

Rebirth to a Military Marriage: Good Morning Chief

#Chapter 21 - Quarrel - Read Rebirth to a Military Marriage: Good Morning Chief Chapter 21 - Quarrel

Chapter 21: Quarrel

“Owes you and has to repay?” Qiao Dongliang smiled coldly. “Who was the one who suggested having a second child, trying for a son?”

Back then, it was Old Ding who said that it would be too lonely to just have Zijin in the family and that they should have a second child. Even though it was against national planning policy, Old Ding said that having a second child was more important than work or career prospects.

Qiao Dongliang admitted that he was undoubtedly a traditional Chinese man who felt the need for a son to carry on his family name. But he also knew that such things could not be forced.

Upon listening to his wife’s suggestion, he was tempted or rather muddle-headed enough to give up his work and future, all to try for a son.

Qiao Dongliang did not have any regrets having this daughter, Qiao Nan. What he regretted was giving up everything for having a son.

If not, his wife would not put all the blame of quitting their jobs and not giving birth to a son on Nan Nan.

“Old Ding, I kept quiet but that doesn’t mean I was unaware. You should know what it was like at Ding family and how you grew up at that family. So now you want Nan Nan to go through all the hardships you faced? Is it Nan Nan who owes you or you who owes Nan Nan?”

Ding Jiayi grew up in a family that was extremely patriarchal. Back then it was the old friend of Qiao Dongliang’s father, a veteran cadre who introduced Ding Jiayi to Qiao Dongliang. The veteran cadre was hoping that they would lead a better life.

Qiao Dongliang’s parents had passed away and he did not have any relatives.

For people like him, it was very difficult to get married.

It just so happened that Qiao Dongliang was only a platoon leader then, slightly better than an average soldier, but did not have good prospects. So it was difficult to find

someone of matching status. People from lower rank would not do, while people from higher rank would not take a fancy to him.

And so it was difficult to find a wife.

As for Ding Jiayi, she came from an average family, but she had three younger brothers.

Her parents wanted to hold a grand wedding for their three sons and they would each have their own house; and so there was not enough money to get by.

So her parents decided to set their sights on their daughter, Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi brought up her three brothers single handedly. In spite of this she was like the servant in the Ding family. She had to do all the chores but there was never enough for her to eat and she still got frequent scoldings from her parents.

But Ding Jiayi was not stupid, she made use of the chance to read her brother's books while looking after him.

At times, she could even coach her brother in his studies.

And so with the on and off studying, Ding Jiayi finally managed to grasp the elementary school syllabus through self study. She managed to learn most of the Chinese characters.

In Ding Jiayi's time, her standard was considered very high.

When Ding Jiayi grew up, her parents had no intention of keeping her at home. They wanted her to work and earn money to support the family.

Their idea was to find a "good family" for her, get a good bride price and marry her off.

At that time, Ding's parents had already sourced a family and even decided on a bride price. Even though they were marrying off their daughter, everyone could tell that they were in fact selling off their daughter.

Ding Jiayi's future husband was not only short, he was already in his forties, even older than her father.

But the problem was, after the cultural revolution, he was considered a good catch. He knew how to have fun, served as a vanguard, and was a man of certain authority.

Ding's father had in fact found a son-in-law who served the government.

He was old and ugly-looking, but what was worse was his foul temper. No-one had any idea what had happened to his previous wife who had passed away.

Knowing that she was to be married to a man like him, Ding Jiayi almost wanted to die.

News spread and the veteran cadre knew about this. His old friend was framed by others. As a result, his son who served in the army had no good prospects. Furthermore he did not have any relatives and had difficulties in finding a wife.

He surmised that this lady was decent looking and well-educated, except for the fact that her family was not really dependable. The two of them would make a good match.

The veteran cadre did not want to throw two unknown people together. He informed Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi of the other's situation and let them decide for themselves.

Ding Jiayi said yes immediately when she learned of Qiao Dongliang's situation.

At that time, being a soldier was the best occupation.

No elders at home? That was fine. When she married into the family, she would be the mistress of the house, with no parents-in-law to order her around and she would not need to take care of them.

It was fine that he did not have any siblings. As long as he worked hard, it would be better.

While Ding Jiayi agreed in an instant, Qiao Dongliang had some doubts. However he accepted in the end and so they ended up getting married.

Because of Qiao Dongliang, the veteran cadre helped Ding Jiayi to secure a pretty decent job. She not only got married but also led a much better life.

At that time, Ding Jiayi felt that marrying Qiao Dongliang was the wisest decision she had made in her life.

Ding Jiayi came from a very patriarchal family. Since a young age she had to bring up her three brothers and handle everything by herself.

Ever since having her elder daughter, Ding Jiayi came out of her disappointment quickly and doted on her daughter. She wanted her to have everything that she had missed out on when she was young.

When Qiao Nan was born, though she was also a daughter, things were totally different.

“Back then you said that we should sacrifice our jobs to have a second child. You begged me to have a second child. For that, I left my favorite army. Old Ding, I made a lot more sacrifices than you to have this child. Nan Nan wasn’t a boy but a girl. But can we blame her for that? You couldn’t bear me a son, and you still dare to blame our daughter?!”

Qiao Dongliang got all riled up as he spoke and raised his voice.

After having their elder daughter, Qiao Dongliang sorted out his thoughts and consoled himself that daughters and sons were all the same. Furthermore, he really loved the army life. He enjoyed being a soldier. His father always said that he was born to be a soldier.

For the sake of continuing working in the army, Qiao Dongliang decided to concentrate on nurturing his elder daughter.

But when he finally stopped thinking of having a son, Ding Jiayi became bent on having one.

“Now you are blaming me?!” Ding Jiayi seemed like a porcupine who stuck out all its spines. “Who was the one who said that sons and daughters are the same, and that he would not blame me for not carrying on the family line, having no offspring. Old Qiao, you are so bizarre in your thinking!”

Ding Jiayi hated it the most when someone said she could not bear a son. She gave birth to two daughters consecutively and ended up losing both of their jobs.

For this, her mother once came from faraway with her grandson, mocking Ding Jiayi for being so heartless, saying that Heaven had punished her and now she could not bear a son.

Chapter 22: Exams

“I am backward in my thinking! Why did you not set an example for me? In short, if you uses the Ding’s family old rules and thinking on Nan Nan, I will not let you off!”

With that, Qiao Dongliang got up from bed, took his pillow and blanket and went to sleep in the study room. He did not wish to share a bed with Ding Jiayi any more.

He did not care how the Ding family treated people, but he would not allow his daughter to be treated like that!

“You... you, where are you going?” Ding Jiayi was dumbfounded. Old Qiao refused to share a bed with her just because of that wretched girl?

On the next day, Qiao Dongliang was just his usual self; but Ding Jiayi's eyes were puffy red and swollen. She had obviously been crying.

Qiao Nan started school at an earlier time than Qiao Zijin. She went out early in the morning, taking the deep-fried dough sticks that Qiao Dongliang bought along with her. She carried her bag and drank her soybean milk, making a stop at Zhai's house to get her books before heading off to school.

Looking at the unfamiliar faces of her classmates whom she could not recall, Qiao Nan started to feel anxious. She could not even remember where she sat in the classroom.

She finally found her classroom by checking the class plates outside. She stood dumbfounded at the doorway.

"Qiao Nan, why are you standing by the door, go in now." Her class teacher, Teacher Chen saw Qiao Nan and smiled brightly.

Qiao Nan always ranked top three in her level and ranked first in her class. Every teacher loved a good student like her.

With Teacher Chen's prompting, Qiao Nan braced herself and went into the classroom.

Qiao Nan could no longer remember her classmates, but she still remembered Teacher Chen.

In this country, everyone had to go through nine years of compulsory education. In her previous life, Teacher Chen paid a lot of visits to her house when she stopped going to secondary three.

Every time Teacher Chen visited their house, her father would urge her to go back to school, but her mother would kick up a fuss. She was frustrated by all this and ended up doing a lot of stupid stuff, breaking Teacher Chen's heart.

Looking at her junior high class teacher, Teacher Chen, she felt a twinge of guilt.

Upon entering the classroom, Qiao Nan had no idea where she used to sit. At this moment, Teacher Chen said, "Qiao Nan, you had better sit in your usual place."

Teacher Chen pointed towards the second row of the second group, at the seat to the right.

That seat was the nearest to the blackboard and the teacher.

This was undoubtedly the seat that teachers reserved for good students.

Qiao Nan let out a breath and with her bag behind her, walked towards the seat that Teacher Chen said. She put away her bag at the desk.

When she was finally settled down, the rest of the classmates also streamed in gradually. Teacher Chen assigned seats to everyone but the good seat besides Qiao Nan still remained vacant.

“The summer break was over. Let’s have a test. Everyone put away your books, do not leave anything unnecessary on the table. Hurry up.”

At Teacher Chen’s words, everyone started to complain.

There was a saying that goes: Examinations were a teacher’s weapon while grades were a student’s lifeline.

Qiao Nan turned as white as a sheet upon hearing Teacher Chen’s words.

Nobody knew the worry, dread and guilt a top student like her was feeling at this moment.

She had only spent a few days revising the junior high syllabus and she had to sit a test now. There was no way that she could get a good result and match up to her usual standard.

Qiao Nan started to break out in a cold sweat.

Teacher Chen was a Mathematics teacher, so he must be testing them on their Maths.

She took a few deep breaths, gripped her pen and started writing.

Qiao Nan had a systematic way of tackling the test. In order not to run out of time, she started answering the questions one by one. If she was stuck for five minutes, she would skip and move on.

When she finished answering the questions she knew and had checked through once, she then went back to the questions that she skipped.

It was a good thing that she could answer most of the questions. But in the past, she could start solving the problems as soon as she gets the papers without stopping for a moment to think.

Now, she had to think through the solutions and she was not as good as before in her mental and manual calculations.

After finishing the paper, Qiao Nan was drenched in sweat, with her clothes plastered to her back.

Qiao Nan only had time to check through once before the alarm went off. Teacher Chen then started to collect the papers.

When class was over, Qiao Nan headed for the washroom to wash her face.

The Maths test was finally over, but there must be other tests for the rest of the main subjects.

On the first day of school, Qiao Nan was kept busy taking tests for the three main subjects Mathematics, Chinese and English. Her head was spinning from the tests.

Qiao Nan did not feel well after the tests; she barely made it back home.

“Oh, you are back so early today?” Ding Jiayi saw Qiao Nan and pulled a long face, her eyes full of mockery. “Your Dad is not back yet!”

Didn't the wretched girl always come back at the same time as Old Qiao?

Pierced by Ding Jiayi's mocking voice, Qiao Nan came back to her senses. She felt the heavy weight of her books on her back. Without a word, she ran inside the house like a rabbit, sped past Ding Jiayi and went into her room, sliding the bolt in place.

“Mom.” Qiao Zijin saw that Ding Jiayi was about to follow after and stopped her. “Dad is still furious. We can't help that Nan Nan is not sensible. But you definitely do not want to keep on quarreling with Dad.”

Father was the sole breadwinner in the house. If mother fell out with father and he refused to give his pay to her, what was going to happen to her?

“Since Nan Nan is not going to work to lighten Dad and your load this year, Mom, you should stop quarreling with Dad and making yourself unhappy.”

“You are right. Your Dad and I have been together for so many years, we have never had such a fierce quarrel before. It's not worth it to fall out with your Dad for this wretched girl.” Ding Jiayi calmed down and said, “You mentioned that secondary three syllabus is much more difficult, and not as easy as before, right? Let's wait and see her results this year. She had made a promise with your Dad. If she fails to score well, she would have to work no matter what!”

She finally managed to calm Ding Jiayi down. Actually Qiao Zijin did not tell Ding Jiayi that secondary three syllabus might be difficult for her; but she had no idea if it was easy or difficult for Qiao Nan.

Qiao Zijin could not help but pray that just like her and the other female classmates in class, Qiao Nan would find the secondary three syllabus difficult, and in particular would fail terribly at Maths and Chemistry.

“Nan Nan, it’s Dad.” Qiao Dongliang reached home one hour later and went to look for Qiao Nan.

“Dad.” Qiao Nan opened the door to let Qiao Dongliang in.

Qiao Dongliang knitted his eyebrows, “Nan Nan, your room is this small?”

Chapter 23: Change of Room

Qiao Dongliang was a traditional man. He had never stepped inside his daughters’ room before.

Last time round was the first time he had stepped into his elder daughter’s room; and today was the first time he went into the younger daughter’s room.

Because of this, Qiao Dongliang was shocked when he saw that Nan Nan’s room was only a third the size of Zijin’s room. In fact, his study room was twice as big as hers.

“Dad.” Qiao Nan did not answer but stared at Qiao Dongliang, wondering what was the matter.

“Nan Nan, wait a minute.” The younger daughter might be used to it and have no grievances but Qiao Dongliang could not bear it.

Without a word, Qiao Dongliang went into the study room, packed everything and put it in the living room.

He then dismantled Qiao Nan’s bed and brought it piece by piece to the study room.

“Old Qiao, what are you doing now?” Ding Jiayi heard noises and came out from the kitchen. She saw Qiao Dongliang bringing in Qiao Nan’s bed into the study room.

Qiao Dongliang did not bother to look at Ding Jiayi, he said curtly, “Nan Nan’s room is way too small, I am going to switch the study room with her bedroom.”

“That will not do. That room is not big enough for a big man like you. You would be so cramped there. She is so petite, she doesn’t need such a big room.”

Ding Jiayi wanted to stop Qiao Dongliang. Though she disliked the younger daughter, she treated her husband fairly well. She couldn’t bear to see a 1.8 meter tall man like him, cramped up to read in the room that was as small as a sparrow’s nest.

“Since a big man like me might be uncomfortable, then let’s have Zijin switched rooms with Nan Nan?” Qiao Dongliang was amused and angered.

Old Ding was not showing favoritism, she was treating Nan Nan like an outsider.

“That won’t do. Qiao Nan is the youngest in the house. Why can’t she stay in a small room?”

“A day has 24 hours, I only use the room for a few hours. But Nan Nan has to sleep in the room. She has stayed there for so many years, so why can’t I?”

Qiao Dongliang just could not get through to Ding Jiayi. He harbored no hopes of Ding Jiayi coming to her senses and offering to help him. He moved the bed into the study room and assembled it.

Qiao Dongliang took out all his books. But the desk and chair had no place to go. “Nan Nan, I will leave them for you, I will think of ways to get some wood and make another set for myself.”

Compared to the elder daughter’s room that was well-furnished, the younger daughter’s room was not only small, it was also without a desk and chair.

All these years the two daughters had been doing their studying in their rooms, Qiao Dongliang could not imagine how the younger daughter had made it through those times.

All along Ding Jiayi had kept it from him and Qiao Nan was too quiet, never uttering a word of complaint.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease, the saying was very true.

Qiao Dongliang was an inattentive father and furthermore Qiao Nan never once complained. So he had no idea that the elder daughter and younger daughter were treated so differently. If any, he thought it was only a slight difference in the treatment.

“Thank you, Dad.” Qiao Nan nodded and accepted her father’s suggestions.

“Nan Nan, I will get you a lock later. You are a young lady now, this room will be under your care.” Qiao Dongliang thought for a moment, and decided to get the lock and install it for her the next day.

Qiao Nan’s eyes turned red and she felt warm inside. Her voice was choked up with tears, “Okay.”

She was such a letdown in her previous life, her mother disliked her, and her father gave up on her.

In fact, her father was a good father. She did not know how to cherish him; she had let down the few people who really cared for her once and again.

“Dad, I had tests today.” Qiao Nan once gave up in despair, but now she realized that she had family love. Qiao Dongliang was a good father to Qiao Nan. She could not help but start crying. “I... I fear that I did not do well for my tests, Dad, will you be disappointed in me?” And give up on me just as in the previous life?

Qiao Dongliang was completely at a loss seeing the younger daughter in tears. He wanted to wipe away the tears. “Don’t cry, I have given you my promise that you have half a year’s time. Even if you did not do well this time, you can strive for better results next time. I believe that you will definitely be able to catch up.”

Qiao Dongliang spoke with confidence. He truly believed that the younger daughter would be able to catch up on her studies.

When the elder daughter flunked her middle school exams, she never even cried once for her results.

“Nan Nan, no hurry. There’s still half a year to go. Don’t stress yourself out.” Qiao Dongliang thought for a moment and added. He knew that some of the kids at the quad have always been doing well, but because they were too stressed, when it was time for the final exams, they failed to perform and fumbled the ball.

“Okay.” Embarrassed, Qiao Nan wiped the tears off her face. She was no longer a fifteen-year-old kid; mentally, she was already thirty now, yet she was still crying her guts out in front of her father.

“Mom.” Qiao Zijin went to the kitchen looking for Ding Jiayi. She heard Ding Jiayi ranting to herself. “Mom, don’t be angry. Nan Nan is already in tears.”

Ding Jiayi was startled. “What’s there to cry about? I should be the one crying. Now Old Qiao treats me just like the step mother of that wretched girl. The whole world now revolves around her, what’s there for her to cry about?”

“I seemed to hear Nan Nan said that she did not do well in her tests today.” Qiao Zijin smirked. If Qiao Nan did not do well, did it mean that it would not take one year’s time; that within half a year, she would quit school and work?

“How is that possible?” Ding Jiayi did not believe her. “She was burning with fever when she had her exams in the final year of elementary school, yet she came in fifth place in the school. She couldn’t possibly have screwed it up.”

When the subject was about the younger daughter’s results, Ding Jiayi had no doubts at all. She trusted that she would do well for her exams.

It was another story if those were syllabi that Qiao Nan had never learned. If not, she would never flunk her exams.

Qiao Zijin was upset. Whenever she sat for exams, her mother would ask about her results anxiously. "It was definitely true. Nan Nan said it herself. She was shocked to tears. Mom, maybe she was down with fever a few days ago and it burnt her brain."

She clearly remembered that right before Qiao Nan kicked up a fuss, she went into Qiao Nan's room that morning and felt her forehead, it was burning hot.

"Burnt her brains? Yes, but she burnt her conscience not her brains. But, did she really said that she flunked it?"

"Flunked it."

Ding Jiayi thought for a moment. "Don't be too happy. Your Dad promised to give her half a year's time. We would have to see if she is able to catch up on her studies by then. Maybe she has been using gimmicks all along. She might have memorized all the content in the textbooks. That's why now that I sold all the textbooks, she could not study for one whole summer break, and has finally shown her true colors."

Ding Jiayi has been through this before, so she could tell at once.

Chapter 24: Setbacks

"Zijin, look at Qiao Nan, no matter how bad she is, she is very hardworking in her studies. You are as intelligent as me, if you put in more effort and time, you would definitely be better than Qiao Nan. I would do anything for you. You must strive and work hard so that I can stand up straight in front of your Dad!"

She has devoted everything into nurturing the elder daughter. She must be successful to prove that she was right all along.

"I understand, Mom. Don't worry, I will study hard. When I enter high school I will catch up on my my studies and I will definitely make you proud." Qiao Zijin felt a twinge of guilt at using up all the savings at home.

"Alright, school starts tomorrow. Remember to do more reading. Worst comes to worst, just memorize all the textbooks. If Qiao Nan can do it, so can you."

Ding Jiayi was brimming with confidence. It seemed that she could already see the day whereby the elder daughter enrolled into college.

"Okay." Qiao Zijin smiled happily. But she became depressed when she was back in her room.

It did not matter whether Ding Jiayi was unhappy or not, the study room ended up being Qiao Nan's new room, and Qiao Nan's old room now became Qiao Dongliang's study room.

Though Ding Jiayi bickered with Qiao Dongliang about this, seeing that he had made up his mind, that night she straightened and tidied up the new study room.

The next day Qiao Dongliang was home earlier than usual. As soon as he reached home, he headed for Qiao Nan's room, took a look inside and installed a lock outside her room. Ding Jiayi was boiling with anger.

What was this lock for? To guard against who?

It was definitely not to keep out thieves, it must be to guard against her!

Qiao Nan, who was at school, had no idea of this at all. Back in the classroom, people were discussing her unusual performance in the recent exams.

Teacher Chen had intended to have a talk with Qiao Nan. But when he saw how dejected she looked, he could not bear to say another word. "Qiao Nan, though you did not do well this time, you have a strong foundation, and your performance was still pretty good in the class. It's just that you did not maintain your usual standard. If you meet with any problems in your studies, feel free to come to me, understand?"

Qiao Nan had never scored below 90 points for her Maths exams, a full score was the usual case.

This time she scored 85 points; to others it was a pretty good result, but to Qiao Nan it was an unprecedented low score.

In this round of pre-testing, there were more than 240 students from secondary three. Qiao Nan used to be among the top ten, but now she was ranked at around 70th to 80th place.

If it had not been for Teacher Chen who noticed Qiao Nan's results and insisted on finding out the ranking for individual subjects, Qiao Nan would know her exact ranking among the cohort.

Teacher Chen pondered for a while and walked up to Qiao Nan. "Qiao Nan, how did you spend your summer break? Did you do some revision?"

In the past, Teacher Chen never had to worry about Qiao Nan's studies, but this time he was shocked by Qiao Nan's results.

Qiao Nan did not know if she should be sad or relieved. The best result in her class was a score of 92 points and her result of 85 points was actually considered above average.

Picking up what she used to study in school was really not an easy task. Qiao Nan could feel despair sinking in.

“All my textbooks are gone.”

“Gone?” Teacher Chen looked at Qiao Nan in surprise. “Where have they gone?”

“My Mom sold them.”

After the rebirth, Qiao Nan had sorted out her thoughts. She would no longer hide the deeds her mother has done. No, she did not want to gain sympathy, it was just that she felt it necessary for people concerned to understand her situation and to give her a helping hand when needed.

She really needed her teacher’s help to give her some coaching in order for her to work on her results and to catch up to her usual standard.

Teacher Chen was rendered speechless. They would be doing revision in the second half of secondary three. There wouldn’t be any new knowledge points. The middle school exams would cover a large portion of secondary one and two syllabus.

What kind of parents would sell all the textbooks when they knew that their child would be taking the exams soon? Was it intentional?

Thinking of what he overheard recently Teacher Chen asked, “Qiao Nan, I heard that your sister enrolled in the The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?”

The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China was a good high school in the area, but it was not easy to enroll in.

“Yes, today is the enrollment, she will be starting school officially.” Qiao Nan was stunned for a moment. The saying was right, good news went unnoticed while bad news travels fast.

The act of using money to buy results might not be news ten years later, but it was very rare now. Furthermore, her mother used that money to pull strings instead of buying results.

If father knew that mother went to look for that grandpa all because of Qiao Zijin, he would surely explode in anger.

Teacher Chen’s countenance fell.

If one would say that Qiao Nan could enroll in the The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, he would have no doubt about it; but Qiao Zijin? He did not believe

it. Besides, it was hard fact that Qiao Zijin has always been an average student, there was no way that she could make it to that high school.

Teacher Chen did not wish to speculate about how Qiao Zijin manage to enroll in that high school, let alone make wild conjectures about Qiao Nan's mother purpose in selling her textbooks.

Teacher Chen was puzzled when Qiao Nan had only scored 85 points in the exams. But now he understood and felt sorry for her instead. "It's alright if your textbooks are gone. I will come up with a solution. Your foundation is good, there's still a year to go, you can definitely catch up. You know the way to my house. Whenever you have any questions, feel free to come looking for me. Understand?"

"Thank you, teacher." Qiao Nan no longer felt dispirited. She plucked up her courage and said, "Regarding my textbooks, I have already settled the problem."

"How?"

"I went to the thrift shop to buy a set of textbooks. I have been reading up. I will definitely trouble you for areas that I am unclear of."

Teacher Chen smiled. "No troubles at all. Qiao Nan, don't give yourself too much stress. You must learn to strike a balance between work and rest, understand?"

"Alright, I will."

Maths results were out, next would be Chinese and English.

Qiao Nan's grade for Chinese was about the same as her Maths. She scored a few marks above eighty. It was an average grade. For those questions that required memorizing, she scored zero marks for them.

Those students who did not know the inside story were all shocked when they found out that Qiao Nan had not fared well for two subjects in a row. Some were gloating while some were speculating that something must have gone wrong with her, either she had become stupid or she had gone astray.

The top student that they all looked up to had fallen from grace in just one summer break's time? Top student to slacker in two months' time?

The Chinese subject was taught by a pretty and gentle female teacher. Teacher Lee was exasperated when she saw Qiao Nan's results. She did not get a good sleep last night, her mind was preoccupied with how she was going to knock some sense into Qiao Nan. She did not want her to feel that since her results has always been good, there was no need to put in hard work. She had thoroughly disappointed her with her results.

Chapter 25: Mixed Emotions

Teacher Lee looked through Qiao Nan's papers again and again. It pained her to see her scores. But Qiao Nan answered brilliantly for every subjective question. In particular for her essay, she scored flying colors.

As a Chinese teacher, it had been a long time since Teacher Lee saw such a well-written essay.

Aside from her neat handwriting, her essay was fair and reasonable; the language used though simple had deep meaning; it was logical and well structured. All in all, she could not find any fault with it.

Such a brilliant essay deserved full marks. However the teachers from the Chinese team had multiple discussions and decided that Qiao Nan's use of words was too simple and deducted one mark for that.

What did one mean by back to basics?

This was back to basics!

Actually Teacher Lee did not agree to the deduction and wanted to have a discussion with the Chinese team.

But she was infuriated when she saw Qiao Nan's answers for the components in front.

Memorization component accounted for a total of 10 marks. Qiao Nan did not get a single mark!

As for the other four marks, it was all pure memory work.

In other words, if Qiao Nan had studied what was taught in class while Teacher Lee tried to fight for that extra one mark, this average Chinese test paper would then score full marks!

It was common to have a full score for elementary Chinese paper. But for junior high level, in particularly secondary three, it was rare to see full marks for Chinese papers.

This could actually be the highest results among the cohort, a once in a blue moon full marks. But Qiao Nan wasted it all and ended up with 85 points, placed somewhere in the middle. How could Teacher Lee not be angry?

Teacher Lee felt that it was a pity for Qiao Nan to score this kind of result.

Because of this Teacher Lee did not sleep at all last night. She pondered over what she should say to Qiao Nan, in order for her to understand and reflect on her mistakes.

Teacher Lee was even angrier when she realized that Qiao Nan also had not done well in Maths, the subject that she was always good at.

But now Teacher Lee no longer thought that way.

Teacher Chen knew that Teacher Lee would be upset by Qiao Nan's results. When he learned of Qiao Nan's situation at home, he went back to the office and informed Teacher Lee about Qiao Nan's complicated situation.

After learning of Qiao Nan's situation, Teacher Lee could only sigh in exasperation. No matter how hardworking the child was, if their parents were unreasonable, what could a child do?

For those areas that require memorizing, no matter how hard Qiao Nan tried to commit the knowledge to her memory, if her parents had sold her textbooks, there was no way that she could revise.

Teacher Lee looked at Qiao Nan with mixed emotions. The other students in the class were bewildered. Qiao Nan had not done well in her exams. Why didn't Teacher Lee reprimand her? Why did she stare at Qiao Nan but with no words of displeasure?

Come on, Qiao Nan deserved a serious scolding!

After the long summer break of fun, most of the students did not do well in the exams, they were bound to be spanked by their parents.

But they would at least be comforted by seeing Qiao Nan being reprimanded by the teachers.

A lot of the students were looking forward to seeing Teacher Lee rant at Qiao Nan. However after a while Teacher Lee said, "All of you should learn from... Qiao Nan, look at how well written her essay is. Then take a look at your own essay, is that even an essay? After a long break, all of your essays are rubbish."

Teacher Lee bombarded the students for not doing well. "Qiao Nan, write a copy of your essay and paste it on the blackboard at the back of the classroom. Of course, everyone should just learn from the way she wrote her essay. Qiao Nan, do you know that your results were a real pity? It should have been... forget it, it was painfully agonizing to talk about it. Study hard in the future, you shouldn't lose these 10 points."

Qiao Nan flushed red with shame at Teacher Lee's criticism and praise.

In particularly when Teacher Lee gazed at her, she felt a twinge of guilt, as if she had done something wrong to Teacher Lee.

At this, Qiao Nan thought what a cruel mockery this exam was.

After the lesson was over, Qiao Nan felt a shadow behind her, she turned and saw a girl glaring at her. She seemed to be unhappy. "Qiao Nan, hurry up and make a copy of your essay. I wanted to see just how brilliant it is."

Qiao Nan had not much impression on this classmate. Qiao Nan was also not interested in making copies of her essay.

Without a word, Qiao Nan took out her essay from her exam paper, and pasted it on the blackboard at the back of the classroom, "Look at it yourself."

After which she went on to study her Maths exams paper, paying attention to the problems.

"You." Zhao Yu was enraged at Qiao Nan's attitude. "Well there's nothing to be proud of. You only did well for your essay and scored an average score of 85 points. That's not the highest!"

There was no way to hide the fact that Qiao Nan did not do as well for this exam and was told off by Teacher Lee.

She heard Zhao Yu grunting to herself and turned back to look at her. What exactly was wrong with this young lady?

But she turned her attention back to the Maths exam paper after one glance.

Zhao Yu grew angrier by the moment, seeing how Qiao Nan appeared to be unaffected, and could not be bothered to bicker with her.

With a look of disbelief, Zhao Yu snorted and went to look at Qiao Nan's essay. She had intended to pick on every small error that she could find. But after a long time reading the essay, Zhao Yu had to admit, the essay was very well written.

So what, she might have lose out to her this time, but there was always the next time and the time after that!

Zhao Yu clenched her fists and returned to her seat to read her essay book.

Soon after, the class had an English lesson. Unlike Teacher Chen and Teacher Lee, Teacher Yu was the only teacher who was all smiles on the way into the classroom. "After a summer break, a lot of students have lagged behind in their studies. Of course,

there are some who have improved. Do you all know what's the highest English score for the secondary three cohort and who is that student?"

"How many points?"

"98?"

"Bet it was not more than 99."

There was an essay component for junior high English. Just like a Chinese essay, it would be difficult to score full marks.

"It is definitely not Qiao Nan." Zhao Yu snickered and whispered softly.

Zhao Yu also sat in the second row, very close to Qiao Nan. So Qiao Nan overheard what she said.

Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows. She must have messed with this young lady in the past. Today was the second time she had picked on her.

"Nobody has the answer? Well, I also didn't think that there would be a full marks this time! And the most commendable part is that this full marks score came from our class, Secondary Three Class One. Qiao Nan, come and get your paper."

Every teacher usually went by one of the three styles to hand out the exam papers – firstly, from highest to lowest; secondly, from lowest to highest; and lastly, randomly.

As for today, Teacher Yu did not seem to be handing out according to the second or third scenario. If so, Qiao Nan was the one who scored full marks?

A lot of the students who were hoping that Qiao Nan would flunk her third subject, so as to have an excuse to rebut their parents back at home, were distraught when the teacher called out Qiao Nan's name.