

Fields of Gold Chapter 11

"Horse carriage? That's very expensive. Who can afford that, expect for those wealthy old masters in town? Our village doesn't have a lot of farmland, so there wasn't anyone who raised cattle. However, Uncle Ma, from the neighboring village, has a donkey cart. He usually helps transport goods, but when he's free, he would also give people a ride to town." Yu Xiaolian chirped a reply.

Yu Hang seemed to have understood Xiaocao's intentions. After a moment of deliberation, he said, "We still have enough firewood at home. Why don't I accompany you to town?"

Yu Xiaocao was certainly pleased with his offer, so she hastily nodded. She had wanted to go by herself, but she didn't know the direction.

Yu Xiaolian also wanted to go with them when she heard her eldest brother's suggestion to accompany her younger sister to town. However, she knew that if she followed them, then her mother would be responsible for all the chores in the family.

Xiaolian looked at her younger sister's pale face, set down the sickle in her hand, and whispered, "Wait for a moment." After that, she ran into the courtyard.

A while later, under her siblings' puzzled gaze, Xiaolian rushed out again and took out a small cloth bag in a mysterious manner. She pulled out several copper coins from the bag and said with a smile, "It's younger sister's first time going to town, so you guys should ride the donkey cart!"

"Where did you get these copper coins?" Yu Hang was surprised. All of their family's income must be handed to and kept by their grandmother. With their grandmother's stingy character, even a deity can't take away a copper coin from her hand.

Xiaolian gave them a mysterious smile, looked around, and whispered, "Didn't Doctor You teach us how to distinguish medical herbs? While collecting fishworts, I would also dig up herbs that I come across and save them up. Then, I sold the herbs that I saved up to a pharmacy and earned a few copper coins. I had originally wanted to buy some candies for younger sister. She can eat the candy after drinking her medication and change the bitter taste in her mouth."

Yu Xiaocao felt very touched as she held the six copper coins within her hand. She swiftly put away the money and said, "I'm borrowing these copper coins from you. When I have money in the future, I'll pay you back twice as much."

"We're family, so there's no need to mention that! It's getting late already. If you guys don't hurry and leave, you might miss the donkey cart. Remember to come back early. Otherwise, Grandmother will scold you guys again!" Yu Xiaocao wasn't sure where Xiaolian inherited her frank and brisk personality, but she really likes her this way.

Yu Hang took the earthen jar from his sister's hands, then they quickly walked towards the neighboring village. About thirty minutes later, they saw Ma Dafu pulling his donkey cart at the entrance of the village.

Although it only cost two copper coins for each person, there weren't many people who were willing to spend money to ride on the cart these days. On the donkey cart, there were only two women who were taking eggs or vegetables to the morning market. However, there were quite a lot of baskets on the cart.

"Uncle Ma, my sister and I want to go to town. Please give us a ride!" Yu Hang had been to town several times in the past when he followed his father to sell the game that they had caught. Thus, he had ridden on Ma Dafu's donkey cart before.

Ma Dafu naturally wouldn't reject them since it was an opportunity to earn money. He answered with a smile, "Isn't this Brother Dahai's son, Xiaosha! Is this your younger sister, Xiaolian? Quickly get on!"

The women on the cart sheepishly moved their baskets and emptied a small area for them. Yu Hang lifted his sister up onto the cart, then he went and sat on the thill [1] beside Ma Dafu.

The corners of Yu Xiaocao's mouth twitched. She seriously didn't know how to describe the feeling of being carried by a ten year old child.

The donkey swiftly trotted forward. It would have originally taken over two hours to reach the town by foot, but the duration of the trip was shortened by nearly half now.

The siblings finally arrived in town at around eight in the morning. This small town, Tanggu Town, was just an ordinary coastal town. It only takes about an hour to travel from the east side of town to the west side. However, it was a necessary route from the harbor to the Maritime Protection Bureau. Thus, despite being small, it was a rather prosperous town.

The entrance of the small town was crowded with people rushing to the morning market. Xiaocao and her eldest brother thanked Uncle Ma and paid him four copper coins for the ride. Ma Dafu warmly told them the departure time for the return trip, and he also reminded them to meet him at the same gate.

After bidding farewell to Uncle Ma, the siblings walked on the bustling street, which was wide enough for two horse carriages to run side by side. They would occasionally see horse wagons filled with cargos from the wharf rushing through the streets. This town was also an essential

route for transporting ocean freights to the capital. Thus, it was no wonder that this town was so lively.

Both sides of the street were filled with stores. There were so many stores lined up one after another that the siblings didn't even have time to see everything. Yu Xiaocao was eager to sell the abalones in her hands, so she turned her head towards Yu Hang and asked, "Eldest Brother, do you know where the biggest restaurant in town is? Let's just go there directly!"

"There are two famous restaurants in this town. One is called 'Fulin Restaurant', while the other one is 'Zhenxiu Restaurant'. Father also sells his prey to these two restaurants first. Fulin Restaurant is closer to here, should we go there first and ask?" Yu Hang has been here several times, so he somewhat familiar with this town.

Fulin Restaurant was a two-story restaurant. It appeared to be a long-standing business that gave off a sense of simplicity and elegance.

The siblings stood briefly in front of the entrance. It wasn't time for them to open the door for business yet, so there was only a young waiter. He was holding a broom and yawning lazily, while sluggishly sweeping the floor.

When the waiter saw the patched clothes on their body, he impatiently swept the dust in their direction and shouted with a disdainful look, "Leave, leave, leave! Is this a place that people like you can come? Even if you want to beg for food, you should find a better time! Hurry up! Hurry up and leave!"

It was the first time that Yu Xiaocao encountered a situation where someone had called her a 'beggar'. A sense of rage rose within the depth of her heart. However, she endured and suppressed her emotions. On the principle that harmony makes money, she squeezed

out a smile, "Hey, young brother, is your manager around? I have some fresh seafood here. I was wondering if your restaurant would be interested in buying them."

That waiter looked up and swept a gaze at the ceramic jar within her hands. He had a look of contempt as he said, "Fulin Restaurant's seafoods are all delivered by a fixed fisherman. With your poor appearance, would you even have any high-quality goods? Just scam! Why would our manager waste his time to see a filthy little tramp like you?"

"Why are you swearing at us?!" Yu Hang frowned and stepped forward to reason with him.

The waiter threw the broom in his hands, clasped his waist, and hollered, "So what if I'm swearing at you! Did you filthy beggars want to scam money? You even wanted to see our manager. Who do you think you are?"

"Why is it so nosy in the morning?!" Yu Xiaocao was about to explode in rage when a middle-aged man, who looked like a shopkeeper, came out of the main entrance and scolded.

The waiter instantly changed his attitude and grinned flatteringly, "Manager Liu! This underling was sending away these beggars!"

"You're a beggar! Manager Liu, I have several fresh and big abalones here. Would your restaurant be interested in buying them?" Yu Xiaocao gave the waiter a fierce glare, but she didn't continue to argue with him and directed her inquiry to Manager Liu.

Manager Liu looked at the siblings, but he didn't really take them seriously, "Oh, abalones! If they are of good quality, then we'll take them!"

Yu Xiaocao walked forward with the earthen jar and said, "These are first-class abalones, with each being over five inches in length. Would you like to have a look?"

On the street, a young man in an exquisite brocade robe immediately pulled on the reins of his horse upon hearing her words. Abalones that were over five inches in length? If it was true, then they were certainly abalones of the highest quality. County Magistrate Wu is holding his birthday banquet at Zhenxiu Restaurant this afternoon. Weren't they just missing an impressive main course?

[1] Thill - a shaft used to attach a cart or carriage to the animal drawing it