

## **RTAMM 61**

### Chapter 61: Sensitive

Has hell frozen over?

Elder Zhu told the people around him not to make a sound and went to look for Elder Lee.

“Why are you here?” Elder Lee snorted when he saw Elder Zhu. His daughter was so smart, his grandson should be smart as well. Yet he was pampered to such an extent by the Zhu family. It was all the fault of this old man.

But the Lee family had not bothered to care about Zhu Baoguo’s affairs, hence he had no right to chide Elder Zhu.

“Why bother with watering the plants? Are you really going to let that young lady teach Baoguo? What can a young lady be capable of? The Zhu family is capable of hiring a teacher. Let me tell you beforehand, if Baoguo’s results is not good even with the tutoring, do not put the blame on the Zhu family.”

Even if Elder Lee kept quiet about it, Elder Zhu knew what was on his in-law’s mind.

They had brought up their grandson by themselves. For people like Elder Zhu who was conventional in his thinking, they would naturally dote and pamper their grandson.

Discipline, Elder Zhu wanted to discipline him but he had no idea how to discipline. On top of that, his grandson had lost his mother at a young age and his father was not by his side to take care of him. It was already very painful for him to be all alone by himself. So Elder Lee could not help but pamper Zhu Baoguo.

“Like you said, the Zhu family was capable of hiring a teacher. Didn’t you hire a teacher for Zhu Baoguo before? And what were the results? Look now, Nan Nan might be a young lady, but you have to see Baoguo’s attitude towards her.”

Elder Lee smirked.

The Zhu family had hired several teachers for his grandson, male and female.

But when the teachers knew of the identity of his grandson, they dared not offend him. Moreover his grandson was very mischievous. The female teachers all ended up in tears of exasperation, while the male teachers were too frustrated that they quit.

For some matters, one could not judge a person's capabilities by his age or qualifications. One had to judge them based on the person itself.

“Do you mean that my grandson has been subdued by that young lady?” Elder Zhu was unhappy. His grandson had been a bully at home. But he was intimidated by this little girl, what did this mean?

“Baoguo was willing to be subdued, and Qiao Nan was willing to subdue him as well.” Elder Lee had learned of what happened between Zhu Baoguo and Qiao Nan just now.

Elder Lee was slightly annoyed by Qiao Nan's cold attitude. But he could understand, since he knew of her situation at home.

In particular when his grandson asked “Are you looking down on me because I do not have a mother since a young age?” Elder Lee knew that this was hurtful for both his grandson and Qiao Nan.

Looking at Ding Jiayi's temper, having a mother and being without a mother did not make a difference.

And though his daughter had passed away at a young age, his grandson still loved and missed his mother. But Nan Nan had no feelings left for Ding Jiayi.

“This young lady was so pitiful?” After hearing about Qiao family's affairs, Elder Zhu was shocked. “What does Qiao Dongliang mean by that? He had a daughter but he did not bring her up well, and he did not say a word when his wife bullied her?”

“He is a traditional man, favoring sons more than daughters. It totally clouded his judgment.” Elder Lee laughed coldly. He had seen through Qiao Dongliang, but he did not spell it out on that day.

The reason why Qiao Dongliang did not put in efforts on Qiao Nan was simple – Qiao Nan was a daughter, not a son.

If Qiao Nan was a son, even if Ding Jiayi favored daughters over sons, Qiao Dongliang would know of it if Ding Jiayi did not treat Qiao Nan well.

“Baoguo is such a troublemaker and yet you get him a young teacher. Is that suitable?” Elder Zhu was troubled over this.

His grandson was very stubborn and had a bad temper, he could not get along well with anyone.

Judging from the family that the young lady came from, she must not be someone who was warm hearted.

Would a young teacher like her be able to teach his grandson?

“I only wanted Nan Nan to coach him in his studies. She is not responsible for his character building. That is Zhu Chengqi’s responsibility.” Elder Lee gave him an angry stare. He was full of complaints at the mention of his son-in-law, Zhu Chengqi.

His daughter was no longer around, Zhu Chengqi should bear the full responsibility of teaching and guiding his grandson. Yet look at what Zhu Chengqi had done!

It was a fact that his daughter had passed away, but Zhu Chengqi was always not at home, his grandson had been leading his life with the absence of his father.

It was Zhu Chengqi’s fault that his grandson was so disobedient and keep getting into trouble.

“Alright, that’s enough. Let’s not talk about this.” Elder Zhu waved his hands, he did not wish to talk about his son.

Both of them were glad that his son and daughter-in-law had deep affections for each other.

But who would have known that after the daughter-in-law died, his son would neglect his biological son and failed to take him in hand. Elder Zhu was boiling with anger at the mention of his son.

When Zhu Baoguo was sent to the hospital for emergency treatment, Elder Zhu ordered Zhu Chengqi to come back from the army. As soon as he arrived, Elder Zhu gave him a few punches out of anger and exasperation.

Elder Zhu might be old, but he was once a soldier. His fists were still very powerful, it would be painful to be on the receiving end of his punches.

“Baoguo has very high self-esteem, he would definitely not accept someone who was warm hearted and compassionate. Instead, Baoguo would listen to Nan Nan who was indifferent and cold. Facts speak louder than words, I think this arrangement would work. I did not expect Baoguo to catch up on his studies, I only hope that he would rein in his temper and stop being so irritable and he would not be bullied by those hooligans. If Baoguo is not good in his studies, I will send him to the army when he graduates from high school.”

Elder Lee had his grandson's future all planned out.

“Alright.” It was rare to see that his grandson settle down to study. No matter who the tutor was, what was important was that the grandson would listen to her.

“You should make your way back. Baoguo will stay over at my house tonight.”

“What, how could Baoguo not go home!” Impossible.

“What do you mean by not go home? Lee's house is also Baoguo's home!” Elder Lee fumed in anger. “Baoguo is my biological maternal grandson, why can't he stay over for a night in my house?”

“Why didn't you ask Baoguo to stay over in the past? Why did you begin to care for him now?” Elder Zhu would not budge regarding his grandson.

Zhu Chengqi was Elder Zhu's only son, and Zhu Baoguo was Zhu Chengqi's only son.

The saying is very true, “The first grandson and the last son are the lifeline of the old lady.”

The first grandson, and the only grandson were the lifeline of the grandpa as well.

Zhu Baoguo, who had finally settled down to work on the test paper turned green when he heard the loud quarrel between his two grandparents. He looked at Qiao Nan in embarrassment and unease.

Qiao Nan remained calm and composed. “Why are you looking at me? Do your test papers, don’t waste your time. We are in secondary three now, there isn’t much time left for revision, so we have to be efficient.”

Zhu Baoguo twitched his lips and finally managed to settle down.

Before the incident, Elder Zhu and his wife were the only people who cared about Zhu Baoguo. but they had no idea how to discipline and care for him. As for the Lee family, they never asked about him at all.

Come to think of it, Zhu Baoguo seldom went to Lee’s house. He knew that they believed that he had caused his mother’s death.

Up till now, even if the Lee family had a change in attitude, Zhu Baoguo still found it weird and uncomfortable to be around his grandpa, Elder Lee.

Chapter 62: Small Chat During Dinnertime

Zhu Baoguo felt more at ease when he saw that Qiao Nan did not have any reaction to what she just overheard.

Ever since Qiao Dongliang agreed to this private job on behalf of Qiao Nan, during the weekdays Qiao Nan had to keep an eye on Zhu Baoguo in school, during the weekend she had to keep him in check at the Lee house.

The Zhu family and Lee family did not harbor high hopes on Zhu Baoguo’s results. Their only wish was that he would mellow his temperament.

During the past half month where Qiao Nan tutored him, both of the families never asked about Zhu Baoguo's performance.

This weekend Qiao Zijin was back at home. She realized that Qiao Nan had gone out early on the Saturday morning. She frowned and asked her mother, "Mom, where has Qiao Nan gone?"

Where exactly did she read her books?

"Mom, Qiao Nan seems like a mouse nowadays. She seemed to have lots of mouse holes to go to. She spent the whole of the weekend outside instead of staying at home, you are just letting her be? Where did she keep her books? I don't suppose outsiders will keep her books for her without any charges?"

"I have no idea." Ding Jiayi prepared breakfast and placed them on the table. "You better go brush up, have your breakfast and start studying. You must perform better than Qiao Nan. I am going off to work. As for other matters, we will talk later when I am back from work."

Ding Jiayi went off to work, not waiting for Qiao Zijin's response.

"Hmph, everyone seems really busy." There was no one but her at home. The house felt so empty. Qiao Zijin felt uncomfortable.

In the past, when it was the weekend, her father would be working while Qiao Nan would do the household chores. As for her, she would have a leisure chat with her mother. But now she was left all alone at home.

Since she was free and she was not going to study if she stayed at home, why not she go out to look for Qiao Nan? She might discover her secret hiding place.

But she had a change of mind when she opened the door and was about to go out. Not to mention the quad, the total area of Ping Cheng was quite significant, where was she going to find Qiao Nan?

After some thoughts, Qiao Zijin rolled her eyes and took out the romantic novel that she borrowed from the library out of her bag.

Qiao Dongliang had decreased the allowance that he gave Qiao Zijin. Even if Ding Jiayi was working now and would give some money to her, Qiao Zijin still owed some external debts for the dance costume that she bought last time. She had to save up money to return the debts.

Hence she has decided if she wanted to read novels, she would not buy them, instead she would borrow them from the library. Not only could she save the money, she could also return the novel after she had finished reading them. In that case, no one would find out that she had been secretly reading these novels.

She laid down on her bed and read her favorite novel. A thought came to her mind. It was good to be at home by herself.

If Qiao Nan was around, she might come into her room and discovered that she was reading a novel and complain to their parents.

“Nan Nan, now that I only come home once a fortnight, we don’t have the time to have a proper chat. Where have you been all day long?” During dinnertime in front of everyone, Qiao Zijin asked Qiao Nan this question. “Even if you are to stay out for the whole day, you should come back for lunch.”

In the beginning when there was only Qiao Zijin at home, she was glad that she could have the house to herself and no one would be around to disturb her while she was reading her novels.

But Qiao Zijin turned unhappy whenever it was lunchtime.

Ding Jiayi was not at home, and Qiao Nan had went out, there was no one around to prepare lunch for her.

Unlike Qiao Nan, Qiao Zijin was clueless when it came to household chores. She was already scared out of wits by the worms in the vegetables, there was no way that she could cook for herself.

Ding Jiayi who was in a rush did not think of that and had rushed off to work.

Qiao Zijin searched through her parents’ room, she found a fifty cent coin and used it to buy instant noodles. That was how she settled her lunch.

It was only when Qiao Zijin mentioned lunch that Ding Jiayi remembered that the elder daughter did not know how to cook.

But it was inappropriate to ask what the elder daughter had for lunch in front of Qiao Dongliang.

Qiao Nan looked up from her bowl and curled her lips mockingly. This weekend was not the first weekend that she had been away. It had already been more than a month since she did not come home on the weekend.

Qiao Zijin only cared about her as her mother was off to work and there was no one around to prepare her lunch.

“Zijin, you don’t have to worry about Nan Nan. She is at the Lee house. She’s fine.” Qiao Dongliang looked embarrassed at the mention of this.

Elder Lee specifically ordered that Qiao Nan have her meals at the Lee house. Qiao Dongliang knew that Elder Lee must have heard that she was malnourished.

At the thought of that, Qiao Dongliang shot cold stares at Ding Jiayi.

Qiao Dongliang was furious when he knew that Ding Jiayi sought Elder Lee’s help to enroll Qiao Zijin into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. But he did not pick a quarrel with Ding Jiayi. There was no use in quarreling, Qiao Zijin already went to that high school to study and she had made tremendous improvements.

No matter how he kicked up a fuss, there would be no use. Qiao Dongliang could only keep quiet about this and pretended that he didn’t know anything.

“Why would Nan Nan go to Grandpa Lee’s house?” Qiao Zijin was stunned.

“To help Baoguo with his studies.”

“What, Nan Nan is helping Baoguo with his studies?” Qiao Zijin shrieked. Her voice was jarring and noisy, sounding like a duck that has been grabbed by its throat. “Dad, you must be crazy. Nan Nan is already in junior high, she has to sit middle school exams next year. Her results have lagged



behind and there was not enough time to study. Now she still has to tutor Zhu Baoguo, how is she going to sit for her middle school exams?”

Qiao Nan's hand paused in the middle of eating. She glanced at Qiao Zijin, her eyes twinkled in surprise.

But in the next instant she was back to normal.

Indeed, there were risks involved for her to tutor Zhu Baoguo.

But what Qiao Zijin said was definitely not out of concern. She must be worried that if Qiao Nan grew closer to Zhu Baoguo, she would have the support of the Lee family and the Zhu family. Her future would be assured and Qiao Zijin could no longer be able to order her around like a slave. This was what Qiao Zijin was anxious about.

They were siblings and had been sisters for two lifetimes, Qiao Nan knew what was on Qiao Zijin's mind.

If not for the connections with the Zhu family and the Lee family, Qiao Zijin would not have volunteered to tutor Zhu Baoguo when Elder Lee visited Qiao's house last time.

It was just that more than half a month had passed. Qiao Zijin thought that nothing had been finalized. She never thought that it had been agreed upon and Qiao Nan had already started to tutor Zhu Baoguo.

Ding Jiayi who sat beside her gave Qiao Zijin a kick. “Qiao Nan and your Dad knew what to do. There's no need for you to be concerned.”

This child must be stupid. It would be Qiao Nan's problem if she did not do well in her exams.

Since Qiao Nan had already given her promise, if she did not do well in her exams, she would never ask her parents to fork out five thousand yuan to enroll her into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

If she really did badly, she would not be shameless enough to continue with high school or college. It was an excellent idea for her to tutor Zhu Baoguo.

Why would Zijin be so foolish?

“Nan Nan, can you cope with it?” Qiao Dongliang was stunned as well. This had never crossed his mind.

But now that he knew about it, Qiao Dongliang was merely paying lip service. He did not seem to be expecting a negative answer.

### Chapter 63: The Biased Father

Qiao Nan replied coldly. “I am full, I will go back to my room.”

“Go ahead, there’s no one to disturb you at home. Study hard, Dad believe that you can cope well.” Qiao Dongliang now knew that tutoring Zhu Baoguo might affect Qiao Nan’s studies.

At the Lee house, Qiao Nan could not concentrate on her studies. But back at her house, she could pay full attention to her revision.

Qiao Dongliang had told Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin not to disturb Qiao Nan when she was at home. He also forbade Ding Jiayi from asking Qiao Nan to help out with household chores. He wanted her to have all the time to study.

This was Qiao Dongliang’s way of compensating Qiao Nan.

Since Qiao Nan could not help out, Qiao Zijin would have to do her share. It seemed like she also had some questions for her mother. “Mom, why did you stop me just now?”

“You are usually very bright, why would you do such a foolish thing now?” Ding Jiayi bent down and peeped outside, checking to see if Qiao Dongliang and Qiao Nan had returned to their rooms. She then lowered her voice and said, “Zhu Baoguo is known for his bad temper, everyone in the quad who hung out with him before was bullied by him. With people like Zhu Baoguo around, Qiao Nan will not be able to concentrate on her studies. He would not obey her as well. Qiao Nan has given her promise, if she does not do well in her middle school exams, it would be your Dad’s fault. Your Dad cannot possibly blame us for this. As long as she does badly in her exams, I will be able

to come up with ways to make her quit school to work. By that time, the three of us will work to provide for your college fees. You can go to the best college in the Celestial Empire.”

“You could say that.” Qiao Zijin pursed her lips in annoyance, with a hint of doubt in her voice. “But Mom, Grandpa Lee is a good man, he took care of Dad just because he was comrades with Grandpa. If Qiao Nan’s studies fall behind after tutoring Zhu Baoguo, the Lee family and Zhu family would definitely do something about it. In any case, if Qiao Nan really did badly for her exams and wanted to work, it only take one word from Grandpa Lee to get her a good job.”

No matter how hardworking and studious one was, it was useless compared to a word from a influential person. That was why Qiao Zijin did not put efforts in her studies. She felt that it was a waste of time to study.

“That would be wonderful.” Ding Jiayi was beaming with excitement. “If Qiao Nan landed a good job, she would definitely be paid well. You can concentrate on your studies. I heard that lots of people who had good results went overseas to study. Though the expenses would be higher, if Qiao Nan has a high paying job, she would be able to provide for you.”

Ding Jiayi painted a beautiful picture in her mind. This was the first time that she felt that it was a good idea for Qiao Dongliang to take on the private job on behalf of Qiao Nan.

Qiao Zijin laughed bitterly, go overseas to study?

With her current results, not to mention studying overseas, she would have to do well for the next two and a half years so as to get into a good college.

“Mom, Dad always placed a lot of importance on Qiao Nan and my studies. Why would he make such a decision?” Qiao Zijin could not understand Qiao Dongliang’s attitude.

“Others might not understand your Dad, but I have been living with him for years, I know him inside out. Your Dad is indebted to Uncle Lee. He wanted to repay the debt of gratitude that he owed Uncle Lee. But he was discharged from the army when Qiao Nan was born. This has always been a knot in his heart. Now that he finally had a chance to mend his relationship with Uncle Lee and to repay his debts, your Dad was willing to sacrifice Qiao Nan’s time for revision to help Uncle Lee. If taking the exams for someone else was allowed, he would even ask Qiao Nan to give up on her middle school exams and take the exams for Zhu Baoguo.”

Her mother's words gave her a scare. Qiao Zijin asked in shock, "My—my—my—Dad will actually do this. If it's me, will he treat me in the same way?"

"No." Ding Jiayi said with confidence.

"Why?" Even if she might be an exception, Qiao Zijin had no confidence at all.

When she heard her mother's words, Qiao Zijin was worried that what if there was a day that she had to be sacrificed in order to return Elder Lee's favor, her father would treat her in the way that he treated Qiao Nan.

"Do you think that it's only your Mom who favored sons? Your Dad favored sons as well, If not, we couldn't possibly have a second child. Though he kept silent about it, he wasn't that pleased after I gave birth to you."

Ding Jiayi sighed. After giving birth to the elder daughter, she had been through disappointment and frustration. But she and her husband had stable jobs, the three of them would still be able to lead a happy life.

But in about two months after Qiao Zijin was born, Qiao Dongliang started to spend all his time in the army, coming with all sorts of excuses not to go home.

If Qiao Dongliang was to stay in the army and worked hard, aiming for promotion, Ding Jiayi would not have anything to complain about.

But during that period he committed several mistakes.

He was thought to be the most likely candidate to be promoted to battalion commander, but after he committed the mistakes, his promotion was delayed for several years.

On top of that, Ding Jiayi was antagonized by her mother for not being able to bear sons. She then decided to give up everything to have a second child, hoping that they would have a son.

As expected, after she brought up this suggestion, it didn't take very long or much persuasion for Qiao Dongliang to agree to leaving the army to have a second child.

Qiao Zijin was boiling in anger at the mention of the topic of having sons. But Ding Jiayi's words that followed after appeased her anger.

“After giving birth to Qiao Nan, your Dad was so disappointed that he was not in the mood to work. I told him we could always treat you as a son and give you all the support and guidance that we would give to a son. We could take in a son-in-law to bear the bride's family name. In that case, there would be no difference between a son and a daughter. That's the reason why you get to wear new clothes every year while Qiao Nan could only wear your hand-me-down and use those that you discarded. Your Dad never said anything about it or take the initiative to buy anything for her. That's because Qiao Nan would eventually get married and leave the family, but you would be staying with us. But I didn't know that your Dad would give her some money here and there, and that she would seize the opportunity to save up the money.”

Qiao Zijin had no idea that there was more to it behind her differential treatment at home.

If her mother told her father that Qiao Nan should stay with the family and they would take in a son-in-law for her, would she and Qiao Nan be treated in a vastly different manner now?

Luckily she was the child that her mother doted on and Qiao Nan was not.

Qiao Zijin hugged Ding Jiayi's arm and said affectionately, “Mom, you are so good to me.”

“Of course, you are the only one that I dote on. Don't disappoint me, keep up the good work. When it's New Year time, do well in your exams and make me proud.” Ding Jiayi was delighted at her beloved daughter's affectionate gestures.

“Mom, don't worry. I will work hard.” Qiao Zijin smiled, if her father saw her to be as important as a son, even if her results are not satisfactory, her father would not ask her to give up on her studies. This piece of news was akin to granting her amnesty.

To think that back then she feared that with her poor results and the lack of money at home, she might be the one who had to quit school and work. Hence she opened the windows in Qiao Nan's room in the middle of the night, hoping that Qiao Nan would come down with sickness, and she would be the only one at home who was still studying.

Chapter 64: You Had An Express Delivery

After she had cleared all her doubts, Qiao Zijin was at ease now. She swung her barely wet hands and was about to leave.

Qiao Zijin turned around and saw Qiao Nan standing by the kitchen doorway with a cup in her hand. She was staring directly at her. Qiao Zijin shrieked in alarm, her heart in her throat. “Nan... Nan Nan, wh-why are you here?”

Had Nan Nan overheard the conversation that she had with Ding Jiayi? How much of the conversation did she overhear?

Ding Jiayi was also shocked at the sudden appearance of Qiao Nan, not to mention Qiao Zijin.

Ding Jiayi might be capable of ruthless and shameless acts, but she could not bring herself to say it or admit it in front of Qiao Nan, especially when she had been caught unawares by her.

“I want to pour myself a drink.” Qiao Nan waved at the cup in her hands and shot an aloof look at Qiao Zijin, “Can’t I?”

“Of course.” Qiao Zijin smiled awkwardly. This was not her concern at all. “Nan Nan, let me pour you a drink?”

Qiao Zijin just found out the truth from Ding Jiayi behind her father’s attitude towards she and Qiao Nan. She had a guilty conscience when she saw Qiao Nan and felt sorry for her.

“No need, I am okay.” Qiao Nan was not the least bit happy at Qiao Zijin’s efforts to please her. In fact she had goosebumps all over her.

Her experience from the two lifetimes told her that whenever Qiao Zijin treated her with a slightly better attitude, there must be something that she wanted from her.

She would rather be treated with arrogance and coldness, than to face Qiao Zijin’s smiling countenance.

After Qiao Nan poured herself a drink and left the kitchen, Qiao Zijin asked Ding Jiayi, “Mom, do you think Qiao Nan overheard our conversation or not?”

“I don’t think she has overheard our conversation. She would not have had this kind of reaction.” Ding Jiayi breathed a sigh of relief as well.

“Luckily she didn’t.” Qiao Zijin patted her chest, she had the shock of her life at seeing Qiao Nan.

Ding Jiayi might have nothing to fear regarding Qiao Nan, but it was not the same for Qiao Zijin. She was not ready to lose this younger sister totally.

“Alright, you should go and do your schoolwork. I will finish up the chores. Even if that wretched girl did overhear our conversation, it was nothing but the truth. Besides it was all your father’s doing. It has nothing to do with us. Good girl, go back to your room.” Ding Jiayi patted Qiao Zijin on the shoulder. She was no longer preoccupied with Qiao Nan’s attitude.

Ding Jiayi had never been affected by Qiao Nan’s attitude.

“Okay.” Qiao Zijin returned to her room in high spirits. Even if her results were not as good as Qiao Nan’s, she was the most important person in the house. There was no way that Qiao Nan could compete with her.

It turned out that her father was also biased towards her. Though compared to her mother, he might be slightly fairer.

At the thought of this, Qiao Zijin felt cool and refreshed, as if she had a glass of spring water in the hot summer.

While Qiao Zijin rolled around in happiness on her bed, Qiao Nan as usual was poring over her books, studying conscientiously.

The weekend flew past, Qiao Zijin went back to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, while Qiao Nan stuck to her usual routine – going to school, the Zhai’s house and Qiao’s house.

This day, someone from the reception office informed Qiao Nan that someone had left her a parcel, notifying her to collect it.

Qiao Nan was confused. Someone sent her a parcel? Who would that be?

That was impossible.

Had the staff at the reception office made a mistake? There was only one Qiao Nan in the whole school, but could there be homonyms?

Qiao Nan went to the reception office and raised her doubts. But the staff said that the person who made the delivery had gave her name and even stated the class that she was in.

Unless there were two persons by the name of Qiao Nan in Secondary three (1) class, this delivery was meant for Qiao Nan.

After hearing what the staff from the reception office said, Qiao Nan could only take the parcel with her. When she returned to the classroom, many of the classmates stole glances at her, staring at her while she walked in.

The end of the 20th century was unlike the 21st century where parcel delivery was very common. It was very rare that someone sent a parcel and left it at the reception office.

“Hmph.” Zhao Yu snorted in annoyance. There was nothing to be smug about, it was just a delivery. If she wanted a parcel, she could also ask her mother to send her one.

“What’s that?” Her desk mate Zhu Baoguo craned his neck like a swan, with his eyes fixed on Qiao Nan. He was dying to get his hand on the parcel and to see for himself what was inside.

“I have no idea.” Unlike people her age who were impatient and fretful, Qiao Nan was calm and composed. She took her time to open the parcel.

The parcel was squarish and heavy. Qiao Nan surmised that it might have been books.



As expected, when she opened the parcel, there were books inside. In fact, there were revision books.

There were revision books for the sciences subjects.

Qiao Nan flipped the books open. There were simple explanations and concepts inside the revision books. These books were hard to find in the times now. Most people would not be able to buy them.

To Qiao Nan, these books came at an opportune time. She was thrilled to have these books.

Qiao Nan had been worrying about her weak foundation in sciences subjects. Despite revising and grasping some of the simple arithmetic concepts, she would be confused whenever she applied all of the arithmetic concepts simultaneously. It was undoubtedly a timely help to Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan was not worried about those questions that required the application of a single concept. Her biggest worry was those complicated questions that required her to apply multiple concepts.

In the Celestial Empire, the exams placed a big focus on doing huge amounts of exercises and problem sums. To Qiao Nan, it would definitely be useful to do lots of practises and exercises.

“Oh, we do not have these books here. There are very popular in the national capital as well, but there aren’t many in stock. Which of your friends is so nice to send you this as a gift?” Zhu Baoguo could tell at one glance that the books were not easily available.

Of course, people like him could get their hands on anything they wanted.

Zhu Baoguo had a cousin who once flaunted this volume of books to him. His intention was to make him jealous. But Zhu Baoguo was unaffected, he did not even bother to take a glance at the books.

“It was this popular?” Qiao Nan was stunned. She was unfamiliar with the consumer market here.

But who would have sent her these books, could it be...

Impossible.

A person came to her mind. But Qiao Nan shook her head, intuition told her that it could not be him. But if it was not him, Qiao Nan could not think of another person who would do this for her.

It was impossible that the relatives of Qiao's family would buy these books. Her father had no relatives, as for the relatives from her mother's side, it was all the more impossible for them to buy these books.

All her blood relations would not buy it for her. If her closest kin would not put in these efforts, who in the world would be so nice to her?

"What's on your mind?" Zhu Baoguo prodded her shoulder, "You really have no idea who bought you these books?"

Chapter 65: Shared My Mother With You

"No idea." Qiao Nan shook her head honestly.

"Qiao Nan, on the account that we are classmates, I must remind you, these books seem to be very costly. The reception office might have the wrong person. You had better handle the books with care and do not make any scribblings. If not, you might not be able to pay for the books." Zhao Yu gloated at the thought. There was no way that someone would give Qiao Nan these books as a present.

"It's only worth a few yuan, why can't my sister afford it?" Zhu Baoguo glared at her in anger.

"Zhu Baoguo, you may be rich, but that's your business. Qiao Nan did not have the money. Qiao Nan, you are not thinking of using Zhu Baoguo's money to pay for the books?"

The more protective Zhu Baoguo was of Qiao Nan, the more frustrated Zhao Yu was.

Zhao Yu was aware that Zhu Baoguo and Zhu family had lots of money. She could tell from the fact that someone drove him to school every morning.

In this school, there were not many students who had a chauffeur to take them to school. Zhu Baoguo came from an established family.

“You do not have to worry about that.” Qiao Nan kept the books. Zhao Yu’s words might be hurtful but they made sense. Even if the staff at the reception office made it very clear that the sender had specified that the parcel was for her, it would not hurt to be careful.

Besides, there was no need to make notes on the books. She had lots of rough paper. Her teachers were very generous with rough paper.

Zhu Baoguo found it incredulous that Qiao Nan could maintain her composure despite Zhao Yu’s hurtful words. “She was trying to mess with you, yet you are not angry?”

“That would be a waste of energy and time.”

“Why does she always say that of you? Are you very poor?”

Qiao Nan who was reading the books paused for a second, “I have always been poor.”

In her previous lifetime, in the eight years of school before she quit and started to work, she had never once used a new eraser or a new pen. All of her stationery was that which Qiao Zijin had no use of.

As time passed, her classmates eventually noticed that.

In her previous lifetime, part of the reason why Qiao Nan quit school and submitted to Ding Jiayi’s wishes was also due to that.

Unlike Zhao Yu who would laugh and tease her to her face, in her previous life, most people would talk behind her back. Qiao Nan had overheard their conversations for a few times.

As a child growing up in that kind of environment, this gossiping and badmouthing would hurt one’s feelings, not to mention the fact that children at this age were very sensitive.

At that time Qiao Nan was only a child, she could not take all the gossiping and grew to be very quiet in class. Other than her teachers, no one liked her.

In this lifetime, Qiao Nan was still used to being alone, she did not intend to make friends. But at the very least she would no longer feel ashamed when people made hurtful remarks just like what Zhao Yu had said to her just now.

“Don’t worry, I have the money.” Zhu Baoguo patted his chest out of loyalty. He had nothing except loads of money.

“Silly.” Qiao Nan rolled her eyes at Zhu Baoguo. No wonder he was beaten up by hooligans. What a bad mouth he had. He was not good with words and was not likable at all.

“You are the silly one. Lots of people are queuing up to have my money. But it all depends on my mood. I am offering it to you, yet you reject me?” When Zhu Baoguo was not at school, he would always have a bunch of sidekicks with him.

“You are comparing me with them? Why didn’t these people come to your help when you were beaten to a pulp?” Qiao Nan laughed.

Zhu Baoguo was just like a deflated balloon, he was stumped for words. “I wanted to be nice to you.”

Cupping her chin in her hands, Qiao Nan looked askance at Zhu Baoguo. “Your Mom passed away at an early age, I have a Mom, shall I share my Mom with you?”

If her mother had a son like Zhu Baoguo, she would be thrilled. She would definitely treat him well as if he was her biological son.

“You are courting death!” Zhu Baoguo smashed his fists on the table, his eyes red in anger. “Mother” was a taboo for Zhu Baoguo. Whoever said it would be in for trouble.

“Look, isn’t it the same?” Other people might be afraid of Zhu Baoguo, but Qiao Nan was not. “I may be poor now, but I will earn lots of money in the future. I do not need your money.”

“You...” Zhu Baoguo could not stay angry but he was also displeased with her words. Looking at Qiao Nan, he could not wait to bite at something to ease his frustration.

Zhu Baoguo jumped around in frustration, as if he had ticks on him. Qiao Nan looked at him and sighed, “This character of mine, I do not know how to get along well with others and would offend others unknowingly. I have a sharp tongue and my words might hurt others.”

Qiao Nan could sense that Zhu Baoguo was sincere and genuine about making friends with her.

It was rare that someone treated her with kindness, she could not bear to shut him out.

But this was her personality. There were some habits that she just could not change.

To put it bluntly, both of them were problematic kids, it would be difficult to get along with each other.

“I am a man, I wouldn’t argue with you.” Zhu Baoguo’s eyes spewed fire. But Qiao Nan’s explanation doused his anger. It was as if ice water was being poured over the blazing fire.

Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows in surprise when she saw that Zhu Baoguo had calmed down and was no longer angry with her.

Zhu Baoguo was known for his bad temper. Most people would not be able to accept her explanation, yet Zhu Baoguo accepted it. He was a good kid after all.

“What’s there to look at, didn’t you say that you would rather look at the books than at me? Look at your books!” Zhu Baoguo blushed in embarrassment. He covered Qiao Nan’s face with the books, avoiding her eyes.

Qiao Nan laughed. It seemed like Zhu Baoguo would make a worthy friend.

“What’s there to laugh about? To show off your white teeth?” Zhu Baoguo had relaxed and was no longer angry.

Zhu Baoguo knew that those “brothers” that followed him around in the past were only after his money, they were not sincere in making friends with him. They hung around him for his money, but would be the first to run off when he was in trouble.

But Qiao Nan was different. She had saved his life and ever since knowing him, despite his prominent family background, she had never sucked up to him or asked him for favors. Even if he wanted to treat her differently, she also refused vehemently.

Zhu Baoguo was not stupid, he could tell if one was sincere or not.

If one could have a sincere and loyal friend, no one would like to mix with fair-weather friends. But it was just that Zhu Baoguo had never had the chance in the past.

Zhao Yu’s eyes reddened, she was full of anger and jealousy when she saw how unaffected Zhu Baoguo was by Qiao Nan’s blunt words, and that they seemed to be closer than before.

She remembered there was once when someone mentioned about Zhu Baoguo’s late mother in front of him, and Zhu Baoguo gave that person a furious kick.

#### Chapter 66: Did Well or Did Badly

If not for the bystanders who stopped him, judging from his ferocious look, Zhu Baoguo might have beaten that person to death.

When other people mentioned Zhu Baoguo’s mother, he would beat them up, so how could Qiao Nan escape his wrath when she spoke of his mother? This was unfair.

Zhao Yu who was thinking about this did not realize that there was no fairness in these things. There was no valid reason behind her enmity towards Qiao Nan as well.

No matter how bitter Zhao Yu felt, Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo had been getting along well with each other.

Time flew past. Qiao Nan had just started to make changes to her sorrowful life that she had in the previous lifetime. But in a blink, half of the semester had passed.

Qiao Nan and Qiao Zijin were both preparing for their mid-term exams.

Qiao Nan was better prepared compared to the last time. In fact, she was looking forward to the mid-term exams. She wanted to know how her revision was going.

Even if the exams might not be an accurate indication of how she did for her revision, at the very least she would have a rough gauge of her standard.

As compared to Qiao Nan who was full of anticipation, Zhu Baoguo did not have confidence in the exams. "If I did not do well, would you... Would you look down on me?"

"Isn't it normal for you not to do well?" Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows. She had only tutored Zhu Baoguo for about a month, unless he cheated in the exams, if not it was impossible for him to do well.

"Right, forget that I said it." Qiao Nan's words might seemed like she was looking down on Zhu Baoguo, but what she said was the truth.

They had known each other for more than a month. Zhu Baoguo had been used to her way of speaking. She would not beat about the bush and she would always hurt others inadvertently with her blunt truths.

School ended earlier as the students were having exams. Qiao Nan did not feel like going home, so she went to the Lee house with Zhu Baoguo to do revision.

Elder Lee knew that according to the school schedule, his grandson was in the midst of his mid-term exams.

He thought of asking about his exams.

Elder Lee had neglected his grandson for years. Now that he wanted to mend their relationship, he realized that he had no idea how to communicate with him.

Besides, his grandson never used to put his mind into studying. He should not harbor any hopes of him doing well for his exams.

Especially when he saw that as soon as his grandson and Qiao Nan reached Lee house, he did not play around, instead he took out his books and started reading.

Upon seeing that, Elder Lee told himself, it was within his expectation if his grandson had done badly for his exams. But even so, he was still happy with his change of attitude.

By the time Qiao Nan reached home, everyone was home. Despite a day of work, Ding Jiayi was not tired, she hung around Qiao Zijin, asking about her results for the mid-term exams.

Ding Jiayi had a job now and she got to know more people. Moreover she had two daughters, thus she naturally knew that her daughters would be having mid-term exams around this time of the year.

“Nan Nan is back.” Qiao Dongliang was full of smiles, his tone full of affection.

Qiao Nan arched her eyebrows when she saw the attitude of her parents. It seemed that Qiao Zijin had done pretty well in her mid-term exams.

It would be a festive mood in the Qiao family whenever Qiao Zijin did well in her exams. But when Qiao Nan had good results, she would only get a “Good” from Qiao Dongliang.

“Nan Nan, your sister had her mid-term exams. How about you?” Unlike the cold and indifferent attitude of Ding Jiayi, Qiao Dongliang was concerned about Qiao Nan.

“I had my exams, I just finished them today.” Qiao Nan put down her bag and poured herself a cup of water.

In Elder Lee’s house, their nanny would always serve her tea, but she was used to drinking plain water.

“How do you think you did for your exams?”



“No idea, I have to see the results to know.” Qiao Nan felt good about her exams, she felt more confident compared to her last exams.

But it seemed that Qiao Zijin had done well in her exams, hence Qiao Nan did not bother to say too much, lest she dampen her parents’ high spirits.

When Qiao Zijin was in the limelight, it would not be good for Qiao Nan to steal her limelight, if not her mother would not let her off.

Qiao Zijin was happy at Qiao Nan’s words, she lifted her chin and said, “Nan Nan did you flunk your exams like last time? You should have an idea of how you do for the exams. But it’s okay, do not be too anxious. I can catch up on my grades, so can you. Besides your results have always been good.”

“You really flunked your exams?” Qiao Dongliang’s countenance wobbled, could it be that Nan Nan’s results were affected as she had to tutor Baoguo?

If so, should she continue to tutor Baoguo?

At the next moment, Qiao Dongliang put his heart to rest. If Qiao Nan did not do well in her exams, he would not need to say another word, and the Lee family would get another tutor for Zhu Baoguo. After all, if Qiao Nan’s results were as bad as Zhu Baoguo, she could not help him.

By that time, when the younger daughter no longer needed to tutor Zhu Baoguo, she would have more time for revision and would be able to catch up.

“I am not too sure. It’s more or less that way.” Qiao Nan did not cherish much hope for Qiao Dongliang. She gave a faint smile and did not say much as usual.

“In terms of studies, as one advances to another level, it gets more and more difficult, but this should be the case. As the saying goes, ‘A man at five may be a fool at fifteen’, Zijin is so smart and hardworking.” Ding Jiayi felt proud and elated, she could finally hold her head high.

Five thousand yuan was nothing. No matter how much it was worth, it was incomparable to the future and prospects of the elder daughter.

The teachers at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China were really capable, better than the others.

When Ding Jiayi was at work, she would always chat with her colleagues about Qiao Zijin who studied at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

Everyone in Ping Cheng knew about The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Anyone who managed to enroll into the high school must have been very intelligent and had good future prospects.

When her colleagues heard that Ding Jiayi's daughter was studying at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, they were full of praise for Qiao Zijin, saying that she must be very smart and that she would be successful in the future. Ding Jiayi could be assured that she could lead a good life.

Ding Jiayi found it inappropriate to tell them that her daughter did not do very well for her middle school exams and that she spent some money to enroll her into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

If not she would love to tell them that the teachers at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China were really capable. After studying at the high school, Qiao Zijin who was once an average student had improved tremendously and was the top student now.

Ding Jiayi had absolute trust in Qiao Zijin's words. It never crossed her mind that if the teachers at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China were capable of creating miracles, making a silk purse out of a sow's ear, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China would be full of top students, no one would have bad results.

"Don't be anxious, since Zijin managed to catch up on her results, Nan Nan can do it as well." Qiao Dongliang looked at Ding Jiayi in disapproval.

"How could it be the same? How can the teachers at the other schools be comparable to the teachers at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China?" In this life, Qiao Nan could never have the chance of studying at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Therefore there was no way that she could catch up on her studies.

"That's simple. Since Zijin can study at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, why can't Nan Nan?"

## Chapter 67: Results Are Coming Out

“Nan Nan’s results used to be better than Zijin, it would be good if she could go to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, she would be able to catch up on her studies.”

Qiao Dongliang laughed coldly.

“No, she had already said that if her results are not satisfactory she wouldn’t go to that high school. We do not have so much money at home!” Ding Jiayi turned green with anger. She did not wish to see that Qiao Nan and Qiao Zijin had the same treatment.

“I have said before, you will take care of Zijin while I am in charge of Nan Nan. I wouldn’t take the money from our house. If she really did badly, I will think of other ways.” Qiao Dongliang looked at Ding Jiayi with a forced smile on his face. “If I do not have the abilities, there would be someone who has the abilities.”

“Mom, I am hungry, shall we make dinner?” Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi were about to break into a fight and the topic made Qiao Zijin uncomfortable. She cut in and tried to stop them.

Her mother had spent all the money at home. If her father wanted to send Qiao Nan to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, he would have to seek Grandpa Lee’s help to fork out a sum of money.

Her father would definitely have to borrow that money.

Anything borrowed had to be returned.

If their family had external debts and had not enough to feed all of them, given her character, her mother would definitely tighten the purse strings and cut down on her allowances so as to save the money to repay the debts.

All said, the money that was supposed to be spent on her would then be used for Qiao Nan’s enrollment.

Most importantly, when Qiao Dongliang mentioned that he might look for external help, Qiao Zijin was worried that he might seek Elder Lee's help. He might spill the truth about the secret to her enrollment.

Her mother had gathered that the Qiao family and Lee family had not been in contact with each other for ages.

Since they had not been keeping in touch, Grandpa Lee would help them on the account that it was the last request that the Qiao family had of him.

By then, she would have settled the enrollment problem and her father would not find out the truth. This would be kept a secret forever.

But now that Qiao family and Lee family were in contact with each other, if Grandpa Lee was to tell her father about the truth, Qiao Zijin could not imagine the thunderstorms that would be stirred up in her family.

After pulling Ding Jiayi to the kitchen, Qiao Zijin said, "Mom, stop picking on Nan Nan in front of Dad. We are the ones who would suffer in the end." In particular her!

"As long as Qiao Nan has agreed to it, it doesn't matter how Dad thinks about it. But if you continue with your ways and agitate Dad, he might borrow money from Grandpa Lee to get Qiao Nan into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. By then, not only would we have a lot of external debts, Grandpa Lee might mention my enrollment to Dad. What do you think his reaction will be?"

Even if there was no way for Qiao Nan to quit school and work, her mother should try to cut down on Qiao Nan's expenses, lest her father spent too much of his hard-earned money on her.

Her mother had always been quarreling with her father. Because of all these quarrels, her father had given the money that was meant for her to Qiao Nan instead!

"If he could seek Uncle Lee's help for Qiao Nan, he would not dare to raise his voice at me if he finds out that I have been to Grandpa Lee regarding your enrollment. Aren't they the same?" Ding Jiayi refused to admit defeat, but her tone calmed down. "Forget it, I will not pick on that wretched girl on your account. It would be a waste of my time and energy to pick on her."

“Mom, it’s good that you can straighten out your thoughts.” Qiao Zijin was relieved that Ding Jiayi was willing to listen to her.

Qiao Zijin noticed that whenever her parents quarreled, Qiao Nan would be the one who benefited from it, while she was the one on the losing end.

During dinnertime, Ding Jiayi had a change of attitude, she no longer picked on Qiao Nan. Instead she concentrated on praising Qiao Zijin, saying that she would definitely be able to get into a first tier university and study at the capital.

When Qiao Zijin found a job, settled down and have a family at the capital, she and Qiao Dongliang would stay with Qiao Zijin at the capital, leading a life of leisure and comfort.

Qiao Dongliang’s countenance did not changed when he heard Ding Jiayi’s words, in fact his silence seemed to say that he agreed with her.

Qiao Nan buried her face and laughed at her parents’ reaction.

In the previous life, Qiao Zijin was married to Chen Jun, she stayed in a small villa and had a limousine. But even so, she did not give a single cent to her parents, in fact, they had to give her money instead.

In this life, it sounded amusing and hilarious to say that Qiao Zijin would take care of her parents and let them live in comfort.

It reminded her of a popular saying years later: Fantasy is always good, but the reality is always cruel.

Qiao Nan who was well aware of Qiao Zijin’s selfishness, could not help but hand it to her when she looked to be in high spirits at her mother’s words.

The Qiao Zijin in this life would not have agreed to her mother’s words as well. When her mother said that Qiao Zijin would have to bear the responsibility of taking care of her parents, she could still talk animatedly without batting an eyelid and nodded in agreement to her mother’s words. Qiao Nan smirked, it was no wonder that she was totally defeated by Qiao Zijin in the previous life.

Even in this life, she could never match up to the glib-tongued Qiao Zijin.

On Sunday, Ding Jiayi sent off Qiao Zijin in high spirits, with hopes that she would bring back good news with her. The next day morning, Qiao Dongliang thought for a while and said to Qiao Nan, “Don’t be too worried or give yourself too much stress. It’s okay if you did not do well. It’s only half of a semester. Besides, there’s still half a year to go. We can take things slowly. Even if you really did badly, as long as you wanted to study, I will definitely support you.”

As for whether he would fork out the money for Qiao Nan to enroll into The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China like Qiao Zijin, Qiao Dongliang dared not make a promise right now.

“Thank you, Dad.” Qiao Nan gave Qiao Dongliang a relaxed smile, took her bag and left before him.

“Hmph, she is really shameless. She could still smile when she did badly in her exams.” Ding Jiayi had a look of disdain on her face as she watched Qiao Nan left the house.

“What did you say?” Qiao Dongliang snarled and chided Ding Jiayi. “Have you forgotten what I said previously? You have no say over Nan Nan’s affairs. Since you don’t wish to take care of her, then you have to relinquish all your authority over her. Not a word from you ever.”

“Fine.” Ding Jiayi muttered grumpily. “I am going off to work, remember to close all the doors and windows before leaving.”

She did not have the time and effort to pick on Qiao Nan.

Rather than wasting time on Qiao Nan, she would rather think of ways to work hard and to earn more money so as to send Zijin to the university and for overseas studies.

“You are here?” Zhu Baoguo reached school earlier than Qiao Nan.

“You are so early?” Qiao Nan’s eyes flickered in surprise. “Has hell frozen over?”

Ever since coming back to school, though Zhu Baoguo did not play truant or arrive late, he was never this early before.

“I woke up early today, is there anything wrong?” Zhu Baoguo turned his face sideways, avoiding Qiao Nan’s eyes. Whenever she looked into his eyes, he had the feeling that he could hide nothing from her. It was so strange, after all she was just a young lady.

## Chapter 68: Got Back On Track

“No problem at all.” Qiao Nan knew when to draw the line. She knew that if she was to continue, Zhu Baoguo might turn hostile.

The first lesson in the morning was the form teacher, Teacher Chen’s lessons, Mathematics. Teacher Chen walked into the classroom in high spirits.

Most of the students breathed a sigh of relief when they saw Teacher Chen’s expression. It seemed like they did not do too badly in the exams.

It was the mid-term exams after all, the second most important exams in a semester. Very few students could be indifferent towards their results, especially when they were in a good class.

“For this mid-term exams, the class’s results were satisfactory. I am very pleased that some of the students have made improvements.” Teacher Chen cast a glance in the direction of Qiao Nan.

Those students who noticed Teacher Chen’s expression make noises at their seats. It seemed that Teacher Chen was in high spirits as Qiao Nan had done well. The teacher was so good to Qiao Nan.

“But everyone must bear this in mind, one must be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. We must continue to work hard and make improvements. I will hand out the papers now. Qiao Nan.”

Teacher Chen did not announce the results, but Qiao Nan’s paper was placed on the top of the stack. It was obvious that Teacher Chen had taken a look at the papers before arriving at the classroom.

A lot of the students craned their necks trying to get a glimpse of Qiao Nan's results. But she folded the papers in half as soon as she received it and returned to her seat.

Everyone could only see the ticks on the questions, with no indication of any deduction in marks.

"100 points?" Zhu Baoguo arched his eyebrows. His desk mate was so extraordinary, her results were truly outstanding.

"It would be good if its 100 points." Qiao Nan sighed. "98 points."

Qiao Nan had a rough gauge of her marks before receiving her papers.

She was confident about the new knowledge learned in this semester. But the last question in the "fill in the blanks" section of the Maths paper was much more complicated and difficult. Even though she did not leave it blank, she had no confidence in getting it correct.

As expected, she saw a cross on that question, and two marks being deducted.

"That's a very good result." Zhu Baoguo said in surprise. "Did you think that it would be that easy to score 90 points and above and that it was that common to score 95 points and above just like in the elementary school?"

He clicked his tongue. For him, it would be marvelous if he could score 89 points, not to mention 98 points.

Though Qiao Nan and Zhu Baoguo were whispering to each other, a lot of the students had overheard their conversation. They were all surprised at Qiao Nan's grade of 98 points.

No wonder Teacher Chen said that Qiao Nan had made tremendous improvements. She was only a few marks short of a perfect score. It was not easy to get this result.

She was the top student after all. It was only not long ago that she fell below her standard. Yet she had got back on track in such a short period of time.



By the time everyone got their papers, Teacher Chen said, “The highest score in our class for Mathematics was 98 points. But the highest score in the level was 99.5 points. That student left out a period in the answer. We must put in extra efforts and to take this as a learning example, not to commit the same mistake. This deduction of half a point is a pity, isn’t it?”

A sheer pity.

If not for the period, it could have been a perfect score. There was nothing that was more unjust than this.

“Alright let’s analyze the papers now.” Teacher Chen went through the papers quickly, highlighting the parts where most of the students did not answer correctly. Of course, the question in “fill in the blanks” section with a hundred percent failure rate was the main highlight of the discussion.

“Alright, the lesson is over.”

Qiao Nan waited for Teacher Chen to leave the classroom before stretching her hand towards Zhu Baoguo, “Don’t hide it anymore, let me take a look at your paper.”

“No, why should I give my paper to you?” Zhu Baoguo stiffened, he wished that he could tear up his papers right in front of Qiao Nan.

As compared to Qiao Nan’s paper which had such pretty results, Zhu Baoguo’s paper was just like the scene of a traffic accident, it was a horrible sight to see.

“Would I not know where’s your standard? Do you think I would have other thoughts after looking at your papers?” Qiao Nan sighed. If she was to judge someone based on results, she would not have wasted her time on Zhu Baoguo.

“Elder Lee only wanted me to keep an eye on you, he did not want me to make sure that you do well for your exams. I wanted to look at your papers as I treated you as my friend. If you do not wish for me to look at your paper, I won’t.”

“Go ahead and have a look.” Zhu Baoguo was appeased by Qiao Nan’s words. He relaxed his tight lips and handed the papers to Qiao Nan reluctantly.

Qiao Nan was as calm as the dead sea when she looked at her papers, But when she looked at Zhu Baoguo's papers, she widened her eyes and had a look of surprise on her face.

Zhu Baoguo's face reddened in anger. "You, you hand it back to me!" Didn't she say that she would not judge someone based on results. What does Xiao Qiao mean by her expression? Were his results way below her expectations?

"Zhu Baoguo, I have realized that you are very bright." Qiao Nan praised him while looking through his papers.

"Qiao Nan, are you praising Zhu Baoguo or mocking him?" Zhao Yu smirked. Everyone knew where Zhu Baoguo's standard was, it would have been difficult for someone like him who never turn up for school to pass the exams. How could Zhu Baoguo be associated with being bright?

If Qiao Nan wanted to suck up to Zhu Baoguo, she should not have gone to such extremes.

Zhu Baoguo glared in anger, "What do you mean by that?"

Qiao Nan might not be the type who would mock him, but it would be impossible to praise him.

Nobody would praise him for having such a bad result. He could not bring himself to say his own grades.

"Take a look at it yourself." Qiao Nan placed the papers in front of Zhu Baoguo. "You haven't been to school for a long time. I went through the new knowledge that was taught in this semester with you. This few questions, and this question, and the other few questions. You have got the answers correctly for most of the questions that tested on the topics that I covered with you. As for those that you answered wrongly, they were all those that I did not go through with you. Zhu Baoguo, you are really quite brilliant. I only went through them once with you, yet you can take in all the information and concepts."

Qiao Nan meant it with her sincerest heart when she praised Zhu Baoguo.

Zhu Baoguo definitely had the knack for Science subjects.

After Qiao Nan's detailed explanation, Zhu Baoguo knew that Qiao Nan meant it from the bottom of her heart when she praised him.

Zhu Baoguo was used to being scolded. As it was the first time someone had praised him, he blushed in embarrassment and felt awkward. "That, that, as long as I put my heart into it, there's nothing that I wouldn't excel in. Of course, you have done a good job teaching me."

Compared to the teachers that his grandpa hired for him previously, other than their temper, they were also not good in teaching. He could not take in what they said at all.

"Keep up the good work, you would surpass me and make huge improvements in the future." Qiao Nan could feel the pressure.

#### Chapter 69: 'Thrilled' to 'Death'

She had been through rebirth, her comprehension skills and receptive abilities should be stronger than her peers.

More importantly, she had a goal in mind, hence she would put in efforts to work towards her goals. It was normal for her to improve gradually.

But it was different for Zhu Baoguo. He was not the least bit interested, he was dragged into studying by Qiao Nan.

He did not put in much effort yet he made tremendous improvements. Compared to her, Zhu Baoguo had the talent for studying.

"Come, explain to me how to solve this problem." Zhu Baoguo lifted his chin, proud of Qiao Nan's surprised expression.

"Alright, let's bring out your Mathematics book first. Let's go through some knowledge points before we talk about the solutions."

The second lesson was Chinese. As compared to the joyous expression on Teacher Chen's face, Teacher Lee only looked slightly better than last time. "Hand out the papers, have a look and do some reflection."

Obviously Teacher Lee's words was directed at Qiao Nan.

"Teacher Lee, I will give out the papers." Zhao Yu smiled. She scored lower than Qiao Nan for Maths, but judging from Teacher Lee's expression, she definitely scored better than Qiao Nan!

She was all thrilled to hand out the papers. She still remembered that previously Qiao Nan scored 85 points while she scored 89 points.

"Alright, take them." Teacher Lee passed the papers to Zhao Yu.

Zhao Yu knew which group the students belonged to. She only had to hand the papers to the person sitting in the first row and they would pass down the papers. She was quite efficient in handing down the papers.

While handing out the papers, Zhao Yu saw her results—88 points, it was not too bad, though her result last time was higher by one mark.

She finally reached Qiao Nan's papers. As soon as she saw Qiao Nan's name on the papers, her eyes searched for the results. Her smile froze on her face. 92 marks?!

Zhao Yu was stunned, she stopped handing out the papers and started to flip through Qiao Nan's paper. She couldn't believe that Qiao Nan would score above 90 marks for her Chinese in such a short period of time. The teachers must have made a mistake.

She saw that Qiao Nan's essay had the same score as before, only one mark was deducted from the essay. On the other hand, five marks was deducted from Zhao Yu's essay. Looking at Qiao Nan's essay, she felt as if she was being slapped on the face.

"Zhao Yu, this is Qiao Nan's paper. Aren't you going to give them out? The student who sat in front of Nan Nan saw that Zhao Yu stood frozen on the spot with Qiao Nan's papers and made no move to hand them out. The student said out of impatience, "No matter how you stare at it, Qiao Nan scored 92 points for her Chinese, it couldn't be wrong."

The student's accusation made a defeated Zhao Yu flush in embarrassment.

She clenched her fist and tried to contain the tears swimming in her eyes. She handed out the rest of the papers in silence and returned to her seat.

She did not hear a single word of what Teacher Lee said thereafter.

When the school bells rang, Zhao Yu sat bent motionless over her desk.

When it was time for lessons, her desk mate Zhou Lei noticed that Zhao Yu's eyes looked red and puffy, as if she had just cried.

Zhou Lei twitched his lips. What was there to cry about? She must be sick.

Like the last time, the results for the three subjects were out.

As compared to last time, Qiao Nan's total score for the three subjects had increased by 20 points. Her ranking in the level had jumped to the top ten, and she was ranked among the top three in her class. She had gotten back on track, to her usual standard.

"You are really awesome." Zhu Baoguo was all excited at Qiao Nan's results. No wonder his grandpa would get him a peer to coach him. He never imagined that Xiao Qiao would do so well for her exams.

"It was average." Qiao Nan was not really happy. She could have these results as it was only junior high exams.

If the exams were on the combined knowledge points of the three years of junior high school, she had no idea how she would fare.

Qiao Nan's focus was on the combined exams, not on the exams right now.

The results for the common tests did not matter. What was more important was the final results for the middle school exams.

“You are too modest.” Zhu Baoguo patted Qiao Nan on her shoulder. “Your father and your mother will be thrilled to death when they know of your results.”

If he could have the same results just once, his grandpa and grandma would be extremely happy.

Zhu Baoguo grew frustrated at the thought of his cousins. They would always bragged about their results in front of him, teasing him for being a slacker.

At first, Zhu Baoguo detested top students like Qiao Nan.

But during that time, he heard that Qiao Nan’s results was dropping, moreover she was his life savior, hence he agreed to having her as his tutor.

If Qiao Nan had been a top student all along, Zhu Baoguo might have just thanked her for saving his life, and rejected the idea of taking tutoring lessons from her.

“Thrilled to death?” Qiao Nan was amused at this. Her father would be thrilled, as for her mother it would mean death to her. If she put the two expressions together, it would be “thrilled” to “death”.

Zhu Baoguo had no idea what Qiao Nan was smiling about. He thought that she was just happy.

That night when she reached home, Qiao Dongliang asked about her results. Ding Jiayi pricked her ears and listened carefully.

When Qiao Nan told them of her results, Qiao Dongliang was thrilled, while Ding Jiayi pulled down her face and gave Qiao Nan a disdainful stare.

But Ding Jiayi had been warned by Qiao Dongliang umpteen times. This time she did not bad mouth Qiao Nan. She snorted disdainfully and went to prepare dinner.

Zijin would be back two weeks later. She would definitely do better than Qiao Nan.

It was of no use to do well in junior high, what was important was to do well in high school.

Doing well in junior high would only get you into a good high school. But doing well in high school could make sure you enter a good college. Upon entering a good college, one could be ensured of a high paying job.

“Nan Nan, you have done well this time. How about Zhu Baoguo?” Qiao Dongliang was concerned about Zhu Baoguo after he was done asking about Qiao Nan.

“He is pretty smart. He gave the correct answers for all the questions that I taught him.”

“How much did he score?”

“He did not pass.”

“This will not do.” Qiao Dongliang frowned. “Nan Nan, since you are tutoring Baoguo, you must make sure you do a good job and help him to improve his results. It’s not good enough that you do well, you must make sure that Baoguo had good results as well. You should know Grandpa Lee took great care of me in the past. You have to repay the debts on my behalf. You have to make sure that Baoguo does well in his exams as well, do you understand?”

Qiao Nan pursed her lips, looked at Qiao Dongliang for a while and replied coldly, “I understand.”

“Nan Nan, I know that you might find it difficult. But I have my own difficulties as well. You can spend the weekend tutoring Baoguo. You do not need to help out at home. During the weekdays you can make use of your time to study. You must juggle your time between both and place the same importance on these two tasks.”

## Chapter 70: Better Treatment

Her father quoted the words of the great leader just to get her to tutor Zhu Baoguo. Qiao Nan twitched her lips and forced a smile on her face. “I understand.”

“Good, you must make sure to study hard. Dad will not disturb you. Leave all the chores to your Mom.” Qiao Dongliang patted Qiao Nan on her shoulder happily. He then instructed Ding Jiayi not to disturb Qiao Nan when she was studying at home.

Ding Jiayi was displeased at his words. "I had a long day at work, I am tired to the bones. There are so many chores to do, why can't she help me out? Old Qiao, don't you think you have gone way overboard?"

"There's nothing wrong with it. Wasn't it the same for other people?" Qiao Dongliang laughed in anger. In his department there were a lot of his female colleagues who had to work and take care of their children.

"They have in-laws to help them to take care of the children. I had two daughters, nobody was around to help me." Can other people be compared with her?

"But you are not working at that time. You basically just stayed at home to look after the children, and I helped to bring up Nan Nan as well." Qiao Dongliang might have kept his silence, but that did not mean that he was unaware or had forgotten about it.

If not for the fact that Ding Jiayi complained that milk powder was too expensive, she would not have bothered to breastfeed Qiao Nan.

After feeding her for less than half a year, she complained that it was too toilsome on her and had stopped feeding her.

Luckily the families nearby reared goats. The goats had just given birth and had milk for its offspring. The families felt that Qiao Nan was very pitiful, and they boiled the goats' milk and gave it to her.

At times Ding Jiayi found it too troublesome, it was Qiao Dongliang who prepared the milk for Qiao Nan.

Ding Jiayi did not really do her part in bringing up the child.

Even if Qiao Nan had closed her door, she could still hear the quarreling sounds of her parents.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips and continued to do her work.



In the past she had to help out with household chores and had no time to study.

Now that she had to tutor Zhu Baoguo, at the very least she had the weekdays to revise. She stood to gain from this arrangement.

Ever since the rebirth, she had learned to set her thinking straight. In this lifetime, she had the chance to study. There was no need to compare herself to Qiao Zijin, she only had to make sure that she led a better life than herself in the previous life.

Given that she had five days worth of study time at home and she would no longer need to do housework, as compared to the previous life, this current life was already so much better.

In the previous life, she had to work during the day and help out with household chores at night. On the contrary, her mother stayed at home the whole day long. Apart from preparing meals, the rest of the housework was done by Qiao Nan. Sometimes Qiao Nan even had to wash the clothes for the whole family.

In this life, besides washing her own clothes, Qiao Nan did not need to do other chores. She had more time for her studies.

With that, Qiao Nan felt better.

Her weakness was Chinese. Besides Chinese, she also had no confidence in Chemistry as well.

But the books that she received previously basically covered almost all of the subjects and topics that Qiao Nan was not good at.

Who would have such a clear understanding of her studies, to have given her the exercise books on the topics and subjects that she was weak in?

In the beginning, Qiao Nan had doubts about the intended recipient of these books. But after looking at the contents, she was sure that these were for her. If not, it would not be such a coincidence.

Maintain your strengths while working on your weaknesses.

To get the results, every subject must be tackled.

Ding Jiayi had to obey Qiao Dongliang's words. There was no way that she could make Qiao Nan share the burden of the housework.

This weekend, to everyone's surprise, Qiao Zijin was home.

"Zijin, aren't you supposed to be back next week? Why are you back this week?" Ding Jiayi poured her a glass of water and asked her.

"Our school is having a sports meet, that's why I am back. Mom, how did Qiao Nan do in her exams this time? The results should already be out." Zijin did not forget about Qiao Nan's exams.

"Don't mention it. What she said that day was purely to hoodwink us. She had gotten back on track with her exams this time. She was among the top ten in the level and the top three in her class." Ding Jiayi looked defeated at the mention of this.

Qiao Nan made such a tremendous improvement. Her results rose and fell just like a rocket.

"How about you? Your results are out as well. How did you do this time?" Ding Jiayi's eyes sparkled. She was more interested in the elder daughter's results.

"That's right, Zijin, how were your mid-term exams?" Qiao Dongliang who just came back overheard their conversation and asked in concern.

"Similar to what I had before, not as much improvement as Qiao Nan." Qiao Zijin was not quite pleased.

"That's incomparable. The students at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China are the cream of the crop, can all of the students at Qiao Nan's school enroll in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China? The ranking is incomparable." Ding Jiayi praised Qiao Zijin. "It's alright, you just have to maintain your standard."

The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China was the key high school in Ping Cheng. A significant percentage of their students could make it into the first tier key university.

If Zijin could maintain her standard and stay in the top eight places in her class, she should be able to get into the first tier university, if not, a second tier university would be just as good.

As for Qiao Nan's school, one still could not say for sure how many of the students would make it to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, not to mention getting into a first tier or second tier university.

"Still the eighth place in class? Well, it is more than enough." Qiao Dongliang sounded slightly disappointed. He thought that the elder daughter would improve in her ranking, he did not expect that she would still be ranked eighth in class. "How was your ranking among your level?"

Qiao Nan told them her ranking in both the class and the level. Naturally Qiao Dongliang would like to know how Qiao Zijin did in detail as well.

"In our high school, we only have the ranking within the class, we do not ranked the students according to the level. This is not the final year exams." Qiao Zijin rolled her eyes and thought of an idea.

It was the truth that she ranked the eighth place in class. But she was way behind Qiao Nan in terms of her ranking in the level.

Qiao Zijin had originally planned to tell her parents of her ranking in the level. But when she heard that Qiao Nan ranked in the top ten, she decided to keep silent about her ranking.

If she was to tell them, her poor results would be a stark contrast to Qiao Nan's good results.

Qiao Nan had just entered the house, she laughed to herself when she overheard Qiao Zijin's words.

In junior high school, the students would always be ranked according to the level, so it was amusing that The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China did not rank students according to the level.

But seeing that her parents had believed Qiao Zijin's words, Qiao Nan made no other comments.

“Dad, I will bathe first.” Qiao Nan put down her stuff in her room, took her clothes and went to bathe.

Both Qiao Zijin and Qiao Nan had sports meets in their schools.

Unlike Qiao Zijin who only cheered from the sides, Qiao Nan took part in the actual sports events.

She knew that there would be questions related to sports and microcomputer experiments in the middle school exams, so her participation would be an added bonus in the exams.