

RTAMM 141

Chapter 141: Wept Out Her Grief

Qiao Nan had yet to reply while Qiao Zijin gave him a look of disdain. She was standing there all the while. Why would this man ask Qiao Nan if she could cope by herself? What did he mean by that? Was she not considered a person as well?

This man was good-looking. It was a pity that he was 'blind'.

"It is fine. You should go back to have a good rest. I can cope." Fortunately, she had a good sleep at home. It should not be a problem to stay vigil through the night.

As for the reason why Ding Jiayi had not shown up at all, Qiao Nan could not be bothered to care.

Unlike the prone Qiao Dongliang who was still on the bed, Ding Jiayi was healthy; she could take care of herself.

"Alright, I will come by tomorrow." Zhai Sheng nodded. It was not easy for him to have some time off from the army. He could not possibly not go back home. Besides, this is the hospital. It would not be appropriate for him to stay there when he was drenched in sweat.

After Zhai Sheng left, Qiao Zijin leaned close to Qiao Nan. "Who is he?"

"It has nothing to do with you."

"Of course it has something to do with me. Both of you are acquaintances. Now that I have met him today, I can't possibly address him as 'Hey' when I bump into him next time. After all, he has helped us today, so we should thank him at the very least." Qiao Zijin was indignant. She used to be more likable as compared to Qiao Nan. Even the boys would prefer to hang out with her.

However, this man only had eyes for Qiao Nan. He practically treated her as if she was invisible.

"You can use whatever form of address you prefer." Qiao Nan widened the distance between her and Qiao Zijin. "Dad has not woken up yet. Can you shut your mouth and don't disturb Dad?"

Besides, aren't you hungry? You can go back home and fix yourself a meal. I do not have the time to wait on you."

"You..." Qiao Zijin turned green with anger. "Fine, it's no big deal! I will leave!"

Qiao Zijin was tired, starved and sleepy. After getting the fright of her life just now, she felt even more exhausted.

Since Qiao Nan was around, Qiao Zijin did not find it a problem to leave. She went back home and left Qiao Nan to look after Qiao Dongliang by herself.

Once Qiao Zijin was gone, Qiao Nan could finally relax. She asked the nurse to look after Qiao Dongliang while she bought a basin, a towel, and other related stuff.

Qiao Nan noticed that Qiao Dongliang's lips were chapped. She used the cotton swabs to dab on Qiao Dongliang's lips with warm water over and over again. Afterward, she wiped his hands and face clean with a cloth.

"You are quite good at taking care of your dad. Do you have any experience in taking care of patients?" The nurse was surprised when she saw how Qiao Nan took care of her father. Did children nowadays know so much about caring for patients?

"I read it from books." Qiao Nan smiled. She had plenty of experience.

In the previous life, her parents were quite healthy, but Qiao Zijin had uremia at a young age.

Qiao Zijin had always been bad-tempered. When she was diagnosed with uremia, she behaved as if she was the empress dowager. Qiao Nan had to wait on her and take care of her daily needs.

Qiao Nan gained the experience through taking care of Qiao Zijin.

"Dad, when I went to school today, I was rewarded three hundred yuan for doing well in the exams. Dad, it has been confirmed that for the next three years in high school, I would be exempted from paying tuition and incidental fees. I only have to pay for my meals. Dad, you must get well soon. Judging from Mom's temper, after today's incident, if you did not recover before school starts, she will definitely forbid me to continue with my studies. Dad..."

Qiao Nan started to cry.

Even if Qiao Dongliang was biased, Qiao Nan knew that whether she could continue with her studies all depended on Qiao Dongliang.

If anything happened to her father, her mother would have the final say in the family.

Qiao Nan was reminded of the terrifying life she led in the previous life. It was just like a horrifying nightmare. Her tears tumbled down her cheek, falling onto the back of Qiao Dongliang's hand.

While Qiao Nan bent her head and sobbed her guts out, she did not notice the slight twitch of Qiao Dongliang's index finger.

By the time she lifted her head, there was no more movement in Qiao Dongliang's fingers.

Qiao Nan stayed at the hospital throughout the night, looking after Qiao Dongliang. She dared not sleep at all. Her eyes were all red the next day from staying up all night.

While Qiao Nan was in the hospital keeping vigil over Qiao Dongliang, Qiao Zijin was having a good time at home. After eating whatever food available at home, she had a bath and went to sleep. As to why Ding Jiayi was not home yet, she did not give it much thought.

The next morning, Qiao Zijin heard sounds and jumped up from the bed. Did a robber sneak into the house?

"Qiao Nan!" Ding Jiayi shouted in displeasure. "Stop sleeping like a log. Hurry up and pour me a drink. Prepare today's breakfast too. I will bathe and have breakfast before going to the hospital to visit your dad. Your sister has been keeping vigil by his bedside throughout the night. It must be very tiring for her, yet you are enjoying yourself here."

"Mom, it's me. Qiao Nan is at the hospital." Qiao Zijin yawned and came out of her room.

"Why is it you? I wanted you to stay at the hospital and wait for your dad to wake up so that you will be the first person he sees. Why are you back at home! Are you a fool?!" Ding Jiayi was

exasperated at Qiao Zijin. She slapped her on the shoulder. “You should not find it troublesome. If you want your dad to favor you once again, you have to put in some efforts. This cannot do!”

“Mom, it’s painful.” Qiao Zijin grabbed at her shoulder in displeasure. “Don’t worry. We still do not know if Dad will wake up today.”

“What do you mean? What’s wrong with your dad?!” Ding Jiayi stiffened at Qiao Zijin’s words.

“Dad... Dad’s condition was not very good, and he went into the operating room again. Hence, I suppose he will not wake up so soon. We should be able to make it in time if we go to the hospital now.” Qiao Zijin dared not say that she dozed off as she was too tired, and it almost landed her father in serious trouble.

“Then, what are you waiting for?! Let’s hurry up to clean and wash and go to the hospital. Do you want your dad to treat Qiao Nan as his precious darling?!” Ding Jiayi did not elaborate further. She did not bother to use hot water. Instead, she used the water from the well to bathe and changed into her clothes at lightning speed. She then prepared some food and went to the hospital with Qiao Zijin.

“Mom, why did you come back in the morning?” Qiao Zijin couldn’t help but ask on the way to the hospital.

“Why else could it be? Wasn’t it because your dad got into an accident and I had to leave work earlier? My boss was unhappy with me and wanted me to make up for the time.” Ding Jiayi was indignant. “Qiao Nan was too much. I didn’t go back, yet she also didn’t look for me. If she was to look for me and said that your father’s condition was not that good, my boss would not have made me work throughout the night.”

While Ding Jiayi was doing the night shift, she had been complaining that Qiao Nan had no conscience at all and that she did not care about her mother.

“Mom, did you really expect Qiao Nan to look for you? If not for the fact that Dad is unwell, she would have ignored you.”

Chapter 142: Time Reveals a Person’s Heart

Qiao Zijin was such a tattletale. She added fuel to the flames and ‘ratted on’ Qiao Nan.

“Alright, don’t mention this anymore. It makes my blood boils. Let’s hurry to the hospital. We would not want Qiao Nan to be the only one by your dad’s side when he wakes up later. If that really happens, your dad will definitely side with Qiao Nan and will only have eyes for her. If that comes to pass, you can forget about being in his good graces in the future.”

“You’re right, Mom. Let’s run there.” They dared not take any form of transport to the hospital as there was no money at home. They could only go there on foot.

By the time they ran all the way to the hospital, it was eight in the morning.

The first question Ding Jiayi asked Qiao Nan when she reached the hospital was, “Has your dad woken up?”

“No.”

“Phew, that’s not bad.” Ding Jiayi breathed a sigh of relief. As long as Old Qiao had not woken up, Zijin still had a chance.

“Not bad?” Qiao Nan asked in disbelief. “Mom, what is good with Dad’s condition now?!”

“When did I say it’s good? I said it’s still early. The doctor said he must be under observation for twenty-four hours, so it’s still early.” Ding Jiayi denied having said ‘not bad’. “Alright, you have looked after your dad through the night. Your sister and I will take over from here. You can go back to rest.”

“Why would you ask me to take a rest again? Are both of you very sure that you can do a good job and look after my dad?! You had better not fall asleep and fail to inform the doctor when my dad shows signs of relapsing!”

“What do you mean?” Ding Jiayi paused momentarily and looked at Qiao Zijin. “Zijin, what happened? Why did your dad go into the operating room again?”

Qiao Zijin felt a twinge of embarrassment and gave Qiao Nan a slight push. “I was too tired yesterday. I am well rested today, so there will not be any errors. Besides, Mom will be here with

me. You do not have to worry. You had better worry about yourself.” They still did not know where Qiao Nan borrowed the money from. Anyway, their mother had said that whoever borrowed the money would have to return it themselves.

To think that Qiao Nan still wanted to continue with her studies... Dream on!

Not waiting for Qiao Nan to reject, Qiao Zijin gave Qiao Nan a hard push and closed the door shut as soon as Qiao Nan left the ward. “Qiao Nan, have a good rest at home, Mom and I will look after Dad. There will be no problem.”

Qiao Zijin leaned against the door, preventing Qiao Nan from opening the door and entering the room. She talked to her from the other side of the door.

After staying up the whole night, Qiao Nan was no match for Qiao Zijin.

After being pushed out of the room and having the door closed on her, Qiao Nan really wanted to give Qiao Zijin a good thrashing. If Qiao Zijin was not her biological sister, she wished she could chop Qiao Zijin with a kitchen knife.

But this was the hospital. Qiao Nan did not want to create a din lest she disturbed other patients.

Qiao Zijin did not care about disgracing herself, Qiao Nan did. She would not behave brazenly at the hospital. She could only leave and go back home to rest.

Qiao Zijin smiled when she heard Qiao Nan walked away. Qiao Nan was no match for her.

“Has she left?” Ding Jiayi, who was watching by the side, did not try to stop Qiao Zijin. In fact, she looked favorably on it.

“Left for home. I am her sister, and she had stayed up through the night. I have her best interests at heart, and I wanted her to go back to have a good rest. She should thank me for that. Why shouldn’t she leave?” Qiao Zijin snorted proudly. “I am a good sister.”

“Alright, you can knock it off in front of me. Hurry up, you should rub at your eyes and make it red. You should have seen how Qiao Nan looked just now. Look at you. If you tell your dad that you

stayed up all night, he will not believe you. Don't forget that your dad was once a scout in the army." Ding Jiayi remembered that her husband used to be a scout in the army.

"You're right. Oh, why are there a basin and a towel here? It's perfect. I can get some hot water, soaked the towel with it, and placed it on my eyes." Qiao Zijin took the towel and basin and went to get the hot water.

Ding Jiayi sat down, feeling slightly weary. She looked at Qiao Dongliang and sighed. "Old Qiao, you must get well soon. The Qiao family cannot do without you. Zijin cannot do without you. You said that you want to take in a husband for Zijin. We would still need to buy a house in the future. All of us are depending on you."

She had to work to realize that earning money was not an easy task.

Yesterday, her boss found out she skipped work and made her worked all night long. Ding Jiayi had to admit that she was advanced in years and could no longer do manual work. Besides, the job was too tiresome. She missed the days when she was still a housewife.

After the incident yesterday, Qiao Zijin took great care in looking after Qiao Dongliang. Ding Jiayi made use of the free time and took a nap by the side of the bed.

When it was noontime, Qiao Zijin finally had a rest and poured a drink for herself. She noticed that Qiao Dongliang's eyelids were twitching. "Dad... Dad, are you awake?"

"What? Is Old Qiao awake?" Ding Jiayi, who was asleep, heard her words and woke up immediately. "Old Qiao?"

Qiao Dongliang, who had slept for a whole day, fluttered his eyelids and opened his eyes slowly. He opened his mouth and said in a dry, hoarse voice, "Yes."

"Old Qiao, you have finally woken up!" Ding Jiayi's worries and fears dissipated the moment Qiao Dongliang opened his eyes and made a sound. "Old Qiao, you gave us such a big fright this time. If anything happens to you, how are Zijin and I going to survive?"

Qiao Dongliang tried to move his lips with difficulty, his throat was very dry.

Qiao Zijin noticed that Qiao Dongliang looked like he wanted to lick at his lips and asked, “Dad, are you thirsty? Let me pour you a drink.”

By the time she poured the drink, she realized Qiao Dongliang was injured and could not move. He was lying flat on the bed. She had no idea how to feed him the water. “Mom, Dad wants to have a drink. How... how am I supposed to do it?”

“Do it slowly.” Ding Jiayi was clueless as well. She had no experience in taking care of patients. She could only hold Qiao Dongliang’s head steady to help Qiao Zijin with the feeding.

In the end, Qiao Dongliang ended up not having any water at all. All the water dripped out and his collar was wet from the water. Qiao Zijin could not help but feel embarrassed.

“Dad, I... I am sorry.”

“Zijin, don’t be anxious. It’s alright. Your dad will not take it to heart.” Ding Jiayi saved her from further embarrassment. “Old Qiao, you must not have known that after you were hit by the car, Zijin was worried sick. Look at her eyes, she stayed with you and cried throughout the night. She did not even sleep a wink. It is as the saying goes: ‘As distance tests a horse’s strength, time reveals a person’s heart’. You should realize by now which daughter is filial to you. As for Qiao Nan, forget about her. I don’t want to talk about her anymore. No matter how heartless she is, I gave birth to her after all. But Zijin is so pitiful and has tired herself out.”

“Mom, I am fine. I am not tired at all. He is my biological dad, so it is my duty to take care of him and wait on him,” Qiao Zijin rushed to answer. “Dad, Nan Nan is still young. She cannot stay up through the night. As her elder sister, I should do more.”

Chapter 143: Do You Have the Final Say?

Seeing that Qiao Dongliang did not respond to her words, Qiao Zijin shot a glance at Ding Jiayi. Ding Jiayi hinted at Qiao Zijin to carry on, and so she did. “Nan Nan is still young. She cannot stay up through the night. It’s normal for her to rest more. Actually, I do not find it tiring at all. My biological dad is injured, and I am so anxious that I could not even sleep. I am glad that I could stay behind to take care of you. Dad, Nan Nan cares for you as well. When you went for the surgery, Nan Nan and I donated some blood to you.”

“Alright, your dad has just woken up and is tired. Let him rest more. When he recovers, both of you will have lots of chances to chat.” Ding Jiayi interrupted with a smile on her face. “Old Qiao, would you like to sleep for a while?”

“...” Qiao Dongliang made some movements as if he was sighing. He closed his eyes without casting another glance at Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin.

Qiao Zijin walked to stand by Ding Jiayi’s side. “Mom, what’s with Dad?” What did this attitude of his mean?

“Shush, don’t disturb your dad. He needs to rest. Whatever it is you want to say, say it outside.” After covering Qiao Dongliang with a blanket lest he caught a cold, Ding Jiayi pulled Qiao Zijin out of the ward. “Don’t think too much about it. Your dad suffered such serious injuries, and he underwent two surgeries. He is very weak now and didn’t mean anything by that. He is just too weak to say anything, so you should not worry. After this incident, your dad will realize who is more filial to him between Qiao Nan and you.”

“You’re right.” Qiao Zijin smiled. “But Mom, Qiao Nan borrowed such a huge sum of money. Even though you said that whoever borrowed the money would have to repay it, can she even repay them? If the debtors make a fuss in the future, will Dad learn that Qiao Nan was the one who borrowed the money for his surgery?”

“I have already thought of this. Even if someone is to come to our house and demand payment for the loan, we will tell your dad that Qiao Nan borrowed the money for other purposes—that it has nothing to do with your dad. I believe Qiao Nan did not mention your dad when she went to borrow the money. Alright, I will handle this. Now that your dad has woken up, you should make use of these few days to look after him. After all, he is still the one with the final say at home.”

After working to pay for Qiao Zijin’s school fees for a year and borrowing it from Qiao Dongliang’s comrades to pay for the school fees for the second semester, Ding Jiayi realized that it was too tiring to finance a child through school.

It would be so much easier if they only had one child going to school.

“Qiao Nan wants to continue with her studies. I am worried that she might not be willing.”

“She has no say in this matter at all. You are not going to continue with your studies after the third year, and she has no right to study as well. If your dad has any objections, I would say that we

should be fair to all.” Old Qiao had always said that one must be fair. If Zijin quit school, why should they waste money to send Qiao Nan to school?

“Alright.” Qiao Zijin nodded.

Her sister Qiao Nan had good results. If Qiao Zijin stopped her studies after she graduated from high school while Qiao Nan still performed well in high school, Qiao Zijin, as her sister, would be disgraced. Everyone would say that Qiao Nan was very bright, and no one would remember Qiao Zijin.

It would be all the better if both she and Qiao Nan stopped their studies together.

“Mom, what’s on your mind?” Qiao Zijin found it strange that Ding Jiayi kept her silence.

“I am wondering where Qiao Nan borrowed such a huge sum of money from. Do you know how much remaining money does Qiao Nan have? I would not allow her to squander away the money that could save your dad’s life. She is just a child. It would not be good to keep so much money with her. She wouldn’t use it anyway.” Given Old Qiao’s condition, it would take a few months before he could go back to work.

Everything at home would need money.

Most importantly, Old Qiao was injured. She had to think of ways to make some tonics for Old Qiao.

With her meager salary, she could not even provide for Zijin, let alone for a family of four.

If Qiao Nan still had some money with her, then it would be a different story if she could get her hands on the money.

Since Qiao Nan also had a part in piling up the expenses at home, it was only right for her to pool the money into the house fund.

Qiao Zijin’s eyes sparkled. “That’s true. But it is still the same story, Mom. Qiao Nan is very smart now. I tried ways and means to get the money from Qiao Nan to no avail. I feel that Qiao Nan would be way more stingy than before. Just look at what happened this time. She did not hand the

money for Dad's surgery to you and paid the money to the hospital by herself instead. Qiao Nan did not plan to let you keep the money at all."

"That wretched girl!" Ding Jiayi boiled with anger at the mention of the surgery fees. "If not for your dad's colleagues who sided with her, I would have dealt with her. We are in such a dire situation now, yet she gave empty promises that she would return them the money. Where would we have the money? This won't do. I have to get the money from her lest she squanders it away. You stay here and look after your dad. I will make a trip home."

Why did she forget to do a body search on Qiao Nan just now?!

If Qiao Nan had the money on her, there was no way she could hide it from her during the body search.

"Don't worry, Mom. I will not fall asleep this time." Qiao Zijin felt energized after a good night sleep yesterday. She would not commit yesterday's mistake again.

"Alright." Ding Jiayi entrusted the task of looking after Qiao Dongliang to Qiao Zijin. Afterward, she dashed back home to deal with Qiao Nan.

Back at home, Ding Jiayi grabbed the door handle to Qiao Nan's room and tried to turn the handle. She realized there was no way that she could open the door. "You wretched girl, you have the audacity to lock the door? Open it right now!"

Qiao Nan, who was woken up by Ding Jiayi, had only slept for less than two hours. With a sullen expression on her face, she spoke to her mother from the other side of the door, not making any move to open the door. "Mom, what is the matter?"

"What else but..." Ding Jiayi was about to launch into a tirade, but she remembered that Qiao Nan had the money with her. She calmed down and said, "Your dad is injured and could not work. We have a lot of expenses at home. You are still young; it is not convenient for you to keep the money with you. Besides, you have no idea what the expenses are. Qiao Nan, listen to me and give me the money. I will buy some tonics to nurture your dad."

"Mom, to tell you the truth, I have used all the money I borrowed to pay for Dad's medical fees and to repay the money we owed Dad's comrades."

“What? You... We are in such a dire situation here, why would you repay the money we owed? Do you want your dad to die?!” Ding Jiayi was so angry that she almost vomited blood. She had borrowed a total of four to five hundred yuan.

“If I wanted Dad dead, would I still borrow the money? Mom, you could not come up with the money as well! Mom, don’t try to have any designs on me. Rather than questioning me about the money you borrowed from Dad’s comrades, you should worry about how you are going to explain to Dad when he recovers from his injuries!” Qiao Nan smiled coldly. It seemed like she did the right thing when she locked her door as soon as she reached home. It was not groundless worries at all.

Chapter 144: Little Warm Jacket

Ding Jiayi, who was outside the locked room, turned green with anger. “How dare you think of telling your Dad about this! Do you want to infuriate him and aggravate his condition? Do you want to watch him die?!”

“I did not borrow the money from Dad’s comrades. Even if Dad dies from anger, I am not at fault. You are the one to be blamed. You know how his temper is, yet you still went ahead to borrow the money. Do you think that we do not need to return the borrowed money and that Dad will never find out? My sister’s school fees are much less than the amount you borrowed. Mom, search your conscience. You have it all planned out. You knew that Dad and you are a couple after all. If you really could not repay the money, he would still repay the money in your stead, albeit unwillingly. In that case, what Dad earns will eventually be used on sister. Sister would stand to gain in the end!”

Qiao Nan knew more than anyone about what was going on in Ding Jiayi’s mind.

Qiao Dongliang was mindful of maintaining his image in front of his comrades. If they were to demand the repayment of the money, Qiao Dongliang would never delay the payment. Regardless of his initial plans, he would repay all of the debts as long as he had the money with him.

As husband and wife, Ding Jiayi was really too scheming to have had such designs on her husband.

But Ding Jiayi was unconscious of her own behavior. She had no idea that it was so hurtful to the other party.

“Are... are you opening the door or not?!” Ding Jiayi was enraged that Qiao Nan knew what she had in mind.

“No. Since you have the time to quarrel with me, Dad must have woken up. Come tomorrow when Dad is feeling better. Mom, you will have to bear the consequences for what you have done!”

“You are not allowed to tell your dad about the debts!” Ding Jiayi was anxious. “Did you hear that?!”

Since all the debts had been repaid, she had better keep her mouth shut lest Old Qiao became furious when he learned about it.

“I heard you, but no!”

“You dare disobey me? Do you still treat me as your mom?!”

“It is all up to you to say if we are mother and daughter. As for the debts, there is no room for discussion!”

She had to be firm to deal with people like her mother.

She did not care how her father wanted to dote on her mother; she was not going to budge in this life.

Even if she could not do anything to her mother regarding the debts, it would be good to give her a scare. Her mother would at least not mess with her for the next few days.

“You...” Ding Jiayi was panting with anger. She glared at the closely shut door. There was nothing she could do about Qiao Nan.

If it was up to her, she wished she could get a knife from the kitchen to hack off her door so that Qiao Nan could not lock her door in the future.

But on second thought, Ding Jiayi could not bear to do it. She would need to spend a bomb to fix the door.

“Fine, you have guts. You are the best in this house!” Ding Jiayi kicked at the door indignantly. “I am warning you, if anything happens to your dad when he learns of the debts—even if I need to commit murder—I would make sure you die and buried alongside your dad!”

“Ahh...” Qiao Nan laughed coldly. Her dad was hit by a car and did not have any other illness. Her dad was not like her, he would not be angered to death.

Ding Jiayi ranted and lashed out at Qiao Nan, but the latter refused to respond to her. In the end, she could only give up and walked away, panting in anger.

On the second day, the atmosphere was awkward in the hospital. Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin ignored Qiao Nan, while Qiao Nan also did not bother to spare them another glance. She gave all her attention to taking care of Qiao Dongliang. “Dad, I made this chicken porridge. Now that you have yet to recover, you could only have something light. Oily food is not good for you.”

“Chicken?” Qiao Dongliang said hoarsely. “Don’t... don’t waste the money. I will recover gradually.”

“It is alright. We can still afford the chicken.” Qiao Nan fed Qiao Dongliang the porridge. In fact, Qiao Nan did not buy the chicken. Zhai Sheng brought it to the Qiao family’s residence early in the morning.

The chicken was already slaughtered and skinned.

Given Qiao Dongliang’s health condition, oily food was unsuitable for him. It was good to have the chicken skinned.

Qiao Nan thought about it and made shredded chicken porridge for Qiao Dongliang.

“It is delicious.” The porridge tasted soft and smelled nice. Every grain of rice was soft and melted as soon as it touched the tongue. The taste was perfect, neither too salty nor tasteless. It whetted Qiao Dongliang’s appetite. “Nan Nan, you have good culinary skills.”

At the very least, the porridge tasted better than what Old Ding used to make for him.

“If Dad likes it, you should have another half a bowl. It is not good to have too much food at one go. I will make more for Dad in the future.” Qiao Nan stopped giving Qiao Dongliang the porridge after he finished one and a half bowl of porridge. Regardless of whether he would like some more or not, she stopped giving it to him.

Qiao Dongliang was an adult. He knew Qiao Nan had his best interests at heart. He would not be greedy and did not ask for more.

The pair of father and daughter had a good time feeding and eating the porridge. Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin who stood by the side seemed to be out of place.

“Brother, you are so fortunate. Your daughter takes such good care of you; she is even better than your wife.” Today, there was another patient in Qiao Dongliang’s ward. He was surprised when he saw this scene.

The wife was usually the one who took care of the husband when they were sick.

This brother had raised such a good daughter. His younger daughter did most of the chores, and unexpectedly, it was his wife and elder daughter who stood by the side watching.

The patient lifted the corner of his lips. He did not understand what was going on with this family.

“Yes, I am blessed.” Qiao Dongliang smiled. “We all say that daughters are like little warm jackets. It is very true. I am able to survive this car accident all because of this daughter of mine. I have to thank her for saving my life. She could match up to ten sons!”

“Dad, do you want some water?” Qiao Zijin turned green with anger. She quickly poured a cup of warm water and brought it to Qiao Dongliang. “The temperature is just right. You just had your porridge, so you should be thirsty.”

Qiao Dongliang blinked a few times and looked at Qiao Zijin without any expression. He uttered a sound and allowed Qiao Zijin to feed him the water.

Why should he make the younger daughter wait on him and let the elder daughter rest?!

After drinking the water, Qiao Zijin was even more uncomfortable. She felt awkward and uneasy. She just could not find the right standing position.

Qiao Zijin frowned and returned to stand by Ding Jiayi's side. "Mom, I feel that Dad is acting strangely. After waking up today, he never looked at me in the eye. Didn't you say that as long as I stayed by his side and was the first person he saw when he woke up, he would be good to me and would no longer be biased toward Qiao Nan? Why do I feel that Dad sides Qiao Nan even more than before?"

Since her dad woke up till now, he only mentioned Qiao Nan. His words just now also sounded as if Qiao Nan was the only good daughter he had. She treated him in the same way as well. Was she not good enough to him?

"It cannot be..." Ding Jiayi hesitated. But in fact, Ding Jiayi also felt the same way as Qiao Zijin.

Chapter 145: Change of Attitude

Ding Jiayi had been telling herself that Qiao Dongliang had just woken up and was not as vigorous as before. He was still weak, so it was normal to ignore them. This was how a patient would behave. It might just be her misconception after all.

But since Ding Jiayi was not the only one who noted the strange atmosphere, but also Qiao Zijin, Ding Jiayi started to feel uneasy.

"Your dad is sick, and his wounds must hurt badly. He does not have the strength to speak. Don't think too much." Ding Jiayi patted Qiao Zijin on her head. She seemed to be consoling Qiao Zijin as well as herself.

The three of them would have to go back in the evening, and someone would have to stay behind to take care of Qiao Dongliang.

Without waiting for Ding Jiayi to say anything, Qiao Dongliang spoke up. "Nan Nan, you should go back tonight. Zijin should stay behind to take care of me."

“It is not really appropriate, is it?” Ding Jiayi frowned. She had wanted Qiao Nan to stay behind. After all, Zijin was the first person Old Qiao saw when he woke up. She should no longer need to tire herself out any more than this. “Zijin stayed up all night to take care of you. It will be Qiao Nan’s turn to look after you tonight. The day after tomorrow—tomorrow night—we will have Zijin take care of you.”

Ding Jiayi’s initial plan was only for Qiao Zijin to wait on Qiao Dongliang till he woke up.

After he woke up, Qiao Nan would have to take care of him.

Unexpectedly, Qiao Dongliang came up with this request all of a sudden, catching Ding Jiayi unaware.

Ding Jiayi used to be the one who was in charge of such ‘small matters’ in the family. Qiao Dongliang never gave his comments and would not bring up any request on his own accord. Why would he do that today?

Could it be that since Zijin was the first person Old Qiao saw when he woke up, he then developed an attachment to her and came to value her more than before?

Ding Jiayi paused momentarily. She did not know how to react to Qiao Dongliang’s requests.

“Well... well, I will stay behind tonight.” Without waiting for Ding Jiayi to say anything, Qiao Zijin spoke up first.

“Zijin, are you up to it? You didn’t sleep well yesterday.” Ding Jiayi spoke anxiously.

“I...” Actually, Zijin felt tired and sleepy. Most importantly, it was summer now, and she had looked after Qiao Dongliang for a long day. She was sticky from her perspiration, feeling uncomfortable. She really wanted to go back to have a bath.

However, her father had already said his piece. If she did not stay, how would the other patients in the ward think of her?

Qiao Nan was filial; she was a good daughter as well!

“Dad, why don’t I stay behind?” Qiao Nan never harbored any hopes on Ding Jiayi or Qiao Zijin. Qiao Zijin might be unwilling to stay behind, but she was all the more willing to do that. “Dad, how about I stay behind instead?”

Her father’s condition the day before was not really stable, and Qiao Zijin had stayed up all night to take care of her father. The one who stayed behind today to look after her father would no longer need to keep vigil all night. One could still have a nap.

“No need. You should go back,” Qiao Dongliang said firmly. “Zijin, are you staying or not?”

Qiao Zijin was stunned momentarily. She quickly agreed. “Yes, I would definitely stay behind. But Dad, how about I go back home first to have a change of clothes and come back later to take Qiao Nan’s turn?”

“Sure.” Qiao Dongliang nodded in agreement.

Ding Jiayi heaved a sigh of relief. Qiao Zijin could hurry back and have a short rest at home before returning to the hospital.

After Qiao Zijin left, Ding Jiayi sat down by Qiao Dongliang’s bedside. “Old Qiao, what’s wrong with you today? Did you know that you gave Zijin a fright just now? You...” Ding Jiayi hesitated, not knowing how to describe Qiao Dongliang’s behavior.

“What did I do just now?” Qiao Dongliang asked a question in return.

“Nothing... It’s nothing.” Ding Jiayi shook her head immediately. Old Qiao was a patient and should not be agitated. But Qiao Nan that wretched girl stood to gain! Qiao Zijin would have to do all the hard work.

While Qiao Dongliang was talking to Ding Jiayi, Qiao Nan peeled an apple for Qiao Dongliang. She even cut the apples into small pieces, making it easier for him to eat.

Actually, besides Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin, Qiao Nan also noticed that Qiao Dongliang’s behavior was strange.

Even though her father refused to let her stay behind and rejected her curtly, she did not sense any loathe in his tone.

But why would her father behave in this way? She had no idea as well.

By the time Qiao Zijin returned to the hospital, three hours had already passed.

Even though it was summer, the sky already looked dark at eight.

“Are you alright?” Ding Jiayi asked out of concern. Ding Jiayi started to have regrets as soon as the sun set. She should have accompanied the elder daughter home. It was no longer as safe as it used to be. What should she do if Zijin had any mishaps or was bullied by someone on the way?

“I am fine. What could have happened to me?” Qiao Zijin said in a displeased tone.

As soon as she reached home, she had a bath, had some food, and went to sleep for two good hours.

Regardless, she was drenched in sweat on her way to the hospital, and her clothes were plastered to her back. She had bathed in vain. Naturally, she was in a bad mood.

“Shall I stay behind with you tonight?” Ding Jiayi gave Qiao Zijin a towel to wipe off her perspiration, waiting on her.

Unlike how Ding Jiayi took care of Qiao Dongliang, she was so ardent and eager to wait on Qiao Zijin as if she was waiting on her elders.

“No need. You have to work tomorrow.” Qiao Zijin rejected her mother’s suggestion. If her mother did not work, she would not be paid, and she would have no money to pay for her school fees when school reopened.

Even though she planned to find a good job with the help of the Zhu family after graduating from high school, she still wanted to graduate from high school. “If you stay behind to accompany me, you would be too tired to work the next day. Mom, go back home with Qiao Nan. I can cope with it by myself.”

Ding Jiayi broke into a smile at the elder daughter's concerned words. "Alright, you look after your dad. I will go back home first."

"Nan Nan, you should go back home too." Unlike her concerned words toward Qiao Zijin just now, Ding Jiayi left by herself, not bothering to wait for Qiao Nan. Qiao Dongliang frowned and urged Qiao Nan to go back home. "Be careful on your way home. Walk on the big road. Do not take the side road."

"I understand, Dad. I will go now." Qiao Nan nodded and turned to leave.

As soon as Qiao Nan came out from the hospital, she was stopped by Ding Jiayi. "Let me ask you. Did you tell your dad anything without us knowing?"

"Dad is sick. Don't worry. I did not say anything to him." Qiao Nan shrugged away Ding Jiayi's arms and did not trail after her. She made her way back home by herself instead.

Chapter 146: 'No One' at Home

"Impossible! If you did not say something to your dad, why would he behave strangely today and give us strange looks?" Ding Jiayi pulled at Qiao Nan, refusing to let her go.

They were outside the hospital on the road and Ding Jiayi was pulling at her. For no reasons, Qiao Nan was reminded of the accident she had in her previous life and was enveloped by fear. Her countenance changed. "Mom, that's enough. What is wrong with Dad that you have to keep coming at me?! Besides, if you have anything to say, you can do so at home! Must you say your piece on the road?!"

Ding Jiayi was stunned by Qiao Nan's fierce and harsh attitude.

While Ding Jiayi was stunned, Qiao Nan slapped her hands away, turned, and ran off, trying her best to widen her distance between them.

"You..." Ding Jiayi saw Qiao Nan ran off and was about to give chase, but she was startled by the loud honking sounds of the cars.

Seeing the cars sped by right in front of her, Ding Jiayi turned pale and patted her chest a few times. Qiao Nan was right. Next time, they should not stand on the road to talk.

Old Qiao ended up in the hospital because he was hit by a car.

When Ding Jiayi reached home, she went to the kitchen and lifted the lid of the pot, wanting to get some food for herself. But no food could be found in the kitchen. There wasn't even a bowl of leftover rice. "Qiao Nan, didn't you make the shredded chicken porridge? Where's the porridge?"

Old Qiao only had a few bowls of the porridge. Surely there would be some leftovers.

"Dad finished them all," Qiao Nan said coldly.

"Impossible! You cooked the entire chicken, so how could there be only two bowls of porridge? Who are you trying to deceive?! Given your sister's appetite, she could not have finished everything. Where did you keep the porridge?" Ding Jiayi had planned for Qiao Zijin to go home first, so she could heat up the porridge Qiao Nan made.

She might not like Qiao Nan, but Qiao Nan had good culinary skills.

She intended for Qiao Zijin to come home first to have a few bowls of the shredded chicken porridge before returning to the hospital to look after Qiao Dongliang.

By the time she came back, she could finish the rest of the porridge.

Ding Jiayi craved for the porridge since Qiao Dongliang was all praises for the porridge just now.

"An entire chicken?" Qiao Nan had a mock smile on her face. "What is the situation of our family? Where would I have the money to buy an entire chicken? Just as I have said in the hospital, there is nothing left. I have given all the porridge to Dad!"

"Are you serious? Is there really nothing left?" Ding Jiayi widened her eyes. "What did your sister eat for dinner when she came back home just now?"

“How would I know? Since my sister is healthy, she should be able to make some food for herself. If you want to know what my sister had just now, you should ask her.”

“You...” Ding Jiayi was speechless. “Your sister knows to care for my well-being, but why can’t you be the same? I am your mom. I went through so much suffering to give birth to you. Now that I am home, do you intend to deny me a warm meal?”

Ding Jiayi was waiting for Qiao Nan to prepare food for her.

“Hungry?” Qiao Nan thought for a while and ran out. She came back in less than half an hour, buying four big buns and a box of green pepper with potato shreds. “Help yourself.”

Ding Jiayi was so starved that she did not bother to argue with Qiao Nan. She grabbed the buns, picked up some potato shreds, and dug in.

Ever since she started working, Ding Jiayi’s appetite had become bigger. Initially, she had wanted to have three buns, but Qiao Nan ate very fast as well and had two of the four buns.

After the meal, Ding Jiayi cleaned herself and went to sleep.

Ding Jiayi woke up the next day morning and prepared to go to work. Before leaving the house, she ordered Qiao Nan, “Before going to the hospital to take over your sister’s shift, wash your sister’s and my clothes.”

Ding Jiayi left for work afterward.

Qiao Nan gave a big yawn, washed her own clothes and pretended not to see Ding Jiayi’s and Qiao Zijin’s clothes.

As soon as she finished hanging out the clothes to dry, she heard some sounds at the door. Qiao Nan ran out, “Is that Brother Zhai?”

Zhai Sheng was here today again, and he had with him half a chicken and some vegetables. Qiao Nan opened the door and invited him in.

“I have brought mushrooms as well. You can put them into the porridge. After handing the chicken and mushrooms to Qiao Nan, Zhai Sheng sat down comfortably as if he was in his own house.

“Alright.” Qiao Nan walked straight to the kitchen with the chicken. She boiled the chicken until it gave off a nice fragrant, then she shredded the chicken and put them into the porridge.

As there were mushrooms today, the shredded chicken porridge tasted better than yesterday.

She left the porridge to boil over low heat, wiped her hands, and sat down opposite of Zhai Sheng. “Brother Zhai, is the porridge fulfilling enough? Even though the dishes they sold outside might not be as tasty, you are not picky with your food. It is much simpler to buy some dishes from outside. I came back late yesterday, and that’s what I had for dinner.”

“It’s okay.” Zhai Sheng lied without batting an eyelid.

“Is there no one at home?” Qiao Nan tilted her head and looked at Zhai Sheng with a puzzled expression.

Qiao Nan was unwilling to accept anything Zhai Sheng gave her. After all, she had owed him a huge sum of money.

However, Zhai Sheng bought half a skinned chicken yesterday morning and came over to the Qiao family’s residence, asking whether Qiao Nan knew how to cook.

When he came back from the army this time, no one was at home to prepare meals for him. Therefore, he wanted to know if Qiao Nan could make some porridge for him. He was craving for some porridge.

Qiao Nan had no other talents except good culinary skills. She agreed readily and made chicken porridge with half a chicken. Apart from the porridge, Qiao Nan gave Zhai Sheng to bring home with him, Zhai Sheng made Qiao Nan have a big bowl of the porridge and asked her to bring the remaining porridge to Qiao Dongliang in a thermos flask.

“No.” Zhai Sheng lied again without batting an eyelid. Zhai Hua was at home, but Zhai Sheng conveniently treated his biological sister, Zhai Hua, as non-existent and lied to Qiao Nan.

Zhai Hua might be at home, but she did not know how to cook. Hence, it did not matter whether she was at home.

“The porridge is ready, Brother Zhai. Do you want to bring them back?”

“No need. I am hungry and will have a bowl of porridge here before bringing them back.”

“Alright.” This time, Qiao Nan prepared two bowls of porridge without waiting for Zhai Sheng’s orders, one for Zhai Sheng and one for herself.

She did not prepare a bowl of porridge for herself yesterday. In the end, Zhai Sheng looked at her without any expression and said, “Do you want to stare at me while I eat?”

Qiao Nan found it to be awkward too, so she had a bowl of porridge with Zhai Sheng.

Qiao Nan felt very satisfied and contented after finishing the bowl of shredded chicken porridge. As expected, it was wonderful and fortunate to be well-fed. “Brother Zhai, I have put the porridge into the pot. It is all thanks to you that my dad and I get to savor such good food again.”

“No worries. I might have to trouble you with my meals these few days. We should help each other.” Zhai Sheng took the pot of porridge with him as if it was as light as a cotton ball.

Chapter 147: Parents Always Have Good Intentions

Looking at Zhai Sheng who was leaving with the porridge, Qiao Nan kept feeling something was not right. However, Zhai Sheng looked so calm and composed that Qiao Nan did not feel that he was lying.

“Gee, I forgot to tell Brother Zhai again. On the other hand, it is also uncertain whether the method is workable.” At the thought of her owing Zhai Sheng 1,500 yuan, Qiao Nan’s pretty and fresh-looking face revealed uneasiness all over.

After a sigh, Qiao Nan scooped the remaining chicken porridge from Zhai Sheng into a thermal food container, leaving not a single drop for Qiao Zijin. Thereafter, she left for the hospital.

At the smell of the extremely fragrant chicken porridge, Qiao Zijin, who was so hungry, swallowed her saliva a few times. “Nan Nan, is there any porridge left at home?”

She did not believe Qiao Nan only cooked her father’s portion and that there was no extra portion.

Strangely, when she was home yesterday—not to mention shredded chicken porridge—she did not even see a single chicken feather.

“No,” Qiao Nan replied to Qiao Zijin as she fed Qiao Dongliang the porridge. “Dad’s health is weaker. I did not cook much. The portion is just enough for him. If you want to eat, you can cook by yourself when you are back.”

“...” Qiao Zijin pursed her lips. Qiao Nan seemed to be implying that she was only concerned about food and not her father. “How do I cook this?” Shredded chicken porridge... She was uncertain whether she would be able to make a pot of porridge.

“Zijin, go home and rest. Nan Nan will take care of me during the day. You can come and take over Nan Nan at night.” After Qiao Dongliang finished the porridge and drank some water, he seemed to be in much better spirits.

“It’s me again tonight?!” Qiao Zijin stomped her feet. “Dad, I have looked after you for two nights in a row. Why don’t we have Nan Nan stay over for tonight?”

To Qiao Zijin, who had never missed a night of sleep, staying awake overnight was an extremely painful affair.

Furthermore, whenever Qiao Zijin was able to grab a rare opportunity to nap, she would always be awakened by other people’s movement in the ward. Qiao Dongliang was not the only patient in the ward. As such, Qiao Zijin did not even manage to have a full hour of uninterrupted sleep throughout the night.

“Dad, don’t worry. Tomorrow... I will be here again tomorrow night.”

Qiao Zijin was a little afraid of Qiao Dongliang now. If this was how her father expressed his love and care for her, she would rather let Qiao Nan have this love and care. It was too much of a torture.

Her mother's idea did not work at all. Her father's reaction was not what she wanted!

“Are you not willing to?” Qiao Dongliang turned his head and looked at Qiao Zijin with his dark, deep eyes. “If you are not willing to, let Nan Nan stay behind, then.”

“No, it's not that I'm unwilling to.” Qiao Zijin was bitter and was close to tears.

When did her father become so unreasonable? She was tired but could not even rest for a night.

“It's good that you're willing to. You must be tired since you stayed overnight yesterday. Go home and have a good sleep. Come again tonight.” Qiao Dongliang nodded his head.

“...” Qiao Zijin took a deep breath and asked as she opened her dry mouth, “Dad, then what do I eat when I go back?”

Qiao Nan would definitely not leave any food for her. What about her breakfast, lunch, and dinner—the three meals? What would she eat when she reached home?

“Nan Nan, what is available at home?”

“Rice. As for vegetables, I think there is one cabbage left.”

“Alright, Zijin. When you are back, cook some rice and fry the vegetables. When your mom returns at night, ask her to buy some food for you.”

“...” Hearing this outcome, Qiao Zijin did not even have the energy to laugh. “Dad, then I will be leaving first.”

“Okay, be careful on the roads.”

When Qiao Zijin was present, it was not appropriate for Qiao Nan to say certain things. Hence, after Qiao Zijin left, Qiao Nan said, “Dad, I can swap with her tonight.”

“Are you feeling sorry for your sister?” Qiao Dongliang’s stiff expression turned into a smile.

“...” Could she ask her father to pretend as if she had not said those words?

Feeling sorry for Qiao Zijin? It was more like she was concerned about her own father.

The result of putting her father under Qiao Zijin’s care was that he had to undergo a second surgery. Fortunately, Brother Zhai was around at that time and was sharp enough to realize that her father’s condition was not right. Otherwise, she did not know what would have happened.

“Your sister has been spoiled by your mom. If I still do not think of a way to change her character, she will become like your mom,” Qiao Dongliang said with deep thoughts. “I can’t possibly let her cause harm to the whole family, could I?”

“?” Feeling puzzled, Qiao Nan raised her eyebrows.

“For the sake of two sets of new clothing, Zijin let your mom worked overnight for a month. Your sister was not concerned about your mom at all, and neither did she help your mom with the work. Of course, your mom deserved it. But your sister’s attitude is not right. Your sister has a sweet tongue but a bitter heart. She can bluff people for a while but not for the rest of her life.” The character of Qiao Zijin, his elder daughter, had gone astray.

“Oh...” After a long time, Qiao Nan then responded without expressing much feeling.

She was still puzzled by the change in her father who suddenly seemed like he wanted to torture Qiao Zijin. It was similar to how her mother tortured her. In the end, after a long day of hassle, her father did it for Qiao Zijin’s sake.

That’s right. Her mother was totally heartless to her. But her father could not do that to Qiao Zijin.

“Looking at the situation, Sister looked like she was about to cry. Dad, whether my words sound good or not, please remember what I say. My sister... What you did may cause her to resent you.” Qiao Zijin would not care if her father was doing it for her sake. She only wanted practical benefits.

“She won’t. Your sister is still young. When she is older, she will understand. No matter what, I’m still her dad. I can only blame myself for not interfering when your mom spoiled her in the past,

which resulted in her going astray. Even if she resents me, it will be temporary. Take it that I owe it to her.” Qiao Dongliang gave a long sigh.

How could Qiao Dongliang not know that his elder daughter was unhappy?

However, the daughter had to marry eventually. Zijin was already so heartless to her own family. Both Old Ding and he would not do anything to her as they were her biological parents. But would others treat her in the same way?

Qiao Dongliang was concerned that if Qiao Zijin continued with her ways, her marriage with her future husband would definitely suffer, and it would be huge suffering at that.

Children are debts owed by their parents. What could Qiao Dongliang do?

“Nan Nan, it is really hard for you in this matter. You are younger than your sister, but our family still had to rely on you for support when things happened.” After talking about the elder daughter’s matter, Qiao Dongliang looked at Qiao Nan. “Dad’s life was saved by you.”

“...” Qiao Nan, who had her head down, did not say anything. Somehow, Qiao Dongliang’s concern and persistence toward Qiao Zijin made her feel a little uneasy.

Nevertheless, although Qiao Nan could not forgive Qiao Dongliang’s attitude, she could understand it.

Unlike her, her father did not experience those pain and sufferings that she did. He certainly did not lose his hopes for Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi.

Chapter 148: Brain Damaged by Accident

Forget it. She could not say much about this too. Her father could interfere as he wished. She would have nothing to do with it. She could only do so much for her father.

Qiao Zijin was her father's daughter, and he could not stop caring for her. She could ignore her mother, but her father was still her father, and she could not stop caring for him too. It was, in fact, the same reasoning.

With these thoughts in mind, Qiao Nan felt a little better.

"Nan Nan, don't worry. Dad will return the money you borrowed."

"Dad, you..." Qiao Nan lifted her head and looked at Qiao Dongliang with hesitation. "Mom... What did she tell you?" How could it be? Given her mother's character, she would never admit to her wrongdoing. It was impossible that she would let the cat out of the bag on her own accord

"Your mom?" Qiao Dongliang sneered. "That old habit of your mother would probably stay with her for life.

He was hit by a car but had not fully lost his senses. On the day of the surgery, Qiao Dongliang was able to catch a little of what was happening.

Furthermore, when Qiao Zijin left for a while yesterday, the colleague who was present on the day of the surgery came to visit. The colleague did not hide any details and simply related to Qiao Dongliang the full string of events that happened on that day. Thus, Qiao Dongliang had an idea of the situation.

Judging from the situation, the colleague also guessed that Ding Jiayi was someone who was full of deceit.

If he did not voice this out, Old Qiao would be the one in the family who was kept in the dark.

After confirming that what he heard that day was true, that it was neither his imagination nor dream, Qiao Dongliang did not sleep at all last night.

At the thought of Ding Jiayi borrowing money from his comrades behind his back, he could not wait to beat a tooth off Ding Jiayi's mouth, leaving her speechless for the rest of her life.

This woman was getting more daring! She was really ill-disciplined and out of control!

“Dad, how do you feel?” Looking at Qiao Dongliang’s face turning black and his neck becoming red with rage, Qiao Nan was shocked. “Dad, do you feel unwell? Should we call the doctor? Please don’t bite the bullet!”

Qiao Dongliang regained his senses and managed to suppress the rage in his heart. “It’s nothing. I was just angered by your mom. Nan Nan, how much money do we owe others for my sickness this time? Whom did you borrow from?”

Even his surgery fees were borrowed by his younger daughter. He heard from his colleague that Old Ding only knew how to sit on the ground, crying and lamenting that she was penniless. Qiao Dongliang could not help feeling utterly disappointed.

His family did not have money, but did they not have anything else?

If he were in her shoes—if Old Ding encountered a similar accident—he would definitely be willing to sacrifice everything, including selling his house, to cough out the medical fees at the fastest possible speed.

“I borrowed 1,500 yuan from Brother Zhai.”

“Zhai? That guy from last time?” After Qiao Dongliang realized who ‘Brother Zhai’ was, he was stunned. The status of the Zhai family was above the Lee family. Qiao Dongliang always felt that his family was unworthy to have any connections or relations with the Zhai family.

“Yes.”

“How did you know Zhai Sheng? Why would he lend you such a large sum of money? Nan Nan, we can’t do things that put others in a difficult position.” Qiao Dongliang regretted immediately after he said that. “Forget it. You are not wrong in this matter. 1,500 yuan, right? When Dad recovers, I will think of a way to repay the money.”

If not for his sake, Nan Nan would not have done this.

“Did you write an IOU for him?”

“I did.” But Brother Zhai would not accept.

When Brother Zhai was back, the first thing Qiao Nan did was to write and pass him an IOU. However, he tore it on the spot.

Zhai Sheng had said, “The monk can run away, but the temple won’t run with him.” He was not afraid that Qiao Nan would not repay the debt. To put it bluntly, even if Qiao Nan was not able to pay him back, he would still have his means to ensure she paid back the money if he wanted to.

Given the Zhai family’s power and status, it was natural for Qiao Nan to believe him. If she dared to default on the loan, the Zhai family could just use a little of their means to make her land in jail for a few years because of the 1,500 yuan.

In the face of absolute power and authority, what was the use of a small piece of IOU?

Qiao Nan felt that Zhai Sheng’s words made sense. Furthermore, she never intended to default on the loan. It was fine to scrap the IOU, then.

After Qiao Dongliang communicated with Qiao Nan, the father and daughter pair seemed to have more to talk about now than before.

Meanwhile, in the Qiao family, Ding Jiayi was finally home after work and she found Qiao Zijin crying on the floor. “Mom, is Dad’s brains damaged by the accident? He kept asking me to stay overnight to take care of him, whereas Qiao Nan could come home and sleep. On what basis could he do that? I’m also a human being. I’m tired too. Both Qiao Nan and I are his daughters. At most, I can take turns with Qiao Nan to stay overnight on alternate days. Why am I always the one who has to stay overnight? Now, my day and night routines are overturned. If this becomes a habit, what should I do when I go back to school?”

After staying up for two nights, Qiao Zijin was haggard and felt that it was hard on her.

Initially, when Qiao Dongliang’s condition was more critical, Qiao Zijin was nervous and did not feel that much.

But now, although Qiao Dongliang’s injury was still serious, his spirits and energy were improving day by day. Qiao Zijin could no longer tolerate the hard work of staying overnight.

“Mom, look, these are the clothes that I’ve changed into for the past two days. Qiao Nan is so lazy. She has not washed the clothes for me for two days. It’s been hard for me to take care of Dad overnight. When I came back, don’t mention food, I didn’t even have a mouthful of water to drink. I had to cook for myself, and there was only rice and cabbage left. Mom, do you still dote on me?”

With so many things happening, Qiao Zijin felt that she had suffered a lot.

At this moment, Qiao Zijin had a *déjà vu* that she was back to when she was just a three-year-old. At that time, her mother just became pregnant with Qiao Nan. As her mother thought that she was pregnant with a son, Qiao Zijin’s status in the family plummeted. She had nary a chance to enjoy all the good food, drink and toys in the family. Moreover, her mother kept brainwashing her to take good care of her younger brother in the future and not let him get bullied by others.

No, she did not want to return to that time!

Most people had a vague memory of what happened when they were a three-year-old. However, Qiao Zijin’s memory of that year’s events was particularly clear.

“Don’t cry, don’t cry. When you cry, Mom’s heart goes out to you.” Ding Jiayi quickly helped Qiao Zijin wipe away her tears. “Qiao Nan is disobedient and refuses to listen. Mom will discipline her for you in the future. No issue, it’s just two sets of clothes. Mom will wash them for you later. By the way, have you taken your meal?”

“I have eaten but did not eat well. I’m also not full.” This was the first time Qiao Zijin cooked rice at home, and it was not cooked well. As for the highly difficult task of frying the vegetables... Qiao Zijin really could not accomplish it.

Qiao Zijin cried as she ate the rice and vegetables she cooked.

“Mom will buy you a big chicken drumstick later to give you more nutrition. There’s cooked food available for sale outside.” After hearing what Qiao Zijin said, Ding Jiayi’s heart went out to Qiao Zijin even more.

“Mom, your prediction is not accurate. I was clearly the first person whom Dad saw when he woke up, but I keep feeling that he treats Qiao Nan better than he does me. I wanted to let Qiao Nan stay overnight to look after Dad today, but he disagreed.”

Chapter 149: A Belly of Evil Fury

“I will talk to your dad about this.” Patting Qiao Zijin’s back, Ding Jiayi made huge efforts before she could calm Qiao Zijin down. “This time, your dad was probably knocked out of his senses. How can he be so biased? Qiao Nan is her daughter, but that doesn’t mean you are not. Don’t worry, Mom’s here. Mom will not let anyone bully you.”

“Mom, I’m definitely unable to keep vigil tonight no matter what. I might as well skip my trip to the hospital. Otherwise, I won’t be able to refuse Dad when he requests in front of others. It will seem as though Qiao Nan is the only one who is filial to Dad. I can’t lose my face in this way. Mom, why don’t we do this? You go to the hospital later and tell Dad that I have fallen sick, that I’m suddenly unwell and can’t go to the hospital. I’m not going tonight. Tomorrow—no, I’ll go the day after tomorrow!”

She had been keeping vigil by her father’s bedside for two nights. It should be Qiao Nan’s turn to do so now. It was only fair that each of them stayed overnight for two days so that neither would take advantage of the other.

“Alright, let’s do that.”

Hence, when Ding Jiayi told Qiao Dongliang that Qiao Zijin was not feeling well, Qiao Zijin was holding the lunch box bought by Ding Jiayi and munching on the big chicken drumstick.

“Zijin is not feeling well. Is she sick?” There was a flash of sarcasm in Qiao Dongliang’s eyes as he asked again.

“Yes, Zijin is so filial. She kept vigil by your bedside for two nights, and her body totally can’t take it anymore. Let Qiao Nan stay overnight by your side today and allow Zijin to rest for a few days.” Ding Jiayi sounded as if she had the final say. After she finished her words, Ding Jiayi turned her head toward Qiao Nan and said, “You’re already a grown-up. Don’t be such a lazy worm. When you are back home, wash all of your sister’s clothes! It’s been piled up there for two days! Don’t you find it a shame to ignore it?!”

When Ding Jiayi said this, the patient beside Qiao Dongliang laughed. “When I hear these words, somehow I feel that your elder daughter is made of tofu, whereas your younger daughter is made of steel.”

One stayed overnight for two days and needed a few days of rest, whereas the other stayed overnight for a few days but it did not matter. Oh dear, there was indeed a problem with this family's situation, judging from what his wife had told him.

This ward mate was also someone with a shrewd tongue. Ignoring Ding Jiayi's feelings, he simply asked, "Big brother, did you have a second marriage? Was it the first or the second wife who gave birth to the younger daughter? Wrong, my words are confusing. Your younger daughter has to wash your elder daughter's clothes, doesn't she? If she doesn't do it, she's a lazy worm. If the elder daughter doesn't wash them, it's because she is unwell. Big brother, what kind of your situation is your family in?"

The ward mate felt that the Qiao family's situation was like a full-scale drama. It was too ridiculous.

It was also because Ding Jiayi was used to being unreasonable to Qiao Nan that she blurted out those words without giving any thoughts about how inappropriate they were.

Ding Jiayi's face turned pale. "I'm her biological mother!"

"Oh, I really can't tell. My eyes are bad. My eyes are bad, indeed."

"Shut up!" Qiao Dongliang subjected to the saying that dirty linen should not be aired in public, but Ding Jiayi's tyrannical character was simply an embarrassment in front of others. Qiao Dongliang could not stop her even if he wanted to. His face was flustered with shame. "Since Zijin is unwell, let her rest then. She does not need to come for the next few days. But Nan Nan's health is not any better than Zijin's. In this case, when Zijin is resting these few days, you will keep vigil by my bedside. Nan Nan, go back and take care of yourself."

"No, I still have to work!" Ding Jiayi screamed in shock.

"If you can't, let Zijin come." Pick one out of the two options. There was no room for negotiation!

Regarding whether Qiao Zijin was really unwell, Qiao Dongliang clearly knew the truth.

Ding Jiayi wanted to spoil her?

Fine!

In that case, Ding Jiayi would stay overnight. No matter how hard it was, Ding Jiayi had to endure this. He needed to let Ding Jiayi know that she had to pay the price for spoiling her daughter.

Qiao Nan only took it as Qiao Dongliang worrying about Qiao Zijin and wanting to pull Qiao Zijin's character, which had strayed, back to the right path.

In fact, Qiao Dongliang had been bearing an enormous fury in his heart ever since the car accident. He was unhappy that there was no opportunity for an outburst.

However, he could not say this in front of his younger daughter. It was because of this fury in his heart that he was so persistent and blunt in handling these matters.

“Old Qiao, what's wrong with you? You seem to be possessed. How can you be so unreasonable?” Ding Jiayi was extremely crossed. No wonder Qiao Zijin lamented to her that Old Qiao's brain was seemingly damaged by the car accident. Old Qiao did not use to have such a temper.

“Alright, there is no need to have any reason. You are the ancestor. In short, make your choice. It is either you or Zijin tonight. Nan Nan, it is late. Go home when the sun is still up.” If Old Ding could not bear to let Zijin undergo hardship, then he would insist on not tiring out their younger daughter.

At the critical juncture, his life was saved by the younger daughter. If Old Ding dared to bully Nan Nan in front of him again, she must also seek his permission first!

It was a rare occasion to see her father being so insistent. Qiao Nan was quite shocked.

Qiao Nan was no longer the goody-two-shoes she used to be. Of course, she was willing to listen to Qiao Dongliang. “Dad, Mom, I shall go back first then.”

At this moment, Qiao Nan already did not care what the reason behind Qiao Dongliang's behavior was. Even if her father did it for the sake of Qiao Zijin and her mother, there was only one word that could describe her feelings when she saw her mother and Qiao Zijin being constantly forced to concede: cool!

True enough, the only person in the family who could subdue her mother and Qiao Zijin was her father.

“You!” At the sight of Qiao Nan leaving, Ding Jiayi wanted to use violence to physically restrain Qiao Nan so that she would initiate to stay behind and keep Qiao Dongliang company.

At the sight of this, Qiao Dongliang smashed Ding Jiayi’s hands with his pillow without saying a word. Anyway, the dirty linen had already been aired in public. There was no difference to let others see one or two more ugly scenes. He did, not, care!

“Ding Jiayi, let me warn you. Nan Nan bears the surname of Qiao and belongs to my Qiao family. Don’t you dare hurt her again!” At the thought of what happened a year ago—Qiao Nan was malnourished and her ears had a big gash from Ding Jiayi’s wring—Qiao Dongliang simply lifted a cup. “The next thing I throw will not be just a pillow. Don’t think that I don’t have a way with you now that I’m lying in bed and can’t get up.”

Qiao Dongliang, who used to be in the army, did not have many talents but was very good at throwing and aiming.

In the presence of outsiders, Qiao Dongliang had already made himself clear. Ding Jiayi also did not want to lose face. She was so embarrassed that she could not lift her head and could only watch helplessly as Qiao Nan left with style.

After Qiao Nan left, Ding Jiayi then said spitefully, “Old Qiao, what you did was really...”

“Was really what? There’s still time. I’ll give you one more chance. Go home and ask Zijin to come. Otherwise, you will stay here.” Qiao Dongliang’s expression was cold, fully displaying the attitude that there was no room for negotiation.

Ding Jiayi was silenced by Qiao Dongliang’s words. She could not say a word.

In the end, Ding Jiayi sat down. She did not look at Qiao Dongliang. She was silent but also did not leave. Obviously, she would not let Qiao Zijin come.

Qiao Dongliang sneered as he lied in bed and rested with his eyes closed.

Ding Jiayi was correct in one matter. Qiao Dongliang was not possessed by evil. His belly was just full of the fury of hell!

Chapter 150: Brother Zhai was Angry

Qiao Dongliang had a belly of fire with no outlet to vent. For the time being, he could only be like an invalid who lied in bed without moving. Yet, Ding Jiayi was foolish enough to bump herself against the opening of the gunfire. If Qiao Dongliang did not spit at Ding Jiayi, who else could he spit at?

Qiao Dongliang was silent. Ding Jiayi was unhappy as well. The couple simply remained silent and ignored each other.

In the Qiao's residence, Qiao Zijin was a little surprised when she saw that the person who came back was Qiao Nan.

However, when Qiao Nan was back, she did not ask Qiao Zijin to go to the hospital to keep vigil. Qiao Zijin simply kept quiet. She did not even ask why Ding Jiayi was not back. "Nan Nan, it is already so late, go cook something. Help me wash the clothes too. I'm so tired."

When Qiao Nan was back, Qiao Zijin felt that Qiao Nan should do all the household chores and she could finally rest.

"I'm indeed hungry." Qiao Nan did not expect Qiao Zijin to cook a meal for her. To put it badly, given Qiao Zijin's character, even if Qiao Zijin cooked for her, she would not dare to eat them as she was afraid that Qiao Zijin might poison her.

Qiao Nan cooked rice, then cut the cabbage and fried a plate of it. After bringing them to the table, she began to have her meal.

Qiao Zijin knitted her brows with disdain but did not say much. "Nan Nan, where is my rice?"

"In the kitchen. Take it yourself." Qiao Nan said without lifting her head.

Swiftly, Qiao Nan finished her meal. She washed her cutlery, cleaned herself up, and went to bed. She did not converse with Qiao Zijin throughout the entire process.

Qiao Zijin was extremely bothered by this attitude of Qiao Nan.

After painstakingly finishing her meal, Qiao Zijin's eyes swirled with thoughts as she looked at the clothes changed by Qiao Nan. She took the dirty clothes she had just changed out of and threw them together with that of Qiao Nan.

She did not believe that after she did this, Qiao Nan would still pick out her clothes one by one and asked her to wash them herself.

After further consideration, Qiao Zijin simply poured some well water onto both of their clothes to wet them thoroughly.

After she did this, Qiao Zijin then returned to her bedroom. She turned on her fan and fell asleep after much difficulty.

"Zijin." Early in the morning, Ding Jiayi was back from the hospital. She was so busy that she directly shouted for Qiao Zijin.

"Mom, you're back." Qiao Zijin was full of energy after a good night's sleep. "Mom, are you going to work?"

"Yes. Hurry, go make some food for me," Ding Jiayi said as she changed her clothes.

"Okay." Qiao Zijin recalled that there were still some leftover rice and vegetables cooked by Qiao Nan yesterday. She helped Ding Jiayi scoop a bowl of cold rice, poured some hot water into it before bringing it to the table.

Ding Jiayi was so hungry and anxious that she simply lifted the bowl of rice porridge and drank it without a care in the world. She did not even stop to take a breath. "Zijin, there is no one by your dad's side now. Hurry and go."

Qiao Zijin had a burst of panic. "How about tonight, then? I can't possibly keep watch during the day and continue to do so at night, can I?" She was most afraid of keeping vigil overnight now.

“...” Looking at Qiao Zijin’s attitude, Ding Jiayi also felt depressed. “Alright, I will keep your dad company tonight. Don’t be afraid.”

“Mom, I will accompany Dad during the day, and you will take care of him at night. Then, what does Qiao Nan do?”

“Your dad... Forget it, I don’t wish to say it again. I’m full of anger at the mention of it.” Ding Jiayi changed her shoes and left for work hurriedly. She did not have time to tell Qiao Zijin anything more.

At the sight of Ding Jiayi leaving, Qiao Zijin stomped her feet unhappily. Her father’s brains were really damaged by the car accident. His temper had also become very eccentric. He was not good to her and did not even listen to her mother’s words anymore.

“You’re awake.” Seeing Qiao Nan coming out of the bedroom, Qiao Zijin said unhappily, “You’re happy now. Dad only dotes on you and doesn’t dote on me anymore. I will be going to the hospital to take care of Dad later. Mom will do so at night, so you really have no worries.”

“Dad only dotes on me?” Qiao Nan was both amused and angry. “We all know in our heart whether Dad really dotes on me alone. If I am the only one Dad really dotes on, then I will certainly be very happy!”

Her mother behaved as though Qiao Zijin was her only daughter, yet she did not allow her to hope for her father to do so—to treat her as his only daughter.

“Wishful thinking! I’m Dad’s elder daughter. It is impossible for him not to dote on me!” True enough, after hearing Qiao Nan’s words, Qiao Zijin would not concede defeat and quickly retorted. “I won’t talk to you anymore. I’m going to the hospital. Dad must be yearning to see me. That’s why he asked me to take care of him. Fine, you can stay at home and rest.”

After deliberately leaving such a sarcastic remark, Qiao Zijin left for the hospital to take care of Qiao Dongliang.

“Sick in the mind!” Qiao Nan intended to wash the clothes when she saw Qiao Zijin’s clothes intertwining with hers.

Qiao Nan's face was expressionless. Without a word, she gave another disgusted look before picking out Qiao Zijin's clothes one by one and threw them into the face basin.

After separating Qiao Zijin's clothes from hers, Qiao Nan started to wash them. After washing, she wanted to hang them up to dry.

As she was holding her pure white little *** and hanging it up, she heard footsteps by her side.

As Qiao Nan's held her personal white little ***, she saw Zhai Sheng, whose straight face exuded a sense of uprightness. "Brother Zhai? Why did you come?"

"Erm..." Zhai Sheng looked away uneasily. However, he could not help giving a few more stares at the little white cloth in Qiao Nan's hands. "I saw that the main door was not closed, so I came in. You go ahead and finish drying the laundry first. I will go inside and sit for a while."

Before Zhai Sheng could come to his senses, he was already in the living room and had found himself a place to sit.

Zhai Sheng's head hung downward. Then, he extended his right hand and murmured to himself, "Very small." It seemed to be smaller than his palm.

"Brother Zhai." After drying the clothes, Qiao Nan walked in calmly.

Compared to his uneasiness and weird imagination, Qiao Nan's calm manner was unexpected by Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng secretly knitted his brows. "Next time, be careful when you are home alone. Lock the main door properly. In addition, it's best not to dry such a private and personal item in front of the members of the opposite gender in the future."

"My sister just left for the hospital. Most likely, she did not close the door properly on purpose to spite me." Qiao Nan sighed. Who would have done this except for Qiao Zijin? She was really childish.

Seeing that Qiao Nan did not seem to get the main point, Zhai Sheng reminded her again, "Qiao Nan, have you gotten your ID card? You are considered an adult now, and you must be responsible for your own actions. It would not be appropriate to show outsiders certain private and personal items so easily."

He said this at the thought of Qiao Nan being so unreserved in front of others and seemingly did not mind letting other men see those white little *** of hers. Moreover, the reaction and thoughts of those men when they saw these private items of Qiao Nan were also an issue.