

RTAMM 851

Chapter 851 As Humans, Don't Go Overboard

Wei De doted on his child so much. She would not be able to stop him even if she wanted to. If that child did not do well in the future, Wei De would definitely resent her for life. If that was the case, was there still a need to lead this kind of life?

Zhai Hua felt that moving forward, she needed to calm down more when she was with Wei De. She could not remain as she was, agreeing with Wei De's reasoning all the time.

Wei De should not be the only person who had all the reasoning.

"Hua Hua, you..." Wei De chased after her quickly.

That Zhai Hua in the past whom he had in his clutches had really changed after the past few days of cooling-off period. The more this was the case, the more nervous Wei Wei felt. He started to regret his decision to bring Wei Wei to Ping Cheng.

"Don't worry. I have not thought of breaking up with you. I just feel that I really need more time to cool down. I will cancel my leave tomorrow and return to the camp directly. I'm not sure when I'll be back too. We'll contact each other again when I have the time." Zhai Hua asked Wei De to let go of her. Thereafter, with a phone call, Zhai Hua really canceled her leave and ran back to the camp.

Zhai Hua applied for a leave to come back this time because she wanted to make use of the good news regarding Qiao Nan's college entrance examination to ease the relationship between Wei De and the Zhai family. This was a time when everyone was feeling relaxed and happy.

Of course, in the end, Wei De himself had wrecked the plans that Zhai Hua had made painstakingly.

In fact, Zhai Hua had also thought of how to work hard on this thereafter.

Wasn't Zhai Sheng going to be engaged with Qiao Nan? She could bring Wei De along to the event and let him come into contact with people related to the Zhai family so that they could become familiar with him. She would start with these little moves regarding her relationship with Wei De.

However, at this moment, Zhai Hua no longer felt like doing so.

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She made such plans only because that was a joyous day for Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan. Regardless of how unhappy her parents were, they could not possibly make a scene, ask Wei De to leave, or refuse to openly admit Wei De's status or something.

This method was rather rogue but it was useful.

However, at this moment, at the thought of how furious her parents would be if she were to do that, Zhai Hua felt guilt-stricken. She was full of self-blame.

She was not just paying lip service when she said that she wanted to learn from Wei De and spare more thoughts for her family's feelings. She really had such an intention and wanted to do that.

With these thoughts in mind, Zhai Hua immediately stroke off the initial plan from her schedule.

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Zhai Hua was very conscious of her own temper. She could not help changing her stand if Wei De were to pester and sweet-talk her more.

Knowing her own weakness well, Zhai Hua might as well hide in the camp. As long as she was not carrying out any mission, at most, she would go home on the day that Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan was engaged.

Zhai Hua had left. Wei De did not have any way out then.

When Wei De arrived home, Wei De's family happened to call him. "Ah De, when are you going to bring Wei Wei over? Wei Wei is your... You have to keep Wei Wei's matter at heart. In the past, you didn't have the ability. Now, you have money and we can't shortchange Wei Wei. We are holding tightly to the money that you have transferred to us. We have built a house and we've always been

quite good to Hua Er. Wei Wei, this child, has to get out of the countryside. Like you, he will be very successful in the future. He will have to grow up outside, in the city.”

“Don’t worry. How can I not be good to Wei Wei? Rest assured. I’ll drive back to the countryside to fetch Wei Wei personally tomorrow. Mom, I’m really going to fetch Wei Wei. Don’t miss Wei Wei. I’ve already told you about my situation here. It’s not appropriate for Dad and you, especially Hua Er, to come here. I’ve been through many difficulties to achieve what I have today. I can’t ruin it.”

“...” Wei De’s mother sniffed. “Yes, the daughter of the great chief is very capable, and her status is so high. I’m just a countryside bumpkin. How will I dare to provoke her? But, Ah De, when you have the spare time, bring Wei Wei home more often. If you have children with the chief’s daughter, you also have to bring them back for Mom to see. When Mom and Dad leave the world, you have to come back too. It’s just that, at that time, Hua Er...”

“Mom, what inauspicious things are you talking about? Dad and you will live to a ripe old age. No matter what, I will make good arrangements for Hua Er.” Unknowingly, Wei De felt a little vexed. “Mom, it’s late. Quickly go and rest. I’ve said that I will go and fetch Wei Wei tomorrow and sleep over for one night at the hometown. If you want to tell me anything, you can do so tomorrow.”

“Aye, okay.” When she heard that her son was coming home, Mother Wei hung up the phone happily.

On the contrary, Father Wei, who was sitting by the side, continued to smoke as he looked at Mother Wei. “Unethical. This matter is so unethical. The other party is the daughter of the old chief. You are too audacious!”

“What do you know? Didn’t I tell you long ago? This kind of situation is quite common nowadays. Look at how good Wei De is to the old chief’s daughter. For the sake of the daughter-in-law, he doesn’t even want his mom anymore. Did I complain? Where can she find a man as good as our family’s Wei De and a mother-in-law as good as me? I heard that the old chief’s daughter is not young anymore.” If she were in the countryside, she would be shunned and left on the shelves. Their Wei family did not even shun her. What did the other party have to complain about?

“Ha.” Father Wei sneered. “If this is truly the case, when you have the chance to meet the old chief’s daughter next time, do you dare to say this to her or even the old chief?”

“You... This old man is really... Wei De is our son. Don’t favor an outsider instead of someone on your own side. Alright, our son is coming home tomorrow. We only have one son. If our son brings that woman home one day, don’t spout nonsense. If you destroy our son’s future, I won’t continue

to live with you anymore. Your old Wei family is so poor. I'm the only one who was willing to marry you and live with you in the past," Mother Wei said without any reservation.

"..." Father Wei fell silent. If not because of this reason, Father Wei would not let Mother Wei and Wei De do this.

However, it was still a problem whether Wei De's relationship with the old chief's daughter would be successful. Hence, it was useless for him to think about it.

The next day, true enough, Wei De made a trip back to the hometown and slept over.

Initially, the Wei family was the poorest in the countryside. However, now, all the villagers knew that the son of the old Wei's family was successful. The house of the old Wei family was now the best house in the countryside.

On the third day, Wei De then brought the four-year-old Wei Wei and left the countryside to return to Ping Cheng. It could be said that he spent a lot of money instead of making use of connections. After much spending and hard work, he finally settled Wei Wei's household register and schooling issues.

It was just that Wei De felt that the kindergarten that Wei Wei would be studying at was far from satisfactory. Unfortunately, with his ability, those good kindergartens were not willing to accept Wei Wei.

Wei De knew that he still had to seek Zhai Hua's help eventually in this matter.

When Zhai Hua's anger had subsided, he would appease her more. This matter had to be successful. He was bent on manipulating his woman.

Chapter 852 When You Are Tough, I Will Be Soft

Before Wei De could settle Wei Wei's matter, Zhai Sheng had already fetched Old Master Zhai home on the day before Wei De brought Wei Wei back. "Where's the young lady?" He had thought that there was still a long time before he could have a granddaughter-in-law. Unexpectedly, Zhai Sheng really found one back when he was still alive. "Right, why didn't I see Zhai

Hua?"

“She went back to the camp.”

“Zhai Sheng is getting engaged. Why did she go back to the camp? Is she throwing tantrums at Zhai Sheng or you both?”

Zhai Yaohui looked at Old Master Zhai. “You really understand this granddaughter of yours very well. She did not quarrel with us, but she had one with that boyfriend of hers. I think it’s quite good that she went back to the army camp at this time.” While saying this, Zhai Yaohui took a glance at Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng straightened his back and he wore a proud expression on his face.

“...” Miao Jing rolled her eyes as she had enough of this stupid father-son pair. “Most likely, she sorted out some of her thoughts after chatting with Nan Nan. So, she purposely went hiding in the army. She’s afraid that her heart will soften and she will be cajoled by someone again.”

“You all have indulged Hua Hua too much such that she took a fancy to that kind of person.” Old Master Zhai was not pleased. In fact, he had long heard about Wei De’s matter. He was enduring the urge to return to give Zhai Hua a beating. He dared not believe that Zhai Hua, this foolish child, was brought up by him. “Forget it. Let’s not talk about

Where’s that granddaughter-in-law of mine? This marriage can’t proceed if she doesn’t pass my judgment.”

Old Master Zhai was aware that it was certainly because when Zhai Hua was a child, he had been raising her up like a grandson instead of a granddaughter. She even grew up among the opposite gender.

This was the first time that a man treated, cajoled, and doted on her like a real woman. Despite his granddaughter being almost thirty years old, her experience in the romance area was as clean as a piece of white paper. It was no wonder that she would fall into other people’s trap.

Old Master Zhai had even shouted for his ‘granddaughter-in-law’. Hence, his last sentence could threaten others but not anyone from the Zhai family.

“We have invited them to our house tomorrow. The Qiao family doesn’t have many relatives. Nan Nan only has her father. Tomorrow, only the father-daughter pair will be here,” Miao Jing quickly

said. She seemed to be protecting Qiao Nan and hoping that Elder Zhai would not make things difficult for others when the time arrived.

Zhai Sheng had already briefed Old Master Zhai about the situation of the Qiao family long ago.

Old Master Zhai was not someone who favored males over females. Otherwise, he would not have raised his granddaughter like a grandson. His initial thoughts were to find ways to nurture Zhai Hua to become successful. Old Master Zhai was the one who gave Zhai Hua her name.

Unfortunately, before Zhai Sheng was born and aware of what was happening, Zhai Hua's temperament was too lazy. Old Master Zhai thus dropped his plans.

When Zhai Hua finally became diligent under the stimulation of Zhai Sheng, unfortunately, she could not win against Zhai Sheng.

Hence, since he could accept Qiao Nan, whose family background was not that good, old Master Zhai would not object to Zhai Hua being together with Wei De too if the latter did not have any problem with his character.

If Old Master Zhai was concerned about family status, would Miao Jing be able to marry into the Zhai family in the past?

Hence, Old Master Zhai was willing to address Qiao Nan as 'granddaughter-in-law', but he was full of disappointment when he mentioned Zhai Hua. It was enough to tell that Old Master Zhai was very dissatisfied with Wei De.

"Don't worry. I've heard about the situation. I won't judge that young lady based on her family background. I only look at the individual." This was the promise that Old Master Zhai gave to Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua.

Wei De was frequently in contact with Zhai Hua's childhood friends. Within a few days, Wei De heard the news that Old Master Zhai was back.

At that juncture, Wei De quickly gave a call to Zhai Hua, who was in the army camp. "Hua Hua, the old master is back. Why didn't you tell me so that I could fetch him?" The old master was from the older generation and he should prefer people from the countryside. Didn't Madam Zhai marry into the family because of that?

Other people in the Zhai family would look down on him but not Old Master Zhai.

“Zhai Sheng will go and fetch the old master.”

“...” Wei De fell silent. Even if Regiment Commander Zhai was going to fetch him, if Zhai Hua had told him earlier, he could go and ‘snatch’ the person. “What should I bring along to see the old master?”

“Are you sure that you want to meet the old master?” Zhai Hua questioned back.

“Why?”

“I have not mentioned much to you about the old master. Since the old master is back, I’ll tell you the situation. You have been feeling inferior about your status and worrying about this and that. Our family’s old master does not judge a person by their status. He pays more attention to the character.”

“Do you mean that I have a poor character?” Wei De raised his voice. The secretary outside his office also had a shock.

Zhai Hua sighed helplessly as she swapped the phone receiver to her other ear. Her ear had been agitated by Wei De’s voice earlier. “Old Master Zhai is someone who had been on the battlefields and fought against the Japanese. What he hates most was those who leave their comrades in the lurch on the battlefields. Think about what happened previously. You caused a platoon leader to lose one of his limbs because of your own risk-taking and self-heroic actions. With this matter alone, the old master already has a negative impression of you in his heart.”

At this point in time, none of the four family members of hers had a good impression of Wei De.

Was it because her family members were biased against Wei De or that Wei De really had too many shortcomings?

In the past, Zhai Hua felt that it was the former. Zhai Sheng was allowed to find someone that he liked regardless of the other party’s status while she was not. Her family members insisted that she had to find someone with status. Who would know what they were thinking of? It could not be just for her own good, right?

Now, Zhai Hua had to admit that the probability of the latter reasoning was higher.

“He simply shot me to death because of this one matter? He’s not giving me any chance?” Wei De felt that this was unbelievable. The matter regarding the platoon leader... That platoon leader was just an outsider. He was the one who was part of the Zhai family.

Was it not enough that he was good to his own family members?

“I have also paid a price for that matter, haven’t I? Didn’t they say that learning from one’s mistake and changing for the better is the most important? Why are your family members all like that? All of them deny me because of that matter. Will your family only accept me if I break a limb and repay it to that platoon leader?” Sick in the mind!

“What can I say if you want to put it this way? I’m hanging up!” Zhai Hua was not pleased. Clearly, Wei De was the one in the wrong regarding this. Why was it that besides admitting to his mistake initially, each time she brought up this matter, Wei De behaved as though her Zhai family had been using this as a handle against him? It was as if Wei De felt that he was never in the wrong.

Someone had broken a limb and was forced to leave the army. Would the matter be considered as resolved just because Wei De said ‘I’m in the wrong’?

Why did Wei De keep thinking that he committed a mistake and left the army because Zhai Sheng did not help him? As such, he could not see eye to eye with Zhai Sheng

When Zhai Hua calmed down, it was not difficult to discover the flaws in Wei De’s character.

Once Zhai Hua was tough, Wei De would soften his attitude, but he was, in fact, not feeling fearful at heart.

Chapter 853 I Will Definitely Change

After all, they had dragged on until Zhai Hua was already at this age. Wei De felt that Zhai Hua would definitely not marry someone else given the past few years of effort that he had put in.

Sooner or later, Zhai Hua would be his Mrs. Wei. He thus did not need to keep up with some of the pretenses as much as when they were dating.

“Hua Hua, don’t be angry. I don’t mean to vent my frustration on you. I just feel that they can’t give me a death sentence just for the one mistake that I have committed. This is so unfair to me. I’m also changing for the better.” Wei De softened his tone. He dared not continue to be as fierce and aggressive as before.

“You’re changing for the better? In which way? Give me an example. I only know that a few days ago, you made use of Qiao Nan and caused my mom to faint from anger. My family’s old master has not even seen it. You’ve changed?” Zhai Hua raised her voice. She sounded very sarcastic.

“Hua Hua, what do you mean?” A woman was a woman. How could she be so unreasonable in front of a man!

In the past, when they were together, Zhai Hua had never displayed such a tough attitude in front of him. She was increasingly unbecoming of a woman.

“I had just wanted to ask you what you mean. As a man, you complain to me every day about this and that and request me to solve many problems for you. Wei De, so, our marriage is just my problem alone? I should settle everything by myself? Wei De, I’m exhausted too. If you don’t wish to get along, we can choose not to.”

Zhai Sheng was also dating. It was not as if she had not seen how Zhai Sheng behaved when he was with Qiao Nan.

This was the first time that she was dating but it did not mean that she did not know how a man behaved when he was in love.

No matter what, one could not possibly behave like Wei De, who just knew how to voice out and then dump everything to the woman to resolve.

As time passed, who would not feel annoyed with this kind of relationship? Furthermore, Wei De was the type of person that would push his responsibility to others. No matter how patient Zhai Hua was, there was a limit to that patience.

In the fit of pique, Zhai Hua had even thought of simply breaking up with Wei De. Anyway, everyone around her, including Qiao Nan and Shi Qing, did not agree to her relationship with Wei

De. After the breakup, Wei De would not suffer so much pain, and she would also not feel so troubled.

Wei De could just find any other woman to quickly give birth to a grandson and console his old-aged mother. Even if she was not in a hurry for marriage, she could take her time to look around lest people around her kept telling her that she had a poor sense of judgment.

Seemingly, in this way, both she and Wei De would be relieved from this ordeal.

When one was feeling vexed, they could really spout any words.

Zhai Hua was completely saying these words in a fit of anger but Wei De had a great shock. “Hua Hua, you’re really going to break up with me?” Could it be that he had gone overboard in his doings and had cornered Zhai Hua that badly?

Having been together for many years, although he did not achieve much in the army and he was also left with nothing after he left the army, Zhai Hua had never shunned him or talked about breaking up.

Could it be that the Zhai family had been secretly introducing partners to Zhai Hua as they did not want Zhai Hua to be with him, so Zhai Hua was preparing to dump him as she felt that the other party was suitable?

How could this happen?!

“Hua Hua, I... I know that I’ve given you a lot of pressure since we’re together. Actually, I’m also under a lot of pressure. I definitely won’t break up with you. However, I should also reflect deeply on the situation that you have reflected to me. Perhaps my feelings and bond for you have grown deeper as our time together increases. No matter what I encounter, I want to discuss them with you. I’m different from other men. Even if I don’t really respect women, I respect you very much. I want to hear your views on every matter and hope that you can give me some suggestions. But you may not be used to this. Hua Hua, I definitely don’t have the intention to push all the responsibility of our matter to you. Anyway, I think the old master won’t leave so soon since he just arrived.”

Wei De let out a long sigh. “What you said is right. I didn’t perform well previously. If I appear before the old master now, the old master can’t possibly accept me. Perhaps you will be in a difficult position as well. I’m too anxious. I panicked because I’m anxious about your family. I will fight for a chance to perform. After changing your family’s impression of me, I will then pay a visit

to your house. There has to be a process in this matter. I... I wish so much to form a family with you and have our own children as soon as possible. You like children. I'm of this age. How can I not like children? I'm good to Wei Wei because I'm already thirty years old. I don't even have a daughter, let alone a son. Wei Wei's situation is also as such. Before we have any children, I can only focus my feelings on Wei Wei."

"..." As Wei De's tone eased, Zhai Hua also felt more relaxed.

Sometimes, Zhai Hua could be rather impulsive too. When she mentioned break-up, she was, in fact, uneasy at heart, but at the same time, she felt a sense of relief.

At this juncture, if Wei De had been stubborn with Zhai Hua and were to say 'let's break up then', regardless of how much Zhai Hua could not bear to do so, she would also drop her feelings for Wei De, just like undergoing drug rehabilitation.

It was not without a reason that Zhai Hua would fall into Wei De's trap.

At the very least, when it was time to soften his attitude, as a man, Wei De did not have that backbone not to do so.

"I will take care of Wei Wei's matters. Don't worry about what you just said as well. I will seek a balance. If you're really worried, when Wei Wei is older and more familiar with this city, I can also bring Wei Wei's mother over and find a house for them. I will only give them money and let Wei Wei's mother take care of him. It will certainly be better than me, this uncle, taking care of him. It's just that that won't do now."

It was true that it was a problem to continue letting Wei Wei stay by his side. He had to think in the long term.

"Okay..." Hearing this arrangement of Wei De, Zhai Hua finally felt more at ease.

Precisely. That child did not have a biological father but he had a biological mother. Why did Wei De, this uncle, have to raise that child by his side every day?

Zhai Hua would not mind at all for Wei De to spend more money and rent a house for that mother-son pair.

She did not mind losing some money. She was only concerned about whether Wei De would wholeheartedly treat her and the children that she gave birth to in the future well.

“When are you coming out from the army camp? Give me a call. At least, before I bring Wei Wei’s mother over, Wei Wei can meet up with you, his auntie-in-law.” After hearing that Zhai Hua’s tone did not sound that angry anymore and she seemed to have softened, Wei De then heaved a huge sigh of relief.

Just a while ago, he had really believed that Zhai Hua was going to break up with him.

They had been together for so many years. Wei De understood one thing. Zhai Hua was different from other women. She would not talk about breaking up from time to time for no reason.

When Zhai Hua opened her mouth and said this, she must have been very annoyed and thus, such thoughts surfaced.

Wei De went through so much to have successfully wooed Zhai Hua and become her boyfriend. He had also received so much help from Zhai Hua.

Chapter 854 Finally Engaged

He was still far from being successful. If he were to break up with Zhai Hua now, all his previous efforts would be in vain.

“We’ll see when the time comes.” True enough, the affections of Zhai Hua toward Wei Wei had vanished to the point of no return. All her longing for Wei Wei was completely gone.

Hence, when Wei De brought up Wei Wei’s matter, Zhai Hua could not bring herself to sound happy. “I have some matters to settle in the army. I won’t chat with you further.”

“I’ll go and fetch you when you’re coming back, okay?”

“...Wei Wei is just a child. It is not safe for him to be at home alone. Since you wish to be a good uncle, you should spend more time to keep him company,” Zhai Hua said. She was feeling very perplexed.

Wei De smiled. "This auntie-in-law is really very good to Wei Wei. If Wei Wei is not filial to you when he grows up in the future, I'll definitely smack his backside. Don't worry. I'm a grown-up man and I have never been a father. How will I possibly know how to take care of a child? So, I simply hired a nanny to take care of Wei Wei. Wei Wei won't have the opportunity to be alone at home. You don't need to worry about Wei Wei. Wei Wei is only my nephew but you are my wife, the mother of my future children. To me, only you are the most important."

"Humph, who knows if what you're saying is true or false." Zhai Hua finally smiled.

"Of course it's real. It's more authentic than gold."

After appeasing Zhai Hua and hanging up the phone, Wei De experienced cramps in the three veins on his forehead.

Even though he had successfully appeased Zhai Hua, the mention of 'break up' by Zhai Hua this time was a warning bell for Wei De.

True enough, after being separated for some time, Zhai Hua seemed to be on the momentum to kick up a 'family dispute'.

It was just that unlike in the past, he could no longer stay in the army camp, where he could be together with Zhai Hua all the time as long as he did not have to attend any training sessions.

Zhai Hua spent most of her time in the army. When she was occasionally on leave, she still had to consider the situation at the Zhai family. The time that the two spent together was thus greatly reduced. This was only the first year and there were already talks about breaking up. He was fearful that if he had not married Zhai Hua in the second year, instead of talking about breaking up, Zhai Hua would just notify him directly that it was 'game over' for the two of them.

However, what could he do to let the Zhai family approve of their relationship within one year such that he could marry Zhai Hua?

Despite dating Zhai Hua so many years, they were purely dating. He had always relied on his five fingers to relieve his sexual desire. Zhai Hua not only did not help him but also refused to give herself to him. At the thought of this, Wei De felt more sullen.

If Zhai Hua had become his woman long ago, given his ability, she would have been pregnant with his child.

He did not believe that those in the Zhai family could bear to let the child in Zhai Hua's womb become one that did not have an official father.

The Zhai family was a family of soldiers. How could they do such a thing?

At the thought of this issue, Wei De felt troubled. Was this the only way out for him?

After it happened, what if Zhai Hua were to flare up at him for scheming against her and wanted to break up with him?

Wei De was scratching his head hard and he simply tugged a few strands of hair off. "This won't do. I really have to think of a way to marry Zhai Hua this year and let Zhai Hua give birth to a child as soon as possible."

Once there was a child, the Zhai family had to accept him. They would also gradually treat him better because of the child.

Zhai Hua loved children very much now. When they were out dating, Zhai Hua always liked to tease other people's children that she saw on the streets. If he could teach Wei Wei well such that Wei Wei would be sweet and affectionate to Zhai Hua, it might be a solution too.

Zhai Hua was totally unaware that Wei De had thought of so many scenarios after she hung up the phone.

A few days later, Qiao Nan did not expect that she would really meet the legendary hero of the wartime, Old Master Zhai, who was still as hale and hearty as before.

Even Qiao Nan felt a little uneasy. Qiao Dongliang felt even more awkward and he did not know where to place his hands and legs.

"O-old Chief Zhai, good day." At the sight of Old Master Zhai, Qiao Dongliang's face swelled in red. He stood courteously and gave a ninety-degree bow to Old Master Zhai.

With the presence of Old Master Zhai, only Old Master Zhai was qualified to be addressed as the old chief.

“Comrade Qiao, good day.” Old Master Zhai laughed. “We’re going to be a family soon. Don’t need to be so nervous. This is not the army. It is just an ordinary family gathering. Why do you need to be so nervous? I heard that you have left the army for a long time. Nevertheless, your bow still meets all the criteria.”

Only someone who had been thinking of and missing the army would maintain this kind of state after leaving the army.

Okay, not bad.

“I’m nervous to meet you.” At that moment, Qiao Dongliang said honestly as he could not contain himself.

“Haha, don’t be nervous, don’t be nervous. If you meet me in the future, you can address me as uncle.” Old Master Zhai was very approachable. He did not have any intention of making things difficult for Qiao Dongliang.

Zhai Sheng secretly squeezed Qiao Nan, who was sitting beside him and having sweaty palms, to calm her down. “The old master is quite a good person. You should know when you see how carefree my mom has been these past few years.”

“It is normal for me to feel nervous at this time.” Emotions were not something that could be controlled as one wished. If Brother Zhai was not by her side, Qiao Nan might even tremble.

“Don’t be polite, everyone. Quickly sit down.” This was Old Master Zhai’s first impression of the Qiao family. He did not feel any revulsion toward the father-daughter pair of the Qiao family. “I heard that your daughter has just become the top scorer of the college entrance examination? She’s a talent.” Her grades were excellent. It was still compatible with that of his grandson.

“Luck, it was luck. My family’s Nan Nan doesn’t have a lot of hobbies. She just likes to study.” Qiao Dongliang wanted to be modest but he also wanted to express Qiao Nan’s willingness to learn. In the end, he said something where the first half of the sentence contradicted with the remaining half.

“Uncle Qiao, have some tea.” Seeing that beads of sweat were dripping from the side of Qiao Dongliang’s cheeks and him looking embarrassed and awkward, Zhai Sheng stood up and poured everyone a cup of tea.

Qiao Dongliang was also aware that he did not perform very well. He quickly moved the cup of tea before him and took a sip of it. He almost burned his tongue. In the process, he also wet his shirt.

Facing Qiao Dongliang’s loss of composure, Qiao Nan did not have much reaction. She calmly took out her handkerchief and passed it to Qiao Dongliang. “Dad, wipe yourself. Although it’s summer now, you’ll still feel uncomfortable. You can drink the tea when it’s cooler. No hurry.”

“Aye.” Qiao Dongliang felt so embarrassed but he listened to his daughter. He briefly wiped the tea on his shirt. When he took a sip of the tea when it turned cooler, he seemed to have calmed down a little.

Old Master Zhai nodded quietly. Not to mention Qiao Dongliang, he had seen many soldiers of Qiao Dongliang’s generation behaving in this way in front of him. It was not strange. Old Master Zhai was already used to it. Instead, he termed the reactions of these people as honest and forthright.

Qiao Dongliang had embarrassed himself in front of others, yet Qiao Nan was so patient. She not only did not blame Qiao Dongliang but also consoled him with usual words and calmed Qiao Dongliang down. This was hard to come by.

Chapter 855 Invitation to the Banquet

At this moment, if Qiao Nan revealed even a tinge of scorn and blame at Qiao Dongliang, he would only feel more nervous.

Zhai Yaohui did not lie to him. This young lady certainly exuded the charisma of a well-bred individual. If they were to nurture her properly, she would not be weak.

She was a good seedling!

The first impression of Old Master Zhai on Qiao Dongliang and Qiao Nan was not bad. “The two children have known each other for a long time. That said, your family’s daughter is actually very young. It’s my family’s grandson who is thick-skinned and shameless. Nevertheless, since the

children have already decided, Comrade Xiao Qiao, what's your view regarding the matter regarding the two of them?"

Old Master Zhai did not give any face to his grandson when he derided him. Anyway, he was telling the truth.

The other party was just a young lady at a nominal age of twenty years old. His own family's grandson was already of a nominal age of twenty-six years old. According to the time, when his grandson had his eyes on the young lady, she was only a teenager who was less than her twenties.

Zhai Sheng had given his promise to Old Master Zhai previously. Hence, Old Master Zhai knew that Zhai Sheng would not do anything to Qiao Nan even if he liked her. Otherwise, when Old Master Zhai heard such a matter, instead of feeling happy, his first reaction would be to catch hold of Zhai Sheng and give him a beating.

It was too shameless!

"This... I will obey the orders of Old Chief Zhai," Qiao Dongliang said forthrightly without thinking. As long as the Zhai family made the proper arrangements, he did not have any opinion. Everything was good.

Old Master Zhai turned his glance toward Qiao Nan. "Daughter, do you have any opinion on this?"

"I'll listen to Brother Zhai." As she felt her hand being grabbed tightly by Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan could only respond with this in an abiding manner.

In fact, even if Zhai Sheng did not remind her, Qiao Nan was prepared to say this. Zhai Sheng had been anxious for nothing.

It was just an engagement. She would not delay it.

Old Master Zhai stared at his grandson from the corners of his eyes. Do not think that he was long-sighted and could not see his grandson's cheap trick under the table. He even threatened other family's young daughter. He was bullying the young as he was older. He was too shameless.

Facing the look of blame from Old Master Zhai, Zhai Sheng not only did not slant his eyes but also looked so righteous and full of justice. It was as if he was not the one who squeezed Qiao Nan's hands earlier.

As for the glance of Old Master Zhai, Zhai Sheng simply ignored it.

At this juncture, he would put everything, including his grandfather, aside temporarily. His daughter-in-law was the most important.

"When school reopens, Nan Nan will have to study at the college in the capital. Why don't we let them get engaged in early August next month?" Miao Jing, who had accepted this matter, considered the practical issues well. They had to find a suitable date that matched Qiao Nan's schooling schedule.

"That's fine." Zhai Yaohui made the final call on this. "We can fix it on 1 August. It's the Army Day[1]. It's a good day."

"...But it's the end of July now..." Qiao Nan could not help but interrupt with one sentence.

In other words, if she really wanted to be engaged with Brother Zhai, there was only less than a week of preparation time left.

"If we arrange a simple event, it can actually be done in time. It's basically engagement and it doesn't need to be so complicated. 1 August. This date is good. It's excellent and meaningful. We'll fix it on that day then." Qiao Dongliang, who was emotionally affected when he saw the old chief, did not have any stand at all. He agreed to whatever the Zhai family proposed.

"Not bad. If we wish to make it a major event, we can wait until their formal wedding." Old Master Zhai also agreed on the date fixed by his son. "1 August then. Miao Miao, work harder and quickly make arrangements for this. Of course, if you can't handle this alone, you can get Zhai Hua to come back from the army. I heard that she is not carrying out any mission now. She's just training some new recruits in the army. There are many people who can do this in the army. We can ask her to come back and help with Zhai Sheng's matter first."

She was willing to spend so much time on outsiders. However, she hid herself so far away when her brother was getting engaged. Where was the logic in this?

“Fine.” Miao Jing agreed swiftly. After waiting for so many years, she had finally toughed it out and was going to have a daughter-in-law. Most unexpectedly, after going in circles, her son actually liked Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan became her daughter-in-law instead of goddaughter. Not bad. This outcome was more wonderful.

Hence, with one phone call from Miao Jing, Zhai Hua, who had just returned to the army for a few days, abidingly returned to the Zhai’s residence in the quad.

No matter how simple an engagement event was, they had to set up a banquet and invite some people to witness the event.

The Qiao family did not have any relatives. Initially, the Qiao family could still invite some of the neighbors in the quad.

However, after Qiao Nan encountered the matter on the day of her college entrance examination, whereby one of the neighbors took someone else’s money and tried to stop Qiao Nan from entering the examination hall, and he even wanted to force Qiao Nan to go to the hospital...

If they really had to invite people, Qiao Dongliang had to consider very carefully which families to extend the invitation to.

At the very least, they would definitely not invite the one that he had just mentioned. He lived very close to the small courtyard of the Qiao family and previously, they greeted each other whenever they met and they were on very good terms.

Despite being on good terms, at critical times, the neighbor took other people’s money and harmed Qiao Nan. Why would they want to invite this kind of neighbor?

Anyway, the Zhai family had already made themselves clear that they would not accept red packets for the engagement event.

Hence, the other party would be coming to have free meals and drinks. At the same time, they could widen their horizons and see some prominent figures.

Where could they find such a good deal in the world?

In the end, Qiao Dongliang invited a few families of those neighbors who were truly close to them.

It could be said that besides the family that harmed Qiao Nan, he invited all those neighbors whom he was on very good terms with in the past twenty years. After all, they had watched Qiao Nan grow up. Everyone should celebrate the joy together in such a good occasion.

As such, the guest list from the Qiao family had been finalized most quickly.

As for the situation at the Zhai family's side, Qiao Dongliang could not and did not have the ability to intervene. Qiao Dongliang would only enquire if the Zhai family had finalized the list.

When those few neighbors of Qiao Dongliang received the news, they were extremely surprised. "Nan Nan is getting engaged at such a young age?"

"Of course, the engagement has to be early. After all, the old chief's son is not young anymore. Nan Nan has been very sensible since she was a child. She is good-looking and also good in her studies. I know that she will definitely be a blessed child when she grows up. See, she's going to be engaged with the old chief's son this time. When Nan Nan graduates from college, she can immediately get married."

"Haha, the reason why we're staying here is mostly because of the opportunities left for us by our elders. As such, wouldn't we have the chance to see the old chief too?"

It was not just the old chief. The Zhai family was organizing an engagement banquet. Either no one or only the prominent figures would attend it.

At the thought that poor ordinary citizens like themselves could also see the prominent figures, those who were invited by Qiao Dongliang felt extremely proud and honored.

Only that one family, who was not invited and also felt guilty-conscious, twisted their lips unhappily and said, "What's there to be happy about? They are not getting married. It's just an engagement banquet. It's not as if we have never been to one before."

Chapter 856 Blame Each Other

So what if they were engaged? There were also many people who divorced after marriage.

Having said that, this person was given a round of scolding by his own elderly father after he arrived home.

The Qiao family of four was considered good-tempered and quite reasonable. This included Ding Jiayi's behavior when she was with outsiders. Everyone would see each other frequently. Hence, they got along quite well.

From all perspectives, as a neighbor, no one would behave like his son who harmed his neighbor for the sake of a few yuan. It was too embarrassing.

This elderly man used to serve in the Red Army. After he retired from the army, he had seen less of his former comrades, let alone meeting a character like the old chief.

This was a good opportunity and his only one but it had been ruined by his son for the sake of a meager sum of money. How would this elderly man not feel angry?

He was so furious that he wanted to search out that rattan cane that he had used to discipline his son thirty years ago so that he could give him a good beating. His son was really too materialistic.

Fortunately, the Qiao family was very benevolent. Clearly, his son had done something so mean but the Qiao family had never spread this incident to others in the quad. At most, they just did not invite his family when Qiao Nan was getting engaged with the chief's son this time.

At the thought of this matter, the elderly man felt so flustered and embarrassed that he did not have the shame to go out and meet anyone.

On the second day, the elderly man was simply taken ill. He spent a lot of money after visiting the hospital.

This neighbor then pulled Qiao Nan aside and spoke to her briefly. He told her that he only earned fifty yuan but he spent two hundred and fifty yuan for his father to seek medical consultation at the hospital.

Hearing this figure, the neighbor kept having the feeling that he was slapping his own face.

It was just that it was too late for regrets now.

This was not the only family that had a dispute because of Qiao Nan's engagement.

Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi had gotten a divorce. Although Ding Jiayi did not appear throughout the entire divorce process, the divorce certificate still reached her hands.

Holding the divorce certificate, Ding Jiayi seemed very out of sorts. Tears rolled down her eyes uncontrollably and she did not eat for the whole day.

They had divorced. They were truly divorced. From today onward, Ding Jiayi was really no longer Qiao Dongliang's wife.

At the thought that she lost her husband despite the fact that she was already not young, Ding Jiayi even thought of dying. "Look, it's all your fault. You kept asking me to make a fuss. Your dad has divorced me. Are you happy now? The court has awarded me custody of you and your dad custody of Qiao Nan. I... Your dad and I will be considered as two separate families from now onward!"

Qiao Zijin, who was similarly feeling angry and sullen, did not like to hear this from Ding Jiayi most. "Can you blame me? I gave you a suggestion but look at what you have done. You clearly know that my dad is still angry and that he cares most about Qiao Nan, yet you had to be at odds with him in front of the Zhai family. It's no wonder that Dad would divorce you."

At the thought of Ding Jiayi's behavior that day, Qiao Zijin was enduring a tummy full of anger.

If Qiao Zijin had not played a part in Ding Jiayi's hospitalization-she was the one who asked Ding Jiayi to appear at that place that day-given Qiao Zijin's temper, she would have flared up badly at Ding Jiayi long ago for the incident that happened on the day that Qiao Nan became the top scorer in the college entrance examination.

"Don't forget. You, and not Dad, Qiao Nan, or me, are the one in the wrong for matters in the past. Clearly, you have such good requisites..." Qiao Zijin looked at Ding Jiayi, who was covered with injuries and bandages from tip to toe. "Humans will always sympathize with the weaker ones. You can kneel down, and you can cry. If Dad dares to pull you up, you can simply pretend to faint on the ground. No matter what, there will definitely be someone who will be willing to help you. Who would know that you're so stupid? You are so fierce and aggressive to Dad. You're afraid that no one will know that you call the shots in our family."

If public opinion had sided with them, Qiao Nan would not even have had a chance to win.

However, her mother simply made a mess out of such a good opportunity. Today, her mother still had the cheek to throw tantrums at her?

“Do you know that Qiao Nan is going to be engaged with the son of chief today! From today onward, Qiao Nan will be the fiancée of the regiment commander. She’s the future daughter-in-law of the chief!”

At the mention of this, Qiao Zijin was so resentful that she nearly broke all her teeth from the grinding.

She was already in the second year of her diploma studies but she could not even find a decent boyfriend. The Chen family seemed to have been defeated but Chen Jun was still very capable and resourceful. She had the intention but Chen Jun did not. He purely saw her as someone who could collaborate with him to deal with Qiao Nan.

She could not even deal with someone like Chen Jun and Qiao Nan had become the wife of a regiment commander!

In the past, Qiao Zijin really did not look up to Zhou Jun. She disliked soldiers and shunned the Zhou family for being farmers. It was not easy for Zhou Jun to have to rely on his own effort to climb up the ranks. She shunned Zhou Jun for being promoted too slowly, that his rank was too low.

However, the wife of a regiment commander or the future wife of a chief-Qiao Zijin was interested in these two positions not only in reality but also in her dreams!

She had not assumed these roles but Qiao Nan had done so easily. Why was this world so unfair to her?!

“Is the Zhai family still willing to accept her? That day, I saw that Madam Zhai fainted when she knew about the relationship between Qiao Nan and Regiment Commander Zhai.” Ding Jiayi was very surprised. She thought that the matter between Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng would be a fiasco because of that day’s matter.

“However, don’t also forget that Madam Zhai gave you a slap before she fainted. She even retorted, scolding you back on Nan Nan’s behalf.” Judging from this point alone, Madam Zhai did not seem to detest Qiao Nan very much.

“This...” Ding Jiayi felt depressed. The situation had escalated so badly. Regiment Commander Zhai could not find a wife and wanted someone like Qiao Nan. The Zhai family had such poor taste. They had to take in a jinx and ignore Qiao Zijin who was the good one. “Something is not right. How did you know about that day’s matter? I didn’t mention it to you before. You described it in such detail. It was as if you were present and had seen it for yourself on that day.”

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“You were present that day!” At this moment, Ding Jiayi came to her senses. “You were there that day. You went there. You saw me being hit by others. You saw your dad dragging and pulling me. My injuries almost came apart. You saw them. Why didn’t you come out and help me? You allowed others to bully me? You even saw the doctors treating me like they would a madwoman and injecting sedatives into me. Zijin, what do you mean by this?”

At the thought of the humiliation she suffered that day, Ding Jiayi’s face turned crimson.

What happened that day was the most embarrassing moment in Ding Jiayi’s life.

The look of despise, the words of sarcasm of those people, and the cold and aloof demeanor as they stood aside and watched how could Ding Jiayi not feel embarrassed and upset? It was not as if she did not have a heart.

It was just that as a mother, she was putting on a false strong front before Qiao Zijin, lest Qiao Zijin also became sad and angry along with her.

Who would have known that there was no need for her to keep the matter a secret? Qiao Zijin basically followed her there but did not tell her. She had been watching others bully her and ignoring it. She refused to help her.

“The situation that day was so complicated. Would there be any use if I stepped out? Would I be of any help?”

“You made a mess and hope that I will clean it up for you? Do you know that I didn’t step out for your own good? If I appeared in such an awkward moment, wouldn’t you feel embarrassed? Those present that day were all my elders and I’m just a junior. If I shouted at the group, would I be able to overcome them? I would be badly bullied too, no?”

Stepping out? She would be a real fool if she were to appear before others on that day.

“...” Once Qiao Zijin was fierce, Ding Jiayi fell silent. This was because she knew that Qiao Zijin’s appearance certainly would not change anything. At most, there would only be one person to keep her company by her side.

“Mom, I say, why are you standing there in a daze?” Qiao Zijin looked at Ding Jiayi unhappily.

“What else can I do?” Ding Jiayi lifted her half-crippled body. “With my current state, what else can I do if I don’t stay in the hospital abidingly?” Ding Jiayi had a car accident. She had been knocked by a four-wheeled car and not a two-wheeled bicycle. Her injuries were not light and she should not have been discharged at all.

That day, she left the hospital on her own accord. With that round of torture, Ding Jiayi’s injuries simply deteriorated and she had to lie in bed for a few days before she could get up.

“Your daughter is getting engaged today. You’re the mother but you’re not going to appear?” Those guests who would be attending the event at the Zhai family would not be ordinary folks. Some were prominent figures whom she could only see on television. At the thought of this, Qiao Zijin felt tempted again.

Qiao Nan was going to be engaged with Zhai Sheng. That meant that she would have a brother-in-law who was a regiment commander.

If Qiao Nan could show more concern on her matters, it was, in fact, not difficult for her to become the wife of a regiment commander. At most, she would not be as blessed as Qiao Nan who would eventually become the wife of a chief.

“Mom, Qiao Nan is getting engaged today. You’re her mother and I’m her sister. As her next-of-kin, we certainly have to be present to give our blessings. You dote on her so much all this while. She has found a man who can take care of her now, so shouldn’t you feel glad and relieved?” Snatch? She would not be able to snatch over a man like Zhai Sheng.

Hence, she could only plead with this brother-in-law to take good care of her, this sister-in-law. At the very least, she could enjoy her remaining lifetime.

Obviously, Qiao Nan was not as good as her but she could marry so well—so well that she had far exceeded her. Now, she even had to bask in Qiao Nan's glory and seek her help to find a good marriage partner. At the thought of this, Qiao Zijin did not feel too happy.

Qiao Zijin kept having the feeling that Qiao Nan's and her life had been reversed.

She should be the one leading a life that others would be envious of, and Qiao Nan was the one that had to be looked down upon by others and live a shabby life.

“She caused your dad and me to have a divorce. Why should I feel glad and relieved that she has someone to take care of her now! In addition, given my current condition, can I leave the hospital? Not going! Today, Qiao Nan is going to be engaged with Zhai Sheng. Last time, your dad treated me that way and caused me to stay in the hospital for a longer time. If I really dare to go today, your dad may chop me with a knife before I can even say anything. He is bent on raising this daughter. Now, your dad only has Qiao Nan, this daughter, in his heart. He doesn't have you or me, his wife, in his heart. I don't want to go.”

During the last incident, Ding Jiayi already had a feeling that Qiao Dongliang could not wait to kill her.

Until now, whenever Ding Jiayi recalled the look in Qiao Dongliang's eyes at that time, she could still feel fear and trepidation.

They had said that a marriage might be short-lived but the couple's affection might continue to run deep. She had been a couple with Qiao Dongliang for twenty years but Qiao Dongliang now had thoughts about killing her because of one Qiao Nan. Ding Jiayi felt very disheartened.

She was the one who accompanied Qiao Dongliang through the most difficult times of his life.

“He won't.” Qiao Zijin refused to give up. The people that she could meet today were those that she might not have the chance to see again for the rest of her life. If she were to miss this opportunity, she would have to wait a few years later when Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng got married and after Qiao Nan graduated from college.

If she did not attend this event this time, when Qiao Nan was going to be married next time, was she certain that she could attend the event?

At this moment, the most important thing to her was to salvage the relationship between Qiao Nan and her.

After the engagement, when Qiao Nan said one word, it would be more effective than her doing a hundred things.

“If you feel that it won’t happen, you can go by yourself. Anyway, no matter what, I won’t attend her engagement event. I want to see... I’m not dead yet. If someone asks her where her biological mother is during the engagement, how is she going to respond? Just wait and see. Without me, she will be laughed at. If I go now, I will really be saving the face of that wretched girl.”

If she did not appear, the Zhai family would definitely not be pleased with Qiao Nan. They would feel that Qiao Nan did not respect the Zhai family.

Who had asked the Zhai family to be so blind to take a liking to Qiao Nan? She would not give the Zhai family any face. The Zhai family could just wait to become a laughingstock.

“Mom...” Why was it, no matter what she said, that she could not make her mother understand?

“Alright, I know what you want to say. Regardless of whether I turn up or not, I’m still that wretched girl’s mother. As long as I’m alive, she can forget about dumping me. She has to give me a good life. Since that is the case, why should I make myself suffer? Alright, I am tired and want to sleep.” Ding Jiayi turned her body and refused to continue this conversation with Qiao Zijin. She then fell into a slumber.

As the mother, she was certain that Qiao Nan would have to yield to her for life.

“...” Qiao Zijin stomped her feet in fury.

She had heard of a child supporting their parents for life. However, she had not heard of people supporting and caring for their biological sister for life.

Qiao Nan could not shut her mother off from her life but she could do so to her.

This would not do. She had to think of more ways to make her mother listen to her. She must not let Qiao Nan off. She could not let her off in the past; the more she could not let her off now.

Ding Jiayi insisted that she would not go. Qiao Zijin felt very unfair. She thus quietly returned to the quad. She had to be involved in such a bubbly occasion.

However, it was Zhai Sheng's engagement today and the event would be held at home. They only invited people who were close to them. The simpler the arrangement was, the harder it was to enter the place.

Qiao Zijin was not on the guest list at all. Although Qiao Zijin said that she was the biological elder sister of one of the couple, Qiao Nan, the guard did not listen to her. He just told her that he did not receive any instructions about her.

The security guard even had a gun. He was looking tall and impressive at the entrance. In particular, that formal and serious expression on his face, which warned one not to offend, made Qiao Zijin, this kind of scheming people, feel frightened. She dared not go near him.

This was similar to when a thief saw a policeman in his uniform. He would definitely avoid him like a mouse that saw a cat. Otherwise, he would be courting his own death.

The other party had made himself very clear. He would not let Qiao Zijin enter the place. This was the quad and there were people around who knew her. Qiao Zijin really could not bring herself to kick up a big fuss to embarrass Qiao Nan and insist that she be invited to the event.

Chapter 858 The Old Generals Who Could Stop a Child from Crying

As such, in the end, despite rushing over and drenching most of her clothing, Qiao Zijin could only return home empty-handed.

Just as Qiao Zijin left, news that she came had reached Zhai Sheng.

Zhai Sheng had longed guessed that Qiao Zijin was the kind of person that would refuse to give up. In normal times, she could not bear to see Qiao Nan do well. When Qiao Nan was really doing well and she could rely on her to benefit from it, Qiao Zijin would definitely not let this chance slip.

Hence, Qiao Zijin was someone that Zhai Sheng paid ‘special care’ to.

If other people had come today, the guard might have to enter the house and check with them. However, once he heard that it was Qiao Zijin, the biological sister of one of the couple, the security guard held Qiao Zijin back firmly without a word.

Zhai Sheng was certain that since they were in the quad and given Qiao Zijin’s age, she would want to save some face. Hence, she would not do those shameless things that Ding Jiayi would do.

The engagement that he had been pining for was finally happening. How could Zhai Sheng let a small fry like Qiao Zijin ruin it?

“Thank you, thank you.”

As one of the hosts from the Zhai family, Zhai Hua had been busy walking in and out of the venue. She was busier than Zhai Sheng, the one who was getting engaged.

Zhai Hua was already so tied up, yet someone had to add on to her troubles.

“Hello? Haven’t I told you that my family is

very busy today? It’s not convenient for you to come.” As soon as she picked up Wei De’s phone call, Zhai Hua could feel a headache. “I’ve said this countless times. If my family accepts you, you will certainly have a place here today. But the problem is that they have not. If I let you come now... Are you trying to anger my mom or my family’s old master?”

“But I’m your boyfriend. Haven’t we been dating for many years? You can’t possibly hide me away all the time, right?” Wei De was anxious. Those who were going to the Zhai family today were mostly prominent figures with brains and status. There would be old chiefs. If not, they would also be former comrades of Old Master Zhai, who held atypical statuses.

In fact, until today, Wei De still held the dream of returning to the army as a soldier and being promoted to regiment commander thereafter.

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When Wei De was a child, his family situation was not good and they could not afford to enroll him in college studies. Wei De was also very passionate about being a soldier. Hence, he joined the army immediately after he quit school.

The Zhai family did not see anything good about him. It could only mean that the Zhai family was not the lucky star that could tell and acknowledge that he was a prodigy.

The Zhai family was not his lucky star but others might be.

As long as there was a chance, he still wished to return to the army and continue to be a soldier. He did not want to do business. He had to completely listen to a few youngsters' bidding and could not make his own decisions at all.

Wei De was completely a layman in doing business. Besides, this kind of knowledge could not be picked up all at once.

Fortunately, Zhai Hua's childhood friend was very good to Zhai Hua. They had never plotted against Wei De. Whenever they let Wei De be involved in a business, it was guaranteed that Wei De would make a little money.

This was actually the same situation and logic whereby Wei De wanted to be a soldier in Zhai Sheng's team so that he could follow him and pick up military achievements behind Zhai Sheng.

Someone else would do the work and Wei De just needed to pick up the fruits of the labor.

The only difference was that military achievements were what he truly desired. Now, other people were bringing him along to pick up the money. Wei De actually shunned the value of money as this was not what he wanted most.

"You know how to feel anxious now. What have you been doing previously? When I say no, it means no!" Zhai Hua was fuming with anger. "Wasn't everything fine during my previous phone conversation with you when I was in the camp? You said that you wanted to perform well and worked hard to receive my family's affirmation. Just a few days have passed and you have forgotten what you have said. You have not shown any results but you want to take a shortcut again?"

“...” Wei De refused to admit. “When did I think of taking a shortcut? I value our relationship and see Regiment Commander Zhai as my brother-in-law. Since my brother-in-law is getting engaged, of course I have to appear to give my blessings.”

“Since I’m so important to you, why don’t you care whether I feel happy or not? If you really want to come, fine, I won’t stop you. But I don’t have a way to let you come in. If you are capable, you can come in yourself!” Zhai Hua slammed the phone with a loud bang.

Zhai Hua was not stupid. Earlier, Wei De insisted that he wanted to fetch the old master. Today, he kicked up a fuss and insisted that he wanted to attend the banquet. How could he be coming just because of the Zhai family and her? He wanted to come because of the uncles and granduncles sitting on the few tables outside.

Precisely, as she was well aware of this, Zhai Hua felt more reluctant.

It was no wonder that her parents did not take a liking to Wei De. Even the old master was not satisfied with Wei De when he first heard about Wei De’s matter. He was too impatient on material gains.

In particular, when Wei De said that he saw Zhai Sheng as his brother-in-law, Zhai Hua nearly retorted him by asking him whether Zhai Sheng was willing to treat him the same way.

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By saying that, Wei De was praising himself blatantly.

After hanging up the phone, Zhai Hua hid her anger and went out again to entertain the guests who came to give their blessings.

“Congratulations, Old Zhai. In the blink of an eye, you even have a granddaughter-in-law now. This little child is really not bad-looking.”

“She is already engaged. What little child?! Old Master Zhai felt sore. These few old friends were really bad company.

Zhai Sheng was not young anymore. It was not considered early to be married, let alone engaged. They even purposely addressed his granddaughter-in-law as a little child. It would only make his grandson seemed old. Old Master Zhai felt very disappointed.

“Hahaha, alright. Old Deng, you have been bickering with Old Zhai for life. Haven’t you had enough? It’s such a joyous occasion today. Don’t anger Old Zhai. Look at how good-looking the young lady is. If you scare her away, you can forget about drinking that cup of tea in your hands.”

Someone became the mediator.

“Don’t mind them. These former comrades of the old master are used to joking with one another in this way.” Zhai Sheng had been keeping Qiao Nan company by her side, in case Qiao Nan felt nervous.

Nevertheless, undoubtedly, Qiao Nan performed quite well. Facing the gazes of these ‘big bosses’, Qiao Nan did not avert her gaze. Instead, she looked at them in the eye graciously.

While her bright and starry eyes were blinking, her long and black eyelashes were like a pair of tiny wings. A peachy blush could be seen through that fair-skinned face of hers. Complimenting this was the red wedding dress. She looked so pretty.

Such a good-looking child was staring at them. As ‘big bosses’ who were already in their old age, how would they not like it?

Most importantly, Qiao Nan was all smiles to whoever she looked at. Some of the ‘big bosses’ had very dark and tanned faces. This was because they had fought on the battlefields before during wartime. All of them had one thing in common: they exuded a much stronger feel of a murderous aura than a typical soldier.

When a crying child heard that they were coming, the child would be so scared that they would stop crying. ‘They’ referred to these old generals.

Any young and tender children who saw these tough and burly elders would cry or run away. This was notwithstanding their own grandchildren and great-grandchildren. When one was carrying

these little ones and playing with them, the old generals dared not go near them. The little ones would cry as soon as they approached.

For young, smiley, and good-looking youngsters such as Qiao Nan, even if they were able to refrain from crying when they saw the old generals, their gaze would be evasive and they would turn miserably pale. At the sight of this, the old generals would already feel bad, let alone be in a good mood.

Chapter 859 This Is a Good Lady

As such, as long as that Qiao Nan continued to carry that happy smile on her tender face when she looked at them, the old generals felt much more at ease. It was as if they had taken strong alcohol. Their whole body became more relaxed.

“Old Zhai, you’re so blessed. This little child is so brave. At the sight of us, she is still able to walk and smile.” Some of Old Master Zhai’s former comrades patted his shoulders with envy. In fact, they had been worried that the atmosphere would not be good if they were to attend the event.

That grandson of Old Zhai was not young anymore. However, the lady that he was engaged with was so young. She had just reached adulthood. There were still a few years to go before their marriage.

The old generals had been veteran revolutionaries all their life. They loved their soldier attire the most.

For grand events that they valued, they would attend them in their soldier attire. When they were in their soldier attire, they were giving their utmost importance and respect.

These old generals already looked scary when they were in casual clothing. When they were in their army attire, they looked even more frightening. It was as if they were attending some major national events.

Not everyone could handle such utmost respect from the old generals.

The awesome thing was that Qiao Nan was able to do it.

During this period, there was already a rising overseas influence in China. Many people would wear a white bridal gown during their engagement or wedding. However, the old generals preferred traditional Chinese stuff.

Today, Qiao Nan was wearing a bright fiery red cheongsam that had been modified.

The fabric of a cheongsam was usually quite thick. The weather was hot and there was no air-conditioner. Qiao Nan could not take the heat.

As such, Qiao Nan brought into play her talent. She chose her own fabric and tailor-made a modified wedding cheongsam for herself.

She could not possibly just utilize the sewing machine gifted by Shi Qing once and let it retire thereafter. That would be too wasteful.

Of course, Shi Qing was also a 'vicious' woman. Initially, she was not very interested in the so-called modified cheongsam. However, when she saw that the one that Qiao Nan made for herself looked good, she pestered Qiao Nan to make one for her.

On this joyous occasion today, Shi Qing was openly flaunting the modified cheongsam that Qiao Nan made for her continuously before the eyes of Zhai Hua. She was enjoying herself and immersed in that envious look of Zhai Hua. She then received praise from the countless uncles that she knew or were familiar with. "Isn't that so? The things from China are so good. The clothes are pretty too. Why are people learning those things from foreigners? What bridal gown? They look so white. It is as if someone from the family had 'left'. This one is pretty. It's pretty!"

It could be said that the modified cheongsams on Qiao Nan and Shi Qing received countless good reviews from the group of old generals. They were full of praises for them.

"Don't say that. She is still young and doesn't have enough training. She also has very little experience." Old Master Zhai, who was also looking very proud, simply grinned like a flower. "I heard that my granddaughter-in-law made the dress that she is wearing now herself. Her skills are So-so. It is still passable."

"Oh, she also knows how to tailor-made clothes. What a good lady."

The old generals gave sincere praise.

Different from the current youngsters, the old generals did not subject to the habit of buying their daily food and household necessities. They believed in homemade and homegrown stuff.

Until today, the old generals seldom wore leather shoes. They wore cloth shoes most of the time. Moreover, they wore the kind of cloth shoes that had to be sewn using pieces of fabric. They felt more comfortable wearing them on their feet.

As for those so-called exercising shoes that were manufactured by the foreigners, the old generals would not wear them again after trying them out once. They would feel uncomfortable all over just wearing them. This was despite the good quality of the shoes bought for them by their filial children.

The things in their own country were so good. Why did they have to wear those from the foreigners' countries?

Due to this, they took a liking to young ladies such as Qiao Nan with such skills and who knew how to DIY.

“Do you know that this child is very young but she's very filial? She knows that I like to wear Mao suit[1] and insisted to make one set for me. The two of them were already very busy with their engagement. There's no need to do so! After a long round of persuasion, that child finally agreed to make me one only after this period and before the school reopens, so that I can wear it and walk around.”

At this moment, Old Master Zhai was getting the kick out of showing off.

It was already the 21st century. It was common to hear the youngsters buying instead of making them something. This batch of old revolutionary veterans still preferred handmade instead of ready-made stuff.

As such, it was obvious that Old Zhai was showing off when he said this.

It was true. So what if one was young? It was fine as long as she was sensible.

The granddaughters-in-law of their family were all much older than this young lady before their eyes. They had not even made them a pair of socks, let alone a Mao suit.

It was so different from the times when they were a child. When a lady was getting married, she had to make so many pairs of shoes for the husband's family as meeting gifts. Without these, they would be labeled as a lazy daughter-in-law that was not presentable.

"Go, go, go." After much boasting, he had attracted some annoyance. "Move aside. Get the young lady to serve us some tea." This old man was too annoying.

"Hahaha..." Old Master Zhai was not angry. Instead, he was smiling with joy. "When that set of clothing is ready, I'll wear it back for all of you to see."

"..." Facing the enthusiasm of Old Master Zhai, the old generals rolled their eyes continuously. His grandson was already engaged and he did not know how to restrain himself despite his age. Childish!

"Did you hear that? Words that have been spoken are like water that has been spilled. The old master has in mind this set of clothing. You'd better get it ready for him before he goes back. Otherwise, if he has boasted about it today and you don't make it for him, do you believe that he won't leave?" Zhai Sheng laughed. He seldom saw the old master behave in this way. It seemed like the old master was genuinely happy today.

Qiao Nan turned red. "Actually, I have already made the measurements. Once I finish cutting the fabric, I just need to spend one day to make it."

Qiao Nan did not expect that the 'cheap' design that she came up with was a hit among these old generals. Was this considered hitting the mark by a fluke?

The family situation of the Qiao family was not good. They had to cough up the tuition fees from various ways and sponsorships. This was just the engagement and Qiao Dongliang felt shy to accept too many things from the Zhai family. It would seem that he was selling his daughter.

To give face to both Qiao Dongliang and the Zhai family, she certainly had to make proper preparation for the engagement gown. She could not afford an expensive one. Therefore, she could only rely on herself to make something different.

Who would have thought that these old generals would like it so much?

The money in Qiao Nan's hands was enough to buy the fabric to make one set of clothing for Old Master Zhai. However, if she really wanted to buy something of good quality at the mall, she could not even afford to buy the upper or lower piece of the clothing, not to mention the whole suit.

Zhai Sheng smiled. "If the old master knows about this, he will boast to his former comrades again."

"..." Qiao Nan looked very shy. "It's good that the old chief doesn't mind." Fortunately, these veteran revolutionaries were so down-to-earth and adorable. Otherwise, given her preparation today, it would, at most, be considered presentable. Those who were mean might say that she reeked of poverty or give even worse comments.

Chapter 860 Call 'Mom' Instead

Qiao Nan felt very fortunate that the Zhai family and these veteran revolutionaries were the ones that she had met.

"You should change your address to grandpa." Zhai Sheng reminded. "If you call him old chief again, the old master won't be pleased."

"..." Qiao Nan pursed her lips but she was too shy to address the old master as such.

Qiao Dongliang, including the neighbors and friends that he had invited, appeared more reserved than one another. Everyone was sitting in a prim and proper way. It was as if this was the first day of school and they were carrying their schoolbags for studies. Their two hands were placed properly by the side of their body. They dared not move their pair of eyes much and they sat in a stiff and straight manner as if they were being punished.

Facing these veteran revolutionaries, these people really could not bring themselves to laugh. It was not easy for them to sit down in a calm and proper manner.

At this moment, everyone began to take their hats off Qiao Nan. It was no wonder she could be engaged with Regiment Commander Zhai. She had such extraordinary courage.

Even uncles and aunties like themselves were not as brave as Nan Nan.

The neighbors and friends invited by Qiao Dongliang usually behaved with propriety. Besides feeling nervous, they did not make any mistakes or do anything wrong. At the very least, they managed to go through this engagement with no hiccups.

The event was not especially grand. They did not hold a huge banquet at the hotel. It was just an ordinary banquet held at home. Nevertheless, to Qiao Nan, all these were more than sufficient.

Although Qiao Nan did not interact much with politicians, after hearing Lin Yuankang's explanation, she knew that, in fact, the simpler the arrangements were, the more they approved of and respected her. When Qiao Nan knew about it, she was extremely touched.

As a former comrade of Old Master Zhai, of course, Lin Yuankang was one of the guests.

As Qiao Nan's master, Lin Yuankang also had to attend the event.

It could be said that Lin Yuankang's support had made it even easier for these veteran revolutionaries to accept Qiao Nan.

As such, although there were no flashing gown, palace-like venue, colored ribbons, fresh flowers, and champagne, Qiao Nan had already received the greatest affirmation and respect from the Zhai family.

The value of these thoughts and considerations could not be measured by materialistic means.

One just had to think about it. There were so many veteran revolutionaries who attended the event. At what kind of event would one normally see this happening?

It would only occur at very important and major events concerning the country!

Ordinary folks had no chance to meet or invite these veteran revolutionaries, not to mention the current situation whereby they were all gathered at the same place. In the whole of China, most likely, it would only be possible for the nation's leaders to make this happen. Even when the nation's leaders met them, they had to show much respect and tribute to them.

Qiao Nan was just a young lady from an ordinary family but she had received a treatment that was similar to that of the nation's leaders. The Zhai family had flattered her so much.

Nothing was parallel to such an honor!

“It has been hard on you all. It’s just an engagement and I have to trouble you all to make the trip.” When the banquet ended, Old Master Zhai sent his former comrades off one by one.

The former comrades were all quite happy. “You’ve finally fulfilled this wish of yours. This time, you’re having the engagement banquet. Next time, you have to invite us to the wedding banquet. But there are some conditions. We are also the young lady’s elders from her grandfather’s generation. You can’t possibly be the only one receiving gifts. We want them as well. We are not expecting much. Just some items personally made by the young lady will do.”

“To hell with you all! Do you want to tire my granddaughter-in-law out? She has just completed her college entrance examination this year. She is the top humanities student of our province and has enrolled in Peking University. She will be very busy with her studies in the future,” Old Master Zhai said this in both a serious and proud manner.

The few veteran revolutionaries were speechless. They could not remember how many times Old Master Zhai had mentioned that the young lady was the top scorer in the college entrance examination. “You’re such an old man, yet, you’re not as stylish as the young lady in your manners.”

The young lady did not even mention it once. On the contrary, Old Zhai had been talking about it umpteen times. Didn’t he find it exhausting?

“Haha, you all are just jealous.” Old Master Zhai lifted his chin. He was still as fearless as ever.

The people from their generation did not have many opportunities to study. Their family conditions were not good either.

Thereafter, they were not sure why, but not many offspring of soldiers like them were good in their studies.

In the past, when Zhai Sheng’s grades were good, old Zhai talked about it in front of his former comrades all the time. Now, there was a fresh top student from Peking University. Of course, Old Master Zhai had new things to boast about before his former comrades again.

“Nan Nan, you must be exhausted, right?” Today, Miao Jing was overjoyed but it had been hard on her. At the sight of the guests leaving, she then went closer to Qiao Nan and asked her.

“I’m alright. Auntie Miao, you must be feeling tired.” Seeing that Miao Jing did not look too good, Qiao Nan felt very bad. It was just an engagement and they had to tire out so many people.

Qiao Nan must be feeling exhausted as well. The problem was that she was in the lead role today. Most importantly, she received a huge pile of red packets and praises, such as ‘handsome couple’ and ‘perfect match in heaven’. Qiao Nan’s hardship and fatigue were in exchange for a bucket full of returns.

“You’re still calling me auntie?” Zhai Sheng knitted his thick brows and said in a cajoling tone. “Call mom.”

The corners of Miao Jing’s lips curled up and she revealed a huge smile. “Right, although it’s the engagement and not wedding today, it’s also a marriage. Call mom, call mom!”

“Mom...” Qiao Nan’s voice was as small as the buzz of a mosquito. It was so different from the graciousness that she displayed when she was in front of the veteran revolutionaries earlier.

Nevertheless, such a soft and inaudible ‘mom’ made Miao Jing overjoyed. “Aiyo, I don’t feel tired anymore at the sound of this ‘mom’. Nan Nan, you have to call me mom, alright?”

Miao Jing was not the only one feeling happy. Zhai Sheng was so happy that he pulled Qiao Nan into his arms in front of Miao Jing.

If Miao Jing was not present, Zhai Sheng would have already thought of giving Qiao Nan a good kiss as a form of encouragement and reward.

It was just that the good mood did not sustain for too long. Old Master Zhai and Zhai Yaohui, who were sending the guests off, came back pulling long faces.

Shrinking her shoulders like a little wife, Zhai Hua dared not utter a word as she silently sought help from Qiao Nan with her eyes. As for Wei De, who was following behind, and the child that he was carrying in his arms, Zhai Hua did not even look at them.

Qiao Nan did not know who the child in Wei De's arms was but she knew who Wei De was.

"What is this?" Miao Jing's good mood vanished into thin air. She just felt her heart sank. "Where did this child come from? Can it be..."

Could it be that the thing that she was most worried about had happened? Furthermore, this was already the truth a few years ago?!

"Mom!!"

"Mom."

The emotional-sounding word was from Zhai Hua, and the calm-sounding one was from Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan patted Zhai Sheng's arms and asked him to let go of her. She then walked over to Miao Jing and held her hands to calm her down. "Mom, this child should be that nephew of Comrade Wei. He's the son of his younger sister." It did not have anything to do with Sister Zhai Hua.

The child was already four years old. If one were to include the period of pregnancy, it would be about five years.