

RTAMM 2151

Chapter 2151: Worried

“If you really want to see Nan Nan, please come back again when Nan Nan has given birth and finished with her confinement period. Alright, Nan Nan should be waiting for us in the hospital. It’s a rare opportunity for you to be in Beijing. Please have a good time.”

Did she really come to help out in the Zhai family? It seemed like she was trying to create trouble!

Everyone had thought that Qiao Zijin shared a close relationship with Qiao Nan because of her words. Otherwise, given Qiao Zijin’s age, there was no way she would have abandoned her husband and children just to take care of her pregnant sister. The sisters must have a close bond!

But upon hearing Miao Jing’s words, they suddenly came to their senses.

The Zhai family’s daughter-in-law had not gone to school herself and had instead supported her sister to become a university graduate. It was not difficult to understand why the sisters shared such a close bond that the elder sister was willing to leave her own family behind to take care of her younger sister.

But listening to her words again, it was strange that a university graduate had never gotten a job even after graduating all those years ago. Even the daughters-in-law in their families had their own jobs before getting married.

More importantly, it was rather strange for the family of the Zhai family’s daughter-in-law to turn up at this time. If her family had shown up on the second day of her hospitalization, that would have made some sense. But the problem was that the Zhai family’s daughter-in-law had already been hospitalized for almost half a month. Wasn’t it a little late for them to show up only now?

Quite a few neighbors knew that it was quite hard on the Zhai family while Zhai Sheng had been in the military earlier because of the elderly couple and a pregnant Qiao Nan. Two days after Qiao Nan had been admitted into the hospital, Zhai Sheng had rushed back from the military to take care of her. Compared to the situation in the past, Qiao Nan’s life had definitely become easier with Zhai Sheng’s help.

In that way, it really did seem as though the Qiao family had turned up too late. They had not been present when they could have helped out and chose instead to turn up when they were no longer needed.

“Auntie, could you tell me which hospital Nan Nan is at? I-I’ll head there myself.” Qiao Zijin had already expected that the Zhai family would not have a good impression of her and that Miao Jing would not have a good attitude toward her. She could imagine just how much Qiao Nan, who could not care less about her family, must have spoken ill of her in front of the Zhai family, so much so that the Zhai family hated her.

But that was understandable. In the Qiao family, her parents had favored her over Qiao Nan, who was almost treated as nonexistent in the Qiao family. After marrying into the Zhai family, the change was as different as day and night. Qiao Nan was the Zhai family’s only daughter-in-law and Zhai Sheng had insisted on marrying her.

Having been pampered, there was no way Qiao Nan would let the Qiao family steal the Zhai family’s attention from her. Qiao Nan was petty and calculative indeed! Qiao Nan was just envious and jealous of her!

Did Qiao Nan really think that speaking ill of her in front of the Zhai family would make the Zhai family be certain that she was a bad person that they would hate? Of course not! She would prove to Qiao Nan that the Zhai family would treat her just like her parents, who pampered and favored her, did. No matter how much Qiao Nan tried to stop them, her efforts would all be in vain.

If Qiao Nan agreed to her proposal more readily, she would consider treating Qiao Nan’s three children a little better. On the other hand, if Qiao Nan disagreed and did not let her have a moment to rest... Qiao Zijin expressed that she would be a strict mother to Qiao Nan’s three children.

Didn’t the saying go ‘spare the rod, spoil the child’? Only if she were stricter and fiercer would Qiao Nan’s three children be as outstanding and kind as her Feng Feng.

Since Qiao Zijin had already prepared herself to be rejected by Miao Jing, not only was she not upset, but she even gave off the air that there had been a misunderstanding only because of Qiao Nan. That didn’t matter to her. After all, time would change a person. As long as they interacted with her for a longer period of time, they would realize her true nature. She smiled at Miao Jing.

Qiao Nan had occasionally mentioned Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi’s evilness to the Zhai family. What Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin were most known for was their ‘sweetness’. Even though their reputations were already ruined, they could still act as though everyone had misunderstood them. They acted as

though they were resilient blades of grass that could never be beaten down no matter the weather and that others would eventually understand their true natures. It was infuriating!

Where did that ridiculous sense of superiority come from?

A misunderstanding?

What a joke!

“Nan Nan is at XX Hospital. You can head there yourself. Alright. Please move aside now.” Miao Jing did not dawdle or nag at Qiao Zijin. Even if she told Qiao Zijin where Qiao Nan was hospitalized, without Qiao Nan’s or the Zhai family’s permission, there was no way Qiao Zijin would be allowed to enter the hospital to visit Qiao Nan since it was a military hospital.

“Auntie, I’m sorry for bothering you.” Qiao Zijin had remained polite and courteous up until the moment Miao Jing left. She did not seem like a random and poor relative who had appeared just to take advantage of the Zhai family.

Well, this was the capital. It had already been quite good that Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi had only been on the Ping Cheng news. How could she have made it onto national news? The country was huge and there were so many other important issues concerning the state and international affairs. No one would bother about a trivial family trifle like that.

It was exactly because of that that Qiao Zijin had dared to make her way down to the capital. The capital was an entirely new environment, and no one around Qiao Nan or the Zhai family knew anything about her or her past. As long as she performed well now, she would still be able to keep them in the dark.

It was unlike in Ping Cheng, where everyone would criticize her no matter what she did once they found out that she was Qiao Zijin.

Qiao Zijin was truly speechless at those who were sour about what she had.

“Auntie, thank you for telling me where Nan Nan is. I won’t bother you any further. I’ll visit Nan Nan later.” Qiao Zijin treated Miao Jing as someone from the capital who had no idea about the things she had done, thinking that Miao Jing only had a bad impression of her because of Qiao Nan ‘speaking ill’ of her.

Once she got in touch with the Zhai family and had more interactions with Miao Jing, Miao Jing would naturally realize that she was much better than Qiao Nan.

Qiao Zijin could not exactly be blamed for thinking that way. Before coming to the capital, she had made her enquiries. She knew that the Zhai family had already been living in the capital for close to ten years before Zhai Sheng had returned to Qingshui Town to recuperate. She had already thought that it was strange that Qiao Nan had managed to get together with Zhai Sheng.

Chapter 2152: Still Optimistic

Everyone in the Ping Cheng quad knew that the entire Zhai family lived in the capital and had not returned in years. Because of the distance, when talking about the Zhai family, they often could only rely on news from the television. ‘See, that’s what the news on television said. I used to be neighbors with their family and lived in the same courtyard.’

Since the Zhai family was in the capital and Qiao Nan had never been to the capital, how had Qiao Nan managed to hook up with Zhai Sheng and enchant him to such an extent that he was willing to marry an old spinster who was nearly forty years old?

In Qiao Zijin’s mind, she had never treated Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family as people from Ping Cheng. As such, although everyone in Ping Cheng already knew about their family, she felt that it was likely that Zhai Sheng and the Zhai family did not. With such a bold assumption, Qiao Zijin faced the Zhai family with full confidence.

“Alright, let’s go. I don’t want Nan Nan to starve.” Miao Jing wound up the window, no longer in the mood to care about Qiao Zijin. She had to do what she could. She had to tell everyone that apart from their family, no one was allowed into the compounds.

With that idea in mind, Miao Jing hurriedly made a call to the guards to inform them that no one who claimed to be from the Qiao family from Ping Cheng should be allowed in, apart from an old man. If a middle-aged woman or an old auntie appeared, neither of them should be allowed in. The Zhai family did not have so many relatives in the Qiao family.

She had done so just as a precaution.

On the day of Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng’s wedding, Shi Qing had sent Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi to the police station as well and Miao Jing had only found out about it afterward. Because of that matter, Miao Jing knew that she had to be more cautious.

Upon receiving Miao Jing's call, the guard instructed his subordinates never to let anyone from the Qiao family into the compounds, as long as they were not male.

But Qiao Zijin knew nothing about that. Before she could even come up with the idea of getting into the compounds using her relationship to the Zhai family, Miao Jing had already cut that possibility off!

"Mom, you're here?" Qiao Nan looked much better than she had been now that she was in the hospital. At the very least, she was no longer bleeding, and neither did her stomach hurt.

"Don't get up. Just lie down." Seeing Qiao Nan, who had lost quite a lot of weight, Miao Jing's heart broke. "Zhai Sheng, how's Nan Nan's condition today? Did the doctor say anything?"

Zhai Sheng poured a glass of water for Miao Jing and took the thermos flask over from her. After pouring the soup out, he blew on it to cool it before feeding it to Qiao Nan. "The doctor said that Nan Nan's and the children's conditions look quite optimistic. We're nearing the eighth month, and if we can maintain this, the children will be able to stay in Nan Nan's womb for a while longer."

Actually, Zhai Sheng thought that eight months was already quite a significant period of time. She should give birth now if she could. If she held on any longer, it could increase the risk that both Nan Nan and the children faced.

All Zhai Sheng wanted was to be a good husband, but unfortunately, Qiao Nan disagreed. Qiao Nan remembered clearly that the doctor had told her in her dream that remaining in the mother's womb for another day was much better compared to a whole year's worth of nourishment after birth. Even if she only had one child, Qiao Nan would wish for her child to remain in her womb for as long as possible so as to develop more fully.

Anyway, there were so many competent doctors and nurses in the hospital. Neither had she bled again after being hospitalized. This meant that the children could remain in her womb for a little longer. She would be willful just this once. She didn't have many chances to be willful in this lifetime anyway.

She would be willful to the end regarding the children. She wouldn't force her children to remain in her womb, but as long as they were willing to do so, she was in no hurry to chase them out to meet their family.

They had already waited for such a long time. Would another few days make a difference?

Seeing Qiao Nan's stubbornness, Zhai Sheng had no choice but to agree to Qiao Nan's demands and communicate with her doctor to see if any problems would arise if they went ahead with that.

Thankfully, the doctor's opinion was similar to Qiao Nan's. With the help of the hospital and nurses, Qiao Nan maintained quite good health and was not forced to the point of childbirth. Since she had no major problems, there was no need for her to induce labor.

She would only have to undergo premature labor if anything went majorly wrong with her body or the children's health.

Since the doctor had already said that, and given Qiao Nan's insistence, Zhai Sheng, who had never made a compromise in the military, finally gave in. He paid close attention to Qiao Nan's needs and took care of her meticulously in case anything happened and he missed it out.

Being a good father was naturally no mean feat.

"That's good." Miao Jing smiled. She had been scared out of her wits initially when Qiao Nan had complained of discomfort and upon hearing that Qiao Nan had bled. It had been an even bigger scare than when she had given birth herself. Qiao Nan had not even reached her eighth month of pregnancy yet. If Qiao Nan was forced to give birth at this moment, their family's triplets would be no bigger than a kitten once they were born.

She had heard that it was difficult to raise children that small and it was expensive as well. Her heart ached upon thinking about how the grandchildren, whom she had been longing for, would be so small when they were born. As elders, their hearts would definitely break if the children felt uncomfortable or fell ill.

Every day longer the children spent in the womb was good news. Because of this, Miao Jing could not help but feel anxious. "The doctors in this hospital are quite good and their skills are quite advanced too. I think that we can rest assured putting Nan Nan in their hands."

At times, when Miao Jing looked at Qiao Nan's protruding belly, she had to resist the urge to ask Qiao Nan to give birth immediately. She was a mother too, and she understood a mother's heart. Even if she wanted Qiao Nan to do it, Qiao Nan, as the triplet's mother, might not agree.

“Nan Nan, do you have any cravings? I’ll try to make you whatever you want as long as pregnant women are allowed to eat them.” Miao Jing’s voice was soft, out of fear that she would scare Qiao Nan and the children if she was too loud.

Drinking Miao Jing’s hot soup, Qiao Nan’s cheeks were flushed. “I don’t have any particular cravings. The children and I enjoy whatever you bring, Mom. You don’t have to prepare anything special.”

Chapter 2153: Intergenerational Relationship

She had never felt nauseous eating whatever her mother-in-law cooked. She stroked her belly as she ate. Both she and her triplets were truly pampered.

“Alright, it’s fine if you can’t think of anything now. If you think of anything, just get Zhai Sheng to call me even if it’s in the middle of the night. I’ll get the auntie to visit the market bright and early to get the freshest vegetables so that you’ll be able to eat whatever you want!” Miao Jing could not be of any use anywhere else, but at the very least, she could take charge of Qiao Nan’s meals.

“Thanks, Mom.” Qiao Nan’s appetite had increased significantly because of her pregnancy. Although she ate a fair bit, she did not seem to have gained weight anywhere else but her belly. Because of that, the doctor remarked that the children had probably absorbed most of the nutrition.

As a mother of triplets, it was a delightful thing that the children were able to absorb nutrition so well.

“Are you sleepy?” Even a normal person got sleepy after eating and it was only natural for someone like Qiao Nan to feel that to a greater extent. After clearing the air about Qiao Nan’s situation, Zhai Sheng immediately supported Qiao Nan to lie down the moment he saw Qiao Nan squint. “Why don’t you take a nap?”

“Yes, I’ll rest my eyes for a while. Remember to call me. It’s uncomfortable to sleep for a long period of time. It’ll make me even more exhausted.” Qiao Nan had already learned that exercise was good for childbirth when she had just been admitted.

In her dream, Qiao Nan had gritted her teeth and had given birth to all three children naturally. But this time, even though the doctor had only mentioned it to Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan knew that she would probably have to undergo a cesarean section.

Although she knew that a natural birth would be better for her children, Qiao Nan dared not be willful about this matter. She would listen to the doctor and cooperate. Being stubborn in this matter would only put her life and those of the children at risk.

When Qiao Nan fell asleep, Zhai Sheng followed Miao Jing out of the ward. “Mom, did something happen?” Zhai Sheng knew immediately that his mom wanted to speak to him based on her expression when she had entered the room. But of course, it had not been convenient to talk with Qiao Nan around.

“Qiao Zijin is in the capital. I was late today because I was stopped by her. But I’ve already made my calls and they won’t let her meet Nan Nan. You’re the one spending time with Nan Nan nowadays, so I thought that it would be better for you to know about it. With Nan Nan in this condition, she definitely can’t be provoked. Just in case, do you want to tell Nan Nan about this?”

Qiao Zijin was clearly one who would not stop until she achieved her goal. If she really got in the way of Qiao Nan and the three children, something terrible might happen. It was better to find a suitable occasion to let Qiao Nan know about the matter so that she would not bump into Qiao Zijin and be caught off guard.

“I’ll tell Nan Nan about this.” Zhai Sheng felt that his mom underestimated the Qiao family. It was not that Qiao Nan was extremely strong and rational when it came to the Qiao family, but she was not completely irrational and foolish either. The news had only told one side of the story. What Zhai Sheng knew was that Qiao Nan’s attitude toward the Qiao family ever since they met was one that he approved of. He felt that it was entirely alright for Qiao Nan to treat the Qiao family in that manner.

Qiao Nan would probably already have known that the Qiao family would never let the Zhai family get away because of their high status. There was no way Qiao Zijin would have come to the capital out of concern for Qiao Nan. One would never be disappointed if one had no expectations in the first place. “Mom, if she continues to bother you, just pretend that you’re not feeling well and refuse to meet her.”

Miao Jing had not been in the best of health in the first place and it was common for her to feel ill sometimes. But this year, Zhai Sheng had married Qiao Nan and Qiao Nan had gotten pregnant not long after. It was this endless stream of good news that had caused Miao Jing to be on a high and ‘forget’ all about her pains. So, there was absolutely no problem with rejecting Qiao Zijin due to her health issues.

“Alright.” She had no intention of dealing with the Qiao family anyway.

Miao Jing had never once forgotten what had happened on the day of Qiao Nan and Zhai Sheng's wedding. She had never expected the Qiao family to do anything for Qiao Nan, but wasn't it a little too much for them to make trouble when they were not even helping out? But that was exactly what Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had done!

Apart from the Zhai family, Qiao Nan was the person whom Miao Jing cared most about. Because Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi had bullied Qiao Nan so badly, Miao Jing was at ends with them. The moment she heard Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi's names, she felt her blood boiling. Relatives? Nonsense! "I'll go home first. Stay here and take care of Nan Nan. Don't worry about the military. Your dad has already asked and there will be someone taking care of your matters for you. Nothing will happen. Besides, you're already going to be a father. There are some things you should let go of and let others take over. Learn from your dad and let go of them early."

Once the triplets were born, she did not want Zhai Sheng to be like Zhai Yaohui of the past and be missing from his children's childhoods. Her children had already gone through that pain. Miao Jing did not want her grandchildren to suffer in the same way.

What was an intergenerational relationship?

It referred to how grandparents would usually dote on their grandchildren more than their own children.

"I know." Zhai Sheng had become the youngest ever chief in history because of his hard work in his younger days. To be honest, Zhai Sheng was still relatively young. But he had already given his all in his younger days and Zhai Sheng had experienced everything he should have.

Now that he was past that stage of vigor, Zhai Sheng was as silent and calm as a mountain. The atmosphere was solemn and it was hard to guess what was on his mind.

Without that youthful impulse, Zhai Sheng's ideas had changed drastically from his youth. That was probably what people meant when they said that people would tone down over time. Zhai Sheng was more than happy to stay by his wife and children's side at this moment and support Qiao Nan when she needed him or educate his children when they acted out.

Indeed, he had grown old. But thankfully, he was going to be a father. If fathers were not old, who was?

After saying that he knew what to do, Miao Jing naturally stopped nagging. Before Zhai Sheng had gotten married, Zhai Sheng had been the most perfect son whom she was proud of, apart from the fact that he refused to get married. Now that Zhai Sheng had both a wife and children, there was nothing Miao Jing could nitpick anymore.

Chapter 2154: An Annoyance

“Alright, I’ll believe you. Don’t disappoint me. It’s about time for me to go home. Otherwise, your dad will nag at me again.”

Miao Jing could come to visit Qiao Nan whenever she liked, but ‘seeing’ her was not enough and Miao Jing would always stroke Qiao Nan’s belly to feel the three children greet her. The problem was that Zhai Yaohui could not do what Miao Jing could.

Since that was the case, Zhai Yaohui decided not to visit them until the children were born and he could carry them. He would try his best not to provoke himself with such an exciting image otherwise.

Because it was inconvenient for Zhai Yaohui to visit Qiao Nan, Miao Jing could not spend much time in the hospital with Qiao Nan either. Miao Jing visited Qiao Nan because of how much she missed the children. Besides, Qiao Nan had her husband, Zhai Sheng, taking care of her. Zhai Yaohui did not allow Miao Jing to spend too much time in the hospital, fearing that she would bother Zhai Sheng and distract him from taking care of Qiao Nan.

It would be terrible if they could not help their son and daughter-in-law out at such a time and even added to their problems.

After being nagged at by Zhai Yaohui, Miao Jing still took the bait, albeit knowing that Zhai Yaohui was no different from a kid who was jealous of her interactions with the triplets. She could not possibly pretend not to know about Zhai Yaohui’s jealousy and let Zhai Yaohui remain miserable alone.

Apart from the fact that it was slightly dangerous for Qiao Nan to be pregnant with three children at once, Miao Jing could not be happier with the number of grandchildren she was about to have at once. Otherwise, she would have to fight with Old Zhai over taking care of their grandchild. That would make a joke out of them.

She was going to be a grandma. How could she let her grandchildren see such a childish side to her? As such, both she and Old Zhai would have to set good examples for the children.

Upon returning home, Miao Jing specially asked the auntie if any strangers had visited them today. The auntie did not know what was going on but answered honestly in the negative. Hearing that answer, Miao Jing relaxed slightly. That was right. She had already given her instructions. How would Qiao Zijin have been able to enter?

People living in this area never had to worry about matters like security.

“What’s wrong?” Zhai Yaohui asked upon hearing Miao Jing’s question. “Did someone come?” This person must have been someone Miao Miao hated.

Miao Jing ranted. “Apart from that stupid woman, who else would our family not welcome?”

As soon as Miao Jing finished her sentence, the phone rang. “Hello, what? A Qiao is here? Didn’t I say—oh, it’s a man? He’s quite old? Alright, let him in. He’s our relative.” Miao Jing had already said that any female Qiao would not be allowed in.

This time, it was a man. Of course, Miao Jing could not reject this man because she knew that it was probably Qiao Nan’s father, Qiao Dongliang.

Qiao Dongliang’s heart pounded rapidly as he walked into the military courtyard. No matter how ignorant he was, he knew that the people who stayed in the same district as the Zhai family had to be amongst the most important figures in the whole of China.

“This is the Zhai family’s house.” After guiding Qiao Dongliang to the Zhai family’s house, the soldier quickly returned to his post without hesitation.

“Hello, you must be Uncle Qiao.” The auntie knew that they would receive a relative today and waited for Qiao Dongliang at the door. Qiao Dongliang was dressed very ordinarily and had a formal expression. The auntie recognized him at once. The auntie had no intention of looking down on Qiao Dongliang. She was just like him when she had first been hired by the Zhai family and the chief.

More importantly, the auntie knew that Qiao Dongliang’s surname was Qiao. Qiao Nan was also a Qiao. Without the need for introductions, the auntie could already guess Qiao Dongliang’s relationship with Qiao Nan. “Please come in.”

“Hello, you are?” Did someone like that exist in the Zhai family?

“I’m the Zhai family’s auntie. Please come in. The chief and Madam Zhai are already waiting for you.” The auntie looked at Qiao Dongliang amicably as though Qiao Dongliang was her own relative.

“Alright, thank you.” Qiao Dongliang had heard Qiao Nan mention this auntie before and knew that this person treated his daughter well. Having seen her, Qiao Dongliang was no longer as anxious as before. “Oh right, didn’t you say that Nan Nan is in the hospital? Which hospital is Nan Nan in?” He had not intended to come to the Zhai family. His most important objective was to find out where Nan Nan was and to visit her.

It was just that the Zhai family was his relative, after all. Out of courtesy, he had to visit them and express his sincerity.

“Nan Nan’s in XX Hospital.” There was nothing sensitive about this question since he had come to visit his daughter, after all. The auntie knew that she was allowed to answer this question and unhesitatingly answered Qiao Dongliang.

Seeing Miao Jing and Zhai Yaohui, especially Zhai Yaohui, Qiao Dongliang was so nervous that he was at a loss. “Old-old chief.”

Zhai Yaohui’s gaze was slightly astringent when he looked at Qiao Dongliang. “I’m older than you and Qiao Nan’s my daughter-in-law. It’s too distant for you to address me as old chief. If you’re willing, you can address me as ‘older brother’.”

Qiao Dongliang felt embarrassed. If not for his daughter, he would never have gotten the chance to address someone like Zhai Yaohui as his older brother. “I’m so sorry for bothering you. Nan Nan is truly blessed to have you guys taking care of her.” It was late and yet, early for him to visit them at this time.

“Not at all. Nan Nan is a good kid.” But your family was blind and couldn’t tell that Nan Nan was good and even mistreated her. The Zhai family was not at all blind, alright?

“Yes, yes. Nan Nan is indeed a good kid.” Qiao Dongliang nodded in agreement. “I didn’t know what to buy, but I heard that these fruits are imported and both children and the elderly can eat them.”

Of course, Qiao Dongliang could not have shown up empty-handed, but buying something became another problem. He could not afford anything too expensive, and neither would it be suitable to send them to the Zhai family. After giving it some thought, Qiao Dongliang thought that it would be best to bring some fruits over. It was alright for pregnant women to consume more fruits.

“That’s very kind of you,” Zhai Yaohui replied. The auntie had already brought the fruits into the kitchen. “When are you going to see Qiao Nan?”

Chapter 2155: Runner

“Tomorrow, I guess. It’s already very late.” He had just arrived in the capital and had not even gotten the chance to get a change of clothes. It wouldn’t be right for him to visit Nan Nan now. He would return to his hotel, take a bath, and change his clothes before visiting Nan Nan.

Qiao Nan had already been admitted into the hospital to keep her babies. Qiao Dongliang had to take all precautions. “Are Nan Nan and the children doing well?”

“When I visited Nan Nan today, the doctor said that they’re doing fine and that the children can remain in her womb for another few days. It’s good.” Miao Jing’s hostility lessened as she talked about Qiao Nan and the children. It was just that there was still a question in Miao Jing’s mind that she was waiting for Qiao Dongliang to bring up.

But no matter what Qiao Dongliang talked about, it was all regarding Qiao Nan. He had never once brought up Qiao Zijin. This attitude confused Miao Jing. Qiao Zijin had shown up, and now, Qiao Dongliang had shown up too. What was this father-daughter pair trying to do?

Zhai Yaohui picked up his teacup and asked casually, “Oh right, Old Qiao, did you come alone?”

Zhai Yaohui’s eyes were sharper than Sun Wukong’s. The dust on Qiao Dongliang’s clothes could have escaped Miao Jing’s eyes, but not Zhai Yaohui’s. Zhai Yaohui could even vaguely smell gasoline from his body.

What did that mean?

That meant that Qiao Dongliang had just recently gotten off the long-distance bus.

But based on what Miao Jing said, she had met Qiao Zijin early in the morning. But half a day earlier, Qiao Dongliang should have still been on the bus. That meant that Qiao Zijin could not have accompanied Qiao Dongliang to the capital.

Unfortunately, Miao Jing had only seen Qiao Zijin and not Qiao Dongliang. As such, Zhai Yaohui could not judge Qiao Zijin's situation and could only make inferences based on Qiao Dongliang, who was in front of him.

Miao Jing eyed Zhai Yaohui. How could he have come alone? Wasn't there still Qiao Zijin? But based on their years of cooperation, Miao Jing knew to remain silent and allow Zhai Yaohui to continue with his question.

"Yes, I came alone." It had not been easy for him to have made this trip. Even up until the moment he alighted from the bus, Qiao Dongliang had not understood why Ding Jiayi had done so many things to prevent him from visiting the capital. Ding Jiayi could not have done all that for nothing. It couldn't be as simple as trying to stop him from visiting Qiao Nan.

So, why had she done so?

He could not find the answer no matter how hard he wracked his brain.

After getting their answer from Qiao Dongliang, Zhai Yaohui and Miao Jing shared a knowing look. Did that mean that Qiao Dongliang had no idea that Qiao Zijin had come to the capital to look for them? Zhai Yaohui had already gone a step further. Not only did Qiao Dongliang not know about Qiao Zijin being in the capital, but Qiao Zijin had also gotten here before Qiao Dongliang! "I hope it was a smooth journey here. Did you run into any problems?"

Qiao Dongliang laughed bitterly. "I did, but that doesn't matter. I'll be able to see Nan Nan tomorrow." No matter what Ding Jiayi had up her sleeves, Qiao Nan was his daughter and he was Nan Nan's father. No one would be able to stop him from seeing Nan Nan. "It's late. I'll make a move. Oh right, can I visit Nan Nan at the hospital directly tomorrow?" Qiao Dongliang was too embarrassed to take a ride from the Zhai family and follow them to the hospital.

"Do you know where Nan Nan is?"

"I do. The auntie told me earlier."

Thinking about it for a moment, Zhai Yaohui took a piece of paper and copied down the address for Qiao Dongliang. “Qiao Nan is here. It’ll be easier for you to find your way there with this address. A good memory can’t compare to a lousy pen. Oh right, where are you staying now? Should I arrange for accommodation for you?”

It was slightly out of place for him to stay in the Zhai family’s house. Initially, the Zhai family had numerous empty rooms. But in the span of a year, the Zhai family had encountered good news after good news. Zhai Hua had returned home, and Zhai Sheng had gotten married and was about to have children. The guest room on the first floor had also been converted into Qiao Nan’s room for her convenience.

As for the rooms upstairs, apart from the room for the triplets, only Zhai Hua and Jiajia’s rooms were empty. Zhai Sheng was often in the hospital taking care of Qiao Nan, but he would still return home from time to time to get a change of clothes. Besides, it wouldn’t be right to let Qiao Dongliang stay in Zhai Sheng and Qiao Nan’s room for a few days.

“There’s no need for that. I’ll find my own accommodation.” Qiao Dongliang felt a pinch paying for slightly more expensive hotels but he was not thick-skinned enough to spend on the Zhai family’s accounts.

But Zhai Yaohui did not give Qiao Dongliang the chance to refuse. “We’re relatives. If not for the fact that we’ve had a lot of changes in the house lately, you should be staying here. You’re Qiao Nan’s father and our in-law, after all. Please don’t refuse our offer. This place is quite near our neighborhood and has good traffic flow. It’ll be convenient for you to visit Qiao Nan in the hospital. Otherwise, it’ll be very troublesome if you have to change buses just to get to the hospital.”

As he said that, Zhai Yaohui made a call and yelled for a young man.

“Old Chief, what’s the matter?”

“Xiao Hu, this is my in-law. Do me a favor and help me run an errand.” Zhai Yaohui got Xiao Hu to get a refund for the room that Qiao Dongliang had booked earlier and got him to bring Qiao Dongliang to the place that he had arranged for.

After understanding the situation, Xiao Hu had even sensibly checked up on how to get to the hospital by public transport, and he even wrote it down for Qiao Dongliang in case he forgot.

With so much care from the Zhai family, Qiao Dongliang was finally able to relax his nerves. Not only did the accommodation that Zhai Yaohui had arranged for have a room, but it even had a kitchen and furniture. In that way, as long as Qiao Dongliang went to the market and got some fresh vegetables, he would be able to prepare his own meals or meals for Qiao Nan.

Of course, what Qiao Dongliang was happy about was not this treatment from the Zhai family. What he was truly thankful about was that the Zhai family treated him well because Qiao Nan was his daughter. This could only mean that they cherished and loved Qiao Nan very much.

How much more reassured could Qiao Dongliang be upon knowing how pampered Qiao Nan was at her in-law's?

After a night's rest, Qiao Dongliang cleaned up and headed to the hospital to visit Qiao Nan. Before doing so, Zhai Yaohui had made a call to Qiao Dongliang.

Chapter 2156: Can You Understand?

Zhai Sheng said that they would be heading over at one o'clock in the afternoon and asked Qiao Dongliang if he wanted to head over together.

Qiao Dongliang refused the offer, saying that he would head there alone. He had already endured it for an entire night. He wouldn't be able to hold it in for another half a day. Hadn't he rushed to the capital for the sake of seeing Qiao Nan with his own eyes?

The moment Qiao Dongliang arrived at the hospital, he asked the nurse for directions to Qiao Nan's ward.

Upon hearing Qiao Dongliang's question, she looked at him with a strange gaze. "What's your relationship with the patient?" This woman had quite a high status in the hospital and was an important patient. There were rules as to who could visit that pregnant patient.

More importantly, she had just chased away someone who had not been allowed to visit that patient. That had been a woman, and now, an old man had come. This patient was very popular indeed. Everyone had come to visit her on the same day.

"Hello, I'm her dad. I've come to visit her and her children. Oh right, do you know how my daughter is doing? Did the doctor tell you how she and the children are? When is she giving birth?" Qiao Dongliang spat out a series of questions.

The nurse gave it some thought. This man was not on the blacklist, so she led Qiao Dongliang over. "I'm sorry. I don't know the patient's condition well, but I think she should be fine. As for when she'll give birth, I can't say for sure. I guess it'll be soon since she's reached her eighth month and she's carrying triplets."

"Thank you." Having been led to the door of the ward, Qiao Dongliang thanked the nurse profusely. "No worries. I'll take my leave now." The nurse was courteous, but before she left, she muttered under her breath. "This is her father, and that was her elder sister just now?" Was this for real?

Qiao Dongliang had not heard the nurse muttering under her breath and he knocked on the door. Someone opened it from the inside. It was his son-in-law. "Zhai Sheng, I'm here to see Nan Nan."

"Dad." Zhai Sheng addressed him and opened the door fully to allow Qiao Dongliang in. "I'll get you a glass of water."

"There's no hurry. How's Nan Nan? Is she asleep or is she awake?" Qiao Dongliang moved quietly and spoke in a low voice so as to not disturb Qiao Nan's rest.

"Dad." Qiao Nan called out, letting Qiao Dongliang know that she was awake. "Dad, why did you come?" Qiao Nan had not been surprised at all that Qiao Zijin had come. When Qiao Zijin had been pregnant, the Chen family had gotten her and Ding Jiayi to serve Qiao Zijin all the way until her confinement period was over.

The problem was that the Chen family had never allowed them to touch the child. After Qiao Zijin's confinement period, the Qiao family was never allowed any contact with Chen Feng. But the strongest impression Qiao Nan had was how Qiao Zijin had been very alert with her when she had been taking care of Qiao Zijin.

Why?

Qiao Zijin was the Chen family's daughter-in-law and the Qiao family had come to take care of Qiao Zijin. As such, there was no way the Chen family could let the Qiao family fork out money to pay for their daughter-in-law, right? As such, during that period of time, Qiao Zijin was especially worried that they would deduct the money from her bank account, and she would always check her balance to see if it was correct and whether any money was being spent.

Qiao Zijin had been so guarded against her and now that it was her turn to be taken care of, Qiao Zijin would naturally think that the Zhai family would be even more generous than the Chen family. As long as she was not so petty and did not make Qiao Zijin's life difficult, Qiao Zijin would probably be able to earn quite a lot of money from this.

But what Qiao Nan thought was strange was Qiao Zijin's confidence. Why did Qiao Zijin think that she would agree to Qiao Zijin taking care of her? How ridiculous!

"How could I not come to visit you when you've already been admitted?" Had Nan Nan ever thought about how she would be looked down on by her in-laws if no one from her family visited her in the hospital? It was often said that a married daughter's pride was in her own family, and Qiao Dongliang wanted to be his daughter's pride. But he knew that it was not just ordinarily difficult for that to happen.

"Oh." Qiao Nan blinked. She wanted to know whether her dad knew about Qiao Zijin being in the capital and that she had arrived even earlier than he had. "Dad, did you come to the capital alone?"

"Why are you asking this as well?" Qiao Dongliang recalled that his in-laws had asked the same question the previous day. "Of course, I came alone." Were they unclear about their family's situation? Apart from him, could Old Ding or Zijin possibly come? If they did, Nan Nan would probably feel uneasy and refuse to see them.

Qiao Nan looked at her father seriously, realizing that her father was being honest. Qiao Nan could not help but ask, "Then, are my mom and Qiao Zijin both at home?" Did that mean that Qiao Zijin had come to the capital behind her dad's back and that her dad knew nothing about it? But Ding Jiayi probably knew about it.

There had probably been an agreement made between Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin. As such, Ding Jiayi should probably have known about Qiao Zijin arriving in the capital before her dad.

"Your mom is at home but Zijin left the house earlier than me. Your mom said that she went on a trip." Qiao Dongliang did not know why Qiao Nan was asking him about this but he felt that there was no reason to keep it from her either.

Qiao Nan sighed. Qiao Nan had not been surprised that Qiao Zijin had rushed to the capital, but her dad was surely going to be surprised. "Dad, is Qiao Zijin on a trip in the capital?"

Qiao Dongliang's eyes widened and he fell into a trance. "What do you mean?" Old Ding had not told him about where Zijin had gone, and neither had he bothered to ask. "Do you mean that Zijin is in the capital?" Even Qiao Dongliang thought that it was absurd.

Qiao Nan's in-laws lived in the capital and Qiao Zijin had chosen to take a trip to the capital. Was Qiao Zijin really in the capital for a trip, or was she here because of Qiao Nan? Qiao Dongliang was no fool and he understood the situation perfectly. "Your sister... Did she come to look for you? What did she say?"

No wonder his in-laws and Nan Nan asked him whether he had come alone. What they wanted to know was why he had not brought Zijin along. The problem was that he had not even had an inkling that Zijin had arrived in the capital!

"She hasn't come to find me, but my mother-in-law has met her. She said that she wanted to visit me. I'm sure you know that it's best for me not to meet too many people in my current condition. I'm not extremely close to her, so I'm not prepared to meet her. I'm sure you understand, right?"

Chapter 2157: Money Is Life

She had never had a day of peace with Qiao Zijin. She would never believe Qiao Zijin if she said that she was visiting her out of the kindness of her heart. It was already good enough if Qiao Zijin could stop trying to make calculated moves against her, found her conscience, and changed for the better.

"I know." Qiao Zijin seemed to have changed for the better and Qiao Dongliang didn't try too hard to force Qiao Nan into accepting her elder sister, Qiao Zijin. But now that he knew that Qiao Zijin was still problematic, there was no way Qiao Dongliang could expect Qiao Nan to accept Qiao Zijin. "You guys can settle your own business. You're all grown up and there are things I shouldn't interfere in. Do as you deem fit."

Qiao Nan sighed. There were some things she had no control over, especially when it concerned someone as scheming as Qiao Zijin. Qiao Nan knew that her dad had no idea why Qiao Zijin had come to the capital and what her motives were. "Dad, did you have any problems coming to the capital this time?" Her father had found out about her admission into the hospital quite a long time ago but he had only arrived today. Qiao Nan had been rather surprised by that.

Qiao Nan's casual comment made Qiao Dongliang suddenly think of something. "Not-not really." After thinking of a possibility, Qiao Dongliang could no longer sit still in front of Qiao Nan.

After rattling on about nutrition, Qiao Dongliang left in a hurry.

Seeing Qiao Dongliang's behavior, Qiao Nan frowned. "Do you believe what my dad said?" Her dad was not one who could keep secrets well. Had Qiao Zijin created some trouble before coming to the capital this time?

Pinching Qiao Nan's nose, Zhai Sheng looked at her indifferently. "Qiao Zijin is your dad's daughter, not ours. If there really is something wrong, let your dad deal with it. Don't overthink it. It won't be so easy for Qiao Zijin to meet you."

Qiao Nan nodded. "You're right. Qiao Zijin is my dad's daughter. If she creates any trouble, the person who should care about it is my dad. The second one who'll have to take that burden on my behalf is you." With that, Qiao Nan suddenly realized that she had it the easiest.

Qiao Zijin was still frustrating, but even if Qiao Zijin were to appear in front of her, Qiao Nan felt that she would still be able to lead a comfortable life.

Qiao Dongliang's mood was contrary to Qiao Nan's relaxed mood. First, he had suspected that Ding Jiayi had been behind him not being able to board the bus to the capital twice. Then, he had found out that his elder daughter's so-called trip had been to the capital, and she had even arrived in the capital before him and met with the Zhai family.

Putting two and two together, Qiao Dongliang felt uneasy. It was obvious that Qiao Zijin was up to something. It was definitely not like what Ding Jiayi had told him. Qiao Zijin had not gone on a simple trip just because she had gotten too bored at home. Qiao Zijin was probably scheming something against Qiao Nan. It was just that he was unsure of what Qiao Zijin was planning on doing this time.

After returning to his accommodation, Qiao Dongliang made a call to Ding Jiayi. "Tell me truthfully. Where did Zijin go? Is she really on a trip?"

"..." Ding Jiayi did not want to answer that question. "Of course. If she's not on a trip nor at home, where else could she be? Old Qiao, why are you asking such a strange question? Oh right, where are you staying in the capital? Qiao Nan married so well. She couldn't possibly not have arranged accommodation for you, right?"

If that was the case, Qiao Nan was truly a heartless wretched girl!

Ding Jiayi mentioned it because she had heard Qiao Zijin complaining about how expensive living in the capital was. Just eating plain noodles cost more than twenty yuan. The same bowl of noodles would cost only six to seven yuan in Ping Cheng. Of course, Qiao Zijin could not handle such a drastic difference.

Not only was food expensive, even renting a room in a motel was expensive. The money spent on a room in a small motel in the capital was enough to rent a house in Ping Cheng for an entire month! Moreover, the rooms in the capital were really small. In a city where every square foot counted, Qiao Zijin had finally experienced how difficult it was for Beijing drifters.

Thankfully, she had chosen to return to her hometown in Ping Cheng after her graduation instead of making a living in the capital. What was the point in giving up a comfortable lifestyle and forcing herself to work so hard? Even though she did want to settle in the capital, she would never choose to do it by her own means. Like now, she would be able to do so comfortably without any cares or worries once she married Zhai Sheng. She could even live in the best neighborhood!

This was life indeed.

It was only after Qiao Zijin's complaint that Ding Jiayi realized how ridiculous the cost of living was in the capital. She could not care about Qiao Zijin, but Qiao Dongliang had visited the capital rightfully. Qiao Nan could not possibly leave her father to fend for himself and pay for an expensive hotel stay since he had gone to the capital to visit her.

She thought about how they had already wasted four thousand on bus tickets to the capital. Thinking about how Qiao Zijin and Qiao Dongliang were not staying together in the capital and were spending twice the amount of money, Ding Jiayi felt the pinch.

It was no joke traveling to the capital. It was no different from burning money.

"I have somewhere to stay. I don't have to pay for it." The moment he mentioned money, Qiao Dongliang's tone and expression worsened. "I'll ask you again. If Zijin really went on a trip, where did she go?" Money, money, money. That was all that was on Old Ding's mind. Money was her life.

For the sake of money, Old Ding had given up such a good daughter like Nan Nan. Old Ding had never reflected on why things had gotten to this stage, and she was even still harping on 'money'. The reason Zijin had become this way was all Old Ding's fault. One day, Old Ding would regret her educational methods.

No matter how good a daughter was, there was no way she would improve under Old Ding's teachings.

"..." She had managed to get away from that topic with much difficulty but was now being dragged back. Ding Jiayi had no other choice. "Of course, she went on a trip. But I don't know where she went."

"You don't know? Would you have let her go without telling you? Could she have held it in?" There were no secrets between Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi. Qiao Dongliang was clear about that.

Chapter 2158: Seen It All

There was no way Qiao Dongliang was going to believe such a blatant lie. "Someone saw Zijin in the capital." He wanted to see how Old Ding would reply to him.

"..." Ding Jiayi was frustrated. Since someone had already seen Zijin, why was Old Qiao asking about it? Didn't he already have an answer? Because she had already said those words earlier, Ding Jiayi could only stick to her guns. "Is that so? Does that mean that Zijin went to visit the Forbidden City and the Great Wall? Isn't that good? Didn't you say that you hoped for our daughter to see Tiananmen and witness the flag-raising ceremony? See how well Zijin listens to you and takes your words to heart. She didn't even mention to me that she was going to the capital. Sigh. When will she listen to me as well as she listens to you?"

Ding Jiayi acted as though Qiao Zijin was Qiao Dongliang's precious daughter who was not even close to her mom. It disgusted Qiao Dongliang so much that his blood pressure shot up. "Stop spouting such nonsense. I'll ask you again. What are you and Zijin up to this time? I didn't mention it earlier, but do you really think that I don't know what you're up to? How did I lose my identity card the first time? And why did I oversleep the second time? Ding Jiayi, since when have you been so bold to drug me? This time, you drugged me with sleeping pills. Are you going to kill me next time with insecticide?"

Qiao Dongliang was truly in a rage. Not only had she stolen his identity card, but she had even drugged him!

If not for his cautiousness by purchasing bottled mineral water, he might very well have overslept the third time too. In fact, Ding Jiayi had been surprised by him waking up earlier than her. This meant that Ding Jiayi had done something to the water too.

“...” Ding Jiayi’s expression changed. She could not help but thank the heavens that she was speaking to Qiao Dongliang over the phone. If they were speaking face-to-face, Qiao Dongliang would definitely have seen through her act. “Old Qiao, what nonsense are you spouting? Why don’t I understand anything? You dropped your identity card and lost it. What has that got to do with me? The second time, you woke up late. That was your problem too. It has nothing to do with me. Old Qiao, you can’t blame everything on me. All those things had nothing to do with me!”

She couldn’t admit to it. Not even over her dead body!

Drugging... Yes, she had done it. But it had not been a huge amount. All she had intended was for Old Qiao to sleep for a while longer. She had not intended to make Old Qiao sleep forever. Their family didn’t own any land and had no use for insecticides. She would never allow Old Qiao to put such huge blame on her!

At her age, she had never thought of killing Qiao Nan no matter how much she hated her, much less her own husband.

“You’re really something. Alright. I won’t bother talking to you anymore. I’ll just be wasting my breath anyway. You and Zijin are really amazing. Since you’re so capable, you two can live alone. Why should I get in the picture? I’ll just be standing in your way.”

The more Ding Jiayi denied it, the less Qiao Dongliang believed her. If Ding Jiayi was the one behind everything, there could only be one reason: Qiao Zijin. That meant that Qiao Zijin had put in quite a lot of effort in stopping him from getting on the bus.

This mother-daughter pair would never do anything without getting anything in return. Given how hard they had worked this time, what Qiao Zijin wanted was surely more important than a job in the civil service.

After angrily hanging up the phone, Qiao Dongliang stopped thinking about the matter. He had known all along just how much Qiao Nan hated Qiao Zijin. Today, Qiao Nan had repeated it again.

Given Qiao Nan’s attitude and how Qiao Zijin had not managed to become a civil servant, there was no way Qiao Nan was going to fall into Qiao Zijin’s trap. The Zhai family was not the Qiao family, and neither would they give in to Qiao Zijin and let her have her way.

With these two huge obstacles, there was no way Qiao Zijin would succeed no matter what she was scheming. After making sure of that, Qiao Dongliang felt as though his burden had suddenly been relieved.

More than a month ago, he had been worried. But there was no point in him as a father worrying about his daughter since she was so skilled. Qiao Zijin had already made a hundred and eight different plans for her future. There was no need for an incompetent father like him to worry about her at all!

Having come to a realization, Qiao Dongliang made a meal for himself. After having his fill, he went to bed.

Qiao Dongliang thought nothing more of the matter and fell into a deep sleep. On the other hand, Ding Jiayi had been scared out of her wits because of that call. "Zijin, it's me."

"I know." There was a caller ID and she knew that the person on the line was her mom. "What's the matter?" She was being charged a roaming fee for answering the call.

"Your dad just called me and he already suspects that I was the one who stole his identity card and drugged him so that he wouldn't be able to get on the bus. I was wondering how he managed to get on the bus to the capital even after I took away his bus ticket. I guess he must have been prepared to guard against me. We've been duped by your dad!" In that case, all her questions had been answered. "Your dad threw a huge tantrum at me. Oh right, did you meet with the Zhai family? They must have told your dad about you being in the capital. That's why he got angry!"

The Zhai family must have arranged for Old Qiao's accommodation in the capital. Zijin had not even mentioned it to her. That meant that the Zhai family had not cared about Zijin and that Zijin was still spending her own money by staying in a hotel. The Zhai family was really too much! How could they treat their in-laws like that?

It was not as though the Zhai family did not have a house. If they could arrange accommodation for Old Qiao, why couldn't they do the same for Zijin? What if Zijin encountered any danger outside because she was staying alone? That would be the Zhai family's fault!

Knock on wood! Zijin would be fine. Nothing would happen to her. She was simply confused by Old Qiao and angered by the heartless Zhai family.

Chapter 2159: Where Are You Staying?

“So be it. I’m angry at him too. There have been so many accidents. Isn’t it obvious that the heavens don’t want him to come to the capital either? Why doesn’t he realize that? He can get angry for all I care.” Qiao Zijin had already understood that her dad would never agree to her marrying Zhai Sheng to become the stepmother to Qiao Nan’s three children once Qiao Nan died.

Her dad had not helped her when she needed help and was even trying to drag her down. She didn’t care for a father like that. Who was angry at whom? What a joke!

What bothered Qiao Zijin most now was the Zhai family’s attitude. She had already tried twice but she had not managed to see Qiao Nan. Even when she had visited the hospital and said that she was Qiao Nan’s sister and that she was there to visit Qiao Nan, the staff had refused to tell her which ward Qiao Nan was in.

Qiao Zijin was determined to find out which ward Qiao Nan was in, but the hospital was too large and Qiao Zijin was not familiar with the internal structure of the hospital. She had almost gotten lost the previous two times she tried. Afterward, she had even heard that visitors didn’t have access to every floor.

Upon hearing that, Qiao Zijin immediately realized that Qiao Nan was either not in this hospital or staying on a floor that was inaccessible to ordinary people. Even if she managed to guess where Qiao Nan was staying, she would never be allowed in.

Thinking about how Qiao Nan was already eight months pregnant, she knew that Qiao Nan did not have much time left. Qiao Zijin could not help but wonder if she would have to wait until the very last minute to get close to Qiao Nan and let Qiao Nan know of her plan.

That wouldn’t do. It would be too much of a rush and Qiao Zijin felt anxious just thinking about it. If Qiao Nan spoke too late and didn’t manage to let Zhai Sheng or the Zhai family know about such a plan before she passed on, implementing it would be difficult no matter how flawless her plan was.

Qiao Zijin felt that there was no way Zhai Sheng’s next wife would treat Qiao Nan’s three children well. She had never seen a kind stepmother in her life. She had heard of it but that didn’t mean that the Zhai Sheng thought so as well. Perhaps, the Zhai family would want to preserve their dignity. After all, it was not as though their entire family had died. If Zhai Sheng were to remarry, they would never let his next wife bully the three children.

It was not strange at all for such a respected and powerful family to think in this manner.

As such, Qiao Nan's attitude would determine the rest of her life. That was why she could not afford to make any mistakes in her next step.

"Alright, I've already let you know what's going on with your dad. If you have a plan in mind, I won't worry about it anymore." Ding Jiayi had no idea what Qiao Zijin was planning to do after reaching the capital. She was in Ping Cheng while Qiao Zijin was in the capital. Even if she was anxious and wanted to do something, there was nothing she could do. Qiao Zijin could only rely on herself. "But the Zhai family arranged for your dad's accommodation, so he probably doesn't need to spend any more money. Didn't you say that it's expensive staying in a hotel? Why don't you stay with him?"

The Zhai family was already paying for the accommodation. There would be no difference whether it was one or two people staying there. It was not as though the Zhai family would have to pay twice the amount of money. So, there should probably be no problem if Zijin went to look for Old Qiao.

No matter how angry Old Qiao was, he should know his limits. Neither she nor Zijin had committed arson or murder. Zijin was Old Qiao's daughter, after all. Old Qiao could not leave his daughter in the lurch in a place like the capital, right?

"Fathers and daughters don't develop enmity overnight. Once you find your dad, coax him a little. If that doesn't work, push all the blame for the loss of his identity card to me. Do whatever you need to get him to forgive you. Tell him that you had no idea about it and that I was the one behind all that. Anyway, your dad has already brought up divorce. It doesn't matter if he scolds me even more."

As long as he did not go through with the divorce, she would just treat Old Qiao's words as harmless threats.

Zijin could push the blame to her, and once Zijin and Old Qiao returned, she would simply deny it. That would be the end of the matter. He had no evidence, anyway. There was no need to be so anxious over the matter. No one could pin the blame on her with mere suspicions.

Qiao Zijin gave it some thought and realized that that plan would work. "Alright, I'll tell my dad that I don't know anything in case I let something slip in front of him. My dad is quite stupid in front of outsiders, but his mind is somehow clear in front of the two of us. It's better if I just remain mum."

If she could stay with her dad, she would be able to save a huge sum of money. It was not that she could not bear to spend money. It was just a waste to spend it all on her accommodation. So what if she had spent three thousand six hundred on eighteen bus tickets? Her dad had got on the bus and arrived in the capital all the same.

She could spend money but only on the right things.

Since Qiao Nan was in the hospital, she could afford to spend money on Qiao Nan. Instead of spending money on her accommodation, it would naturally be better for her to spend that money on Qiao Nan and her children to gain some favor.

“Give me a minute. Let me call my dad and ask him where he’s staying. I’ll move over too.” She believed that her dad would not chase her out as long as she moved in. Thinking about the money she would be able to save, Qiao Zijin’s pounding heart calmed down.

The moment she ended the call with Ding Jiayi, Qiao Zijin immediately made a call to Qiao Dongliang. At this moment, Qiao Dongliang had already had his dinner and was preparing to go to bed. That was his routine in Ping Cheng too. Even in the unfamiliar capital, Qiao Dongliang stuck to that routine since he did not have anything else to do. He could not possibly be like Ding Jiayi and watch the television while munching on melon seeds.

“Hello. Who’s that?” Qiao Dongliang had not paid attention to the caller ID and had simply picked up the phone.

“Dad, it’s me.”

“Zijin?” Qiao Dongliang frowned and his drowsiness dissipated immediately. He sat up in his bed and switched on the bedside lamp. “Why are you suddenly calling me?”

Could it be that Ding Jiayi had not told Zijin about his words earlier?

Chapter 2160: Persuading

Qiao Zijin laughed. “You’re my dad. Why can’t I call you? Mom told me that you’re in the capital too. I guess you’re here to see Nan Nan, right? I’m here for a trip, but since I’m here, I want to meet Nan Nan too. Otherwise, I won’t have the face to respond to Nan Nan if she addresses me as her elder sister in the future.”

“...” Qiao Dongliang bit on his lip. If she was really self-aware, Zijin should have realized that she had lost all right to be Nan Nan’s sister a long time ago.

“But it’s great that you’re here. We can visit Nan Nan together! Dad, where are you staying now? Why don’t we stay close to each other?” It was her dad who should have said these words. She was a single woman and her dad should have offered her a place to take care of her.

Qiao Dongliang rubbed his nose bridge, understanding Qiao Zijin’s plans. “That won’t be necessary. The Zhai family arranged for my accommodation here. There’s only one room with one bed. You’re my daughter, so it won’t be right for us to sleep together. I guess it’ll be hard for us to stay close to each other. This is a residential area and I haven’t seen any units up for rent. Besides, the rent here isn’t cheap. You’re only here for a few days. It’s probably cheaper for you to stay in a hotel.”

It was the Zhai family’s territory and the Zhai family cared deeply for Nan Nan. As such, there was no way the Zhai family would allow Zijin to stay in their house. If the Zhai family did not take issue with Zijin, they would have made such arrangements for her the moment they met her.

The Zhai family had already made their stance clear, and Qiao Dongliang was in no position to offer his help and offer Qiao Zijin a place to stay when he was depending on the Zhai family.

“...” From the looks of it, her dad was staying in a small studio. “Dad, you don’t have to worry. You’re my dad. I can always sleep in the living room. Honestly, I feel a little unsettled staying in a hotel alone. There are always weird people coming to knock on my door.”

If possible, Qiao Zijin certainly hoped to sleep on the bed while Qiao Dongliang could sleep on the sofa. But of course, Qiao Zijin had to humble herself and think of a way of moving in first.

Qiao Zijin was not entirely making up her words. There had indeed been people knocking on Qiao Zijin’s door, asking whether she needed special services, or whether she wanted to have a drink and some fun together.

In the past, Qiao Zijin might very well have agreed. She had finally come to the capital, after all. It would be nice to experience the difference between a bar in Ping Cheng and the capital. The problem was that she was about to get married to Zhai Sheng and become the chief’s wife in a few months’ time. How could she ruin her reputation and image before she had even succeeded? This would only be giving the Zhai family a reason to reject her.

No matter how well Qiao Zijin thought she had performed, there were two stains she could never get rid of. Firstly, she was divorced. Although Qiao Nan was old when she had gotten married, she had still been a virgin. It was just that she had been slightly older. There was no way Qiao Zijin could compete with that. Secondly, Qiao Zijin had not gotten a divorce voluntarily. She had only done so because Chen Jun had demanded one, and the reason was that he had caught Qiao Zijin red-handed in bed.

Zhai Sheng was a divorcé too, and his first wife had committed the same mistake as Qiao Zijin. Qiao Zijin did not even want to give any explanations when this fault of hers was mentioned. She did not want to talk about how Chen Jun had been a playboy and had been having affairs, leading to her having her own affair as an act of revenge.

To marry Zhai Sheng, Qiao Zijin had done her homework. She knew that Zhai Sheng's first wife despised the fact that Zhai Sheng stayed in the military all day, never spending any time with her at all. That was why she had not been able to tolerate the loneliness and had committed adultery, eventually getting caught in the act by Zhai Sheng.

Because she had a 'past record', she naturally had to be more careful before she succeeded. Qiao Zijin had already thought it through. Even if she were to succeed, she would have to respect herself and not get into another affair. A man could never be as important as her future and her own life.

Even Chen Jun had not let her off for finding a man. Zhai Sheng had already gotten divorced once. Would he be afraid of doing it again?

Now that she was getting remarried, she had to keep herself clean and never get involved in those dirty men or anything that would cause the Zhai family to look down on her.

Hearing Qiao Zijin say that, Qiao Dongliang was worried, but he calmed down very quickly. Qiao Zijin had arrived at the hotel even earlier than him. If she had really encountered such a situation, it would have happened on the very first day, right?

Qiao Zijin was not actually out on a trip. If she was scared, she should simply return to Ping Cheng. But she didn't. That could only mean that Qiao Zijin was not actually afraid. In that case, why did he have to worry?

"Really? If it's really unsafe, you should go back to Ping Cheng. Or perhaps, you should ask your mom to tag along in the future when you go on trips. Two is always better than one, after all. You've already been in the capital for two days, right? You're probably almost done seeing all the sights. It's about time for you to head back."

“...” Qiao Zijin had intended to move in with Qiao Dongliang to save on her expenses so that she could spend some money to curry favor with Qiao Nan. She had not expected her dad, Qiao Dongliang, to be so insensitive to chase her back to Ping Cheng. “Dad, I still want to stay in the capital for another few days. Dad, look...”

Beep... What else was there to see? The moment he heard that Qiao Zijin did not want to return, Qiao Dongliang hung up. They were father and daughter, but Qiao Zijin was full of lies in an attempt to coax Qiao Dongliang. She was treating him like a three-year-old child.

Qiao Dongliang did not want to talk to a daughter like that!

Qiao Zijin stared at her phone wide-eyed. She had never expected her dad to hang up on her before she could even finish. Given his attitude, Qiao Zijin could guess that she was not welcome at Qiao Dongliang's accommodation. What right did he have? It was not as though he owned the house. He was just staying there temporarily, so why did he have the right to hang up on her and refuse her demands?

Of course, Qiao Nan had no idea about the conflict between Qiao Zijin and Qiao Dongliang, and how Qiao Dongliang had gotten upset this time. Apart from caring about herself, Qiao Nan was also worried about Chief Zhu. “Brother Zhai, has Chief Zhu been well lately?”