

Folly 120

Chapter 120: The Bookworm

Lu Yuanfeng froze in place, staring in surprise at the girl in front of him.

She kept her head down, gripping a knife with both hands as she chopped the meat on the cutting board, her eyes never even glancing at him.

Lu Yuanfeng reached out his hand and wiped it repeatedly on his pants, and after confirming there was no dirt, he grasped a small tuft of hair.

His hands were large, so inevitably he brushed against Shuangshuang's cheek.

The girl's skin was smooth, like a freshly peeled egg, but at that moment, he also felt as if he had touched Shuangshuang's bone.

She was too thin!

Feeling guilty, Lu Yuanfeng glanced at Mu Shuangshuang, his hand shaking uncontrollably, forgetting the sensation of the hair he was holding.

Until the girl finished making the meat sandwich and called out, "It's ready!"

Lu Yuanfeng snapped back to reality, feeling like a thief caught red-handed, utterly embarrassed.

"What's wrong with you? Why keep your head down? As a man, you should hold your head high. With your chest hunched like that, anyone could mistake you for a sissy."

"Ah, a sissy?" Lu Yuanfeng instinctively frowned.

"Yeah, it means you're like a woman."

Mu Shuangshuang truly didn't understand how Lu Yuanfeng, who had trained in the military for five years, could be so cowardly.

She spent four years in college, half studying culture and half physical training, and by graduation, her posture was perfectly standard. This silly guy must've been through experiences equal to hers; why can't he walk boldly?

"I'm not a woman," Lu Yuanfeng retorted.

"Exactly, so stand up straight. If I catch you slouching again, you're dead meat," Mu Shuangshuang said sternly.

Lu Yuanfeng was quite tall, around six feet. Standing upright, Mu Shuangshuang had to look up at him, but it improved his entire demeanor.

With the remaining sandwiches made, it was now noon, and the dock bustled with activity, full of men, women, and children as the day laborers finished their shifts.

The worksite doesn't provide lunch, so the men have food brought by their wives or elders, while loners fend for themselves and splurge on something to eat.

The wages of ten to twenty copper coins weren't considered low in this era and sometimes came with bonuses of silver for valuable cargo.

Over a month, one could earn five to six hundred copper, which if saved, could almost cover a child's annual gift fee in half a year.

So, spending on a sandwich was affordable for them.

Mu Shuangshuang's meat sandwiches smelled delicious, and the men, tired of bland meals, followed the scent to her stall.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, the men burst into laughter.

Men invariably assumed that when seeing a man and woman together, they must be lovers or spouses. Since Shuangshuang hadn't styled her hair like a married woman, they naturally assumed they were lovers.

"Hey little girl, are you earning money for your wedding with your future husband?" one of the men joked.

"Yes, that's right. So, dear brothers, do try our meat sandwich and help me earn the wedding money sooner," Mu Shuangshuang replied with a smile.

Standing nearby, Lu Yuanfeng widened his eyes in surprise at Shuangshuang's lack of denial, yet he found himself enjoying it.

The men were intrigued by her response.

Women of this era tended to be reserved, blushing shyly after just a few words.

But Mu Shuangshuang's "bold confession" charmed the gruff men.

"We like straightforward little girls. How much do you sell these for?"

"This is your first visit, kind brothers. The sandwich is four copper coins apiece, and I will give you a bowl of my wild vegetable soup, usually one coin a bowl, for free."

There were eight men in total, and Shuangshuang gave away eight copper coins' worth, making them happy.

"Alright, we'll eat here today. Eight sandwiches, this little girl sure knows how to speak, your business will thrive!"

"Thank you, big brother!"

The men found spots to sit while Mu Shuangshuang started making the meat sandwiches, and Lu Yuanfeng served them soup.

By the time eight bowls of soup were served, Shuangshuang had made four sandwiches.

The aroma of the sandwiches teased the men's cravings, one of them salivating at the sight of the sandwich Shuangshuang handed over before even taking a bite.

"Hey, Ji Mao, eat if you're gonna eat, don't drool and sniffle all over, it's gross," one man said to the man with the sandwich.

"I... I'm... what's wrong? I... I... just... I... I... won't... won't... eat."

Ji Mao, the man with the sandwich, was a stutterer, struggling to speak as Mu Shuangshuang made several more sandwiches, handing them to the remaining men.

The men devoured their sandwiches, finding them so tasty they wanted to swallow their tongues, deciding to each order another.

This time, pairing it with vegetable soup.

Though getting started was hard, with these men acting like living advertisements, more people began gathering around Mu Shuangshuang, eagerly waiting for her to serve them.

"Everyone, the stall's space is limited, please wait a bit, or you can take the sandwiches home, either is fine."

The men eagerly drank their hot soup, their tongues savoring every drop.

Those waiting naturally thought the sandwiches must be eaten with the soup, so they waited expectantly.

Lu Yuanfeng approached Mu Shuangshuang, "Shuangshuang, you go collect the money, I'll handle this. I've watched long enough; I know how it's done."

"Hmm! Okay."

Having been gripping the knife for so long, her hand was feeling stiff.

Lu Yuanfeng had strength to spare, time for him to shoulder the effort.

Once Mu Shuangshuang started collecting payments, she instantly felt more relaxed.

Half an hour later, she'd sold almost one hundred and twenty sandwiches out of a hundred ninety; the men were a rush, coming in droves now and then.

Maybe someone was spreading the word; soon another wave of customers arrived, repeated flows of people. By the time only ten sandwiches remained in the basket, Mu Shuangshuang was completely exhausted.

She sat panting under the tree shade, gulping water ladled from the jug, unable to recover her energy.

Before she could rest long, a man dressed as a scholar, carrying a chest, approached her.

"Do you... want to buy a book?"

Oh, turns out he sold books, but why ask her? She was just a young girl, nowhere near attending school.

The scholar seeing Mu Shuangshuang not responding, prepared to leave.

Before departing, he eyed the sandwiches in Mu Shuangshuang's basket and the pot of meat, swallowing secretly.

"Wait, didn't you have lunch? Do you want to try our meat sandwich? It tastes really good."

The scholar pursed his lips, shaking his head. "I have no money..."

"No problem, you're our one hundred eighty-first customer today. That earns you a freebie."