

RTAMM 271

Chapter 271: You Can't Go

Chen Jun gently flicked the note from Qiao Nan with his fingers. "Qiao Nan, you're still too young and not enlightened. Or perhaps you are playing cat and mouse with me? Regardless, congratulations, Qiao Nan. The game between us is really not over yet."

"Chen Jun, your call." The teacher in charge of the dormitory shouted from the ground floor.

"Okay," Chen Jun acknowledged and then locked all the letters in his cupboard before he ran down the stairs. "Thank you."

"Don't mention it," The teacher replied smilingly. The teacher was definitely pleased to interact with a student like Chen Jun, who was always polite and performed well in his studies. He also never had any hanky-panky in his dormitory.

"Hello, yes, I am. Don't worry. Of course, I have not forgotten that project. I've been following up. However, haste makes waste. It's better to take it a step at a time."

"..."

"There is no use to be anxious. I like to carry things out in a steady manner. Furthermore, isn't there still time? It will do as long as we can complete this project according to the timeline. Okay, I know. This project will benefit both your family and mine. I placed this as one of my priorities too, so don't worry about it. Furthermore, I'm not anxious although my family stands to benefit from it much. Why should you be?"

"..."

"Alright. I know. If you really don't feel assured and are not afraid of ruining it unnecessarily, you can try to look for others to do this. Okay, alright. See you." After rubbing his ears that were aching from the call, Chen Jun covered his mouth and smiled. A child was a child, hardly patient at all.

Only two months had passed. If it was so easy to settle this matter, that person would not have sought his help.

The truth of the matter was that this 'project' was more complicated than he had expected.

"Chen Jun, you're only in the second year of college. Are you starting your own business?" The teacher in charge of the dormitory was stunned. A good student was undoubtedly a good student. When others were still learning new knowledge, these people already had a head start by enterprising. "Chen Jun, you have to strive hard. Our school relies on students like you."

"Don't worry, teacher. I will do my best," Chen Jun replied with a smile. "I may receive more phone calls in the future. I'll have to trouble teacher to alert me a few more times."

"Haha, no worries. Nevertheless, I heard that the school is trying to arrange for phones to be installed in every dormitory. You most likely don't need to run all around soon. You will soon be able to make the phone calls in your own dormitory."

"That sounds good." Chen Jun nodded. "See you, teacher."

"See you, see you."

When he returned to the dormitory, after some consideration, Chen Jun took out the letters that he received today again. He prepared two document envelopes, one for his own letters, and the other, which is more exquisite, for Qiao Nan's handwritten note.

After doing all these, Chen Jun then locked the two envelopes properly.

The other party had already called to hasten him. Even if there was still time, he should not drag it on for more than six months.

He certainly needed to find a way to deal with this quickly and resolve this matter by next year's summer vacation. Otherwise, his father's side would be anxious too.

Chen Jun's father had urgent matters to attend to. And so did Qiao Nan's father.

“Alright, I have said that I’ll be attending Qiao Nan’s parent-teacher conference this evening. You should go home. I’m locking the door.” Seeing that Ding Jiayi was dragging her feet and unwilling to leave as usual when it was time to go home, Qiao Dongliang became impatient.

In the past few days, Qiao Dongliang did not chase Ding Jiayi away so badly and allowed her to delay for over ten minutes in the house. However, he could not do so today.

Qiao Dongliang did not wish to be late the first time he attended Qiao Nan’s first parent-teacher conference in the senior high school and leave a bad impression on the teachers. That would negatively affect Qiao Nan’s image in front of the teacher.

“Since it’s the parent-teacher conference, then I should go together with you. After all, I am Nan Nan’s mother!” Ding Jiayi refused to leave. After so long, why was Old Qiao still unwilling to forgive her?

They were clearly a couple but had to live separately. What was this situation!

Ding Jiayi had lost more weight again as she had to rush between two places every day.

She started to reminisce about the days they stayed in the Qiao’s residence in the quad. Although Qiao Dongliang slept in a different room, they were still living under the same roof at the very least.

“This won’t do!” Qiao Dongliang declined flatly. “You can’t go. If you wish to go, you can attend Zijin’s parent-teacher conference. Zijin is already in the second year of senior high school. It’s not possible for her not to have any parent-teacher conference. You just have to take proper care of Zijin’s matters.”

“Why can’t you let me attend Nan Nan’s parent-teacher conference?!” Ding Jiayi was not pleased. In the past, she was not willing to attend if she was paid to do so. If not for the sake of giving Old Qiao’s face, would she be willing to go today?

She was already willing to attend. Why couldn’t she do so?

“Old Qiao, is it... Is it because Nan Nan told you something? Did she not want me to go? Why? Did she think that I’m a mother that will make her lose face? A mother never looks ugly to her child. What did she mean by that? Has she studied for nothing?” The more she did not want her to go, the more she wanted to do so.

“This has nothing to do with Nan Nan. I’m the one who doesn’t want you to go.” Qiao Dongliang frowned. “Alright, hurry up and go home. I’m locking the door!”

Following after, he did not care whether Ding Jiayi was willing to leave. He simply pushed and pulled Ding Jiayi out of the rented apartment and locked the door in front of her.

At the sight of Qiao Dongliang walking toward Qiao Nan’s school in a limping manner, Ding Jiayi stomped her feet in fury. In the end, she fell into a murderous rage and followed him.

She did not believe that Old Qiao could attend Qiao Nan’s parent-teacher conference and she could not do so. She was Qiao Nan’s biological mother.

“Wait, who are you?” When Qiao Dongliang reached the school, he was stopped by the security guard at the entrance.

“Hi, I’m the father of Qiao Nan from the high school first year’s class one. I’m here to attend the parent-teacher conference,” Qiao Dongliang replied awkwardly. At the thought of his limping, Qiao Dongliang unknowingly shrank his shoulders and wanted to hide both his legs.

“Oh, so you’re Qiao Nan’s father. Qiao Nan’s results were excellent. Your daughter is very good!” Who did not know the top student in the cohort? The security guard became polite instantly. “I have a daughter too. I don’t hope that she is as good as Qiao Nan, but I’ll be happy if she is half as good. That’s the classroom for class one. Shall I bring you there?”

“No need. Thank you.” The security guard’s affectionate behavior made Qiao Dong feel awkward. “That’s the classroom, right? I can find my way there.”

Chapter 272: Other People’s Children

Qiao Dongliang slowed down and tried his best to walk normally. However, this was very taxing on him.

After much difficulty, he finally arrived at Qiao Nan’s classroom but was perspiring furiously. “Dad, you’re here!” When Qiao Dongliang reached the entrance of the classroom, Zhu Baoguo

gave Qiao Nan a nudge and Qiao Nan ran up to Qiao Dongliang as soon as she spotted him. “Dad, why are you perspiring so badly? The weather is not that hot.”

Qiao Dongliang was very embarrassed as there were already other parents in the classroom. “You... you don’t need to help me. I can walk on my own.”

“It doesn’t matter, Dad. Please don’t be stubborn.” It was no wonder that her father was sweating profusely. It was because he felt embarrassed. “Dad, don’t take it to heart. You have been injured and will recover in time.”

“This... I’m afraid that I’ll make you lose face.” Qiao Dongliang felt both comforted and helpless as he said this. All the other parents seemed fine. It didn’t look good that he was the only one limping.

“Lose face? Dad, you have been thinking too much.” Qiao Nan rolled her eyes. There was nothing to be ashamed of. “It’s not embarrassing even if you’re really handicapped, not to mention that you’re just injured. Dad, sit down. I’ll get you a cup of water. You should also wipe away your sweat.”

Qiao Nan took out her handkerchief and passed it to Qiao Dongliang. She then took a cup to get water for him.

Qiao Dongliang looked at Qiao Nan’s small handkerchief. It was so clean and there were flowers embroidered at the rim. As an old man, Qiao Dongliang was extremely embarrassed to use it. He also could not bear to dirty Nan Nan’s handkerchief.

“Dad, have some water. Why are you not wiping away your sweat?”

“No need.” Qiao Dongliang took the water and drank a mouthful of it. His eyes and throat immediately felt much better. “There isn’t much sweat. It’ll dry up very soon. Keep your handkerchief properly and don’t dirty it.”

“Dad, what are you talking about? There’s no reason not to dirty the handkerchief. If it’s dirty, I’ll just wash it. Quickly wipe away your sweat. Your face has even turned red. Who told you to be stubborn?” Qiao Nan stiffened. “Dad, tell me honestly. How long have you been walking with that posture? Are your legs hurting? Don’t injure the legs that are finally recovering again.”

“No, no, no, I definitely didn’t.” Qiao Dongliang was the father, but he was afraid of his daughter when she pulled a long face. “Just... just for a while, a short while. I did that after I entered your school. There won’t be a problem.”

“Does it hurt?”

“No...” Just as Qiao Dongliang wanted to reply that it did not hurt, Qiao Nan did not look convinced and pursed her lips. “It’s a little painful. I feel much better after sitting down and resting.”

“Wipe your sweat!”

Qiao Dongliang heaved a sigh. He had no choice but to wipe away the sweat on his face with his younger daughter’s clean handkerchief.

Although it’s already October, the weather was still a little humid. Furthermore, as he had perspired a lot, he did not feel comfortable.

True enough, as soon as Qiao Dongliang finished wiping his face, Qiao Nan’s white and clean handkerchief turned black.

Qiao Dongliang’s old face turned red. He was so embarrassed that he nearly could not bring himself to return the handkerchief to Qiao Nan.

Without a word, Qiao Nan took the handkerchief from Qiao Dongliang’s hands and ran to the restroom to wash it with tap water. She then wrung it dry and passed it back to Qiao Dongliang. “Dad, wipe again.” The handkerchief was so small. How much sweat could it wipe away?

Whatever happened would happen again. Although Qiao Dongliang was embarrassed, he had already done it once. As such, he endured the uneasiness and wiped his face again. “Alright, I’m really fine this time.”

“Okay.” Qiao Nan washed and wrung the handkerchief dry again. She did not insist on another wipe.

“Daughter, who is that girl? She’s so filial to her father. How was her academic performance in the class?”

“Dad, what do you mean? Am I not good to you?” The girl who was named was not pleased. She felt that she was also filial and helpful to her father.

“Yes, you’re very good to me.” The parent smiled. He did not argue with his daughter. However, the parent knew in his heart that the girl was different from his daughter. If he did not mutter a word, would his daughter be so thoughtful as to do so many things and be more considerate toward him?

There was a great difference between initiative and passive.

Nevertheless, his daughter was not bad too. Although she did not take the initiative, as long as he mentioned it, his daughter would usually obey him. Moreover, her daughter’s results were good and she’s in the top class of Ping Cheng High School. She was his pride and glory in front of his colleagues.

“Ah yes, you have not told me yet. How’s the academic performance of this young lady in the class?”

The girl blew her cheeks. “She’s the top in our class as well as the cohort. What do you think?”

“She’s a good student. Are you friends with her?”

Qiao Nan’s attitude toward Qiao Dongliang stood out too much from the rest.

The families in China, particularly in the late 20th century, were more restrained in expressing their feelings toward their family members. This applied to both parents and children. Even if they were truly concerned for one another, they would not display it so blatantly.

Qiao Nan’s behavior was considered extremely rare.

How should he put it? He would not do that himself. Nevertheless, he was very envious at the sight of it. He very much wished that his own children could express their filial piety to him in this way. He would feel so proud!

Furthermore, when he heard that the obedient young lady was the top student of class one as well as the entire cohort, this... He was getting a little jealous. What to do?

His child would always be the best. This was so even if her grades were not comparable to others'.

It did not matter if that child did not belong to his own family. But if his child could get closer and be friends with her, that would be great. They could influence each other and his child might become more filial or see some improvement in her results in time to come!

“Stop talking. Our form teacher, Teacher Liu, is here.” That girl was not quite willing to continue with this topic anymore.

In the past, when she was in junior high school, she was one of the top students in the class. It had always been others who took the initiative to make friends with her and ask her questions. The situation was reversed now. The girl expressed that she was unable to accept the change.

“So flashy. She’s definitely pretending.” Zhao Yu ground her teeth. She did not believe that Qiao Nan was truly so filial to her father. She must have done this to gain the favor of others and stand out from the group. She was too shameless!

“Don’t talk nonsense.” Father Zhao gave his daughter a pat helplessly. Fortunately, he did not allow his wife to come to the parent-teacher conference today. Otherwise, given her character, she would probably develop some animosity toward the Qiao family.

“Why not? Qiao Nan can fool everyone but not me.” Zhao Yu was unconvinced. “Any student who came here from Ping Cheng Junior High School knew that Qiao Nan had never worn any new clothing for the three years she’s in the school. She always wore second-hand clothing from her elder sister. However, Qiao Zijin was different. There were four seasons in a year and she had at least two new sets of clothing for each season. When we knew that Qiao Zijin and Qiao Nan were biological sisters, we even suspected that Qiao Nan was picked up from the streets.”

Zhao Yu’s voice was neither loud nor soft, but quite a number of people in the classroom heard her. Even Teacher Liu who just came in heard it too.

Chapter 273: The Perfect Daughter

All of a sudden, the classroom was quiet. The sound of everyone's breathing was seemingly amplified many times.

Seeing that her words attracted the attention of many, Zhao Yu smiled proudly.

Since the fiasco of the matter regarding the change of dormitory, Zhao Yu had been trying to find an opportunity to teach Qiao Nan a lesson. She finally found a chance today after enduring for so long. Zhao Yu remembered that during the first two years of junior high school, everyone except for Qiao Nan came to school wearing new clothes during the Lunar New Year period. However, Qiao Nan wore clothes that Qiao Zijin had worn before instead.

At that time, based on her recollection, Qiao Nan never seemed confident. She was always gloomy and did not like to talk in class. She also did not interact with anyone. She did not even have any close friends of the same gender.

Qiao Nan was also very quiet now. However, she got along very well with the five girls in her dormitory and had become more cheerful.

This was the fourth year that Zhao Yu was classmates with Qiao Nan. Of course, she was the one most emotionally impacted by Qiao Nan's change.

Qiao Nan now looked bright, well-clothed, and seemingly in the limelight. However, she was in fact, very pitiful two years ago. She must let their classmates know how Qiao Nan was like in the past.

"Nan Nan..." The silence in the classroom made everyone uneasy. Qiao Dongliang felt most embarrassed, his face extremely red. He did not know how he should react. After all, Zhao Yu was telling the truth. Even Qiao Dongliang felt that he had owed Qiao Nan too much and was too unfair to her in the past.

"Dad, have some water." Qiao Nan was indifferent. It was as if she did not hear what Zhao Yu said. "Dad, this is Teacher Liu, our form teacher."

"Aye." Qiao Dongliang was holding the cup of water as his hands stiffened.

At the sight of Qiao Nan who was sitting by his side looking unaffected, Qiao Dongliang nearly posed the question that he did not dare to do so for a long time. He wanted to know whether Nan Nan had ever hated him as her father all these years.

However, as he moved his lips, he felt that it was inappropriate to do so at this moment. Qiao Dongliang was also afraid to receive a certain answer. As such, he did not put forth that question.

Teacher Liu cleared his throat. He had not expected to hear such gossip during the parent-teacher conference. It was no wonder Teacher Chen told him that it was not easy for Qiao Nan to continue with her studies when he called him the last time.

Having been a teacher for so many years, he had, of course, seen students who never wore any new clothes to school.

Typically, those students came from poor families that had financial difficulties. Then, similar to Qiao Nan, they were able to enter the school because of their good results and had their school and miscellaneous fees waived.

When he encountered students who were in the same situation as Qiao Nan, those whose parents were biased toward their sibling, he came to learn that the parents and children were definitely not on good terms. Thus, there would be minimal interaction between them.

However, Qiao Nan seemed close to her father. It was as if she was the one favored by her parents. Teacher Liu encountered this for the first time and felt that it had widened his horizons.

“First and foremost, I would like to thank all the parents for taking the time to attend the parent-teacher conference. Students, you may leave the classroom now for your own activities.” After Teacher Liu said that, the students stood up and left for the field to carry out other activities.

After his daughter left, Qiao Dongliang found Zhu Chengqi sitting beside him. Qiao Dongliang felt even more stressed. The earlier stress came from his daughter, and now it was due to Zhu Chengqi.

“Hello.” Zhu Chengqi had observed Qiao Dongliang for a while. He, of course, knew that Qiao Dongliang was once a soldier. Nevertheless, no one was perfect. It did not mean that Qiao Dongliang would not make a mistake if he was a soldier. On the contrary, Qiao Dongliang was in fact, a very muddle-headed person.

Zhu Chengqi was puzzled as to why Qiao Dongliang could have such an outstanding child like Qiao Nan.

Contrariwise, Xiao Shu and he were both so outstanding, but why did they have a child who was so foolish and a good-for-nothing?

Zhu Chengqi clearly remembered. When Lee Shu was pregnant with Zhu Baoguo, putting aside the elders' wish, both Zhu Chengqi and Lee Shu actually wanted a daughter, an obedient, adorable, and sensible daughter.

In real life, Qiao Nan completely matched Zhu Chengqi and Lee Shu's imagination of their daughter at that time. This was simply the perfect daughter.

Qiao Nan was not aware of Zhu Chengqi's thoughts at all. Although she was badly despised by her mother, she was actually the daughter that a prominent figure like Zhu Chengqi wished to have. She also did not know that although she had not been as perfect in her previous life, she had made Zhu Chengqi reminisce the fantasy of Lee Shu and him in the past.

It was because of this fantasy that brought her a disaster like Chen Jun.

"H-Hello." Qiao Dongliang dared not ignore Zhu Chengqi since the latter had already greeted him first. However, as it was not appropriate to point out Zhu Chengqi's identity, he could only say, "Hello, Baoguo's father."

Zhu Chengqi felt that the greeting was a novelty.

Most of the time, people said that his son was Zhu Baoguo. No one had ever greeted him as Zhu Baoguo's father.

"Nan Nan is a very outstanding child. She helped our Baoguo so much. Baoguo can continue with his studies and have today's results all because of Nan Nan. However, I have been really busy. I must really say thank you for some matters. As the father, I should pay a personal visit to your house to show my sincerity. Next time, our families should find a chance to have a meal together."

"No, no need. Chief—no, I mean, Baoguo's father. You're too polite. To put it honestly, you don't need to thank me or Nan Nan. I'm grateful to Uncle Lee. After my dad is gone, Uncle Lee took good care of me. In fact, I allowed Nan Nan to help Baoguo in his studies to repay Uncle Lee's

kindness.” Qiao Dongliang was an honest man. This was unlike Ding Jiayi who wanted to conjure up some connection although there was none to begin with.

Even if Zhu Chengqi took the initiative to extend an olive branch, Qiao Dongliang not only did not conveniently take it but also moved further away.

If he was still a soldier, he would definitely not miss such a good opportunity. However, he was no soldier at the moment, but a father.

Nan Nan did not mind and he should not live in the past too. He had to move forward and focus on the present and the future. He could not make Nan Nan lose face in front of Chief Zhu. If that happened, then he would be no different from Ding Jiayi.

Seeing that Qiao Dongliang’s eyes were determined and had no sense of reluctance, Zhu Chengqi felt much better. Qiao Dongliang had some good qualities and was not totally unworthy of a child like Qiao Nan.

“Now, we’d like to invite the parents to take a look at the academic report given to you. This is the result of our midterm examination for class one. Initially, the parent-teacher conference should be held after the first monthly examination but this was delayed until today due to some circumstances. The scores are not absolute. I hope that you will not give your child too much pressure when you find out about their academic performance. This will only be counter-productive and widen the problem in their learning.”

Chapter 274: The Commendation Ceremony

“As the form teacher of class one, I’m very proud of our students because they are truly excellent and outstanding. There’s also a set of data at the bottom of the page in the report. This is a summary of our class’s results versus that of the other classes’. You may review them as well.”

As Teacher Liu said that, all the parents immediately bowed their heads to look at the academic report. They searched through the report like a scanner so that they could find their child’s name from the list in the report as soon as possible. After they confirmed their child’s name and results, they started looking for the name of the top scorer.

When the parents consequently discovered that the top scorer was actually the student who had been named earlier, the one suspected to have been picked up from the streets, many of them felt depressed.

It did not matter whether she was picked up from the streets. They treated their child well wholeheartedly, but their child's results were only that good. Why was that child's academic performance so outstanding despite having suffered so many grievances? That cripple was too blessed.

At the sight of Qiao Dongliang looking radiant and happy, Zhu Chengqi smiled. "Nan Nan's grades are truly excellent."

"Nan Nan has always been very sensible. She has never made me worried." Qiao Dongliang's smile was more relaxed. At the mention of Qiao Nan, he was full of pride. "Baoguo's grades have improved quite a fair bit too."

"It's all thanks to Nan Nan." His son's grades definitely looked better. When Zhu Chengqi talked about Zhu Baoguo, his tone was different. He did not sound disappointed like he did in the past.

"Don't mention it. Baoguo and Nan Nan are classmates and also desk mates. It's good to help each other. My Nan Nan is good at everything, but she is too soft and easily bullied by others. That being said, I must thank you. If not for Baoguo, Nan Nan will definitely be bullied at school." Qiao Dongliang was very certain of this.

"He's a boy. I guess he is only useful to Nan Nan in this aspect." Zhu Chengqi could not help smiling. Based on what Zhao Yu said earlier, Zhu Chengqi was very sure that his son was of some use to Qiao Nan.

The kids nowadays were more scheming. If Qiao Nan was not emotionally strong, don't even mention continuing with the same learning attitude, she would most likely find it hard to lift up her head in front of her classmates in the future due to Zhao Yu's revelation.

Compared to the happy conversation between Zhu Chengqi and Qiao Dongliang, the interactions between other parents were not as harmonious.

Any parent would be more than willing to let their own child mix around with and learn from the top student in the class.

As such, Qiao Dongliang was actually their main target.

As soon as Teacher Liu's finished his words, many parents surrounded Qiao Dongliang when they were given free time to interact with one another. "Hello. You're Qiao Nan's father, right? My daughter is Zheng Lingling. She stays in the same dormitory as your daughter."

"My daughter is He Yun. She also stays in the same dormitory as Qiao Nan."

The few parents of Qiao Nan's dormitory mates came to Qiao Dongliang in an instant. In fact, as soon as Qiao Dongliang appeared, He Yun and the other dormitory mates informed their parents that he was Qiao Nan's father at once.

The five parents did not know who Qiao Dongliang was, but they knew Qiao Nan. The five parents were very familiar with Qiao Nan's name.

One must know that according to their daughter, Qiao Nan was someone who was perfect and had no shortcomings.

In fact, when they saw the academic report today, the five parents could only admit that this young lady called Qiao Nan was definitely formidable. At the very least, she was very good in her studies. In addition, their daughters had been telling them that they were greatly influenced by Qiao Nan. It seemed like it was with Qiao Nan's help that their daughters could have done fairly well in the recent examinations. The five parents felt thankful to Qiao Dongliang at the thought of this.

"My daughter's name is Fang Fang. She's from the same dormitory as well. Qiao Nan takes very good care of our Fang Fang. Big brother, you truly know how to teach your daughter. I've never seen Fang Fang admire anyone. Qiao Nan is the first." Fang Fang's father gave a thumbs-up. His daughter did not talk much and was a little too proud since her results were good.

Because of that, Father Fang was afraid that his daughter's life was too smooth sailing and she would not be able to take any setbacks in the future. If she really encountered any problem or difficulty, she might panic beyond her wits.

Now that his daughter had someone whom she admired, at the very least, she finally understood that no matter how strong she was, there would always be someone stronger. She had become more humble and careful henceforth. Father Fang was very pleased with the change in his daughter.

“Yes, our Tang Mengran is also fortunate to have Qiao Nan helping her in her revision. Otherwise... my child’s results are inconsistent. The scores are high at some point in time and low at another. It’s like flying a kite. It’s so worrying.” Tang Mengran’s mother was very clear of her daughter’s situation.

The Tang family even thought that although Tang Mengran got into the top class in Ping Cheng High School, she might be kicked out of it in less than one and a half months.

They did not expect that her daughter’s results would become quite consistent. At the very least, it was maintained at the slightly below-average score in class one.

If the time to adjust the classes came, their daughter would not be affected.

Who did not know that class one in Ping Cheng High School was an important class? When they took the university entrance examination in the future, they would not enroll in anything less than a third-tier university!

Mother Tang expressed that she was not greedy. She was very satisfied with her daughter’s current results.

The daughter’s results had become consistent not only due to her own effort but also Qiao Nan’s help. It was a rare opportunity to meet Qiao Nan’s parent and Mother Tang expressed her gratitude to Qiao Dongliang. From that tone and expression of hers, it was obvious that she was speaking from her heart.

“Don’t... please don’t be like that. They are classmates and also staying in the same dormitory. It’s only right that they help one another. It’s the right thing to do.” Qiao Dongliang’s old face turned red again. Previously, he was embarrassed. Now, he was proud and shy.

He received the thanks, but his daughter was actually the one who did all the work. He did not do anything.

“Don’t say that. You have taught her well,” Mother Tao said. “We can tell that Qiao Nan is very close to you. She’s so outstanding. It must be because you have taught her well. If there’s a chance in the future, could we discuss how you managed to teach Qiao Nan so well? Do you have a secret formula?”

Father Zhao gave a sigh and looked at Zhao Yu helplessly. “Xiao Yu, your results were quite good in junior high school. Why did it turn out this way in senior high school? Xiao Yu, when are you going to let me gain some limelight, just like Qiao Dongliang?”

Father Zhao did not stay in the quad, but he knew how to make money, much better than Qiao Dongliang, in fact. Everyone had to call him Boss Zhao. However, Father Zhao had never received the treatment Qiao Dongliang received today.

He would rather have an experience like Qiao Dongliang than to do so well in his business.

Chapter 275: Join the Clique of Good Students

No matter how successful a parent’s career was, they hoped that their children would be promising in the future.

“Dad, what do you mean by this? Do you believe that I’ll tell Mom what you have just said?” Zhao Yu would not concede defeat. In what way was she worse than Qiao Nan? Her father actually envied Qiao Nan’s father. This was not the real Qiao Nan. She was clearly a scheming bitch. She really knew how to act and pretend.

If she was willing to, she would definitely have become good friends with Qiao Nan long ago.

However, she was not as insidious as Qiao Nan. She was a forthright person. She could not act or pretend to like or hate someone.

“Alright, alright, alright. Don’t get angry.” Father Zhao patted his daughter. “Where are you going now? It seems that your classmates have not returned.”

“I came to take something. I need to leave now,” Zhao Yu said angrily. If she had not realized that she had missed out one of the books, she would not have seen Qiao Nan’s father being surrounded by so many people. She was most annoyed by what her father said earlier.

One day, her father would understand that his daughter was much more outstanding than Qiao Nan.

Her father was the one truly blessed with her as a daughter.

“Alright, then quickly go ahead. Right, Xiao Yu, I’ve never heard you mention about making any new friends in this half a semester. Since next week is your birthday, do you want to organize a celebration at home and celebrate with your classmates? Qiao Nan’s house is so near to our family. This year, you should invite Qiao Nan too.”

She was the top scorer in the cohort and once the top of the middle school examination in the province. Father Zhao had the feeling that Qiao Nan might not be Fang Zhong Yong, the child prodigy who lost his talent when he was older, as mentioned by Zhao Yu.

Most people said that the results between males and females would be different from the third year onward. The difference would be more obvious as they reached senior high school. However, judging from Qiao Nan’s progress in the science subjects, she scored nearly full marks for all of them in this midterm examination.

At the very least, there was no disadvantage for Xiao Yu to mix around with such a child.

If she was to make friends, she should certainly find a ‘good’ friend. Father Zhao would be very pleased if Zhao Yu could be closer to Qiao Nan.

Father Zhao heard what Mother Tao and the few parents said.

The few families’ children were in the same dormitory as Qiao Nan, and the latter helped them a lot in their studies. Their children’s academic performance had not only become consistent but also improved.

If Qiao Nan’s good friend was Zhao Yu, the latter’s results would definitely be different when he attended the parent-teacher conference next year.

At the thought of Zhao Yu, who never failed to be in the top ten in junior high school, but was now in the last ten, Father Zhao felt a little depressed.

“I’ll invite everyone except her!” Zhao Yu snorted. “But I wish to focus on my studies this year. I’m not joining these messy activities anymore. Anyway, it’s always the same when celebrating

birthdays. Besides feasting and drinking, what else can there be? Instead of wasting time, I might as well study more and do better in the next examination.”

“Are we really not holding a party for your birthday this year?” Father Zhao was shocked. His daughter loved having fun and people. If they did not remember it, their daughter would definitely kick up a big fuss. Unexpectedly, Zhao Yu actually requested not to hold a birthday party or any related activities this year on her own accord.

“Of course, it’s more real than genuine pearls. Dad, don’t look down on me. I’m actually quite sensible too.” Zhao Yu would never tell her father that she had not found any good friends in the class although half a semester had passed.

Zhao Yu’s grades were average in the class. In fact, it was actually below average. Even if the Zhao family was wealthy, not everyone in the class was keen on favoring her.

Because of Zhao Yu, Xu Tingting had been stripped off the role of the vice class monitor.

Xu Tingting directly told the class that they had to be careful if they were close to Zhao Yu.

Zhao Yu already caused her to lose the position of the vice class monitor. If anyone dared to be close to Zhao Yu, they might be the next victim.

In a class, there were more students who did not hold any position than class committee members.

However, because of Xu Tingting’s words, although some of the students were not class committee members, they were reluctant to become close to Zhao Yu too. What if Zhao Yu harmed them in other ways?

In that case, although they did not have an extremely poor relationship with Zhao Yu, they were not that close to her either.

Take the classmates in Zhao Yu’s current dormitory as an example. They did not directly ignore and bully Zhao Yu like the latter’s previous dormitory mates. They would usually greet Zhao Yu and call her along when they attended class or went for meals.

However, that was, at best, out of politeness. It did not go beyond that.

As such, Zhao Yu did not make any good friends at all in the class.

If she really organized a birthday party just like what she did in the past and invited a few classmates, in the end, Zhao Yu would not be in the limelight. She might even lose her face as not many would attend. Even if they came, that didn't mean they were close to her.

“With what you said, Dad feels like having taken more nutrients as compared to eating ginseng. Xiao Yu, strive hard. With your learning attitude, Dad believes that you will definitely do well in the next examination.” Father Zhao was happy. There was no reason for him not to support his daughter in quieting down and focusing on her studies.

“Alright, I'm going to study in the reading room.” Zhao Yu pursed her lips as she was not too pleased actually. However, she could not explain to her father given her current situation.

“Go ahead.” Father Zhao smiled. He was extremely pleased as he looked at his daughter's back. Xiao Yu had become more sensible. He believed that as long as she worked hard, people would not treat him any less than they would Qiao Dongliang at the parent-teacher conference next year.

The parent-teacher conference ended as soon as it began. When it ended, the sky was already dark.

“Dad, take this with you so that you can see the way when you go home. It's not convenient for you to walk with your legs. Walk slowly and be careful on the way back.” Qiao Nan stuffed a small flashlight into Qiao Dongliang's hands. She used the small amount of pocket money that she had to buy this.

“No need. Keep it for yourself.” Qiao Dongliang refused to take it. “Look at how round and bright the moon is today. Don't worry about Dad. Nothing will happen. Nowadays, it's different from when Dad was still a child. There are many streetlights along the roads. I will walk slowly and won't fall down.”

“Take it. Although it's not bright enough, it can still light up the way a little.” Qiao Nan forcefully tucked the flashlight into Qiao Dongliang's hands again.

“Then, how about you?” Nan Nan must have bought the flashlight because she had a use for it.

“It’s fine. I won’t be needing it in the near future. I will be going home next week. I will be able to bring it back to school then. It’s not a big issue.” She bought this flashlight specifically for her father. She had no use for it as she normally did not read in the dormitory.

“Alright, I’ll take it.” Qiao Dongliang smiled helplessly. Nan Nan’s temper was growing. He had to listen to Nan Nan although he was the father.

Chapter 276: True Colors

“Nan Nan, I am curious. Unlike us, you do not study in the dormitory at night. Why do you need to buy a flashlight? You are really good to your dad.” Tang Mengran tapped the shoulder of Qiao Nan, her tone full of envy. “Nan Nan, your dad must be very good to you.”

“Yes, there will be no me without my dad.”

“That’s not it. I mean, what Zhao Yu said in class just now must be lies, then?” Tang Mengran blurted out the question on her mind without taking into consideration Qiao Nan’s feelings. Zheng Lingling was shocked. She did not manage to stop Tang Mengran in time.

Zheng Lingling gave Tang Mengran a disdainful glance. Why would she touch someone’s soft spot?

Tang Mengran did not believe what she just heard. “What’s wrong with all of you? Nan Nan and her dad are very close. It is obvious that Zhao Yu was lying.” She was not a fool. If Uncle Qiao was not good to Nan Nan, why would Nan Nan be so close to Uncle Qiao?

She did not believe it.

Nan Nan had been her roommate for half a semester. It was true that Nan Nan did not have many new clothes, but at the very least, she did not wear hand-me-downs.

“Alright, we should go back to finish our homework. The teacher has given us a lot of homework. We still have to go back to our dormitory later,” Fang Fang interrupted Tang Mengran’s silly words. If Zhao Yu’s words were not true, Uncle Qiao would not have that kind of reaction.

“That’s right. I still have five exam papers that I haven’t done yet. What to do?” Tang Mengran was so anxious that she could not stand still. After entering high school, the workload was so heavy that Tang Mengran could not remember how many practice papers she needed to do every day.

There were too many practice papers that she could no longer keep them in her desk in the classroom. She had to bring some of them back with her to the dormitory.

“Let’s go. I have three practice papers to finish.” He Yun turned and walked into the classroom first.

Because of the parent-teacher conference, every student in the class seemed to be able to get along with one another. Their attitude toward Qiao Nan particularly had also changed.

To Qiao Nan, it was good that they would be able to have a good and relaxed learning atmosphere.

But after a short while, Qiao Nan and the others felt uneasy and uncomfortable.

While Tang Mengran was having her lunch, she looked around the canteen. “Do all of you feel that the students from other classes seem to be casting strange looks at us? They seem to be stealing glances at us.”

“If you didn’t look at them, how would you know that they were watching you?” Fang Fang took a sip of her soup: “I don’t find it weird.”

“I looked around since I felt uncomfortable with their stares. The problem is, every time I looked at them, they would avoid my gaze. It’s okay to be curious. After all, Nan Nan ranked first place in the whole level. But why would they steal glances at us? I can’t help but feel uncomfortable.” In fact, Tang Mengran felt that those students not only stared at Qiao Nan, but they also appeared as if they were gloating.

“Actually, I also have this strange feeling,” Tao Zhenqin could not help but said. “Shall we ask around?”

Regardless, she felt that those students were not staring at Nan Nan because she ranked first in the whole level. It seemed to be for other reasons.

“Who will volunteer to ask around?” He Yun blinked her eyes. How could they bring themselves to ask?

Qiao Nan finished her meal and said, “Forget it. All of you don’t have to worry about this. I have a way to figure it out.”

“How?” Zheng Lingling looked at Qiao Nan.

“Zhu Baoguo.” No matter where he was, people would be fearful of Zhu Baoguo and listen to him. Even though he was still a first-year, those students in the second and third year dared not go against him. He was like their ‘big brother’. He was the most suitable candidate for this task.

“That’s a good idea.” Fang Fang finished her soup and said satisfactorily, “Zhu Baoguo may not be capable in other areas, but this is an easy feat for him.”

Zheng Lingling thought for a while and nodded. “Alright, you should get Zhu Baoguo to ask around. If there’s anything wrong, you must let us know. We can work together to find a solution.”

“Why will there be any problems?” Tang Mengran did not understand and asked. Nan Nan’s academic performance was good, and her classmates had changed their attitude toward her. Why would there be any problems?

“Alright, you should hurry to finish your meal.” Zheng Lingling really had nothing to say about Tang Mengran’s silly character. No wonder Tang Mengran sounded uneasy whenever she mentioned Xu Tingting in the past. It was not that Xu Tingting was very capable. It was Tang Mengran who was too slow-witted.

Back in the classroom, Qiao Nan saw that Zhu Baoguo had returned to his seat. “Zhu Baoguo, can you find out something for me?”

“What is it?” Zhu Baoguo looked strange.

“The people from other classes cast me weird glances. Can you find out what’s wrong?”

“This...” Zhu Baoguo wrapped his arms around his stomach and said reluctantly, “Xiao Qiao, I think it is better for you not to know about this. Anyway, you have moved out of that Qiao’s house

and have been staying with your dad. It's good to not know about those terrible things. The guards in our school are very strict. This will not happen again in the future. After a while, those people will not look at you strangely."

"The Qiao's house?" Qiao Nan was stunned at the mention of the house she used to stay in. "It seems like this has to do with either Qiao Zijin or my mom. The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China is similar to our school, and their students have to stay at school during the weekend. Since it's not Qiao Zijin, then it must be related to my mom?"

Zhu Baoguo frowned with disapproval. "I have never seen a mother who acted like her. She must be your enemy. Xiao Qiao, you should stop treating her as your mom. Even if she is the elder, even if she gave birth to you, if she is here, I feel like giving her a punch!"

Qiao Nan rested her elbows on the table. She put her hand on her forehead and sighed deeply. "Sure enough, she is the one behind all these troubles. Tell me honestly, what 'good deeds' has she done this time?"

What she did not understand was why her mother would appear for the parent-teacher conference at Ping Cheng High School yesterday. Her mother treated Qiao Zijin as her sole daughter and would only attend the latter's parent-teacher conference. What did she mean by coming to Ping Cheng High School?

"Do you really want to know?" Zhu Baoguo looked at Qiao Nan. "You may be angered to death if you know about it."

Qiao Nan twitched the corner of her lips and sneered. "Angered to death?" She had once been angered to death by her mother. In this life, that would not happen again. "Tell me, what happened? I don't want to be kept in the dark."

At Qiao Nan's insistence, Zhu Baoguo had no other choice but to tell her what happened.

Most importantly, he hoped that Qiao Nan would be able to see the true colors of Ding Jiayi.

Chapter 277: Biological Daughter

Zhu Baoguo heard what Zhao Yu said yesterday as well.

If it had not been for Zhao Yu, Zhu Baoguo would have remained clueless about the miserable life Qiao Nan had led before she was acquainted with Zhu Baoguo.

Zhu Baoguo, who never had to worry about life, could not believe that it was almost the 21st century, yet there were people who could not afford new clothes and had to wear their sister's hand-me-downs. If the family was not well-to-do but the sisters were treated equally, though life was tough, they would find comfort in each other's company.

But Zhu Baoguo knew better than anyone else that the Qiao family's situation was not that bad.

If the Qiao family could not make ends meet, they would not use five thousand yuan to make sure that Qiao Zijin enrolled in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Obviously, Qiao Nan was forced to bear all the hardships and sufferings.

In the past, the two adults in the Qiao family were biased toward Qiao Zijin, but Uncle Qiao had changed for the better. However, Xiao Qiao's mother was just too terrible.

Since a young age, Zhu Baoguo would throw tantrums and be aggrieved as he did not have a mother. But whenever he saw Ding Jiayi, he would comfort himself that even without a mother, he was way much better than Xiao Qiao who had such a mother like Ding Jiayi.

Compared with Xiao Qiao, he was very fortunate.

"Please get to the point and don't look at me with that kind of pitiful expression. I am not a stray kitten or stray puppy. Even without my mom, I have no problem surviving on my own. I do not need others to pity me," Qiao Nan said calmly.

"Your mom didn't say it outright, but these are what she wanted to convey basically. Firstly, you dislike your mom. Since she is uneducated, you feared that if she were to come to the school, she would be a disgrace. Hence, your dad was the only one who attended the parent-teacher conference as you forbade your mom to come. Secondly, you are very scheming. You sowed discord between your parents so as to strive for a chance to go to school. You did not take the family's situation into consideration. On top of that, despite knowing that the family is not doing well, you insisted for your dad to rent a house near the school so that it will be convenient for you to get to school, and thus you can save time on transport."

Nearing the end, Zhu Baoguo found it so outrageous that he felt like vomiting. "She did not fail to mention that as a mother, she is certainly very happy that you are working hard. She said that she has worked hard all her life for your sake—that it's her dream for you to have a bright future. When

you graduate and find a job in the future, she will not be your burden. She will still work to support herself. She said that at times, you think too much.”

In other words, Ding Jiayi clearly meant that Qiao Nan was like a leech that made her family spend money on her education. But when she led a good life in the future, she did not intend to take care of her parents.

Zhu Baoguo had known Xiao Qiao for a while. He was very clear about what kind of person Xiao Qiao was.

However, for those who did not know Xiao Qiao, they would surely believe that Xiao Qiao was a scum when hearing such remarks.

Others would feel that Xiao Qiao was already so scheming at this young age. Hence, she deserved to be despised upon. Regardless of Xiao Qiao’s good performance, it would be impossible for her to hold her head up high in school with such a bad reputation.

Zhu Baoguo was furious at the damage that Ding Jiayi’s complaints caused to Qiao Nan.

“Your mom said all these as she wallowed in self-pity, repenting on her own mistakes. She made it sound as if she had a lot of grievances, and that she was misunderstood. She was very clever to have used such a method. This is my first time seeing someone like that. Xiao Qiao, are you sure she is your biological mother?”

It was obvious that it was Ding Jiayi who could not stand the sight of Xiao Qiao, treated her badly, and was biased toward Qiao Zijin. Uncle Qiao and Xiao Qiao moved out of the Qiao’s house because Ding Jiayi maligned Xiao Qiao, saying that she was a thief!!!

Zhu Baoguo remembered clearly that Qiao Nan had rushed to his home on that day to ask him for help.

After listening to Qiao Nan’s words, Zhu Baoguo’s first reaction was that it was useless to reason it out with Ding Jiayi. One should use force on her instead. He believed that after taking some blows from him, Ding Jiayi would learn her ways.

However, Qiao Nan insisted that it was not a good idea. Luckily, Zhu Yan came to the Zhu's residence at that time, and she wore a dress that was similar to Qiao Nan's. That was how Qiao Nan came up with the idea to solve the problem.

Qiao Nan arranged for Zhu Yan to arrive earlier than her, but Zhu Baoguo laughed at her idea. "Xiao Qiao, you may be intelligent, but there are times when you are muddle-headed. Your mom doesn't know Zhu Yan at all, and she looks different from you. You are as fair as snow while Zhu Yan is as dark as a boy. Even someone who is blind can tell the both of you apart."

"That's not necessary. Others may not fall for the trick, but my mom..."

Zhu Baoguo did not believe in Qiao Nan's words, but in order not to complicate matters, Zhu Baoguo listened to her and did not show up despite knowing that Ding Jiayi wanted to create troubles for Qiao Nan.

When Zhu Yan came back an hour later, she told him that Ding Jiayi mistook her as Qiao Nan. Ding Jiayi thought that Zhu Yan, who had her head down, was Qiao Nan. She called her 'Nan Nan' for a while. It was only when Qiao Nan appeared did Ding Jiayi realize that she had the wrong person.

Zhu Baoguo was dumbfounded when he heard of such a ridiculous thing.

Ding Jiayi was a sheer 'talent'!

After having an idea of how shameless Ding Jiayi could be, Zhu Baoguo was already accustomed to it when he heard the news this time. He knew straight away that nobody besides Ding Jiayi would say such words.

"I also hope that she is not my biological mother. If that were so, then it would make sense for her to treat me this way. I can thus understand and accept the differential treatment toward her biological daughter and someone whom she did not give birth to. Unfortunately, she did give birth to me." Qiao Nan smiled grimly.

She counted with her fingers. It had only been two peaceful months ever since her father moved out with her, yet her mother had already reverted to her old ways.

"How about your dad? Your dad used to be biased toward your sister. Although he has changed his attitude, will he revert to his old ways in the future?" Zhu Baoguo had a terrible headache. "Xiao

Qiao, my dad likes you, and my grandpa has a good impression of you as well. Why don't you come to my house and be my younger sister?"

In that case, he could hang out with Xiao Qiao in the future without having to worry about people gossiping. He could go to school and go back home from school with Xiao Qiao. During the school vacation, he would be able to see Xiao Qiao every single day. He could play to his heart's content without having to worry about Xiao Qiao being bullied by others or how she was doing.

"I will not go to your house." Qiao Nan refused. "There is... Wang Yang at your house."

Chapter 278: Out of Their Minds

"As for my dad... well, whatever," Qiao Nan said, feeling listless.

Right now, her father might care a lot for her, but nobody could tell what would happen in the future.

"What! Why will Uncle Qiao change his attitude? You are so much better than Qiao Zijin in every way. Why will your mom and Uncle Qiao be so biased toward Qiao Zijin? It's unfair and unreasonable. They are blind, both in the heart and the eyes!" They must be out of their minds!

"My dad prefers to have a son, but he has two daughters. Qiao Zijin is the elder daughter, and my dad hopes that Qiao Zijin will stay with the family. She will take in a husband in the future, so her children will have the same surname as her. In other words, I will eventually have to marry and leave the family. As the saying goes, 'A daughter married is like water spilled'. He will naturally treat us differently. In fact, at times, I will imagine that Qiao Zijin is a son. It's only then that I will be able to better understand why they do certain things. At least, I will not be so depressed."

Back then, Ding Jiayi was deprived of a chance to go to school as her mother favored sons and only sent her sons to school. She even wanted to sell Ding Jiayi to gain more money for her sons to set up a family.

Her mother might have hated her grandmother, but there was no doubt that her mother was the biological daughter of her grandmother. Her mother was simply a replica of her grandmother!

“Alright, don’t worry about me. My parents may have their plans, but I have planned it out as well. I am not stupid. I know why you’re telling me all these. I really understand, so don’t you worry. I will not be so foolish.” It was a fact that her mother gave birth to her and raised her up.

Her mother had fulfilled her obligation to raise her, and she would certainly provide for her mother and fulfill her responsibilities as well.

But there would be no way that she would let her mother limit her freedom and take all her hard-earned money to subsidize Qiao Zijin like what she did in the previous life.

Aside from the monthly allowance that she would give her mother, she would have to consider carefully when her mother asked for a penny more.

In this life, her mother could no longer make impossible demands of her.

“Really? I don’t believe you. I heard that lots of people will give in as long as the person who makes the mistakes begs and puts up a pitiful look.” To Zhu Baoguo, Xiao Qiao was too kindhearted. She would definitely give in to her mother’s pleas.

“I won’t. My mom is only after my money. I know her very well. This is the one thing that she treasures the most. I am not so foolish as to fall for her tricks.” Of course, she was so stupid in her previous life that she died in the end.

“I hope you can live up to your words.” Zhu Baoguo was pleased and assured by Qiao Nan’s firm attitude. “But what should we do now that things have come to this stage? Your mom may be completely shameless, but you still have to study in school. How are you going to deal with the rumors going around the school? Have you thought of any solutions?”

“Well...” Qiao Nan bent toward the table as if she was sapped of all her energy. “Give me a break first. I have not come up with any solutions yet. My mom has always wanted to do me in. She has really dealt me a big blow this time around. Should I congratulate her for making the right move?”

Now that things were like this, no matter what Qiao Nan did, she would be at fault.

Dirty linen should not be aired in public. Besides, the power of gossip could not be underestimated. Regardless of whether those words were true or false, it would not take long before such a juicy gossip spread all over the school.

On the other hand, even if she was not afraid of telling others about the bad deeds her mother did and explained them clearly, others might not be willing to believe her. There were so many people in Ping Cheng High School. Even if someone believed her, she could not get everyone to believe her regardless of how hard she tried.

Her mother was very ruthless.

Zhu Baoguo asked cautiously, "Is there really no solution? Maybe we can think about it again?"

"I can't think of anything." Qiao Nan sighed. She was tired, and she felt like giving up. "Alright, let's take one step at a time. At most, I will transfer to another school."

Qiao Nan was particularly afraid of having to deal with all these troubles that Ding Jiayi caused. Instead of being entangled in such a mess, she would rather have a change of environment and have a peace of mind.

"I will go with you!"

"Why should you? Ping Cheng High School is a good high school." Zhu Baoguo was not her. There was no need for him to transfer. "Besides, things have not come to that stage yet, so do not worry."

"You can rest assured that I will settle this for you." Zhu Baoguo was furious. It was obvious that Ding Jiayi lied, yet many of the students were foolish enough to believe her words.

Whoever believed in Ding Jiayi's words and dared to talk nonsense in front of her, he would not let them off.

"Rein in your temper. I do not want to make matters worse."

"Don't worry. I know what I am doing." Zhu Baoguo patted his chest and vowed to help Qiao Nan with her problem.

Zhu Baoguo was not without any capabilities after all. The students in the school would always give Qiao Nan strange looks and whisper to each other after Qiao Nan walked away.

However, after Zhu Baoguo volunteered to help her, although they would still give Qiao Nan's strange looks from time to time, no one dared to question Qiao Nan regarding the rumors, and neither did they dare to say hurtful words. Most of the students steered clear of Qiao Nan's path as if she was the god of plague.

Qiao Nan did not ask for much. She was happy enough that no one would disturb her.

“Before I begin the lessons today, there's something that I want to tell all of you. There is an old saying that goes, ‘Rumors stop at the wise’. As students from the same class, I hope that everyone can unite as one and will not be so susceptible to whatever rumors that are circulating outside. You are not only high school students, but also adults who are old enough to be issued with an identity card. You must not believe in the rumors. One should not only listen but also use their eyes and hearts when making judgments. As your form teacher, I sincerely hope that the students in my class are wise men, not cows who are led by the nose. Alright, let's look at the textbook.”

One could never underestimate the power of rumor, even the teachers had heard about them.

Even though Teacher Liu did not specify what he was referring to when he made the speech to the class, everyone in the class clearly knew what Teacher Liu was referring to.

“Xiao Qiao, have you told Teacher Liu anything?” Zhu Baoguo was a little surprised. It was rare that there would be such a discerning person. Nevertheless, he was a teacher. He was wiser than the students.

“No.” Qiao Nan shook her head. “I thought Teacher Liu will ask me to go to his office to explain myself regarding the rumors.” After all, she had encountered such a situation in junior high school. At that time, she was called to the office to be questioned by Teacher Chen.

“No matter what, Teacher Liu is a teacher worthy of our respect.” Zhu Baoguo gave a thumbs-up. He felt better now and started to pay more attention to Teacher Liu's lessons.

Chapter 279: Would Not Be Tolerated

Following the herd might be bad, but what was worst was for people like Teacher Liu who played a decisive role in the class to inculcate the wrong beliefs to the students. Fortunately, Teacher Liu was not that type of person.

Apart from those students who were from the same dormitory as Qiao Nan and had been close to Qiao Nan, other students had a change in attitude toward Qiao Nan because of Teacher Liu's words.

It was no use to be good in one's studies only. One should have a good moral character as well.

Regardless of their own moral character, there would always be moralists in the world who were strict with others and lenient toward themselves.

Teacher Liu's words had a very big impact on the students in the class. All of them, except for Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu, no longer looked at her strangely.

Xu Tingting and Zhao Yu sneaked a glance at each other. They added fuel to the flames, colored Qiao Nan as a bad moral character, and managed to tarnish her reputation in class. They did not expect that because of Teacher Liu's words, the rumors would be stopped and their previous efforts were all in vain.

They had finally found a chance to ruin Qiao Nan. It was such a pity that Teacher Liu ruined everything!

After class, Teacher Liu walked to stand by Qiao Nan's table and asked after her before leaving.

The attitude of the teachers, particularly the form teacher, set an example for the students. Given that he disregarded the rumors, it gradually died down and the students no longer talked about it.

Zhao Yu banged at the table. Back in junior high school, Qiao Nan had Teacher Chen defend her. Now, Teacher Liu was on her side. She could not understand why everyone would be so good to Qiao Nan.

If not for the teachers standing on Qiao Nan's side, she could have easily made things difficult for Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan was a good student, but so was she. Why were the teachers not good to her?

“Teacher Liu, you have the best class in our school. Should I congratulate you for the things that happened?” A teacher from the same department said sourly, sounding as if he had enjoyed a good show.

At the start of the school year, the school had a discussion about who would be the form teacher of class one. Initially, this teacher was very confident that he would be selected. He had heard that the top scholar in the middle school examination would study at Ping Cheng High School and would be a student in class one.

But in the end, Teacher Liu turned out to be the form teacher of class one.

Now that class one had such a big scandal, this teacher could not help but gloat.

It was important that the students had good grades, but the school management would not accept students who had bad moral character.

If the rumors were true, then it would not be long before Qiao Nan would be expelled from Ping Cheng High School. Since the top scholar in the middle school examination was not in his class, it was best that she left the school.

“Thank you for your concern, Teacher Zhou. Qiao Nan is a student of class one. I will handle this matter. I will not allow my student to suffer such grievances. As for the school management, I will report to them. Teacher Zhou, please don’t worry.” Teacher Liu laughed.

Teacher Liu knew what Teacher Zhou meant by his words.

It was the school management’s decision as to which teacher would be the form teacher of class one. He did not have any say in the matter. If Teacher Zhou was displeased, he should not find trouble with him but discuss with the management instead. What a coward!

“Is that so? Well, then I shall see how you handle this matter.” Teacher Zhou smirked. This was already a dead end. The person who badmouthed Qiao Nan was none other than her mother.

There would never be mothers who maligned their biological daughters. He never imagined that Qiao Nan, who had such good grades, would be so selfish and had a bad moral character. Luckily, he did not have such a bad student in his class. Otherwise, it would be a disgrace to him.

The more Teacher Zhou thought about it, the more he felt that the old saying was very accurate. Misfortune might really be a blessing in disguise.

He was relieved that it was Teacher Liu, and not him, who had to handle this mess. He supposed that Qiao Nan's scandal would leave a blemish on Teacher Liu's teaching career.

Ping Cheng High School placed very high importance on the moral character of their students. After receiving the news about the recent scandal, the principal sat down grimly in the office, thinking of ways to solve the problem. As the principal of the school, he certainly could not only listen to one side of the story. He could not simply believe in these rumors and expel Qiao Nan. That would be unfair to Qiao Nan.

However, he had to make thorough investigations to be at ease. If the rumors were true, how could he allow such a student to study at their school and tarnish the school's reputation?

Although the school should provide education for all people without discrimination, it was easier said than done. Schools must choose their students selectively. After all, this was not the nine-year compulsory education. It was senior high school.

At that thought, he heard a knock on his door.

"Who is it?"

"Principal, I am Liu Neng."

"Oh, Teacher Liu. Please come in." The principal was slightly relaxed once he knew that Teacher Liu was here looking for him. "What's the matter? By the way, how do you intend to handle the matter regarding Qiao Nan from your class? According to Qiao Nan's achievements, she is definitely a good student. But as you know, our school has always placed great importance on the moral character of the students. We must not wrong the students, but we cannot just let things as it is either. Teacher Liu, do you understand what I mean? As the principal, I am responsible for the school and all of the teachers and students here."

“Principal, please be assured that I understand what you mean. Actually, I am here for this matter as well.” Teacher Liu understood what the principal meant by his diplomatic words.

If he did not give the principal a satisfactory answer, then it would not take long for the principal to handle it by himself. After clarifying everything, he would then decide whether Qiao Nan should stay or not.

“Principal, I have always felt that words alone are no proof, so I will not try to convince you that Qiao Nan is a good student. Look at all these documents. I believe you can make the judgment by yourself.” Teacher Liu had a thick briefcase in his hand. He opened the briefcase and took out the documents inside. “This is the phone number of Qiao Nan’s junior high school class teacher. If you have any questions, you can call him to find out.”

The principal put on his reading glasses and read through the documents carefully. He widened his eyes in disbelief. “Is this true?”

“I will not go into details about the insults directed at Qiao Nan. Let’s talk about her mother’s accusation that Qiao Nan is selfish and self-centered, sacrificing her parents’ interests for her own gains. Qiao Nan’s sister, Qiao Zijin, is the student of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. This is her score in the middle school examination. There’s no way that there can be a mistake.” If the principal wanted to check, he only needed to make a phone call to confirm its authenticity.

Chapter 280: The School’s Solution

When the principal saw Qiao Zijin’s results, he made a phone call to check. The answer he received was exactly the same as the transcript in front of him.

After all, they were high school teachers and would know the admission scores for The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. The admission scores for The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China were much higher than that of the Ping Cheng High School. It was impossible for Qiao Zijin to enroll in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China with such results.

There was only one explanation. The Qiao family must have forked out a large sum of money to enroll Qiao Zijin into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

If the Qiao family could come up with such a large sum of money to send Qiao Zijin to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, it showed that their financial situation was not as bad as what the rumor made it to be. In that case, it would not be seen as splurging for her parents to rent a house near the school for Qiao Nan.

The principal was certain that the three-year lease of Qiao Nan's house that was near the school cost less than half the amount of Qiao Zijin's 'sponsorship fee' to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

In that case, the rumors that Qiao Nan leeches on her parents were not true.

The environmental evidence was much more credible than the words of others.

Ding Jiayi never imagined that after she took great efforts to spread the rumors about Qiao Nan in Ping Cheng High School, everything would come to futility all because of the fact that she spent money to 'sponsor' Qiao Zijin to study at her high school. As soon as it was cleared up, the rumors that had been spreading would die down eventually.

"As a teacher, it is inappropriate for me to comment on the behavior of the parents. Other people might value boys more than girls. As for the Qiao family, they value the elder daughter more than the younger daughter. I was angry after reading through the materials. I could not sleep a wink at night. I can't believe that there is such a mother in this world who has the heart to do terrible things to her own daughter. If not for the solid proof, no one will believe it. These people are fearless as they think that they can do anything with their status. We almost wronged our own student. Principal, given Qiao Nan's results, she actually could enroll in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China."

Teacher Liu took a deep breath. He was furious at what he read from the documents.

After being a teacher for a long time, one could get to know all sorts of bizarre things and 'widen' one's horizons in the process. "Qiao Nan chose to come to our school because she studied at Ping Cheng Junior High School. Given her excellent performance in junior high school, she could have been directly admitted to our high school, but she refused to do so. She insisted on taking the middle school examination and has done our school proud by coming in the first place in the province. We have to be fair to such a good student like her. At the very least, we must not let such things happen again or escalate."

"You are right." The principal took off his glasses and stopped looking at the information. He could not bear to read on.

According to the data, the parents had no wish for Qiao Nan to continue with her studies. They wanted her to quit junior high school and work.

If not for Qiao Nan who had a mind of her own and insisted on completing her studies, Ping Cheng High School would not have a top scholar in middle school examination like her.

Qiao Nan's performance had been very stable and excellent. The principal was certain that as long as Qiao Nan could maintain her standard, their school would definitely be able to have a top scholar in the college entrance examination in three years' time.

As the principal of Ping Cheng High School, how could he allow such an excellent student to leave school!

Ding Jiayi had always succeeded in making life difficult for Qiao Nan. She had gone too overboard that she ended up setting her own spear against her own shield.

No matter how exaggerated and serious Ding Jiayi made it to be, people could see through her lies easily after some probing and investigations.

They had the solid proof with them, and nobody would believe Ding Jiayi's lies.

"But we have to be very careful when handling this matter. Otherwise, it will have an impact on our school," Teacher Liu said seriously. The whole school had probably known about the rumors now.

After all, this was Qiao Nan's family affairs. The school could not possibly publicize the family affairs of the Qiao family. They could not make a speech to clear things up on the flag-raising ceremony on Monday either.

But now that they knew the truth, they could not sit by and do nothing about it.

Once other people learned about this, the students and the teachers in the school would be affected.

If outsiders learned of the rumors, the reputation of Ping Cheng High School would be completely ruined.

If Qiao Nan really did these things, the principal could come up with an excuse to expel Qiao Nan and things would die down gradually. But now that he knew that what Ding Jiayi said were all lies, as a principal, he could not do this to his student.

Therefore, Teacher Liu felt that it was not easy to clear up the rumors.

“Let me think about it.” The principal pinched his nose, lost in his thoughts. Ding Jiayi had created such big trouble for Ping Cheng High School and landed them in such a dilemma. He felt bitterness in his mouth at the thought of Ding Jiayi. “There’s a way!”

“What is the solution?” Teacher Liu asked nervously. Right now, the principal was the only one who could solve the problem.

“I remember that Teacher Feng who has retired has a house nearby. He lives abroad with his son and left the house with the school. I remember there isn’t anyone staying at the house, is there?”

“Yes, no one lives there. However, there is some miscellaneous stuff there.” Teacher Liu’s eyes lit up. He more or less knew what the principal was thinking about.

“You can make a trip in noontime to have a talk with Qiao Nan’s father and tell him what has happened recently. You can hand him the key to Teacher Feng’s small cottage as well. Qiao Nan is a good student. The school has exempted her from paying tuition and miscellaneous fees. This can be considered as an additional reward for her.”

“Let me thank you on behalf of Qiao Nan. Thank you, principal,” Teacher Liu said happily.

“Let’s just do this. You should go over to Qiao Nan’s house to inform them so that they can make preparations. The house has been vacant for a while. I suppose it will need some cleaning up. I heard that Qiao Nan’s father had a car accident recently and he is still recovering from it. You can bring a few helpers with you to clear up the house as much as possible. In this way, Qiao Nan can devote her full attention to her studies.”

“Thank you, principal!” Teacher Liu did not expect that the principal would arrange a place for Qiao Nan. It was an excellent solution.

Teacher Liu had his class in the morning. After his class, he had time to make the necessary arrangements.