

Genius Daddy in the City

Chapter 12: His Daughter's Dream

It was the peak of school release at the Little Swan Kindergarten. As the school bell rang, cute little faces shuffled out of the school. There were many parents crowding the school entrance, waiting to pick their kids up.

Ye Chen stood aside with wide eyes to study those kids carefully. He was worried that Mengmeng would be in the crowd and that he would miss her.

He had never picked kids up from school before. Never had he thought it was so sweet and nerve-wracking at the same time. Perhaps it was the feeling of becoming a first-time parent.

Ah Hu asked for his number after he brought him there. Figuring that he had nothing since he had just returned, Ye Chen got Ah Hu to bring him to an ATM machine nearby to withdraw some money. He bought a mobile phone and a SIM card to tell his mother that he would pick Mengmeng up himself.

He would be lying if he said he was not envious of the kids who were being coy with their parents.

Ye Chen's eyes lit up just when he was thinking to himself. He saw a lady in a white chiffon dress bring a little girl out. The lady was only 24 or 25 years old. With such a pretty face and great charisma, she attracted many adults when she walked out.

Meanwhile, the little girl wore a faded black uniform. She had two little braids on her head while her little nose was straight and high, and her big eyes watery and sparkly. She was indeed a beauty.

Who else would that little angel be apart from Mengmeng?"

"Mengmeng!" Ye Chen called out to her. He walked over excitedly.

The little girl scoffed and turned her head away to avoid looking at him.

The smile on Ye Chen's face froze as he sighed secretly.

The lady smiled and spoke to him courteously after taking a good look at him, "Hi, you must be Ye Mengmeng's father. I'm Mengmeng's teacher, Ou Lan."

Wu Lan was always the one who picked Mengmeng up. However, she had called Ou Lan in advance, informing her that Ye Chen would pick her up. Therefore, Ou Lan recognized him upon seeing that Ye Chen resembled the little girl.

"Hi, Teacher Ou." Ye Chen nodded while smiling. He heard the little girl scream all of a sudden just when he was going to say something.

"He's not my father, Teacher Ou. He's not my father!"

Ye Chen forced a smile at the moment. He could be cold, overpowering and even ignore other people. However, he was helpless when it came to his own daughter. What could he do when he owed the mother and daughter so much?

Ou Lan squatted and patted the girl's head. "Mengmeng, you can't speak to your father like that. Did you forget that I taught you to be a good girl who's courteous and respects her parents?"

Ye Chen looked at Ou Lan with endless gratitude hearing that.

The little girl pouted and looked at the packed crowd with a stubborn expression. She seemed to be looking for someone. "Where's Grandma? I want Grandma to bring me home."

"Grandma has something to do so she won't be coming. She got me to come," Ye Chen comforted her while smiling kindly.

Ou Lan looked at her with utter helplessness and said with a smile, "It's tiring that your grandma has to work. It's the same since your father is here to bring you home. Mengmeng, wait with Mr. Guard for a bit okay? I need to speak to your father."

The little girl held onto her hand tight and attempted to decline by instinct. Ou Lan looked solemnly at her now. "Be good, Mengmeng. Otherwise, I'll be mad."

The little girl could only nod unwillingly.

Ou Lan turned her head to smile at Ye Chen after speaking to the guard as she sent Mengmeng to the guardhouse. “Mr. Ye, can I speak to you for a while?”

Ye Chen looked at the little girl and nodded after making sure that everything was good.

The duo walked to the school field. While checking out the environment that his daughter was in every day, Ye Chen was emotional. He said from the bottom of his heart, “Teacher Ou, thank you so much for taking care of Mengmeng all this time.”

He saw with his own eyes that other kids walked out on their own earlier whereas Ou Lan had brought Mengmeng out. From that alone, one could tell how she usually treated Mengmeng.

“You’re being too kind. To tell you the truth, I like Mengmeng very much.” Ou Lan chuckled softly, but a little grim expression soon took over her pretty face. “But that silly girl Mengmeng is quite pitiful. I heard from Aunt Lan that you disappeared before she was born. Just when she turned five, her mother was gone too. Then, she was diagnosed with leukemia when she was three and a half. Although I’m not related to Mengmeng and I’m just making a living, my biggest hope is for this kid to grow up healthy.”

Ye Cheng felt his heart sink and he took a deep breath in. “Teacher Ou, I...”

“Mr. Ye, you don’t have to explain anything to me. I’m just an outsider after all, so I shouldn’t be asking about your family. However, Mengmeng is really sad. Although she’s only four, her mind is much more matured than kids her age.”

Ou Lan sighed, looking pained. “There are many kids at school who make fun of Mengmeng because she doesn’t have parents, but she doesn’t cry. Instead, she charges at them, scolds them, squeezes and scratches them. She offended some kids in her class, thus many of them are unwilling to play with her. As a result, she’s possibly a little introverted and has low self-esteem.”

Ye Chen listened quietly before he turned around slowly to face the guardhouse.

“Mengmeng loves drawing when she’s alone, especially pictures of meadows and stars. I’ve asked her before, and she said the meadow is the closest to

the stars. Meanwhile, everyone who disappears from this world will turn into a star in the sky. Therefore, her dream is to bring her sketchpad to the meadow to draw stars, so she'll be closer to her father."

Ye Chen shuddered when he heard that. He felt a lump rise in his throat.

Throughout the five years he disappeared, nobody had seen him alive, and nobody had seen his body had he been dead. Perhaps everyone thought he was dead, including his parents.

Therefore, his daughter, who was under their influence, would have that thought too. To her, her father was already dead. It was a kind of desperate conclusion.

Now that he appeared before her all of a sudden, it was like fire being ignited in an endless desert. Her passion and light could not be kindled no matter what.

Ou Lang turned around all of a sudden and looked at him in all seriousness. "Mr. Ye, in reality, Mengmeng approves of you deep down in her heart. She's a kid after all, and she craves love from her mother and father just like most of the kids her age. However, she feels a little contradicted. Perhaps it has something to do with her experience since she matured earlier. That's right. She's a stubborn yet introverted little girl."

Ye Chen nodded.

One could say that apart from his own parents, the teacher standing right before him was undoubtedly the person who understood Mengmeng best. If she did not say this today, he would have never understood his daughter.

Ou Lan checked the time and said with a smile, "Alright, that little girl must be impatient from all the waiting. Mr. Ye, that's all that we'll talk about today."

"Thank you so much, Teacher Ou." Ye Chen initiated a handshake as he expressed the gratitude that came from the bottom of his heart.

Ou Lan shook his hand softly before she drew back when she touched his hand. "There's no need for you to thank me. It's my job."

Ye Chen smiled and followed her to the guardhouse. The little girl did not stop pacing up and down the entrance, clearly impatient.

Ou Lan squatted to smoothen the little girl's hair in front of her forehead. She said while smiling, "Mengmeng, go home with your father now. Don't forget what I taught you, and listen to your father."

She got up and walked out as soon as she was done speaking.

"Goodbye, Teacher Ou!" The little girl waved at her, looking doubtful.

After Ou Lan left, Ye Chen only said to the little girl with his head down, "Mengmeng, I'll piggyback you home, okay?"

"Hmph, only kids will want piggyback rides. I'm not a kid." She lifted her chin extremely arrogantly before she started to walk in front.

Ye Chen caught up to her immediately. He was worried that she might fall or be hit by cars on the street. She turned her head to look at a Pretty Goat cartoon bag on the display when they passed by the supermarket. There was a burning desire in her eyes.

Ye Chen looked at the bag she was carrying and realized that the color had faded a lot. Even the two straps were restitched before. He felt pain and guilt well up within him.