

Folly 45

Chapter 45: The First Piece of Silver

"Hmm?" Yu Si Niang's eyes widened, a flurry of emotions surged within her gaze.

Mu Shuangshuang instantly understood that Yu Si Niang wanted to split the family, but had yet to find a reason to convince herself.

Fortunately, they finally arrived in town.

"Mother, keep this matter in your heart for now. When Shuangshuang has time, she will discuss it with you in detail."

Yu Si Niang let out a sigh of relief, though she felt a hint of anticipation. She wondered if it was just her imagination, but ever since their last conflict, her daughter seemed different, more thoughtful than before.

"Shuangshuang, it's my fault for being useless. I've let you grow up without having a single good meal. Mother is sorry to you..."

Yu Si Niang's eyes roamed over Mu Shuangshuang's frail body. The more she looked, the more pained her expression became. A perfectly healthy daughter, thirteen years old, yet she looked no different from a ten-year-old child, and her body was even thinner.

"Mother, what silly things are you saying? It's just that Grandma is too partial. All the good food and drink go to Uncle's family. But you need not worry; people do, and Heaven watches. One day, God will look out for our family, and our days will improve too." Mu Shuangshuang comforted Yu Si Niang.

Originally, she wanted to say that the family would suffer retribution but feared Yu Si Niang couldn't accept her "rebellious" words, so she changed her tune.

Everything takes time; only then can it be secure.

"Yes, Mother believes the Bodhisattva will bless our family." Yu Si Niang nodded heavily.

"Mother, later, could you hand me the basket of eggs? I'll go sell them by myself."

Mu Shuangshuang knew that eggs cost three copper coins each, and she had learned from Yu Si Niang about the wild vegetables and black fungus. The wild vegetables sold for two bundles per copper coin. Depending on their size, four to six pieces made a bundle, tied with dry grass.

As for the black fungus and monkey head mushrooms, their prices varied, as these items were rare at the market and lacked a standard reference price.

From conversing with Yu Si Niang, Mu Shuangshuang learned that due to post-war recovery, town prices were generally low, but even so, people's purchasing power was limited.

So everyone was scrimping and saving through these toughest years, hoping that in a few years, when the country became prosperous, their lives would improve as well.

"But aren't these eggs your grandma's? She values silver so highly; what if something goes wrong..."

In the end, Yu Si Niang was still worried. After all, their daughter was still young. If these eggs were bumped or scratched, Old Mrs. Mu would never let it go.

"Alright then, I'll take Shuangshuang with me!"

Mu Shuangshuang and Yu Si Niang headed to Qingshan Town, which encompassed dozens of nearby villages. Normally, many farming families would come to trade, but not this month.

Because this month was the busy double harvest season for farm families, both men and women were engaged with household chores. Only after the rice was harvested and stored, and the seedlings planted, would the market regain its usual bustle.

Walking through the market, Mu Shuangshuang noticed how quiet it was. Few farming families in coarse hemp clothing were in sight, but there were quite a few vendors and small traders. They quietly watched over their stalls, waiting patiently, and as one approached, they would softly ask.

Miss, Madam, Sir, what would you like?

Following Yu Si Niang, Mu Shuangshuang found a vacant space and neatly arranged the three baskets. Yu Si Niang stood beside her, waiting and softly asking passersby if they wanted eggs.

Tsk, tsk, tsk, too gentle.

Mu Shuangshuang shook her head. With Yu Si Niang selling like this, when could they sell out a basket of eggs?

"Mother, why don't you go work at Wealth Master Zhang's house first? Shuangshuang can guard the eggs here, ensuring nothing goes wrong. How about that?"

Yu Si Niang probably noticed that today's eggs were not selling as quickly as usual. Waiting any longer might delay her work. Gritting her teeth, Yu Si Niang agreed to Mu Shuangshuang's suggestion, repeatedly reminding her.

"Shuangshuang, make sure to watch the eggs closely. It doesn't matter if no one buys them, and remember, you're more important than the eggs."

"Alright, Mother, rest assured!"

After Yu Si Niang left, Mu Shuangshuang displayed the eggs, wild vegetables, and black fungus. Previously hidden in the baskets, they would now catch attention when laid out.

"Little girl, how are you selling these eggs?"

A woman in a floral dress squatted down, looking at the eggs Mu Shuangshuang displayed on the ground, and asked.

"Eggs are three copper coins each, all laid by our own hens, eating our rice. They're different from other eggs laid by hens eating bran. More nutritious, one equals two.

You could also check out our greens. These aren't homegrown—they're wild vegetables picked early in the morning from the mountain. Compared to regular vegetables, they taste better, imbued with the mountain's spiritual essence. They can refresh the mind. If you have a student at home, buying them would be excellent, for the mountain essence greatly aids in achieving the ranks of the Champion Scholar."

After Mu Shuangshuang spoke, the woman chuckled uncontrollably, "You little girl, your sweet tongue! To tell you the truth, my son does attend the town's academy and will take the scholar exam next year."

Pretending to be surprised, though she already knew the woman likely had a son studying, Mu Shuangshuang remarked on the faint ink fragrance the woman carried. An ordinary woman would likely smell more of cooking oil; she was indeed different.

"So, you are the scholar's mother. Next year, your son will certainly achieve top marks. Buy some of my eggs and greens; maybe in a few years, you'll be the Champion's mother."

Boasts are made to be exaggerated, and kind words need to be said. Naturally, selling requires not just eloquence but understanding the customer's psychology. Mu Shuangshuang's words about becoming

the Champion's mother happily persuaded the woman to pay. She bought six bundles of wild vegetables and five eggs, totaling eighteen copper coins.

"Little girl, here are the coins. I take your good words to heart. If my son does become the Champion, I'll buy all your goods."

"Thank you, future Champion's mother!"

As the woman walked away, Mu Shuangshuang looked at the copper coins threaded with hemp in her palm, grinning widely.

The first trade in this worldly place, even though only three of those coins were truly hers, wasn't bad at all, was it?

"Everyone, come have a look, see here—the best, most nutritious farm eggs. Perfect for frying, frying, boiling—they grow children taller, men stronger, women more beautiful, and help students excel—come take a look, the wild vegetables full of mountain spirit..."

Mu Shuangshuang raised her voice, loudly introducing her wares to the passersby, and within a short time, a crowd had gathered around...