

THE MOONLIT PAGE

Room Around the Flowers



Mae had arranged flowers for weddings, shop windows and dining tables for nearly forty years. She could make a generous bouquet while discussing the weather and finding somebody's change.

At the dawn market, Dario showed her an arrangement with only three stems.

"I'd keep reaching for another flower," she said.

"I did, at first."

He offered her a narrow vase from the shelf behind his stall. Mae bought three stems and carried them to the little worktable where she checked her orders.

Her pencil was tucked inside a seed catalogue. She drew the vase in the margin, then three lines above it. On paper, the spaces looked rather good.

In the vase, the tallest stem leaned towards the middle one. She turned it a little. Now all three seemed to be avoiding one another.

Dario passed with a bucket and stopped.

"May I turn the vase?"

He moved it a quarter turn, not touching a flower.

Mae pulled up her stool. From this side, the stems made a quiet, uneven triangle. Behind them she

could see the market beginning to fill with coats and baskets.

She reached for her pencil, then left it in the catalogue.

“Don't move the table,” she told him.

“I wasn't going to.”

“I know. I'm telling myself.”

To remember

1. An experienced florist tries Dario's three-stem arrangement
2. Mae sketches empty space in a seed catalogue
3. The real stems look awkward until Dario turns the vase
4. She sits with the new view and tells herself not to move the table.