

RTAMM 1961

Chapter 1961: You Still Have the Cheek to Say

Ding Jiayi hadn't thought of a solution yet. Qiao Zijin, who was very anxious, kept asking Ding Jiayi if the real estate certificate was found. Being pressed by Qiao Zijin, Ding Jiayi could only share this situation with Qiao Zijin so that she could help come up with ideas and think where else could Qiao Dongliang place the real estate certificate.

It wasn't that Qiao Zijin was smart. It was just that Qiao Zijin always had that worry that the situation before her was really going to happen. Qiao Zijin's first reaction was to ask, "Mom, Dad has always been biased toward Qiao Nan. Even if Qiao Nan left me in the lurch and took away all my life-saving money, his heart has never changed, let alone blamed Qiao Nan. He even finds me unpleasing to the eye. Mom, you said that you have searched through everything at home but still couldn't find the real estate certificate. Could it be that he has already given the house to Qiao Nan? Before my surgery, didn't Dad say that he already had plans for this house? Was his plan to give the house to Qiao Nan? Is he crazy?!"

Everything in the Qiao family belonged to her. It had nothing to do with Qiao Nan. On what basis did her father give her things away to others? They were hers!

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Qiao Zijin turned pale. Indeed, her worries before her surgery came true. For things that weren't hers, there would always be some changes. Only those things that had been firmly grasped in her hands were real. That's why she wanted to sell the courtyard first before her surgery. "Mom, you said that before my surgery, Dad was not willing to sell the courtyard at all. Was it then that he had already given the courtyard to Qiao Nan? Tell me. When did Dad give the courtyard to Qiao Nan? Qiao Nan has no conscience. She doesn't care about my life and death. She will similarly do the same to you and Dad in the future. Qiao Nan's already like this, but Dad still treats her so well. What does he mean by this? Is Qiao Nan his birth daughter but I'm not?"

The more Qiao Zijin thought about it, the angrier she became. If he had long given the courtyard to Qiao Nan, then he definitely didn't blame Qiao Nan for her departure. Otherwise, if her dad despised Qiao Nan for abandoning this family, why was it that when Chen Jun called to tell him where Qiao Nan was, not only did he not find Qiao Nan to get the real estate certificate back, but he even kept Qiao Nan's whereabouts from her and her mom?

If her dad gave the real certificate to Qiao Nan after that... Upon thinking of this possibility, Qiao Zijin knew that she would definitely hate Qiao Dongliang to death. Qiao Nan ignored her life and death. She didn't give her a kidney or money and couldn't wait for her to die sooner. She was such a heartless person who ignored kinship, but her dad actually gave the courtyard, which was the only thing valuable in this house, to her?

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Did her dad feel that what Qiao Nan did was right? Did her dad also think that she shouldn't be alive and that she should die after getting uremia?

"Don't be anxious and don't overthink. Who said that just because I can't find the real estate certificate, it means that your dad must have given it to Qiao Nan, that wretched girl? I don't believe your dad's that foolish. If he gives the house to Qiao Nan, does that mean he doesn't expect you to provide for him in the future? Or is he expecting Qiao Nan to have him in her heart and that she would be willing to take care of him in the future? No, I think he must have hidden it."

Ding Jiayi felt that Qiao Zijin was good and Qiao Nan was bad. She wished that she had never given birth to Qiao Nan before. After Qiao Nan 'absconded with the money', she felt that it was only natural that Qiao Dongliang's mindset was the same as her own. They had to see Qiao Nan's true colors clearly.

Everyone knew that Qiao Nan was bad. Even if Qiao Dongliang was a fool, he wouldn't have given the courtyard to Qiao Nan. If he really did that, he wouldn't be giving himself a good path to walk on.

This time, regardless of how Ding Jiayi persuaded her, Qiao Zijin couldn't listen to her words. As soon as Qiao Dongliang was back, Qiao Zijin delved straight into the topic without saying another word. "Dad, did you give the real estate certificate of the courtyard to Qiao Nan?"

This question came too suddenly. Qiao Dongliang was not prepared at all. Although he didn't answer with a 'yes', he also didn't say a 'no' after a while.

Upon seeing Qiao Dongliang's reaction, Qiao Zijin understood everything. As she cried, she made accusations. "Mom, you were still telling me that this wasn't the case. Look at Dad's reaction. It's obvious he gave the real estate certificate to Qiao Nan. In his heart, only Qiao Nan is his daughter. Qiao Nan is his precious daughter, and I'm worthless. Dad, you've made me so disappointed and

hopeless. I'm your daughter too. Why do you have to be so cruel toward me? Qiao Nan took away all my life-saving money. You didn't blame her and even gave the courtyard to her. You obviously knew that I was waiting for the money to save my life. You didn't want to sell the courtyard and even forced me to sell my house. Dad, are you my birth dad?!"

"Don't you know that I'm divorced? Don't you know that aside from that house, I don't have any money at all? After the divorce, I have to rely on that house for a living. Are you trying to force me to my death?"

After being pointed at and scolded by Qiao Zijin, Qiao Dongliang's face turned red. He became angry and scolded her. "I don't treat you as a daughter? Then, do you treat me as your dad? Is there anyone who speaks to her father like that? Are you treating me as your son to scold? The courtyard is mine. I can give it to whoever I like. You don't have a say in this. I can't be bothered who you want to give your things to in the future as well. Yes, I gave the courtyard to Nan Nan. So? On what basis couldn't I do this? In a way, this courtyard isn't mine as well. Back then, in order to let you study in university, I had long sold the courtyard. Nan Nan bought it back with her hard-earned money. I'm just returning everything to its rightful owner by giving the real estate certificate to Nan Nan. Why can't I do that?!"

Qiao Zijin choked a sob. "Qiao Nan's not married. The money she earns belongs to this family. Why is it hers? Dad, you're biased. You're just biased and unreasonable!" Whose family wasn't like this? Before marriage, all the money earned would belong to the family. Since the money belonged to the family, using it to buy the courtyard meant that the courtyard belonged to the family. It had nothing to do with Qiao Nan.

"Is that so?" Qiao Dongliang laughed sarcastically. "You worked for a few months before you got married too, right? During the few months that you worked, why is it that I didn't see you taking a single cent out for your mom and me to spend?"

"Wasn't my salary low then? Furthermore, I was still young and unmarried. I have to buy clothes..." Not only was the money she earned back then not enough for her to spend, but she also secretly got more money from Ding Jiayi in private. Qiao Zijin remembered all of these.

Qiao Dongliang was so angry that he slammed the table. "You still have the cheek to say this!"

Chapter 1962: I Will Give It to Whoever I Want

“You’re a college graduate who doesn’t even earn as much as Nan Nan, who didn’t even graduate from high school. What do you have to be proud of? Your mom always praises you, saying that you’ll accomplish great things someday, that Nan Nan can’t compare to you, that Nan Nan’s results weren’t as good as yours, and that Nan Nan’s pay is not as high as yours. But were you the one who found that son-in-law that your mom looks so highly upon? If not for Nan Nan, do you think you would have been able to marry into the Chen family and get married to Chen Jun?”

Yes! Of course!

Zijin could not match up to Nan Nan in every way, and whatever she had was snatched away from Nan Nan, yet what Ding Jiayi was saying was that Zijin was very capable herself!

In the past, he had been muddleheaded and had allowed Ding Jiayi to do as she wanted. But now, he was no longer muddleheaded. His elder daughter had better not treat him as a fool either.

Qiao Zijin’s face paled. “Dad, are you despising me for earning less than Qiao Nan?”

Qiao Dongliang sneered. “Am I the one despising you for that? These are your mom’s words. Your mom is the one despising you. Ding Jiayi, haven’t you always praised Zijin for everything and said that Nan Nan is no better than Zijin? Come. Why don’t you tell me in detail everything that Zijin has done well in without Nan Nan’s involvement? What has Zijin done alone that has pleased you? It’s best you explain clearly what’s good about this perfect daughter you care so much about. If you can really prove it, I might just agree with you and acknowledge Zijin as our only daughter and abandon Nan Nan!”

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While saying this, Qiao Dongliang yanked Ding Jiayi over in front of him. Ding Jiayi felt pain from Qiao Dongliang’s vigorous pull. She stumbled and nearly fell. Ding Jiayi’s expression was blank. “Zijin is a university graduate!” Zijin was obviously better than that wretched girl. Was there a need for any comparison?

“Wasn’t Zijin the one who completed her university course by herself? Do you mean that that wretched girl helped Zijin study, take exams, and graduate?”

Qiao Zijin puffed up her chest. That’s right. Had she not relied on her own efforts to graduate from university? Even if she had not passed her exams, she had taken supplementary papers herself. When had Qiao Nan ever helped her?

Qiao Dongliang rubbed his face. “While Nan Nan was studying, she always ranked among the top three. When has Zijin ever ranked among even the top five? If Nan Nan had not gone out to work before graduating from high school, do you think Zijin could have finished her three years of high school relying on just you and me? Yes, Zijin did go to university and she was indeed the one taking the exams, but is that something to be proud of? Didn’t all of Zijin’s classmates do that too? Why do you think she’s the most special and the most hardworking? Everyone will laugh at you if they hear what you’ve just said. The problem is that if Nan Nan had not gone out to work to support Zijin, could Zijin have graduated just by taking an exam? Money! It’s all about money!”

At the mention of this, Qiao Dongliang’s heart broke. “Did Zijin manage to get into Tsinghua University or Peking University? You’ve been bragging but don’t you remember what kind of school Zijin studied in? As long as you have money, you’ll definitely be able to graduate from that school! I’ve never said it, and neither has Nan Nan, but are you two not clear about that? To put it bluntly, Zijin’s identity as a university graduate was bought with Nan Nan’s money!”

It was just an educational certificate that had been bought with Nan Nan’s money. He could not understand why Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin were proud of it. Thinking about it, it was actually humiliating. Was a university graduate like that a true university graduate? But there were two people in his family who could never understand the situation and had been proud of it. Initially, he had had such foolish thoughts as well. Just thinking of it gave Qiao Dongliang the urge to slap himself. How shameless!

Qiao Dongliang was the one arguing rationally, but Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin were both people who did not care about rationality. Neither of them could convince the other, and Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin insisted that the courtyard should be Qiao Zijin’s.

It was not right for Qiao Dongliang to have secretly given Qiao Nan the property deed. They would have to get it back. Apart from the property deed, Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had other devious plans in mind.

Firstly, Qiao Nan had left with a few hundred thousand. Would they be willing to let Qiao Nan ‘take advantage’ of them just like that? Secondly, Qiao Zijin had some feelings for her son, after all. Besides the mother-son bond, she cared more about everything the Chen family had. Upon getting a stepmother, a father was bound to become a stepfather too. If all of the Chen family’s assets went to the second child, what would her son do?

Chen Feng was her son. The Chen family's assets landing in Chen Feng's hands was no different from landing in her hands. It did not matter if she would have to wait for a few years. Would Chen Feng disregard her, his mother, in the future? The better Chen Feng's conditions and background was, the more she would be able to enjoy her life in her old age.

As such, before her son gained control of the Chen family's assets, she would have to find a way to keep a close eye on all of their assets. Qiao Zijin had no way of controlling other women, but she did think that she could, at least, control Qiao Nan. All the while, Qiao Nan had been pretty good to Chen Feng. Besides, Qiao Nan was already turning forty. Perhaps, if they scolded her, she might just get married to Chen Jun and not have kids anymore.

As long as Chen Feng remained as Chen Jun's only child, there was nothing Qiao Zijin had to worry about. Thinking about how Chen Jun had feelings for Qiao Nan and how Chen Jun might no longer lead a wild life outside after marrying Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin was miserable, feeling that this was the only way to ensure Chen Feng's and her survival.

If Chen Jun did not play around with other women, there would be no illegitimate children to fight over the Chen family's assets with her son.

As Chen Jun's rank rose and his path got smoother, there would be even more young ladies willing to marry him, even if he was in his fifties or sixties.

As such, they had to take the opportunity before all these women appeared and get Qiao Nan to marry Chen Jun as soon as possible so that Qiao Nan could help them keep an eye on Chen Jun. This should happen sooner rather than later. They had not had the chance to broach the topic since they had not even met her. This time, they could kill three birds with one stone. They had to find Qiao Nan and settle these three matters once and for all.

Knowing that Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi were about to find Qiao Nan, Qiao Dongliang thought that the pair simply meant to retrieve the property deed. He had not expected that the mother-and-daughter pair had so many other devious schemes up their sleeves. But even if it was just for the property deed, Qiao Dongliang would not let them go either. "No, you can't go. It's my name on the property deed and this house is mine. I'll give it to whoever I want."

At this moment, the person who frustrated Qiao Dongliang the most was not Qiao Zijin but Ding Jiayi, who had not fulfilled her role as a mother.

He had given the property deed to his younger daughter out of fear that he would pass on before Ding Jiayi, who would have only one daughter, Qiao Zijin. Then, there would be no one to take care of her, and worse still, she might not even have a roof over her head.

But these were just Qiao Dongliang's own suspicions. There was no way Qiao Dongliang could express those suspicions of Qiao Zijin being an unfilial daughter out loud. It would just be embarrassing himself since he and Ding Jiayi were the ones who had raised such a heartless daughter.

Qiao Dongliang knew that even if he were bold enough to say so, Ding Jiayi had already been poisoned by Qiao Zijin. Even if he was willing to rationalize with Ding Jiayi, she had to be willing to hear him out. Now, Ding Jiayi was unwilling to listen to anything. Her daughter, Qiao Zijin, was the best thing in the world.

That was why Qiao Dongliang had not bothered wasting his breath on Ding Jiayi.

He had taken such an effort to find a way out for Ding Jiayi on the account of their years of marriage. But who would have known that Ding Jiayi herself would try to destroy that path?

In the face of Ding Jiayi, who was so foolish, Qiao Dongliang had the urge to let Ding Jiayi drive herself into the ditch. Very soon, however, Qiao Dongliang calmed down, knowing that he could not let her do so.

If his elder daughter truly did not care about Ding Jiayi, she would not care about her own reputation either. Of course, his elder daughter did not have much of a reputation to begin with. His elder daughter could abandon Ding Jiayi, but would his younger daughter do so? The heavens were always watching one's actions. His younger daughter was nowhere as heartless and vicious as his elder daughter.

When Ding Jiayi became a problem, she would be his younger daughter's problem.

Qiao Dongliang had insisted on giving Qiao Nan the courtyard not only to give Ding Jiayi a solid insurance plan for her old age but also to avoid any possible trouble that might arise because of Ding Jiayi.

It was unavoidable that Zhai Hua had overheard the Qiao family's quarrels since Zhai Hua had intentionally taken the route past the Qiao family's house. Zhai Hua stroked her chin. "Does that mean that the Qiao family knows where Qiao Nan lives?"

Should she give Qiao Nan a call to let her prepare? Wait a minute. Just a few days earlier, had Zhai Sheng not called her mom, saying that Qiao Nan had moved? If they were really going to Qingshui Town, they had better not find Qiao Nan at her old address. Qiao Nan was not there. She wondered if the Qiao family had Qiao Nan's old address or her new one.

Before Zhai Hua could come to a conclusion, someone had already delivered the answer right in front of her. "Yes, Uncle Qiao?"

Looking at the person before her, Zhai Hua wondered what Qiao Nan's father could be asking for. On Qiao Nan's account, she had no choice but to address him as 'uncle'.

Qiao Dongliang's expression was awkward. He was clear that he was in no position to be addressed as an 'uncle', and Zhai Hua was simply being polite. "I-I know that Nan Nan stayed at your place for a few days. Don't worry. I'm not here to find out about Nan Nan. I know that Nan Nan has had it tough, and I'm really grateful that you guys are willing to help her."

The courtyard had been abuzz about Qiao Zijin's uremia initially, but Ding Jiayi had not heard about it and neither could Qiao Zijin care less about it. It was Qiao Dongliang who had heard most about it.

When he heard the rumors that his younger daughter had gotten close to the Zhai family and had even gotten together with the Zhai family's son, who was a chief, Qiao Dongliang could not help but feel excited and overjoyed. Nan Nan was already forty. Even if she was only twenty-four, with their family background, how could she ever get acquainted with the Zhai family?

Those people had to be joking and were trying to make the Qiao family into jokes themselves!

Even though the Qiao family had indeed gone through some embarrassing times, Qiao Dongliang was not so shameless to think that Qiao Nan had indeed gotten close to the Zhai family just because of these rumors.

Qiao Dongliang had never even once considered that Qiao Nan could have gotten together with Zhai Sheng. He simply thought that Qiao Nan had encountered some trouble after moving out, and the Zhai family had happened to help her. The Zhai family was an old revolutionary family, and Zhai Sheng was a chief. It was normal for them to help others out when they were in trouble.

That was his younger daughter's relationship with the Zhai family.

After hearing the humility and 'self-awareness' in Qiao Dongliang's words, Zhai Hua's lips twitched and she did not know how to continue the conversation. Perhaps, it could be a simple misunderstanding if it had happened to someone else. But with Qiao Nan, it was not as simple as a misunderstanding.

However, she could not possibly say anything about that at this point in time. Zhai Hua cleared her throat. "Uncle Qiao, have you come to find me just to convey your thanks?"

That could not be. Just a few minutes earlier, she had walked past the Qiao family's house and had heard them having a huge argument. It had been just a matter of a few minutes. They could not possibly have solved their problems by now.

"I have no other intentions. I just want you to help me out by making a call to our Nan Nan. I-I'm really useless. Just tell Nan Nan that her mom and her sister have gone to find her. It takes about two to three hours to get to Qingshui Town from Ping Cheng. If it's possible, it'll be best for her to hide or move away."

There was actually no need for Nan Nan to live such a tough life, trying her best to hide from her family as though she had committed a crime. But there was no choice since this was how their family was. Since Nan Nan had already hidden from them once, she would just have to do it again.

"Oh. They've set off." Zhai Hua nodded. No wonder Uncle Qiao had come to find her within a few minutes' time. "Uncle Qiao, can I know which address they've gone to find Qiao Nan at?" At least, she could find out if the Qiao family had Qiao Nan's old address or new address.

Ever since finding out where Qiao Nan lived, Qiao Dongliang had never bought a bus ticket to Qingshui. However, he had memorized Qiao Nan's address. The moment Zhai Hua asked, Qiao Dongliang immediately said it so smoothly as though he was saying his name.

Upon hearing that address, Zhai Hua smiled. "I see. If that's where they're headed, there's no need to worry, Uncle Qiao. They won't find her there. Qiao Nan had some trouble and moved away a month ago. Her current address is a little far from that address you just told me."

"She moved?" Qiao Dongliang's eyes twinkled and he heaved a sigh of relief. "That's good. Then, Nan Nan... I don't have anything else. Thank you."

“You’re welcome. Uncle Qiao, you can always come to find me if you have any matters regarding Qiao Nan in the future.”

Chapter 1964: Empty

Did Uncle Qiao want to ask where Qiao Nan was now? Unfortunately, he had not dared to do so. It was probably because of the situation the Qiao family was in that Uncle Qiao did not have the guts to ask about Qiao Nan’s whereabouts.

Qiao Nan did not know that Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had gotten her address from Chen Jun and were rushing to find her with some devious plans up their sleeves. By the time Qiao Nan received news of it, Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had already been scared away by the fierce landlord.

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The landlord was surprised when she talked to her son about this. “Xiao Qiao looks like a nice person to me. She has a good temper and she never raises her voice. She looks so gentle. How could a person like that have such an unreasonable mother and sister? That’s not right. Xiao Qiao doesn’t look like them either. Were they scammers?”

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The landlord thought that this was a rather laughable situation. In her years of experience, she had never once seen people like that. She had already explained that Xiao Qiao had moved away and that she had no idea about Xiao Qiao’s whereabouts. She was indeed a landlord, but she could only look after Xiao Qiao while she was a tenant. It was unreasonable to expect her to know where her tenant had moved to and even more so ridiculous to demand that she be responsible for finding Miss Qiao for them.

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This made no sense at all.

She was merely a landlord. Why should she have to do that?

Upon learning that Qiao Nan's biological mother and sister had come, the landlord had thought of getting them to know them. Xiao Qiao had already found a partner in the chief's son. As long as she got along well with Xiao Qiao, the chief would probably treat her son better in the future. She had to get along well with Qiao Nan, but she had clearly just messed up her relationship with Qiao Nan's family!

No matter how great the landlord's plan was, she could not prepare for what Ding Jiayi had in mind.

Upon learning that Chen Jun had feelings for Qiao Nan, Ding Jiayi was sure that Qiao Nan was still in that house. She shouted for someone to open the door, but no one came. This made Ding Jiayi think back to the time when she had gone to Qiao Nan's old apartment to look for her. At that time, Qiao Nan had secretly terminated her lease without letting her know, causing her to stand at the door foolishly for half a day.

The infuriated Ding Jiayi felt that Qiao Nan was deliberately hiding from her. She was clearly at home but was simply trying to avoid her. Even that experience in the past was not enough for Ding Jiayi to learn anything from it.

It was just that afternoon that she had found out that Qiao Dongliang had handed the property deed of the courtyard over to Qiao Nan. Ding Jiayi had been holding her anger in all this while. Now, she was truly enraged. As such, she could not care less whether Qiao Nan had bought this apartment or whether she had simply rented it. Without a second thought, she started kicking the door.

Anyone would care about their own house. Besides, one should not be so unreasonable. As soon as the landlord saw Ding Jiayi kicking her door, she immediately pulled Ding Jiayi aside roughly.

Three women make a market, not to mention how both Ding Jiayi and the landlord were strong as bulls. Just the two of them alone would be able to make a market. There was no need for a third.

The landlord was infuriated. Clearly, Ding Jiayi was not looking for her daughter out of kinship. The landlord was not foolish either, and after tugging on Ding Jiayi a few times, she simply said, "Oh, you're Xiao Qiao's mother? During the new year period, I saw that Xiao Qiao was alone and she didn't even receive any calls. I thought that all of Xiao Qiao's family was dead. I didn't know that they are still alive. I guess I can finally understand why someone with a family like Xiao Qiao would rather escape to a rural and small town like Qingshui Town. After all, Qingshui Town doesn't have that many evil and vicious people around. I'm warning you that this is my house, and this is my door. Xiao Qiao did rent an apartment here in the past, but she moved away a month ago."

Looking at the footprints on her door, the landlord was upset. “You’ve destroyed someone else’s property by kicking on it. It’s illegal. Thankfully for you, I’m magnanimous. Since the door isn’t spoiled, I won’t ask you to compensate me for it, but you’d better wipe off all of your footprints from the door. If you don’t, I’ll make sure the police come to help me out!”

“She moved away? Where did she move to?” Qiao Zijin had the biggest reaction. She had thought that she had finally found Qiao Nan. Why had she suddenly moved away again? Was this not too much of a coincidence? “My mom might not have a good temper, but she’s Qiao Nan’s biological mother, after all, and I’m Qiao Nan’s biological sister. My mom’s only angry because Qiao Nan was at fault. My mom simply wants to teach her a lesson. My mom will definitely wipe off those footprints from the door. But I hope that you can tell us where Qiao Nan is. No matter what, we’re still Qiao Nan’s family.”

Qiao Nan was also a little evil. Which of Qiao Nan’s acquaintances did not know that their mom had such a temper? Even while knowing that their mom had a foul temper, those people still dared to help Qiao Nan and had even given all the money to Qiao Nan. Qiao Zijin had reason to believe that Qiao Nan had already badmouthed the Qiao family in front of the landlord. That was why the landlord had lied to them, saying that Qiao Nan had already moved away a month ago.

Thinking about how all outsiders, including Chen Jun, were so friendly toward Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin felt sour. Qiao Nan was so dull and introverted. Were all those people blind? Why could they not differentiate between good and bad people?

But the landlord was not Ding Jiayi and had not fallen for Qiao Zijin’s tricks. The landlord had even seen through Qiao Zijin’s tricks. “You can believe whatever you want. You’d better wipe those footprints off. She doesn’t stay here anymore. After wiping those footprints off, you’d better scam! Otherwise, I’ll call the police.”

She had been too muddleheaded. Xiao Qiao had been staying here for almost half a year. Xiao Qiao was such a good person but had never mentioned having any family, much less having any contact with her family. Based on that, she should have guessed that Xiao Qiao probably had no family or that her family was not worth keeping in touch with.

Otherwise, who would be willing to uproot and move to an unfamiliar place to start a new life?

The landlord had already made her words very clear. There were other witnesses who also supported the claim that the person living in that apartment had not been around for about a month. They had wondered about it, but this scene had proved their suspicions.

Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had rushed to Qingshui Town angrily because of their house and money. They had been rehearsing how they would lecture and punish Qiao Nan to the point of crying once they met her. But who would have known that Qiao Nan had already vanished into thin air?

Chapter 1965: When's the Wedding

Qiao Zijin was confounded and Ding Jiayi was in a rage, demanding that the landlord tell her where Qiao Nan had moved to. Otherwise, the landlord had better find Qiao Nan herself and bring her before them. After that, it would be between the Qiao family. She would not leave if the landlord did not fulfill her demands.

Seeing Ding Jiayi playing rogue, the landlord spat at Ding Jiayi before whipping out her phone and dialing a certain number. "Hello, is this the police station?"

It was only when they realized that the landlord had really called the police that Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin were finally willing to back down. After reluctantly wiping the door clean, they finally left.

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The mother-and-daughter pair had spent half a day on this return trip. However, even after slogging away, they had not managed to find Qiao Nan. In fact, they had not even gained anything from this trip. They had finally gotten news of Qiao Nan after such a long time, but it had turned out to be useless.

"Mom, let's keep this between the two of us. I'll just let Sister Qiao know of it, but let's not interfere in anything else." This was truly an eye-opening experience for Xiao Xu. He had finally realized how terrible a family Qiao Nan had. He understood why Qiao Nan had never wanted to mention her family.

If anyone else were in her place, they would simply have taken it as though they had no family.

“Don’t worry. At my age, I’ve eaten more salt than you have rice. Do you need to teach me how to act?” The landlord rolled her eyes at her son. “I’m asking you to let Xiao Qiao know about this. From the looks of it, that mother-daughter pair probably encountered some problems and is urgently looking for Xiao Qiao to solve it. Xiao Qiao’s temper is too good when facing people like them. If they are reluctant to give up and insist on coming again, we have to let Xiao Qiao know. What do you think your chief is trying to do?”

If Xiao Qiao was going to get married, these people should know to restrain themselves, right? Was the chief’s family so easily bullied?

“Aiyo. Don’t you worry about this, Mom.” How could he tell his mom that there was no one in more hurry than his chief? Even so, his chief could not do anything since Sister Qiao was in no hurry. Saying something like that would damage his chief’s reputation. As his chief’s man, he naturally stuck by maintaining his chief’s image, preventing ‘others’ from learning about how his chief was already whipped even before marriage.

Upon hearing her son’s words, the landlord remained silent. If even the parties concerned in the marriage were in no hurry, there was no point in outsiders trying to rush them. After what she had witnessed today, she simply felt that it would be better that they took the opportunity to get married earlier rather than later since it was a question of whether they would even be able to get married in the future.

The landlord had already known that there would be trouble along the way if Qiao Nan were to get married to Zhai Sheng, but these troubles were even more complex than she had expected.

The moment Zhai Hua had successfully divorced Wei De, the atmosphere in the Zhai family lightened significantly. Even though she knew of this result, Jiajia was always smiling. This result clearly did not affect her too much.

As long as there was nothing wrong with Jiajia, the adults were naturally at ease.

Since Wei De was no longer a problem, Miao Jing started harping on past matters. “Old Zhai, when are we going to Qingshui Town?” She was afraid that Zhai Sheng would not try hard enough if she was not around and that getting her daughter-in-law would have to wait until next year.

“We’re not going.” Zhai Yaohui, who was reading the newspaper, answered indifferently. “Didn’t Zhai Sheng ask us to prepare for the wedding reception in advance? It’s only been two months since

he submitted his military order. Weren't you the one who was so excited and had refused to allow others to pack the candy, wanting to do it yourself? If you go to Qingshui Town, are you going to leave Jiajia to do it alone?"

Zhai Yaohui knew that this might be Zhai Sheng's second marriage, but in Zhai Sheng's heart, his marriage to Qiao Nan was his first true marriage. His son was already forty-five and was finally getting married for real. Could his mother possibly not get excited and emotional?

That was why Miao Jing wanted to do everything herself.

It was only upon seeing Miao Jing's reaction did Zhai Yaohui realize that not many people in the Zhai family had been happy when Zhai Sheng had married Qiu Chenxi more than a decade ago. Whether it was their son or their daughter, neither of their first marriages had been a good one. What was different, however, was that he had seen through Wei De. On the contrary, he had not seen through Qiu Chenxi, who had grown up under his nose.

But that mistake had already been made. There was no point in bringing up a mistake that had been made more than ten years ago. It was rare that Miao Jing was so happy, and there was the atmosphere of a joyful occasion in the Zhai family for the first time. As long as Miao Jing did not tire herself out, Zhai Yaohui would not try to stop Miao Jing from helping out if she wanted to.

If he were to stop her, he would become the bad guy.

Thinking about the wedding invitations and candy, Miao Jing smiled. "Jiajia and I work quickly. We've finished almost half of everything. Can I not care about it now that my son is getting married? Jiajia is such an understanding child. She's been worried that I'll be tired and always asks me to rest. She even tells me that she can handle it alone. This child is even more obedient than her mother. How can I let a child who's about to take the middle school examination work so hard? I'm only asking her to help out because I'm afraid that her eyesight will deteriorate from studying too hard."

1

"Yes, yes. Your granddaughter is the best and the most obedient in the world." Zhai Yaohui felt as though there were worms crawling in his ears when he heard his wife praising Jiajia. He wondered how his wife had not grown tired of praising her.

"Of course! My granddaughter is the best!"

“And my grandma is the best too!” Jiajia, who had just returned from school, joyfully bounced over to Miao Jing’s side and hugged her. “Grandma, I’m starving. Is there anything to eat at home?” Jiajia rubbed her stomach. She realized that ever since moving into her grandma’s house, her mood had improved and so had her appetite. Most importantly, she had grown.

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“Yes, there’s the soup dumplings that you love most. I specially asked auntie to make them. I’ll get her to steam them. They’ll be down in about five minutes. You must eat them while they’re hot.” Miao Jing’s heart leaped with joy as Jiajia hugged her. She was in luck this year. Everything was going her way and life was only getting better!

Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui were already advanced in age and there was a limit to how much they could eat. Sometimes, when the auntie asked her what to prepare, Miao Jing would tell her to make a decision on their behalf. Now, everything had changed. Because there were more people in the family, especially with a growing child like Jiajia, Miao Jing finally found meaning in deciding what to prepare for their meals every day.

“Grandma, when are you and grandpa going to Qingshui Town? When is my uncle going to have his wedding?” She had been packing those candies for way too long.

Chapter 1966: Good Taste

She counted by pinching her fingers. Her uncle would probably marry Auntie Qiao in June. “It’d better not be the day when I’m taking the middle school examinations. If that’s the case, I’ll fight it out with my uncle!”

“How could that be?” Miao Jing smiled and said, “Your uncle will definitely get married on a day that you’re available. You’re taking the middle school examinations in mid-June. Isn’t it perfect if your uncle gets married in late June?”

“Grandma, aren’t you anxious?” Her mom told her that her grandparents were eager for grandchildren. Jiajia wasn’t jealous of the unborn younger brothers and sisters even though she might not be able to enjoy everything at her grandma’s place for long.

Jiajia heard from her mom that when she was young, her grandparents wanted to take care of her. However, her paternal grandparents refused by making all sorts of excuses. As such, there was always this regret in her grandparents' hearts.

Seeing that both silver-haired grandparents had been working hard for their children and had so many concerns even when they were so old, Jiajia hoped that they could lead a happier life. Furthermore, she felt that if Auntie Qiao was the one who gave birth to a younger brother or sister, she would definitely like it. She would also definitely be a good sister.

Miao Jing touched Jiajia's face and said, "Even if I'm anxious, it wouldn't be just for these couple of days. You're grandma's precious as well. I won't leave you alone."

"Grandma, you're so great." Jiajia felt warmth in her heart and shook Miao Jing's arms. "Jiajia, after your uncle married Auntie Qiao, do you think they will give birth to a child as sweet as you?"

Jiajia tilted her head. "I don't know. I'll like it regardless of whether the child's a younger brother or sister!"

Zhai Yaohui, who was reading the newspapers, shook the newspapers in his hands and secretly snorted. Who said that it would be a granddaughter? He felt that it should be a grandson. It wasn't only women who had a sixth sense. Men had a sixth sense too.

The phone rang. Zhai Yaohui, who was sitting next to it, picked up the call. "Hello? Yes, it's me. Old He. Is anything the matter? Yes... You have received the news quickly. I haven't sent you the invitation but you know that my son's getting married. Caretaker? Who have you heard this from? Regardless, what's most important is that the children are willing parties. Yes, remember to attend the wedding then."

After putting down the phone, Zhai Yaohui's face darkened a little.

"What's wrong?" Miao Jing patted Jiajia and asked her to eat the soup dumplings which should be steamed by now. Jiajia was smart and obedient. She knew that if her grandparents had serious matters to talk about, they didn't need a child to interfere. As such, she raced to the kitchen. "There's a child at home. If you frighten Jiajia, don't blame me for getting even with you."

Zhai Yaohui glanced at Jiajia, who was happily eating soup dumplings in the kitchen. "Jiajia's a child of our Zhai family. How would she be frightened so easily? You have thought too

much.””Who called just now? Why did I hear the word ‘caretaker?’” Then, Old Zhai’s face darkened.

Zhai Yaohui put down the newspapers. “Someone must have been uttering nonsense. As such, Old He asked me today if Zhai Sheng was going to marry a caretaker.” Zhai Yaohui laughed coldly. He roughly knew who this someone was.

To know who was close to the Zhai family and could even get in touch with them, this person was obviously part of their family previously. Zhai Yaohui had never acknowledged Wei De as a son-in-law. Even if he didn’t pick on Wei De, it was impossible for him to bring Wei De into the Zhai family’s social circle.

There was only one person who had received such special treatment from Zhai Yaohui before: Qiu Chenxi.

Upon thinking about the call that he had received one day in the middle of the night, Zhai Yaohui understood everything.

“Nonsense!” Miao Jing was so angry that she nearly couldn’t control herself hurling vulgarities. “Nan Nan was only invited to take care of Zhai Sheng for a few days. When did she become a caretaker? Furthermore, this is my family business. What’s wrong with a caretaker? Looking down on a caretaker? A caretaker is also relying on their ability to earn money. What’s wrong?!”

The Zhai family didn’t mind Qiao Nan’s background or what kind of jobs she had done before. As long as one was self-sufficient, there wasn’t any distinction between jobs. This was often said, but there weren’t a lot of people who could really not mind this like the Zhai family.

However, Miao Jing couldn’t accept that Qiao Nan was rumored to be a caretaker just because she had taken care of Zhai Sheng for a couple of days and that she now appeared as lowly in front of others.

Upon talking about this, Miao Jing became angry. “Let’s minimize interaction with that person surnamed He in the future. All of them are interfering in our family matters. There should be a limit to their care and concern. When Zhai Sheng didn’t have a marriage partner in the past, he asked you daily when Zhai Sheng was going to get married and shared how well his granddaughter was. Did he really think that we didn’t know what he was thinking? I just can’t be bothered seeing that he’s old and that you are long-time friends with him. He’s trying to take advantage of that, isn’t he?”

“Heh...” Zhai Yaohui smiled. He knew that Old He’s call didn’t bear good intentions. Old He had a niece who was also divorced. She was about the same age as Zhai Sheng and their family backgrounds were compatible. Since both of them were divorced, what Old He meant to say was they shouldn’t despise each other. Furthermore, Old He’s niece was a student who graduated from a prestigious university.

Even if Zhai Sheng was the chief, his niece was worthy of Zhai Sheng and he didn’t need to suffer much. Yes, with Zhai Sheng’s identity, he could marry a young and pretty girl. However, the Zhai family’s identity determined that Zhai Sheng’s wife mustn’t be the kind of frivolous girl who couldn’t handle big occasions.

It didn’t matter if the Zhai family’s daughter-in-law was young and pretty. What was more important was that she was gracious and capable.

Zhai Yaohui didn’t mention this to Miao Jing as he knew that this would definitely not work. Not only did he not mention this to Miao Jing, but he also didn’t say a single word in front of Zhai Sheng. He initially thought that this matter was over. However, after receiving this call today, Zhai Yaohui knew that it wasn’t over.

As he had rejected him, Old He always felt unhappy in his heart. He wanted to see if Zhai Sheng was planning to remain single for life or he was going to marry a woman who was better than his niece.

As Old He waited, his niece hadn’t remarried yet, but he heard that Zhai Sheng was going to marry a caretaker. He became angry and felt that the Zhai family belittled them. Couldn’t his niece compare to a caretaker?

Before Zhai Sheng got married, Old He hurriedly made a call to mock Zhai Yaohui and also to remind him that there wasn’t any meaning in deciding on a caretaker as his daughter-in-law. His niece wasn’t remarried yet, but she might not fancy Zhai Sheng anymore if he got a divorce again in the future.

Chapter 1967: Nothing

Zhai Yaohui understood Old He’s meaning, but he didn’t agree with it at all. However, Zhai Yaohui agreed with Miao Jing’s words. The He family was going downhill. In recent years, not only did they side with the wrong people, but they also relied on the fact that they were veteran revolutionaries and put on airs everywhere. None of their descendants were capable.

If it wasn't that the He family was incapable, would Old He still keep his divorced niece from getting married until now? Wasn't he just waiting for him to nod in agreement so that they could interact more?

No matter how noble Old He put it, he just wanted to take advantage of the Zhai family to pull the He family up the ranks. It was that simple.

Old He became utilitarian. He was scheming for this even though they were old friends. Friends were to stay if they got along well but free to leave if they didn't. Since Old He had such thoughts, Zhai Yaohui didn't think that there was any issue in distancing themselves from the He family. "Just forget about this matter after listening to it. You don't have to care too much. Old He has long changed."

Old He didn't overstep his boundaries before, so he couldn't be bothered with him. He didn't expect Old He to really think that they had a solid friendship and that he wouldn't mind no matter what he did. In the face of a capricious old friend whom he wasn't so close to anymore, Zhai Yaohui couldn't be bothered to explain so much. He would only use practical actions to tell Old He that the relationship between the two of them wasn't as close as he thought.

"Then, let's not send an invite to the He family for Zhai Sheng's wedding this time. Based on his call today, I feel that he will definitely be unhappy if he attends the wedding, so why bother? Not inviting him is good for both him and our family." A wedding was a joyous occasion. She was afraid that Old He couldn't control his mouth and would spout nonsense in front of Qiao Nan.

It wasn't easy for their family to have a daughter-in-law like Qiao Nan. How was an outsider as important as their daughter-in-law? Miao Jing was particularly clear about this point. Furthermore, Miao Jing had long detected that Zhai Yaohui was interacting lesser with Old He. He rarely mentioned Old He as a friend.

She understood her own man. Based on Zhai Yaohui's attitude, Miao Jing knew that their family's relationship with the He family was not as good as before. Who would have thought that Old He didn't realize this and even pretended to be a big bad wolf? How ridiculous.

"I'll leave it to you." Zhai Yaohui didn't have an opinion on these matters and let Miao Jing make the decision.

After glancing at Miao Jing, Zhai Yaohui suddenly remembered how it was a few decades ago when he was going to marry her. Back then, a lot of people had looked at Miao Jing the same way as they had at Qiao Nan today, right?

Seeing that Jiajia had finished half the soup dumplings, Miao Jing hurriedly raised her voice and gave a reminder. “Jiajia, that’s enough. We are going to have dinner in half an hour. If you are full from soup dumplings now, you won’t be able to have dinner and will wake up hungry late at night.”

“Got it, grandma.” Jiajia stopped quickly. She knew that her grandparents had already finished their discussion. “Grandma, why isn’t my mother back yet?” Ever since she lived in her grandma’s house, she realized that her mother was so busy. She was even busier than when she was back at that house.

“I don’t know what your mother has been busy with recently either. However, she didn’t give me a call. I believe that she should be back for dinner soon.” Miao Jing felt that ever since the divorce, Zhai Hua had really grown up. She could worry less about her. “Oh, right. Old Zhai, who did you say had shared our family matters with Old He?”

Miao Jing hated Old He for being a busybody and not treating himself as an outsider at all, but she hated the person who publicized the Zhai family’s personal matters even more. They were going to stop their interaction with the He family. As for the person who spouted nonsense, they had to look at the situation and give them a lesson.

Zhai Yaohui looked slightly embarrassed.

Except for that mother-daughter pair, Miao Jing couldn’t think of a third person who could make Zhai Yaohui reveal such an unnatural expression in front of her. Miao Jing snorted coldly. “So, it’s them.”

Jiajia blinked. Who was it? Why didn’t grandma finish her words? She didn’t understand. Who was the one who had publicized uncle’s and Auntie Qiao’s marriage in advance? This person even made up rumors about Auntie Qiao. They were obviously full of schemes.

Zhai Yaohui felt extremely helpless. “Don’t talk nonsense in front of Jiajia. This happened so many years ago. Haven’t I already explained it to you clearly?” Everything was just a misunderstanding. He didn’t like Qi Minlan at all. He only had Miao Miao in his heart.

Zhai Yaohui had no choice but to foot the bill for his negligence when he was young.

“Talk is cheap. That mother-daughter pair will keep finding our family trouble. Are you going to take action only when they really do something and Qiao Nan no longer dares to marry Zhai Sheng?” It turned out that the mother-daughter pair was still very important in Old Zhai’s heart. Could it be more important than their son’s happiness for the rest of his life?!

Upon mentioning Qi Minlan and her daughter, Miao Jing was like an ignited firecracker. Zhai Sheng’s first marriage was ruined in the hands of these two women. If there was going to be a second time, not only would Miao Jing find Qi Minlan and her daughter to settle scores, but she would also fight it out with Zhai Yaohui.

If not for Zhai Yaohui, would Zhai Sheng not only have to be forced into marrying someone he didn’t like in his first marriage but also be made a cuckold out of?

In short, if Qi Minlan and her daughter did anything that resulted in Zhai Sheng having any losses, the person who was most responsible would be Zhai Yaohui.

Jiajia, who saw her grandma angry for the first time and couldn’t tell who the ‘she’ was after listening to their conversation, was shocked. She didn’t know if she should do some persuasion now. However, who should she persuade? Her grandpa? She didn’t even know what had happened. How was she going to persuade him? Her grandma? She was so sad. It was obvious she was the one being bullied.

Just when Jiajia was in a dilemma, Zhai Hua returned. It could be said that she rescued Jiajia. “Okay, that’s all eight hundred years ago. The two of you have the cheek to argue about this in front of Jiajia. Didn’t you see that she’s confused by the two of you? Mom, Dad did make a mistake when he was young. His mind was unclear, and he couldn’t differentiate family from outsiders.”

After being scolded by his daughter, Zhai Yaohui looked at Zhai Hua warningly: You’re here to persuade her, not add fuel to the flames. Know your place well.

Zhai Hua smiled. “However, don’t you know how Dad is like? Qi Minlan’s an old hag. Qiu Chenxi is a divorced woman. Both of them are detestable. However, who asked them to be women, and women with nothing at that?”

Chapter 1968: Background

“My dad wants to deal with them, but how should he do that? Warn them? Would that work? Get someone to beat them up? Wouldn’t we be throwing the Zhai family’s reputation down the drain then?”

Zhai Hua felt bad for Zhai Yaohui on this account. Qi Minlan was old now. If Qiu Chenxi worked, her dad could have retired a long time ago. Unfortunately, Qiu Chenxi had ideas of her own. Whether it was before or after her marriage, she had never wanted to work and had insisted on her family supporting her.

The men of the Zhai family did not know how to deal with such a woman.

Miao Jing was reluctant to back down. “We can’t retaliate? All our family can do is suffer?” She could not take it lying down. She did not believe that there would be no solution to this matter.

“That might not necessarily be the case.” Zhai Hua sat down comfortably, enjoying the water that her daughter had brought her. It was so sweet. It was indeed water that her daughter had given her. “Didn’t my dad already deal with Qiu Qin? Otherwise, he could have retired by now and enjoyed life as an old cadre. That’s all gone now. But I’ve always been a little hesitant about that. Do you think that was punishing Qi Minlan and her daughter, or we were helping them instead?”

“What do you mean?” Miao Jing frowned in confusion.

“Mom, you should know that Qiu Qin had an affair behind Qi Minlan’s back while he was younger, right? They even had a son. That son graduated from university and has a stable job now. He’s even gotten married and has a son himself. Qiu Qin no longer goes home and lives with that woman instead, spending time with his grandson. His life can’t get any better.”

Qiu Qin had lost his privileges as an old cadre, but someone might have benefitted from that situation. However, Qiu Qin did know that it was entirely Qi Minlan’s and Qiu Chenxi’s faults that he had been robbed of those privileges. As such, he was even more unwilling to return home to face the mother-daughter pair and chose to spend all his time with his grandson instead.

“Is that true?” Miao Jing was taken aback. “That’s just as well. I’m sure the loss of those privileges must have some impact on the Qiu family.” Qiu Qin did not have those benefits, and neither did Qiu Chenxi nor Qi Minlan work.

Thinking about how quickly Qiu Chenxi spent money, Miao Jing was sure that Qi Minlan would be very miserable, let alone Qiu Chenxi, especially since Qiu Qin was not receiving any benefits as an old cadre. She had no money to spend!

“Dad, Qiu Qin was probably the one who took care of his son’s job, right? I checked on it recently. We can do something.” Whether it was to punish Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan, or whether it was because she looked down on that illegitimate child, Zhai Hua felt that they could take some action in this regard.

The look in Zhai Hua’s eyes told Zhai Yaohui that she had some plans in mind. “Do whatever you want but don’t go too far. Leave them with some room to breathe at the very least. Even if you do something, make sure you target the correct person.”

“Don’t worry. I know what to do.” She simply felt that Qiu Qin should clear up the relationship between these two women at least. His marriage to Qi Minlan existed in name only. That mistress he was supporting outside was a more authentic wife than Qi Minlan herself, and she lived even more happily.

Sorry, she could not stand the sight of either of these two old women. She would simply deal with them at the same time. Qiu Qin had been riding on the Zhai family’s laurels to allow that mistress to live such a comfortable life and find his son such a good job. Now, she would simply be retrieving whatever the Zhai family had lent Qiu Qin.

Qiu Chenxi only knew that Old He shared a decent relationship with Zhai Yaohui. When she learned that Old He intended to introduce his divorced niece to Zhai Sheng, Qiu Chenxi grew to hate Old He. Miao Jing only scolded Old He just now, but Qiu Chenxi had already lambasted Old He one too many times in her heart.

It was only when she realized that Zhai Sheng had gotten together with Qiao Nan, whom she could not control, did Qiu Chenxi suddenly realize that Old He seemed like a good pawn. That night, Qiu Chenxi, who had been provoked and run into obstacles with Qiao Nan, made several calls to the Zhai family.

Unfortunately, she could not go any further than ‘Dad’ before the call was cut off by Zhai Yaohui. Following that, the Zhai family simply unplugged the phone. Since she could not get in contact with the Zhai family, Qiu Chenxi could not be sure of how the rest of the Zhai family, apart from Zhai Sheng, felt about Qiao Nan.

She refused to believe that she would lose to a caretaker like Qiao Nan. No matter how bad she was, was she worse than someone like Qiao Nan? She was a hundred times more outstanding than Qiao Nan! So, how could the Zhai family choose a caretaker over giving her a second chance?

Since she could not get in touch with the Zhai family, Qiu Chenxi could only settle on starting somewhere else. Because she knew that Old He's relationship with Zhai Yaohui was no longer as good as it had been, she was slightly nervous. Unlike the Zhai family that had gradually risen through the ranks, the He family had simply grown in number. Seeing his brother in arms rise in position, Old He's neck almost got too strained from looking up in jealousy.

Qiu Chenxi might not understand others, but she was clear about how someone like Old He felt. As long as Old He still had some form of contact with the Zhai family, she was confident that her plan would definitely work.

After reporting the matters to Old He, Qiu Chenxi anxiously awaited the results. She did not believe that Zhai Yaohui would not be moved by Old He's words that he delivered in that weird tone. Even families with lower social statuses than the Zhai family would not accept a caretaker as a daughter-in-law, much less the Zhai family.

If the Zhai family were ridiculed, would they still allow Zhai Sheng to be with Qiao Nan?

"All right. Stop pacing around." Qi Minlan knew what 'good deeds' her daughter had done. There was no use, and everything that Qiu Chenxi had done would yield nothing. But her daughter had already gone too far for saving. Qi Minlan knew that nothing she said mattered.

"Mom, do you think my father-in-law would have already gone to find Zhai Sheng and bring him back from Qingshui Town, warning that caretaker to stay away from Zhai Sheng? I guess that should be it, right?" Qiu Chenxi got even more excited as she dreamed of this possibility. "Mom, say something."

Qi Minlan sighed. "Chenxi, have you forgotten your mother-in-law's background?"

"..." Qiu Chenxi was left in a trance and her face stiffened. Yes, she had almost forgotten. Her ex-mother-in-law had been nothing more than a countryside bumpkin who was a farmer before marrying into the Zhai family. Her situation had been no better than Qiao Nan's today.

Knowing that her daughter had realized that, Qi Minlan continued.

Chapter 1969: Immensely Regretful

“The Zhai family...” Qi Minlan was extremely sour. “The men of the Zhai family are all good men who treat their women well. They often say that everyone is equal in modern society and that it doesn’t matter whether you’re rich or poor. There are very few people who can truly practice what they preach, but the Zhai family is an example.”

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At that time, Zhai Yaohui had not despised Miao Jing for being a countryside girl. Not only had he married Miao Jing, but he had even treated Miao Jing so well all these decades. That was unlike Qiu Qin, who had coaxed her when they were young but had already betrayed her a long time ago by finding a mistress outside and had even had a son out of wedlock.

Compared to the men of the Zhai family, all other men, including Qiu Qin, could not be considered good men.

The better the Zhai family’s men were, the more Qi Minlan hated her daughter. She had committed a folly in her youth, thinking that her now-deceased brother could have competed with Zhai Yaohui for the position of a chief. That was why she had looked down on Zhai Yaohui, causing her to miss out on him, leading to Zhai Yaohui marrying Miao Jing instead.

Her daughter was different. She had groomed her daughter from a young age to marry Zhai Sheng. In reality, her daughter had indeed succeeded and Zhai Sheng had married her. Who would have known...

Good men like those in the Zhai family were almost extinct. Someone as outstanding as Zhai Sheng had been thrown aside by her daughter, who was then left in even more dire straits than she had been in her youth. She had lost to Miao Jing. But at least, Miao Jing was at her prime and Miao Jing’s father was the Old Master Zhai’s benefactor. If they were really to talk about it, it was not that she had not been outstanding enough that she had lost to Miao Jing, who had a much lower social status than she did. That was why it had not been such a humiliating loss.

But Chenxi’s situation was different. That caretaker was an old woman of almost forty, and there was no way her education could compare to Chenxi’s. Even then, a woman who could compare with Chenxi in every way and had no prior relationship to the Zhai family had won against Chenxi and was about to become the Zhai family’s daughter-in-law.

With such a comparison, her daughter had lost badly.

Qiu Chenxi burst into tears. “Why does everyone in the Zhai family accept Qiao Nan who’s a caretaker? Do they not think that it’s humiliating? Don’t you think the Zhai family is full of monsters? Why can’t they think more like normal people? What do you mean by good men and bad men? The men in the Zhai family are only good toward that caretaker but bad toward me! I only made one single mistake, but they aren’t even willing to give me a second chance! I’ve already learned my lesson. I’ll live honestly and simply for the rest of my life. I won’t go out and play around anymore. But look at how vicious and heartless the Zhai family is toward me! They don’t even want to see me just once! The Zhai family’s men are no good at all! They’re scums!”

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Yes, Qiu Chenxi finally realized. That was good.

Even men with lower statuses than Zhai Sheng would find mistresses outside to satisfy their own desires. It was only normal. Qiu Chenxi had no desire to be the one needing to tolerate that affair just as her mom had.

When Qiu Chenxi had gotten married to Zhai Sheng at that time, it had been too glorious. Everyone around her had been envious of her. But when Qiu Chenxi got divorced, they were all standing on the sidelines, waiting to see what would happen next. There were even some ‘sisters’ who had directly told Qiu Chenxi when she had gotten married, “A divorce is no big deal. Chenxi’s pretty and outstanding. I’m sure she’ll be able to find a man who’s better and more outstanding than Zhai Sheng after her divorce. Do you think that it’s possible for our Chenxi to regress and find someone worse off than Zhai Sheng? Chenxi, when you get remarried, you’d better look for us. Don’t forget me. When that time comes, I’ll definitely laugh at Zhai Sheng on your behalf!”

These words embarrassed Qiu Chenxi. Perhaps it was because she had drunk some alcohol, or perhaps it was because she did not want to get divorced, or that Zhai Sheng had practically forced her into a divorce that Chenxi had announced that she was the one who had grown annoyed with Zhai Sheng first.

Since she had been the one to say so, she had to take responsibility for her words.

Even though it had been years since those words were spoken, those ‘sisters’ who had heard Qiu Chenxi say those words at that time would still specially call her from time to time, asking when she was getting remarried, and whether she had already found someone better than Zhai Sheng. If she had indeed done so, she had better remember to tell them. They had already prepared fat red packets for Qiu Chenxi’s marriage.

In the face of these constant reminders of her actions at that time, Qiu Chenxi could not forget about them even if she wanted to. Now, Qiu Chenxi told Qi Minlan while wiping away her tears. “Mom, what should I do? Do you think Zhai Sheng will really get together with that caretaker? If the Zhai family doesn’t mind, there’s nothing else I can do. Mom, I’m already at this age and can’t give birth to any children. If I don’t reconcile with Zhai Sheng, I don’t have much hope for the rest of my life.”

Seeing her daughter, who was already in her forties, crying her heart out helplessly, Qi Minlan was heartbroken. “If it doesn’t work with the Zhai family, you can try that caretaker. I’m sure she has an inferiority complex. That caretaker’s background is just ordinarily bad. You can think of a way to make that caretaker voluntarily leave Zhai Sheng.”

In her whole lifetime, Chenxi was the only one who mattered to her. She had already given up her husband, Qiu Qin. The only one she could not bear to let go of was her only daughter, Chenxi, and she hoped that she would lead a comfortable life.

“It’s no use. I’ve looked for that woman. It’s exactly because of her poor background that she won’t ever give up on Zhai Sheng since it wasn’t easy for her to be so lucky. Mom, I have no other choice. I really have no other choice. Mom, I feel like I can’t live anymore!” Qiu Chenxi sobbed while hugging Qi Minlan. “If I can’t get back together with Zhai Sheng and have to watch him get married to another woman, I might as well die!”

Qiu Chenxi thought about how she did not have much hope for the rest of her life at this age. She did not even have a child of her own at this age. She did not want to think about her father, and her mother was already old and could not be with her for much longer. Once her mother was gone, she would have no other kin left in this world. What was the point in living in that case?

“Mom, I regret it. I really regret it now. I should have listened to you and cherished myself in the past. I shouldn’t have thrown a tantrum. I should have tried to salvage my marriage. I shouldn’t have led such a wild life and wrecked my own body. Mom, I want a child.” If she had a child, her life would not be so miserable and devoid of hope at the very least.

Chapter 1970: He Knows Everything

Caressing Qiu Chenxi’s head, Qi Minlan felt similarly, thinking that it would be better if Qiu Chenxi had a child by her side. “Are you thinking of adopting a child?” Qi Minlan had already lost all hope of Qiu Chenxi having her own child. Qi Minlan had not forgotten the doctor’s words. Qiu Chenxi was now barren.

“I don’t want to raise anyone else’s child.” There was no point in doing so.

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“What do you mean?” Qi Minlan’s hand stopped midair. Who would hand their own child over to Chenxi apart from the orphanage?

“Mom, I want to raise Zhai Sheng’s child.” The only way she would be able to remarry Zhai Sheng and become the chief’s wife was by raising Zhai Sheng’s child and being the mother of Zhai Sheng’s child.

Because of Qiu Chenxi’s words, Qi Minlan, who was almost seventy, took the long journey to the far-away town of her memories, Qingshui Town. Qi Minlan was not even sure if she would succeed in her mission this time.

But for the sake of her daughter’s happiness, she had to make this journey, and she would do her best to ensure her success. “Hello, is anyone there?”

Upon hearing a stranger’s voice, Qiao Nan hesitated. It was also because she had almost been scared to death by Qiu Chenxi making a scene at midnight the other day. That day, she had been fortunate that Qiu Chenxi had turned up alone. If Qiu Chenxi had called a whole gang of people along, as she had done in her dream, she would probably have been gone by the time the police arrived.

As such, Qiao Nan was a little hesitant to open the door this time. “Who’s that? What’s the matter?” Qiao Nan asked while trying to peer outside. Then, she saw a stranger who looked a little familiar. Thinking carefully about it, Qiao Nan finally realized who that woman in front of her door was.

“I’m...” Qi Minlan did not know how to introduce herself to Qiao Nan either. If she introduced herself as Qiu Chenxi’s mother, Qiao Nan would probably refuse to open the door. However, if she did not state her identity, Qiao Nan would probably not care about her either.

“Please wait a minute.” Qiao Nan did not harp on Qi Minlan’s identity and decided on a call to Zhai Sheng. She could not understand why these people were all coming to find her one after the other, especially Qiu Chenxi and Qi Minlan. Shouldn’t they look for Zhai Sheng instead?

Upon receiving Qiao Nan's call, Zhai Sheng rushed to Qiao Nan's house. Qiao Nan had not even told Zhai Sheng about Qiu Chenxi appearing the previous time, but now that Qi Minlan had turned up, she had conveniently told Zhai Sheng about that incident too.

After waiting outside for a while, Qi Minlan sensed that something was amiss. When she spotted Zhai Sheng with a dark expression, Qi Minlan could only stare blankly. He was undoubtedly Zhai Yaohui's son. No matter how bad the background of that woman inside was, the men of the Zhai family could not care less about such a thing as long as they were moved. They were like saints.

Qi Minlan laughed sarcastically. "You've come so quickly?"

Zhai Sheng could not even be bothered to address her. "Nan Nan, I'm here. You can open the door now." Zhai Sheng agreed that Qiao Nan should not need to face Qiu Chenxi or Qi Minlan alone. Qiao Nan was simple and was not scheming like Qiu Chenxi, and neither did she have wide connections.

Upon opening the door, both of them entered. The first thing Zhai Sheng did upon entering was to instruct Qiao Nan. "Nan Nan, go and pack up your things. I'll bring you back to the Zhai family's old villa. My marriage report has already been approved. There's no need for us to be hiding anything."

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To soldiers, a marriage report being approved was as good as being married, and this was a military marriage, no less.

The reason why Zhai Sheng had said these things in front of Qi Minlan was to warn her. At that time, Qiu Chenxi had cheated on him and had destroyed a military marriage. If Zhai Sheng really wanted to take issue with that, would Qiu Chenxi have been able to live so freely? She would have been thrown into jail to be reformed!

Even if no one else respected her, she had to respect herself!

At the mention of Qiu Chenxi's affair, Qi Minlan was too ashamed to face Zhai Sheng. She had not even despised Qiu Qin for having an affair, but she felt too ashamed to persuade Zhai Sheng to cherish her daughter, who had been at fault. "Zhai Sheng, is there really no turning back on the account of all those years of your relationship with Chenxi? Chenxi knows she's wrong and she's really changed for the better."

Zhai Sheng faced Qi Minlan calmly. “It’s good that Qiu Chenxi realized her mistake since her life is her own. But the one who should feel happy should be her future partner, not me.” Whether or not Qiu Chenxi changed for the better had nothing to do with Zhai Sheng.

As such, it was laughable that Qi Minlan was telling him such things so solemnly.

“You were husband and wife for so many years. Do you really not have any feelings for her?”
Could it be Qiao Nan’s appearance that caused Zhai Sheng to be unwilling to give Chenxi a second chance? Thinking about how Qiao Nan’s existence had resulted in her daughter losing her happiness, Qi Minlan eyed Qiao Nan coldly.

Zhai Sheng shielded Qiao Nan, no longer treating Qi Minlan amiably. “I guess Qiu Chenxi truly inherited her self-centeredness from you. She was the one at fault but she’s pushing the blame on others. Qiu Chenxi is indeed your daughter.”

If Qiu Chenxi had not cheated, the marriage would have lasted even if he had no feelings for her. There was no point in mentioning feelings. In those three years, he had never loved Qiu Chenxi. However, he was a soldier and had already been a soldier even before his marriage. Qiu Chenxi should already have considered the loneliness she would face as a military spouse even before marriage.

Qiu Chenxi could be unhappy about the marriage, but there was no way she could cheat on him or be unfaithful.

“But she’s already...”

“So what if she knows she’s wrong? Not all mistakes should be forgiven. Even if they’re forgiven, not all mistakes can be accepted. An honest person won’t do anything underhanded. In the years after our divorce, Qiu Chenxi led quite a good life, but did she visit the hospital too many times? It isn’t every day that I return to Ping Cheng after getting injured, but I just so happened to bump into her. Qiu Chenxi isn’t young anymore, so it’s best she look after her health. Don’t ruin her life just because of a moment of greed.”

Zhai Sheng's cool tone was just short of letting Qi Minlan know directly that Qiu Chenxi had gotten all those diseases because of her wild lifestyle. As someone with such illnesses, Qiu Chenxi should know to love herself even more instead of trying to drag others down.

Qi Minlan's face paled. "You knew?" Zhai Sheng knew all about Chenxi's illnesses... Were the heavens really unwilling to give Chenxi a second chance?