



My Father's Love

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My father, as silent and solid as a mountain, is a good book to read. His love, as nurturing and sheltering as a thriving green tree, helps me to see the world with good reasoning.

I was once firmly convinced that my father did not love me. I realized later that I was wrong and became indebted to him emotionally, to the tune of a tremendous sum that I will never be able to repay.

My father was awkward with words. He never chatted nor joked with us. He was always silent when he returned from working in the field. We were fearful of him and wondered how horrible it would be if he lost his temper someday. When I was young, I would retreat to a corner of the house at dusk and watch in silence when father stepped into the room, washed his face and ate dinner. I was not able to appreciate the profound love in my father's weary eyes. I simply could not bring myself to believe that my father loved me.

That year, I passed the high school entrance examination with outstanding grades. Everyone in the family was happy for me. Yet, in the face of the astronomical tuition, I hesitated, even though I did long for the high school campus and aspired to live the college life. I became bitter and tearful at the sight of my parents' tired figures with stooped backs. Then again, would I get the approval from my unmoving father?

At the thought that my dream would burst like a soap bubble; that I would never return to my beloved schoolyard; that I would live all my life in this barren village in the mountains; I lost control of myself. I ran to the top of the mountain in front of our house because I could not stand staying in the house anymore. I wanted to flush away my grief with tears. My tears surged without inhibition for a long time before I opened my eyes again. In the blur, I saw a man with a stooped back walking towards me, a familiar figure! Here came my father! I was taken aback. In a flurry, I wiped my tears with my sleeves, pulled up a weed from where I was sitting and put it into my mouth to chew as if nothing had happened. Why was he here? Didn't he go to work in the field? Why did he come in such intense heat? Though I was unable to shake my doubt about him, he was, after all, my father, who had raised me for 15 years. Watching his unsteady gait, I felt like my heart was being roasted by fire, and my eyes welled up again. One more time, I wiped my eyes with my sleeves.

"Dad," I asked, why are you here? It is quite hot here!" Holding back tears, I managed a smile.

"Oh, I would like to talk to you," he said. "Is there something wrong? You have been moody lately."

"No, Dad, nothing is wrong."

“You don’t have to hold anything back from me,” he said. “Are you worried that we can’t afford the tuition?”

His words drove home my worry and I could no longer hold back my tears. “Dad!” I cried. I did not expect my father, who had been parsimonious with words, to know his daughter so well.

“My child, my good child...”

My father held me in his arms and his tears streamed down my face, very hot tears. “Dad!” I grabbed his hand for the first time and wailed, bitter tears cascading down all over us.

The next day, father summoned the grain merchant to the house and brought out whatever grains we could part with. Watching the merchant load his car with bags of grain, I felt like my heart was being cut up. The grains constituted the livelihood of my family. How could my family go on living if the grains were sold to pay for my tuition?

I tried hard to stop my father but he would not reconsider. He said, “You have come a long way studying so very hard. You can’t just give up like that!”

Knowing him, once he had his mind set on something, he would not be swayed. I eventually attended the high school. It was an opportunity that my father bartered for me with endless hardship on his part. On the first day of school, my father walked with me to the entrance of our village. Neither of us spoke. Reaching out for the bag he was handing over, I took a closer look at him. His back was weighed down by his years, his face well weathered, his hands coarsened by working in the field, and the pair of heavily torn cloth shoes on his feet...

“Do well in school,” he said.

“Don’t worry, Dad, I will!”

My eyes began to well up again. I turned my back quickly to avoid being seen by father. Only after walking quite a distance did I dare to wipe my tears. Knowing that my father was still standing there, I did not look back.

I often thought that I should appreciate the deprivation in our life and the hurdles we had to endure. They helped me to better understand and cherish my father’s profound love.

There are some things in life that cannot be erased by time. There are moments that we will always remember by heart, and that deserve to be cherished all of our life. This is how I feel about my father’s love.