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### Fields of Gold Chapter 231

The refugees in the 'refugee camp' saw a rich-looking man stride towards them in an agitated manner, while being chased by a pretty little girl. The refugees were afraid of offending the nobles, so they all moved away. After the father-daughter pair passed by, they whispered about what had happened.

Hearing his younger daughter's voice, Yu Hai halted his steps with difficulty, turned around, and held the hand of his younger daughter, who was chasing after him. After that, he continued to walk towards that familiar figure.

"Father? Who did you see? Is it my oldest aunt?" Since the beginning of winter, her father had been worried about her oldest paternal aunt, who lived in the northeast disaster area. They didn't know her oldest aunt's situation. There had long been refugees coming to Tanggu Town, yet they hadn't received any news from her oldest aunt.

Holding onto his younger daughter's small hand, Yu Hai felt very anxious, but he still slowed down to match his daughter's pace. As they got closer to that thin figure, Xiaocao felt her father's hand slightly trembling.

"Husband, drink some congee. The congee at Tanggu Town is much thicker than that of other places. There's quite a lot of rice inside!" With a smile full of warmth, Yu Caifeng gently lifted the man lying on the straws, who was so thin that he barely looked like a human.

The man coughed violently, and his haggard face was completely flushed as if he would stop breathing at any time. The refugees around them were afraid that he was suffering from tuberculosis, so they all moved away.

The man finally calmed down slightly. He worked hard to inhale a few times, and then weakly said, "I'm not hungry. You and the children should drink it!"

Yu Caifeng shook her head resolutely and said in a soft voice, "The children are waiting in line to get congee! Since we have arrived in Tanggu Town, we are considered home already. After you drink this congee and recover some strength in your body, we will go to Dongshan Village tomorrow."

The man moistened his dry lips, which were cracked and bleeding, with his tongue. He sighed and said, "I'm being a burden to you and the children. If it wasn't for my treatment, you wouldn't have to suffer with me. I reckon that I won't be able to survive this illness. It would be a waste for me to eat this congee, so it is better for you to eat it! The children are still young, so you can't fall sick..."

"What are you saying! You just have a cold, and you haven't recovered due to the poor conditions on the road. When we get back to Dongshan Village, I'll borrow some money from my father and get a doctor from Tongren Medicine Hall to treat your illness... Doctor Sun of Tongren Medicine Hall in town has excellent medical skills. Everyone says that if he's willing, he can certainly be an imperial physician with his skills. He will definitely be able to cure you! Hurry up and drink the congee!!" With tears brimming in her eyes, Yu Caifeng pretended to be fierce.

The man was several years older than her, and he was also a widower. When she first married him, she had a strong temperament and regarded him with contempt for a long time. However, the man had a good temper. He tolerated her little temper and pampered her as a young maiden. Although she wasn't satisfied with this marriage at first, she was moved by the man's sincerity and lived with him wholeheartedly. After depending on each other for fifteen years, it had already become a habit for her to rely on him and trust in him. Now, she seriously couldn't imagine how she would continue living without him...

Looking at his wife's helpless and indecisive eyes, the man felt a sharp pain in his heart that was even more unbearable than his illness. He forced out a smile and said, "Okay! I'll drink this congee! I have already persevered all the way to here, so no matter what, I must hold on! I'm really still very worried about you and our three children..."

"Don't speak anymore. Drink the congee..." After wiping her eyes, Yu Caifeng scooped a spoonful of congee with a spoon, gently blew on it, and delivered it to the man's mouth. The man held the congee in his mouth and worked hard to swallow it.

Yu Xiaocao and her father saw this scene from afar and had a mixture of feelings in their hearts. At this time, three children holding congee passed by them. The oldest boy spoke with a slightly brisk voice, "Father, Mother! The people handing out the congee here are pretty nice. Even young kids like us can get a full bowl of congee! These three bowls are enough for our whole family!!"

Among them was a young girl, who was about the same age as Xiaocao. She watched as the man finished half of the bowl of congee and revealed a happy smile, "Father seems to be in good spirits today! Your appetite has gotten a lot better! Mother, is Father's illness going to get better soon?"

Yu Caifeng fed congee to the man and said, "When we see your uncle tomorrow, your father will be able to treat his illness in town. The doctors in town are very skilled, so your father's illness can definitely be cured!"

The youngest of the three children asked naively, "Mother, when Father gets better, we won't have to beg for food anymore, right?"

Yu Caifeng's nose was sour as she nodded heavily and said, "When your father's illness is cured, he can go find a job in town. Your father is very capable, so he definitely won't have a problem supporting our family of five!"

"Yay! Other people won't call us 'little beggars' anymore! Mother, Xiaoping don't want to be called a little beggar and beg for food. Eldest Brother said that we are just going through a difficult time for now, and it will get better in the future!" With a pair of big eyes that were similar to Yu Caifeng's, the young boy exclaimed in an innocent and serious manner.

Seeing this scene, Yu Hai choked up and hastened his steps. He shouted at Yu Caifeng, "Older Sister!!"

The hand that Yu Caifeng held the bowl of congee with abruptly shook, as if she couldn't believe it. She turned her head slowly, and when she saw Yu Hai, her lips trembled and she couldn't utter a word.

"Older Sister!" Yu Hai rushed forward and hugged Yu Caifeng, who was so thin that she only had bones left. The tears that had been welled up in his eyes for a long time flowed down his face.

"Xiaohai? Is it Xiaohai?" Yu Caifeng still couldn't believe it, for fear that she was in a dream. Her motivation to persist on the road, other than her children, was her younger brother, whom she hadn't seen for over a decade.

"Older Sister, it's me! I'm your Xiaohai!! Older Sister, you have suffered!!" Yu Hai hugged his older sister and cried like a child.

His older sister was only three years older than him. When his mother passed away, his older sister held back her grief, and like how Yu Hai was embracing her now, she comforted him. When Madam Zhang

skimped on the siblings' meals on the pretext of food shortage, his older sister often shared a portion of the little food that she had. In order to protect him, his older sister had often been beaten and scolded by Madam Zhang. Even though he was nearly thirty years old now, he was still 'Xiaohai' who relied on his older sister.

Yu Caifeng held Yu Hai's face, carefully examined him, and smiled with relief, "Xiaohai, Older Sister is relieved to see that you're living a good life."

Yu Hai saw his sister and the children were wearing rags that could barely cover their bodies. He frowned and asked, "Older Sister! In autumn, I asked someone to send a message to tell you to come home. Why did you guys only arrive now? Didn't I send some traveling expenses? How did you guys turn out like this?"

Yu Caifeng finally noticed the expensive, fine cotton robe on her younger brother's body. Although she was surprised that Madam Zhang was actually willing to let her younger brother wear such nice clothing, she didn't inquire about it. She just sighed and said, "Ay... It's a long story!"

From Yu Caifeng's words, Yu Hai had learned that due to his older sister and brother-in-law's hard work and frugality, their family had some surplus grain. There was a great drought in the northeast. The couple had received Yu Hai's letter and money, but they were reluctant to let go of their hard-earned property. As a result, they took out twenty taels from the money that Yu Hai sent over and secretly hoarded some grain to see if they could survive until spring plowing.

They hadn't expected that, after surviving the winter, those famine victims had found out from an unknown source that their family had excess grain and rushed to their house. They destroyed their belongings, stole their grain, and also injured her husband. Fortunately, Yu Caifeng had securely hidden the remaining thirty taels, so it wasn't discovered.

Their food was robbed, and the valuable belongings at home were also taken by those famine victims. With no other choice, Yu Caifeng and her husband packed their bags, took their children, and finally joined the refugees.

On the way, the group of refugees were suddenly attacked by the cold spring, and many of the refugees had fallen sick. Thinking that he had a strong, healthy body, Yu Hai's older brother-in-law, Liu Hu, gave his clothes to his wife and children, and thus fell ill.

At first, Liu Hu didn't take his illness to heart. Didn't he recover from his previous illnesses pretty quickly? He didn't want the trip to be delayed due to himself, so even when he had a high fever, he didn't say anything. He just endured it and continued on the journey. As a result, he had fallen ill right after they left a small town in the northeast.

At this time, his originally small cold had turned into pneumonia. The small town had poor medical standards and only had one barefoot doctor. They spent the money and got medicine for him. However, Liu Hu illness always came back and couldn't completely be cured.

In this way, they need to stay at a lodging and treat his illness. More than a month later, the money that Yu Caifeng brought along had been completely used up. Liu Hu felt that his illness couldn't be treated, so he refused to accept treatment and insisted on continuing on the journey. Yu Caifeng failed to talk him out of this idea, so they had to pawn off their unnecessary belongings, rent an ox cart, and continue on the road to the south.

On the road, Liu Hu's condition fluctuated. All their traveling expenses had been spent, so they didn't even have enough to eat, let alone rent a cart. The whole family supported each other and begged for food as they continued on their journey. Had it not been for the belief in his heart, Liu Hu would have collapsed a long time ago—Before he died, he must see his wife and children return to their hometown and reunite with their relatives. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to die in peace!

Once a person was supported by faith, they often could create miracles. Dragging his sick body, Liu Hu was actually able to see the main gates of Tanggu Town. Seeing the moment that his wife and her younger brother embraced each other, a heavy sense of weariness fell upon him—Perhaps, this was the moment he could leave at ease.

"Father... Father! Mother, Father fainted again!!" Yu Caifeng's eldest son, Liu Junping gently shook his father, but didn't receive any response. So he shouted in slight panic.

Yu Caifeng turned around and saw her husband's ashen complexion. She felt alarmed in her heart and rushed to him. With a trembling finger, she reached under her husband's nose. After testing, her complexion instantly changed and she hollered, "Husband!" After that, she fainted in front of Yu Hai.

Yu Hai quickly lifted his older sister's body. He looked at Liu Hu, who was lying on the straw with his eyes tightly shut, and felt a sour feeling in his heart.

"Father! Father!!" The three children, who seemed to have realized something, shook Liu Hu's body as they cried. Those who heard them would feel heart-broken, and those who saw them would shed tears.

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[Master, that person hasn't died yet. The soul hasn't left the body, my bathwater can save that person!] The little divine stone had sensed Xiaocao's sadness, so it quickly transformed into a golden kitten, reminding her in a child-like tone.

When Yu Xiaocao heard that, she recalled that the little divine stone had once said that when it was at the peak of its power, it was able to bring a person back from the dead. The little divine stone recently recovered a lot of its spiritual power. Since he said that he can save her uncle, then there would be no problem!

Xiaocao wiped away the tears on her cheeks and stepped forward, pulling the three crying children aside. She said, "Please move aside! I've studied medicine before, let me take a look!"

After she said that, she put her finger on Liu Hu's pulse, quietly feeling his pulse for a while. She realized that his pulse was indeed still beating weakly. Mhm! He could still be saved! Xiaocao quickly took out a small and delicate jade bottle from her embroidered pouch. She lightly pinched open Liu Hu's mouth and carefully poured the mystic-stone liquid into his mouth.

"Father! Bring the water bag!" Liu Hu had lost the ability to swallow, she must use water for him to wash down the mystic-stone liquid.

At this time, Yu Caifeng slowly woke up from Yu Hai's arms. As if she suddenly remembered something, she stood straight up and was about to rush toward her man. Yu Hai hurriedly pulled her back and comforted her, "Older Brother-in-law might still be saved. Cao'er is treating him right now."

"Young lady, I beg you, you must save my husband! If he dies, I... then I won't live either! I beg you, please save him!" A final ray of hope flashed in Yu Caifeng's eyes. Could someone who stopped breathing come back to life? She didn't dare to think about it and only hoped that God will bless them with a miracle again.

Yu Xiaocao asked her father to open Liu Hu's mouth. Her heart finally felt relieved after feeding him two mouthfuls of water. She recalled the method to do CPR in her previous life.

About a third of the way below his sternum, she placed her left palm on his chest. Then she placed her right palm on top of her left palm, with her arms straight, she pressed down thirty times using her upper body strength. As she did that, she said to her father, "Father, follow my instructions: pinch uncle's nose and blow into his mouth—blow..."

"Not like that! Your mouth must block uncle's mouth while you blow forcefully into his mouth!" Xiaocao saw that his father was far from the patient's mouth as he blew air into his mouth. Despite finding the scene to be quite funny, she quickly corrected him.

Yu Hai awkwardly raised his head and looked at his brother-in-law's lips. However, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't do it.

"I'll do it!" Yu Caifeng had finally found a thread of hope from her desperation. She could throw away her reputation and her face as long as she could save her man's life! Under the watchful eyes of other people, she blocked the man's mouth with her mouth, giving him artificial respiration under Xiaocao's guidance.

It wasn't known whether it was Xiaocao's CPR or the mystic-stone water that had worked, but Liu Hu was finally able to breathe on his own after two minutes. Seeing her husband's chest moving up and down weakly, Yu Caifeng covered her face and wept noiselessly—these were tears of joy of regaining something again after losing it!

Liu Hu slowly opened his eyes and saw his tearful wife as well as his children crying in low voices. He lifted his withered hand and tightly pulled his wife's hand. He had sensed just now that he was about to approach the last moment of his life. The instant he closed his eyes, his heart was filled with reluctance and nostalgia.

He didn't know if his wife would still be able to live so willfully like before without his care. How would his children grow up and how would the family survive in the future without him? However, he had, fortunately, overcome this hurdle again. His body was like an arrow that was reaching the end of its flight until he felt a small life force flowing in his body. Each of his exhausted organs seemed to glow with vitality.

"Oldest Aunt, give Uncle some water! Patients need to replenish themselves with water!" Xiaocao secretly dropped two drops of mystic-stone liquid into the water. The patient's body was still very weak, so drinking some mystic-stone water would be very helpful for future recovery.

Yu Caifeng took the water bag; her eyes were full of gratitude. Her husband had clearly stopped breathing just now. It was thanks to her young niece, who had given him some magical elixir and taught her how to give air to her man, that her husband was able to return from the gates of hell. She couldn't imagine and didn't want to imagine what would've happened if she didn't meet her little niece, or if her brother and little niece had arrived a step too late! She only knew that it was her brother and her little niece who had saved her man and her family!

"Good... what a good child! Aunt doesn't know how to thank you..." Yu Caifeng didn't know what to say. Words couldn't describe her gratitude towards her. In the future, even if she had to work like an ox or horse, she must repay her brother's family.

Yu Hai felt very happy for his older sister, and he was extremely glad that his younger daughter had studied medicine under Doctor You. He sighed heavily and said, "Older Sister, we're all family. There's no need for you to express your gratitude. Give Older Brother-in-law some water, then let's pack our stuff and go to town and have Doctor Sun take a look at Older Brother-in-law."

"Father! Do you not believe in my medical skills? Doctor Sun had praised me ceaselessly, saying I'm very talented when it comes to studying medicine!" Yu Xiaocao pouted with her small mouth and had an 'I'm very angry' appearance on.

Yu Hai stroked his daughter's glossy black hair and said with a smile, "I believe you; I believe you! Our family's Xiaocao is so capable, how can I not believe you? Your uncle is very sick, so we're going to go to Tongren Medicine Hall to get some medicine to nourish his health. In passing, we can also have Doctor Sun feel his pulse!"

Yu Caifeng's youngest son, Liu Fangping, had just turned six this year and he said in a childish voice, "Older sister, I believe you too! You cured my father; you are a godly doctor!"

Liu Fangping was one year younger than Little Shitou, and one could tell that he had suffered a lot. He was very skinny, similar to how Little Shitou looked when Xiaocao had just transmigrated. Xiaocao stroked his little head gently and said with a smile, "You have to call me Older Cousin, do you understand? Older Cousin isn't a godly doctor, I just know how to perform some first aid. Your father still needs the experienced Doctor Sun to prescribe him some medicine and to nurse him back to health. Don't worry, your father will be fine!"



From the beginning, Liu Fangping had snuggled up against Xiaocao's side with an extremely adorable smile on his face. On the road, he had often relied on his pure and adorable smile to trigger married women and young women's maternal love for kids, making them give him food. Xiaocao couldn't help but pinch the little guy's face gently.

When Liu Yaner, who was a year older than Xiaocao saw how her younger brother was selling his lovable appearance, she couldn't help but roast him. "Older Brother, look at how our younger brother is pretending to be lovable again! When he's outside, he acts like an obedient little boy, but when he's at home, he's extremely naughty!"

The oldest child, Liu Junping smiled maturely and brought his younger sister and brother to greet their uncle. When he was in the northeast, he had frequently heard his mother mention this capable uncle of his, who could catch fish and hunt. In their first meeting, his first impression of his uncle was that he was very tall and strong; his body was even sturdier than his father's before he fell ill.

His mother had frequently talked about how his honest and considerate uncle would definitely be bullied relentlessly by their stepmother. However, based on the clothing his uncle and younger female cousin was dressed in, they appeared more well off than the lords in his village who owned over a hundred mu of fields. No matter how one looked at them, they didn't appear to be treated harshly. Although Liu Junping had doubts in his heart, he never revealed his inner thoughts.

Liu Hu drank a few more mouthfuls of water and felt some of his strength returning to him. Yu Hai patted the oldest of the siblings, Liu Junping's shoulder. He urged him to quickly pack up some necessities and move them to a nearby carriage.

On their way here, in order to treat Liu Hu's illness, the Liu Family had pawned most of their valuable belongings, so they didn't have much to pack. Yu Hai carried Liu Hu on his back as he walked toward the carriage. Yu Caifeng brought her children along as they silently followed behind him.

The surrounding refugees looked at the Liu Family enviously. When this family had just arrived at this camp, very few people interacted with them because they were suspected of being infected by a contagious disease. However, they were quite fortunate to have met their wealthy relatives and were able to escape from the abyss of suffering. Many people were secretly regretting that they didn't help them out in their most difficult times. Even if they want to beg them now, they had no way of doing it!

"Wow! Older Cousin, your family's horse carriage is so beautiful!" When Liu Fangping saw the strong, sturdy, and beautifully decorated horse carriage, he couldn't help but exclaim in admiration.

Yu Xiaocao propped the little guy up by his armpit and helped him onto the horse carriage. She smiled and explained, "This carriage was lent to us by my godfather! My family's horse carriage isn't this beautiful!"

In the carriage, Liu Fangping excitedly touched the items in the horse carriage, he was curious about everything. The little guy had only ever been in an ox cart since he was a child, so he never had the opportunity to come in contact with horse carriage that has a sedan chair.

The horse carriage was very spacious. Liu Hu was half-lying inside the horse carriage while Liu Caifeng sat next to him to take care of him. The children curiously and excitedly sat in the horse carriage. When the horse carriage set off, Liu Fangping clapped his hands and said, "It's more comfortable to sit in a horse carriage, I can't feel the jolting as the carriage is moving. Whenever I'm in an ox cart, it feels like my bottom is about to turn into three segments because of the jolting of the cart!"

Yu Xiaocao could deeply relate to Liu Fangping's sentiment for ox and donkey carts. In the past, when the wheels of her donkey cart had yet been changed, the jolting of the cart as it rushed towards its destination would almost make her puke up her dinner. That was such an 'amazing' feeling ah!

The horse carriage was stopped at the city gates. With the increase of refugees outside of Tanggu Town, there had been more soldiers guarding the city gates. She heard that those soldiers were transferred here from Jinwei Prefectural City!

Liu Yaner, who had been looking outside the carriage window, hurriedly pulled down the curtain of the carriage window. She looked at Xiaocao timidly and asked, "Younger Cousin, will the soldiers not let us enter the city?"

When they had first arrived, several refugees were arrested for trying to enter the city without a permit and having a dispute with the soldiers. However, those weren't the most serious cases. On their way here, many places, especially big cities, had been unwelcoming and unfriendly towards the refugees. This had created a shadow in Liu Yaner's heart.

Yu Xiaocao comforted her, "It's okay! For Tanggu Town, as long as there are relatives that are willing guarantee for you, you can freely enter and exit Tanggu Town."

Sure enough, when the steward of the Fang Estate showed the soldiers his identity medal, the soldiers allowed them into the city cordially with a smile on their face.

As they passed through the city gates, Liu Fangping poked his little head out the window and was seen by the soldiers. However, none of them were detained like Liu Yaner had worried about.

Liu Junping, who had been sitting quietly in the horse carriage while observing all of this, faintly thought in his heart that the status of his younger cousin's godfather must not be low. Otherwise, the soldiers with eyes growing on their forehead wouldn't have allowed them into the city that easily. Those soldiers were so cordial and enthusiastic even to someone who looked like a subordinate. Could it be that his younger cousin's godfather was an official?

His environment had encouraged his growth. The journey had allowed Liu Junping, who didn't have a worry in the world before, to mature quickly...

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The horse carriage passed through the bustling streets and drove towards the house that the Yu Family had bought in town. The streets of Tanggu Town was simple but prosperous. At this time, the street vendors were like clouds, and there were streams of people weaving their through the streets. There were deep fried fruits, chowder soup, steamed stuffed buns, and steamed buns, etc. The voices of vendors crying out their goods for sale could be heard by the ears from time to time.

The majority of the people passing through the streets were ordinary people dressed in plain cotton clothing and signs of the hardships they had faced could be seen on their face. There were also scholars dressed in long gowns with an aura of elegance and grace. Of course, there were also wealthy people dressed in splendid embroidered clothes. Occasionally, there was a young lady wearing a veil followed by senior servants and servant girls passing by their horse carriage while laughing softly...

It seemed as if Liu Yaner and her younger brother's face were embedded in the carriage window as they looked at the bustling and stable street. Their wandering minds from their long journey here seemed to be comforted by this scene. This was the first time they were able to enjoy the exquisiteness of the streets in such a leisurely way. They didn't have to worry about being berated, driven out, or even think about how they should smile and what they should do to receive charity from others...

The experience in the past few months could be said to be a nightmare for everyone in the Liu Family. Yu Caifeng looked down at the man who was sound asleep. As long as he was here, no matter how much hardship she had to face, she was not afraid. In the future, no matter how difficult their lives became, it wouldn't be more difficult than being a refugee and begging others for charity!

"Older Sister! We're here! Let's get off!" The horse carriage arrived in front of a courtyard. Yu Hai jumped out of the horse carriage, pulled the curtains to the side, and smiled brightly at the people inside.

Liu Junping tactfully decline his uncle's goodwill to help him down. He jumped off the horse carriage by himself and stretched out his hand again to help his brother and sister down the carriage. However, he found that his uncle had already skillfully helped his siblings down the carriage. Liu Fangping was giggling and laughing happily.

Their next door neighbor had just returned from buying vegetables, and saw Yu Hai leading a group of refugees in ragged clothing emitting a strange odor. She couldn't help but frown and say, "Brother Yu, there was a kind family who had taken in a family of refugees before, but their money was stolen! You have to be careful!"

When Yu Hai bought this house, he had visited both his right and left neighbors. Therefore, even though he didn't often come here, his neighbors still knew that he was the owner of this house.

Yu Hai nodded towards her and indifferently said, "Thank you for your kind reminder. This is my older sister. She was just affected by a disaster on her journey here; she's not a refugee!"

The married woman looked up and down at Yu Caifeng and her family. She curled her lips and asked, "Are you going to let them live here for a while? It seems like I need to change my family's door lock!"

When Yu Caifeng heard those words, she stared at the woman in humiliation, and her fingernails sank deeply into the palm of her hand. Yu Xiaocao looked at the rotten vegetables in the woman's basket and snorted coldly, "Just based on your house? Would there be a difference whether you lock your door or not?"

The married woman's complexion immediately changed and shouted, "What do you mean?!"

"What do I mean? Do you still need me to explain it? It means that——since your family is so poor, even if you leave your door wide open, thieves wouldn't even care to come in!" Since the other party doesn't want to save face, then why should Yu Xiaocao give her face?

"You..." The married woman wanted to say something, but she was interrupted by a drunk voice from inside her house.

"Damned woman! Do you want to starve me to death by shopping for so long? Why are you still dawdling over there? Aren't you going to hurry it up and prepare a meal for me?!"

All of the married woman's arrogance and rudeness disappeared in an instant. She trembled for a moment before she entered the courtyard compliantly. Soon, a painful scream could be heard followed by a man's screaming voice, "Where's the wine? Where's the wine that you went to buy for me? If you can't do such a simple thing, what do I need you as a wife for?" Soon, the sound of disjointed punching and kicking could be heard.

Yu Xiaocao grabbed her father who was about to go and persuade the man and whispered, "Father, we're not familiar with them. It's best not to interfere with other people's business otherwise people will say we're too nosy. Father, I will take aunt and uncle into the house first. You should go buy some ready-made clothes from the clothing store!"

Yu Caifeng hurriedly stopped them, "No... there's no need! Our clothes can still be worn after they are washed and re-sewn. There's no need to waste money."

Yu Hai hurriedly nodded his head and said, "It's not a waste, it's not a waste! Older Sister, you should go in and rest for a while. When I return, let's go out to eat together!" After he finished speaking, he hastily left, leaving no room for Yu Caifeng to say anything.

Xiaocao knocked on the door, and the person who opened the door was a gray haired old man. The old man's surname was Tang, and his only son was swallowed up by the storm while fishing. The married couple didn't have anyone to rely on. Yu Hai found them pitiful, so he lent them the side room to reside in. The Yu Family would occasionally stay in this house in town or they would use the kitchen here to make a meal and send it to Little Shitou. So it was similar to letting the couple watch over their house in exchange for free rent!

The old man recognized Xiaocao because Xiaocao would come here when she was free to cook for her younger brother who was studying in town. The food the little girl cooked was so fragrant that he couldn't help but drool whenever he smelled it.

"Miss Yu, these people are..." The old man looked at the five members of the Liu Family without any contempt in his gaze.

"This is my oldest aunt's family. They had just arrived at Tanggu Town." Yu Xiaocao explained lightly. She invited Yu Caifeng and her family into the courtyard. The courtyard wasn't big and was divided into two courtyards; the front courtyard and the back courtyard. There were three main rooms, two side rooms, a kitchen, and a junk room in the back courtyard.

For the Liu Family, who had been living in the northeast countryside, the view of the brick houses and the neat and orderly courtyard was beyond their imagination. Liu Caifeng secretly wondered, when did her brother become so rich for him to afford a house in town?

After restraining herself, she still couldn't help but ask, "Xiaocao, does your grandmother know that you have bought this house in town?"

"Why would I let her know?" Xiaocao blinked her eyes puzzledly at first and then she asked suddenly, "Oldest Aunt, you don't know yet? We have separated our households, so buying a house here was our idea!"

They separated households! No wonder! She was wondering how the stingy Madam Zhang would be willing to allow her younger brother and niece to dress so nicely and even allow them to buy a house in town. It turned out that they separated their households! The last worry Yu Caifeng had in her heart vanished like smoke in thin air.

Originally, she was worried that she would be shut out by the cruel and ruthless Madam Zhang when she returned to her maiden home, leaving her brother in a difficult position of being stuck in the middle of them. She thought that if Madam Zhang didn't let them in, she would first live in the old Yu residence and let her man go to the mountain to learn hunting with her brother. There were a lot of edible wild vegetables in the West Mountains. As long as one was diligent, it was impossible to starve to death.

Since her younger brother had split households, there wouldn't be so many misgivings! It seemed like her younger brother's family was doing well. Her younger brother had always been capable, without Madam Zhang, that blood sucking leech, it wouldn't take long for her brother to live a better life! According to her younger brother's nature, he definitely won't turn a blind eye to her.

However, as an older sister, she couldn't completely rely on her younger brother. She believed that this difficult time was only going to be temporary. Once her husband recovered from his illness, he could work some temporary jobs in town. In the spring of next year, they could rent a few acres of land to farm. There weren't many people remaining in her man's family, nor was it necessary to return to the bitter cold place in northeast countryside.

"Oldest Aunt, you should take a break. I'll go to heat up a pot of water so you will be able to wash yourselves in a short while!" Yu Xiaocao's crisp and melodious voice had interrupted her thoughts.

Yu Caifeng helped her husband to sit on a chair in the room, when she heard what Xiaocao had said, she quickly said, "Let me do it!"

Xiaocao laughed and said, "Oldest Aunt, why are you being so modest with me? Uncle's body isn't well, and you should help him onto the kang bed to rest for a bit."

"Mother, watch after Father. I'll go help Younger Cousin boil water!" Liu Yaner sensibly took Xiaocao's hand and headed towards the kitchen.

When the water turned hot, Yu Hai was carrying a bundle as he entered the house. He moved to the side as he let Doctor Sun from Tongren Medicinal Hall in. Following behind them was a young apprentice who was holding a medicine box.

When the two entered the room, they found Yu Caifeng sitting at the edge of the kang bed, and her husband was leaning against her shoulders with his eyes closed. Yu Hai said, "Sister, why didn't you let Brother-in-law lie down?"

Yu Caifeng appeared somewhat embarrassed as she whispered, "Your Brother-in-law said that his body was dirty, and he was afraid that he'll dirty your bed!"

Yu Hai revealed an unhappy expression as he said in displeasure, "If it becomes dirty, I can just wash it! Help him lie down and let Doctor Sun to look at him!"

After Doctor Sun took his pulse, he pondered for a moment before he said, "The patient developed a lung disease because his common cold wasn't treated in time. However, his illness isn't serious! Since the patient's body has a good foundation, he should fully recover after taking some medicine!"

What Doctor Sun had diagnosed was the patient's condition after Xiaocao had given him mystic-stone water. Had it not been for the mystic-stone water, Liu Hu would've been seriously ill and died. It would've been impossible for him to be able to wait for Doctor Sun to arrive.

Doctor Sun mixed two batches from his medicine box and told them to let the patient take this medicine first before taking the prescription to the medicine hall to get more. After taking the medicine for three to five days, the patient should be able to recover without any accident.

After Doctor Sun was sent away, with the help of his nephew Liu Junping, Yu Hai helped Liu Hu took a hot bath, changed him into clean clothes, and then let him lie on the kang bed. Yu Caifeng was brewing medicine for her husband in the courtyard. All the money Yu Hai had given her for the journey was nearly all used up for medicine. Yu Caifeng had become skilled at brewing medicine from this.

After Liu Hu drank the medicine and fell asleep, Yu Caifeng and her children had taken a bath and changed into clean cotton clothing. The clothes were made of average material with average style and patterns because it was bought from a ready-made store, yet the three children were so delighted that it seemed like it was New Years.

Before the disaster, Liu Hu's family rarely had any surplus food around. They weren't considered to be well-off, so they might not even get a set of new clothes a year. On their journey, their remaining clothes were used to exchange for medicine for their father. The clothes they had left would be sewn again and again with patches here and there. It was so shabby that they were unable to look at it. Now, they felt very satisfied being able to wear new clothes.

"Father! There is nothing left at home besides rice. Let's go out to eat at noon!" Because the house in town was rarely occupied, except for some rice and noodles, there were hardly any other ingredients. Xiaocao thought of going out to eat because there was a restaurant in town where the food tasted quite good.

Yu Caifeng hastily said, "We already drank a bowl of porridge when we were outside the city gates. We can make do with whatever we have at home. We'll have to spend money if we go out to eat!"



Yu Xiaocao said, "The rice at home is only enough to make a bowl of porridge for Uncle! My father and I had left the house early this morning and by now, we're hungry. We will need to go out to buy ingredients and then come back to cook, I don't think I will be able to wait that long! Let's go out to eat, it won't cost a lot of money!"

Fields of Gold Chapter 234 - Stupefied

After a great amount of effort, they were finally able to convince Yu Caifeng. Liu Junping was very sensible and stayed at home to take care of his father. Although the doctor had already reassured them that Liu Hu's illness was no longer a big deal, he still needed someone at his side. Liu Junping volunteered himself to take on that task.

Yu Hai took his older sister's entire family to a nearby little restaurant and ordered a few dishes. Most of the dishes were vegetarian. When Yu Caifeng saw that most of the food had been cooked with a decent amount of oil, she felt bad at the thought of the amount of money that had to be spent on this meal.

Yu Xiaocao gave both Liu Yaner and Little Fangping half a bowl of thick rice congee and grinned, "Older Cousin, Xiaoping, first drink some congee to prep the stomach. When we get back to Dongshan Village, I'll make some more delicious food for you guys."

Sips of the thick and fragrant rice congee warmed the belly. Little Fangping alternated between a mouthful of congee and a mouthful of eggs. He marveled that there couldn't be food that was more delicious than this. A content expression surfaced on his face as he said, "Older Cousin, this food is already very good. Is the food you make even better than this?"

Yu Hai hadn't eaten much food as he was preoccupied with adding food to his sister's plate. When he heard the boy's question, he laughed, "Xiaoping, did you not know? Your Older Sister Xiaocao's culinary skills are famous around here. Even the head chef of Zhenxiu Restaurant complimented her before!"

The woman who owned this little restaurant sneered when she heard Yu Hai's words. She silently thought, 'This family loves to boast. The head chef of Zhenxiu Restaurant has standards. How could he possibly value this little brat's cooking abilities? If you have to brag, why don't choose something more outrageous, like claiming that your family came up with Zhenxiu Restaurant's recipe for their roasted chicken and salt-brined duck, eh?'

Lady, you actually hit upon the truth there!

Yu Caifeng looked at the table full of food and remarked in an embarrassed tone, “Xiaohai, you really spent too much money. What's the point of ordering so much food for such a small group of people? If we can't finish it, it'll all be wasted!”

Yu Hai looked at his older sister, who had become so thin that her face looked like it was about to disappear. A wave of melancholy flooded him as he gave his older sister another serving of shredded meat stir-fried with tofu, “Older Sister, eat more! When we get back home, your niece will help you nourish your body.”

Xiaocao grasped this opportunity to explain, “Oldest Aunt, right now it's not a good idea for you and my cousins to eat anything too greasy, so we only ordered some light dishes. Just eat this food for now. Once your stomachs are more healthy, I can make anything you guys want to eat!”

The owner of the restaurant sneered somewhat unhappily and muttered under her breath, “This little kid really loves to boast! Her father doesn't even bother to correct her when she claims that she'll make anything they want to eat. Can she make roasted chicken? What about osmanthus duck? They can't afford to order meat dishes yet she still has to make it sound so nice.”

Although the woman's voice was very quiet, Yu Xiaocao had been nourished with the mystic-stone water for over a year. Her five senses were naturally more sharp than a normal person's, so she was able to hear the manager's grumbles. Xiaocao raised an eyebrow and knowingly looked the older woman in the eye. The woman was startled by her actions and shrunk down a bit as she thought, 'This little girl could hear what I said even though I said it so quietly. However, does it matter that she could hear me? Everything I said was the truth!'

Yu Xiaocao naturally wouldn't lower herself to argue with the woman. The whole group finished the meal and also bought some takeout wrapped in waxed paper to feed Liu Junping. In addition, they also bought some white rice, vegetables, meat, and a fat hen at the market before they finally returned back to the Yu Family's town residence.

After taking some medication, Liu Hu had quickly fallen asleep. Yu Xiaocao gave the food to Liu Junping to eat before she went into the kitchen to cook a thick and nourishing pot of chicken congee. The tantalizing smell of chicken congee wafted through the courtyard and tempted Little Fangping, who had just eaten his fill. The little boy swallowed down the saliva pooling in his mouth as his eyes wandered back to the kitchen from time to time.

When Liu Hu woke up from his nap, a bowl full of nourishing chicken congee was placed in front of him. The translucent grains of rice had already melted into a thick porridge. Shreds of chicken meat dotted the contents of the bowl and the whole thing was garnished with a handful of thinly chopped green onions. The whole bowl looked incredibly appetizing and, when combined with the delicious smell, roused the appetite of someone who wasn't even hungry.

Yu Caifeng silently swallowed down the saliva that had flooded her mouth and took the bowl of congee from her niece's hands. She scooped up a portion and carefully blew on the spoon to cool the contents down before she fed her husband. Little Fangping crawled onto the kang bed and stared piteously at the congee bowl. Liu Yaner lowered her head out of desperation as she tried to ignore her desire to eat the food. Only Liu Junping, who had just eaten, was able to calmly watch his father eat congee with a smile on his face.

After eating a few bites of the delectable, savory chicken congee, Liu Hu looked at his youngest son, who was staring at the bowl with pitiful eyes. He raised a hand to rub the little boy's head and said, "I've eaten enough, you guys should finish the rest..."

Liu Fangping hurriedly shook his head like a rattle, "Father, you should finish it so you can get better faster. I ate scrambled eggs and a large bowl of rice porridge for lunch, so I'm very full! Quickly eat more!"

Liu Hu had a tender heart. Ever since Yu Caifeng had married over, he always saved the best food for his wife to eat. After they had children, he always gave the best food and items to his wife and kids while he gladly partook his own plain meals. This was also the reason why Yu Caifeng later on ended up loving him to the high heavens. Naturally, with this delectable chicken congee in front of him, no matter what anyone else said, he refused to enjoy it alone.

Yu Xiaocao finally ended this stalemate with a word, "I made a whole pot of this congee, so there's more than enough for our whole family to eat! Xiaoping, Older Sister Yaner, let's go to the kitchen and grab a portion for everyone to enjoy!"

Liu Fangping cheerfully jumped off the kang bed after hearing Xiaocao's suggestion. He sloppily put on his shoes and scampered behind Xiaocao as they exited the room, as if he was her little tail blindly following along.

Liu Hu only finished his bowl of food after six bowls of porridge appeared in front of him. Xiaocao had added a few drops of mystic-stone water to the congee, so after Liu Hu ate his bowl, his whole body felt comfortably warm. All of the heaviness left him and his body became light and energetic.

While the Yu Family was enjoying their happy family reunion together, the young royal prince, Zhu Junyang, was unable to spend time with his mother, who had been eagerly anticipating his arrival in Tanggu Town. Instead, he had just gotten to the capital with a train of a hundred-so carts all piled high with goods and was covered in dust from his travels.

The emperor summoned him to the throne room. The seventeen year old young royal prince elaborated on his travels and what he had seen while he was in the throne room that was crowded with literary and military officials. The group of officials listened avidly to his stories that sounded fantastical. From time to time, some people let out a few soft cries of astonishment. When the emperor summoned the foreign artisans that the royal prince had brought back with him to the room, all of the officials stared at these people, who had blond hair and blue eyes, as if they were monsters. All of their eyes were opened wide in shock and their mouths gaped open.

Although Jianwen Emperor had also traveled the seas and brought back sweet potato plants before he ascended the throne, he had never brought back any foreigners who had red hair and green eyes back. It was no wonder that all of these officials were shocked.

“Ah Junyang! We told you to find some novel crops. How did that go?” Drought had plagued the north this year and there were starving migrants roaming everywhere. Jianwen Emperor had been very worried. If they were able to get their hands on corn and potatoes, two high-yielding crops, then everyone in the future would have enough staple food to eat. Future disasters would also not be as bad!

In front of the emperor, Zhu Junyang still had his usual stony cold expression. He replied confidently, “Your Imperial Majesty, this official has succeeded!”

The emperor's eyes lit up, and he leaned slightly forward on the dragon throne. He somewhat impatiently said, “Ah? Then bring it here, we need to see this!”

Before long, a small bag of corn and a few potatoes had been presented to the emperor. Jianwen Emperor descended from the dragon throne and scooped up a handful of golden corn. He lightly felt the kernels and then picked up a potato to inspect. A nostalgic expression surfaced on his face. His favorite dish in college was sauteed spicy and sour shredded potatoes. He hadn't eaten any for a few decades and he really missed it! He used all of his willpower to suppress his desire to send these potatoes to the

imperial kitchens. These potatoes were seeds ah. He must endure now so that in the future he would have more potatoes than he could devour!

“Very good! Very good!” The emperor was quite pleased as he lavished compliments, “Quickly bring all of this to the Ministry of Revenue. They need to start planting corn and potatoes as soon as possible...”

The Minister of Revenue, who had been called over, stared at the two foreign plants in front of him. He hesitated for a moment before he said, “Your Majesty, do we have any methods on how to plant these correctly?”

How should corn and potato be planted? Jianwen Emperor was an engineering student who specialized in shipbuilding in his past life. He had grown up in a city. This question truly stumped him. Zhu Junfan, the emperor, looked at the person who had brought over the two plants, Zhu Junyang. Zhu Junyang's eyes twitched. The original agreement only stated that he had to find the two plants and didn't mention that he had to plant them, okay? He pasted on an inscrutable expression, which wasn't consistent with his youthful age, and replied emotionlessly, “This official is also helpless!”

Zhu Junfan felt deflated by his younger cousin's answer. Why was this brat so self-confident? What was the point of going on this arduous journey to find the plants if you didn't find out how to cultivate them?

Zhu Junfan glared at him and then pondered for a bit. A crafty smile crept onto his face that made Zhu Junyang have a bad premonition.

“Junyang ah, since you were the one who traveled afar, you're the one who has the most experience with corn and potatoes. You probably know more than the officials in the Ministry of Revenue. We have decided that you will assist these officials in cultivating these two plants! Do you have any objections?”

The emperor finally broke through Zhu Junyang's poker face. The prince faintly frowned yet his voice remained calm when he replied, “Emperor, is this a decree or are you asking for my opinion?”

Zhu Junfan naturally wouldn't give him any chance to evade this duty. The emperor solemnly decreed, “This is our order! Naturally, we also hope that you will gladly take on this burden. Just think of the day when all of the people will be able to eat to their fill. They will all be grateful for your benevolence and favor...”

'The people's gratitude? Whoever wants that can take it! You already told me this is a direct order, how can I possibly refuse?' Zhu Junyang looked at the emperor expressionlessly. Although he was truly unwilling in his heart, he still had to take on this duty ah!

After he left the palace, Zhu Junyang had been invited over to the Ministry of Revenue. All of the officials stared at the youthful royal prince with anticipation in their eyes. The Minister of Revenue, whose beard and hair had long gone white, could apparently tell that the prince was displeased. He rubbed his hands together before he cautiously opened, "Royal Prince Yang, it's almost the perfect season for planting now. What do you think is the best way to plant corn and potato?"

'You can ask me, but who can I ask? Bah!!' Zhu Junyang had no idea what he could do at this point. He raised his head to look at the group of officials and coldly replied, "Planting seeds should all be the same! You all...do what you see fit!"

After he finished, the ruthless and handsome young royal prince turned around, under the eyes of all of the officials in the Ministry of Revenue, and left...left...he left...

Fields of Gold Chapter 235 - Meeting Between Mother and Son

All of the officials of the Ministry of Revenue looked at each other with dumbfounded expressions. Royal Prince Yang, you had been given an imperial edict, you can't just stand aside and do nothing ah! If we can't cultivate corn and potatoes, then when the emperor became angry, everyone would be implicated together ah!

The royal prince may be able to wash his hands of this affair, but they, the officials of the Ministry of Revenue, couldn't! They went to find some experienced old farmers and cleared out a field at the imperial farms for experimentation. Altogether they decided on a couple methods to try out with the corn. Some of the seeds were directly planted into the ground, while others were left for breeding purposes. As for the potatoes, the old farmers thought that it somewhat resembled sweet potato and decided to use the sweet potato method to plant a block. The officials also planted another block of land with potatoes directly buried into the ground.

During this process, Royal Prince Yang only came by once to inspect the process and didn't come over a second time. When the Ministry of Revenue finished writing a report to the prince on the various methods they used to plant the new crops, they couldn't get in contact with him. The head steward of Imperial Prince Jing's Estate had told them that the young royal prince was currently in the faraway Tanggu Town and was unable to receive the report.

After spending half a month in the capital doing work, the emperor had mercifully given him ten days of vacation. Zhu Junyang immediately traveled to his mother's residence in Tanggu Town. Construction on

Prince Jing's residence on the West Mountain hadn't finished yet, so Princess Consort Jing was still living in the previous county magistrate's wife's manor. County Magistrate Wu had gone back to the capital last autumn after finishing his term, and the Wu Family had arranged a fifth rank official's teaching position for him. In the future, after the imperial academy offered him a retirement package, he had pretty much reached the highest rank he could go.

In order to give his mother a nice surprise, Zhu Junyang didn't send any servants over to inform her that he was coming over. He brought along his personal imperial bodyguards and galloped his horse at top speed throughout the whole journey until he reached the manor. When he arrived, he casually asked the gatekeeper, "Has my lady mother left the residence in the past few days?"

The gatekeeper carefully bowed and replied, "Prince, the princess consort hasn't left in the past few days. However, she did invite Lady Fang and her goddaughter, Miss Yu, over for some conversation today."

'Miss Yu?' A ripple of movement went through Zhu Junyang's normally chilly eyes. 'It's that girl who had solemnly vowed that she would be able to cultivate corn and potato ah!' At that time, the little girl was so confident that he had almost wanted to believe her. Perhaps this little girl would be able to give him a nice surprise, eh?

Zhu Junyang actually felt a bit of anticipation when he thought of seeing that lively little girl with the large eyes. In fact, he didn't even notice that his steps into the courtyard were a bit more hurried compared to previously.

It was a beautiful spring day and the whole courtyard was filled with lush flowers that dotted the landscape with red and purple. Inside the garden, Princess Consort Jing leaned back on a long couch as she quietly discussed Lady Fang's situation, "Are you going to give birth soon, Lady Fang?"

Yu Xiaocao gleefully replied, "Yes! Her due date is within the next couple of days. For the sake of my little brother, Godmother always walks around the garden a few times every day even though her body is quite heavy now. Doctor Sun felt her pulse earlier today and said that her body is in good condition. However, Godmother's legs are quite swollen, so she can't wear her old shoes anymore!"

Princess Consort Jing lightly sighed, "Children embody the debt from our past lives ah! As parents, who wouldn't willingly be devoted and worried about their own children? Yet children never empathize with

their parents' feelings. For example, my third son didn't even discuss with me and his father before he silently left to go out to sea. After waiting for months, he finally came back, right? He obviously knows that I, his mother, am waiting for him here yet he decides to emulate Yu the Great [1] and not visit me. Tell me, do you think he even has me, his mother, in his heart anymore?"

Zhu Junyang, who had been eavesdropping on them behind some trees, felt his mouth twitch. Now he wasn't sure whether he should come out and greet his mother. From his past experiences, he had a feeling his mother would only cry and complain if he came out now. He didn't fear anything on the earth or the heavens, but he did fear his mother's tears.

Just as he was hesitating, he heard Yu Xiaocao's suave and gentle voice comforting his mother, "Your Highness, all men strive for self-improvement and all mothers hope that their sons will be successful, right? However, since the past, it is hard to be both successful and filial at the same time. If the young royal prince first came to see you, in other people's eyes, wouldn't that be something to criticize him for? Your Highness, you also don't want him to be accused of being inattentive to his duties right after he got home from such a long journey, right? I believe that the young royal prince has been thinking about you this entire time! Once he organizes all of his affairs in the capital, he absolutely will rush over here to see you!"

The sound of Xiaocao's voice seemed to have a soothing quality. Princess Consort Jing wasn't the only one affected by her. Even Zhu Junyang, who was standing behind a tree, was shocked by her understanding of a person's heart. He raised his icy cold eyes and looked at that smile that seemed to be as gentle as spring. The warmth melted his normally icy heart as he listened idly to her quiet chatter. It felt as if a spring wind had blown into his heart...

He looked down again and calmed down again. Once his mood had stabilized, Zhu Junyang softly pushed aside the willow branches and quickly stepped forward as he quietly said, "Lady Mother——"

Princess Consort Jing had been pulling on Xiaocao's tiny little hands when she jerked to a stop. A self-mocking smile appeared on her face, "Ah! Look at me, I must have been thinking about my third son so much that I'm having a hallucination now!"

Yu Xiaocao gently moved her body to the side as she looked at that handsome and straight figure in the garden. The smile on her face became even more bright, "Your Highness, you're not crazy! The young royal prince is here to see you!"

A thread of helplessness could be heard in Zhu Junyang's voice as he raised his volume, "Lady Mother, I am an unfilial son. I made you worry too much!"



Princess Consort Jing swiftly stood up. Because she got up too quickly, her vision suddenly darkened and her body swayed lightly. She almost fell down onto the couch. Zhu Junyang's expression rapidly changed as he strode forward to grasp his mother's hand while Xiaocao held the princess consort's other hand to keep her standing.

“Lady Mother, what part of you doesn't feel well? Someone find the doctor! Now!” Zhu Junyang only lost his usual calm when he was interacting with his mother. During the darkest time of his youth, his mother was the only ray of light illuminating the deepest corners of his heart, giving him warmth in an otherwise frosty environment. Although his mother liked to tease and make fun of him sometimes, she still took care of him with all her might. He felt like he could only lean on her.

Yu Xiaocao felt Princess Consort Jing's pulse and relaxed. She said, “Don't worry, young royal prince. Her Highness had only stood up too quickly, which caused her to not have enough blood flow to her head. This is why she got dizzy and faint. After resting a bit, she will be fine.” Zhu Junyang's icy cold eyes sent out a sharp glare at her. The look in those cold eyes made Xiaocao shiver unconsciously—this young royal prince's eyes were truly too scary!

“What are you all waiting for? Why hasn't anyone called the imperial doctor over?!” It was obvious that Zhu Junyang didn't have any faith in the words of a ten year old kid. He sternly scolded the princess consort's handmaiden, Meixiang, “If this delay causes a problem for her health, then be prepared to lose your life!”

All of the blood immediately left Meixiang's face. Under Zhu Junyang's furious glare, the maid shivered and felt her legs go soft. The young royal prince's anger wasn't something to be taken lightly. When she was still an ordinary servant at the residence, she had heard that the young royal prince, at the age of nine, had chopped off the hands of Chuntao, who was Princess Consort Jing's favorite personal maidservant.

Afterwards, an investigation discovered that Chuntao had been bribed by the prince's concubine's maiden family. She had been adding a slow-acting poison to Princess Consort Jing's pastries. However, who would have expected that the young royal prince, who was still a child at the time, would find out? Luckily, it was discovered early, so the princess consort wasn't completely harmed. Despite that, her body was still damaged from this event...

Princess Consort Jing comforted her son by patting his hand and she smiled, “Don't worry, I'm fine! Xiaocao is very good at making medicinal cuisine. After partaking of it, my body's condition has become

a lot better. You've been gone for more than a year and I haven't gotten sick this entire time. This is all thanks to Xiaocao's hard work! Since she says I'm fine, then I should be okay! Don't make a big fuss about nothing! Third Son, let Mother take a closer look at you—you've become tanner and thinner—you probably had a lot of hardships this past year, right?"

As she chattered, the princess consort's eyes filled with tears at the thought of her son enduring difficulties. Zhu Junyang noticed that his mother was feeling down and felt panic bubble up. He hastily said, "Lady Mother, I only got tanner because I was on the deck a lot and had the sun shining on me and the wind blowing. Tanner people look thinner. Feel my arm, I've gained a lot of muscle! Didn't I tell you before? The ships have more than enough food to feed me and I also caught a lot of seafood delicacies to add to my meals. I also had a lot of servants helping out, so how could I possibly have had a hard time? Mother, I feel like you've become thinner. It must be because you were so worried about me ah! I am truly unfilial..."

In front of Princess Consort Jing, Zhu Junyang, who was usually as cold and taciturn as an ice sculpture, finally acted like a normal person. He readily showed his emotions and spoke to her.

Princess Consort Jing wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes. Her son always had an emotionless and cold expression on his face but right now he looked quite worried for her. A faint smile appeared on her lips, "I've gotten thinner you say? That can't be true. I feel like I've gotten plumper instead! All of the clothes I brought along feel much tighter! This is all due to Cao'er's help. From time to time she comes to visit me and cooks me medicinal cuisine and other tasty foods. My appetite has gotten a lot better with her around!"

Zhu Junyang inspected his mother's face and discovered that her complexion had improved a lot. Previously her cheeks had been somewhat sunken in, but now they were healthy and plump. Her usual sickly pallor had also disappeared and there was a hint of a rosy blush now. All of this made her look more youthful. The look in his eyes as he glanced at Xiaocao had unconsciously gentled. He slightly nodded his head and said, "Many thanks, Miss Yu, for taking such good care of my lady mother!"

Yu Xiaocao hurriedly waved her hands, "You're being too polite, young royal prince! Her Highness is a good friend of my godmother and treats me like her own niece. I'm more than happy to help her nourish and heal her body!"

Princess Consort Jing pulled Xiaocao's pale and soft little hand into her own. Her smile was full of sincere love as she remarked, "Xiaocao is truly a little girl who warms people's hearts! Everyone always says that a daughter is a mother's cotton padded jacket. I have three sons and my only little cotton padded jacket is also like a boy too. She's not sweet at all and was even stolen away by someone! Xiaocao, how about you become my daughter ah..."

Zhu Junyang's eyes twitched as if he wanted to interject. However, he didn't quite know what was appropriate to say. For some reason, he was a bit repelled by the idea of Yu Xiaocao becoming his younger sister—Was it because he was afraid that the little girl would steal away his mother's affection? That couldn't be right, he was almost seventeen and was past the age when he would fight for his mother's favor.

Yu Xiaocao revealed a somewhat helpless expression. Why did everyone want to become her godparents? Not to mention her current set of godparents, but it seemed like even the emperor emeritus also wanted to recognize her as an adopted granddaughter. Furthermore, even the headmaster of Rongxuan Academy had once hinted that she should become his granddaughter. Now Princess Consort Jing was joining in on the fun. Was it because she was too adorable and other people couldn't resist her charms?

“Your Highness, if this was heard by my godmother, then she would definitely not agree and accuse you of trying to steal her daughter!” Yu Xiaocao's joke also hinted at her own personal thoughts on this matter.

Princess Consort Jing was about to reply when her son butted in. Zhu Junyang deftly changed the subject to what he had seen and experienced on his journey. He babbled story after story to let his mother hear. Only after he saw that his mother didn't propose the idea of adopting a daughter again did he finally relax.

#### Fields of Gold Chapter 236 - Capability

Zhu Junyang currently had a position at court that didn't have much required of him. Thus, on most days, when there wasn't anything special going on, he didn't have to go to court. In order to compensate his mother for making her worry for more than a year, he decided to stay in Tanggu Town for now. Other than practicing his martial arts, he mostly spent his days playing chess with his mother and amusing her in the garden with flowers.

In the garden, there were a few rare and famous camellia plants currently blooming. The brilliant red camellia had just opened a few buds, and the flowers resembled tiny little bells at court. The dark red flowers had sparkling drops of dew clinging to the edges of the petals, and, under the sun, the buds seemed much more lovely and charming. The one that amazed people the most was the scarlet red camellia that was especially bred and called 'auspicious crowned phoenix'. Its flowers were beautiful and plump, dignified and elegant, soft and flexible, and had layers of blush red petals surrounding the center. This flower resembled the red halo of clouds around the sun as it set in the horizon. Although it wasn't very showy, it looked very noble and gorgeous.

When Princess Consort Jing saw that her son's attention had been taken up by her favorite camellias, she revealed a joyful expression, "Aren't my camellias beautiful? Hmph! Lady Feng only recently got a brilliant red camellia recently, but she had to invite people over to a flower fair to flaunt it. Any one of my camellias would be able to outshow her camellias on any day!"

Zhu Junyang could clearly perceive that his mother was feeling proud and arrogant. He felt a bit helpless at his mother's childish actions. Lady Feng was the wife of the current imperial tutor at court, and was also someone obsessed with flowers. Lady Feng and Princess Consort Jing both loved camellias since they were young. Occasionally they would even have a falling-out over a famous and valuable variety of camellia.

When Princess Consort Jing found out that Lady Feng had incidentally obtained a brilliant red variety, she bothered the other lady to give it to her several times. However, how could Lady Feng, a camellia addict, bear to give it to her? Thus, Princess Consort Jing could only return to the residence downcast and feeling somewhat depressed. From time to time, she would bring up this topic again to complain. This time, she had recently gotten a few rare and valuable varieties into her hands. How could she not take them out and brag a bit?

Although Princess Consort Jing would occasionally squabble with Lady Feng over these flowers, they had never become true enemies. Every time one of them had a banquet or flower fair at her residence, she would never forget to send an invitation to the other. Even though they both compared and bragged about their camellias, they never had a true falling out. Zhu Junyang could tell that his mother had a rather complicated feeling towards Lady Feng, so he resisted the urge to give her advice. Perhaps these two noblewomen had finally found something that gave them both pleasure in their normally dull and boring lives.

"Yang'er, has your ability reached a more stable state?" After Princess Consort Jing watered her beloved camellias, she suddenly asked her son this question.

Zhu Junyang's eyes dimmed and he lightly shook his head, "Sometimes I still get influenced by another person's emotions. However, I have gotten better at controlling my feelings to avoid being influenced too much."

The princess consort looked at her son with a gaze full of pity. When her son hadn't reached the age of five, he was so cute and adorable that people couldn't help but draw him into their arms and hug him.

Ever since he fell into the water at five and was in a coma for ten days, he had the ability to perceive other people's thoughts and feelings.

At the time, Prince Jing had just been given the title of imperial prince and the emperor had given him weighty responsibilities. She, on the other hand, didn't have good health either, so she had relaxed her hold on the residence a bit. Many spies had entered their residence and she suspected that her son's accidental fall into the water wasn't an actual accident.

Her five year old son felt bewildered and afraid by his new ability. Over time, he became more and more taciturn and antisocial. At the time, Prince Jing had just taken office and was busy with court issues. Sometimes, the family wasn't able to see him for many days in a row. As for herself, she was bedridden from illness and wasn't able to sense the changes in Zhu Junyang. By the time she recovered, her youngest son had thrown himself into his martial arts training and he had acquired a high-strung and temperamental personality. It was as if he was a balloon that was inflated to its maximum state. At any time, he could explode.

She had once thought that her son became warped because she had fallen ill and was unable to take care of him. After she recovered, she spent all of her time and energy on her youngest son. However, all her efforts were for naught. He didn't change much. Instead, her second son started to believe that she was impartial. Jealousy invaded his heart and he drifted away from his youngest brother. Consequently, her youngest son's temperament became even more unstable and volatile.

On the year that her youngest son turned nine, one of the higher-ranking concubines in the residence decided to meddle with her. Princess Consort Jing's personal maidservant was bribed and started to poison her with a slow-acting substance. Her body's condition slipped with every passing day. Her youngest son, who was already living in his own courtyard, visited her when she was ill one day. As he passed her personal maidservant with a medicine bowl in her hands, he suddenly pulled out the dagger from his waist and chopped off her hands in a rage. He continuously interrogated the hapless servant, demanding to know who sent her.

The handmaiden passed out from extreme pain yet continuously howled her innocence. All of the people around her misunderstood her youngest son. None of them sensed that something was wrong and they accused him of being brutal, vicious and merciless. From then on, her Yang'er transformed into his current temperament— an icy-cold personality that emitted apathy at all times. It was as if he had sealed himself within a giant frozen glacier.

Finally, Prince Jing investigated this situation after he heard about what happened. Only then did they find out what 'good deeds' that personal maidservant had done. By following the trail of clues, they finally found and caught the villain behind the scenes. The concubine had been punished with death by

poison while the rest of the world only knew that she had passed away suddenly from a fast-acting illness. At this time, Princess Consort Jing realized she had misunderstood her son this entire time. However, it was too late to try to fix her mistakes.

She used an entire year's worth of time to carefully attend to her youngest son. Only then was she able to slowly crack open his outer shell and sneak through a tiny little hole to his inner thoughts and heart. That was when she finally had a hint of the secret that he had concealed for five years.

She was truly quite frightened when she first found out his secret! However, when she saw the hurt and pain within her youngest son's eyes, she knew right then that if she pushed him away again, she would lose her son forever.

Because she was afraid that people would regard him as a monster, she didn't even mention this to her husband, Prince Jing. Despite her weak and frail body, she gave all of her maternal love and selflessness to her youngest son. She did her best to convince her son that this ability of his wasn't necessarily a bad thing, but it took years to let the idea settle into his head.

Everyone always said that a person's heart was inscrutable. With this ability, a person's inner thoughts and feelings were on the table for Zhu Junyang. Those who treated him well, he could remember for a lifetime and allow them to become his most faithful and loyal companions. As for those who didn't have good intentions, he would be able to understand their every movement and be able to prepare against them or strike when necessary.

When Zhu Junyang was younger, it was easy for him to be influenced by the strong feelings of other people. As his ability got stronger, his personality became more and more odd, and he reacted by becoming even colder than before...as he slowly grew up, he became more adept at handling and controlling his own feelings to weaken other people's influence on himself as much as possible. However, his frosty nature had already been ingrained in him, and this type of personality made him lose many friends. Therefore, he became even more antisocial and icy.

Regardless, she was glad that her son was well and in front of her. Even though he was less talkative, his eyes now carried a bit of warmth.

“Mother, the garden in the West Mountain residence...eh? Younger Brother, you're here.” Princess Consort Jing's second son, Zhu Junxi, walked through the flowering garden and billowing willows in the direction of the pavilion. When he saw the unfamiliar figure, he hesitated a moment before he called out a greeting.

Deeply hidden within Zhu Junyang's dark eyes was a hint of loss. It seemed like his Second Older Brother would never treat him as he did when he was five years old...

Zhu Junxi arrived at the pavilion and stayed quiet for a bit before he finally smiled, "Younger Brother, when did you arrive? How come you didn't let us know beforehand?"

"I got here yesterday morning. I wanted to give Mother a nice surprise..." Zhu Junyang had always been taciturn. The conversation between the two brothers revealed an unfamiliar feeling of awkwardness.

Princess Consort Jing felt a bit helpless inside. She gently smiled, "Yang'er, your second brother has done a lot of work in making sure the West Mountain residence gets completed. He almost spends all of his time there and he's working quite hard! Xi'er, your younger brother brought over some presents from you that he got from the western hemisphere. They are all things that we've never seen before— Yang'er, why don't you take them out now?"

Zhu Junyang took out a carved pocket watch that was painted a bright copper color from his chest pocket and placed it into his older brother's hands. He dryly explained how the pocket watch worked and how it could tell the time.

Zhu Junxi saw that the pocket watch was small and exquisite, yet had the ability to keep the time accurately. He immediately liked the item. Previously, he had a heart-to-heart conversation with his lady mother and he had decided on leaving once the construction on the new residence was finished. He was planning on enlisting in the army and using his own strength and abilities to see how far he could go. With the world in front of him, he naturally wouldn't brood on past injustices anymore. Thus, all of his jealousy and petty thoughts had evaporated into smoke.

Zhu Junyang could distinctly tell that his second brother's mood had changed for the better. A current of warmth traveled through his ice-cold heart. He had many memories with his older brother that were tinged with many different feelings. In his youth, his father had been busy with court and his mother's body was weak. His eldest brother, as the heir, had been busy at his own lessons, so Zhu Junyang only had his second brother, who was five years older than him, to accompany and love him. At that time, he had wholeheartedly relied on Second Brother...but for some reason, and, he didn't know when, his second brother changed. He drifted apart, became hostile, and avoided him...

Later on, he gained his ability to spy on other people's thoughts and understood why his second brother had changed. However, it was something he had no control over. His mother, at that time, was his only grasp on life. Without her, he would always be stuck in a deep abyss. Thus, he selfishly plundered his

mother's attention that should have been on his second brother. Although guilt plagued his heart, he couldn't bear to let go.

Although he didn't know the reason, he could tell that Second Brother had finally let things go. As for him, he was no longer that vulnerable little boy that thirsted for affection. Perhaps, and he knew it was an extravagant hope, his relationship with his second brother could return to normal?

Zhu Junxi revealed a smile that was as warm as the spring sun and gently patted his younger brother's shoulder. He sincerely said, "Thank you for this gift, I really like it!"

The corners of Zhu Junyang's mouth curved up and exposed a tiny smile that could barely be seen. Princess Jing witnessed this entire scene and felt gratified as well as a bit disconsolate at the same time—Her youngest son had smiled; after not smiling for eleven years, she could finally see Yang'er's smile again!

The three family members warmly chatted amongst themselves under the luminous and bright spring sun. Naturally, Princess Consort Jing and Zhu Junxi did most of the talking while Zhu Junyang quietly listened to them. However, the icy cold atmosphere around Zhu Junyang seemed to be slowly melting under this type of environment...

In the Fang Estate, on the other hand, chaos was reigning.

Lady Fang had been strolling around the garden when she suddenly felt a sharp pain throb in her belly. Her face immediately became white, and she covered her belly and let out a cry. Linglong, who was supporting her, panicked upon seeing this. She supported her mistress on one hand while she screamed, "Someone come! Our mistress is about to give birth!!"

Immediately, the entire courtyard full of maids bustled into frenetic activity. Some went to call the midwife, while others ran to find a doctor. There were even some who ran around like headless flies...The maids scrambled around in a panic and a few even crashed into each other!

Fields of Gold Chapter 237 - In Labor

"What is going on?!" Yu Xiaocao, who was currently in the kitchen cooking up some medicinal cuisine, heard all of the ruckus and came out. She frowned fiercely and scolded all of the servants. The sound of her voice seemed to calm everyone down, and the whole courtyard quieted down almost instantaneously.



Yu Xiaocao had come out in a hurry, so there was still a soup ladle in her hands. All of the servants silently lined up as she instructed them individually, "You, go to the front courtyard and bring over some trustworthy elder servants in; you and you need to go to the kitchen and boil some water; you, go to the outer courtyard and send people bring Godfather home. Older Sister Linglong, escort my godmother to the birthing chamber...this is my godmother's first child, so it should take some time from when the pangs first started to when she's ready to push him out!"

All of the maids seemed to know what they needed to do now, so they immediately went off to do their duties. Linglong gratefully smiled at Yu Xiaocao. They were fortunate that Miss Xiaocao was here today.

"Godmother, Younger Brother must be impatient to see all of us. Come here, I'll support you as you slowly walk. No need to rush!" Xiaocao's sweet and dulcet voice seemed to have the ability to calm a person's heart.

Lady Fang's panicky heart slowly became calm and the sharp pangs in her belly gradually subsided. The color of her complexion became normal again, and she smiled at her maids who acted as if they were facing their worst enemy, "It's okay. I don't feel pain right now, so don't be worried!"

Xiaocao continued to support her godmother towards the already prepared birthing chamber. After helping her godmother sit down on the bed, she softly said, "All women will experience labor pain before the birth is done. Godmother, this is your first child, so the labor pains will likely be longer than usual. This is all considered normal, so there is no need to panic. I'm going to the kitchen to check on something since the medicinal cuisine should be almost done. You should eat something now and save your strength for later."

Lady Fang cradled her belly and leaned on a hard pillow at the head of the bed. She smiled and nodded, "Ah you! My little sweetie is such a young child, yet you explain the birthing process so well. You truly do have the air of a little doctor ah!"

Yu Xiaocao pursed her lips and remarked, "Godmother, I already asked around. How can I not take this matter seriously when you're going to give birth to my little brother? I'm going to go grab the medicinal cuisine, you should rest..."

After plating the medicinal cuisine, Xiaocao came out of the kitchen and saw her godfather, Fang Zizhen, rushing through the gate. Sweat beaded his brow as he strode quickly towards the inner rooms.

This child of theirs did not come easy. After begging the heavens for years, they had finally obtained this blessing. Fang Zizhen had been nervous ever since he found out his wife was pregnant. Today, when he had left the house, he had felt unsettled. The uneasiness did not abate, and he had a feeling that something important was going to happen today. He had been an orphan since childhood, and his wife's wet nurse had been left in the capital to manage their residence's affairs. Without anyone experienced at home to watch over, it really made him a bit anxious! It was probably best for him to stay home for the next couple of days.

When he got to the docks, he carelessly patrolled a round. Throughout the whole process, his eyelids twitched constantly as his heart fretted about his wife, who was on the verge of childbirth, at home. Afterwards, Fang Zizhen hurriedly spurred his horse back into town. He came across the house's steward the moment he entered through the town gates, who informed him that the lady of the house was about to give birth.

Fang Zizhen felt his heart squeeze and whipped his horse forward into its top speed. On the whole journey there, he had almost run over several pedestrians. The steward behind him had to constantly apologize to those unfortunate people as he also headed back.

While he was rushing back, Fang Zizhen wished he could suddenly grow a pair of wings and fly back to his wife's side. The doctor had told him that his wife was on the older side, so she would likely have an element of danger when giving birth. At this time, he wasn't by her side, so she must be scared, right? Although they had their adopted daughter, who normally acted like a small adult, she was still a kid who hadn't reached the age of ten. Who knew how panicked she would get at this time!

As his thoughts circled around his head, his feet stamped impatiently forward and he almost started running. Because he was in such a rush, he almost bumped into Yu Xiaocao, who was currently holding a tray full of medicinal cuisine.

"Godfather," Yu Xiaocao narrowly avoided the large man and managed to save the food within her hands. She rolled her eyes at her godfather and commented, "Don't worry, the midwives are already here! These two are well-known experts in town, and Godmother's body is quite healthy. This birth will definitely go very smoothly!"

Fang Zizhen came to a stop and took the food from his adopted daughter's hands. He rubbed her head and linked hands with her as he softly said, "Daughter, you're probably scared out of your wits, right? Don't be afraid, giving birth to a child is..."

Yu Xiaocao slanted her eyes at him and made fun of him, "Godfather, how many times have you seen children being birthed? How do you know what giving birth is like?" "Uh...I was only worried that you were scared, so I was trying to comfort you!" When Fang Zizhen noticed that she had seen through his actions, he relaxed a bit and felt the panic within his heart settle down a lot.

The two of them very soon arrived at the birthing chamber. Lady Fang was in the throes of another contraction, so she supported her belly as she let out a cry. The expression on Fang Zizhen's face immediately changed when he saw this, and he rushed into the room despite the midwives and maids trying to stop him. He held onto his wife's hand as he asked in concern, "Wife, does it hurt? Let me help you rub a bit..."

"Lord, please don't add to the chaos!!" The midwife steeled herself and pushed away Fang Zizhen's hand as she continued, "The lady's child hasn't reached the birth canal yet. If you start rubbing, you might move the child into the wrong position! Men are not allowed inside the birthing room, so please leave now!"

"Why can't men enter the birthing room? My wife is giving birth to our child, so what's wrong with me staying by her side?" Fang Zizhen softly growled as he stared fiercely at the midwife with his large eyes that could cause his enemies to tremble in fear.

After hearing his rebuke, the first midwife trembled. The other woman hurriedly interjected, "Lord, it is said that the scent of blood from the birthing room is ominous. You can't help with anything here and will only cause trouble for your wife. Therefore, can you please wait outside?"

Fang Zizhen's innate stubbornness reared its head and he loftily lifted his head and proclaimed, "Not okay! My wife has a cowardly nature and this is the first time she's giving birth. She must be very scared right now, so I need to stay here and give her some courage!"

Fang Zizhen was a general and would likely have to go back onto the battlefield in the future. When Lady Fang heard that it was not auspicious for him to be here, she hurriedly shooed him away, "What can you do here anyway? Can you carry the pain or birth the child for me? If you continue to stand here, you will only influence my mood!"

"Wife, don't be afraid! I'm here for you!!" Fang Zizhen pretended that he didn't hear a word. He gripped his wife's somewhat cold hand and boasted, "If I could help you birth the child instead, then I naturally wouldn't have you do this task! Wife, does it hurt? If it hurts, you can bite on my hand. My skin is thick and I have plenty of flesh, so I'm not afraid of pain!"

With her loving husband by her side, Lady Fang completely calmed down at this time. She glared moodily at her shameless man and said, "Do you think that me biting you will get rid of my pain? You...ahhhhh..." Another contraction attacked her, and she gritted her teeth!

In between the contractions, Fang Zizhen personally fed his wife a bowl of medicinal cuisine and a few eggs stewed in brown sugar. Yu Xiaocao also had her godfather support her godmother to walk a few rounds around the room. She told them that it would help the child move into the right position.

Fang until the evening, when her water finally broke. Fang Zizhen wiped off the dense sweat that dotted his wife's forehead and tenderly remarked, "How come this stinky youngster hasn't come out yet? He's causing so much trouble for my wife. In the future, just watch me slap his bottoms!"

Lady Fang, who was in the midst of gritting her teeth to endure the pain of another contraction, firmly glared at him and snarled, "If you dare to hit him, then I will hit you!!"

"Okay, okay! Quickly birth this stinky boy and then you can hit me all you want!" Fang Zizhen could feel his wife clamping down on his hand. It was obvious that his wife was in a lot of pain to grip his hand so tightly. Thinking about this made his heart hurt.

"The cervix is opening! Lady, when I tell you to push, that's when you push ah!" Both of the midwives joyfully instructed her.

When Yu Xiaocao saw that the birth was about to happen, she hastily told Fang Zizhen, "Godfather, you should go out first! If you're here, Godmother will only act spoiled when it hurts and won't push as hard. It will only cause her to suffer longer!"

When Lady Fang heard this, she remarked sourly, "Act spoiled? Who are you talking about? Who will act spoiled towards him?? However, Daughter is right. If you continue to stay here, it'll be too annoying and affect my concentration!"

Laboring was a cruel process. It was obvious that pushing a child out would only cause her to look quite fierce. She didn't want her husband to see her in such a state, so Lady Fang had long wanted to shoo him out before that happened.

Although he felt quite reluctant to leave, when he heard that he might poorly influence his wife, Fang Zizhen slowly left the birthing chamber. In front of her master, Linglong carefully closed the doors shut.

“Ah——” As soon as Fang Zizhen left the birthing chamber, he suddenly heard a scream from inside. He almost kicked the door open and rushed back in again.

“Wife, wife, are you okay? Just tolerate it a bit more, once you finish giving birth to this child, let's not have any more children again!” Fang Zizhen pressed himself against the crack in the door as he yelled towards the inside. The veins on his neck bulged and the expression on his face looked even more suffering than the one on his wife's face.

“Fang Mingzhe, you shut up!!” Lady Fang suddenly lost her usual elegance and grace due to the pain ripping through her. She screamed out her rage, “If you don't want more, this lady insists on more! I want to give birth to a dozen more just to piss you off!”

Everyone inside the room lowered their heads and muffled their laughter. This couple was truly too funny!

However, the light atmosphere within the room was quickly replaced by a more solemn one. After the cervix slowly widened, the child within the uterus still didn't drop down into the opening. Lady Fang felt like she was slowly being crushed by a horse carriage and she could only feel one thing now——pain!

Yu Xiaocao could also tell that something wasn't right and sternly asked the midwives, “What's going on?!”

Neither of the midwives had any color in their faces. One of them replied with a voice that trembled, “The lady...the lady's child doesn't seem to be in the right position...”

“Doesn't seem?! I don't need such a wishy-washy answer! You need to tell me exactly what is going on! If something happens because of your delay, do you think you will be able to take on the consequences?” Although Yu Xiaocao didn't have an imposing height and had a somewhat childish looking face, she truly seemed very intimidating at this moment.

The other midwife inhaled deeply and stated, “The lady's child's foot...it's a breech birth!”

“Is there a way to fix this?” Yu Xiaocao felt panic bubble up in her heart yet managed to force herself to stay cool headed as she solemnly asked.

That midwife thought quickly and then replied, “The only thing that can be done is to push the child back into the uterus and then slowly rotate the child. However, this method might injure the lady...”

Yu Xiaocao glanced at the midwife's thick and crude looking hands. If that woman used her hands to turn the child, then her godmother would definitely suffer an injury. She gritted her teeth and made a split second decision, “Tell me how to do it? I will go ahead!!”

Fields of Gold Chapter 238 - Washing Ceremony

The two midwives looked at Miss Cao'er's small and delicate little hands and their eyes lit up. The midwife who stated that it was a breech birth squeezed out a smile and said, “Miss, if you're the one doing it, then it's likely the lady will survive! Don't be scared, just do what we say and everything will be fine!”

Lady Fang had been tormented by the relentless pain and was semi-conscious at this point. Yu Xiaocao carefully fed her a few drops of the mystic-stone water and managed to squash down the nervousness in her body. She diligently washed her hands over and over and even rinsed them with some mystic-stone water as she firmly enforced the belief that her godmother would survive this with no injuries.

The cervix had already dilated to the width of seven fingers and Xiaocao's hands were small and soft. She gently inserted her hand and touched a tiny little foot not far up. The foot seemed like it could tell that something was touching it and it even pushed down a bit.

Xiaocao grabbed onto this foot and carefully pushed at it. As she pushed, she described what was happening to the midwives. Perhaps it was because she was steady and calm, but the two midwives also managed to calm down after wiping their faces full of sweat. They slowly and surely guided Xiaocao on what to do.

With the help of the two midwives, before long, the infant had been pushed into the right position. Xiaocao touched the little guy's shaggy head and finally felt her heart settle down again.

The little fellow apparently was impatient to get out. Right after his position was adjusted, the little fellow's head managed to get squeezed out of the birth canal despite Lady Fang having minimal energy from exhaustion. He chirped noisily as he fell into Xiaocao's palms.

The midwives finally relaxed. The two of them helped to cut the umbilical cord and then used a soft cloth to wipe his body clean of the dirty blood. The midwives grinned in delight as they held the tiny infant up towards Xiaocao, "Pat him a bit, let him cry!"

Xiaocao gingerly held the little fellow in her arms. He had tiny and incredibly soft body. The infant, who was just born, had an entirely red body and his skin was so tender that it almost looked transparent. The little boy had his eyes shut and his face was wrinkled. It was hard to tell who he resembled. As he lay in Xiaocao's hands, he apparently felt a bit uncomfortable, so scrunched up his face and kicked his tiny legs. Such a tiny adorable baby, how could Xiaocao bear to pat him hard?

When the midwife saw this, she laughed and took the baby and flipped him over in a practiced movement. Perhaps being moved from a soft embrace to a more rough one made him feel uncomfortable as the little fellow started to cry raucously before the midwife could even pat his butt.

Fang Zizhen was waiting anxiously inside the courtyard. When heard the loud and powerful cry of the baby, he finally relaxed. A smile blossomed on his face as he muttered, "Stinky brat, you have quite a pair of lungs to cry so loud. You must be an energetic little fellow, just like me, your father!!"

With the help of one of the midwives, Xiaocao managed to put a diaper on the baby. She looked at the little fellow's tiny and delicate p\*\*\*\* and wickedly thought, 'If this little guy grows up and finds out that he was once buck naked in front of me, I don't know what kind of expression he would have on his face.'

A smile fluttered at the edges of her lips as she swaddled the little fellow up into a neat little package. She held him in front of her godmother and whispered, "Godmother, this is little brother! Look at him, he's quite adorable and lively."

Lady Fang pried her exhausted eyes open and looked at the little fellow's red face as he cried. A loving smile slowly unfolded on her face—this was the little fellow who had the same blood as her. For this sake of this child, she had waited for a very, very long time. She almost gave up this dream. With him, she could finally consider herself satisfied. After being tormented by this child for an entire day, Lady Fang sweetly fell asleep after seeing her baby. As she dreamt, her loving smile still lingered on her lips.

“Wife...is my wife okay?” Fang Zizhen, who had finally been allowed inside the room, asked about his wife first and wasn't concerned about the baby at all. Linglong was holding a basin full of dirty water and whispered quietly towards him, “Shhhh...Madam is very tired, so she just fell asleep. Be a little more quiet to avoid waking her up.”

After hearing that, Fang Zizhen immediately lowered his volume. He hoarsely whispered, “Is your mistress okay?”

“No problem, no problem! Mother and child are both doing well!” The two midwives' faces were wreathed with smiles, as if they could see the shiny glitter of money right in front of them.

Fang Zizhen sat down next to the bed and didn't even glance at his son. His entire attention was on his wife's somewhat pale face. He gently used his hand to brush away a piece of unruly hair from her face. Because he was afraid of rousing her, he quietly said, “Wife, you have worked hard!”

Yu Xiaocao's eyes were full of admiration and envy as she held the forgotten little fellow in her arms. In this society, where men were considered more important than women, and where wives coexisted with concubines, a man who wholeheartedly loved one woman was hard to find. She didn't need someone who knew how to say beautiful things or do romantic things, all she wanted was a man who would only love her and her alone.

From her perspective, if she had the choice in her hands, she would rather be single for the rest of her life if she couldn't find that one person who wholeheartedly loved her...

The little fellow, who had long been given the name of Fang Haolin, seemed to not get along with his father from the start. As soon as Fang Zizhen held him, he would wail inconsolably without stopping. Fang Zizhen didn't want his wife to suffer any hardships, so he regarded this little fellow, who he had waited until he was over forty to receive, with an unimpressed eye. Lady Fang laughed and stated that these two must have been sworn enemies in their past lives.

Although little baby Fang Haolin had a little temper, he was really quite sweet normally. Other than occasionally crying when his diaper got soiled or when he was hungry, he spent most of his time sleeping peacefully.

Lady Fang had heard from Xiaocao that breastfeeding was good for both mother and child. Although they had already hired a wet nurse, Lady Fang still personally breastfed Little Linlin. This made Fang Zizhen feel even more resentful of the little brat who stole his wife's attention away from him. After his



son was born, his status within his wife's heart had sharply plummeted. Come on! Hmph! You little brat, just watch how I torment you in the future!! A treacherous smile hovered at the corners of Fang Zizhen's lips.

The little fellow, who had just finished drinking his milk, was happily blowing bubbles from his mouth in the arms of his godsister when he suddenly sneezed and he frowned unhappily.

Lady Fang somewhat nervously looked over and asked, "What's wrong? Do you think he might have gotten cold from his midday bath?"

Right after the little fellow was born, Yu Xiaocao had fed him a few drops of diluted mystic-stone water, so she naturally knew that his body was stronger than a young calf. She smiled, "Sneezing can be caused by a lot of things, so it's not necessarily because he's getting sick. Godmother, my younger brother's body is very healthy, don't be too worried!"

Lady Fang let out a somewhat sheepish laugh and replied, "After hoping and praying for almost twenty years, I finally got such a tiny little thing. I'm a little nervous! Cao'er, in the future, you must remind me that I absolutely cannot spoil this guy until he gets rotten!"

Yu Xiaocao placed Little Linlin, who was sleeping peacefully, on the bed next to her godmother and whispered, "There's a well-known saying: 'a strict father and loving mother'. Don't you still have Godfather?"

Lady Fang thought for a bit and then chuckled, "If you're talking about your godfather's personality, even though he looks very fierce, he's still like a kid inside. He actually wants to fight for favor with his own child; he's really too much!"

Yu Xiaocao joked, "Doesn't that show that Godfather loves and cares about you? You can't just pour all of your attention on little brother and end up neglecting Godfather, right?"

"That's right, that's right! Our daughter is right!!" Fang Zizhen pushed open the door with a face wreathed with smiles. He ruffled Xiaocao's hair and complimented her, "Good daughter, looks like I didn't dote on you for nothing!"

Lady Fang felt a bit bashful inside, yet she obviously rolled her eyes to cover up her inner happiness and shyness...

After the baby was born, the most important ritual after the full moon celebration was the washing ceremony. On the third day after an infant was born, they needed to hold a washing ceremony. Friends and relatives were all invited over to participate. The purpose of this 'washing ceremony' was to wash away all of the bad and dirty things and also pray for fortune and good luck for the newborn.

Because most of their friends and family were in the capital, Fang Haolin's washing ceremony was simultaneously simple and grand. It was simple because a lot of people didn't come over. Although many of their friends and relatives got the notice in the capital, they weren't able to make it. As for grand, it was because her godparents and the people around them all attached great importance to this and didn't let a single detail go.

On the third day after Fang Haolin was birthed, Yu Xiaocao's whole family came over in the early afternoon. Madam Liu and Xiaocao's oldest paternal aunt both helped with a lot of matters regarding this ritual.

The two midwives grinned until their faces almost split open. With the help of the servants, an incense burner table was set up in the reception area outside of the birthing chamber. The table was set with the images of the Childbirth Goddess, the Sending Children Goddess, the Measles and Plague Goddess, and another thirteen gods. Rice was set on the censer and held the powdered incense. Lady Fang's bedhead also had the images of the God and Goddess of kang beds, and the images had five bowls of osmanthus flower pastries in front of them as offerings.

The maids all placed copper basins full of locust tree and mugwort juice in front and also set the table with the required articles for the ceremony. At this time, all of the officials in Tanggu Town and the docks, including Fang Zizhen's personal assistants, came in with gifts. Even Princess Consort Jing came over with her two sons to send her congratulations.

The two midwives held Little Linlin and the washing ceremony began. Fang Zizhen had been an orphan since he was a child and his martial teacher was stationed far away at the borders. Thus, the Yu Family represented his side of the family. Yu Hai added a ladle of clear water to the copper basin and also put his presents in there. This represented 'filling the basin'.

Yu Hai and his wife had added a pair of carved 'auspicious fortune' and 'longevity' silver bracelets. Yu Hang also used his personal cash reserve to add a beautiful and exquisite silver necklace for Little Linlin. Xiaolian added a pair of anklets that had tiny little bells on them. Even Little Shitou, who hadn't reached the age of seven, added a silver nine-link chain. As for Linlin's older sister, Xiaocao, she had prepared her

gift a long time ago. It was a set of auspicious jewelry for children that was made with pure gold and inlaid with jade. The jewelry was finely made, unique, and full of auspicious meanings.

Princess Consort Jing's gift was a pair of jade scepters made of the finest mutton-fat jade. Her two sons also gave them gifts of immense value, especially Royal Prince Yang. His gift was not only expensive but also extremely rare as it was from his travels in the west hemisphere. It was a small belt accessory that was carved out of ivory.

The officials of Tanggu Town and Fang Zizhen's personal assistants also added gifts to the copper basin one after another. The maids and older servants also added some longan, jujube, chestnuts and other fruits with auspicious meanings.

The two midwives continuously spouted out words of good fortune. For example, when a person added water, they would say: 'flowing water lead to a mind that is clever and quick-witted'. When someone was adding jujube, chestnuts, and longan fruits, they would say: 'jujube seeds will lead to unending descendants; longan, longan, one shall place first on all three examinations'...

After the ritual of adding gifts to the basin was over, the midwives picked up wooden clubs and stirred the contents as they chanted, "One stir, two stirs, three stirs; an older brother will take his younger brother for a run. Seventy sons, eighty sons, silly sons, naughty sons, all of them will quickly come!" Xiaocao listened to the proceedings as her excitement shot through the roof. She thought all of this was very interesting!

Fields of Gold Chapter 239 - Returning Home

After saying that, the midwife began to bathe the baby. After going through the procedures, the water in the basin had already cooled down. Poor Little Linlin was stripped naked, and then put into the water. These days, Xiaocao bathed the little fellow nearly every day. The little fellow had gotten used to bathing once a day, so when his swaddling clothes were opened up, he still remained obedient and quiet. However, when the little guy was stripped naked and placed in the slightly cold water, he was suddenly startled and began displaying his amazingly loud voice, crying loudly.

The midwife smiled and said, "The young master is certainly someone who is blessed. With a 'ringing basin', one shall be blessed with good fortune and happiness."

Then she started bathing the little guy. As she washed him, she recited the congratulatory speech, "First, wash your hair first and be a nobility. Next, wash your waist and each generation will have a higher rank. Clean your lower body, and you will become a county magistrate. Clean your armpits, and you will become a senior official of a prefecture."

The other midwife placed a ball of mugwort leaves with a slice of ginger as the base on the baby's forehead and burned it in a token manner. After that, she combed the baby's hair and tidied his appearance, while saying, "Comb three times with a comb and two times with a fine-toothed comb; you will grow up to be a high-ranking official. Draw your left eyebrow and strike your right sideburn; find a virtuous wife. Brush your teeth and rinse your mouth; you will be an eloquent speaker."

After that, she rolled an egg on the baby's face and chanted, "Roll an egg on the face and your face will be like an egg's skin. With fair skin and a healthy blush, you will be a lovely person." Then, she gently patted the little fellow's forehead three times with a leek and said, "One strike for intelligence. Second strike for wit."

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Fang Haolin wasn't someone who would let others control him, so he was extremely uncooperative during the entire process. He kept kicking the water and crying desperately with his eyes closed. Lady Fang's heart ached dearly upon hearing his cries. However, this was a tradition passed down by the older generation to pray for the child. Thus, she could only suppress herself from going up to stop it.

When they finally completed the three stages of 'washing ceremony', Yu Xiaocao quickly picked up Little Linlin and stuffed him into the embrace of Lady Fang, who was lying on the bed. The little fellow, who was terribly exhausted from being tossed about, stopped crying and fell asleep as soon as he returned to the familiar and warm embrace.

Yu Xiaocao expressed deep disapproval for tormenting a three-day old baby like this. It was no wonder that the survival rate of babies was so low in ancient times. It wouldn't be weird for a baby with a weaker body to fall ill after being tormented in this way! Last night, Xiaocao bathed the little fellow, who had a stuffy nose, with mystic-stone water, and added a few drops of the mystic-stone water in the water he drank. Hence, Little Linlin was able to avoid the danger of becoming sick.

This spring, Yu Xiaocao lived a full and busy life. During her godmother's postnatal confinement period, she attended to her and thought of ways to make meals to nourish her body. She helped her godmother take care of the little guy, Fang Haolin. Besides his mother, Little Linlin was the closest to his godsister. She also had to go back every few days to water and fertilize the watermelon, corn, and potatoes...

Of course, she didn't need to do the work herself. For her family's a dozen or so mu of farmland, her parents and her aunt's family, whose health had already recovered, would help take care of the fields. She just needed to be responsible for making the so-called 'fertilizer'.

When they grew melons and vegetables last year, Yu Hai still didn't really believe that her so-called 'fertilizer' could accelerate the growth of crops. Well, it didn't look any different than clear water. It was colorless and tasteless, so he thought that his younger daughter said it casually like she was playing house.

But later, the family's vegetable garden and melon patch grew extremely well. There was no comparison for the watermelon, so it didn't need to be mentioned any further. With a rough estimate, the family's two or three plots of vegetable fields actually had a bigger harvest than other families' seven or eight mu of land. Not to mention, the harvest of the sweet potatoes in autumn was three times higher than Ergouzi's family's harvest. Three times higher ah!!

Yu Hai once watched the entire process of his younger daughter preparing the 'fertilizer'. She had only added a few drops of water from a small bottle into the bucket. He had even secretly tried it with his tongue, and it was no different from the water that they usually drank. However, it was this extremely ordinary water that displayed such a great effect. Could people not be surprised?

He remembered that his younger daughter had once said that her soul had visited the underworld and she had encountered immortals. Could it be that she had really been enlightened by the immortals? Thus, she had the magical ability to turn normal water into a fertilizer that could accelerate growth of crops. Yu Hai thought about this in his heart, but he didn't dare to say anything about it, for fear that someone with ulterior motives would hear it and treat his precious daughter like a monster!

Since then, in order to cover for his younger daughter, he dug a large manure pit at the foot of the back mountain. The manure of livestock, human waste, and fertilizer made of dead leaves from the mountains were all collected there. When it was time to fertilize the fields, he would come take some as a way to cover for his daughter.

When the villagers saw the Yu Family's crops growing so well, they all praised Yu Hai for being so hardworking and capable, and that he had used the right amount of fertilizer... No one suspected Xiaocao at all.

Xiaocao's oldest aunt's family lived in town for several days. Liu Hu's health had just gotten slightly better, and the family hurriedly packed up and went back to Dongshan Village with Yu Hai. In their opinion, although it was convenient to live in town, they needed to spend money for everything. The

wild vegetables that could be found everywhere in the countryside needed to be bought with money in town. At present, her younger brother was responsible for all their food and accommodation. As his older sister, not only could she not take care of her younger brother, but she also needed to him to subsidize her. With that said, would she be able to stay in town with ease?

Fortunately, Liu Hu's health recovered rather quickly. In addition, he was able to eat rice and wheat flour for every meal, and from time to time, there would also be chicken, fish, and meat. Every meal that the family ate was like a meal for the New Year. The three children had apparently gotten chubbier, and there was also a rosy glow on their faces. Even their personalities seemed to have become livelier. Yu Caifeng felt that her body was even healthier than before she became a refugee.

As soon as her husband was able to walk, Yu Caifeng packed the little luggage that they had and returned to Dongshan Village on her younger brother's carriage.

After Yu Caifeng got married, she had only returned once. It had already been over a decade since she left Dongshan Village. When she saw the old elm tree at the entrance of the village again, she really did feel somewhat anxious when approaching her hometown after being away for so many years away. She smoothed out the cotton clothing that her younger brother bought for her, and then squeezed out a smile for those familiar, or unfamiliar, faces from her memory.

“Oh! Isn't this Old Yu Family's Caifeng!! I haven't seen you for over a decade. Your children are so big already?” Under the old elm tree, there were several old people playing chess and chatting. The village head looked up and saw Yu Caifeng's family coming down from the horse carriage. He was stunned, but he recognized her.

Yu Hai's eldest uncle, Yu Lichun, heard this and quickly got up. He walked closer to them and looked carefully at Yu Caifeng. With slightly moist eyes, he choked up and said, “It's Caifeng. It's really that child Caifeng! You have gotten a lot thinner. It must have been difficult over the years, right?”

“Village Chief, Eldest Uncle...” Yu Caifeng's eyes brimmed with tears, but it was unknown whether she had recalled how she couldn't control her fate in the past, or if it was the joy of reunion.

“It's good that you're back. It's good that you're back!!” Yu Lichun wiped the corner of his eyes and said with a big smile, “Your father has been worried about you, since you lived far away in the northeast, since he heard about the drought in the northeast last year. You, this child, are so stubborn. Why didn't you come back earlier ah? You must have suffered a lot, right?”

Yu Hai hastily interjected, "Village Chief, Eldest Uncle, my older sister just came back, so let's get her settled down first."

"Go, go!" The village head waved his hands at them. Yu Lichun, on the other hand, followed them to the Yu Family's old residence.

Following the path in her memory, they went straight to the old residence. Although she had already prepared her heart, when she saw the black brick, tiled-roof house and a tall, imposing stone enclosed courtyard, Yu Caifeng still felt astonished inwardly—Younger Brother had really made a fortune. Besides the village head's house, it was impossible to find such a dignified house in the entire village!

As soon as they entered the gates, their eyes were filled with the vigorous green vegetables that were growing under the sun. Some of the matrons who helped to pick vegetables were close childhood friends of Yu Caifeng, so there was naturally another series of chatting.

In a daze, Yu Caifeng settled in the two-room compound on the side. After a long time, she finally realized that it wasn't a dream. The three siblings of the Liu Family had originally thought that the houses in the countryside would be about the same as their house in the northeast, so they hadn't expected that it would be even more dignified than the houses in town.

Although there were only two main rooms, there was a large courtyard and side rooms on both sides of the building. It was more than enough room for a family of five. The three siblings all got their own rooms, and they were so happy that they didn't even know what they should do!

Before they could be happy for too long, Liu Hu called the children together later that evening and solemnly told them, "Children, you guys must remember that we're only temporarily staying at your maternal uncle's house. When Father's health is better, I'll find the village head to see if he can give us an approval for a piece of land. We'll build a two-room straw cottage and move over! It's improper to live in your uncle's house for too long!"

Liu Junping nodded his head sensibly and said, "I heard that it's easier to find a job at the docks now and there's also a high wage. I'll go to the docks tomorrow to take a look."

Liu Yaner bit her lips and said in a soft voice, "I can also earn money by sewing pouches..."

Liu Fangping, who was only six years old, opened his mouth, but lowered his head and muttered, "I... I can't make money. What should I do?"

Liu Yaner comforted him considerably, "You can help with the chores at home, such as collecting firewood, making a fire, and so on. In the future, our family will definitely raise chickens and pigs, so you can help feed the little chicks and pigs ah!"

Little Fangping immediately cheered up, nodded repeatedly, and said, "Mhm! Xiaoping can help catch bugs to feed the chickens. When the chicks grow up and lay eggs, I can sell them for money!"

Looking at her sensible and obedient children, Yu Caifeng held them in her arms, feeling sour and proud in her heart.

Hearing that Liu Junping wanted to work at the docks, Yu Hai looked at the little fellow's still growing body, and weak and thin arms. He thought about it and said, "Our watermelons will ripen soon, so we will surely need help at that time. Why don't Junping stay and help Uncle?"

Now, the five members of the Liu Family relied on the Yu Family for food and accommodation, so they naturally wouldn't refuse to help. The recently recovered Liu Hu, Yu Caifeng, who couldn't stay idle, and Liu Junping, who considered himself as an adult, followed Yu Hai to work in the fields every morning. They were all capable workers, so they swiftly finished watering, fertilizing, and weeding the dozen or so mu of farmland.

It was worth mentioning that Wang Ergou had become much more diligent since the birth of his son. He rented his land to Yu Hai to grow watermelon, and he was even more attentive to the melon field than when he grew sweet potatoes in the past. He had to come over and check the fields several times a day. He searched for weeds in the fields several times a day, so he had already pulled up all the weeds.

Looking at the tiny watermelons growing bigger day by day, he seemed to be able to see silver ingots flying at him in succession. It was as if he could see his own house covered with black bricks and tiles, and his son grown up and going to school...

Fields of Gold Chapter 240

Since the seeds had been planted, nearby villagers would come to the Yu Family's corn fields to see the rare crop. Due to being specially notified by the royal prince from the capital, the county magistrate attached great importance on this matter and sent bailiffs to patrol the fields every now and then. The



village head of Dongshan Village took this as a great honor and established a patrol team. Every day from morning to night, there would be people guarding the fields, so it made things a lot easier for the Yu Family.

Most of the villagers looked up to Yu Hai with great respect. The village head also didn't dare to put on the airs of a village head in front of him. When the village head's successful sons returned to the village, they also took the initiative to be on friendly terms with Yu Hai.

This was no joking matter because Yu Hai's family was definitely different from before! First, they became friends with the young boss of Zhenxiu Restaurant and caused the future master of the Zhou Family to regard them with special respect. After that, they became adoptive relatives of a general. But that wasn't the end of it. Now, they had also become acquainted with a royal prince from the capital! He was a real member of the imperial family ah!

To be able to work for the royal prince, it wasn't only the pride of the Yu Family, but also the entire Dongshan Village. In the future, if someone wanted to cause trouble at Dongshan Village, he would have to first consider whether he had the ability to do it. One had to know who the master was before striking a dog! Imperial Prince Jing had built a mountain manor in Dongshan Village, so he would certainly provide some protection to Dongshan Village. The village head felt his back becoming ramrod straight, and in front of other village heads, he felt a slight sense of pride in being superior to them.

There wasn't anyone in the surrounding villages who didn't know that Yu Hai was protected by the royal prince. Therefore, although a lot of people came to see the rare crop, none of them dared to have any malicious intentions.

"Tsk tsk, is this the corn that was brought back from the west? Why does it look like sorghum seedlings ah? They didn't plant the wrong seeds, did they?" Someone gloated.

The Yu Family's corn, which had been planted for less than half of a month, had already grown upwards. With a green stalk and wide leaves, it looked like a green flag fluttering in the wind. Compared with the corn in her previous life, Yu Xiaocao relied on her cheat, the mystic-stone water, and sowed ahead of time. As expected, corn watered by the mystic-stone water grew very fast. Corn usually took around a month to mature, but the growth period had actually been shortened by half. Moreover, it had grown very luxuriantly.

As if it was in a competition, the watermelon fields next to it grew rapidly. Normally, watermelon planted in March or April would be ready for harvest in July or August. For the Yu Family, this regular

pattern of growth had already been broken. At the beginning of March, when the land in the north had just thawed, the Yu Family's melon seedlings had already sprouted and were buried in the fields.

In order to prevent freezing, straw thatches were moved to the melon fields. When the temperature was low at night, they would be used as 'blankets' for the seedlings. At noon, when it was warmer, the watermelon seedlings would bask in the sunlight. Even in the early spring when the temperature was low, the watermelon seedlings still grew tenaciously.

It was currently still late April, but the watermelons in the fields were already about the size of a rubber ball. The dark green watermelon in the green foliage resembled a mischievous child poking his head out to look about curiously. Yu Hai walked around the melon fields and picked out several watermelons that had ripened early for his daughter in town. He planned to go to town tomorrow and bring two watermelons for her to taste.

Wang Ergou trotted over with a grin and looked at the plucked watermelons. His eyes lit up and he said with a smile, "Brother Dahai, there's already ripe watermelons? That's great! It won't be long before we harvest the watermelons on a large scale, right?"

Yu Hai picked up the largest watermelon, stuffed it into Ergou'zi's hands, and patted him on the shoulder, saying, "Brother Ergou, you have worked hard during these past two months! Take this watermelon back and taste it!! Rest assured, we will definitely give you priority for this year's watermelon!!"

This year, they planted six mu of watermelon. According to last year's output, they should probably yield about one hundred thousand catties of watermelon. Seeing that the Yu Family and Wang Ergou made a lot of money from selling watermelons last year, ideas emerged in the minds of the villagers of Dongshan Village. They had already quietly approached Yu Hai, hoping to get a wholesale quota.

There was a limit to the amount of ripe watermelons produced every day, so he couldn't promise everyone. After a period of distress, Yu Hai chose to work with several families that he had a closer relation with, and politely declined the others. Those who had been rejected would certainly feel unhappy in their hearts, but now Yu Hai was rich and had backing from influential people, so what could they do even if they felt unhappy?

Yu Xiaocao, who was taking care of her godmother and younger brother in town, couldn't return to Dongshan Village every day, but she was always concerned about the watermelon fields! She counted

her fingers every day. Soon, the watermelons would be available on the market. In her heart, she pondered whether she should rent a shop in town to sell the watermelons this year.

Although the two shops near Zhenxiu Restaurant were located in a good area, they had been rented out after all, and signed a three-year lease. If they rented a shop randomly, it would probably be hard for their business to achieve the same popularity as last year. Just as she was troubled over this matter, her father, Yu Hai, had come to visit his precious daughter with several ripe watermelons.

Fang Zizhen had gone to the harbor, so the head steward invited Yu Hai to the study in the front court and sent someone to the inner court to notify the eldest young miss. The head steward didn't dare to slight the master's adoptive relative, who had come from peasant origins. Not to mention the master's attitude towards this adoptive relative of his, but just based on the fact that his daughter was even more important than the master's own daughter, no one would dare to look down on him.

The head steward had worked for Fang Zizhen since he had been conferred the title of a general. Due to his loyalty and competence, he had been bestowed the same surname as his master. For servants, it was a great honor to be given the same surname as their master! Whether it was in the General's Estate in the capital or the residence in Tanggu Town, Head Steward Fang was second only to the masters.

Yu Hai was honest and sincere, but he wasn't dull. He knew that, in order for his daughter to live comfortably in the Fang Household, he couldn't offend Head Steward Fang. He picked one of the watermelons that he brought over and handed it to the head steward. Yu Hai said with a smile, "It's a homegrown watermelon, which isn't worth much money. Head Steward Fang, take it and have a taste!"

Were there watermelons at this time of the year? As the chief steward of the General's Estate, Head Steward Fang naturally wasn't someone who lacked knowledge and experience. His master was favored and trusted by the emperor, so he would be rewarded with some of the watermelons that were given as tribute every year. His master was very generous to the servants, so he had also tried them from time to time. However, weren't watermelons used to relieve the heat in midsummer? Why were the watermelons already matured when it wasn't even summer yet?

Although there was doubt in his heart, Head Steward Fang happily accepted the present and sincerely thanked him. Seeing Eldest Young Miss coming from the inner court, he excused himself and left. Head Steward Fang had come to Tanggu Town with his whole family. When he brought the watermelon to his own housing compound, his two young sons welcomed him with a cheer, "Watermelon? Father, you're actually willing to buy such an expensive thing for us to eat?"

The corner of Head Steward Fang's mouth twitched. He patted his youngest son's bottom and said with a smile, "When was your father ever unwilling to buy things for you guys? This watermelon was rewarded by the general's adoptive relative. At this time of the year, it can't even be bought with money!"

"They probably grew it themselves, right? Last year, I heard the servants of the Zhang Estate next door say that the Yu Family's watermelons are big and sweet, moreover, the price is much cheaper than in the capital! At that time, the lord often lived in Dongshan Village, so he must have eaten a lot of watermelons!" Head Steward Fang's oldest son, who was fifteen years old, took the watermelon with a smile and spoke as he eagerly went to find a knife.

The head steward's wife, who was in charge of the inner court's kitchen, wasn't in the room at the moment. His oldest son took his two younger brothers and skillfully cut open the watermelon. The red melon meat was dripping with alluring juice as the knife sliced through it, and a sweet smell hit their noses. His youngest son, who was only six, couldn't resist swallowing his saliva, and he stared at the watermelon as if his eyes were glued on it.

The head steward couldn't help from laughing and patting the little guy's bottom again. In his heart, he thought about his youngest son's age and the possibility of his youngest son becoming the young master's personal manservant in the future. Their age gap wouldn't be considered too big, would it? Everything in the general's household would definitely belong to the young master in the future... It seemed like he needed to personally teach his youngest son!

"Steward, Head Steward..." A slightly flustered voice sounded in Head Steward Fang's ears. It was the gatekeeper, Old Zhou. Could it be that something happened at the entrance?

Head Steward Fang didn't have time to enjoy the delicious watermelon with his sons and hurriedly rushed out of the room. He saw the gatekeeper, Old Zhou, trotting in, but he couldn't tell whether the expression on his face was due to excitement or panic.

"Head Steward... Yang... Royal Prince Yang... Royal Prince Yang..." Since he had rushed over, Old Zhou was out of breath and stuttering, which made Head Steward Fang very anxious.

"Royal Prince Yang? Royal Prince Yang came? Our madam has a good relationship with Princess Consort Jing. Did the princess consort send Royal Prince Yang to visit our mistress?" His master didn't have any relations with Prince Jing's Estate, let alone Royal Prince Yang, who was aloof and proud. Except for this reason, Head Steward Fang really couldn't think of another possibility.

Old Zhou first nodded his head, and then shook his head incessantly. He patted his own chest several times and finally stopped gasping for breath. After that, he loudly said, "Royal Prince Yang came to see our eldest young miss!!"

After the birth of the young master, the Fang Zizhen couple had ordered the servants to call their goddaughter 'Eldest Young Miss'. This was to show that Yu Xiaocao still had a very high position in the couple's hearts, and was comparable to their own child.

Royal Prince Yang wanted to see Eldest Young Miss? When did Eldest Young Miss know this cold-faced Royal Prince? Although Head Steward Fang had doubts in his mind, he still rushed over to personally greet the royal prince, and respectfully invited him into the estate.

"Royal Prince, our eldest young miss is currently in the reception hall of the outer court. This way please..." Head Steward Fang was polite and respectful, but not cowardly.

'That lass is in the reception hall? Since when was a little girl allowed to entertain the guests in the Fang Household? It seems like the lass has quite a high position in the hearts of General Fang and his wife ah!' Zhu Junyang's pair of deep eyes were filled with the glow of interest.

Yu Xiaocao, who had received the news from the reception hall, saw the youth, who appeared to be isolated from all heat despite being bathed in the sunlight. Beside the tall, green bamboo, a young man who exuded a faint and indifferent aura, walked over with the light against his back. Under the warm spring sun, circles of dazzling light shone on the youth's hair, which was scattered on his shoulders...