

RTAMM 631

Chapter 631: Zhai Sheng Chased to the Camp

Initially, Qiao Nan wanted to tell Zhai Sheng that Shi Qing noticed Chen Jun had been following her, but she did not feel like doing so anymore.

Chen Jun had nothing to do with the Zhai family.

Besides, Zhai Sheng had to return to the camp right away to handle matters. If she mentioned about Chen Jun, and Zhai Sheng was to stay in Ping Cheng for a few more days, Qiao Nan was worried that Zhai Hua might be unhappy with her.

“Alright.” Although what happened with the Qiu family concerned Shi Qing as well, Zhai Sheng felt much assured knowing that Shi Qing would accompany Qiao Nan to school. Qiao Nan would have a bodyguard who would be by her side twenty-four hours a day. “Nan Nan, is there anything else that you want to tell me?”

Qiao Nan paused momentarily. She took a while before she replied, “No, Brother Zhai. The time is almost up. I have to go to school with Shi Qing.”

“Be careful on the road. Let Shi Qing walk on the outside, while you walk on the inside.”

“Do you take her as my human shield?” There was finally a hint of smiles in Qiao Nan’s voice.

Zhai Sheng curled the corners of his lips into a faint smile. There was a glitter in his dark eyes. “No, it’s just that she is more athletic than you. I believe she won’t allow you to be hurt.”

Qiao Nan loosened her tight shoulders. “Forget it. Shi Qing is, after all, a girl. If she hears this, she will be mad.”

“She is not that vulnerable. I believe in her. You should also believe in her.”

“Does she need the vote of confidence?”

“Why not?”

Qiao Nan did not know what to say. “Brother Zhai, you are used to winning the conversation. I really can’t chat with you anymore. Otherwise, Shi Qing would be shooting daggers at me with her eyes.”

“Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

After hanging up the phone, Qiao Nan took the schoolbag from Shi Qing. “Alright, stop staring at me. If you don’t, your eyeballs would fall out. If we don’t go now, we will be late.”

“Qiao Nan, you are too useless. Sister Zhai Hua was being too much, yet you didn’t complain to Brother Zhai and just put it aside. If you continue to be like this, you will be bullied. It’s no wonder Zhu Baoguo often says that you are the best, especially your good temper. You will not retaliate even when bullied, while the onlookers are anxious for you and can’t wait to get it back for you!!!”

In that past, Shi Qing did not think too much about it when Zhu Baoguo mentioned it to her.

However, now that she spent more time with Qiao Nan, she could not agree more with Zhu Baoguo’s apt description of Qiao Nan.

“Unlike you, I am not good at fighting. I can’t resort to force whenever I suffer grievances. If I do, I will lose the fight and my face will always be swollen from the fights.” Qiao Nan was not displeased at being lectured by Shi Qing.

Perhaps Zhu Baoguo and Shi Qing were right. She had a mild temper and was used to being passive. She did not know to take the initiative to fight for herself and was used to being bullied.

At times, when she was very annoyed, she would think of going to the extreme to retaliate against her enemies.

For example, when her mother created all sorts of trouble for her, she felt like encouraging her father to leave her mother. Without her father's support, her mother would not dare to be too heartless to her. However, she was not able to deal with the regret that her father would have in the future.

The last time she was framed by her mother and Qiao Zijin, she had even thought of using a knife to stab her mother and Qiao Zijin. She would have to kill herself as well, as she would not want to go to jail and suffer humiliation before she was sentenced to death.

But she was unable to kill the two people closest to her even though she had suffered a lot of grievances because of them. Besides, she would have to pay a price for killing them.

She was unable to be heartless to her mother and sister. As for Zhai Hua, she was an outsider, and she was in a better position than her. Even if she was upset with her, there was nothing she could do.

She could not win against Zhai Hua.

She would be the one to suffer if she was estranged with her.

Unless she broke up with Brother Zhai, she would be seeing Zhai Hua often in the future. She could not possibly quarrel with her every time she saw her.

"Shi Qing, I am very envious of you. It will be good if I can be as straightforward as you." If her temper were like that of Shi Qing, no matter who was going against her, she would not be the one who suffered.

But the problem was that Qiao Nan's personality was unlike Shi Qing's.

"I am the one who is envious of you. Forget it. I suppose one will prefer to have what they do not have. Anyway, you are in a relationship with Brother Zhai, not Sister Zhai Hua. It doesn't matter what she thinks of you. If not, you can stay out of her way in the future. Sister Zhai Hua will have to get married sooner or later. If she ends up like my auntie who is married to a faraway place, she will only be back once or twice a year to her parents' house. You will not have many chances to see her."

Qiao Nan had yet to settle the problem of her future mother-in-law, and she had a difficult sister-in-law to worry about.

It turned out that the Zhai family was quite complicated. It was foolish of Qiu Chenxi and her to want to marry into the family.

Qiao Nan smiled but kept her silence. Being together? Marriage?

Things were not that simple.

Qiao Nan might have felt that it was not that simple, but Zhai Sheng made a move to simplify things.

Zhai Sheng knew that Qiao Nan had to go to school. He did not waste his time at home either.

Since Zhai Hua could cancel her leave to return to the army, so could Zhai Sheng.

Zhai Hua, who was in the army, felt uneasy upon hearing that Zhai Sheng had come back to the army. Even if Qiao Nan went to school today, Zhai Sheng could not have hurried back to the army. It seemed that Qiao Nan had told Zhai Sheng about the incident.

Before Zhai Hua could flee, Zhai Sheng spotted her right away in the army camp.

Zhai Hua pretended that everything was alright. “Why are you back at the army? Why don’t you rest for a few more days at home?”

“I’m worried that you will be lonely since you are alone in the camp.”

“Me? Lonely?” Zhai Hua pointed at herself. “You must be joking. The army camp is my home. There are many brothers and sisters that I am close with. How would I be lonely? But you have come back at the wrong time. Or rather, I have come back at the right time. I just received a task and I have to go now. Why don’t we continue the chat after I return from my mission?”

Zhai Sheng stopped Zhai Hua. “Mission? I just came back from Officer Shi’s place. If there’s any mission, why didn’t he mention it to me? How about we go and ask Officer Shi?”

Zhai Hua was annoyed that Zhai Sheng blocked her way, preventing her from leaving. “How do you know?”

“Are you trying to ask if Nan Nan told me about it?”

“It’s good that you understand. Tell me right away so that I will know what happened.” It was necessary for her to be suspicious of Qiao Nan and to sound her out. As expected, she had shown her true colors.

For people like Qiao Nan, who was unable to suffer any grievances, even though it would not be a big issue, she would tear the Zhai family apart.

“Mom said that after returning from the Qiao family’s residence, you decided to cancel the leave and came back to the camp. I remember clearly I used the shell casings that grandpa gave me to assemble a model when I was seven years old. After you broke it, you fled from the house like what you did today.”

Back then, that model was Zhai Sheng’s favorite.

The shell casings were from the days when Old Master Zhai fought in the battle against the enemies. They held a very special meaning.

Old Master Zhai doted on Zhai Sheng, so he was willing to give them to him. Otherwise, no matter how worthless the items were, he would treat them as his precious belongings and put them safely aside.

Zhai Hua was unhappy, thinking that her grandpa should have given her the present instead of giving them to Zhai Sheng since she was older than Zhai Sheng.

After receiving the shell casings from his grandpa, Zhai Sheng studied the photo of the tank used in the army and made use of the dirty and ugly shell casings to glue them together to form a small model of the tank. Zhai Hua, who was passionate about the army, could not get her hands off the tank model.

Though Zhai Sheng did not allow her to play with it, she just had to land her hands on them.

Later, Zhai Hua broke the model accidentally. She was worried that Zhai Sheng would be angry with her, so she ended her elementary school summer break ahead of time and went back to Ping Cheng, saying that she had to finish her homework so that the teachers would not have any excuse to scold her.

“That was ages ago, yet you still remember them.” Zhai Hua was embarrassed. She had really forgotten all about it. It turned out that when she was young, she already had the bad record of fleeing after making mistakes. It was no wonder that Zhai Sheng knew something was wrong right away. “Qiao Nan didn’t tell you anything?” She did not believe it.

“I will let you choose. You can either come clean or let’s fight it out. If you lose, you will surrender.” Zhai Sheng exercised his wrists. There was a ferocious glint in his eyes.

Zhai Hua knew that Zhai Sheng was serious. He was not joking with her. She turned serious. “I won’t come clean, not without putting up a good fight. I don’t believe that after so many years, I still can’t win against you.” Then, Zhai Hua took off her coat and threw it on the ground.

As soon as Zhai Hua was ready, Zhai Sheng started the fight as if he was a ferocious and menacing leopard who was ready to pounce on his prey.

Zhai Hua was not an easy opponent either. At least, she was better than Shi Qing.

The siblings engaged in a fierce fight. It was as if they were the martial arts swordsmen in the novels who fought their opponents using ruthless strokes, not giving any leeway to each other.

If someone were to witness the fight, they would be in awe to have seen such a splendid display of martial arts prowess. Their moves were quick, ruthless, and varied. It was as good as the martial arts that were aired on the television.

Both Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua sustained injuries from the fight, but Zhai Sheng had the upper hand.

Zhai Sheng dealt Zhai Hua with a hard blow and she dropped to the ground. Drenched in sweat, she laid on the floor, gasping for air. “It’s no wonder that grandpa dotes on you and keeps saying that you are made out to be a soldier. In the end, he even gifted you with his precious shell casings.”

“Even though you envy me, you should not break my tank model. This is unlike what the people from the Zhai family will do.” Zhai Sheng sat down, looking grim.

Zhai Sheng had never taken issue with Zhai Hua for the pranks that she pulled on him or the fights that she engaged with him. However, he would not budge this time, especially when it concerned Qiao Nan.

Zhai Hua sat up unhappily. “I may be older than you, but I’m your elder sister.”

In other words, she was a woman.

Since Zhai Sheng knew that she was envious of him, why did he not give her the shell casings? In the end, she had to resort to breaking the tank model and fleeing after making a mistake.

Zhai Hua could not figure out why her younger brother refused to give in to her.

Zhai Sheng snorted. “Insatiable.”

“Hey, how am I being insatiable? Make things clear.” Zhai Hua was not convinced. She was never a greedy person, but she did not like it when people were biased.

Since Zhai Hua wanted to know, Zhai Sheng decided to make things clear. “Since a young age, you feel that grandpa dotes on me and neglects you, and that the men in the Zhai family favor boys over girls. You never feel that you are weaker than boys, or even weaker than me. You are very outstanding, but you keep working hard to prove yourself.”

“Yes!” Zhai Hua did not hesitate to admit. “I am a woman, but one not only needs to be physically strong to carry out the missions, but one also needs to have brains as well. I am not as strong as you, but I am quick to adapt and respond. Besides, I won’t compare with you. Compared with other people, I will not lose to them. Why is it that I am not cut out to be a soldier just because I am a woman?”

“The problem is, there are only two of us at home. Grandpa will naturally compare you to me. You have also admitted just now that my fighting prowess is better than yours. At least, this proves that grandpa was not wrong back then.”

It was Old Master Zhai who taught Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua martial arts skills.

It was also Old Master Zhai who taught them about the army. Old Master Zhai could be seen as their teacher who guided them into the army.

“When you were an only child in the family, grandpa had sung your praises as well. But after I was born, coupled with the fact that I am better than you, what’s wrong with grandpa praising me and saying that I was born to be a soldier? He did not lie but told the truth.” Zhai Sheng pursed his thin lips and looked at Zhai Hua unhappily. “Can you accept the fact? As a soldier, are you so petty?”

“But he cannot put me down.” Zhai Hua refused to admit that she was wrong.

“Did grandpa put you down in front of others? When you said that you wanted to join the army, grandpa was in favor of it, and he praised you in the army. He said that the new recruits from the same batch as you, as well as the soldiers who have been in the army for two years, are not your opponents. Grandpa has praised you for your abilities.”

Zhai Hua frowned. She had to admit that her grandpa had praised her for her efforts.

“When grandpa praises me, you feel that he is favoring boys over girls. But when you are making a fuss, you say that I should not take issue with you because you are a woman. If I am to take issue with you, it will be my fault.”

When it was about one’s performance, she would feel that men and women should be treated equally, and that she was just as good as anyone else.

But if she was losing, she would say that as a man, one should give in to a woman. Zhai Hua had made every situation to her advantage, yet she said that she had suffered grievances.

Chapter 633: Self-Reflection

Zhai Hua was silent. She could not deny that she had that shortcoming.

Despite admitting to her shortcoming, Zhai Hua still felt unhappy. Zhai Hua looked askance at Zhai Sheng. “I have had this temper since a young age. In the past, you always gave in to me and wouldn’t take issue with me. But this time, isn’t it too much of you to engage in a fight with me? I

am your sister, your biological sister. I am bitterly disappointed that you treat me as such for someone who may not be your wife.”

“Bitterly disappointed?” Zhai Sheng shot a cold look at Zhai Hua. “Who is the one who did not stay at home ever since getting to know a man from outside? As a woman, you didn’t even make a proper meal for your younger brother and yet I have to provide food for you? When you want me to take care of you, you will say that you are my elder sister. But when you leave me alone at home for the sake of a man who may not be your husband, will you remember that you are my elder sister?”

Zhai Hua looked embarrassed. “You knew about it?” She thought she had hidden it very well.

“But you didn’t take issue with me in the past.” Zhai Hua sounded jealous.

“Hehehe...” Zhai Sheng sneered. “Why don’t you think about it? Before you were in a relationship, you would always take good care of me. But after having a boyfriend, you neglect me and don’t care about me. Nevertheless, did I take issue with you? Don’t you think that you are childish?”

“In short, when we are talking about your rights, you insist that there should be gender equality. When you are being willful, you insist that men should give in to women. Zhai Hua, you are indeed capable. You have learned to adopt a double standard.”

Zhai Hua knew that she was in the wrong.

After realizing this, Zhai Hua sat upright and looked straight at Zhai Sheng. “I will confess. I ask that the organization goes easy on me.”

“Go ahead.”

“Didn’t Qiao Nan give us four sets of clothes? But how would the Qiao family have the money? Qiao Nan has no money either. I know that she still owes us. I mean, she still owes you a thousand yuan. You can’t blame me for being suspicious when she was generous enough to give us four sets of clothes. I will be displeased if she spends the Zhai family’s money to please us, so you have to understand.”

Understand?

Zhai Sheng thought it was absurd!

Zhai Sheng had a dark expression. Zhai Hua sat rigidly upright at the sight of the look on his face. "I didn't say it in front of Qiao Nan, but Shi Qing pointed it out bluntly in front of us. Shi Qing went into a big quarrel with me and Qiao Nan seemed to have heard them. I don't harbor any ill-intentions toward her, and I am supportive of you both. Zhai Sheng, you have to forgive me for my small blunder."

"You don't harbor any ill-intentions toward Nan Nan, but you speculated her actions based on your biased impressions and hurt Nan Nan because of that?" Zhai Sheng did not feel better after Zhai Hua's explanation. In fact, his expression darkened.

Zhai Hua crossed her leg and looked serious. "I have already reflected on my mistakes. I realized my mistakes, so I will make a sincere apology to Comrade Qiao Nan and write a self-criticism letter. I ask that the organization continues to observe me and puts me through challenges. I assure you that there will not be a next time."

Qiao Nan was indeed a good lady. She was happy for Zhai Sheng. After all, it was Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family's good fortune to know Qiao Nan.

She paid particular attention to Qiao Nan as she knew that she was someone that Zhai Sheng intended to marry. She wanted to be sure that Zhai Sheng would not fall head over heels in love with Qiao Nan and overlook any shortcomings that she had, and allowed her to join the Zhai family.

However, after her observation and assessment, Qiao Nan was indeed a good girl. She could put her heart at ease and would no longer be suspicious of her.

Zhai Hua knew her limits as well. She knew that everyone had their temper.

If she overstepped the boundaries and annoyed Qiao Nan, she might break up with Zhai Sheng. Even though Qiao Nan would be on the losing end, the Zhai family had no need to do harmful things to others, which were not beneficial to themselves.

Zhai Sheng had been single for twenty-five years. It was hard for him to finally find someone that he liked. As his sister, she would want for her brother's relationship to come to fruition.

“Is it of any use to say this to me? If you really realize your mistakes, you should know what to do. I just want to see the results. Also, don’t try to use your status on Nan Nan and force her to accept your apology unwillingly. If this is the case, I don’t need you to apologize. I only have a tiny request. In the future, when you see Nan Nan, leave her alone and stay as far away from her as possible. Both of us know the reason why you help Nan Nan and me. You are not helping me, but yourself. Therefore, you should be clear of my attitude.”

Zhai Hua had kept many things from Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family. Zhai Sheng did not mind to follow suit.

Zhai Sheng did not mind that she had some tricks up her sleeves as long as it was not harmful. However, if it was too much, he would not tolerate it.

“Reporting to Regiment Commander Zhai, I understand.” Zhai Hua gave Zhai Sheng a salute.

Zhai Sheng stood up and patted the dust off his shirt. He glanced at Zhai Hua before striding off, leaving her to mull over what they had talked about.

As a family and as her younger brother, Zhai Sheng hoped that Zhai Hua could sort out her thoughts and see things clearly.

After Zhai Sheng left, Zhai Hua lay down on the floor listlessly.

Zhai Hua was still drenched in sweat. However, it was not the same as what she felt when she was in a fight with Zhai Sheng. Right now, she was breaking out in cold sweat from their conversation just now.

Zhai Hua covered her face in agony. She was not used to doing such things.

This would not do. Next time, she would have to discuss with Wei De that she would not do such things again. Zhai Sheng was already in a fury this time.

Zhai Sheng was not a kid. He would be able to make a judgment on one’s character. In fact, he was better than her at that.

Zhai Sheng would decide for himself if Qiao Nan was good or not. There was no need for her to get involved and for everyone to end up being angry at her. She had done everything for nothing, and either way, she was blamed and unappreciated.

Yes, she must make it clear to Wei De. It was already considered good that she could settle their issues. She did not have the right to meddle in Zhai Sheng's affairs.

Besides, though he never said so openly, her father had agreed to the relationship between Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan. There would not be anything wrong with Qiao Nan.

With that, Zhai Hua stood up, went back to the dormitory to have a bath before she changed into clean clothes, and went to look for Wei De.

"I heard you canceled your leave and came back to the camp. Why are you so anxious?" Wei De's square face revealed a smile when he saw Zhai Hua. "I have told you that the chief and Madam Zhai are no longer young, and the chief and you spend a lot of time in the army camp. Your family rarely has the chance to come together. It is rare that there is a chance to spend time together, so you should accompany your loved ones and enjoy the time with them. We are still young and have a lifetime to go."

Chapter 634: Working Hard to Be Worthy of You

Zhai Hua felt warm inside. "Wei De, I know you care about me and my family. But our family is like this, and everyone is used to it. We will not drift apart just because we don't spend time together." More importantly, she was brought up by her grandpa. She spent very little time with her parents.

In the past, she felt comfortable when she was alone with Zhai Sheng at home.

But right now, if Zhai Sheng was not at home, Zhai Hua felt particularly awkward with Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing around.

If Miao Jing decided to have a chat with her, Zhai Hua would wish that she had a pair of wings so that she could fly back to the camp. She felt very uncomfortable around Miao Jing.

What happened with Qiao Nan was also a chance for Zhai Hua, who felt awkward at home, to find a reason to cancel her leave and return to the camp. In that way, she did not need to force herself to stay at home and she could return to the camp to spend more time with Wei De.

There was a flicker in Wei De's eyes. He smiled and touched Zhai Hua's head. "Little fool, have you heard of a saying that sometimes, the parents pass away before the child has a chance to repay their kindness? I know you are not used to it, but when you finally get used to it, you may not have the chance anymore. By then, you will have regrets."

"Wei De, you think too much." Zhai Hua smiled. "My parents are in good health. What you said will not happen." She was only twenty-seven years old this year. Her parents would live to old age.

However, what Wei De said was true. Even if she was not used to it, she should gradually get used to it. It would not do to avoid it.

"Alright, it's fine as long as you know what you are doing. I don't want you to regret it in the future. The thought of that pains me." Wei De let Zhai Hua lean on his shoulder. "By the way, I heard from you that Regiment Commander Zhai has a girlfriend. How is that lady? Regiment Commander Zhai does not have much experience in dating. You are his elder sister. You must keep a lookout for him. People used to say that women are good at judging other women. Even if the lady is all pretenses, and Regiment Commander is being carried away by love and loses his judgment, I believe that you will stay clear-minded."

Zhai Hua, who was used to putting up a strong front since a young age, seldom leaned on someone else's shoulder. However, after trying it out, Zhai Hua had grown to like this feeling of leaning on others.

Zhai Hua stretched out her legs to get into a comfortable position. "You can rest assured that the young lady has a good personality. Not only does Zhai Sheng like her, but our family likes her very much as well. Even though Zhai Sheng and I are still young and are not a good judge of character, my parents can tell if she is a good lady or not."

Zhai Hua dared not tell Wei De that after his reminder last time, she had been observing and sounding out Qiao Nan.

In the end, it did not prove that Qiao Nan was pretending to be nice. Instead, she had angered Zhai Sheng such that he told her off and reminded her of the foolish deeds that she did in the past.

“Being able to be with the young lady, Zhai Sheng is in high spirits. We don’t have to worry about him. I have already told you that it all depends on the young lady whether we can be together in the future.” She was hoping that Zhai Sheng’s relationship with Qiao Nan would turn out well. When everything was settled, she would bring Wei De to meet her parents.

Wei De knew of Zhai Hua’s plan.

Wei De was thrilled at the thought that he could become a family with Chief Zhai and Madam Zhai. “You shouldn’t be thinking that way. I believe Chief Zhai and Madam Zhai are open-minded. Besides, we are in the modern age. What is important is that both parties have feelings for each other. Their family background and social status do no matter. I believe that as long as I am good to you and want to spend the rest of my life with you, they will agree to our relationship. It has nothing to do with the relationship between Regiment Commander Zhai and the young lady. Even without them, I am confident that Chief Zhai and Madam Zhai will be moved by my sincerity.”

Wei De had more or less understood the situation at the Zhai family.

Once again, Wei De was glad that he could find a girl who had such good background and was as simple-minded as Zhai Hua. Being with her, his future would be bright and carved out for him.

Other girls who came from a good background like Zhai Hua would not possibly accept an unknown soldier with no achievements like him.

“Hua Hua, when it comes to the position in the army, I am just a soldier under you. Thank you for seeing my efforts and accepting my sincere feelings, as well as your willingness to be with me. Knowing you is the greatest happiness in my life.” Wei De held Zhai Hua’s hands tightly, deeply touched.

Zhai Hua blushed slightly and retracted her hands. “Didn’t you say that you want to keep it under wraps for the time being? What if someone sees us? I’ve been with you for so long. I know the person you are. Wei De, don’t be in a hurry. Take in slowly. I will wait for you.”

She was already twenty-seven years old. She was willing to wait for a few more years.

“Hua Hua, rest assured. I won’t let you wait for too long.” Wei De’s mouth stiffened slightly. “But Hua Hua, I still decide to be under Regiment Commander Zhai. Song Yin is so lucky this time. If I were the one who carried out the mission with Regiment Commander Zhai, with the third-class merit, I would be all ready to tell Chief Zhai and Madam Zhai about our relationship.”

Zhai Hua was amused. “Are you sure you want to work under Zhai Sheng? Fine. If you are sure, you must train with me to hone your fighting prowess. Otherwise, you must work on your cultural knowledge. In the past, this may not work in the army. But after what happened with Song Yin, you have seen for yourself that the more you know, it will mean more opportunities for you.”

It would not be easy to become another Song Yin.

Song Yin was lucky to be able to achieve third-class merit this time. Luckily, he had been learning English from Qiao Nan previously. Hence, with the few English words that he knew, he was able to memorize a sentence and Zhai Sheng could guess the meaning of what was being said.

If not for all these coincidences, it would have been difficult for Song Yin to achieve third-class merit.

Actually, Zhai Hua thought highly of soldiers like Song Yin, who had perseverance, had ideas of their own, and was willing to work hard.

The opportunity was in one’s hands. Back when everyone learned English together at the camp, it seemed that Qiao Nan taught English very well. Even her mother loved to go to Qiao Nan’s class.

Zhai Hua was all praise for Qiao Nan’s teaching method. She was able to introduce English to Song Yin, who had never been exposed to English, and helped him make big improvements in less than a month.

All the soldiers that went to Qiao Nan’s class were taught based on the same syllabus by Qiao Nan. But Song Yin was able to make huge improvements in a short period of time. Aside from Qiao Nan, who taught well, Song Yin also had put in a lot of hard work.

Ever since Song Yin earned third-class merit in his mission because of his understanding of English, everyone in the army had become enthusiastic about learning.

Zhai Hua, who had just come back from her mission, was surprised. She had thought that she was at the wrong place. This did not look like a camp that made the soldiers go through tough training. Instead, it looked more like a school with a good learning environment.

Chapter 635: Regret Skipping Qiao Nan's Classes

Zhai Hua was aware that the huge change to the army was largely related to Song Yin's matter.

Even Wei De would mention Song Yin in front of Zhai Hua. He was envious of Song Yin, who received third-class merit this time.

"Hua Hua, I'm serious." In the army, besides the chief who occasionally came to the army, the only one who could lead the team to achieve greater things was Regiment Commander Zhai. If he was in Regiment Commander Zhai's team, then, like Song Yin, he would be able to achieve military merits as soon as possible and be promoted to platoon leader, or even company commander.

If he continued with what he had been doing, he could not even achieve what Song Yin did in a few decades, let alone a few years.

Regardless of whether the Zhai family took issue with his identity, the statuses of the Zhai family members were not low. He could not possibly be the only individual that was ordinary in the family after he married Hua Hua, right?

Wei De was aware that, given his situation, his wish to be compatible with Zhai Hua and let the Zhai family feel proud of having a son-in-law like him was equivalent to zero.

Nevertheless, no matter what, he had to try hard at least once and not let the gap between the Zhai family and him become too wide. He would minimize the gap as much as he could.

As the statuses of all the Zhai family members were not low in the army, Wei De was also concerned that after he married Zhai Hua, everyone would laugh at the Zhai family for having such a good-for-nothing son-in-law, that Zhai Hua was married to someone that was beneath her in terms of status and other aspects.

As such, Wei De very much longed that he could be in Zhai Sheng's team so that Zhai Sheng could lead him personally. He could then 'progress' faster.

Zhai Hua lifted her head from Wei De's shoulder and looked at Wei De. "It's not that you're not aware of Zhai Sheng's temperament. Are you hoping that I will request Zhai Sheng to especially bring you along during such important missions?"

Wei De blushed. There was a flash of shame in his eyes. "Hua Hua, you know that I certainly don't mean that."

Although Wei De certainly had this intention initially, to follow Zhai Sheng around and then pick up a military achievement so that he could establish his status in the army as soon as possible, Zhai Hua had put it too bluntly. He was thus too embarrassed to admit his own thoughts.

In fact, he could not understand. He would be family with Zhai Sheng after he married Zhai Hua. He would be Zhai Sheng's brother-in-law.

Since everyone belonged to the same family, why couldn't they support and help each other?

If he was doing well, wouldn't that benefit Zhai Hua too?

It was a win-win situation for everyone. Why would Zhai Sheng refuse to do it?

"I'm a man. If I really have any thoughts, I hope I can rely on myself to achieve everything that I wish to have. I want to let the Zhai family know that I'm someone reliable, someone you can be entrusted to for the rest of your life. If Regiment Commander Zhai deliberately guides and helps me, how will the chief and your mom look at me?"

"Boo." Zhai Hua smiled. "Look at how serious you are. I was just kidding with you earlier. Of course, I know what kind of person you are and won't misunderstand you. Look at how nervous you are. It's not impossible for you to follow Zhai Sheng by his side during his mission. But having been in the army for so long, you should know that Zhai Sheng's expectations are a little high. If you are able to meet his requirements, or if your expertise fits the requirements of his mission, then Zhai Sheng will definitely bring you along. This matter can't be rushed. You have to take it slowly."

In fact, those initial two ways that Zhai Hua suggested jokingly were not impossible.

Firstly, Wei De had sufficient merits or expertise that Zhai Sheng would appreciate.

Secondly, Zhai Hua, this biological sister, would pull the strings and put up a request to Zhai Sheng.

“Alright, take it slowly...” Wei De was not speaking from his heart.

Take it slowly? How much time did he have to do that?

He was already twenty-eight years old while Zhai Hua was twenty-seven years old. Even if he had the patience to take his time, would the Zhai family not feel anxious and try to find a marriage partner for Zhai Hua?

Wei De was aware that, actually, he did not have much time left. He not only could not take his time but also had to quickly find a way to ensure that he had the confidence to stand in front of the Zhai family and admit that he was the man who would be marrying Zhai Hua.

If he had known that it would turn out this way for Song Yin, he should not have frequented Qiu Chenxi’s classes when the high school student with the surname Qiao came to the army to teach English previously. He should have attended the high school student’s classes instead.

The truth had proven that despite being a high school student, that young teacher with the surname Qiao had taught much better than Qiu Chenxi.

“Do you regret it?” Zhai Hua was amused.

“I do.” Wei De sighed. “If I had known earlier that your relationship with the Qiu family had long turned sour, I wouldn’t have needed to give Qiu Chenxi some face for the sake of the Zhai family. I’ve been attending all of Qiu Chenxi’s classes instead of those of Teacher Xiao Qiao. Otherwise, the one who received third-class merit could have been me and not Song Yin.”

At that time, how would he know that the Qiu Chenxi, a college graduate, would be so much worse off than a high school student?

He further did not expect that learning English in the army could earn him such an opportunity.

As such, how could Wei De not keep thinking about Song Yin’s example? How could he not feel anything about Song Yin’s change of fortune and grieve his poor luck?

“I’ve already told you long ago that the relationship between the Qiu family and the Zhai family hasn’t been good, that you don’t need to give Qiu Chenxi’s face. But you refused to listen.” Zhai Hua had no choice too.

Was his pride more important than his capability?

Most of the people in the army opted to attend Qiao Nan’s classes. As such, it was apparent that Qiao Nan’s classes were better.

Unfortunately, Wei De had to commit such a silly mistake at that time for the sake of the connections between the Zhai family and the Qiu family. He insisted on attending Qiu Chenxi’s classes.

“Forget it. It’s already in the past. The more I talk about this, the angrier I feel.” Wei De stopped harping on about it. If he had known that he would receive third-class merit just by learning English from that high school student for a period of time, he would have attended the class standing even if he had no place to sit. He would definitely conscientiously listen to all the contents taught by that high school student.

“Don’t flare up or lose your temper. Since it didn’t work this time, try again next time.” Zhai Hua was very positive. She was not anxious and even consoled Wei De.

She was aware that Wei De had been working very hard in order to be with her openly.

Working hard was one matter, but Wei De was not cut out for learning English. Even if Wei De had opted to attend all of Qiao Nan’s classes, he might not have performed as well as Song Yin eventually.

It was true that Song Yin had been in luck. Nevertheless, if Song Yin had no passion for English, he would not have achieved third-class merit just by attending those slightly over ten classes of Qiao Nan.

Saying the fact out loud would seem to imply that Wei De was not as good as Song Yin.

Zhai Hua had never thought of it that way. Hence, she was not willing to say something which would cause a misunderstanding and make Wei De feel unhappy.

Wei De was very confident. “Yes, since I couldn’t do it this time, I’ll try again next time.” Next time, he would definitely not miss the opportunity again. He would certainly be able to achieve military merits and progress in his career.

Chapter 636: Baffled

Wei De told himself that he would immediately ask the Zhai family for Zhai Hua’s hand in marriage once he received some military achievements.

He was a grown-up man. There was no issue if he got married later but Zhai Hua was not young anymore. She was already not a young lady. If he did not find a way to marry her, Zhai Hua would soon be married off to someone else.

“Okay, next time.” Zhai Hua, who was contented as long as she was in love, was truly not anxious or worried at all. She trusted her sense of judgment and further believed in Wei De’s ability.

If Wei De did not wish for a higher status in the army before he could hold his head up openly when facing her parents, she did not even mind all those. She loved Wei De as an individual and Wei De loved her in the same way as well.

However, Zhai Hua could not deny that what Wei De said was true.

Given the status of the Zhai family, it would certainly not do if the status of Wei De, the son-in-law, was too low.

Otherwise, Zhai Hua and Wei De would not have taken Qiao Nan’s case as an experiment to assess the situation that would be acceptable to Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing.

Compared to Qiao Nan, Wei De was older.

Qiao Nan was a high school student, an outstanding student, and definitely a potential college graduate.

As for Wei De, besides being an experienced junior soldier, he did not have any qualification or other qualities to show.

Even if the Zhai family accepted Qiao Nan, Wei De would need a lot of time and effort to engineer a similar outcome to that of Qiao Nan.

“It’s late. You go back first?” Wei De took a deep breath. His eyes were filled with ambitions.

Although Hua Hua was not a flexible-minded individual, she was right about something.

If he wished to be in Regiment Commander Zhai’s team, he had to improve himself such that he would have areas that Regiment Commander Zhai could appreciate. Otherwise, he would not even be the third Song Yin, let alone the second.

“Okay.” Zhai Hua nodded in disappointment. She had wanted to stay longer with Wei De. She had to leave the army for a mission and Wei De had to attend training sessions in the camp.

Although the time Zhai Hua spent in the camp was much longer than that at home, she did not have a lot of time to be alone with Wei De.

“Hua Hua, for the sake of our future, I’ll definitely work hard and end this situation as soon as possible.” Wei De gave Zhai Hua’s head a rub.

“I trust you.”

When he heard Zhai Hua saying ‘I trust you’, Wei De was filled with motivation. “Then, I’m going back. Hua Hua, take care.”

“Alright, bye.” Zhai Hua did not send Wei De off. A while after Wei De left, she followed suit.

This had been the habit of the two of them. After all, they were in an awkward situation. Thus, to prevent others from knowing, their preventive measures were much better than that of Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan.

When Wei De returned to the army camp, he heard another group of people discussing how lucky Song Yin was this time. Wei De's expression changed again.

Wei De could not help asking himself that if Regiment Commander Zhai knew he was with Hua Hua, would he have more opportunities, at least more than Song Yin, – in the future?

Unfortunately, he was only asking himself. Wei De did not have the courage to let Zhai Sheng know about his relationship with Zhai Hua.

Lying on his bed and resting, Wei De stared at the ceiling in a daze.

After Hua Hua was with him, she was quite good to him and was willing to share with him many things. It was just that Hua Hua did not tell him who Regiment Commander Zhai's current girlfriend was. However, he understood that her plight was almost as poor as him.

At the thought of this, Wei De felt depressed too.

He truly could not understand what Regiment Commander Zhai was thinking. Comrade Qiu was so pretty and of a compatible age to Regiment Commander Zhai. Most importantly, the status of the Qiu family was high enough.

If he married such a woman, he would truly have to pray and thank his ancestors. Hence, what was Regiment Commander Zhai thinking when he gave up such a good woman for one that had nothing.

Wouldn't Regiment Commander Zhai want to climb higher in his career and brighten the reputation of the Zhai family further?

"Wei De, what are you doing? You're lying on the bed in broad daylight. Are you able to sleep?" When the people in the army saw Wei De's sloppy demeanor, they felt that he was acting strange recently. "Wei De, what's wrong with you recently? When you're training, you're so serious and conscientious as if you're willing to give your life. Once the training ends, you look so listless and lazy. Let's not talk about others. Song Yin has been in the army for a shorter time than you, but he's now an educated person. We have to work hard too. It will be our turn sooner or later."

“Sooner or later...” It was impossible to be sooner. As for later, how late would it be?

Wei De rubbed his hair. “Alright, you all chat. I’m tired and will nap for a while.”

“Hahaha.”

At the sight of Wei De, the rest of his comrades smiled.

Everyone knew in their heart that Wei De’s cultural standards were not high and he was also not as motivated as Song Yin toward learning.

Although Wei De had more experience than Song Yin, the lucky encounter that Song Yin met would probably be wasted on Wei De if the latter had encountered it.

Truly, this was a situation and fortune that not everyone could yearn for.

What was the use of feeling unjustified and unhappy? If they wanted to gain military achievements, they had to rely on true capability and skills!

Everyone understood in their heart, but they would not say such words that would pierce Wei De’s heart.

Seeing that Song Yin, who joined later than him, was now ranked higher than him, Wei De already felt bad enough despite his comrades not saying anything.

At this juncture, Wei De’s mood was awful. If he did not have a girlfriend like Zhai Hua consoling him at this moment, he would have started to suspect life and whether he was suited to remain in the army.

At this moment, Wei De was not the only one who doubted his life. There was another person: Shi Qing.

Finally, one weekend passed by quietly. Shi Qing had thought that there would not be any more issues, that Qi Minlan finally understood that she should find ways to communicate with Qiu Qin instead of wasting her time on people like her who had nothing to do with the matter.

Whether they were to remain together or go their separate ways, they had to settle the arrangement.

Who would have known that Qi Minlan was someone who had grown in age but hardly matured? When a problem arose, she would come after others instead of finding ways to resolve it herself.

“Alright, if you’re angry, don’t take it out on your pen. If you continue to do so, everyone in the library will stare at us. It’s fine that your pen is destroyed. Do you still want this book?” Qiao Nan dug her ears as she heard the sharp scribbling sound beside them. “The school had already stopped her from entering the school. Moreover, haven’t you also escaped to the library? What’s there to worry?”

“I just can’t accept that someone will be so stupid to this extent.”

Chapter 637: Blind

Was she the one who committed adultery? Was it her father? Her auntie did not look for her uncle-in-law and had to keep going after her father and her. What did she mean by that?

Qiao Nan was flipping her book and reading it. “It’s not as if this is the first day you know her temperament. You should have been used to it. Now, what I’m worried about is...”

Although Shi Qing had previously managed to dismiss Qi Minlan when the latter inquired about Brother Zhai and Qiao Nan’s relationship, at this juncture, Qi Minlan seemed to have been cornered to desperation. She would have no rationality to speak of and would hold on to anyone that she could.

“There won’t be any problem,” Shi Qing said confidently. “When I helped you shake her off previously, I’ve tested her. Even though she saw with her own eyes that you were shopping with Brother Zhai, she was not entirely sure that the woman with Brother Zhai was you. You don’t know where they gathered such a theory from. They think you’re definitely not involved in a romantic relationship because your grades are still good.” Hence, when her auntie tried to find out about the

relationship between Brother Zhai and Qiao Nan, the first question she asked was whether there had been any changes to Qiao Nan's grades recently.

After knowing that Qiao Nan was still the top scorer in the cohort and the top in the humanities course, her auntie had already dispelled her initial suspicion on Qiao Nan before she could tell her about what happened to the Zhai family.

Qiao Nan stopped writing for a while. "Could it be that when Qiu Chenxi was with Brother Zhai in the past, her grades dropped because of Brother Zhai?"

As a student, once in love, nine out of ten of them would suffer a drop in their grades.

Qi Minlan had been using Qiu Chenxi as a benchmark. That could only mean that they had gone through that situation before. "Moreover, perhaps your auntie had also encountered the same situation while she was still studying."

"I'm not too sure about this. Have to ask my dad." Since she disliked Qi Minlan, this auntie of hers, why should she be willing to understand Qi Minlan so thoroughly? "I'm not pleased that she's coming after me now. Why did she?"

"She's couldn't find your dad, so she came after you." This was called a daughter paying for her father's debts.

"There's no use looking for me!"

"Looking for your dad is no use either." Qiao Nan was amused. "This matter was not caused by your dad. At most, your dad and you discovered it."

"Don't tell me she's going to continue pestering me if she can't find my dad? Does she not want to resolve the issue regarding my uncle-in-law anymore? I heard that my uncle-in-law has not broken up with that woman. Most importantly, the attitude of the elderly couple in the Qiu family is very strange."

Although their son had a mistress behind their daughter-in-law's back, the elderly couple of the Qiu family was not angry with their son. At most, they only chided him slightly and did not punish him at all. Shi Qing thus could not understand their thoughts.

“They’re acting smart and also want to test what Qi Minlan’s status in the Shi family is now.” The Qiu family and the Shi family became in-laws on the pretext of self-interests. They could be considered united by marriage.

Shi Peng had resigned from the army. The power of the Shi family had been greatly reduced to almost nothing.

Without Shi Peng, the Shi family was only left with an empty shell.

In the face of such an in-law family, of course, the Qiu family had to consider carefully whether they would continue to acknowledge the Shi family in the future. Additionally, if they disallowed Qi Minlan to leave, what was the appropriate distance they should maintain with the Shi family?

The state of Qi Minlan’s status in the Qiu family would now depend on the value that she could bring to the Qiu family and whether the Shi family was willing to bother about Qi Minlan, this daughter.

The attitude of the Shi family would be the determining factor for all these.

“Since that’s the case, she still dared to create troubles for me and my dad?” Shi Qing was glaring. “Is she brainless?”

Her auntie did not have any status in the Qiu family now. She had to rely on the Shi family.

As long as the Shi family was doing well, her auntie would then be well.

“Some people are born to be muddleheaded. You can’t do anything about it.” Qiao Nan was amused. Obviously, Qi Minlan belonged to the category of people who were as such.

If she was clear-minded, not to mention that she would already have been married to Chief Zhai long ago, at the very least, it was impossible that she would kick up such a fuss and force Shi Peng to submit his resignation earlier.

“Just like your mother and sister?” Thinking about the information she gathered about Qiao Nan, Shi Qing said something that was akin to piercing Qiao Nan’s lungs.

“Yes.” Qiao Nan gave Shi Qing a glance. “Why? Are you hoping to find peace from my end?”

Shi Qing laughed at herself. “I’m being quite annoying, right? I have never thought that there’d come a day I would be this annoying. But whenever I see my auntie, I really feel troubled. Then, when I think of my grandpa, I nearly feel that there’s no meaning in life.”

First, he relied on his comrade. Then, his son. Now, he had to rely on his married daughter and his granddaughter.

As a man, her grandfather was only thinking about depending, depending, depending, and depending on others. Could he not rely on himself for once?

Qiao Nan held her head with one hand. “It’s good that you know that you’re being annoying. The most annoying people are those that don’t have any self-awareness.”

“Thanks.” Shi Qing never expected that she would say countless ‘thank you’ to Qiao Nan during the past few months.

She had lost her temper just now. There was, in fact, no need for Qiao Nan to tolerate it. She was the one who was too willful and had overreacted.

At the thought that Shi Peng was staying in the hospital within the army compound and Shi Qing was the only one that Qi Minlan could get a hold of, Qiao Nan frowned. “I say, will Qi Minlan go and seek trouble with my dad?” Shi Qing was hiding in the school and Qi Minlan could not meet Shi Peng. As such, Qi Minlan could only vent all her anger on the Qiao family since they were the ones who allowed Shi Qing to stay in their house.

“I, uh, don’t think so?” Shi Qing jumped in shock. “Your family and mine are not related in any way. The ones who discovered her husband’s adultery were my dad and me. It doesn’t have anything to do with you all. Why will she look for your dad?”

“Firstly, you’re staying at my house. Secondly, they can’t find you. Therefore, they will definitely look for someone they can find.” Moreover, her father was someone Qi Minlan could easily find.

“Crap, that’s really possible!” Shi Qing was so agitated that she forgot that she was in the library. She slammed one of her palms on the table with a loud bang. “This won’t do. I’ll call my dad now and ask him to keep a tighter watch.”

Qiao Nan tugged the corners of her lips. She was only afraid that it would be too late now.

It was true that only bad things came true. Qi Minlan had the door slammed in her face a few times. This was something that had never happened before.

Her husband, who had been as obedient as a dog all this while, had not only reared a mistress but also got another house outside. The reason he did not come home often was to keep that mistress company. At the thought that that woman was not comparable to her in any way, yet Qiu Qin treated that mistress better than her, Qi Minlan’s lungs were filled with fury and pain.

When she saw the face of that woman, she simply asked Qiu Qin, “Are you blind? She’s prettier than me? In what ways is she better than me? You don’t stay at home and go out to embarrass me?”

The most terrible thing was that this matter was discovered by her maternal family.

It was fine that her family discovered it. However, they intended to dump the problem on her and then wash their hands off this matter.

Chapter 638: The Qiao Family Was Implicated

All the troubles of her husband’s family and her family occurred at the same time. Unfortunately, the matter between Zhai Sheng and her daughter had no progress at all. These matters combined made Qi Minlan have a feeling that she would simply lose her mind one of these days when she woke up.

Qi Minlan was stomaching her anger. She was unhappy that she could not find anyone to vent her frustration on. She could not find Shi Peng and Shi Qing was hiding in the school. How would Qiao Dongliang not become Qi Minlan’s target?

If there was someone to blame, Qiao Dongliang could only blame himself. Shi Qing had relatives in Ping Cheng and yet he still took Shi Qing in. Who else could she look for if she did not look for him?

When Qiao Dongliang saw Qi Minlan knocking at his door and asking for her niece, he was simply confused. “Who is your niece?”

“Whoever is staying at your house is my niece.” Qi Minlan snorted coldly. Her eyes were full of disdain when she looked at Qiao Dongliang.

Qiao Dongliang was not frightened by Qi Minlan. Instead, he was amused by her words. “There’s not only one person staying at my house. Are all of them your nieces?” Was she acknowledging relatives haphazardly?

“My niece is called Shi Qing!” Qi Minlan’s chest was heaving up and down heavily. “I can’t be bothered to waste my breath with you. Quickly hand over my niece. Otherwise, I’ll call the police and sue you for illegal imprisonment!”

At the mention of a lawsuit, there would be some who would stand by his side and others who would distance themselves away from him.

Toward this, Qiao Dongliang had observed and remembered these in his heart. “So you’re Shi Qing’s auntie. Before you call the police, do you want to contact your brother first? Shi Qing’s guardianship rights are with her father. She’s staying at my house because her father called us personally about it. He put Shi Qing at my house, yet you, the auntie, want to sue me for illegal imprisonment. When the time comes, you have to consider carefully what to tell the police comrades.”

Qiao Dongliang was not frightened at all by her threat of calling the police.

What should he be afraid of?

Shi Qing’s biological father allowed her to stay with him. Did he need to be afraid when he met the police officer?

“What evidence do you have to prove that my brother put Shi Qing in your care? You’re not even thinking of how old you are and how there’s no woman at home. Would my brother be willing to

allow her grown-up daughter to stay at your house? What a joke!” Qi Minlan said this with implied negative meaning, as if Qiao Dongliang had some disgusting ulterior motives for taking in Shi Qing, that the relationship between the two was abnormal.

“The way this woman speaks is too much. Old Qiao has a daughter at home. Do you think we’re not aware of this? Your niece and Nan Nan are classmates. The two ladies eat, stay, and learn together. You think we don’t know anything and deliberately came here to lie to us? You’re the biological auntie of that young lady. She’s staying at a classmate’s house instead of yours. Who’s the bad guy and who’s the good guy? You’re just talking nonsense with that mouth of yours. Wow, this has really widened my horizons.”

Old Yang immediately stood out to support Qiao Dongliang.

“It looks like I, and not you, should be the one calling the police. Do you know what you’re doing now? You’re defaming me!” Qiao Dongliang was truly angered. If Qi Minlan was truly concerned about Shi Qing, Qiao Dongliang’s temper could be better. However, it was not so.

Initially, Qiao Dongliang found it strange that, although Shi Qing could stay at her biological auntie’s house, she came to stay at his house. It was not logical.

However, after he saw Qi Minlan today, Qiao Dongliang expressed that this was the most logical thing to do. If Shi Qing could continue to stay at her biological auntie’s house, that would be illogical.

She said such words to smear the reputation of her own biological niece. What kind of person was this?

No, this was not something a human being would do.

“If you’re capable, you can call then!” Qi Minlan was not afraid. Furthermore, given the connections of the Qiu family in Ping Cheng, who would dare to touch her? She was the daughter-in-law of the Qiu family!

“I can’t be bothered to waste my breath with you.” Qiao Dongliang cast Qi Minlan a cold look. “If you think there’s a problem, you can call the police directly. I don’t believe that there’s such nonsense in this world, that you can wrong someone without any basis. Shi Qing is doing well and studying at Ping Cheng High School now. You ran here and behaved atrociously. It looks like you,

as an auntie, really did not fulfill your duty. Your biological niece refused to see you, so you're targeting me, right?"

Qiao Dongliang was not stupid. Judging from Qi Minlan's temper and the fact that Shi Qing had been staying at his house, Qiao Dongliang could, of course, guess that Qi Minlan certainly had not been a good auntie. Shi Qing would rather stay at her classmate's house than that of her auntie. Shi Qing was forced to do that due to Qi Minlan.

Since Shi Qing refused to stay with such a person, she would certainly refuse to meet the latter as well.

As such, although Qi Minlan was not afraid of calling the police, there was no need for Qiao Dongliang to be afraid.

"Yes, didn't you say that you will call the police? You can try it first. I've not seen an auntie like you. No wonder she'd rather stay at her classmate's house than that of her relatives. You don't know how to reflect on yourself and still want to look for trouble. My horizons have really widened." Old Yang could tell that Qi Minlan was from a wealthy family. Nevertheless, although she was wealthy, she should not be unreasonable and malign others. "Old Qiao, don't bother about her. We're off work. Come to my house and have a drink."

Old Qiao was aware that there was no one to keep Qiao Dongliang company when Qiao Nan was in school. Hence, he often pulled Qiao Dongliang along to his house to have a few drinks.

Qiao Dongliang had good manners in drinking. Besides marrying a wife that was not that good, he did not have any other shortcomings.

Even if he frequented Old Yang's house for meals, he would often bring along dishes and alcohol. He was not covetous of small gains and would not always let Old Yang pay for all the dishes and drinks.

As such, the other family members of the Yang family were very receptive to Old Yang's friendship with Qiao Dongliang.

"Let's see who can leave if I don't agree!" Qi Minlan pulled a long face. It was really a bumpkin who sprang out of nowhere, yet he dared to act viciously in front of her.

As long as she extended a little finger of hers, she could easily make these people die like she was killing ants.

At the sound of Qi Minlan's order, a few strong-built and muscular men surrounded the entrance of the factory.

Today, Qi Minlan was determined to lay her hands on Qiao Dongliang and force Shi Qing to come out. Although she could not control Shi Peng, she did not believe that she could not catch Shi Qing, this little niece of hers!

The people in the factory saw that there was an emergency situation. "Hurry! Hurry and call the security officers in the factory."

"Call 110, call the police!" Qiao Dongliang's face turned black and red intermittently. What was illegal imprisonment? This was illegal imprisonment!

"No need to call the police. What's the matter? Speak." Upon receiving Shi Qing's phone call, Shi Peng, who rushed out from the army, looked pale as he brought a few soldiers and alighted from a green army vehicle. When he saw the unreasonable Qi Minlan, he felt embarrassed.

"Have you seen that? The People's Liberation Army is here. We'll see how unreasonable you can get. Each of you acts like you're from a secret society!" The people in the factory immediately let down their worries. The People's Liberation Army, the envoy of justice. They could drive away these baddies who bullied ordinary citizens.

"Yo, brother, you're finally willing to come out and meet me?" Qi Minlan said with a fake smile. She was looking at Shi Peng with her arms crossed.

Chapter 639: Shi Peng Appeared

When Qi Minlan said this, the people in the factory panicked. On the other hand, the few men brought over by Qi Minlan felt more at ease.

“Didn’t you want to meet me? I’m already here. Should these few men of yours leave then? Disturbing the law and order of the society, how many days do you want these people to squat in prison? It’s not difficult.” Shi Peng knew Qi Minlan’s temper too well.

Once Qi Minlan laid her hands on Qiao Dongliang, she would never give up if she did not force Shi Qing or him to appear.

When Miao Jing was about to get married to Zhai Yaohui, if not for the fact that Qi Minlan did not have the capability then, she would have definitely brought a group of people to stop the marriage. Even if it was something that she did not want, there was no reason to let someone else pick it up. Furthermore, Zhai Yaohui was the one who deserted her in the first place and married Miao Jing.

Now, Qi Minlan was already the daughter-in-law of the Qiu family. She had power and wealth. Hence, it was not difficult to hire a few people.

Having expected this, Shi Peng had no choice but to bring a few soldiers over. After all, it was also considered as maintaining safety and order.

Hearing Shi Peng’s threat, the group hired by Qi Minlan faced one another: Why was there an internal conflict now?

Seeing that the physiques of the few soldiers in camouflage uniform were stronger than theirs, without the need for Shi Peng to repeat his words, they immediately moved aside and allowed the workers who were off work to go home quickly.

Qi Minlan snorted but did not hold them back, silently accepting their actions.

“Good day. You’re Qiao Nan’s father, right? I’m Shi Qing’s father.” His daughter had been inconveniencing other people for so long, but this was the first time Shi Peng met Qiao Dongliang in person.

Qiao Dongliang appeared quite emotional. “Officer Shi, good day. Previously, Nan Nan stayed in the army for a period of time. Fortunately, you all took good care of her.”

“Good day, we’ve caused you inconvenience.” It was not only his daughter who had disturbed others but also his younger sister.

Qiao Dongliang smiled but he did not deny it. Be it Qi Minlan or Shi Qing, they were certainly troubles to him.

“Old Qiao, you know him? Will there be any problem?” Old Yang refused to leave. The atmosphere there was very atrocious. At one point, they were at odds with each other. At another point, they were family. Old Yang was worried.

“No issue. This officer is the father of that classmate of Nan Nan. He’s the one who put Shi Qing at my house for me to take care of. There won’t be a problem.” Qiao Dongliang trusted Shi Peng.

Anyway, as per what Qi Minlan had said, if he were to put himself in others’ shoes, having such a grown-up daughter, he might not really feel at ease enough to put her under a stranger’s care.

However, Officer Shi was not worried. There was a difference in the magnanimity of the hearts of people. An officer was indeed an officer.

“I see.” Old Yang felt more assured as he nodded. “Then, I’ll leave first?”

“Okay.”

“Our age is almost the same. I’ll call you Qiao Dongliang then.”

“Officer Shi, you’re too polite.” In the army, he could at most be addressed with a serial number.

“I shouldn’t hold you back. You can go home first. After I’ve settled these matters, I’ll visit you at your house.” When Shi Peng faced Qiao Dongliang, he was very polite. At the very least, his attitude was much more polite than when he faced Qi Minlan.

“Alright, then I’ll go back first.” Qiao Dongliang did not decline. After all, this was a matter of another family. It was not convenient for an outsider like him to be present.

Furthermore, Officer Shi brought with him so many people. There certainly would be no issue.

Typically, an individual from the army could fight and handle ten people!

“Alright, bye.” After sending Qiao Dongliang off with his eyes, Shi Peng then looked at Qi Minlan coldly. “Let’s change a place to talk.”

“Fine.” She was not willing to stand there like she was being punished and let others view them as a laughingstock.

The siblings found a place to sit down and talk. While drinking his water, Shi Peng just stared at Qi Minlan.

Qi Minlan laughed coldly. “Brother, isn’t Longjing tea your favorite in the past? You don’t need to be polite today. I’ll pay for the bill. I can’t treat you to more expensive things. But if it’s just a cup of Longjing tea, you can have as much as you wish.” Was the plight of the Shi family was so poor that her brother had to drink plain water while he was out?

Perhaps, toward her family, she certainly should not harbor any hopes. It would be a waste of her feelings.

“No need,” Shi Peng said at ease as he drank his water. “When I was in the army earlier, Qiao Nan suggested that, given my health, it’s better for me to drink water. The doctor also said the same thing. Thereafter, I don’t drink tea anymore.”

Not drinking did not mean he could not afford to drink. It was because he could not drink.

Only someone like Qi Minlan, who judged people by their wealth and status, would distort and perceive a simple changed habit of Shi Peng to something as such.

Qi Minlan smiled grimly. “Father and daughter pair knows Qiao Nan quite well now. All of you protect her so well. You seem to have forgotten who your real family members are. You’re favoring an outsider instead of someone from your own side. That’s not the way it should be.”

“Yes, the whole family favors an outsider instead of someone from our own side. That’s not the way? At the end of the day, it means we’re no longer a family.” Shi Peng hinted as he replied to Qi Minlan. There were two meanings in his words.

There were certainly issues but they were not with the Shi family. The problem was with Qi Minlan. "I'm already here. Tell me directly what you want to say. Since we're no longer a family, we'll meet less in the future. Of course, I'm washing my hands off your matters."

It was not bothering less, but not bothering at all anymore. Shi Peng was really not willing to intervene anymore.

If not for the fact that he wanted the old master in his family to be prepared, he would not have given the information to the old master.

Hence, not once had he thought of standing on Qi Minlan's side to help her discipline Qiu Qin.

When Shi Peng appeared openly and asked Qi Minlan clearly what she wished to do, Qi Minlan was dumbfounded instead. She did not say anything even after thinking for a long time.

What did she want to do?

What could she do!

"How did you know that Qiu Qin has an issue outside? Did you see him before but hid the truth from me because you just wanted to watch me turn into a joke?!" That woman's looks and qualification were not better than hers. Moreover, her birth status was not comparable to that of hers.

To have lost to such a woman who was beneath her in many aspects, Qi Minlan could not take it lying down. "Qiu Qin said he wishes to divorce me."

"He doesn't want his political career anymore? Once this matter spreads, if he's targeted, he will only be demoted if he's lucky. If he's unlucky and meets an opponent, it may result in disciplinary measures, including detainment and interrogation." Shi Peng was quite surprised. He only needed to confirm that Qiu Qin had done something wrong and let Qi Minlan down.

Since Qiu Qin's heart was not with Qi Minlan anymore, naturally, it was not possible that Qiu Qin would continue to sing the same tune with the Shi family.

Regarding the intricacy of the relationship between Qiu Qin and that woman, Shi Peng was not interested to know. Thus, he did not send anyone to investigate it.

However, he did not expect that a man like Qiu Qin would give up everything he had worked hard for previously for the sake of a woman. This was simply a joke to him!

“No, he doesn’t. He doesn’t want anything now. He only wants that vixen!” Qi Minlan could not remain stubborn anymore. Her tears poured like a heavy downpour.

Chapter 640: Could Not Sympathize

This time, she had endured far too much.

“He is what he is today because I’ve put in so much effort. It’s so easy for him to say now that he doesn’t want me. Moreover, it’s for the sake of a vixen. How can he do that to me? By doing this, isn’t he letting me down?!” She had worked so hard for the sake of the Qiu family.

The Qiu family rose through the ranks and status because of her. Qiu Qin had not assumed the role that she wanted most, yet he was washing his hands off the matter. He did not care and did not want anything anymore. How could Qi Minlan agree to this? “He said that he wants to divorce me and marry that vixen. That woman is not well-educated. She’s ugly and doesn’t have many family members. She’ll only become the burden of the Qiu family and Qiu Qin. I’ve worked so hard for the Qiu family and Qiu Qin wants to divorce me because of such a lousy woman. I’m not willing. I can’t take this lying down!”

“In that case, why were you looking for Qing Qing and me?!” Shi Peng turned a deaf ear to Qi Minlan’s complaints and grievances. “Do you know that this willful behavior of yours has already disrupted other people’s lives!”

Yes, that woman was not pretty. She was not well-educated and was not born into a wealthy or powerful family. Nevertheless, she was better than Qi Minlan in one way. She had a better temper.

“Why did I look for you? You’re my only biological brother. Now that I’ve encountered something like this, who else could I look for besides you? Yet, you avoided me. Is there a brother like you? Your sister has been bullied and you’re not stepping out to help me. Moreover, if you have not gathered that information, I wouldn’t kick up a fuss in front of Qiu Qin and let him have the chance

to mention divorce.” If she had not discovered it, Qiu Qin would not have thought of divorcing her at all.

Hence, regarding this matter, Shi Peng had to bear most of the responsibility. He had to help her settle this matter and give her a satisfactory outcome.

“Brother, I don’t care. You have to intervene in this matter until I’m satisfied with it. Otherwise, as long as I am unhappy, all of you can forget about having peace!” Qi Minlan said selfishly and willfully. She was determined to make Shi Peng yield to her such that he would do everything for her and settle all her problems.

“How are you going to disrupt my peace?” Facing Qi Minlan’s attitude of taking things for granted, Shi Peng asked sullenly, “You’ll harass the Qiao family again?”

“Yes, if you don’t help me and avoid me like before, I’ll lay my hands on the Qiao family. Shi Qing and you have the means to hide so well but not everyone is like you. Since the Qiao family allows Shi Qing to stay at their house, I don’t believe that you can just watch them land themselves in such huge trouble and have their peace disrupted because of you and your daughter. Brother, let me tell you. If you did not discover this, it’s impossible that Qiu Qin would stir up the divorce issue with me. I also believe that he will return to my side eventually after he’s sick of that woman outside.”

In other words, Qi Minlan felt that as long as this matter did not blow up, she did not even have to do anything and Qiu Qin would eventually return to her side. She could then also believe that she was the only woman in Qiu Qin’s life all these while.

Shi Peng was the one who exposed Qiu Qin and complicated things. He was the one who made her life more miserable.

Because of this, Shi Peng had the responsibility to ‘steer’ her life back to the original ‘tracks’.

“I’ve understood your threat. Fine, I’ll make separate arrangements for Qiao Dongliang’s matter. As for the matter between Qiu Qin and you, I don’t care,” Shi Peng said without reservation. He was not affected by what Qi Minlan had just said at all. “Even if I know that Qiu Qin has someone outside, I’d never thought of telling you. At most, I was just letting Dad know of it. I couldn’t stop Dad from telling you. A son does not speak of his father’s wrongdoing. You can’t blame me for this matter.”

In fact, Old Master Shi, and not Shi Peng, was the one who brought this matter to light.

If Qi Minlan wanted to find someone to settle the scores, she should look for Old Master Shi and not Shi Peng.

“Yes, Dad told me about it, but you’re the one who told him in the first place!” Without Shi Peng, this initiator, there would not be so many things happening thereafter.

“If you want to look at it in this way, then you can only settle the scores with yourself.” Shi Peng looked at Qi Minlan with a wry smile.

“Why?” Qi Minlan did not believe him. “Don’t tell me you’re trying to say that I was not good to Qiu Qin, and that I was the one who forced Qiu Qin to find someone outside. In the end, the actual responsibility lies with me, is that it? How could there be a brother like you?”

“No, I’m not referring to this.” Shi Peng denied. “Do you know who triggered the discovery of Qiu Qin having a woman outside in the first place? I’m very busy in the army. I’ve submitted my resignation letter and there’s definitely a lot of work that I have to prepare beforehand to handover. I’ve been so busy lately. How could I possibly know about Qiu Qin’s issue?”

“Who’s the one who noticed that there’s a problem with Qiu Qin!!” Yes, Shi Peng was in the army every day. To put it bluntly, Shi Peng might not even know that there was a problem with his wife, let alone Qiu Qin.

“You, of course!”

“Me?” Qi Minlan shrieked. “Brother, don’t talk nonsense just because you’re trying to shift the blame. Do you think I will definitely believe you?” She had known earlier that Qiu Qin was two-timing her and having a mistress? If so, she would have kicked up a fuss long ago.

If not for the information given to her by her father, she would have thought that Qiu Qin was devoted to her all along. When she asked him to head toward the east, he dared not head toward the west. When she asked him to stand, he dared not sit!

Shi Peng tugged the corners of his lips, his eyes looking very cold. “Have you forgotten what you told Qing Qing when you looked for her a month ago?”

“What did I say?” Qi Minlan had really forgotten about it.

“Weren’t you the one who told Qing Qing that Qiu Qin has changed and doesn’t like to come home recently? He always tells you that he’s busy. He did not come home to sleep for a number of nights. Qing Qing is just a child. She also felt something amiss. She thus reflected the situation to me. I then investigated and found out about the existence of such a woman. Qi Minlan, if you really wish to get to the bottom of this matter, actually, you’ve noticed it but did not realize it. If you had not said all those to Qing Qing and she had not told me, would I pay attention to Qiu Qin?”

Shi Peng saw the look of ridicule in Qi Minlan’s eyes. “You’re the one sleeping beside Qiu Qin. Didn’t they say that women are very sensitive to such things? Qiu Qin had not been coming home to sleep and you did not even realize it. Qi Minlan, what do you pay attention to normally? Where did you focus your thoughts on?”

It could be said that Qiu Qin’s behavior was apparent enough. However, Qi Minlan did not suspect him at all. Shi Peng even had to investigate the matter to find out the truth. Obviously, all these circumstances pointed to the fact that Qi Minlan had ridiculously neglected and overlooked Qiu Qin’s matters.

The most ludicrous matter was that, if he had not brought this up today, Qi Minlan had not even come to her senses. She had long noticed Qiu Qin’s odd behavior but never reflected deeply on it before.

As a wife and a mother, Qi Minlan was muddleheaded to such an extent. As such, although Qiu Qin committed adultery, Shi Peng could not bring himself to sympathize with Qi Minlan.