

RTAMM 1561

Chapter 1561: Shameless

“But I have one question. It costs money to have a good education.” Money. Did she even have it? Did she have enough?

If raising a child well was just a matter of talk, would she have forced Qiao Nan to work part-time while she was still in junior high school just so that she could pay for her elder daughter’s school fees? It was exactly because studying was too expensive and having two children studying was too heavy of a burden that she had made such a decision, offending that foolish girl Qiao Nan.

Without what happened then, her relationship with Qiao Nan would not have deteriorated to such a bad state, so much so that Qiao Nan no longer recognized her as her mother.

“...” In the face of such a realistic problem, Qiao Zijin gritted her teeth. “I don’t, but Qiao Nan does! Mom, you also know that Qiao Nan struck a fortune! A huge one! The money that Qiao Nan has in her hands is more than we’ll ever have in a few lifetimes! No matter what, Qiao Nan is still Ying Ying’s aunt. Even if Qiao Nan were to raise ten Ying Ying, she would still have loads of money leftover!”

After learning that Qiao Nan had such a huge fortune, Qiao Zijin had been so angry that she had been unable to sleep for three nights. Was it not enough that she was the Minister of Foreign Affairs? Now, she was even filthy rich! Even Chen Jun said that he could not tell how much Qiao Nan had on hand now. Qiao Nan could very well be one of the richest invisible tycoons in the whole of China!

“Mom, do you not know? Ten million yuan, ten million yuan! She just donated it out! And do you know who Qiao Nan donated it to? She started a foundation specially to support lonely old people to let them live out the rest of their lives comfortably. How about me? We’re her relatives, but we’re living such hard lives. If she was really so kind, why didn’t she come and help her relatives first? Mom, don’t tell me you’re still happy that she rented you a house in the capital. I’m telling you that Qiao Nan has many houses in her possession. And those are big houses. These houses are all hers, but she didn’t even tell you about it, much less let you into her houses. She’s so heartless! Are you still thinking about her?”

The more she said, the angrier Qiao Zijin got. After a while, Qiao Zijin started shouting.

She wanted to get remarried too, and she knew that it would be inconvenient to have her daughter with her. But she had no other choice. She had to keep Zhou Ying by her side. Zhou Zheng wanted her to get divorced without receiving any alimony or marital assets, but Qiao Zijin refused to do so. Knowing that the Zhou family did not favor boys over girls, Qiao Zijin knew that they loved their granddaughter, Zhou Ying, greatly.

Thus, Qiao Zijin made use of Zhou Ying and asked for a huge sum of alimony. Only then was she willing to get a divorce. Otherwise, since Zhou Ying was her daughter, she would bring Zhou Ying away with her.

She had not expected that she would lose this game. Initially, the two Zhou elders were reluctant to give up their granddaughter. Even if Qiao Zijin had been at fault, they were still willing to give Qiao Zijin a sum of money. But the amount of money that the Zhou family was willing to part with was far from what Qiao Zijin demanded. Seeing how Qiao Zijin's attitude was worsening, Zhou Zheng was furious. Since Qiao Zijin was Zhou Ying's mother, Zhou Zheng pushed Zhou Ying over to Qiao Zijin's side without hesitation. "You hardly spent any time at home in the past, so you were never able to spend much time with your daughter. It's rare that you're willing to have your daughter by your side. It's just as well. Make it up to your daughter and let her feel how it's like to always have her mother by her side!"

Had Qiao Zijin really thought that she held the upper hand over the Zhou family because of her daughter and could get away with anything? Where did she get such a naive idea?

In this way, when Qiao Zijin finally returned from her trance, she had not only gotten her divorce from Zhou Zheng but also Zhou Ying's custody.

After struggling for so many months, other than taking her daughter with her, Qiao Zijin had really been chased out of the Zhou family with nothing to her name. From then on, she had nothing to do with the Zhou family.

Qiao Zijin had no money but still had to raise her daughter. How was she going to do it? She could only think of giving in to others. She wanted Chen Jun to marry her, but Chen Jun had only been playing with Qiao Zijin. He had wasted a huge sum of money on Qiao Zijin when he was young but had gained nothing from it at all. Now, he would just take it that Qiao Zijin was repaying her debt to him.

Why would he get a divorce from his wife and wreck his family for such a foolish woman like Qiao Zijin?

Not wanting Qiao Zijin to continue bothering him, Chen Jun thought of the perfect plan. He decided to tell Qiao Zijin about Qiao Nan's enviable circumstance. Compared to him, Chen Jun knew that Qiao Zijin hated Qiao Nan much more.

To push Qiao Zijin further, Chen Jun specially gave Qiao Zijin a plane ticket to the capital on the account of their relationship, knowing that Qiao Zijin herself did not have much money.

Knowing that Qiao Nan was living the high life now, it was not only Qiao Zijin who was unhappy. Chen Jun was the most unhappy. Initially, he had worked together with Wang Yang to chase Qiao Nan. In the end, when he finally got in touch with Qiao Nan, the playboy Chen Jun felt for the first time in his life that there was a woman whom he was willing to be long-term boyfriend to, and perhaps marriage was not such a ridiculous thought either. At least when he faced Qiao Nan, he felt that life was worth living.

He did not know why, but the moment he saw Qiao Nan, Chen Jun immediately felt that Qiao Nan was a suitable candidate for marriage and would be a woman who would take good care of her family. Every time he thought about getting married to Qiao Nan, Chen Jun felt a warm fuzzy feeling within his chest. But Qiao Nan never even bothered about him.

Nothing that happened afterward was anything that Chen Jun had expected. He saw Qiao Nan marry Zhai Sheng and then move to the capital. Chen Jun himself did not know why he had never given up his obsession over Qiao Nan after so many years. He even spent money keeping track of everything that Qiao Nan did.

He learned that Old Lin had paved the way for Qiao Nan, and that Old Lin had left his entire fortune to Qiao Nan alone. He also knew that the intelligent Qiao Nan was a shareholder of the Tian Corporation. Chen Jun suppressed something inwardly. It only accumulated as time passed, almost to the point of explosion.

At this time, Qiao Zijin appeared in front of Chen Jun.

Although he was angry, Chen Jun did not want to go against Qiao Nan, for fear of backlash from the Zhai family. After being punished once, he was not going to be a fool a second time. Otherwise, he was not worthy to be a Chen. At this time, Qiao Zijin was Chen Jun's best choice.

When Ding Jiayi asked about how Qiao Zijin was planning to raise Zhou Ying, the question was not about whether Qiao Zijin was going to raise her child well. The question was where she was going

to get the money to do so. Without money, how was she going to raise her child? However, Qiao Zijin was so shameless as to directly mention Qiao Nan.

Chapter 1562: Raising Us Up

She said it as if Qiao Nan deserved to be raising her daughter up. She sounded so righteous and confident that it made people want to laugh and cry at the same time.

Upon hearing that Qiao Nan was so rich, Ding Jiayi was shocked. “Where did you hear this from? Are you sure?” Was Qiao Nan really that rich?

“You don’t have to care where I heard this from. You just have to know that this is the truth. Qiao Nan doesn’t lack money. Ying Ying can call her aunt and ask her to provide some money so that Ying Ying can continue to go to school. That is her role as an aunt. Mom, I’m bringing Ying Ying over to find you. Help us prepare a room.”

After saying this, Qiao Zijin hung up the call as she was worried that Ding Jiayi would refuse. After making this call, Qiao Zijin encouraged herself and squatted down. “Ying Ying, Mom will bring you to the capital so that you can live there in the future. Don’t worry. Mom will make sure that you lead a life better than before, just like a princess.”

Qiao Nan was so rich and had so many houses. She even heard that many of them were villas. It wasn’t difficult for her to let Ying Ying lead the life of a princess. If Qiao Nan dared to reject her, she would dare to blow up the matter and let everyone know that Qiao Nan was one of the heartless rich. After becoming the country’s minister, she didn’t even acknowledge her relatives anymore.

Zhou Ying blinked before smiling sweetly. “Okay, Mom will let me be a little princess.” Zhou Ying didn’t find these words unfamiliar. When they were at the Zhou family, Father Zhou and Mother Zhou had told her this as well.

“...” Ding Jiayi was dumbfounded when she heard the beep sound from the phone for the third time. Her house wasn’t big and there were only two rooms. She was already living in the bigger room. The smaller room was especially small and couldn’t even fit a bed nicely. As such, she used it to put her things.

Now, her eldest daughter was bringing her granddaughter over to seek refuge. She even asked her to prepare a room for them. Ding Jiayi didn't know what to say. She couldn't possibly let out her bigger room and squeeze in the smaller room, right? They had to know that Qiao Nan had specially rented this house for her!

Ding Jiayi didn't feel that her life was getting better. After her eldest daughter's call, the matter became more complicated and harder to resolve. Ding Jiayi couldn't stop her now even if she wanted to. Qiao Zijin was probably already on the plane to the capital.

Qiao Nan didn't know that the big trouble Zhai Sheng sent away had returned with small trouble again. What was more ruthless was that after knowing all the things that she owned now, Chen Jun felt that if she hadn't rejected him back then, everything on Qiao Nan's hands would also be his now.

Man and wife were one. After Qiao Nan became the minister, could Elder Lin have made some special arrangements for him, the husband of Qiao Nan, before he passed away?

Stopping one from getting rich was akin to killing one's parents.

Chen Jun felt that it was right for him to take revenge on Qiao Nan by sending Qiao Zijin over to trouble her. This was what Qiao Nan owed him.

Things were always so coincidental. If these people unfavorable to Qiao Nan were crowded together, wouldn't they bring Qiao Nan a devastating catastrophe?

On the first day Qiao Zijin brought Zhou Ying to the capital, of course, they moved into Ding Jiayi's house. When she saw the small room that Ding Jiayi had prepared for her and her daughter, Qiao Zijin's face turned ugly and Zhou Ying cried. "Mom, I want to go home. The room in my house is big, and it's filled with pretty dolls. This house is too small and ugly. It's worse than the princess room at home. I want to go home and find grandpa and grandma. They wouldn't let me stay in such a broken room."

Qiao Zijin exhaled. "Mom, it is fine for me to suffer for the time being. However, Ying Ying was brought up well by the Zhou family. I've said before that the reason why I brought Ying Ying over to the capital is so that she could lead a good life. Let's do this. Your room's big, so I won't squeeze with you. Let Ying Ying sleep with you tonight. I'll find Qiao Nan tomorrow and would definitely not let you squeeze with Ying Ying again. How about that?"

She was going to bring her daughter to stay in a villa tomorrow. A villa in the capital!

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Upon hearing Zhou Ying crying, Ding Jiayi felt a headache. Over these years, Ding Jiayi liked Zhou Ying. Once her granddaughter cried, she would feel heartache. The problem was that ever since Qiao Nan was three years old, Ding Jiayi had let her take care of herself. Now that Qiao Zijin asked her to take care of her granddaughter, Ding Jiayi felt that she didn't have the capability and couldn't bear the suffering.

How would Ding Jiayi, a woman who had given birth to two daughters, not know how troublesome raising children could be?

After thinking for a while, Ding Jiayi gritted her teeth. "Let's do this. Just one night tonight. No matter what the results are tomorrow and no matter whether Qiao Nan agrees to you or not, I'll let you and Ying Ying sleep in my room. I'll stay in the smaller room for a night. This shall not be repeated tomorrow. If Ying Ying finds the rooms to be too small, then you'll have to solve the problem yourself."

Even after knowing that Qiao Nan might be rich, Ding Jiayi felt that Qiao Zijin's thoughts were overly optimistic. Qiao Nan wasn't that easy to talk to. Qiao Nan's identity as a minister might not be the absolute reason for them to control Qiao Nan.

Anyway, Ding Jiayi would definitely not involve herself in this matter. If she infuriated Qiao Nan, she might not even be able to guarantee the life she was leading now. If she didn't offend Qiao Nan, even without going out to work, her monthly allowance now was much higher than her salary at work in the past. She didn't have to pay the house rentals as well. She just had to think of ways to pass time every day. Life wasn't that bad.

"Also, let me give you a piece of advice. It's not wise to use hard tactics on Qiao Nan. She can be much ruthless than us." If it was another person who had married into the Zhai family and become the minister of foreign affairs, based on their family situation, how would Zijin dare to provoke the minister? She would probably hide to the side.

Qiao Zijin didn't say anything. She obviously didn't believe Ding Jiayi's words. Qiao Nan was now a minister. How would someone like her not want face? If she kicked up a fuss, Qiao Nan would lose face and this might even impact her future development adversely.

If she didn't have a good life, Qiao Nan didn't have to think about everything going smoothly as well. If she really infuriated her, not only would she want Qiao Nan to lose her job as a minister, but she would also think of ways to pry out the money in her hands so that it became hers.

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Of course, if Qiao Nan knew what was best for her and was willing to fulfill her request, then everyone was still relatives and they were still sisters. After all, she and her daughter could only have a good life if Qiao Nan led a good life, right?

Qiao Zijin had made up her mind at this time that not only was she going to pester Qiao Nan, but she was also prepared for Qiao Nan to provide for her and her daughter for life. Qiao Nan had to make sure that they led a good life.

Chapter 1563: She Was Rich

Whatever Qiao Nan used and ate, Qiao Zijin should have it the same. Schools that Qiao Nan's children attend could not be better than Zhou Ying's as well.

Since Qiao Zijin had made up her mind, Ding Jiayi didn't bother stopping her. She had made her decision to live a peaceful life. Qiao Nan had been the only one bearing her cost of living, so she wouldn't owe Qiao Zijin anything as a mother.

If Qiao Zijin insisted on seeking trouble, it couldn't be helped.

After clearing her thoughts, Ding Jiayi decided to forget about the mess and take a nap in her room.

Zhou Ying wasn't satisfied with her grandma's room. She hated the smell of Ding Jiayi's room. Unlike this place, her house in Ping Cheng always smelled nice. However, her mother asked her to bear with it for a while. She believed that her mother would bring her to a better place as long as she listened to her.

Qiao Zijin looked for Qiao Nan on the weekend, and Qiao Nan was at home. The three kids were home as well. When they heard that Qiao Nan's relative came to visit with a child, the Zhai family was surprised. "Relative? Which one? Did she give a name?"

Recalling her son's wedding with Qiao Nan, there weren't many relatives that participated on the bride's side. The sudden appearance of Qiao Nan's relative piqued Miao Jing's curiosity.

"I don't have many relatives." Qiao Nan frowned. It wouldn't be anyone from the Qiao family, and Ding Jiayi had cut ties with the Ding family. It's been two lives, yet she had no idea who her grandparents were.

Therefore, there was no way that her grandparents would find their way into the military and political compounds.

They wouldn't even recognize Ding Jiayi as their daughter, let alone Qiao Nan. She couldn't figure out who the relative was.

"She said that her surname was Qiao, and she was Minister Qiao's sister."

"..." The Zhai family was at a loss for words. How could Qiao Zijin have the nerve to show up as Qiao Nan's relative? It'd been years since they'd last met, and everyone thought that they would be living separate lives.

"Mom's sister?" Da Bao blinked his eyes. "Mom, do you have a sister?" Why had they never heard about their mysterious aunt? In fact, Da Bao had realized that their maternal grandma was never mentioned to them as well.

Due to Elder Lin and Elder Zhai, Da Bao had his guess that his grandma had passed away before they were born.

Before he could figure out the truth about his grandma, an aunt showed up out of nowhere. From Qiao Nan's expression, Da Bao could feel that his mother was rather uptight about his aunt's arrival.

Er Bao and San Bao exchanged glances; they could feel the atmosphere turning tense. This had never happened in their family. Who could this person be to wipe off the smiles of everyone's faces?

“Nan Nan, this is crazy. Let’s just ignore her.” Miao Jing didn’t want to speak of Qiao Zijin’s sordid history before the kids. Cheating as a married woman was something that Miao Jing could never accept.

When she heard the news, she imagined that she would murder Qiao Zijin if Qiao Zijin were her daughter.

It was something that would put everyone to shame!

Er Bao’s mouth was wide open as he realized that his aunt was up to no good. It was no wonder that his mom’s face sank when she arrived. After all, his mom would have told them about her if she was a nice person, and this wouldn’t be the first time that they’d heard of an aunt.

Da Bao glared at Er Bao, signaling him to cut the act. “Mom, do you want to tell us about her? You’ve always said that we shouldn’t be involved in adults’ conversations, but I think that we are old enough to make judgments now. We will not step into the situation, but I think we should at least be aware of it. I do have the confidence that you will settle everything, but I think we should be prepared for any potential trouble in school.”

They didn’t want to be defenseless if someone showed up and criticized their mother.

The kids were not as innocent as before, and they would like to prepare for any possible circumstances.

What if... what if it did happen?

Miao Jing glimpsed at Qiao Nan. “I don’t think it’s appropriate to bring her into the house, but we can’t have her stand in front of the gate all the time. Qiao Zijin really knows no shame. How about taking the conversation elsewhere? I know that you wouldn’t allow her to act up all the time, so don’t promise her anything.” Qiao Zijin always thought of herself as a queen, who could demand anything from others.

How obnoxious!

“Fine.” Qiao Nan stood up. She only carried a purse and left the car keys at home.

After Qiao Nan had left, the children gathered around Miao Jing, waiting for her to tell them about their 'aunt'.

Miao Jing had no intention of covering up Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi's ugly doings. If the kids weren't fond of Qiao Dongliang, Miao Miao even wanted to expose the entire Qiao family. She wanted the children to know about the kind of life their mother had lived before meeting their father.

Chapter 1564: As Good As Nothing

Thankfully, Miao Jing still left Qiao Dongliang with some dignity and talked mainly about Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin. As for Qiao Dongliang, if she could avoid it, she would. If they had no choice but to talk about it, she would just mention it briefly and pass over it.

At the same time that Er Bao and San Bao were enraged at how Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin treated their mother, they felt as though something was wrong. Only Da Bao, who had remained silent, realized it.

When Miao Jing finished speaking, San Bao bit on her lip. "Grandma, if my maternal grandma and auntie are so bad, then what about grandpa? What is grandpa doing?" When these two women were bullying her mother, she had only heard about how her mother had worked hard and that was when her father and master grandpa had helped her mother.

But no matter how they talked about it, there was always one person missing: their grandpa.

Miao Jing did not say anything ill of Qiao Dongliang but took San Bao's hands into her own and said, "You're still young. You don't understand. It's like how your mom would not help either of you if you and Er Bao start arguing. Rather, she would scold the both of you and get you two to reconcile. To Nan Nan, you are both precious to her. She can't possibly give up on either of you."

"That's not the same. Mom doesn't help either of us because Er Bao and I are only playing. Our relationship is superb! In the end, Mom always gets us to reconcile with each other. How about grandpa? Did grandpa get them to reconcile with each other? What did he do?" San Bao was dissatisfied with such a superficial answer.

Other than being happy with the intelligence of the three children, Miao Jing could only laugh sheepishly in response to the children's gazes that were full of curiosity. She would let the children figure out for themselves what her laugh meant. "It hasn't been easy for Nan Nan. There are some things that Nan Nan doesn't want to pursue anymore, so we don't want to talk about it in front of you three either. You three should understand that your grandpa treats you very well. Of course, he hasn't been bad to Nan Nan either, depending on who you compare him with. In that situation, if your grandpa did not help your mother at all, her life would have been much harder."

As much as she hated Qiao Dongliang and felt that he was an irresponsible father, Miao Jing still gave him credit where it was due and gave Qiao Dongliang a fair judgment.

It was the first time the three children heard about what had happened to their mother when she was younger, and they were all stunned. What was hardest for the three children to accept was that such a thing had happened to their own beloved mother!

Er Bao's face which was usually plastered with a smile was now extremely serious. He looked like how Da Bao and Zhai Sheng looked like normally, and his hand unwittingly clenched into a fist. Er Bao, who was now a junior high school student, was a righteous young man. At this time, one could see some parts of Zhai Sheng's posture and spirit in him.

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"Why does such a person still come to our house to find my mom?" Er Bao's voice was low. He was clearly enraged.

The moment Er Bao thought about how that grandma whom he had never met in his life forced his mother to work while studying just to provide for his elder aunt whose academic performance was obviously not as good as his mother's, Er Bao was so furious that he wanted to find someone for a fight to vent all the anger within him.

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Leaving school to work?

Ever since he was old enough to understand the world, he knew how much his mother loved to study, and even after becoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs, she would still spend at least two hours reading every day. Er Bao could not believe that his mother who had such a love for learning had almost lost the opportunity to pursue her studies. To his mother, it must have been excruciating.

When his mother was faced with such cruelty, she was about the same age as he was now. Thinking about how he had been raised so comfortably, Er Bao was even more enraged. “Grandma, is my maternal grandma really my mom’s mother?” Was there really such a biological mother in the world that would sacrifice the daughter who was gifted to let a daughter who clearly could not study?

No matter how biased she was, she had to be rational, right?

Miao Jing sighed. “I really didn’t want to tell you about this. In your mom’s heart, she probably hopes that she isn’t her biological mother either. If so, it would be much easier to accept everything that she went through.” But it was exactly because she was her biological mother that it was all even more frightening.

Nan Nan was left to struggle on her own. And to uphold their own reputations, Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin unhesitatingly smeared Nan Nan’s. Qiao Zijin had been the one who got into an early relationship, but the mother-daughter pair had forced Nan Nan to take the blame.

Qiao Nan had never mentioned all these ‘small’ matters to Miao Jing, but that did not mean that Miao Jing was ignorant of them.

At that time, Miao Jing had not known that Qiao Nan was dating her son. Purely out of her like of Qiao Nan as an elder, she had wanted to understand Qiao Nan further.

When Miao Jing found out what Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had done to Qiao Nan while she was still in high school, Miao Jing was completely speechless. Honestly, a part of Miao Jing’s affection for Qiao Nan was due to Qiao Nan’s experiences.

Before Miao Jing gained affection for Qiao Nan, she had met Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin, and at most, she felt sympathetic toward Qiao Nan. She pitied Qiao Nan for having such an unloving mother and such a selfish older sister. But once they got familiar with each other, Miao Jing felt that Qiao Nan was a really fine young lady, and immediately, Miao Jing’s sympathy turned into heartache.

But if Qiao Nan herself did not talk about these experiences, Miao Jing was not going to pick at those scars even if it was out of love.

Today, when her three grandchildren had asked her about it, Miao Jing had only said a little more. Otherwise, even she herself was on the verge of forgetting these events and would only remember that Qiao Nan's life had gotten better after leaving her mother, Ding Jiayi.

Ordinary people would only see how glorious Qiao Nan was today. Who could imagine that Qiao Nan had such a sad past and childhood?

"Thankfully, Dad appeared. Dad is Mom's Prince Charming. He rescued her when she was struggling the most." San Bao was conflicted. When her mother read her fairy tales when she was younger, she had always felt that fairy tales were fictional and could not possibly be true.

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She had never expected that fairy tales could happen in real life too. Her parents were such a couple!

She thought about how her mother was abused so badly by her biological mother that she was always hungry as a child. When her mother met her father, her mother was already malnourished. In an instant, the three children lost any affection for Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin, who had hurt their mother.

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Da Bao finally understood why his mother was so filial but had never mentioned their grandma in front of them. Having such a relative was as good as having none at all.

Chapter 1565: Asking For the Sky

Now that all these people who had treated his mother so badly in the past were starting to stick to her, Da Bao frowned uncomfortably. "Mom must be feeling terrible."

"That's right. When Nan Nan comes home later, if she doesn't mention it, don't ask her about it either. Find a way to coax her and lighten her mood." Miao Jing nodded in agreement. If that happened to her, she would feel uncomfortable too.

She recalled that she had gone out to hide the moment Qi Minlan brought Qiu Chenxi home as a guest in the past. She had been so foolish to just accept it as it was.

But after all, Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi were outsiders. She had accepted this mother-daughter pair reluctantly, but if she was unwilling to meet them, she could choose to hide outside. But Qiao Nan was different. One was her elder sister, and the other was her mother. Where could Qiao Nan hide from these two people? She would never be able to hide from them for her entire life.

While the three children, whose hearts ached for their mother, wished they could hug their mother, their mother was now sitting in a tea house. Qiao Nan looked at both Qiao Zijin and Zhou Ying, who were sitting in front of her.

The last time she came to the tea house, Qiao Zijin's attitude had been quite good and she had kept rather silent. But today, Qiao Zijin had reached her limit and her tone was sharp. After looking at her provocatively, Qiao Zijin burst out in dissatisfaction. "Qiao Nan, I really don't mean to say anything about you. But why don't you think about what your status is? If you really want to drink tea, why don't you find a nicer place? Why do you still come to such a shabby tea house? Aren't you afraid that other people will laugh at you? Even though my status is not as high as yours, I wouldn't even go to such a place like this in Ping Cheng. Places like this are always dirty. You'll get diarrhea if you eat anything here."

"Spit it out if you have anything to say. If you're really dissatisfied with this tea house, you have another choice. We'll find a quieter part of the park to chat. That works too." But in a place like that, there would be no tea to drink, and neither would there be any air-conditioning.

Qiao Zijin bit the corner of her lip and decided to give up. "Fine. Since you're my younger sister, I'll give in to you. Guests have to go along with their hosts. We'll stay here if you say so." She was no fool. How could she bring her daughter to sweat it out under the sun?

Qiao Zijin glanced at her daughter who was sitting next to her and started. "I'm here today to talk to you about a few things. Take note that I'm not here to ask for your approval. I've gotten a divorce from Zhou Zheng. From today onward, I'll bring Ying Ying to the capital and we'll live here. But you should know my situation well. Ying Ying and I need a place to stay. Remember. Our Ying Ying is used to having only the best. Our residence can't be small. If it's small, Ying Ying and I will feel claustrophobic."

"And also, my health is not too good. My sleep quality is quite poor, so it has to be quiet where I stay. It's best if there's no disturbance coming from upstairs or downstairs. Anyway, I will definitely

not accept a place like Mom's, which is small and noisy. Next, Ying Ying is still young and needs to continue her studies. Our Ying Ying will not go to a normal school. If there's nothing better, I guess she can settle for the school that the three children went to. Lastly, I can't do without any money. Either you recommend me a comfortable job with a high salary, or just give me a living allowance. I still have a daughter to raise after all."

Tussling Zhou Ying's hair, Qiao Zijin sighed and hinted. "It's not easy raising a child now. Even this hair tie that Ying Ying is using costs quite a lot, so our living allowance can't be that little. It has to be at least four or five thousand at the very least."

Qiao Zijin either kept her mouth shut or the moment she opened it, she immediately asked for an allowance that was a few times that of Ding Jiayi.

As Qiao Zijin went on with her monologue, Qiao Nan calmly sipped on her tea without cutting in or giving a response.

As such, Qiao Zijin was elated. "All right, that's all I have to say. Hurry and arrange all these for me. Especially for the house, Ying Ying and I have to move in today. It's too small over there at Mom's. Ying Ying and I tolerated it for a night, but we're definitely not going to do it again. You have quite a few houses on hand, don't you? Hurry and arrange something for me."

After hearing her mother's words, Zhou Ying looked straight at Qiao Nan.

Even though she had been influenced by Qiao Zijin, Zhou Ying knew that even if she wanted to live like a princess, it would all depend on whether the pretty auntie sitting in front of her was willing to provide for her. But looking at Qiao Nan's gaze, it did not seem like Qiao Nan was prepared to present them with such a gift. Even up until now, Zhou Ying had not dared to say hello to her auntie.

The slightly raised chin was the spitting image of Qiao Zijin's when she was younger. Qiao Nan sighed. This young lady was indeed Qiao Zijin's biological daughter.

She had heard that this child had been mainly raised by the Zhou family. Qiao Zijin had been busy enjoying her life as a young mistress, so she rarely paid any attention to her daughter. Even so, that arrogant and mysterious air of Zhou Ying was identical to the young Qiao Zijin's. Qiao Nan had to admit that genetics was indeed impressive.

“Did you hear what I said? Since there’s still so much time left today, hurry and get it arranged for me. By the way, I have time today. To avoid any trouble in the future, why don’t you just bring me and Ying Ying to all the houses you have and let us pick the one that we want? This way, it’ll save us a lot of trouble in case our tastes differ from yours.”

At the same time, she would be able to get a feel of how many houses Qiao Nan had in the capital.

One person could only stay in one house at any given point in time. Would it not be a waste since Qiao Nan would not be able to stay in all her houses? Instead of letting them go to waste, why not do something that would benefit everyone? She would stay in one of Qiao Nan’s houses and change the owner of that house.

Honestly, there was no use for Qiao Nan to own so many houses. She was not even being greedy. She wanted only one. She was just trying to help Qiao Nan out by staying in one.

“Ha, hahaha.” Qiao Nan’s laugh was a textbook laugh. It was just for Qiao Zijin to hear. “I was right. You were the most lucid while you were still married. What’s more, your IQ even increased. Unfortunately, once you got pregnant, you became dumb for three years. After having a baby, it seems as though the IQ that went up has come crashing down completely. You haven’t even been able to retain whatever knowledge you gained in university. All right. I’ll go get the bill. Did you like drinking this tea?”

She had known long ago about how shameless Qiao Zijin was, but she had not expected Qiao Zijin to dip to a new low!

Chapter 1566: You Can Try

The moment she opened her mouth, Qiao Zijin had not only asked for one of Qiao Nan’s exclusive villas or a single unit with a yard. She had even asked for a living allowance of four or five thousand yuan a month!

Hahaha.

Other than laughing, Qiao Nan did not know how else to respond.

“What do you mean?” Qiao Zijin stopped Qiao Nan in time. “You haven’t brought me to see the houses and I haven’t picked one yet. Where are you going? Don’t think that four or five thousand yuan is a lot of money. In the capital, four or five thousand yuan isn’t even enough for me to spend. You know well how I spent while I was in Ping Cheng. But I thought it through and I gave in a lot. Don’t be unkind. Besides, if you recommend me a comfortable job that pays around ten thousand yuan, I’ll go to work and you won’t even need to give me money.”

“No.”

“No? What no? No job? Then, just give me four or five thousand yuan a month. Best if it’s five thousand. I’ll accept it too.” Even if the job was easy, it was still a job. Would working for someone be more comfortable than staying at home every day?

Wait, she seemed to have missed out on something. Whether she arranged for a villa or a single unit with a yard, someone had to clean such a big house. She had always hated doing household chores. If she were to live in a villa, she would not be able to clean her own room, let alone the whole villa.

That would not do. She would have to mention it to Qiao Nan and find a nanny for herself. Of course, Qiao Nan would have to pay for the nanny’s salary. If she were to pay for it herself, how would she and Ying Ying survive on that mere five thousand yuan?

“Not only do I not have a job for you, but neither do I have a house. I have none of all those requests that you have. I’m not going to agree to a single one.” Qiao Nan did not deny that she did indeed own properties in the capital. “Chen Jun treats you pretty well. After he destroyed his marriage and caused you to get divorced from Zhou Zheng, he even did such a huge favor for you. Why don’t you seize the opportunity and marry a guy who can support you well? Why didn’t such a good person like Chen Jun get a divorce for you and get remarried to you and support you himself?”

Chen Jun’s and Qiao Zijin’s fates of bad luck were really intertwined in both lifetimes.

But she was the most pitiful. She had already done her best to hide from these two scums, but even after a few years, Chen Jun could still remember who she was and put up a fight against her by sending this unlucky charm, Qiao Zijin, over to her.

Unfortunately, these two people really did not understand her. How could they have such ridiculous thoughts? “Qiao Zijin, who do you think you are to demand these things from me? What makes you think that I have to agree to all these unreasonable demands that you make?”

She was not even Qiao Zijin's mother. Besides, Ding Jiayi herself would not even be able to agree to these demands.

Ding Jiayi could not, and Qiao Nan would not. But in the end, they would still arrive at the same result.

“Based on what? Based on me being your elder sister, and you being my younger sister. Based on the fact that you are the Minister of Foreign Affairs now. Based on you being a national cadre! Do you wish for the whole of China to know that you're abandoning your relatives now that you're doing well yourself? That you are living the high life, but letting your family live in poverty? Do you still want to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs?”

Qiao Zijin gritted her teeth, but very soon, she suppressed her anger. “Qiao Nan, we're both clear that you're perfectly capable of agreeing to those demands given your current circumstances. I don't think I'm being unreasonable. It will mean nothing at all to you to fulfill my requests. But to me and Ying Ying, it's important for our survival.”

To Qiao Nan, it was harmless. It would not even move Qiao Nan's foundation a single bit. But to the mother and daughter, their lives depended on this.

She had already put aside her dignity and asked Qiao Nan for a living space. She had not asked to live in luxury like Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan had better be understanding and not force her into dire straits. If she was really forced, nothing was out of bounds for her.

She promised herself that she would see to it that her threats would become reality.

“What you mean is that if I can't provide you with that luxurious life you're asking for, you'll drag me down with you and make my life difficult? Are you going to ruin whatever I've worked hard for?” Yes, she had made herself quite clear, and Qiao Nan had understood it well.

That's right. This was Qiao Zijin's style. Typical Qiao Zijin indeed.

“You're correct.” Qiao Zijin had not intended to say it so harshly, but that was indeed what she meant. But Qiao Nan herself did not think it was harsh and wanted to make it clear, so Qiao Zijin could not care less to rebuke her. It was better they made it clear, in case they got into an argument about it in the future.

“That is exactly what I meant. Qiao Nan, you can’t be so selfish. Since I treat you well, you should treat me well too. You’re a national cadre and a leader. I’m just an ordinary citizen. My idea is very simple. I just want to lead my life. If my life is good, yours will be too. At least, any problems in your life won’t be because of me.”

Qiao Zijin gulped down a glass of iced water and lowered her pride again. “Qiao Nan, we’re biological sisters after all. Let bygones be bygones. Let’s not think about it or argue over it. I made mistakes, but so did you. Let’s just call it a truce. We still have decades of our lives ahead of us. What’s wrong with living it happily as relatives?”

Once Qiao Nan agreed to it, she and Ying Ying would have to rely on Qiao Nan to survive. It would not be beneficial to her to cut off her cash flow. In that case, she could only bow down to Qiao Nan.

“Hahaha!” Qiao Nan once again laughed at Qiao Zijin. “I’m not at all surprised that you said that. You’re clearly trying to get something out of me, but you talk about being benevolent and a win-win situation. Qiao Zijin, I don’t care what you’re planning, but I’m telling you clearly today. It’s impossible. I’m not going to agree to whatever requests you have. As for what you do, I don’t care. That’s your own business.”

“Do you think I’ll let you threaten me and be at your mercy now that I’ve become the Minister of Foreign Affairs? You can try it. We’ll see if I’m truly afraid of what you’ll do.”

Chapter 1567: You’re Still Complaining?

With that, Qiao Nan handed the money over to the waiter and left without turning back.

“...”

Qiao Zijin had not expected that Qiao Nan would not only not be threatened, but her attitude was also tough. She had not left any room for negotiations.

From the beginning to the end, it was as though she had been doing a monologue. Qiao Nan was just a spectator, looking on with a mocking smile while Qiao Zijin sang and danced, and even did tricks on stage.

Qiao Zijin's face reddened. She was so furious that she could not utter a word.

Zhou Ying furrowed her small brows. "Mom, that auntie is gone. Where's the villa we're going to stay in? Where's my princess room?" That auntie's gaze was icy cold. Although she did not speak as loudly as her mom, she could feel that that auntie was incensed.

Now that the auntie was enraged, was she still going to get her princess room?

"Auntie? That sounds nice. Why didn't you try calling her to appease her while she was here? Why didn't you cry in front of her to make her soften her heart toward us so that she would let us live?" Qiao Zijin was irate that her daughter had chosen to speak up only now.

She was fuming now that her daughter called Qiao Nan her auntie. It was as though she was trying to get on Qiao Nan's good side. What infuriated her most was that Zhou Ying did not have the sense to coax Qiao Nan so that Qiao Nan would be more likely to help the mother and daughter out on the account that Zhou Ying was still a child.

Now that she had left, there was no point in calling her 'auntie' anymore.

Zhou Ying pouted. "Mom, are you angry, or are you angry at me? Grandma and grandpa would never do that. Neither would Dad. Mom, that is wrong. I didn't do anything wrong. You shouldn't be angry at me. Grandma told me that even if I do anything wrong, you should teach me. Once I learn, I won't make the same mistake again."

When Zhou Ying, who normally did not speak very much, said these words, every word was articulated properly and her thoughts were well-organized. It was as though an adult was speaking.

Mothers knew their children best. Qiao Zijin's eyes glimmered. "Who taught you to say this?" Ying Ying would never be able to say these things on her own accord.

"When you left, grandma specially taught me." She knew that her grandma was teaching her this to help her, so she kept this in mind. Moreover, she had not done anything wrong. Why was her mother being so fierce to her? "Mom, where's my princess room?"

Her teacher had taught her that one had to fulfill one's promises to others. Her mom had promised to give her a princess room that was even more beautiful than her previous one. Her mom was an adult, so it was even more vital for her to fulfill her promise and let her stay in a princess room.

“What’s the hurry? I didn’t say that your princess room is gone. Just wait for a little longer.” Qiao Zijin was both angry and frustrated. Her daughter talked quite a fair bit but did not utter a single word in front of Qiao Nan. Now that Qiao Nan was gone, she had so many requests. How annoying! “I’ll bring you to find grandma first. Don’t worry, Mom will find a way for you to get your princess room. I didn’t lie to you.”

Zhou Ying pouted and threw a temper. “Can we move in today?” She did not want to stay in her maternal grandma’s house. It was not as good as her paternal grandma’s house, and she missed her grandparents and her father. Her mom was still the same as before—fierce. She was totally unlike her classmates’ moms who were especially gentle.

“Today... It’s a bit difficult today, but Mom will try to get it done as soon as possible.” Qiao Zijin had lost all her confidence. Qiao Nan did not look like she was going to allow for any negotiations. If she did not do something to let Qiao Nan know that she meant what she said, Qiao Nan would never learn her lesson.

Qiao Zijin had no idea if she was going to achieve her goal and when she would achieve her goal, so she would just try to appease her daughter as much as possible for now.

Zhou Ying stomped her foot. “Mom, it’s already September. I should be in school. My previous classmates are all in school. Only I’m not! Mom, I want to go back to Ping Cheng. I miss grandma’s house. I want to go to school!”

“School? You don’t even like learning, so what’s the hurry? Shouldn’t you be happy that you get to play for a few more days?” Since she was young, she had not excelled in her studies, and neither did she like studying. She would rather read romantic novels than her textbooks. She had also heard that Zhou Zheng’s results had not been stellar either. Would her daughter with Zhou Zheng be a good child who loved learning?

What a joke!

Her daughter was already in second grade and had been in school for four to five years. At that time, her daughter had never brought home a single award or certificate. She admitted that she spent little time with her daughter, but that did not mean that she was completely ignorant about what was going on with her daughter.

She was all too clear about that feeling of hatred toward studying while she was still a student. Qiao Zijin was sure that Zhou Ying would take after her and would get a headache from just the mention of studying. It would be a miracle for a student who hated studying to get stellar grades.

Zhou Ying got even more upset. “It’s one thing for me not to want to go to school, but it’s another for everyone else to be going to school while I can’t go to school. I don’t care. Everyone is going to school. I want to go to school too! Mom, if you can’t send me to school, then send me back to grandma’s house. Grandma can send me to school.”

1

She did not want to be the odd one out.

If everyone went to school, Zhou Ying knew that it was not a good thing that she was being treated differently and that she was not going to school.

She went to school every day but had never received an award for her results. Thinking about how it had already been a few days since the start of the school term, Zhou Ying was anxious. This was not about falling behind in her studies. This was about her pride.

Qiao Nan’s attitude was firm. There was no room for any negotiation. And her daughter was now throwing a tantrum. Qiao Zijin was not someone who could multi-task. After considering it for a while, Qiao Zijin decided to send Zhou Ying home to let Mother Zhou raise her daughter.

When she had settled everything here and found her daughter’s princess room, as well as a school for her daughter, she would bring her daughter over. It would be better than the current situation where they would squeeze in the same room and her daughter would not be in school.

This was truly detrimental to her daughter’s growth. At the same time, she would only be in her way and cause an even greater delay to something that was not even going smoothly.

Hearing that Qiao Zijin was going to send Zhou Ying back to Ping Cheng, Ding Jiayi thanked the heavens.

When Qiao Zijin said that she had no money and asked Ding Jiayi for money to purchase the plane ticket, Ding Jiayi did not refuse either and just handed the money over.

After receiving the money from Ding Jiayi, Qiao Zijin became unhappy.

Chapter 1568: There's No Choice but to Return for the Time Being

“Mom, that's too little. With this little money, I can only buy two plane tickets. Ying Ying is not young anymore. When she takes the bus or plane, she has to pay for the full fare. You didn't give me money for Ying Ying's ticket.”

“I gave it to you. Didn't you say that the money I gave you is enough for two tickets? One for you, and one for Ying Ying. Doesn't that make two?” Why was it not enough?

“Then, how will I come back?” There was still one ticket missing!

Ding Jiayi replied while doing her household chores, “You should have some money on hand. If you don't have enough money to buy a plane ticket back, then take the train. If you can't even do that, you can still drive. Now, you're not working and have no income, and even the Zhou family won't give you any money. I've worked so hard my whole life, but I've never earned much. Nan Nan pays for everything. It's all your fault that my relationship with Nan Nan is in shambles now. I don't expect you to support me anymore, and neither will I ask you for any money. Zijin, you have to be considerate. You can't always keep taking money from your mom. What kind of example are you setting for Ying Ying? Aren't you afraid that your daughter will act like this in the future?”

She thought about how her elder daughter was already a mother but acted like an old woman at such a young age. She did not work and always asked for money from others as long as she was in need of it. Ding Jiayi could no longer hold it in anymore.

If she had money, she would willingly give her beloved daughter as much as she wanted. But the most important thing now was that she herself did not have any money. All her expenses were taken care of by Qiao Nan. If she finished spending her allowance, there was no way Qiao Nan was going to give her more. Ding Jiayi had tried it before and thus knew for certain.

She was not on good terms with her capable younger daughter, who was on the verge of cutting this relationship off completely. Giving her a living allowance every month was the most Qiao Nan was going to do. What frustrated Ding Jiayi the most was that the daughter she had thought highly of was the one who had not made something out of her life. Before she got married, she had asked for money from Ding Jiayi. After getting married, she had asked for money from her in-laws.

Her daughter had chosen to forgo such a good life and cheated on her husband. Now, she was even bringing her daughter to beg for money! Don't underestimate the cost of these two plane tickets. It cost her half of her monthly living allowance!

In recent years, prices had risen so much that it was frightening. Ding Jiayi had never thought that such a day would come that not only was rice expensive, but the price of a bunch of vegetables was comparable to that of meat! Thankfully, she had fought for a higher living allowance with Qiao Nan. Otherwise, Ding Jiayi was prepared to ask Qiao Nan for a monthly living allowance along with a plane ticket. She might as well return to Ping Cheng.

It was just that Ding Jiayi would never mention a thing about the increase in her living allowance to Qiao Zijin. She had no intention of letting Qiao Zijin know about this matter.

She was clear that once Qiao Zijin learned that her living allowance had increased, Qiao Zijin would find some way to get money from her. She would only be finding trouble for herself if she were to let Qiao Zijin know.

As she grew older, Ding Jiayi grew more anxious and placed more importance on money. She only had two daughters. She had to plan ahead in case Qiao Nan was no longer willing to support her and prepare for anything to happen over on Qiao Zijin's side. Forget about paying for medical bills if she were to fall ill.

If Qiao Zijin could get into less trouble and stop bothering her, it would already be being very filial to her mother.

Since she could not depend on both of her daughters, Ding Jiayi decided to take things into her own hands and rely on herself. She would fight it out with whoever wanted a share of her retirement funds, even if it was her favorite elder daughter.

As such, when Qiao Zijin asked her for money today, Ding Jiayi was adamant that she would only give her daughter enough money for two tickets. If it was not for the fact that she did not know how to purchase tickets herself, Ding Jiayi would have liked to check out the flights personally and buy tickets for the cheapest flight. It would be better than giving Qiao Zijin the money directly. A dollar saved was still a dollar saved.

Thus, Ding Jiayi had thought through it. She would learn how to use a smartphone. She had heard that one could buy bus tickets, train tickets, and even plane tickets without even stepping out of the house.

In that case, if she were to face such a situation again in the future, she would no longer need to spend unnecessary money.

“You’re asking me to take a train when I come back?” Qiao Zijin looked at Ding Jiayi incredulously. “Don’t you know that it’ll take more than ten hours to come back if I take the train? I’ll be back in two to three hours if I take the plane!” The train was in no way as comfortable or as convenient as the plane.

Ding Jiayi was irate. “Of course it’s nice to take the plane, but it’s expensive. If you have the money to take the plane, then do it. I’m not stopping you from spending your money. It’s up to you how you come back. I don’t care.”

As long as she was not the one paying for it, she did not care whether her daughter took the train or the plane.

With that, Ding Jiayi returned to her own room. She was not in the mood to care about Qiao Zijin who was always asking her for money. Today, she had to return to the master bedroom. Zijin had to remember who the owner of the house was after all.

“Mom, I have my backpack with me. Send me back to grandma’s house.” Zhou Ying did not care about what her mother was arguing with her maternal grandma about. She only knew that she was going to return to her paternal grandma’s house and go back to school.

Qiao Zijin’s face was tangled up in embarrassment, and she ground her teeth so hard that they almost fell off. Ding Jiayi had refused to give Qiao Zijin more money. Qiao Zijin was the kind of person who would rather enjoy luxuries herself than leave them for her children. She wanted to be the owner of these two plane tickets.

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The problem was that on the way back to Ping Cheng, there was no way she could leave her ten-year-old daughter alone on the train to go back to Ping Cheng, while she, as a mother, took the plane. If that was the case, she might as well just buy one plane ticket for Zhou Ying and save the rest of the money.

But it was her daughter after all. Although Qiao Zijin was not in her right mind at times, she would not make such a foolish mistake. After taking a few deep breaths, Qiao Zijin immediately purchased two tickets for the cheapest flight to Ping Cheng that very afternoon. After having a meal with Zhou Ying at Ding Jiayi's house, the two of them left for their flight.

At a time like this, a flight departing at eight or nine o'clock at night was the cheapest.

While waiting for the plane, Zhou Ying fell asleep. With no other choice, Qiao Zijin could only allow her daughter to sleep within her embrace. Thankfully, the two of them did not have any luggage. As such, carrying her daughter was not too troublesome for Qiao Zijin.

Chapter 1569: I Gussed So

After the Zhou family received Qiao Zijin's phone call, they smiled scornfully. "Didn't I tell you that she wouldn't be able to take it? Ying Ying is already ten years old, but she's never spent a single month alone with Ying Ying. See, it's only been a few days and she's already sending Ying Ying back to our house."

Mother Zhou was definitely happy that her only granddaughter was coming back home. Zhou Ying had practically been raised by Mother Zhou herself. But what Mother Zhou could not get over was how Qiao Zijin could be so heartless as a mother. How could she make use of her own daughter to threaten the Zhou family for alimony?

Since Qiao Zijin thought that it was so easy to raise Zhou Ying, Mother Zhou would let her try it out for herself to see how normal mothers were like. Perhaps it was because she had done too much as a mother-in-law that Qiao Zijin had had such a good life and had never experienced the pain of raising a child.

Otherwise, she did not believe that Qiao Zijin would be shameless enough to threaten the Zhou family for alimony with Zhou Ying's custody.

Hearing that his granddaughter was returning, Father Zhou was elated too. "Of course, older people are always wiser due to their wealth of experience. How could Qiao Zijin win against you in this aspect? By the time our granddaughter reaches home, it'll be quite late. Why don't we prepare something for her first? I'm afraid that she'll be starving when she gets home. You know that Qiao Zijin doesn't know how to take care of her own child since we've been the ones raising Ying Ying."

“Don’t worry. After Zijin called, I went to buy Ying Ying’s favorite dishes!” Mother Zhou said proudly.

Father and Mother Zhou had made quite a big fuss over the return of their granddaughter. On the other hand, her father, Zhou Zheng, was nonchalant. “Mom, Dad, are you guys preparing for Ying Ying to follow me in the future?”

“Yes, why not? Are you unhappy about that?” Mother Zhou knew that her son was trying to find trouble. “I’m telling you that I don’t care who you get remarried to because of Qiao Zijin. But if you get remarried to a troublemaker, your dad and I will just take Ying Ying away and live as a family of three. You can live with your beloved wife. That will never change. But Ying Ying is the Zhou family’s granddaughter after all, and your dad and I raised her ourselves. Even if you don’t like her, your dad and I do.”

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It was exactly because of Ying Ying that her son would have trouble getting remarried.

It was not at all strange that she would not like a woman who saw Ying Ying as a burden. Even if her son were to get remarried, Mother Zhou’s attitude would still remain unchanged. If her son were to marry a likable wife, all three generations of the Zhou family would live together happily. If needed, she would help take care of the family and raise her grandchildren. It would be a win-win situation for everyone. Living harmoniously would be the best possible scenario.

On the contrary, if Zhou Zheng married a troublemaker, she could not stop him either. If that were to happen, Zhou Zheng could just live with his wife alone. She had her husband and her granddaughter by her side. What was there to be sad about?

Mother Zhou still maintained control over most things in the Zhou family. Even the money that Father Zhou earned from his business was all kept by Mother Zhou. Zhou Zheng received a salary from the government, and thus had a stable income. His salary and benefits were even higher than average, but that was it.

Based on how quickly Zhou Zheng spent his money, it was already tough for him to take care of himself and a woman that he loved, let alone his daughter. If he wanted to live an even better life, he would have to ask for help from Father and Mother Zhou.

In the Zhou family, Zhou Zheng did not dare to offend the one who held the purse strings—Mother Zhou.

Mother Zhou had the guts to leave her son. Without her son's care, she would even be able to live a better life. But on the other hand, Zhou Zheng did not have such confidence to be able to live comfortably without Mother Zhou's care.

The moment Mother Zhou let out her words, Zhou Zheng's attitude softened drastically. "Mom, don't be angry. I haven't even said anything. Ying Ying is my daughter after all. How can I dislike her? I am just quite worried that Ying Ying will be unhappy in our home. But most importantly, I'll respect your decision and do according to what you say."

"Humph!" Mother Zhou snorted scornfully. "I really don't understand what you're thinking. No matter how pretty that woman is, it's already been ten years. Don't tell me she hasn't aged at all in these ten years! You're already married with a daughter. Hasn't she gotten married and given birth to a son too? Our family doesn't despise her. In fact, we think that it will be a good match if you both get remarried to each other. But she's despising the fact that Ying Ying lives in our house? Let me tell you. We pay for all of Ying Ying's living expenses. She doesn't even spend any of your money. I really don't like her attitude!"

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Even when Qiao Zijin had married into their family, she had never said anything about how money was spent in their family. Qiao Zijin married into their family, addressed her as 'mom', but could not care less about how she spent her money. Now, this woman had not even married into their family and addressed Mother Zhou only as 'auntie', yet she already saw Mother Zhou's money as her own! How ridiculous!

In short, Mother Zhou was in a terrible mood, knowing that her son had reconciled with his ex-girlfriend.

Thankfully, she had received the call and learned that her granddaughter was returning home. Otherwise, Mother Zhou's mood would be much worse. It was so bad that Father Zhou wanted to teach his son a lesson as a way of getting back on his wife's behalf. Their son was someone else's husband, but his wife would be their daughter-in-law!

One was someone else's, while the other was their own. Father Zhou had no choice but to weigh their importance.

Father Zhou extinguished his cigarette. Now that his granddaughter was returning, he would not be able to smoke like he had in the past few days. "Zhou Zheng, I'm not trying to be old-fashioned. But with your family background, you can easily find a twenty-something-year-old young lady to get remarried to. In fact, it's not just your mother. Even I don't agree with you being with that woman again. Ten years ago, she was still young and beautiful, but neither your mom nor I took a fancy to her. Ten years later, she's already gotten married and given birth to a child. She's already old. Do you think your mom and I will suddenly take a fancy to her?"

There was no way their Zhou family could be reduced to such a state.

"Of course, your mom has said that marriage is your own business. Your wife is someone you'll spend the rest of your life with. If you're happy, your mom and I won't interfere in your remarriage. The renovation of our house in the Eryang district is almost complete. When it's done, we'll leave it for three months before moving over with Ying Ying if you've really made your decision. It's just as well. You'll be able to enjoy your time with your wife without our disturbances. But this will be the second marriage for the both of you. There are some things I think we shouldn't do. Just have a small wedding and get on with it. There's no need for dowry and all that that we did with your first marriage."

Chapter 1570: Having the Account Settled

Marriage is never easy.

When Zhou Zheng and Qiao Zijin got married, the Zhou family spent a fortune on Qiao Zijin. Gold and diamond accessories were all given to her. The wedding gown was not rented but bought. Including the other full-dresses, there were four dresses in total.

Others would rent the outfits, but the Zhou family was wealthy enough to buy them.

Of course, Zhou Zheng's ex-girlfriend wouldn't receive the same treatment as Qiao Zijin once did. No matter her doings, Qiao Zijin was still a youthful girl when she married into the Zhou family and later gave birth to a daughter. Most importantly, the Zhou family did receive benefits from marrying Qiao Zijin.

Zhou Zheng's mother treated Qiao Zijin well only to return the favor. Moreover, she didn't want to make it too awkward with Qiao Zijin as they would be living in the same family.

Things did go as she thought for ten years before Qiao Zijin was caught cheating.

If it were someone else, her attitude would have been very different.

To avoid rumors of marital fraud, Zhou Zheng's father made things clear before his second marriage. "Your mother and I will let you pay for your wedding gifts. You are thirty-odds, and you haven't bought anything for your parents. Now that you are having a second wife, you will have to take care of your family."

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Zhou Zheng's mother had clear boundaries. If she were fond of the daughter-in-law, she would pay for her expenses. Of course, she wouldn't oppose her son's choice if the daughter-in-law didn't meet her expectations.

However, don't expect her to pay a single cent for the wedding. Zhou Zheng would have to pay for whatever the bride needed as well.

In her mind, raising a child meant watching him grow and leaving him a house to stay.

The Zhou parents were renovating a second house at the moment. The new house was bigger and tidier than the current one, and it would be ready to stay in another two or three months.

Typical parents would leave the new house to their son's family, but the Zhou family didn't work that way. Why should they give him the new home when they were the ones who worked for it?

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Initially, the elders wanted to give the house to Qiao Zijin. Words were going around that the country had plans to allow a second child. On top of that, Zhou Zheng's mother was registered as a countryside resident. If they reallocated Qiao Zijin's origin to her, Qiao Zijin would be allowed to have a second child.

If there were two kids at home, the current house would have been too cramped.

She would never allow her grandchildren to suffer. Therefore, she bought the second house without hesitation, only to find out about Qiao Zijin cheating with Chen Jun.

When Zhou Zheng heard that he was not getting anything for his wedding, his face sank. That was equivalent to disagreeing with his second marriage.

His ex-girlfriend had already done her research before marrying Zhou Zheng. If a cheater like Qiao Zijin could receive so many gifts, there was no reason for her to have any less.

She demanded to have everything that Qiao Zijin had, and maybe more. In short, her wedding had to be better than Qiao Zijin's.

Zhou Zheng knew that this wouldn't be easy, and he figured that it would take some time before his parents would agree.

However, Zhou Zheng's father made it clear that there was no room for negotiation regarding this matter. "Dad, Mom, you are killing my marriage!"

His mother smirked. "What do you mean? We have given you your residence certificate, and you can get married whenever you like. Ying Ying is already ten years old, and she would have to hold her wedding in a decade. Are you planning to have us pay for her wedding too? I've said it before, and I'll say it again. The money that we worked for belongs to us, and you have to wait until our death to claim it. Otherwise, don't even bother trying."

No one could lay hands on her money, not even her son.

Zhou Zheng was pissed, but there was nothing he could do. "Dad, you... you have to help me out here. I've told you about my ex-girlfriend's personality, and she will never marry me at this rate. Do I have to stay single for the rest of my life because Qiao Zijin cheated on me?"

The marriage had cracked the family from within.

Even if he did hold the wedding, his ex-girlfriend would bug him for the rest of his life. Things might even turn out worse than before.

“How can I help you? You know your mother better than anyone. All you had to do was find a girl that she likes. Since you’ve decided to go against it, you have to face the consequences. Do you really want us to take care of you forever?”

Zhou Zheng’s father stood by his wife without a moment of hesitation. Every word that she said was almost obligatory. “Don’t get angry just yet. If you want, I can settle the account with you. You have been married for ten years and have been working for over a decade.”