

RTAMM 671

Chapter 671 Tit-for-Tat Competition

“It’s a good phenomenon, a good phenomenon indeed. It’s considered as progress in our education industry. We should support this.” Principal Wei was grinning from ear to ear. He continuously praised Principal Meng of Ping Cheng High School.

This was because he knew that the more he praised Principal Meng of Ping Cheng High School now, the greater Principal Meng would fall from grace when the results of the college entrance examination were out.

One could not blame him for doing so. For the sake of his school and students, he could only do that.

Furthermore, he was not the one who asked Principal Meng to gamble it in that way.

In the next year’s college entrance examination, Principal Meng had Qiao Nan and Shi Qing, these two good seedlings. This point alone would be sufficient to make Principal Meng happy for a year.

“Thank you.” How could Principal Meng not know that Principal Wei’s words were contrary to his thoughts and he was digging a hole for him to fall into? It was just that, at this juncture, he could not say anything. He had to wait for the results to be out. “No matter what, we should dare to try. Humans have to progress.”

“Hahaha, fine then. I’ll see Principal Meng again. I’ll go and check out other schools.” Having finished his words, Principal Wei did not intend to remain in this school. He wanted to find out the situation of his students in other schools.

“See you again.” Principal Meng nodded and sent Principal Wei off with his eyes.

After Principal Wei left, the form teacher by Principal Meng’s side then asked nervously, “Principal Meng, do you think this matter...” Principal Wei was up to no good. He said all that as he apparently did not look up to their batch of college entrance examination candidates this year.

“Alright, clearly, everyone is aware of the situation between the two schools. If he really looks up to our Ping Cheng High School, that’ll be as surprising as seeing ghosts in broad daylight.” Principal Meng was also on pins and needles.

However, regardless of how unsettled at heart he was, the situation was already cast in stone. He had already placed the chips for this huge gamble. After today, most of the examinations would be over. He could not even regret it if he wanted to, let alone feel uneasy.

“Principal Meng, will there be a surprise?” The form teacher quickly took out a handkerchief. He was wiping it hard on his forehead and face continuously.

The heat from the sun in the summer of July was very strong. The temperature outside was so high that it could literally boil someone alive. The form teacher who was already troubled and vexed had to listen to the sound of the cicada continuously chirping. He felt so annoyed as if he had a ball of entangled wool in his heart.

Within a short time, the clothing of the form teacher was so drenched that they were plastered on both his chest and back.

“Alright, I’ve already done my best in this matter. We’ll have to leave the rest to destiny.” Principal Meng gave out a long sigh. “We have already kept a very tight rein on this cohort of third-year students. Basically, the teachers have given them all the revision that they could. If we continued to let the form teachers hold the ford in the last seven remaining days, the outcome of the revision would be as such. Even if the outcome is not pleasing, actually, it has nothing much to do with Qiao Nan.”

Principal Meng had certainly gambled and he took a huge one. Nevertheless, he was not doing it haphazardly.

At the end of last year, the school had already completed teaching the curriculum of the third-year students. They had already begun with the revision thereafter.

In terms of the revision content and momentum that the subject teachers could give to the students, they had done their utmost. It could be said that if Qiao Nan did not help the third-year students spot questions in the remaining seven days, the subject teachers could not make much of a difference either. These seven days could completely be given to the students for self-study to discover what else was lacking and make up for it.

It was just that, when one suddenly heard that the last critical seven days before the college entrance examination was handed to a second-year student, they felt that it was both unbelievable and unimaginable.

The problem did not lie with time. Instead, it was the identity of Qiao Nan as a second-year student.

“Right, right, right. What the principal said is correct.” After the form teacher wiped away the sweat on his head, he thought about it and agreed. If they had not encountered a situation such as Qiao Nan’s case, those last seven days would have been arranged by the students themselves. Compared to the revision situation in the past few years, there was not much difference.

“Alright, let’s also change to another school to observe the situation. You’ve seen the results of Qiao Nan’s third-year examination papers. I still feel that there is no issue to let Qiao Nan spot the questions. Eventually, we have to see how the students perform on the grounds. It’ll be fine as long as no major incidents occur.”

Said major incidents included a panic attack that caused students to have insufficient time to attempt the questions, heatstroke, or the students deciding not to attempt major questions.

If these situations did not occur, regardless of how poor the students did this time, it would not be worse than before. At most, they would maintain the same standards.

“Yes, Principal Meng’s words make sense. Let’s go to another school to take a look.” The form teacher felt more assured now, but Principal Meng’s tightened brows had not fully eased.

Whether his earlier words were a consolation to himself and the form teacher, or the truth, only Principal Meng himself knew.

The three days of the college entrance examination were truly torturous.

Not to mention that it was terrible for those who participated in the college entrance examination, even their family members at home were nearly driven mad by the hot weather.

There were many who went into the examination hall standing but came out on the stretcher, or vomited and felt dizzy immediately upon leaving the hall.

The weather in July was really terrible. The college entrance examination was also terrible. The combination of the two was extremely terrible.

“Ah, you’re not worried at all?” Shi Qing, who was at home, just moved a little and her whole body felt drenched as if she had just come out from the waters.

Qiao Nan paused her writing and rolled her eyes at Shi Qing, who was hoarding the entire fan. “Please, your house is next door and not here. Are you addicted to being lazy? If you really want to stay at my house, fine, bring over the fan in your house!!!”

Shi Qing had been standing in front of the fan and she did not let the fan oscillate. Would Qiao Nan not feel hot?

“Slow.” Shi Qing continued to enjoy herself by standing in front of the fan. “I’ve already hogged it for five minutes and you only discovered it now. So, actually, you’ll be fine without the fan. You won’t feel hot if you’re calm at heart. It’s so troublesome to move the fan to and fro my house. I’ll perspire so much if I move again. It’s too horrible.”

“You’re not as focused and you’re still blaming it on others?” Shi Peng was off work and did not go home first. Instead, he came to the house of the Qiao family to pick his daughter up.

In actual fact, after Shi Peng took on the job in the government sector, to Shi Qing, there were not many changes in her life. At most, she was now sleeping in another bed.

As for her meals, she continued to settle them at the house of the Qiao family.

In terms of cooking, Shi Peng knew a little but not much. Furthermore, Shi Qing and Qiao Nan normally stayed in the school. It was quite troublesome to cook for himself.

Hence, when Shi Qing and Qiao Nan were in school, Qiao Dongliang had an additional meal buddy, namely Shi Peng.

At the sight of the situation, Qiao Nan rolled her eyes with displeasure.

True enough, these two were biological father and daughter. They had the same temperament. Was it that the meals in the Qiao family were extremely nice, or the meals in other people's house were always nicer to the two of them?

"Dad, I'll get some water for you." Upon seeing Shi Peng, the filial Shi Qing immediately went to the kitchen to get a cup of water for Shi Peng. She then wrung a towel after soaking it in well water and passed it to Shi Peng for him to wipe away his sweat.

Facing his daughter's filial behavior, Shi Peng accepted it smilingly. He slowly finished his water.

Chapter 672 Comparison Drives One to the Grave

When the cool towel came into contact with his skin, the cooling sensation immediately penetrated his body. The feeling could not be described with just the word 'soothing'.

Shi Peng was fatherly and Shi Qing was filial. However, Qiao Nan felt very sullen.

If she witnessed this scene in the house of the Shi family, Qiao Nan expressed that she would feel happier then.

The small courtyard that Shi Peng bought, to the Shi father-daughter pair, was only used for sleeping. They settled all their meals in the house of the Qiao family. If there was something fun to do, the house would become a one-stop service then.

After drinking a cup of warm water and wiping away the sweat on his face, Shi Peng turned the fan to face Shi Peng. The heat that Shi Peng felt had completely come down. "What were you chatting about earlier?"

"The college entrance examination. I was asking Qiao Nan if she felt nervous."

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"What should she be nervous about?" Shi Peng looked at Qiao Nan strangely. Qiao Nan and Qing Qing were obviously going to take the college entrance examination next year. They should feel nervous next year. Qing Qing's question was very odd.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you. This year, for the students who are taking this year’s college entrance examination, the principal ordered Qiao Nan to help them spot questions during the last week leading to the examination. Aren’t the three days of exams already over? I was asking Qiao Nan if she felt nervous.” Although Qiao Nan did not participate in this round of examination, to Qiao Nan, it was quite important too.

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Qiao Nan wiped away her sweat with a handkerchief. As she did not manage to retrieve her electric fan from Shi Qing, her intention to snatch the electric fan back from Shi Peng intensified. “You’re thinking too much. If they do well, it’s due to the hard work and effort of the students themselves and the teachers. I only spent a short span of seven days with them. How much effect can I cause? If they do well, it most probably has nothing much to do with me. If they do badly, it’ll be quite good if I don’t become the scapegoat.”

Qiao Nan was well aware of this in her heart.

This type of ‘fun’ was something that Qiao Nan was most unwilling to join in.

However, the truth was that, during the past two years, the school had taken good care of her father and her. Even their accommodation was arranged by the school.

Otherwise, Qiao Nan would not have agreed readily when Principal Meng posed the request.

Shi Peng was quite surprised. The principal of Ping Cheng High School let Qiao Nan spot questions for the third-year students. It seemed that they had so much trust in Qiao Nan. “Your school principal was so daring. He dared to ask Qiao Nan to do this?”

It was not that he was judging a book by its cover. The fact was that Qiao Nan was only a second-year student. Moreover, were those third-year students convinced about this?

“Rest assured. Our principal is very smart. The preliminary examination for third-year students this semester was similar to that of the college entrance examination. In one round of the examination, the principal simply made Qiao Nan take the examinations for both humanities and science subjects. In the end, Qiao Nan came in the top five for both. She’s super perverted.”

“Getting into the top five in the cohort is not an easy feat!” Shi Peng exclaimed. Compared to the third-year students this year, Qiao Nan had a year less. “Qiao Nan, aren’t you studying humanities? How did you come in the top five in science? Do you also know how to solve the science questions?”

“Yes.” Qiao Nan nodded. “I have all the textbooks of the science subjects. When I have spare time, I read them.” That set of third-year textbooks she bought was actually all on science subjects.

Qiao Nan did not know who Peng Yu was. Nevertheless, just by reading his revision notes, Qiao Nan knew that this Peng Yu definitely excelled in his studies.

Peng Yu was a science student. Qiao Nan took everything that once belonged to Peng Yu home. Bearing the motto of reading every book that she had, Qiao Nan simply learned the scientific knowledge as well.

That was the reason for Qiao Nan’s busy schedule.

Besides learning the humanities subjects, she also picked up science. Coupled with the Oxford Dictionary, if Qiao Nan gave herself a few more days of break, she would not be able to complete all these missions.

When he heard that Qiao Nan actually came in top five in the cohort based on self-studying the science subjects, there was a slight look of dissatisfaction and disdain when he cast his glance at Shi Qing again. Of course, amusement, and not malice, was in his eyes. “Qing Qing, if you compare yourself with others, you’ll be driven to the grave. It’s just like comparing products, and you will have to discard it. What do you say?”

In front of Qiao Nan, his outstanding daughter was lacking a fair bit. Great, excellent.

“Dad, let’s not shun each other. Your culinary skills are not better than Uncle Qiao’s too.” Shi Qing was not angry. She even retorted Shi Peng.

“Indeed, my fortune is not as good as that of your Uncle Qiao, and your fortune is not better than that of Qiao Nan. No wonder we’re father and daughter. Fine, it’s quite good that we’re together in this,” Shi Peng said humorously. “But regarding the matter of college entrance examination, there’s

no use pondering it at home. Anyway, the results will be out soon. Qing Qing, you have to learn more from Qiao Nan. Don't keep thinking about those useless things.”

Until now, Qing Qing had been paying particular attention to the situation of the Qiu family.

Qiu Qin had committed wrongdoings and someone got hold of the chink in his armor.

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armor.

Fortunately, it was not something too severe. Nevertheless, since he had been found out, Qiu Qin was eventually demoted to an official in a small town.

Undoubtedly, Qiu Qin had to move to a small town due to work.

At the very least, before Qiu Qin and family moved to the small town, Qiu Qin and Qi Minlan did not get a divorce. Of course, the whole Qiu family followed him and moved together.

The good thing was that this small town was located just beside Ping Cheng. Hence, it was not particularly far.

In the past six months, whenever Shi Qing had some spare time, she would keep a tight watch on the situation of the Qiu family, especially on Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi.

She was worried that, if Qiu Qin maintained contact with his mistress, and when Qi Minlan and Qiu Chenxi were provoked, Qi Minlan would pester her father and Qiu Chenxi would hold Qiao Nan accountable. They would then make her life miserable.

“Wait, I'm taking a preventive measure. It's her behavior that's strange. Qiao Nan, tell me honestly, how old are you? Why do I feel that even people in their 30s and 40s are not as calm and composed as you?” Sometimes, when Qiao Nan quieted down, she felt that Qiao Nan was not a youthful nineteen-year-old young lady. It was as if she was an old woman in her final days of seventy to eighty years old.

“How old am I? Let me count. About forty-three, I guess.” Qiao Nan added the time that she lived for two lifetimes. Wasn’t that older than those in their 30s or 40s?

“Crap, this joke is not funny at all. It’s meaningless.” Shi Qing simply went to take a watermelon and started slicing it. “Uncle Qiao is coming back soon. If we slice it now, it’ll be just at the right time. Uncle Qiao can have some freshly sliced watermelons to eat then.”

Qiao Nan was not bothered about the matter regarding the college entrance examination. In that case, she would not bring it up anymore. As an onlooker, she was more anxious than the party concerned. Crap!

At the funny sight of Shi Qing, both Qiao Nan and Shi Peng laughed.

When Shi Qing finished cutting the watermelon into slices, Qiao Dongliang arrived home just in time. “There’s watermelon to eat. Just nice. I feel so thirsty.” Qiao Dongliang took a big slice of watermelon and stuffed it into his mouth. During summer, eating watermelon was more thirst-quenching than drinking water. Wonderful.

Chapter 673 Not Nervous

“Today, the college entrance examination just ended. The people in our factory talked about it. A few of our employees have children taking the examination this year. They said that after their children finished taking the examinations, all of them became so skinny. It’s too tough. Nan Nan, don’t give yourself too much pressure during this time of the year next year. I think you’ve been studying consistently. Next year, you should relax more when the college entrance examination approaches. Read less if you can.”

His colleague’s child studied so much that he contracted a bad headache and was admitted to the hospital directly. Qiao Dongliang shuddered at the thought of it.

Qiao Nan nodded and accepted Qiao Dongliang’s good intention.

Qiao Dongliang had been eating and drinking normally these few days. He did not behave oddly at all. Qiao Nan could not help but remind him. “Dad, sister also took the college entrance examination this year.” Hence, they also had a student taking the college entrance examination in the family this year.

Today was the last day of the college entrance examination. Was her father not worried and concerned about Qiao Zijin's situation?

"Your sister..." Qiao Dongliang smiled. "Since a young age, your sister has never felt nervous during the examinations. This is quite a good thing too. Regardless of whether she's nervous or not, her results wouldn't change."

It was not that Qiao Dongliang was not nervous, but there was nothing for him to be nervous about.

There were so many students who took the college entrance examination every year. Only those parents who cared very much about their children's studies and those whose children had been doing well would feel anxious and place so much emphasis on this.

Toward Qiao Zijin, this daughter of his, Qiao Dongliang only adopted one mindset: The opportunities in this society favored the educated. As long as Qiao Zijin was willing to, a woman would definitely not be disadvantaged if she studied more. Nevertheless, he did not have expectations for Qiao Zijin's grades. It would be fine no matter how the grades she received were.

The Qiao family no longer had another sum of money to enroll Qiao Zijin into another school.

The less psychological burden he had, naturally, Qiao Dongliang was able to let it go.

Shi Qing secretly gave Qiao Nan a thumbs-up. She felt that Qiao Nan's influence on Qiao Dongliang was too great. His daughter was having the college entrance examination. Could he not be worried just because he said so?

Qiao Nan slapped away Shi Qing's thumb. Her father wanted to show concern but could he do

so?

Besides the usual festive occasions, Qiao Zijin basically would not appear or come back. It had been almost two years. Qiao Zijin had never informed his father of her specific address.

Even if her father had the intention to visit Qiao Zijin and her mother and see if they had been doing well, her father did not even know where to look for them. He did not even know the phone number that could reach Qiao Zijin.

Whenever her father felt a little concern for Qiao Zijin, there was no avenue for him to show his concern at all.

After a long time, her father was used to not thinking about Qiao Zijin's matters. This did not have anything to do with her.

Two years ago, she had clearly told her father that, regardless of her father's decision, he had to follow his own heart. He did not even need to care about her opinions.

If her father wished to show concern for Qiao Zijin or send her money, she would not utter a word, and neither would she interfere.

As such, she should not be blamed for her father's attitude toward Qiao Zijin, and neither could she take any 'credit' for this.

She would not utter a single word regarding anything that had to do with her mother and Qiao Zijin. She just wanted to wash her hands off their matters. It was best that they did not have anything to do with each other.

Shi Qing was stunned. She shook her head continuously.

One could rub others the wrong way. Qiao Zijin and that Auntie Ding whom she had not met before was simply Qiao Nan's Achilles heel. One should not touch it. If they did, Qiao Nan would explode as if she had consumed a bomb.

However, when she recalled the information that she had gathered about the Qiao family before, she could completely empathize with Qiao Nan.

"Shi Qing, the same goes for you. Don't give yourself too much pressure. Both of your grades are usually quite good. You don't even need to perform beyond expectations. It will do if you just perform as you usually do. The two of you can attend the universities in the capital together. Your future will definitely be quite good."

"Uncle Qiao, you're so relaxed. Don't you know that all the teachers in our school said that for the college entrance examination next year, it's highly possible that Qiao Nan will be the top

humanities scorer in the province for Ping Cheng High School?” She still needed to perform exceptionally if she wanted to be the top scorer. As for her own situation, Shi Qing was a little embarrassed to say anything. After all, comparing to Qiao Nan, there was nothing great about her.

If not for the fact that the college entrance examination for the humanities and science subjects were held concurrently, given Qiao Nan’s ability, she could, in fact, take part in both.

If Qiao Nan was involved, she did not know for certain what would happen to the science department’s results.

The fifth position in the cohort that Qiao Nan clinched previously was not counted. After all, there was still one whole year for Qiao Nan to pick up the knowledge.

“Top scorer?” Qiao Dongliang first laughed and then resumed his normal self immediately after. “Don’t talk about the top scorer. It’ll be best if she can do it. If not, it’s not considered a misstep either. Nan Nan, please don’t give yourself too much pressure just because of the assessment that the teachers gave you or aim for first place in the province. Actually... Really, it will suffice that Shi Qing and you maintain your current standards.”

That said, was Nan Nan working so hard as she was aiming to be the top scorer of the province?

Nan Nan was giving herself so much pressure and had to make herself so outstanding. At the end of the day, it was because of the Zhai family, right?

If not for Zhai Sheng, it would not be so tough for Nan Nan.

From this perspective, Qiao Dongliang actually did not quite favor Zhai Sheng, this future son-in-law.

“The teachers in your school are too much. Nothing tangible is yet in sight. Why are they spreading this without any basis?” At the thought of what happened to his colleague’s child this year, Qiao Dongliang felt anxious.

If Nan Nan was under too much pressure, would she also suffer the same fate as those children and had to be hospitalized due to a headache that resulted from too much studying?

“Dad, don’t be anxious. I’m not nervous. Really.” Within a short time and a few words, Qiao Nan saw that Shi Qing had successfully made her father panic. Qiao Nan quickly consoled him. “I won’t give myself so much pressure. I’ve never set such a feat as a goal. My thinking is quite simple. I just wish to attend a good college, complete my studies, and find a good job in the future.”

“Yes, Uncle Qiao, relax. We know all this. However, the teachers have never said it in front of Qiao Nan or made her promise that she’ll clinch first place in humanities for the school next year. The teachers are just purely pinning their high hopes on Qiao Nan. How will the teachers in the school not know the logic about pulling up a seedling and mistakenly think that they’re helping it grow?”

Having known that she had got herself into trouble, Shi Qing quickly made amends.

If the teacher kept telling the student every day that the latter had to clinch the top place, the student would either perform badly because of the huge pressure or become too proud and complacent because he had gained too much teachers’ affirmation. In the end, the student would not do well.

The probability of this happening was very high.

Hence, the teachers would not possibly do that. It would backfire and make a mess of the situation.

Chapter 674 Influence

If Qiao Nan fared badly in the examinations under tremendous pressure due to what the teachers said, these teachers, and not Qiao Nan, would be the first that would be criticized.

There were certain things that everyone could think of but could not say.

Looking at Qiao Dongliang, Shi Qing was embarrassed to tell Qiao Dongliang that, actually, he should still be nervous. This was because Qiao Nan had been spotting questions for the third-year students during the last seven days leading to their college entrance examination.

If they fared well in the examination, Qiao Nan would be given due credit. If they did not fare well, the school would not take issue. However, it was uncertain if the parents would use this as an excuse to kick up a big fuss.

At the thought of this, Shi Qing began to understand why Qiao Nan was unwilling to participate in these matters.

A second-year student spotting questions for the third-year students might seem like the former would be in the limelight. She clearly had good intentions but had to bear the brunt of any issues if something went wrong. She might get herself into trouble eventually and not get out of it.

“It’s late. I’ll go and prepare meals.” Qiao Dongliang, who was back to his usual self, glanced at the time and immediately took out the vegetables in the refrigerator. He washed them, chopped them, and started cooking.

Once Qiao Dongliang left, Shi Qing leaned toward Qiao Nan. “You didn’t tell Uncle Qiao anything regarding this year’s college entrance examination?”

“What’s there to say? I’m not the one taking the college entrance examination. This matter was decided by Principal Meng. I’m just a student who abides by the school’s arrangements. I did not volunteer.” Qiao Nan felt extremely warm. She was wiping the sweat on her face with a small handkerchief.

Her father was not extremely daring, especially toward her studies, and was very anxious.

She would rather not mention anything that was unrelated to her studies to her father so as not to worry him unnecessarily.

Moreover, Qiao Nan had initially thought that Qiao Dongliang would be focused on and feel anxious about Qiao Zijin’s college entrance examination. It was unexpected that her father now cared more about her, and he was able to look on the bright side of things in regard to Qiao Zijin’s examination.

At this juncture, the phone suddenly rang. “Hello, good day, you... Oh, Principal Meng. Going back to school tomorrow? Why?”

It was already summer vacation. Why did she still have to return to the school? She had already taken her report card.

The college entrance examination system in the year of 2000 was different. Before the year of 2003, the college entrance examination in China was scheduled for three days in July: the seventh, eighth, and ninth. It was only until the year of 2003 that it was changed to the seventh, eighth, and ninth of June.

Hence, when the third-year students were having their college entrance examination, Qiao Nan had already completed her second-year studies. She was thus in her summer vacation period after progressing to her third year.

Those administrative matters such as examination and collection of report card had already been completed. There was basically no other reason to return to the school during the summer vacation.

Shi Qing's ears perked up. She held on to Qiao Nan's shoulders and plastered her ears on the phone receiver to eavesdrop together. "... estimate scores..."

After eavesdropping for some time, Shi Qing only heard the two words 'estimate scores' vaguely.

After the college entrance examination ended, all third-year students would mostly return to the school. Moreover, the school would put up all the examination papers for the college entrance examination and provide the correct answers so that the students could compare their answers against them and estimate their own scores. This would help them decide on the college that they wanted to apply for in the future.

Principal Meng made the call to request Qiao Nan to go back to school. However, Qiao Nan felt that it was not necessary for her to do so. Next year, there was no need to request as she would have to go back to compare the answers.

"Principal Meng, what do I go back for?"

"Principal Meng, no need. In this case, I'm not going back." Hearing Principal Meng's reason, Qiao Nan simply declined. "No need, all these were the school's arrangements. There's really no need to. Thank you, Principal Meng."

"The principal invited you to go back to estimate the scores?" Shi Qing asked.

"Yes."

"Why don't you go back? If the situation is good... Most likely, you will receive many words of thanks tomorrow." That was something great.

“What if I receive hates instead of thanks? From then onward, should I buy a tortoise shell and bring it with me every day to avoid the revenge from the parents of this cohort of third-year students?”

Shi Qing gave a pat on Qiao Nan’s shoulder. “You should have more confidence in yourself. Principal Meng specially made this call. No matter how I see it, I don’t think the third-year students in our school would fare badly. You’ve worked so hard. Applause and fresh flowers are necessary.”

She was not receiving it for nothing. After all, Qiao Nan had put in seven days of effort in this.

“Not going.” Qiao Nan insisted. “It’s just estimating scores and not coming up with the actual statistics. There’s also inaccuracy in this. What if some people are overconfident and estimate wrongly? What will happen then?” Qiao Nan knew what this was about, but she was not willing to take part in it.

“Alright, don’t say this to others. I’ve personally declined Principal Meng. If I decide to go after a few words from you, what will Principal Meng think of me?” Qiao Nan moved away. On such a hot day, the two of them were so close to each other. Was she trying to kill her?

Shi Qing suddenly realized something. She looked at Qiao Nan from head to toe. “You’re not willing to return to school to estimate the scores. Don’t tell me it’s because you’re afraid of the heat, that you’re afraid to go under the

sun?”

“Yes, can’t I?” Qiao Nan felt a little embarrassed. This was certainly the reason why she was unwilling to return to school.

Given such weather, unless she left the house early, she would be toying with her life. If not, she would suffer badly from sunburns.

In addition, air-conditioners were not prevalent in this era. Qiao Nan really did not wish to suffer for this. “You have to take care too. It’s going to be our turn next year. The examination in July is different from that in June. The weather is much hotter. Whether it’s to sit for the exams or to compare the answers, it’ll be torturous. Such a difficult process, having been through it once will be enough for you to ‘reminisce’ for life. Asking me to undergo this experience twice, do you want to torture me to death?”

It was not just the estimation of scores. Initially, Principal Meng had wanted to pull Qiao Nan along to check out the situations of the students in various schools this year.

Of course, Qiao Nan rejected it as well.

She was agreeable to help, but these were all messy and complicated matters, and she would rather not make things difficult for herself.

“Alright, alright, it’s all up to you. You’re not even bothered. Why should I then?” Shi Qing felt that it would be meaningless to continue with the same topic. True enough, Qiao Nan did not seem like a normal twenty-year-old girl. She did not have the curiosity and competitiveness of the person of this age at all. She was leading her life so peacefully like an old woman.

When she returned to her own house in the evening, Shi Qing was still feeling unhappy about this matter. Her expression bared it all.

Shi Peng sighed and advised her. “Qiao Nan is a smart person. She knows what she’s doing. Furthermore, it’s certainly not necessary to be overly concerned about some superficial matters. Qiao Nan’s temperament is her strength and also her weakness. But concerning this point, you should feel grateful.”

“Why?” It was not that she did not wish to be grateful to Qiao Nan. But what was the reason?

“Don’t tell me that, until today, you have not realized that when you are with Qiao Nan, you are easily influenced by her, that you’re different from before?”

Chapter 675: Contentment Is Happiness

“When you’re with Qiao Nan, you’ll drift away from the feelings of discontentment. Your trouble will usually dispel, and you’ll calm down together with Qiao Nan, focusing on doing the things you have on hand.”

Shi Peng was looking at the big picture. Shi Peng had already discovered this special temperament of Qiao Nan when Qiao Nan was previously teaching as Teacher Xiao Qiao in the army.

Qiao Nan did not have the youth and energy of her age. She was also not filled with passion. It was as if she had already gone through the test of time and would make long-standing accomplishments in life through a calm and tranquil demeanor.

It was this special sense of peace in Qiao Nan that could easily influence those around her.

Shi Peng was not sure of the situation of Qiao Nan's classmates at school. Nevertheless, his own daughter, Shi Qing, was certainly the best example.

Regardless of how chatty his daughter appeared to be in front of Qiao Nan, she was no longer as impulsive as before. She would even think of matters in the longer term.

Occasionally, Shi Peng would also hear from his daughter that those dormitory mates and classmates of Qiao Nan had such an excellent learning atmosphere under the influence of Qiao Nan.

All these things were due to Qiao Nan. She was the core reason for the existence of that social circle.

“What is most lacking in your generation is that unique peace and calmness that Qiao Nan possesses. Most behave impulsively and do not care about the consequences. You've seen for yourself. Qiu Chenxi is one example. When one is unreasonable, they won't suffer on their own, but they will implicate those around them. Think carefully before you act. This is not a lie written in the textbooks.”

“Qiao Nan is good. I'm not that bad either.” Shi Qing puffed her cheeks and retorted unhappily. “No matter what, I was just saying. I didn't expect and insist Qiao Nan to abide by my words.”

“Really? You're most adept at debating now. The good thing is that I'm contented and happy. You've improved. Even if there're only slight changes, I'm already very satisfied. No matter how good Qiao Nan is, she's not my daughter. The biological daughter of Shi Peng is the most precious darling in my life.”

Your own child would always be the best. Objectively, Qiao Nan had many good qualities, but subjectively, he had other personal preferences.

The daughter of other families would never be better than his.

Shi Qing burst out into laughter. “Dad, your stand is very firm in this topic.” Nevertheless, she liked it.

“Dad, you don’t need to be overly concerned. Actually, I didn’t mean anything when I said that. I just feel that Qiao Nan is too quiet, so I deliberately teased her.” It did not matter if she was going back to school. Anyway, Qiao Nan was not a third-year student who had taken the college entrance examination. She just wanted to make Qiao Nan exercise more. It might not be good for her to stay at home every day.

“You.” Shi Peng rubbed Shi Qing’s head. “You’re kind-hearted but your method is too childish. A child like Qiao Nan must have already planned what she’ll be doing and when she’ll do them. You poking your nose into her matters stubbornly, won’t you disrupt her learning plan? Instead of spending your time on this, you should give some thoughts about whether you’ll be able to survive this time next year.”

As a government official, Shi Peng had already received information on the college entrance examination this year.

For example, the weather this year was extremely hot. It was much warmer than that of the past years.

It was because of the sudden change in the temperature that quite a number of students who had taken the college entrance examination fainted or suffered dehydration when they exited the examination halls.

As parents, when they saw their own children fainting due to the college entrance examination, who would dare to say anything more? What if they agitated the child and resulted in him or her having suicidal thoughts?

Many parents believed that their children fainted due to too much stress.

Nevertheless, Shi Peng learned from the hospital that there were people who fainted due to stress but the number was not high. Most fainted due to the hot weather and displayed signs of dehydration and heatstroke.

His own daughter would be taking the college entrance examination next year. Of course, Shi Peng was concerned if his own daughter would be able to survive the period. "It's not a good time to take the college entrance examination in July."

The weather was too hot!

"Indeed!" Shi Qing nodded. "Qiao Nan said that, actually, the college entrance examination can definitely be brought forward by one month, on the seventh, eighth, and ninth of June, these three days. Around this time, the school teachers have almost completed their revision for the students. Furthermore, although the weather starts to turn hot in June, it's not as hot as in July. If there's a rainy season or typhoon, the weather can be very cooling. The stress associated with the college entrance examination will then be lessened. At least, the education department should make changes to try their best to help students who're taking the college entrance examination create a cost-effective and conducive natural environment."

Taking the college entrance examination in July was not testing one's scores but one's life.

To bring forward the college entrance examination by just one month, besides time, the country did not need to spend much other efforts or resources to adjust the timing for the examination.

The country should give serious thoughts to such a change that would not cost them money.

"Fine, I'll remember this. I'll reflect this to the leaders next time. Certainly, this should be changed." At the thought that the number of students taking college entrance examination who fainted this year was definitely higher than in the past few years, Shi Peng expressed that this idea of Qiao Nan was very feasible.

Just as Qing Qing said, such a change would not cost the country and government any money. It would also create a better environment for the students who were taking the college entrance examination. There was nothing bad about this. There would not be many obstacles in administering this either.

"Dad, you have to remember." Even if the education department of the country was willing to change the timing for the college entrance examination, she and Qiao Nan would not be able to enjoy the good fortune.

"We're home. Quickly open the door." Shi Peng stood at the door, lifted his chin, and asked Shi Qing to open the door.

Shi Qing rolled his eyes. She had just felt that her father was quite good. Soon after, her father had to show his true colors. Wasn't it just opening a door? Even this had to be done by her? He was too much of a big shot.

Shi Peng was amused. It seemed that Qing Qing had been influenced greatly by Qiao Nan. Now, the two of them even rolled their eyes in an exact manner.

Shi Peng was aware that Qiao Nan's was the original version and Shi Qing's was the adopted version, meaning, it was the pirated one.

Qiao Nan herself was not concerned about the situation of the score estimation this time but others were.

This day, all the third-year students who took the college entrance examination returned to Ping Cheng High School. On the blackboard of their classrooms, the standard answers for the front and back of the papers had already been put up so that they could match their answers.

In comparison, it was easier to do matching of answers for the science subjects. One was one, and two was two. Even if the process of solving the problems were different, the science-related questions, similar to the truth, would only have one answer and not two. Hence, they only needed to match the numbers.

For humanities-related questions, there were fixed answers for multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions.

However, when it came to answers that were subjective, the teachers could only write a general summary, stating that one would be able to earn points if they had answered along the line.

The students were surrounding the front of the blackboard and matching the answers, while the teachers were nervously standing behind and meticulously observing each student's reaction.

Chapter 676: Be Steady

At this moment, the students were nervous, and the teachers were even more so.

Examinations were a teacher's weapon while grades were a student's lifeline.

It was true that this saying was not appropriate in the 21st century.

Examinations were no longer the teacher's weapon but grades were still the student's lifeline.

The teachers in Ping Cheng High School knew that Principal Meng had the ambition to compete with The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. As part of the team of Ping Cheng High School, who would not favor Ping Cheng High School winning against The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China and becoming the top school in Ping Cheng? If the reputation of the school were to rise, their reputations would rise with it. As such, they would stand to gain as well.

Thus, not knowing why, the teachers were harboring different expectations for the third-year students this year.

"How's it going? Those who have finished matching your answers can come to my side to report the scores. It's been so long. Isn't there anyone who has completed the matching?" The teacher was extremely anxious. Sweat could be wrung out from the handkerchief in his hand.

In the past, they did not take so long to finish matching the answers.

If it was the year before, not to mention one, at least five or six students would have come forward to report their scores. What was the situation this year? Could it be that everyone had fared badly? Hence, they took so long to match the answers?

At the thought of this, the teachers felt their heart weakened. Not only their two lower limbs turned soft but their bottoms also trembled.

"Okay... The college entrance examination had already ended. Regardless of the outcome, it's fine as long as everyone had worked hard. Don't, don't be worried. After matching your answers, come here to report your scores. Don't be nervous, everyone. It, it's possible that the questions this year were more difficult. It's not just you. The students from other schools would feel the same way too. Everyone's situation is the same. The scores we gave only serve as reference points. The outcome is still dependent on the final admission scores of the various colleges. Come, don't feel burdened. Come and report your scores."

At this moment, almost all the third-year teachers expressed the same thing. It was fine if they did not do well. If the examination papers were difficult, everyone would not fare well.

No matter what, the students should come to the teachers first to report their scores and let them have a gauge of how the students in Ping Cheng High School had performed in the college entrance examination this year.

The form teacher was so anxious not because of other reasons. It was because Principal Meng had driven to and arrived at the school early this morning. He had been sitting in the office and waiting for their news.

Principal Meng sat in his office. Although he did not move his legs, he had been knocking his hands on the table.

If the overall results of the college entrance examination really improved this year, this would mean that, during this time next year, the results of Qiao Nan's cohort would not be worse than this. Coupled with the top individual scorers such as Qiao Nan and Shi Qing, Ping Cheng High School would finally succeed.

On the contrary, if the results of this year's college entrance examination were not satisfactory or similar to the past...

If that was the case, Principal Meng was aware that the hopes of Ping Cheng High School becoming the top school in Ping Cheng would be dashed. If they had the wish to subdue The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, they would have to wait a few years more.

It was not possible for Ping Cheng High School to scale to greater heights or even be the top in the province by just relying on the two top individual scorers alone.

As such, the results of both the current and upcoming year cohorts would have a great impact on Ping Cheng High School.

"Principal..."

"Teacher Hu, you're here. Quickly come in. How's it? What is the outcome of the matching for your third-year class one?"

"Principal, our class has completed the matching."

“Principal...”

None came previously. Principal Meng had been on tenterhooks and waiting in his office for over an hour. Now, everyone came together at the same time. Principal Meng quickly said, “No hurry. One by one. We’ll start according to the classes. Begin with third-year class one.”

“Principal, take a look. Here’s my record.” There was a list in Teacher Hu’s hands. On the list, there were corresponding names and the matriculation numbers of the students. The scores behind the list were filled in manually by Teacher Hu after the students matched their answers.

Facing this list of results, Teacher Hu looked like he was in a great dilemma. He had a feeling that was indescribable.

“This... Is it real?” Principal Meng stared at the list and looked at Teacher Hu doubtfully.

Teacher Hu smiled bitterly. “Principal Meng, you’re not the only one who doesn’t believe this. The students who scored these results didn’t believe it either at first. They matched two to three times before they dared to report the scores to me. Otherwise, we would not have come so late.”

After the teachers of the rest of the classes heard that, they handed in the scores of their respective classes one by one. “Principal Meng, do you want to look at them together?” It sounded like every class had a similar ‘odd situation’.

The lists of results came so late today because the students in their classes doubted their scores. Hence, they matched two to three times before confirming that the scores were correct.

There were also the more careful ones who matched four or five times.

“This...” Looking at all the results, Principal Meng was a little dumbfounded. “Could there have been a mistake?”

“There shouldn’t be. The students in our class matched the results at least twice. Those who did more matched five times before they dared to report the scores to me.” If there was a mistake, then it would be very strange, unless there were problems with the answers that they announced, or if the students had remembered their answers incorrectly.

Putting these two reasons aside, the results on the lists were basically as such. There should not be too much deviation.

“Great, great!” Hearing the replies from all the teachers, the emotional voice of Principal Meng trembled slightly. “Remember to keep a secret of the results of your respective classes. After all, this is just an estimation. The outcome may not be the same. Hence, we can’t leak the news out. In particular, we can’t let the people from The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China know about this. Understand?”

“We know.” With such results, they dared not say it even if the principal asked them to. They were afraid that others would think that they were boasting upon hearing it. They were more concerned that, if either of the two reasons for the deviation appeared, Ping Cheng High School would lose all its face instead of gaining any.

As part of the team in Ping Cheng High School, why would they do such a foolish thing?

“Right, did the students say anything?” After calming down, Principal Meng thought about the reactions of the third-year students.

“What each of them reflected to us was similar. They still doubt if the results are real.” The teachers did not know whether to laugh or cry. “They were in shock too and dared not say much. They also said that, after the examinations, they did not say much when their parents asked them about it. They hope to bring it up only after the results are announced. They’re afraid that they’ll make a mistake on this and rejoice too soon.”

Now, to everyone in Ping Cheng High School, the results of this year’s college entrance examination were both exciting and tense.

Chapter 677: You Celebrate Too Soon

In previous years, there were many cases whereby they made a wrong estimation of the results.

In order not to rejoice too soon, the students of Ping Cheng High School would be reluctant to tell their parents the rough estimation of their results if they were unsure. They would only say that they performed averagely and gave general comments.

“How was it?” The students in Ping Cheng High School tried to estimate their scores, and so did the students in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

As the principal of the school, Principal Wei and Principal Meng drove to their respective schools early in the morning and sat in their office, waiting for the teachers who were in charge of the third-year students this year to pass them the estimated scores of the students.

“Principal, the scores are very good.” The form teachers of the third-year classes were all smiles and there was a spring in their walk. Judging from their looks, Principal Wei knew that his school had performed well in the college entrance examination.

“Principal, take a look. This is the statistics. This year, the number of students from our school who are admitted to the university should be slightly higher than last year.”

With the increase in the number of students who were admitted to universities, their school’s enrollment rate had increased again.

“Good, that’s good.” Principal Wei looked through the data carefully before smiling and slapping on the table. “Good, the school’s enrollment rate this year has increased. All of the third-year cohort’s teachers will have bonuses.”

In the past, the enrollment rate of Ping Cheng High School was lower than that of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

This year, their enrollment rate had increased. Therefore, Ping Cheng High School must have fallen behind.

Good, brilliant! This year, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China would be able to have an astounding victory.

Next year, the top student in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China might not be better than the students at Ping Cheng High School, but they would be able to deal Ping Cheng High School a crushing defeat by having a high enrollment rate.

“Thank you, Principal Wei.” As soon as they heard that there would be bonuses this year, the third-year cohort’s teachers at The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China were elated.

The teachers had put in a lot of effort for this year’s college entrance examination. The students were not the only ones who had suffered. Like the students, the teachers had lost weight as well. There were many people who hoped to achieve such weight loss.

They had lost weight and earned more money. It was the best of both worlds for the female teachers in The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Their hard work was worth it!

“By the way, is there any news from Ping Cheng High School?” Principal Wei was anxious.

“I don’t know.” The vice principal of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China shook his head. “We didn’t hear any news from them. They are especially quiet. Principal, is it possible that, after Qiao Nan’s nonsense classes, the students have exceptionally poor results?” If so, Ping Cheng High School would have no chance of winning.

Yes, Qiao Nan and Shi Qing were really smart, but they only had chances of being the top student in the province. Things were not confirmed yet.

There were so many students in the province. It was not easy to be the top student.

“It shouldn’t be.” Principal Wei frowned. He felt restless as he did not have any news from Ping Cheng High School. His cheerfulness evaporated. “I heard that Ping Cheng High School started their revision early in the year and finished it. Even if Qiao Nan did not give them classes in the last week, according to Ping Cheng High School’s revision progress, they had arranged for the students to do self-revision. Do you really think that Meng Ping is someone to be trifled with? Would he do anything that he was uncertain of?”

Even if he allowed Qiao Nan to help with the revision, at the very least, Meng Ping must have ensured that all the third-year students had completed their revision.

“In the past few years, although the enrollment rate of Ping Cheng High School was lower than ours, they are not too far behind us. Although Qiao Nan wasted seven days of their time, they would not fare too badly. Get someone to keep a close watch on them and give me a call of any news.”

“Yes, Principal Wei.” The vice principal felt that the principal had groundless worries.

It was very important to revise before the college entrance examination. The last seven days were very crucial, yet Ping Cheng High School allowed a second-year student to waste such precious time. If Ping Cheng High School could maintain last year's enrollment rate, it would already be considered a miracle.

Principal Wei did not know what was on the vice principal's mind. If not, he would have told him not to rejoice too early, as extreme joy might turn to sorrow.

There was no news from Ping Cheng High School. Hence, Principal Wei was very worried.

It seemed to be the calm before the storm.

Principal Wei forced a smile on his face at the beautiful results slips. He hoped that he would have the last laugh, and that his worry was groundless.

In the blink of an eye, it was the day when the college entrance examination results would be released.

Qiao Nan was amused that Shi Qing woke up early in the morning and came to her house right away.

Initially, she had wanted to put aside the matter. But with Shi Qing around, there was no way that she could forget about it. "Shi Qing, why are you so anxious for others? We did not sit for the college entrance examination. Even though the results will be released today, do you think we will have the chance to join in the fun?"

If one was to check the grade, one would need the exam registration number.

This year, several classes in Ping Cheng High School sat for their college entrance examination and there were quite a number of students. She did not know any of their exam registration numbers. Even if Shi Qing stayed put at her house, there was no way that they would know the results.

"Hehehe, I have a way." Shi Qing flipped her hair arrogantly. "The students can call to check their results this morning. I heard that once the students know their results, they will make a phone call to report to their form teacher. You should know what will follow."

After the form teachers of the third-year classes learned of the results, it would not be long before Principal Meng learned about the results as well.

If the results were good, Principal Meng would definitely call to tell Qiao Nan as soon as he knew the results.

Anyway, to Shi Qing, if the students did well for the college entrance examination, it would be Qiao Nan's credit. If not, the responsibility was on the teachers and the students.

Shi Qing had the feeling that Principal Meng would definitely call Qiao Nan today.

"Fine, you can wait here." Qiao Nan could not be bothered with Shi Qing, and there was nothing to worry about. "Shi Qing, shall we find a cooling place? The weather is too hot." Qiao Nan did not care about the results of the college entrance examination. Her only concern was to find a place so that she could escape from the scorching heat.

Indeed, a calm heart kept you cool.

If Qiao Nan focused on her studies, even though the weather was hot, she could ignore it and concentrate on her homework.

But that was only for the time being. She could not tolerate the heat for a long period of time.

Qiao Nan felt like crying at the heat rashes on her skin. She felt slightly better after applying some prickly heat powder and using the Florida Water during her shower.

However, Qiao Nan did not like the feeling of being sweaty and sticky every day.

"It will be the same everywhere in such weather." Shi Qing, who was used to the lifestyle in the army, was more tolerant of hot weather than Qiao Nan. "Qiao Nan, I realize that you can't stand hot weather."

"Yeah." Qiao Nan wiped her perspiration, feeling warmer by the seconds. Actually, she was not that intolerant to hot weather in her previous life.

Chapter 678: The House Had to be Taken Back?

What was wrong with her in this life? She seemed to be having a hard time every summer and would always lose her appetite and weight in summer.

Not only was Qiao Nan afraid of heat, but she also had a bad appetite, and she did not feel like going out. She preferred to stay at home.

Last year, if not for her master's, Lin Yuankang, request, Qiao Nan would stay at home during summer.

“Look at you. How are you going to sit for next year's college entrance examination?” Shi Qing began to worry about Qiao Nan. “I have heard from my dad that quite a lot of students fainted during the college entrance examination. Even though the school had implemented a lot of measures, like giving water and towels, but a lot of problems cropped up regardless.”

“Of course. There are a lot of external and internal factors for the college entrance examination. The college entrance examination is strict, and the teachers will keep a lookout for any form of cheating. Even if the water is provided, in order to prevent the students from cheating, the teachers in the examination room are on their guard. Will you feel comfortable if the teacher stares at you while you drink water? Every candidate knows the importance of the college entrance examination. This pressure alone is very hard on the students. They would not be able to take it under the external and internal pressure.”

There were a lot of cases in China wherein trouble arose during the college entrance examination.

“There's an old saying in China, which is to reach a state where there are favorable climate, geographical position, and the support of the people. It is difficult to have the support of the people, and they do not have a favorable climate and geographical position. Moreover, they have to suffer under hot weather. It is not easy on the students who sit for the college entrance examination.” She did not need to take the exams but she was already melting under the heat even when she stayed inside her house with the fan blowing at her. The college entrance examination next year would be a big problem for her.

“Qiao Nan, I have told my dad a few days ago about what you mentioned to me previously. My dad seemed to ponder it. Do you think that it is possible for the college entrance examination to be held in June next year?” The weather in July and June were very different.

As Qiao Nan had said, the external factors for the exam were very important.

The students had to withstand tremendous stress. If they had to deal with the hot weather as well, they might not be able to take it.

“Well...” Qiao Nan was stunned. She had not expected that her occasional complaints would have such an impact.

In her previous life, China changed the timing of the college entrance examination in 2003. Of course, it had nothing to do with a small character like her.

Was it possible that she was the person who sparked off the change in the timing for the college entrance examination in this life?

“That I am not very sure. I suppose it’s not that easy to change the timing. Besides, your dad is not from the Education Bureau.” Qiao Nan turned her head and put aside that thought. “Actually, you don’t have to worry too much. It’s true that I lose my appetite and weight in summer, but if you look at it, it’s already late July now, so the weather is hot. When we sit for the college entrance examination, it will be in early July. The temperature will not be as high in early July.”

When it was around the end of July to early August, the temperature would be shooting up.

Ring! The phone at the Qiao family’s residence rang at this time.

Shi Qing had the biggest reaction as soon as the phone rang. She jumped from her seat and grabbed the phone. “Hello, Principal Meng, yes, she is at home. I will pass the phone to Qiao Nan.”

Shi Qing arched her eyebrows at Qiao Nan, gesturing to her that she was right. Principal Meng would definitely make a phone call to Qiao Nan.

Qiao Nan pursed her lips and took over the phone. “Hello, Principal Meng, I am Qiao Nan.”

“Qiao Nan, there are two pieces of good news. Which do you want to hear first?” Principal Meng sounded excited.

Qiao Nan was baffled. What Principal Meng said sounded odd. Generally speaking, one would say that they had two pieces of news—good news and bad news—and asked which one the other party wanted to listen to first.

If both were good news, how should she choose? Should she go by size?

“Hahaha, I am muddleheaded. I should say that I have two pieces of good news here. One is more related to you than the other. Which do you want to hear first?”

“In general, we should start from the less related, but I like to do otherwise. I will listen to the good news that is more related to me first.”

Qiao Nan felt as if she was talking to children. She tried very hard to suppress her laughter.

Not to mention Qiao Nan, Shi Qing also covered her mouth to hold in her laughter. Why did the conversation between the two of them turn out to be like this?

“The good news that is more related to you is that the house that you are staying in will be yours.”

Qiao Nan dug her ear. “Principal, I didn’t hear it clearly. What did you say?”

“In the future, the house that you live in will belong to you.”

“Huh?” Qiao Nan blinked in confusion. Was she suffering from heatstroke that she had hallucinations? “Principal, are you kidding?”

It was already good enough that they could stay for three years in the house provided by the school for free. After all, no matter how outstanding the students were, it was considered very good to be exempted from paying tuition and miscellaneous fees. Even if the school was to provide housing, they would only allow the students to live in the house and would not allow the whole family to stay in the house for free.

Qiao Nan felt that Ping Cheng High School and Principal Meng had showered her with kindness and she was grateful to them, so she felt that she must return the favor. That was why she sacrificed her time during the summer break to go to school every day to spot the exam questions for the third-year students.

Otherwise, Qiao Nan would have rejected Principal Meng's request.

Since she had been on the receiving end of the school's kindness, she had no other choice but to agree to the request.

All her neighbors knew that Ping Cheng High School allowed Qiao Nan and her father to stay in the house for free.

Because of this, the neighbors treated Qiao Nan as the role model and wanted their children to follow in her footsteps.

It would do one good to excel in their studies and they would definitely have a bright future. Qiao Nan was the best example. She had good results and the school even provided lodgings for her. Of course, the premise was that she must have good results.

As a result, Qiao Nan had taken on three tutoring jobs this summer break.

If Qiao Nan did not reject more offers and that Qiao Dongliang felt that she had taken on too many jobs, given her popularity, she would be able to start a class in the small quad.

This was because not only did the neighbors want Qiao Nan to tutor their children, but their colleagues also heard that Qiao Nan was good in her results and that the school provided lodgings for her, so all of them wanted Qiao Nan to tutor their kids and open a class.

Right then, Principal Meng suddenly told Qiao Nan that not only could she and her father stay for three years in the house for free, but they could stay in the house forever. Qiao Nan almost fainted for having something fallen into her lap. "Principal Meng, didn't you mention that the house belongs to a retired teacher?"

The house belonged to someone else. Could the principal act on his own accord and give her the house?

“Yes, the retired teacher had just come back from abroad this year. He is getting on in years and does not wish to live overseas, so he wants to return to his home.”

“Oh, then... then my dad and I should find a place to move as soon as possible?” Qiao Nan panicked. Since the owner was back, she and her father had to leave.

There was such a huge difference between telling her that she had to move and that the house was hers.

Chapter 679: A Big Reward

“Don’t be anxious. Listen to me first. The teacher is not from Ping Cheng. Previously, he was assigned to work in Ping Cheng. The house was actually assigned to them by the school. They want to spend their old age in their hometown and want to sell the properties in Ping Cheng.”

The matter was very simple. The children of the retired teacher had been doing well in their careers and bought a lot of properties overseas. They asked their parents to live with them overseas.

But as Chinese people, they felt that, when they were advanced in years, they wanted to go back to their hometown where they were close to their ancestors so as to have a sense of security.

Originally, since the two elderly were not in good health, they should have handed all their properties to their children.

However, their children were doing well and did not need their properties. Moreover, they had already entrusted the school to manage the house that Qiao Nan stayed in. They would like for the school to assign the house to people who made contributions to the school but had difficulties in finding lodging.

The children felt that, since the house was originally allocated to their parents by Ping Cheng High School, and what was taken from the people should be used in the interests of the people, they decided to return the house to the school and let them decide what to do with the house.

Though there were a lot of people who were greedy and would never say no to money, there were also those who had progressive ideas and were open-minded.

Furthermore, they were used to living in big cities and living abroad. They might not be willing to return to Ping Cheng to live in a small quad. Even if they sold the house, compared to their properties, it would not worth much and they could use the time and effort to spend on other more worthwhile matters.

Therefore, returning the house to the school was the most straightforward solution.

The timing was just right.

The two retired teachers went back to Ping Cheng High School to learn more about the recent developments of the school. Coincidentally, the results of the college entrance examination were released and they took the time to look at the results.

They were surprised that Ping Cheng High School had such good results in the college entrance examination, and they made huge improvements. Two years ago, when they called to check on the school, their results were still far behind.

The principal told them of Qiao Nan's contribution to the school.

All of the students who reported their results to their form teachers would remark that Qiao Nan was very accurate in her spotting of questions and had been a great help to them.

If they were not from the same school and did not know of Qiao Nan's abilities, or if Qiao Nan did not come in fifth place when she sat for the test with them on that day, they would be suspicious of her.

They would have suspected that Qiao Nan had already seen the examination papers of the college entrance examination.

In fact, all of the students from Ping Cheng High School were given a shock when they received the exam papers.

Back then, the teachers in the examination room had thought that these students were frightened by the difficulty level of the exam papers.

The teachers in the examination room paid particular attention to these students and realized that all of them were from Ping Cheng High School.

In fact, the students from Ping Cheng High School could not believe that they would be so lucky. Even after sitting for the exams and waiting for the results at home, they still could not get over the surprise.

It was only when they were told of their exact scores on the phone did they feel that everything was true. In the past two weeks, they felt as if they were dreaming.

Only worldly-wise men would become principals.

Principal Meng did not expect that getting Qiao Nan to help students spot the questions would turn out to be a brilliant move.

He was merely returning a favor with a favor. Since the retired teachers had the intention, Principal Meng went with their wishes and gave the house to Qiao Nan.

All the teachers in Ping Cheng High School had been allocated houses.

Moreover, high school teachers had a pretty high salary, and the country placed importance on them, hence their salaries increased every year. The teachers also enjoyed other benefits provided by the school. Thus, the teachers in Ping Cheng High School had been doing well.

Since everyone had been doing well, if Principal Meng was to allocate the house to one of the teachers, it might spell trouble and the good intentions would have opposite effects.

It so happened that the results of the college entrance examination were released. Hence, Principal Meng told the two retired teachers about Qiao Nan's situation and her family.

They heard that Qiao Nan's mother was muddleheaded and biased, and she almost robbed Qiao Nan of the chance to continue with her studies.

Upon learning that Qiao Nan might have to quit school if the school had not lent their house to her, their hearts ached at the hardships that such a talented girl like Qiao Nan had to go through.

So, when Principal Meng raised his concerns and suggestions, the two retired teachers agreed readily.

However, they would like to see Qiao Nan before transferring the house to Qiao Nan.

After understanding the circumstances of the matter, Qiao Nan was very moved. “Principal Meng, thank you.”

“This is the first matter. There is another piece of good news. This year, the college entrance examination results of Ping Cheng High School may break the record.” Principal Meng was all smiles on the other end of the phone. “I will let you know the details when I receive the results slips given by the Education Bureau.”

“Oh, okay.” Principal Meng did not go into details, and Qiao Nan was confused. But at least, she understood that Ping Cheng High School did pretty well in the college entrance examination this year.

Breaking the record. That was a daring way of putting it.

“How is it? I have said that the results will be very good this year and the principal will definitely give you a call. What’s the situation now?” Shi Qing had been waiting by the side. She was excited and enthusiastic, as if she was the one, instead of Qiao Nan, who spotted the questions for the third-year students.

“Principal Meng only said that it is possible that we will break the record and that this year could be the best results that Ping Cheng High School has ever seen so far. As for the details, he will need to wait until he receives the results slips from the relevant department.” Qiao Nan looked to be in a daze.

“Goodness, record-breaking? Are the results that good or has Ping Cheng High School been performing badly?” Shi Qing had estimated that the results would be good, but she did not expect that it would break the record. Was it an exaggeration?

“Apart from The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China, Ping Cheng High School is the next first-tier high school in Ping Cheng. What do you think?” Qiao Nan glanced at Shi Qing. “Besides, it may be that the students performed well and the teachers have taught them well. It is not my credit.”

“Alright, I understand. I won’t create trouble for you. You still have one year to go in Ping Cheng High School. If you take all the credit this time, you will be in for trouble in the following year.” Shi Qing was amused. She knew that if one had too great an achievement, their boss would feel uneasy or insecure.

It was rare that the school would do so well in the college entrance examination. All of the third-year cohort’s teachers must be thrilled and hopeful of an increase in their salaries and bonuses.

Chapter 680: Utter Anguish

Everybody would be displeased if Qiao Nan took all the credit.

“Alright, stop laughing. I am telling the truth. The credit has to go to the teachers who taught them for three years, and the third-year students who studied hard during their three years of high school. If the students just entered high school and I helped them spot the exam questions, they would not be able to do as well.”

“That’s true.” Shi Qing finally turned serious. “Alright, I understand what you mean. I have indeed become overly proud of the results. By the way, I heard the mention of houses? What were you referring to? Does the school want to take back the house and want you to move out? It can’t be, right?”

Even though Qiao Nan could not take all the credit for the good results in the college entrance examination, at the very least, she contributed to their success.

Qiao Nan helped the school make huge improvements in their results, yet the school wanted her to move out? It was impossible.

“The school did not want us to move, but it’s complicated. The principal wants me to go to school tomorrow.”

“You have to go to school again!” Shi Qing was shocked. “Perhaps Principal Meng wants to treat you to a meal? I don’t understand as well. You were not sitting for the college entrance examination, yet you went to school as frequent as the third-year students.”

Previously, although it was summer break, she had to go to school as she needed to spot the exam questions for the students.

Tomorrow, the third-year students would receive their report card and then consider which university they wanted to go to. What would Qiao Nan be doing there?

“I am not sure. Since Principal Meng asked me to go, I have to.” Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. She was intolerant to heat, yet she had to keep going outdoors during the hot summer.

“Do you want me to accompany you?”

“No need...”

“Are you sure?”

“Forget it. You’d better accompany me to school.” Qiao Nan thought of the previous conversation with Principal Meng on the phone. She decided to bring Shi Qing along such that she could help her if anything cropped up.

The results of the college entrance examinations across the country were released. The atmosphere in the school was as blazing hot as the temperature in July.

Some were happy while some were sad upon getting their detailed report cards.

“Principal Meng?” The teachers of Ping Cheng High School, especially the first- and second-year cohorts’ teachers, were shocked when they saw the results. As for the third-year cohort’s teachers, they were mentally prepared, so they were not as surprised.

“Haha, good, excellent! By the way, have the results of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China been released? Give me a copy.” Principal Meng was all smiles when he saw that the actual results were similar to the results that the students had calculated after finishing the exams and checking through the answers back in school.

“I am in the midst of it.”

Principal Meng was anxious to know the results of The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Similarly, Principal Wei was also trying to get his hands on the results of Ping Cheng High School.

Each of them regarded the other party as their opponent. While they were concerned about their school's results, they were just as concerned about the results of the opposing school.

"Have the results of Ping Cheng High School been released? How many of them fall within the cut-off point for the first-tier universities? How many of them for the second-tier universities and how many for the third-tier universities? What is the enrollment rate?" Principal Wei was not interested to know the other details.

Unless they were the top students, it would be good enough to know how many of them qualified for the cut-off point for the first-tier, second-tier, and third-tier universities. The small difference in the marks did not matter. It would only matter when they entered college and wanted to apply for a scholarship.

"Here they are." The vice principal's expression was solemn. He did not feel like looking at the report card of Ping Cheng High School.

"What's wrong?" Principal Wei's heart jumped a bit. The vice principal was beaming in the morning, but he looked terrible right now. "Is there any problem? Bring it over to me." Principal Wei took the report card from the vice principal and scrutinized it. His expression darkened when he saw Ping Cheng High School's results.

Minutes ago, he was elated at the good results of his school, but now, the cheerfulness had evaporated.

Principal Wei waited a good while before he tore the report card of Ping Cheng High School. "Alright, Ping Cheng High School and our school are two different schools. We only have to focus on doing our best. At most, Ping Cheng High School will get to have good results for one more year. It doesn't matter."

"Yes, Principal Wei," the vice principal replied meekly. He did not dare to be as confident and arrogant as he used to be or look down on the methods that Ping Cheng High School used.

After all, the results were there for everyone to see. They were not fooling around. He no longer mocked their innovation. Instead, he commended them for their courage.

The vice principal was given the shock of his life. How did Ping Cheng High School manage to score such astoundingly good results?

He would feel slightly better if the good results were due to the combined efforts of the teachers and students in Ping Cheng High School.

But the problem was that the second-year student who helped spot questions seemed to have made a difference as well!

If possible, the vice principal would also like for his second-year student to spot the questions for the third-year students. But not every second-year student was capable of doing that.

That second-year student in Ping Cheng High School was a geek!

If two years ago...

The vice principal and Principal Wei were thinking about the same thing. Two years ago, when he first heard that the top student in the province for the middle school examination had enrolled into Ping Cheng High School, like Meng Ping, he should have made use of his influence to get Qiao Nan to come to his school. Had he done so, the success that Ping Cheng High School had right now would belong to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China.

If they did well for this year, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China no longer needed to be wary of Ping Cheng High School.

Ping Cheng High School would have fallen far behind them.

If he made sure that the teachers paid attention to Qiao Nan's studies and that she scored the highest mark for the college entrance examination, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China would secure its position as the best high school in Ping Cheng.

Back then, he heard that Qiao Nan did not even consider going to The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China. Hence, he was not interested in getting Qiao Nan to come to their school.

Qiao Nan was, after all, the top student in the province for the middle school examination. She had the potential to be the top student in the college entrance examination!

The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China might have a long history of good results, but their students did not come in the first place in the college entrance examination. No matter how well they performed, they were still a distance from being the best!

Ping Cheng High School was able to do well for the college entrance examination this year. Next year, Qiao Nan would still be able to spot questions for the students.

If Ping Cheng High School continued to have such good results for the college entrance examination next year, the top student would be from that school!

Principal Wei felt like spitting blood at the thought of that. He felt more anguished than the vice principal.

If that happened, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China would not be able to become the best high school in Ping Cheng. Instead, Ping Cheng High School would surpass them, becoming the best high school!!

Principal Wei felt nothing but anguish as he watched helplessly while his ambitious dream extinguished before him. On the other hand, Meng Ping was able to achieve it effortlessly with Qiao Nan's help.