

Rise 15

Chapter 15: Some pain in the ass

Unaware of Li Dacai's returning expression as he ate the wontons, Zhu Ping'an and his family finished their meal and headed to their stall.

By the time they set up their stand, the sun had risen high in the sky, and the market was gradually getting busier. The sounds of vendors shouting, children calling out, and laughter echoed all around. Life had been peaceful for so long, and the bustling atmosphere made Zhu Ping'an yearn for the prosperity of the county town or even the capital.

Zhu Shouyi unloaded the ox cart, tethered the ox to a nearby post, and placed the hay basket down for the ox to leisurely munch on.

Zhu Ping'an, along with his brother Zhu Pingchuan, helped arrange the bamboo baskets and the wild delicacies they had brought. In no time, a simple stall was set up. Once everything was in place, Zhu Ping'an excitedly started talking about his basket of honeysuckle and told his father he wanted to sell flowers.

Zhu Shouyi looked at his son's round, excited face, which was flushed with anticipation, and he found it hard to bring himself to discourage him. This silly boy really thought wildflowers could sell! Oh well, let him find out the hard way. Boys needed to experience setbacks to grow.

"Dachuan, take your brother around. If you can't sell anything, just bring him back," Zhu Shouyi decided, nodding in agreement to his own plan. To be safe, he wanted Zhu Pingchuan to accompany Zhu Ping'an.

Zhu Ping'an could clearly see his father's disbelief. He recalled his mother Chen's teasing remarks from the morning and thought to himself that he would enjoy seeing their expressions when he actually made some money.

Listening to their father, Zhu Pingchuan slung the basket of honeysuckle over his shoulder and took Zhu Ping'an's hand as they headed into the market.

Not long after Zhu Ping'an left, the scheming little girl and the chubby landlord Li Dacai emerged from the nearby eatery. Li Dacai's face was sweaty, and his nose was red, clearly suffering from the spicy wontons that his daughter had tampered with.

"Exactly! Wasting food is bad. It's good that Daddy finished eating," the little girl grumbled as she marched along with her short legs.

Li Dacai, all smiles, nodded repeatedly, his facial muscles twitching.

As the little girl walked past Zhu Shouyi's stall, her big eyes sparkled for a moment as she paused to glance at the stand. However, she didn't spot the "little bumpkin" she was looking for and felt a slight disappointment. How dare he call her ugly! She was determined to make him pay for that!

Li Dacai, unaware of his daughter's mischievous thoughts, noticed her stopping in front of Zhu Shouyi's stall and assumed she had taken a liking to something bamboo woven.

"Shu'er, tell Daddy what you like, and I'll buy it for you," Li Dacai said, willing to spend on his daughter, especially since bamboo items wouldn't cost much.

The little girl's spirits weren't very high, and she casually pointed at a few items with her little finger.

"Alright, buy, buy, buy." Li Dacai rubbed his belly to coax his little daughter and casually asked Zhu's father, "How much?"

Zhu's father saw that the few items the little girl pointed to were the small bamboo crafts that Zhu Ping'an had asked him to make a couple of days ago for fun. They included a small woven bamboo flower basket, a small bamboo teapot, and two matching teacups made from bamboo tubes. He didn't expect to sell them for much, but since they were already made, he brought them along.

"They're just little trinkets, not worth much. The flower basket and the teapot with teacups count as two sets, ten wen..." Zhu's father thought for a moment and said somewhat awkwardly.

Without a second thought, Li Dacai pulled out twenty wen from his money pouch and handed it to Zhu's father, then placed the teapot and teacups into the bamboo basket, presenting it to his daughter like a treasure, before leading the sly little girl away.

Zhu's father turned red in the face, opening his mouth several times, but unfortunately, Li Dacai had already walked far away and didn't hear him.

Zhu's father stared at Li Dacai's retreating figure, feeling somewhat frustrated. I said the two sets together cost ten wen. Besides, I was only making an initial offer, waiting for you to haggle. After all, the bamboo was cut from the mountain and didn't cost anything; I only spent a bit of time on it. It would take me longer to weave one bamboo basket than to make those two sets.

Though Zhu's father was dull, he wasn't foolish. Since Li Dacai didn't lack money, he could consider it a favor done for him.

The street was bustling with people, and Zhu Pingchuan led Zhu Ping'an to walk aimlessly down the street.

Of course, it was only Zhu Pingchuan who had no purpose; Zhu Ping'an had a clear goal, her sparkling little eyes fixed on the shops along the street.

Tea house? No.

Wine shop? Also no.

Rouge and yarn shop? Not that either.

Floral silk and sweet laughter amidst the willow-laden pathways, uh, that's the brothel, definitely not.

Although the town was small, it had all kinds of shops, but what I'm looking for is a pharmacy, not these stores!

"Brother, where are we going? I think Mother is right; no one will buy wildflowers, especially dried ones." Zhu Pingchuan tried to persuade Zhu Ping'an to go back.

"I heard that pharmacies might take some tree roots and bark, so maybe they'll want these," Zhu Ping'an said, tugging at her brother's clothes with her chubby little hands. "Let's go to the pharmacy."

"They only accept medicinal herbs there," Zhu Pingchuan corrected him.

"Maybe my wildflowers are medicinal herbs too..." Zhu Ping'an blinked his eyes and thought to himself that if they weren't medicinal, he wouldn't have picked them.

"Can wildflowers really be medicinal herbs?" Zhu Pingchuan, somewhat skeptical, picked up a honeysuckle and sniffed it, confidently stating, "They can't be."

Despite this, Zhu Pingchuan still led Zhu Ping'an to a nearby pharmacy. He had come here with their father once or twice, so he knew the way.

Although there were many shops on both sides of the street, Zhu Ping'an spotted the pharmacy at a glance. It was easy to identify because it stood out prominently among the many shops; several signs were displayed in front, with phrases like "Miraculous Hands Revive Life" and "Healing the World with a Wandering Hand."

This was a busy area, with the pharmacy located on the north side of the street. The entrance faced south, with the pharmacy divided into two sections: the front was for selling herbs, while the back was a space for resting and processing the herbs. From the outside, the pharmacy appeared clean, tidy, and well-organized.

The pharmacy was named "Jimin Tang," and on either side of the door hung a wooden couplet, with the left side saying, "Wishing everyone good health," and the right side saying, "Wherever I am, I remain poor." The couplet had a grand air, truly embodying the essence of healing the world.

Inside the pharmacy, a lavishly dressed woman was holding a child, asking an old doctor about his condition, while a maid stood by to assist. A row of intricately carved rosewood medicine cabinets lined the back, and two junior apprentices were busy preparing prescriptions. Overall, the pharmacy was clean and orderly.

As Zhu Ping'an entered, she overheard the old doctor diagnosing a patient. While writing a prescription, he spoke to the woman, giving medical advice: "Early autumn heat has not dissipated, and damp heat is troubling your body. Madam, please do not worry about the young master. Use three qian of honeysuckle, one and a half qian each of wild chrysanthemum, dandelion, purple flower di ding, and purple back Tian Kui seeds, with two bowls of water. Boil down to one bowl, then add half a bowl of unburnt wine, and boil it again two to three times while hot. Repeat this method; sweat it out with a cover, and he will surely be well within three days."

The noblewoman repeatedly expressed her gratitude, while the maid diligently noted down the medical advice for brewing the medicine later.