

RTAMM 201

Chapter 201: Bent on Stealing

“If you have really changed, Nan Nan’s heart will also soften. She’ll get along fine with you.”

Qiao Dongliang stated his stand. Since he had promised Nan Nan not to interfere in the matters between Qiao Zijin and her, he would stick to his promise.

Qiao Zijin was putting up a pretense. She did not expect that Qiao Dongliang took her words for real, as if she had truly done something wrong and had to think of ways to plead forgiveness from Qiao Nan. Qiao Zijin was so furious that she choked on her own saliva.

Qiao Zijin grinned widely. “Dad, you’re right. As long as I’m sincere in changing for the better, Nan Nan will get along well with me.”

Since her father was reluctant to tell her where Qiao Nan had been studying at, she would have to rely on herself to find out.

She did not believe the curse that she would never win against Qiao Nan!

When she finds the place, she would not only take away all of Qiao Nan’s money but also burn all her books at once. When that time came, she wanted to see who else Qiao Nan could seek help from!

After gobbling down a bowl of porridge, Qiao Zijin continued to do the handiwork without any expression.

One was busy with the accounts, and the other was quietly working on the handicrafts. It was rare that Qiao Zijin and Qiao Dongliang seemed to be getting along quite harmoniously.

When Qiao Nan came back from the Zhai’s residence, she saw the ‘harmonious’ atmosphere. “Dad, Sister, I’m back.” Qiao Nan placed her books down and poured a cup of water for herself.

When Zhai Sheng was not at home, Qiao Nan could not go around in the Zhai's residence as she pleased. Therefore, Qiao Nan brought takeaway food every time she went over. For the whole day, she only had a jug of water and was now dying of thirst.

Just as Qiao Nan put her books down, Qiao Zijin peeped at Qiao Dongliang and confirmed that Qiao Nan would not walk back so soon. She then quickly stood up to look at the book that Qiao Nan brought home.

When Qiao Zijin saw that Qiao Nan actually brought home the second year's textbook for high school, which was what Qiao Zijin was going to study when the school reopened, she pulled an extremely long face.

Qiao Nan was so showy, already reading the second year's textbooks now. She did not believe that Qiao Nan was able to rely on her own ability to finish self-studying the entire curriculum for the first year of high school. She must be putting up a pretense to show how hardworking and intelligent she was. Liar!

Only her father would be tricked by Qiao Nan and think that the sun shines out of Qiao Nan's arse.

"Mom, you're back. I'll bring you a cup of water. Drink it." Once Ding Jiayi entered the house, she was warmly welcomed by Qiao Zijin.

After drinking the cup of water, Ding Jiayi, who was sweating profusely, felt much cooler and comfortable, as if she had eaten a Popsicle. "Zijin, Mom will do the handiwork together with you. Don't work too hard."

"I'm fine. I'm doing this for the sake of my tuition fees, after all. Instead, it's been tough on Mom for my sake." Qiao Zijin started to massage Ding Jiayi's shoulders. "Take a seat. I will give you a massage. We'll put the handiwork aside for now."

"Hmm, Zijin has a pair of capable hands. I feel so comfortable!" Ding Jiayi purposely raised her voice to let Qiao Dongliang hear what she was saying.

No matter how good Qiao Nan was, would she treat Old Qiao that well? She had already said that Zijin was the more filial one between the two daughters.

Facing Ding Jiayi's childish behavior, Qiao Dongliang did not even bat an eyelid. He continued with the work in his hands. He was not joking when he said he had to earn money to support Qiao Nan for her college studies. It was never all talk and no action.

Qiao Dongliang had made up his mind to raise a college student. He was thus insistent on regaining his authority as the head of the family to prevent Ding Jiayi from squandering away all the money in the family.

"Mom, I have something to discuss with you." When Ding Jiayi was changing her clothes after showering, Qiao Zijin came into her room.

"Why are you so secretive?" Ding Jiayi asked Qiao Zijin to have a seat. "Tell me directly if there's anything. Is there any need to discuss?"

"Mom, it's been a year. Aren't you curious where Nan Nan has been hiding her books and money?"

"..." When she heard Qiao Zijin mention money, Ding Jiayi knitted her brows and quickly shut the door tightly. "Zijin, are you still thinking about that sum of money? Forget about it. You've seen what happened yesterday. Your dad called the police here to help Qiao Nan. I was nearly jailed. He even lied to the police that we lost five hundred yuan!"

Ding Jiayi was not that stupid. Of course, she was sure that Qiao Nan only had three hundred yuan, and she took all of it. There was no five hundred yuan.

Qiao Dongliang told the police that he lost five hundred yuan to scare and trick her into admitting that she took the three hundred yuan.

Yesterday, after she saw the police officers and was slapped by Qiao Dongliang, Ding Jiayi was extremely fearful now, but Qiao Zijin was not. She woke up in cold sweat when she dreamed that she was handcuffed and was on the way to prison.

"Zijin, forget it. We'll not be able to enjoy that three hundred yuan even if we take it. Your dad is all set on favoring Qiao Nan. Don't worry. If your school fees are not enough, at most, Mom will sleep less for the next two weeks to help you cough up the money. If it doesn't work, Mom will do what has been done before—borrowing from others."

“Don’t you need to return the money after you have borrowed them?” Qiao Zijin’s face was stiff. She was unhappy that Qiao Nan had so much money while she didn’t. It seemed that she was doing worse than Qiao Nan. She’s not pleased about it!

“Whatever money you borrowed needs to be returned. But if you take Qiao Nan’s money, you don’t need to do so.”

“What do you mean? Didn’t I return the envelope of three hundred yuan to her yesterday?” Ding Jiayi smiled bitterly. “Zijin, what’s wrong with you? Why do you keep yearning for Qiao Nan’s three hundred yuan?” Initially, she thought Zijin suggested this as she was afraid of not having enough money for her tuition fees.

At this juncture, Ding Jiayi realized that Qiao Zijin probably just did not want Qiao Nan to have any money in her hands.

“Mom, don’t worry. There won’t be any accident like before if we’re successful this time.” Qiao Zijin averted Ding Jiayi’s question and did not answer. “Previously, I asked you to take the three hundred yuan when you had the chance at home because I was afraid that we would not be able to find the money once Qiao Nan hid it outside. We neglected the fact that Dad and Qiao Nan would definitely guess who took the money if the money was lost at home. Now, the situation is different. Qiao Nan has hidden the money outside. If the money is lost again, could they still blame it on the two of us?”

So, in fact, it would be easier to steal the money if it was hidden outside.

“But...” Ding Jiayi felt that this made sense. “But both of us do not know where Qiao Nan hid the money.” Ding Jiayi was puzzled. Both Qiao Dongliang and she had already severed all the ties with their relatives. Where could Qiao Nan have hidden so many books and so much money?

After thinking for a long time, Ding Jiayi could not think of any possible places.

“In the past, we didn’t try to find out as we were too soft-hearted on Qiao Nan. If we really want to know, how can Qiao Nan hide it from us?”

Chapter 202: You Are Not Afraid, I Am

Qiao Nan was keeping the place from them so well. She believed Qiao Nan hid good stuff in that place.

“Zijin, what exactly are you trying to do?” The puzzled Ding Jiayi looked at Qiao Zijin. “What’s the use of knowing where the place is? Qiao Nan, that wretched girl, has been so bizarre since the beginning of last year. I think we should not stir up anything again. Every time we did something, not only did we not manage to do her in but also got ourselves into trouble instead.”

Qiao Zijin was not afraid, but Ding Jiayi was.

She had been married to Qiao Dongliang for so many years. Although they quarreled at times, it was nothing like what happened a few days ago. They argued till tears, and Qiao Dongliang even gave her a slap directly.

In comparison to the husbands of other families who hit their spouse when they were in a bad mood, Qiao Dongliang was considered a good husband.

If Ding Jiayi had not cornered Qiao Dongliang on this occasion, Qiao Dongliang would never have lifted a finger on her.

Because of this, Ding Jiayi was frightened.

The man who never hit a woman started to do so all of a sudden. Ding Jiayi could not forget how she felt at that instance.

“If the two of us continue to work hard for two more weeks and take on more handiwork every day, we’ll be able to come up with your tuition fees. Don’t stir up any more trouble. Zijin, be obedient and listen to Mom. Mom will not lie to you.” Ding Jiayi patted Qiao Zijin’s head. She really did not want to plot against Qiao Nan anymore.

Anyway, the mother-daughter pair could settle it themselves. Why would they need to drag Qiao Nan in and complicate such a simple matter? What was the rationale? Weren’t they courting trouble by doing that?

After saying that, Ding Jiayi left to prepare dinner without waiting for Qiao Zijin’s response.

Qiao Zijin snorted as Ding Jiayi left. She was so furious that she stomped her feet ceaselessly. Her mother used to support her in whatever she said. What was wrong with her mother today?

After all, Qiao Zijin was not the one being slapped. Hence, Qiao Zijin had no idea how much influence Qiao Dongliang's slap had on Ding Jiayi.

However, Qiao Zijin was not someone who would give up so easily. She did not have much confidence in other matters, but cajoling Ding Jiayi was the only thing she knew how to do best. If she did not succeed today, she would try again tomorrow. She did not believe that she could not find an opportunity to make her mother agree to this.

According to Qiao Zijin's sixth sense, if Ding Jiayi discovered the place where Qiao Nan had been hiding the books and money, Ding Jiayi would definitely stir up some trouble.

Most importantly, to Qiao Zijin, there would not be another place safer than home to put away the money. Qiao Nan found another place. Hence, to Qiao Nan, this must be a place safer than home, a place she felt very assured with.

The corners of Qiao Zijin's mouth curled into a smile. Qiao Nan, Qiao Nan, do not let me get a handle of you. Otherwise, I would certainly not let you off!

Being held back by Ding Jiayi, Qiao Zijin had no choice but to painstakingly work for another two weeks despite feeling unjustified. Both her hands were full of calluses from the handiwork. She was in so much pain that she could not sleep well at night.

Even so, the money that Qiao Zijin and Ding Jiayi earned was just enough to pay for her tuition fees.

Now, with the exception of Qiao Nan, the whole family's earnings were with Qiao Dongliang. Both Ding Jiayi and Qiao Dongliang's earnings were managed tightly by the latter. Ding Jiayi only had the two yuan given to her by Qiao Dongliang.

Ding Jiayi could use these two yuan but had to explain clearly what she spent them on. If she used it appropriately, Qiao Dongliang would give her another two yuan. If she did not spend it wisely, Qiao Dongliang would let Ding Jiayi go hungry and not bother about whether she had enough to spend.

With this attitude of Qiao Dongliang, Ding Jiayi no longer dared to subsidize Qiao Zijin.

Ding Jiayi was controlled tightly by Qiao Dongliang. Hence, Qiao Zijin's situation was not any better.

After Qiao Dongliang found out about the price of the food in Qiao Zijin's school, he counted the amount of money required for Qiao Zijin's two weeks of meals. In addition to this amount of money, he gave one more yuan as a buffer to Qiao Zijin.

At that time, one pencil only cost two or three cents, and ballpoint pen cost five cents.

Hence, this one yuan was enough for Qiao Zijin to buy two pens to use interchangeably.

As for Qiao Zijin's meals, three meals per day, Qiao Dongliang only provided enough for one meal with protein dish.

Regarding this, Qiao Zijin was dissatisfied. Even if she could not have meat for every meal, at the very least, she should have it for two of the meals per day. One meal with meat per day was too little.

Qiao Dongliang simply told Qiao Zijin directly that if she felt that it was fine for Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi not to have a single piece of meat for an entire week, then he would be able to provide Qiao Zijin with meat for every meal.

Qiao Dongliang already made himself clear. Unless Qiao Zijin wanted Qiao Dongliang to feel that she was an unfilial daughter, she had no choice but to pretend to agree.

Hence, Qiao Zijin did not have any extra pocket money. The money for her meals was also reduced by one-third.

Looking at the miserly amount of money in her hands, Qiao Zijin nearly cried. If her classmates knew about her situation, how would they view her in the future? They would definitely say that she was in dire straits.

Qiao Dongliang had set the ground rules in a resolute and sweeping manner, and Ding Jiayi obeyed them without any hesitation. Qiao Zijin was unconvinced but had to follow suit.

In the blink of an eye, two weeks had passed. Qiao Dongliang was still working from home with odd jobs from the factory. Ding Jiayi continued to go to work and Qiao Nan and Qiao Zijin had resumed their schooling days.

“I’m finally in high school.” Looking at Ping Cheng High School, Zhao Yu had great ambitions at heart, and she was overwhelmed with emotions.

After Zhao Yu ‘flunked’ the middle school examination, she did not step out of the house for most of the vacation period, shutting herself in the bedroom. The Zhao family nearly made a police report to request the police officer to forcefully pull Zhao Yu out of her room.

In the end, the Zhao family said something that managed to enlighten Zhao Yu. She opened the bedroom door and walked out herself. She picked herself up and decided to start over again.

At the sight of the high school that was much bigger than the secondary school, Zhao Yu was full of aspirations. This was the Ping Cheng High School, not her junior high school. Hence, there was no Qiao Nan.

Previously, she had been stifled so badly by Qiao Nan that she nearly broke down. The more anxious she was, the more mistakes she did.

As long as she adopted a normal attitude, given her ability, she would be able to regain her initial learning attitude and become one of the top-notch students in Ping Cheng High School. When the high school examination came, she would definitely be able to perform well and become a college student at a renowned university.

That’s right. Without Qiao Nan, her life would be beautiful, her future bright.

As for Qiao Nan, she would forget about this person from this semester onward.

“Excuse me, you are blocking the way.” As Zhao Yu was immersed in the bright hopes for the future, a familiar and annoying voice rang behind her. Zhao Yu’s entire body turned stiff. “Don’t tell me it’s such a coincidence...”

Chapter 203: Damned Fate

“Hey, who’s this? Besides standing in the middle of the main entrance and blocking the way, are you also hard of hearing?”

“You’re the one who is hard of hearing!” After confirming that she had not mistaken what she heard, Zhao Yu turned in anger. “Zhou Lei, why are you studying at Ping Cheng High School? Shouldn’t you be going to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?”

She clearly remembered that Zhou Lei did well during the middle school examination, and his grades could get him into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

“That’s for me to choose. I think Ping Cheng High School is quite good. What has this got to do with you?” Zhou Lei was also angered. “But, you. Isn’t your family very rich? Didn’t you ask your family to fork out money to let you attend The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?”

He had been deskmate and classmate with Zhao Yu for three years.

He had thought that he would no longer be Zhao Yu’s classmate in high school and would be freed from the torture. Unexpectedly, Zhao Yu also came to Ping Cheng High School. What was she thinking of?

“...” Zhao Yu’s face turned pale, and she wanted to scold Zhou Lei.

According to Zhao Yu’s original plan, it would be the best scenario if she could attend The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China with her own ability. Regardless, she had also discussed with her family that she would still attend The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, the best high school in Ping Cheng, even if they needed to spend money to get her in.

If not for the fact that The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China did not provide junior high studies, Zhao Yu would not have completed her junior high school education at Ping Cheng High School.

However, at the thought of Qiao Nan studying at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, she was not willing to study there even if the school was willing to subsidize her, not to

mention spending money to get in. Besides, she would not attend it even if it was the best high school in the country, let alone that it was only the best in Ping Cheng.

She did not want to see Qiao Nan ever again. She had to be stifled by her for three years if she did that!

In other words, Zhao Yu was afraid of Qiao Nan. To avoid Qiao Nan, she would rather settle for the second best and attend Ping Cheng High School. She was even willing to give up on attending her dream school: The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

You don't hit a person in his face, and neither do you expose a person's shortcomings when you scold them.

Zhou Lei's words directly offended Zhao Yu.

If Zhao Yu was not a lady, and Zhou Lei not a man, Zhao Yu really wished that she could fight it out with him.

Since the junior high school days, Zhou Lei had never been a gentleman. He had been annoying and hateful. She cursed that Zhou Lei would not be able to find a girlfriend or marry a wife in the future!

"Scram!" A seemingly big shot character appeared behind them. His domineering shout made Zhao Yu and Zhou Lei give way by moving respectively to the two sides of the entrance in a subconscious manner.

It was only when this person passed by before their eyes that both of them realized this was another old acquaintance: Zhu Baoguo.

"Zhu Baoguo?" Zhou Lei looked at him in surprise. "Did I see wrong?"

Zhao Yu hesitated. She had assumed that Zhu Baoguo would be studying at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China due to his close relationship with Qiao Nan. In addition, given the Zhu family's status, it was appropriate for him to attend the school. Unexpectedly, he actually came to Ping Cheng High School.

At that instance, Zhao Yu's eyes lit up. Perhaps she would have an opportunity now!

In the past, Zhu Baoguo hated her because Qiao Nan had been talking bad about her to Zhu Baoguo. Without Qiao Nan, Zhu Baoguo would not be so blind as to not discover her merits. In time, he might even take a liking to her.

In that case, she would be able to fulfill her previous wish in high school!

"Stupid." At the sight of the foolish smile on Zhao Yu's face, Zhou Lei sneered. "Zhao Yu, Zhu Baoguo is so close to Qiao Nan. Since Zhu Baoguo is here, do you think Qiao Nan will be attending Ping Cheng High School as well?" If that happened, ha ha ha, Zhao Yu's expression would be very interesting.

"Impossible!" Zhao Yu's face turned pale as she retorted immediately. "Qiao Nan's grades are so good. She's the top student of the middle school examination and in the whole province. It's not possible for her to come to Ping Cheng High School instead of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Don't tell me such a baseless joke."

Coincidentally, Qiao Nan, who quietly reached the school's entrance, heard the last part of the conversation between the two of her former classmates.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips. Should she greet them now to give Zhao Yu a 'surprise'?

"Well..." Qiao Nan coughed. She really had no choice. Zhou Lei and Zhao Yu were standing side by side at the main entrance. Unless Qiao Nan was willing to lean sideways, she would not be able to enter the school. "Can you please give way so that I can go and pay my tuition fees?"

"..."

"..."

Both Zhao Yu and Zhou Lei had a great shock. When the two of them turned and saw Qiao Nan, who looked so innocent, Zhao Yu's face turned black while Zhou Lei patted his thigh and laughed out in tears. "Qiao Nan, since you're here, does it mean that we still have the fate to be classmates for another three years?"

Aiyo, speaking of the devil, Qiao Nan granted his wish too well!

“Yes, I came to register for school today. If you’re not transferring to another school, we’ll be schoolmates for another three years.” Qiao Nan smiled and replied. She had quite a good impression of Zhou Lei.

“Ha ha ha, of course I’ll not change the school. I think Ping Cheng High School is quite good. But I don’t know if someone else will transfer to another school. Nevertheless, I wish to express that it’s best for someone to change her mind.” Zhou Lei made an inference to something while responding to Qiao Nan.

Zhao Yu was unwilling to be classmate with Qiao Nan. Both Qiao Nan and Zhou Lei were able to decipher this from her words.

“Qiao Nan, it’s late. Let’s register and pay the tuition fees together.” Zhou Lei patted Qiao Nan’s shoulders and strode forward in large steps. He completely ignored Zhao Yu whom he met first.

Qiao Nan nodded to Zhao Yu, who was dumbstruck and frozen to the point of showing no reaction. This was considered as her greeting to Zhao Yu. She then caught up with Zhou Lei so that they could pay the tuition fees together.

Before they did so, they went to the notice board to look at the class they had been allocated to.

“I’m in class one.”

“I’m in class three.” When he saw that he was in a different class from Qiao Nan, Zhou Lei felt a little relieved.

When facing Qiao Nan, while he did not have Zhao Yu’s jealousy, there was some awkwardness.

As per what Zhao Yu mentioned, Zhou Lei could actually study in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China based on his grades. However, Zhou Lei had his own considerations for choosing Ping Cheng High School over the best school.

On one hand, Zhou Lei’s situation was similar to Qiao Nan. It was because of money. The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China was the best school in Ping Cheng High School

not only because of academic performance but also the learning facilities and the quality of the teachers.

High school studies did not constitute as the nine-year compulsory education. Hence, the tuition fees would increase by a great amount. Given the prominence of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, its tuition fees were much higher than other high schools’.

Most importantly, Zhou Lei’s grades were borderline cut-off admission point for The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

As such, Zhou Lei felt that it was quite embarrassing to attend The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. There were a lot of ‘sponsor’ students in the school. In comparison, Zhou Lei was definitely one of the better students.

However, there were also quite a number of students who were accepted due to their own ability.

Chapter 204: The Arrogant ‘Puppy Love’

Zhou Lei’s grades paled in comparison to these students.

As the saying goes, it’s better to be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion. Hence, Zhou Lei opted for Ping Cheng High School. Now that he was schoolmates with Qiao Nan again, and if they belonged to the same class, he would feel stressed as he would again be ‘crushed’ and ‘stimulated’ every day by Qiao Nan’s grades.

Hence, it was great that they were in the same school but not in the same class. As he knew about Qiao Nan’s ‘perverted’ academic performance, he felt more relieved that they were not going to be classmates again.

“Uh...” Qiao Nan screened through the list to see who would be in her class. She did not know whether to laugh or cry when she saw one of the names.

“What’s wrong?” Zhou Lei walked beside Qiao Nan curiously. He was also stunned when he saw the name list of the students in her class and burst into laughter. He was laughing so hard that some of the passerby, and even the students in the classroom, came out to find out what was happening.

“Aye, I made the right choice by coming to Ping Cheng High School. I’ll be missing the fun if I don’t come today. It’s damn funny.”

Zhao Yu, who came up behind them with a gloomy face, heard Zhou Lei and already guessed what the matter was. Her tears welled up. She nearly threw her school bag to make a stand that she didn’t want to continue with her studies anymore!

The high schools were of different standards. Similarly, there was also a difference between the classes within the same school.

Class one of Ping Cheng High School was also called the top class. As the name implied, everyone knew what that meant.

Zhao Yu’s family was wealthy and willing to spend money to send her to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Thus, although Zhao Yu opted for the second choice and attended Ping Cheng High School, she would be in the best class.

Fortunately, Zhao Yu’s grades were not too bad. Hence, the Zhao family managed to get Zhao Yu into class one with minimal effort.

When Zhao Yu saw Qiao Nan today, she had a premonition. Upon hearing Zhou Lei’s laughter, Zhao Yu’s eyes were red. She was staring like a rabbit and shivering all over with anger.

Undoubtedly, she was also in class one. Since Qiao Nan was willing to study at Ping Cheng High School, there was no reason that she would not be allocated to class one.

Zhao Yu realized that all her efforts were in vain. She had done so much to avoid Qiao Nan, but unexpectedly, not only did she not get away from Qiao Nan but also ended up in the same class as her. Facing this reality, Zhao Yu wanted to kneel down and question God what hideous things had she committed in her previous life such that she had to be tortured again by Qiao Nan for another three years.

Clearly, the semester had not begun, but Zhao Yu already predicted that she would be living a life in purgatory, a life full of suffering that she did not wish to live anymore.

“Qiao Nan, let’s go quickly. When I look at Zhao Yu, why do I feel that she was full of desperation and darkness?” Zhou Lei rubbed both his arms. He could not help pitying Zhao Yu as his heart secretly ‘cried’ for her.

Toward Qiao Nan, both Zhao Yu and he had some similarities in their thinking.

Hence, Zhou Lei could understand exactly how crumbled Zhao Yu felt at this point in time. However, it was just too bad for Zhao Yu. Furthermore, he did not consider Zhao Yu as his friend. Therefore, he could only pray that she would not be tortured too badly by Qiao Nan.

“Qiao Nan, I’ll go ahead to register and pay the tuition fees.”

“Let’s do it together.” In the first semester, everyone would go to the administration office to pay tuition fees. Qiao Nan was also going to the same place as Zhou Lei.

Zhao Yu was left alone in peace. Qiao Nan and Zhou Lei paid their tuition fees first and then found their respective classrooms according to the signboards.

“Xiao Qiao, you’re here.” Qiao Nan heard Zhu Baoguo’s booming voice before she could step into the classroom.

Because of Zhu Baoguo’s shout, more than twenty classmates in the classroom turned their eyes to Qiao Nan at the same time. They were either full of curiosity, jealousy, or vigilance.

Besides an ‘idiot’ like Zhu Baoguo, which student in the top class did not have any trait of competitiveness?

The top scholar of the middle school examination in the province—Qiao Nan. Who had not heard of this name before?

In fact, some heard that the Ping Cheng TV Station had wanted to interview Qiao Nan but was turned down by Qiao Nan and the school.

In fact, this would be a good opportunity to gain publicity for the school. In normal times, the school would try their best to facilitate this. But strangely, Qiao Nan’s junior high school did not do so and Ping Cheng High School acquiesced quietly.

Many had the feeling that the school seemed to have taken into consideration Qiao Nan's feelings and gave up such a great opportunity to make a big splash in the news.

The more the school valued Qiao Nan, the more the other outstanding students who entered this school felt that way.

They finally saw the legendary Qiao Nan today. How could these students not have any reaction?

When the guys saw Qiao Nan, they felt more relaxed. But when the ladies saw her, they could not help but look at her harshly.

"What are you looking at? Do you want to be beaten up?" Zhu Baoguo was very sensitive to these glances. His two eyes widened like a tiger baring its fangs, full of deterrence. "I'm warning everyone in this class. Don't provoke anyone without first finding out who that person is. Otherwise, don't blame me for being unruly with my fists. If you're really clueless, go and find out who I, Zhu Baoguo, am. In Ping Cheng, I can easily make you go home lying down simply by moving my finger!"

After Zhao Yu, Zhu Baoguo did not dare to underestimate his classmates. Although they were a bunch of kids, they were better than one another when it came to scheming. The Wang Yang in his family was the best example.

Sensing that the situation was not right, Zhu Baoguo simply threatened them outright.

Because of Zhu Baoguo, the whole classroom was silent. Most of them were sheltered and docile kids. Of course, they were frightened by Zhu Baoguo's behavior. At the same time, they formed a psychological barrier, a 'thick wall', against Qiao Nan, forbidding her from entering their territories.

Qiao Nan did not know whether to laugh or cry. It was a good thing that she only wanted to concentrate well on her studies and was not in the mood to make friends.

Otherwise, with Zhu Baoguo's stirring, she would definitely be isolated in the class. She might even be bullied.

“Xiao Qiao, sit here.” Following similar arrangements as in the past, Zhu Baoguo occupied two seats for Qiao Nan and himself. Hence, he asked Qiao Nan to come over and sit down.

Qiao Nan did not decline Zhu Baoguo’s ‘good intention’. She sat beside Zhu Baoguo, who was a member of the opposite gender, in an unrestrained manner. This was different from the usual way the other men and women interacted with one another.

The extraordinary and close relationship between Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo attracted the curiosity and contempt of many people. At this time, there was already a concept called ‘Puppy Love’.

“What’s with the two of them?”

“Isn’t she just a middle school examination scholar? This attitude is too arrogant.”

“There’s no need to be anxious. See how pleased they can get when the teacher comes.”

When the form teacher, Liu Neng, came, there was instant silence in the classroom. Most people looked as if they were waiting to watch a good show.

Chapter 205: The Odd One Out in Class

Liu Neng glanced throughout the whole classroom before setting his eyes on Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo. “You’re Qiao Nan?”

“Yes, Teacher.”

“Oh, then you must be Zhu Baoguo?” Liu Neng looked at the male student next to Qiao Nan.

“Yes.” Who else but him dared to sit beside Xiao Qiao? Believe it or not, he would chop away the person’s limb!

“Fine, then the two of you can remain seated. The rest of you, queue up outside the classroom. As I shout out your name, come in one by one. I will arrange your seating.” Liu Neng was holding a name list. He started to give orders as he stood at the podium on the platform.

The other students below the platform exchanged looks with one another. Wasn't the form teacher concerned about the blatant romantic relationship between this student called Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo? Didn't they say that Ping Cheng High School was very particular about puppy love matters and would not allow such relationships to occur?

What did they mean by that now?

The situation that was not allowed even in the normal classes had occurred in the top class. However, the form teacher did not say a word about or react to it, as if it was business as usual. This...

Regardless of whether the students knew the reason, none of them was willing to offend the form teacher on the first day of school. Hence, everyone stood up abidingly and queued up outside the classroom. It was only when the form teacher read their name that they entered the classroom and followed the form teacher's directions to find their respective seats.

Liu Neng was a very experienced form teacher. Within a short time span of five minutes, Liu Neng had seated all the students according to their heights. "Alright, from today onward, this will be your seat. Don't sit in the wrong place. Next, I will talk about the class committee arrangements. Those whose names are called, please remember your role and quickly take charge of the tasks within your responsibility. I believe that since all of you are outstanding students, you have the ability to perform your tasks effectively. Don't forget that we're all in the same class. We should set an example for the entire cohort, understand?"

"Yes, Teacher Liu."

"Very good..." Thereafter, Liu Neng read a name and announced their respective role. He finished the announcement in a clear voice and at his fastest speed. "Alright, that's basically the arrangements. Can all the class committee members please take charge and make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible? Now, can the class monitor bring some classmates with you to collect the books? Hurry up."

"Yes, Teacher Liu." The new class monitor blushed for a while. He did not expect Teacher Liu to have such a driven and swift personality. He just got to know that he was the class monitor of class one. He had yet to become familiar with this new identity but had already been allocated the tasks. "Could some male students in the class please come with me to collect the books?"

Class monitor took a look at the male students in the class. He dared to call anyone except for Zhu Baoguo.

After he called out the names, they went to collect the books. Thereafter, the Labor committee member gathered a group of students to clean and tidy up the classroom, whereas the Literature and Art committee member managed the announcement on the notice board.

They were obviously 'good' students from various schools. After Liu Neng assigned the tasks, all the students collaborated and carried out the tasks effectively. Within five minutes, the classroom was clean and in order.

Of course, everyone was busy except for two people, namely Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo.

Almost all of the class committee members dared not assign any tasks to Zhu Baoguo or Qiao Nan.

One summer vacation had passed. The murderous aura in Zhu Baoguo seemed to have increased by a fair bit. Others might be unaware, but Zhao Yu was able to feel the change in him. In the past, Zhu Baoguo was also fierce and able to instill fear in others. However, the Zhu Baoguo at that time was like a sheathed axe, heavy with a shiny blade but was scary only because of its look and weight.

After all, an axe could kill when it smashes.

But the current Zhu Baoguo was more like a sharpened axe, its shimmering blade unsheathed. An axe like this was not only heavy but also sharp. It was much more powerful than before.

It seemed that whoever offended Zhu Baoguo would definitely be bruised and lacerated until they bleed profusely.

Such a Zhu Baoguo was definitely scary. This increased Zhao Yu's dislike for Qiao Nan.

There's a saying that goes 'Nice guys finish last and women favor bad guys'.

In fact, a man like Zhu Baoguo who had a sense of aggressiveness would be able to win over a girl's heart more easily. It was somewhat every girl's dream to be the wife of a 'big brother'.

“Why do we need to do all these while the two of them don’t?” Everyone dared not assign tasks to Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo. Zhao Yu, who became an ‘ordinary’ student after entering class one, refused to continue with her task. “Class committee members, what do you all mean? Why are some people slacking while we have to do so much? If you don’t give me a proper explanation, I won’t continue anymore!”

Why was it that Qiao Nan could sit and read her books comfortably while she had to wipe the tables and windows?

“Because I’ve already assigned enough people for the task. If you have any objections, you can choose not to do it, but I will report this matter to the form teacher. Decide for yourself.” The Labor committee member was not someone to be trifled with. She had always hated girls with a temper like Zhao Yu.

“Go ahead and report me. Since there’re already enough people, it won’t make a difference even if I’m not doing it, will it?” Zhao Yu, who was in a bad mood, argued with the Labor committee member. She threw the rag on the table and really returned to her seat. Thereafter, she took out her own book to read.

In the face of this situation, the Labor committee member sneered. She was the one who made arrangements for the duty roster. The name of this student was Zhao Yu. She had it noted in her mind!

“Alright, now you can refer to this notice and familiarize yourself with your dormitory.” When Liu Neng was back, there were two notices regarding the dormitory arrangements on the blackboard, one for female and the other male.

There were a total of eight beds in each dormitory, but not every bed was occupied.

In Qiao Nan’s dormitory, there were six other occupants besides herself. One of them was He Yun, the Labor committee member who just had an argument with Zhao Yu.

Seeing that Zhao Yu did not have the same dormitory as her, Qiao Nan heaved a sigh of relief. She was not afraid of Zhao Yu, but her character was really troublesome.

During the last essay competition, Zhao Yu dared to break her pens. Qiao Nan was not certain if there would be a second occurrence. Zhao Yu might dare to do other things to her again.

Qiao Nan felt that it was really troublesome to deal with this kind of young ladies. Dealing with Zhao Yu was not any better than dealing with Qiao Zijin.

“Xiao Qiao, if anyone dares to bully you, tell me. I’ll settle it for you.” Zhu Baoguo was anxious, as if he was protecting his calf. As they surveyed the dormitory, he became uptight and spoke as if nobody was kind and everyone was malicious, and Qiao Nan seemed to be one that was most easily bullied in the whole world.

Chapter 206: Putting Aside Prejudices

“Hey!” He Yun snorted. What did they mean by that? They did not find joy in bullying others!

“Okay, stop it.” Qiao Nan clutched her head in exasperation. What Zhu Baoguo said could easily enrage others.

Zhu Baoguo tried to help Qiao Nan, but others had been enraged by what he said and directed their anger toward Qiao Nan. On their way to the dormitory, no one walked with Qiao Nan. They kept a distance from her, and nobody spoke to Qiao Nan.

If any other girl encountered such matter, she might feel wronged and inferior. She might not have an easy life for the next three years, and her studies might be affected as well. Qiao Nan had to rejoice once again that she was not, in actual fact, a sixteen-year-old child. After all, she was more sensitive than the average person at this age.

After arriving at the dormitory, Qiao Nan located her bed and cabinet. She put her clothes inside and locked it with a small lock.

The beds in the dormitory of Ping Cheng High School were all issued in a unified manner. The cost was already included in the tuition fees paid by the students.

Qiao Nan was a special enrollment student. She was exempted from tuition and miscellaneous fees and also did not need to pay for the blanket in the dormitory. Therefore, Qiao Nan and Zhou Lei were just going through the formalities when they did their enrollment just now.

Looking at the blanket that was exactly the same as the others, Qiao Nan took out her needles and thread and embroidered the words 'Qiao Nan' and 'High School Year One Class One' on her blanket.

This way, even if she hanged out the blanket to air under the sun in the future, Qiao Nan could easily identify her blanket.

The other five girls in the dormitory were stunned.

Why did they not think of making a marking on their blankets? After all, everyone's blanket and its cover had the same pattern. If all of them were to hang their blankets out to air, they could easily mix up the blankets.

No one had thought of this in advance, hence they did not come prepared like Qiao Nan.

Today was the first day of school. It would be good to air the blankets under the sun. Though the school had arranged a big area for the students to air their blankets, the students did not dare to air their blankets lest they could not identify their blankets. But if they did not air them, they would not be able to use them at night. They were in a dilemma.

Qiao Nan did not pay attention to the five girls who shared the dormitory with her. After making a marking on her blanket, she brought her blanket out to air.

Even if the school had arranged a big area for them to air their blankets, if all of the students were to air their blankets at the same time, it would still be very cramped. Thus, it would be good to occupy a good spot first.

After bringing her blanket out to air, Qiao Nan wiped her bed and the surrounding areas. Compared to the way her classmates cleaned up the classroom just now, she was much more nimble and dexterous.

He Yun watched Qiao Nan as she worked and did most of the work. She gritted her teeth and walked to Qiao Nan's side. "Qiao... Qiao Nan, can I borrow your needles and threads? I... I want to make a marking too so that my blanket will not be confused with someone else's blanket."

"Sure." Qiao Nan replied faintly and handed the needles and threads to He Yun. "You can pick the color by yourself."

“No, no, this color will do.” He Yun from high school year one class one. She was the only person by the name He Yun. It was impossible to have any confusion.

More importantly, He Yun usually did not do needlework at home. She might not be able to change the threads. She did not want to embarrass herself in front of others.

He Yun noticed that Qiao Nan did it with ease when she embroidered her name on the blanket just now. And the most important thing was that the embroidered words were quite beautiful. He Yun had thought that it was an easy task. But when she worked on the embroidery herself, she then realized that it was not easy at all!

He Yun’s embroidery was twisted and crooked like her handwritings from back when she was still in kindergarten, the moment when she had just learned to write. He Yun had the impulse to cover herself in shame.

She knew that Qiao Nan was the top scholar in middle school examination and that she was smarter than the average person. But she did not know that not only was she smart but also well-versed in other areas as well. Her embroidery was so beautiful. It was as if she was a young lady of an influential family from ancient times.

She was such an all-rounder that others paled in comparison.

Thinking of the words that Qiao Nan embroidered and looking back at the words she embroidered, He Yun did not have the courage to air her blanket.

“Qiao Nan, can you lend us the needles and threads too?” Seeing that He Yun had taken the first step of borrowing the needles and threads from Qiao Nan, several other students in the dormitory also asked Qiao Nan to lend them the needles in a friendly tone.

“Sure. When He Yun is done with her embroidery, all of you can take turns to use them.” Qiao Nan nodded.

Qiao Nan’s calm attitude made these students breathed a sigh of relief.

Minutes ago, all of them gave Qiao Nan the cold shoulder, but now they had to ask a favor of Qiao Nan. They could not help but feel awkward and embarrassed.

“I am done.” He Yun handed over the needles and threads, picked up her blanket, and rushed out at the fastest speed, lest others noticed her face which was dusted in red due to embarrassment.

When the other four students took their turns to embroider their names, they also felt as embarrassed and awkward as He Yun.

But they finally made a marking like Qiao Nan and went to air their blankets.

However, they were smart students after all. Nobody tried to embroider anything too fancy or complicated. They just used the simplest method and embroidered their names stroke by stroke onto the blankets.

It did not matter whether it was ugly or not. What was important was that they were able to recognize their own blankets and would not confuse it with the blankets of other students. Besides, it was the fastest method of embroidering!

By the time all of the blankets in Qiao Nan’s dormitory were brought out to air, there had not been much space left at the area meant for airing of blankets.

“Is it time to eat?” Tang Mengran, who was appointed the head of their dormitory by the form teacher, approached He Yun and asked, “Shall we?”

They had just borrowed needles and threads from Qiao Nan. It would not be right of them to ignore her now, would it?

“Qiao Nan, it’s time to go to the canteen for dinner. Do you want to go with us?” He Yun mustered her courage to ask Qiao Nan.

“Sure.” Qiao Nan put down her book. If her classmates alienated her, she would not try to join in. But if her classmates were willing to accept her, she would not be unsociable.

The five students relaxed at Qiao Nan’s attitude. They were not as nervous as before.

He Yun could not help but say this to Qiao Nan. “Qiao Nan, your temper is actually very good.” Even if Qiao Nan was the top scholar in the middle school examination, and the first place in the school, she was a nice person and easy to get along with since her temper is good. They had initially thought that top students like her would be arrogant and aloof.

Qiao Nan could not help but laugh. “In fact, I have always been very easy to get along with.” At most, she was not easy to become close with others.

“The main reason is that your deskmate is very fierce and scary. Qiao Nan, are you on close terms with your deskmate? Are the two of you...?” The Life committee member was curious and interested to learn about the gossip she heard. “You and your deskmate seem to get along very well. Are both of you in that kind of relationship?”

“That kind of relationship? What kind of relationship?”

Chapter 207: Harmonious Relationship

Qiao Nan was stunned. She could not understand what kind of relationship the Life committee member, Tao Zhenqin, meant. It was only when Qiao Nan saw the ambiguous smile on Tao Zhenqin’s face did she understand what she meant. “All of you have read too much into it. Zhu Baoguo treats me like a younger sister.”

Of course, she treated Zhu Baoguo like a son...

“Younger sister? Are you both related?” Tang Mengran, head of their dormitory, blinked. “Both of you do not look alike. Is he a relative from your mother’s side or your father’s side?”

“No, let me put it this way. My grandpa and Zhu Baoguo’s maternal grandpa have a good relationship. After my grandpa passed away, Zhu Baoguo’s grandpa takes great care of my dad and my family. In fact, the relationship between our families dated back to our grandfathers’ generation.” Both of them were not related, but if she did not give an explanation to these curious young people, news of her ‘puppy love’ with Zhu Baoguo might spread throughout Ping Cheng High School.

“Oh, both of your families have such good relationships.” Sure enough, when Qiao Nan mentioned that the relationship between the two families dated back to their grandfather’s generation and they were old family friends, the people in the dormitory no longer had the ambiguous look when they talked about Qiao Nan’s relationship with Zhu Baoguo.

“We have thought that... It’s a misunderstanding. Qiao Nan, don’t be angry with us.” As good students who were able to study at Ping Cheng High School based on their performance, they were disdainful of students whose academic performance were not as good or those who had messy relationships.

“It’s alright. I am glad that the misunderstanding has been cleared up.” Qiao Nan, who had a good temper, shook her head. After entering the canteen, she took the meal ticket and went to get her meal.

It was not uncommon for people from the same dormitory to sit together and have their meals.

The six young ladies sat together and had their dinner. Even if it was mealtime, there would always be people who could not help but start a conversation. “Qiao Nan, can I ask you a question?” The person who said this was Zheng Lingling, the League committee member and the secretary of the class.

“Go ahead.”

“I heard that you are the top scholar in the middle school examination. Why did you not go to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?” If The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China accepted students based on their score, Qiao Nan should be the first student to be accepted and followed by others. Nobody expected that Qiao Nan would study at Ping Cheng High School.

When Zheng Lingling saw Qiao Nan’s name in high school year one class one, she had thought that this Qiao Nan had the same name as the Qiao Nan who was the top scholar in the middle school examination.

“The tuition fee in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China is more expensive. My family has more than one child. I have an elder sister who is already studying at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Besides, my junior high school is Ping Cheng Junior High School as well.” There was no way she could hide the fact that she was exempted from paying her tuition and miscellaneous fees. Hence, she decided to tell them upfront about her family’s situation.

“Well...” Zheng Lingling was startled. She did not expect that Qiao Nan would be so frank. She was lost for words.

The atmosphere turned awkward in an instant. The six young ladies stopped chatting. They finished their meals at the fastest speed and went back to the classroom to participate in the evening self-study.

“Xiao Qiao, did anyone bully you?” When Qiao Nan sat down, Zhu Baoguo came up to her and asked.

“Don’t worry, everything is good.” Qiao Nan took out her book and started reading. In fact, as long as Zhu Baoguo was absent, she could get along very well with her classmates.

“It’s good that nobody bullies you.” Zhu Baoguo nodded then whispered, “If you are immersed in your books all day long, you will turn into a nerd soon. I don’t know what’s so good about these books.”

“Some of you boys, come with me to get the clothes.” The class monitor stood on the podium and called out two groups of boys.

“Get the clothes? School uniforms?”

“Hey, don’t mention school uniforms, they are so ugly. People who wear them look heavier by ten kilograms. Why must we wear uniforms in high school?”

“It may not be school uniforms. It could be camouflaged suits for military training.”

“Camouflaged clothing? You are right. There is military training in high school!!”

“What do you think our instructors will look like? Will they be fierce?” The most important thing was whether the instructor would be a hunk.

The girls were chatting non-stop. They were like a bunch of sparrows who chirped on the utility pole. Zhu Baoguo had a headache from their chattering. He hated it when the girls chattered throughout the day. Were they not tired at all?

They might not be tired, but he could not stand the noise!

But there was a girl who was quiet and calm unlike them.

Zhu Baoguo sneaked a peek at Qiao Nan and noticed that she had started working on the questions. Zhu Baoguo was bored. He rested his head on the table. What was so charming about the books that Xiao Qiao was so fascinated by them?

Thinking of what Elder Zhu said to him this morning, Zhu Baoguo let out a long sigh.

He had known long ago that he was in the same class as Qiao Nan. Hence, he had intended to go to school with Qiao Nan, but was stopped by Elder Zhu.

Elder Zhu told Zhu Baoguo that if he did not want to bring harm to Qiao Nan and did not want others to badmouth Qiao Nan, it would be better to keep a distance from Qiao Nan in the quad. If there was gossip going around the quad about Zhu Baoguo and Qiao Nan, it would not be good for Qiao Nan as a girl.

Because of this, Zhu Baoguo reached school earlier today than Qiao Nan and did not go to school with her.

Zhu Baoguo treated Qiao Nan like his younger sister. He wanted to protect Qiao Nan and be good to her. He did not understand why there were so many gossip-mongers in the world. Did they have nothing better to do than gossiping about others?

If not for the fact that Xiao Qiao had forbidden him to fight, he would have told his grandpa that he would knock off their teeth if anyone dared to badmouth Xiao Qiao.

If he knocked off every single one of their tooth, they would not be able to gossip about others anymore.

It did not bother Zhu Baoguo that he was the subject of gossip, but he could not stand other people badmouthing Qiao Nan. He knew that he could not stop people from gossiping and that there was no way that he could hit everyone who badmouthed Qiao Nan.

It was better to avoid unnecessary trouble. He was not like those young ladies who needed to go to school and leave school with a group of friends. He did not need for Xiao Qiao to walk with him.

“Do the problem sums and stop daydreaming. Have you done the assignments I gave you for your summer vacation?” Qiao Nan picked a few questions from the new textbook for this current semester and passed it to Zhu Baoguo. “If you cannot get these questions right, you will get it from me.”

“...” Zhu Baoguo curled the corner of his lips. It was enough that Xiao Qiao was a nerd. Did she want to turn him into a nerd as well?

Looking at the familiar notes and content on the notebook, Zhu Baoguo’s tone was full of complaints. However, he looked relaxed and had a sparkle in his eyes. In fact, he was not in a bad mood despite his complaints. “Rest assured. I am very clever. As long as I put my mind to it, these questions are nothing to me.”

“Okay, stop bragging and do your problem sums.” Qiao Nan would not be taken in by Zhu Baoguo. If Zhu Baoguo did not answer correctly for those questions that Qiao Nan felt he should be able to, she would not be lenient with him. In fact, she would be stricter than Elder Lee and Elder Zhu.

Chapter 208: Good Influence

At home, Zhu Baoguo was a bully, but when he was with Qiao Nan, he was well-behaved and honest. He was willing to accept punishments for his mistakes. He was also willing to be pushed around by Qiao Nan.

So, when it comes to disciplining Zhu Baoguo, Qiao Nan was the best candidate in the eyes of both the Zhu family and the Lee family.

After receiving a warning from Qiao Nan, Zhu Baoguo dared not play around. He took out a pen and started to do the problem sums.

The classroom initially had been noisy with people chattering about military training. It was as noisy as the market. But it had quiet down as the students noticed that Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo were doing their problem sums.

Many of the students stared dazedly at Qiao Nan. Did she have to be so conscientious on the first day of school? In comparison, they seemed to be slacking, not doing any studies.

“Stop showing off. She must be worried that other people do not know that she is the top scholar in the middle school examination. She likes to put up pretenses.” Seeing that Qiao Nan had influenced the atmosphere of the entire class, Zhao Yu felt annoyed.

Zhao Yu was a member of the class committee in the past. Back then, she was in charge of a morning self-study group. The classmates did not cooperate when they were studying. Once, Zhao Yu tried her best to discipline the class but to no avail. Her voice was hoarse from trying to get the class to keep quiet and do their work.

But today, though Qiao Nan did not try to discipline the class and was concentrated on doing her studies, the rest of the students became quiet under her influence, causing Zhao Yu to be annoyed and frustrated.

Initially, everyone had been ostracizing Qiao Nan. Despite all these, she could still have such a big influence on the class. Zhao Yu ground her teeth. Sure enough, Qiao Nan was her nemesis. As long as there was Qiao Nan, she would not be able to have a peaceful school life!

It was really annoying!

“Why don’t you try doing what Qiao Nan is doing?” Fang Fang, the Disciplinary committee member who was also Qiao Nan’s roommate, frowned and said coldly, “Your behavior is just sour grapes. Qiao Nan is quite special. Is there any problem with her attitude or the fact that she is the top scholar in middle school examination?”

When talking to Zhao Yu, Fang Fang gently reminded herself that she must work hard.

The curriculum in high school was much more difficult than that of junior high school. Although she was admitted to Ping Cheng High School, it was not like she was admitted to a first tier key university. She could never relax. When it came to studies, it was akin to sailing against the currents. If one did not improve, one would fall behind. She should learn from Qiao Nan and put in more efforts into her studies so as not to waste the three years in high school.

Fang Fang, who had settled down, took out the textbooks that were given out today and looked through them.

When she was in junior high school, she would prepare for her lessons before class. But after one summer vacation, she was not used to doing that anymore.

Even before the class monitor and the boys had come back with the camouflaged suits, everyone in class one was as quiet as if they were having lessons. Despite having no teacher around to supervise them, every student took out their books and looked through them. It was a good learning atmosphere.

Liu Neng smiled at this scene. It was great that Qiao Nan could study at Ping Cheng High School. A good learning example was much more effective than ten strict teachers who disciplined the students with whips.

Qiao Nan did Ping Cheng Junior High School proud in the middle school examination. Three years from now, it should be Ping Cheng High School's turn to be in the limelight, lest The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China became too arrogant and had the false impression that they were the best in Ping Cheng.

When the class monitor came back with the boys and saw that the classroom was quiet and everyone was studying with their heads down, the class monitor took a step back in shock. "Did I go into the wrong classroom? Is this a year two or year three class?"

On the way back, the class monitor noticed that except for the classrooms of year two and year three, which were very quiet, the other first-year classrooms were all very noisy.

When the class monitor saw that everyone was busy studying, he thought that he had gone into the classroom of year two.

"Alright, since the clothes have been brought over, just come on in." Liu Neng, who was standing on the podium, did not interrupt the students who were studying.

"Teacher Liu!" Upon seeing Liu Neng, the class monitor was sure that this was the right classroom. "Come in and put the clothes on the podium first. Let the students collect their clothing according to their height."

There was some bustling when the boys brought the camouflaged suits back with them. But it was not as noisy as before.

The class monitor realized that now that the classroom was very quiet, he did not need to shout over the top of his lungs when he gave his instructions to the students. "There are three sets of clothes in

total, one set is for military training, and the other two sets are school uniforms. When your name is called, come up to collect your clothes. Then, check if there is any problem with the size or the clothes. If there is, please hand them to me and put a note with your class, name, and matriculation number on it.”

Zhu Baoguo, whose name was being called, went to the podium in an unhurried manner. He refused to go after collecting his three sets of clothes. “Okay, let me have the three sets of clothes that belonged to Qiao Nan. I will pass it to her.”

The class monitor was taken aback when Zhu Baoguo narrowed his eyes at him. He quickly picked three sets of female clothes according to Qiao Nan’s height and handed them to Zhu Baoguo.

Zhu Baoguo snorted with satisfaction and returned to his seat with a mountain of clothes in his arms. He sat down and said, “Xiao Qiao, these three sets of uniforms are yours.”

“Put it down. Look at the questions that you have done.” Qiao Nan had a stern expression on her face. “Didn’t you tell me that it would only require a little effort of you to finish these questions and to get all of them correct? But out of the ten questions, two of them are wrong and one is left empty!”

“...” Zhu Baoguo blinked and quickly took back the questions from Qiao Nan. “Two of the questions are wrong? Xiao Qiao, what’s the hurry? I am still halfway through the questions, and I have yet to check through them. This is considered a sneak attack!”

Qiao Nan put down the red pen and checked through her three sets of uniforms. “Don’t forget that this is not an exam. There aren’t so many rules. You cannot take your time to do them. Don’t find an excuse for yourself. It’s a fact that you did not get all of the questions right. I won’t accept your excuses!”

Sure enough, the pants of the military training suit were too long and the waistline was too loose.

It would be impossible to wear this military training suit tomorrow.

“You should know what you should do with this kind of results. I don’t want to supervise you like a teacher. You must have self-discipline. If you do not improve next time, you should know what the consequences are.”

“...” Zhu Baoguo turned a blank eye. Xiao Qiao was too strict.

If Xiao Qiao was riled up, she would be stricter than the teacher!

“Hmm?” Zhu Baoguo did not respond to Qiao Nan’s words. Qiao Nan, who was removing the sewn stitches from her uniforms, raised her tone in a questioning manner.

“I understand. I will take note of it and do much better next time.” Zhu Baoguo replied obediently. He dared not play around with Qiao Nan.

“Okay.” After getting a satisfactory answer, Qiao Nan acted in her usual ways.

They behaved as if they were teacher and student.

Liu Neng witnessed what happened between Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo, a smile on his face.

Chapter 209: You Are Too Annoying

Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo were the most special students in his class. One was admitted to his class based on her excellent results, while the other went through the back door to be admitted to his class. Initially, Liu Neng had been worried when Zhu Baoguo insisted on going to the same class as Qiao Nan.

Liu Neng had seen a lot of problems between boys and girls. Besides, the students in their class would be changed over time. The school would organize monthly and mid-term exams, and reshuffled the students according to their credits.

Liu Neng had seen many cases where the young boys and girls did not put their efforts in their studies but were more interested in their relationships. They might have been admitted to class one in year one, but they could no longer stay in class one when they advanced to year two.

Initially, Liu Neng was worried that Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo would be in a similar situation. Now, he no longer had such concern.

No wonder the Zhu family put in a lot of efforts to ensure that Zhu Baoguo was in the same class as Qiao Nan and had insisted for Zhu Baoguo to be seated with Qiao Nan in the class. At first, he could not understand their intentions. After all, it was a crucial time for them to concentrate on their studies, and it would be too much for parents to go this far to support their children's relationships. But now he knew that it was not the case.

Time passed by very quickly. In a blink, it had turned dark. When Qiao Nan went back to the dormitory, she took back four sets of uniforms with her, including Zhu Baoguo's military training uniform.

"Qiao Nan, what are you doing?" Tang Mengran noticed that Qiao Nan was doing her needlework. She looked at her, perplexed. "Aren't you going to read your books?"

"I am altering the military training uniforms. The pants of the military training suits are too long and wide that one will easily step on the pants. The waistband is too loose as well. If one does not use a belt, I am afraid that the pants will drop off." Qiao Nan sewed the pants while talking to Tang Mengran.

"What? This is news to me." He Yun jumped to her feet and quickly tried on her military training uniform.

As expected, the legs of the pants were too wide. If one jumped about, the pants might drop off. And the pants were particularly long and wide. It was so long that it reached and covered her shoes.

"Oh, my! My uniform has the same problem. What should I do? If my pants drop off tomorrow, it will be so shameful!" All of the girls in the dormitory were anxious and worried.

Qiao Nan had finished sewing her uniform and proceeded to alter Zhu Baoguo's pants. "Don't worry. I have needles and threads with me. All of you can do some minor alterations to ensure that it will not drop off."

"How do we go about it?!" Tao Zhenqin was in frenzy. She did not know how to do needlework.

"Qiao Nan, you must have a way. Teach us!" Fang Fang sat down next to Qiao Nan, wanting Qiao Nan to help her. "Qiao Nan, we have to rely on you for tomorrow. Our success and failure are all in your hands."

Qiao Nan curled the corner of her lips and said, "Is it that serious?"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

The five girls in the dormitory said in unison.

"Alright, I will teach all of you." Qiao Nan had no other choices but to agree. "Since the waistband is elastic, the other ways of sewing are not suitable. It will be useless if the thread comes loose. The best way will be to shift the buttonhole inward according to one's waistline, so one will need to do some scissoring. As for the legs of the pants, you can roll them up and sew some stitches to secure them. It is an easy feat and will be done in a jiffy."

Qiao Nan finished altering Zhu Baoguo's pants while explaining to the five girls. "Okay, I'm done. You can use the needles and threads."

"Qiao Nan, don't go. You have to guide us along. We cannot remember all the steps." Zheng Lingling pulled at Qiao Nan, refusing to let her go.

"Don't worry, it's very simple. Anyway, I just want to pass the pants back to Zhu Baoguo. It's late, there's nowhere for me to go besides the dormitory. You could inform the other girls in our class about the problems with the pants. After all, all of us are class committee members."

With that, Qiao Nan brought the pants to Zhu Baoguo. "You must try it on later when you get back to your room. If it is not fitting, I will alter it for you."

"No, it is definitely fitting." Zhu Baoguo took the pants and put them against himself to see if it was fitting. He was very satisfied with the pants. "Xiao Qiao, you have nimble hands and have no trouble with needlework at all. I suppose you are the only girl who can do needlework in your dormitory. No, I should say that you are the only one who can do this in the whole class. You are amazing!"

"Hehehe." Qiao Nan smiled dryly. "I am going back, then." She did not ask for it, but if she did not have these skills, how could she survive her years at home?

Qiao Zijin would always have new clothes every year, every quarter and every month. But she could only have her hand-me-downs.

Even if Qiao Zijin was plumper than her, or that the clothes were old and most of them were not suitable, Qiao Nan still had to wear them.

Even if she did not have any new clothes to wear, Qiao Nan would ensure that her clothes were neat and fitting. Over time, Qiao Nan became adept at needlework. Qiao Nan could tell at first glance that the military training uniforms were too big and not fitting.

“Qiao Nan, you are back. That’s great. Please teach me what to do and where I should cut it. If I make any mistake, this pair of pants will be ruined.” As soon as Qiao Nan returned to the dormitory, she was dragged away by the people in the dormitory.

“You must put it on so that I can alter it according to your waistline.”

“Okay.” Zheng Lingling put on her pants obediently. Anyway, there were all girls. Zheng Lingling had nothing to be shy about.

“Is this tight?” Qiao Nan made some folds at the waist and asked.

“No.”

“Okay.” Qiao Nan picked up the small scissors and cut a hole at that area. She then fixed the button at that location. “Zheng Lingling, try moving about.”

Zheng Lingling took a few steps carefully. She then jumped around, squatted, and twisted about. “Okay, it’s just nice! Qiao Nan, you are so brilliant, thank you!”

“Me too. Qiao Nan, you have to help me out as well.”

“Me too!”

“There is no hurry. We can do so one by one!”

Zheng Lingling spent ages on the pants but did not make any progress, whereas Qiao Nan altered it within a few minutes. The other four girls were thrilled at that and wanted Qiao Nan to help them with the altering as well.

Zheng Lingling, who had altered the waistline, proceeded to alter the legs of her pants. “Qiao Nan, have you heard about it? When we brought out the blankets to air today, many students from the other classes were confused about their blankets and could not find theirs. In the end, some students lost their blankets. Fortunately, you taught us to make a marking. Otherwise, I have no idea what would have happened.” Zheng Lingling was gloating and rejoicing over what happened today.

“Yeah, it’s too unfortunate for them.”

“Qiao Nan, aren’t you a top scholar in the middle school examination? Shouldn’t you be a nerd? Why are you more adept in other life skills than us? Compared to you, we are not equipped with the skills to take care of ourselves. You are too annoying. But since you are willing to help and share, there is no way that I can stay annoyed at you.” Tang Mengran blushed in embarrassment and said shyly.

Chapter 210: Handsome Instructor

“...” Qiao Nan cut a hole on Tang Mengran’s pants to place the button. She then stared at Tang Mengran. “Was that a tongue twister?” Tang Mengran had said that she was annoying, but she went on to say that she could not stay annoyed at her?

So, was she annoying or not?

Tao Zhenqin wore the altered pants and felt that it was very fitting. “Qiao Nan, I have informed the other female classmates in the class and ask people to pass the words to the boys. I suppose they will find a solution.” But certainly not one as good as theirs.

Qiao Nan nodded. It was good that everyone knew about it. As for how they solved the problem, Qiao Nan was not interested to know. “I will take a bath first. I will go to sleep after bathing. There is military training tomorrow. It must be very tiring.”

“So early?” Zheng Lingling felt excited as it was the first day of school and everyone was new to one another. “No more reading for the day?”

“No, I am exhausted, and I do not read in the dormitory.” Qiao Nan shook her head. She preferred to study in the classroom and did not have the habit of reading books in the dormitory.

Qiao Nan took her clothes and went directly to the toilet to take a shower. After showering, she opened the door and washed her clothes. She brought them out to dry, after which she laid on the bed. In less than five minutes, her breathing evened and was fast asleep even though the lights in the dormitory were still on.

“Is she really asleep?” Tao Zhenqin looked stunned. “Do all of you think that Qiao Nan is a living treasure in every aspect?”

“Definitely!” He Yun nodded affirmatively. “It is getting late. Qiao Nan is right. The military training tomorrow must be very strenuous. Let’s have an early sleep.”

“Let’s sleep.” They lost all excitement in an instant, especially when they saw Qiao Nan sleeping soundly. Tang Mengran, who felt energized previously, was sleepy at once and yawned. “Why do I feel that Qiao Nan has a lullaby effect as well?”

“I think so too.” After taking a shower, they felt clean and refreshed. With the electric fan humming in the background, all of them gradually slipped into dreamland. After a while, Qiao Nan’s dormitory was the quietest among all other dormitories as its residents were the first to fall asleep.

On the next day, all of the students wore camouflaged uniforms to the field for their military training.

Qiao Nan was fully prepared, and so were the girls in her dormitory. The rest of the students from other dormitories were smart as well. They came up with all sorts of ways to alter their uniforms to make them fitting.

Liu Neng noticed that some of the students used clothespins to clip the legs of the pants. The clothespins swayed as the students moved about. It seemed as if there were two braids on the pants. Liu Neng almost lost his composure and broke out in laughter.

It was too hilarious!

Liu Neng coughed. "This is your instructor. His surname is Zhou. You can call him Instructor Zhou."

A soldier in a green military uniform stood by the side of Liu Neng, a middle-aged man. His posture was particularly tall and straight, especially his pair of bright, jet-black eyes. It was very striking that everyone was drawn to his pair of radiant and sparkling eyes instead of his tanned complexion.

"He was so handsome."

"He must be very young."

"Our class is blessed." The girls were bursting with excitement, exhilarated at the sight of the handsome instructor. They were very fortunate to have him as their instructor.

Qiao Nan felt perplexed at everyone's enthusiasm. Yesterday, when Zheng Lingling and the rest of them asked her about her relationship with Zhu Baoguo, there was a little disdain in their tone, as if they were sounding her out. Yet, they appeared to be infatuated when they saw the instructor today. Was that alright?

"Good morning, my surname is Zhou. From today onward, I will be your instructor." Instructor Zhou saluted the students of class one in a serious and formal manner. When he saw Qiao Nan, his eyes lit up.

"?" Qiao Nan who did not have a close look at the instructor heard his voice and found it familiar as if she had heard it before.

Qiao Nan looked up and took a closer look. She almost choked. Instructor Zhou was the son of Zhou Bing who stayed in the same hospital ward as Qiao Dongliang half a month ago. She had called him Brother Zhou back then.

They were acquaintances!

"The instructor is looking in this direction, smiling! His teeth are brilliantly white, and his smile is so beautiful. Who is he smiling at?"

When Zhou Jun saw Qiao Nan, he curled the corner of his lips. Although he did not break out in a big smile, his tanned face made his teeth appear to be particularly white. This slight smile of his did not go unnoticed by the female students who watched his every move!

When he heard the speculation, Zhou Jun quickly recovered and maintained a stern face. “Quiet. The first thing you must learn in military training is to maintain silence. In the army, you must maintain absolute discipline. Without the approval of the instructor, you are not supposed to make any comments or actions. Understand?!”

“Yes.”

“Understood.”

The group of students responded lazily, not in unison.

Zhou Jun frowned. His jet-black eyes which caught all of the students’ attention now gave off a ferocious look. The students of class one did not dare to fool around. “Did you hear what I said?!”

“Yes!” This time, the students from class one answered very neatly in unison.

As soon as Zhou Jun put on a stern expression, the students in class one did not dare to play around. “Okay, now we shall start the military training. If there are any questions during the training, one must ask for approval to speak or act. Understand?!”

“Understood!”

The Indian summer in September was still very scary. The sun was scorching hot on the body. Fortunately, the camouflaged uniform had long pants and long sleeves. Although one would not suffer sunburn, it was particularly stuffy and hot.

It had only been more than an hour and many of the students were drenched in perspiration, their shirts plastered to their back.

Zhou Jun looked at Qiao Nan from time to time to check whether she was fine. When he noticed that Qiao Nan’s cheeks had turned red, her hair wet and plastered to her face—that she was

drenched in perspiration to the point of having difficulty keeping her eyes opened, Zhou Jun said, "Let's have a ten-minute break."

"Phew..." Qiao Nan let out a long breath. Even though they had just finished training, her legs feeling so tired as if they were lead, she did not dare to sit down. Instead, she walked a few steps before leaning against a tree and sipped at her water, hydrating herself.

"Very good, some students are very experienced. When you are tired after exercises, don't sit down right away. You may also feel very thirsty, but you must not gulp down your water. It is better to take small sips." There was a hint of praise in Zhou Jun's eyes. This was the first time he taught students, but he had trained a lot of new recruits.

The new recruits who just entered the army were mostly fools who did not have common sense. They had to teach and guide them along the way.