

RTAMM 2221

Chapter 2221: Going Dutch?

From that incident in the hospital, Qiao Nan had figured out what Qiao Zijin was after. But she had not blown the matter up. If for nothing else, it was simply because Qiao Zijin's plan was simply too disgusting. It felt vulgar to even talk about it.

Qiao Nan couldn't even treat Qiao Zijin like an ordinary stranger, much less a family member. Qiao Nan felt that Qiao Zijin had probably accumulated hatred toward her over several lifetimes. Qiao Zijin had even gone to the extent of snatching her boyfriend away! Chen Jun had been nothing, but now, she was even after Zhai Sheng!

In reality, what angered Qiao Nan the most and what she was unable to accept was how Qiao Zijin revealed that she had even thought of getting Qiao Nan to marry Chen Jun when she thought that Qiao Nan was dying. She had thought that she was sacrificing herself for the sake of Qiao Nan's happiness. After all, Chen Jun still had attractive conditions even though he had become Qiao Nan's brother-in-law.

Coincidentally, Chen Jun had taken the initiative to request for reconciliation just last year. Thinking about how Chen Jun and Qiao Zijin had such good telepathy, Qiao Nan very much wanted to ask both of them: Why did you bother getting a divorce? Look at how well you match each other! It would be best for the both of you to get remarried to each other, lest you harm others.

Qiao Nan had not even told Zhai Sheng about this to save him some anger. Chen Jun and Qiao Zijin were downright disgusting. They had never done anything humane in their lives.

Qiao Nan had been prepared to keep this secret from Zhai Sheng, but she felt as though she had to tell someone about it. She had no other choice. This person was sandwiched between her and Qiao Zijin. He yearned to be a good father, yet he could never harden his heart. Qiao Nan couldn't sever ties with him, but caring about him meant aggrieving herself too.

Qiao Nan had already thought it through. She wouldn't mention this matter to Qiao Dongliang while he was still in the capital. While she was still alive and well in front of her dad, he would still remember that she was his daughter and that Qiao Zijin was not his only daughter.

The problem was that Qiao Zijin and Qiao Dongliang had returned to Ping Cheng for the new year, and there was still Ding Jiayi in the equation. To prevent Qiao Dongliang from meeting Qiao Zijin too often and forgetting about his other daughter, she would let Qiao Dongliang know about this matter once he arrived back in Ping Cheng and called her to let her know.

Time passed and Qiao Dongliang felt as though he had reached Ping Cheng in the blink of an eye. Qiao Zijin had never been picky about the speed of planes. Thinking about how she had left full of confidence but was now returning like that, Qiao Zijin felt a little reluctant.

But that didn't matter. She was back now, but that didn't mean that she would never return to the capital. The next time she visited the capital would be her turn to strike rich. "Dad, the plane may have been fast but I want to reach home as soon as possible. Shall we flag a cab? It'll probably cost just one to two hundred yuan."

Thinking about how she had spent three thousand six hundred yuan on trying to prevent Qiao Dongliang from visiting the capital, she felt that she was already helping her dad save some money by only getting him to fork out the measly cab fare.

Qiao Dongliang was now a grandfather. In the past, his salary always went to supporting his wife and children. Now, he felt that he had to penny-pinch so that he could splurge on his grandchildren. Flagging a cab meant spending two hundred yuan at once. There was no way Qiao Dongliang could bear to do that. "Are you going to pay for it? Am I paying for it? Or are we going dutch?" Qiao Dongliang felt that Qiao Zijin would never be so filial to come up with the entire sum.

In the past, Qiao Dongliang had never understood what 'going dutch' meant. But he now did.

"Dad, you're too stingy. We're a family. I'm your daughter. You can just pay for it first. Why do we have to go dutch? Won't you have to rely on me to take care of you in the future?" Qiao Zijin couldn't understand why her dad was making a fuss over just two hundred yuan. Once she became a millionaire, she would definitely get herself a Porsche.

Qiao Dongliang no longer wanted to talk about who would take care of him in his old age. "Either you're paying or we're going dutch, we can flag a cab. If you disagree with either of these options, I'll go get myself a bus ticket. You can get your own so that you can take your pick of how you want to get home."

He had no hopes of Qiao Zijin forking out the entire sum, but there was no reason for him to do so either. Initially, Qiao Dongliang had intended to pay for both bus tickets. But seeing that Qiao Zijin

had objections to that plan, Qiao Dongliang had lost the desire to even pay for her bus ticket. He would save some money!

“Dad...” Qiao Zijin had never expected that she would have to pay for her own bus ticket just because she had asked Qiao Dongliang to pay for the cab fare. This was really... She felt like dying!

But Qiao Dongliang had already made his decision and he was not going to go back on his word. Qiao Dongliang felt that it was only because he had not put his foot down as a father and educated Qiao Zijin well while she was younger that she had gone astray. He had not realized that when she had been younger. Now that she was older and there was the chance to educate her, it was only right to try to rectify this bad habit of thinking that the whole world revolved around her.

It was another problem whether that bad habit could really be rectified.

Qiao Dongliang could no longer be bothered with Qiao Zijin and left to purchase his own ticket. Qiao Zijin was all grown up, anyway. She hadn't even lost her way in the capital. Now that they were back in Ping Cheng, there was no reason for Qiao Dongliang to worry that Qiao Zijin would get lost in her own hometown. He was going to take the bus back. Qiao Zijin could take her own pick.

“Dad, Dad...” Qiao Zijin had no other choice but to catch up with him. Having someone by her side would beat going back alone. Qiao Zijin could not help but regret her words. If she had known that her father would throw such a tantrum, she would have agreed to split the fare with her dad. Anyway, she had not even needed to pay for her plane ticket back. That had already been a win. She would have saved herself a lot of trouble by spending just a hundred yuan to flag a cab.

That way, she would only have spent a hundred yuan returning to Ping Cheng from the capital.

After Qiao Zijin changed her mind, she immediately tried to stop Qiao Dongliang. “Dad, let's get a cab home. If we take the bus, we'll still have to change to the public bus to get home afterward. You don't have any luggage, but I do. Our house is quite a distance from the bus stop too. I won't be able to walk that far with my luggage. I'll split the cab fare equally with you.”

After that conversation with Wang Yang, Qiao Zijin had started spending without much thought.. She knew that she would have five million in her pocket the next time she visited the capital.

As such, it wouldn't be too much of a splurge to spend a hundred yuan to make herself more comfortable. It was only right for her to do so.

"No, I said that you can take a cab yourself if you want. I'll get myself a bus ticket. It costs only thirty-two yuan. The public bus will cost me four yuan. Besides, I have a senior citizen's card and it won't cost much. I'll spend about thirty yuan in total to get home. Why should I spend a hundred yuan? I'm old and retired. I don't get much from my pension. I should save what I can. You're young and have a different mindset. If you're willing to flag a cab and let me hitch a ride, that's fine. But if you want to split the fare equally, you'd better look for someone else. There are quite a lot of people around in the airport. You might find someone who'll take up your offer."

Women changed their minds quickly, but so did men.

Before the argument, Qiao Dongliang had been willing to go dutch. But after their quarrel, Qiao Dongliang realized that he would be able to save at least sixty-eight yuan. That would be enough to buy his grandchild a cute toy, at the very least. He had three grandchildren. Even though he could save enough to buy one toy, he would have to work hard to save enough to buy another two. He loved all three of them equally. He would never let himself be biased toward one of them ever again.

Qiao Dongliang had already purchased his ticket back to Ping Cheng with his temporary identity card by the time he talked to Qiao Zijin again.

Qiao Dongliang had finally come to the realization that he had been too much of a pushover in the past. Opportunities came only once. If one missed it, it would never come again. He would live the way he wanted in the future.

After buying a ticket for the next bus, Qiao Dongliang no longer bothered about Qiao Zijin and headed to the platform for the bus. Then, he simply stood by the roadside to wait for its arrival.

Since Qiao Dongliang refused to cooperate with her, Qiao Zijin's face turned green and she had no choice but to purchase a ticket too and stand in line behind Qiao Dongliang. Qiao Zijin had initially wanted Qiao Dongliang to fork out the entire sum of two hundred yuan because she knew that there was no way Qiao Nan would only have given him enough for a plane ticket back. Besides, it was almost the new year.

If Qiao Nan didn't return to Ping Cheng, not only would she have to give Qiao Dongliang money, but she would have to include Ding Jiayi as well. Qiao Dongliang would be holding on to that sum of money for both of them. Qiao Zijin had already made her calculations and knew that Qiao Dongliang's pockets were full. There was no way he wouldn't be able to pay for a fare of two hundred yuan.

As long as she could take advantage of someone else, even if that person was her own father, she would do so. Since she had not been able to do so, she had to compromise and settle for going dutch. But now, Qiao Dongliang refused to do even that. To save money, he wouldn't even take a cab. There was nothing Qiao Zijin could do about that.

It was not that Qiao Zijin could not bear to spend two hundred yuan on a cab for the sake of convenience. After all, she had already wasted three thousand yuan in an attempt to stop Qiao Dongliang from visiting the capital. What was two hundred yuan in comparison to that?

The problem was that Qiao Zijin had been chatting with Qiao Dongliang in public. There were many in line who had overheard the conversation between the father and daughter.

If Qiao Zijin were to decide to flag a cab and pay the cab fare now but not invite her father along, she would definitely be publicly condemned. However, Qiao Zijin was reluctant to let Qiao Dongliang hitch a ride for free. All along, she had always been the one taking advantage of others. It had never been the other way round.

Wasn't it just a bus ride, a public bus ride, and walking a distance? She would just treat it as though she was exercising to lose weight.

Not only did Qiao Zijin board the bus with Qiao Dongliang, but she even sat beside him. For over an hour, the father and daughter turned their heads to each side without uttering a word to each other. This silence wasn't broken until they entered the Qiao family's courtyard.

"Old Qiao, you're back?"

"Old Qiao, a large parcel just arrived at your house. I heard my daughter say that there have been quite a few parcels lately."

"Old Qiao, how was it? Was the capital fun? Oh right, Nan Nan's given birth, right?"

All of the neighbors in the quad knew that Qiao Dongliang had gone to the capital because Qiao Nan was about to give birth. Given the timing, Qiao Nan should be about to give birth. It was obvious that Qiao Nan had already given birth since Qiao Dongliang had returned. He wouldn't have returned otherwise.

“Old Qiao, it's rare that you get to visit the capital. Why didn't you spend the new year there?” Ding Jiayi was the only one left here. If Old Qiao had remained in the capital, he would, at least, have a filial daughter, Nan Nan, by his side.

“I can't help it. I'm old and I miss home. There's nowhere better than home. After all, this is my home. Everything's here? My son-in-law helped send them back. It isn't by express delivery, so I'm not sure when they'll all arrive. There are quite a few things that Nan Nan picked out especially for all of you. Remember to drop by later.”

Qiao Dongliang smiled. He was truly astonished that express delivery services were even faster than him. Didn't they say that his parcels would arrive on the next day, at the very earliest? He had even taken a flight back. How could his things have arrived before him?

Qiao Dongliang had not realized that his items had taken an earlier flight to Ping Cheng and had been directly sent into Ping Cheng without going around on public buses in rounds.

“Is that so?” Many were surprised that Qiao Nan had still kept her old neighbors in mind even after making a name for herself. They had had their opinions when all they had gotten were wedding sweets from Qiao Nan without having gotten the chance to attend her wedding. They knew that Qiao Nan was from the northern quad, but they were hardly close.

No matter what, it was too late. By the time Qiao Nan married into the southern quad, she nearly had no contact with her neighbors in the northern quad anymore. They had already mentally prepared themselves for that. As such, they were truly surprised when Qiao Dongliang mentioned that Qiao Nan had prepared gifts for them. “Alright! Hurry and go to rest. We'll visit you later.”

No matter what gifts they were, even if they were just local snacks, it was the thought that counted.

The moment Qiao Dongliang reached home, he had gotten enough praise for Qiao Nan.. Even though his neighbors had left empty-handed, they had all praised Nan Nan for being a filial child and the pride of the northern quad.

Qiao Zijin's expression darkened and she could not help but mutter inwardly: What a bunch of bootlickers! These people had been bought over so easily. Could they get any more superficial? If she had not remembered wrongly, Qiao Nan had not invited her neighbors in the northern quad to her wedding. Then, there had been many who had been bitter, scolding Qiao Nan for forgetting about them because she had gotten rich.

Qiao Zijin felt rather annoyed having such neighbors too. They were pulling her down. "Mom. I'm back." Didn't they say that many things had been sent here today? She had only gotten a glance at that package, so she knew that it was huge. But she had no idea about its contents.

Since Qiao Nan had prepared gifts for her neighbors, she couldn't possibly have neglected Qiao Zijin, who was her elder sister, right? No matter what, Qiao Zijin had made a trip to the capital to see the pregnant Qiao Nan, and she had even waited until the children had turned a month old before leaving. Qiao Nan should acknowledge her efforts at the very least, right?

"You guys are back?" Ding Jiayi wiped her hands as her eyes twinkled. Old Qiao and Zijin were back. She would no longer be alone.

In the past, Ding Jiayi had hated the house for being old and small. It was nowhere as spacious and bright as an apartment. But in the past month she had been living alone, Ding Jiayi had realized that the house was not exactly small. At times, Ding Jiayi had even felt timid when she heard the slightest noises outside. Sometimes, Ding Jiayi even felt that the house was too big for her.

Everything was great now that their family of three was back together, and Ding Jiayi's courage suddenly came back. "You must be tired. Sit down. I'll get you and your dad some water. Take a rest." Seeing the father and daughter covered in dust, Ding Jiayi was especially happy and her expression was much calmer and more peaceful than before.

Qiao Dongliang, who had no luggage with him, looked much more relaxed. However, he looked much more tired than Qiao Zijin because of his age. "I heard the neighbors say that my parcels are here. Where are they? You didn't open them, did you?"

"No." Ding Jiayi waved immediately, afraid that Qiao Dongliang would misunderstand her. "Look, there are so many parcels there. I was thinking that you and Zijin would arrive today, so I decided not to open them for you. If I did, everything might just get messed up."

More importantly, Ding Jiayi's relationship with Qiao Dongliang was no longer like before. As such, Ding Jiayi dared not open Qiao Dongliang's things without his permission for fear of being scolded. In the past when their relationship had been cordial, there was nothing of Qiao Dongliang that Ding Jiayi had not dared to touch.

"Alright." Thinking about how he had already talked to his neighbors, Qiao Dongliang immediately cut open the packages after having his drink. "These clothes are for the new year. You can bring it back to your room." Qiao Dongliang easily removed a set of female clothes and handed them to Ding Jiayi.

All he said was that the set of clothes was for Ding Jiayi, but he had not mentioned who had paid for them. Even so, all three people in the house knew clearly that no one other than Qiao Nan would be willing to spend money on buying new clothes for Ding Jiayi.

After Qiao Dongliang retired, he received a pathetically small pension. In the capital, Qiao Dongliang's monthly pension was probably not even enough to buy a piece of clothing, let alone a full set. "Oh right, be more careful when you wear those clothes. It's... not cheap."

Qiao Dongliang felt the pinch at the thought of its price. If not for the fact that Qiao Nan had already bought them by the time he learned about it and that it was inconvenient to get a refund, he would never have allowed Qiao Nan to buy such expensive clothes. Anyway, all clothes looked about the same. The same thing could go for just a few hundred under another brand in Ping Cheng, but they had cost four-figures in the capital. Just a coat had cost almost three thousand yuan!

Even if Ding Jiayi had been a good mother, Qiao Dongliang would still have thought that it was unsuitable for Qiao Nan to buy such an expensive coat for Ding Jiayi. But Ding Jiayi had not even been a good mom. What right did she have to enjoy such benefits?

Ding Jiayi was not blind and naturally saw the brand new tag on the clothes. Seeing the four-figure price tag, Ding Jiayi could not help but feel her heart ache as well. "Was there a discount?"

"A discount?" Qiao Dongliang sneered. "Of course not. How could there have been a discount? Unfortunately, I wasn't there. If I had been there, I would never have allowed her to buy such clothes for you. Ding Jiayi, touch your heart if you even have one. Do you think you deserve such things from Nan Nan? Remember how you wronged Nan Nan and think about all these things that she bought for you. Don't always be so shameless!"

His identity card, bus ticket, and money had all been stolen by Ding Jiayi. Because of that, he had wasted several bus tickets. Qiao Dongliang was still angry over that matter. They had amounted to

several hundred yuan! He could have spent that sum of money on some nice clothes for his grandchildren, but Ding Jiayi had ruined all of that.

Ding Jiayi's face heated up. She had never worn such expensive clothes in her entire life. When Qiao Zijin had married well, she had asked Qiao Zijin to buy her a coat that cost about eight hundred yuan. Then, Qiao Zijin had said that winter was about to pass and that coat would be out of season. Then, it would be let off at a discounted price.

Ding Jiayi enjoyed wearing clothes of good quality. She didn't have high standards. It was just this one thing that she allowed herself to splurge on. The most expensive piece of clothing that Qiao Zijin had ever bought her cost only three hundred yuan. Nothing had ever gone over five hundred yuan. On the other hand, Qiao Nan had spent almost three thousand on a piece of clothing for her. Ding Jiayi momentarily felt as though something had been caught in her throat and she could not utter a single word.

Qiao Zijin, who was standing by the side, rolled her eyes. Her parents were seriously easily bribed. When had her mother ever been so easily moved and satisfied? Why was she so moved by a piece of clothing that cost just a few thousand yuan? Now, imported clothes cost more than ten thousand yuan for a single piece of clothing! If Qiao Nan was truly generous, why hadn't she bought those clothes instead?

Her parents were truly not intelligent enough. That was why they were so easily moved after seeing that the things Qiao Nan had bought were slightly expensive.

No matter how disdainful she felt, Qiao Zijin was not going to let go of what 'should' be hers.. Even though Qiao Nan had not bought clothes that cost over ten thousand yuan, those that cost even just a thousand yuan were considered expensive in Ping Cheng.

Chapter 2224: It Was Still a Second Marriage At Best

Qiao Zijin thought about it. At least, she wouldn't lose her own face if she wore it in Ping Cheng.

As such, Qiao Zijin put the cup down and leaned toward Qiao Dongliang. "Dad, where's mine? It will be my new clothes for the new year. Take them out quickly. Seeing that the weather's good recently, I should get Mom to help me wash them. You don't know how dirty these clothes are when they're out of the factory. They have to be washed first before they can be worn. Otherwise, you might get some skin disease."

As she said this, Qiao Zijin took the initiative and reached out to flip the things over. Qiao Dongliang, who was by the side, pulled her hand. "There're so many things here but there's nothing for you."

"Nothing for me? Why? Did Qiao Nan forget to buy something for me?" That was too overboard. No, if she was left out, she had to call Nan Nan and get her to compensate her. Since she was compensating her, the value of the clothes she bought must be higher than the ones here. Otherwise, she would be angry at Qiao Nan. "I'll call Nan Nan and tell her she left out my share. How can she only leave me out?"

"You don't have to make this call. Even if you do, Nan Nan wouldn't pick it up. You're her sister, not her daughter or her parents who raised her. If she's willing to buy something for you, it's because she thinks of you since the both of you have a good sibling relationship. If she didn't prepare anything for you, then you should find the reason yourself. Think about your relationship with Nan Nan. Is it strange that she didn't prepare any new year's clothes for you?"

Qiao Dongliang didn't understand. Based on how poor their sibling relationship was, how was Qiao Zijin so confident that Qiao Nan should rightfully prepare a new year's gift for her as well? Didn't she have any self-awareness at all?

It was just that when he thought of how Qiao Nan prepared an expensive outfit for Ding Jiayi in the end, Qiao Dongliang couldn't help but pull the curves of his mouth down. Ding Jiayi had really accumulated blessings in her previous lifetimes to exchange them for such a wonderful daughter like Nan Nan. If it were someone else, who would be willing to acknowledge a mother like Old Ding? They would probably just hope to reincarnate again and change another mother.

"What's strange about that? No matter what, I'm Qiao Nan's only biological sister. Aside from you and Mom, I'm the person closest to her. If she doesn't treat me well, who else will she treat well?" Qiao Zijin said righteously.

Qiao Dongliang's lips twitched. "Then, since Nan Nan is your only sister, why didn't I see you buy clothes for her before?" Why did it only work one way? If all the reasons in this world mentioned by Zijin were only beneficial for her, could they still be known as reasons?

Qiao Zijin wasn't someone to admit defeat easily as well. "That's different. In the past, Qiao Nan used to earn more money than me. I was someone who relied on my in-laws while she was self-reliant. Now, she has married well and I don't even have a stable job. Isn't it normal for her to buy something for me?"

“Zijin...” Upon seeing how Zijin was talking to Qiao Dongliang, Ding Jiayi reminded Qiao Zijin to take note of her own attitude.

Qiao Dongliang laughed coldly. “Yes, whatever you say is correct. Whatever you say is logical and everyone else is wrong. Anyway, we have everyone’s things here but yours. If you want to call her, go ahead.”

He understood Zijin’s words. Nan Nan should be leaning toward her for everything. Everyone said that with justice on your side, you can go anywhere, but without it, you can’t take a step at all. He wasn’t literate and eloquent and couldn’t win against Zijin’s ‘big principles’. Since he couldn’t win against her, he preferred not to say anything.

The money was in Nan Nan’s pockets. Even if Zijin tried all means, she wouldn’t be able to influence Nan Nan. In the end, Zijin didn’t need to think about taking advantage of Nan Nan at all. After understanding this, Qiao Dongliang couldn’t be bothered to argue with Qiao Zijin. He continued to let her find her own sense of self-superiority.

“Old Qiao.” Those neighbors whom Qiao Dongliang had greeted before were all here. Upon seeing the pile of things in the Qiao family’s living room, their eyes shone. Wow, these things were a big deal. They should cost quite a lot of money, right? Nan Nan was still quite willing to spend so much money on things for them, huh?

“All of you are here? Each family can take one packet. These are all freshly-made specialty snacks from the capital. Take them home. Remember not to leave them around for too long. Freshly-made food has a short shelf life. Try them.” The things prepared for the neighbors were nicely packaged in boxes. The red boxes looked especially festive. They looked even more pleasing to the eye given that it was going to be the new year soon.

The neighbors held the packages in their hands. Yes, they were heavy. “Are they snacks from the capital? They’re even nicely wrapped and the aroma’s so fragrant. Nan Nan’s such a good child. We, as the uncles and aunties, have really benefited because of her. Oh, right. Remember to tell us the next time Nan Nan’s back. Also, has Nan Nan given birth?”

The ‘old girl’ from their quad was finally married and had even given birth.

“Yes!” Qiao Dongliang said with joy, “Triplets. Two sons and a daughter. All three of them are so good-looking, especially the youngest daughter. She looks just like Nan Nan when she was young.

The elders in our family dote on them a lot.” Upon mentioning his three grandchildren, Qiao Dongliang was overjoyed. “It was their full-month celebration yesterday. They looked healthy and don’t seem to be premature children at all. A lot of people complimented that they were raised well.”

Of course, it was all thanks to Nan Nan.

The Zhai family finally waited until this year for a grandson to be born. They even had three grandchildren in one go. Nan Nan was the biggest hero in the Zhai family. After having these three children, he really no longer needed to worry about Nan Nan.

“Is that so? Are they that good-looking? Do you have photos?” Upon hearing that they were triplets, the old neighbors felt curious. In their quad, there were only twins at the very most. They didn’t even see twins of a different gender before. Now, there were triplets with different genders. Gosh. The old girl whom everyone in the quad used to gossip a lot about was actually the one who was the most blessed.

If they had known that not only did a woman who got married late in her forties like Qiao Nan could find a good son-in-law like Zhai Sheng but could even have triplets, how would they be willing to let their own daughters marry early?

“...” Upon hearing how everyone was praising Qiao Nan and how cute the three children were, Qiao Zijin was extremely jealous. She couldn’t help but mumble, “How good is it? She’s just married to a man who was married before.” It was both her and Chen Jun’s first marriage. That was called marrying well.

Ding Jiayi pushed Qiao Zijin and asked her to shut up.

Chapter 2225: Unwilling to Take This Lying Down

Everyone was standing together. Even if Qiao Zijin was mumbling softly, those with better hearing could still hear her words.

After knowing that Qiao Nan gave birth to triplets and two of them were sons, Ding Jiayi felt uncomfortable in her heart. Back when Qiao Zijin gave birth to Chen Feng and Qiao Nan helped Chen Feng to change his diapers, Ding Jiayi stared at Qiao Nan’s slender back while saying to Qiao

Zijin, “See, Zijin? I’ve long said that you’re a blessed child. The Chen family’s conditions are so good and they don’t lack anything but a grandson. Look at you. You allowed their Chen family to have a grandson on your first pregnancy. You’re a great hero of the Chen family. That wretched girl is skinny and it’s still a question if she would be able to have a child in the future. Even if she does, she could only give birth to a worthless girl. Wait and see. The Chen family will cherish you more once that wretched girl marries and gives birth to a daughter.”

That scene when she said those words back then was still vivid in her mind. How the tables have turned. Qiao Zijin gave birth to a son while Qiao Nan gave birth to two sons and a daughter.

Qiao Nan was not afraid if one compared blessings. From the day she married Zhai Sheng, Qiao Nan had already become a famous and blessed girl in this big quad. So what if she had married late? Others married late because they couldn’t find the right match. It was either Qiao Nan didn’t find a match, or once she did, she would find the best person to get married to.

“Thanks.” The neighbors carried the packages and left happily. After reaching home, they immediately opened the package and ate the items inside. After tasting them, they couldn’t help but compliment. “These specialty snacks from the capital taste so good. We can’t buy them here. Nan Nan has been obedient and filial since she was young. After getting married, she still remembers us, the old neighbors. Indeed, good people are rewarded. Only a good child like Nan Nan could marry such a good husband.”

The juniors in the house were already used to their parents saying different things every day. “Let me taste this. Actually, this is sold on the internet as well. I’ve tried it before. However, this is indeed fresh. The ones bought online don’t taste as good and aren’t as soft.”

After the neighbors brought away all the snacks, a big and tall parcel immediately became small. After giving Ding Jiayi her clothes, the remaining clothes were naturally what Qiao Nan had prepared for Qiao Dongliang. “Old Ding, I’ve just reached home. I’m quite tired. Can you clean up the rubbish? If not, I’ll do it when I wake up tomorrow.”

The clothes Qiao Nan sent over were still hot. How would Ding Jiayi be so insensitive? “There’s no need to. Go and rest since you’re tired. I’ll do it. It’ll take only a while.” There were only a few items. She could clean them up easily. “Oh, right. I prepared lunch. Shall we eat together?” Ding Jiayi didn’t forget that before Qiao Dongliang and Qiao Zijin went to the capital, their family of three had already started eating separately.

Initially, Qiao Dongliang wanted to maintain this state. However, it was going to be the new year soon and they were a family. It couldn't be that they had to prepare reunion dinner separately for themselves, right?

"Alright, let me know when it's ready." After saying this, Qiao Dongliang returned to his room to rest. Even if he had already saved a lot of time commuting by plane, Qiao Dongliang still felt that his bones had a dull and sharp pain. He had to lie down to rest.

"Zijin, what else are you doing?" After Qiao Dongliang returned to his room to rest, Ding Jiayi wanted to clean up the mess on the floor. Who knew that the things on the floor were already messy but Qiao Zijin didn't complain that they were dirty? She squatted and started searching, creating a bigger mess. "Go to the side quickly. There's quite a lot of dust around. I don't want to clean up after you as well."

"Wait!" Qiao Zijin didn't believe in evil. "This big bag of things is even taller than me. You and Dad have new clothes. On what basis do I not have any? Did Dad hide them?" Weren't the things she did as good as what her mother did?

Over the years, her mom had taken away all of Qiao Nan's salary. Her mom was also the one who forced Qiao Nan to give Chen Jun up to her. Even when she had uremia in the past, her mom was the one who asked Qiao Nan to donate a kidney to her. For this matter, Qiao Nan argued with her mom by the roadside, causing Qiao Nan to get into a car accident and nearly lost her life.

Her mom had done so many sorry things to Qiao Nan and made her life so miserable. Even her mom had new clothes. On what basis did Qiao Nan think that she was worse than her mom such that she prepared clothes for her mom but not for her? In this family, the person most ruthless to Qiao Nan was their mom. Wasn't she good? Perhaps their dad wanted to seek justice for Qiao Nan and deliberately hid her clothes so that she would feel anxious and miserable.

Ding Jiayi slapped the back of Qiao Zijin's hands. "Your dad unfolded that bag of things in front of us after the both of you returned. Haven't you been looking at the things by the side? Since when did your dad hide things? Stop kicking up a fuss. I have to clean up. Also, I think not only do you need to wash your hands, but you should also take a shower."

If there was really Zijin's share, she would have seen it long ago. How would she need to go through the rubbish? Zijin refused to give up. No matter which daughter Ding Jiayi liked, at least she had new clothes for the new year. As such, she was very good-tempered now. Since she was happy, she naturally didn't care about 'other people'.

“Mom...” Qiao Zijin was unwilling to take this lying down. On what basis did the whole family have new clothes but her? Wasn't she a part of the Qiao family as well? “Mom, call Qiao Nan now. She has to buy me an expensive set of clothes as compensation. I'm her biological sister. I'm the only sister she has in this lifetime. How can she do this to me? She has no conscience. If she doesn't compensate me with a good set of clothes this time around, I'll be angry at her in the future. How can Qiao Nan not take me to heart seriously? Does she want to sever ties with her sister? Doesn't she want me to recognize her as a sister anymore?”

1

She was so angry. Qiao Nan wasn't lacking money. The whole family had new clothes but she didn't. Was Qiao Nan giving her a slap in the face?

Ding Jiayi hesitated for a while. “It's easy for me to make this call. However, I'm not sure if she will listen to my words..” If Qiao Nan didn't agree, she would have made a call for nothing.

1

Chapter 2226: Hanging Up

She had not even made the call yet, but Ding Jiayi already had an ominous feeling that the method wouldn't work and that Qiao Nan wouldn't bother about her. It was no longer the first time this was happening. Or should she say that Qiao Nan had never listened to her in the past two years at all?

“Why don't you call her? You know what to tell Qiao Nan, right? Mom, I'm sure you have a way of getting Qiao Nan to agree. Mom. Mom...” Even though her clothes were not branded, they weren't cheap either. She would be proud to wear such clothes during the new year period.

Ding Jiayi felt dizzy from Qiao Zijin's words. “Fine, I'll make the call but I can't make any promises. I'll just try my luck.”

Having been forced by Qiao Zijin, Ding Jiayi had no choice but to make a call to Qiao Nan. “Hello, I'm Qiao Nan's mom. I'm looking for Qiao Nan.”

The moment the Zhai family's auntie heard that it was Ding Jiayi looking for Qiao Nan, she was a little reluctant to hand the phone over to Qiao Nan. The auntie had never heard Qiao Nan mention her mother. More importantly, childbirth was such an important event but Ding Jiayi hadn't even appeared nor turned up to take care of her daughter. It was painfully obvious that this mother-and-daughter pair didn't share a close relationship.

Qiao Nan was still doing her confinement and couldn't be provoked. What would they do if Qiao Nan got hurt?

But she had no choice but to ask Qiao Nan whether she wanted to answer the call since the other party was Qiao Nan's mother, after all.

Qiao Nan thought about it for a moment before picking up the call. "Hello, it's me. What's the matter?"

"What's with your tone and attitude? I'm your mother! You're a mother yourself now. Don't you know how to address your mom properly?"

Upon hearing Qiao Nan's indifferent tone, Ding Jiayi flew into a rage. Which daughter would ever pick up her mother's phone call with such a tone? Even a stranger would speak more politely! Did that mean that she couldn't even compare to a stranger in her eyes?

"Is anything wrong?" It was not the first time that Qiao Nan had refused to address Ding Jiayi as her mom. If there was anything wrong that she could deal with, she would. Otherwise, she would hang up the phone in case she were to disturb the three children.

Ding Jiayi spat at Qiao Nan inwardly, scolding Qiao Nan for disregarding her poor family and her own biological mother after getting married to Zhai Sheng. "Let me ask you. Did you not buy enough new year gifts, or did you forget to send something?"

"No." Qiao Nan had not understood Ding Jiayi's words at first, but within a moment, she came to a realization. What she was saying was that Qiao Zijin's clothes were not among the new year gifts. What a joke! She had bought clothes for her parents, not voluntarily but out of obligation. After all, they were her parents.

But who was Qiao Zijin? They were of the same generation. Even when Qiao Zijin had been living a comfortable life, she had never even sent her a brand new set of underwear, let alone pieces of

clothing. Even more ridiculously, Qiao Zijin would only send her socks that she had worn to the point of breaking with an arrogant attitude as if she was doing something good.

Why should she buy Qiao Zijin new year clothes? Did she owe it to Qiao Zijin?

Ding Jiayi slammed the table. Thinking that Qiao Nan wouldn't be able to hear it, she quickly added. "Nonsense! What about your sister's new clothes? How could you forget about your sister? You have only one elder sister! Have you gone dumb from having kids? How could you forget about your only sister? Alright, I won't take issue with it but you can't leave out what you should buy. Besides, you're at fault here. Remember to buy something better to coax your sister. It's your fault, to say the least. Don't make everyone angry at you because of this."

"..." Fine. Qiao Nan would admit she was at the wrong. She was still doing her confinement and could let the auntie tell Ding Jiayi that she had been sleepy and had fallen asleep. How could she have answered the call in that case? Qiao Zijin's lips curled up into a sinister smile. "I'm sorry. Nope. I'm not coaxing her. You guys can get angry as long as it pleases you. You can choose to disown me too. Happy New Year. Goodbye."

With that, Qiao Nan hung up the phone.

She owed the Qiao family? How ridiculous!

"..." Hearing the beeps from the other end of the call, Ding Jiayi blinked blankly. Actually, she had already expected this outcome but both Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi had had that little bit of hope that Qiao Nan would one day transform back into that obedient and 'good' daughter and sister she had been in the past.

But this phone call proved to Ding Jiayi that Qiao Nan had no intention of doing so at the moment.

Ding Jiayi was angry. Left with no other choice, she ended the call.

"Mom, what did she say? She's agreed, right? Did she say when she would send the clothes over? You know, I'm an adult now and I won't wear those cheap clothes bought from just anywhere. Also, I just received a text that my high school friend is organizing a get-together. I'm planning to wear the clothes she sends."

Qiao Zijin was especially excited seeing that Ding Jiayi was walking over. Initially, she had wanted to stay by Ding Jiayi's side throughout the call so that she would be able to jump in in case Ding Jiayi forgot anything. But the moment Ding Jiayi took out her phone, Qiao Zijin's phone had rung. The moment she saw that it was her old classmate, Qiao Zijin could only abandon Ding Jiayi to speak with her friend.

Coincidentally, once Qiao Zijin put down the phone, Ding Jiayi's phone call had also ended.

The thought of meeting her high school friends excited Qiao Zijin. At that time, she had bought her way into high school, and as such, many of her classmates looked down on her. Now that so many years had passed, she wanted to prove to them that it didn't matter whether she had bought her way into the school at that time. After all, she was still living a comfortable life all the same.

Qiao Zijin had already decided to make Qiao Nan buy her a set of clothes that would not only not embarrass her in front of her classmates but would also be eye-catching. At the very most, she would put in a good word for Qiao Nan when helping settle the matter with Wang Yang. That way, Wang Yang would be more willing to give Qiao Nan a bigger share.

As long as she succeeded, Qiao Nan would, at least, get a million yuan. A couple of thousands for a makeover wouldn't be too much to ask for, right?

"..." Qiao Nan had refused but Qiao Zijin had even upped her request. Ding Jiayi couldn't understand whether Qiao Zijin had faith in herself or whether she had faith in her mother. Why did she think that this call would undoubtedly be a success? "Don't even think about it.. That wretched girl hung up on me before I even finished speaking."

Chapter 2227: She Wouldn't Dare

"And before she hung up, that wretched girl said that there isn't anything for you."

As for getting Qiao Nan to buy something more expensive, she had better stop dreaming about it. Turning it into reality was simply too difficult.

Qiao Zijin's face flushed red. "What right does she have to do that? Mom, did you ask her about it? Did Qiao Nan say why she only bought clothes for you and Dad but forgot about me? I haven't provoked her recently. She's really gone overboard. Is she crazy?"

She might not have provoked her recently, but that didn't mean that she hadn't done so in the past.

That thought ran through Ding Jiayi's mind but she dared not voice it out for fear that Qiao Zijin would throw a tantrum because she was siding with Qiao Nan. "How would I know? What I know is that she refused to buy clothes for you and that she didn't intend to buy you any in the first place. Alright. I've already made the call. Since she's refused, I can't do anything about it either. You can decide for yourself if you want to have new clothes to wear this new year."

If Qiao Zijin wanted to wear new clothes, she could fork out her money to buy some. Otherwise, why had they even bothered calling Qiao Nan in the first place?

"Mom, Mom. Don't go! Let's discuss it further. You can help me." Qiao Zijin tugged on Ding Jiayi's clothes. "Mom, Qiao Nan's already treating me like this. Don't you think you should help me and keep Qiao Nan in line?"

"Hehehe. I was thinking of doing that but I'm not an omnipotent mother. It's been almost two years since she's stopped listening to me. If she refuses to help you, there'll be no point in my agreeing to help you either. Stop calling me. No matter how many times you call me, there's still nothing I can do. That wretched girl already had such a terrible temper before getting married. Now that she's become the chief's wife, there's no way she'll bother about me or listen to whatever I say."

She had never even been the wife of a battalion commander, but Qiao Nan had directly become a chief's wife. Given the change in both their statuses, it was hard to say who would have to listen to the other.

Qiao Zijin gritted her teeth. Qiao Nan was too cruel and heartless to refuse to acknowledge her only sister. But Qiao Zijin was also infuriated at Ding Jiayi for being such a useless mother. In the past, Ding Jiayi had been quite successful as a mother. As long as Ding Jiayi said something, Qiao Nan would never dare to refuse. If only she had managed to keep that up until now.

"Mom, shouldn't we use some special means to let Qiao Nan understand that she's done wrong and that we're angry at her?" Since Qiao Nan had nothing to fear now, it was difficult to deal with her. The best way to deal with her was to find her weakness so that they could instill some fear in her. That way, it would definitely be easier to deal with her.

"What special means?" Was there such a thing? Why had she not known about this before?

"Mom, she's still your daughter and you're her mom. Think about how heartless she was when she left, refusing to acknowledge us or even having anything to do with the Qiao family. But even when

you didn't visit her when she almost died during childbirth, she's still filial enough to you during the new year. Just tell Qiao Nan that you'll not forgive her unless she buys me a decent set of clothes. Otherwise, we'll return your set of clothes to her too."

"Mom, didn't I get a call just now? It was from my high school classmate. They said that they'll be organizing a gathering on the fifth day of the new year. I have to attend it. I'm sure you know how well-to-do those families are. I can't afford to dress shabbily there or I'll be an embarrassment to our family. It's just as well. Doesn't Qiao Nan owe me a set of clothes? Just get Qiao Nan to buy me a set of clothes that's suitable for my gathering. At my age, it's better to save money. I'll just wear the same outfit for the new year as well as for the get-together. I don't need her to get me two different outfits. After all, she's a mother too. I'll just treat it as though I'm helping her save money as an aunt so that she can spend it on outfits for the three children."

How nice of her! Not only would she help Qiao Nan save some money, but she would even give Qiao Nan the chance to buy more clothes for the triplets from the money that she had saved!

Throughout her life, she had always treated herself the best. But now, she was even willing to sacrifice her own interests for Qiao Nan and the triplets' sakes. Qiao Zijin felt that she had already gone above and beyond. Where else would Qiao Nan find a sister better than her? There was no way the triplets would ever have a better aunt either!

"If she doesn't buy you clothes, I should return mine as well?" There were question marks in Ding Jiayi's eyes, and her tone was hesitant. Why would she have to return her clothes if Zijin didn't have any new clothes? That made no sense!

Qiao Zijin dragged Ding Jiayi to sit down. "Mom, don't worry. You're Qiao Nan's mom. She won't dare to not give you new clothes! This is just a means of threatening Qiao Nan. You're my mother. How could I let you have no new clothes for the new year? Don't worry. As long as you listen to me, not only will you have new clothes, but so will I! Then, our family of four will be able to celebrate the new year joyfully!"

Qiao Zijin's words made it seem as though she was the one paying for Ding Jiayi's clothes and that this whole matter had nothing to do with Qiao Nan.

Qiao Zijin's ideas were warped and distorted but Ding Jiayi saw nothing wrong with them. "What if she really gets angry and refuses? What if she really takes my clothes back?"

If she were to send Qiao Nan's clothes back, would Zijin buy her an even better and more expensive set of clothes?

“That’s impossible. Mom, you’re overthinking it. She won’t dare to do it.” How could Qiao Nan dare to take back the clothes and not care about how her mother celebrated the new year? If Qiao Nan was truly that heartless, would this set of clothes even have appeared? Her mom was letting her imagination run wild and worrying unnecessarily. It was just a set of clothes, but her mom was getting overly anxious over it.

No wonder Qiao Nan had transformed into a different person over the past year, so much so that her mom was no longer able to control her. Perhaps, the person who had changed was not Qiao Nan but her mom.

Ding Jiayi dared not say whether Qiao Nan would dare to do such a thing. After all, Qiao Nan had undergone a drastic change. As such, there was no way Ding Jiayi could predict Qiao Nan’s next move or reaction. “Wait a minute. Let me think this through.”

Chapter 2228: Wrong Decision

After about five minutes of contemplation, Ding Jiayi looked up at Qiao Zijin, who smiled at her. “Mom, have you come to a realization?”

She was all too clear about the kind of person her mom was. If her mom was truly an intelligent person, there was no way Qiao Nan would have dropped out of school for her to become a university graduate instead. Her mom’s mind was too simple, and unfortunately, her mom hadn’t even managed her own life well in the past two years. That was why Qiao Nan had been able to break free of her chains and escape the family.

Had she come to a realization? Not really.

But Ding Jiayi had a question that she had to get an answer to. “Zijin, let’s forget about everything else. Let me ask you. If I really follow your plan and threaten Qiao Nan that I’ll return the clothes that she bought for me if she doesn’t buy you any, what will we do if she refuses?”

There was no way a simple phone call would solve the matter.

“That’s easy. I’ll get a courier to send the clothes back to Qiao Nan for her so that she can see for herself that you’re being serious. If you don’t do that, she’ll think that you’re just threatening her

with empty threats. Mom, don't worry. I'll pay for the courier. You won't have to fork out a cent." There was no way the cost of a courier could compare with the cost of an entire outfit that cost up to ten thousand yuan. She wouldn't lose out anyway.

It was going to be the new year soon, and the normal postal services were about to stop their operations. Only courier services and express delivery services were still available. At the thought of that, Qiao Zijin felt the pinch. If they had done this at any other time of the year, it would have cost her ten yuan at the very most with the normal postal service. But courier services and express delivery services would cost her several times more than that!

"We're really sending it back?"

"Of course!" Otherwise, Qiao Nan would never admit defeat.

Ding Jiayi frowned. "What if Qiao Nan accepts the parcel and keeps the clothes instead of returning them to me?" The question was now back to the start. What if Qiao Nan decided not to give Ding Jiayi the clothes that she had already bought just because she was unwilling to buy Qiao Zijin clothes? What would Ding Jiayi do then?

Ding Jiayi was different from Qiao Zijin. Qiao Zijin had nothing to begin with, so the worst result was just maintaining the status quo, which was having nothing at all.

As for Ding Jiayi?

Initially, Ding Jiayi had already enjoyed some benefits. If Ding Jiayi were to infuriate Qiao Nan for Qiao Zijin's sake, Qiao Nan's attitude toward her might go back to how it had been a few months ago, when they had not even had any contact. Then, Ding Jiayi would be at a great loss.

Ding Jiayi had never owned such expensive or good clothes before today. Even when Qiao Zijin had been Chen Jun's wife and the Chen family's daughter-in-law, she had never gotten the chance to wear such expensive clothes.

It didn't matter whether she was being superficial. If she didn't have the opportunity or ability, then so be it. But Qiao Nan had already sent it right to her doorstep. It would be ridiculous to give up the opportunity just like that.

That was why Ding Jiayi wanted to know what Qiao Zijin's attitude and plan were if that really happened. She got her hands on something that she had never gotten from Qiao Zijin all thanks to her most hated daughter. Ding Jiayi felt that she was already a very good mother for treating Qiao Zijin the same as before even after Qiao Zijin had angered her so many times before.

But everyone was selfish. She wasn't counting on Qiao Zijin providing her with such nice things. It didn't seem right to lose this rare opportunity to enjoy such benefits from Qiao Nan for Qiao Zijin's sake.

Ding Jiayi's idea was simple. If Qiao Zijin was willing to make up for everything that Qiao Nan took back, Ding Jiayi would be willing to unconditionally stand by Qiao Zijin's side and support her. After all, that would prove that she had not been wrong and that Qiao Zijin was indeed a filial daughter, after all.

Of course, if Qiao Zijin refused, she would still be her favorite daughter. But she wouldn't foolishly give up her own interests since Qiao Zijin wouldn't benefit in the end either. If they kept mum, at least she would still have a new set of clothes.

If she wore the clothes that Qiao Nan sent her, she would save Qiao Zijin some money, at the very least. It was the new year and Qiao Nan had bought outfits for her parents. What had Qiao Zijin done? Instead of both of them being down on luck, it was better for her to enjoy what Qiao Nan had given her. Even Qiao Nan probably knew that she would still prefer Qiao Zijin more even though she was wearing clothes from Qiao Nan.

"Mom, she won't do that. Believe me. Qiao Nan won't dare to do that." Qiao Zijin was reluctant to answer that question. She was no fool and she understood that her mom was trying to force her to say that she would make up for whatever clothes Qiao Nan refused to return.

How ridiculous!

If it had not been for her mom's incompetence, her dad would never have made it to the capital, and neither would she have wasted three thousand six hundred yuan on bus tickets. She was still feeling the pinch from that sum. The biggest problem was that the set of clothes that Qiao Nan had bought for her mom cost much more than three thousand six hundred yuan!

She wasn't as easily bullied as Qiao Nan and would never spend so much money buying clothes for old people. What was the point of buying expensive clothes for people of her parents' age? Who would be able to tell how expensive those clothes were when they wore them? It was more than

enough for the elderly to have enough to eat and to have enough rest. It was an utter waste to spend so much on expensive clothes for them.

At the mention of this, Qiao Zijin hated Qiao Nan the most. The money was Qiao Nan's. She had saved her money by not buying Qiao Zijin a set of clothes but had spent so much on an old lady like Ding Jiayi. She must be retarded! She was spending money in all the wrong places!

Shouldn't Qiao Nan have bought her an expensive set of clothes? Why did it matter to someone of her mom's age? Besides, she was sure that if she had received the clothes instead of her mom, she would easily have been able to cajole her mom so that her mom wouldn't flare up at Qiao Nan or even rebuke Qiao Nan.

It would still be two sets of clothes: hers and her dad's. The family of three would have been happy all the same.. But now that she had only bought clothes for her parents, there was only one person who was happy while the other two were upset. Qiao Nan was really foolish for choosing the second option instead of the first even though she would have spent the same amount of money!

Chapter 2229: Not Caring

Qiao Zijin only went on about how Qiao Nan would never do that but refused to promise a single thing. Seeing how Qiao Zijin had spared no effort in trying to convince her, Ding Jiayi, who had remained silent all along, finally reacted.

She silently returned to her room and took every single piece of clothing that Qiao Nan had sent over for the new year.

Qiao Zijin, who had followed behind Ding Jiayi, smiled at that sight. She knew that her mom would definitely listen to her. Qiao Nan had gone overboard this time, and they had to teach her a lesson. In the future, Qiao Nan would know to buy clothes for each and every one of them without leaving a single person out.

Wait a minute!

"Mom, what are you doing with that pair of scissors?" She had only asked her mom to return the clothes to Qiao Nan to scare her. She had never asked her mom to cut up the clothes! It would be such a pity to cut up such expensive clothes!

If she didn't cut them up, Qiao Nan would only have to purchase an extra set of clothes. However, once her mom did something so extreme, Qiao Nan would have to purchase two extra sets of clothes. Qiao Zijin was afraid that Qiao Nan would decide to ignore her mom in that case. Then, even she wouldn't have anything to wear.

The snipping of the scissors was heard, but unlike Qiao Zijin's expectations, Ding Jiayi had not cut up the clothes. Instead, she had simply cut away the packaging and tags on the clothes.

It was only then that Qiao Zijin relaxed. "Mom, you're so smart! No wonder people say that nothing beats experience. Why didn't I think of that? If the tag was still there, Qiao Nan would be able to get a refund for them. But now that they're gone, the sellers would surely not accept them anymore. I've seen her mother-in-law before, and she's much older than you. These clothes are suitable for you but not for her mother-in-law. She wouldn't be able to give these clothes to her mother-in-law."

Besides, Qiao Nan's mother-in-law was a chief's wife. Qiao Nan could never use clothes that had been rejected by others to try to please her mother-in-law unless she no longer wanted to be part of the Zhai family.

Since there was no way of getting a refund on such expensive clothes, and neither would she be able to get a refund, it would be a waste to keep them at home. In that case, she would have no choice but to send them back to her mom. Then, Qiao Nan would have no choice but to listen to them and to send Qiao Zijin's set of clothes over as well.

Humph! She wanted to fight it out with her? She stood no chance at all. Why was Qiao Nan still so ignorant about the fact even though she was already forty and was even a mom herself?

Qiao Zijin was still rejoicing inwardly when she saw Ding Jiayi switch on the tap to soak her clothes in water, preparing to wash them. Of course, that excluded the coat.

Qiao Zijin frowned. "Mom, there's no need to go through so much trouble. Don't wash them. We aren't wearing them anyway. Qiao Nan won't be able to get a refund once you cut off the tags. It doesn't matter whether you wash them." It was winter and even with sunlight, the temperatures weren't very high. If they were to wash and dry these clothes, it would take at least another two to three days.

Qiao Zijin wanted to receive her set of clothes from Qiao Nan as soon as possible so that she could wash and iron them and wear them to her high school gathering. This process of washing and drying would waste two to three days. With the time Qiao Nan needed to buy a new set of clothes,

as well as the time for the parcels to be sent around, she might not even receive the clothes in time for her get-together! Then, she would have to spend her own money to get new clothes!

With that in mind, Qiao Zijin rushed to snatch the clothes over from Ding Jiayi. “Thankfully, they’re not entirely drenched yet. It’ll dry faster if we use a hairdryer. Mom, don’t bother washing them. Let’s just send them to Qiao Nan. Don’t worry. My plan will definitely work. There won’t be any accidents.”

Ding Jiayi had allowed Qiao Zijin to continue with her monologue while she had not spoken a single word. Seeing that Qiao Zijin was about to snatch her clothes away, Ding Jiayi tugged at them and submerged them all in the water. She knew her daughter the best. It was winter and the water was icy cold. Qiao Zijin had never dipped her hands in water in winter, except during baths and washing her hands.

Of course, once the clothes were entirely submerged in the water, Qiao Zijin’s hand stopped in midair. “Mom...” What did that mean?

What could that possibly mean?

Ding Jiayi remained silent while pouring detergent into the tub. “You’re right. These clothes came directly from the factory assembly line. They’re not clean. I’d better wash them before wearing them.” She wasn’t going to return these clothes. She was going to wear them herself.

Even though Ding Jiayi was not in the habit of buying new clothes, she knew that the prices of clothes were sky-high, especially during the new year. If Qiao Nan refused to care about her and chose to burn these clothes instead of conceding, she wouldn’t have any new clothes to wear for the new year. Then, should she let others laugh at her? Or should she waste money to puff herself up?

Ding Jiayi could not bear to spend any more money since she didn’t have much to begin with. She already had a set of clothes with her. Besides, many of her neighbors had already seen it and even praised her for it. There was no way Ding Jiayi wanted to send this set of clothes back. She would wear them!

Was it too much for her to wear slightly better clothes for the new year after she had done so much to raise two daughters? Of course not! As for that little dispute between her daughters, she had already done what she could. What she couldn’t resolve was beyond her.

Question marks appeared in Qiao Zijin's eyes and she stared at her mom, who washed the new clothes quickly before transferring them to the washing machine. Seeing that things were not going according to plan, Qiao Zijin rushed up to Ding Jiayi. "Mom, what does this mean?"

Her mom didn't seem to be following her plan to return the clothes to Qiao Nan so that Qiao Nan would be forced to get her a set of clothes.

Ding Jiayi replied as she hung her clothes up to dry, "Zijin, I'm already so old. I don't wish for a good life anymore. But now that it's right in front of me, I should enjoy it. No matter how much money you have, I've never gotten to wear such expensive clothes. You should consider my perspective too. How many more years do I have left to live? It's not too much for me to enjoy what little I have now. I'll help you with whatever I can. But there are things I can't help you with."

Chapter 2230: Refusing

"Mom, are you blaming me for not having the ability to let you wear such nice clothes? Now that Qiao Nan has given you this opportunity, she's become the apple of your eye?" Just because of these broken rags, her mom had followed in her dad's footsteps and was now on Qiao Nan's side, abandoning her!

"No, you're still my favorite daughter. But I can't deny that I've gotten old, just like how I can't deny that I put my hopes in the wrong daughter. Perhaps, that wretched girl and I are not fated. Ever since she was young, she's always listened to me, and I've never needed to worry about her. Still, I've never liked her. As for you, you've always created trouble for me but I've always been happy cleaning up your messes. People are really fools at times."

Had she suddenly taken a liking to Qiao Nan?

No. Because she had had poor judgment when she had been younger, she had made a wrong choice in picking between her daughters. That was exactly why she hated Qiao Nan even more. She couldn't help but wonder what would have happened if Qiao Nan had been more self-aware, performed worse, and failed in life because her own biological mother didn't like her.

In that case, Qiao Zijin's failures would be compared to Qiao Nan, who would be an even greater failure. That way, Qiao Zijin would look rather promising, at the very least.

Speaking of Qiao Nan, she was truly not considerate at all. Now that Qiao Nan was living a good life, there were many who mocked her for choosing not to dote on such a promising daughter and choosing to dote on a useless one instead.

As such, there was no way she could ever like a daughter like that.

Ding Jiayi knew that even if Qiao Nan became outstanding and married well, she would be upset because it would feel as though Qiao Nan was getting revenge on her by living well. On the other hand, if Qiao Nan were to turn out the way she had expected and be a failure in life, not only would she not pity Qiao Nan, but she would look down on Qiao Nan even more because of that since she had already predicted that Qiao Nan would amount to nothing.

Therefore, the problem lay not in Qiao Nan but in her own heart.

Ding Jiayi had lived freely her whole life and had been stubborn and willful about her daughter, Qiao Nan. She didn't have many more years to live, so why would she suddenly change her attitude and tone out of the blue and try to suck up to her daughter, Qiao Nan, out of twenty years' worth of guilt?

She would never do such a thing.

Now that the topic of Qiao Nan had been brought up, Ding Jiayi naturally had to deal with Qiao Zijin. Leaving aside the differences in her daughters' lives, it was only because her younger daughter was living well that her elder daughter had been envious.

Initially, if Qiao Nan had truly left Ding Jiayi in the lurch, Ding Jiayi would definitely have fallen into a crisis in her old age since she would have neither her daughter by her side nor any money. Then, she would try to cling on to anything she could for a sense of security.

But Qiao Nan was not a person like that.

Qiao Nan had never shortchanged her parents, and she gave whatever was necessary. Of course, if Ding Jiayi and Qiao Dongliang had had a better relationship with Qiao Nan, their lives would have been even better. The problem was that Qiao Nan's identity was different now. Even though Qiao Nan treated them very averagely, Qiao Dongliang's and Ding Jiayi's lives were much better than an average old person's.

Having toiled for her whole life, Ding Jiayi was exhausted too. Now, she no longer needed to work but she was still able to live better than many others. So, why would she not enjoy that? Did it make any sense for her to give up even the last bit of her good fortune?

After comparing her life with others', Ding Jiayi finally felt a little satisfied and stopped demanding anything. Her elder daughter treated her in this manner, while her younger daughter was like her enemy. If she went any further, there was no way she would be able to continue living.

Qiao Zijin felt miserable. In the past, her mom had always listened to everything she said and never rebuked her. It was only because her mom thought that Qiao Nan had made a name for herself that Qiao Nan would be able to better her mom's life. That was why her mom no longer cared about her and was now standing on Qiao Nan's side.

Money was such a useful tool. It could make her mom, who had pampered her for her whole life, do such a thing.

Qiao Zijin forced out a smile. "Mom, don't do this. Believe it or not, I'll have money very soon too. Qiao Nan bought you clothes that cost a few thousand yuan. Once I have money, I'll buy you clothes that cost tens of thousands of yuan! Mom, if you don't help me now and keep siding with Qiao Nan, I might not even forgive you when you regret your actions once I have money."

It was not that she was truly worse than Qiao Nan. She had the chance to get rich too. In less than a month's time, she would have money. She would just have to wait until she returned to the capital.

Qiao Zijin, who stubbornly thought that she would definitely become rich, completely forgot that this entire matter depended on whether Qiao Nan agreed to such terms. Without Qiao Nan's cooperation and help, Qiao Zijin's dreams of getting rich would remain as nothing more than a dream.

"Is that so?" Ding Jiayi didn't fly into a rage. "Alright. If that's true, I'm happy for you. I've always thought of you as my best daughter all these years. If you make a name for yourself, it'll prove that I didn't make the wrong choice at that time. As for those clothes that cost tens of thousands of yuan, it's fine. If you're not willing to give them to me, you can keep them for yourself. After all, you have more time ahead of you than I do. Of course, I'll accept them gladly if you want to be filial to me and thank me for raising you all these years once you become rich."

Ding Jiayi smiled faintly. She was not even rich yet, but she was already threatening not to be filial to her once she got rich. This was the daughter whom she had been doting on all these years. There was nothing Ding Jiayi could do about Qiao Zijin.

No matter what, Ding Jiayi had much more life experience than Qiao Zijin. Although she was infuriated by Qiao Zijin's words, she did not lash out and say that Qiao Zijin would never get rich or that she had the backbone to refuse Qiao Zijin's filial piety.

Refusing it?

Why would she refuse it?

Over the past forty years, she had spared no effort and money on her daughter, Qiao Zijin. She had devoted half her life to Qiao Zijin! Even if Qiao Zijin were to buy clothes that cost more than tens of thousands of yuan, she would still be able to wear them with no shame at all.