

RTAMM 171

Chapter 171: Obviously Unreliable

Qiu Chenxi's face turned slightly stiff, but she quickly reverted to her normal self, revealing a natural and gentle smile. "I heard that... your English is quite good at school. If there's anything you're not sure of, you may seek my advice. Of course, feel free to point out my mistakes too."

"Young lady, did you hear that? Don't hold back. Speak your mind." Lin Yuankang nodded and passed a pen to Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan raised her eyebrows and looked at Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng nodded in return. Qiao Nan then took the pen from Lin Yuankang and started writing quietly.

About fifteen minutes later, Qiao Nan had reviewed the first page of the document Qiu Chenxi submitted to Lin Yuankang and wrote a number of comments. Thereafter, she passed the document back to Lin Yuankang. "Too many, I can't finish reading them."

Reviewing the first page only should suffice.

"Oh, have you finished reading a page of it?" Lin Yuankang shrank his neck and hid his chin. He was unable to properly see the numerous words written on the paper.

Lin Yuankang did not say a word. As his pair of eyes stared at the document edited by Qiao Nan, he simply opened the second drawer to the right of his table with his right hand to retrieve a spectacles case. His action was swift and precise, as if there was another pair of eyes on his hands. He took out the pair of reading glasses from its case and put it on.

Qiu Chenxi was stunned. Didn't Grandpa Lin say he could not find the pair of reading glasses?

"..." Qiao Nan twisted her lips. She already said that this old man was not reliable at all.

"Not bad." This time, Lin Yuankang personally saw Qiao Nan edit the document, and the document was brought over by Qiu Chenxi. There was no way she could have cheated.

Lin Yuankang was very satisfied with Qiao Nan's performance. "Young lady, take a look too."

After he read the document, Lin Yuankang returned them to Qiu Chenxi.

Qiu Chenxi's face scrunched up. There seemed to be a thin layer of frost on it. She looked extremely cold.

She did not believe the English standard of a new high school student would be better than that of a gifted college student from a foreign language school.

However, when Qiu Chenxi saw the additional sentences and grammar on that piece of paper, she was totally stunned.

Qiu Chenxi's first reaction neither arose from reading the contents written by Qiao Nan nor whether they were right or wrong. She was shocked by Qiao Nan's excellent handwriting.

Qiao Nan's English handwriting was not the fancy style that was typically beautiful and smooth. It was the formal and upright style like those on printouts.

Qiu Chenxi was very surprised.

The content in this document was completed alone by Qiu Chenxi using the computer. Hence, it was printed, not handwritten.

But Qiao Nan's handwriting was almost no different from those on the printouts. The main difference was that Qiao Nan used a pen with a thicker tip. Hence, her fonts had a thicker line than that of Qiu Chenxi's.

In addition, she was only a high school student. Even a college student might not have such handwriting. The words were so beautiful!

Qiu Chenxi tightened her hold on the document, nearly crushing it.

She took a deep breath. She could not allow herself to panic or lose her cool. She had to calm down. What was the use of having such beautiful handwriting?

Although it was not so prevalent in China now, the Information Technology field would definitely become popular and be widely used once developed.

When that time came, who would write with their hands? Everything would be typed with a machine, and there was no room to showcase beautiful handwriting. In the end, these fanciful handwritten words would become obsolete, unrealistic, and superficial. It would be more important to rely on capability and knowledge!

However, when she saw the standards of the vocabulary and grammar marked by Qiao Nan were beyond that of hers, the hands Qiu Chenxi used to grab the document could not help trembling.

Qiu Chenxi's English was really good amongst people of her age. She had put in a lot of hard work and effort.

Therefore, she was able to tell whether Qiao Nan's edits were right or wrong.

If Qiao Nan's edits were correct, it meant what Qiu Chenxi wrote previously was wrong.

The most embarrassing thing for Qiu Chenxi was that Qiao Nan pointed out six mistakes on that one page alone. She was not thick-skinned enough to admit that she could not understand one of the edits Qiao Nan wrote!

"Young lady from the Qiu family, what do you think of my little disciple's edits? Are they okay?" Lin Yuankang removed his glasses. It was strange that the little lad from the Zhai family was enlightened all of a sudden. He also knew how to use the back door now. After all, he really helped him find a little disciple with very good qualities.

Zhai Sheng did something good via the back door route. However, he was not sure whether it was for the sake of his little disciple or himself. Regardless, it was a happy ending for everyone.

Hearing Lin Yuankang's words, Qiu Chenxi could not hide the change in her expression.

Qiu Chenxi was prepared to visit the Lin's residence today. She even brought her documents.

Many heard that Lin Yuankang would soon retire from the political scene. Given his experience and ability, and the numerous disciples under his wing, many had designs on him.

Otherwise, there would not be so many people crowding at the entrance of the Lin's residence. Qiu Chenxi's visit also had similar purposes. She hoped to take this opportunity to request Lin Yuankang to accept her as his youngest disciple.

Besides Lin Yuankang's knowledge and ability, the network and connections he had accumulated was something yearned over by many politicians.

If Qiu Chenxi could become Lin Yuankang's disciple, it would be of great help to the Qiu family's business. Most importantly, she could raise her own status and reputation.

However, these were all one-sided and wishful thinking of the outsiders. In fact, Lin Yuankang did not let out any news that he would take in a disciple in his golden years.

Nevertheless, everyone was unwilling to give up. They sent their sons and daughters to the Lin's residence, hoping that Lin Yuankang would meet them. If Lin Yuankang happened to take a liking to them, then their child and family could attain great success.

Initially, Lin Yuankang had maintained the same stance toward these people's harassment during the period: "Sorry. I am old and want to rest. I am not accepting any disciple."

Qiu Chenxi had been wracking her brains on how to move Lin Yuankang's heart, trying to use her strength and ability to win his favor. Unexpectedly, she met someone who obstructed and thwarted her good plan. Lin Yuankang even took in that person on the spot and directly addressed her as his little disciple!

Once she heard the two words 'little disciple', Qiu Chenxi knew that her hopes were lost.

"Then, I must really congratulate Grandpa Lin for accepting such an intelligent disciple this time." Qiu Chenxi's words were beautiful, but the smile on her face was a little distorted and scary. She did not look happy for Lin Yuankang at all.

"Thank you. It's all thanks to everyone's blessings. True enough, when one is old, they will be too bored to rest and do nothing. It is the right time to accept a disciple."

Chapter 172: Both Ability and Status Are Important

Lin Yuankang was nonchalant, chatting and laughing despite noticing Qiu Chenxi's distorted expression.

“Grandpa Lin, it's late today. I'll go home first. I'll visit you again another day.” Qiu Chenxi gritted her teeth. If Lin Yuankang was unwilling to accept her as his disciple, she would not shamelessly press on either. Lin Yuankang was formidable, but he was not the only one in China. It was not that difficult for her to find a master!

“Alright, come and have fun again.” Lin Yuankang did not miss the unjustified feeling, anger, and humiliation in Qiu Chenxi's eyes. Nevertheless, he still kindly waved goodbye to Qiu Chenxi and let her leave at a leisurely pace.

“Goodbye, Grandpa Lin, Brother Zhai. When you have time, you can come to my house to play. Can I look for you when I visit my brother?” There was no longer any hope about Lin Yuankang's matter, but Qiu Chenxi did not forget Zhai Sheng's existence.

Zhai Sheng knitted her brows. “The army is not a place that allows people to enter and leave as they wish. I dislike being disturbed by strangers.”

“...” Previously, Zhai Sheng asked Qiu Chenxi who she was, but now he said he did not wish to be disturbed by strangers. These two things made her feel extremely embarrassed. She was not the thick-skinned type. With these piercing and sarcastic words from Zhai Sheng, her face turned red. Tears welled up in her eyes, and she nearly cried on the spot.

Qiu Chenxi bit her lips while she endured and fought back her tears. “Grandpa Lin, I'm going back.” Thereafter, Qiu Chenxi turned away and left as fast as she could.

“Tsk tsk tsk, you bullied another young lady to tears again.” Lin Yuankang said, as if he was watching a show.

“Again?” Qiao Nan's eyes widened. Did that mean Brother Zhai had ever bullied someone else to tears before?

“Back to the topic, what is this matter about taking in a disciple?” When did she become the disciple of this unreliable old man? Why wasn’t she aware?

“Old Lin, Nan Nan is still young.” Without answering Qiao Nan’s question, Zhai Sheng behaved as if he was Qiao Nan’s parent and discussed with Lin Yuankang.

“I understand.” Lin Yuankang nodded his head. Judging by the reaction of the young lady from the Qiu family, his disciple would face much hostility if news of him accepting a young disciple spread.

Lin Yuankang was willing to take in Qiao Nan as his disciple not because he wanted to give Zhai Sheng face. It was because Qiao Nan was a rare talent.

Since it was a disciple that Lin Yuankang accepted according to his wish, he would pay great attention to these matters even without Zhai Sheng’s reminder. “Nan Nan, you have been a great help to master earlier. This is your remuneration. Take it.”

Having said that, Lin Yuankang was like a sly old fox as he laughed again and looked at Zhai Sheng.

Zhai Sheng brought Qiao Nan here today mainly for two purposes. Firstly, it was to let Lin Yuankang take in Qiao Nan as her disciple. Secondly, the document Qiao Nan translated last time belonged to Lin Yuankang. He had to give the remuneration since the job had been accomplished. Hence, Zhai Sheng was helping Qiao Nan to get the payment.

Qiao Nan was so anxious that she wanted to scratch her head. She had not thought of acknowledging a master, and she did not know what kind of master she would be having. In a state of confusion, she suddenly had one.

Now that the old man had become her master, then the help she had rendered to him was expected of her. It seemed inappropriate for her to take the money.

Zhai Sheng was seemingly oblivious to the complex feelings Qiao Nan was experiencing. He tucked the envelope with the money in Qiao Nan’s hands. “Thank you, Master.”

“?” Qiao Nan trembled. “Thank you, Master?” Was Brother Zhai teaching her what to say?

“Don’t mention it. We will all be one family in the future,” Lin Yuankang said smilingly. The corners of his eyes curved up, a sense of cunningness apparent. He looked like a deep and scheming old fox.

“Elder Lin, it is late. I will send Nan Nan back.” He had fulfilled all the purposes of his visit today. Zhai Sheng did not intend to stay any longer in the Lin’s residence.

Lin Yuankang smacked his lips regretfully. Aye, he could not watch the show starring his little disciple and Zhai Sheng anymore. “That is right. Nan Nan is still young, and it is not appropriate for her to go home so late in case the ‘baddies’ kidnap her. Zhai Sheng, you must ensure that you send my little disciple home ‘safely’. If there is a strand of hair missing from my little disciple, I will look for you at the Zhai’s residence to settle the scores.”

Lin Yuankang immediately switched his role and gave Zhai Sheng an implicit warning: This little disciple of his is really young! Don’t be so immoral as to open your wolf’s mouth so soon!

“Nan Nan.” Zhai Sheng stretched his long legs and stood up.

“Oh.” Qiao Nan behaved as if she was the little wife, following step by step behind Zhai Sheng, then giving a bow to Lin Yuankang. “Goodbye, Master?”

Till this moment, Qiao Nan could not comprehend the fact that she now had a master. Speaking of this, what kind of master was he? What would she be taught?

Qiao Nan, who had a head full of question marks, relied solely on her total trust in Zhai Sheng. Although her heart was so confused, she persisted and endured without asking too much.

At the sight of Qiao Nan treading in small steps behind Zhai Sheng, and Zhai Sheng slowing down his long steps to wait for Qiao Nan, Lin Yuankang shook his head. This little disciple of him was so worrying.

Fortunately, Zhai Sheng was not a bad guy. Otherwise, the naive little disciple might be helping the person who sold her count the proceeds.

But at the thought of the way Zhai Sheng looked at Qiao Nan, and the latter's absolute trust in Zhai Sheng, Lin Yuankang clutched his head in pain. It seemed that the meek and tender little disciple he had just taken in would be carried away by the 'wolf' soon. Wrong... In the first place, the little disciple was carried here by the 'wolf'.

Gosh!

"Nan Nan, wait for me here. I am going to get the car."

"Oh, alright." Before Qiao Nan could ask Zhai Sheng who Lin Yuankang was, Zhai Sheng had steered away from the topic.

Qiao Nan, who had nothing to do, could only stay put on the spot and wait for Zhai Sheng to drive his car over.

However, Zhai Sheng, whom she was waiting for, did not come. Instead, she saw Qiu Chenxi who was supposed to have left the Lin's residence. "Do you feel very complacent and happy now?"

Before Qiao Nan could say a word, Qiu Chenxi pressed on, "What is your relationship with Brother Zhai? You are not part of the Zhai family."

"My surname is not Zhai." Of course, she was not from the Zhai family. "Do you like Brother Zhai?"

Qiu Chenxi's face turned red again, but she still lifted her chin and admitted in her stride, "Yes, I like Brother Zhai. I have always liked him since I was a child. I want to be his bride. Brother Zhai is very outstanding, so I must be outstanding too. Only then will I be compatible with him. In this world, the person who is compatible with Brother Zhai not only must be from a good family background but also capable. Do you understand?"

"So, according to you, what exactly is more important in order to be compatible with Brother Zhai? Is it the person's ability more important, or are you trying to emphasize that their family background is more critical?" Qiao Nan's eyes flashed. Her words targeted what Qiu Chenxi was trying to drive at.

Qiu Chenxi pursed her lips. She did not expect this young lady to be so sensitive and actually understood what she was trying to say. “I can only say that both aspects are as important. Neither triumphs over the other!”

Chapter 173: Mature Lady and Silly Girl

“I see.” In contrast to Qiu Chenxi’s aggressiveness, Qiao Nan’s innocent face had a pure smile as she said in her usual sharp speaking style, “May I ask if I am considered as someone with the capability?”

“You...” Qiu Chenxi wanted to deny Qiao Nan’s ability. However, when she thought about how Qiao Nan, a high school student, pointed out a huge number of mistakes in her, a gifted student in foreign languages, writing, Qiu Chenxi could not bring herself to say something against her conscience.

She had no qualms talking bad about Qiao Nan, but saying such unintelligent words would be a slap in her own face.

“Judging by your reaction, I am extremely happy that you have acknowledged my ability.”

“...” Who wanted to acknowledge her!

Qiu Chenxi did not say a word as Qiao Nan continued, “I have become the little disciple of Grandpa Lin. May I ask you another question? Since that is the case, am I considered someone of status now?”

Qiu Chenxi’s face turned pale. She badly wished to give Qiao Nan, whose current smile was as bright as the sun, a slap across the face. Shameless!

She was supposed to be the little disciple of Old Lin. This woman was so young yet unscrupulous and scheming. She actually used Old Lin’s name to suppress her.

Qiao Nan was now the closed-door disciple of Lin Yuankang. Of course, she would be considered someone of status. In fact, the high-level reputation and status were beyond her expectations.

Qiu Chenxi initially intended to use the status of being Lin Yuankang's closed-door disciple to cast a layer of gold on herself. She did not expect that Qiao Nan would thwart her plan.

Qiu Chenxi hated Qiao Nan for upsetting her plan and snatching away the opportunity that was supposedly hers. When she heard Qiao Nan use the status of being Lin Yuankang's disciple to refute her earlier words about status and ability, Qiu Chenxi was no longer able to tolerate the anger burning inside her. She raised her hand and waved toward Qiao Nan's face with all her might.

"..." Qiao Nan was staring. Her mother was unreasonable and liked to use physical violence on others. Never did she expect that the person before her who was seemingly high and mighty and sophisticated would subject to such method as well.

Qiao Nan was not prepared for Qiu Chenxi's atrocious temper. When she was being humiliated by Qiu Chenxi earlier, she did not scold Qiu Chenxi at all. Yet, Qiu Chenxi was so bad-tempered that she wanted to hit her.

As the slap was about to land on Qiao Nan's face, a loud popping sound reverberated. It was deafening and abrupt in the beautiful and fragrant garden.

Before Qiu Chenxi could land her hand on Qiao Nan's face, another hand which was big and strong blocked the slap for Qiao Nan. Most importantly, the direction of the hit was reversed strongly, as if she was slapping herself back.

Qiu Chenxi's strength was certainly not comparable to that of Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng's backhand slap was so strong that it did not only push away her hands but also uprooted her directly from the ground. She lost her footing and nearly fell.

"Zhai... Brother Zhai?" Qiu Chenxi was shocked and angry. Moreover, the hand that was slapped by Zhai Sheng became painfully numb.

Zhai Sheng's face was black and looked at Qiu Chenxi with hostility. "What are you doing? What are you trying to do again?!"

"I... I'm not thinking of doing anything..." Qiu Chenxi was in a panic and said something very silly. "I saw some dirt on this little girl's shoulder and was trying to help her pat it away."

She regretted having said that when she saw the cold and distrustful look in Zhai Sheng's eyes. She wanted to bite her tongue off. "Brother Zhai, I don't wish to say this. After all, this little girl is still young and insensible. Nevertheless, I feel that it's better to let you know lest your kindness be misunderstood and create troubles for yourself. This little girl likes you!"

Brother Zhai hated girls who took the initiative to pester him. Since a young age, she could remember the countless occasions where many young girls confessed their love to Brother Zhai but left in anger and tears due to his response.

There would be no exception this time.

"I wanted to persuade her that since she's still young, the most important task on hand is to study well so that she can repay the country and contribute to the society in the future and be filial to her parents. But I don't know the youngsters' thoughts nowadays. At such a young age, they are already thinking of love and romance. She said she likes you and wants to stick to you. She even warned me to stay further away from you. She said she will not let any other woman snatch you away... Brother Zhai, I... I was muddle-headed and in the fit of my anger. Nevertheless, I have good intentions at heart. It's for her own good!"

After Qiu Chenxi finished, five words instantly appeared in Qiao Nan's heart: What the hell was this!

Wasn't Qiu Chenxi a gifted student from the foreign language school? Surely she was not a gifted student from the acting or scriptwriting course, was she?

When did she say all these? Why didn't she have any recollection?

Qiu Chenxi was waiting to see Zhai Sheng's reaction. Unexpectedly, Zhai Sheng was looking at Qiao Nan as if there was a layer of mist over him. He looked as if he was enlightened, yet unsure. Because of Qiu Chenxi's words, he came to understand the fuzzy feelings he had for Qiao Nan. It was as if the layer of mist was completely dispersed.

Love. These feelings were due to love. He loved Qiao Nan!

At this moment, Zhai Sheng finally knew why he could not help but want to get close to and sit beside Qiao Nan, and slow down his steps so that Qiao Nan could keep up with him. He even had a tingling feeling in his heart each time he met Qiao Nan.

Zhai Sheng was enlightened instantly. He thought about some dirty jokes he heard in the army and the recent feelings and reactions he had toward Qiao Nan.

Naturally, when a man sees a woman he likes, it was true that he could not help getting close to and even taking advantage of her.

At the thought of this, there was a flash of striking radiance in Zhai Sheng's eyes that he never had before when he turned his head to look at Qiao Nan.

It was a pity that the amazing flash of light disappeared before both women present could notice it.

Zhai Sheng put away his thoughts and looked toward Qiu Chenxi calmly. "Even if that is the case, it is a problem between Nan Nan and me. It has got nothing to do with you. I do not need your interference. Nan Nan, let's go back."

"Brother Zhai?" Qiu Chenxi could not believe her eyes when she saw Zhai Sheng's reaction. Was Brother Zhai not angry? It was different from the past. He did not look at the young lady irksomely and then move as far away as he could from her. Why did Brother Zhai still allow the young lady to ride in his car?

Didn't they say that he would not let any outsiders except members of the Zhai family into his car?!

Zhai Sheng did not take a further look at Qiu Chenxi. He walked to the side of the car, opened the door, and helped Qiao Nan into the car.

When Qiao Nan was seated, Zhai Sheng closed the car door and got into the driver's seat. "Fasten your seatbelt."

"Okay." Qiao Nan was so shrewd in front of Qiu Chenxi, showing maturity and calmness beyond her age. Yet, before Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan reverted to a sixteen-year-old kid in general, obeying Zhai Sheng's every word and occasionally showing the clumsy and silly side of her.

Chapter 174: You Will Definitely Like It

With one word from Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan would behave like an obedient baby. With one command from him, Qiao Nan would react accordingly. The mature lady's demeanor and style she exposed to Qiu Chenxi was totally absent.

Zhai Sheng heard a part of the two ladies' earlier conversation.

Facing the change in Qiao Nan, Zhai Sheng did not feel annoyed. On the contrary, his feelings for Qiao Nan seemed to have deepened.

The more you cared about something, the more mess you might create. When facing Qiu Chenxi, Nan Nan was intimidating and subdued her. Before him, she always appeared so silly. He felt that it was most likely because he had an important position in Nan Nan's heart, and that she truly cared about him.

Upon discovering this, Zhai Sheng's mood seemed to have suddenly grown a pair of wings and soared high.

Once she was seated properly, Qiao Nan regained her senses and explained, "Brother Zhai, what Qiu Chenxi said earlier was untrue. I did not say those things. Brother Zhai, don't misunderstand. Those words were made up by Qiu Chenxi!"

Zhai Sheng, who was gently smiling and was in an extremely good mood, suddenly turned gloomy, and the smile left his face. He stepped on the brakes and parked the car by the roadside, his dark eyes turned toward Qiao Nan. "What did you say?"

"..." Qiao Nan was stunned. She replied with caution, "Those words you heard earlier... They were all made up by Qiu Chenxi. We did not talk about that at all."

Brother Zhai seemed to be unhappy now.

But, why?!

Zhai Sheng did not speak. He just stared at Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan was initially able to look straight at Zhai Sheng's eyes, but as she felt Zhai Sheng's anger seemingly rising, she could not tolerate further. She sat up straight. "Brother Zhai, we... are we not going back?"

Zhai Sheng pursed his lips. With his right hand, he pressed somewhere near his seatbelt. With a 'ka' sound, the seatbelt was loosened.

Qiao Nan shrank her neck. What did Brother Zhai want to do?

When Qiao Nan could not endure the nervousness any further, Zhai Sheng reached out with his hand and placed it on Qiao Nan's head. The hair under this palm was so soft and silky, giving a wonderful feeling upon touch. Zhai Sheng reacted according to his wish and wanted to subdue Qiao Nan, so he rubbed Qiao Nan's head a few times, causing Qiao Nan to sway and lose focus.

"Brother Zhai, what are you doing!" Qiao Nan lamented angrily. Who was the one who kept reminding her to keep up her image?

"Silly girl, it is fine if you do not know now. You will know eventually." Even if you did not like me now, you definitely would in the future. That's enough for me!

Before Qiao Nan could regain her focus, the car had already started making its move steadily.

Qiao Nan was totally confused. From Zhai Sheng's side view, he seemed to have a faint smile, as if his mood had recovered and was not angry anymore. This time, it was Qiao Nan's turn to feel depressed.

There was a saying that a woman's heart was like a needle in the sea. But why did it seem that a man's heart was more complicated than that of a woman?

The moment she got off the car, Qiao Nan could not help asking, "Brother Zhai, who exactly is the old man you brought me to see today?" Qiu Chenxi's family background seemed to be quite good. An old master that even someone from such a well-to-do family wanted to get associated with, albeit unreliable, must have something else.

"He is your master." Having said this, Zhai Sheng added after some consideration, "I may need to return to the army and will not be back for a short period. If there is any matter, call me."

Talking about phone calls, Zhai Sheng smiled again.

Zhai Sheng had given the telephone number to Qiao Nan one year ago. In the past, he never liked receiving phone calls. However, during the past one year, he had been wishing for a call from Qiao Nan.

He used to not understand why he would be like this. Now, he no longer had any doubts regarding this matter.

He had initially thought that Qiao Nan had thrown away the phone number. Unexpectedly, Qiao Nan had been keeping it with her all along. There was nothing than this that Zhai Sheng was happier about.

“I am leaving. Go home earlier and put away the money well. Don’t let anyone else find it.” After a few words of concern, Zhai Sheng closed the car door and drove straight to the army.

In fact, Zhai Sheng should have returned to the army three days ago. But in order to let Lin Yuankang take in Qiao Nan as his disciple, he made some special arrangements to delay his return to the army by three days.

Therefore, once today’s matter was settled, Zhai Sheng did not even have any spare time to return home. He must leave for the army immediately.

Looking at Qiao Nan, who was getting smaller as she walked further, from his rearview mirror, Zhai Sheng smiled. It was a pity that he had already returned to the entrance of the quad. Otherwise, he could rub Nan Nan’s head again before he left.

As she did not manage to receive a specific answer from Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan gave a little sigh and said unconvincingly, “If you are not telling me, then I shall find out by myself.”

“Xiao Qiao, where did you go? I have been waiting for you for half a day today!” Someone gave Qiao Nan’s shoulder a strong slap before she could turn around.

Qiao Nan was shocked. “Zhu Baoguo? You... you came back from overseas?”

“How did you know that I went traveling? Were you looking for me?” Zhu Baoguo was pleasantly surprised. He thought Xiao Qiao would not look for him if he did not look for her. “Look, this is the gift I brought back for you this time. See if you like it!”

Zhu Baoguo acted as if he was presenting a treasure and took out the present he was going to give to Qiao Nan.

“Thank you.” Qiao Nan took the gift. “Did you see Wang Yang when you came back? Did he tell you anything?”

“Wang Yang? Of course I saw him.” At the mention of Wang Yang, Zhu Baoguo was unhappy. “I bet you don’t know. We came back yesterday, and it was already past nine when we reached home. Once we arrived home, my auntie brought Wang Yang back immediately. Wang Yang called and followed Grandpa around. In the end, my auntie followed Grandpa to his study room. She must be asking for my grandpa’s help because of my uncle. Wishful thinking!” Wang Yang just harmed him, and he nearly missed the middle school examination because of Wang Yang. This matter would not be forgotten so easily.

“True enough.” Qiao Nan smiled sarcastically. Fortunately, she did not pine any hopes on Wang Yang from the beginning. It was lucky that she had Brother Zhai. Otherwise, her father...

“Why did you ask me about Wang Yang once I came back? Did he bully you?” Zhu Baoguo gave a stare and waved his fists, his aura strong. “Don’t worry. If he really bullied you, I will take revenge for you. I have not been wasting my time in the army. My fists are certainly stronger than that of Wang Yang!”

It was for the sake of dealing with Wang Yang that Zhu Baoguo was willing to follow Zhu Chengqi to the army. He was treated like a new recruit as he underwent vigorous training.

He had said that he would deal with Wang Yang as if he was a small chicken if he dared to do anything to him again!

“Nothing.” Qiao Nan shook her head. “I have received the gift. Go home. My dad will be discharged from the hospital tomorrow. I have to tidy up and clean up his room.”

“Uncle Qiao is in the hospital? What happened?”

“Nothing. He had a small accident. He is recovering well now.” Since the matter had already passed, Qiao Nan did not want to bring it up again.

“Is he really alright? Since Uncle Qiao is sick, he will have a lot of medical expenses, right?”

Chapter 175: His Grandson is Amazing

“Don’t worry, it has been resolved.” Qiao Nan consoled Zhu Baoguo. “Traveling overseas seems fun, but it’s also quite tiring. Since you’re back, you should rest more.”

The matter had already been settled. Her father would be discharged today. Qiao Nan did not want to bring up what happened before if possible.

“Has it really been settled already?” He found it hard to believe.

“Really.” Qiao Nan nodded. “You also know that my English is not too bad. A friend of mine helped me find a translation job, allowing me to earn some money. Don’t worry. If I really have any problem, I will certainly seek your help.”

“That’s good. Who exactly is that friend? Can you introduce them to me?”

“Unfortunately, he had to leave for something. He is probably not in Ping Cheng now, and I do not know when he will be coming back.” Qiao Nan lifted the item in her hand. “Alright, I have already received your gift, but first things first. I did not go overseas for the holiday and do not have any gift for you.”

“Are you looking down on me? Who wants your present! I’m going back.” Zhu Baoguo felt that exchanging gifts in such a way was too polite.

Qiao Dongliang was suddenly ill. Although the financial situation of the Qiao family was still passable, they most possibly did not have much money to spare.

If he accepted Xiao Qiao’s gift, he would be adding a burden to the Qiao family, including Xiao Qiao.

Although Qiao Nan made it sound simple and easy, Zhu Baoguo caught on to the difficulties faced by the Qiao family. If they did not have any difficulty, would they let the younger daughter work during the summer vacation?

That would not do. He came in such a hurry and did not know the situation of the Qiao family at all.

When he got back home, he must get someone to find out what happened to the Qiao family recently and why Uncle Qiao was admitted to the hospital.

“You’re back?” Elder Zhu saw his grandson sweating profusely. “I have already told you not to be so anxious. You insisted on passing the gift today. Baoguo, is that classmate of yours more important than Grandpa in your heart?”

His grandson was so good to an outsider and had been missing them so much. Elder Zhu did not feel good about this.

He had doted on his grandson for more than a decade but never received a gift from him before. On the other hand, the young lady from the Qiao family always received a gift from his grandson whenever he came back from his overseas holiday trip.

“Grandpa, don’t fool around with me. I just saw Xiao Qiao and heard that Uncle Qiao will be discharged from the hospital today. Grandpa, do you know why Uncle Qiao was admitted to the hospital?” In fact, it would be best for him to check with his maternal grandpa about this matter. However, his maternal grandpa also went on the same overseas trip.

“Someone from the Qiao family was hospitalized? Same as you, I was only back yesterday. How could I know when you knew nothing of it?” Elder Zhu felt ridiculous. “Baoguo, don’t you think you are too concerned about the Qiao family?” Now, his grandson was not only concerned about the young lady from the Qiao family but also the rest of the family?

“I can’t bring myself to disregard this. When everybody did not believe me, Xiao Qiao was the only one who believed in me. When all my family members were plotting against me, Xiao Qiao, an outsider, was the only one who helped and did not give up on me. If I don’t care about Xiao Qiao, should I continue to care about Wang Yang, then?”

Zhu Baoguo was wearing a smile, but there was a flash of chilliness in his eyes.

“Grandpa, tell me. An outsider treats me so well, but why can’t my own cousin treat me the same?”

When Zhu Baoguo brought up the matter about Wang Yang, Elder Zhu was unable to reason with him.

At the thought of his daughter looking for him last night, begging him to put in a few good words for his son-in-law in front of his son in order to resolve a matter for his son-in-law, Elder Zhu felt very embarrassed in his heart.

In the previous matter, his maternal grandson was definitely in the wrong regardless of whether he did it on purpose.

He was already in the wrong if he did it unintentionally. If it was intentional, Elder Zhu did not even dare to think about it.

“Baoguo, there is no overnight hatred between family members. Yang Yang has already changed as he knew that he was in the wrong. Since you are the elder cousin, don’t take this to heart.” Elder Zhu had no choice but to be the peacemaker.

“Grandpa, what kind of deep hatred was there between Wang Yang and me that he had to use every opportunity he had to plot harm against me with such sinister tricks? He must have put in a lot of effort to think of such means. Grandpa, how much time do you think he spent plotting about this? It’s nice to be the younger one because the elder one is the forgiving one. Too bad my mom is no longer around. Otherwise, I must definitely ask her why she had to give birth to me in a hurry. If she gave birth to me two or three years later, then how good that would be.”

After knowing Qiao Nan so for long, the one thing Zhu Baoguo learned well from Qiao Nan was to question back instead of refuting the matter.

Elder Zhu’s face swelled and turned reddish black. His grandson made him speechless. After some time, Elder Zhu could not hold back further. He asked, “Baoguo, do you hate Yang Yang now and decided not to treat him as a family member anymore?”

In his lifetime, he only had one maternal and one paternal grandson.

He was initially thinking that if his grandson had a good relationship with Yang Yang, they can support and help each other. That was because his daughter-in-law passed away at a young age, and it was not possible for his grandson to have other siblings.

However, looking at the current situation, Elder Zhu knew that it would be difficult.

“Grandpa, I know what you are thinking. Relatives will always be relatives. But there are different degrees of relationship between them. What my dad said made sense. My auntie is married and now bears the surname of Wang. She is no longer on the side of the Zhu family. If even my auntie is behaving this way, then how about Wang Yang who grew up in the Wang family since he was a child? Grandpa, are you really sure you know what Wang Yang has been thinking of?”

“Baoguo, who told you all these?” Elder Zhu let out a breath of cold air.

In the past, his grandson was always out of line and muddle-headed. Now that his grandson was behaving in a serious manner, why did he feel strange?

Most importantly, Elder Zhu was shocked by Zhu Baoguo’s words. He was unwilling to believe that his daughter had changed. He was even more reluctant to think that his maternal grandson would bear ill intentions toward the Zhu family.

“Grandpa, my dad taught me that one only learns from one’s mistakes. If I could not even do that, then I deserve to be harmed till death by others.”

At the sight of Elder Zhu’s expression getting more awkward, Zhu Baoguo gave a sigh and smiled. He personally poured a cup of tea, brought it before Elder Zhu, and served it to him. “Actually, you don’t need to think so much, Grandpa. This family has my dad now and me in the future. As long as the Wang family does not go overboard, they are still our relatives. Should they need help, our Zhu family will definitely do our part.”

Although they would help, Zhu family was Zhu family, and Wang family was Wang family. It should be clear that the two families were different and should not be confused as the same.

Elder Zhu smiled bitterly. “Baoguo, you are no longer a silly little lad. You have become so smart instead.”

Elder Zhu was a politician. How could he not decipher the meaning behind Zhu Baoguo’s words?

In the past, Elder Zhu always felt that his grandson had an impulsive personality, was rude and impetuous—that he was only interested in picking fights, not studying. Since it was unlikely for him to have a promising future in this lifetime, it might be best to send him to the army when he was young and train him up.

Chapter 176: Qiao Dongliang Stood Up for Her

Elder Zhu was worried that after becoming a soldier, Zhu Baoguo might end up as cannon fodder in the future.

But judging from Zhu Baoguo's performance today, Elder Zhu was sure that his grandson would not end up as cannon fodder as long as he was taught well. He would be a good politician instead!

“Thank you for the compliment, Grandpa. Both Grandpa and Maternal Grandpa had put in so much effort to groom me. I would be letting both of you down if I do not make any improvement.” Zhu Baoguo was not used to sitting next to Elder Zhu, but he remembered what Qiao Nan once taught him. Zhu Baoguo extended his hand awkwardly and placed it on Elder Zhu's shoulders as if they were buddies. “Grandpa, don't worry. I am sensible now.”

“...” Elder Zhu was not very accustomed to his grandson's affectionate gesture. It was usually his maternal grandson who would be affectionate to him. But he was very happy. In fact, he was delighted that his grandson was being close to him.

Elder Zhu quivered, taking a sip of the tea that Zhu Baoguo poured for him. He softened his tone. “Well, you have made improvements. There is nothing better than this. You are right. Your father is in charge of the Zhu family now. When you are able to manage the Zhu family in the future, it will be the day I can finally rest assured.”

When Wang Yang came in, he saw the grandpa and grandson sitting side by side, having an animated conversation. Wang Yang's face stiffened. Still, he had to plaster a smile on his face.

In the past, Wang Yang was the only one who used to sit beside Elder Zhu. Now that there was Zhu Baoguo, Wang Yang felt that there was no place for him.

“Yang Yang is here.” Elder Zhu was all smiles when he saw his maternal grandson coming his way. But Wang Yang could clearly feel that his grandfather was not as happy as he used to be when seeing him.

Wang Yang was angry. Elder Zhu no longer cared about his maternal grandson because he had a grandson by his side. Was that how it was now?

Sure enough, his father was right. The people from the Zhu family were heartless. They did not care about family ties!

“Grandpa, Brother Baoguo.” No matter how angry Wang Yang felt, he had a bright smile on his face. On his refreshed face was a smile as bright as sunshine. Zhu Baoguo sized up Wang Yang. He had to admit that Qiao Nan was right. Wang Yang was very good at pretending. Everyone liked the bright and sunny person that Wang Yang pretended to be.

“Yang Yang, come and have a sit.”

“Okay.” Seeing that Elder Zhu motioned him to sit on another sofa, Wang Yang felt gloomy. “It is so rare for Brother Baoguo to be here and have some time to chat with Grandpa.”

In the past, whenever Zhu Baoguo was free, he would mix with the bad company outside.

“I suddenly realized that I have a lot to chat with Grandpa. This is how we develop relationships with others. Anyway, since I am free, I must spend more time to chat with Grandpa.” Initially, when Zhu Baoguo sat next to Elder Zhu, he could not help but felt uncomfortable.

Now that he noticed that Wang Yang seemed to value sitting next to Elder Zhu, Zhu Baoguo felt comfortable in his seat.

No wonder Wang Yang liked to snatch his things in the past. The feeling of having someone else’s stuff for oneself was really cool!

Zhu Baoguo placed one hand on the back of the sofa, leaning against it and sitting with his legs crossed, one foot poised in the air. To Wang Yang, Zhu Baoguo’s lazy stance suggested provocation.

“Well, it is rare that the three of us can get together. Let’s have a good chat.”

If there was any misunderstanding, one should clear them up.

Now that Baoguo and Yang Yang were on bad terms with each other, it might be good to spend some time with each other.

He always believed that his grandson and his maternal grandson were well-behaved children.

Baoguo used to be naughty and wild, but he could change for the better. Therefore, there was no way that Yang Yang, who used to be well-behaved, would turn naughty and no longer mend his ways.

Qiao Nan did not know that under her guidance for the past one year, Zhu Baoguo was now crafty and clever, someone Wang Yang was not able to handle.

Zhu Baoguo had learned to be sharp and would be able to deal with Wang Yang. Unfortunately, no matter how sharp-witted Qiao Nan was, there was no way she could deal with Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin.

Zhu Baoguo returned to the Zhu residence, and of course, Qiao Nan went back to Qiao residence.

Coincidentally, the family of four met at the door.

Ding Jiayi, who was filled with pent-up anger by the Zhu family's words, pulled a long face, whereas Qiao Zijin kept her silence on the way back.

When Qiao Nan was in the hospital looking after her father, the attitude of the Zhou couple was very good. From time to time, they would talk about Zhou Jun who had returned to the army.

However, when Qiao Nan was not around, and it was Qiao Zijin's turn to take care of Qiao Dongliang, the Zhou couple never took the initiative to talk about their son, Zhou Jun. They simply did not chat with Qiao Zijin and only talked with Qiao Dongliang.

When there was a comparison, one's feelings would be hurt.

Ding Jiayi was boiling with anger when she saw how her favorite elder daughter was wronged and humiliated in front of the Zhou family. She could not vent her anger on them, but she could take it out on Qiao Nan who was the apple of their eyes.

“I have already told you that your dad will come home from the hospital today and that you must clean the house. Where have you been loitering around that you only come back now!” Ding Jiayi glared at Qiao Nan, her voice rising, sounding as fierce as a tigress.

Qiao Dongliang, who needed someone to support him on his way back, had a stern expression on his face. “Stop yelling! Isn’t it disgraceful? I suppose no one cleaned the house during the time I was in the hospital. How could Nan Nan finish such an arduous task by herself? You could have come by yourself to fetch me when I was discharged from the hospital and left Zijin at home so that they could clean up together. That way, both of them would take a shorter time to finish the cleaning!”

“It’s just easy chores that one can finish easily! Since she stays at home every day, what is she good at if she cannot do such an easy task?!” Ding Jiayi refused to admit that cleaning the house was a very tiring chore and insisted that Qiao Nan was useless.

“Is it?” Qiao Dongliang sneered. “Since you have said so, fine. Nan Nan, Zijin, help me to the room to rest. Both of you do not have to bother yourselves with the household chores. Since children are capable of such simple tasks, it must be an easy feat for your mom who is an adult. Just leave it to your mom.”

Qiao Dongliang lifted his hand and his daughters supported him into the room.

The moment he woke up in the hospital, he had said to himself that in the future if Old Ding would dare to bully Nan Nan in front of him, he would not let her off!

Even if he was injured and could not do anything to Old Ding, he would not allow Old Ding to bully Nan Nan like how she did in the past.

“I work for the whole day! I am tired!” Ding Jiayi kicked up a fuss immediately.

Qiao Dongliang had not been home, so he was clueless about the situation at home. On the contrary, Ding Jiayi went home almost every day and knew that their house was very dirty at the moment as compared to how it used to be before.

In the past, all the chores were done by Qiao Nan. As a mother, Ding Jiayi only helped out here and there. As for Qiao Zijin, she did not even lend a helping hand.

Now that Qiao Nan refused to do the household chores, the Qiao residence was no longer as clean as it used to be in the past. It would be very tiring to clean up the house!

Chapter 177: Don't You Feel Shameful

Ding Jiayi would only leave the worst job to Qiao Nan.

This time, Qiao Dongliang threw the task of cleaning up back to her. Ding Jiayi was dumbfounded, perplexed. Recently, Old Qiao had been very meddlesome with the affairs at home. She used to have the final say for things at home.

Thinking of the situation at home, Ding Jiayi had a terrible headache, her heart trembled. If she was to clean up by herself, there was no chance that she would be able to sleep tonight.

It was impossible to make Qiao Nan do all the work at home anymore. In this house, Ding Jiayi, who had lost her sovereignty, was like a frosted eggplant. She felt weak and listless.

When Ding Jiayi stepped into the house and saw that her two daughters had helped Qiao Dongliang back to the room where Qiao Nan used to sleep in, she turned angry. "How foolish the both of you are! That room is so small, and your dad is recovering from his injuries. Why did you both bring him into that room?!"

She and Old Qiao did not intend to divorce, so there was no need to stay in separate rooms. Zijin was as foolish as Qiao Nan to have done such a thing.

Qiao Zijin was angry at being scolded by Ding Jiayi. "Mom, what are you yelling at? I did not want to help Dad into there as well. It was Dad who insisted to sleep in that room!" It had nothing to do with her. Her mother had no right to yell at her. If she dared, she should yell at her father.

For every grievance, someone is responsible. For every debt, there is a debtor!

As a mother, there was nothing wrong with lecturing her daughter, yet the elder daughter lashed back at her. Ding Jiayi would not take it lying down.

But Qiao Zijin was her favorite daughter after all. She was the one who made her proud. Ding Jiayi glared at Qiao Nan and released her pent-up frustration at her. “Are you stupid? Why do you bring your dad into that room? Do you wish for your dad to move about at home and aggravate his injuries? Do you have that much money to splurge?”

Qiao Dongliang was very disappointed by Ding Jiayi’s reaction.

The elder daughter had told the wife clearly that he asked for this room. It had nothing to do with the two daughters. At the very least, one could say that the two daughters were very obedient to him.

If the wife was angry, shouldn’t she direct her anger at him?

Parents always have their good reasons. Old Ding was biased toward Zijin and always sided with her, but Nan Nan never once yelled or disrespected Old Ding.

Old Ding pampered and doted on Zijin. She had wished to give her all the valuables in the house. Even though Zijin treated her disrespectfully, Old Ding did not reprimand her. Instead, she vented her anger on Nan Nan. Why was she so unreasonable?

Qiao Dongliang was not only disappointed with Ding Jiayi but also disappointed with Qiao Zijin.

Qiao Zijin had been spoiled by his wife and developed bad character traits all because of Ding Jiayi.

Nevertheless, his wife was oblivious to it and still indulged her elder daughter until now. Whenever he wanted to correct her, Old Ding would stop him and remind him that Zijin had a hard life and was very sensible.

Qiao Dongliang smiled sarcastically. Zijin might be wrong to lash out at her mother, but Old Ding asked for it herself!

“Have loads of money? Even if you do not have any money, you are still very capable, aren’t you? You can just borrow it from others, so what are you afraid of?” Qiao Dongliang’s eyes were red when he was reminded of what happened when he was sent to the hospital. “Zijin, Nan Nan, both of you should go out. I have something to discuss with your mom.”

“Wait!” Ding Jiayi panicked. Did Old Qiao know about what happened that day?

Ding Jiayi glared at Qiao Nan. It must be that wretched girl who told Old Qiao about what happened that day. If she knew this would have happened, she should not have given birth to her.

“You don’t have to blame everything on Nan Nan. You were shouting that day, and I was woken up by you. Everyone in the hospital would have known about it. There is no need for Nan Nan to tell me about what happened. I already heard it from someone else.” Qiao Dongliang sneered. “Both of you be good and leave us alone for now.”

“Both of you cannot leave!” Ding Jiayi’s face was pale. She quickly grabbed at both of her daughters, stopping them from leaving. They were her shields. “I... We are one family, and there should be no secrets between us all. They have the rights to listen to what you want to say.”

Ding Jiayi knew that Qiao Dongliang would be furious when he found out that she borrowed money from his comrades.

Regardless, she would not mind being disgraced. She placed Zijin’s future above everything. At most, she would be reprimanded by Old Qiao and it would pass eventually.

Ding Jiayi had never imagined that after spending all the money they had at home, Qiao Dongliang would be hit by a car, and that he would require major surgery at the hospital. What was worse was that it was a hit-and-run accident.

Things were totally different under such circumstances.

Whenever it crossed her mind that if Qiao Nan had not managed to borrow the money at that time, Qiao Dongliang could not have undergone the surgery and might have died, Ding Jiayi would break out in cold sweat and had nightmares for several nights. She would dream that she was a widow and had to raise two daughters by herself.

“Are you sure?” Ding Jiayi was so afraid that her legs were shaking from fear. She had no likings for Qiao Nan, yet she grabbed onto Qiao Nan now. Qiao Dongliang let out a long sigh. “Old Ding, I regret it. I really regret it.”

“Okay, all of you leave the room. Old Ding, you should do what you are supposed to do. Remember to clean the house. Otherwise, I will settle scores with you.” It was inconvenient for Qiao Dongliang to bring up certain stuff in front of the two children, especially in front of Qiao Nan. He did not want to hurt her.

In the past, Qiao Dongliang was a careless father. Now, Qiao Dongliang could not ignore her feelings anymore.

Since Ding Jiayi refused to face reality, Qiao Dongliang would just let her be. However, even though he did not say it out loud, it did not mean that it did not exist.

“It will be too tiring for me to clean up the house alone. I have to work tomorrow. Can Nan Nan help me with the cleaning?” Ding Jiayi was scared out of her wits. She gave in and agreed to clean the house. But at the very least, Nan Nan should help her out. Otherwise, she could not finish it by herself.

“You’re too tired to clean up? Didn’t you say that it’s easy? Ding Jiayi, as a mother, you should make your words count in front of your daughters! Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?!” Qiao Dongliang thought that Old Ding would not say another word and would finish the chores by herself.

It seemed that he thought too highly of Old Ding.

“Zijin, help me with the chores.” Ding Jiayi compromised once again and asked her beloved elder daughter for help.

Old Qiao stood firm and left no room for discussion. It must be his plans to make Zijin help her.

“Zijin can help you, but Nan Nan cannot.”

“Why!!!” Ding Jiayi screamed. Even if she had made a mistake, though she did not admit it verbally, she had acted submissive and apologetic.

She gave in to Old Qiao once and again. He should not go too far. “Didn’t you always say that we should treat the two daughters equally?”

Chapter 178: So Rare That She Was Well-Behaved

“You said we have to treat them both equally—that we can’t be biased toward either of them and ill-treated the other. But what do you mean today?! Are you targeting me, or are you against Zijin?”

Qiao Nan’s eyes widened, casting Ding Jiayi an incredulous glance. Was her mother trying to sow discord between Qiao Zijin and father?

Qiao Nan wanted to ask her mother what she meant by saying such words.

“Fine, since you want to be fair, let me tell you why I refuse to let Nan Nan help you with the chores. I will let you know what fairness is.” Qiao Dongliang gasped a few breaths. “Look at my room. Isn’t it clean as compared to other places in the house? Look at my bed and feel my quilt. Obviously, the quilt cover was washed and dried! Are you telling me you and Zijin did all these? Are you telling me you both cleaned this room up?”

After hearing what Qiao Dongliang said, Ding Jiayi was all the more furious.

There were so many rooms in the house, yet Qiao Nan only cleaned up that particular room. Had she been hoping or planning for her to quarrel with Old Qiao and prepared the room for Old Qiao in advance just in case?

If this room was dirty, messy, wet, and dark—given Old Qiao’s physical condition—it would not be suitable for him to stay in the room even if he was willing.

Though the couple would quarrel, they would always resolve their differences. As long as the couple shared the same bed and the same blanket, they would patch up after the quarrel.

No matter what kind of serious mistakes she committed, Old Qiao would forgive her after a few days.

For Qiao Nan to do this, was she hoping for them not to patch up?

It must be under Qiao Nan's influences that Old Qiao was no longer as understanding and objective as he used to be.

"Mom... mom..." Ding Jiayi's face was getting redder, like a kettle with boiling water. Her non-stop complaints were like the sound of boiling water. Qiao Zijin hurried to stop Ding Jiayi. "Mom, Dad is right. This room must have been cleaned by Nan Nan. Nan Nan is still young. As her elder sister, I should do more. Since Nan Nan can do it, I could as well. Both of us are your children. Mom, let's clean up together. Dad, you should have a good rest. Mom and I will clean up the house."

With that, Qiao Zijin dragged Ding Jiayi away.

"You..." Ding Jiayi was angry and discouraged. "Are you capable of helping me with the cleaning? Forget it. You don't know how to do all these. Don't create troubles for me." She had spoiled this daughter of hers. She did not know how to do household chores, just like the mistress of the house.

She hoped Zijin would not end up like her, whose husband was penniless and had a nasty temper, but be blessed with a better husband.

"Zijin, you must bear this in mind. If you wish to lead a pampered life and do not wish to work at all, you must keep your eyes sharp when you choose your husband. You must know who to choose and who not to choose. Now that I married your dad, I guess I will not be able to enjoy life. I prepared his meals and washed his clothes, but in the end, he treats me badly because of an unfilial daughter I gave birth to. This man is really... It's such a waste of my life. Zijin, I have to count on you to be successful and make me proud."

Ding Jiayi's eyes were red and her voice was hoarse.

"Your dad is a good-for-nothing. He blames me for splurging while in fact, I spent the money for your future. Why is this considered splurging? Why doesn't he admit that he is useless—that he cannot make enough money such that there is no savings at home? If we had the money, did I even need to borrow it from others? I am not asking for troubles. If it was not for you, I wouldn't have embarrassed myself to borrow money from those people. Zijin, you must bear in mind that nothing goes well for a destitute couple."

“Mom, you can rest assured, I understand. In the future, I will definitely find a man who is rich and good to me. If Dad does not treat you well, I will provide for you. You can stay with me!” Qiao Zijin was agitated as well. She grabbed hold of Ding Jiayi’s shoulder. “Since Dad is biased toward Qiao Nan, we will just leave him be. In the future, I will not provide for him and will only provide for you. I refuse to take in a husband and stay with the family. If he wants to have a grandson, he can take in a husband for Qiao Nan. If my future husband is capable and successful, he will not want to have his children take our surname. I will definitely find someone who is different from Dad!”

Qiao Zijin felt wronged and full of resentment when she was reminded of the fact that she could not enjoy good food and nice clothes like others. She also did not have any spare money to spend.

People used to say that if one learned mathematics and sciences, one would fear nothing.

But right now, it was better to have a good father rather than learning mathematics and sciences.

Not only did her father lose out to other people’s fathers but also did not dote on her. She hated her father. Why was he biased toward Qiao Nan?

If her father encountered difficulties in the future, she would not help him out. By then, her father would realize that between his two daughters, she was the more successful one.

“Fine, you are my good daughter. Now that your dad wants to sleep in that small room, not only is he staying in a separate room from me but has also cut his ties with me. Zijin, I give up my relationship with your dad because of you. You are the only one I have now. You must make me proud. I will have to depend on you for the rest of my life.”

Ding Jiayi was not really stupid. She might appear to be foolish, but there was always a shrewd side to her.

Qiao Dongliang’s attitude in the hospital had already aroused Ding Jiayi’s and Qiao Zijin’s suspicions. What he said today affirmed the fact that Old Qiao was really angry with her this time. He would not forgive her easily.

For the past year, Ding Jiayi’s relationship with Qiao Dongliang had gone from bad to worst. Among 365 days a year, the couple spent less than half the time sharing the same bed.

As a woman, Ding Jiayi knew something was not right.

When Qiao Dongliang came back from the hospital today, he chose to stay in the small room instead of the spacious room. Ding Jiayi knew it was unlikely for Qiao Dongliang to move back to the spacious room.

She had never liked or wanted Qiao Nan, the younger daughter. Now that her husband had cut off ties with her, she only had her elder daughter left with her.

Ding Jiayi only had Qiao Zijin with her. Hence, she must make sure that Qiao Zijin would stand on her side. That was why she sowed discord between Qiao Zijin and Qiao Dongliang just now.

In addition, Ding Jiayi cried in front of Qiao Zijin so that both of them could empathize with each other. As expected, they had grown closer to each other. Qiao Zijin had eyes only for her mother, Ding Jiayi.

It was shocking how terrible one could be when they only thought of their own interests.

After blaming Qiao Dongliang for everything, Qiao Zijin wiped the tears off Ding Jiayi's face. "Mom, do you know why I agreed to clean the house?"

"I thought you wanted to help me appease your dad, was it not?"

Chapter 179: Your Mom and I Go Our Separate...

Ding Jiayi did not like Qiao Zijin's method of helping her out. It was not an easy task to clean up the house. It would take them half a day to do a simple clean up. If they intended to do a thorough cleaning, they would really have to go without sleep.

"No, Mom, listen to me." Qiao Zijin pulled Ding Jiayi to one side. "Mom, when you stopped me and Qiao Nan from leaving just now, I accidentally bumped into Qiao Nan. I noticed that she seemed to be hiding something in her clothes. It felt like a packet of money. I think there is a large amount of money."

The stack felt long and rectangular. Besides money, Qiao Zijin could not think of any other possibility.

“No, where did she get the money from!” She and Old Qiao had no money. It was impossible that a child like Qiao Nan would have money with her.

“Did she borrow it?”

“Where in the world did such kind-hearted people exist? We still do not know where Qiao Nan borrowed the large sum of money previously. Your dad’s hospital stay cost around one thousand and five hundred yuan. On top of that, she repaid the money on our behalf. All of these amounted to a huge sum of money. She has yet to return the money she borrowed last time, so who lent her the money this time?” If it was so easy to borrow the money, she would not have to seek help from so many families before finally borrowing a few hundred yuan.

When Old Qiao was in trouble, those people acted like debt collectors, demanding their money back.

“How will I know where Qiao Nan got the money from? But I felt there was a lot of money in Qiao Nan’s pocket. Mom, what do you say about doing something with this money?”

“What you mean is... Are you sure? No, no. Given your dad’s temper, we must keep a low profile these few days.” Ding Jiayi wanted the money, but she was fearful of Qiao Dongliang.

This money was Qiao Nan’s. If she wanted Qiao Nan to hand them over, that wretched girl would definitely refuse. Ding Jiayi could not be bothered to argue with her.

In this life, Qiao Nan had made sure her mother understood that she would not be submissive or give in to her. It had only been less than a year, and Ding Jiayi had become accustomed to her firm attitude and persistence, realizing that Qiao Nan would not budge easily.

“Mom, don’t be so foolish. We are a family. Everyone has a share in everything at home. Even if it is money, it doesn’t solely belong to Nan Nan. Does it mean we cannot do anything to Nan Nan if she refuses to hand over the money—that everything belonging to Nan Nan has nothing to do with Mom, the family, and me? There is no such thing in this world. Aren’t we still considered as one family?”

To put it simply, whatever Qiao Nan had, belonged to them; whatever belonged to them were theirs as well!

“But she will refuse to hand it over, so there is nothing we can do!” Ding Jiayi said helplessly.

“...” Qiao Zijin rolled her eyes. “When you needed the five thousand yuan for me to enroll in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, we somehow managed to get the money even though Dad disagreed. How did you do it?”

Who said we must get the consent of the rest of the family when we wanted their money?

Everyone was one family. Everything was shared between one another. In other words, she and her mother merely took their own things. There was nothing wrong with it.

No one would need to inform the others when they took their own things. Wouldn't that be a joke?

“Zijin, do you mean to... steal?” According to what Qiao Zijin said, Ding Jiayi could only think of this word.

“What do you mean by stealing? We are one family. Isn't Nan Nan your daughter and my sister? Whatever belongs to Nan Nan is ours as well, so what do you mean by stealing? Do you mean that you stole the five thousand yuan from Dad for my school fees?”

“No, your dad's money is mine. I have the right to spend it!”

“That is right. Nan Nan is still young. Whatever belongs to Nan Nan is ours. Nan Nan cannot keep them with her. There is nothing wrong for you to keep them for her for the time being.” Qiao Zijin was glad that Ding Jiayi finally understood what she said.

“That wretched girl is very smart. It is not easy to get the money from her.”

“Hey, Mom, the reason why we could not find the money and books that Nan Nan hid is that she didn't bring them home at all. We don't know where she put it. However, it's different this time. Nan Nan has the money with her. Even if she really wants to hide it, at the very least, she needs to keep the money in our house tonight. Since we are cleaning up the house, it will be easy to find the money.”

Ding Jiayi's eyes lit up. "It makes sense! Zijin, you are young and smart, unlike me, muddleheaded. Why didn't I think of that? Okay, it's settled."

Ding Jiayi finally understood why Qiao Zijin was so eager to clean the house when Qiao Dongliang asked her to do it.

"Mom, we are not in a hurry. Dad wanted us to clean the house, but he didn't say that it must be done today. We can do it at our own pace lest Qiao Nan hides it too well and we can't find it right away." At the mention of money, Qiao Zijin became smart instantly. She was not this smart in her studies.

If Qiao Zijin put in efforts and make use of her intelligence that she displayed when coming up with the plan to get Qiao Nan's money, she would do well for her exams.

"Well, we must be careful. Don't give yourself away in front of Qiao Nan, that wretched girl." Zijin would start school in about half a month's time and would be able to get her tuition fees just in time.

Initially, she had been worried about paying for Zijin's tuition fees. If she could get hold of Qiao Nan's money, together with her pay, she should be able to cover for her tuition fees.

If there was any remaining money, she could get new clothes for Zijin to wear to school.

Ding Jiayi was Qiao Zijin's biological mother after all. They were thinking about the same thing.

Qiao Zijin was very sure that since Qiao Nan had managed to borrow more than one thousand yuan last time, she must have a significant sum of money with her this time. The money should be enough for Zijin to spend.

Qiao Nan did not know that Qiao Zijin had discovered that she had money with her. Ding Jiayi had merely pulled at her while Qiao Zijin knocked accidentally into her.

"Dad, you must be tired from the journey back. Lie down on the bed and have a rest." As soon as Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin left the room, Qiao Nan helped Qiao Dongliang take off his shoes and helped him to the bed. "I have asked the doctor. Given your condition, it is best to lie down and rest

for about ten days. Afterward, you can get out of the bed and move about, but you should keep it short.”

“Nan Nan, you are more meticulous than your mom.” Qiao Dongliang was disheartened. When Ding Jiayi picked Qiao Dongliang up from the hospital, she only knew how to ask Nan Nan about the medical fees, and whether the hospital owed them any money or miscalculated the bills. She did not bother to ask what she should look out for when taking care of Qiao Dongliang.

At that time, Qiao Dongliang really felt that in the eyes of Ding Jiayi, money was more important than her husband.

“Nan Nan, if your mom and I go our separate...” Qiao Dongliang stopped in the middle of his sentence. He was afraid that he would scare Qiao Nan. He was also unsure whether he was making a mountain out of a molehill and being petty.

Chapter 180: Do as You Wish

As the saying goes, husband and wife might be living in the same forest, but when faced with adversity, they would fly away in different directions.

He was in a car accident, and the man who hit him ran off. He was taken to the hospital and was in urgent need of a large sum of money for surgery. Although Old Ding did not abandon him at that time, what was the difference between Old Ding’s behavior and abandoning him? He felt bitterly disappointed either way.

They had no money, and he was sent to the operating room. Yet, his wife did nothing but sat down on the ground and cried, sobbing that they had no money. Qiao Dongliang was chilled and bitterly disappointed.

What was the difference between Ding Jiayi’s actions and leaving him behind right away?

No, there was a slight difference.

If Ding Jiayi had left with Zijin, Ding Jiayi would not have known what happened to him. Though Ding Jiayi stayed in the hospital and did nothing but cried and ranted, she could watch him as he died at the very least.

Thinking of the years they spent together, even though Ding Jiayi did not give birth to a son and had two daughters, he had never shortchanged her. He gave all the money he earned to her.

Did Ding Jiayi do the right thing?

During the past half month he stayed in the hospital, he saw that Zhou Bing's wife was very considerate toward her husband. In comparison, whenever Ding Jiayi came to the hospital to take care of him, she would pull a long face. She would look at him with resentment, blaming him for not making enough money, and that he was biased toward Nan Nan and did not treat Zijin well enough.

Qiao Dongliang was tired.

Given how his wife treated him, it was meaningless to stay as a couple.

When he saw how the other couple treated each other, and he compared it to himself, he was seized with an impulse to divorce his wife.

But Qiao Dongliang was a traditional man. He would not bring himself to divorce his wife unless she went over the limits.

Besides, Qiao Dongliang was worried that both of his daughters, especially the younger daughter, might not understand his reasons for divorcing his wife and would want them to stay together as a couple.

At Qiao Dongliang's factory, he would occasionally hear the news of some couples who were on bad terms with each other and wanted a divorce. However, their children would refuse or even skive off school, objecting to their parents' divorce.

The only worry Qiao Dongliang had was that Qiao Nan might be hurt. He did not want Qiao Nan, who was such a good child, to suffer.

Hence, he stopped his words midway.

“Dad, no matter what is going through your mind, as long as you are happy, I will support you.”
After thinking about it, Qiao Nan looked at Qiao Dongliang fixedly.

“Nan Nan, do you know what you are talking about? Or rather, do you really understand what I am talking about?”

“I understand.” Qiao Nan took a deep breath and said with certainty.

Although she had no feelings for her mother, she was her mother after all. She could not disregard their blood relations. After all, she had given birth to her and raised her up.

After the rebirth, besides having the conviction that she must complete her studies, Qiao Nan had never intervened in the affairs between Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi.

In the previous life, Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi would quarrel often, but it was especially common in every household for the couple to quarrel over basic daily necessities. Up till the day she died from a car accident, her father might have some quarrels with her mother, but he had never thought of divorcing her mother.

Qiao Nan would not encourage her parents to divorce just because she disliked Ding Jiayi. She would never do such things.

However, it was a different matter if Qiao Dongliang had such an idea himself. Qiao Nan was not a sixteen-year-old child. She did not harbor any love and feelings for Ding Jiayi. Though Ding Jiayi was her biological mother, she could not stand it that she was biased to her elder daughter.

In the event that their parents filed for a divorce, what should she do if her father remarried and she had a stepmother?

If it was Qiao Nan from the past life, she would rather be bullied by her mother than to see her parents divorced.

But in this life, Qiao Nan had matured.

If her father had no wish to divorce her mother, she would not speak a word about it or lead her father into thinking that way. But if her father had such a thought, she would definitely support her father to do so.

“Nan Nan, you...” Qiao Dongliang had a bitter smile on his face. Nan Nan might have kept her silence, but she remembered by heart the deeds Old Ding did.

Among the many other children Qiao Dongliang had seen, Qiao Nan was the only person to remain calm and supportive when she learned that her parents had divorce in mind.

“Dad, don’t think too much. The reason why I agree to it is not what you imagine it to be. Dad, you should know better how life is with Mom, be it good or bad, bitter or sweet. My sister and I cannot make the judgment. If you feel that you are leading a good life, I will not say a word. But Dad, now that you are considering divorce, I hope you can lead a happier life. At the very least, I do not want to hold you back from making the right decision for yourself. Dad, I do not want to suffer as well. I don’t want you to hold on to this family because of me.”

Qiao Nan had heard that parents stayed in the marriage for the sake of their children.

In her previous life, whenever her mother came up with this excuse, she would have to give in to her unreasonable requests in order to stop her parents from ending their marriage.

If Qiao Dongliang wanted a divorce, Qiao Nan would not object to it. If Qiao Dongliang wanted to stay as a family with Ding Jiayi, Qiao Nan would not express her disapproval as well.

Qiao Nan did not want to bear the responsibility or to be the reason for her parents to stay together as a couple.

She was not worried that her parents would suffer. Instead, she was genuinely worried that she would suffer any grievances.

There was no need for it!

“Dad, you need to think it through whether you want a divorce. No matter what your decision is, you do not have to take me into consideration.” In order not to affect Qiao Dongliang’s decision, Qiao Nan did not say what was on her mind: ‘For me, it would be better if you have a divorce.’

“Nan Nan, you really suffered a lot of grievances. For you to have such a mother, it is ...” The calmer Qiao Nan appeared and the way she washed her hands off their affairs, the more Qiao Dongliang could tell that she was disappointed and disheartened with Ding Jiayi.

Since Nan Nan could stay calm and clear-headed when he mentioned about divorcing Ding Jiayi, it suggested that she did not have any feelings for Old Ding.

Sins. They had committed sins.

“I owed Mom in the previous life, and I am here to repay the debts. But I have already repaid all the debts.” Her mother gave her a life, and she had repaid her by living her life for her and dying in the end.

In the previous life, she had been knocked down by a car. Her body organs must be suitable for transplant. Her mother and Qiao Zijin must have gotten the kidney that they had longed for.

In ancient times, there was a legend where Nezha carved up his own flesh and dismembered his bones to return to his parents, in repayment for the debt of his birth.

She had given her life back to her mother and returned the kidney to Qiao Zijin. It was more than enough. She had repaid her debts.

“Dad, I don’t blame the situation at all. We can determine our own fates. Mom may have a nasty temper and bad character traits, but as long as I work hard and don’t give in to her, I will be able to lead a good life.”