”

“However, Battalion Commander Zhai is Regiment Commander Zhai’s biological sister.”

“So what? Everyone is equal! Regiment Commander Zhai is very fair and will definitely not condone a villain like Wei De. There are no siblings in the army. There is only a supervisor-subordinate relationship.” Wei De wished to rely on his relationship with Battalion Commander Zhai to fearlessly have his way in the army. He would be better off dreaming about it.

“Is it true?!” The platoon leader was such a good person and he was now in such a pitiful state because of Wei De. If Wei De were to really take over the platoon leader’s position, then he would also lose confidence in the army and the country.

“What’s the hurry? If you don’t believe me, wait and see. After he can get out of the bed, I want to see if his mood will still be as good as today.”

“That’s good then. I feel more assured now. Come on, let’s go and see the platoon leader. I think the platoon leader will feel happy when he hears about this.” Regarding the sum of money that they wanted to give the platoon leader, the two soldiers started to feel bad again.

The platoon leader deserved that sum of money.

However, that sum of money was in exchange for one limb of his. It was not worth it!

“Hello, good day?” In the house of the Qiao family in Ping Cheng, just as Qiao Nan sent her students off, the phone in the house rang.

At the sight of the unfamiliar phone number, Qiao Nan hesitated for a while. However, the phone rang continuously. Qiao Nan then picked it up.

“Hi, good day, Teacher Xiao Qiao.”

After a long time, Qiao Nan almost could not recognize the voice.

However, when a mature man addressed her as Teacher Xiao Qiao, he could only be people from the army in Ping Cheng. Amongst these people, there were not many who would have the ability to find out the telephone number of her house and called her at this hour. “Wei De?”

“Teacher Xiao Qiao is very blessed and busy. You can still remember my name. It’s not easy.” Wei De sounded very complacent and arrogant.

Qiao Nan shrugged her shoulders, feeling very helpless. “So you made this call just to confirm if I still remember you?”

It was difficult for her not to remember a ‘talent’ like Wei De.

“Surely not. We’re also considered as old acquaintances. I encountered something good recently and wish to share my joy with Teacher Xiao Qiao.”

“Is that so? What’s the good news that made you so happy?” Qiao Nan was a little sullen. Shouldn’t Wei De feel depressed and angry at this point in time?

Wei De raised his voice. He could not hide and control his joy and arrogance. “After hearing your views, I participated in the mission this time. Fortunately, I did not lose my life and I did not let down Teacher Xiao Qiao’s expectations and hopes on me. I consider myself returning in glory. I’m not well-educated and I don’t know if I’ve put it across correctly. As a gifted student, you have to guide me if I make a mistake, Teacher Xiao Qiao.”

He was going to be a platoon leader soon, then a company commander, or even a battalion commander. His literacy and cultural standards certainly had to improve as well.

“Hahaha, you’re too modest, Comrade Wei. What you said is correct and you have a good gift of gab. I admit that there’s nothing that I can teach you. As for the happy matter that you mentioned, I would like to congratulate you.” Did this mean Wei De had been hospitalized all this while and did not know what was going to happen next?

Congratulations. She really wanted to congratulate Wei De and his whole family.

“Thank you.” Wei De, who was high-spirited and thinking that his life was going uphill, did not sense the oddity in Qiao Nan’s tone at all. “What I have today is all thanks to Teacher Xiao Qiao. I didn’t know that I could also have such results if I work hard properly.”

Chapter 727 Zhai Hua’s ‘Heart of a Princess’

“I know myself better now. Teacher Xiao Qiao, thank you for making me discover myself again. I believe that I will become increasingly better in the future. I’ll definitely not let down that previous ‘well-meaning intention’ of

yours.”

Didn’t ‘Teacher Xiao Qiao’ refuse to help? No issue. He did not need it anymore.

He had succeeded this time and he would certainly continue to succeed in the future.

Without the help of Teacher Xiao Qiao', he succeeded all the same. When he openly stood in front of the Zhai family with the identity of Zhai Hua's other half, 'Teacher Xiao Qiao' might not even have graduated from school

yet.

He wanted to see how Teacher Xiao Qiao' would then repent and plead for his help!

Qiao Nan was amused as she could tell that Wei De was deliberately boasting to her. "Is that so? Then, I have to congratulate you once again. Congratulations to you for having such progress and results. Comrade Wei, do you still have any other matter?"

How much assurance did Zhai Hua give Wei De to make him so arrogant?

There was no place for Wei De in the army anymore. He had not even known the situation that he was in before giving such an arrogant phone call. When Wei De knew the truth of the matter, she did not know how Wei De would take the conversation between them today.

"Then, I will also say it again. Thank you, 'Teacher Xiao Qiao'. You're the one who made me realize that I can actually have such a different life." He no longer needed Regiment Commander Zhai to pull strings for him. He was capable. It was just that he lacked luck and had not met the right opportunities earlier.

This matter was sufficient to prove that he was, in fact, a sturdy horse that previously had no opportunity to showcase his talent.

Fortunately, with the spur of the momentum of this matter, the road ahead of him would still be smooth sailing without the help of the Zhai family and Zhai Hua.

"Then, I'll congratulate you on having a second 'life'," Qiao Nan said as if she was implying something else. "It's late. I remember that you're injured. I won't disturb you from your rest. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

After hanging up the phone, Wei De laughed scornfully. This was just a woman who relied on her beauty to succeed and she dared to be so arrogant and boastful to him.

Just wait and see. Three years later, his status in the Zhai family would become firmer. Three years later, he wanted to see what Qiao Nan, who would have lost some of her youth, could rely on to hold on tightly to Regiment Commander Zhai's heart.

With a heart filled with ambitions, Wei De limped back to his ward and lay on the hospital bed as he fantasized about his grand plans for the future.

He did not rely on women or connections. He only relied on his own pair of hands as well as motivation and effort to build a splendid and glorious life!

“Wei De?” Shi Qing, who was by Qiao Nan's side, blinked when she heard the conversation “He's showing off to you? Is he an idiot? Isn't it true that he won't be able to remain in the army anymore?”

“Obviously, he has been staying in the hospital and no one has notified him about it. Hence, he doesn't know anything yet.” Qiao Nan pursed her lips and smiled. She was not bothered.

“How about Sister Zhai Hua?” Sister Zhai Hua had not told Wei De the situation. If this were to drag on longer, Wei De would most likely feel worse.

“I'm not sure. I didn't contact Brother Zhai after he left for the army camp yesterday. Brother Zhai was the one who gave Wei De this opportunity, and Wei De got into such serious trouble. Although he can no longer remain in the army, Brother Zhai still has to clean up the mess that he had created, right?” Hence, he had not received a call from Brother Zhai until now. Instead, she got a call from Wei De.

Shi Qing's lips curled. She doubted once again how blind Zhai Hua was to be able to take a liking to Wei De. “I guess Sister Zhai Hua will probably visit Wei De at the hospital. Do you think she will tell Wei De the truth immediately?”

“No.” Qiao Nan yawned. “Sister Zhai Hua is someone who's straightforward and she doesn't drag her feet. However, in the face of love, a woman will always become undecided. Regardless of the severity of Wei De's injuries, he won't be discharged from the hospital in these few days. Seeing that Wei De is in such a good mood, do you think Sister Zhai Hua could bear to tell Wei De such a mind-blowing truth?”

Promotion?

There was only expulsion for Wei De.

This was basically the difference between heaven and hell.

Shi Qing shook her head. “Don’t think about these matters anymore. Wei De is Sister Zhai Hua’s boyfriend and not someone that I have blindly taken a liking to. This big worry belongs to Sister Zhai Hua, no matter if she tells him or not. But according to what Brother Zhai told you yesterday, Chief Zhai is prepared to be in for a good show? Until when? He already saw Wei De’s true colors. He can’t possibly continue to let him be together with Sister Zhai Hua or even let him marry her and give birth to his child, right?”

It would be too late if that truly happened.

Also, Sister Zhai Hua was twenty-seven years old this year.

Not to mention other matters, Sister Zhai Hua would be twenty-nine and thirty years old respectively in two and three years’ time respectively.

Shi Qing had not seen anyone who was not married at that age.

Wei De was a man and could afford to delay marriage, but not Sister Zhai Hua.

“He won’t,” Qiao Nan said with certainty. “Given the family rules and situation in the Zhai family, they will not accept Wei De. As to when, I can’t be certain either. Sister Zhai Hua is very stubborn and at the peak of her temper now. If the Zhai family objects to the relationship now, the effects will be counterproductive. Therefore, Chief Zhai quietly acquiesced first. After Wei De is expelled from the army, Wei De will realize that he may be able to gain as much as he expected from being together with Sister Zhai Hua. With many conflicts happening at the same time, as time goes by, the relationship between the two of them may deteriorate. Now, Wei De fully believes and hopes that he can rise through the ranks with the help of Sister Zhai Hua’s connections. Hence, Sister Zhai Hua is enjoying a treatment akin to that of a princess from Wei De. Tell me, which woman doesn’t like this kind of treatment?”

“Princess treatment?” Shi Qing was now a little enlightened about why Zhai Hua chose Wei De.

“You should know a little about the situation of the Zhai family. When they were children, Sister Zhai Hua and Brother Zhai were under Old Master Zhai’s care without their parents by their sides. Such children will more or less have some flaws in their characters. The only difference is the degree of severity. When Sister Zhai Hua was a child, she did not get to enjoy the feeling of being doted on by her parents. Hence, when she’s older, she especially cherishes the affection and love from her partner. When Sister Zhai Hua can’t feel this kind of love from Wei De anymore, they will break up sooner or later without the need for others to advise her. The only thing that I am worried about is when and in what circumstances will Wei De give up completely on Sister Zhai Hua and choose another target to replace her.”

The status and power of the Zhai family were too enticing

Wei De was quite street smart. It would not be easy to make Wei De completely give up on Sister Zhai Hua.

Chapter 728 Double-Crossing

Shi Qing lifted the corners of her lips. “Unless Sister Zhai Hua was not an offspring of the Zhai family, or if the Zhai family disowns Sister Zhai Hua completely? Even if Sister Zhai Hua is willing to, Wei De will not agree.” Wei De had been targeting Sister Zhai Hua’s relationships and connections. With Wei De’s influence, Sister Zhai Hua would most likely not make such an extreme decision.

“Ah, it’s hard to say. I’m afraid we won’t be able to know for certain in these few years.”

Wei De was still unaware that he had been expelled from the army. If he were to find out, he would definitely bear a grudge and create another scene.

If Wei De kicked up a fuss with Sister Zhai Hua, Sister Zhai Hua would definitely do the same to the Zhai family. It would basically be a vicious cycle.

“Let’s not talk about this anymore. The National Day holiday is coming to an end. We will need to return to school the day after.” There were only seven days of holiday for National Day. It was almost the end of the tuition period for the current batch of Qiao Nan’s students. Qiao Nan perked up and did not forget about her studies.

“When school reopens, you can’t continue to teach the students anymore.” Shi Qing raised her brows. “Qiao Nan, you really don’t want to be a teacher in the future?”

Based on her observation, Qiao Nan was much more popular than typical school teachers.

Regardless of what kind of student, they would become very obedient in front of Qiao Nan.

If every teacher could have it as easy as Qiao Nan, whereby the students were obedient and good in both their studies and character, it was, in fact, quite good being a teacher.

Qiao Nan wanted to laugh at Shi Qing. “Being a teacher is not as easy as you imagine. Think about it. Don’t talk about other teachers. Can you recall that amongst all your teachers since you’re a child, who had it easy and who made you feel that it’s quite easy to be a teacher?”

It was difficult to manage students. In addition, students of future generations would be even more difficult to manage. It was too tough being a teacher.

Shi Qing knitted her brows and thought about it seriously. In the end, she realized that being a teacher was really not as good as she had imagined. “However, it’s different. You’re different. Look, I’ve been observing you teach your three batches of students. Those teachers of mine did not teach the students the way you did.”

It was a joyful style of teaching.

When the other teachers were giving lessons, the students always wore painful expressions on their faces.

On the contrary, Qiao Nan’s students would always leave with a smile.

There was another point that was also the most obvious.

It was almost inevitable for students to be late for classes.

However, amongst the three batches of students taught by Qiao Nan, none of the students were late. Most arrived early for the lesson.

Just from this point alone, it was not difficult to tell that, in fact, all the students of Qiao Nan were very supportive of Qiao Nan.

“Are you trying to persuade me into becoming a teacher?” Qiao Nan shook her head. “I go by unorthodox and unconventional ways. Furthermore, I’m really not interested in being a teacher. Children of this age are very sensitive and stubborn. When did I put on airs of a teacher in front of them? If not for this, they might not even give me face. However, if I really become a teacher, it won’t be appropriate to use this unorthodox way of mine.”

The teaching style should be catered to the students.

It was too hard to be a teacher. Moreover, she had too little knowledge and it certainly would not do.

There were different psychological developments in each age group. To be a good teacher, one needed to have a good grasp of the various psychological stages of different age groups.

It was also because of this that Qiao Nan adopted an entirely different teaching method for the people in the army and the junior high school students. Even when she was at school, Qiao Nan had never put on airs of a teacher before the students in her cohort.

“I think you know a lot too.” At the very least, it would not be a major problem for Qiao Nan to teach students from junior high school, senior high school, and adults.

Qiao Nan took out two ice pops from the refrigerator and passed one of them to Shi Qing. “How so? Speaking of which, you’re so interested in whether I’ll become a teacher. Why don’t you give my master a call to talk about this?”

“...” Shi Qing, who had just taken a big bite of the ice pop, froze. “Please, please don’t tell Elder Lin what I said earlier. I don’t wish to memorize the English dictionary.”

Shi Qing usually seemed like a fearless little bully but she would occasionally meet formidable characters and Lin Yuankang was one of them.

Lin Yuankang loved to look for intelligent children to test them on their innate ability to learn English.

Who in the political circle did not hope that their children could become Lin Yuankang's disciple? China had already bridged itself with the world and English was a compulsory subject.

It would be best to learn from Lin Yuankang than other people.

Many years ago, Old Master Shi had intended to send Shi Qing to Lin Yuankang.

Shi Qing was an intelligent child but she did not have a passion for language since she was born. Her learning attitude toward English was akin to that of a coping mechanism to fulfill her studies.

Hence, Shi Qing could not tolerate Lin Yuankang's training style at all.

Qiao Nan memorized the dictionary on her own initiative. When Shi Qing was a child, Lin Yuankang looked at those clever and mischievous eyes of hers, and then the scheming look in Elder Shi's eyes. Without a word, he threw a small dictionary to Shi Qing. "When Shi Qing is able to memorize all the words in this dictionary, I can take her under my wing."

Lin Yuankang simply scared Shi Qing away with a dictionary. That was also the first time that Old Master Shi expressed dissatisfaction with Shi Qing

It was also because of that incident that whenever Shi Qing saw Lin Yuankang, she was like a mouse seeing a cat. She would shrink her neck and disappear at the fastest speed from Lin Yuankang's sight, in case Lin Yuankang caught hold of her.

Of course, Shi Qing knew that Lin Yuankang was nurturing Qiao Nan as his successor and that Qiao Nan was Lin Yuankang's last disciple.

Shi Qing expressed that she did not have the guts to poach someone from Lin Yuankang. "Do you know how stressed I feel to be your friend because you're Elder Lin's disciple? When I was a child, my grandpa brought me to acknowledge him as a master. Elder Lin didn't like me and chased me away with a dictionary. Now, because of my relationship with you, Elder Lin is so friendly to me. He even asked me if I wish to learn English again. Ah, I'm already so traumatized. I would rather be a rock than an unpolished jade in his eyes."

She truly did not have any interest in this subject. Elder Lin should not waste his good intentions on her.

There were many people who wished to seek advice from Elder Lin. There was simply no need for Elder Lin to waste his effort on her.

“Aren’t you hoping that I will become a teacher? He’s my master after all. I have to seek his opinion, don’t I? You have a gift of gab. Maybe my master will agree after you talk to him.” Qiao Nan was extremely amused. Even a top student like Shi Qing would have a teacher that she was fearful of. It was rare.

“Enough. It’ll be strange if Elder Lin agrees to it.”

“Not really. You can convince him to let me become an English teacher. I won’t waste the skills that he imparted to me then, right?”

Qiao Nan was truly busy. Besides teaching two groups of students, she also had to find time to learn English from Elder Lin during the summer break.

Chapter 729 Qiao Nan Gave Herself Away

During the last ten days of the summer break, Qiao Nan had followed Elder Lin to an occasion and put her knowledge and skills into practice.

A few foreigners who saw the potential to develop their businesses in Ping Cheng visited the place.

The mayor in Ping Cheng considered this occasion as one of his priorities and specially invited Elder Lin to help. Elder Lin simply brought Qiao Nan along to be the on-site interpreter.

As such, while Qiao Nan’s classmates were unaware, Qiao Nan had already gotten to know and interact with the mayor in their town for some time.

“I’m not talking to you about this. You’re clearly aware that I’m most afraid of Elder Lin. If Elder Lin finds out about my earlier conversation with you, he’ll definitely think of a way to torture me till I die.” At the thought of how Elder Lin dealt with her in the past, Shi Qing was so frightened that she could feel chills down her spine.

Qiao Nan rolled her eyes. “Obviously, you’re very scared of my master. Then, why do you keep poaching me? What’s wrong with you?”

“I just can’t control my mouth.” Shi Peng, who rarely knocked off early, was home earlier today. When he heard the conversation between his daughter and Qiao Nan, he interrupted and made use of the opportunity to chide her daughter. “You’re so scared of Elder Lin and yet you dare to test his limit. Qing Qing, you’ve grown bolder recently.”

“Dad, you came back so early? You’re deriding your own daughter once you’re back. Is that appropriate?!” Shi Qing was angered. This father must be an impostor. “You didn’t work overtime today?”

“Of course, it’s the National Day. I also wish to take a break and rest.” Drinking the cup of tea prepared by his daughter, Shi Peng found it flavorful even if it was bland. “Recently, most of the proposals for the major projects have been put up on the agenda. Progress has been quite smooth currently. My hard work for the past six months has not been in vain. After a few years, Ping Cheng will definitely be able to develop well.”

At the mention of this, Shi Peng was in an extraordinarily good mood.

“A few years?” Qiao Nan was more sensitive to this figure. “I heard that some places will develop quite quickly.” A few years is considered slow?

Shi Peng took a sip and said smilingly, “You youngsters nowadays are a little too impatient. Take a step at a time. It’s better to be slow and steady in certain things. If the foundation is not good, there’ll be more repercussions in the future. We can’t just focus on the short-term interest before us and ignore the rest. Ping Cheng’s sceneries are very beautiful. Its hills are green and waters are clear. If we ruin the environment and disrupt ecological equilibrium for the sake of developing the place, we will eventually receive retribution from mother nature.”

“...” Qiao Nan was taken aback as she looked at Shi Peng.

Of course, Qiao Nan knew what Shi Peng was referring to.

In her previous life, after the 21st century, the various cities in China developed very quickly at a rapid pace. Amidst this, environment protection and ecological equilibrium were the major areas that were most often neglected.

The consequences were reflected in the future, when the greenhouse effect worsened, resulting in problems such as global warming, air pollution, ozone hole, and many others.

As someone who was reborn, Qiao Nan knew that not only China but also all the countries in the world faced severe environmental pollution issues.

However, this was a macro issue. Qiao Nan alone would not be able to change anything.

In particular, everyone in China was thinking of ways to develop and grow during this period. There was an advocate of economic efficacy. If the city did not develop as quickly as expected, the officials might lose their jobs.

As such, it only focused on rapid but not balanced developments.

Qiao Nan knew that if she were to voice out any views in public at this point in time, it would be lost in the sea. There would not be any impact. This behavior might even be perceived as anti-socialism.

How could Qiao Nan not feel surprised and shocked by that advanced foresight, scientific knowledge, and incremental thinking of Shi Peng?

If China had more people like Shi Peng, then at the very least, the environmental pollution issues in China would be better controlled. The situation of the government focusing on development initially before dumping huge sums of money to treat the side effects of development, such as environmental pollution, thereafter would not even occur.

“Director Shi, you’ll definitely be the best director in Ping Cheng.” In this lifetime, Ping Cheng had a Director like Shi Peng. Could they avoid the unhealthy cycle of rapid development and prevent pollution as best as they could?

“Hahaha! Qiao Nan, did I just receive high praise and affirmation from you?” Shi Peng laughed. “Thanks for your affirmation. I’ll definitely work harder and strive for Ping Cheng to develop well

and let all the citizens in Ping Cheng lead a good life. Economic growth is important but Ping Cheng is our home. All the more we should protect it well. Qiao Nan, don't you think so?"

"Yes!" Qiao Nan nodded vigorously.

Shi Qing knitted her brows. She looked at her father and Qiao Nan, feeling puzzled. "Aren't you talking about the development of Ping Cheng? What did it have to do with environmental protection? If I don't remember wrongly, the leaders of the country are now looking at production efficacy as well as economic growth and its benefits. Dad, you doing this is like subjecting yourself to endless days of hard work only to remain as a director in Ping Cheng, isn't it?"

Her father's concerns and priorities were different from and not aligned with those of the country.

Qiao Nan smiled mysteriously. "Manage the economic development in one hand and environmental protection on the other. Both have to be managed in strong ways."

"What Qiao Nan said is right. We can't be content with staying where we are now. We need to have foresight when viewing every matter. Environment protection will become one of the priorities in the political arena sooner or later. Economy ranks first and the environment second. Simultaneously, we have to advocate a change of mindsets." At the mention of Ping Cheng's future progress, Shi Peng went on enthusiastically. That excited manner of his seemed as though he was in the office and meeting room and not the house of the Qiao family, a place for resting.

"..." Shi Qing tugged the corners of her lips. "Don't you think that the topics of your conversation are getting strange? Qiao Nan, do you really understand them?"

"I have asked you to learn more from Qiao Nan. Do you think I said it just for the sake of chiding you?" Shi Peng looked at his daughter in a disapproving manner.

Logically speaking, Qing Qing grew up in the Shi family and received much more influence in politics than Qiao Nan. Most importantly, with the situation of the Qiao family, Qiao Nan would not have any chance to be exposed to such political matters.

Why was it that Qiao Nan understood this but Qing Qing had absolutely no idea what they were referring to?

Shi Peng certainly would not admit that the family education of the Shi family had failed. Shi Peng was well aware of the kind of people and elders in the Qiao family.

That mother of Qiao Nan whom he had not met before could not possibly have such influence on her.

Qiao Dongliang was quite a good person, but besides his passion for the army, he did not have many thoughts and ideas regarding the development and progress of the nation.

As such, the two elders in the Qiao family could not guide Qiao Nan in the right direction at all. Then, how did Qiao Nan 'grow up'?

Sensing the curiosity and probing from Shi Peng, Qiao Nan's heart jumped. She felt that she had been too complacent earlier.

She was not Shi Peng. Hence, she could not possibly possess that advanced foresight of his. All that she knew was based on her experience in the 'future'.

Given her situation, it would certainly arouse suspicions if she seemed to know too much.

Chapter 730 Qiao Nan's Profound Insights

This situation had happened once before with Zhai Sheng. At that time, Qiao Nan was scared out of her wits.

Fortunately, Zhai Sheng had always been very forgiving toward Qiao Nan. He had never forced Qiao Nan to tell him something that she did not wish to. Gradually, Qiao Nan had also let down her guard regarding this.

This time, she was so careless for having slipped so badly in front of Shi Peng. This perked Qiao Nan up and made her more alert. She definitely would not let it happen a third time.

Qiao Nan's heart was thumping rapidly but she gradually managed to calm herself down. "It's not about whether I understand the situation or not. You're from Mo Du while I grew up in Ping Cheng. Hence, I understand Ping Cheng's situation more than you. Three years ago, at the east of Ping Cheng, there was a stream with water so clear that you could see the bottom of it. That crystal clear water even had a sweet taste to it. It was also easy to net small fishes and shrimps from the stream.

Especially during summer, if the rain was not heavy, many would go there to catch fishes and shrimps. The beauty of that stream was as per every description of it in school textbooks. However, two years ago, a factory was built on the bare land in front of the stream. As a result, the flow of water to the stream was cut off. That stream has turned stagnant now. It first turned smelly and dried up thereafter. If you visit it now, you could see that the stream has already become a path.”

“This is just one of the examples. You came here late and don’t know that much. Such situations are not uncommon in Ping Cheng. There’re some parts of China with adequate water supply while some facing a serious shortage of water. A source of water is so important to a place that faces a shortage of water. It’s not something that people like us, from places that do not face such problems, can understand. One may not feel much initially regarding the damage and pollution of the environment. When the problem is visible, it’ll most likely be too late then. Why is it that when the west areas plagued with severe desertification are furiously planting poplar while places like ours with green hills and clear waters are chopping the trees blatantly? With fewer plants and trees, the biggest problem is the loss of soil. The trees are gone but the lands are still around. Once the rainy season of June arrives, with heavy storms and rains, there will be landslides. It’s so dangerous for those who live near the hills. You can’t imagine it at all. They’re staying near the gate of hells!”

Upon hearing this logical and lengthy speech of Qiao Nan which made every sense, Shi Qing looked wide-eyed and tongue-tied. She could not utter a word for some time.

Even Shi Peng was silent for some time. He was deep in thought about what Qiao Nan said.

Regarding the problem of water supply, as a government official, Shi Peng was aware that the country had already researched and even come up with a project to divert water from the south to the north.

It could be said that this major project took more than ten years of meticulous efforts to complete, from its initial proposal and step-by-step detailed research until the final execution.

Relatively, the country spent so much effort, hard work, and monetary resources to support the project of diverting water from the south to the north. It was thus really bad to have a cutoff of water supply in places with adequate water supply.

Water is a source of life. If he really wished to protect the environment from pollution, the development and building of water supply was a major theme and project. He had neglected this point earlier.

Fortunately, Qiao Nan brought this up today. Otherwise, just as Qiao Nan said, by the time he realized, it would have been too late as the problem had occurred.

Right from the beginning, his objective was to stop all the environmental pollution and potential lurking perils caused by economic development as soon as it spelled trouble.

The most frightening words that he heard from Qiao Nan was about the monsoon season.

Although there were no landslides in Ping Cheng now, there were cases of many rocks of various sizes sliding down the hills during the monsoon season, causing accidents and deaths.

It was just that there were not many such cases, and most resulted in injuries, not deaths. The probability of occurrence was not high either. The final precaution that the government and the local departments administered after some short discussion was to put up warning signs near the areas with frequent incidents.

If a major natural disaster, such as landslides, were to occur, these small warning signs would be totally useless.

What Qiao Nan said were all false but there were many issues in it that Shi Peng needed to think about. Shi Peng was thus totally silent as he pondered deeply over the problems brought up by Qiao Nan.

As for Shi Qing, she understood some of it but not all.

Of course, she understood literally what it meant as well as its implications.

However, was it really so easy to resolve such a major issue?

“This, what’s happening?” When Qiao Dongliang was back, he saw the three of them surrounding the table in silence and no one was speaking. The house was as quiet as the library. “You are...” Discussing some issues? There should be some noise if that was the case, no?

Reading?

No one was holding a book in their hands.

Then, they were in a daze together?

Nan Nan had been lamenting that she did not have time to study. How was it possible that she would do something so useless? Shi Qing was not that kind of person either. As for Director Shi, for the sake of reforming and opening up Ping Cheng, he was an extremely busy and hardworking man who was always running about and did not have any minute to waste.

With such a combination, they were actually sitting around together in a daze. Qiao Dongliang did not think it was possible no matter how he thought about it.

“Dad, you’re back. It’s already so late!!” Qiao Nan lifted her head. Ah, it’s half-past six in the evening!

“I have not prepared dinner.”

“No issue. We’ll prepare them together. It’ll be faster that way.” Seeing that Shi Peng was still deep in thought, Qiao Dongliang dared not disturb him. A character such as Shi Peng, who was a leader at the forefront regardless of whether he was in the army or the government sector, was different from ordinary people like him.

They were worried about daily necessities while Shi Peng was worried about the major affairs of the country and the livelihoods of the citizens.

“Okay.” Qiao Nan stood up and cast a weak glance at Shi Peng.

Fortunately, she managed to come up with this information to divert Director Shi’s attention from her. Otherwise, she would be in trouble in the future.

“I’ll help too!” Shi Qing could not provide much help anyway. She only understood about fifty to sixty percent of Qiao Nan’s conversation. Although she understood, it did not mean that she could participate in the discussion and help think of solutions, not to mention that she did not even understand it fully.

After entering the kitchen, Shi Qing asked Qiao Nan secretly, “Do you have any solutions to the problems that you mentioned just now?”

“No.”

Upon hearing this answer, Shi Qing felt very disappointed.

If so many problems were to occur, given her father’s character, he would start to give his all to his work again. He would work overtime and stay up late for endless nights until the problems were resolved and the citizens in Ping Cheng could lead peaceful lives.

The corners of Qiao Nan’s lips curled into a smile. “But I know of a way that can prevent the occurrence of such severe situations and let your dad work less.”

Shi Qing’s eyes lit up instantly. “I know that you will have a way!! Quickly tell me.”

“Very simple. The problems that I mentioned earlier are not that serious in Ping Cheng. Since the problems have not occurred, what we should be thinking about now should not be how to resolve them but to protect and avoid such situations. That’s in accordance to your dad’s earlier thoughts and plans.”