

RTAMM 1441

Chapter 1441: Special Treatment

“Really?” Er Bao pulled Qiao Nan’s hands and asked worriedly. “Recover very soon. How soon? How many days? Will I be able to see master grandpa and ask him to play with me tomorrow?” Children did not have a strong sense of time. When he heard Qiao Nan say that he could recover faster, to Er Bao, it should be considered fast if master grandpa were to recover from his illness tomorrow.

Da Bao pulled Er Bao’s hands and led him into the house. “Don’t ask such a silly question. If master grandpa really recovers, you also have to let him rest well. You’re only thinking of asking master grandpa to play with you. Not obedient at all.”

“But I also miss master grandpa,” San Bao said unhappily. “I’ve not seen master grandpa for a long time. Doesn’t grandpa miss San Bao?” Using her two little arms, San Bao tried her best to draw a big circle to express the intensity of her longing for master grandpa.

Watching the children walking in quick steps in front of her, Qiao Nan smiled. She realized that she might not need to work on the topic of master grandpa anymore. Perhaps Da Bao alone would be able to help her settle Er Bao and San Bao. Yes, it was a blessing to have an obedient and sensible elder son.

His cousins were walking in front of him. Like a rabbit, Xiao Bao hopped and ran home, while wrapping his little hand around one of his auntie’s fingers. He did not feel nervous about his cousin’s bickering at all. Obviously, his mood was as good and high as a kite soaring high in the sky.

Xiao Bao was granted his wish to stay at the Zhai family’s residence. During the day when his auntie went to work, he had his cousins keep him company and play with him. When nighttime arrived, with a gentle voice, his auntie would always narrate a bedtime story to him.

However, his cousins were already sleeping on their own. There was thus one more little bed in the bedroom prepared for him; he had to sleep by himself too. After successfully sticking around at the Zhai family’s residence for the remaining National Day holidays, Xiao Bao returned to the Tian family’s residence, crying and screaming to heaven when Tian Dong forcefully carried him back.

Miao Jing stroke Qiao Nan's face. "No wonder Xiao Bao's grandma is always feeling jealous. Tell me. What did you do to Xiao Bao to make him like you so much? If this goes on, isn't Xiao Bao going to be a child of our Zhai family? I almost can't differentiate it now. I've never seen a child crying in this manner when he is about to go home."

Hua Hua was seldom at home. In Xiao Bao's heart, the grandparents in the Tian family should be his closest and favorite kin. Unexpectedly, Xiao Bao loved the relatives at the Zhai family to the core although he clearly did not spend that much time at the Zhai family's residence.

Her own child liked someone else so much that he did not fancy her attention. Just by imagining this, Miao Jing felt so upset that she almost lost her appetite for dinner. One could imagine how vexed and upset Xiao Bao's paternal grandmother felt when looking at how Xiao Bao behaved every day.

After giving a bitter smile, Qiao Nan moved behind to give way. "What can I do to Xiao Bao? I treat him almost the same as how I treat the triplets." Qiao Nan also did not know why Xiao Bao liked her so much. She was a first-time mother. When she took care of the triplets, she was always worried and troubled that she would not be a good mother, that the triplets would suffer grievances or pick up bad behaviors.

She did not think that she had the capability to 'seduce' Xiao Bao and steal his heart.

Miao Jing revealed an unfathomable smile. Nan Nan treated Xiao Bao as well as she treated the triplets. Wasn't this already enough to make Xiao Bao pledge his loyalty to his auntie? Hua Hua had been a fake lad since she was a child. After she grew up, besides giving birth to Xiao Bao, Miao Jing had never seen Hua Hua behaving the slightest bit like a mother.

In that case, Xiao Bao's longing and feelings for motherly love all came from Nan Nan. Was there any child that would not love to have a mother? Although to Xiao Bao, this 'mother' was, in fact, his auntie.

"Xiao Qiao, take a look at these documents." He Yi threw a thick stack of documents on Qiao Nan's table. If there had been dust on Qiao Nan's table, it would definitely fly around when such a huge stack of items was thrown onto it.

Qiao Nan looked at the stack of old documents, innocently blinking her eyes. "Minister He, where did you dig out these antiques from?" At one glance, she knew that these documents had been in

existence for ages. There were some pages that had turned yellow. If one was not careful when they flipped the pages, they could be ruined very easily.

“Since you know that these are antiques, please be a little more careful. I will ask you questions when you finish reading them.” He Yi rolled his eyes at Qiao Nan for not admitting to receiving a bargain. Even when others requested him, he did not agree to give out these antiques. Part of them was passed down to him from his master, and he was now passing them to his junior sister.

Although Qiao Nan was smiling, her attitude was still as serious as ever. “I promise that I will complete the mission tasked by Minister He.” Used to reading, Qiao Nan would feel uneasy all over if she were to flip fewer pages of a book a day. Qiao Nan was most pleased to accept such a task.

After He Yi left, an elderly in the department approached Qiao Nan quietly. “Tsk, Old He treats you quite well, almost treating you as his own daughter. I have worked in this department longer than Old He. After so many years, this is my first time seeing Old He take out these things for someone. One has to know. Old He was not even willing to lend these to some of his former colleagues who wanted to borrow them from him.”

Actually, what this retiring senior wanted to ask most was whether Qiao Nan was He Yi’s illegitimate daughter. Otherwise, why would He Yi let Qiao Nan have all the good things in the world? There were so many other people in the department and Qiao Nan joined the latest.

Why was it that He Yi treated everyone normally except for Qiao Nan? He looked at her in such a different light.

Qiao Nan did not seem to have detected the suspicion from this person’s tone. She answered earnestly, “Senior, rest assured. No matter what mission Minister He hands to me, I will definitely complete and deliver it with both quantity and quality. This is such an excellent training opportunity. How can I give this up? I will strive to improve myself and not become a burden to the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

“It’s good that you understand. Read these documents properly. Keep a tight watch on them as well. Don’t lose any piece of them. If that happens, you won’t be able to explain to Old He.” This elderly was very curious but he was not a bad person. When he saw that he could not get any information out of Qiao Nan, he did not continue to pester her. He returned to his seat and continued with his work.

Qiao Nan was not sure, but Deng Wenchang had long heard from his father that He Yi had a stack of extremely important old documents in his hands. Those were passed down from Elder Lin, who

had retired from the central government. After He Yi became the successor of these documents, as time and things evolved, he had tidied up and added a lot of contemporary information to them.

Chapter 1442: Slip of the Tongue

In the end, even if He Yi was not willing to accept Deng Wenchang as his disciple, as long as Deng Wenchang could get this stack of documents from He Yi, his earlier efforts would not be in vain then.

Although not acknowledging He Yi as his master was regrettable, the documents could make up for a large part of his loss that resulted from the failure of not completing this mission.

Unfortunately, after working so hard for two to three years, Deng Wenchang did not become He Yi's disciple. In addition, their relationship was not as close as before. In the end, he did not get a master, and even the stack of useful documents mentioned by his father had been placed in front of Qiao Nan. Without lifting a finger, Qiao Nan was enjoying the fruits of other people's labor. What a great life, really.

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It seemed that Qiao Nan was basically heaven's daughter. Otherwise, why did she and not other people get all the good stuff?

At the thought that He Yi personally came over to send the documents to Qiao Nan, Deng Wenchang did not know how to vent out that deeply accumulated resentment in his heart. "Comrade Qiao Nan, it seems that your seat in the office will be changed in a few days' time? That's right. How can an ordinary old chair in the office be as comfortable as the 'dragon chair' in the minister's office?"

At the rate that He Yi was nurturing Qiao Nan, besides moving her cubicle, Qiao Nan would have a private space dedicated to her in less than three to five years' time. Most agonizingly, He Yi would definitely find excuses to beautify Qiao Nan's resume. He would give any progression opportunities available in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Qiao Nan without any reservation.

On what grounds!

He had not done less work than Qiao Nan, and the quality of his work was not worse than Qiao Nan's. Both he and Qiao Nan were newbies. He had been performing quite well and never gotten the department into trouble. Before Qiao Nan joined the department, which of the miscellaneous tasks were not handed to him, and when did he ever fail to complete the task?

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Since his performance was not poorer than Qiao Nan's, on what basis did He Yi let out news of his intention to nurture Qiao Nan as his successor to take over everything in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when Qiao Nan had only joined them for less than six months?

He had been in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs longer than Qiao Nan. Furthermore, he was a man. It was more at ease for him to carry out the work. Wasn't the gender ratio of the diplomats in the department enough to prove this point?

Since that was the case, why did Qiao Nan have to join in the fun for no reason? Wasn't He Yi afraid of giving Qiao Nan too high hopes and make her misunderstand him? Qiao Nan would feel even more disappointed in the end.

Until today, Deng Wenchang had not given up on the top role at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He wholeheartedly hoped that He Yi would be fairer to him and that he would not disregard the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or sacrifice the interest of the country for that of his own family to fulfill the selfish and deep desire in his heart.

During these few months, Qiao Nan had to face Deng Wenchang's ridiculous animosity and hostile line of sight from time to time. As time passed by, Qiao Nan was already used to them, especially such sarcastic and 'flattering' words from Deng Wenchang. Qiao Nan could already completely play dumb. "Is that so? Deng Wenchang, your news is so accurate. You already know something that even me, the party concerned, don't know. However, I'm not sure if this is true or false. Since you have already said such positive things, I will wish you a happy marriage and an everlasting union."

It was impolite not to reciprocate.

Deng Wenchang gave her such an auspicious greeting. Qiao Nan would not be a wet blanket too. She politely gave her words of blessing to Deng Wenchang, hoping that he could quickly settle his marriage and not remain single.

Qiao Nan could not help suspecting that Deng Wenchang had been targeting her all because he did not have a girlfriend. If Deng Wenchang was dating, he would have to go on dates with his girlfriend, no?

After dating, they would discuss their future life plans and such. The discussion of such topics should be quite time-consuming, right? Most importantly, if a man with a girlfriend were to keep staring at another woman, an ordinary woman would not be able to accept it regardless of the reason. She would feel very uneasy at heart.

If it was a real woman, there was a ninety-percent chance that she would argue with her boyfriend.

Undoubtedly, if Deng Wenchang had a girlfriend, this woman could help divert ninety-five percent of his attention. In addition, despite being a man, he was so narrow-minded, pettier than a woman, and hot-tempered. Qiao Nan suspected that Deng Wenchang had become like that due to suffering from hormonal imbalance arising from long-term singlehood.

Just having a girlfriend would be able to cause so many changes in Deng Wenchang and improve her life tremendously. Of course, Qiao Nan wished very much that Deng Wenchang could get married earlier. After getting married and having children, would the mother-and-child pair not grab all of Deng Wenchang's attention? When that time came, she could be considered truly free then!

“What nonsense are you talking about? I don't even have a girlfriend. Where did the happy marriage and everlasting union come from? Qiao Nan, did you do it on purpose?” Deng Wenchang's face reddened. He was fuming and glaring so much that his eyes were protruding. “Shouldn't you be saying these to the people who are getting married?”

“...” Qiao Nan felt awkward for a moment. Alright, when Qiao Zijin was getting married, she seemed to have said that on the day of her marriage. Most likely, she had been too used to it and did not manage to tweak her brains to change it. She had set someone on fire. “Don't have a girlfriend? You can go and find one. You're not married now. After having a girlfriend, you can get married then. I am just bringing forward the words that I said earlier. I don't think there is a major problem with that. Don't tell me that you don't intend to get married in your entire life? Or you're not prepared to hear such words of blessing?”

As for the slip of tongue, Qiao Nan refused to admit it. That was because she was worried that once she did so, given Deng Wenchang's character, he would definitely hold onto it endlessly and annoy people to death.

Deng Wenchang was enraged. “You have a reason for everything. Don’t divert the topic. Clearly, we were not discussing this earlier. Whether I marry or not, what has it got to do with you? Do you need to care so much?” Deng Wenchang was flustered and exasperated. Qiao Nan was too shrewd in her words. She actually made things difficult for him with such a sly question within minutes.

If he had not been clear-minded, he would have been led astray by Qiao Nan and forgotten his initial question.

“I’m not your mother. Of course, I don’t need to bother about your marriage. Don’t worry. Whatever you like to do, that’s up to you. We’re colleagues. What does our lousy opinion matter? Most importantly, you have to like it.”

Qiao Nan smiled and led Deng Wenchang by the nose. Who told Deng Wenchang to bring up such a sensitive topic? He Yi was still at his prime age—alright, maybe not prime age, but the last few years of it.

Chapter 1443: Don’t Give Up Too Soon

It was impossible that He Yi would pass the baton within three years.

At this juncture, it seemed overboard and vicious for Deng Wenchang to discuss the topic of promotion with Qiao Nan. This was such a sensitive topic. Even when at home, they should not casually engage in such hate, let alone at the office.

He Yi’s identity and status were one of the reasons that Qiao Nan was unwilling to continue on this topic.

Secondly, Qiao Nan was the newest employee in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. No matter how well she had performed, obviously, she had limited contribution when compared to the elders who had worked in the department for twenty to thirty years. She had far fewer opportunities than them.

If Qiao Nan dared to admit that she had high chances of promotion, someone would send an anti-corruption and whistle-blowing letter to the top leaders tomorrow. The letter would be filled with the injustice, favoritism, partiality, and unfair practices of He Yi during his term at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In short, if it were to reach this stage, it was very likely that both she and He Yi would be down on their luck.

Deng Wenchang dug such a huge pit for Qiao Nan to jump in. Clearly, Qiao Nan had seen it. How could she still jump into the hole knowingly as if she had been possessed?

This was such a sensitive topic. From Qiao Nan's perspective, it was best to cease it now.

Deng Wenchang had been confused by Qiao Nan. Only after Deng Wenchang calmed down did he realize that Qiao Nan had diverted the topic. Qiao Nan neither denied nor gave any hints to the question he had posed. Given this attitude, everyone would think that there seemingly wasn't any major problem with Qiao Nan and He Yi.

Deng Wenchang crumpled up a booklet in a furor. He really could not figure out why Qiao Nan could always answer his questions perfectly, covering all angles, although she was two years younger than him.

His father had long said that He Yi had such useful and important documents. He Yi could bear to give Qiao Nan something so good. He did not believe that He Yi did not tell Qiao Nan about his future plans for her during their usual day-to-day interactions.

She clearly knew that she would receive many excellent resources from He Yi in the future, yet she could maintain her silence on it. Wasn't Qiao Nan too calm and resilient? Deng Wenchang could not see in Qiao Nan the impetuosity and conceit found in people of similar age. Was there really such a placid youngster in this world?

"Dad, did Peng Yu or his family contact us eventually?" After returning home from work, Deng Wenchang was so anxious that he did not even change out of his clothes. He sat on the sofa and looked at his biological father eagerly. "It's best that the Peng family take action as soon as possible. The situation has changed."

"Change? What changes again?" Father Deng removed his reading glasses and looked at his son. "This is not the first or second day that He Yi thinks highly of Qiao Nan. You should be used to it by now." As to the means that He Yi used to dote on Qiao Nan, Father Deng was not interested at all.

"The documents that you mentioned to me previously... Over an hour ago, He Yi passed them to Qiao Nan in front of everyone. He not only asked Qiao Nan to read it properly but also said that he

would check Qiao Nan's homework on it after she read them. Dad, tell me. Is He Yi mad? Why is he so good to Qiao Nan?"

"You're worried that after handing this set of documents to Qiao Nan, He Yi's next step will be to pass his most precious minister role to Qiao Nan?" Father Deng's expression was more solemn now. "Qiao Nan has just joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not long ago. He Yi can still continue his term for another two years. Creating such a situation at this time, what is he thinking of?"

It was very normal to nurture Qiao Nan. However, He Yi would feed on Qiao Nan's ambitions with such behavior.

At this point in time, Father Deng could not guess what He Yi was trying to do even after pondering for a long time. "Don't feel anxious about this matter. They won't succeed within such a short time. Putting aside Qiao Nan, He Yi has not even reached retirement age. Even if he is willing to retire from his role and pass it to Qiao Nan or someone else, the leaders won't agree. Don't always be distracted or confused due to some minor matters. The time is not ripe for that yet."

Deng Wenchang sneered continuously. "Dad, I think this is precisely He Yi's thoughts. He is prepared to boil the frog slowly. He is aware that he will be retiring in a few years' time. Hence, Qiao Nan will not be too much of a threat to him in these few years. At most, he will let Qiao Nan get some limelight. He Yi has been in this role for so many years. Obviously, he is capable. If he really passes down everything to Qiao Nan, Qiao Nan having more limelight won't be the only issue then."

The problem was that, when that happened, there would be a wide gap in capability between him and Qiao Nan.

Now, Qiao Nan's work capability was slightly better than him. If he did not have the status of an overseas student, he would have long been subdued badly by Qiao Nan.

He Yi would retire in a few years' time. At that time, would his status as an overseas student be as useful as now? It was very rare to have overseas students in ordinary families of the older generation. However, in his social circle, there were quite a number of people who studied overseas.

Thereafter, no one could predict the situation.

"Dad, you should know very well the scarcity of females in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are a lot more men. What is the era now? People value gender equality. In other countries, some

women are emperors. Qiao Nan is young and also a woman. It's much more difficult for her to take on that role. However, can you guarantee that the situation will remain as it is when He Yi retires? When Qiao Nan far surpasses me, with He Yi's insistence and the Zhai family's support... Dad, tell me. What are the chances of Qiao Nan getting promoted then?"

At this juncture, Father Deng smiled bitterly. "You have not said it all. Qiao Nan not only has the support of He Yi and the Zhai family. She is also the last disciple of Elder Lin. This point alone will give her at least ten percent more chances of winning. Besides this, there are also chances that the Zhu family, the Shi family, and the Lee family will give Qiao Nan a push. With the support of so many powerful forces..."

Qiao Nan might even be able to take on a more powerful and greater role in the future, let alone the minister of foreign affairs.

Deng Wenchang's face turned ghastly pale "This... So as to speak, there is no need to wait for a few years. Actually, it's already a sure loss for me, no?" Qiao Nan had the support of so many people but the Deng family was only collaborating with the Peng family. How could he compete with Qiao Nan?

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Father Deng held back his actual thoughts and consoled Deng Wenchang. "Wenchang, don't be like that. I've said before. The situation is not that serious now. We must not give up until the last moment. Otherwise, it means that we have conceded defeat."

Chapter 1444: Stir Up Matters

"It's not confirmed who will have the last laugh. What did I teach you when you were a child? Change is the only constant in the political world. Those who seem powerful now may not remain so in the future. If the Zhai family joins the wrong team or pick the wrong person, Qiao Nan, as the daughter-in-law of the Zhai family, will be the first to be down on her luck."

Without Qiao Nan, this opponent, did his son still need to worry about not getting that role?

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“We have ample time. No need to be anxious. If you’re worried that Qiao Nan will surpass you with He Yi’s guidance, you should perk up. Without He Yi, do you think you won’t have other ways to surpass or catch up with Qiao Nan’s progressive steps?”

If he had a choice, Father Deng really did not wish to say the last few sentences, which made him feel like vomiting blood. He had spent so much money on his son and specially sent him abroad for studies. Who would have known that his son’s capability would be poorer than Qiao Nan’s, who was a local college fresh graduate?

If he had known that the quality of education in local colleges was so high, he wouldn’t waste so much energy and dump a hill of gold to send his son abroad to study. Wasn’t he looking for torture if he did? A few more years of studies and huge expenses, yet his precious only son was subdued by a young lady. No one could understand how aggrieved Father Deng felt.

Only Mother Deng knew that Father Deng had not slept well lately. As soon as he lay down and the lights were off, Father Deng would sigh many times in the darkness, tossing and turning continuously.

When Mother Deng asked him about what happened, he gave a very vague response. “When Wenchang is married and has kids, why don’t we send his kids to Peking University? Don’t take the old path of Wenchang. When he was overseas, we could only see him once every few years.”

“Why did you say this without an apparent reason? It is in man’s nature to strive for the better. Life will always get better. Wenchang has already finished his studies abroad. Don’t tell me you can’t bear to let your grandson go overseas?” Overseas students sounded so pleasant.

Father Deng snorted. “Will the overseas student status ensure that one will definitely find a good job? After entering the department, will he definitely be promoted faster than others? I feel that the quality of our local graduates is quite good. The overseas schools are not really gems either. Forget it. Not chatting anymore. Quickly sleep.”

Mother Deng gave Father Deng a slap on his body angrily. “Aren’t you the one who kicked up a fuss, refusing to sleep? You’re rushing me now. Sick!”

Of course, those were the conversation at night between Father and Mother Deng, which Deng Wenchang was unaware of. At this juncture, Father Deng did not wish to let Deng Wenchang know either. “We can forget about He Yi’s side. We don’t need to consider him anymore. Besides He Yi, who else do you think is more suitable to be your old master?”

Qiao Nan had He Yi to guide her along. He could also find an experienced master for his son.

In conclusion, Wenchang must not be flung too far behind from Qiao Nan, causing the gap of an ocean between the two of them. If that really happened, even if the Zhai family had fallen from grace, implicating Qiao Nan and her promotion, his son could not become He Yi's successor either. Instead, other more capable individuals would.

“Dad, I will listen to you.” Deng Wenchang was already very lost. His father gave him quite a reliable suggestion. Besides listening to him, Deng Wenchang could not think of any other solution.

Fortunately, they still had the Peng family as an ally. They were not there for nothing.

When the Peng family found out about the Deng family's situation, they volunteered to find Deng Wenchang an old master. This old master was once an ambassador and had set up embassies for China in other countries. He was very experienced, with profound knowledge and a gift of gab. As he aged, he wished to return to his home country in glory. Unlike others, he did not simply migrate overseas. Instead, he returned to his native country and led a peaceful and retired life.

Such a talented elder could be termed as a wise man. Under the guidance of the old ambassador, Deng Wenchang's improvement was apparent, so apparent that many people could sense it.

Sensing his progress and that he did not let Qiao Nan widen the gap between them, Deng Wenchang was increasingly motivated. He was more conscientious and serious in learning. At the very least, he definitely would not lose out to Qiao Nan in terms of ability on the day He Yi retired.

“Mom, don't. I'm a primary school student now. I'm going to join the Young Pioneers of China and wear a red scarf. I am already of this age. I will carry my own schoolbag.” In the blink of an eye, the triplets had reached the age of going to primary school. Qiao Nan was only helping San Bao hold her schoolbag when she was wearing her jacket. Who would have known that the little girl would lament and jump, insisted on snatching back her schoolbag?

Qiao Nan tapped her daughter's nose unhappily. “What's the hurry? I am only helping you hold it for a while. Who told you that I will be helping you carry it all the time? Wishful thinking. Xiao Bao carries his schoolbag when he attends kindergarten. I have to carry yours for you. Be careful that Xiao Bao will laugh at you and say that you're younger than him despite the fact that you're older.”

Four years had passed. From kindergarten children, the triplets had become primary school students. From a little toddler who swaddled like a duck when walking, Xiao Bao had also become a little boy who could sit properly in the kindergarten, eat fruits, and learn how to sing.

Xiao Bao even threw tantrums because of this. "Cousins, slower. Wait for me. I will catch up with you all very soon." Xiao Bao wanted to attend school and study together with his cousins. Otherwise, it felt meaningless to be alone when his cousins were in school.

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Xiao Bao had maintained his childhood habits. He not only liked Qiao Nan but also was very attached to the triplets. However, Xiao Bao did not like to mix with other children of his age.

Xiao Bao expressed that those who were younger or of his age only knew how to cry. He had already learned the song by heart the second time his teacher taught them, yet the boy sitting beside him was like an idiot. He could only sing bits and pieces of the song after learning for two to three days. Xiao Bao felt that no matter how smart he was, he would become stupid if he were to often learn alongside such children.

Xiao Bao was reluctant to be close to those of the same age or younger than him. As such, Mother Tian thought of ways to find a few children of similar age as the triplets from her relatives' families to become Xiao Bao's playmates.

The children's world was not as complicated as that of adults. Tian Dong's business was doing well. Many of the relatives by the surname of Tian needed Tian Dong's help. Before the children left the house, the adults told them that they had to coax Xiao Bao and make him happy.

When the children were at their own houses, who were not precious darlings and little emperors of their parents? Initially, everyone could keep their promise to their parents. They could hold back their temper and tolerate Xiao Bao. However, after a few times, almost no one could play together with Xiao Bao.

Chapter 1445: Competing for Affection

In particular, a few children saw that Xiao Bao had so many toys which they really liked. However, their parents often did not buy these for them. In a thrill of the moment, they had not only forgotten

about Xiao Bao but also fought with him for the toys. In the end, they bullied Xiao Bao until he cried.

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Such children, without the need for Xiao Bao to say anything, Mother Tian would also not let them continue to be playmates with Xiao Bao.

She complained a lot about the Zhai family because she felt that the Zhai family had kidnapped his precious grandson. However, she had personally seen the way the Xiao Bao and the triplets interacted with one another. Among the triplets, even San Bao, this young lady, took very good care of Xiao Bao. They typically would not fight with Xiao Bao for the things that he liked and always gave in to him.

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When Xiao Bao was with the triplets, his temper was especially good. They would take turns playing with the toys that everyone liked. There would not be a situation of fighting or kicking up a ruckus.

With a bright pearl like the triplets as an example, the first person that could not tolerate it when other children from the Tian family came to her house and created a din was Mother Tian, let alone Xiao Bao.

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After half a day of torture, Mother Tian did not make any of the children stay behind to play with Xiao Bao. After some twists and turns, Xiao Bao's playmates were still left as the triplets.

Xiao Bao liked to follow the triplets in everything. The triplets were studying now. Hence, Xiao Bao also babbled that he wanted to follow his cousins to school when he was two years old. He even carried the little bag that Mother Tian bought to coax him, as if he was also going to school with them. His stubby legs ran at lightning speed. Clearly, the little lad did not even know the way, yet his daring stunt made others perspire.

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If the nanny at home was not quick enough to hold onto Xiao Bao when he was dashing out, she might lose sight of Xiao Bao once he got out of the entrance of the Tian family's residence.

A group of elders surrounded Xiao Bao to coax and persuade him. They openly promised Xiao Bao that similar to the triplets, they would send him to kindergarten when he was three years old.

At that time, Xiao Bao was happily grinning from ear to ear. He wholeheartedly believed that when he was three years old one year later, he could continue to be his cousins' 'tail' and always be with them.

Never did Xiao Bao expect that he had only remained happy for one year before the reality dealt him with another painful blow. When he arrived at the kindergarten, the triplets were already at the upper kindergarten class, while Xiao Bao could only study at the lower kindergarten class. They were studying in the same school but not in the same class. Nevertheless, during dismissal time, he could still play toys with the triplets, just like what they did at the Zhai family's residence.

This kind of happy and contented life only lasted for one year before it changed again.

After knowing that the triplets were going to primary school while he had to continue studying at the kindergarten, Xiao Bao began to cry. In the end, Xiao Bao knew that he could not win no matter what. Helplessly, he asked the triplets to wait for him at the primary school, and he would catch up with them very soon.

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Er Bao looked at Xiao Bao sympathetically, rubbing Xiao Bao's head. "Be good. No hurry." Hadn't the pitiful Xiao Bao understood? When he entered primary school, the triplets would be promoted to another grade. Basically, as they studied at junior and senior high schools, Xiao Bao and they could only maintain the momentum of 'you are entering the school, while I am graduating'.

1

"No, I feel very anxious. I'm afraid that someone will bully Sister San Bao when I am not with her." Xiao Bao clenched his fists. His elder sister was very pretty. In the past, many little boys in the kindergarten wished to play with her. In the end, all of them ran away because he hit them.

Er Bao raised his brows. Which warrior dared to bully the tough woman in their family? Er Bao revealed a look of disbelief as he glanced at San Bao, who was wearing a flowery dress. One second ago, San Bao looked obedient and quiet. The next moment, she showed her fist to Er Bao and reminded him not to look at her in that way: Be careful that she would deal with him!

Er Bao, who had been warned, smiled at San Bao in an attempt to gain her favor and restrained the banter in his eyes. All of a sudden, San Bao touched her little ponytail. The corners of her lips curled up slightly like candy floss, looking so sweet. This was a baby blue flowery dress. It made San Bao look more introverted, like a little demure lady.

Only those who were extremely close to San Bao would know that San Bao, who was smiling to you a second ago, could beat you up until you cry in the next second!

“Are all of you ready? Let’s quickly go and enroll in school.” Today was not the official day of the start of school. Qiao Nan was bringing the triplets to the school for enrollment. Three years had passed. Qiao Nan’s professional capability had become stronger. Under Old Master Zhai’s suggestion, she attained a driving license and had also used her salary to buy a mobility scooter.

“Auntie, can I go too? I want to send cousins to school.” Xiao Qiao held onto Qiao Nan’s thighs pitifully. His little nose sniffed, as if he was going to cry immediately if Qiao Nan did not agree.

Qiao Nan moved her heavy legs. Xiao Bao, who was in his second year of kindergarten, was not light. His chubby body weighed almost thirty pounds now. “Alright. When you sit in the car, you have to be obedient and listen to me, okay?”

Xiao Bao revealed his millet tooth, smiling so obediently. “Auntie, rest assured. Xiao Bao is the most obedient one. Xiao Bao loves to listen to auntie the most.”

Qiao Nan had no choice but to pat Xiao Bao’s little buttocks and let him follow the triplets.

As the elder brother, Da Bao let Er Bao and San Bao board the car first. As he expected, when Xiao Bao received his mother's approval and wobbled over, Da Bao exerted strength in his arms and carried the chubby Xiao Bao into the car.

1

Da Bao was only at the age of going to primary school. Most likely, the genes of the Zhai family were stronger. Although Da Bao had not begun to go through the second stage of puberty and was only at the first stage, the rates at which Da Bao grew taller and bigger were much faster than other children.

Now, Da Bao's nominal age was only seven years old, but given his height, people would guess that he was about ten years old. As such, it was not a difficult matter for Da Bao to carry Xiao Bao into the car.

1

At the sight of Xiao Bao moving his buttocks to sit between him and San Bao, Er Bao had a look of disdain on his face. "Xiao Bao, if you don't eat less in the future, be careful, Da Bao won't be able to carry you anymore." So fat, like a meat dumpling. Auntie and uncle were clearly quite thin. He did not know whose genes did Xiao Bao, this little bun, inherit and who he looked like.

Xiao Bao made funny faces at Er Bao. "Bad Er Bao, you bully me all the time. I don't like you anymore. Auntie tells me that I look especially good like this. Very cute and auntie likes it very much. Unlike you, skinny monkey, auntie doesn't like you. He likes me now." Xiao Bao's expression seemed to be saying 'I know that I am good-looking. You are jealous of me and I won't fall into your trap.'

1

Chapter 1446: Sleep in Separate Rooms

After finishing his words, Xiao Bao lifted his face and kicked in a carefree manner. That smug look could drive one to the grave.

1

Unexpectedly, Xiao Bao was not done with his words yet. “Er Bao, Da Bao is the elder brother. You have to call him elder brother, not Da Bao. You are not obedient. Auntie will beat you!”

1

All of a sudden, Er Bao felt like he was going to suffer from an emotional breakdown. He had a cousin who very much wished that he would be beaten up. How was he going to resolve this?

1

“Don’t you also call me Er Bao?” This naughty little one who has never addressed me as his elder brother.

Xiao Bao shook his head. “Not calling, not calling. Just not calling.”

“Not calling. If you don’t call me elder brother, I’ll bite you. Oo-ah! I am a big tiger.” Er Bao pretended to be ferocious, placing his claws by the side of his face and pouncing on Xiao Bao. Xiao Bao was hiding and shouting for San Bao to help beat the ‘tiger’. He was laughing so loudly that he almost could not catch his breath.

1

Da Bao, who was sitting on the front passenger’s seat, stiffened his face, his voice turning serious. “Mom is going to drive soon. Don’t joke around when Mom is driving. If you continue to behave like that, I’m not playing with you any more next time.” Da Bao did not want to say something so childish. If possible, he wanted to be like a man and teach these two, Da Bao and Er Bao, a lesson, especially Er Bao. Why wouldn’t he grow up? He was older than Xiao Bao by so much, yet he loved to tease Xiao Bao.

1

Unfortunately, Da Bao was afraid that Xiao Bao could not understand him if his words were too strict and serious.

Hence, Da Bao simply used what Xiao Bao cared about most to threaten him. His mother had said that Xiao Bao was very pampered at the Tian family. Although Xiao Bao was a good boy, he was still young and did not know many things. As his elder brother and sister, they had to teach Xiao Bao well if he was not obedient. They could not pamper Xiao Bao like his auntie's family.

Naturally, Da Bao was the first to take on this responsibility. As soon as Xiao Bao did something wrong, Da Bao's expression would look very ugly. Xiao Bao dared not be mischievous anymore. Sometimes, Xiao Bao's fear for Da Bao far exceeded that for his biological father, Tian Dong.

1

Once Da Bao spoke, Xiao Bao immediately sat properly. He dared not even look at Da Bao. As for Er Bao, seeing that Qiao Nan was already sitting on the driver's seat, he was already prepared to stop even if Da Bao did not say so.

"After getting into the car, what is the first thing that you must do?" Qiao Nan reminded the four children when she was in the driver's seat. As soon as Qiao Nan spoke, the triplets automatically fastened their seat belts. Xiao Bao obediently allowed San Bao to help 'tie' him up on the baby seat.

Seeing that all four children were done with the safety measures, Qiao Nan stepped on the accelerator, started the engine, and headed towards the triplets' primary school. Today was the first day of September. Many parents rushed to the school's entrance with their children who were new to primary school. The scene was extremely lively and bustling.

At the sight of the people squeezing with one another, Qiao Nan felt her head hurting a little. "San Bao, you have to look after Xiao Bao well at all times. Xiao Bao, remember to hold hands with your sister. You must not let go. If you don't listen, auntie won't bring you out next time, understand?"

Xiao Bao held on to San Bao's hands tightly, nodding furiously. "Auntie, rest assured. I will be very obedient."

Qiao Nan's clothes had become messy from the squeezing before she finally got hold of the enrollment forms. Qiao Nan had seen the publicity material for this school before. Before enrollment, the school would administer a round of tests for all the new students. Qiao Nan did not understand a little. Shouldn't such tests be conducted before the enrollment as a form of selection criteria for students?

After enrollment and payment, the children were already considered formal students of the school. They would only be assessed thereafter. Could there be any reason for this? When her family's three children had been allocated to Class One, Qiao Nan then realized that the so-called top class also existed in primary school.

When the triplets were taking the tests, Qiao Nan held onto Xiao Bao's hands. She might as well tour the school. "Xiao Bao, you want to study together with your cousins, right? Since there is a chance today, you can take a good look at the school and see if you like it."

Xiao Bao's little head was turning happily. He had not even taken more than a few glances at the school, and his little mouth already answered, "Love it. I will definitely love it." Weren't all schools the same? The only difference was that his cousins were in this school. Even the three-year-old Xiao Bao had started to hatch a plot.

If he was in the same school as his cousins, his auntie could also fetch him when she fetched his cousins home. Next, he would feign spoiled. He would be able to go to his maternal grandmother's house for dinner then. After dinner, he did not feel like moving due to exhaustion. He needed to rest for one day. The sky was dark and he was scared. He did not want to leave. He might as well stay over at his maternal grandmother's house.

2

At the thought of this, Xiao Bao was in a wonderful mood. He could not wait for that day to arrive.

The triplets were already at the age of going to primary school. The Zhai family had prepared a separate bedroom for them. Now, they were still little and could live together in one bedroom with three beds. When San Bao was ten years old, Miao Jing decided to let her grandchildren have one bedroom each. After all, they had two grandsons and one granddaughter. Her granddaughter could not always sleep in the same room as her grandsons.

Xiao Bao had always liked to follow the triplets. When he saw that the triplets had their own rooms, he did not fuss the elders in the Tian family to prepare one for him. Anyway, he had been sleeping alone. His mother was seldom home and his father had to go to work at the office. His grandmother accompanied his grandfather. He was alone.

Hence, after he saw the triplets' bedroom, Xiao Bao babbled and insisted Qiao Nan prepare one more bed in his cousins' bedroom. Xiao Bao expressed that he had grown up and he did not need his auntie to keep him company anymore when he was at his maternal grandmother's house. He would like to sleep in the same bedroom as his cousins.

Fortunately, the Zhai family's residence was not small. They could still place another small bed in the triplets' bedroom. However, in that case, this bedroom would be maxed out and there was no longer any space left.

As such, Qiao Nan made some space in Zhai Sheng and her study room to let the three children have individual space to do their homework. Xiao Bao was very small-sized. He would be able to find a small space to draw and write as long as he squeezed beside one of the triplets.

As one could imagine, Xiao Bao did not have fewer things than the triplets in the Zhai family. Xiao Bao loved to stay in the Zhai family. Tian Dong thus put away some of his clothes at the Zhai family's residence. He had never thought of taking them back. After some time, the Zhai family's residence had become Xiao Bao's second home. Therefore, when he suddenly said that he wanted to stay in the Zhai family's residence, it was not inconvenient. In fact, whatever he needed was already available.

Xiao Bao dared to have such an idea as he was well aware of this.

He would hold onto anything that could give him an excuse to stay over at the Zhai family's residence. Xiao Bao was young but very smart. He had never missed any opportunities, having it all planned. He was exactly the same as his father when he was negotiating collaboration projects with his business partners.

Chapter 1447: School Entrance Examination

This also indirectly proved that Xiao Bao resembled Tian Dong more. He was unlike his mother, who was very sloppy in other matters besides the affairs of the army.

Holding hands with his auntie, Xiao Bao very patiently toured the entire school. After returning to the starting point, Xiao Bao then lifted his head and looked at Qiao Nan. "Auntie, when will cousins finish their exams?" How long more did we have to wait?

“See, I already told you. Xiao Bao, this little brat, will definitely feel anxious. I really didn’t guess it wrong.” Er Bao’s tone of ‘watching a good show’ could be heard. That ruffian-like look of his carried a wicked tinge of liking to make fun of others.

1

San Bao rolled her eyes. “Do you need to say that? We knew even if you didn’t say it, okay? Furthermore, we had been in the examination hall for a long time.” If her mother had not reminded them many times not to be anxious during the examination and to read through the answers a few more times, the trio would have long been out.

“Wow, whose family are these kids from? They are out so early.”

“Child, is this school entrance exam difficult? Were there any questions that you didn’t know how to do?”

Before the triplets could walk to their biological mother, they were surrounded by a group of parents. All these parents were very concerned about the difficulty level of the examination. They had more information than Qiao Nan. Hence, they were very clear that the results of this examination would determine the class that their child would be placed in and their child’s future for the next six years.

In front of their own family, the triplets would reveal a little of their true temperament. However, in front of outsiders, they would normally portray the images of obedient children.

In particular, Er Bao. He put away the ruffian naughtiness of bullying Xiao Bao a while ago and then carried a smile as warm as spring. At a young age, he gave others the feelings of a well-learned gentleman. At that sight of him, everyone said that he looked like he was totally cut out for studies. “Uncle and auntie, rest assured. I think the exams were quite easy.”

“Was there nothing that you didn’t know how to do?” Er Bao gave them a feeling that he was an obedient and outstanding student in the school. Facing a child with good results, the parents were always more forgiving. Furthermore, Er Bao was young and very good-looking. When facing such an exemplary child, who could bear to speak to him in a loud voice?

“No. I finished everything.”

“What about this young lady?” Finished everything? Impossible. The school entrance examination was certainly not that easy. He had found out about the situation a few years ago. There was no exception.

He could not gather anything from Er Bao. Hence, that person turned to San Bao. “Little girl, what do you think? Was the exam difficult? Were there any questions that you didn’t know how to do?” The little San Bao was wearing a baby blue flowery skirt. She had a rosy face and grape-like, watery eyes. That sweet smile of hers was sweeter than the candy floss that they had eaten before.

San Bao gave a ‘coy’ smile. “I feel that it was alright. It’s not especially difficult.” San Bao was very gentle and demure when she spoke. Her voice was clear and crisp, like that of an oriole. It sounded extremely pleasant.

“The exams are almost ending. Very soon, uncle and aunties’ children will be coming out.” At the sight that these parents did not intend to disperse, Da Bao added. Da Bao just wanted to express one meaning: The three of them had finished the examination earlier. They felt that the questions were easy but it was not an accurate reflection of the difficulty level. Everyone had different standards and they would feel differently when attempting the questions.

1

As if to prove Da Bao’s words, the bell signaling the end of the examination rang. These parents jerked up their heads. No longer surrounding the triplets, they were trying hard to search for their own child among the group of children who were coming out.

When the bell rang, the triplets felt liberated. They walked to Qiao Nan at their fastest speed. “Mom, I feel so hungry. Let’s go home quickly. I feel like eating the dumplings made by you.” San Bao almost wanted to rub her tummy to express the extent of her hunger.

Fortunately, she did not as she very quickly realized that she was outside and not at home. Hence, she would definitely not do such a crude action outside.

“Yes, yes. Auntie, Xiao Bao is also hungry. Go home and eat the fair and chubby dumplings.” As the supporters of his cousins, just as San Bao said that, Xiao Bao immediately stood out and backed San Bao up. He took advantage of the fact that he was younger. He was well aware that his words were sometimes more effective than those of his cousins.

There was no issue. If his cousins' words did not work, he would help repeat them, as long as the final outcome was the same.

Qiao Nan had not thought of declining San Bao either. It was very normal for children to feel hungry as they were still growing. Furthermore, as long as the children did not request for outside food, Qiao Nan had never rejected their requests for additional meals or special requests of homemade food. "Sure, let's go home and make dumplings. We will make the skin on our own too, okay?"

"Okay, the dumplings that auntie makes taste the best." Xiao Bao clapped continuously and happily that even his hands had turned red from the clapping. Homemade skin would taste especially chewy. The triplets and Xiao Bao especially liked the feel and taste of chewing the dumpling skin made at home.

However, it was too cumbersome to prepare dumpling skin. Mother Tian was not good at cooking. Not to mention preparing the skin, she was also not very familiar with wrapping the dumplings. Even Mother Tian did not know how to it. One could not expect much from Zhai Hua then. As one could imagine, only the Zhai family could satisfy Xiao Bao's desire of eating such food.

"Alright, let's get into the car." Different from other parents who held onto their children once they were out, questioning them this and that to confirm how they had fared in the examinations, Qiao Nan did not mention the examination at all. She knew that her children were hungry. Hence, she asked them to get into the car quickly so that they could go home to make dumplings. Although the auntie would help Qiao Nan prepare the fillings, rolling the skin and wrapping the dumplings were all completed by Qiao Nan alone.

If they really wanted to eat dumplings, they still had to spend some time making them.

It was only after the triplets left with Qiao Nan did the parents who surrounded the triplets earlier realize from their children's words that the three children who came out together were rare triplets and from the same family. "How did the parents raise these three kids? So beautiful and smart."

Two of the children responded that the questions were not that difficult. Although the elder one did not say much, they could tell that he had not fared badly either. On the contrary, when they asked their own children, they said that it was difficult, something they had not learned before. At the sound of it, they knew that their children did not fare too well in the examination.

Sigh, they were all children. Why was there such a huge difference between them? Why was it that the children who did not find the questions difficult were not from their family?

“They are triplets, right? Such a good fortune. The children are both beautiful and smart.”

Chapter 1448: Itching for a Beating

Qiao Nan and the four children had already left the school. However, the matter of the triplets leaving the examination hall a few minutes earlier had generated a discussion among many of the parents.

“Mom, you’re not asking us how we fared in the exams?” After returning home, Qiao Nan busied for an hour before the dumplings were ready to enter the children’s tummies. After eating and drinking to their fill, Er Bao stood close to Qiao Nan and looked at her curiously. “All the other parents seemed to be very concerned.”

“I am concerned too.” Qiao Nan smiled as she poured a cup of water for Er Bao. “Er Bao, drink more water. It’s good for your body. Mom does not ask because I trust you all. The three of you usually perform so well at home. When you are in kindergarten, you often come home with little red flowers. I believe that your performance won’t be too poor when you go to primary school.”

This was a cognitive bias that a mother had toward her child.

Er Bao was pleased. “That’s true. Grandma said that Dad did very well in his studies, and so did you, Mom. You’re top scorer of the college entrance examination. As your children, how can we perform too badly?” Since the day they went to kindergarten, the triplets often heard their grandmother telling them the situations of their parents when the latter were schooling.

1

Upon hearing that their parents were so good at their studies, the triplets quietly made up their minds. As their parents’ children, how could they perform badly and make their parents lose face? Since their parents were good at their studies, they would certainly be good at it too. They would do wonderfully in their studies.

Er Bao felt very pleased with himself after taking the school entrance examination today. “Mom, during exams next time, I will definitely work hard to achieve the top place.”

“No, you’re second!” San Bao suddenly called out. “The top place is mine.” Grandmother had said that she resembled her mother the most. Hence, she had to be like her mother and attain the top place, being the top scorer!

Er Bao raised his eyebrows. “This first or second place, it doesn’t count when you or I say it. We will know when the results are out.” Er Bao was so cunning. He knew that San Bao was the only lady in the family, and all the elders asked him to give in and take care of San Bao. It was fine for other matters but not his grades.

Instead of fighting with San Bao and receiving his grandfather’s beatings when San Bao cried, he might as well just speak the facts.

Da Bao stood up, held Xiao Bao’s hand, and tugged San Bao’s hand. “We’ve rested enough and should take our nap. Otherwise, Xiao Bao can’t endure any longer.” When Er Bao and San Bao were discussing their grades, Xiao Bao, who was the youngest, had already gone into his usual routine, nodding off like little chicks feeding on grains. He almost fell headlong off the sofa.

1

Da Bao could only carry Xiao Bao for a short distance. However, if he were to carry Xiao Bao upstairs like an adult, it would be too difficult. Da Bao knew his own limits. He would not force himself to do something that he could not. Anyway, Xiao Bao was already old enough to climb the stairs on his own. It was not necessary for someone to carry him up.

“Brother Da Bao.” Xiao Bao leaned softly on Da Bao, speaking and yawning at the same time, even closing his pair of little eyes. He was completely following Da Bao and not even looking at the direction.

Da Bao pursed his lips. “We’re going up the stairs now. Be good. Walk yourself. I can’t carry you.”

“Okay.” Xiao Bao mumbled and reluctantly opened his eyes. His stubby legs seemed to have eyes grown on them. Without the need for Da Bao to teach him, when the tip of his shoes touched a blocked path, his other leg would automatically lift higher and walked up.

Xiao Bao was short and had short legs, yet he wanted to shut his eyes and walked as he slept. That speed of his was almost equivalent to that of a snail crawling. Clearly, Da Bao could go upstairs within a minute, but to accommodate Xiao Bao, he accompanied Xiao Bao up the stairs, taking a step at a time.

Er Bao and San Bao, who were bickering earlier, snorted at each other. They then ran after Da Bao and Xiao Bao upon seeing the situation. Their mother had told them that at this age, they had to eat, sleep, and play more. In that way, they could grow better and faster.

“Faster, Xiao Bao. I will go upstairs and be the first one to sleep.” Er Bao was a cheeky one since he was a child. As he grew older, he developed a little more humorous and silly side. Er Bao belonged to the type that could tease someone to confusion.

Xiao Bao was very young and could not take spurring on. Initially, he was in a daze. As soon as he heard that they were going to compete and Brother Er Bao was overtaking him, aiming for his first place, he opened his eyes widely. He flung Da Bao’s hand away and looked at Er Bao, his eyes shining. Seeing that Er Bao was really at a higher step than him, without a word, Xiao Bao crawled upstairs using both his hands and legs. Both Da Bao and San Bao could compete for the first place but not Er Bao.

“Come, come. Faster.” Er Bao did not mind watching the fun grow. Clearly, he could reach the top of the stairs earlier but he purposely made himself quicker than Xiao Bao by two to three steps. Thereafter, he stood and hurried Xiao Bao. Moreover, Xiao Bao especially liked to fall into Er Bao’s trap. He was climbing enthusiastically.

2

Da Bao quietly retracted his hands. Facing the sleepy and rogue Xiao Bao, Er Bao had more ways than him.

After successfully fooling Xiao Bao to the top of the staircase, with Xiao Bao gamboling into their bedroom and pouncing onto his little bed, Er Bao looked at Da Bao smugly, as if asking ‘Look at how good I am. Without my help, you could wait for Xiao Bao to climb up the stairs for half a day.’

1

Stiffness was written all over Da Bao's expressionless little face. He seemed as mature as a little old man. Even Elder Lin had more expressions than him. That impenetrable look made Da Bao the one among the triplets who resembled Zhai Sheng the most. After hearing Er Bao's boast, Da Bao's eyeballs swirled. He opted to hide the truth and didn't utter a word. He would let Er Bao, this younger brother, feel happy for a while more.

Was it because he did not have any solution?

At this moment, as long as Er Bao turned his head and looked at the expression of their mother, who was sitting downstairs, he would know that this was not a matter of having no solutions but a matter of whether the solution was acceptable.

"This Er Bao." True enough, Qiao Nan's expression did not look good. Xiao Bao was only three years old. He was very small and his height was not much taller than that of the staircase step. Xiao Bao liked to follow the triplets. As he had seen the triplets ascending the stairs on their own, he insisted on doing the same at all times. Just from the looks of Xiao Bao dozing off and shutting his eyes, Qiao Nan might as well go over and personally carry him upstairs.

Fortunately, Da Bao was sensible and knew how to hold Xiao Bao's hands, while carefully accompanying him to ascend the stairs slowly and step-by-step. Out of trust for Da Bao, Qiao Nan did not bother about the situation. Unexpectedly, with Er Bao's spurring, Xiao Bao climbed up the stairs like a puppy crawling. Qiao Nan's eyes and heart almost leaped out at the sight of this.

Chapter 1449: The Top Student's Children Are Also Top Students

Er Bao was really itching for a beating!

Qiao Nan rubbed her forehead. If Xiao Bao were to find out that he had such a dark past during childhood, would he hate Er Bao, this rogue cousin, so much that he wished to kill him? Who would bully his younger cousin in this way?

On the other hand, Miao Jing was thinking on the bright side. She asked Qiao Nan not to worry. "I think Er Bao knows his limits. He is not fooling around with Xiao Bao. You're angry because you think that it's too dangerous for Xiao Bao to climb up the stairs in this way. No issue. Our Zhai family's children have very tough skin." Xiao Bao had been spending more and more time at the Zhai family. It could be said that the Zhai family had taken on half of the responsibility of raising Xiao Bao.

Hence, it was not exaggerated to say that Xiao Bao was a child of the Zhai family.

Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. “Mom, you should know that I don’t mean it that way. I am worried about that auntie in the Tian family.” Xiao Bao was the only grandson in the Tian family and Mother Tian placed great importance on him. In the eyes of ordinary people, what happened earlier was purely Er Bao spurring on Xiao Bao so that Xiao Bao could ascend the stairs faster and take his nap thereafter.

1

The problem was how Mother Tian would view the earlier scene. It was hard to tell. When it went to other people’s mouths, Qiao Nan did not want Er Bao’s mischief to become a malicious intent of humiliating Xiao Bao.

Speaking of this in-law, Miao Jing wiped away some sweat. “It’s also strange. Look at Dongzi and his father. They are both quite good people. Why is it that Dongzi’s mother will stir up some issues from time to time? No matter what, she is someone who has lived in America for more than twenty years. Didn’t they say that people from western countries were more open-minded and liberal in their thinking? She has lived there for more than twenty years. Didn’t she pick up the good things from there?”

Which of the triplets did not take care of Xiao Bao and treat Xiao Bao like their biological younger brother? This included Er Bao, who was always bickering with Xiao Bao and making Xiao Bao’s face swell like a puffer fish. There was once when the Tian family specially gave a Chihuahua to Xiao Bao as they felt that Xiao Bao would feel lonely on his own. Unexpectedly and unknowingly, the cute Chihuahua found Er Bao an eyesore. It always barked fiercely at Er Bao, even refusing to let Er Bao enter the doors of the Tian family.

At the sight of this situation, Xiao Bao gave the Chihuahua a push and told Mother Tian on the spot that this puppy was too bad-tempered. He disliked it and did not want it anymore. He even gave it away. In fact, one hour before this incident occurred, Xiao Bao had been hugging the little puppy, saying that its fur was very soft and he felt very comfortable carrying it.

1

Xiao Bao and Er Bao were on very good terms. If Er Bao were to encounter any matter, Xiao Bao would protect him more than anyone else.

Looking at Xiao Bao's reaction, Mother Tian should know that if Er Bao did not treat Xiao Bao well, would Xiao Bao be so close to him? Why didn't Mother Tian look on the positive side of things? She always liked to make a mountain out of a molehill, as if such young children already had dark thoughts in them. Towards this, Miao Jing was having a huge headache.

"Your Sister Hua Hua is not good at dealing with these problems. Fortunately, she had long discussed and agreed with Dongzi that she will not leave the army even after marriage and having kids. Otherwise, if your Sister Hua Hua stays a few more days at her in-law's house, given her temper, she will surely stir up something. When that happens, Dongzi will be sandwiched between his wife and mother. He will be in a very difficult position."

Well, no one would be able to endure this kind of temperament.

"Isn't that quite good? Sister Zhai Hua can avoid managing the mother and daughter-in-law problem." Qiao Nan did not comment on Mother Tian much. However, there was certainly a little problem regarding her temperament. One word: paranoid

In the end, Miao Jing gave a sigh and did not continue with this topic.

Without Mother Tian's disturbance, Xiao Bao's life in the Zhai family was very carefree. If Tian Dong did not come and fetch him, Xiao Bao basically did not want to go home.

Soon after, the results of the school entrance examination for the triplets were out. The school sent the results to the parents via mobile messages. As such, Qiao Nan's cell phone beeped thrice. The messages stated which child the results belonged to and the respective grades for the subjects.

Although the total marks for that paper were 100, it seemed to be categorized into a few sections. It stated the percentage and total marks of each section, as well as the score of the child.

As there were three children in the family, the three messages in Qiao Nan's cell phone looked very long. Fortunately, Qiao Nan was usually very patient. She was already very patient when reading books. Of course, she was even more patient when looking at her children's grades now.

"How is it?" Miao Jing was very concerned about the triplets' results.

Qiao Nan simply copied the triplets' results into a table and passed to Miao Jing for her to take a look herself. Looking at the table, which revealed everything at one glance, Miao Jing was very

clear. “The triplets should have done well?” Miao Miao did not know how to compare the grades for every subject. What she knew was that, out of 100 marks, Da Bao had attained 99 marks while Er Bao and San Bao 96 marks.

From the basis of a 100-point system, at the very least, the triplet’s results were not considered poor.

“Not bad.” Qiao Nan nodded with certainty. “When the children came out, they didn’t look good. I guess the exam questions were not too easy. Da Bao almost attained 100 marks. He may not be the top scorer but should be in the top three. As for Er Bao and San Bao, they should have high rankings too. I heard that the triplets’ school has a class that they pay particular attention to. Many parents are especially nervous about the school entrance exam as it is related to getting into that class.”

“This...” When Zhai Sheng and Zhai Hua were studying, it was much simpler to select the schools. Miao Jing did not spend much effort doing so. Unexpectedly, after coming to the capital for a few years, she still did not have much understanding of the situation in this area. Fortunately, Nan Nan, this biological mother, was very clear-minded and concerned about the children’s future. “So as to speak, our three children should be able to get into that class?”

Judging from this, that class seemed quite formidable.

If the triplets could attend that class, they would definitely do as well as their parents in their studies.

“Yes, there shouldn’t be any major problem.” Qiao Nan was aware of the situation of her own children. What Qiao Nan did not know was the standard of other family’s children. There would definitely be comparisons with the children who went into that class. Fortunately, her three children were very outstanding. Qiao Nan felt that it should not be a difficult matter for them to get into that class.

“That’s great!” Miao Jing clapped her hands happily. “This won’t do. This is a joyous matter. Let’s celebrate? Auntie, buy more of the triplets’ favorite dishes. Each child must have one dish. Let’s have a good feast to celebrate.”

At the thought that the three children in her family performed so well, Miao Jing looked as though she had been injected with chicken blood, plunging into a small state of excitement.

Chapter 1450: Disdain from a Top Student

“The results are out?” Er Bao had sharp ears. He dashed over excitedly when he vaguely heard his mother and grandmother discussing the scores. “Mom, did I attain the top place?”

When Er Bao said this, San Bao also rushed over. “Mom, am I the top scorer?”

Da Bao walked over leisurely with Xiao Bao, this little tail, following by his side. He quietly walked to Qiao Nan without saying a word. While Da Bao was calm and cool, Er Bao and San Bao almost quarreled. Two little mouths were clattering, filled with a taste of explosives. At the end of Er Bao and San Bao’s ‘discussion’, both of their faces turned red with all the yelling.

1

Qiao Nan could not help reaching out her hands and flicked on Er Bao and San Bao’s foreheads. “How old are the two of you? Quarreling to this extent in front of Xiao Bao? Aren’t you afraid that Xiao Bao will laugh at you? You’re the elder brother and elder sister. Are you setting this kind of example for Xiao Bao?” This was just the rankings for an examination and they could quarrel until their faces and ears turned crimson. Qiao Nan was the first to disagree with such behavior.

“Isn’t this just the results of an exam? Don’t you find it embarrassing to kick up such a ruckus? How did Mom teach you normally? Did you all fulfill Mom’s expectations of you? If you behave like this, Mom is going to be angry!”

Er Bao and San Bao immediately shut up and mumbled in their hearts: Mom, you are already angry.

“Hug, hug.” Qiao Nan took a deep breath. Er Bao and San Bao liked to compete. This was normal for every child. If it was a friendly competition, Qiao Nan was supportive. However, in the current situation, the two were arguing nonstop and almost fell out with each other. Therefore, Qiao Nan’s attitude immediately turned serious.

The triplets were usually very attached to Qiao Nan. However, when Qiao Nan scolded them with a strict face, they would become very obedient. They were afraid that their mother would be angry although she was especially good to them normally.

When one who did not flare up normally suddenly toughened her attitude, the triplets would feel that they had gone overboard.

Once Qiao Nan spoke, Er Bao and San Bao dared not continue to kid around. They had long put aside the top scorer matter and hugged each other according to Qiao Nan's request. One said 'sorry, sister' while the other said 'sorry, brother'.

1

Seeing that her children had admitted their mistakes, Qiao Nan did not continue to chide them. "Your results are out. In Mom's views, all three of you have done very well. I am very satisfied." There was an ancient saying of 'There is no best writer, nor is there a second-best fighter.' It was hard to differentiate the best in an academic competition, but easy to find out the stronger one in a fighting competition.

Qiao Nan felt that she should have a good discussion with her mother-in-law when she had time. Of course, it was not an issue to use Brother Zhai and her as examples for her children. However, it seemed that both Er Bao and San Bao had a distorted understanding of what attaining the top ranking meant. They were even so stubborn about it. That was a problem.

"Really?"

"Cousins, you are awesome."

Having received their mother's praise, the triplets were especially happy. Even Da Bao, who already resembled more and more like his father with his strict and serious manner even at such a young age, also curled the corners of his mouth and revealed a smile.

"Of course it's true. Da Bao got 99 marks, while Er Bao and San Bao got 96 marks. The three of you did so well. Mom is very happy." Having said that, Qiao Nan bent down and gave them a kiss each. Upon receiving their mother's praise and kiss, the triplets were smiling like pink flowers.

Xiao Bao was anxious. He twisted his chubby body and squeezed in between his cousins. "Auntie, I am also obedient and good. When I am in the kindergarten, I do very well. The teacher always gives me small little red flowers. Auntie, I want a kiss too." His cousins received kisses. How could his auntie miss him out?

Looking at Xiao Bao's anxious and red face, Qiao Nan laughed and gave him a hard kiss on the face. Xiao Bao's fair skin resembled Tian Dong's and his bright eyes resembled Zhai Hua's. Qiao Nan did not know who his chubby face with baby fat looked like. However, just based on these, Xiao Bao was already a very adorable, lovely, and good-looking little boy.

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Sometimes, Qiao Nan felt that she was taking advantage of Xiao Bao when she kissed him.

This matter had passed. However, Qiao Nan did find time to have a heart-to-heart talk with the triplets thereafter. Qiao Nan hoped that Er Bao and San Bao could get Da Bao to play with them more. She did not want Da Bao to become so mature at such a young age and miss out on laughter and happiness during childhood.

“Da Bao, Mom doesn't know how great-grandpa and grandpa usually teach you, but Mom wants to tell you that in front of Mom, you are always my son. You're still very young now. You don't need to feel anxious about many things. Don't give yourself too much pressure. Play and make noises when it is time to.” As the eldest son of the Zhai family, the pressure that Da Bao had to take on was much greater than that of Er Bao and San Bao.

In front of Qiao Nan, Da Bao should have the childlike innocence of a seven-year-old child. “Mom, rest assured. I know.” After thinking, Da Bao tugged Qiao Nan's sleeves. Qiao Nan bent down and lowered her head. Da Bao then whispered into her ears. “Mom, don't worry about me. Actually, sometimes, I don't like to talk because I feel that some children are too childish.”

1

Just take what happened earlier. He felt that the argument between Er Bao and San Bao was pointless. The examination was over and the results were already in their mother's hands. Would the rankings change just because one's voice was louder or he was fiercer?

As the 'eldest one', Da Bao was still very confident of himself. He just could not be bothered to say that he did not think that the top place would be snatched away by his younger brother and sister.

The triplets' IQs were not low. They were all very intelligent children.

Although Er Bao and San Bao were occasionally a little ‘stupid’ in Da Bao’s eyes, making him speechless, Da Bao was even more reluctant to bother about those children and classmates in the school. “Mom, you don’t know. During yesterday’s exam, one of our classmates was so anxious that he cried. I think he didn’t know how to answer some questions. He kicked up a ruckus and wanted to go to the bathroom. He insisted the teacher bring him there, saying that he didn’t know how to take off his pants.”

At the end of his speech, the disdain on Da Bao’s face was very obvious.

He wasn’t in kindergarten anymore, yet he insisted the teacher help him take off his pants when he went to the bathroom. Each time Da Bao recalled that he was in the same examination hall with such a child, he felt extremely unhappy. In his heart, Da Bao felt grateful more than once that Er Bao and San Bao were not like that.

Even Xiao Bao. For those pants that were easier to remove, Xiao Bao did not want the adults to keep him company. He would step on the stool and pee on his own.

A primary school boy performing worse than his family’s Xiao Bao—it would be strange if Da Bao could see eye to eye with such a child.