

Rebirth to a Military Marriage: Good Morning Chief Novel Chapter 16 To 20

Chapter 16: Shot in the Foot

“20... 20 yuan. We don't have so much.” Ding Jiayi felt the pinch, 20 yuan – that was a month of the family expenses. “Anyway, Zijin has a lot of pens and notebooks, can't she use them?”

Qiao Dongliang was both amused and angered by Ding Jiayi's words. “While Zijin has a poor learning attitude, she can have everything new. Nan Nan's results are so good and she can only use the leftovers from Zijin? Let me repeat. Give Nan Nan 20 yuan!”

“If we give her 20 yuan, what are we going to eat and drink for this month?!” Ding Jiayi was not happy to provide the money.

“Mom.” Qiao Zijin whispered to Ding Jiayi, trying to dissuade her.

She finally felt it. Recently, Qiao Nan's behavior was so bizarre that it was causing her bad luck.

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With her father's current attitude, her mother would never be able to override him no matter how determined she was. Qiao Nan would undoubtedly continue with her studies.

Since this was the case, Qiao Zijin thought that her mother might as well agree to this immediately. This might even improve her father's impression of Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi pushed away Qiao Zijin's hands. “Zijin, I know you don't want me to argue with your dad, but please leave this matter alone.”

Though he heard from Ding Jiayi that she did not have money on hand, Qiao Dongliang did not feel like questioning her on where his salary for the month went to. “If it's not enough, you can go to the bank to withdraw 100 yuan. That should do.”

Nan Nan started school, so did Zijin.

As Zijin continued her studies, she certainly needed money. Old Ding could not possibly let her suffer. She would not give even one cent, not to mention 100 yuan.

At the mention of savings, all three women of the Qiao family became exceptionally quiet.

Qiao Nan need not say anything. The huge mess that her mother made would be found out sooner or later.

Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin had a look of guilt all over them. They dared not speak.

“Why are you standing there. Give me the chequebook. I will go to the bank with you tomorrow to withdraw 100 yuan.” Qiao Dongliang stretched out his hands to Ding Jiayi.

Ding Jiayi was scared stiff. Her face turned slightly pale and she stuttered when she spoke. “No. Didn’t you want 20 yuan? I will give it to you. We don’t have to go to the bank.”

To ensure that Qiao Dongliang dismissed the thought of the passbook, Ding Jiayi immediately took out 20 yuan from her pocket and threw it on the ground.

Qiao Nan’s face was stiff. She took deep breaths. She remained silent.

She must continue with her studies. At this time, it was not easy to get her mother to give any money out. She must cherish this opportunity.

Qiao Nan continued to comfort herself with such thoughts, but as an adult with dignity, her eyes were all red, and her hands reluctantly moved to pick up the money.

Qiao Dongliang pursed his lips. “Old Ding, although it is not the time to fight now, I don’t think you want me to lift my hand against you!”

Ding Jiayi was at the top of her anger, she not only had to give the money, but also had to wait on the wretched girl, Qiao Nan, as if she was their ancestor. Why should she?!

Before Qiao Dongliang could flare up again, Qiao Zijin stood up without a word, bent down and picked up the money. She blew and patted it dry before handing it to Qiao Nan personally. “Nan Nan, please don’t misunderstand. Mom definitely loves you, but she hasn’t been resting well recently, and has a poor temper.”

Unlike the past, Qiao Nan was not so easy to sweet-talk. If Mom continued with this attitude, whatever she said to Qiao Nan would not no longer have any effect.

Qiao Nan held on tightly to the money but did not speak.

“Nan Nan, let’s go, Dad will get some egg noodles for you.” Qiao Dongliang shot a look of disdain at Ding Jiayi. Despite being years older, she was not as sensible as her daughter.

Qiao Zijin was sloppy in her studies, Qiao Dongliang was of course angry and disappointed but he still loved his own daughter. Seeing that Qiao Zijin was more gracious and sensible than Ding Jiayi, his gaze quickly softened.

Standing by the side and watching, Qiao Nan sighed. They belonged to one family. The mistakes that Mom made were mostly “petty” ones; regardless of how angry Dad was, he would at most argue a little. It would definitely not be that serious.

To put it bluntly, her father was easy to appease.

As she was fully aware of this, after the rebirth, Qiao Nan only focused on protecting her own interests. She did not kick up a big fuss or sow discord between the couple.

“Dad, can you give me two eggs?” Qiao Nan perked herself up and smiled at Qiao Dongliang.

“Well, as long as Nan Nan likes it, not to mention two, three is also not a problem.” Qiao Dongliang pulled Qiao Nan to the kitchen and rolled up his sleeves to prepare noodles for her.

Hand-made noodles are delicious, chewy and not sticky, topped with some shallots and two golden eggs, they were especially fragrant.

Having the freshly-made noodles, Qiao Nan smiled bitterly. The reason why her father personally went to the kitchen to prepare noodles were two-fold. First, to make up to her and second, he hoped that she would forget what happened today and not take this matter to heart with her mother.

She did not expect her mother to become fair, nor did she expect her father to become firm in taking her mother in hand.

The only thing she hoped and strived for in this life was that she would study well, find a good job to support herself, have her own home and quietly live through her days.

As for her mother and Qiao Zijin, they could try to torture her as much as they would like to, but she would not participate with their ploys. She would earn her own keep and guard it jealously.

This dinner, the Qiao family had a particularly quiet meal.

Qiao Dongliang had only prepared the portions of Qiao Nan and himself, and Ding Jiayi had to prepare for Qiao Zijin and herself.

This was the first time that the Qiao family was divided into two tables. Except for Qiao Nan, the rest of the three parties felt strange and confused.

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After eating the noodles, Qiao Nan washed her own cutlery, turned and returned to her bedroom and started reading.

When Ding Jiayi saw that Qiao Nan had only cleaned up after herself, she was so furious that she shouted at her.

Qiao Zijin quickly stopped Ding Jiayi and hinted at her by shaking her head. She silently mouthed two words – “The passbook”.

These two words were Ding Jiayi’s Achilles heel. Before this, Ding Jiayi was like a balloon that was ready to blow up anytime. Now, she seemed to be one that was out of gas and withering badly.

“Mom, let me wash up.” Qiao Zijin endured the greasiness and discomfort while she immersed her hands into the water.

Ding Jiayi took the dishes out of Qiao Zijin’s hands. “No, Mom will wash. My daughter does not need to do these rough chores. You just have to go back to

your bedroom to rest... Zijin, the situation at home, Mom did not hide from you. Don't make your dad angry again and create trouble for Mom. Okay?"

"Mom, you can rest assured, it won't happen again." Qiao Zijin also began to regret letting her mother sell all of the textbooks. With none left, she could not even put up a pretence.

What Qiao Nan did not know was that Ding Jiayi had only intended to sell her books, and not those of Qiao Zijin.

Qiao Zijin finally graduated from junior high school. She hated the sight of those textbooks and was eager to get rid of them.

She even told Ding Jiayi – if she did not sell her textbooks, and Qiao Nan's books were gone, what if she asked to borrow from her?

Chapter 17: Guerilla Warfare

Right from the start, Qiao Zijin's intention was to leave Qiao Nan with no alternatives. She never expected that the outcome was that she would dig her own grave.

After Qiao Zijin came out from the kitchen, for a moment, she did not know what she could do.

After some thoughts, Qiao Zijin prepared a cup of tea for Qiao Dongliang and then apologized to him in an honest and sincere manner. As for when the book was purchased, whether she read it before or after the middle school exams, she did not say a word.

Qiao Zijin was quite street smart, especially when it came to appeasing her parents.

Knowing the temperament of Qiao Dongliang, it was better to admit to the mistakes immediately than to argue and lie.

True enough, with this, Qiao Dongliang was forgiving and softly persuaded Qiao Zijin not to make the same mistake again in future, to do well in her studies. The behavior was unlike that of Ding Jiayi, who kept shouting at Qiao Nan to quit school.

After appeasing Qiao Dongliang, Qiao Zijin was certain that her younger sister Qiao Zijin had changed in these few days.

Qiao Zijin constantly reflected on herself – could she have accidentally let slip her intentions before Qiao Nan and resulted in Qiao Nan’s current attitude towards her?

Having successfully maintained the father-daughter relationship, Qiao Zijin decided to try again to mend the sister-to-sister relationship. “Nan Nan, can I come in?”

Qiao Zijin waited for a while but did not hear the voice of Qiao Nan. After some thought, Qiao Zijin simply pushed open the door and entered.

In fact, before today, Qiao Zijin would enter Qiao Nan’s room as and when she wanted to. There was never a need to knock on the door.

In the entire Qiao family, the family members only had the habit of knocking on Qiao Zijin’s door before entering. “Nan Nan, what are you reading?”

As Qiao Nan’s back was facing Qiao Zijin, Qiao Zijin could see that Qiao Nan was flipping the pages of a book but she could not see what book it was.

Qiao Zijin’s eyes lit up, revealing her excitement. All the textbooks had been sold by Mom. How could Qiao Nan have any decent books left to read?

Qiao Zijin shouted straight at the top of her lungs.

Her voice alerted Ding Jiayi who was behind the stove and Qiao Dongliang who was resting in the room.

When she heard Qiao Zijin’s hoarse voice, Qiao Nan’s face turned black and hid her books immediately. “What are you doing in my room?!”

“Nan Nan, what did you hide? Is there a secret between the two of us? Can I see? Nan Nan, I am the living example. Don’t pick up the wrong things from others and read those indecent books. If Dad knew, he would be so sad and angry. It is enough that I have made this mistake. I just promised Dad that it will not happen again. Nan Nan, be obedient, hand over the book, I will help you to ask for Dad and Mom’s forgiveness. You must also promise them that you will never make such a mistake in the future. If you are too afraid, I can help you to cover it up, but you must not keep this book.”

As Qiao Zijin spoke, she pounced towards Qiao Nan and wanted to grab the book was hidden in Qiao Nan's arms, so that she would have the complete set of evidence.

"Ah." Qiao Nan could not stop sneering.

With the voice of Qiao Zijin as loud as an opera singer, Dad and Mom could not have missed it unless they were deaf. And Qiao Zijin was still trying to sweet-talk her by offering to cover up the matter!

It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Qiao Zijin, who had just done something wrong, to catch her red-handed. Qiao Zijin could not wait to let the whole world know.

"What is happening?!" Ding Jiayi rushed over with the spatula still in her hand.

After she heard Qiao Zijin's words and also saw Qiao Dongliang who rushed over at the same time, Ding Jiayi began to bombard the father without any reservation. "See for yourself, this girl is so wild at heart, not to mention that she is always outside. I don't even see her studying hard at home. Hiding to read novels? Zijin had completed her middle school exams, but her, this is the critical year that she will be advancing to secondary three. With her attitude, aren't you pouring money down the drain if you allow her to study?!"

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No, she must have a good talk with Old Qiao. To let such a person continue her studies would be a waste of the family's money.

"Shut up!" Qiao Dongliang was in a fix. "You dare to scold Nan Nan, you have sold her secondary one and two textbooks, what can Nan Nan be reading?"

Qiao Dongliang had not forgotten this. "I was still wracking my brain, Nan Nan also needed to take the mid-term school exams. How is she going to revise her studies for this year?"

Just when Qiao Dongliang was thinking hard of ways to help the younger daughter borrow a set of the secondary one and two textbooks, she had also picked up the bad habit of reading novels. Qiao Dongliang felt so exhausted at heart.

"Nan Nan, you see, both Dad and Mom are angry, why don't you take the novel out?" Qiao Zijin was quite happy and smug.

At this moment, she was unable to hide her emotions from Qiao Nan.

With more than a lifetime of experience, Qiao Nan's eyes were venomously sharper than before. She saw straight through Qiao Zijin at one glance. Qiao Zijin was gloating. "I'm not giving it to you, or Mom either!"

Qiao Dongliang took a deep breath and said with his greatest patience to Qiao Nan, "Nan Nan, if you really wish to study hard, please give the book to me."

Since he had forgiven one, he would have to forgive the other.

He could not possibly be generous to his elder daughter and petty to the younger one. Qiao Dongliang was could not bring himself to do that.

Qiao Nan breathed a sigh of relief. She handed the book to Qiao Dongliang.

If her book was with Qiao Zijin or her mother, she would not be able to keep it, even if it was a decent book.

"This is..." When Qiao Dongliang saw that the younger daughter had handed to him a secondary one math textbook, he was stunned. "Isn't your book – ?"

Was it sold by Lao Ding?

Qiao Nan's face was red. "A summer vacation had passed. Maybe I really was a little crazy. I seemed to have forgotten what was taught in secondary one and two, so I wanted read more and pick up the knowledge again before the school starts."

After all, she had not been studying for years. If she suddenly had to pick up her previous knowledge, Qiao Nan definitely needed some time.

Qiao Nan was not afraid of other things. She was only afraid that if she flunked the mid-term exams, she would have let down Qiao Dongliang. Her wish to study would also be dashed.

After all, her mother would constantly try to influence her father. Her academic results were the only reason and source of motivation for her dad to continue supporting her.

"Oh, good, good!" Qiao Dongliang felt at ease instantly. "But your book?"

“Yes, where did the book come from?!” Ding Jiayi’s face was as fierce as a tiger. She still wished that the wretched girl would fail her exams since she did not have the secondary one and two textbooks for revision.

Old Qiao now insisted that the wretched girl should continue to study. But if she graduated from junior high school, and did not do well, should she find a job instead?

The country currently only advocated a nine-year compulsory education, it was not necessary to go to high school. The tuition fees were expensive!

For her elder daughter, Ding Jiayi was willing to pay. However, at the thought of spending so much money on the younger daughter, Ding Jiayi felt the pinch.

“I bought it from the waste recycling station.” Qiao Nan answered with dignity.

“Bought, where did your money come from?!” Why didn’t she know that the wretched girl had hidden some money?!

Chapter 18: Valued

“Nan Nan, how can you spend money so indiscriminately?” Qiao Zijin was not happy, she knew that the money that Qiao Nan had on hand was not much, and that she had saved it up over the years.

She was actually thinking of asking Qiao Nan to spend the money on her, so that she could attend high school in a proud fashion.

Qiao Dongliang’s happy face turned dark. “How is this a waste of money, the money is well spent!”

Qiao Dongliang knew that buying books from the waste recycling station were much cheaper than purchasing new ones directly from the school. Not only the money was not wasted, but it was also worth it!

“Let me ask you, where did your money come from?” Ding Jiayi tugged at Qiao Nan. “How much did you spend on buying the book? How much do you have left? Take it out.”

Wretched girl, she even dared to hide money.

“What are you doing?” Qiao Dongliang pulled Qiao Nan behind him. Ding Jiayi did not dare to come forward to touch Qiao Nan. “The money was from me.”

However, he had not given much. It seemed that Nan Nan had never spent that money. After so many years of savings, they were finally put to a good use at this crucial moment!

“Nan Nan, is the money enough, did you buy just one book? If that’s not enough, don’t be afraid, tell me. I will buy for you!”

It was obvious to Qiao Dongliang that the younger daughter would never be able to receive a single cent from his wife. No matter how small the amount was, any money that the younger daughter had would be confiscated by his wife.

Fortunately, his wife did not know about this stash. Otherwise, the younger daughter would not have conceived the idea of buying books from the waste recycling station.

Moreover, the elder daughter had spent all the money that he had given her and even bought those novels.

With this, Qiao Dongliang began to pay more attention to the younger daughter who had been quiet all this time.

Both daughters should be loved, but five fingers were not of the same length. In Qiao Dongliang’s impression, besides performing better in her studies, Qiao Nan did not have any other positive qualities.

But today or recently, Qiao Dongliang found out that, besides not as being as affectionate as the elder daughter, the younger daughter actually had many merits. Not only did she have the tendency to do the right thing, but she was also very intelligent.

If Old Ding was not the mother of the younger daughter, she might not be able to bully her.

True enough, having heard what Qiao Nan said next, Qiao Dongliang became very certain of this.

“No, I found the secondary one and two textbooks.”

“Where are they?” Ding Jiayi asked loudly.

When she found all those books, she would not leave any for Qiao Nan. At the very least, she would ask the school to extend an additional year for Qiao Nan to complete her compulsory education. Not more than that!

“They are not at home anyway.” Qiao Nan snorted. “Which book would you like to see? I will bring it back.”

When she brought the book home, Dad was already home. If Dad was around, Mom would not dare to grab her book, nor would she dare to tear it.

When she heard Qiao Nan’s answer, Ding Jiayi was furious. On the contrary, Qiao Dongliang laughed. He touched the younger daughter’s head. “This is quite good.”

The younger daughter had also learnt guerrilla warfare with the old Ding. She had inherited the qualities of the old Qiao family.

If Qiao Nan had been a son, the old Qiao family would have a successor. This was a living soldier with great potential!

Qiao Dongliang took a glance at Ding Jiayi who had the cheek to be angry. “Old Ding, remember what I said? Nan Nan is good, we have to nurture her.”

Qiao Dongliang’s words made Ding Jiayi and Qiao Zijin’s faces change simultaneously. Not only were they unable make Qiao Nan quit school and work, but now they had to nurture her. How were they going to do that?!

If they nurtured Qiao Nan, what about Qiao Zijin?

Qiao Dongliang was the sole breadwinner, and all the savings in the family had been wiped out by Ding Jiayi.

One earns and four spent, Out of the four, two were big spenders, Ding Jiayi thought. She was at the top of her anger and ulcers formed all around her mouth that night.

Ding Jiayi, who was bitter in her heart, could not bring herself to tell Qiao Dongliang about this. She could only worry about this herself.

The next morning when Qiao Dongliang saw Ding Jiayi had a mouth of ulcers, he only thought that his wife was heathy, but the two daughters knew in their hearts why Ding Jiayi were like this.

Qiao Nan could not even protect herself, not to mention that she had always been the one being sacrificed. No matter how anxious Ding Jiayi was, at this time, Qiao Nan was not willing or able to help.

So, one day before the start of school, Qiao Nan continued to go to the Zhai family to revise. In order to avoid Ding Jiayi, Qiao Nan did not even go home for lunch at noon, she spent five cents and bought a loaf of bread to tide over her hunger.

She waited until the evening when Qiao Dongliang got off work before she went home again.

After revising for two days, Qiao Nan became more aware of her current standard. After some consideration, Qiao Nan felt that it was necessary to talk to Qiao Dongliang. "Dad."

"Is there something? Come in."

Qiao Dongliang pointed to the stool in the room, Qiao Nan sat on it. "Dad, this is the situation, I have to let you know. Mom's attitude, as you know, during this summer vacation... Dad, this time after school starts, my results may not be as good as before, or may even be a little worse. Dad, can you not take into account the mid-term exam results, and wait for my performance at end of the term?"

Qiao Nan was really worried that with only half a semester of time, she might not be able to catch up, and then if her mother kicked up a fuss, her dad would relent and make her quit school.

Qiao Dongliang thought about it: *'Yes, but Nan Nan, you have to remember that since you have made a promise, I can disregard the mid-term exam, but you have to give me a satisfactory answer in the final term. Otherwise, I won't be able to explain it to your mother either.'*

In teaching a child, having flexibility is important.

You can't pull the reigns too tightly, neither can you let it loose too much.

The fiasco of Qiao Zijin's middle school examination made Qiao Dongliang reflected for a long time. He felt that the couple had been too assured with their elder daughter and too lax in monitoring her studies. As a result, Qiao Zijin became who she was.

He did want to make a second mistake twice, this time, on his younger daughter.

"Okay." Qiao Nan did not know Qiao Dongliang's thoughts, but she placed these words of Qiao Dongliang in her heart with great importance.

In any case, she won more than half a year's time for herself.

"Dad, then I shall go and revise." Having given the opportunity that she fought hard for, Qiao Nan cherished it immensely and immediately went back to the room to read.

"Mom." Qiao Zijin stayed with Ding Jiayi at the stove, her eyes full of worries.

"Phew..." Ding Jiayi breathed a sigh of relief. "Don't worry, Mom will find a way. The wretched girl will start school tomorrow, so don't bother about it this year. But after you go to high school, you have to save more money. Also, that savings of Qiao Nan, you didn't know?"

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When she heard that she had to tighten her belt, Qiao Zijin was unhappy. "Daddy only gave me and Nan Nan a few cents. I thought that Qiao Nan also spent it all. I didn't know that she saved them up."

"In future, keep a tight watch for me and don't let her have any money on hand. Look at this matter. If she doesn't have money, she can't buy books and when she fails her middle school exams, she will have to work. It will at most be delayed for a year."

Chapter 19: Body Search

Now...

Ding Jiayi had to admit that, in comparison to the elder daughter, the younger daughter's academic performance was better.

The elder daughter could continue with her studies even though she flunked the middle school exams. If the younger daughter performed better in the

exams, she would not be able to convince Old Qiao on this. However, if the younger daughter performed worse, she would have the opportunity to convince Old Qiao to change his mind.

“Mom, don’t mention this anymore.”

Talking about money, Qiao Zijin was more dismayed than Ding Jiayi.

Qiao Zijin had long been aware of Qiao Nan’s money, before Ding Jiayi’s knowledge.

Qiao Zijin was a spendthrift who spent all that her parents gave. She also knew that Qiao Nan did not spend a single cent and gradually saved up.

The reason that Qiao Zijin did not tell Ding Jiayi about the money was that if her mother knew, her mother would simply confiscate Qiao Nan’s money and not let Qiao Zijin spend it. Qiao Zijin was reluctant to part with that money.

Qiao Zijin thought that it was easy to sweet-talk Qiao Nan.

As long as she wasted some breath and sweet-talked Qiao Nan, the savings would eventually have been spent on her.

Qiao Zijin treated Qiao Nan as a living bank.

Now, the money was not being spent on her and was giving Qiao Nan the opportunity to continue her studies.

If she had known that this would be the case, she would not have allowed Qiao Nan to keep the money until this day. A few days ago, she would have cajoled Qiao Nan into buying new clothes for her.

At this time, Qiao Zijin had a feeling that if it had been a few days ago, she was certain that she could get the money out of Qiao Nan’s hands. But now, it was difficult.

“Well, don’t mention the money, how about your learning attitude? Zijin, whatever happened in the past, Mom will not talk about it anymore. But after you go to high school, you need to buck up.” Ding Jiayi thought of Qiao Zijin’s academic results and could not help but start to frown.

“I understand.” Qiao Zijin said, her heart on fire. She also wanted to study hard and be like Qiao Nan, who was always in the top three in the cohort, so that her parents would be proud of her wherever they went. She would also be proud of herself.

But...

“Qiao Nan is revising. You did not do well for your junior high school, you can ask her to teach you.” Ding Jiayi’s eyes lit up as she hatched this idea. In fact, she had used the same method before.

Qiao Nan was in secondary one and Qiao Zijin secondary two. When Qiao Zijin could not remember what was taught in secondary one when she was solving secondary two mathematical problems, Ding Jiayi would ask Qiao Zijin to check with Qiao Nan.

However, to outsiders, Ding Jiayi would always tell them that the elder daughter guided the younger one, and thus the younger one’s academic performance was good, that it was the sacrifice of the elder daughter to fulfill the younger daughter’s wishes.

Qiao Zijin’s eyes lit up. Yes, why had she not thought of this? If she kept pestering Qiao Nan, wouldn’t Qiao Nan have less time for revision?

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“Nan Nan.” This time, Qiao Zijin did not knock on the door and went straight into Qiao Nan’s room.

“Are you thinking of grabbing my book again?” Qiao Nan did not even raise her head, as she was tackling a mathematical question.

For Qiao Nan, to revise mathematics, you must master all the example questions in the book. The notes in the book that she had picked were more comprehensive, and the solutions to the problem were clearer, which allowed Qiao Nan to do more with less.

“No, I am here to ask you questions.” When she peeked and saw that Qiao Nan was reading the subject that she had the most problem with – maths, Qiao Zijin spoke with more confidence.

Qiao Nan moved and closed the book. The corners of her mouth curled and she looked at Qiao Zijin. “Did you come of your own accord, or did Mom ask you to?”

In two lifetimes, since when did Qiao Zijin like to study?

“Of course I came of my own accord.” Qiao Zijin helped herself to a place in the room and sat down. “Nan Nan, teach me how to do this question.”

Qiao Zijin arbitrarily turned to a page and pointed to a question.

Qiao Nan grabbed the book back, and then took out a workbook and copied the question that Qiao Zijin pointed to.

When she saw Qiao Nan doing this, Qiao Zijin laughed.

Just shortly after Qiao Zijin laughed, she heard the sound of Qiao Nan tearing the blank piece of paper which noted the question. “Dad!”

“What’s wrong?” When Qiao Dongliang heard the younger daughter’s voice, he immediately came over.

When Qiao Nan called, Qiao Dongliang came over without any hesitation. Qiao Zijin snorted unhappily.

“Dad, Sister said that she did not know how to do this secondary one question. I need to revise. Dad, can you teach Sister.” Then, Qiao Nan simply handed that paper with the problem to Qiao Dongliang.

She was now unwilling to waste any feeling or money on Qiao Zijin, not to mention time and energy, which were more more precious than money.

“I’ll look at it.” Qiao Dongliang took the math problem over. At a look, he did know how to solve this.

Qiao Dongliang was not highly educated. As both daughters went to school, Qiao Dongliang would occasionally pick up and read his daughter’s books, thinking that they could make improvements together.

It was rare that the daughter did not know something that he did. Qiao Dongliang was feeling motivated. “Zijin, you bring your book and pen to the study room, I will teach you.”

Without waiting for Qiao Zijin to decline, Qiao Dongliang pulled Qiao Zijin and left.

Seeing the unwilling Qiao Zijin being taken away, Qiao Nan laughed and opened the book to continue with her revision.

Rested well for a night, the next day, with the 20 yuan from Ding Jiayi in her pocket, Qiao Nan reported to school.

After paying the tuition fees she was left with three yuan. With this three yuan, Qiao Nan simply spent it all on school supplies.

She was used to using things that were leftover by Qiao Zijin. All of a sudden, she had new things that belonged solely to her. Qiao Nan was in disbelief.

With a handful of new books, Qiao Nan thought about it, and she did not take all the new books home. Instead, she placed everything at the Zhai family's house.

She would rather trouble herself a bit more by waking up earlier to go to the Zhai's house to retrieve her books than to leave it at home. If she did not pay attention, her mother would scrap all her books.

"Where are the books?" Seeing that Qiao Nan had only brought one book home, Ding Jiayi's pulled a long face. "Who are you guarding them from?"

Qiao Nan's clear eyes stared straight at Ding Jiayi and said in a semi-loud voice, "The books are too heavy, I can't bring them back, I've left them in the school."

"How about the money?" Sick of mentioning the books, Ding Jiayi thought of the money. "I remembered that your tuition fees are 17 yuan. Give me the three yuan left over."

Three yuan could provide a few meals of meat.

Qiao Nan shook her head. "I have spent all the money, Dad promised to let me buy me a pen and notebook."

"You are a wastrel!" Ding Jiayi was furious. "It is impossible to spend all three yuan! How much did you spend? Hurry, take your things and return them to the store to get a refund. Your sister has a lot of leftovers, aren't they all good to use?"

Not waiting for Qiao Nan to answer, Ding Jiayi simply started searching Qiao Nan's body and vowed to take all the money from her.

Chapter 20: Taking It Out On Others

Ding Jiayi was not ashamed of what she was doing, but that did not mean Qiao Nan could tolerate her actions.

Her mother had not changed at all in two whole lifetimes.

In her previous life when she was already working, her mother went to her workplace to find out her monthly salary. As soon as she received her pay, the first thing her mother would do was to search through all her pockets, making sure that she did not have any money left on her.

Not waiting for Qiao Nan to suffer from humiliation, Qiao Dongliang who had just returned from work witnessed the entire scene.

Qiao Dongliang put away his bicycle and shouted, "What are you doing!"

Qiao Dongliang pulled Qiao Nan to his side. Seeing that her arm has been pinched to a bright red, he was all the more angry. "What are you up to this time?"

Ding Jiayi was scared stiff, she pursed her mouth and did not say a word.

"What, have you lost your tongue?!" Qiao Dongliang bellowed. He used to think that his wife showed favoritism and favored the elder daughter. But now from the looks of it, it was not just simple favoritism. Old Ding seemed to dislike Nan Nan!

Nan Nan was already a fifteen-year-old young lady, yet she was treated like a thief, being forced to go through a body check. Wouldn't Nan Nan be hurting inside?

"Dad, Mom wanted me to hand over the extra three yuan left from today's school fees. I said I have used them to buy exercise books. But she insisted that I returned the books and get the money back. Mom said I could use the hand-me-downs from sister." Since Ding Jiayi kept quiet, Qiao Nan went on to explain to her father.

Ding Jiayi did not feel that she had gone overboard. But when she faced Qiao Dongliang, she felt ashamed and could not bring herself to say what she had done.

Qiao Dongliang was enraged. "Since Zijin's leftover stationery is still in good condition, she could continue to use it in high school. Why must you insist that she leave it for Nan Nan?"

All along the younger daughter had been using her sister's hand-me-downs, her pencil was only a palm size long.

On the other hand, for every new school year, the elder daughter would have an array of new stationery, from pencil and eraser to exercise books. Qiao Dongliang was beginning to feel very upset about this.

If Old Ding wanted Nan Nan to be thrifty and frugal, increasing income while decreasing expenditure, Qiao Dongliang would definitely agree and be supportive of her.

But Qiao Dongliang realized that Ding Jiayi did not manage to increase income and she only requested her younger daughter to be frugal. What was more, she spent whatever was saved on the elder daughter. How would one say that this was being thrifty and frugal?!

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"Nan Nan, don't pay attention to your Mom, let's go inside." Qiao Dongliang pulled Qiao Nan along with him into the house, not paying attention to the unreasonable wife who showed favoritism.

On one hand he persuaded Nan Nan not to harbor grudges, but on the other hand, his wife did not rein in her unreasonable nature. No matter how forgiving Nan Nan was, his wife should know her limits.

This would not do. He must have a good talk with Old Ding tonight.

Back in the house, Qiao Nan had a drink and said, "Dad, you must be tired after a day's work. I am alright, I am off to do some studying."

Qiao Dongliang looked closely at Qiao Nan's eyes, she really did not seem to mind whatever had happened just now. He felt really bad for her. "Nan Nan, your... your Mom, that's her nature, she gets muddle-headed as she grows older, don't take it to heart."

Qiao Dongliang hoped that Nan Nan would not blame her mother, however when he saw how unaffected she was, he felt really gloomy and depressed.

“Okay.” Qiao Nan responded and carried her books into the house, all her thoughts on her studies.

Seeing the younger daughter left quietly, returning to her room to study, Qiao Dongliang did not feel good at all.

During dinnertime, Ding Jiayi fried a total of two eggs. Qiao Dongliang gave half of the eggs to Qiao Nan, making Ding Jiayi turn green with anger.

As soon as Qiao Dongliang put down his chopsticks, without a word, Ding Jiayi put half of the remaining fried eggs into the elder daughter’s bowl and divided the leftover fried eggs with Qiao Dongliang.

At night, Qiao Dongliang tossed and turned on the bed, finding it difficult to fall asleep. He could not forget the overly calm expression that he saw in Nan Nan’s eyes.

“What’s wrong?” Ding Jiayi could not fall asleep either with his tossing and turning.

“Old Ding, what do you think of Nan Nan? Zijin is your daughter, and Nan Nan isn’t? Aren’t you worried that your behavior will hurt Nan Nan?”

“It would be good if she wasn’t my daughter. You would be a battalion commander by now, and I would still have a job!” Ding Jiayi, who was worried about finances, lost her temper on hearing what he said.

If she and Old Qiao still had a job, the savings at home would not be depleted after they were used to pull strings for Zijin, and she would not be so worried now.

A depressed Qiao Dongliang said, “We can’t blame this on Nan Nan. It was our decision to have a second child. We gave up everything willingly, and yet you have shifted the blame onto Nan Nan?”

At the thought of his comrades from the same batch, every one of them valiant and heroic; and looking back on himself—an ordinary salary man—Qiao Dongliang felt suffocated as well.

But Old Ding wanted to have a second child, and he really wanted a son. They discussed and came to an agreement.

What they never thought was that after quitting their jobs and having a second child, what awaited them was not the son that they had dearly hoped for, but yet another daughter.

But after all, it was their own child. Yes, they gave up everything for this child and Qiao Dongliang could not deny that he felt disappointed, heartbroken and even dejected.

But life had to go on, and they had another child to bring up. Qiao Dongliang recovered quickly from his disappointment.

Nowadays men and women were equal in society. Women could hold up half the sky. If he put effort into bringing up his daughters, who would say that they were not as good as sons?

Qiao Dongliang had come to terms with it, but not Ding Jiayi.

She still dreamed of being the wife of the battalion commander, with a chauffeur to fetch her around. She also wanted a government job, a simple job with ample pay.

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And all her dreams had come to an end when the younger daughter was born!

Ding Jiayi felt as if she had fallen from heaven to hell. Whenever she looked at Qiao Nan, she could feel bitterness and resentment in her heart.

“Who else to blame but her? This family was totally ruined by her. She has dragged down everyone with her. Shouldn't she sacrifice and make atonements?”

Seeing the agitated Ding Jiayi sat up in bed, Qiao Dongliang lowered his voice and pulled at Ding Jiayi. “Quiet down, do you want to wake the kids up? Just look at what you said just now, is that something one would say, why can't you tell right from wrong? I never knew that you bear such thoughts ever since Nan Nan was born. No wonder you treat Nan Nan in such a manner.”

Qiao Dongliang finally found out that his wife harbored such thoughts towards their younger daughter.

“Old Ding, let me tell you, you can’t blame Nan Nan for what has happened. Your way of thinking is dangerous. If you don’t reflect on yourself and do some serious soul-searching, one day you will lose your daughter, Nan Nan.”

“I don’t believe you. I gave birth to her and brought her up. No matter how good or bad I treated her, she is my daughter in this life. She owes me and has to repay her debts!” She had married well and was the envy of everyone, but the birth of Qiao Nan had destroyed her whole life!

