

Rebirth to a Military Marriage: Good Morning Chief Novel Chapter 11 To 15

Chapter 11: Hate Them All

The times now were unlike the times before Qiao Nan's rebirth where people usually paid with hundred yuan big bills. Looking at the stash of money in her hands, the smallest denomination was only one cent, and even the largest denomination was only one yuan.

Qiao Nan counted the bills, it actually added up to a little more than ten yuan.

In the late 80s to early 90s, the value of money was much higher, this ten yuan was worth so much more than one hundred yuan in the 21st century.

In her previous life, she had used this ten yuan to buy a pair of black leather western style shoes for Qiao Zijin, matched with a dress.

Qiao Zijin wore this outfit that she spent ten yuan on to the new high school.

In this life, she would not spend a single cent on Qiao Zijin anymore!

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Qiao Nan went out with that "large amount of money"; Qiao Zijin could not stop her no matter what she did.

By the time Ding Jiayi reached home, Qiao Nan had already been away for more than an hour. Ding Jiayi wiped her hands and asked, "Where is Qiao Nan?"

Qiao Zijin had a look of worry on her face. "Mom, Nan Nan was looking for her secondary one and two textbooks today."

Ding Jiayi was lost for words.

"Nan Nan seemed to have guessed that you sold her textbooks. When she left just now, I wanted to stop her but I couldn't. Mom, do you think Nan Nan would go to look for Dad?"

This was very nerve racking for Qiao Zijin. Qiao Nan used to hate it when Dad and Mom quarreled because of her. But now why would she go to Dad for the most trivial things and cause them to get into an argument?

“I must have owed her in my previous life, and I had to pay the debts in this life!” Ding Jiayi took off the apron that she just put on and threw it on the floor out of spite. “In order to have her, your Dad and I lost our cradle-to-grave jobs. Your Dad used to be a company commander in the army and was about to be promoted to battalion commander, But all because of her, your Dad has nothing now! She ruined your Dad’s career, and now she still wants to ruin your life?!”

Ding Jiayi really regretted having a second child.

If she had not had a second child, Old Qiao would definitely be a battalion commander by now, and she would be the wife of a battalion commander. As for her government job, although it was just simple chores, it was leisurely work.

Though without the second child, their family would not be the eye of envy of others, at least she would be able to hold her head up high in the quad.

The Qiao couple’s future was completely ruined because of the second child. It was not wrong of her to say that she owed her younger daughter in her previous life!

She spent all those years bringing up the younger daughter, yet she was of no help at all. All she could do was to splurge and create troubles, causing a strain to her relationship with Old Qiao.

What sins had she committed to give birth to such a daughter?!

Qiao Zijin listened while Ding Jiayi raked up the old stories. It was a surprise that she kept quiet all along.

Actually deep down inside, Qiao Zijin hated Qiao Nan as much as Ding Jiayi. However, unlike Ding Jiayi, while she hated Qiao Nan for taking away her chance to be the daughter of a battalion commander, she also hated her parents Qiao Dongliang and Ding Jiayi.

Why did they need a second child? Why did they need a boy? Weren’t they happy with her?

If Qiao Nan had been a boy, her mother would definitely do everything for him, including spending all the money, not to mention losing her cradle-to-grave job.

When the time came, instead of Qiao Nan, the elder daughter would be the one to bear the wrath of her mother's anger.

Qiao Zijin knew that there was nothing wrong with the birth of Qiao Nan; the problem lay with the fact that Qiao Nan was a daughter. She was not the son that her parents were willing to sacrifice their cradle-to-grave jobs for.

Lost in thought, Qiao Zijin dug at a scar on her palm.

She was two years old then and her mother was pregnant. All she wanted was to hug her mother's leg. But her mother pushed her off to a side, for fear that she would knock into her protruding stomach. She fell and hurt her hand then.

More than ten years had passed, the wound had healed but it left a scar forever.

Qiao Nan was totally unaware of what happened while she was away from home. She knew little of the complicated feelings that Qiao Zijin had.

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She took the money and went to a thrift shop.

"Young lady, do you have scrap to sell?" The uncle at the thrift shop wore an old blue cotton hat. His face and hands looked clean and his clothes did not seem to be dirty.

Qiao Nan shook her head, "Uncle, I am not here to sell things, instead I would like to buy some stuff."

The uncle found it weird, "Why would you come to my place to buy stuff? What do you intend to buy?"

Qiao Nan took a glance and said, "Uncle, do you have textbooks here, I would like to take a look at secondary three books."

The uncle blinked a few times but did not probe, "If you don't find it dirty, just go ahead and look for the books you want. We can decide on the price based on whatever you find."

“Alright, thank you, uncle.”

The slight smell and messiness of the thrift shop did not bother Qiao Nan at all, she started to search conscientiously.

Every year there would be a batch of junior high school graduates. And just like Ding Jiayi, there were quite a lot of people who would sell the textbooks.

So it only took Qiao Nan a while to find the junior high school textbooks.

Qiao Nan must have been lucky. Not only did she find the textbooks she wanted, the notes were neat and tidy, with detailed solutions to the problems.

At one glance, Qiao Nan could tell which books belonged to the same owner of the textbooks she found. She took out all the books with the similar handwritings, including some exercise books.

After some picking and choosing, aside from the main subjects, Qiao Nan also managed to find a few workbooks from the same owner.

Judging from the paper quality, Qiao Nan surmised that the workbooks were not cheap and seemed to be foreign goods.

“Oh, you have managed to pick a pile of books?” The uncle walked over and saw the big pile of books stacked nicely besides Qiao Nan. He knew that these must be the books Qiao Nan wanted.

“Yes.” Qiao Nan’s face was wet with sweat, she casually wiped it off with the back of her hand, leaving a few streaks of dirt on her fair and pretty small face.

At the sight of the delicate pretty young lady with a dirty looking face, the uncle laughed, “That’s quite a few books, will you be able to carry them back?”

The uncle’s question made Qiao Nan stumped for words. The books she picked were pretty heavy. She could made a few trips to bring them back, but where could she keep them at home?

If her mother saw the books, she would definitely throw the books away as soon as she bought the books home.

Furthermore there was no point telling her father. He had to work and could not stay at home everyday. Once he leave for work, her mother would not let her keep the books.

Qiao Nan had painstakingly found the books she wanted, this was a chance she did not want to miss. What she could do now was to ask the uncle for help.

“Uncle, I am buying these books. Could you put them aside for me, I will just be away for a short while? If you are worried, I can pay first?”

The uncle waved his hands, “It’s alright, I’ll keep the books for you.”

Aside from this young lady who came to the thrift shop to buy books, everyone came with the intention to sell things.

“Thank you, uncle.” Qiao Nan smiled gratefully at the uncle and took off at a run.

Over at Zhai’s house, Zhai Hua who just woke up was brushing her teeth with a cup in her hands. She saw a young lady pacing outside the doorway, contemplating to go inside the house or not.

Zhai Hua spat out the toothpaste foam and rinsed her mouth. She did not know who exactly this young lady was.

Chapter 12: Inside Story

Face dripping with water, Zhai Hua went to the study room and asked Zhai Sheng who was reading. “There’s a young lady outside, go and take a look and see if you know her, I don’t think you do?”

Her younger brother’s hobbies were not inclined towards either gender. To think that last time, she thought that something rare had happened, that her brother had finally been enlightened.

Zhai Sheng closed the book and walked towards the door.

Zhai Hua was stunned – the young lady was really here for her brother?

Zhai Hua would not miss out on the fun; she craned her neck and peered outside through the window.

Zhai Sheng who knew Zhai Hua very well, closed the door sharply right after he went out. Zhai Hua could not even catch a glimpse of what was happening outside, stomping her foot in frustration.

The young lady that Zhai Hua mentioned was really Qiao Nan. Zhai Sheng looked her up and down; thankfully, except for the dirty-looking face, the young lady did not have any injuries or bloodstains. "Is anything the matter?"

Qiao Nan gave him a silly smile. Besides Zhai Sheng, there was no-one that she could ask a favor of. "Brother Zhai, do you have some space that I could put some stuff, but I would need to come over occasionally to use them?"

"What stuff do you want to keep?"

"Books."

Zhai Sheng puckered his thin lips, "Is your Mom giving you trouble again?"

He remembered that Qiao Nan mentioned yesterday that her mother did not intend to let her continue her studies. "She wanted to sell your books?"

Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. "I have forgotten some of the knowledge learned from secondary one and two. Middle school examinations will be coming in one year's time. I would like to sit for college entrance examinations and get into a college."

"Sure, come with me." Zhai Sheng nodded. After all, he had given his word to Qiao Nan a few days ago that she could come to him for help if she faced any problems.

Staring at Zhai Sheng's broad, dependable back, Qiao Nan felt slightly at ease. Luckily Brother Zhai was willing to offer his help.

Brother Zhai appeared indifferent and aloof, but in fact he was a very kind-hearted person.

Zhai Sheng brought Qiao Nan to the backyard. There was a small hut by itself which was used to store groceries. But the hut had been emptied of groceries the past year and had been vacant since then.

Zhai Sheng handed two keys to Qiao Nan. "This is the key to the hut, while the other one is the key to the back door of my house. Don't lose them."

Qiao Nan blinked her eyes at Zhai Sheng, dumbfounded by his words. She knew that Brother Zhai was a good person, but this was too kind of him. How could he just give away the keys to the back door of his house so easily?

Was... Was this appropriate?

“Have you committed it to memory?” Zhai Sheng asked coldly.

“Yes!” Qiao Nan nodded her head quickly. “But is this appropriate?”

“Good, just bring the books over.” Zhai Sheng did not answer Qiao Nan’s question, but wanted her to bring the books as soon as possible.

“Oh, alright.” At the thought of the books, Qiao Nan dashed out in full speed as if she had the legs of a rabbit.

Once Qiao Nan left, Zhai Sheng went back inside the house and took a new light bulb for the storeroom. The light bulb in the storeroom has not been working since half a year ago, but since it was no longer used to store grocery, no-one had bothered to change it.

After changing the light bulb, Zhai Sheng took his desk and chair from the study room and put it in the storeroom.

“Oh, why did you shift them here?” Zhai Hua was bursting with curiosity when she saw Zhai Sheng moved the desk and chair to the storeroom. “What exactly is happening here? Why are the desk and chair here? Hey, you even changed the light bulb?”

Zhai Hua pulled the string. The storeroom which used to be dim and dark lit up brilliantly in an instant.

“This place is not for me. I lent it to Uncle Qiao’s younger daughter.” Zhai Sheng notified Zhai Hua in advance for fear that it might cause a misunderstanding when Qiao Nan returned with her books.

“Uncle Qiao’s younger daughter, do you mean Xiao Qiao?!” Zhai Hua said, “The young lady just now is Xiao Qiao? She looked quite pretty.”

“Xiao Qiao?” Zhai Sheng appeared clueless.

“In ‘Romance of the Three Kingdoms’ there were the Two Qiaos of Jiangdong, for us, it is the Two Qiaos of the quad.” Zhai Hua might not have know the people from Qiao family, but she definitely knew about the jokes going around the quad. “My brother, among the Two Qiaos of the quad, who is prettier, Da Qiao or Xiao Qiao?”

Zhai Sheng shot a cold stare at Zhai Hua. She froze over and gave an awkward smile. “I was just joking, just joking!”

Little brat, he really could not take a joke.

“Brother Zhai.” Qiao Nan puffed hard from the run, bringing some books from the thrift shop. She saw a charming big sister, though she seemed unctuous. “Zhai... is this your big sister?”

Qiao Nan never thought that she would run into another member from the Zhai family so quickly. She became tongue tied all of a sudden and addressed her in a funny way.

Zhai Hua had to bite her tongue. This was not the first time someone called her elder sister. But it was definitely the first time she had been called big sister. “You could address me as Sister Zhai Hua.”

“Sister Zhai Hua.”

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“There were only this many books?” Zhai Sheng took the books from Qiao Nan and put them aside.

“There are still more to go, I have to go for a few more rounds.”

“You go, I will be here.”

“Yes, alright.” Qiao Nan was still elated about resolving her two big problems. So when Zhai Sheng asked her to go ahead to bring the books, she ran out happily and did not bother to stay to chat with Zhai Hua.

Zhai Hua blinked and was dumbfounded that she was treated as if she was non-existent. She had never imagined that there would be a day where she would be disregarded to such extent.

Compared to her ice-cold brother, most people would be more than willing to be with her.

Zhai Hua touched her nose oddly and looked through Qiao Nan's books. She saw the handwriting on the books and her face hardened. She now looked somewhat similar to Zhai Sheng's usual expression, particularly her eyes, which seemed sharp as razors. "Zhai Sheng, what's all this about? Xiao Qiao was acquaintances with Peng Yu?"

Peng family did not get along well with Zhai family. Was there something suspicious about Qiao Nan?

Peng Yu was two years younger than Zhai Sheng, but he was as prominent as Zhai Sheng. Zhai Sheng was an all rounder, while Peng Yu has been hailed as genius military counselor in the army, known for his foresight and vicious nature.

If Xiao Qiao was sent by Peng family to get close to Zhai Sheng, she would stop at nothing to deal with her!

"Don't worry, Qiao Nan had nothing to do with the Peng family." Zhai Sheng said calmly and matter-of-factly.

"Oh." Gone was the Zhai Hua who was all smiles everyday. She now appeared very stern and serious. "Zhai Sheng, although it was a rare occurrence that you have finally grown up and I am glad that you have taken a fancy to ladies, you do not put the Zhai family reputation at stake. I would not allow you to put our family at risk. Given Peng Yu's character, if Xiao Qiao has nothing to do with Peng family, he would rather throw them away than give it to Xiao Qiao!"

Zhai Sheng curled his lips, "These books were thrown away by Peng Yu."

"What?" Zhai Hua arched her eyebrows, a look of disbelief on her face.

"Didn't you notice the smell coming from Qiao Nan?" Even though the smell was faint, he could still tell.

"Smell?" Zhai Hua asked uncertainly.

Chapter 13: 'Studious'

"It was only early autumn now, the weather was very hot, everyone was drenched in sweat and smelled terribly. I just praised you for finally

understanding the way of things and now you're all muddle-headed again. How could you tell a young lady that she smelled right to her face?"

Zhai Sheng curled one side of his lips in a sarcastic manner. "How did you even manage to get into the army back then? Just because you were all brawn and no brains and could serve as cannon fodder?"

Zhai Hua almost vomited blood. This blood brother of hers really had a sharp tongue!

"Qiao Nan must have bought these books from the thrift shop."

Zhai Sheng had really sharp eyes. Just from the smell of her and her dirty little face, he could tell where Qiao Nan had been before coming to Zhai's house.

Zhai Hua arched her eyebrows.

When Qiao Nan returned with another stack of books, Zhai Hua paid more attention to her instead of her gender.

What she saw was exactly what Zhai Sheng said. With that Zhai Hua finally relaxed and asked, "Why did you go to the thrift shop to get old books?"

And among all the books, you picked Peng Yu's books.

Qiao Nan smiled awkwardly. She could tell Brother Zhai of her family situation, but for no reasons, she just could not bring it herself to reveal it to Brother Zhai's elder sister.

"This is the study desk?" This time round Qiao Nan noticed that the storeroom's light bulb was working, and it was refurbished with a sturdy-looking study desk.

The study desk was sparkling clean and smooth. One could tell that it had been used regularly.

"That belonged to my sister. She seldom stays at home, leaving it with her would only gather more dust." Zhai Sheng mentioned.

"Thank you very much, Sister Zhai." Qiao Nan thanked Zhai Hua from the bottom of her heart. Not only did she has a place to keep her books, but she also had a study desk.

This storeroom was much better compared to Qiao Nan's learning environment at her house.

Qiao Nan rubbed at her eyes quietly. Heavens seemed to be quite nice to her. She was given a chance to have a new lease of life and was lucky enough to run into two kind hearted souls.

Zhai Hua arched her eyebrows and puckered her lips into an "O" shape. She threw a meaningful glance at Zhai Sheng. What was wrong with Xiao Qiao, was she touched to tears?

"Have you brought all the books back?" Zhai Sheng did not respond to Zhai Hua's look. Instead he flipped through the books that Qiao Nan brought back and realized that they were in series, from secondary one to secondary three.

"Yes, I have brought everything back." Qiao Nan said as she felt the pinch. She had painstakingly saved up the money for fifteen years and now she had to spend more than three yuan on these books.

Qiao Nan wondered how much her mother had sold her books for? Did it even amount to three yuan?

"Alright, I will leave this place to you." Zhai Sheng dragged Zhai Hua who did not seem to be leaving alongside with him, leaving no room for argument.

"What is wrong with you?" Zhai Hua beat Zhai Sheng on the back of his hand and said sullenly, "You are so nice to that young lady, offering her your study desk, and let me take the credit for it. I am your blood sister, why aren't you so nice to me?"

"By the way, what happened to Xiao Qiao, why did she need to buy books from the thrift shop?"

"What did you think was the reason?" Zhai Sheng looked askance at her; why would she ask when she already knew the answer?

Zhai Hua pulled at the corners of her mouth, "Young brat, is that how you treat your sister?"

Zhai Sheng rolled his eyes at Zhai Hua, not responding to her.

With such an unreliable sister who enjoyed setting him up, if not for his careful nature, he might have been totally screwed up long ago.

Zhai Hua glanced at Qiao Nan who was already studying in the storeroom. She then caught up to Zhai Sheng and stopped making comments regarding Qiao Nan's matter.

With no-one around to bother her, Qiao Nan pored over the books.

Qiao Nan had forgotten a lot of the Mathematics knowledge points. But she had studied them before, so with some reading up of the lessons, she still managed to grasp the concepts fairly fast.

As for Chinese, comprehension was pretty easy, but for those that required memorizing, she would have to do it from scratch.

In the blink of an eye, a day had passed. Qiao Dongliang had come back home from work. The first person that he called out for was his younger daughter.

Ding Jiayi breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed like Qiao Nan had not run off to look for Old Qiao. That wretched girl still had some conscience.

"There is no need to shout anymore, Qiao Nan went out to play, she is not at home." Ding Jiayi told Qiao Dongliang head on as he came in. "She is undoubtedly a young lady, but she craved fun and excitement more so than a young man, spending her time outside every single day. With such behavior, I reckoned that she would not survive secondary three. Did she really think that she could ace her three years of school with her petty tricks?"

Qiao Dongliang had a sip of water, wiped his sweaty face with a wet cloth and looked at Ding Jiayi, "I have made my stand, if Nan Nan would like to continue her studies, I will provide for her no matter what."

"All you say is you will provide, doesn't that require money?" Ding Jiayi was furious.

"Spend money? Can I not afford the money? My salary is not sufficient to pay for Nan Nan's education fees? Qiao Dongliang was boiling with anger. He would provide for the daughter that he had.

Ding Jiayi flushed with anger, “Do you even understand our situation here? Qiao Zijin is in high school now, the expenses are much higher than before, and there’s our household expenses as well, everything needs money! If Qiao Nan were to work, the household would have an extra income and incur less expenses, wouldn’t that be good?”

Qiao Dongliang pondered and said, “Even if Zijin wanted to enroll in high school and our expenses become higher, at most I could use my monthly pay to cover for all these and not set aside any money for savings. If there’s any unforeseen circumstances, we still have some savings, what’s there to worry about?”

Qiao Dongliang remembered that they have roughly more than five thousand yuan of savings, not much, but it should be enough for emergency use.

Ding Jiayi turned green with guilt upon hearing Qiao Dongliang mention the savings.

Qiao Dongliang did not notice Ding Jiayi’s expression; he was lost in thought, pondering whether he should come up with ways to earn more. He would never know that the five thousand plus yuan of hard earned savings that he spent years sloughing his guts out for, had in fact been used by Ding Jiayi as bribery to get their elder daughter to enroll in high school.

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The reason why Ding Jiayi wanted desperately for Qiao Nan to work, was not only because she did not want to provide for Qiao Nan; another reason was that they did not have any savings at all.

A wrinkled purse, a flustered Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi stomped her feet in nervousness. Once riled up, there was nothing one could do to hold Old Qiao back.

Good thing was that Old Qiao said that as long as that wretched girl agreed to quit school, he would not force her. So she would have to work on that wretched girl.

Ding Jiayi thought for a moment, it was an easy feat to stop Qiao Nan from going to school. But what was most difficult would be getting Qiao Nan to quit school of her own accord.

She had no idea what the wretched girl had been into these two days. Though useless she used to be obedient, nowadays she even refused to listen to her and Zijin.

“How about Zijin?” The younger daughter was not at home, the elder daughter was nowhere to be seen as well.

Ding Jiayi raised her chin happily, “Zijin said that she wanted to enter into the college. She did not do well for the middle school examination and wants to revise the knowledge points. Hopefully after she has enrolled in high school, she can catch up on her studies.”

“Okay.” Qiao Dongliang was pleased that his daughter was studious and would like to strive for excellence. “Make lots of good food for her, and don’t think of bullying Qiao Nan behind my back!”

Chapter 14: Continue Her Studies

Qiao Dongliang was full of anger.

His wife passed the younger daughter food with chopsticks, but would ask her to put back the meat. Qiao Dongliang just could not understand why would his wife do such a thing.

Ding Jiayi gritted her teeth, not rebutting what Qiao Dongliang said.

Ding Jiayi still remembered that day when they had a quarrel; Qiao Dongliang had closed the door and stared at her as if he wanted to swallow her up.

Qiao Dongliang’s anger remained. Ding Jiayi did not dare do anything to upset him.

“Dad.” Qiao Nan knew that Qiao Dongliang must have returned when she reached home.

Qiao Dongliang smiled, “Nan Nan is back, where did you go to play? It’s still hot now. You have just recovered from an illness, you must be careful not to go in the sun, do you understand?”

Qiao Nan turned and looked towards Ding Jiayi. It was no doubt her mother who spoke ill of her in front of her father, saying that she has been out for fun.

Ding Jiayi caught Qiao Nan's eye and glared at her, warning her to behave herself.

Ding Jiayi stood behind Qiao Dongliang, so he did not see the warning look that she gave their younger daughter.

Qiao Dongliang patted Qiao Nan's head, her fever has subsided by now and said, "Nan Nan, though your results and foundation are better than your sister, school reopens the day after tomorrow. If you have time, it would be good for you to stay at home to revise just like your sister."

Qiao Nan smiled, "Dad, Mum sold off all our junior high school textbooks. I would like to do some revision, but there's nothing for me to revise from. Middle school examinations will cover secondary one and secondary two content, now I am worried and don't know what to do. Besides, elder sister also does not have her textbooks. I wonder what is she reading in her room?"

"Sold?" Qiao Dongliang was stunned. He could not believe it and turned to look at his wife. "Where have you put Nan Nan's secondary one and secondary two textbooks? Nan Nan takes proper care of her books. Nan Nan mistakenly thinks you have sold them. Hurry up, take out the books now!"

Qiao Dongliang refused to believe that his wife would be so ruthless. He did not want to see the relationship between his wife and younger daughter turn sour.

The elder daughter had just had middle school examinations. His wife kept the textbooks, and insisted that the younger daughter who just started secondary two to revise secondary one and secondary two knowledge points with the elder daughter.

But when it was the younger daughter's turn to sit for the exams, his wife had sold the books. What was this?!

Ding Jiayi turned red. If not for Old Qiao, she would have beaten that younger daughter of hers who was bent on going against her.

"What are you waiting for, return Nan Nan's books to her now!"

"Return her books, what's there to return? I was the one who paid her school fees! Is there any mortar and brick in the house that belong to Qiao Nan?"

Qiao Dongliang drew a deep breath, “You paid her school fees, but did you earn that money? Stop all this nonsense, where are the books?”

“Very well, I stayed at home and worked my guts out for you, keeping busy all day long. Now you are telling me all this money is yours and I have no say at all! Old Qiao, how could you say this, where’s your conscience? What about all the efforts I put into this family, aren’t they considered contributions at all?”

Ding Jiayi burst into tears.

“Don’t try to change the topic. Where are Nan Nan’s books?”

Startled by Qiao Dongliang’s bellow, Ding Jiayi stopped crying. She could not help but snarl, “Everything is gone, there is nothing left. Since Zijin has graduated, there was no point in keeping the books. So I sold them off. But I sold her books by mistake as well.”

“By mistake?” Qiao Dongliang was amused by how Ding Jiayi was lying through her teeth. “Did it really slip your mind, or was it all part of your plan to stop Nan Nan from continuing her studies?”

Anyone could tell from these incidents whether his wife had done so intentionally or not. If Qiao Dongliang could not make out the truth, those years in the army were all for nothing.

No wonder his wife had refused to give Nan Nan medicine for her fever, and had even thrown the medicine away.

Old Ding must have planned for Nan Nan to be so sick that she could not enroll for school!

Old Ding must have harbored this thought of not letting Nan Nan enrol in school for ages. She definitely had not thought of it on the spur of the moment.

To think that when Nan Nan first told him that Old Ding wanted her to quit school, he thought that Nan Nan had misunderstood Old Ding. So after all, it was his daughter who had seen through Old Ding’s mind.

Now that everything was out in the open, Ding Jiayi no longer bothered to explain. But she refused to admit that she was in the wrong, “Didn’t she always score well? Don’t tell me she could not do well in her middle school

examination just because she did not have secondary one and secondary two textbooks?”

“Nan Nan, did you hear that, your Mom has agreed to let you continue with secondary three.” Qiao Dongliang smiled coldly. He stroked Qiao Nan on the head and picked on Ding Jiayi’s words, “Don’t worry Nan Nan, even if your Mom does not allow, I am the breadwinner of the family. I will earn the money to let you continue with your studies.”

“Thank you, Dad. Thank you, Mom!” Qiao Nan said at the top of her voice.

No matter what, she had finally gotten the opportunity to continue her studies. She would not need to quit school anymore.

Seeing that Ding Jiayi had turned green, Qiao Nan just couldn’t help but shout out in joy with a wicked thought in mind, “Dad, Mom has sold all the books, so what is sister reading in her room?”

What was Qiao Zijin so fascinated with? Her father and mother just had a big quarrel, yet she as a good daughter did not turn up at all?

Qiao Dongliang looked towards Ding Jiayi, who stiffened and said, “Zijin told me she wanted to read some books, how would I know what is she reading?”

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Ding Jiayi never doubted her beloved elder daughter’s words.

“Mom, you have always been ranting about money, complaining that there was not enough to spend. You bought high school books for sister in advance, wasn’t that a waste of money?”

“I didn’t.” Ding Jiayi shook her head.

She had spent all the savings in order to get Zijin into a good high school. How would she have money to buy high school books?

They were stunned by Ding Jiayi’s denial.

Flustered, Ding Jiayi walked to Qiao Zijin’s room. She knocked at the door lightly and said, “Zijin, Mom is coming in.”

Upon knocking the door, Ding Jiayi opened the door without waiting for Qiao Zijin’s reply.

Ding Jiayi stepped into Qiao Zijin's room and saw that her elder daughter's face was covered in tears, her eyes clouded with sadness.

Ding Jiayi's heart skipped a beat. Her elder daughter must have felt sorry for her Mom who was caught up in a quarrel with Old Qiao.

Ding Jiayi's heart melted. Her elder daughter was such a dear, she had to give extra love to her. She must think of ways to pave the path for her daughter's future.

"Ha..." Qiao Nan who followed right behind snorted and laughed when she saw the book that Qiao Zijin was holding in her hands. "Sister, so you are reading a novel. Seems like you are so engrossed in your novel, it must have been tiring for you."

The novel that Qiao Zijin was reading was none other than Mou Nainai's novels. Mou Nainai has been known to write novels regarding affairs in a marriage for quite a long period of time.

Qiao Dongliang overheard them and knitted his eyebrows, "You are reading novels, not revising? What is this novel about?"

Chapter 15: Fumble the Ball

By the time Qiao Dongliang snatched the novel from Qiao Zijin, only then did she realize that someone had entered her room.

Qiao Zijin flushed with embarrassment and said to Ding Jiayi, "Mom, why did you enter my room without knocking!"

"What kind of nonsense novel are you reading!" Qiao Zijin had stopped at a page where there was some saucy material. Qiao Dongliang took a few glances and was exasperated. "Did you coop yourself up in your room to read this kind of novel?"

Giving Qiao Zijin no time to react, Qiao Dongliang spread his two hands and tore up the novel. "You refuse to let Nan Nan study, and yet you have spare money to buy this for Zijin. Old Ding, let me ask you, do we have money or not?"

Qiao Dongliang saw that the novel was not cheap, and there was the elder daughter's name on the book. It was undoubtedly hers.

“I... I...” Ding Jiayi was dumbfounded. Old Qiao wanted his daughters to be well-educated and to have a promising future, so as to make up for his regret of being discharged from the army. This was the first time that she had seen Old Qiao tear up their daughter’s books.

“I didn’t.” Ding Jiayi hurried to explain. “I didn’t give Zijin money and I never knew that she bought books recently.”

Ding Jiayi felt that she had been treated unjustly. She had saved and scrimped at home and kept tight control on the meat and fish dishes at home in order to save some money to pull strings for Zijin.

She would never give Zijin extra money to buy these kind of novels.

Ding Jiayi had no idea what the novel was about. But judging from Qiao Dongliang’s reaction, when he only took a glance and tore it into pieces, intuition told her that there was nothing great about the book.

Out of curiosity, Qiao Nan picked up the book on the floor, and flipped to the last page.

She has been sisters with Qiao Zijin for two lives. She knew all the small habits that Qiao Zijin had.

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As expected, when Qiao Nan flipped to the last page, she saw some dates written on it. It dated back to more than half a year ago, around New Year last year.

Looking at the pages, there weren’t brand new. It meant that Qiao Zijin bought it more than half a year ago, and she had finished reading some time ago.

Qiao Nan calculated the dates, and realized that it had been during the most crucial part of the year where Qiao Zijin was sitting for her middle school examination. Qiao Zijin had spare money, yet she did not spend it on revision books, but wasted it on this kind of novel. No wonder Qiao Zijin had not been doing well in her exams, and that she only barely managed to make it to high school.

Qiao Dongliang used to serve in the army, he was more insightful than others.

Just one glance at Qiao Nan’s flipping actions and he knew what was going on. There was no need for Qiao Nan to say a word.

Qiao Zijin was sitting for her crucial middle school examination at that time, and yet she had the time to read novels. Thinking back on her results, Qiao Dongliang felt extremely disappointed.

Ever since he had been discharged from the army, he had pinned his hopes on his two daughters, hoping that they would have good prospects, and that was why he let them enrol in school.

He thought she was not as gifted but had tried her best, thus with the adequate results that she had, he had not scolded her at all for two whole months.

But now Qiao Dongliang knew the truth. Qiao Zijin did not put any effort into her studies at all.

“No wonder your results are less than satisfactory; this is where you have channeled your attention to.” Qiao Dongliang was puzzled, at such a young age, how did Qiao Zijin know about these romance novels?

Thinking back on the near seventeen years that he had spent bringing up his elder daughter, she had never shed a tear for her Dad. Yet she had cried her guts out for that book. Qiao Dongliang felt awful.

But he could not take it out on his daughter, so he ranted at Ding Jiayi. “She was preparing for her middle school examination and yet she was reading this sort of immoral book. How could she possibly get good results?! Zijin’s heart was not set on studying and you forced her to study. On the other hand, Nan Nan had been performing well all along, yet you wanted her to quit school. What do you mean by that?!”

Qiao Dongliang grabbed the book from Qiao Nan and threw it into Ding Jiayi’s face.

Her face was not hurt, but her pride did. However Ding Jiayi could not rebut a word now. “Zijin, why did you...”

Why did she have to fumble the ball at such a juncture?

Ding Jiayi never imagined that her elder daughter would be reading novels instead of revising in such a crucial half-year period.

On the other hand, even though Qiao Nan wanted to study at home, Ding Jiayi would always order her around, asking her to run errands and to clean up the house.

Qiao Zijin still had a buzzing sound in her ears. She was totally baffled, scared out of her wits.

Whenever Qiao Zijin was reading, no-one in the house would disturb her.

In particular today, she made it a point to tell Ding Jiayi that she was going to study. As always, Ding Jiayi would not let anyone disturb her or go into her room.

Because there was Ding Jiayi around, Qiao Zijin read her novel without a care.

The story had reached a climax, Qiao Zijin was totally absorbed in the plot, sobbing terribly for the couple who were forced to stay apart by the wife of the male lead. Yet all of a sudden there were three people in her room.

As for the revision that Qiao Zijin was saying, the content of this book had no relation whatsoever to her junior high studies.

“No, no, Dad, you... you are mistaken, this book... I, I only read it after exams were over, not, not before that...”

Qiao Zijin stuttered and could not utter a proper sentence. But everyone could tell that she was trying to make excuses for herself.

Ding Jiayi came to her senses and went to Qiao Zijin’s rescue. “Old Qiao, you heard it, though Zijin bought the book way before exams, she only read it recently. How she fared in middle school examination had nothing to do with this book. Zijin was so sensible, she would not do things like that.”

“Never read before, does this look like a new book?”

“Dad, I never read it, but I lent it to my classmate!”

“Who did you lend it to?”

“I have lent it to Wang Hua from the next class.” But Wang Hua has moved house four months ago. She did not even sit the middle school examination. Her Dad would not be able to find her.

“The one who moved, sister, since when are you on such close terms with the classmates from the next class?” Qiao Nan laughed. Qiao Zijin might be able to convince their mother, but definitely not Dad.

This was obviously Qiao Zijin’s intention. Wang Hua had moved house and Dad had no way of verifying with her.

“You shut up!” Ding Jiayi shouted at Qiao Nan. “At this juncture, you are still adding fuel to the fire, Qiao Nan, what ill intentions are you harboring, if you do not know how to speak, just keep your mouth shut!”

Ding Jiayi was startled by Qiao Dongliang’s darkened face.

“Dad, I have to enroll for school the day after tomorrow. Where are my school fees?” Qiao Nan tried changing the topic, the date for enrollment was just a few days away, would she be able to get her school fees? “Dad, I have used up all my pens and exercise books.”

Qiao Dongliang let out a deep breath, “Give twenty yuan to Nan Nan.”

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