

## RTAMM 1701

### Chapter 1701: Not Allowed

She wanted to see how well Qiao Dongliang could do if he were to be in charge of Zhou Xing. She would take this opportunity to show Qiao Dongliang that she was no jinx. It was just utterly untrue that anyone who got close to her would be unlucky. It just so happened that the children that she liked were all 'spoiled brats' who could not be controlled.

Qiao Dongliang would only understand such a situation and her difficulties when he personally experienced it.

Zhou Xing had no idea that this one call during the New Year meant that her grandpa would start supervising her strictly once she returned to the capital for her studies. As for whatever she had plotted against the Zhai family, Qiao Dongliang would nip them in the bud, depriving them of the chance to grow.

As such, springtime this year was really a buzz in Zhou Xing's school.

That boyfriend of Zhou Xing's from the PLA National Defense University became her cousin. And now, their mutual grandpa really came to visit.

Someone with sharp eyes noticed that Qiao Dongliang had come in Zhai Yi's car and had come along with the Zhai brothers. After arriving, Qiao Dongliang had first accompanied the brothers into the PLA National Defense University. Perhaps it was to take a look at the brothers' friends and their living environment.

It was exactly because Qiao Dongliang had appeared together with his outstanding grandsons that other people had such a deep impression of Qiao Dongliang. When Qiao Dongliang appeared at Zhou Xing's school, people immediately came to the realization: That's right. Zhou Xing and the Zhai brothers were relatives. Since this old man was Zhai Yi's elder, he was most probably Zhou Xing's elder too.

After visiting the Zhai brothers, it was only normal for their elders to visit Zhou Xing.

"Hello, I'm Zhou Xing's grandpa. Can you give me some directions? I would like to find Zhou Xing." After the New Year, Qiao Dongliang finally got a sense of how Zhou Xing looked like

through a photograph. Zhou Xing did not resemble Qiao Zijin. In fact, she looked much prettier than Qiao Zijin. In other words, Zhou Xing had inherited the good traits of each of her parents.

Thus, Zhou Xing did take after Zijin in the slightest bit but was much better-looking than Qiao Zijin had been as a student.

It was after seeing Zhou Xing's photograph that Qiao Dongliang finally understood how Zhou Xing had the guts to date her own cousin. Thinking back to the past, if Qiao Zijin had looked like Zhou Xing, Qiao Dongliang wondered if Qiao Zijin would fight with Qiao Nan for such an outstanding man like Zhai Sheng.

"You're Zhou Xing's grandpa, so does that mean you're also Zhai Yi's and Zhai Xin's grandpa?" The other party asked curiously to confirm that Zhou Xing and the Zhai brothers were indeed cousins.

Knowing about how her curiosity arose, Qiao Dongliang patiently answered the female student, even though he thought that such a question was rather inappropriate. "If there's only one Zhou Xing in your school, then what I want to say is that I do indeed have two daughters. My younger daughter is Zhai Yi's and Zhai Xin's mom. My other daughter, who is no longer around, has a daughter named Zhou Xing."

"Grandpa, the way you speak is so interesting!" The female student laughed, sensing that her question was a little inappropriate. Zhou Xing had lost her mother, so that meant Zhou Xing grew up with her birth father. She wondered if Zhou Xing's father had gotten remarried after Zhou Xing's mother died.

If she had a stepmother, she would probably have a stepfather. She was rather interested in such gossip.

No wonder Zhou Xing was not familiar with the Zhai brothers. After her birth mother passed away, her birth father remarried. That would definitely mean that Zhou Xing had little contact with her maternal relatives. "Grandpa, I'm free. Why don't I show you the way? I'm not too sure about where Zhou Xing is at the moment. We have quite a few dance studios in our school. If the students have a need for it, we can even ask to borrow a dance studio to train in."

"All right, thank you." Qiao Dongliang nodded in agreement.

Coincidentally, Zhou Xing had indeed spent some money to borrow a dance studio to train in today. Unlike other students, Zhou Xing had the entire fortune of the Zhou family in her hands. Zhou Xing could spend that money in any way she liked, and she could easily allow herself to lead a better life. As such, all those things that average students could not afford meant nothing to Zhou Xing.

“Oh, Zhou Xing, you’re here. Look who I’ve brought.” Upon finding Zhou Xing, the female student laughed and tried to win Zhou Xing over. As compared to her father who had remarried, Zhou Xing should still have a good impression of her maternal grandma’s family, not to mention just how amazing those maternal relatives of hers were.

If she had a good relationship with Zhou Xing, she might just become Zhou Xing’s cousin-in-law in the future! It did not matter whether she would become the elder or younger cousin-in-law. Both Zhai Yi and Zhai Xin were handsome and popular.

“Who?” Zhou Xing did not take a particular interest in her and simply wiped off the sweat from her face before picking up her cup to hydrate herself. She was destined to be a star. Zhai Yi might have been slightly harsh with his words, but what he had said was nothing but the truth. It was true that she should practice her basics and not forsake the basic skills.

As long as she made a mark for herself, Zhai Xin would regret breaking up with her and would eventually come back to chase her.

“We’ve only just started the semester. Who’s come to find me?” It could not possibly be Zhai Xin, right? Other than Zhai Xin, she did not wish to see anyone who came to see her.

“It’s me!” Upon seeing the revealing and tight-fitting clothes that Zhou Xing was wearing, Qiao Dongliang’s expression darkened. “Aren’t you learning to dance? Why are you dressed like that? Is this a uniform? Or did you buy this yourself? If you bought this yourself, why couldn’t you have bought something with more cloth on it?” One sight of her could tell you that she was no decent young lady.

The thought of San Bao, who was always dressed neatly and tidily, made Qiao Dongliang even angrier to see Zhou Xing in this state.

“Don’t talk to me now. If you’re really free, we can chat later. Just leave with me now. I’m going to get you some new clothes.” Qiao Dongliang was a soldier and he was extraordinarily inflexible.

Qiao Dongliang had seen people wearing such revealing and tight-fitting clothes on television several times. It was just that he did not like seeing such things and would typically change the channel upon seeing them. Anyway, those people on television had nothing to do with him. It was all right once he changed the channel and could not see them anymore.

But it was absolutely unacceptable for Zhou Xing to do that. Zhou Xing was his granddaughter, and he had to rein her in. She was no longer allowed to wear such indecent clothing in the future. He never wanted to see it ever again.

Only when Qiao Dongliang grabbed her elbow did Zhou Xing frown in pain and shout out. “Wait a minute! Who are you to grab me the moment you arrived? We’re in my school now and it’s in broad daylight! I’m telling you that you shouldn’t even think of leaving our school if you’re a kidnapper.” Human traffickers nowadays were too bold. They were even coming to school to kidnap people?

#### Chapter 1702: Imparting Values

It was not as though she had no money to buy nice clothes. Would she really be cheated by nonexistent clothes that that person was talking about?

“Who am I? Haven’t you heard Ding Jiayi mention me or seen my picture at Ding Jiayi’s? When your mom was around, I didn’t discipline her well before she passed away. The only thing I can do for her in this lifetime is to raise you well. Zhou Xing, listen. I’m your grandpa. You have to listen to me. Do you understand?”

Qiao Dongliang did not know whether Zhou Xing truly did not recognize him or whether she was simply pretending not to recognize him. Either way, that did not matter. All that mattered was that he recognized his own granddaughter.

“You’re my grandpa?” Hearing Qiao Dongliang’s words, Zhou Xing immediately came to her senses and assessed Qiao Dongliang. Yes, if she looked closely, the man in front of her did resemble the man in her grandma’s photo album.

“It’s good that you know that you still have a grandpa.”

“Phew...” The female student who had brought Qiao Dongliang to see Zhou Xing breathed a sigh of relief. When she heard that Zhou Xing did not know Qiao Dongliang, and even said that Qiao

Dongliang was a kidnapper, the female student had been badly frightened. She even thought that she had done something wrong! Thankfully, it was all a misunderstanding. “Grandpa, this leotard was given to us by the school when we registered and paid our school fees. It’s a uniform. I didn’t purchase it myself. It’s normal to wear such clothes when dancing because we get all hot and sweaty. Even if you were to buy one outside, all leotards look rather similar to this one.”

It was issued by the school, after all. From the design to the cutting of the clothing, they were all as conservative as possible.

She had not known that Zhou Xing’s grandpa was so old-fashioned. They had not found anything wrong with such typical leotards, but why had it become indecent in Zhou Xing’s grandpa’s eyes?

“Issued by the school?” Qiao Dongliang was rather respectful toward the school. “Why would the school issue such clothes to you young ladies? Do you have no other choice but to wear this when dancing?” He would have to go back and look around. He did not believe that he would not be able to find a looser-fitting piece of clothing with more cloth that would be more secure when dancing.

Wasn’t it just for a dance? Why did they have to dress so skimpily? No wonder Zhou Xing tried to leech on to Er Bao, trying to make Er Bao her boyfriend. At the very least, if Zhou Xing were to stop wearing such abnormal clothes, her mindset would be just a little bit more normal.

“Of course I can only wear this since it was issued by the school.” Zhou Xing took the opportunity to get away from Qiao Dongliang the moment he loosened his grip. Even if he had not, she had to!

Just based on what Qiao Dongliang had said, Zhou Xing knew that there was no way she could accept the clothes picked out by Qiao Dongliang. Besides, this was her first time seeing this grandpa of hers! Was it so easy to be a grandpa? He had never gone to visit her, but the moment he appeared, he was picking on her dressing and criticizing her clothes for being too revealing as though he was her parent.

Upon hearing that answer, Qiao Dongliang almost lost all respect for the school. What kind of school was this that they issued such revealing clothes to their girls? It was too indecent. “What do you guys wear once you stop dancing?”

Thankfully, Zhou Xing was alone in the room and was practicing alone when Qiao Dongliang entered the dance studio. There was not a single bystander, much less those boys whom Qiao Dongliang hated the most.

“We wear whatever we like when we’re not dancing. We’re not elementary school students. We don’t need to always be in a uniform.” The female student who had led Qiao Dongliang here laughed. “Grandpa, don’t think too much about it. In this school, we have more girls than guys. What you’re worried about will never happen.”

They were considered military performers, so there were males in this school as well. But just like the girls, they learned to dance and sing. No matter what, there was just some manliness lacking in them that failed to attract girls. Anyway, she would never take a fancy to them. As for Zhou Xing, she thought that Zhou Xing would probably not like those male military performers either.

After all, Zhou Xing had such brilliant cousins like Zhai Yi and Zhai Xin. Under Zhai Yi’s and Zhai Xin’s influence, Zhou Xing would never take a fancy to those men who were miles apart from the Zhai brothers.

Otherwise, why would Zhou Xing have agreed to help Zhai Xin out by saying that the two of them were in a relationship?

Based on how Zhou Xing behaved during that period of time, she felt that Zhou Xing really had some talent in acting. At that time, Zhou Xing truly acted like someone who had just fallen in love with an extremely handsome boyfriend. Even the smiles of someone truly in love could not compare to Zhou Xing’s sweet smile when she was acting.

“Yes.” With that answer, Qiao Dongliang’s expression brightened significantly. “Thank you for bringing me here. Zhou Xing, hurry and change out of these clothes. Let’s find somewhere and have a good chat.” He felt as though he might go blind if he were to see Zhou Xing in these clothes any longer.

“...” Zhou Xing pouted. She was extremely reluctant.

Last year, she had been on very good terms with Zhai Xin when Qiao Nan had suddenly appeared and requested to ‘have a chat’ with her. Right after that, she had been forced to break up with Zhai Xin. Now, the mention of ‘having a chat’ immediately made Zhou Xing feel all sorts of unease.

But he was her biological grandpa, after all. In front of her classmates, she did not want to disrespect her grandpa, but neither did she want to let others have something to attack her with. As such, she had no choice but to change out of her dance clothes and put on her day-to-day clothing to ‘have a chat’ with Qiao Dongliang.

When Zhou Xing put on her own clothes, she could not help but breathe a sigh of relief. It was just the beginning of spring, so the temperatures had not risen by much. If she were to go out in thinner down jackets, she would shiver bitterly.

Even though Zhou Xing was pretty, she did not make herself suffer. As such, she wrapped herself up warmly in long johns, a thick wool sweater, and a down jacket that went all the way down to her calves. Zhou Xing felt that Qiao Dongliang should have nothing to say about how she dressed now.

When Zhou Xing emerged from the dance studio, the female student who had shown Qiao Dongliang the way was no longer around.

Qiao Dongliang glanced at Zhou Xing, who was all wrapped up, and nodded in affirmation. “Winter here in the north is especially cold. Even when spring has already come, the temperatures are still low. It’s better to dress warmly. Besides, it’s only right for you to dress like that as a girl. There are a lot of bad people out in society today. Girls must know how to protect themselves. Not only is it ugly when you dress up flamboyantly, but it’s also easy for you to attract unwanted attention. When that time comes, the only one who’ll suffer is yourself. It will be too late to regret then.”

Qiao Dongliang grabbed the opportunity to constantly impart values to Zhou Xing. He was afraid that if he were to be too late in doing so or be incomplete in any aspect, Zhou Xing might very well fall into a pit that she would never be able to climb out of.

Chapter 1703: Sorry

At that time, would he still need to mobilize Qiao Nan to clean up Zhou Xing’s mess?

He had to think of a way to prevent such a situation from occurring.

“Grandpa, can you stop talking?” What Zhou Xing hated the most was having other people talk to her about life principles. She was no three-year-old. She understood whatever she had to understand, but it did not matter whether she understood them or not. She would still not do whatever she was unwilling to do. “Didn’t you say that we should find somewhere to have a chat? It’s just as well. My stomach has something to say to you.”

The situation today had been awkward enough. Thankfully, only one person had witnessed that scene. If any more people had been present, she would probably lose all respect and not even need to study in her school anymore.

Based on just his appearance, Zhou Xing knew in her heart that her grandpa might act as though he cared for her, but in reality, her grandpa was biased toward Qiao Nan's family.

Her grandma had told her long ago that even when her mom was still around, her grandpa had favored Qiao Nan and treated her mom badly. That was why after the divorce that year, her grandma had chosen to take her mom. As expected, her grandpa had chosen to take Qiao Nan.

At that time, her grandpa had already made such a decision. Qiao Nan's three children had been raised by this grandpa. As for her, this was her first time meeting her grandpa. Zhou Xing was no fool. She knew exactly who was important and who was not in her grandpa's heart. "Grandpa, there's no one else here. Why don't you just say whatever you have to say? I'll listen to whatever pleases me. Whatever I think is inappropriate, I'll just treat it as though we're chatting leisurely."

"What kind of attitude is that? I'm your biological grandpa, your elder. Everything I say is for your good. What do you mean that you'll listen to whatever pleases you and ignore whatever you think is inappropriate?" Qiao Dongliang stared wide-eyed at Zhou Xing. He almost choked after hearing Zhou Xing preempting him.

Zhou Xing raised her hand in refusal. "That may not necessarily be true. I have so many elders, but my dad. My birth father was intent on taking money from my pocket to help him support that vixen and to raise that favorite son of his from that vixen. My dad treats that mother-and-son pair extremely well. Even the child from her previous marriage is much more lovable than me in my father's eyes. Elder? Elders have never been reliable. Grandpa, you should know that you're just about the same. After my mom passed away and my dad remarried, my life in the Zhou family was never easy. However, I never once saw you coming to express your concern as a grandpa, or even just to visit me."

In her most difficult times when she needed the most help, her grandpa did not even appear. Now that she was grown up and had a little capability, as well as her own judgment, she would not be so courteous to a grandpa with no conscience who suddenly appeared in front of her.

If she had to listen to everyone else's words, she would have long ago been gobbled up by her own father and that vixen, so much so that there would only be her bones left.



“All right. What do you want to chat about?” She was used to being courteous after being impolite. As long as she stated her requirements right from the start, she could not be blamed for anything that happened afterward. Neither could her grandpa say that she was disrespecting her elders. After all, it was her grandpa who had done it knowingly. What could she do?

Qiao Dongliang’s lips were tightly pursed together. “I cannot confirm what nonsense you’ve heard from Ding Jiayi. You’ve said that you’re grown up and you have your own judgment. That’s fine. I’ll tell you all about how your mom grew up with Nan Nan. I’ll see if you truly have your own judgment.”

Ding Jiayi had definitely only told Zhou Xing that Zijin had died under Nan Nan’s wheel. There was no way this was the only incident between the sisters throughout their childhood together. If Ding Jiayi had not created so much animosity in the first place and caused the resentment in Zijin’s heart to accumulate, all that would never have happened.

“That’s what happened. Your mom... was completely brought astray by Ding Jiayi. I think your mom’s attitude before her death is solid proof of everything. You can’t listen to just Ding Jiayi alone on this matter. You also have to listen to what other people say to get a better picture of the whole situation. I dare say that Nan Nan had never done anything wrong to your mother. Your mom... I won’t pass judgment on whatever she had done. You said you have your own judgment. Take time to think. Your mom is already gone. If it’s possible, I hope that you have a better image of your mom.”

There was no way Nan Nan should be blamed for any of these things happening. It was always Zijin bullying Nan Nan, and all these happened because Ding Jiayi had led Zijin astray. Without the foundations laid by Ding Jiayi, Zijin would never have grown up this way.

Zhou Xing remained silent for quite a while. It was clearly her first time hearing whatever Qiao Dongliang had just told her. After a long while, Qiao Dongliang wondered if Zhou Xing actually believed him. Then, Zhou Xing asked in a slightly different tone, “How do I know that whatever you’re saying is the truth? You can’t possibly deny that Qiao Nan is more important than my mom in your heart, right?”

In that case, whatever her grandpa had said was simply unfair. It was understandable that he was used to speaking for Qiao Nan and thinking from her point of view. Knowing that, she had to take her grandpa’s words with a huge pinch of salt.

“Ha...” Qiao Dongliang could not help but chuckle bitterly. “I’ve always thought that my heart should be biased toward Nan Nan since I took Nan Nan and Ding Jiayi took your mom after our

divorce. But in reality, I know that's not the case. I got a divorce from Ding Jiayi because she made too much trouble, so much so that Nan Nan almost lost the opportunity to further her studies. Think about what benefits I could bring to your younger aunt at the time I divorced Ding Jiayi. I let Ding Jiayi have the Qiao family's house in the small courtyard. If I had not done so, your mom wouldn't even have had a roof over her head after I got divorced from Ding Jiayi."

Similarly, without the Qiao family's house, he and Nan Nan were both homeless and had no choice but to rent an apartment.

"It can be said that Ding Jiayi spent all our family's money in order to let your mom study in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. That was why I almost died because I had no money to pay for my surgery. The only thing of value in our family was that house that I left to Ding Jiayi and your mom. At that time, all the money I earned was spent on your mom, and the most valuable thing in our family was left to your mom. Zhou Xing, do you really think that I'm biased toward your younger aunt and not your mom after I did all that?"

He had done some of these things subconsciously without proper thought about what his goals and intentions were. Now that he was old and had a lot of free time, Qiao Dongliang could not help but reminisce about the past.

The more he thought about the past, the more he realized that he had done much wrong to Qiao Nan. At his age now, the only thing he could do for Qiao Nan was to settle the matter with Zhou Xing so that Zhou Xing would not be a source of trouble for Qiao Nan in the future.

#### Chapter 1704: Giving In

"But you were part of the labor force and the main source of income for the Qiao family." Zhou Xing was in a dilemma. She seemed to be struggling with taking in what she had just heard and whether she should accept this truth that seemed to completely oppose what she had heard for the past ten years.

If Zhou Xing had grown up in a normal family with both parents by her side, she might not have been able to tell whom Qiao Dongliang favored among his two daughters from his words. But Zhou Xing was not such an innocent and foolish young lady.

She was only seventeen years old, but she had a deep understanding of how important money was to survive in society. At the same time, as inflation occurred, money would be worth less as time passed. As such, the most valuable things were usually other things, such as houses.

She had no mother, but she did have a birth father.

Under such circumstances, her dad had not intended on leaving everything he owned to his daughter. What she could not accept was her dad trying all means to scheme against her to take over the money and houses that her grandparents had left to her. He had even tried to coax her as though she was a three-year-old child, just so that he could cheat her money.

They were both fathers, but when her grandpa got a divorce at that time, he had spent all his money on her mom and had even left the house to her mom and her grandma. From this point alone, her grandpa's love toward her mom surpassed her father's love toward her by a hundred, or even a thousand times.

Apart from himself, her grandpa had not taken anything along for Qiao Nan.

“But I was not the coolie of the family, and neither was I Ding Jiayi's or your mom's money-making tool. In a relationship, you must sow to be able to reap. I've told you about how Ding Jiayi raised your mom. Do you agree with how Ding Jiayi raised your mom? Could your mom still be normal after being brought up this way? Of course, at that time, I had no idea that this was how Ding Jiayi was raising your mom. I was just bitter that I had sacrificed everything for your mom, but your mom had even accused me of being worthless and useless because I could not let her live a luxurious life. At that time, I was still lying in the hospital after going through a surgery that was paid for with the money your younger aunt borrowed from other people. I was toeing the line of death!”

“...” Zhou Xing bit on her lip. She could not say with a clear conscience that Qiao Dongliang should dedicate his life selflessly to her mom just because he was her father. Even if her mom really took Qiao Dongliang to be an ox, Qiao Dongliang would work tirelessly, trying to fulfill her mom's requests.

With a father like Zhou Zheng, Zhou Xing understood what a good father Qiao Dongliang was. They were both daughters, but her mom had been much luckier.

Her grandma's teaching methods might have been wrong, but her grandma truly treated her mom well and was cold-hearted toward Qiao Nan. Similarly, her grandpa had fulfilled his responsibilities toward her mom. Her grandpa had more than one daughter but had unhesitatingly given almost everything to her mom. Not all parents were willing to do that for their children.

No, that was definitely not the case. Her father had never treated her as well as this for just a day!

“After going to high school, your younger aunt’s results were stellar, so she was always on a scholarship. Then, she went off to university and married your uncle. Of course, I haven’t needed to spend a single cent on your younger aunt’s expenses. If we were really to talk about it, I probably didn’t even provide for your younger aunt for many years. Apart from those few meals that I fed her, it’s really pathetic how little I have given to her compared to how much I’ve given to your mom.”

In the first few years, education was compulsory, as stipulated by the state. As such, Nan Nan only had to pay for her textbooks when going to school. When education was no longer compulsory and they needed to fork out a large sum of money for her to stay in school, Nan Nan strived hard. Initially, she won scholarships through her stellar results. Then, when she got into university, she married a good husband.

As a father, he had done nothing for her. That was the truth of the matter.

Zhou Xing clenched her jaw tightly, her face paling. “I don’t know if I should believe your words. What you’ve said is very different from what grandma has said, and grandma has never even mentioned some of these things.”

Her grandma had only told her that her grandpa had cared a lot about his younger daughter, Qiao Nan. Her grandpa had gotten a divorce from her grandma for Qiao Nan’s sake. After their divorce, her grandpa wanted Qiao Nan and not her mom. Her mom was raised by her grandma, who had supported her until she finished her studies. That was the truth that she had known all her life.

She had never imagined that there had already been a war in the Qiao family when the sisters were still in junior high school, over having Qiao Nan leave school to work so as to let her mom continue with her own studies.

Between the sisters, it was obvious that Qiao Nan had better grades and that her mom’s grades could not match up to Qiao Nan’s. But the fight had started over having Qiao Nan leave school to work so that her mom could go to school. Based on this point alone, Zhou Xing could not help but suspect that her grandma had deliberately hidden part of the truth from her.

Her grandma had simply said what was advantageous to herself and had hidden whatever was disadvantageous to her mom and herself. But what she had hidden was much closer to the truth. Without this portion of the truth, she had the most important basis for her judgment, leading to her wrong judgment.

“How about this? You can choose not to believe me, but you should at least clear out everything that Ding Jiayi told you from your mind. Before I got divorced from Ding Jiayi, and up until your younger aunt entered high school, we were a family of four living in the Qiao family’s house. I’m sure our neighbors still remember what happened to our family. You can go find out for yourself. If you’re still doubtful, you can inquire at your younger aunt’s high school as well. The incident between Ding Jiayi and your mom may have happened twenty to thirty years ago, but I’m sure there are still quite a few people who still remember this incident.”

Qiao Dongliang was not afraid that Zhou Xing did not believe him. He was only afraid that Zhou Xing would not even bother to check up on the matter and relied only on whatever she had heard. As long as she investigated the matter, he had a bunch of witnesses to prove that whatever he had said was nothing but the truth.

“All right.” Zhou Xing lowered her voice. “I think I can guess why you’ve come to find me before even saying anything. My mom and Qiao Nan... I may have had some misunderstandings, but I’m sure I’m not mistaken about who you’ll choose between me and Qiao Nan’s three children.”

It was truly a tough call. They were all his grandchildren, so it was impossible that he had no feelings for her as her grandpa. The problem was that he did indeed have deeper feelings for Qiao Nan’s children. There were three of them and only one of her, after all.

Zhou Xing took a deep breath and gave in. “I’ll stop looking for Zhai Xin for the time being, and stop scheming against the Zhai family.” Until she got to the bottom of the matter and found out whether the truth was just as her grandma had said or whether it was like what her grandpa had said.

## Chapter 1705: Asking Around

“All right.” Qiao Dongliang’s expression stiffened. He had not expected that Zhou Xing could be so direct and straightforward with her words once she had calmed down. “You... you’re more understanding than your mom. Thankfully, you’ve only lived with Ding Jiayi for three years. The Zhou couple had raised you quite well. I don’t want to discuss this, but all I can say is that I’m just worried that you would follow in your mom’s footsteps if you had been raised by Ding Jiayi from a young age.”

Qiao Dongliang finally understood why Zhou Xing had only returned to Ding Jiayi when the Zhou couple passed away.

It seemed that Qiao Nan must have been involved in Zhou Xing staying in the Zhou family and being raised by the Zhou couple. Ding Jiayi was completely abnormal. In other words, she was not fit to teach a child. Ding Jiayi would only mislead a child.

Zhou Zheng was heartless toward Zijin but was still quite normal in other aspects. If he had not been bewitched by that woman, Zhou Zheng would never have been so vicious toward Zhou Xing. But whatever Zhou Zheng had done could not even compare with whatever Ding Jiayi had done.

“Grandpa, it’s quite late. I’ll go back to school first. Can you go back on your own?” Zhou Xing did not want to go on any further. After her paternal grandparents passed away, her whole world collapsed. She felt as though she was all alone in this vast universe. Her birth father bared his fangs and was planning on swallowing her whole.

At her most helpless and desperate moment, her maternal grandma appeared and pulled her out of the swamp in the Zhou family. Her grandma took care of her, cared for her, and did everything with her in mind. It made her feel some sort of warmth that she had felt only when her grandparents were still alive.

“Sigh... What a sin.” Seeing Zhou Xing suffer such a huge blow caused Qiao Dongliang to feel heartbroken too. Zhou Xing’s lack of expression was the most obvious expression. Children from poor families tended to mature earlier. Zijin had lived too enjoyable a life when she was younger and had never suffered. That was why she was so innocent and was never able to correct herself after being led astray by Ding Jiayi.

But Zhou Xing was different. Zhou Xing was a child who had gone through trials and tribulations.

It was indeed true that life should not always be so smooth-sailing. Only after experiencing both ups and downs and various trials would a child be able to become independent.

Zhou Xing promised Qiao Dongliang that she would not look for Zhai Xin, and neither would she try to scheme against Zhai Xin for the time being, and she did indeed keep to her promise. Typically, Zhou Xing already had a busy schedule keeping up with her dance lessons in school. Even without a boyfriend like Zhai Xin, Zhou Xing was busy all the same and could not take any time out to investigate whatever Qiao Dongliang had told her.

When the May Day holiday finally arrived, Zhou Xing did not tell Ding Jiayi that she was going back to Ping Cheng. Instead, she quietly bought a plane ticket returning to Ping Cheng and secretly went to visit the Qiao family’s house in the quad.

Zhou Xing had lived in the Qiao family's house with Ding Jiayi for three years, so she knew Ding Jiayi's routine like the back of her hand. She knew that Ding Jiayi would definitely be out at this time to purchase her groceries. Thus, Zhou Xing knocked on the door of a few neighbors who were more familiar with the Qiao family to find out about that incident from the past.

The people in the quad all knew that Ding Jiayi had brought Qiao Zijin's daughter home to raise her. At that time, there were already people who wondered whether Zhou Xing would turn into a second Qiao Zijin.

Qiao Nan was the one child that everyone in the quad was proud of and the person that they treated as a role model for their children. But for some reason, Ding Jiayi did not take a fancy to such an outstanding child. Instead, she always tried to create trouble for Qiao Nan, hindering Qiao Nan's career.

If Zhou Xing were to become the second Qiao Zijin, these neighbors would not be able to step in to help at all. All they could do was to pity Qiao Nan. She was such a good child, but why were the people from her family all so evil?

Thankfully, Zhou Xing had not done anything special in those three years. Thus, those three years passed by peacefully. Zhou Xing knew that her results in her cultural class were above average at the very best and were nowhere near the excellent standard. She would never have much room to develop or a good performance if she were to focus on her cultural class.

But she had been practicing dance since she was a child. In the three years living with Ding Jiayi, Zhou Xing knew what her strengths were and decided to focus all her time on her strengths to hone her strengths even further so as to give herself a good future.

And that was also why Zhou Xing had never had much contact with her neighbors in the quad or even chatted with them before in the three years that she had lived in the Qiao family's house.

Now that Zhou Xing was visiting them to ask about the time when the Qiao family was still a family of four, the neighbors were taken aback. It was rare that Zhou Xing herself was willing to ask about it, so the neighbors were extremely frank about the matter as well.

After they finished saying what they wanted to say, the neighbors were still afraid that Zhou Xing would not believe them, and they even said, "What Ding Jiayi did was really too extreme, so much so that it embarrassed even the neighbors here in the quad. Your mom... She was led astray by Ding

Jiayi. Really, we're not afraid of you asking around. Everyone who lives here in the quad knows about what happened to the Qiao family. If you still don't believe us, I can give you an address. After Old Qiao got a divorce from Ding Jiayi, he took Nan Nan and moved to this place. Even though that father and daughter duo tried their best to hide, Ding Jiayi did not let Nan Nan go and would always try to cause trouble for Nan Nan, so everyone who lives around here will have an impression of this."

"You're Zijin's child. Zijin is gone, but when she was younger, she was a really obedient and good kid. We won't say anything more. You might get upset if we say some more. Ding Jiayi really did your mom wrong. Your mom didn't meet a good mom. Old Qiao... All he knew was to work. He cared too little about what went on at home. Sigh. Thinking about it now, it's such a pity that this happened to your mom."

When she was still alive, Qiao Zijin was no different from Ding Jiayi, and she attracted a lot of hate from their neighbors in the quad. But now that she was no longer around, everyone's attitude toward a departed person softened. They gradually felt that if it had not been for Ding Jiayi's misguidance, there was no way such an obedient child could have grown up in this manner.

"All these were your Qiao family's matters. It's not appropriate for us outsiders to intervene or talk too much about it. But child, you're Zijin's daughter. We really don't want to see you walk down the same path that your mom did. Your grandma might have had good intentions for your mom, but she really doesn't know how to be a mom. In the future, it is best if you just come back to visit her occasionally."

"Th-thank you. I understand," Zhou Xing replied dryly.

She could tell that there was a lot of vagueness when her neighbors mentioned her mom.

## Chapter 1706: Afraid

It was not because what had been said had not been clear, but because the other person had said it too clearly.

The problem was that her mom was gone, and she was her mom's only daughter. It was inappropriate to speak ill of her mom in front of her, so the other party had simply chosen to avoid the topic altogether.



Perhaps it was because she was unwilling to give up, or because she wanted to be utterly convinced to give up. Zhou Xing asked a few more families in the quad, but they all told the same story, and they even gave similar descriptions about what had happened at that time. This was a huge blow to Zhou Xing.

From everyone's descriptions, Zhou Xing could tell that the neighbors in the quad had not 'heard about' these things but had witnessed these things personally. If they had heard about these things, it might have been just rumors that were simply made up. But because they had seen them with their own eyes, it was almost impossible that these things were made up.

Zhou Xing ended up visiting two other places afterward: Ping Cheng High School, where Qiao Nan had studied, and the place where Qiao Nan and Qiao Dongliang had lived. No matter how many places Zhou Xing visited and how many people she asked, other than the people in the quad, everyone had a deep impression of what had happened to the Qiao family. At the last two places that she visited, she asked five people about the incident. Amongst them, three of them had an especially fresh memory of what had happened to the Qiao family and could even recount the incidents well.

With that, Zhou Xing really believed that this was the truth.

Before the May Day holiday ended, Zhou Xing returned to the capital.

Zhou Xing had just returned to her room and was lying down on her bed, staring blankly into space as though her soul had left her body, when Ding Jiayi called.

Upon seeing that it was Ding Jiayi, Zhou Xing hesitated before answering. "Hello?"

"Xingxing, did you return to Ping Cheng for the May Day holiday? Why didn't I see you? Where are you now? Grandma cooked a whole table's worth of your favorite dishes! Hurry on home!" Ding Jiayi had heard from others that Zhou Xing had returned and had rushed to buy a whole lot of vegetables, intending to nourish her granddaughter.

But the sun was almost setting, and Zhou Xing was not back yet. Ding Jiayi could not hold it in any longer and called Zhou Xing.

Zhou Xing grabbed her phone tightly. "I'm currently in the capital. I just returned to the capital today."

“You’re already in the capital? Why did you go back? You didn’t come to visit me while you were back in Ping Cheng?” Ding Jiayi’s tone revealed her disappointment. The May Day holiday was only seven days, so she was already used to Zhou Xing not returning to Ping Cheng. As such, she had no expectations about Zhou Xing visiting during this period. But she learned from her neighbors that her granddaughter had returned. She thought that she would have the time of her life for a few days, only to feel as though someone had just poured a bucket of cold water over her.

“Something cropped up in school, so I had to return. I only returned to Ping Cheng at the last minute to get some materials for school. That’s why I was in a bit of a hurry this time.” At this time, Zhou Xing did not feel that she could face Ding Jiayi.

From the time she found out that her mom had said that she never wanted to see Ding Jiayi again right before her death and had not cursed Qiao Nan, she had already felt that something was not right. The truth was indeed different from what she had always known, and there was a huge difference.

When she found out about the real truth, Zhou Xing did not know how to treat Ding Jiayi, who was the only person who treated her genuinely, liked her, cared for her, and was even her only kin.

“So that’s the case. Actually, you can just give me a call if you need any materials. I’ll just help you look for them and send it over to you.” Ding Jiayi laughed. “Xingxing, are you still in a bad mood over Zhai Xin? Xingxing, listen to grandma. Just forget about this. You are cousins with Zhai Xin. It’s not right for the both of you to get into a relationship. Don’t go looking for Zhai Yi and Zhai Xin in the future, all right?”

Since the Zhai family was being so resolute, Xingxing should know to take a step back too, right?

“Grandma, shall we never mention the Zhais or Qiao Nan ever again?” She finally replied after a long while. There was such a long pause that Zhou Xing herself thought she was going to lose the ability to talk. In a hoarse voice, she said, “I don’t want to know about my mom’s past with Qiao Nan. My mom is gone, but you and I are still alive. As long as I still remember my mom and pay my respects at her grave, that will be enough.”

She seriously did not want to listen to any more of the past that was distorted and mixed with personal feelings. If she had not been struck with grief from her grandparents’ sudden death, her birth father trying to snatch her money, and her grandma’s influence, which had all caused her to bear a grudge against Qiao Nan for causing her mom’s death, she would never have gotten into a

relationship with Zhai Xin. She was truly intending on marrying Zhai Xin! If she were to give birth to abnormal children, she felt that that would be God's punishment for Qiao Nan!

But that was such a ridiculous and frightening idea!

That child was her child too.

The most ridiculous thing was that she was only sixteen years old. To put it bluntly, she was just a child herself. How could she harbor such evil thoughts toward her future children? Her grandpa had been right about one thing. She had been influenced by her grandma.

It was true that her grandma had only told her about the 'past' and had never instilled any ideas of revenge. But after hearing about the 'past' from her grandma, she was filled with injustice and felt aggrieved. She could not help but want to release all of her negative emotions by getting revenge on Qiao Nan.

She was probably not the only one who experienced such feelings. She was sure that her grandma experienced them too. Otherwise, her grandma's description would have been much fairer.

"..." Ding Jiayi had never expected Zhou Xing to say such a thing and was completely shocked. This time, it was Ding Jiayi's turn to be in a daze. After a very long while, she finally replied. "Didn't you insist on getting revenge for your mother and seek justice for her? What's happened?" Why had she suddenly changed her mind? This did not seem like something Xingxing would say.

"Are you in a bad mood? Did someone bully you? Did the Zhai family bully you?" Xingxing meant to say that she was no longer willing to mention the Zhai family or Qiao Nan from that day on. "How dare they do that! Xingxing, just wait. Grandma will go to the capital to find you. No one will dare to bully you with grandma around. Even if I have to sacrifice my life, I'll protect you to the end."

Zhou Xing's head was splitting. "Grandma, there's no need for you to come. There's no one bullying me. I guess I haven't told you that grandpa came to find me two months ago. He talked to me about a lot of things, and these things were things that you've never told me about."

"..." Ding Jiayi's breath hitched and her face paled. Was she going to lose her granddaughter?

“Grandma, as long as you promise to never mention the Zhai family again, especially Qiao Nan, and that we will never look for them or visit them, we will still be on good terms like before.”

“...All right.” Ding Jiayi had no idea how she managed to utter those words. “We won’t look for them. I don’t want to see them ever again. Anyway, I already have one foot in my coffin. I don’t even want Qiao Nan to mourn for me after I die. I don’t need her to be filial to me.”

But did that mean that she would never be able to mention Qiao Nan or scold Qiao Nan in the future? Qiao Nan had done so much wrong toward her, Zijin, and even Xingxing! Why could she not talk about that anymore?

Zhou Xing chuckled bitterly. “Grandma, my mom was indeed your daughter whom you raised.” Her mom had said the same thing before her death, but it had not been targeted at Qiao Nan, who had hurt her, but her birth mother who had hurt her for her ‘entire life’. That was her grandma whom she was talking to at this very moment.

In other words, she had no reason to believe that the person that her mom hated the most was Qiao Nan and that the person who had done the most wrongs to her mom was Qiao Nan. No. That was not the case.

Zhou Xing could not help but worry that the person her mom hated the most was her grandma. If she were to continue living with her grandma and even got along well with her grandma, would her mom be angry at her for it and think that she was unfilial?

Ding Jiayi felt a lump in her throat. She had also remembered Qiao Zijin’s behavior before her death and the explanation she had given to Zhou Xing for that. “Xingxing...” Did Xingxing find out about everything? Including how Zijin had said that the person she hated the most was her birth mother and not that good-for-nothing Qiao Nan who had refused to help her?

“Grandma, I’m really tired. I’m really sleepy now. I just want to get a good night’s rest. Let’s continue another time.” Zhou Xing was not just physically exhausted, but her heart could not hold out any longer.

Thinking back about what she had done in the past six months, it was absolutely ridiculous. Instead of a revenge queen, she had been a jester at worst, and cocky at best.

“All... right.” Ding Jiayi’s voice wavered, and her hands trembled badly. “If you’re tired, it’s best for you to have an early night. Shall I call you again tomorrow once you’ve had enough rest?”

“I’m not free tomorrow.”

These four words were enough for Ding Jiayi to feel as though she had been sent straight down to hell. Did that mean that she could not even keep her only granddaughter by her side? Was Xingxing intending on disowning her?

“Our teacher is going to teach us a new dance tomorrow. After I learn it, I have to rent a dance studio to really memorize it. I want to be the main dancer the next time we get a chance to perform. How about I call you in about three days when I have more free time?”

In Ding Jiayi’s heart, Zhou Xing was her only kin left. Why would Zhou Xing not think the same? Even though Zhou Xing knew that ‘only’ was relative, she would not bear to throw that away. Ding Jiayi knew that she was lowly, but she was even more reluctant to let go as compared to Zhou Xing.

Why would she force herself into such a state?

“Oh, okay. I’ll wait for your call.” Upon hearing Zhou Xing’s parting words, Ding Jiayi felt as though she had been raised from hell to heaven in an instant. “Xingxing, do you still have anything to tell me?” Ding Jiayi was unsure about how much Zhou Xing had found out on this trip back.

But Ding Jiayi knew very well that no matter how much Zhou Xing knew about this matter, Zhou Xing’s attitude and mindset was sure to change along with her knowledge. That meant that Zhou Xing might not acknowledge her as a grandma for very much longer. Zhou Xing might very well get upset one day and decide to settle scores with her and disown her!

The start of everything was like a ticking time bomb that was planted between Zhou Xing and Ding Jiayi. Ding Jiayi was unsure about whether it was ticking. Perhaps, it would explode all of a sudden.

Ding Jiayi knew well how bad the consequences would be once the bomb exploded. But before that happened, Ding Jiayi was reluctant to even touch that ticking time bomb in the slightest. Instead, she wanted to hold on to that fleeting happiness and live her life that way.

Zhou Xing had promised Qiao Dongliang that she would never look for Zhai Yi and Zhai Xin again. That was the end of her relationship with Zhai Xin as well. Qiao Dongliang had no reason to doubt Zhou Xing. But if these words had come out of Qiao Zijin's mouth, Qiao Dongliang might not have believed it.

But the person talking today was Zhou Xing. Qiao Dongliang was willing to give the granddaughter whom he had only met once a chance and chose to believe Zhou Xing. From then on, unless Zhou Xing was willing, Qiao Dongliang would never come knocking on her door. He would simply keep in contact with her through phone calls. Unless he got Zhou Xing's permission, Zhou Xing's classmates would only know that Zhou Xing's grandpa had come to visit her once.

Qiao Dongliang himself was uncertain about whether he had made the right call in trusting Zhou Xing this once. Thankfully, Zhai Xin gave Qiao Dongliang an answer before long.

After the 'fake relationship' saga, Zhai Yi and Zhai Xin had quickly gotten news that Qiao Dongliang had gone to visit Zhou Xing after visiting them. The brothers had not expressed any opinions about that, and neither did they stop Qiao Dongliang from doing so. Qiao Dongliang was their elder. It was better and more effective for him as an elder to discipline Zhou Xing than them trying to persuade her as elder cousins.

But before long, Zhai Xin received a letter. Apart from his address, the letter contained no stamp or name of the sender. Neither did it contain the sender's address.

The handwriting in the letter was beautiful. It was obvious from just one look that it had been written by a girl.

Zhai Xin had received many love letters, but his intuition told him that this letter was different from other letters. This was probably no love letter. Upon opening the letter, the letter's contents confirmed his suspicions.

The content of the letter was simple. It was so simple that the letter contained only three words: I am sorry.

Upon seeing these three words, Zhai Xin breathed a sigh of relief. He was finally over this ordeal with Zhou Xing. Zhou Xing would never come to find him in the future, much less bother him just because of their relationship as cousins. "Look at this, Zhai Yi. Grandpa had a chat with Zhou Xing, and it seems that it was quite successful. I thought that grandpa would just be wasting his breath trying to persuade Zhou Xing, but look! Grandpa was actually successful! What do you think grandpa said to Zhou Xing that she suddenly changed her mind?"

He had thought that Zhou Xing would be so bent on revenge that no one would be able to change her mind. But their grandpa had done a 'one shot one kill'!

"How would I know?"

Chapter 1708: "Brave"

Zhai Yi raised his eyebrows. To tell the truth, he was rather surprised by such an outcome. His grandpa had been more successful in persuading Zhou Xing than he had expected. "No matter what, you're lucky that Zhou Xing isn't at that stage where she's beyond remedy. Obviously, once Zhou Xing gets to interact with some normal people, she'll be much more normal than her mom and will listen to advice."

Zhai Xin understood at once that the abnormal person that Zhai Yi was talking about was that 'grandma' back in Ping Cheng whom they had only met once.

Not only had she raised her own daughter in this manner. Now, she had even raised her granddaughter in this manner. Zhai Xin had no children of his own, and neither did he have any experience being a father. But he could not help but 'respect' Ding Jiayi. Other people never grew tired of teaching others, while this 'grandma' of his never grew tired of 'ruining' others. What was most ridiculous was that his 'grandma' did not choose to ruin other people, but instead, she chose to ruin her own family members! Especially those closest and most beloved to her!

Was there anything more extreme than this?

"All right, grandpa stepped up to help you solve the problem of Zhou Xing. Remember to be more restrained in your action in the future. Don't go around overflowing with compassion and love. Otherwise, Zhou Xing might have gone, but a second Zhou Xing might just appear. When that time comes, grandpa couldn't possibly keep solving your problems for you."

After all, this whole matter had been a result of Zhai Xin's lack of a strong will. Zhai Xin should have been like him and held firm to his principles even after Zhou Xing appeared. He should have put his focus on his schoolwork and not have been in a hurry to get into a relationship. No matter who appeared, Zhou Xing should not have viewed the other party as a younger sister and allowed her to call herself his girlfriend just because she was young and insensible and did not know what she truly wanted.

What happened in the end only proved that having too much compassion would only lead to misunderstandings.

Zhai Xin rubbed his face. “Once bitten, twice shy. Not everyone can love others so selflessly. I, for one, can’t do that. From now on, I have no affinity with selfless love. As long as I ensure that I am not one who purposefully destroys others, I’ll not be wasting whatever Mom has taught me since I was young.”

Cherish others selflessly?

Not all flowers needed to be cherished by others. If you met one who was a bully, it would be best to avoid it. Otherwise, the only one who would suffer would be yourself.

“Remember what you’ve just said.” Zhai Yi patted Zhai Xin on the shoulder. If Zhai Xin could really follow through with his words, this incident with Zhou Xing would not be a wasted one. With a younger like Zhai Xin, there was no way Zhai Yi could choose not to care about him. Zhai Xin was his only brother, after all.

Zhai Xin looked at Zhai Yi. “I have no other problems. Zhai Yi, you’d better pay more attention to Zhai Yu in the future. You know that Zhai Yu is the one that resembles Mom the most amongst the three of us. Mom was the most popular girl in Peking University in her days. If she had not gotten married early and had the three of us immediately, there might have been a whole line of people waiting to chase Mom. Do you think that this incident with Zhou Xing will happen on Zhai Yu?”

‘Someone’ would set his sight on her just to get some so-called revenge for his mother. Based on the Zhai family’s background, there were a countless number of people scheming against the Zhai family. If Zhou Xing had had her eyes on him, there was sure to be someone else who had set his sights on a young lady like Zhai Yu.

Everyone knew that Zhai Yu was the only young lady in the Zhai family and was the precious golden goose of the whole Zhai family. With Zhai Yu’s special position in the Zhai family, there would only be more people who were scheming against Zhai Yu than against Zhai Yi.

“Hehehe...” Zhai Yi put down the pen in his hand. “You’re worried about Zhai Yu? Zhai Yu may be the youngest among the three of us, but I guess it’s because of the difference in gender that Zhai Yu is much more sensitive than you are in this aspect. There will definitely be more people like Zhou Xing in the future. But don’t you worry about Zhai Yu. It’s better for you to take care of yourself.”



While they were still in junior high school, there were already boys who were eyeing on Zhai Yu. Perhaps, things had been more innocent at that time. Before he could even do anything upon learning about the matter, Zhai Yu had resolved the matter herself.

He thought about how that boy always made detours upon seeing Zhai Yu afterward, acting as though he was a mouse running away from a cat. Initially, Zhai Yi had been rather curious about how Zhai Yu had managed to do that. After a lot of effort, he still failed to get the story from his own sister. Instead, he managed to coax the answer out of that boy whom Zhai Yu had rejected.

Actually, Zhai Yu had not rejected him either. She had simply asked a few questions to pressurize and crush the other party. Zhai Yu expressed that she had recently found a few new questions that were pretty interesting and suggested that they went through them together. In the end, the boy had not even gotten an understanding of what the question meant while Zhai Yu had arrived at the answer. “Ha. This question only looks interesting and a little challenging, but it’s actually so easy. Sigh. This is an insult to my intellect.”

Boys in junior high school cared a lot about having their dignity, so there was no way the boy would have admitted that he had not even understood the question, much less any idea of how to solve the question. If such a difficult question was an insult to Zhai Yu’s intellect, and if he could not even solve this question, then his intellect...

From then on, that boy no longer felt that Zhai Yu was the lover of his dreams. He only felt that Zhai Yu was too intelligent. No wonder she always placed among the top three in the level at every examination. Putting it in another way, the Zhai siblings were too outstanding.

It was too easy for anyone to feel inferior in front of someone like that. An average person could not handle the pressure of staying by the Zhai siblings all the time.

Incidents like this happened almost every term when a fearless boy would try to get close to Zhai Yu. What comforted Zhai Yi was that Zhai Yu was able to handle all of them herself and handle them very well for that matter.

It was rare that his sister was able to deal with things in a sensible manner herself. Since his younger sister was all grown up and able to deal with problems on her own, Zhai Yi felt that it was only natural for him to give his sister enough space to develop and show off her talents.

This meant that Zhai Yi had absolute confidence in Zhai Yu and felt that she would definitely be able to handle whatever was thrown in her direction. On the other hand, Zhai Xin, who should have

performed better than Zhai Yu, had a big fall when it came to Zhou Xing. Zhai Yi felt that this joke was the funniest joke that he had heard in this entire year.

After hearing Zhai Yi's words, Zhai Xin looked depressed and covered his whole body with his blanket. After he learned about Zhai Yu's 'bravery', Zhai Xin felt too shameful to meet anyone.

#### Chapter 1709: Upset

As Zhai Yu's second brother and the second child amongst the triplets, he had not even performed as well as Zhai Yu. How could he continue living his life?

"Mom, I guess you can finally rest assured now." Zhai Xin was heartened by the letter and told Qiao Nan about the apology from Zhou Xing. But this call had been answered by Zhai Yu. Hearing that Zhou Xing had finally given up, Zhai Yu was rather happy. It had not been easy for Zhou Xing to come to a realization.

If Zhou Xing had been obstinate and resolute, they would have no choice but to use some extreme methods to deal with her.

"Yes, don't worry." Qiao Nan had always been frowning lately. Now, she could finally relax. She had never expected that it would be so easy to resolve the matter with Zhou Xing. "Zhou Xing doesn't seem to be that much like her mom."

If Qiao Zijin had been like Zhou Xing and had readily accepted other people's advice and thought it through, Qiao Zijin would still be alive today. Zhou Xing would not have lost her mom at such a young age either.

What Qiao Nan could not accept was how Qiao Zijin had still gone down the same path even after starting her own family in two whole lifetimes. Instead of taking care of her own family, she chose to have affairs. Without it, Qiao Zijin would not have gotten a divorce from Zhou Zheng. As long as she did not get divorced from Zhou Zheng, Qiao Zijin would only live well in Ping Cheng and watch Zhou Xing grow up healthily.

What a beautiful and happy life that would be! But everyone was ruined by Qiao Zijin.

“Mom.” Zhai Yu leaned on Qiao Nan’s shoulder, overcome with emotions. “This only proves that it’s crucial for children to have elders that can correct them properly. In fact, Zhou Xing grew up with her paternal grandparents. Mom, you’re the clearest about how that old couple was. With those two people educating Zhou Xing, Zhou Xing could not go too far off the path.”

After she learned about Zhou Xing, Zhai Yu used several contacts that her auntie, Zhai Hua, had given her to investigate Zhou Xing’s background.

After learning about what Zhou Xing had gone through in her childhood, Zhai Yu, who had grown up in a bed of roses, felt a little sympathy for Zhou Xing.

Father and Mother Zhou did not like their grandson and were biased toward their granddaughter, Zhou Xing. But that was not without reason. After Mother Zhou got married, she had always been pampered by Father Zhou. Mother Zhou held the power to make the decision in all matters in the Zhou family.

Before Zhou Zheng got remarried, he always listened to his mom in all matters. After Zhou Xing was born, she had been raised by Father and Mother Zhou. As such, Zhou Xing had a close relationship with her grandparents since she was young. Moreover, Zhou Xing had a sweet mouth that was not unlike Qiao Zijin’s when she was a child herself. As such, Zhou Xing was her grandparents’ happy pill.

When Zhou Zheng got remarried, Father and Mother Zhou had done nothing to help the couple other than turning up at the wedding venue as their elders. All the costs of Zhou Zheng taking a new wife and the cost of giving his father-in-law some pocket money entirely came out of Zhou Zheng’s pocket. Father and Mother Zhou had not forked out a single cent.

Zhou Zheng had a stable job that had good welfare benefits too. The problem was that he did not have a high salary. Besides, he was not one who had much savings. Before he got a divorce from Qiao Zijin, he was used to giving a portion of his salary to Qiao Zijin as pocket money.

One could imagine how different Zhou Zheng’s second wedding was from his first. It was as different as night was from day.

The bride had a sharp ear and had heard their guests comparing this wedding to that wedding with Qiao Zijin, saying that everything was too shabby and distasteful. It was obvious that this bride was not in the good books of her parents-in-law. When Zhou Zheng had gotten married for the first time, it had truly been marrying a wife, the most important event in one’s life.

But this second wedding was as though they were just playing around. It was just too shabby.

Even if it was for a second marriage, the bride was still proud as Zhou Zheng's favorite first love. When Zhou Zheng had married Qiao Zijin in the past, he had still listened entirely to his mom. After marrying this favorite first love of his, Zhou Zheng finally revealed his true nature of listening to his wife, which he had learned from his father. He allowed his first love to arrange everything and take care of all matters at home.

At that time, Father and Mother Zhou had already taken Zhou Xing to live in that big house that they had purchased for Qiao Zijin.

It did not look too bad, but neither was their home very good. As such, his first love's dissatisfaction reached a breaking point. But his first love was an intelligent person and chose not to throw a temper at Zhou Zheng. On the night of their wedding, Zhou Zheng apologized to his first love, saying that he had already strived hard, but he would strive even harder to let her lead a good life in the future.

His first love was clearly full of rage but treated Zhou Zheng gently nonetheless. She kept reassuring that it was all right that this wedding could not compare to her first wedding. Because of Zhou Zheng's feelings toward her, she felt that she had married the right person and that she would lead a good life in the future.

Upon hearing her say that, Zhou Zheng fell even deeper for her, and his guilt toward her intensified. In short, his first love's tenderness and consideration on their wedding night caused Zhou Zheng to completely give in to her. Zhou Zheng felt that his first love was actually the same type of person as his mom, the kind of woman who would treat her husband especially well.

The next day, Zhou Zheng ran to his parents and complained about the injustice faced by his first love. He even told Father and Mother Zhou about those sensible words that his first love had told him. "Dad, Mom, listen. Huihui is really a good young lady. She's so sensible. She's nothing like Qiao Zijin who's incapable and feisty. It's your son's good fortune to be able to marry such a good young lady like Huihui. You two elders should treat Huihui better and fairer, even if it's just a little bit. Is that all right?" That would be fair to him.

"No!" Mother Zhou was not moved by her new daughter-in-law's words to her son. In fact, she was fuming. "Her words may be able to deceive a fool like you, but don't even think of trying to toy with me like that. I've said long ago that this woman is not an oil-efficient lamp. If you like her, just live your life with her. You'll have a hard time in the future!"

Her son had actually compared such a scheming b\*tch with his own mother! Mother Zhou was heartbroken. She might have a hard temper and a strong personality, but she treated her husband and son well and genuinely. She had never done anything that would let her son down.

If her daughter-in-law's heart toward her son was like hers toward her husband, there was no way she would disagree to the remarriage. In fact, Qiao Zijin would not even have been in the picture. Mother Zhou could sense that this young lady was pretty but was not actually sincere toward her son. All she wanted was to spend the money in her son's pocket.

#### Chapter 1710: Unexpected

After graduation and entering society, the world was much more realistic. That young lady wanted to find someone with money who would allow her to lead a good life. That was why she did not take a fancy to her young and foolish son. She would not pass her judgment on this lady's character. All she had to say was that this young lady was not genuine and was not sincere in wanting to spend her life with her son.

Qiao Zijin was indeed no good. Neither did she say that Qiao Zijin was good. The problem was that Qiao Zijin only had a bad temper when she was back at her own house because she had been spoiled rotten by her own family. But once Qiao Zijin married into the Zhou family, she was obedient. In the almost ten years that she had been married, she had never once caused trouble for her apart from having an affair.

Qiao Zijin was unwilling to go out to work and wanted only to stay at home. But she spent only as much as her son gave her. Qiao Zijin had never fought with her over managing the family or money at home. The way Mother Zhou saw it, Qiao Zijin had led quite a decent and honest life in the Zhou family in those few years.

On the other hand, she felt that this new daughter-in-law was a troublemaker. Not only would she make Zhou Zheng rebel against her, but she would also stir up trouble in the Zhou family, disrupting their peace.

So no matter how good this woman was, she could not even match up to Qiao Zijin. At least, she did not have to worry about Qiao Zijin. As for this new daughter-in-law, she would have to worry about everything. What Mother Zhou could not accept the most was that her son had always listened to her and had enjoyed a close relationship with her while Qiao Zijin was the Zhou family's daughter-in-law.

It was only the second day of her new daughter-in-law entering the Zhou family, and yet, that obedient and filial son of hers was already screaming and shouting at her. Just listen to what she had said! What did she mean by this second wedding not matching up to her first? Only a deaf person would not be able to tell that this new daughter-in-law of hers was feeling aggrieved over this wedding. That was why she had hoodwinked her son!

Mother Zhou had been strong and capable her whole life. Was she going to let this b\*tch get a hold on her now that she was old?

Absolutely not!

She did not need her son to support her, so why did she have to live her life looking at her daughter-in-law's mood? Besides, now that Qiao Zijin was gone, it was just as well that they could live as a couple along with their granddaughter. With their granddaughter who had such a sweet mouth, why would she still need her son? If her new daughter-in-law liked him, she would just give him to her.

She had heard stories of sons neglecting their moms once they married their wives. She had never expected that her son, who was already in his thirties, would undergo such a drastic change overnight. He was suddenly making up for whatever rebellion he had not expressed in his teenage years.

Father Zhou was a man who loved his wife deeply. Seeing how infuriated Mother Zhou was at their son, Father Zhou also felt that his son was not as lovable as he used to be. "Since we're already living apart, let's just treat it as though we're two completely separate families. If you're grateful to us for raising you up and giving you an apartment to live in, you're always welcome to come and visit us if you're in the mood to do so. If you think that we've failed as your parents and have let you and your Huihui down, that's fine too. It'll be better for you not to visit, then. At least, you won't anger your mom and me, and we'll be able to live longer lives. No matter what, we were the ones who gave birth to you. Just take it as though you're repaying our kindness for that. How's that?"

Not only had he been chased out by his parents, but his own birth father had even chastised him in this manner.

When he first arrived, he had been fuming and feeling that his parents had been too extreme. Now, Zhou Zheng felt ashamed. "Dad, that's not what I meant. Of course I know how hard you and Mom worked to raise me. I..." In an instant, Zhou Zheng had no idea how to explain the tantrum that he had just thrown.

“Don’t just go ‘I, I’. Can’t you see that your mom is angry? All right, you’d better go back and find your Huihui. I fed you, clothed you, provided for your education, and even bought a car and a house for you. Now, I have only one request to make. If you really care about your mom and me, you can come. But if you feel that you will only make your mom angry if you were to come, then just don’t come. Sounds good?”

Father Zhou was not going to fall for Zhou Zheng’s words. He opened the door and invited Zhou Zheng to leave. Father Zhou’s words had indeed been gentler than Mother Zhou’s, but he had also directly opened the door and chased Zhou Zheng out. That was an even tighter ‘slap’ in Zhou Zheng’s face.

Upon finding out that Zhou Zheng had gone to her in-laws but had not only failed to seek justice for her but had also been chased out of the door because he had angered his mom, Huihui flew into a rage.

Thankfully, Huihui calmed down very quickly. She was still young and had a long way to go with Zhou Zheng. She knew that the Zhou family’s background was good. Even if Zhou Zheng did not have any money, the Zhou family did. As long as she married Zhou Zheng and waited for the old couple to pass away, no matter how much those two elders disliked her, their money would still eventually land up in her hands.

As for the matter of marriage, if she were to argue with Zhou Zheng and lose his favor, that would truly be a mistake on her part. She would have fallen into the trap of those two elders.

Before long, there was something that made Huihui overjoyed. She was pregnant with Zhou Zheng’s child! During her first marriage, Huihui had given birth to a daughter. It was because of this that she had not had a good life in her in-laws’ after giving birth to her daughter. Thankfully, Huihui herself was a female and liked daughters. As such, she never put it against her daughter for being a girl. Even after she got divorced from her rich husband, Huihui was firm in her decision of taking custody of her daughter after the divorce before marrying Zhou Zheng.

This time, Huihui had many more considerations than when she had been pregnant the first time around. Only after marrying into the family did Huihui realize that the Zhou family was actually quite rich. When she had been dating Zhou Zheng, the Zhou family had already been in quite a good position. They could match up with her ex-husband’s family.

If she had known about the Zhou family’s conditions at that time, she would never have broken up with Zhou Zheng. Instead, she would have clung on tightly with all her might to Zhou Zheng and

simply marry Zhou Zheng. Her ex-husband was slightly richer than Zhou Zheng and slightly older, but he was nowhere near as good as Zhou Zheng in every other aspect.

What she had not expected was that after her second marriage to Zhou Zheng, the conditions of the Zhou family far exceeded that of her ex-husband. Her ex-husband's family was not even as rich as the Zhou family, and their only son would inherit everything the family had!

Those two old people had money, houses, and even factories. Surely they would want a grandson to inherit everything they had!

As she rubbed her belly that was not yet showing, Huihui firmly hoped that this child would be a boy. She had an intuition that this child would for sure be a son.

After ten months of pregnancy, Huihui's wish finally came true. She had indeed given birth to a son!

Holding his son, Zhou Zheng smiled like a fool. Not only was this a son, but this was also a son from his first love! Zhou Zheng could not love this son any more than he did!