

RTAMM 241

Chapter 241: Moving Out

“...”

“...”

Seeing that Qiao Zijin’s attitude toward Qiao Nan and Zhai Hua was vastly different, both Zhai Hua and Miao Jing could not help but frown and purse their lips into a thin line.

Zhu Yan expressed her displeasure upfront and said sarcastically, “Why don’t you just admit that there’s something wrong with your brain? Alright, stop embarrassing yourself and go back home. Remember to cover your face with a cloth when you go out next time. I’m sure you do not want to embarrass yourself further.”

Her sister did not do anything wrong, yet Qiao Zijin cried as if their parents were dead and insisted that Qiao Nan had stolen things.

Although Zhai Hua was not deliberate, it was her fault for overestimating Qiao Zijin and embarrassing Qiao Zijin in front of everyone. However, not only did Qiao Zijin not blame Zhai Hua, but she also spoke up for her in front of Miao Jing.

There must be something seriously wrong with her to do such foolish things.

Miao Jing was not Ding Jiayi. She was Zhai Hua’s mother. She would know if her daughter did it on purpose or not. Miao Jing only wanted to preserve some dignity for everyone and did not really mean to blame Zhai Hua.

Qiao Zijin was in no position to intervene on Zhai Hua’s behalf at all.

Qiao Zijin did not even treat her own sister with such good temper and kind intentions!

To put it bluntly, Qiao Zijin was particularly good to Zhai Hua on account of the fact that she was from the Zhai family which was influential in the city.

“Nan Nan, we will help you move the books.” Some of the uncles and aunties in the quad could not tolerate the way Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi tried their best to please Miao Jing. They helped pick up Qiao Nan’s books, dusted off the dirt, and stacked them nicely. They also took the initiative to move them back to the Qiao’s residence.

“Thank you.” Qiao Nan could not be bothered with Qiao Zijin’s and Ding Jiayi’s shameless and disgraceful ways.

With the help of the uncles and aunties, Qiao Nan managed to move everything back to the Qiao’s residence in a single trip. “Thank you, uncles and aunties. Do all of you want to have a cup of tea before leaving?”

“It’s okay. It’s getting late, and we have to go to work. Qiao Nan, you are different from your sister. You must study hard and make a mark for yourself.” Otherwise, Nan Nan would only be bullied in this family.

“Thank you, uncle. I understand.”

After sending them off, Qiao Nan let out a long sigh. Her shoulders drooped, feeling tired to the bones.

She had returned the three hundred yuan to Brother Zhai. She would have to think of ways to make some money in a short period of time. After what happened today, she would not stay with her mother anymore. She could live alone and support herself.

“Dad, what’s with this?” Qiao Nan was thinking of ways to break the news to Qiao Dongliang when she came in and realized that there was a bag full of clothes in the living room. “Dad, these are your clothes. Do you intend to move back to Mom’s room?”

Qiao Nan’s face dropped. Now, she was even more determined to move out of the house. What somebody did not see could not hurt them.

“I will help you bring it over.” Qiao Nan took a deep breath and reached for the bag.

Qiao Dongliang shook his head. “No, I am not moving back to the room I used to stay in. Nan Nan, this bag is for you. You should take your clothes, and most importantly, your books.”

“For me? Dad, what’s wrong with you?” Why would her father give her a bag and ask her to bring her clothes? What did he want to do?

“Nan Nan, we are moving out.” Qiao Dongliang said plainly.

“Moving out? Where are we moving to?”

“Don’t worry. Dad has found a place, and I have called for a tricycle as well. No matter how many books you have, we will have someone help us move them to the new place.”

“If we move out, what about this house?”

“This house will not go empty. Your mom and sister will stay here.” Qiao Dongliang had a reluctant smile on his face as he patted Qiao Nan on the head. In fact, he should have made this decision long ago—the moment Ding Jiayi stole the money Nan Nan earned and bought clothes for Zijin half a month ago.

Fortunately, it had only been less than a month since then. It was not too late to move now.

“Dad, you ...” Qiao Nan was surprised. Did this mean that her father wanted to separate with their mother and Qiao Nan would stay with him?!

“Alright, you should get your clothes.”

“Dad, actually you don’t need to...” Since her father did not intend to divorce her mother, it would be meaningless to stay in separate houses.

“If I don’t move out, then must I let you stay outside by yourself? I am worried about you. I have to take care of you.” Qiao Dongliang smiled bitterly. Ding Jiayi created these troubles. He had to help clean up the mess.

Qiao Nan could not help but sigh again. “Dad, I have grown up. I can live alone. Dad, to tell you the truth, I really want to find a place for myself. If you move in with me, Mom will definitely find troubles with me.”

Since she could not mess with her mother, the only thing she could do was to hide away from her.

“Ignore her. The reason why I want to move is not solely because of you. Given your mom’s personality, I can’t live with her anymore. If I continue to live with her, we will only end up quarreling every single day, which is meaningless.” Qiao Nan was tired. Qiao Dongliang was exhausted as well.

He never knew that it was so difficult to communicate with Ding Jiayi.

Every time he tried to reason with Ding Jiayi, it was just like playing the lute to a cow. He felt powerless, helpless.

“I don’t want to argue with your mom anymore. Since things have gotten to this stage, moving out is our best option.” Qiao Dongliang had this idea of moving out long ago, and he finally made up his mind today. “Nan Nan, the car is coming soon. You should hurry up to pack.”

“Dad, it’s good that you have thought it through.” Since Qiao Dongliang sounded very determined, Qiao Nan did not persuade him any further and hurried to pack her clothes.

“So fast? Do you only have these few pieces of clothes?” Seeing that Qiao Nan’s bag was only half full, Qiao Dongliang felt sorry toward her daughter. “It’s okay. I will buy more clothes for you in the future.”

Nan Nan would always wear Zijin’s hand-me-downs. She would only have two sets of clothes to wear interchangeably for every season. There were not many clothes for her to bring to the new house.

Qiao Nan smiled confidently. “Dad, there’s no need for that. I have the ability to earn money. I will earn money to not only buy new clothes for myself but also for you!” She could work and support herself and her father. She did not need others to provide for her!

“Old Qiao, I am here.” A middle-aged man rode a tricycle and stopped at the door of their small courtyard.

“Who are you? Why are you looking for Old Qiao?” Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin finally came back from the Zhai’s residence with a defeated look on their faces. When Ding Jiayi saw the tricycle in front of their house, Ding Jiayi asked in an unruly manner, “Do you know that your tricycle is blocking our front door? You cannot park them here. Move it to the side now. Believe it or not, I will only need to make a phone call to get someone to tow your car away!”

“Are you sister-in-law?” The man asked in a mocking tone.

Chapter 242: Would Not Change

“Sure enough, knowing a person by their reputation is not as good as meeting them face to face.” A guest should be treated with politeness, yet Ding Jiayi’s attitude was unwelcoming. The wife that Old Qiao married was more unreasonable than what he heard. She did not know basic courtesy at all.

“Old Yang, I am sorry for the wait.” Qiao Dongliang heard sounds at the door and came out of the house. He gave Ding Jiayi a cold glance and moved his belongings onto Old Yang’s tricycle. “I am sorry for making you run this trip. It’s been hard on you.”

“It’s okay. Let me help you.” Old Yang came down from the tricycle and went into the Qiao’s residence. “You only have these few pieces of belongings?” It seemed that Qiao Dongliang did not have much to move to the new house.

“Yes, that’s all.”

“Okay. Old Qiao, you can take a rest. I can move them by myself. Where’s Nan Nan?”

Right then, Qiao Nan came out of the room with her bag. “Uncle, how are you?”

“You must be Nan Nan. You are very pretty-looking. Old Qiao, you are blessed with such a good daughter.” Old Yang gave Qiao Dongliang a thumbs-up. “Nan Nan, what else do you have? I will give you a hand.”

“These are everything that I have.”

“Okay, leave it to me.” Old Yang moved several of their bags at a time. When he lifted Qiao Nan’s bag which contained her clothes, he was a little surprised at how light the bag was. He had thought that as a young lady, she would have more clothes.

“Dongliang, you... what are you doing? And you, put down our belongings right now. Let go!” Ding Jiayi, who entered the house, panicked and rushed to snatch Qiao Dongliang’s bag from Old Yang.

“Dad, aren’t those your and Nan Nan’s belongings? Why is a stranger taking your belongings?” Qiao Zijin looked stiff. There was not a hint of a smile on her face.

A thought came to her mind. She ran to Ding Jiayi’s side and held on to her clothes.

Old Yang was a man, and he was stronger than Ding Jiayi. There was no way that she could snatch the bags away from him.

Qiao Dongliang pulled at Ding Jiayi while Old Yang brought out their bags and placed them on the tricycle. Seeing that the father and daughter did not have many belongings and his tricycle had more than enough space for their bags, Old Yang could not help but sigh and shake his head. Old Qiao must have had a difficult time living with a woman who wasted their money away.

“Dongliang, Dongliang, y-you... what are you doing?” Ding Jiayi’s eyes turned red. She was scared out of her wits.

“Since you can’t stand the sight of Nan Nan, Nan Nan and I will move out of the house. In the future, Zijin and you will stay in this house. Both of you can create havoc for all you want, I will not be bothered.” Qiao Dongliang said coldly.

“No, no, I didn’t say that I cannot stand the sight of the wretched... I didn’t say that I cannot stand the sight of Qiao Nan. I am the one who gave birth to her. Even though I may be fierce to her, I love her dearly deep down inside! Qiao Nan, in all fairness, have I been good to you? Did I provide you with food and clothes?” Ding Jiayi grabbed Qiao Dongliang’s hands, similar to how Qiao Zijin pulled at her clothes.

Qiao Dongliang shrugged off her hands, refusing to be in contact with Ding Jiayi. “Stop it. Don’t force Nan Nan. When you demand that she be fair and tell the truth, you should do the same first. If you loved Nan Nan, would you accuse her of being a thief who stole from the Zhai’s residence? You also made sure that you brought the three gossipmongers from the quad with you! Ding Jiayi, do

you think that we are all fools and you are the only one who is clever? You are downright shameless to say that you love Nan Nan. Did you even do a single thing that is for the good of Nan Nan? Nan Nan, let's go."

"Okay." Qiao Nan, who remained silent, carried her schoolbag and walked outside.

"No, I won't let you go. Dongliang, you can't go. If you are gone, what will happen to Zijin and me?" Ding Jiayi sobbed, her face covered in tears and snots. She was a terrible sight to behold. "Dongliang, don't be angry. Don't leave us. If you have anything that you are upset with, tell me and I will change."

"Change?" Qiao Dongliang sneered. "Do you believe you could? Anyway, I don't believe it."

After he had called the police last time, though Ding Jiayi said that she had learned her mistakes, she reverted to her old ways in less than a month!

Thinking of what happened this morning, Qiao Dongliang shut his eyes and thought to himself. Ding Jiayi was hopeless!

"Dad, don't go." Qiao Zijin was in tears as well. She refused to let go of his hands. "Dad, I am your daughter too. Why do you take Nan Nan with you and leave me here? Dad, are you abandoning me? I am your favorite daughter and you doted on me! I... I have not done anything wrong. Dad, don't leave me behind. Dad, don't go. Don't ignore Mom and me."

Qiao Dongliang's heart ached at the sight of Qiao Zijin who had burst into tears and turned hoarse from crying. Ever since she was little, Zijin had been leading a pampered life. Everything went well for her. He had never seen her in such despair. As parents, how could Qiao Dongliang not feel the pain?

As soon as Qiao Dongliang softened his attitude, Qiao Zijin tightened her grip on Qiao Dongliang's arms and cried out loudly. "Dad, Mom and I can't live without you. Dad, don't leave. Dad, I won't let you go!"

Qiao Nan kept her silence. With her schoolbag on her back, she tightened her grip on the straps of the bag and turned to walk out of the Qiao's residence, leaving the three of them to themselves. "Uncle Yang, could you please move my dad's belongings down? My dad is not leaving. I will go now. Could you send me to the place my dad has rented?"

The reason why her father wanted to leave with her could be that he knew that after what happened today, it was unlikely that she would stay in this house again. He would be worried if she was to live alone. Hence, he decided to leave with her.

As long as she stayed in the place her father had rented, he could visit her when he was worried about her. In that case, her father would be assured that she was doing well.

“Your dad is not leaving with you? Nan Nan, are you going alone? Is it appropriate?” Old Yang asked in surprise.

“It’s okay. I can go alone.” With her gone, this house might be more harmonious.

“Nan Nan, are you sure to leave your dad’s belongings behind?” Old Yang asked uncertainly.

“Yes.” With that, Qiao Nan decided to move the bags by herself. She took Qiao Dongliang’s bag of clothes from the tricycle and put it on the ground. When she left, her mother and Qiao Zijin would definitely move his belongings into the house right away. Her father would not even need to move it by himself.

“Dad!”

“Dongliang, don’t leave!”

All of a sudden, Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi shouted from inside the house. Qiao Dongliang walked out of the house steadfastly. “Nan Nan, why did you move my things down? Old Yang, let’s go now.”

“Scram! Both of you get out of my house right now! You are determined to tear our family apart!” A screaming Ding Jiayi dashed out of the house frantically. She raised her hand in a bid to hit Qiao Nan and Old Yang.

Chapter 243: Give the Both of You a Chance

“Both of you are scoundrels who are determined to wreck my family! Let me tell you, no way! This is my house, and these are our belongings. Let go! I won’t let you take away a single piece of clothing from my house!” Ding Jiayi dashed toward Qiao Nan and Old Yang as if she was mad. Her frantic behavior was similar to a patient who escaped from a mental hospital.

Old Yang was an outsider, and he had heard of Ding Jiayi’s bad deeds. Besides feeling surprised at being treated in such a manner, he did not care much.

However, when Old Yang heard that Ding Jiayi screamed at Qiao Nan and wanted to send her away as well, he could not tolerate her behavior anymore. “Old Qiao, should I send Nan Nan away first?”

“Sure, bring Nan Nan away.” Qiao Dongliang grabbed Ding Jiayi with one hand and told Qiao Nan calmly, “Nan Nan, you will go ahead with Uncle Yang to the rented place first.”

“Okay.” Qiao Nan found a seat on Old Yang’s tricycle without a hint of expression on her face.

There was no electric tricycle at the end of the 20th century. One had to pedal the tricycle by themselves. Old Yang pedaled the tricycle and left the quad. He could not help but sigh. Old Qiao had his hands full with such a chaotic situation at home.

As the old saying went, the husband of a virtuous wife seldom suffered misfortune. Old Qiao would have a lot of troubles in the future.

“Old Qiao, you can’t do this to me. I have been married to you for almost twenty years. I gave birth to two children and I took care of this family for you. Old Qiao, you can’t be so heartless. Think about it. If I did not marry you twenty years ago, would you be able to get yourself a wife? Would you have two daughters? I may not have any credits, but I had put in hard work. You can’t leave me when I am old and haggard!”

Ding Jiayi did not care about Qiao Nan leaving the house. She was only worried that Qiao Dongliang would leave her. She grabbed at his arm, refusing to let go.

“I wouldn’t be able to find a wife?” Qiao Dongliang was exasperated. “Ding Jiayi, do you think that you will be able to find a good man if you leave me? Back then, we just made do with each other. We don’t owe each other anything.”

“Dad, what about me?” Qiao Zijin pulled at Qiao Dongliang’s other hand. “Dad, don’t you want me anymore? I didn’t make any mistakes, Dad. You can’t be so unfair to me. Nan Nan is your daughter. Am I not your daughter, then? Dad, are you that heartless as to leave me behind? Do you really want me to be without a father?”

“Dongliang, I am wrong. I promise you this will not happen again. This is the last time. I will not act rashly anymore. I will definitely lead a down-to-earth life in the future and will not pick on Qiao Nan. Qiao Nan is my daughter. Actually, I really want the best for her. It’s just that I do not want her to go the wrong way. Dongliang, you have to understand. No mother will harm their daughter.”

“That’s right, Dad. You must not misunderstand Mom. She appears to be cold and aloof, but in fact, Mom is very concerned about Nan Nan. We are one family and must not keep secrets. If Nan Nan had made it clear to Mom in the first place, Mom would not have been suspicious and ended up doing the wrong things since her intentions were initially good. Dad, you can’t deny that Mom meant well!” Qiao Zijin cried her eyes out.

Qiao Zijin was terrified when she saw that Qiao Dongliang was about to leave with Qiao Nan.

She had thought that even if her father found out what happened, he would just scold her and give her mother the silent treatment—that it would not take long for things to pass.

It had not crossed Qiao Zijin’s mind that Qiao Dongliang would want to leave with Qiao Nan after what happened today.

“Zijin, let me ask you. Do you really mean what you said?” Qiao Dongliang took a deep breath and looked at Qiao Zijin. “Was what happened today Nan Nan’s fault? Zijin, what are your thoughts on this?”

“I...” Qiao Zijin’s face turned red, and she was lost for words. No matter how she answered this question, she would be in the wrong.

“Zijin, Nan Nan has always done better than you in terms of studies. Do you know why I listened to your mom and favored you over Nan Nan regardless? That was because I felt that you did better than Nan Nan in terms of human relations. It is okay to be not as good in your studies. When you enter society, it is more important to have people skills. Do you think that the people in the society will agree with what you said just now?”

“Dad...”

“Zijin, regardless of whether you really did not understand or pretended not to understand and said those words just now, I am really disappointed with you.” Qiao Dongliang sighed. He should have known that Zijin’s problem had something to do with her personality. It was not so much as being spoiled by her mother.

Was Ding Jiayi the sole mastermind behind what happened today?

If that was the case, why was Zijin at the scene as well? Why did she rush out early in the morning?

No matter what, Qiao Dongliang had to admit that both Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin knew about the incident that happened this morning. Both of them had wished that Nan Nan had done something wrong. They had planned for it to be known by everyone so that people would forget about the scandal—the day he reported to the police about the money that was stolen by Ding Jiayi.

At the thought of Qiao Zijin wanting to harm her own sister, Qiao Dongliang was not only disappointed but also felt a chill in his bones.

Qiao Zijin could watch by and sleep well while Ding Jiayi worked through the night to earn money for her tuition fees. She could complain to Ding Jiayi behind his back that she was disappointed in him—that the useless him had two daughters but could not afford to give them a good life.

Now, Zijin framed Nan Nan yet again for reasons unknown to him. Though the weather was still hot in September, Qiao Dongliang felt cold to the bones. He shivered as if he had broken out in cold sweats from the cold December weather.

They were a family of four, but Qiao Zijin did not care for anyone else besides herself.

To Zijin, did her family mean anything to her at all?

“Dad, that’s not the case. You... you misunderstood me.” Qiao Zijin was so anxious that she stuttered. “Dad, listen to me...” Qiao Zijin did not know what to say as well.

Should she say that she framed Qiao Nan on purpose or that after going through so many years of education, she could not tell right from wrong anymore? Should she say that Qiao Nan was in the wrong so that she did not have to bear any responsibility?

“Dongliang, please don’t do this. If you think that we are in the wrong, we will change. We will definitely change this time.” Ding Jiayi’s face had turned red from crying. She really did not want this family to fall apart. She did not want to lose Qiao Dongliang.

“Ding Jiayi, you may be willing to make a promise, but I can’t bring myself to believe you.” Qiao Dongliang shrugged off Ding Jiayi’s hands coldly. “You must take good care of Zijin. You do not need to bother yourself with Nan Nan. I will take good care of her. From today onward, the two of you can rest assured that Nan Nan will no longer be a hindrance to the both of you.”

“No, I will really change my ways. I will really change!” Ding Jiayi was terrified.

“Okay, I will give you another chance.”

Chapter 244: Dependent on Your Performance

As soon as Qiao Dongliang made that statement, both Qiao Zijin’s and Ding Jiayi’s faces lit up instantly. They could see a ray of hope.

“Dongliang, we have been husband and wife for so many years. I know that you won’t be so heartless. You have always favored and pampered Zijin. You will not abandon us.” Ding Jiayi quickly wiped the tears on her face. “Dongliang, Nan Nan has been taken away by that person just now. The four of us need to be together to make a complete family. Let’s fetch Nan Nan now.”

Ding Jiayi knew that Qiao Dongliang decided to leave this house because of Qiao Nan.

Therefore, as long as Qiao Nan lived alone by herself, Qiao Dongliang would move out to stay with her.

In order to keep Qiao Dongliang with her, no matter how much she disliked Qiao Nan, she must fetch Qiao Nan home and treat her well in the future. Otherwise, Qiao Nan would move out by herself and Qiao Dongliang would follow suit, leaving her husbandless, and Zijin fatherless.

“That’s right, Dad. Let’s bring Nan Nan back now.” Qiao Zijin said while trying to muster a smile.

Although she complained to her mother that her father was useless and could not provide a good life for his daughters, the moment Qiao Dongliang decided to move out of the house, she realized that Qiao Dongliang was very important to her. At the very least, she could not bear to lose her father at this point in time.

“Yes, let’s bring Nan Nan back. Dongliang, you can rest assured. I will take good care of Nan Nan. I... I will not be willful or self-centered. I will love and take care of Nan Nan. I will not do anything that will upset you in the future.”

Ding Jiayi had tried all means and ways to keep the family together. She would agree to do anything as long as the family could stay together.

Ding Jiayi consoled herself. After all, Qiao Nan was sixteen years old and was already a high school student.

Qiao Nan had to stay in the school dormitory and would only come back once every fortnight. When she attended college, she would probably come back twice a year only.

Ding Jiayi could endure for a few more years until Qiao Nan graduated from school. Afterward, she would find her a good husband and marry her off. By then, she would no longer need to stay under the same roof as Qiao Nan.

Initially, Ding Jiayi had thought that with Qiao Dongliang’s firm attitude, she would have to kneel and beg for his forgiveness. Otherwise, Qiao Dongliang might not have a change of heart. But since he had agreed to give them another chance, she would accede to any requests he made, even if it meant she had to fetch Qiao Nan personally.

“No need for that.” Qiao Dongliang stopped Ding Jiayi. “Judging from what you have done today, I don’t understand why you still have the cheek to face Nan Nan. Given your attitude, even though both of you say that you will change, I have doubts about it. ”

“I...” Ding Jiayi clenched her clothes tightly. She felt helpless and at a loss. “What do you want us to do then?”

No matter what outrageous acts she did, Ding Jiayi had never felt that she was in the wrong. She had no self-awareness.

Today, Qiao Dongliang was very firm in his attitude, pushing Ding Jiayi to her wit's end. Ding Jiayi had meant to soften her attitude so that Qiao Dongliang would be soft-hearted on them. However, no matter what she said or did, Qiao Dongliang was not appeased at all.

Ding Jiayi, who was already in her fifties, felt so helpless and clueless.

“Nan Nan will not come back. She is still young, and I can't leave her by herself. I have to take care of her.”

“So you still intend to abandon Zijin and me?” Ding Jiayi growled. “You said that you would give me another chance! Did you lie to me?!!”

“Mom...” Qiao Zijin wanted to stop her mother from shouting at her father. Her father was already in anger, yet her mother lost her temper at him. Did she want to drive him away? Was she out of her mind?

“I meant it when I said that I would give you another chance. You can rest assured that I am different from you. I will keep my promise, but that doesn't mean I am not leaving. Both of you should reflect on yourself as to how you have been treating Nan Nan. It's no use to insist that you will change your behavior. Actions speak louder than words. If Zijin and you really change for the better, I will come back with Nan Nan.”

“What if we can't meet your expectations?” Ding Jiayi could not help but ask.

“Mom!!!” Qiao Zijin wished that she could stop her mother from shooting off her mouth. Her mother seemed to be telling her father that she had never been in the wrong or let Nan Nan down, and that she would not change in the future.

Even if her mother really thought this way, she should not have said it out loud.

Did her mother want Qiao Dongliang to stay with them and bring back Qiao Nan or not?

Sure enough, Qiao Dongliang sneered. “If that's all you could say, then I will have to tell you that Nan Nan and I will never move back in this life. I have already said my piece. It's up to you as to

what will become of our family in the future.” With that, Qiao Dongliang shrugged off Ding Jiayi’s hands, took the bicycle out of the house, and cycled off.

In the end, Ding Jiayi could not make Qiao Dongliang stay. Qiao Zijin knew that her father would not listen to her pleas as well.

Both of them could only watch helplessly as Qiao Dongliang left the house. Right then, Ding Jiayi flared up at Zijin. “Zijin, I have told you long ago that the wretched girl is very evil. Whoever is close to her will be unlucky. We may have gotten the three hundred yuan back, but look at the mess we have gotten ourselves into! Now that your dad has moved out with Qiao Nan, what are we going to do? Ever since I married your dad, I have always been devoted to him and intended to be with him till I grow old. Now, I can’t even keep my husband by my side...”

Ding Jiayi cried when she thought of her mother’s curse on her.

Back when her mother arranged a marriage for Ding Jiayi, her mother took the bride price and spent one-third of the money on her son.

Even so, Ding Jiayi came up with ways to marry Qiao Dongliang with the help of Elder Lee.

One could tell that the Ding family was not well-to-do since they spent one-third of the bride price as soon as they received it. Since there was no way that Ding Jiayi could marry the man, her parents had to return the amount of money they had spent.

In order to return the money, it caused a strain to the already dire situation in the Ding family.

Her mother who hated Ding Jiayi to the core scolded Ding Jiayi that since she could disregard her parents for Qiao Dongliang, there would come a day when he would abandon her for his own reasons.

By that time, the Ding family would not offer her any help!

It had almost been twenty years. Ding Jiayi had led a happy life holding the purse strings in the Qiao family and ordering Qiao Nan around. She had long forgotten about the curse her mother said. She had lived as if she was the queen of the Qiao family.

Chapter 245: Fatherly Love

But after what happened today, her mother's words had been echoing in her mind like a curse.

“Mom, you only know to cry and complain, but can your tears bring Dad back to us? Mom, search your conscience. You were the one who asked me to come up with ways to help you reconcile with Dad so that he would go back to sharing a room with you. Mom, you were the one who came to me for ideas. How could you blame me for what happened today? You followed Qiao Nan and found your way to the Zhai family. You were the one who said that Qiao Nan must have stolen or picked up the key from somewhere. Besides, who was the one who mistook someone else for her own daughter? Everyone in the entire quad must be laughing at you for not recognizing your own daughter and lecturing someone else's daughter instead. Can you blame me for all of these? You cannot blame me for mistaking someone else for Qiao Nan.”

Qiao Zijin was boiling with anger as well.

She pretended to be nice in front of Qiao Dongliang, but she dropped all pretenses with Ding Jiayi.

“Mom, I admit that you are good to me. But you treated Nan Nan badly and that angered Dad. Whose fault is it if Dad wants to settle old scores with you? I did not instruct you to treat Nan Nan badly. Dad moved out with Nan Nan due to the series of things you did in the past. Dad wants to settle the old scores with you!”

With that, Qiao Zijin pushed all the blame onto Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi cried, feeling angry and embarrassed. “Yes, I treated Qiao Nan badly, but that's because I wanted to save everything good for you.”

“If so, why is that when you were pregnant with Qiao Nan and had the impression that the baby was a boy, you never spared me any good food?” Qiao Zijin asked a burning question that had always been on her mind.

“What are you talking about?” Ding Jiayi frowned, not remembering the incident Qiao Zijin was referring to.

Qiao Zijin sneered. Both she and Qiao Nan were Ding Jiayi's daughters. Her mother could not remember how badly she treated Qiao Nan and pushed the responsibility of what happened today to her. Of course, her mother would not remember how she had all the good food when she was pregnant with Qiao Nan and how she neglected Qiao Zijin back then.

Generally, people would not have a clear memory of what had happened when they were young, especially when they were about three or four years old.

But Qiao Zijin remembered very clearly what happened when she was a child, particularly the ten months when her mother was pregnant with Qiao Nan.

"Forget it. No matter how much we quarrel, Dad will not come back. Dad has said that he will decide based on our performance. If by pushing all the blame to me, Dad will change his mind and come back home, I will really have to hand it to you. Otherwise, instead of quarreling with me, it is more practical for you to find a way to let Dad know that you have changed for the better. I am going back to the room!"

Back when she was young, she knew that her mother was not reliable. However, she did not expect that after so many years, her mother, who had doted on her all those years, would remain so unreliable.

If she had known, she would have found an excuse to leave with her father.

Qiao Zijin pulled a long face and went back to her room. She opened the door with force, packed her things, and came out with her schoolbag. "Today is the weekend. I am going back to school. Give me some money for my meals!"

Ding Jiayi was stunned. She could taste bitterness in her mouth. "You... you are going back to school?"

Ding Jiayi came back to her senses. Today was the weekend. Qiao Zijin and Qiao Nan had to return to school. In other words, after Qiao Zijin left, she would be left alone in the house.

"I am obeying what you said: I have to study hard and strive to be successful in the future. After what happened, I can rely on no one but myself." Qiao Zijin curled the corners of her lips and sneered. "Give me some money, Mom. Now that you have driven Dad away, are you bent on starving me?"

“No.” Ding Jiayi hurriedly took out the money that she had set aside during this half a month for Qiao Zijin’s meals. She dared not lose her temper at Qiao Zijin anymore. In fact, from the meek and obedient way she behaved, she acted as if she was Qiao Zijin’s grandson. “Use them wisely.”

Looking at the money in the palm of her hand, Qiao Zijin twitched the corner of her lips. “With this miserly sum of money, I will have to starve if I do not use it wisely. All of you are the same.” If they were incapable of raising two kids, they should be contented with having one child.

After getting the money, Qiao Zijin had no wish to stay at home for another second. She walked out of the house and took a bus to school.

After getting on the bus, Qiao Zijin grabbed the bag in her arms, a gloomy look on her face. No one dared to sit next to her.

After a while, Qiao Zijin let out a long sigh and took out a book from her bag. This book was Qiao Zijin’s diary. Not only did she keep a record of the things that happened after she grew up, but she also wrote down what she remembered from when she was a child.

After reading through how Ding Jiayi treated her when she was pregnant with Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin’s face turned cold. She put the diary back into the bag without any emotion on her face.

“Nan Nan, all the things are here. What else should I help you with?” Old Yang had sent Qiao Nan to the place where Qiao Dongliang had rented. This place was situated very close to the high school that Qiao Nan was studying at. It was very convenient for Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan was particularly happy upon seeing the place.

“Your dad took a long time to find a place that is very near to your school. Your mom is muddleheaded, but your dad is a good father. Nan Nan, don’t be angry with your dad for what your mom did.” Old Yang gave a word of advice to Nan Nan.

“Uncle Yang, he is my dad. I will not do that. Besides, the other party is my mom. I know what to do.” Qiao Nan sounded happy when she mentioned Qiao Dongliang, but she was emotionless when she talked about Ding Jiayi.

“Uncle Yang, it is not easy to rent a place like this. Did my dad manage to find it in one day’s time?” Qiao Nan put down her things and asked unbelievably.

Her father seemed to have made preparations for moving out of their house. Unlike her, she had only made up her mind to move out after what happened in the morning.

Be it now or in the future, houses in the school districts were highly sought after.

It was impossible to rent a house in the school district within such short notice.

“No, your dad has been looking for this house for three months. Your dad started looking for a place to move in after your middle school examination.” Old Yang shook his head. “Your dad has been asking around since ages ago.”

Chapter 246: The Same Quiet Temperament

“He knew that many parents rent a place in the school district in order to save their children’s traveling time, a place with an atmosphere conducive to education and fewer distractions so that their children could focus on their studies. He thus sought the help of others to search for such a place. He was afraid that it will be hard to find one in the school district in the next two and a half years’ time, so he simply started to rent the place when you are still in the first year of high school. Your dad said that it’s better to plan ahead although it would cost more. Furthermore, it’s not easy to find a place somewhere in the school district. Even if he starts the search now, he may not be able to find one.”

“Both of you were in luck too. This room was available because one of your year two schoolmates suddenly transferred to another school.”

Upon hearing Old Yang’s words, Qiao Nan became silent.

She had always thought that, regarding her decision to study at Ping Cheng High School, her father would appreciate her for being sensible and considerate toward the parents at most. Never did she expect that she actually had an important place in her father’s heart. In addition, her father also felt bad that she had to attend Ping Cheng High School.

At least, her father did not spend so much effort when it came to Qiao Zijin's high school studies.

Renting a place near the school for three years was not cheap. Although it's the 20th century and the cost of goods was considered affordable, the amount was definitely substantial. With the three years' worth of rental expenses and some top-up, one might be able to buy a suite at the end of the 21st century.

Her father always advocated equal treatment between Qiao Zijin and her. Indeed, her father had been trying hard to carry out what he preached instead of paying lip service.

Qiao Nan initially thought that the matter of spending five thousand yuan for Qiao Zijin to study at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China was over and forgotten. However, at the sight of this rented apartment, she realized that Qiao Dongliang had never forgotten about it.

"Uncle Yang, don't worry. I know that Dad is good to me. He's different from my mom." Qiao Nan gave Old Yang a smile from the bottom of her heart. Her mood was instantly bright now despite the terrible experience in the morning. "Thank you so much for telling me all this, Uncle Yang. My dad has a quiet temperament, an enigma at times. He will not tell me anything even after doing certain things for my sake."

She obviously resembled her father in this aspect.

Old Yang scratched his head, embarrassed, and smiled awkwardly. "I'm glad that you don't blame me for being a busybody. Nan Nan, you're a smart child. Nothing escapes your eyes."

"No matter what, I'm very grateful to you, Uncle Yang." Qiao Nan pursed her lips and smiled shyly. She had a pure and childlike innocent look befitting a real sixteen-year-old kid. "Really, thank you so much, Uncle Yang. I mean it."

"Well... no, don't mention it." Old Yang was puzzled. He heard that children of Nan Nan's age had the most rebellious and eccentric character. They would do the reverse of what the adults told them to. However, Nan Nan's temperament was also eccentric in a sense. It was weirder, even, for she was way too sensible for someone of her age.

Old Yang did not understand fully why he received three big and serious thank-yous from Qiao Nan by putting in a few good words for Qiao Dongliang. What was she thanking him for?

“Uncle Yang, we have just reached the house and have not boiled any water. I’m so sorry that we have no drinking water to serve.” After Qiao Nan calmed down, she remembered her duties as a host. She did not have money with her and could not even go out to buy a Popsicle for Uncle Yang.

“No worries, no worries.” Old Yang waved his hands as he did not mind. If Qiao Nan had not mentioned it, Old Yang would have felt a little disappointed indeed. Now, Qiao Nan’s words made him feel much better. It was certainly better than having Popsicle.

He did not need anything to eat, but at the very least, the other party had to be appreciative.

“Nan Nan, Old Yang.” Qiao Dongliang, who was riding on a bicycle, reached soon after.

“Dad!” Qiao Nan happily called out and rushed to him eagerly. “Dad, you have not fully recovered. Why did you ride a bicycle here? This can’t be good for your health, can it?”

Qiao Nan helped him get down from the bicycle affectionately. Qiao Dongliang raised his eyebrows as he was a little puzzled by the behavior. “I’m fine. Don’t worry. Dad has almost recovered. Most likely, I’ll be able to return to the factory to work next month.” After resting for six months, it was finally time for him to return to work.

“Dad, you don’t have to be in a rush. You have only rested for three months, not long enough for a full recovery. It takes a hundred days to recover from nerve and bone injuries. Since your injuries are more serious, you should rest for at least another month.” Qiao Nan said as she helped Qiao Dongliang park the bicycle. “Dad, give me half a yuan. I will go and buy a Popsicle for Uncle Yang to relieve the discomfort from the hot weather. We just arrived at the new house and there’s no drinking water. There is tap water, but I am afraid it is not suitable for him to drink.”

“It’s okay. Dad bought them.” Qiao Dongliang smiled happily as he raised the small bag in his hand. “There are three Popsicles, one for Uncle Yang, one for you, and one for me. No one is left out.”

“Okay!” Qiao Nan took over the Popsicles happily and ran into the house. “Uncle Yang, my dad bought these. Please choose one.”

Old Yang saw that there were three Popsicles in the bag, but Qiao Nan did not pick hers first despite being the youngest. He was very pleased. “You can pick the flavor first. Uncle Yang eats everything.”

“Me too. I’m not picky. Uncle Yang, you choose first.” After thinking, Qiao Nan simply picked one with a nice packaging for Uncle Yang as she guessed that he was too shy to take the Popsicle first. “Uncle Yang, take this Popsicle. I’ll take this one and the other one will be for my dad.”

“Sure. Uncle Yang owed this to Nan Nan, then.” Old Yang took the Popsicle smilingly. The previous anger caused by Ding Jiayi’s scolding diminished. After all, he already knew about the situation before he made the trip to the Qiao’s residence.

“Dad, here’s your Popsicle.” Just as Qiao Dongliang entered the house, Qiao Nan passed him the last Popsicle. She had already helped him unwrap it. Only when Qiao Dongliang started eating his Popsicle did Qiao Nan unwrap hers and follow suit.

As Old Yang was having his Popsicle, he showed Qiao Dongliang a thumbs-up sign from an angle out of Qiao Nan’s sight. He was looking at Qiao Nan when he gave the thumbs-up, hinting at something that went without saying.

Qiao Dongliang smiled proudly. She’s his daughter. Of course, she’s the most wonderful and the best daughter in the world.

You would only know the truth upon comparison. Qiao Dongliang discovered that, except for having a sweet tongue, Qiao Zijin was in no way better than Qiao Nan.

At the thought that Qiao Zijin did not even greet Old Yang when the latter was helping out in the Qiao’s residence today, Qiao Dongliang could not help but feel like shaking his head and sighing.

Given Zijin’s character, he could not imagine what would happen to her when she stepped out to society after graduating from high school. If she had a boyfriend and remained impolite when meeting his parents, she would most probably leave a poor impression on them during their first meeting.

Qiao Nan, who was having her Popsicle, did not know Qiao Dongliang’s thoughts. Otherwise, she would have told Qiao Dongliang with certainty.

As long as the family background of Qiao Zijin’s boyfriend was good, Qiao Zijin would transform into the most sensible and obedient young lady in the world. She had her way of gaining the favors of her parents-in-law.

In the past, didn't Qiao Zijin double-cross her and marry Chen Jun successfully because of this?

Chen Jun's parents already knew that Qiao Nan was his girlfriend. Typically, would parents be able to accept someone who double-crossed her biological sister as their daughter-in-law?

Chapter 247: Saving the 'Damsel in Distress'

This was particularly so for Chen Jun's parents. If Chen Jun did not like the girl, given the Chen family's status and reputation, Mother Chen would be reluctant to become in-laws with the Qiao family. Moreover, Qiao Zijin had double-crossed her biological sister by snatching the latter's boyfriend. Mother Chen might not agree to the marriage even if Qiao Zijin was already pregnant with Chen Jun's child.

However, strangely, in less than a month's time before Qiao Zijin's tummy had even grown bigger, Father Chen agreed to the marriage. Even Mother Chen, who had strong objections initially, nodded her head and acknowledged the marriage-to-be.

As such, Qiao Zijin was high in both EQ and IQ. The only issue was that she had not met the right person who would make her smarter.

Or rather, Qiao Zijin was still young and had yet to be enlightened to who she was in her previous life.

"Nan Nan, it's late. Should you be going to school?" Before they finished packing, Qiao Dongliang urged Qiao Nan to leave for school. "You can't be late for school. It'll leave a bad impression on the teachers."

"Dad, don't exaggerate. Moreover, this place is just a short walking distance away from Ping Cheng High School. I'll leave after we are done with the packing. There's still time." Qiao Nan was full of enthusiasm and seemed to have boundless energy.

Qiao Nan's actions were nimble and quick. Coupled with her hyperactive mood, she was able to carry out the task efficiently.

Soon after, Qiao Nan finished organizing most of the household items and placing them properly. “Dad, I don’t need much at home today as I will be staying at school. But if you’re going to continue staying here, you will need to get some essential items such as the washbasin and kettle. Don’t miss these out.”

“Alright, Dad knows what to do. These are mundane matters. Don’t worry and go to school.” Qiao Dongliang smiled as he patted Qiao Nan’s shoulders, took schoolbag, and handed it to Qiao Nan. “Go.”

“Dad, I’m leaving for school, then.” Qiao Nan nodded and took over the bag. She left for school, feeling extraordinarily relaxed.

It was only a ten-minute walk to Ping Cheng High School from the rented apartment. Unlike the past, Qiao Nan did not need to take any public transport to get to the school.

Qiao Nan was in such a good mood that she started humming songs on her way there. At this juncture, she heard someone’s footsteps running anxiously behind her.

Qiao Nan was not bothered initially. However, the person ran toward her and bumped hard onto her shoulders, causing her to lose her footing and fall forward with both hands on the ground. Qiao Nan’s school bag was flung away from the impact.

“Tsk...” Both of Qiao Nan’s palms stung with pain. The pain made her frown and gasped in cold air.

Qiao Nan looked up to see who the careless person was. She did not expect that the person who bumped into her not only did not apologize but also picked up her schoolbag from the ground and simply ran off. “Hey, you snatched my schoolbag! Help, there’s a robber! There’s a robber!”

Qiao Nan anxiously got up from the ground and ran after the robber. However, a quicker figure passed by Qiao Nan in a flash as it headed in the robber’s direction.

“It’s broad daylight, yet you dare to steal and rob! Do you take the policeman in China as ornaments?!” That figure caught up with the robber before Qiao Nan. He even managed to kick the robber’s back, resulting in Qiao Nan’s school bag being flung away for the second time.

“Don’t be a busybody!” The robber halted his steps and shot a deadly stare at the figure. “Lad, let me warn you. If you don’t wish to die, quickly scam. If you’ve watched too much television drama and became a moron, I’ll help your parents teach you a lesson and let you know how to mind your own business!”

“Nuts.” The young man was both amused and angry at the robber. “Fine, I’d like to see how you can teach me a lesson.”

“You’re really not afraid of dying?” The robber’s eyes were staring at the young man, giving him a fierce look. He took out a knife from his pocket and stabbed at the young man.

Qiao Nan drew in a sharp breath. She was so scared that she covered her mouth. The young man was barehanded, but the robber had a weapon. The disparity in competitive advantage was too great.

Qiao Nan looked around her and realized that there was not even a piece of stone within sight that she could use to smash the robber’s head. She was so anxious that she nearly cried. “Schoolbag! Yes, I still have the schoolbag!”

Just as the young man was occupied with fighting the robber, Qiao Nan bent down and picked up the school bag that was flung onto the ground earlier. She strapped it behind her back threw it hard at the robber.

Qiao Nan’s schoolbag was heavily filled with books. Even if the hit did not make the robber faint, it should make him dizzy.

“Hurry!” At the sight of the robber vigorously shaking his head to regain his sense, Qiao Nan shouted.

The young man was stunned. He did not expect that Qiao Nan was so awesome. Upon hearing Qiao Nan’s reminder, he lifted his knee and kicked straight toward the robber’s tummy. The knife in the robber’s hand dropped onto the ground, a clinking sound signaling its fall. Thereafter, the young man elbowed the robber’s back, forcing the latter to kneel down in pain.

With nary a word, Qiao Nan kicked the knife on the ground as far away as she could.

The collaboration of the two subdued the fearsome robber in a matter of seconds.

“Ah, softer, softer! God, it hurts!” When the young man twisted the robber’s hands to his back, the robber shouted loudly in pain, looking so frightened.

Hugging her lost-and-found schoolbag, Qiao Nan then forced a smile as she looked up at the young man. “I’m really thankful for...”

When Qiao Nan had a clearer look at the face of the young man who helped her, both her expression and body froze. She clutched on to her schoolbag, nearly turning away to leave.

“Don’t mention it. My dad taught me to be brave in helping those in need. When we see someone who needs assistance, we’ll definitely not hesitate to lend a helping hand. You don’t need to worry about it.” The young man revealed a very friendly smile. “Are you alright? I saw that you had a fall earlier. How’s the injury? Is it serious? Shall I send you to the hospital?”

“No need!” Qiao Nan declined flatly without hesitation. Her tone was firm, seemingly a little harsh.

Upon realizing that her attitude might seem strange to others, Qiao Nan relaxed her stiffened face. “I’m a student from the nearby Ping Cheng High School. My palms are only slightly hurt. I’ll just go to the sick bay in my school and seek my teachers’ help in applying some medication oil. There’s no need to make a trip to the hospital. It’s too troublesome.”

“Really?” The young man smiled. “So you’re a student from Ping Cheng High School. Me too. I graduated from Ping Cheng High School. In that case, you’re my junior. It’s late. You’d better make your way to the school. I’ll deal with this robber. You have to study well. Oh yes, my name is Chen Jun. Perhaps we’ll have the fate to meet each other again. When that time comes, don’t refuse to acknowledge me, your senior.”

Chapter 248: Bandaged Like a Dumpling

Upon hearing the young man’s name, Qiao Nan’s fingers sank deeper into the schoolbag she was clutching.

That’s right. The helpful young man standing before Qiao Nan was none other than Chen Jun, the scum whom she was on marriage talks with, but betrayed her and made Qiao Zijin pregnant in the previous life.

At the thought of Chen Jun's betrayal, Qiao Nan gritted her teeth.

Before the two of them got together, Chen Jun was the one who made the first move. Qiao Nan knew about Chen Jun's wealthy family background and felt that their relationship would not work. The two families were grossly incompatible in terms of social status. She had thus rejected Chen Jun numerous times.

However, Chen Jun persisted and repeatedly proved to Qiao Nan with his actions that he would not give up—that he was determined in his love for Qiao Nan. Eventually, Qiao Nan was moved by Chen Jun's unwavering attitude and finally relented.

In her previous life, till her death, Qiao Nan had one romantic relationship and only loved one man. However, in the end, she was utterly hurt and covered in emotional scars when she eventually withdrew from the relationship.

Qiao Nan had always known that she remained single until she was forty years old not only because of her mother, who eyed her income and objected to her marrying, but also Chen Jun. She was fearful of marriage, fearful of meeting a scum like Chen Jun again.

"How are you?" Seeing that Qiao Nan seemed to be shivering, Chen Jun thought that she was affected by the incident. "Why don't I send you to the school first?"

"No need!" Qiao Nan declined as if it was a natural reflex. She then said, "I'm fine. You can send robber to the police station. Thank you for your help today. See you."

Qiao Nan bowed to Chen Jun sincerely to express her gratitude. After thanking him, without waiting for Chen Jun's reaction, she grabbed her bag and ran toward Ping Cheng High School at a speed faster than that of the robber. It was as if there was a ghost chasing her.

"What a strange young lady." Chen Jun smiled. He found Qiao Nan interesting. He had seen so many young ladies. This was the first time he met with one who did not bother about him.

He had often been pestered by girls who initiated the first move. As such, Chen Jun felt that Qiao Nan was quite special. "Aren't you leaving?"

“Aye, my brother. Softer, please. You asked me to put up an act but you’re too much. Your kick nearly made me vomit yellow bile,” the robber shouted. His previously fearsome demeanor changed, and he seemed to know Chen Jun well.

“Alright, cut your pretense. How could I not know how much strength I used? This is for you. Consider it as the remuneration for your effort.” Chen Jun took out a ten yuan note and threw it at the robber.

“Brother, you’re really my biological brother. If you have similar requests in the future, you can look for me. Brother, I’m leaving.” After receiving the money, the ‘robber’ stopped wailing and left happily instead.

When Qiao Nan and the ‘robber’ left, Chen Jun leaned on the wall and took out a stick of cigarette. He placed it in his mouth and lighted it, taking a deep breath and exhaling a ring of white smoke.

It was only when he had finished smoking the cigarette that he threw the cigarette bud on the ground, stepping on it to extinguish it before leaving.

Qiao Nan, who had left earlier, did not know about all this. However, in this life, even if she knew, she would not be affected.

“What happened?” When Qiao Nan reached the school, the first thing she did was to report to the sick bay. The teacher on duty was shocked when she saw the pitiful state Qiao Nan was in.

Qiao Nan, who usually looked prim and clean, was in a messy state. Both her hands were stiff and covered with dirt and blood. Bits of sand could be seen on the tiny cuts and bruises. The teacher’s heart ached for Qiao Nan. “Did anyone from the school bully you?”

“No, it has nothing to do with the schoolmates. I met a robber near the school. He bumped into me and I fell.” When Qiao Nan arrived at the school, she finally awoke from her hatred and fury toward Chen Jun. The nerves in her hands had long since transmitted the feeling of pain to her brain, but she could only feel the unbearable pain now.

“There’s a robber near the school? So bold and lawless.” The teacher in the sick bay was stunned. “We’ll have to reflect on this in case other students encounter the same situation. Your hand injury is not serious, but it’s quite cumbersome. I’ll wash and disinfect your wound first. It’ll be quite painful, so please bear with it. I’m not sure if you’ll be able to write for the next two weeks.”

The teacher held Qiao Nan's hands, washed them, and removed the sands. She then used iodine to disinfect the wound and bandage the parts that were more seriously injured. "Take extra care these two days. As a precautionary measure, don't let any water get into your hands as there are cuts on your palms and they're quite deep."

"I will, teacher. Thank you. I'll return to my dormitory first."

At the sight of her hands being wrapped like a dumpling, Qiao Nan did not know whether to laugh or cry. Chen Jun was her jinx. Nothing good would happen whenever she met him.

Due to the incident, it was rather late when Qiao Nan reached the dormitory. The other five dormitory mates had already gone to the classroom. They only discovered about Qiao Nan's condition when the latter reached the classroom.

"Xiao Qiao, what happened to your hand? Was it your mother?!" Zhu Baoguo had a fierce and determined look. He clearly heard that Xiao Qiao's mother created a din but did not hurt her physically. That old woman must have made things difficult for Xiao Qiao when they were at home!

Qiao Nan shrugged her shoulders while she put her schoolbag down. She dared not move too much and both her palms were facing up. "I don't wish to talk about it. This matter did not have anything to do with my mom. I'm down on my luck. Blame it on my bad luck."

"I'll help you." Seeing that Qiao Nan was having difficulty with her movements, Zhu Baoguo took her schoolbag and put away some of the books into the desk's book box as per what Qiao Nan usually did. He then placed the remaining books on the table. "What happened?"

"I met a robber on my way here. He pushed me, and the rest is history." Qiao Nan looked helpless as she raised her hands that were now bandaged like a dumpling.

"Nan Nan, are you alright?" Zheng Lingling came over. "How could there be a robber? Is your money still with you?"

"Yes, I kept it with me all along. The schoolbag was nearly snatched away. Fortunately, someone helped me, so I only suffered light injuries." Qiao Nan had little to no money at all, so she never had the habit of putting money in the schoolbag. She always carried it with her instead.

“It’s too scary. Nan Nan, do you want to let Teacher Liu know about this?” Tang Mengran covered her face with both hands. She looked frightened.

Qiao Nan shook her head. “There is no need to. The teacher in the sick bay will bring this matter up to the school.”

“I’ve not heard about anyone who encountered the same situation, have you?” He Yun knitted her brows.

“What do you mean? Are you saying that Xiao Qiao is lying?! Are you asking for a beating?”

Chapter 249: The Suave Senior Is Here

Zhu Baoguo was unhappy. He knitted his eyebrows and fiercely slammed on the table, the ‘little lord of the Zhu family’ aura exuding from his every pore.

“Don’t get so worked up. I think He Yun was only questioning the robber’s intelligence.” Fang Fang adjusted her glasses. “We’re students. To put it bluntly, although we’re already in high school, who will carry a lot of money with them? Do we look like the kind of people that’s truly wealthy? I’ve heard of cases about holding someone to ransom on the road, but not robbing so blatantly such as Nan Nan’s case. Furthermore, the schoolbag was snatched away in this circumstance.”

“Xiao Qiao, how did you manage to retrieve your schoolbag?” Zhu Baoguo pursed his lips. His expression became more serious.

Fang Fang’s words were not without reason.

“A stranger helped me,” Qiao Nan said coldly. She was not even willing to mention Chen Jun’s name.

“Nan Nan, you don’t seem to like the person who helped you?” Tao Zhenqin was puzzled as she looked at Qiao Nan. “Is it because he’s too ugly?”

“Not ugly.” How could Chen Jun be considered ugly? His father was quite handsome and his mother was famous for her beauty. Hence, the couple’s child was not only not ugly but quite good-looking.

If not for the fact that Chen Jun had money, power, and good looks, would Qiao Zijin resort to all ways and means, and was even willing to be pregnant with Chen Jun's child before marrying him?

The meeting with Chen Jun, an 'old friend', made Qiao Nan a little impetuous.

Tang Mengran smiled. "He's not ugly. That means he's not bad-looking. Nan Nan, in that case, is this considered as a hero saving the beauty? Did he tell you his name?"

Qiao Nan tugged her lips and did not elaborate much. "I think he did. I can't really remember. I blame it on my bad luck for today's incident. I don't wish to think about it anymore. It's late. You all should return to your seats. Don't let Teacher Liu see you."

Just as Qiao Nan finished her words, the alarm for the evening self-study time rang. All of Qiao Nan's dormitory mates immediately returned to their respective seats abidingly.

"Xiao Qiao, I think Fang Fang's words made sense. Did you offend anyone recently that they deliberately used this method to teach you a lesson?" Fortunately, Xiao Qiao met someone who helped her. Otherwise, he could not imagine what would happen to Xiao Qiao if she lost her schoolbag.

Zhu Baoguo knew very clearly that Qiao Nan loved to study and valued her books very much.

Zhu Baoguo had deeper thoughts in regard to this matter than Fang Fang. From Zhu Baoguo's perspective, stealing Qiao Nan's books was worse than taking Qiao Nan's life.

Clearly, this was someone whom Qiao Nan knew and was familiar with. They deliberately set up this incident to make Qiao Nan feel miserable.

The first suspect that came to his mind was Zhao Yu, who had a bad track record. Zhu Baoguo eyes flashed as he stared directly at Zhao Yu.

Zhao Yu had, in fact, been observing Qiao Nan quietly. When she heard that Qiao Nan met with a robber and was hurt, she felt overjoyed. However, when Zhu Baoguo stared at her in this manner, she was so scared that she quickly covered her face with her hands.

The more Zhao Yu behaved in this way, the more Zhu Baoguo had a reason for suspecting her.

Zhu Baoguo sneered. He had already let Zhao Yu off previously in the matter about the essay competition. If Zhao Yu did not mend her old ways, then don't blame him for being unruly to her!

Zhu Baoguo shifted his gaze away from Zhao Yu and looked at Qiao Nan instead. He smiled when he saw Qiao Nan clumsily try to open her pencil box to retrieve a pen to no avail. "Alright, since you're so handicapped, tell me if you need anything. I'll help you."

"Crap. The teacher in the sick bay overdid the bandage." Qiao Nan felt depressed. Besides the deeper cuts on the palms, the injuries on the rest of her hands were not that serious. Who would have known that the teacher would put so many bandages on her hands? It was terrible.

"Don't be anxious. The few girls in your dormitory are quite good in their studies too. You can tell them to help you since it's not convenient for you to take notes these few days. When your hand injuries recover, simply borrow their notes and copy them." The teacher was smart to bandage Xiao Qiao's hands in this way. Otherwise, given Xiao Qiao's diligence, she would definitely move her hands and write despite the injuries. The wound would probably burst open in that case.

Qiao Nan sighed. "I guess there is no other way."

True enough, one could not afford to be too complacent. One moment, she was overjoyed to have discovered her father's care and concern for her. Another moment, she met with this incident. The thing that she could not accept most was that she actually met Chen Jun!

Clearly, she met Chen Jun when she was twenty years old in her previous life. Why was it brought forward by four years in this life? Could it be because of the fact that she did not quit school and studied at Ping Cheng High School?

Forget it. Since she had already met him, then so be it.

She already knew Chen Jun's character. The person who hurt her deeply was the Chen Jun from her previous life. There was no need to seek revenge in this life. However, she would stay away from Chen Jun to avoid the sins that happened in her previous life.

As a form teacher, Teacher Liu naturally knew of Qiao Nan's hand injuries in no time. When the school knew about the matter, they placed great importance to it and told the security guards to keep a watchful eye.

Given the way she was bandaged by the teacher in the sick bay, Qiao Nan did not touch a pen for five whole days.

To ensure that Qiao Nan's hands recovered quickly, even the towel for washing her face was wrung by one of her dormitory mates each morning.

When the school started, Zhao Yu clearly saw that the five dormitory mates of Qiao Nan were united in isolating Qiao Nan. However, within a short time span of two weeks, everyone in the dormitory changed and now addressed her intimately as Nan Nan. When Qiao Nan was injured this time, they treated and cared for her as if she was a little princess.

In comparison, she experienced psychological abuse from her dormitory mates. No one bothered about her when she returned to her dormitory and her things were often thrown away or dirtied. Only Zhao Yu herself knew how much hate and despises she felt.

"It's such a big relief." It was Saturday, and Qiao Nan could finally remove all the bandages. She moved both her hands and felt revived. "The five of you, quickly lend me your lesson notes. I have missed five days of notes. I'll need to copy till my death."

"We've already prepared them. Take your time to copy." Tang Mengran looked like she was gloating.

To a student, the most miserable thing was to be punished. Qiao Nan was not punished, but this was akin to punishment in a sense. She had to copy five days of notes. It felt miserable at the mere thought of it.

"Where did all the boys in the class go today? Have they been too relaxed during the free and easy time and thus gone missing?" Feeling puzzled, Tao Zhenqin blinked her eyes as she asked.

"I think one of the seniors who graduated from our school came back. He's playing basketball in the school, so the boys in the class went to join in on the fun," Fang Fang said calmly.

“Senior? How does he look like? Why did his return cause a stir?” Tang Mengran was the first to be interested.

Fang Fang adjusted her glasses as usual and simply said, “Whether he’s good-looking or not... Look around the classroom. Is Xu Tingting still around? As to why his return caused a stir... I heard that his grades were excellent when he was still a student at Ping Cheng High School.”

Chapter 250: I Changed My Habit

“He eventually did our school proud and studied at a first-tier university. Don’t you think he’ll cause a stir?”

Tang Mengran slammed the table in fury. “What! Xu Tingting was too quick. She called herself our vice class monitor. Can’t she be more disciplined like Nan Nan and set a good example for us? This won’t do. I want to take a look at the handsome guy too!”

Having that said, Tang Mengran took off and ran toward the basketball court, leaving the rest of the people stunned.

“This Tang Mengran...” Tao Zhenqin curled the corners of her mouth. She had to ‘adore’ Tang Mengran. Compared to Xu Tingting, she was only slightly better.

“Xiao Qiao, you don’t look good.” Zhu Baoguo was not interested in such matters. He observed that Qiao Nan, who looked quite happy earlier, turned pale at this moment. He asked with concern, “Do you feel unwell?”

“No.” Qiao Nan shook her head, thinking that it could not be so coincidental. She was most likely overthinking. “Alright, those who are keen to take a look, please go ahead. There’s no need to keep me company. I need to copy the notes now.”

“Not going,” Fang Fang said decisively. “I’m going to study.”

“That...” Tao Zhenqin was a little tempted, but unfortunately, Tang Mengran ran off too quickly and she did not manage to follow suit. She felt a little embarrassed if she left at this point in time.

He Yun and Zheng Lingling were more decisive. After entering high school, there was so much homework every day. How would they have the spare time to look at seniors? Time to do their homework!

Those who liked to watch the fun left and those who remained behind quiet down.

Shortly after, the classroom of class one was filled with silence. There was no sound except for the occasional flipping of books and writing.

However, the silence was broken by a commotion very soon. “Senior, take a look. This is the classroom of class one now. Is it the same as the one you used when you’re still studying here? Senior, which is your previous seat?” It would be great if she had the same seat as the senior.

Xu Tingting was chattering non-stop like a sparrow. It hurt to listen to her.

Fang Fang knitted her brows and looked out of the classroom. She saw an extremely good-looking man standing beside Xu Tingting. The rest of the people seemed to be surrounding the man.

Fang Fang raised her brows in realization. That must be the legendary senior who had too much time to spare.

“It’s quite a coincidence. When I was still a student here, class one used the same classroom as well. It has not changed at all.” Chen Jun smiled gentlemanly.

Xu Tingting’s heart melted at the sight of Chen Jun’s smile. That was because he did not see the impatience and disgust in Chen Jun’s eyes at all. “Can I enter the classroom to take a look?”

“Of course you can!” Xu Tingting’s eyes lit up. “Senior, look. That’s my seat. Where were you seated previously?” Xu Tingting lifted her chest in arrogance. In front of the other girls who had the look of envy, she tried to steer Chen Jun toward her seat. “Senior, why don’t you take a seat on my chair first?”

She was fully aware that many other girls were shamelessly trying to get close to Senior Chen because he was good-looking. Nevertheless, Senior Chen had high standards. Any ordinary folks would be overestimating themselves if they thought that they could gain Senior Chen’s favor.

“Oh, it’s such a coincidence. I didn’t expect us to meet in less than a week.” There was a flash of guilt in Chen Jun’s eyes. He looked pleasantly surprised as he strode toward Qiao Nan with his long legs.

“Hahaha...” The few girls who were earlier disappointed that they had to sit by the side and watch as Xu Tingting got close to Chen Jun immediately covered their mouth and laughed secretly.

Xu Tingting was complacent and rolled her eyes at them. The current situation was superb. It was much more so since it particularly involved Qiao Nan. It was simply fabulous!

Qiao Nan, who was looking down and hiding her face, had a headache when she heard Chen Jun. Qiao Nan scratched her forehead and looked at Chen Jun. “You are?”

The bright smile on Chen Jun’s face stiffened. “Last Sunday, in the small alley. Like this.” Chen Jun made a kicking action. He did not believe that Qiao Nan had forgotten what happened last week.

“Oh, it’s you. Thank you so much for your help previously. Sorry, I’ve studied too much and become a moron. Remembering the knowledge in the textbooks aside, my memory is not very good when it comes to other matters. Moreover, I’m poor at recognizing faces. Don’t take it to heart.” Qiao Nan patted her forehead as if she finally remembered who Chen Jun was. “Oh yes, you told me last time that you graduated from Ping Cheng High School.”

Chen Jun was so wealthy. His father was the police commissioner. Chen Jun did not attend The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Did he come to Ping Cheng High School to experience life?!

“Last week?” Tang Mengran blinked her eyes. She seemed to have realized something as she looked at Chen Jun with admiration. “Nan Nan met a robber last week on her way to school and was saved by someone. Were you the one who helped her?” She had said that it was the case of a hero saving a beauty, but Nan Nan would not admit it.

“So you’re called Nan Nan?” Chen Jun said in a deep tone. Somehow, when Chen Jun said the two words ‘Nan Nan’, it sounded like a bad premonition.

Tang Mengran sounded affectionate when she called Nan Nan, but Chen Jun’s ‘Nan Nan’ was like a spider web, sticky and pestering. It sounded as if he was calling someone he liked. It gave people the goosebumps.

Xu Tingting, who was ignored, stomped her feet thrice. She could not take it lying down any longer. She pushed away those around Chen Jun and stood beside him. Thereafter, she looked at Qiao Nan and faked a smile. “Qiao Nan, do you know Senior Chen?”

Why was Qiao Nan involved in everything? First, it was Instructor Zhou, and now, Senior Chen. Was Qiao Nan the reincarnation of the seductive fox spirit? All the good men in the world knew Qiao Nan and were so good to her!

“That’s right. Qiao Nan, why didn’t you mention it earlier that you know Senior Chen? Someone thought that she knew Senior Chen very well, or rather, knew him best.” One of the girls could not help saying this sarcastically.

“So you’re the one who helped Xiao Qiao last time. Thanks so much.” Zhu Baoguo moved forward to shield Qiao Nan and smiled narrowly.

Chen Jun smiled in return as he looked at Zhu Baoguo. “Are you thanking me on behalf of Nan Nan as her classmate?”

“Senior Chen, you’ve misunderstood. Zhu Baoguo is not thanking you as Qiao Nan’s classmate. He’s thanking you as Qiao Nan’s boyfriend. Our whole class knows about them!” Xu Tingting said loudly.

Zhu Baoguo’s face turned black. For the sake of Xiao Qiao, he did not stick to Xiao Qiao during or after school. He was usually together with the boys in the class. Xu Tingting’s mouth was way beyond rude to have made such false statements. “Xu Tingting, in the past, I didn’t have the habit of hitting a woman. But in the future, I have decided to change my habit when I encounter shameless women.”