

RTAMM 2141

Chapter 2141: Angered to Death

“My daughter and grandchildren are in the hospital. I have to go to the capital immediately to see them. Police officer, please help. Please help me think of a solution.”

The police officers understood that Qiao Dongliang’s situation was unique. However, rules were rules and they couldn’t break them. “Sir, don’t worry. Sit down and have a glass of water. You can’t be anxious when encountering such a matter. There would always be a solution. If you don’t mind forking out money, maybe you can apply for an urgent identity card?” However, no matter how urgent it was, the identity card couldn’t be issued tomorrow if the request was submitted today. “We will explain all the situations to you clearly. See if you can wait for another week or so?”

He just wanted to visit his daughter and grandchildren.. However, he lost his identity card. For some things, the more coincidental it was for all of them to happen together, the more uneasy he felt. He kept feeling that this wasn’t a good sign. “Money isn’t an issue. However, would the fastest be one week? Is there any other way? How about using a temporary identity card first?”

“Sure. See if this works. Don’t apply for an urgent identity card first. Go by the normal procedures and collect it after a month. As for you, go and think of a way to issue a certificate and bring it over to us. By then, we will do a temporary identity card for you. We will try to get this out within three days so that you can go to the capital and visit your daughter and grandchildren. How does that sound?”

The law took into account human sympathy. Qiao Dongliang’s situation was more unique. His daughter and grandchildren were in the hospital. Upon hearing this matter, they knew that this was crucial. If they didn’t settle this quickly, they would feel apologetic as well.

They could tell that this elder before them was so anxious that he was about to cry as he had lost his identity card and had no means to go to the capital to visit his daughter and grandchildren who were hospitalized. Who didn’t have elders and children in their family? Everyone could understand this type of worry and fear.

“Thank you. Thank you so much.” Three days. He could still wait for three days.

After knowing what kind of procedure this entailed, Qiao Dongliang retrieved the household register of family members first when he returned home. After that, he went out to the streets and prepared a few certificates. That afternoon, he returned to that police station again. The police still had an impression of Qiao Dongliang as they had just seen him earlier in the day. Seeing that Qiao Dongliang's documents were complete and had no issues, everyone used the fastest speed to help Qiao Dongliang process a temporary identity card. They told him that three days later, he could retrieve this temporary identity card and go to the capital to visit his daughter and grandchildren.

For a temporary identity card, Qiao Dongliang had worked for the entire day. Qiao Dongliang knew that this was already efficient. No matter what, at least, he didn't make a wasted trip today. Three days later, he could similarly take a train to the capital.

Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi, who thought that this matter was settled, didn't think that there would be such a fiery side to Qiao Dongliang when it came to doing things. He had finished making a temporary identity card and could go to the capital again in three days.

Since Qiao Dongliang was going to the capital himself, how would he be willing to let Qiao Zijin go to the capital to take care of Qiao Nan and the children on behalf of him?

"Dad, you have been out the whole day. You must be tired, right?" Qiao Zijin was half-angered to death in her heart. However, she continued to care about Qiao Dongliang on the surface. "Actually, this matter doesn't have to be so complicated. Just wait for a month. If you're really worried about Nan Nan, I can help you go to the capital first to take a look at Nan Nan's situation. Look at you. You've been running around the whole day today. Mom and I feel heartache looking at you. If Nan Nan knows about this, she would definitely have the same thoughts as us."

He was already so old. Had he forgotten that just a few months ago, he had been discharged from the hospital? How was he so energetic? Qiao Zijin was depressed. Ever since her father was discharged from the hospital, she had bought too many nutritional items and raised him well. If her father hadn't recuperated well from that fracture back then, would he have been able to run around so much outside?

She raised her father well, but he despised her and insisted on going to the capital to visit Qiao Nan. That was really... enough.

"There's no need to." Qiao Dongliang smiled. "If I hadn't moved so much, I wouldn't have known that I'm actually not too old." That was right as well. He was about to become someone with three grandchildren. If he was really old, he wouldn't be able to carry any one of the three grandchildren.

He felt regretful that he didn't manage to carry Chen Feng when he was young. Qiao Dongliang wanted to make up for his previous regrets with Qiao Nan's children. Although he was no longer young, his body was still in good shape. It was nothing to carry a baby or coax a child.

"Indeed, I'm tired from running around today. I'll go to bed first. The both of you can continue chatting." After going to the capital, he wouldn't have so much leisure time. In order for him to cope well after arriving in the capital, he had to eat, drink, and sleep well in the next three days so that he would have enough energy and strength.

At this time, Qiao Dongliang already knew that based on Qiao Nan's situation, where she was carrying multiple children, it was very difficult for her to go through a ten-month pregnancy period. In other words, within a few days after arriving in the capital, he might have the chance to meet his grandchildren.

Of course, it was also because of this that Qiao Dongliang was so anxious and wanted to make a trip to the capital personally. Waiting for another three days was his limit. Qiao Dongliang couldn't wait for a month or a week.

After saying this, Qiao Dongliang returned to his room. It was only seven in the evening, but he was already in deep sleep. Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi felt depressed.

Ding Jiayi patted Qiao Zijin's hand. Both of them continued chatting after going to Qiao Zijin's room. "There's no need to be so nervous. Your dad must be sleeping soundly now. There's no need to seal the cracks in the door. We can just talk about the sensitive topics briefly. If your dad suddenly wakes up from his sleep to go to the toilet, he would definitely argue with us if he sees this situation."

"Yes." Qiao Zijin thought so as well. "Mom, Dad really cherishes Qiao Nan and the three children in her stomach. When I was giving birth to Fengfeng in the past, was he that anxious over me and Fengfeng?" No matter how much she didn't care about whom Qiao Dongliang was more biased in his fatherly love to, Qiao Zijin couldn't help but feel jealous today.

In order to go to the capital to see Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin felt that her father had already fought with his life. They were both her father's daughters. There was such a huge difference in the way he treated her compared to Qiao Nan. She couldn't accept it. When she gave birth to Chen Feng, her father wasn't that nervous at all. He also didn't insist on visiting her.

Once she had finished her confinement period, she had still not met anyone from her family. She knew that her mom had gone to the Chen family's house several times to look for her but had been stopped by her mother-in-law.

Ding Jiayi laughed. "Are you still jealous about that? Why do you care about your dad's concern and anxiety? Can you wear it or eat it? Why are you behaving like a child and nitpicking about even this? Zijin, remember that we have to know our duties as women. The most important things are the ones that are tangible. No matter how much your dad cares about Qiao Nan, can he give birth on Qiao Nan's behalf or die for her? Or can he make Qiao Nan our family's only university graduate instead of you?"

What was the point of caring only now? Many things had already been set in stone. No matter how much of a fuss he kicked up, the fact remained that Qiao Nan was half-literate and had only graduated from junior high school. There was no way she could compare to Zijin, who was a university graduate. "Talking about that, it's fortunate that Qiao Nan has such low qualifications. I've already thought about it. The Zhai family was willing to accept a daughter-in-law who's a mere junior high school graduate. You're a university graduate! Once you marry into the Zhai family, they should love you even more!"

On the other hand, if Zijin had been the second woman to marry Zhai Sheng, there would be no fight between Zijin and his previous wife.. Zijin would lose out no matter what. Thankfully, Qiao Nan had married into the family first to lay the foundations for Zijin. Once Zijin married into the family, Zijin would be much more suitable for Zhai Sheng as compared to Qiao Nan.

"That sounds quite reasonable." Qiao Zijin nodded. Was it necessary to care about it? It might be important, but tangible benefits were more important. Her dad could be concerned about Qiao Nan for all she cared, as long as he did not ruin her plans. "But Mom, don't forget that Dad will get his temporary identity card in three days. Then, he'll be able to make the trip to the capital."

What would they do in three days' time? Once her dad made that trip, her plans would fall through.

At the mention of this, Ding Jiayi was troubled too. She had not expected Qiao Dongliang to be so stubborn about this matter. Although he had lost his identity card and knew that he would not be able to make the trip for the time being, he was still insistent on doing so. He had never even thought of handing the job over to Qiao Zijin. "I have a way but I can't use it too many times. Even if I succeed, your dad may get suspicious over time. The only thing I can do is prevent him from

boarding the bus in three days' time when he receives his identity card. After that, you'll be on your own. I can't be the only one putting in the effort, after all. Zijin, aren't you going to do anything?"

There was a limit to how much she could help out. After all, Zijin was the one going to the capital.

"Mom, how about this? As long as you prevent Dad from boarding the bus, I'll take Dad's place and head to the capital. Since Dad won't be around, I can say whatever I want to Qiao Nan and the Zhai family. I'll try to settle the matter before the two of them get in touch with each other and before Dad reaches the capital. Of course, if Dad asks where I am, you can just tell him that I've gotten bored sitting around at home and have gone on a trip."

She was headed to the capital, which was home to the Great Wall and Tiananmen. It was reasonable for her to take a trip there.

In short, they would try their best to delay her dad while she tried her best to get close to the Zhai family. Then, she would try to convince Qiao Nan to help her in marrying Zhai Sheng before she took her last breath.

"Alright. Let's do that." Hearing that Qiao Zijin had plans of her own, Ding Jiayi sighed in relief. There was no way the plan would succeed if she were to work alone. Qiao Zijin had to make some practical action too. She was capable of delaying Old Qiao. But getting the Zhai family to agree to Qiao Zijin marrying Zhai Sheng? That was impossible!

Three days later when Qiao Dongliang received his temporary identity card and could purchase bus tickets to the capital, Qiao Dongliang met with another incident.

What incident?

He overslept!

The bus departed at seven-thirty in the morning but by the time Qiao Dongliang awoke, it was already half past ten. He had missed the bus by three whole hours. The bus was probably already halfway along the way to the capital. As such, Qiao Dongliang had once again missed his chance to head to the capital. "How could I have overslept?"

He was already in his seventies and was a light sleeper. He had rested rather well at home recently and that was why he had not been able to go to sleep the previous night. Even so, he could not have woken up only at ten-thirty, right?

“How am I supposed to know?” Ding Jiayi did not dare to look Qiao Dongliang in the eye, in case he realized something amiss. “Old Qiao, you’re always feeling unwell. That’s why you overslept. Actually, I even tried to wake you up a few times today. I saw that you didn’t wake up, so I thought that you changed your mind and decided not to go to the capital.”

Qiao Dongliang knocked his head, wondering if he had indeed fallen ill. Otherwise, why did he feel so light-headed and giddy? It was already half past ten. There was no way he was still half-asleep. “Where’s Zijin?” Since the time he had awoken, he had only seen Old Ding but not Qiao Zijin.

Ding Jiayi turned around, her back facing Qiao Dongliang. “Zijin said that she’s gotten too bored at home, so she went on a trip. Since you didn’t want to go on a trip, she went off alone.”

“She went on a trip?” Qiao Dongliang thought that something felt strange but he could not pinpoint what it was. “Forget it. I’m going to get a bus ticket.”

“You’re getting another ticket?” Ding Jiayi tried to stop Qiao Dongliang. “A bus ticket from Ping Cheng to the capital is expensive. It costs more than two hundred yuan! You’ve already wasted two bus tickets. That’s more than four hundred yuan! I think that you’re fated not to go to the capital! Which woman doesn’t give birth to children? Why is she so precious that you need to make a trip specially to visit her? Didn’t she tell you that she’ll bring you to the capital once she finishes her confinement period? Why are you in such a hurry?”

“No. I have to meet Nan Nan. Otherwise, I’ll be worried.” How could that be the same? Yes, every married woman gave birth after getting married. The difference was that most women were in good health during pregnancy. Nan Nan, on the other hand, had only gotten pregnant at the age of forty and her pregnancy was even unstable. She had been admitted into the hospital in her seventh month of pregnancy. How could he not visit her as her biological father? “Alright. Stop spouting nonsense. Why would I be fated not to visit her? I don’t believe that.” It was not right for Nan Nan to give birth without a single family member by her side.

He had failed in his attempts to go to the capital twice and would always meet with an incident. Qiao Dongliang could not help but wonder if the heavens were against him too. But didn’t they always say that men’s will would always triumph over heaven’s will?

All he wanted was to visit the capital to see his daughter and grandchildren. Why was that such a big matter? Why were the heavens putting him in such a hard spot?

Even God wouldn't be so strict.

Ding Jiayi's expression soured. Did that mean that Old Qiao was going to buy a bus ticket anyway? In reality, Ding Jiayi was already feeling the pinch from wasting two bus tickets. It had cost several hundred yuan. It was enough to pay for half a month's worth of their family's expenses.

"Alright. Do what you want." She and Zijin had already expected that Old Qiao would not give up so easily. It was just that Ding Jiayi had held on to that little bit of hope before it had happened.

Qiao Dongliang was a man of his words and immediately headed off to the bus station with his wallet. Because Qiao Dongliang was buying a ticket from Ping Cheng to the capital for the third time in such a short span of time, the seller was already familiar with him. "Sir, this is your third time here. What happened?"

Hadn't he already purchased a ticket yesterday? It was impossible for him to have traveled to the capital from Ping Cheng and back in a day's time. Besides, he had just gone there yesterday. If he was to go again today, that would mean that he must have taken the overnight bus ride back to Ping Cheng. Were tickets too cheap to him, or did his family have too much money to spare?

Qiao Dongliang laughed bitterly. "I'm really unlucky. The first time, I already had my bus ticket but I lost my identity card. Afterward, I got a temporary identity card but I overslept this morning and missed the bus!" It was not as though his money grew on trees that he could afford to waste his money on bus tickets every day. It was just that he had no other choice since he was down on luck.

The seller was dumbfounded. "You're really unlucky indeed. After losing your identity card, you even missed your bus because you overslept! That doesn't sound right. It's not like you ate sleeping pills. Why would you have slept in and missed the bus?" It was not often that people missed their buses because of oversleeping.

Knowing that he would be in a rush the next morning, one would typically not sleep too soundly. In fact, it would be a rather light one where one would awake at the slightest sound.

The seller had only brought up sleeping pills as a joke but Qiao Dongliang fell into a trance. He had also found it strange that he had overslept.

These few days, he had indeed had a good rest. Besides, who could sleep until half past ten at his age unless they were ill? He was sure that he was sleeping so soundly with no intention of waking up. Usually, he did not even sleep so soundly. Something did feel amiss.

“Old comrade, keep this bus ticket carefully. Don’t lose your identity card or oversleep again. This will be the third time losing your ticket.”

Initially, Qiao Dongliang had already collected his identity card and bus ticket, but upon hearing that, he could not help but ask, “Then, can I buy another ticket? I’m always losing things. I might very well lose this ticket too.”

“But...” Under normal circumstances, one identity card was only entitled to one bus ticket. “They’re all using your identity card?”

“Yes.”

“But you won’t be able to use two seats.” If this old comrade requested a refund at the last minute, their bus station would lose out.

“Don’t worry. I’m so careless. If I really lose one, won’t I still have another?” In other words, there would definitely not be a case of a refund even if he bought two tickets.

Since Qiao Dongliang had already said that, the other party had no other choice. “Alright, then.” Anyway, it was not her who had too much money to spend. Four hundred yuan on two tickets for a single person. If someone wanted to spend that money, who was she to stand in the way? Besides, this old comrade really seemed to be down on his luck. It was indeed necessary for him to buy another ticket just in case.

After purchasing those two tickets, Qiao Dongliang placed one ticket and his change back into his wallet, and his temporary identity card and the other ticket into the pocket close to his chest.

“You’re back?” Seeing Qiao Dongliang’s expression, Ding Jiayi knew without asking that Qiao Dongliang had indeed purchased the bus ticket. “You must be hungry. I made quite a lot for lunch. Zijin isn’t home, so you don’t have to worry. Besides, I’m not planning on moving back into our room either. If you want to throw a tantrum, go ahead. But having a meal together doesn’t mean much.”

“Fine.” Qiao Dongliang agreed after giving it some thought. “I just came home and it’s true that I’m a little lazy to make something for myself. I’ll find a chance to return you the favor in the future.” Qiao Dongliang had eaten Ding Jiayi’s food for decades and was already used to it.

After the couple finished their meal, Ding Jiayi asked Qiao Dongliang, “You’re leaving tomorrow, right? Aren’t you going to get ready since you have half a day left? You can’t possibly stay at home and wait around, right? You’re not like me. You don’t like lazing around watching television.”

“I’ve already visited everyone I need to. They know that I’m going to the capital to visit Nan Nan. It’s the same going out or staying at home. It’s just as well. I’ll just watch the television. I haven’t done that in a long while.” Qiao Dongliang had no intentions of heading out of the house. What if he tired himself out, slept too soundly, and missed the bus again?

As such, the couple took a chair each and sat a good distance away from each other. Their eyes were fixed on the television and they hardly had any interaction with each other.

After about two hours, Ding Jiayi suddenly piped up. “I’m thirsty. I’m going to get some water. Do you want some?”

“No. I’m not thirsty yet.”

“Alright. I won’t get any for you, then.”

After sitting for a while longer, Qiao Dongliang stood up at around half past five. “It isn’t early anymore. I’ll make myself some food before going to bed. You can do whatever you want.”

Seeing Qiao Dongliang enter the kitchen, Ding Jiayi’s eyes lit up and her gaze fell on Qiao Dongliang’s room. Just as Qiao Dongliang emerged from the kitchen with his dinner, Ding Jiayi returned to normal. “Alright. Now that you’re done, it’s my turn. I’m hungry too.”

The couple did not prepare anything fanciful for dinner, so they were quick in their preparations. Before Ding Jiayi even left the kitchen, Qiao Dongliang had already finished his meal.

Ding Jiayi did not have any response upon seeing that Qiao Dongliang had finished his meal, cleaned up, and was preparing to go to bed. She simply continued with her meal. That calmness was rather reassuring.

When the clock struck ten that night, both of them should already have been asleep. But at that moment, Ding Jiayi gently pushed the door to Qiao Dongliang's room open and stole a glance before calling out softly, "Old Qiao? Old Qiao!"

Even after a few calls, Qiao Dongliang had not only not responded, but he even flipped over in his sleep. Within a second, Qiao Dongliang's breath became heavier and longer.

Chapter 2144: Delaying

After making sure that there were no more movements, Ding Jiayi finally relaxed and slipped into Qiao Dongliang's room. She picked up the wallet that Qiao Dongliang had placed on the table and opened it to take a look. This was the bus ticket. Where was his temporary identity card?

With the help of the moonlight, Ding Jiayi very quickly found the bus ticket, but she had not managed to find Qiao Dongliang's temporary identity card.

This time, Ding Jiayi had intended to take Qiao Dongliang's temporary identity card along with his bus ticket to delay him by another three to five days since he would not even be able to buy a bus ticket. Since he had already lost his identity card once, it wouldn't be too strange if it happened again.

She was Qiao Dongliang's wife. Besides, once she took Qiao Dongliang's things, she would burn them to ashes at once. No one would have any idea of what she had done. Based on that alone, Ding Jiayi did not feel an ounce of guilt or fear when doing such 'harmless' things to Qiao Dongliang.

But this time, Ding Jiayi had only managed to find the bus ticket that Qiao Dongliang had kept in his wallet.. She had not found the temporary identity card. This situation made Ding Jiayi hesitate. After giving it some thought, Ding Jiayi gritted her teeth, walked toward Qiao Dongliang's bed, and reached out toward the jacket that Qiao Dongliang had worn that morning.

She knew that Qiao Dongliang had the habit of stuffing his things into his pockets at times. Since his temporary identity card was not in his wallet, Qiao Dongliang could very well have placed it in his pocket out of convenience.

But even after fumbling through the pockets on both sides, Ding Jiayi had not managed to find the temporary identity card. Since it was in neither of those places, Ding Jiayi decided to stick her hand under Qiao Dongliang's pillow.

Just as Ding Jiayi touched the corner of Qiao Dongliang's pillow, he flipped over again to face Ding Jiayi. Ding Jiayi was so shocked that she nearly let out a scream. In the end, she managed to suppress her scream by covering her mouth.

“Old... Old Qiao?”

“Hmm...” Unlike earlier when he had had no response at all, Qiao Dongliang seemed to have stirred a little. He was now able to hear someone calling him while he was still half-asleep. That was why he had answered her.

Ding Jiayi's legs shivered in fear and she fell onto the ground. Ding Jiayi had never had the experience of being a robber. Thus, she could not even remain calm in such a situation.

Ding Jiayi was terribly afraid that Qiao Dongliang would suddenly wake up, realize what she had done, and would even snatch the bus ticket away.

If that happened, she would have gone to such lengths for nothing.

Even if she couldn't find the temporary identity card, the result would be the same. Without a bus ticket, Old Qiao wouldn't be able to get on the bus either. Ding Jiayi practically crawled out of Qiao Dongliang's room to return to her own room. As she sat on her bed, her heart pounded rapidly and she drew in a few deep breaths. “That's not right. That didn't happen last night. Did the medicine lose its effectiveness in just a day?”

Today, Ding Jiayi had targeted Qiao Dongliang in three different ways. Firstly, Ding Jiayi had thrown five sleeping pills into the hot water just like she had done the previous day. As long as Qiao Dongliang drank the hot water from the flask, he would definitely fall for her scheme. Secondly, Ding Jiayi had taken away his bus ticket. Thirdly, Ding Jiayi was prepared to make Qiao Dongliang lose his identity card again so that he would be unable to board the bus.

She succeeded with her second way and failed the third. The first seemed to be a success yet a failure at the same time.

To ensure that Qiao Dongliang had indeed fallen for her plot, Ding Jiayi purposely woke up in the middle of the night to check on Qiao Dongliang. At that time, Qiao Dongliang had been sound asleep and had had no knowledge of her coming and going. Today, not only had Qiao Dongliang responded, but he had even flipped around twice, scaring Ding Jiayi out of her wits!

Ding Jiayi took the sleeping pills out and made a call to Qiao Zijin melancholically. "Zijin, have you reached the capital?"

"Yes." It was just that she had reached in the dead of night. Qiao Zijin loved the hustle and bustle of the capital. Thinking about how she would be able to settle down in the prosperous capital once Qiao Nan died and she married Zhai Sheng, she was over the moon.

She had persisted in life for such a long time and endured all her hardships for the sake of that day. She had been waiting for it for way too long.

"Mom, is my dad still at home? You stopped him from boarding the bus, right?" Although Qiao Zijin had many plans up her sleeves and even with a relative like Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin dared not visit the Zhai family or Qiao Nan straightaway after reaching the capital. She would only be putting herself down if she were to show up in front of the Zhai family and Qiao Nan in her current state.

If she really wanted to make an appearance, she would have to change her image to leave a good first impression on the Zhai family.

"No, he's still at home, fast asleep like a log. How could I have let him get on the bus?" Ding Jiayi was especially proud of herself. Recently, that was the only thing that had gone smoothly for her.

Sitting on the bed of the small motel, Qiao Zijin heaved a sigh of relief. Qiao Zijin was dazzled by the bustle of the capital, but the problem was that the cost of living in the capital was equally dazzling. Thankfully, Qiao Zijin still had 1.3 million yuan. Otherwise, staying in the capital for just a few days would probably shorten her life by a few years.

The room she was in was too small and had a terrible environment. Still, it cost her several hundred yuan a night. If she were in Ping Cheng, she would have been able to stay in a five-star hotel with

that sum of money. As such, Qiao Zijin decided that she would not gallivant around for too long. She would have to get in touch with the Zhai family as soon as possible so that they would make arrangements for her.

Otherwise, the money she spent on her accommodation alone was enough to make her heart bleed. “It doesn’t mean much even if you were able to stop Dad today because I just arrived in the capital. I haven’t met the Zhai family yet. Mom, how much longer could you delay Dad for?”

Because things had not gone as smoothly as she had expected, Qiao Zijin was in a frenzy too. Upon reaching the capital, she had asked around about Qiao Nan’s residence, only to find out that the situation was the same as it had been in Ping Cheng. If she wanted to enter their residence, she would have to get the Zhai family’s permission.

Otherwise, she wouldn’t even be able to enter that residential area, much less the Zhai family’s house. She would simply be stopped at the gate. Only with the Zhai family’s permission would she be brought in by the Zhai family themselves.

Chapter 2145: Exposed

Qiao Zijin had never been successful in the Ping Cheng quad. Now that she was in the capital alone, Qiao Zijin was even more uneasy and unsure if she would be successful this time. Qiao Nan should probably be quite fearful since she had been admitted into the hospital before reaching her eighth month of pregnancy.

When women were afraid, they would always want one or two familiar faces around to take care of them. Perhaps, she should contact Qiao Nan and let her know that she had rushed down to the capital to take care of her!

If Qiao Zijin had known that such a day would come, she would have rebuked Ding Jiayi years earlier and stood on Qiao Nan’s side instead. In that way, Qiao Nan would have had a good relationship with her. As her only sister, shouldn’t Qiao Nan take better care of her? Why would she have to spare so much effort and money trying to please her to no avail?

At the mention of this, Ding Jiayi felt rather helpless too. “You also know how your dad is. It’s too difficult. Your dad missed the bus this morning, but the moment he woke up, he rushed down to the bus station to purchase another ticket without even taking breakfast. He’s already wasted four or five hundred yuan on bus tickets alone! He doesn’t even feel bad about it.”

In the past, Old Qiao would have frowned upon spending such a huge sum of money at once.

Qiao Zijin lay on her bed and sneered. “Mom, are you kidding me? He took two hundred thousand yuan from me. What he’s spending now is my money, not his! Isn’t it obvious why Dad’s behaving in this way?” Since it wasn’t his money, he probably wouldn’t feel bad spending it anyway. Wasn’t it easy to understand?

“Mom, let me know how much longer you can delay Dad for.” What if...

Ding Jiayi held the phone in her other hand. “Your dad probably won’t make it for the bus tomorrow. I put some sleeping pills into his water today and took his bus ticket from him. Initially, I was planning on taking his temporary identity card too, but he probably kept it somewhere safe because he lost it previously. I didn’t manage to find it.”

“Didn’t you say that he won’t be able to make it for tomorrow’s bus? If that’s the case, try to make my dad lose his temporary identity card again. I’ve made my enquiries. It was only because Dad was in a hurry that they rushed it out for him in three days’ time. Workers in that department are pretty slow in their work. This time, it will probably take about a week for him to get a new identity card. Try to persuade my dad and you might just get his identity card in another two days. With that delay, I think I should be able to tie up the loose ends with Qiao Nan and the Zhai family.”

Qiao Zijin was not confident of settling all the matters in such a short span of time. But she would probably be able to do so in half a month’s time. She knew that that was her mom’s limit.

Ding Jiayi put up her fingers and did some mental calculations. “Alright. I’ll try my best. It’s late and you must be tired from a whole day’s journey. I won’t disturb you any further. Go to bed earlier. You must have enough energy to visit that wretched girl tomorrow. Don’t worry. I’ll try my best to keep your dad here.”

“Alright, Mom. Good night.” After hanging up the call, Qiao Zijin was so exhausted that she did not even wash up. All she did was remove her pants before squirming under her blanket.

Qiao Nan, who had Zhai Sheng by her side in the hospital, had absolutely no idea that the Qiao family, whom she hated the most, was now in the same city as her. Moreover, that person was plotting on getting close to her and snatching her husband and children!

Another night had passed and nothing had changed in Qiao Nan's life. On the other hand, Qiao Zijin had her eyes set on the Zhai family. She was trying to see if she could 'run into' the Zhai family and let them know that she had specially made the trip to the capital to take care of Qiao Nan.

The Zhai family had no idea about Qiao Zijin's ideas, but Qiao Dongliang had found out about Ding Jiayi's. After falling for her tricks once, Qiao Dongliang was not entirely ignorant anymore.

After hearing that ticket seller's joke, Qiao Dongliang had had some suspicions of his own. All he needed to do was to confirm them. Ding Jiayi had only seen Qiao Dongliang return after purchasing his bus tickets. What she did not know was that Qiao Dongliang had not only bought his bus tickets but also two bottles of mineral water.

It was convenient for Qiao Dongliang to boil water when he was thirsty at home. He was not so foolish or generous to waste his money on mineral water when he was already used to drinking boiled water at home. All along, Qiao Dongliang had never had such a habit, and as such, Ding Jiayi had not paid close attention to it.

Qiao Dongliang had not purchased those mineral water bottles for nothing. Of course, they were for him to quench his thirst. It was just that he had not done so in front of Ding Jiayi. Qiao Dongliang could only hope that he had overthought everything and that that person's joke was nothing more than a joke.

But the results of his experiment the next day turned Qiao Dongliang's face entirely black.

In the middle of the night the previous night, Ding Jiayi had run into his room. At that time, Qiao Dongliang had originally been asleep but had been awoken by Ding Jiayi calling out for him. When he had first awoken, Qiao Dongliang had not gotten a complete sense of what was going on. All he knew was that it had been Ding Jiayi who had entered his room, not a robber or an outsider. That was why he had remained silent.

It was only when he saw Ding Jiayi looking through his wallet did Qiao Dongliang finally understand the situation. Afterward, Ding Jiayi had even tried to reach around his pillow to find his temporary identity card! Qiao Dongliang had flipped over because of that just to scare Ding Jiayi, and he had even responded when Ding Jiayi called his name.

Thankfully, Ding Jiayi did not have it in her to be a thief. Upon encountering such a situation, Ding Jiayi took it upon herself to exit the room. What Ding Jiayi did not know was that the moment she shut the door, Qiao Dongliang, who should have been asleep, was wide awake, his eyes full of resentment.

After seeing what Ding Jiayi had done, Qiao Dongliang was now unsure about whether the previous two accidents were, in fact, accidents. Although he was not a particularly careful person, he had never lost something as important as his identity card before. Why had he suddenly lost it for the very first time now that he was going to the capital to visit Nan Nan?

Chapter 2146: Well-Prepared

He had already known that he had to catch the morning bus to the capital, but the moment he woke up, it was already half past ten.

So many things had happened to him alone. That was strangely abnormal. Someone in the family must have been playing tricks on him. That was the only logical explanation.

Qiao Dongliang did not want to alert his enemy, but unfortunately, Ding Jiayi had been married to him for decades and was all too familiar with Qiao Dongliang's routine. In the morning, Qiao Dongliang had bought two bus tickets. Just in case, he had only placed one in his wallet, and that was the one that Ding Jiayi had found.

As for the other ticket and his temporary identity card, Qiao Dongliang had placed them both under his pillow. If Ding Jiayi got hold of those two things, it would be difficult for him to get to the capital. He had no choice but to take such precautions because someone in the family was playing tricks on him.

Thankfully, he had managed to scare Ding Jiayi away and Qiao Dongliang did not have to worry about how to confuse Ding Jiayi.

When Ding Jiayi walked out of her room to wash up, she was taken aback by Qiao Dongliang, who had already finished his breakfast and was about to head out. Ding Jiayi's expression stiffened. "Why are you up so early today? You woke up even earlier than me. I was wondering what would happen if you overslept again today and whether I should wake you up. I didn't expect you to be awake already!"

How had he managed to wake up?

Could it be that Old Qiao had developed a resistance to that medicine, just like in television shows? Probably not. She had only given Old Qiao sleeping pills of the same brand twice. Didn't they say that it wasn't that easy to develop resistance to drugs? It wasn't common either. Besides, this was only her second time. Wasn't it a little too exaggerated?

"Like this?" Qiao Dongliang, who had already gained a clear idea of the entire situation, did not expose Ding Jiayi. What if Ding Jiayi started wailing and kicking up a fuss, making him unable to leave? Qiao Dongliang had already guessed that Ding Jiayi would try all means to prevent him from going to the capital to visit Qiao Nan.

He did not understand Ding Jiayi's motives, but what he wanted to know was whether Qiao Zijin was involved. Or should he say that Ding Jiayi's involvement was part of Qiao Zijin's plan?

"There's no need to shout at me. I probably had a good rest yesterday, so I was able to wake up early. Actually, I didn't sleep very soundly last night. I wonder if I was dreaming but I think I heard someone calling my name last night."

Ding Jiayi, who had a guilty conscience, was unsettled by this comment. "Old Qiao, it's not good to joke around about such things. Who would wake up in the middle of the night to call out to others? Qiao Nan has gotten married and Zijin went on a holiday. There're only the two of us left here. Based on what you said, there must be something unclean in our house. It's an unclean thing calling out to you. Don't scare me like that! I'm not so brave!"

"Are you really that timid?" Someone as timid as that would dare to commit immoral acts? "Then, leave the lights on when you sleep tonight. Alright. I've finished my congee. It's only six and the bus leaves at half past seven. But it's better for me to go early and wait at the bus station since the bus won't wait for me."

Ding Jiayi tugged on Qiao Dongliang. "Have you brought all your things?"

Qiao Dongliang retracted his arm. "Don't worry. I've brought all my things. I checked several times last night. Be more careful since you're home alone. Get the neighbors to help you if anything happens. Of course, if you're scared of being alone at home, you can call Zijin and get her to return to accompany you. Otherwise, you can ask where Zijin has gone to and go on a holiday with her too."

Ding Jiayi knew that she had to remain calm. Just like the first time, once Qiao Dongliang reached the bus station and realized that his bus ticket was missing, he would naturally return. But it was the second half of the year and not the peak period yet. Ding Jiayi was a little worried that the bus tickets to the capital would not be sold out.

What if Qiao Dongliang managed to buy a bus ticket at the ticketing counter once he realized that he had lost his own?

Ding Jiayi's head hurt badly and she could not help but wonder if she had bought fake pills. Otherwise, why had the bottle of sleeping pills become ineffective on their second use? She had placed five sleeping pills into the bottle of water just like before. Unless the pills were fake, there was no way Old Qiao would have woken up today. He should have been fast asleep just like the previous day, all the way until the late morning.

If that had been the case, she wouldn't have been worried about Old Qiao being able to buy a ticket to the capital at the last minute.

Thinking about what Qiao Zijin had told her the previous day, Ding Jiayi held onto Qiao Dongliang once again. "What's the hurry? It's only six. Didn't you say that your bus leaves at half past seven? Even if you're in a hurry, there's no need to be in such a rush. You can afford to rest at home for another hour. You'll still be in time if you leave at seven. You'll be cold and lonely waiting alone at the bus station. How pointless that would be. Besides, it's autumn now and it's cold outside. You'll be miserable waiting out there in the cold."

Seven o'clock was the peak hour for office workers. If he met with a traffic jam on the way to the bus station, he would miss the bus too.

Qiao Dongliang flung Ding Jiayi's arm away once again. "There's no difference between waiting at home and at the bus station. I'll feel more secure being early. I'm not Zijin. I don't need people by my side all the time. What's wrong with you today? Why are you trying to stop me from leaving? Actually, I was thinking about it before I went to bed last night. I lost my identity card and also overslept. I really wonder if there's a ghost in our house that's watching over me all the time and trying to stop me from going to the capital."

Ding Jiayi might have understood the traffic conditions in Ping Cheng, but Qiao Dongliang was even clearer about that. Seven o'clock was the peak hour. By half past six, those working the morning shift and those who had just finished the night shift would already be on the roads. It was better that he left early, even as early as six, than late, in case he encountered a jam.

Since Ding Jiayi was being so unaware of what she had done, Qiao Dongliang decided to remind her about the 'good deeds' she had done over the past few days. Since the previous night, there was no longer the need for Qiao Dongliang to suspect Ding Jiayi. He was sure that the loss of his identity card and his oversleeping were all thanks to Ding Jiayi.

If he did not mention those incidents, Ding Jiayi might very well have forgotten all about them.

Chapter 2147: Feeling the Pinch

He really had to give it up to her for being so unaware.

As expected, with Qiao Dongliang's reminder, Ding Jiayi felt guilty once again and her wandering eyes did not dare to meet Qiao Dongliang's gaze. "What nonsense are you spouting in broad daylight? That was just an accident that no one expected to happen. It's common for one to lose their identity card or to oversleep. Who hasn't lost their belongings or overslept before? Don't overthink it. It's only six. If you don't think it's too early, then please go ahead to the bus station. I'm just being thoughtful but it seems like it's not appreciated."

She could only hope that the heavens would be on her side and that the tickets to the capital would be sold out. In that case, Qiao Dongliang would be making a wasted trip to the bus station no matter how early he reached there.

Since Ding Jiayi no longer stood in his way, Qiao Dongliang naturally left. Thankfully, the bus services had already started for the day. As such, there was no need for Qiao Dongliang to hail a cab. He could simply take the public bus to the bus station.

Seeing Qiao Dongliang board the bus toward the bus station, Ding Jiayi could not care less about whether Qiao Zijin had already awoken. She immediately dialed Qiao Zijin's number.

Qiao Zijin, who had been awoken by her ringtone, was in a foul mood. Thankfully, she saw that the caller was Ding Jiayi. Otherwise, she wouldn't have picked up the call. "Mom, it's so early in the morning. What's the matter? I'm still sleepy. Hurry and say what you need to say. I want to go back to sleep after this."

"Zijin, your dad's headed for the bus station." Ding Jiayi's tone was frantic and the contents of the phone call suddenly chased all of Qiao Zijin's drowsiness away. "My dad got on the bus? How could that be? Didn't you say that you added sleeping pills into the hot water flask? How did my dad wake up?"

“I don’t know either. This medicine was quite effective on your dad yesterday but it failed today.” That was something out of her control. If Zijin wanted someone to blame, she should find the shop that had sold her this medicine instead. “Zijin, I’m calling you now because I want to check and see if there are any remaining bus tickets to the capital today.”

“Why?” Hadn’t her dad already left?

Although Ding Jiayi was alone at home, she instinctively lowered her voice. “Your dad may have left but I stole his bus ticket and burned it. If the tickets to the capital are sold out, your dad will probably be back within an hour.”

“Mom, you should have said so earlier.” She had almost thought that her dad was headed to the capital for sure. “Mom, I’m going to end this call and check the internet right now. It’s fine if the tickets are not sold out. As long as I’m here, I’ll make sure that they’re sold out.”

It was easy to do so.

At that moment, Qiao Zijin was thankful that Qiao Dongliang did not know how to use the internet to purchase bus tickets, even though he knew how to use WeChat and QQ. If she managed to purchase all of the tickets before her father did, everything would be fine.

Qiao Zijin made her calculations and decided that Qiao Dongliang would probably still be on the public bus and would probably not have noticed that he was missing his bus ticket. With that thought, Qiao Zijin opened the app to purchase bus tickets and made enquiries on the ticket sales for the day. As she looked at the remaining tickets up for sale, Qiao Zijin’s face turned green.

A bus ticket cost about two hundred yuan. The problem was that there were eighteen tickets left for this bus ride! If Qiao Zijin were to purchase all of them, she would have to spend at least three thousand six hundred yuan! Gritting her teeth, Qiao Zijin decided that she had to take the plunge no matter what. She had to get her hands on those eighteen bus tickets. She could not even lose one of them!

Even in the five minutes before the bus departed, Qiao Zijin dared not put her guard down. She constantly refreshed the site for fear that someone would suddenly request a refund and Qiao Dongliang would manage to grab a seat at the very last minute. If that was the case, she would have wasted three thousand six hundred yuan on eighteen tickets.

Only after confirming that half past seven had come and gone and that the bus had departed from the station did Qiao Zijin finally heave a sigh of relief. Then, she made a call to Ding Jiayi.

Before Qiao Zijin could say a word, Ding Jiayi anxiously said, "Zijin, something's not right. It's already past half past seven and the bus should have left, but your dad isn't back yet. Do you think something happened? Didn't I ask you to check on the remaining tickets? Did you? How's the situation like?" Hadn't Zijin said that she would buy all of the remaining tickets?

"Don't talk about it." Just the thought of the three thousand six hundred yuan made Zijin feel the pinch. That was enough for her to purchase several tickets from Ping Cheng to the capital! To save two hundred yuan, she had chosen to take the bus instead of flying to the capital. But now, she had wasted three thousand six hundred yuan on tickets that no one would use!

But no matter how much her heart broke for the three thousand six hundred yuan, the result was still good for Qiao Zijin, at the very least. "When I checked the sales online, there were still eighteen tickets left. I bought all of them. I'm calling you now because the bus has already departed. I can assure you that my dad wouldn't have had the chance to get a ticket before the bus left."

Thankfully, no one had requested a refund. Otherwise, her expense would have gone over three thousand six hundred yuan. At the thought of that sum, Qiao Zijin's gaze darkened and her heart dripped with blood. Forget it. No pain, no gain. It was just three thousand six hundred yuan. Once she married Zhai Sheng, she could afford to waste much more than that. Perhaps, she would even be able to spend a few hundred times more than the three thousand yuan she had forked out!

"That's good." Ding Jiayi sighed in relief. She had not worked in vain, after all. "You bought all eighteen tickets? How much did you spend?" Ding Jiayi already felt the pinch from Qiao Dongliang spending money on those few tickets. If Qiao Zijin had bought them all, she must have spent several thousand yuan!

Thinking about how several thousand yuan had been thrown into the drain, Ding Jiayi patted her chest heavily. They had given up so much this time but had not even gotten anything in return yet.

In short, that wretched girl was to be blamed for leaving her family in the lurch. Old Qiao was also in the wrong for favoring that wretched girl, not thinking about Zijin at all. Otherwise, those thousands of yuan would still be in the family. How nice that would be. She would be able to get herself a better LED television.

"Don't talk about money. I don't want to talk about it. No matter how painful it is, I've already spent it. There's no other choice. Remember to call me when Dad gets home later."

Chapter 2148: Dignity

“Alright. Don’t worry. Once your dad reaches home, I’ll call you or text you immediately. It’s still so early in the morning. Don’t you want to go back to sleep?” Ding Jiayi knew that Qiao Zijin was not in the habit of waking up early. She had been woken up at six and had been busy for another hour and a half. Now, Qiao Zijin should probably be more tired than ever. “Why don’t you go take a quick nap? No matter what, there’s no need to be worried today, much less for another hour or two.”

“No.” Qiao Zijin grabbed onto her hair, her expression worse than the previous day’s. It was early in the morning and she had not even had her breakfast and yet, she had already forked out three thousand six hundred yuan for nothing. Qiao Zijin knew that she would never be able to fall asleep after facing such a huge blow even if she were to lie back down on the bed. Perhaps, she might even get even more upset while thinking about the matter.

Since that was the case, she might as well get up and do something.

If she could settle the matter with the Zhai family and Qiao Nan earlier, she could comfort herself that she had not spent three thousand six hundred yuan in vain, at the very least.

“Alright. Wake up if you want to. Remember to take your breakfast. If you don’t take care of your body, you won’t be able to get this settled. Even the doctor can’t be sure of when Qiao Nan will give birth. Don’t take it too hard on yourself. Nothing is more important than your own health. We’re spending money now so that we’ll earn more in the future.” Ding Jiayi could imagine just how expensive things were in the capital. She knew that inflation was crazy in the capital.

Every time she heard the shopkeepers tell her that the prices of vegetables went up again, Ding Jiayi felt the pinch. In the past, people from the countryside were always looked down on. But now, vegetables from the countryside were even more expensive than meat! That was why people in the countryside were even richer than city-dwellers nowadays. What was wrong with the world? It was strange that city-dwellers were worse off than countryside people.

“Okay. I’m hanging up now.” After wasting such a huge sum of money, Qiao Zijin was eager to save as much as she could, even the couple of cents from speaking on the phone. Besides, she was in the capital now. Calling her mom meant making a long-distance call. It was way too expensive!

Qiao Zijin, who had faced enough setbacks for the day, washed up at the quickest speed possible. Looking at her luggage, she hesitated. What would she do if she failed? With no other choice, Qiao Zijin decided not to check out and to extend her stay by another three days. If she succeeded, she would simply come and check out afterward.

Thinking through the matter, Qiao Zijin felt that it was best for her to get in contact with Qiao Nan as soon as possible. On the other end, Ding Jiayi lost even the mood to watch the television. She paced around the house mindlessly, looking at the door from time to time before glancing at the clock on the wall, thinking about where Qiao Dongliang would be at that time. It had been an hour. Even if he had not taken a taxi and had taken a public bus back, he should be back home by that time. Should she head down to the bus station to pick Old Qiao up instead?

Thinking about how Qiao Dongliang had wasted his efforts three times in a row and had not made it to the capital, Ding Jiayi felt guilty. She had been the root cause of all that.

Wanting to make up for that, Ding Jiayi rushed to the bus stop to wait for Qiao Dongliang.

Three busses had passed by but Ding Jiayi had still not seen Qiao Dongliang alighting from the bus. When Ding Jiayi finally came to her senses and checked her cell phone, she realized that it was already nine o'clock!

It was already more than an hour past the departure time of half past seven. No matter how slow Qiao Dongliang was, he should be home by now. There was no reason for him to still be out and about. Ding Jiayi frowned. Had she made a mistake somewhere? Or had Old Qiao taken a taxi home instead of a public bus? Was Old Qiao already home and they had missed each other?

With that thought, Ding Jiayi rushed home and opened the door, only to find that the house was empty apart from her. "Old Qiao? Old Qiao, are you back?" She walked into Qiao Dongliang's room to find that it was just as neat and tidy as when Qiao Dongliang had left that morning. As for the luggage that Qiao Dongliang had packed and brought along, it was not there either.

That all went to show that Qiao Dongliang had not returned.

Ding Jiayi was in a frenzy and whipped out her phone. Instead of calling Qiao Zijin, she made a call directly to Qiao Dongliang. "Old Qiao, hurry and pick up your phone. Did you get into an accident on your way back and were sent to the hospital? Hurry and pick up your phone!"

Since Qiao Dongliang had no bus ticket and could not board the bus or go to the capital, he would have no choice but to return home. Besides, Old Qiao had no clue about all those things she had done. So, why hadn't he returned? Unless he met with an accident along the way and could not make it home. If that was the case...

Ding Jiayi started to worry. She could find a solution to anything else. But what if something had truly happened to Qiao Dongliang? What would she do then? If she had known that that would happen, she would never have hidden Old Qiao's bus ticket. She would have just allowed him to go to the capital. Nothing would have happened in that case.

As long as Qiao Nan agreed, Old Qiao's disagreement would mean nothing.

The phone rang about ten times and Ding Jiayi was just about to give up when Qiao Dongliang picked up. Qiao Dongliang's voice sounded rather hoarse, as though he had just woken up. In fact, it was true that Qiao Dongliang had just woken up. He had been awoken by his cell phone's ringtone. "Hello?"

"Old Qiao, it's me. Where are you? Are you alright?"

"..." Qiao Dongliang yawned and looked at the scenery outside. Rubbing his eyes, he answered, "Where else could I be? Don't you already know that I'm going to visit Nan Nan in the capital today? It's a long journey there, so I'm obviously still on the bus."

Glancing at the empty seats behind him, Qiao Dongliang thought that this world was pretty strange too. Just like the driver had said, there were people living in poverty and people with loads of money to spare in the world.

This bus had departed ten minutes later than scheduled and Qiao Dongliang had been so anxious about it, afraid that Ding Jiayi would suddenly appear to drag him off the bus, not allowing him to go to the capital.

The ticket seller had even told him that this bus ride had been a popular one and had been entirely sold out. Strangely enough, not a single person had shown up even until the last minute even though the last eighteen tickets had been sold. Eighteen tickets meant thousands of yuan! Because of that huge sum of money, they had tried to wait for the buyers.

Chapter 2149: On Board

Ten minutes later, not a single one of those eighteen people had appeared. Not only had they not appeared, but none of them had even made a call or anything. With no other choice, the bus departed.

“What? You’re on the bus? You managed to get on the bus to the capital?” Ding Jiayi blinked her eyes in shock, wanting to dig her ears clean so that she could hear more clearly. “Old Qiao, say it again. Where are you now?”

“On the bus.”

“You don’t even have a ticket. How did you get on the bus?” She had stolen Old Qiao’s ticket and burned it, and Zijin said that she had purchased all of the excess tickets for this ride! When Zijin had done so, Old Qiao was still on the way to the bus station!

Zijin had thought that nothing would go wrong once she purchased the remaining eighteen tickets. Who would have expected Old Qiao to get on the bus all the same? Were they not overloading the bus?

Taking out a mineral water bottle from his luggage, Qiao Dongliang took a sip. Anyway, it was free for him to pick up a call. The one paying for the call would be Ding Jiayi, so he was in no hurry. “How would you know that I don’t have a ticket? If I didn’t have a ticket, would they have allowed me to board? Of course, I have both my ticket and my identity card!”

Ding Jiayi was confused. “You...” She was a hundred percent sure that she had taken out the ticket from Old Qiao’s wallet and had even burned it! She had done that for sure! That had not been a dream!

It was because of that that Ding Jiayi was even more confused. How had Qiao Dongliang managed to board the bus without any identification documents? That made absolutely no sense.

“Do you have anything else?” Qiao Dongliang was clear of why Ding Jiayi refused to believe that he had managed to get on the bus to the capital. It was just that Ding Jiayi had spent so much effort and would rather have wasted three tickets than let him go to the capital. But he was still confused about the reason as to why she would do so.

If possible, he wanted to ask Ding Jiayi in person why she did not want him to visit Nan Nan in the capital. Nan Nan had gotten pregnant with triplets at the age of forty. That meant that the situation was not particularly ideal. He hoped that nothing would happen to Nan Nan, but no one could guarantee that.

If Nan Nan survived, he would have three grandchildren at once. That would undoubtedly be a joyous occasion. Otherwise... He would finally be able to be a father to Nan Nan by staying by her side until the very end.

It was not that Qiao Dongliang wished to think about it so negatively. But as he aged, it became more natural for his thoughts to run and for him to scare himself in this way. It was because of these thoughts that he was even more determined to make it to the capital to stay by Qiao Nan's side. Perhaps, with him by her side, Nan Nan would be more assured and her condition would change for the better!

Whether he was being narcissistic or not, he felt that it would be better for Nan Nan to have a family member cheering her on by her side given her condition.

"I..." What else did she have to say? What else could she say? If she asked Old Qiao to return and not go to the capital to visit Qiao Nan, would he listen to her? Of course not! What Ding Jiayi wanted to know was how Qiao Dongliang had managed to board the bus even though she had burned his ticket and Qiao Zijin had bought all of the remaining tickets!

Ding Jiayi wanted to ask Qiao Dongliang if he had put his guard up against her because of the previous two incidents. Was the ticket that she burned last night a fake? Was that how Qiao Dongliang had managed to board the bus today?

Of course, Ding Jiayi did not have the guts to ask those questions. Their spousal relationship was already bad enough to begin with, and there seemed to be no sign of improving. Once Qiao Dongliang found out about the truth and addressed the elephant in the room, Ding Jiayi worried that she would completely lose her husband. Ding Jiayi could not bear to face such a consequence.

After remaining silent for almost half a minute, Ding Jiayi replied in a low voice, "No, there's nothing else. Be careful and remember to call me once you reach the capital. You can send a text message too to let me know that you're safe."

"Alright." He was already on the way to the capital. Ding Jiayi would not be able to do anything to him even if he told Ding Jiayi that he was on the way there.

This small victory did not make Qiao Dongliang overly happy. In fact, Qiao Dongliang felt rather exhausted. All he wanted to do was visit his daughter and grandchildren. It was no big deal at all. Why was his family treating it as though he was going to visit his enemy? It was ridiculous that they were making such a huge fuss over such a trivial matter.

Only the Qiao family would do such a thing.

“Then, I’ll hang up.” Ding Jiayi felt guilty and flustered in the face of such silence, ending the call before Qiao Dongliang could. She dared not even think about whether Qiao Dongliang had found out about the truth because she had another problem ahead of her: how to let Zijin know about this. After all their efforts, Old Qiao had still boarded the bus in the end!

As much as she did not want to deal with it, Ding Jiayi could only text Qiao Zijin to break the news.

When Qiao Zijin looked at the message, she nearly jumped up, as though someone had stepped on her tail. The obvious anger and rage made strangers detour around her.

Qiao Zijin gritted her teeth. Her dad was already on his way to the capital. That meant that she had wasted that three thousand six hundred yuan this morning!

Even if her plan were to succeed in the end, Qiao Zijin would still feel a pinch because of that three thousand six hundred yuan. Just thinking about that bus ride that Qiao Dongliang was on, Qiao Zijin felt like vomiting blood.

Qiao Dongliang had managed to get on the bus. On the other hand, Qiao Zijin had not even managed to meet the Zhai family, much less acknowledge her younger sister, Qiao Nan.

As she was deep in thought, a car drove out of the military district. Because it was at the main gate, the car was driving very slowly. That meant that Qiao Zijin could see clearly that it was Qiao Nan’s mother-in-law, Miao Jing, who was in the car!

The Zhai family had no intention of meeting with the Qiao family at all, much less Qiao Zijin or Ding Jiayi. But someone as ambitious and internet-savvy as Qiao Zijin was able to find out all about others with a simple search on Baidu. Besides, the Zhai family was a well-known family in the country!

Chapter 2150: Independent

Since she had already decided to get into the Zhai family and become their daughter-in-law on Qiao Nan’s behalf, it was only natural for Qiao Zijin to do her homework and find out about how her future mother-in-law looked like and the situation in the family. If she didn’t even do that, how would she ever be able to win their favor and get married to Zhai Sheng to be his third wife?

Upon confirming that the woman in the car was indeed Zhai Sheng's mother, Qiao Zijin bit down on her lip and rushed in front of the car, not even afraid that the car would knock her down. Anyway, the car was driving so slowly and there were so many people at the gate. There was no way the Zhai family would knock her down.

"Hey! What are you doing? Are you trying to fake an accident here?"

It was exactly because they were at the gate that many had seen Qiao Zijin rush up to the car herself, as though she was trying to create trouble for the Zhai family. The Zhai family was not at fault in the least.

Of course, the Zhai family's chauffeur had managed to brake in time and had stopped more than ten centimeters away from Qiao Zijin. It would be hard to extort the Zhai family in this manner. The driver wound down the window and looked toward Qiao Zijin. "Miss, are you alright? If you're fine, could you please move aside? Our madam is in a rush to visit someone in the hospital."

Normally, the chauffeur would not brush the matter off so lightly just because he was a chauffeur for the Zhai family. He would have alighted from the car to check on the person himself. He would never let someone have any material to blackmail him with. But today was different. Because the family had been making soup, Madam Zhai had left the house a little later than usual and she was already in a frenzy. "We have some pressing matters to deal with."

Even if they wanted to fake an accident to claim compensation, they should look at where they were, at the very least. The chauffeur was not at all afraid that Qiao Zijin would have anything on the Zhai family.

"Comrade, I think there's been a misunderstanding. That's not what I'm trying to do. I know that you're in a rush, so am I. Can I say hello to Auntie? My younger sister is married into their family and I know that she's currently in the hospital because of her multiple births. I rushed over from my hometown to visit her, but I don't know which hospital she's in. I know that my brother-in-law's house is here, so I came to find their family here."

Qiao Zijin had not lived all those years in vain. She had even managed to spin such a story! It sounded so endearing. Knowing that her sister was not in a good condition, she did not even wait for her brother-in-law's family to fetch her and had instead come all the way there to find her sister!

If the Zhai family did not even agree to that, it would just go to show that the Zhai family did not care for relations and looked down on their poor relatives.

Miao Jing did not know Qiao Zijin but her words sounded rather familiar. Miao Jing's eyebrows furrowed. "You're a Qiao?" Was this Nan Nan's elder sister? Just her face made it obvious that she was not a good person to deal with.

"Yes, Auntie, I'm a Qiao. My name is Qiao Zijin. I'm Nan Nan's elder sister. I know that Nan Nan has been hospitalized, and our family has been worried about Nan Nan, so they sent me to visit her. Auntie, where is Nan Nan? Can I go along with you to visit her? I won't be able to stop worrying until I see her for myself. Besides, I'm still young. I can take good care of her."

As long as she spent enough time with Qiao Nan, she would definitely find the chance to speak with her alone to convince her, unless Qiao Nan was uninterested in being a good mom and did not wish for her three children to have a good future. Instead of letting a vixen outside benefit, wouldn't it be better for Qiao Nan to take good care of her elder sister?

One should not allow benefits created by one's own work to accrue to others, after all!

At the very most, she would treat Qiao Nan's three children as her own biological children and dote on them as much as she did Feng Feng. Qiao Nan would not be at a loss with such a deal either. After all, she could not expect Zhai Sheng to remain single for the rest of his life once she passed away!

It was better not to have such unrealistic dreams. She didn't even hope that Chen Jun would be able to do that. In fact, she had already expected Chen Jun to find a mistress for himself to replace her.

"Oh, so you're Qiao Zijin." As much as Miao Jing was in a hurry to get to the hospital, she couldn't possibly brush Qiao Zijin off so easily because Qiao Zijin's words could ruin the Zhai family's and Qiao Nan's reputations. "You were indeed better fed than Nan Nan. I don't think it's strange that you want to visit Nan Nan since you're her sister. Your results were always poorer than Nan Nan's, but because the Qiao family could not afford to sponsor the education of two children, Nan Nan had to leave school to provide for your school fees. Not bad. It seems like Nan Nan didn't work hard in vain. It's just that you have to buck up since Nan Nan sacrificed herself for you to be a university graduate. Our family doesn't need anything in return for what Nan Nan did for you, but at the very least, you should be worthy of the effort the country spent cultivating you. As a university graduate, you have to make some contributions to the country and society. It's boring to stay at home every day."

Miao Jing was amazed at how shameless Qiao Zijin was. It was nothing much that she had relied on her parents when she had been younger. After all, everyone did so. When she grew older, she had always stepped on her sister's head and depended entirely on her sister to live a flamboyant life! How shameless!

Now that Qiao Zijin was trying to show concern about Qiao Nan, Miao Jing was not going to believe a single word. If Qiao Zijin was the slightest bit grateful, she would never have tried to make use of the Zhai family's name to become a civil servant after handing in a blank examination script just earlier that year.

The mention of that made Miao Jing feel that Qiao Zijin was hopeless. Qiao Nan had sacrificed herself and given up the chance of going to university so that Qiao Zijin could be a university graduate. Qiao Nan had always scored well in examinations based on her own abilities. Who would have known that a university graduate like Qiao Zijin would have the guts to hand in a blank script, wanting someone to open a back door for her to become a civil servant?

Did Qiao Zijin really think that everyone in the world was like Ding Jiayi and prioritized her? Wow! She really thought that everyone was her mom!

“Our Nan Nan has been independent all along. When she was younger, she supported you so that you could be a university graduate. Now, she's finally been able to leave that burden behind and start on her own studies. Of course, we have to thank you for coming to visit Nan Nan, but don't worry. It's normal for Nan Nan to be in the hospital since she's pregnant with triplets. Our family is concerned about Nan Nan, and we all treat her like our precious treasure.”