

RTAMM 731

Chapter 731 The Zhai Family Wants to Have a Good Daughter-In-Law

“Since the sources of water supply are critical, at the very least, the future developments in Ping Cheng must not affect water supply and cause water pollution. Once such projects appear, we must ban and put an end to them. Regarding the loss of soil, the crux of this problem is with the trees and plants. As long as deforestation is controlled and Ping Cheng’s greeneries are protected, none of these problems will occur in the future.”

The current ecology system of Ping Cheng was fine. It was not as bad a situation as the time after the year 2010.

The difference in ten years was not only the economy but also the environment.

As long as Shi Peng paid attention to these issues at this point in time, Ping Cheng could definitely become one of the most unpolluted places in China.

In short, it was necessary to prevent those issues from occurring.

Solving the problems after occurrence would be difficult. In comparison, it was easier to ensure good management and control practices.

“Right, I’m so muddleheaded!” She had been thinking about what to do if the problems were to occur but had forgotten that these issues had not even materialized. “Then, I’ll go and tell my dad...”

“No need. Your dad doesn’t need your reminder. He’ll be able to think of it himself.” Director Shi was a qualified and outstanding party member. He would do all he could for the country and the people.

With Director Shi as a government official in Ping Cheng, she felt quite assured.

Each time Shi Peng had a meal at the house of the Qiao family, he would derive a sense of satisfaction. Today, he felt extraordinarily satisfied in both psychological and physiological aspects.

“Dad, what are you doing? Quickly go to bed.” Shi Qing, who had just finished bathing, was drying her hair and yawning at the same time. She then searched out the hairdryer at home and was prepared to go to bed after drying her hair.

“Nothing. Rest assured. I won’t sleep late. I’m just going to make a call before I sleep.” Shi Peng picked up the phone.

“Who are you calling?” Shi Qing sat down, feeling curious. “It’s already so late. You have not slept but others may be sleeping.”

“Don’t worry. I’m sure they haven’t gone to sleep yet.” Shi Peng dialed a phone number swiftly. Before two rings, the other side picked up the phone. “Hello?”

“Old Zhai, it’s me.”

“I know.” Zhai Yaohui’s aloof voice could be heard from the other side of the phone.

Shi Qing, who was sitting by his side, widened her eyes. She mouthed, “Why did you call Uncle Zhai?!”

At the sight of his daughter, Shi Peng laughed. “There’s something about Qiao Nan today which I feel the need to tell you to deepen your understanding of her. After all, this is the mission that you assigned to me. I can’t let down the trust that the leader placed on me, right?”

“...” Shi Qing’s face turned black. Her father actually became Chief Zhai’s spy. Moreover, it was to specifically spy on Qiao Nan.

Wasn’t her father being too much by doing this? Uncle Qiao and Qiao Nan were so good to them and her dad still wanted to tell on Qiao Nan.

Shi Peng was amused when he saw the anger in his daughter’s eyes rising. He was not telling on Qiao Nan. He was helping Qiao Nan to improve Zhai Yaohui’s impression of her. “This is what happened... Old Zhai, your family is so blessed. Zhai Sheng’s judgment of character is better than yours.”

“...” Zhai Yaohui, who was on the other side of the phone, was silent for a while. However, he did not agree readily with Shi Peng.

If the woman that Shi Peng was referring to was Qi Minlan, then he would admit that his sense of judgment was not better than that of his son. But if he was referring to Miao Miao, he did not think so.

Both Miao Miao and Qiao Nan had their own merits. Moreover, they would become mother and daughter-in-law in the future. Hence, there was no need to compare them.

“Qiao Nan, this lady, is incredible. Your previous fears are completely unfounded. She is certainly qualified to take on the role of the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family. She won't make the Zhai family lose face. Maybe your Zhai family will even rise further in your reputation with such a capable and forward-thinking daughter-in-law.”

The hero's origin did not matter. Since ancient times, the emperor had the habit of giving high regard to his people with humble backgrounds. It was the same situation in China now.

The more ordinary one's background was and the more successful one became, they would be highly regarded by the country and leaders as role models.

Qiao Nan, this young lady, was truly incredible.

“Unfortunately, Qing Qing is also a lady. Otherwise, Zhai Sheng wouldn't stand a chance.” Perhaps this was Zhai Sheng's blessing too. When Qiao Nan was still a plain and unpolished jade, he had already taken a liking to her.

When Qiao Nan was polished, she would be shining in dazzling splendor and exuding inner grace and charisma. Countless gentlemen who noticed Qiao Nan's positive qualities would be more than willing to woo the fair lady.

It was a matter of timing and opportunity.

Zhai Yaohui snorted. “The problem is that you only have one daughter.” Regardless of whether it was a pity, it was impossible for Qiao Nan to become part of the Shi family. She belonged to his son.

If not for Zhai Sheng, the Shi family might not even have an opportunity to meet Qiao Nan in their entire lifetime.

At the end of the day, Zhai Sheng was the only person with a good sense of judgment. The father-daughter of the Shi family owed it all to Zhai Sheng.

“Do you mean that you’re more approving of Qiao Nan and are agreeable to their relationship now?” This was the first time that Zhai Yaohui spoke to Shi Peng in such a proud and complacent manner. Therefore Shi Peng did not dispute him. He even allowed Zhai Yaohui to gloat about it.

He was returning favor with favor.

“Qiao Nan is certainly not bad.” As his understanding of Qiao Nan grew, he also agreed that Qiao Nan was becoming more and more outstanding and dazzling. She was completely worthy of Zhai Sheng.

One of Zhai Yaohui’s requirements for the future daughter-in-law of the Zhai family was for her to have some sensitivity to political issues. At the very least, she must not be an idiot in politics.

This was also the reason that Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing wanted to find Zhai Sheng a wife with a similar family situation as the Zhai family.

Given the reputation and status of the Zhai family, they needed to have certain considerations and reservations.

Love was, of course, important, but not as much as suitability.

If they could meet one that their son loved and was also suitable for the Zhai family, that would be a happy ending for all.

Thinking about that stubborn character of Zhai Sheng now, Zhai Yaohui let out a huge sigh of relief. Fortunately, Zhai Sheng was lucky and Qiao Nan was outstanding enough. There was nothing that he could pick on regarding her. This was the fortune and luck of both the Zhai family and Qiao Nan.

“But you have not settled your wife’s end, have you?” Shi Peng was laughing at Zhai Yaohui. Clearly, he had acknowledged Qiao Nan as his daughter-in-law but this matter was still stuck at Miao Jing’s end.

“It’s not an issue.” Zhai Sheng was good at nothing except for smoking his way through others.

Given Miao Miao’s temper, it was really not difficult to let Miao Miao accept Qiao Nan as long as Zhai Sheng put in some good words and both he and Qiao Nan worked on it together when the time came.

Shi Peng laughed. “How was it? Have I completed my mission beautifully? It’s fortunate that I did not fail.”

Zhai Yaohui snorted at Shi Peng’s claims. “Didn’t you gain much from this as well?”

All of what Qiao Nan said was constructive and meaningful. It gave Shi Peng so much inspiration and guidance on his future plans. Shi Peng was the one who benefited much. In fact, Shi Peng was the one who took his undeserved gains for granted.

Zhai Yaohui did not have the habit of pampering his long-time opponent.

Chapter 732 – Shi Peng Was a ‘Spy’

“Hahaha...” Shi Peng was amused. Certainly, he had received much inspiration from Qiao Nan. This was a fact that he did not deny. “When can you let the two children feel assured? Don’t tell me you want to let your son and Qiao Nan continue to keep their relationship in the dark.”

“Does it make a difference? That lad of mine is already enjoying himself.” Zhai Yaohui was not anxious at all. “Qiao Nan is only in her third year of senior high school. If she really goes to college, she will need at least four years to graduate, not including doctorate and master’s studies. Telling them so soon is not meaningful. Her current mission is to do well in her studies.”

Fortunately, Qiao Nan had been clear of her priorities all this while. Despite being with Zhai Sheng for over a year, he had never seen Qiao Nan’s grades slip.

Having seen Qiao Nan’s self-discipline and self-control, Zhai Yaohui was more than satisfied with her.

Shi Peng glanced at the time. "Alright, I've already reported the situation to you. How you wish to manage this is the business of your Zhai family. I'm going to bed."

"Okay." After a short acknowledgment, Zhai Yaohui hung up the phone before Shi Peng.

At the sound of the beeping tone, Shi Peng was speechless as he looked at the phone. He then hung it up properly.

Shi Qing, who had been enduring for some time, finally could not take it anymore. She grabbed her father's hands and asked, "Dad, what's happening? Why did you tell Chief Zhai about Qiao Nan's matters? You betrayed Qiao Nan?!"

"Child, don't talk nonsense. Am I betraying her? I am helping her." Shi Peng looked at his daughter from the corners of his eyes. It was fine that she was not as smart as Qiao Nan but she did not even know how to talk nicely. "Zhai Yaohui knows that our house is situated near the house of the Qiao family. He thus specifically asked me to observe Qiao Nan."

"Are you sure this is a request and not an order?" Shi Qing expressed her doubt.

"..." It was so annoying when his daughter's words were sharp. "Zhai Yaohui is paying so much attention to Qiao Nan. It can only mean that he's quite satisfied with her. That's why he wishes to have a deeper understanding of Qiao Nan and confirm her character. What I did is not considered as a betrayal but a helping hand. As long as Zhai Yaohui finds out more about the outstanding qualities of Qiao Nan, will anything go wrong for Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng?"

If Zhai Yaohui did not take a liking to Qiao Nan, he would not even spare this effort.

Just take Wei De's matter as an example, Zhai Yaohui only needed to express that work should be separated from personal matters. All the little tricks up Wei De's sleeves had been destroyed by Zhai Yaohui.

Zhai Yaohui and Shi Peng had seen many people like Wei De.

Wei De wished to rise in the ranks but he did not even have the opportunity to try now. This was the biggest punishment for him.

It was thus true that, sometimes, people like Zhai Yaohui could make a person disappear before his eyes with just one word if he could not see eye to eye with him.

“Dad, you’re saying that Chief Zhai wished to have a deeper understanding of Qiao Nan because he starts approving of her?” If that was the case, it was good news.

“Otherwise? Do you think I have so much spare time to make frequent calls to Zhai Yaohui and tell him about Qiao Nan?” He was a busy man who found twenty-four hours a day insufficient. How could he waste his time to report to Zhai Yaohui about Qiao Nan? “I’m helping them so that Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng can take some shortcuts.”

“Dad, you’re so good!” Shi Qing’s eyes lit up as she clung to Shi Peng’s arms. “Dad, I know that you’re the most sentimental person in this world. Based on the current situation, does it mean that Chief Zhai will not object to the marriage of Qiao Nan and Brother Zhai? Instead, he’ll agree and help them convince Auntie Miao?”

“Why are you bootlicking me? Qiao Nan is the one who will be having in-laws, not you. Qing Qing, you really don’t like Zhai Sheng and have no feelings for him at all? When you hear that things will be smoother for Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng, do you sincerely feel happy for them?” One year ago, his daughter was so infatuated with Zhai Sheng. As the father, this often made him jealous.

Qing Qing had feelings for Zhai Sheng for many years. It was just one year. Could Qing Qing really forget about Zhai Sheng completely and feel happy for Zhai Sheng and another woman, congratulating them wholeheartedly?

“Dad, don’t underestimate my thoughts and self-awareness. Brother Zhai is still my idol. It’s just that he’s beyond my reach. As for Qiao Nan, she is already at a stage where I can’t reach. There’s no one more compatible than the two of them. Now, I’m good friends with Qiao Nan, and I see Brother Zhai as my elder brother. I no longer have any feelings for Brother Zhai.” When Shi Qing said this, a determined face flashed across Shi Qing’s mind.

During her entire second year of high school, Zhu Baoguo rarely mentioned Qiao Nan in front of her. Instead, he was more focused on improving his own abilities.

Could it be that Zhu Baoguo had sorted out his thoughts and did not like Qiao Nan anymore?

“Qing Qing, I’m talking to you. Why aren’t you responding to me? What are you thinking of?” At the sight of Shi Qing not budging for some time, Shi Peng frowned. “Do you feel unwell or tired?”

Shi Qing was surprised when she realized that she was lost in her thoughts about a young man in front of her father. She blushed instantly. “No, my health is quite good. No, it’s just... I’m just a little tired. Qiao Nan said that the National Day holiday is coming to an end. She asked me to prep myself in case I have difficulty adjusting when school reopens.”

“Qiao Nan is right. You should certainly do that.” After a short holiday, Shi Peng knew that it was not uncommon for many children to have excessive fun during the holiday.

Shi Peng was not from the education sector. Hence, he could not discipline other people’s children. However, he was very strict with his only child. “Alright, quickly go to sleep. Don’t pick up the bad habit of sleeping late, in case you can’t change it when you return to school.”

“Okay, I know. Dad, I’m going to bed. Don’t stay up late. Quickly go to bed.”

“Okay.” Shi Peng smiled bitterly. Did he dare to stay up late when Qing Qing was at home?

“Right.” Shi Peng called Shi Qing back. “I need to discuss something with you. Can you take back the sound tape that you gave to my secretary?”

He had been hearing various versions of voice recordings which requested him to have lunch for a month. Now, to Shi Peng, Shi Qing’s voice was simply akin to a demon’s haunting. He did not wish to listen to it again starting next month.

Shi Qing raised her brows. “You don’t want to listen to it anymore?”

“Yes!”

“If you don’t, then be more self-aware. As long as you take your meals on time, will the secretary have the chance to play the tape? Dad, try harder next month. I believe you can definitely cultivate the good habit of taking your meals on time. Before long, that sound tape of mine should be able to retire.” Shi Qing patted Shi Peng’s shoulders and then happily returned to her bedroom.

According to what her father said, Qiao Nan would be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel very soon.

It was great today. All her wishes came true.

Qiao Nan sneezed. She rubbed her nose that suddenly itched.

“Nan Nan, you sneezed? Don’t tell me that you caught a cold.” Qiao Dongliang was very anxious when he heard Qiao Nan sneeze. “Why don’t you drink a cup of indigowoad root[1] herbal tea?”

“Dad, don’t, I’m not drinking it.” Qiao Nan shook her head quickly. “My nose just feels itchy. I didn’t catch a cold. Taking too much medicine is not good. It’s not good to keep drinking herbal teas either. Dad, it’s late. Quickly go to bed. There’s nothing wrong with me. I’ll sleep after I memorize a few pages of the dictionary.” It was already half-past nine and she also did not plan to stay up late.

“Fine, as long as you know what you are doing. I’m going to bed.” After a long day at work, Qiao Dongliang was exhausted too. He was, in fact, also trying to perk himself up as he talked to Qiao Nan.

Once the National Day holiday ended, Qiao Nan and Shi Qing resumed to their normal lives, juggling between school and home.

However, due to the National Day break, a sudden rumor regarding Qiao Nan occurred at Ping Cheng High School: Qiao Nan made use of her status as the top student of the cohort in Ping Cheng High School to open tuition classes and collect exorbitant fees.

In other words, Qiao Nan was earning money illegitimately using Ping Cheng High School’s name.

“Damn, who’s so mean?!” Upon hearing this news, Shi Qing’s eyes widened, looking as fierce as a tigress. “Qiao Nan, don’t worry or be distracted. I think someone did it on purpose. They think they can affect your learning and confidence with such despicable methods so that you will lose the place as the top student in the cohort. Damn, they’re too stupid. I’ll help you settle this.”

She did not believe that she could not find out who started this.

“What you said is also what I wanted to tell you. Don’t get distracted because of that kind of person. They can’t stir up much trouble. You’ll be wasting your time and effort if you deal with such people.” It had been four years since her rebirth. She encountered many matters and this was not her first time seeing people adopt such means.

Now, to Qiao Nan, these were just little tricks that would not hurt her at all.

To get angry and take issue with these people would be a true loss to her—loss of time and energy.

As such, after arriving at school, she could not be bothered and was expressionless when she heard such adverse rumors about her.

At the sight of Shi Qing feeling angry and unjustified, Qiao Nan expressed that it was not necessary. “Alright, I’m going back to my class. If you trust me, don’t intervene in this matter. Nothing much will come out of it.”

She was the reason Ping Cheng High School received sponsorships. Moreover, she had just become the owner of the small courtyard that she was currently living in.

To put it bluntly, from a practical perspective, it was all or nothing, Principal Meng would not doubt or criticize her because of these rumors. Instead, he would try hard to think of ways to dispel them.

Furthermore, the rumors did reflect some of the truth.

She had never made use of the fact that she was one of the top students in Ping Cheng High School to attract students. She just could not reject those students.

As for the tuition fees, the students’ parents discussed and agreed on it on their own.

Although it was a little shameless to do that, Qiao Nan passed all the decision rights to the parents and students, refraining from intervening in any area.

“Your temper is so good. If anyone dares to poop on my head, I certainly won’t endure it. Alright, I know what to do regarding this. You just need to study well. Don’t be affected. As for me, I know my limits and won’t go overboard.”

No matter what, she could not choose to do nothing.

Qiao Nan shook her head and let Shi Qing be.

They were not kids anymore. She believed Shi Qing knew how to strike a balance.

When Qiao Nan arrived at her classroom, her dormitory mates were very concerned. “Nan Nan, did you offend anyone recently?” If Nan Nan did not offend anyone, why were there such adverse rumors about Nan Nan in the school? “Have you thought of any solution to this? Do you want to explain this to the form teacher and principal?”

“No need. You don’t need to care about those rumors. Let them spread. We’re already in our third year and we barely have enough time to study. It doesn’t matter who has the time and energy to stir things up at such a critical time. Just let them be. Let’s hope they don’t regret it and cry miserably after the college entrance examination ends.”

Qiao Nan very much wished that she had forty-eight hours a day for her utilization. As a third-year student, anyone who hoped to achieve outstanding grades for the college entrance examination would feel as anxious as Qiao Nan about the lack of time to study.

Usually, no one would stir up this kind of matter. It was a waste of time and would not help them in the college entrance examination.

If they dwelled on it for too long, it might even delay their own learning progress.

Hence, they would be a fool if they impeded their own learning progress for the sake of these rumors.

When Qiao Nan’s classmates heard what she said, they immediately sorted out their thoughts despite being previously distracted a little by these rumors.

Nothing was more important than studying and the college entrance examination at this point in time.

They did not even have enough time to study. They must have been too muddleheaded to have bothered about these rumors. They nearly lost their priorities.

Fang Fang adjusted her glasses. “Maybe that person did it on purpose. The competition for the college entrance examination is so harsh. If the students in the same stream fared badly, that person can do better and score closer to the college admission score. Some just like to specifically do things that deride others and benefit themselves. It’s ridiculous that many people foolishly fell into the trap.”

“It’s hard to say.” Zheng Lingling laughed mockingly. “Who asked Qiao Nan to be the ‘living treasure’ of third-year class one and even the entire cohort? They are trying to sow discord between Qiao Nan and us so that Qiao Nan will be angered and not spot questions for us. This person must be very proud because what they did implies that they don’t care about Qiao Nan’s questions and have no qualms about using such despicable tricks behind one’s back. Whoever falls into their trap is a fool.”

Undoubtedly, there were not many people who would spread such rumors in Ping Cheng High School.

One must know that Qiao Nan was the famous and highly respected Teacher Xiao Qiao to the students of the second-year and third-year cohorts.

Even the new students who had just joined the school heard about Qiao Nan.

In normal circumstances, who would do something so mean to Qiao Nan when it would not benefit Ping Cheng High School? There would only be two people no matter how one looked at it.

At the thought of Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu whining and appearing like a fly from time to time to prove their existence, Zheng Lingling felt very annoyed.

Why was it that the world did not have a huge fly swatter so that she could swat annoying flies like Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu to the wall swiftly in one go such that they could not even drop from the wall? There would be world peace then.

Chapter 734 Plead for Forgiveness

Zheng Lingling had put her words so bluntly that any normal person would understand.

This was not the first time such things happened in the cohort. Almost no one doubted the truth of Zheng Lingling's words. Instead, most believed her completely.

"This kind of people is just too annoying."

"Exactly."

"Will those capable of saying such things dare to touch the question papers set by Qiao Nan? Will their fingers be chopped off instantly when they do? There should be a limit to one's ill intentions. All of us are relatively young, but some people are already so mean. What horrible characters."

"Exactly. Some people are really annoying. Why can't they stop doing all this? Since they have time and energy for such crap, why don't they find peace and focus on their studies instead? With this kind of learning attitude, they still wish to compete with Qiao Nan? It'll be faster to dream about fulfilling their wishes."

If one wanted to be at odds with Qiao Nan due to personal feuds, no one would care.

However, if someone deliberately wanted to sow discord between Qiao Nan and the entire third-year cohort, then that would definitely not do!

The previous batch of seniors received excellent grades. As such, the enrollment rate of Ping Cheng High School this year had reached a record high.

As a student from Ping Cheng High School taking the college entrance examination soon, who would not hope that they could sustain or improve the outstanding results of this year's third-year cohort? This was so that they could become like one of them and be admitted to the college of their choice.

At this juncture, whoever dared to thwart this plan was simply akin to the enemies who murdered their parents. They would make others feel hateful to the core such that there was absolutely no way they would be let off.

The materials from Qiao Nan were precious things that could help them take the college entrance examination successfully.

If someone wanted to harm Qiao Nan, sure. Next time, these people could forget about lifting a finger to touch the materials shared by Qiao Nan.

When that time came, these people could kick up a fuss as much as they wished to. They could not be bothered and would not care as well.

Everyone was aware that there were only two possible candidates who were at odds with Qiao Nan and would create such a fuss in the entire third-year cohort. One was Xu Tingting and the other was Zhao Yu.

The third-year students basically did not inquire which of the two did this or whether the two were in it together. They simply put the entire blame of this matter on the two of them.

As long as the revision materials and lesson notes were given by Qiao Nan, everyone in the third year would receive them except for Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu.

If the two of them were to ask for the notes, the student distributing the materials would simply tell them that he only had a certain quantity on hand and was short of one copy. Thus, he was helpless even if they requested it.

When Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu did not accept the explanation and said that they would tell the teachers, the rest would be gracious about it. “You want to tell the teachers? Go ahead. You can tell them whatever you like. Whoever stops Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu from doing so is not born to your own parents!”

Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu had no alternative but to seek the teachers’ help.

The two of them had now been boycotted quite badly by the rest of the third-year students. Even those who followed closely by Xu Tingting’s side and followed her lead in the past also stayed away from her.

In these two years, the only one that was by Xu Tingting’s side was surprisingly the one whom Xu Tingting had previously boycotted and schemed against, and ended up in doldrums together: Zhao Yu.

The two of them, who temporarily got together, went to look for the teachers to request for the revision materials.

The form teacher expressed without reservation that there were no excess copies as everyone had a fixed number of sets of revision materials.

If Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu really needed them, the best way was to borrow from their classmates. Thereafter, they could copy the notes or make photocopies outside the school. The school would not interfere.

The teachers had already said their piece. Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu could only return to the class again to borrow the materials from others so that they could make copies of them.

They did not expect that, after a round of requests to all the classmates, no one expressed willingness to lend the materials to them. All expressed with no hesitation that they needed to use the materials at all times.

As to whether these were lies, both Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu did not have the energy to expose them anymore. The outcome would be the same whether they did or not.

Unknowingly, with Qiao Nan as the main party concerned, a boycott that was not extraordinarily mean or serious occurred in the school. Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu were the ones who brought all these troubles upon themselves.

As the main party concerned, Qiao Nan was nonchalant about this until Zhao Yu came crying to her. "Qiao Nan, I'm innocent. This matter really did not have anything to do with me. This was done by Xu Tingting alone. Actually, I tried to advise her not to, but I didn't dare to tell this to anyone. Qiao Nan, I'm really innocent."

No one hit or scolded Zhao Yu. Everyone gave Zhao Yu cold shoulders and Zhao Yu could not get hold of any materials from Qiao Nan.

The problem was that Zhao Yu wanted to study hard. She also wanted to perform exceedingly well during the college entrance examination so that she could attain good grades and get into a good college.

The materials that Qiao Nan provided for the third-year students were everything that Zhao Yu needed badly.

This path had now been destroyed. Zhao Yu felt like crying but no longer had any tears.

It would be her karma if she had participated in the wrongdoing. However, she really did not do anything this time.

Three years had passed. Zhao Yu had long acknowledged the gap between Qiao Nan and her. Regardless of how unjustified and unhappy she felt, the gap between Qiao Nan and her had increased greatly. She could only watch Qiao Nan from afar. This was the truth. Not admitting it did not mean that it did not exist.

Not to mention the third-year, in their second-year, Zhao Yu had already dropped the intention of dealing with Qiao Nan. She had been abidingly minding her own business. She was focused on her studies and no longer saw Qiao Nan as her enemy.

In their third-year, as Zhao Yu did not have a very solid foundation in her studies, she had already fallen behind in her grades. She thus further did not have the mood to think about how to deal with Qiao Nan. She only resented that she did not have enough time to make up for the basic knowledge that she did not learn well in the past.

Having been given cold shoulders and being boycotted by others, Zhao Yu felt wronged but she had no ways to vent.

Zhao Yu had already explained to many classmates that she did not have anything to do with this matter. She did not do this but no one believed her. Hence, the cold shoulders and boycotting continued. Zhao Yu was nearly driven mad.

Having nowhere else to turn for help, Zhao Yu could only look for Qiao Nan, the main party concerned. “Qiao Nan, can... can you let me off, please? I admit that I was wrong. Yes, I disliked you in the past and always wanted to find trouble with you. But these are things of the past. I can swear that I have not done anything that let you down since our second year. I, I admit that I, I was the one who smashed and broke all your pens during the essay writing competition in secondary three. However, I’ve changed now. I really didn’t do this... Qiao Nan, let, let me off, please. I can apologize to you. Just tell me what you want.”

Chapter 735 More Precious than Gold

“As long as you are willing to let me go, I will do whatever you want.” In the end, Zhao Yu was all tears, having an emotional breakdown.

Qiao Nan believed that if she pressed her further, Zhao Yu, who was very tensed, might just snap. “Don’t cry...”

Where was the proud and arrogant Zhao Yu who used to strut around like a rooster in junior high? Right now, she seemed to have caught the epidemic and was shunned by everyone. Qiao Nan did not know what to say. “I have never complained about you or told anyone to deal with you. I didn’t know about your situation.”

“Then...” Why did all of her classmates shun her? Was it not due to Qiao Nan?

“It has nothing to do with me.” Qiao Nan sighed. “Do you think that it’s so easy to be the first place in the cohort? Some of the rumors are indeed true. Several parents came looking for me and wanted me to tutor their children. Initially, I refused to tutor them as I don’t have enough time for my studies. I spotted the exam questions for the third-year students in the first half of the year. I also spotted the questions for our batch. I am sure you have done the test papers that I prepared in the first half of the semester. I have to juggle between my studies and so many other tasks. I don’t possess remarkable abilities. I don’t have any time or effort to care about Xu Tingting and you.”

“If so, why...” Zhao Yu was startled. It had nothing to do with Qiao Nan? She had thought that Qiao Nan was taking revenge on her.

“No, it has nothing to do with me. I didn’t say anything and I do not have that much influence in the school. I can’t control my classmates or the entirety of third-year students. However, according to your words, it must be due to me that they treated you in such a manner.”

Qiao Nan had no idea why the third-year students targeted Zhao Yu without an apparent reason.

“Then... then, what should I do?” Zhao Yu was in a panic. She looked pitiful as she wiped away her tears.

Qiao Nan was not behind it. If Qiao Nan could not put a stop to it, did it mean that she would be bullied until she graduated from high school?

“It all depends on you. Do you hope to have classmates who get along well with you or do you want the revision materials that I provided?” Qiao Nan asked a practical but harsh question.

If what Zhao Yu wanted were friends, then there was nothing that Qiao Nan could do. She did not tell anyone to shun Zhao Yu. Therefore, it was entirely up to the students how they wanted to treat Zhao Yu. She had no right to interfere.

But if it was the latter, Qiao Nan could do something about it.

It took Zhao Yu a long while before she replied in embarrassment. “They refused to give me the revision materials you provided. They would always say that they were short of one and that the teachers did not print enough. They told me to borrow from other classmates, but no one was willing to lend me their materials.”

Friends?

Zhao Yu had known all along that she did not have any true friends in Ping Cheng High School.

When they had something to gain from her, they would be close to her; when she was in trouble, they were nowhere to be found.

In her last year of high school, she had no wish to care about all these. Her only thought was to focus on her studies and to get into a good university. Nothing was more important than that.

Zhao Yu was not worried that she was shunned by others and that she had no friends.

However, to all the third-year students, the revision materials provided by Qiao Nan were more precious than gold. She could not afford to go without them.

“Qiao Nan, I... I can give you money. Tell me an amount and I will give it to you!” She knew that Qiao Nan must be in dire financial straits such that she had to give tuition. Hence, she decided to offer Qiao Nan money in exchange for the revision materials. She would not get it for free.

Qiao Nan fiddled her own hair. “If you were from another school or from another batch, I would be able to take your money. But you are not. In fact, you came from the same junior high school as me. Alright, when the teachers give out revision materials in the future, you can come to look for me. Before long, your classmates will start to give you a copy of the revision materials.”

“Really?!” Zhao Yu’s eyes lit up, full of hope. She did not expect Qiao Nan to help her so easily.

Before looking for Qiao Nan, Zhao Yu had thought of all kinds of possible scenarios wherein Qiao Nan would make things difficult for her. She even imagined Qiao Nan to act in a way that was similar to what the television dramas' scripts dictated, asking her to kneel down and admitting her mistakes. She had no idea if she should kneel or not.

To her surprise, Qiao Nan did not ask Zhao Yu to apologize to her. Instead, it did not take Zhao Yu much effort before Qiao Nan forgave her for what she did previously and was willing to give her the revision materials. "Qiao Nan, are... are you lying to me? I... I used to treat you badly... I am really the person who broke your pens when you sat for the essay competition in junior high!"

Zhao Yu could not believe that happiness would come so easily and that Qiao Nan was so easy-going

If it were her who had the upper hand, and Qiao Nan came begging her for help, she would make use of the chance to take revenge on Qiao Nan and humiliate her.

However, Qiao Nan had no intention of doing that.

Right then, Zhao Yu's eyes turned red again. She broke down into tears and lost her composure totally. "Qiao Nan, I am sorry, I am sorry. I am really sorry."

"Okay, I have heard enough of your apologies. Let me know which revision materials you lack. I will tell Tang Mengran to pass them to you." Tang Mengran was the most 'heartless' person in their dormitory. If she asked the other roommates to pass the materials to Zhao Yu, Qiao Nan was worried that they would make things difficult for her.

Since Qiao Nan was willing to give the revision materials to Zhao Yu, she had no intention to take issue with what she did to her in the past. It was unnecessary to make things difficult for her.

Zhao Yu understood the reason why Qiao Nan asked Tang Mengran to pass the information to her.

Zhao Yu took a deep breath and sniffed. "Qiao Nan, I'm sorry, and thank you."

Zhao Yu ran away afterward.

After Zhao Yu left, Qiao Nan exercised her stiff neck. She could hear cracking sounds as she twisted her neck.

“Playing the good guy.” Shi Qing leaned against one of the trees. She did not agree with what Qiao Nan did. “Zhao Yu used to make trouble for you. It is not your fault that she is in such a situation now. Her classmates decided to do this to her. It has nothing to do with you, so why did you bother?”

It was meaningless to requite evil with good.

They should only treat people who deserved it with kindness. Being kind to people like Zhao Yu was simply a waste.

Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. “This is not the first time someone said this to me. Zhao Yu is just a child. The most important thing is that as long as she does not provoke me, I don’t care what kind of person she is.”

Chapter 736 Don’t Even Think about it

“Besides, all third-year students will have access to the materials that I provide. If Zhao Yu uses her wits, she will be able to get it.”

“What do you mean?”

“The Zhao family has the money.” Qiao Nan chuckled. In this world, no one would say no to money.

In fact, Zhao Yu only needed to spend some money and ask around secretly. Someone would certainly lend her the materials.

To Qiao Nan, it was good for her that Zhao Yu backed down and promised that she would not give her any trouble in the future. It was better to have one less enemy. “People like Zhao Yu may not be able to stir up big trouble for me, but you can’t deny that it is quite annoying when she is constantly on your back. I hope that this year will pass by peacefully. After I graduate, it is impossible that we will end up in the same college.”

They had been in the same school for twelve years. Qiao Nan had no wish to be so ruthless in their last year together.

“As you wish.” Shi Qing did not deny that she was right.

Take for instance what happened this time. The rumor might not have any impact on Qiao Nan, but one could not help but be annoyed.

Luckily, Qiao Nan could take it in stride.

Other people might succumb to the stress and would not be able to focus on their studies. They would then fall for the trap of the person who spread the rumor.

After Qiao Nan went back to the classroom, she asked Tang Mengran to pass the revision materials to Zhao Yu.

When Tang Mengran came to look for Zhao Yu, all the classmates in Zhao Yu’s class kept staring at the two of them.

All the third-year students knew that Qiao Nan was on good terms with her roommates. Since Tang Mengran was here, she must have obtained Qiao Nan’s consent. “Here, Nan Nan told me to pass this to you.”

“Thank you.” Zhao Yu turned red. She lowered her face in embarrassment and dared not meet Tang Mengran’s gaze.

Tang Mengran twitched the corners of her lips. When she first met Zhao Yu, they were in their first year of high school. Her temper was just as bad as Xu Tingting’s, haughty and arrogant. Now, she seemed to be like a young daughter-in-law who was afraid of making mistakes. She looked pitiful. “Don’t thank me. It’s Nan Nan who asked me to pass it to you. Nan Nan is good-tempered and kind. You have been classmates with her for years. You should know your limits. She has her temper as well. This could be the last chance that she will give you.”

“I... I understand.” Zhao Yu nodded hard. She would be crazy if she continued to make things difficult for Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan was the first place in the level whereas she already fell outside the top hundred places. She did not have the ability and self-confidence to make trouble for Qiao Nan. She only wanted to focus on her studies and get into a good university. She had no time and energy for other things.

“It’s good that you understand.” Tang Mengran gave a faint reply. “Now that I have passed them to you, I’ll be leaving. Conduct yourself well.”

Tang Mengran had a good temper. Since Zhao Yu accepted her reminder, she did not say other nasty words and turned to leave.

Once Tang Mengran left, Xu Tingting, who turned green from anger and had crushed her papers into a ball, stood up, stopping in front of Zhao Yu. “Xiao Yu Yu, can I borrow these materials to make a copy?”

“No way!” Zhao Yu gritted her teeth and hid the copies behind her. “Xu Tingting, I have told Qiao Nan everything. In the future, let’s mind our own businesses. I will not mix with you anymore. Don’t think of asking me to join you in your silly acts. Qiao Nan is, in fact, a good person. Why do you insist on bullying such an honest and good person like her?”

“What a bootlicker. Are you trying to be wise now?” Xu Tingting turned purple from anger.

Zhao Yu and Xu Tingting always seemed to be in cahoots with each other to bully Qiao Nan.

Whenever there were any rumors about Qiao Nan, it was most probably started by the two of them.

Since their classmates shunned Zhao Yu, they were not nice to Xu Tingting as well.

Therefore, Zhao Yu and Xu Tingting were the only two students among all the third-year students who did not have access to Qiao Nan’s revision materials.

Zhao Yu was repentant, but Xu Tingting was haughty.

Her results had been good enough for her to be allocated to the humanities’ class one.

But Xu Tingting felt that it would be just as well if she was not in class one. Now that she was in a different class from Qiao Nan, although she could not be the best among all the third-year students, she would be able to come in first place in her class.

Although she did not rank first in the cohort, she was able to be in the top three or top five places.

Knowing that she was smart, Xu Tingting felt that she was above others and looked down on them.

But the problem was that with Qiao Nan's help, the humanities' class one did better in their exams. In particular, Fang Fang and Zheng Lingling would come in the top five places in the cohort; and He Yun and Tao Zhenqin would make it to the top twenty places in the cohort. Even for Tang Mengran who had the worst grades among all of them, she could still make it to the top fifty places in the cohort.

Now that Fang Fang and Zheng Lingling were in the top five rankings, Xu Tingting found it difficult to maintain her ranking in the top five places.

In the beginning, Xu Tingting was very full of herself. She felt that she had no use of Qiao Nan's revision materials and believed that she would do just as well without them.

Other people might not be willing to share Qiao Nan's revision materials with her, but she had no use of them as well.

However, Xu Tingting began to panic when Fang Fang and Zheng Lingling came in the top five places in the level. She was no longer as confident and sure of herself.

She found Qiao Nan to be an eyesore, especially since she always ranked first among them all. It infuriated her further that the revision materials that Qiao Nan prepared were so useful that not only had the humanities' class one and Qiao Nan's roommates improved in their results, but Xu Tingting's classmates had been doing well in the exams as well.

Although they only made slight improvements, it was a fact that they had been making steady improvements.

They would do better each time for the exams. If one was to compare the results of the most recent exam with those of the first exam that they took when they had just advanced to the third year, it could be seen that they had made tremendous improvements.

Xu Tingting was the first place in her class. What was most intolerable was that the gap between the second place in her class and her was getting smaller and smaller. In the past, there used to be a difference of more than ten marks. Now, there was only a difference of less than ten marks.

At times, studying was akin to sailing against the currents. If one did not improve, one would fall behind.

Xu Tingting had maintained her standard. However, her classmates had been improving day by day. Soon, she would no longer be the first place in her class.

Therefore, Xu Tingting tried means and ways to make trouble for Qiao Nan to affect her studies.

If Qiao Nan was affected and lost her focus on her studies, not only would her results be affected, but all of the third-year students, including her classmates, would be affected as well.

By then, she would be able to widen the gap between her classmates and her and close the gap between Qiao Nan and her.

This was killing two birds with one stone. Xu Tingting had come up with a brilliant plan.

Chapter 737 Your Father Worked for a Living under My Father

However, Xu Tingting did not expect that Zhao Yu would behave in such a way.

Her intention was for Zhao Yu to join her in what she did. “Zhao Yu, it has been two years. We have been bullied by Qiao Nan for two years. We finally have the chance to get back at her. This time, we must make sure that she suffers!”

“I won’t do it.” Zhao Yu did not have the slightest hesitation. “I don’t have so much time and energy to be doing all these. I just want to study hard. Xu Tingting, you should do the same. I have been in a different class from Qiao Nan for the whole second year. I have been doing a lot of thinking. In retrospect, Qiao Nan has never provoked me or bullied me. I just couldn’t stand it that she is better and more popular than me. I was doing myself in.”

In the past, Zhao Yu felt that Qiao Nan was a bad person and that she had suffered because of Qiao Nan.

But after a year apart, she had sorted out her thoughts. What happened had nothing to do with Qiao Nan. It was her fault.

When she was in her third year of junior high school and the first year of senior high school, she could not think properly and worked herself into a dead end. She did not focus on her studies and spent all her time making life difficult for Qiao Nan. She could not understand her behavior back then. It was as if she was out of her mind.

But right now, Zhao Yu no longer harbored such thoughts. She was not willing to mix with Xu Tingting anymore. “Xu Tingting, since we have been classmates for three years, let me give you a piece of advice. This is our third year. We should pay attention to our studies. There is already not enough time for our studies, let alone to come up with all these cheap tricks. Doing all these won’t do you any good. Stop now.”

Xu Tingting had gradually lost her place as the most outstanding student in the class and in the cohort.

If she were her, she would be in a panic and she would spend all her time on her studies in order to improve her performance. Unlike Xu Tingting, she would not have the time to dig up rumors about Qiao Nan.

What Zhao Yu did not know was that Xu Tingting was, in fact, concerned about her studies. However, she used the wrong method to improve her results.

Xu Tingting did not have a good temper. Since Zhao Yu had no intention of helping her, she did not share the scandal about Qiao Nan, lest Zhao Yu betrayed her and told others of the scandal. “Fine. But let me warn you. If you dare to tell others about this, even though I can do nothing to Qiao Nan, I will make sure you will not have a good time!”

Zhao Yu’s face turned pale. Xu Tingting had been bullying her in the past year. “Don’t be too smug. It won’t do you good to make life difficult for Qiao Nan. As for me, given my relationship with Qiao Nan, even if I tell others about this, no one will believe that I’m helping Qiao Nan.”

Those were groundless concerns.

In the end, the rumor was spread around the school. Zhao Yu, who did not do anything and instead tried to persuade Xu Tingting to stop making trouble for Qiao Nan, was implicated because of her past bad records.

Zhao Yu regretted what she did in the past and she also hated Xu Tingting for implicating her.

In the two years that they had been classmates, Xu Tingting did not treat her nicely and yet she was implicated by her. There was no justice in the world. “Xu Tingting, don’t think that you can continue to bully me. You’d better watch out. Don’t forget, even a worm will turn. I will not go easy on you if you provoke me!”

“What do you mean?!” Xu Tingting’s countenance changed.

Zhao Yu took a deep breath. The tables were turned on Xu Tingting. “I just found out that your dad is a worker at my dad’s factory. I heard from my dad that your parents... no... I mean, your father is an honest man. As for your mother... you know very well what kind of person she is. Your dad works at the factory to earn your school fees. If my dad is unhappy, he can always fire your dad. If you continue to bully me, don’t blame me for being vicious!”

She was the daughter of the boss, yet she was bullied by the daughter of her father’s worker.

Zhao Yu turned green in anger when she found out the truth by chance.

“How dare you!” Xu Tingting gritted her teeth.

Zhao Yu might not have known about this, but Xu Tingting had known about it since the first semester of their first year in high school.

At times, Xu Tingting would visit her father’s workplace to bring him his meals.

As a result, she found out that, like her case, her father’s boss had an only daughter as well.

The boss liked daughters and pampered his daughter.

On several occasions, when Xu Tingting delivered meals to her father, the boss would drive his car to fetch his daughter. She would catch a glimpse of a figure in the car, but she did not manage to see the person inside the car.

It was only when they studied at the same high school, and Zhao Yu's father came to school to fetch Zhao Yu in the same car, did she realize that the daughter of her father's boss whom she had been curious about was Zhao Yu.

Qiao Nan was not as good as her, but there were many people who liked and defended her. Similarly, Zhao Yu was not as good as her, but she had such a good father. Why was it that she was outstanding in every aspect but her family was not rich and she could only pin her hopes on finding a good husband? As a result, her classmates would always ridicule her for being a vixen as she was always on the lookout for good men.

Xu Tingting felt wronged for being treated unfairly. Therefore, she turned to bullying Zhao Yu to gain a sense of accomplishment.

After finding out that Zhao Yu was the daughter of her father's boss, Xu Tingting stopped delivering meals to her father, lest Zhao Yu bumped into her at the factory.

She did not expect that after two years of hiding the truth from Zhao Yu, she would find out about it in her third year of high school.

“Let's see if I dare to do it or not!” Zhao Yu shook with anger. “My dad feels sorry for you and your dad who have been bullied by your mom. If he didn't give him a job, you wouldn't even have the chance to study. However, you used the money that was earned at my family's factory to go to school and bullied me. Xu Tingting, such people like you will never be able to surpass Qiao Nan or lead a better life than her!”

She used to bully Qiao Nan in the past. However, Qiao Nan did not take issue with her even when she confessed to Qiao Nan that she broke her pens when they took part in the essay competition in their third year of junior high, almost causing Qiao Nan to be unable to participate in the competition.

As for Xu Tingting, she did not know to be grateful. Such people were the most annoying.

In the past, she was blind to be in cahoots with Xu Tingting and bully honest people like Qiao Nan.

Xu Tingting's face turned red when she noticed that everyone in the class was looking in their direction. She ground her teeth and lowered her voice. "Fine, I will not provoke you in the future, and you shall not bother me as well. Don't make my father lose his job. And don't tell anyone in school about my family, not even a word!"

Chapter 738 Unintentional Bullying

"Do you think I care?" Zhao Yu snorted disdainfully. She went back to her seat with the materials that Tang Mengran gave her just now.

If possible, she did not want to talk to Xu Tingting, lest other people misunderstood that Xu Tingting and her were in cahoots and that they started the rumor about Qiao Nan.

Xu Tingting noticed the disdainful look on Zhao Yu's face. She was so angry that her teeth hurt.

Xu Tingting did not know that there were more to come.

During the self-study session at night, Xu Tingting had just finished 'chatting' with the boy from the next class who came from a good family background. She passed by a corner and was about to go back to her dormitory when a sack was put over her head. Everything turned black in an instant.

"I have beaten you up previously. You must have forgotten about it." Zhu Baoguo threw punches at Xu Tingting with a sullen expression.

Despite taking his punches, this woman could only behave well for a year.

"Don't bother to talk sense into her. Let's beat her up. It is no use to talk reason with her. It is a waste of our time." Shi Qing was more straightforward. Her only purpose today was to give Xu Tingting a beating.

Shi Qing and Zhu Baoguo had spent enough time in the army to know the trick to beating people such that it would be painful but would not leave many bruises.

Xu Tingting was lucky enough for them to use what they had learned in the army on her.

“Xu Tingting, let me warn you. Since you like to use your mouth, we will use our hands on you. In the future, we will give you a beating every time you use that mouth of yours. I don’t believe that you will not admit defeat.” To them, it was merely having a few more sandbags to play with.

“I don’t dare to do it anymore.” Xu Tingting might be reluctant to admit her mistakes, but she could not stand the punches.

That was why she behaved herself after she was beaten up by Zhu Baoguo a year ago. However, she only did so for a year before she went back to her old ways.

Zhu Baoguo and Shi Qing stopped the beating. They were not worried that Xu Tingting would go back on her words. After all, if she stirred up trouble again, they would just have to beat her up again.

Zhu Baoguo and Shi Qing left at the fastest speed afterward.

It was getting late. It was time for all students to return to their dormitory. The person-in-charge would be on their way to check the rooms.

Xu Tingting freed herself from the sack after she could no longer hear any footsteps. She rubbed at the places that were aching. There were tears and snot all over her face.

“Qiao Nan, I am not finished with you!” She did not believe that Qiao Nan would be so lucky all her life, and that there would always be someone to protect her. She would not stop until she defeated Qiao Nan.

Xu Tingting was given a beating. Naturally, she wanted to get back at Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo.

Xu Tingting went to the hospital after being beaten previously, but the doctor said that there were no bruises, wounds, or even parts that were swollen. Although she complained that she was in pain and had been beaten by others, the doctors could not tell from his observation. Hence, he could not give the diagnosis that she had been beaten.

When Xu Tingting refused to accept the doctor’s diagnosis, the doctor suggested for Xu Tingting to have an X-ray.

In the end, Xu Tingting gave up proving that she had been beaten.

This time, Xu Tingting knew that her condition was similar to what happened previously.

Xu Tingting limped back to her dormitory and took off her clothes. True enough, like what the doctor said last time, there was no wound or bruise on her fair skin. If she were to say that she had been beaten by people, no one would believe her.

Xu Tingting might have maintained her results, but she was no longer the leader in the dormitory.

She had no idea what exactly had happened. However, all of the third-year students and her own classmates, including her roommates, alienated her and ignored her.

As a result, although she limped around in the dormitory, the seven people in the dormitory did not bother to show concern for her.

Xu Tingting lay down on the bed and covered herself with the blanket. She whimpered under the blanket, feeling wronged and sorry for herself.

Qiao Nan was being too aggressive. Qiao Nan already had everything she wanted, yet she ganged up with everyone to bully her.

The next day, Xu Tingting woke up feeling tired. She had a date with her 'new friend' around noontime, thinking that she could pour her grievances to him.

In the end, she did not have the chance to complain to her friend before he told her a piece of shocking news. "Xu Tingting, I... I can't be friends with you anymore. Please return the revision materials to me."

"W-why?" When Zhao Yu and Xu Tingting were ostracized by their classmates, Zhao Yu had tried to get the revision materials from the teacher, but Xu Tingting did not. Xu Tingting behaved as if she had no use for the revision materials. She never asked around in the class either.

Actually, Xu Tingting was bothered that she did not have the revision materials. She only pretended not to care. She would get her hands on the revision materials through her new 'friends'. Some of them even volunteered to make a copy for her.

Xu Tingting was not stupid. She would not shortchange herself or do anything that would affect her results.

The only thing that set her apart from other beautiful girls was her performance in school.

Xu Tingting was in a panic now that her new 'friend' would not provide her with the revision materials anymore. He would not make a copy for her as well.

"If I continue to give you the information and to be friends with you, it will be my turn to be without these revision materials," the boy said resentfully.

"Qiao Nan is too overbearing! You are innocent. You have done nothing. Why did they bully you as well? They should just come after me. This is not the first time that I am being bullied. What do they want now? Wasn't it enough to give me a beating? Must they implicate my friends as well?" Xu Tingting was filled with indignation.

This 'friend' of hers did not notice that Xu Tingting gave the impression of weakness and did not read between the lines. "Xu Tingting, I am really sorry. My family places more importance on my studies. If there's a chance in the future, we can still be friends. But now that we are in our final year in Ping Cheng High School, you... you must not come looking for me anymore."

His father said that this year was the most crucial year. If he did not do well in the exams and was unable to go to university, he could give up his dreams of having his own house and car by then.

Xu Tingting was not the most beautiful girl in school, and her results were not among the top as well. On the contrary, Qiao Nan had the looks and the brains.

He did not really like Xu Tingting. But seeing that she was ostracized by others, he felt attracted to her as forbidden fruit was the sweetest. He was not serious about her.

He did not intend to sacrifice his results for Xu Tingting:

When he had his house, his car, and money, and he was in the university, he would be able to have any kind of girlfriend that he wanted. He did not need to waste his time on Xu Tingting.

Chapter 739 Not a Conspiracy but a Strategy

Xu Tingting pretended to show her weakness. However, she did not succeed in getting her ‘new friend’ to stand up for her. Instead, he acted like a coward and ran off. Xu Tingting had nothing but anger for him.

“Useless scoundrel.” He cowered in fear under the threats of others. She had been beaten up by other people, but she did not act like a coward. She had made the wrong judgment. He was clearly a jellyfish!

No matter how angry Xu Tingting was or how she stomped her feet, the boy left without turning back. Even when he received new revision materials, he would not give them to her or make copies for her.

Xu Tingting knew very well that the revision materials Qiao Nan provided were very important to her studies. She wanted to sit for the college entrance examination and do well in the exams. Therefore, she was not willing to go without it.

Xu Tingting tried to find ways to get her hands on the revision materials. In the past, they might be free. However, she believed that if she was willing to pay for it, she would be able to get the materials.

Xu Tingting tried means and ways to get the revision materials but everyone refused to lend her. She had no idea that this had nothing to do with Qiao Nan. In fact, someone had controlled the public opinion in the school.

Shi Qing sneered at Xu Tingting’s futile attempts to get back at Qiao Nan. She was bound to fail but she was clueless of her predicament. “I wonder what else she is capable of?”

Zhu Baoguo stared at Shi Qing with mixed emotions. “You are quite insidious to have come up with something like that.”

Shi Qing was the person who was behind the change in public opinion in the school while Zhu Baoguo was her assistant. Both of them felt that it was not enough to give Xu Tingting a beating; they had to give her a harsh lesson.

Not only did she scheme against Qiao Nan, but she also spread false rumors about her. How could such people be able to use Qiao Nan’s revision materials! It was unreasonable!

Shi Qing rolled her eyes. “If you are stupid, you shouldn’t blame others for being too clever. This is not being insidious. This is called strategy. Don’t think that you can speak indiscriminately and use inappropriate words just because you are from the science class. I reserve the right to pursue legal actions and I will sue you for defamation anytime. Do you understand?”

Zhu Baoguo was silent. He had to admit that Shi Qing’s method was much better than his original method.

Xu Tingting had only one purpose in mind in everything that she did it was to destroy Qiao Nan and get rid of her.

Right now, what they did was to give her a taste of her own medicine. Since Xu Tingting wanted to get rid of Qiao Nan, they would get rid of Xu Tingting for Qiao Nan.

Zhu Baoguo grew silent as he thought of Zhu Chengqi’s words to him.

Xiao Qiao was in her third year of high school. It was the most intense and stressful time in her three years of high school.

Xiao Qiao was different from him. Xiao Qiao desperately needed to change her destiny through education. If he really liked Xiao Qiao, all the more he could not be a trouble or a distraction to her at this time.

He would wait until she went to university to confess his love for Xiao Qiao and ask her to be his girlfriend.

Before that, what he needed to do was to get rid of Xu Tingting and all sorts of trouble for Xiao Qiao so that she could have a good and peaceful learning environment. This was his display of love and protection for Xiao Qiao.

Shi Qing felt guilty at Zhu Baoguo’s silence. “Do you intend to follow in your father’s footsteps and join the army as a soldier? In the future, you will learn of such a strategy in the army. Right now, you can take it as a hands-on demonstration in advance. You can have a go at it and you will better understand it when you join the army. Given the Zhu family’s status, you will not always be an ordinary soldier in the army. Eventually, you will need to take on leadership positions in the army. There will use a lot of such strategies in the future. You must take this chance to learn them.”

“Phew...” Zhu Baoguo let out a long breath. “Yes, I really need to work hard.” If he was not powerful and strong, how could he protect Xiao Qiao in the future? Xiao Qiao would not be able to live freely and would be schemed or harmed by other people.

“That’s right. You must learn them well.” Shi Qing turned to the side, avoiding Zhu Baoguo’s gaze.

It might seem like Shi Qing was the leader while Zhu Baoguo was the assistant.

However, Shi Qing knew that she was just an intermediary and someone had been giving her instructions remotely.

Shi Qing was troubled with the awkward position that she was in. Why did she have to be embroiled in this? It was Brother Zhai who was in a relationship with Qiao Nan.

Anyway, Xu Tingting’s problem had finally been solved. Wait a minute. She had to make a call to Brother Zhai to report to him.

Shi Qing felt guilty. Her father was the spy that Chief Zhai placed by Qiao Nan’s side, whereas she was the insider who helped Brother Zhai with Qiao Nan’s problems. “Hello, Brother Zhai?”

“What’s with this tone?” Zhai Sheng sounded sullen. “Zhu Baoguo and you have yet to settle the problem?” Had he thought too highly of Shi Qing and Zhu Baoguo?

“No, it’s settled!” Shi Qing felt unjust. “You have made your words clear. I am not stupid. There was no way that I couldn’t settle it. Brother Zhai, don’t look down on people!”

“If that is the case, what’s wrong with your voice?”

“I just felt sorry toward Zhu Baoguo. Zhu Baoguo has been thinking of confessing to Qiao Nan when she goes to university.” But right now, she was making use of Zhu Baoguo to help her implement Brother Zhai’s ploy. No matter how she thought about it, it was not right of her to do that. “Brother Zhai, you can let Qiao Nan handle it by herself. She has the ability.”

“As I have said, this is not the right time.” There was only one year left until the exams. It might be easy for Nan Nan to deal with Xu Tingting, but it was tricky to find the most suitable way to deal with her.

He did not want Nan Nan to be distracted at this crucial time. “If Zhu Baoguo and you control the public opinion in the school, Xu Tingting will not be able to stir up trouble in the final year.”

Now that Zhai Sheng controlled the public opinion in the school, there was no way that Xu Tingting could come up with other tricks.

Not only was Qiao Nan clueless, but Xu Tingting, who had been ostracized by the rest of the students, did not know what was going on among the third-year students in Ping Cheng High School.

Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu, who were in their third year, could not get along with Qiao Nan and they would badmouth her. Why was it that the two of them could have access to the revision materials provided by Qiao Nan?

This was a psychological tactic. When someone felt that there was unfair treatment, they would find a way to correct the situation.

Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu would always bully Qiao Nan, yet they could use Qiao Nan’s revision materials. It was impossible for them to follow suit and bully Qiao Nan. The only outcome would be that no one would be able to have access to revision materials provided by Qiao Nan.

After all, Qiao Nan had no obligation to provide her personal revision materials. She was not paid by Ping Cheng High School to do that. She was not a teacher, and she did not have the responsibility to teach the students and improve their results.

Since they could not bully Qiao Nan to correct the situation, the only way was to ostracize Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu so that everyone would receive fair treatment.

This tactic was easy to comprehend, but it was difficult to execute. It required skills and planning, and all of these were done by Zhai Sheng.

“I know. She can’t be jumping in high spirits now.” Qiao Nan’s revision materials were akin to a cheating tool. It could help one revise the important pointers in a systematic way in the shortest time possible.

Without this hack from Qiao Nan, one had to arrange and tidy up the notes on their own. Much time would be needed to do all these.

Qiao Nan’s revision was so structured since she had never slacked off during the holidays. She studied until ten in the evening every day.

Qiao Nan did all these—slept later than a dog, woke up earlier than a chicken, ate worse than a pig, and worked harder than a cow—but it benefited Xu Tingting who did nothing. Xu Tingting utilized Qiao Nan’s revision materials and saved her time, but she used the time to make trouble for Qiao Nan instead. At the thought of all these, Shi Qing fumed with anger.

It could benefit anyone else but not Xu Tingting.

If not for the fact that Qiao Nan’s revision materials were that useful, Xu Tingting would not have so much spare time and would be very tied up. Xu Tingting would be studying and too busy to attend to any other matters.

Now, with the loss of Qiao Nan, this effective hacking weapon, she would like to see if Xu Tingting would still be able to lift herself up.

“Brother Zhai, don’t worry. This is our last year of high school studies. I will not let Xu Tingting have any chance. A woman like this deserves a lesson!” Shi Qing snorted. That round of beating yesterday was not enough to alleviate her anger. She should have given her a few more beatings.

Zhai Sheng put away the materials on hand properly. “Very good. Then, I’ll continue to leave it to Zhu Baoguo and you to manage Xu Tingting’s matter. You and your father have been taking free meals for so long in the Qiao family. It’s certainly time for you to do something to repay the Qiao family.”

As such, Zhai Sheng did not feel apprehensive about ‘enslaving’ Shi Qing at all.

“...” Must Brother Zhai be so hurtful when he spoke?

“I’m hanging up.” Zhai Sheng behaved like a superior. After finding out the situation, he hung up the phone swiftly. “Please come in.”

“Regiment Commander Zhai.” Zhou Jun walked in. “I’ve made arrangements for Wei De’s expulsion from the army. Would you like to take a look?”

“Okay.” Zhai Sheng took over the documents. The administrative matters were done in a very complete manner. There was no issue with it. “Okay, this is fine. Find a time to send this over to Wei De.”

“Wei De is still in the hospital. Do we still send it over to him?”

“I’ve checked on his condition. Actually, Wei De’s injuries are not considered very serious. At most, he sustained some external injuries. Hence, you can simply send it over. Otherwise, you can also pass them to Zhai Hua. It’ll be the same.” Zhai Sheng frowned at the thought that Zhai Hua had specifically applied for ten days of leave to take care of Wei De when he was in the hospital.

Zhou Jun gave a nod. “Sure, I’ll send it over.”

Now, in the army, the matter between Wei De and Zhai Hua had already been known to others.

No one could gossip about Zhai Hua but they could do so about Wei De.

Many were overjoyed to know that Wei De would be expelled from the army. Regiment Commander Zhai was very impartial. He did not play favorites or commit any irregularities at all. One would be rewarded or punished accordingly.

Wei De committed a mistake. He must be dreaming if he still wished to be promoted to a platoon leader.

After Wei De’s case, the morale in the army had been affected. Once the announcement of Wei De’s expulsion was official, the situation in the army immediately stabilized and the atmosphere was even better than before.

After Zhou Jun left, Zhai Sheng took a breather and drank some water.

After Shi Peng left the army, the new officer had to familiarize himself with things. At this juncture, besides the political commissar, Zhai Sheng was the one who had to handle most of the matters. In particular, Zhai Sheng had to manage Wei De's matter from the start to the end.

Everyone in the army now knew that Wei De was Zhai Hua's boyfriend.

Zhai Sheng could administer severe punishment to Wei De, but not others. Other people dared not do so as they might think that Zhai Sheng was just pretending to punish Wei De.

If this was not handled properly, Wei De's expulsion might even lead to the end of Zhai Sheng's career in the army.

Hence, a typical person in the army would not be able to handle Wei De's matter properly, let alone go by the books regarding this matter. In the end, Zhai Sheng had to take over the matter and settle it.

Zhai Sheng could completely imagine Zhai Hua's reaction when she received the document.

It was just that this matter had exposed the relationship between Zhai Hua and Wei De. Zhai Hua should feel contented.

Zhai Sheng was drinking from the cup that he was holding. His eyes narrowed but there was a glint in them, as if he had deliberately done something

Zhai Sheng made Shi Qing and Zhu Baoguo secretly deal with Xu Tingting, this big troublemaker. As such, the rumors died down within a couple of days.

It was just that the third-year cohort did not change their attitude toward Xu Tingting at all.

Initially, Zhu Baoguo believed that Zhao Yu was also involved in this matter. Zhao Yu's sudden realization was not something that Zhu Baoguo had expected.

Since Zhao Yu wanted to abidingly be a third-year student now, Zhu Baoguo could not be bothered to deal with her. Hence, Zhao Yu's situation in the class eased very quickly, and she was not ostracized by the rest any longer.

In that case, Xu Tingting was the odd one out in the entire third-year cohort.

Without Qiao Nan's revision materials, Xu Tingting became busier than before. At the same time, she could no longer spare some time to get to know male classmates with good family backgrounds. She was abidingly studying and attempting revision questions every day.

Logically, the teachers in the school should intervene when such a matter occurred. However, many teachers expressed that they really could not interfere in this matter.

First, Xu Tingting was the one in the wrong. There were some truths in the rumors, but some of the information was otherwise conjured.

In fact, the school should report and criticize such a student.

However, Xu Tingting was good in her studies and she was in her third year now. It would not be beneficial to anyone if they made a fuss out of it at this point in time. Furthermore, the rumors had died down subsequently and Xu Tingting had stopped stirring things up.

Secondly, the materials were provided by Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan was not obligated to provide materials to every student.

One should be grateful to Qiao Nan if she was willing to provide. It was not within her obligation to provide. No one could force Qiao Nan to be Virgin Mary and request Qiao Nan to do all these.

Moreover, Xu Tingting had been creating troubles for Qiao Nan. The teachers in Ping Cheng High School did not have the shame to ask Qiao Nan to provide Xu Tingting with the revision materials.

Xu Tingting was not afraid of offending people because her grades were quite good. Since they could not take in hand both of them, the teachers simply washed their hands off the matter. Anyway, the matter was not blown up, seemingly fine on the surface.

If other students went overboard in ostracizing Xu Tingting, the teachers would then intervene.

This matter gradually quieted down.

Qiao Nan was not bothered about this, but she could also feel the change after some time. “Tang Mengran, how did the rumors in the school die down so quickly?”