

Fields of Gold Chapter 10

Yu Xiaocao was infuriated, "Eldest Aunt, who are you accusing of pretending to be sick? Didn't you see my mother fainting yesterday? You're such a healthy person, yet you're ordering a sick person to work. Moreover, you still think you're in the right. If you want to know whether my mother was faking her illness, then just invite Grandpa You over!"

Madam Zhang, who was inside her room, finally couldn't sit still anymore when she heard Xiaocao's words, "Li Guihua, you lazy woman! You disappeared once it was time to cook and finally came back now! Why are you still chitchatting? Hurry up and go help in the kitchen!"

We'll have to spend money if we call for a doctor!

Madam Zhang walked to the entrance of the kitchen and jeered at Liu Muyun, who was working busily, "You should hurry up and go back to your room to rest. Your daughter's heart was aching for you."

"Are there any daughters who doesn't love their mothers? Mother, you sit down. I'll help you bring the dishes over!" Yu Caodie came out of her room. She and the third son, Yu Bo, were the only ones within the family who could calm the old lady down.

Madam Zhang turned her head and saw the seafood that Yu Hai and his children were holding. Her gloomy expression turned bright and she immediately smiled, "Give me the barrel! The seafood looks quite fresh. We can keep them overnight and let your eldest brother sell them to a restaurant in town tomorrow morning."

"Grandmother, let's keep some oysters and steam some to eat ourselves! I want know what it tastes like." Yu Xiaocao deliberately suggested.

Madam Zhang's expression instantly turned grim. She angrily said, "There are plenty of things that you haven't eaten before! If we sell them in town, one catty of oysters can be worth several copper coins. Won't you feel vexed for eating them?!"

If Yu Hai wasn't standing beside them, Madam Zhang would have made even harsher comments. She called for her daughter and didn't even spare the children's buckets. She wanted to take everything back to her room. As long as it was something that could be exchanged for money, she must grasp it within her own hands by all means.

She turned around and looked at the basket within Yu Xiaocao's hands. She signaled with her lips and said, "Bring the basket you're holding into my room, too."

Xiaocao pouted and replied resentfully, "Grandmother, you already took all the seafood. There are only kelp and sea lettuce in my basket, which aren't worth much money. We should just keep them and make cold dishes for grandfather to accompany his drinks in the evening."

Madam Zhang stretched out her head to take a look. When she saw that it was only glossy and green kelp, she spoke as if she was showing mercy, "Just this once! In the future, I have the final say in everything within the family. You're not allowed to act on your own!"

Yu Xiaocao agreed. She waited for Madam Zhang to enter the main room before winking at Xiaolian and taking the small basket into the west room.

Yu Xiaolian understood her meaning and got a worn-out earthenware jar from the corner of the kitchen. She filled it with some water and quietly followed her younger sister into the room.

It was impossible to sell them today, so the sisters carefully placed the abalones inside the ceramic jar and hid them under the kelp. Yu Xiaocao was still worried, so she added some mystic-stone water inside and hid the jar in a concealed place in the corner of the kang bed. After that, she came out of the room again with the rest of the kelp.

Yu Hai followed them inside and saw the sisters' actions. Xiaolian had always been a hot-tempered person. When she was angry, she had even dared to argue with Madam Zhang. Thus, she was frequently scolded and disciplined for her actions. Xiaocao's personality was also rather fierce now. However, she had more tricks up her sleeve and was also courageous. She decisively hid the expensive abalones.

In the kitchen, Madam Liu was almost done preparing dinner. Yu Xiaocao went in and swiftly made shredded kelp with crushed garlic [1] and sea lettuce soup [2]. Hence, dinner was much more lavish than in the past.

During the meal, the men and women in the Yu Family sat separately. On the women's side, each person had a dark-looking piece of pancake that was about the size of a palm. There were also poached vegetables that were seasoned with a small amount of salt and a bowl of bean paste soup.

The staple food for the men was an unlimited amount of triple-flour steamed buns [3], which were made with a mixture of wheat flour, millet flour, and potato flour. Their meal also consisted of vegetables that were cooked with lard, and they drank the same soup as the womenfolk. However, this had nothing to do with the idea of men being superior over women. It was just that the men did hard labor that required a lot of energy and strength, so they needed to eat a nice and filling meal.

Yu Xiaocao won unanimous praise for the two dishes that she personally prepared. The plate of shredded kelp with crushed garlic was savory and slightly spicy, while the sea lettuce soup tasted very fresh and full of flavors from the sea. Old Yu was especially fond of the shredded kelp with crushed garlic, and praised it endlessly.

Madam Zhang couldn't stand seeing the second branch being complimented. She stuffed mouthfuls of shredded kelp into her mouth and said, "Xiaocao is rather capable. She can gather for seafood at the sea and help prepare meals. Doctor You had already said that her health is fine, so I reckon we can stop preparing separate meals for her in the future."

Xiaocao was currently holding her savory congee and happily sharing with Little Shitou. However, her expression darkened when she heard her grandmother's remark. In the future, she would have to also eat the difficult to swallow coarse grain pancakes and disgusting bean paste soup. Urgh! It's going to be a painful torment! Luckily, those abalones weren't confiscated!

Madam Zhang was satisfied upon seeing Xiaocao's expression. She appeared to be enjoying the coarse grain pancake even more now. She also ate more than half of the bowl of shredded kelp.

Madam Li and her equally obese son were entirely focused on stuffing their mouths, so the rest of the shredded kelp and the sea lettuce soup were also devoured by them. When the plates were completely cleared, she pulled her son, who had wanted to continue eating at the men's table, back to their room stealthily.

Xiaocao knew that they had gone to secretly eat by themselves again.

Madam Li's maiden family had been poor at the time she married into the Yu Family. Otherwise, she wouldn't had married the equally poor

stepson of the Yu Family. However, several years ago, her brothers earned some money through a small business and improved their family's circumstances. Madam Li was the youngest and only daughter in her family. Hence, every time she returned home, her parents, brothers, and sisters-in-law would provide her with some money and food to help her out. Otherwise, with the meals that the Yu Family eats, how were Madam Li and her son able to become so fat?

It was silent throughout the night after dinner!

On the second day, in the west room, Yu Hai's family had all woken up at the first glimmer of dawn.

Yu Hai and Hunter Zhao had agreed to go hunting in the mountains. Yu Hang and Yu Xiaolian had always gotten up at this time to collect fishworts and pick up firewood at the foot of the mountain. In the courtyard, Madam Liu was already cleaning the chicken and pig pens with a broom.

Yu Xiaocao's family was surprised to see her waking up so early. Yu Hai touched her little head and said with a smile, "Sleep some more. It's still pretty dark outside."

Yu Xiaocao was still concerned about an important matter within her heart, so she couldn't sleep anymore. She replied to her father with a smile, "Even Little Shitou is helping out with the chores. How can I be lazy when I'm his older sister? Father, you should hurry up. Don't make Uncle Zhao wait for a long time."

Yu Hai didn't delay any further and swiftly gathered his belongings. He took the paper bag with two triple-flour steamed buns wrapped up inside from Madam Liu and tied the water bag to his waist. After that, he got his homemade bow and hunting spear, and left.

Yu Xiaocao took out the earthenware jar that she hid under the kang bed yesterday. The abalones had become even more fresh after being nourished by the mystic-stone water.

Only a big restaurant can offer a good price for abalones of such good quality. However, she had just transmigrated here and hadn't even left the village before. So, how would she know the direction to town?

"Eldest Brother, is our village far from town?" While the main room and east room were still sleeping, Yu Xiaocao carried the ceramic pot and followed her older siblings out the door.

Yu Hang gave her a weird look and asked, "It's quite far. It would take over one shichen by foot. Why are you asking? You wouldn't be thinking of taking these to sell in town, right?" He pointed at the earthenware jar in her hand as he spoke.

Over one shichen? Doesn't that mean it would take at least two hours?! Yu Xiaocao looked down at her own short legs, sighed, and said, "Are there any horse carriages or ox carts traveling to town in our village?"

[1] shredded kelp with crushed garlic

[2] sea lettuce soup

[3] triple-flour steamed buns