

RISE OF THE POOR

Chapter 4: Give up the Egg

Back to the main topic, as the meal was nearing its end, there was one piece of scrambled egg left. Grandma habitually picked up the egg with her chopsticks and placed it in Zhu Pingjun's bowl. As a result, the egg was rather loose, so half of it stuck to the chopsticks, while the other half fell on the table. Grandma handed the half on the chopsticks to Zhu Pingjun, and when she saw the half that had fallen on the table, she noticed that Zhu Pingjun seemed to be a bit disgusted by it. Perhaps he recalled the earlier scene, or maybe it was about balance; Grandma decided to pick up the piece that had fallen on the table and placed it in Zhu Ping'an's bowl.

It was truly a bit surprising!

This was Grandma's first time serving me food, even if it was the piece that had fallen on the table.

"Thank you, Grandma." Zhu Ping'an smiled silly at Grandma Zhu.

Seeing her grandson being so understanding touched the biased Grandma's heart a little, though it was fleeting. In her heart, her oldest son and youngest son's families were the true darlings. The eldest son had a bright future due to his education and civil service examinations, while the youngest son was considerate. The remaining two sons had married and forgotten their mother, especially the second daughter-in-law, who was the most troublesome; the second son had almost forgotten his own mother.

Zhu Ping'an didn't plan to eat this piece of egg, not because it had fallen on the table. Ever since arriving in this farming household, to maintain hygiene like in his past life would mean waiting to starve to bones; the conditions were what they were. Besides, the rural area was all-natural and harmless; just rinsing it off with water was good enough.

The main reason was the little girl Zhu Pingyu, who was next to him sucking her fingers. This was an era that favored boys over girls; although he was not spoiled by his grandparents, as a boy, he still received more attention from Grandma compared to little Yu'er.

Moreover, just before the meal, his mother had secretly given him an egg.

"Here, have it, little sister." Zhu Ping'an gently picked up the egg with his chopsticks and placed it in little Yu'er's bowl, speaking softly.

Zhu Ping'an's action attracted the attention of everyone at the dining table. Everyone was curious because scrambled eggs were not common in farming households; they were usually saved for money. Especially in the Zhu family, scrambled eggs were a rare dish, and even when they had them, it was mostly Grandma Zhu favoring the elder and younger uncles. Zhu Ping'an and his siblings hardly ever got to eat them, so now that there was a rare piece of egg, Zhu Ping'an actually gave it to little Yu'er; this was much more challenging than the story of Kong Rong giving up a pear. At that time, Kong Rong was from a wealthy family, and pears were common, unlike the Zhu family, where a plate of scrambled eggs might not appear for a month, and even when it did, they might not get to eat it.

For Zhu Ping'an to give away the egg that was practically in his mouth was a real eye-opener for everyone! This child was truly understanding!

Little Yu'er stared with wide eyes, fixated on the scrambled egg, drooling.

However, at that moment, Third Aunt Zhang took the egg back and placed it back in Zhu Ping'an's bowl. "Here, Yu'er, thank your brother Zhi'er. Zhi'er is really good, but you should keep it for yourself. This egg is for you from Grandma, so you should eat it quickly and grow taller to be filial to Grandma."

Although little Yu'er was eyeing the scrambled egg greedily, she still behaved well and, while drooling, thanked Zhu Ping'an, saying, "Thank you, Brother Zhi'er. Yu'er doesn't want to eat scrambled eggs."

Although her little appearance was saying she didn't want to eat, her eyes were still glued to the scrambled egg, and her mouth was watering.

The little girl was so adorably cute, a certain little brat thought, forgetting that he was also a short-legged kid.

Zhu Ping'an picked up the egg again and held it up with his little arm to little Yu'er's mouth, looking very much like a big brother. He said, "I love watching my little sister eat scrambled eggs."

As the egg entered her mouth, it was soft and delicious. What child could resist not eating? Besides, once it was in her mouth, could she really take it out to give to someone else?

Just having a tiny piece of scrambled egg, about the size of a fingernail, little Yu'er showed a very content and happy expression, even cutely sticking out her tongue to lick her lips, like a little cat drinking water.

"Is it delicious, Sister Yu'er?" Zhu Ping'an asked little Yu'er with his cheeks puffed up as he ate the millet flatbread in his hand.

"Delicious, thank you, Brother Zhi'er," little Yu'er replied in a tender voice, her crescent-shaped eyebrows arched.

Having already finished the scrambled eggs, Third Aunt had no choice but to accept this, increasingly feeling that the lively and adorable Zhu Ping'an was quite sensible, especially in contrast to his older brother, Zhu Pingjun, who only knew how to be selfish and act spoiled.

Third Aunt lovingly patted Zhu Ping'an's head, turning to tease Chen with a smile, "Second sister-in-law, I truly envy you for having two good sons. Zhi'er dotes on his younger sister so well; you taught him really well. When he grows up, he'll definitely be a filial good child."

There isn't a mother who doesn't love praise for her son, especially since Chen had a bit of a showing-off streak. Naturally, she was extremely pleased and waved her hands repeatedly, saying it was nothing, but the pride on her face was hard to hide as she laughed with Zhang Shi.

On the other side, First Aunt was not pleased. In her heart, her own son was the best. After all, he was the one who needed to study and take the imperial examinations, and the town's fortune teller had even claimed that her son was a reincarnation of the Literary Star.

Thinking of this, First Aunt, Wu Shi, nudged her husband with her leg, signaling him to bring up the matter of letting Zhu Pingjun go to school to Old Zhu.

Uncle lowered his head to eat and ignored his wife's hint, believing her vision was too narrow. Today, with the commotion caused by his younger sisters-in-law, it was clearly not a good time to bring up this matter. Moreover, he had already spent quite a bit on his own studies for the exams, and the younger brothers had begun to voice their concerns. If his son were also to go to school, it would be difficult to explain. It would be better to discuss it with their parents when the younger brothers were not around, so that once it became a done deal, it would be futile for the younger siblings to complain.

First Aunt, a farmer's wife, did not have Uncle's composure. Seeing her husband not speak up and still dreaming of her son becoming a top scholar, she couldn't hold her impatience and spoke up, "Father and Mother, look, Jun'er is already seven years old, getting older. It's not good for him to keep hanging around like this. I was thinking, how about we let our Jun'er attend the private school run by Old Scholar Sun from our neighboring village, Shanghe

Village? It would be good for him to study and could also bring glory to our Old Zhu family."

This statement caught Zhu Ping'an's attention. Going to school was something he particularly needed. On one hand, he could study the Four Books and Five Classics for the imperial examinations, and on the other hand, it would serve as a cover to mask his experiences and insights that were centuries ahead of his time. After all, "there is beauty in books," and in this era, scholars were highly revered. Once he attended school, any extraordinary understanding or knowledge he exhibited could be attributed to his education.

"Among all pursuits, reading is the highest," was an unbreakable truth in this era. Even wealthy tycoons were too afraid to argue back when a poor scholar pointed a finger at them. Moreover, during this time, education was the main and most effective way for the children of poor families to rise in status.

Thus, Zhu Ping'an raised his chubby hand, "I want to study too."

"You're so young; what could you possibly study? Moreover, not everyone can attend school; only those who are the reincarnation of the Literary Star can. Our Jun'er has had his fate read by a master and is indeed a reincarnation of the Literary Star," First Aunt was the first to oppose Zhu Ping'an attending school. She knew that their family couldn't afford to support two students; they

were already eating millet porridge and vegetable leaves. If both went to school, the family would definitely be unable to make ends meet.

First Aunt's words were laced with disdain for Zhu Ping'an while elevating Zhu Pingjun, which made Chen quite unhappy. However, Chen was also wary of the First Aunt's family. Uncle was an educated man, and if he succeeded in the exams and became a scholar or even a higher official, the family would have to rely on him. Thus, Chen merely frowned, thinking that even if she didn't speak up, someone would, and there was no need to offend First Aunt's family.

Sure enough, before Chen could say anything, someone else couldn't hold back. Little Fourth Aunt immediately expressed her opposition.

"Eldest sister-in-law, our family can barely make ends meet, and we don't have extra money to support another student, right, Mother? I think it's better to wait until we save some money before letting Jun'er go to school." Little Fourth Aunt's words were quite reasonable; she even knew to pull Grandma Zhu into her alliance. She expressed her opposition to Jun'er studying but did so in a way that left room for negotiation. On one hand, she mentioned that the family was already supporting Uncle in his studies, and on the other hand, she said that they couldn't afford to let Jun'er go to school because they were struggling financially. Once the family had enough money, then they could let Jun'er study. As for when the family would have extra money, that was hard to

say; in any case, ever since Little Fourth Aunt entered the Zhu family, they had never been financially comfortable.