

## Gold Chapter 261

### Fields of Gold Chapter 261

Yu Hai was stuck trying to figure out how to persuade Royal Prince Yang to not go when his youngest daughter interjected, "There was heavy rain last night. The plants are thick up in the mountains. If you don't want to get your legs wet, then I advise you to wait several days before you go hunt."

No one knew what the weather would be like for the next several days. Summer had just started and it was slowly starting to rain more. Perhaps in the next couple of days it would rain again. Although the young royal prince looked like he was good at hunting, there were too many uncertain elements in the mountains. It was better to avoid dangerous situations!

However, the heavens appeared to have not heard Yu Xiaocao's prayer. For the next few days, the weather was perfect. The tide had been receding in the morning recently. Yu Xiaocao's friends also knew that she had more free time, so they invited her to gather seafood together.

Within the group of three, Zhou Shanhu, Qian Yafang and Liu Yingzi, they had somehow added a fourth person, Zheng Xiaocui. With the addition of Yu Xiaocao, they were all around the same age and all of their families had decent situations. Although none of them were able to wear new clothing frequently, none of them wore clothing full of patches like a few years back. The group of five girls were all considered relatively good-looking in the village, so when they were together, they looked youthful and pretty as well as very pleasant.

Whenever they came to find Yu Xiaocao, Zhou Shanhu and the three others were dressed in their ordinary working clothes. The only exception was Zheng Xiaocui. She always wore her new set of clothing, which was a set made from blue cloth embroidered with yellow flowers. At the seaside, she was afraid of getting her clothing wet and dirty, so she always had the lowest yield out of all of them.

Zhou Shanhu had once tried to persuade her, "Xiaocui, when you work it's best not to wear skirts. It's really too inconvenient!" Zheng Xiaocui wasn't grateful at all and held her handkerchief as she shyly replied, "My father said that girls should act like girls...I can still do work while wearing a dress!" As she talked, her eyes wandered towards the direction of the Yu Family's residence.

Zheng Xiaocui was a bit older than the other four girls and was already thirteen. Her body had gradually developed and her slender figure, when clothed in aqua blue, looked quite delicate and pretty. However, she was still a daughter of a fisherman. Everyday the sea breeze blew at her, so her skin looked a bit tan and rough. If she was paler, with her pretty features, she would be as pretty as those town girls who grew up in decent families!

Yu Xiaocao hastily rushed out of the courtyard. This wasn't the first time she had sensed Zheng Xiaocui sneakily looking at her courtyard. What was she looking at? What's so good about her family's courtyard?

When Zheng Xiaocui didn't see the figure she wanted to see, she couldn't help but reveal a disappointed expression.

"Yu Xiaocao, this prince is going into the mountains to hunt today. Whatever game you want, I'll make sure to catch some!" Zhu Junyang's voice sounded from the west.

Zheng Xiaocui was pleasantly surprised and craned her neck to look around. Today, Zhu Junyang was clothed entirely in black clothing embroidered with dull patterns. His trouser legs were tucked into his tall boots made of deer hide and his hair was bound tightly at the top of his head. A few loose strands casually framed his face. He looked agile and strong.

After seeing Zheng Xiaocui's star-struck eyes, Yu Xiaocao finally understood why this girl always came by every day to spend time with her. She glanced briefly at Zhu Junyang's handsome figure and couldn't help from inwardly sighing—a devilishly handsome man was a calamity ah!

However, when she remembered what the young royal prince had told her the other day, Yu Xiaocao couldn't help but admire his intuition. At that time, Zheng Xiaocui was quite a distance away from him and they didn't have any interactions together. How did he manage to detect that this little girl's motives weren't pure?

Yu Xiaocao also carefully observed the other three girls, who were her good friends. She inwardly rejoiced that the one smitten with the prince wasn't any of them. Zheng Xiaocui was only the neighbor of Older Sister Yingzi and had showed up uninvited into their little group. She didn't have as close a relationship with her as she did with the other girls, let alone having a good friendship. However, where did this little girl get the confidence to adore Royal Prince Yang, who was a relative of the emperor himself?

The nobles in the capital all cared about crafting marriages that were well-matched in terms of social status. Zheng Xiaocui was only little peasant girl from Dongshan Village. Even if she caught the eye of Royal Prince Yang, she could only become his concubine. Did she think it would be easy to spend the

rest of her life within the confines of a rich family? Perhaps her final ending would lead to a pile of dead bones that no one cared about!

As Yu Xiaocao thought about this, she couldn't help but shudder a bit. If it were her, she would rather find a poor family where they couldn't eat their fill, then be concubine of a rich man. In the future, her husband could only have her as his sole wife. If he had other ideas, she would rather peacefully divorce then share her husband with other people. Even if he was extremely outstanding and she loved him to death, she would still stand by her principles!

"What are you thinking about? This prince is talking to you ah!" Zhu Junyang lightly tapped Yu Xiaocao's forehead with the bow in his hand, interrupting her train of thought.

Yu Xiaocao covered her head with her hand and angrily retorted, "If you need to talk, then just talk! Why do you need to hit me too? If you hit my head again, I won't be polite to you anymore!"

Zhu Junyang looked at her slightly-built body that was as flat as a board. He tsked in disdain, "Not be polite anymore? What can you do to this prince?"

"Be careful, I might add some laxatives to your food! Let you stay on the toilet for three days and three nights!!" Yu Xiaocao revealed a slightly sinister expression on her face.

Zhu Junyang didn't believe that she would do such a thing, "Don't forget, we currently eat from the same plates. Don't tell me that you want to end up poisoning the rest of the family ah?"

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes and replied, "Don't forget that I'm quite proficient in medicine. I could just give my family members the antidote prior to eating the food and everything would be alright!!"

Zhu Junyang inwardly thought, 'This prince also brings antidote pills along too. I wouldn't be afraid of a highly toxic poison, let alone something as mild as a laxative! The prince knows your personality, all bark and no bite. Even if someone threatened you, I don't think you would necessarily try to poison me!'

"You're quite a bold girl eh! You even dare to poison me so obviously, who gave you the courage? Hm?" Zhu Junyang lifted his eyes slightly which made his handsome face appear even more enchanting.

"Royal...Royal Prince, Xiaocao is only joking around, she doesn't have any bad intentions..." The two of them suddenly heard a timid voice interject from the side.

Yu Xiaocao turned in the direction of the voice and couldn't suppress her surprise, 'Zheng Xiaocui, just how badly do you want to get the Royal Prince's attention ah?! Are you trying to plead for clemency for me? If you want to do it correctly, you first need to disguise that seductive expression in your eyes first and also conceal your wild ambitions, okay?'

Zhu Junyang's expression immediately chilled as he looked out of the corner of his eye at the blue-clothed figure. Uneasiness bubbled up in his heart and he frowned unconsciously. Disgusting! How come he had to come across another person who could influence his feelings?

Head Steward Liu understood the hint in his master's expression and hurriedly hollered, "Outrageous! How dare you interrupt when the prince is speaking? Guards come! Take her away from here!"

The order was only to escort her away and they were only being so lenient for the sake of Miss Yu. If it had been another person in another situation, they would have already dragged her down and started lashing with the whip! Hmph! A vulgar girl from a fisherman's family also had the guts to cozy up to the magnificent and glorious royal prince. Who gave her the confidence?

Zheng Xiaocui was scared witless at the sight of two large and burly imperial guards coming towards her. Her knees weakened as they escorted her out. Zhou Shanhu and the other three girls now saw a noble's fickle temperament. Earlier, the prince seemed to be doing fine, merely having a small quarrel with Xiaocao. How did he suddenly end up becoming angry?

Yu Xiaocao didn't attempt to intercede for Zheng Xiaocui, who had ulterior motives. A person needed to take responsibility for his or her own actions. Xiaocao merely looked at Zhu Junyang in the eye with a calm expression and said, "What are you being so mean for? You've scared the girl out of her wits!"

After Zheng Xiaocui was forcefully escorted away, Zhu Junyang immediately felt like the air had become a lot more fresh. He couldn't help but warn Yu Xiaocao again, "That girl's heart isn't pure. You need to stop spending time with her!!"

'Are you saying that someone who likes and adores you is someone who doesn't have a pure heart? You can't only blame the little girl ah, you have to look at that devilishly handsome face of yours too, right?'

Yu Xiaocao silently cursed the prince in her mind before she replied, "How bad can a girl of twelve to thirteen be? Don't make other people more complicated than they actually are!"

'How bad can a girl of twelve to thirteen be? Just wait until you see those supposed gently-raised maidens in the capital fighting and scheming against others! In order to gain a personal advantage, they are willing to plot against their own sisters, step on their supposedly good friends, yet still pretend to be gracious and loving to them while stabbing them in the back. Only after seeing that could you finally understand just how 'bad' twelve to thirteen year old girls could be!

"Enough, let's not talk about this anymore! This prince is going to enter the mountains..." Zhu Junyang waved the bow in his hands at Yu Xiaocao and turned to leave.

Yu Xiaocao looked up at the sky to observe the time and then advised him, "Young Royal Prince, you should eat lunch before you go! That way you won't miss a meal."

Zhu Junyang hesitated for a second before he nodded his head, "Okay! I'll go with what you say!! This prince will go to the thickets at the foot of the mountain and try my luck there. Maybe I can hunt a few pheasants or hares and add them to our lunch!"

When Yu Xiaocao saw that Head Steward Liu was following along, she thought that everything should be fine now. She had already inquired earlier about Head Steward Liu. Apparently, he was very skilled at martial arts and was similar to those giant 'bosses' that guarded places in the dramas of her previous life. A lot of television dramas had head eunuchs that were very good at martial arts. Perhaps they had all practiced from the Sunflower Manual [1]?

When they saw Zhu Junyang leave, Zhou Shanhu and the three other girls, who were terrified by the previous scene, scampered over to Yu Xiaocao and exclaimed, "That was super scary! Zheng Xiaocui didn't say much ah, how did she end up offending His Highness so much?"

"Aren't all nobles with high rank and power temperamental?" Liu Yingzi had a better understanding of how the world worked, so she seemed to have sensed something more. She was feeling a bit displeased with Zheng Xiaocui.

No wonder Zheng Xiaocui, who usually didn't spend much time with her before, always stuck around her whenever she was visiting the Yu Family. She wanted to get closer to the royal prince ah! Liu Yingzi

didn't know if Uncle Zheng knew Xiaocui's inner thoughts but she needed to tell her father when she got home and have him subtly make some inquiries.

Yu Xiaocao smiled, "Alright, let's go gather seafood now. If we get there later, all of the good spots will get taken by other people ah!"

Qian Yafang gazed at Yu Xiaocao with eyes full of admiration, "Older Sister Xiaocao, you are too awesome ah. You're not even the tiniest bit afraid of that stormy royal prince and you even dare to argue with him."

Yu Xiaocao pinched the other girl's chubby little face and grinned, "Xiaofang, you're wrong! I'm just a little peasant girl, how can I actually dare to argue with His Highness? I just have a better understanding of his personality since I've spent a little more time with him. As long as I don't cross his bottom line, there won't be any problems!"

Qian Yafang first nodded her head and then shook her head, "My mother told me that I'm very bad at judging other people's expressions. In the future, I'll stay farther away from the royal prince then!"

Zhou Shanhu also vigorously nodded her head in agreement.

Fields of Gold Chapter 262 - Going Hunting Together

Around noon, Zhu Junyang came back triumphantly with two hares and a pheasant in his hands. In the nearby thickets, there were many people who went there to pick up firewood, gather wild plants, so there wasn't a lot of game around. By coming back with such a haul in such a short period of time, it showed that the young royal prince's hunting skills were quite good.

For lunch, Yu Xiaocao made 'salt and pepper rabbit meat', 'spicy wild pheasant', 'steamed egg with seafood', 'roasted garlic scallops', 'savory sandworms', 'sauteed eggplants with minced meat', and 'oyster tofu soup'. There were a total of six dishes and one soup, and the meal contained both seafood and wild game dishes. Everyone ate the food with great relish.

After finishing the meal, Zhu Junyang picked up his bow and arrows in preparation to enter the mountain.

Since the West Mountain was giant, the Yu Family was afraid that he wasn't familiar with the terrain and might get lost. Furthermore, it was possible that he might accidentally step into the wrong area and meet something dangerous. Thus, they had the experienced hunter, Yu Hai, act as his guide.

Yu Xiaocao still didn't feel comfortable with the arrangements, so she found an excuse to leave the house. She secretly followed them from behind as they entered the mountain.

Today, Zhu Junyang only brought Head Steward Liu along with him. As their guide, Yu Hai decided to bring the older adult and the youth on a loop around the outskirts of the West Mountains so they could hunt some wild deer, roe deer and other animals in order to satisfy the prince's desires. However, Zhu Junyang had already guessed what the other man was thinking about. After encountering some smaller game, he didn't stay put. His purpose today was to hunt some ferocious beasts in the mountains.

Yu Xiaocao, who was following the three of them from behind, started to find it was harder and harder for her to keep up as they went further within the mountainous trails. Right now the plants and weeds around her were waist high and she had to use a lot of energy for each step she took. As she watched the gap between them get wider and wider, fear settled into her heart that she would get lost behind.

"Father, Young Royal Prince, wait for me!!" Just as the three figures in front were about to disappear, Yu Xiaocao finally couldn't hold back and shouted towards them. Deep within the mountains there were trees all around, covering the sky and the ground. If she wasn't careful, she would quickly get lost in the thickets. Yu Xiaocao was still a little girl who was quite inexperienced in this setting. If she was lost by the others, it would be hard for her to find her way back on her own.

The road in front of them was becoming steeper and steeper and the forest around them was thick. Head Steward Liu stayed alert this entire time in order to observe their surroundings. He absolutely could not allow his master to encounter a mishap. Suddenly, his ears moved. He stopped moving in order to listen more closely to the sound. He quietly talked to Royal Prince Yang, who was in front of him, "Master, do you hear that..."

Zhu Junyang thought that Head Steward Liu had heard a wild beast and immediately stopped and held his breath to listen...

"Father——Father——"

"Young Royal Prince——Wait for me——"

The thick forest muffled echoes in the area and the sound of the little girl's voice was only carried into the three people's ears by the wind. Yu Hai's expression immediately changed and he hurriedly rushed back as he stated, "It sounds like Cao'er's voice. That girl, she's always been interested in hunting since she was a wee child. She must have secretly followed us!!"

Zhu Junyang also looked more solemn. He did his best to figure out the direction of where the sound was coming from and walked in the direction.

"Father...Young Royal Prince—Where did you guys go ah..." Yu Xiaocao was starting to get angry after shouting all this time. She didn't know whether her father or the young royal prince could hear her. She lowered her head to carefully look at the footprints the men left behind but she didn't realize yet that the more she walked, the further away she got from them.

Yu Xiaocao found a wide open space and sat down on a rock. She retrieved a small porcelain bottle from her chest pocket and dripped a drop of mystic-stone water into her mouth. Her throat immediately felt better and her exhausted body started to fill with strength again.

"Father—Young Royal Prince...where did you guys go? It's Xiaocao ah..." Yu Xiaocao clumsily climbed up a crooked tree and sat at the bottom of the forked branches. She cupped her hands around her mouth like a megaphone and started to shout loudly again.

Zhu Junyang had followed the sound of her voice over and looked around. He didn't see Xiaocao anywhere. He turned around, raised his head, and was almost hit in the forehead by a pair of grubby, muddy, deer-skin boots. Luckily, his reactions were quite agile and he managed to avoid getting stamped by stepping back.

"You also know how to climb trees? Looks like you're quite skilled ah!!" Zhu Junyang raised his head to look at Yu Xiaocao, who was sitting astride on the tree. Her hair had been tangled with stray branches and there was even a dried leaf sticking on her temples. He didn't know whether the moisture on her face was from sweat or tears but she looked like a dirty little kitten. There were some holes in her clothing that had recently been ripped open. If he didn't look more closely, he would have thought she was a little beggar!

"Young Royal Prince!" Yu Xiaocao almost wanted to cry tears of joy, "That's great!! I finally found all of you!"



Zhu Junyang watched as the little lass clumsily climbed down the tree. She slowly scampered down. Because her boots were covered with mud, she didn't have a good footing on the bark. She could only hug the tree tightly as she slowly slid down.

Zhu Junyang couldn't stand watching her struggle anymore and sprung forward. He grasped the little lass's collar and jumped back as the little lass screamed to high heaven.

The sudden weightless feeling made Yu Xiaocao think that she was about to fall down. She yelped mournfully as she gritted her teeth in preparation of the pain that was about to hit her bottom. Even when she was steady on the ground, with Royal Prince Yang supporting her up, she continued to holler shrilly with her eyes closed.

Zhu Junyang used his other hand to pick at his ear. He felt like his ears were about to explode from the little lass's screams. He lifted Yu Xiaocao's hand and then lightly let go. The little lass's legs wobbled and she fell bottom first into the underbrush. Only then did she stop ravaging his eardrums with her voice.

'Eh? It doesn't hurt? How come I don't feel any pain after falling off the tree? Is it because the grass is too thick or is it because I have too much fat on my butt?' Yu Xiaocao rubbed at her butt and looked up the tree again.

"Cao'er?! Why did you follow us?" Yu Hai had heard Xiaocao's desperate screeches earlier and thought she had encountered danger. He bolted over, panting, and carefully inspected her from head to toe. He only relaxed after he discovered that she had no injuries.

"I...I was afraid you guys might get into trouble, so I followed along..." Yu Xiaocao could tell that her father was getting angry very quickly, so she lowered her head and pulled at the grass as she stammered out a reply.

Zhu Junyang let out a cold sneer, "You were afraid for us? So you followed along? With that tiny stature of yours, if we encounter a wild beast, can you help us beat it off? Or can you protect us with your body? Hmph! This prince knows now, you probably planned on sending yourself into the jaws of the beast and give us an opportunity to run away right? You're so tiny, you're not even enough to get stuck between the teeth of a wild beast ah!"

Yu Xiaocao couldn't explain that she had the little divine stone, so she kept her head down as she obediently listened to his lecture.

Yu Hai noticed that they were already in an area in the mountains where very few people tread. If he told his youngest daughter to head back on her own, she could get lost and then end up in a very bad situation. However, he couldn't, for the sake of his youngest daughter, ruin the royal prince's hunting mood. He braced himself as he said, "Your Highness, my daughter isn't sensible and caused trouble for you...what do you think about letting my daughter follow along with us..."

Earlier on the way here, they traversed hills and threaded through the forest. The trail was quite hard to walk on. Zhu Junyang eyed the little lass who looked quite disheveled. He didn't know how that lass managed to go this far. When he thought about how the girl might end up breaking a leg or encountering some dangerous beasts on the way back, Zhu Junyang wished he could pick her up and give her a spanking.

He looked around the area. They were surrounded by a thick forest and the mountain was loftily high. Who knew what type of ferocious beasts lurked in the area. They absolutely could not allow the little lass to stay here by herself. But they had already walked all this way, so they couldn't just leave empty-handed. Apparently, they could only bring this fellow along and hope that she didn't impede their way!

"You better keep up because if you don't, this prince won't wait for you!!" Zhu Junyang leveled a fierce glare at the little girl and then turned around to continue deeper into the mountain forest.

At this time, Head Steward Liu discovered that his master's walking speed had decreased a lot compared to before. He looked back at Yu Xiaocao, who was doing her best to keep up with everyone. When did his master ever think of others? Was the sun about to rise from the west?!

With a useless tail behind them. Zhu Junyang had a premonition that his chances of hunting a ferocious beast had dwindled considerably. He no longer rushed forward and instead did his best to shoot at any animals that appeared. Yu Xiaocao soon found out that the young royal prince's archery skills weren't just good; they were astoundingly good. He almost never missed what he shot at and every arrow hit a vital spot. He never needed to shoot a second arrow to fell a beast.

Red deer, wild goats, roe deer, hazel grouse...the most impressive one was that Zhu Junyang managed to kill a giant wild boar that weighed over three hundred pounds by accurately shooting it in the head. A wild animal that was usually quite vicious didn't even make much noise before it was killed instantly by Zhu Junyang.

Yu Xiaocao looked at her father, who was carrying the red deer and wild goat on his back while his waist was strung with pheasants, badgers, and other small game. Head Steward Liu had easily crafted a sledge out of branches and was pulling along the wild boar, roe deer and other game. Even she was holding two wild hares. Despite all that, the young royal prince continued deeper into the thicket enthusiastically.

“Young Royal Prince, if we continue to hunt through the afternoon, we won't be able to bring all of the game back! How about we go back home now and you can come back another day?” Yu Xiaocao heavily sat down on a nearby rock. She really didn't want to get back up. Although the mystic-stone water had replenished her energy, she was still very tired, okay?

Zhu Junyang attentively observed their nearby terrain and environment and then turned back to look her in the eye, “You truly came over to be a deadweight! If you're tired, then just stand here and watch over the game. This prince will head deeper in to take a look. If I'm lucky, I might encounter a black bear. Didn't you say you wanted to try the taste of bear paws eh?”

Yu Xiaocao looked at the pile of game that emitted the smell of blood. She was absolutely sure that all of this was the perfect bait to attract a carnivore. If she was in charge of watching over the game, did he want her to become the snack of a wild beast? 'Young Royal Prince ah, just what type of enmity do you have against me?'

'Little Glutinous Dumpling, are you there?' Yu Xiaocao lightly called at the little divine stone in her mind. It was currently in the multi-colored stone on her wrist.

A tiny, golden colored kitten appeared behind her and jumped onto her shoulder. It arrogantly asked, [What do you need this divine stone for ah? It wouldn't be that you want this divine stone to help you go hunting eh?]

Yu Xiaocao suddenly thought that the little divine stone was quite similar to Zhu Junyang. Both liked to look down at everyone from their high statues, with their noses in the air. When they talked, they also made people feel like they immediately deserved a spanking. But the part that they most resembled each other was this: they were both annoying, but at the crucial point, they never disappointed her!

'Little Glutinous Dumpling, help draw a ferocious beast over. The best kind would be one that's not a fully grown adult and is easy to take care of! Either a tiger or bear would work. If there aren't any, then a wolf would do too!'

[Tsk tsk! You take this divine stone to be bait for you? What advantage does this divine stone get out of this ah? If there are no advantages, this divine stone refuses to help!!] The little divine stone was feeling arrogant again. Every time she asked it to help her, it always acted as if it was very reluctant and made Yu Xiaocao quite unhappy.

#### Fields of Gold Chapter 263 - Dangerous Situation

Yu Xiaocao took the little golden kitten off of her shoulders and held it by the scruff of its neck. She used some force to shake it around and pretended to be very fierce. She frowned and glared at it, "Who's the master out of the two of us? Asking you to do something is like praying to the gods!! I've already endured you for a long time! You're going against the wishes of your master, are you not afraid of being punished for this?"

Yu Xiaocao had truly guessed correctly. The Goddess of Spirits was very familiar with the little divine stone's personality, so when she created this space, she added something to prevent the little divine stone from devouring its master: If it went against the master's wishes, 1% of its spiritual energy will drain away. If it helped its master, then 0.1% of its spiritual energy will recover. It was an extremely unequal rule.

Consequently, even though the little divine stone really disliked Yu Xiaocao as its master, it could only fulfill all of her requests unconditionally. It could only wish that it could recover its powers sooner rather than later, break through its prison, and leave this energy-less world that was unsuitable for cultivation.

The tiny golden kitten momentarily deflated like a balloon and its ears drooped down dispiritedly. Even its two usually bright and dazzling golden eyes also didn't have as much sparkle as before. This fellow had unexpectedly learned how to pretend to be pitiful to gain sympathy.

Yu Xiaocao lightly ran her hands through its soft and pointed little ears and sighed, "Since our contract was a success, then it means we are fated to be with one another. You shouldn't be in too much of a hurry. Heaven never bars one's way. Inevitably, there will be a method to restore yourself. When the moment comes, our destiny together will be considered at its end! Perhaps it's only a short few years or decades. Why not treasure the time we have together now?"

[Stop saying these plaintive, useless words, hmph! Isn't it just attracting a fierce beast over? For this divine stone, it's as easy as just thinking!] The little divine stone seemed to not be used to these emotional words that were coming out of her mouth, so it jumped out of her hands and shook itself all over, allowing its shiny golden fur to settle. It transformed into a golden light and shot into the forest.

Zhu Junyang had gone deeper into the forest for a short period of time and found that there was nothing interesting. He felt a bit disappointed. Yu Hai, who was next to him, would, from time to time, look back in the direction they came from because he was worried about his daughter. Zhu Junyang felt like his mood had also been influenced by the other man's and also started to worry about that foolish little lass.

“Let's go forward a bit more. If there's nothing to be found, then we'll head back home!” Zhu Junyang felt an unfamiliar jittery feeling rise up within him and he lost his desire to continue hunting. He aimlessly stepped forward.

Suddenly, Head Steward Liu, who was constantly on the lookout, felt his ears twitch and he stopped moving, “Master, there's something that's rushing over to us...be careful!”

Zhu Junyang saw something that was moving extremely rapidly. He didn't even think when the bow in his hands moved and an arrow was shot towards that figure.

The little divine stone barely managed to avoid that arrow that was headed its way. It used its paw to pat itself on its chest in a very human-like manner, [How dangerous, I almost got hit by the arrow! This fellow's archery skills are pretty good. He's already gotten to the point where he can shoot accurately just based on his feelings!]

Although this kitten form was only something crafted by itself using spiritual energy, getting injured would still require the little divine stone to use up some of its hard-won spiritual energy to recover! The little divine stone let out a shrill meow as it was afraid that Zhu Junyang would shoot another arrow.

At this time, Zhu Junyang was also very surprised. He knew how fast his arrows were, yet there was an animal that was able to dodge his heavenly arrows? Just as he was about to put another arrow to the string, he heard a coy mew from the underbrush. They were deep in the mountain forests, how could there be a cat in the area?

Yu Hai recognized that delicate and dazzling little animal in the underbrush. He hurriedly interceded, “That seems to be Cao'er's pet, a yellow kitten called 'Little Glutinous Dumpling'.”

Yu Hai carefully pushed aside the long grass and a tiny golden kitten, barely the size of his fist, appeared in front of the three men. The golden kitten seemed to know who almost injured it earlier and let out a resentful 'yeowl' at Zhu Junyang's direction!

Zhu Junyang bent over to pick up the tiny kitten by its scruff and lifted it to the height of his eye. He sized up the indignant, snarling little cat and finally chuckled, "A pet takes after its master. This kitten is very similar to its owner. They both are the type who have more guts than the size of their own bodies."

As he talked, he threw the kitten over to Yu Hai. The little cat executed a difficult rolling movement in mid-air and landed accurately on Yu Hai's shoulders. It resentfully raised all of the fur on its body and bared its teeth at Zhu Junyang.

Yu Hai hurriedly caught the cat in his hands and lightly stroked it. He knew his daughter's pet was very aware and asked it, "Little Glutinous Dumpling, how did you get here? Did you follow your master here?"

[This divine stone was forced by your scoundrel of a daughter to come here. In a moment, when a giant black bear comes over, you better stay far away. If you get hurt, I will need to pay with my spiritual energy!] The little golden kitten mewed at its master's father and didn't care if the man couldn't understand it.

Zhu Junyang laughed, "Look at this fellow, it must be tattling on me. Exactly the same as its master!!" Head Steward Liu lightly sniffed at the air and frowned, "Master, this old servant can smell the distinct odor of an animal. A giant one must be coming over. Be careful!"

As the sun slowly set in the west, the grove slowly darkened. Other than the sound of the wind blowing around, the rest of the glade became dead silent. Something was wrong. Although the forest was quiet earlier, there were still sounds of birds chirping occasionally. Now it was too quiet, so quiet that it made people feel pressured.

After hearing the startled calls of birds nearby, Zhu Junyang ordered Yu Hai somewhat hastily, "It's here! Go hide behind the tree!"

Yu Hai was just about to reply when Steward Liu persuaded him, "Go hide first. If we have any trouble, you can go out then."

Just as they finished talking, a large black bear that was as tall as a grown man and had a thick coat of fur appeared in front of them. Its large mouth was wide open and it seemed to be full of rage. It charged towards them and used its paws to break away all of the foliage in front of it. It easily snapped a young tree, that had a trunk about the size of small bowl, in half and the bear looked incredibly ferocious.

Zhu Junyang calmly took aim and pulled the bowstring back. The arrow flew towards the bear's head. However, that bear seemed to have supernatural reflexes and slapped away the arrow accurately with one of its paws. The bear continued to rush over, its speed as swift as before.

“Quickly dodge!” Zhu Junyang shot another arrow that didn't cause any damage and he scrambled up a nearby boulder. He took aim at the bear from the height as Head Steward Liu followed him blindly from behind.

Zhu Junyang's third arrow had left behind a wound on the bear's forelegs. The pain enraged the animal and it charged even more crazily forward.

Oddly enough, the furious animal didn't go after the main culprit who injured it and instead charged towards Yu Hai, who was hiding behind a large tree. The expression on Zhu Junyang's face immediately darkened. Yu Hai's pitiful hunting abilities were nothing compared to an enraged, full-grown black bear.

The prince pulled back his bow again and shot the arrow towards the animal's back. The arrow punched through the black bear's thick hide and deeply embedded itself into the animal's flesh. However, it didn't hit a vital organ.

Yu Hai naturally wouldn't stay there like a sitting duck when he saw the bear run over. He sensibly didn't try to fight head-on with the animal and, instead, darted around some nearby large trees. Although the bear had a large, bulky body, it wasn't the tiniest bit clumsy. It seemed to have latched onto Yu Hai as its prey and energetically chased after the older man.

Yu Hai cried indignantly within his heart, 'That wound wasn't caused by me. If you want to take revenge, then you shouldn't go after me, the easier target, right?'

“Lure the bear over here, climb up that tree!!” Zhu Junyang pointed at a tree with a trunk the size of two men that wasn't far from him and hollered at Yu Hai.

Yu Hai, who heard the prince's instructions, circled around a tree and started to run for his life in the direction that was pointed out. From time to time, Zhu Junyang would shoot an arrow to distract the black bear and slow down the animal. Yu Hai stuffed the kitten in his hands into his chest pocket and stretched out his hands. He quickly scrambled up the giant tree.

Zhu Junyang silently let out a sigh of relief. Luckily Yu Hai was stronger than his stupid little daughter. At least, his ability at tree climbing was a lot better!

The giant bear gained a few more wounds and cuts as it chased after its prey. It only made the bear even more angry and furious. It used its large body and struck the tree trunk that Yu Hai had climbed onto. Its two paws scratched cruelly at the tree, leaving large gouges in the bark.

Yu Hai clung onto the tree trunk for dear life. He was deathly afraid that the bear's violent thumps against the tree would knock him down.

Zhu Junyang noticed that, without much effort, the bear had already savaged a third of the tree. If this continued, Yu Hai would soon be caught and ripped apart by the animal. Zhu Junyang took a deep breath and took out a special bowstring from his knapsack. He swiftly changed the strings on his beloved bow.

With the bow in his steady left hand, he slowly pulled open the bow with his right. The muscles on his arms were so stretched that they were at the rupture point. Blue veins popped out from Zhu Junyang's neck and a faint sprinkling of sweat shone on his forehead.

This bow string was crafted from a special type of steel and had been made by a secretive mastersmith. Because it was crafted out of metal, it required ninety pounds of force to be pulled open. Normally, during practice, Zhu Junyang was only able to pull around seventy pounds of force. Today, he needed to bet it all on this one arrow and hit his target!

The bowstring slowly stretched as Zhu Junyang's face turned a dark purple color. He breathed in deeply and concentrated all of his strength into his arms. By the time the bear had savaged over half of the tree trunk, the prince let go of the fully stretched bowstring and shot the quivering arrow towards the berserk animal.



The arrow gave off an ear-piercing whistle as it shot towards the black bear. The savage animal was busy clawing at the tree trunk, doing its best to get its prey. It could apparently sense that danger was approaching and wanted to dodge. However, it was too late!

The arrow smacked through the back of its head and punched through its right eye before it deeply embedded into the tree trunk that Yu Hai was hiding on. The only thing that could be seen from behind was the feathers.

Steward Liu had a good understanding of his master's current strength and knew that it was hard for the prince to pull open something that required ninety pounds of force. The prince did it in order to save a person's life, but it was likely he had injured his tendons and muscles. He hurried over to inspect his master's arms and discovered that his master couldn't even hold onto his beloved bow anymore. Both of his arms continuously trembled at his sides.

“Master, you...why did you have to do this?” Steward Liu hurriedly took out some bone-healing ointment and started to slather it on.

Fields of Gold Chapter 264 - To Pay a Debt of Gratitude

Zhu Junyang acknowledged that he had never been a kind-hearted person, but when he saw that Yu Hai was about to get killed by a bear, there seemed to be a voice in his heart shouting, 'Save him. You must save him!!'

When he wanted to give up after injuring his arms when trying to pull the bowstring, the scene of Yu Xiaocao crying in sorrow suddenly appeared in his mind. He didn't want the smile that made him feel warm to disappear. He didn't want her clear, bright eyes to be covered with tears and tainted with sorrow. As he endured the pain from his arms, an inexplicable force rose and supported him to draw the bow, which he had never pulled back before.

Seeing that the black bear was dead, Yu Hai jumped down the tree in cold sweat. Behind him, more than half of the trunk of the tree had been gnawed, and as if it was overwhelmed, it snapped.

Yu Hai wiped the cold sweat on his forehead with his sleeve. It was so dangerous earlier. For a moment, he almost gave up on living and waited for death. He must ill-fated with creatures like bears. Otherwise, the injured bear would have looked for the person who injured it instead of chasing after him, as if they were mortal enemies. It was the same as last time when he nearly got killed by a bear! Yu Hai reminded himself to stay far away from bears in the future. The good days had just begun, and he hadn't enjoyed it enough yet!!

When the tree collapsed, the little golden kitten jumped down and landed on the grass next to Yu Hai's feet. It licked its paws with its pink tongue. Just now, it had been on the tree branch above Yu Hai's head. On the one hand, it wanted to attract the bear's attention, and on the other hand, it wanted to stay close to protect its master's father.

That's right. The little divine stone was the main culprit who caused the black bear to chase after Yu Hai. Didn't Yu Xiaocao always use it as a bait? The petty Divine Stone decided to take a small revenge by letting her father get a taste of being a bait.

The little divine stone emitted a scent that was fatally attractive to the black bear and slowly lured it into Royal Prince Yang's hunting range. Moreover, it had been hanging on Yu Hai. In the eyes of the black bear, Yu Hai was like a piece of delicious red braised pork. It wished it could swallow him in one bite.

In order to ensure the safety of its master's father, the little divine stone had been paying attention to the black bear's every move. Once the tree collapsed, it would immediately rush forward without hesitation. What a joke! Getting revenge was one thing, but if its master's father really got hurt, the one fifth of its power, which it worked hard to recover, would probably return to its original state as a punishment.

Yu Hai walked around the corpse of the bear and arrived in front of Royal Prince Yang and his servant. Seeing that Head Steward Liu was applying medication for the royal prince, he asked anxiously, "Did the royal prince get injured? Is it serious?"

Head Steward Liu forced out a smile and said, "It's nothing. He used too much strength when drawing the bow. He should be fine after resting for a few days..."

In actuality, he was also uncertain in his heart. The injury of one's muscles, bones, and meridians wasn't a small matter. If it was a light injury, he would recover in a few days as he said. In serious cases, it may be impossible for him to use bows and arrows for the rest of his life... He couldn't understand what the royal prince was thinking. To injure himself in order to save a low status commoner, was it worth it?

After all, the royal prince had gotten injured when saving him, so Yu Hai felt very guilty. He rubbed his hands and said, "My family's Cao'er knows a little about medicine. When we get back, I'll have her make some ointment and apply it for you. You will recover faster. My leg was bitten by a bear before. All the

doctors at Tongren Medicine Hall said that my leg needed to be amputated because the muscles and veins had ruptured. Later, my family's Cao'er cured my leg!"

Originally, Head Steward Liu didn't take his words to heart. How good could the medical skills of a ten year old girl be? Could the herbal medicine be as good as the imperial palace's famous bone healing balm? But, when he heard Yu Hai say that his previously ruptured veins in his leg had recovered, and his walking wasn't affected whatsoever, he immediately focused all his attention on him.

Head Steward Liu helped his master pick up his precious bow, and then he solemnly said to Yu Hai, "I shall thank you first. We will have to trouble Second Miss Yu in the future!"

Yu Hai knew that Head Steward Liu was someone who was favored by the royal prince and had accompanied him since he was young. Seeing his solemn thanks, Yu Hai shook his hands in a slightly awkward manner and said, "No trouble, no trouble! The royal prince was injured because of this lowly commoner. This is something that I should do..."

Zhu Junyang kicked the prey with his feet. The black bear was at least three to four hundred catties, so transporting it back was a big problem. Should he just chop off the paws and bring them back?

In the end, Yu Hai cut some branches and made a simple stretcher. With Head Steward Liu, he carried the bear back to the place where Xiaocao was guarding the game.

The sun gradually set beyond the West Mountain, and the forest got darker. The wind blew on the bushes and made a rustling sound, and the homing birds occasionally crowed. The bored Yu Xiaocao was worried about whether they could leave the forest before it got dark when the silhouette of her father dragging a bear appeared within her line of sight.

When Yu Xiaocao saw the huge size of the black bear, she ruthlessly scolded the little divine stone in her heart. The bear looked so fierce. If something happened to her father or the young royal prince, she would definitely throw the little divine stone into a manure pit!

[With this Divine Stone here, who could hurt them?] The tiny kitten jumped onto her shoulder and looked as if it was ready to fight her. She actually dared to threaten this Divine Stone and wanted to throw this Divine Stone into the dirty and smelly cesspool. 'Just because this tiger isn't showing my power, she's treating me like a sick kitty?'

The game was tied up on two stretchers, which were pulled by Yu Hai and Head Steward Liu. Fortunately, the two of them, one was used to manual labor, while the other knew martial arts. Thus, they were able to easily handle all the game.

When they walked out of the forest, the sky had already completely darkened. Madam Liu and her two children were anxiously waiting at the foot of the West Mountain. Ever since Yu Hai got injured, Madam Liu had regarded the West Mountain as a synonym for danger. She strictly forbade her husband and the children from hunting in the mountains. She even stipulated that they could only pick mushrooms and dig for wild herbs around the foot of the mountain. Her husband went out with the royal prince at noon, but they still hadn't returned yet. Thus, it was inevitable that Madam Liu would have all sorts of ideas in her mind.

"Mother, is that Father and the others?" Yu Hang had sharp eyes and saw a group of people coming out of the forest.

Madam Liu looked carefully. As she breathed a sigh of relief, she also asked in confusion, "It's them! But, why is there another child?"

Xiaolian exclaimed in surprise, "Mother, I didn't see Younger Sister when I came back in the evening. It wouldn't be her, right?"

Madam Liu creased her brows and thought about it, and then said with slight anger, "It's definitely that lass. I haven't seen her since noon! That lass is getting too bold. She didn't tell anyone and secretly followed them up the mountain!"

With the help of the moonlight, Yu Xiaocao saw Madam Liu and the two kids. She ran over happily and said, "Mother, we got a good harvest from hunting today! The young royal prince also caught a bear! It weighs more than four hundred catties!"

Madam Liu gently twisted her younger daughter's ear and angrily said, "Who allowed you to follow them? It's so dangerous on the mountains. If something happened to you, wouldn't that be asking for Mother's life?"

Feeling slightly guilty, Yu Xiaocao covered her ear and exclaimed, “Mother, I'm wrong. In the future, I won't go up the mountain without telling you! Please don't be angry. If you fall sick because of anger, Father and I will both be heartbroken!”

Zhu Junyang, whose arms were hanging on his sides, tried his best to endure the pain. When he saw the lass's grinning face and flattering expression, he couldn't help but raise the corners of his mouth. 'This lass has such rich expressions!'

After dragging the game to the Yu Residence, Head Steward Liu, who was worried about his master's injury, found an opportunity to call Yu Xiaocao and whispered, “Second Miss Yu, I heard that you cured tendons and veins on your father's leg. Is it true?”

When facing this loyal, ruthless, and shrewish Head Steward Liu, Yu Xiaocao couldn't help but be more vigilant. She shook her head decisively and said, “For my father's leg, Doctor Sun of Tongren Medicine Hall had prescribed effective medication and my father originally had a rather healthy body. Finally, the herbal paste that I made also worked. All three aspects are indispensable. Why? Who got hurt?”

Yu Hai just happened to walk by and heard them, so he quickly said, “Cao'er, the royal prince got injured because he was saving me. If your herbal paste works, you must properly treat the royal prince's injury. If it wasn't for him, your father might have died or been seriously injured!”

Yu Xiaocao reproached the little divine stone in her heart again, and said, “Father, don't worry! My herbal paste doesn't have any side effects. It can clear the acupuncture points, improve blood circulation, and relieve pain. I'll go make some right now. But, we still need to see if the royal prince wants to use it!”

He was a dignified royal prince and a relative of the emperor. He was usually treated by the imperial physicians, so would he want to use home remedies from the countryside?

From the small medicine box at home, Yu Xiaocao got some herbal medicine for promoting blood circulation and dissolving bruises. She crushed them into bits and boiled them into paste with highly concentrated mystic-stone water. The herbal paste had a murky black appearance and didn't look very good, but it exuded a faint herbal fragrance that made people feel refreshed.

When Yu Xiaocao brought the self-made herbal paste to the royal prince, she hadn't expected that he would choose to trust her without hesitation.

“Aren't you afraid that I would put something in this herbal paste? Or that the herbal paste was randomly made?” Yu Xiaocao asked as she applied the herbal paste for the young royal prince.

Zhu Junyang said firmly, “You won't!”

“Why are you so certain?” Zhu Junyang's arms were smeared completely black by Yu Xiaocao, like a burnt wooden stake.

Zhu Junyang felt a cool sensation emanating from the herbal paste, and the pain in his arms was immediately relieved. He didn't know whether it was an illusion, but he seemed to be able to feel his muscles, tendons, and veins swiftly recovering.

“Intuition! This prince's intuition tells me that you won't harm me. My intuition tells me that your herbal paste will definitely be effective to my injury!”

'Intuition again? Could it be that the young royal prince has a very accurate sixth sense? He doesn't have superpowers, does he?' Yu Xiaocao's imagination went wild.

Both of Zhu Junyang's arms were covered with thick herbal paste. When it was time to eat, he could only wait for others to serve him. As for this important task, it somehow landed on Yu Xiaocao.

Yu Xiaocao felt very helpless in her heart ah! 'Oh, Young Royal Prince ah! Don't you have a head steward court eunuch, who serves you, with you? Why are you making things difficult for a nobody like me?'

“Eggplant!” Zhu Junyang sat in an unrestrained manner, looked at the sauteed eggplants with minced meat and unashamedly directed Xiaocao on what he wanted to eat.

Yu Xiaocao, who had accepted her fate, picked up a piece of eggplant and stuffed it into the young royal prince's mouth, thinking, 'I'll just take it as helping my father pay a debt of gratitude!’

Fields of Gold Chapter 265

The next day, Yu Hai sent the injured Royal Prince Yang back to town on the horse carriage. Yu Xiaocao followed behind on the donkey cart, which was full of yesterday's game. The donkey, Little Gray, had

become so fat and strong that normal horses couldn't compare to it. Once, someone offered a high price to buy Little Gray, but the offer was firmly rejected by Xiaocao.

When they got to town, Yu Hai went to send the game to Zhenxiu Restaurant. The large black bear on the donkey cart attracted the attention of the people in town. Before the cart even stopped in front of Zhenxiu Restaurant, many people came to make reservations for a game banquet. In particular, there was an endless stream of people inquiring about the price of the bear paw. Although Tanggu Town wasn't big, there were quite a lot of rich people.

When they heard that Royal Prince Yang had kept the bear paws, they had no choice but to take the next best thing, make reservations for the bear meat. Bear meat was good for supplementing deficiencies, strengthening muscles and bones, and treating disorders like rheumatism, disjuncted limbs, and muscle spasms. It also tasted very good. Most importantly, bear meat wasn't something that one could eat whenever one wanted. The last time someone caught a bear was one and a half years ago. They naturally didn't have to worry about not being able to sell this kind of rare food.

More than three hundred catties of bear meat were completely reserved in less than two days. The rest like deer, mountain sheep, roe deer were stored in the ice house. With these game, Zhenxiu Restaurant's sales reached a new peak, which caused the other restaurants in town to be extremely envious. The manager of the old brand Fulin Restaurant, in particular, regretted his past actions. Had he not been greedy for small advantages and forced the price down, it would have been Fulin Restaurant flourishing with business right now... There was no such thing as a medicine for regret in this world. Everyone had to be responsible for their own decisions.

Yu Xiaocao and her father went different ways to complete their tasks. Yu Hai went to Zhenxiu Restaurant, while she drove the horse carriage to take Royal Prince Yang back to the estate that Princess Consort Jing stayed at.

When Princess Consort Jing heard that her youngest son was hurt, she nearly fell ill from the fright. She quickly called for the imperial physician to treat Zhu Junyang, and received the conclusion that he could no longer exert force with both his arms. Her youngest son had worked hard to practice martial arts since he was a child. If he couldn't use strength in his hands, wouldn't he be considered a cripple? The disbelieving Princess Consort Jing called over Doctor Sun of Tongren Medicine Hall and received similar results. When Princess Consort Jing heard this, she immediately clenched her chest and fainted.

Doctor Sun rushed to save Princess Consort Jing. Fortunately, Princess Consort Jing's health had been nourished very well in the past two years. She had just fainted due to excessive grief. Doctor Sun pricked a needle in her philtrum point, and Princess Consort Jing woke up.

The thought of her youngest son being a disabled person because of hunting made Princess Consort Jing extremely sad, and she appeared very pitiful as she wept. Both of Zhu Junyang's arms were injured, but he still comforted his lady mother, "Lady Mother, I have just strained the muscles and bones in my arms. It's not as serious as they're making it. I'll be fine after resting for a while."

"The imperial physician and Doctor Sun both said you can't even lift a bucket of water in the future. What are you going to do? Wahhh... Why did you suddenly go hunting? Fortunately, only your arms are hurt. If the wild beast... How is Lady Mother supposed to continue living ah!" Princess Consort Jing gasped for breath as she cried. In her heart, she couldn't help but blame the Yu Family for taking her Yang'er to such a dangerous place.

Princess Consort Jing couldn't stop her tears from flowing down her cheeks, and no one was able to comfort her.

Doctor Sun hesitated for a while and finally said, "Your Highness, in fact, it's not that there aren't any cases of recovery from injuring muscles and bones..."

"Can my son's arms recover?" With tears on her face, Princess Consort Jing quickly asked. Her eyes, which were filled with tears, were full of expectation.

"There was a villager in Dongshan Village whose leg was injured by a bear. The damage to his tendons and muscles was much more serious than that of Royal Prince Yang's arms. However, he has recovered very well now. He can walk, run, and jump just like normal people, and he can also carry heavy loads and do heavy labor..." Each time Doctor Sun recalled Yu Hai's injury, he always thought it was a miracle.

As if she had grasped on a life-saving straw, Princess Consort Jing repeatedly asked, "Who is it? Does his family have some secret medicine? Quick, quickly find him. Let's buy his secret medicine. No matter how much it cost, we're willing to pay for it, as long as it can cure my son's arms..."

Zhu Junyang could clearly feel the abundance of care and motherly love from his lady mother. It was this great, selfless maternal love that left a sense of warmth in the corner of his cold, gloomy heart, and thus he didn't get lost in the negative emotions.



With his injured arms, he gently took his lady mother into his embrace. There was a lot of pain in his arms, but it couldn't cover the warmth in his heart. He softly said, "I know the person who Doctor Sun mentions. Lady Mother also knows him."

"Quickly let go. Be careful of your arm..." Princess Consort Jing, who was embraced by her son, was stiff and didn't dare to move at all, for fear that she would hurt him, "You said I also know that person? Who??"

Zhu Junyang retracted his arms and smiled a bit more tenderly, "It's Yu Xiaocao, who Lady Mother is at angry at and being punished to stand outside. Her father's leg was once bitten by a bear. Isn't it in a perfectly fine now?"

At the mention of this matter, Princess Consort Jing couldn't help but feel angry, "What's wrong with that father of Yu Xiaocao? He had been bitten by a bear before, yet he still took you hunting in the West Mountain? What are his intentions? Had it not been for the fact that he's Xiaocao's father, I would have definitely punished him!!"

"Lady Mother, I have already said that I was the one who insisted on hunting in the mountains. He was kindhearted and afraid that your son would get lost in the mountain forest, and thus suggested to guide me! Without his rich hunting experience, perhaps your son would still be wandering in the mountains right now!" Zhu Junyang kindly put in a good word for Yu Hai.

Upon hearing him mention this, Princess Consort Jing began crying again, "Yang'er, you're not allowed to scare Lady Mother again! If something really happened to you, Lady Mother doesn't want to continue living either..."

"Aren't I fine now?" When faced with Princess Consort Jing's tears, Zhu Junyang felt helpless.

"You call this fine? With your arms like this, you still think it's fine? Will you only consider it a problem when your whole body is covered in wounds after being bitten by a bear?" Princess Consort Jing really wanted to beat up her worrisome son of hers, but she was also worried about his swollen arms.

Zhu Junyang quickly said, "Lady Mother, why don't you call Yu Xiaocao in and ask how her father's leg was cured?"

Hearing this, Princess Consort Jing wiped her tears and hastily nodded and said, "Yes, that's right! Quickly tell Xiaocao to come in. I need to ask if her family has some good medicine to cure muscle and tendon injuries."

Meixiang complied and quickly walked out the door. She said to Yu Xiaocao, who was bored to death as she stood in the corridor and kicked at the brick under her feet, "Miss Yu, the princess consort asked you to come in!"

Holding the herbal paste that she had just heated this morning, Xiaocao followed Meixiang through the door and bowed a greeting at Princess Consort Jing, whose eyes were red.

Princess Consort Jing, who was still somewhat angry, expressionlessly said, "Stand up!"

Yu Xiaocao knew that Princess Consort Jing was angry with her. The young royal prince got hurt because of her father. She would even be willing to take a beating, let alone getting the cold shoulder. Seeing that the princess consort didn't intend to speak, she summoned up her courage and whispered, "Your Highness, the young royal prince's arms... it's time to change the medicine..."

As soon as she finished speaking, Princess Consort Jing asked anxiously, "You applied the medicine on Yang'er's arms? Is this the medicine that healed the injury on your father's leg?"

Yu Xiaocao quickly nodded and said, "In reply to Your Highness, my father's leg was cured after consuming the medication prescribed by Doctor Sun and applying this herbal paste. It got better with the combination of external application and internal treatment!"

Doctor Sun and the imperial physician seemed very interested in the herbal paste in jar in her hands. Doctor Sun tried to restrain himself, but in the end, he couldn't help but ask, "Miss Yu, can you let this old man look at the herbal paste in your hands?"

Yu Xiaocao wasn't afraid of being found out by him because the ointment she brewed was really made for muscle and bone injuries. But, without the most critical component, the mystic-stone water, it became the most common muscles and bones ointment on the market.

Doctor Sun and the imperial physician took the jar of medicine and studied the properties of the herbal paste together. After a discussion, they realized that it was made of very common ingredients.

However, Doctor Sun noticed that there was an ingredient in it that could activate the properties of the medicine and make the medicine work to its fullest. Perhaps, it was this ingredient that caused an originally common medicine to become effective enough to cure Yu Hai's leg.

Doctor Sun wanted to ask what this ingredient was, but on second thought, this was their secret medicine. It was already pretty good of them to let him look at the medicine. If he asked them how the herbal paste was made, wouldn't that make things difficult for them?

Seeing that the imperial physician and Doctor Sun had studied the medicine for a long time, Princess Consort Jing anxiously asked, "How is it? Will this medicine work? Will it be able to cure Yang'er's injury?"

Doctor Sun gave the herbal paste back to Yu Xiaocao and nodded, "This herbal paste is good for Royal Prince Yang's injury. If used together with the medication for relieving acupuncture points, there is an eighty percent chance that Royal Prince Yang's injuries will be completely healed."

Eighty percent chance? Although Princess Consort Jing wasn't completely satisfied, it was already considered pretty good compared to the death sentence that the imperial physician and Doctor Sun imposed on her son's arms!

"Xiaocao, quickly apply it for Yang'er!" Princess Consort Jing's tone had softened a lot. She wasn't an unreasonable person, but concern caused her to be in a confused state of mind. It was inevitable that she would vent her anger on others upon hearing that her youngest son's arms were going to be crippled. It was understandable since this was due to a mother's love for her son.

Yu Xiaocao asked Meixiang to bring over a basin of warm water. With her back facing everyone, she placed the multicolored stone into the warm water. The little divine stone cooperated and emitted some spiritual power into the water, which turned the warm water into mystic-stone water.

Yu Xiaocao carried the water to the table next to Royal Prince Yang and said in a soft voice, "Take off your clothes!"

When Head Steward Liu took off his outer garment, there was a casual sleeveless garment inside. The two maidservants, Meixiang and Lanxiang, blushed slightly and turned around. As a citizen of the twenty-first century, Yu Xiaocao was used to men wearing nothing but a pair of shorts in the summer, let alone he was wearing a 'large tank-top'!

With a straight face, Yu Xiaocao calmly washed off the herbal paste on the young prince's arms with gauze, and then she applied a thick layer of the herbal paste on his arms.

"Does it need to be wrapped in gauze? Wouldn't the medicine lose its effect if it accidentally got rubbed off?" Princess Consort Jing asked with concern.

'Sure, it can also be wrapped up ah!' Since the patient's family requested it, Yu Xiaocao naturally wouldn't disagree. With the gauze, she wrapped the young royal prince's arms up like a mummy, and even his elbows couldn't be bent. Yu Xiaocao looked at Zhu Junyang, whose two arms were hanging straight to his sides, and nearly rolled on the floor laughing in her heart.

Fields of Gold Chapter 266

Zhu Junyang looked down at his arms, which were tied too tight to bend. With the corner of his eye, he saw Yu Xiaocao secretly snickering like a little mouse. He faintly asked, "How long will it take for this prince's arms to be able to move freely?"

Yu Xiaocao hastily suppressed her laughter and said in a serious manner, "It takes a hundred days to recover from serious injuries. No matter how effective my medicine is, it would still take at least one or two months for you to recover, right?"

"Then... I will have to trouble you for the time being!" Zhu Junyang had noticed something from Xiaocao's expression, but he didn't expose her and replied in a very natural manner.

Yu Xiaocao suddenly felt as if she had dug a pit for herself. Like an angry kitten, she looked at Zhu Junyang defensively and asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Zhu Junyang faintly glanced at her and said, "The literal meaning! You're the one who made the herbal paste, and you're also the only one who knows how to make it. You must know the most about the medicine. Thus, for the sake of this prince's arms, I will have to trouble you in the future!"

Thinking about how the young royal prince ordered her around like a maid at home, Yu Xiaocao immediately felt dark clouds gathering above her head. She tried her last attempt at struggling out of it, "Actually, there's no special technique for applying my herbal paste. It just needs to be applied evenly on the arms. I can send it over after I finish making it every day. You can just let a maidservant or manservant to apply it for you."

Princess Consort Jing understood her youngest son's meaning. The injury of one's muscles and tendons was a serious matter. If he wasn't careful, both his arms might become crippled. Thus, they naturally had to be more careful. Princess Consort Jing held Yu Xiaocao's small hand and said earnestly, "Xiaocao, you're a good child. Please understand a mother's feelings regarding her injured son. My Yang'er is only seventeen years old, which is the period of youth. He hasn't even found a wife yet, so he can't have injuries that aren't fully restored ah! This child has a hard life. When he was young..."

"Lady Mother!" Zhu Junyang quickly interrupted Princess Consort Jing's words. 'Why are you talking about these? Go straight to the point and keep her here ah!'

As she spoke, Princess Consort Jing's eyes, which were similar to her youngest son's, filled with tears again. She gently patted the corner of her eyes with a handkerchief, looked at Xiaocao sincerely, and said, "For the sake of the injuries on Yang'er arms, I hope Xiaocao can stay at the residence for some time. I can only rest assured if you personally handle the herbal paste!"

At this time, Yu Xiaocao wasn't in front of the lofty princess consort, but a loving mother who cared about her son. How could she refuse her? Biting her lips, Yu Xiaocao nodded and said, "This commoner will go back to inform my godparents, and I also have to send a message back to Dongshan Village..."

Princess Consort Jing apparently breathed a sigh of relief. She sent the steward of the outer court to send the message to Dongshan Village, and then had a horse carriage send Yu Xiaocao back to the Fang Estate in town.

When Lady Fang, who was packing up and getting ready to return to the capital, heard about her goddaughter returning in Princess Consort Jing's carriage, she inwardly wondered, 'I have become closer with Princess Consort Jing since coming to Dongshan Village and the princess consort also really likes Xiaocao, but it's very rare for someone to have the honor of being sent back in Princess Consort Jing's carriage in the capital, let alone in Tanggu Town. Did Xiaocao win Princess Consort Jing's favor by doing something 'extraordinary' again?'

After Yu Xiaocao came in, she recounted what had happened. Lady Fang suddenly realized, 'It turns out that they were actually interested in Xiaocao's family's secret recipe for the bone healing and acupuncture point relieving medicine ah!' Not to mention that Royal Prince Yang had gotten injured in order to save Xiaocao's father, but with Royal Prince Yang and Princess Consort Jing's identities, she wouldn't be able to refuse them.

Hearing that it would take at least a month for Royal Prince Yang's arms to recover, Lady Fang said with slight disappointment, "Cao'er, you can't go back to the capital with Godfather and Godmother this time. I was going to introduce you to our relatives and friends in the capital during Lin'er's hundred day ceremony. Who knew that this would have happened..."

Yu Xiaocao looked at Little Linlin, who was lying on the bed with his eyes tightly closed. His fair and tender face was as delicate as an egg with its shell peeled. He should be dreaming of drinking milk. His small mouth gently moved a few times and curled up into a satisfied smile.

In regard to this younger brother, she had nearly witnessed all his growth and changes everyday, from a red, wrinkled and monkey-like little thing to a beautiful, angel-like baby. Although they weren't related by blood, her feelings for him were no less than that of real siblings.

"The introduction isn't really important. I just feel that it's a pity that I can't attend Linlin's hundred day ceremony!" Yu Xiaocao gently caressed the little fellow's soft, little head. As if his sleep had been disturbed, he scrunched up his face unhappily and appeared like he was saying, 'If you continue to disturb my sleep, I'll let you see me crying!'

Yu Xiaocao took back her hand, looked at the little guy's cute appearance with a smile, and said to him, "Although I can't attend Little Linlin's hundred day ceremony, Older Sister has already prepared the present!"

Lady Fang knew that although the Yu Family had made some money, it was money that they worked hard from dawn to dusk to earn after all. She smiled and said, "Why mention presents when we're all one family? You're still a child yourself!"

Yu Xiaocao took out a small wooden box with elegant and simple carvings from her chest pocket. After opening it gently, a bright and lustrous pearl that was the size of a quail egg appeared in front of Lady Fang. Even Lady Fang had seldom seen such a big and beautiful pearl. Perhaps only the east pearl on the empress's crown could rival it?

"Cao'er, you... where did you get such a big pearl? It's too valuable, so quickly put it away! This pearl is definitely a rare treasure that can not be easily bought with money. Keep it yourself and save it for your dowry!" Lady Fang pushed back the wooden box with a firm attitude.

Yu Xiaocao smiled nonchalantly and said, "I inadvertently found this pearl when I was diving. I'm a very good swimmer now. If I want to get some pearls, I can easily get them whenever I want. This is for my Younger Brother Lin. When he's a little older, he can shoot it as a pellet."

Playing with a valuable pearl like it's a toy? Wouldn't that be apparently flaunting one's wealth? Lady Fang still insisted on declining the gift, but Yu Xiaocao forced it into her hands.

Yu Xiaocao pouted and spoke before her godmother could say anything, "Godmother, if you don't accept it, then you're not treating me as part of the family!"

"Wife, since our daughter said that, you should just accept it! If you feel sorry about it, then you should prepare more for our daughter's dowry. At that time, prepare 5 kilometers of dowry, so that that stinky brat, whose current whereabouts are unknown, won't mistreat our daughter!" Fang Zizhen, who had entered the room without them noticing, had overheard the conversation between the mother and daughter.

Seeing that Lady Fang had carefully put away the pearl, Yu Xiaocao looked at her godfather and unabashedly said, "That's right! With a general as my father, I want to see who would dare mistreat me!! My godfather's fists aren't just for display!!"

Zhu Junyang, who had been ordered by Princess Consort Jing to stay in bed, sneezed two times in succession. He wrinkled his brows and whispered, "It goes without saying that it's that lass Yu Xiaocao who's talking behind my back!"

Princess Consort Jing, who was next to him, worriedly had someone add another quilt for him for fear that he would get sick. Although it wasn't very hot in early summer, it was uncomfortable to be covered by so many quilts. Zhu Junyang quickly used the excuse of 'sweating would affect the healing of the wounds' to reject his lady mother's good intentions.

In the following days, Yu Xiaocao lived in Princess Consort Jing's temporary residence. Like she was entertaining an esteemed guest, Princess Consort Jing prepared an elegant and exquisite courtyard for her. This courtyard wasn't far from Zhu Junyang's courtyard, and was within two minutes away on foot. She also specially sent maidservants and senior servants to serve her. All of the arrangements were not even slightly inferior to that of the noble young ladies in the capital.

However, in addition to decocting the medication and changing his medicine, she also had to serve the young royal prince three meals a day. What exactly was going on? Didn't she come to be a doctor? How did she ended up becoming the young royal prince's personal maidservant?

Standing next to the table with chopsticks in her hands, Yu Xiaocao looked at the young royal prince, who was waiting for her to feed him with his mouth wide open as if he was a hungry swallow, and had an urge to flip the table.

"Shrimp crystal steamed bun." Seeing that he didn't receive the food he requested after waiting for a long time, the young prince emphasized once again. His eyes swept across the ashen-faced Yu Xiaocao, and he was in a strangely good mood.

Yu Xiaocao glanced at the maidservants who usually served the young royal prince's daily life and said with displeasure, "Young Royal Prince, I don't think I'm one of your maidservants? It doesn't seem to be one of my responsibilities to serve you when you eat, right?"

Zhu Junyang icy gaze swept over the maidservants in the room. The maidservants trembled and went out of the room one after another. He took back his gaze with satisfaction, shook his arms, which were wrapped up like a mummy, in front of Yu Xiaocao, and said, "Now, this prince and you are the only ones in the room. This prince's arms got injured because I was saving your father. So, it's not too much to ask you to serve this prince while I eat, is it?"

'Don't all gentlemen show kindness without expecting repayment? Young Royal Prince, is it really alright for you to mention that you got injured in order to save my father eight times a day? This is apparently the ungrateful act of taking advantage of a good deed and seeking repayment ah!!'

Yu Xiaocao angrily picked up a crystal steamed bun and tried to choke him to death by stuffing the whole thing into the young royal prince's mouth.



Zhu Junyang worked hard to chew the food in his mouth and finally swallowed it after chewing for a long time, "Are you trying to kill me! Congee! This prince nearly died from choking!!"

Yu Xiaocao slammed the chopsticks on the table, picked up the bowl of congee, scooped out a spoon of congee, and shoved it into the young prince's mouth. The congee on the spoon dripped onto the clothes that Zhu Junyang had just changed into in the morning.

"You're too unprofessional when serving people. You need to practice more!" Zhu Junyang scolded in an irritating manner.

After she finally finished serving this great lord breakfast with much difficulty, he opened his hands and said to his trusted little maidservant, "Just look at how you fed the congee. It sprinkled everywhere. Had it been someone else, this prince would have flogged her already! Come, help this prince change my clothes!"

Yu Xiaocao couldn't hold it in any longer and shouted towards the outside, "Who's on duty outside? Come in and help the young royal prince change his clothes!!"

When the people outside heard this, there was a series of disorderly footsteps, and then it became dead silent. Yu Xiaocao opened the door and rushed outside to take a look. Not even a trace of the people, who should be serving outside, could be seen.

With no other choice, Yu Xiaocao took out a set of clothing that she thought was the ugliest from the wardrobe and helped the young royal prince change into it. Zhu Junyang also didn't like this attire and had never worn it. When he appeared in front of the princess consort in this dark reddish purple outfit, she couldn't help but look surprised.

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"Yu Xiaocao, help this prince change. I need to go out!"

"Why do I need to help you change your clothes? Don't you have a lot of maidservants at your house?" Yu Xiaocao was irritated. She had to wash his face, comb his hair, and feed him. Sometimes, she also had to cook the dishes that he requested in the small kitchen. Now, she also had to help him change his clothes. Was he really taking her as a maidservant?

Zhu Junyang looked at the maidservants, who were assigned by his lady mother, with disdain. His gaze was as cold as snow as he said, "This prince hates being served by people with impure intentions. It makes me feel disgusted!"

When the maidservants heard this, their faces were ghastly pale and dripping with cold sweat as they kneeled on the ground, trembling. These maidservants were all carefully selected by the princess consort. Their figures and appearance were considered more outstanding within the estate. Seeing that her youngest son was already seventeen years old, Princess Consort Jing reckoned that it was time for him to understand certain things. Thus, she picked out several bed-servants for her son. Although this matter wasn't explicitly stated, the maidservants all clearly knew within their hearts.

The young royal prince had a cold and indifferent temper, but he was handsome, had a high status, and was trusted by the emperor. Thus, he would surely have a bright future. To be able to be the young master's bed-servant, if they could give birth to one or two offsprings, the mother's position would definitely rise due to the child. There was no hope of being his ranked concubine, but becoming the concubine of the royal prince would be the best outcome for the maidservants.

For this position of the bed-servant, not only did the maidservants fight openly and secretly in private, but from time to time, they also tried to get closer to Zhu Junyang. They wanted to show their faces more in order to gain a more favorable impression. Unbeknownst to them, with his special ability, Zhu Junyang could clearly detect their strong desires, which made him feel repulsed. He would rather do things himself, or have Head Steward Liu serve him, than let those maidservants with ulterior motives get close to him.

After hurting his arms, Zhu Junyang began ordering Yu Xiaocao around in a right and self-confident manner. Although he couldn't detect Yu Xiaocao's feelings, the scent from her body could give him a sense of peace and tranquility, which made him want to get closer to her.

Poor Yu Xiaocao was temporarily used as a worker, and was ordered until she was screaming and yelling. Her energetic appearance made small ripples in Zhu Junyang's character, which was like a pool of dead water. After meeting Yu Xiaocao, the people around Zhu Junyang, especially Princess Consort Jing, could all clearly feel the change in her son. This was something that she was very happy to see.

At this time, Yu Xiaocao was still doing her best to get out of this situation, "You don't like to be served by the maidservants, but don't you still have Head Steward Liu?"

Head Steward Liu, who was standing on the side and watching the show, suddenly got dragged in. He naturally wouldn't ruin his master's 'happy matters', so he immediately put away the smile on his face and solemnly said, "Master, this servant will go accomplish the task that you assigned to me this morning!" After saying that, he hurriedly went out the door, as if someone behind him was trying to chase him out.

'Completing a task that was assigned in the morning now? Who is he kidding!! So, you want to play with me?'

Yu Xiaocao refused to work, "I was invited to help you, the young royal prince, to cure your injury, so I should be considered half a doctor, right? Is this how you guys treat doctors who help treat patients, heal wounds, and rescue those who are dying? From now on, I won't do anything other than my duties as a doctor!! Don't even think of telling me to do things like help you change your clothes. I'm not your family's servant!"

Seeing that the little kitten was angry, Zhu Junyang pretended to be pitiful, "Alright! This prince will change myself..."

As he said that, he straightened his arms, took a set of clothes from the wardrobe, and spread it out on the bed. He turned his body around and tried to poke his ramrod straight right arm into the sleeve of the garment on the bed. Once, twice... As if the clothes were deliberately against him, no matter what, his arms couldn't go in.

Yu Xiaocao looked at the young royal prince's sweaty face. Feeling somewhat softhearted, she picked up the clothes on the bed and carelessly put it on for him. A complacent smile appeared within Zhu Junyang's eyes, 'This lass is the epitome of someone who has a sharp tongue but soft heart. I knew she would be willing to compromise.'

After helping the young prince put on his clothes, Yu Xiaocao pouted even more and sullenly said, "It's done. Hurry up and leave!"

"This prince is bored from staying at home recently, so I want to walk around in Tanggu Town. However, I'm not very familiar with Tanggu Town. I need a guide..." Zhu Junyang glanced at her and slowly said.

Yu Xiaocao had already resigned to her fate. This guy really knew how to make trouble for others. She could only anticipate that his arms would get better soon so that she could escape from this torture.

"Where do you want to go? Tell me!" Yu Xiaocao asked in low spirits.

Zhu Junyang couldn't bear to see her being so lifeless, but he felt that Yu Xiaocao had been trapped in the compound for the past two days. She had never been indoors for so long like this. He was afraid that she would feel stuffy and bored, so he used different ways to give her things to do. But, it seemed like the other party didn't understand his good intentions ah!

"Let's just stroll on the street and relax!" Zhu Junyang turned around and headed out. Yu Xiaocao hastily followed him. When they were about to reach the main entrance, Head Steward Liu suddenly came out of nowhere and silently followed them.

As soon as they went out of the residence, there was a bustling street that was lined with various shops. Zhu Junyang walked leisurely on the street, and both of his arms were hanging to his sides without the slightest movement. It looked somewhat funny, but it didn't affect the amount of attention he attracted at all. Who let him have such a devilishly attractive face?

"Older Sister Zhuang, look at that person! He's so good-looking!! I wonder whose son he is?" After Miss Wang saw Zhu Junyang, her eyes lit up and she whispered to Eldest Young Miss Zhuang.

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang looked at her scornfully and thought that there was something wrong with the upbringing of the Wang Family. A young maiden actually commented on the appearance of a man on the streets. Good-looking? How good-looking could he be? Her second older brother was universally acknowledged as the most handsome man in Tanggu Town, and her eldest brother and third brother were also very good-looking. She was already tired of looking at good-looking men, okay?

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang casually glanced in the direction that Miss Wang pointed at, and as a result, she couldn't pull her eyes away as if they were stuck.

Among all the people in the crowd, he was like a gem among the rubble. What a beautiful yet indifferent face. He had a handsome face with long eyelashes that left a deep shadow on his eyelids. A pair of dark eyes that seemed to be able to clear through everything, and emitted cold air like a deep pool of water. He had a straight nose bridge, crimson lips, and a profile that was as sharp as a knife. His black attire

further enhanced his tall and upright figure. Compared with those physically weak scholars, Eldest Young Miss Zhuang preferred this type of lean and tall figure.

Miss Wang, who was next to her, interrupted her infatuated gaze, "Older Sister Zhuang, isn't that Miss Yu, who sells watermelons, behind the handsome man? Did she stop selling watermelons and become a maidservant?"

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang finally turned her attention to another person. With Yu Xiaocao's inconspicuous appearance and Head Steward Liu's humble and respectful manner, she classified them both as the dazzling man's servants.

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang boasted about having a good family background and an outstanding appearance. She was also familiar with poetry and books. Among those vulgar men in town, Third Young Master Zhou was the only one who was barely decent, but he was a little too young. With her age, it was about time she looked for a husband. Eldest Young Miss Zhuang's parents were very worried about her pickiness.

However, Eldest Young Miss Zhuang always wanted to find someone who was on par with her. Tanggu Town was only so big, and there were only so many families of equal social ranking who were suitable for marriage. After picking and choosing, there still wasn't anyone who she was satisfied with.

Today, Miss Wang happened to come look for Eldest Young Miss Zhuang, who had been somewhat depressed from being rushed by her family, to go shopping, so she took this opportunity to come out and relax. They didn't come out in vain this time. She had finally met a man who was good enough to match her!

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang blocked half of her face with the round fan in her hands, and with her pair of pretty eyes, she carefully observed him from behind the fan. Looking at the handsome youth's low-key but luxurious clothing and the air that he exuded, he was definitely born in a wealthy and respectable family.

An unfamiliar face in town, who had a noble status and knew the little lass of the Yu Family from Dongshan Village. He should be Royal Prince Yang, who took the emperor's order to come to Tanggu Town. Royal Prince Yang was the youngest son of Imperial Prince Jing, and thus he was a true member of the imperial family. If one could gain his interest... Eldest Young Miss Zhuang's cheeks were flushed, and there was an amorous gaze in her eyes.

"Miss Yu! I was going to visit you at the Fang Estate, but I just happened to meet you here. It's really fate ah!" Eldest Young Miss Zhuang stopped Yu Xiaocao, who was following behind Young Prince Yang dejectedly with her head lowered, and walked over leisurely. Her gesture was like a light wind blowing on a willow, very graceful.

Yu Xiaocao raised her eyes and looked strangely at Eldest Young Miss Zhuang. When did she ever become friends with Eldest Young Miss Zhuang, who was like a haughty peacock?

Seeing that her eyes kept wandering towards Royal Prince Yang, she suddenly understood in her heart. She inwardly scolded, 'This young royal prince, why does he have to be born so good-looking and attracting all these admirers!'

"May I know why Eldest Young Miss Zhuang is looking for me?" Yu Xiaocao looked at Eldest Young Miss Zhuang with a smile and commented in her heart, 'This girl looks pretty good and has a good figure. She was like a ripe peach. It's just that she has a big temper. I don't know if the young prince can tolerate it!'

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang stealthily glanced at Royal Prince Yang. Seeing that he didn't even look at her as if he didn't see her at all, she felt angry inwardly but forced a smile on her face and said, "Recently, there will be a distinguished guest coming to my house, so I wanted to ask if your family have any more watermelons left?"

Watermelons had stopped being sold in town half a month ago. If people still had watermelons at home, who would keep them instead of selling them? Wasn't that a really bad excuse? Yu Xiaocao inwardly twitched her mouth, and she said, "I'm really sorry, but our family's watermelons had long been sold out. We have even uprooted the seedlings in the fields and planted sweet potatoes. There are many unique things in our Tanggu Town. You can reserve a banquet in advance at Zhenxiu Restaurant to entertain the esteemed guest..."

Eldest Young Miss Zhuang glared at her and thought, 'Talking to you was just an excuse to get closer to Royal Prince Yang. You must really think you're so special, chattering endlessly.'

Yu Xiaocao, who got glared at after reminding her out of kindness, touched her nose and thought, 'A good heart is struck by thunder!'

"Let's go! Why are you wasting time here?" Royal Prince Yang looked back at her with slight impatience, yet he wasn't even willing to take one look at Eldest Young Miss Zhuang before walking away.

Yu Xiaocao smiled apologetically at Eldest Young Miss Zhuang, and then jogged after him. Zhu Junyang said to her angrily, "Open your eyes. Don't be someone who helps others count the money after being sold!"

Yu Xiaocao giggled and teased, "Young Royal Prince, you also noticed that Eldest Young Miss Zhuang have ulterior motives ah? Tsk tsk! I didn't expect you to be popular even when you're always pulling a long face. You can have a romantic encounter just by strolling on the street!"

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"What are you saying!" If Zhu Junyang could move his arms, he would have knocked on her forehead, "How can that be considered a romantic encounter? She's just a disgusting toad!"

"Pshhh! Well, someone is quite thick-skinned ah. Comparing himself to a white swan [1]!" Yu Xiaocao tutted endlessly.

This time, Zhu Junyang really raised his arm, which couldn't bend, and lightly knocked on her head. He sullenly said, "Such a young age, yet your mind is filled with all these weird thoughts. Come on, where do you want to go? This prince will accompany you!"

Yu Xiaocao covered her head and made a funny face at him. Who was the one who needed to be accompanied ah! She thought about it and said, "Let's go to Zhenxiu Restaurant first to buy roasted chicken and osmanthus duck, and then go to Rongxuan Academy!"

Since Headmaster Yuan said her family's Little Shitou could try taking the county-level examination next year, her younger brother had taken Rongxuan Academy as his home. Even when it was break time, he still seldom went home. He said he wanted to have more time to study. Although Headmaster Yuan wasn't at the academy, he had entrusted the supervisor and head teacher of the academy to look after his young disciple. He also got many of the previous exam questions for the county-level examinations and told Yu Fan to work on them during his spare time, and then he would give him some advice when he got back.

She hadn't seen Little Shitou for a period of time, so she really did miss him. Recently, in order to not disturb her younger brother's studies, Xiaocao didn't visit him as frequently as before. 'Did my younger brother get thinner?'

Zhu Junyang had originally come out for a walk because he was bored at home. He didn't mind where they went, so it wasn't a bad idea to go check out the famous academy of the Great Ming Dynasty!

Yu Xiaocao went directly to the back kitchen of Zhenxiu Restaurant, and greeted Yang Feng. After that, she took a roasted chicken and osmanthus duck, cut them up, wrapped them in oiled paper, and took them away.

"Dine and dash? You're not paying?" Zhu Junyang didn't know about Yu Xiaocao's relationship with Zhenxiu Restaurant. He silently watched everything that happened and couldn't help but ask.

"This maiden has never needed to pay when eating at Zhenxiu Restaurant! You must be surprised because of ignorance, right?" Yu Xiaocao waved the roasted chicken in her hands in front of him and smiled at him in a flaunting manner.

Zhu Junyang knew that one had to make a reservation in advance in order to eat at Zhenxiu Restaurant, especially for private rooms. When the business was good, people still might not be able to get a seat even if they made a reservation over one month in advance. Seeing Yu Xiaocao's smug expression, he couldn't help but want to make things difficult for her, "You have so much face ah? Then let's eat lunch at Zhenxiu Restaurant. You're treating!"

He originally thought that he would be able to see Yu Xiaocao being embarrassed, but he hadn't expected that she would nonchalantly nod, "Okay! Isn't it just a meal? Easy!!"

Last year, with just the year-end dividends from roasted chicken and salted ducks, Yu Xiaocao had received more than thirty thousand taels. She divided the money into five portions and deposited them into the Zhou Family's bank in town. The four siblings each got a share, while one portion was saved up as pension for Yu Hai and his wife.

Originally, Yu Hai, Yu Hang, and the others felt that it was money earned by his daughter (younger sister), so they firmly refused to accept it. However, Yu Xiaocao's attitude was even more resolute. She



said that she was a member of the family, so of course, the money that she earned was considered the family's. If they didn't accept it, then they weren't treating her as a member of the family!

Seeing that Xiaocao was really angry, they reluctantly accepted the money and decided to save it up for her dowry. Xiaolian also offered to put the money that she earned into the family account since she was also a member of the family. However, her suggestion was rejected with one remark from Xiaocao, "The little money that you make isn't even enough to fill the gaps between one's teeth. Does it really matter whether you contribute it or not?"

Xiaolian didn't concede within her heart, 'Isn't my business doing pretty well right now? With an income of several dozens taels a month, I can earn several hundred taels annually. Although it can't compare with the Younger Sister's abnormal speed of making money, I'm still one of the few in Dongshan Village who can earn so much!' However, within her heart, she knew that her younger sister was being partial to her and letting her save up more private savings!

For this matter, Yu Xiaocao had gathered the entire family and held a family meeting. In the future, the money that the family earned would be divided into five portions and each person could freely decide what they wanted to do with their own portion. In the future, the siblings would be responsible for all the expenses of their own weddings. For their parents' share, they could subsidize whoever they wanted and other people weren't allowed to complain!

Since they separated from the main family, which method of making money didn't come from Yu Xiaocao? The most profitable business was also contributed by Yu Xiaocao. Since she had made this decision, what could the others say? The siblings all felt that they had taken advantage of their younger sister (second older sister), and felt very embarrassed inwardly.

Ahem, seemed to have gone off topic! Back to the present, with roasted chicken and salted duck in her hands, Yu Xiaocao bought some of the children's favorite sweets and pastries from a famous snack shop on the street. After that, she headed in the direction of Rongxuan Academy in a valiant and spirited manner.

Zhu Junyang was quite critical of the pastries in the snack shop, "Is this the most famous snack shop? Those few kinds of snacks that they have doesn't look appetizing, so they're probably not very tasty either! When this prince gets back to the capital, I will take you to eat the capital's most famous 'fresh Chinese wisteria cake', 'sponge cake', 'hibiscus cake', and various flavors of sesame candies. I guarantee that you will want to eat more after trying them and never be tired of them!"

Royal Prince Yang said these words in the snack shop. The worker in the shop heard him and kept shooting daggers at him, yet he still didn't notice and kept blabbering on. After Yu Xiaocao paid, she nearly fled out of there. If she stayed any longer, she was afraid that the worker would beat them up and kick them out.

"Young Royal Prince, you're quite talkative today! Yu Xiaocao vaguely reminded him.

Zhu Junyang thought that she was scorning him for being too talkative, so he glared at her and said, "You think that this prince is talking too much? Had it been someone else, this prince would have been to lazy to even say anything!"

Zhu Junyang also didn't know the reason, but in front of Yu Xiaocao, he no longer had to be in a state of extreme nervousness and be on guard at all times. He could finally completely relax, and thus he naturally became more talkative!

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes at him, hung the pastries that she just bought on his finger, and continued to walk towards Rongxuan Academy. Zhu Junyang looked at the snacks in his hands and didn't know whether he should laugh or cry, 'So who is supposed to be the minion now?'

Head Steward Liu didn't dare to let his master carry things, so he hastily took the pastries from the royal prince's hands. He complained about Yu Xiaocao in his heart, 'Master's arms haven't recovered, yet she made Master carry things. What are they going to do if he pulled a muscle?'

If Yu Xiaocao could read minds, she would definitely roll her eyes at him, 'It's only a little more than a catty of pastries. How would that tire out your master? That's too frail!'

With one in the east side of town and the other in the west, Rongxuan Academy and Princess Consort Jing's temporary residence were in opposite directions. From the residence, they had to travel across nearly the entire Tanggu Town.

Xiaocao checked the time. It was still too early for lunch break, so they leisurely strolled towards Rongxuan Academy. They arrived at the entrance of Rongxuan Academy right at noon.

To the academy's gatekeeper, Yu Xiaocao was already considered a familiar acquaintance. After warmly greeting the gatekeeper uncle, Yu Xiaocao went into the small door of the academy with two 'tails'.

Right at this time, the bell for dismissal rang and students, who were dressed in different colored clothes, came out of their classrooms. Although their height and figure were all different, they all exuded the strong air of scholars. In groups of two or three, they discussed the teachers' lectures in low voices.

"Second Sister, Second Sister!!" Little Fatty's loud voice attracted the attention of the students around him. After seeing the sea blue uniform of the primary class, they smiled and turned around. The senior students were quite tolerant of their younger schoolmates.

"This is your younger brother?" Zhu Junyang looked at plump Sun Runze in front of him and tried hard to find a trace of similarity with Yu Xiaocao from his face, but he failed. Could it be that he was so fat that his facial features were squeezed together by his flesh, so he couldn't see the similarity between the siblings?

Little Shitou pushed Sun Runze's chubby body away and said with his lips pursed, "How many times have I told you? She's my second sister, not your second sister!! When did you change your surname to Yu?"

Sun Runze stared at the oiled paper in Yu Xiaocao's hands and sniffed hard with his nose. After smelling the rich scent of roasted chicken, he grinned and put his arms around Little Shitou's neck, saying, "Yu Fan, what's our relationship? Your second sister is my second sister. Why do we need to be so clear about it? Second Sister, you haven't visited in a long time. What did you bring for your younger brothers?"

Little Shitou's gaze turned towards the cold-looking man behind his second sister, frowned, and said, "Second Sister, who is he?"

Yu Xiaocao finally remembered that there was someone else behind her. She smiled and said, "Him? Royal Prince Yang ah!! Didn't you see him at the docks when the young royal prince set out on his voyage? You almost cried because you were scared by him ah!"

Hearing Yu Xiaocao's words, Royal Prince Yang felt that something like that did happen before. Was he really so scary in the past that he nearly made children cry?

Little Shitou also recalled the scene at that time. He wasn't the same as before. Little Shitou bowed a greeting at Royal Prince Yang in a refined and courteous manner. His roommates also dropped their usual joking manner and greeted Royal Prince Yang.

Seeing that the kids had become restrained in front of the young royal prince, Yu Xiaocao turned her head and said to Zhu Junyang, "Young Royal Prince, didn't you say that you wanted to see what Rongxuan Academy looked like? It's lunch break right now, so you can freely walk around the academy. Don't go too far. I'll go find you later!"

'When did this prince said I want to walk around Rongxuan Academy? She actually sent me away in such a casual manner. I must ruthlessly slaughter this lass at noon and let her release some blood!' Zhu Junyang glared at Yu Xiaocao, and then slowly walked away with Head Steward Liu.

Before Head Steward Liu left, he gave the pastries to Little Shitou, patted his shoulder, and looked at Yu Xiaocao with a faint smile on his face. This lass was quite bold. No one had ever treated the prince like an eyesore so apparently and shooed him away!

Once the royal prince left, the kids became lively again. Little Fatty volunteered to help Little Shitou get rice so that the siblings could have some time to talk in private.

"How are you doing recently? Is there a lot of assignments? Don't give yourself too much pressure. Next year, you will only be eight years old. Will it be too early to take the county-level exams?" Yu Xiaocao didn't want her younger brother to become a bookworm who only cared about studying. She never let her younger brother touch books during his breaks from school. Instead, she took him to the mountains and sea to play, hoping that he would have a happy and unforgettable childhood.

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Little Shitou confidently replied, "Second Sister, don't worry! The headmaster also said that I have a gift for studying. He even said that although we can't guarantee I'll get a placement on the entry exams next year, I'll definitely pass! Second Sister, just wait for when you'll become the older sister of a scholar who has passed the county level exams ah!"

Little Shitou, who was only seven years old, already had his own plans. He knew that his family had bought a decent amount of arable land in town and they were renting them to some tenant farmers. Judging from the speed of his second sister's current ability to earn money, in the future, they would definitely be buying more farmland and creating more businesses. He was currently young and was

studying to be a scholar, so he wasn't able to help out much. However, if he managed to pass the county level exams, then everything would be different. All of the farmland and other industries his family had wouldn't be subject to taxes anymore, so they could save a whole lot of money!

He didn't do this to pursue fame, to become the person who placed first in the exams. He also didn't care about becoming someone who had placed first in all three exams either. He only wanted to pass the county level examinations earlier, so he could help his family out. In the future, once he had his feet firmly planted on the ground, he could work harder to get a better result at the exams.

One roasted chicken and one osmanthus duck was more than enough to feed four half-grown children. Little Shitou had also invited over a few more friends to enjoy the meal. Yu Xiaocao felt immensely gratified as she watched the little rascal, who had been just a brat running around in the mud when she first transmigrated over and had now matured into a fine little scholar, interact joyfully with his group of friends.

The children ate exuberantly and praised the food without end. One of Yu Fan's best friends, Zhao Datong, was born in a salt merchant's family, so he was very familiar with money. He asked Little Shitou in a low voice, "Yu Fan, did your family reserve this roasted chicken and duck days in advance? My father thinks it's inconvenient, so he only occasionally reserves one. I don't necessarily get to eat it every month!"

Little Shitou thought for a bit and decided that he should be magnanimous to his friends. He explained, "My family's relationship with Zhenxiu Restaurant's Third Young Master Zhou is decent, so we never have to make reservations to buy their roasted chicken!"

Little Fatty Sun yelped in a voice full of envy and jealousy, "What? You guys are that awesome?? Then in the future, if we want to eat roasted chicken, can't we just beg you or Second Sister to help buy some?"

Little Shitou somewhat hesitantly replied, "Occasionally is fine. But, after all, Zhenxiu Restaurant's roasted chicken and osmanthus duck is too popular right now. They also only have a fixed number that's available every day and all of that is reserved in advance. If we buy too many, I'm afraid we would end up disturbing their sales."

Liu Jinye was older than the rest of them by two years, so he naturally was a bit more steady. When he heard that, he nodded his head, "Yu Fan is right! We can only occasionally take advantage of this. Otherwise, the mutual regard they have for your family will be wiped away!"

"Heehee! You guys don't need to say this, I know this already! As long as I can eat some every ten days to half a month, I will be perfectly content. If I eat it too often, my mother will see that I've gained weight again when I go back for break and she'll punish me to jog outside. So tiring!!" Sun Runze's mother disliked the fact that he was fat and was always thinking up ways for him to lose weight. This made him feel quite helpless!

Situ Qing was on the younger side so he didn't know how to conceal his curiosity. He gnawed on a chicken wing as he asked inquisitively, "Yu Fan, aren't your family members farmers? How did they end up having a relationship with the Zhou Family's Third Young Master?"

All of the other kids were also curious. However, they were afraid that by asking they might end up upsetting Yu Fan, so they endured it and didn't ask. When they heard the question, all of them stopped eating the chicken and duck meat in their hands and the whole group of them turned their inquisitive eyes over to look at Yu Fan.

Second Sister had often told him that one's status and position in life can be changed through one's own hard work. Although he had been born in a poor family, he absolutely couldn't look down on himself. The environment was only a place for a person to mature and grow. Even though his family was currently farmers, he firmly believed that through his and their own hard work, they could become the envy and goals of others in the future! Historically, weren't there examples of scholars born from humble families getting first place in the imperial examinations? And weren't there a decent amount too?

Yu Fan calmly smiled at them, "My father is good at hunting and fishing. In the past, whenever he caught some good game or high quality seafood, he would always sell it to Zhenxiu Restaurant. Gradually, they got to know each other. Afterwards, my family's out-of-season vegetables also supplied their whole restaurant. Perhaps they make an exception for my family due to these previous favors ah?"

Little Shitou had long known that many of Zhenxiu Restaurant's specialty dishes were made with the contribution of his second sister. However, the reason why Second Sister knew how to craft these dishes was too mysterious and profound. He didn't want too many people to find out and cause trouble later on.

His explanation didn't arouse any of his friends' suspicions. After all, at the start of spring, only Zhenxiu Restaurant was able to advertise their stunningly expensive green vegetable dishes. For people living in ancient times, after eating a whole winter's worth of radishes, cabbages, and meat dishes, they all

wanted something fresh. Each plate of green vegetables cost at least a couple taels, yet, if you arrived there late, they would be all sold out. Perhaps it was because of their previous relationship that the Yu Family only sold their vegetables to Zhenxiu Restaurant and no others, right?

At this moment, Yu Xiaocao wasn't even aware that her younger brother was thinking up ways to cover for her. She was currently sitting inside one of the private rooms at Zhenxiu Restaurant. Other than the young royal prince, there was also Third Young Master Zhou in the room, who was looking eagerly at her.

The situation was simple. After she left Rongxuan Academy, it was already close to noon. Yu Xiaocao took the young royal prince and his servant on a stroll and ended up at Zhenxiu Restaurant. Fortunately, Third Young Master Zhou had managed to snatch a moment of leisure time today and was resting in the private room drinking tea. When he heard Yu Xiaocao had come over, he was pleased beyond expectation. He had something he wanted to discuss with Yu Xiaocao!

After inviting Yu Xiaocao and her group into the private room, Third Young Master Zhou suddenly discovered that the capital's current hot topic, Royal Prince Yang, was there too. Why was Royal Prince Yang currently a hot topic? There were several reasons. First of all, the court gossips all said that Royal Prince Yang had lived up to expectations by bringing back the high-yielding crops that were drought resistant: corn and potatoes. The emperor himself had rewarded the youth. Secondly, he had brought back exquisite items that had never been seen before. For example, a desk clock that could accurately tell the time, beautiful enamelware, delicate ivory carvings...and they were all being sold at Treasure Pavillion, which was under his name. The shop was blazingly popular. Thirdly, Royal Prince Yang had managed to procure some ripe watermelons out of season from a place no one knew. These watermelons set off a frenzy of buying at the capital. In short, everyone in the capital was talking about Royal Prince Yang, the man of the moment.

After they greeted each other, the three people took their seats. Yu Xiaocao started off the conversation, "I was still under the impression, Third Young Master Zhou, that you were currently in the capital busy beyond compare! How do you have the time to come back to Tanggu Town ah?"

"In the last few years, the imperial family hasn't carried out any large construction projects. Thus, their requirements for lumber has not been high. The Zhou Family has their own lumber operation, so there's no need to worry about it. Furthermore, our dried seafood quota has been fulfilled for the next couple of months. The second branch store of Zhenxiu Restaurant in the capital has also formally opened..." Third Young Master Zhou had something to ask of her, so he described everything very clearly.

Zhu Junyang felt quite surprised inside. He raised his eyes to look at the future head of the Zhou Family and thought, 'What is this fellow trying to do in telling all of this to Yu Xiaocao?' However, he couldn't feel any malice or ill-will coming off of Zhou Zixu. He lowered his eyes again and stared at the cup in front of him before he curtly ordered, "Tea!"

Yu Xiaocao tacitly understood his request and lifted up the tea cup and placed it near his mouth. Zhu Junyang leisurely blew on foam in the cup and then lightly drank a sip. He nodded his head as a hint to Yu Xiaocao.

Zhou Zixu watched as Xiaocao helped Royal Prince Yang drink tea in a practiced manner. Only when she placed the cup down did he stare at her with astonishment. This little lass, who was never polite when she spoke to him, had suddenly become so obedient? Was this the same Yu Xiaocao whose temper blew all the time? Perhaps...Royal Prince Yang used his power to suppress her?

Zhu Junyang could tell that the future head of the Zhou Family had an inquisitive look in his eyes. He continued to sit silently and played the mysterious guest.

Yu Xiaocao laughed hollowly and pretended to not see Third Young Master's astonishment. She stated, "Third Young Master, you don't need to report to me about your Zhou Family's industries. It has very little bearing to me!"

Third Young Master Zhou nodded, "The Zhou Family's industries aren't related to you, but you have quite a stake in Zhenxiu Restaurant. The Zhenxiu Restaurant in the capital has encountered some difficulties, so I need you to help me."

Yu Xiaocao was now the one who was surprised, "The capital's Zhenxiu Restaurant? The furthest I've been is the prefectural city. I don't know anything about how the capital works, so I can't really do much. Third Young Master, you're looking for the wrong person, okay?"

Zhu Junyang raised his head again to look at Third Young Master Zhou in the eye. What was the point of finding a little rural village girl for help when there was a problem with the Zhenxiu Restaurant in the capital? If he needed to find someone, then he should find someone like himself, someone with the status to act as a patron ah!



"I will just say it bluntly then!" Third Young Master Zhou looked at Royal Prince Yang and clenched his jaw, "Our osmanthus duck has met a rival! One of the capital's long standing restaurants, 'Defeng', has come out with a new duck called, 'furnace roasted duck'. It has skin that is glossy and crisp, exquisite white meat, tastes astoundingly delicious, and is flavorful without being greasy. Furthermore, they have also copied our 'starvation marketing' strategy and limit their daily sales quota. Their price is a bit more expensive than our osmanthus duck, yet their supply does not meet the demand. They have taken away quite a few customers from Zhenxiu Restaurant and the sales volume of our osmanthus duck keeps dropping!"

Apparently they had met a business rival ah! She remembered that in her previous life the people selling 'Peking Duck' claimed that it had been around for a millennium. Was this when it first started? This 'furnace roasted duck' was likely the predecessor to 'Peking Duck'.

She was very good at making roast duck ah! In her previous life, at her braised food shop, she had also especially learned how to make 'fruit-scented roast duck'. This wasn't hard to make. All it required was an oven, accurate heat control, and a special blend of spices. Fruit-scented roast duck was considered a type of roast duck that was cooked by hanging in an oven and had its pros and cons over furnace roasted duck.

Roasting duck by hanging in the oven created a product that had less fat under the skin, so the skin was crispy and the meat tender. Furthermore, it had a fruity smell. On the other hand, furnace roasted duck had more fat and moisture in the end product, so the meat was even more tender. The duck that came out of a furnace seemed like a steamed roll: flexible and soft. She not only knew how to make fruit-scented roasted duck but also knew how to make floral-scented flaky roasted duck and vegetal crispy roasted duck. She was not convinced that the products from more than a millennium of food experimentation in her previous life couldn't beat a recently new furnace roasted duck in popularity.

Third Young Master Zhou lowered his head and fidgeted in his chair as Yu Xiaocao pondered. He shifted forward a bit and said, "Xiaocao, do you have any new recipes that could compete with this new roast duck? We can go with what we did with the osmanthus duck recipe. I will give you dividends for the next twenty years from the sales. How's that?"

Judging by the current sales volume of the osmanthus duck, she was currently earning two to three thousand taels a month. That meant in one year, she would get thirty thousand taels from the sales. If it was roasted duck, the sales wouldn't be much lower than this. Third Young Master Zhou had a lot of sincerity and had extended the terms of the contract by an additional ten years. The profits to be earned from an additional ten years weren't a small number ah!

"I know a recipe for fruit-scented roast duck. The first thing we need is to build a giant fireplace and the heat in that oven must be homogeneous." As she talked, she drew and wrote the specifications of this fireplace that she needed on a piece of paper.

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"Actually, the duck needed for the fruit-scented roasted duck needs to be raised in a free-range and has to be thin. If it's too fat, then it would turn out too greasy. Also, there's a certain ratio for the wood from the jujube trees, pear trees, apple trees, and other fruit trees that are used. I will write down the proportions for you later!"

"For fruit-scented roasted duck, the duck must be marinated in 28 kinds of spices, not a single one can be missing. I'll send you the proportions of the type of spices later. Let Uncle Wang think it over! The difference between a hanging furnace and the braising furnace is that with the braising furnace, you can check the duck at any time while it's being roasted. After putting the duck into the furnace, the position of the duck should be changed regularly with the rod to make sure the duck is evenly cooked!"

The differences in professions made one feel worlds apart. Third Young Master Zhou felt bewildered as he listened. He carefully collected the directions and precautions Yu Xiaocao wrote down. After thinking he asked, "How about...I let Head Chef Wang come back and consult you on this personally?"

Yu Xiaocao shook her head and said, "The capital's Zhenxiu Restaurant is currently going through a turbulent period. If Uncle Wang were to be called back again, I'm afraid the business will suffer a disastrous decline. Aren't Uncle Wang's two apprentices based in Tanggu Town? Currently, Tanggu Town's market has been stable. Although it may be busy for one person, he should be able to handle it if there's an additional assistant. Let either Brother Yang or Brother Liu learn the techniques of making this roasted duck!"

Head Chef Wang's two apprentices, Yang Feng and Liu Bi, had already finished their apprenticeship. Their skills in making braised roasted chicken and salted ducks weren't inferior to their master's. Between the two, Yang Feng was more talented and able to accept new things quicker. As such, he was selected to learn how to make the fruit-scented roasted duck from Yu Xiaocao.

However, the most pressing matter was building the oven. Third Young Master Zhou saw that the dishes were being served and Prince Yang had no intention of letting him stay for the meal. So he stood up to take his leave, "Xiaocao, as expected you didn't let me down! I'll invite you to a meal another day to show you my thanks! I'll go ask someone to make an oven in the back kitchen first, enjoy your meal!"

After Third Young Master Zhou went out, Zhu Junyang looked at Yu Xiaocao and waited for her to explain.

Yu Xiaocao touched her face and asked him strangely, "Is there something dirty on my face? Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Was the osmanthus duck recipe for the Zhenxiu Restaurant given by you?" Zhu Junyang lightly asked but he didn't forget to point at the delicious dishes on the table and instructed, "Duck meat!"

Yu Xiaocao, who had been waiting on this lord and walking around all morning, had been hungry for a very long time. She thought she could finally have a peaceful lunch, but ever since they entered the private room, Head Steward Liu had played the disappearance game and she couldn't find a trace of him at all. The young prince's arm couldn't bend, so she naturally had to wait on him during the meal.

Alas... she silently sighed, dragged the chair over to the young prince's side, and picked up the chopsticks in front of him. After picking up a piece of osmanthus duck, she carefully removed the bones from it and stuffed it into Zhu Junyang's mouth.

Taking advantage of the time the young prince spent chewing, she hurriedly ate a few mouthfuls of vegetables looking as if she had been hungry for eight hundred years.

"This prince is asking you something!" Zhu Junyang slowly swallowed the delicious piece of duck meat and gently kicked Yu Xiaocao's chair, continuing their previous conversation.

Yu Xiaocao took a big generous gulp of tea swallowing the food in her mouth and nodded, "Yes! Is there a problem?"

"No wonder you don't have to wait in line to buy osmanthus duck at Zhenxiu Restaurant! But, how did you get the recipe for the osmanthus duck?" Zhu Junyang asked as he pointed at the roasted chicken near his hand.

Yu Xiaocao forgot to change her chopsticks and used her own chopsticks to pick up a piece of the chicken leg. Just as she was about to put it into the young prince's mouth, Zhu Junyang turned his head to the side and said with dislike, "Change the chopsticks, who would want to eat your saliva?"

Yu Xiaocao curled her lips and complained in heart, 'Clean freak! Even if you are willing to, I'm not willing to let you! Wouldn't that be considered an indirect kiss then? I am a virgin in my previous life and in this life, I still have my first kiss.' She smoothly put the piece of chicken in her bowl, changed chopsticks, and fed him another piece of chicken. After Zhu Junyang ate it, she laughed and clapped her hands, "Do you know what you just ate? Chicken butt——"

Upon receiving a sharp glare from the young prince, Yu Xiaocao immediately caved, "All right, I'm lying to you! Don't be so serious, it's just a little joke! Do you want to eat chicken skin? The strongest flavor and essence of the roast chicken is here, the chicken skin..."

Zhu Junyang didn't listen to her rambling. He looked at the other chicken drumstick on the plate and said, "Drumstick!"

After successfully eating the drumstick, he continued the conversation topic, "Osmanthus duck, fruit-scented roasted duck, where did you get these recipes?"

Yu Xiaocao's eyes darted around and she answered in a seemingly serious manner, "If I said that I have an extraordinary innate talent and these delicious dishes are known without any effort, would you believe me?"

"Tell the truth!" Splitting out the chicken bone in his mouth, Zhu Junyang slightly glanced at her and said with a commanding tone.

Yu Xiaocao purposely sighed deeply and shook her head. "Ah... the world's moral degeneration is getting worse day by day, and human hearts are no longer what they used to be. No one believes the truth these days..."

"Use human speech!" Zhu Junyang looked at Yu Xiaocao's exaggerated performance and secretly felt that it was funny but he didn't express anything.

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes and said, "Who's not using human speech? How can you call me names?"

"Alright, alright! I'll tell you!" Under the sharp eyes of Zhu Junyang, Yu Xiaocao surrendered once again, "Two years ago, I went with Zhao Han, the grandson of General Zhao, into the mountains to catch rabbits. By accident, we became separated and I met an injured old man with white hair. Seeing that he was so pitiful, I saved him with my dabbling medical skills. The old man felt that he was unable to repay my kindness, so he gave me the fragments of a recipe book. All the dishes I know come from that book."

After she finished speaking, she showed a 'this time you should believe it' expression.

Zhu Junyang's subordinates, who he sent to investigate her, didn't mention this event. He slightly frowned. Perhaps, because it happened deep in the mountains and the little lass didn't tell anyone when she came back, so it was left out?

"Where are the fragments?" Zhu Junyang asked after instructing Yu Xiaocao to give him a bite of a dish again.

Yu Xiaocao pointed to her head and made a triumphant expression, "It's in here! It's a magic weapon for our family to make money. Of course, it's safer to keep it in my mind! Don't worry, I have a good memory. I'll never forget it!"

Looking at the little lass's proud expression, Zhu Junyang didn't ask anymore and focused on commanding Yu Xiaocao to get food for him.

'I finally came up with a plausible explanation!' Yu Xiaocao quietly sighed in her mind. This story was pretty good. In the future, if someone asked her why she knew so many dishes she could just use it as a reply. Who cares if they believed it or not, if they had the ability, then they could go investigate it!

In order to launch the fruit-scented roasted duck as soon as possible to compete with Defeng Restaurant, Third Young Master Zhou built the oven overnight according to the requirements Xiaocao had given. He also found branches that had been cut in the spring from nearby households that planted fruit trees. Once everything was ready, he invited Yu Xiaocao over the next day!

Royal Prince Yang said that he had nothing to do and followed along. Yu Xiaocao showed step by step how to marinate with the spice, how to turn while roasting, and how to control the fire. While showing Yang Feng how to do it, she also gave him detailed explanations.

When the first batch of roasted duck came out, it smelled delicious. Even the customers eating in the front could smell the scent of the roasted duck. They all asked what new dish Zhenxiu Restaurant was launching that had such a strong fragrance. The head manager took the opportunity to advertise the fruit-scented roasted duck in the restaurant. He also said that at noon, no matter if they were dining in a private room or in the dining hall, he would present a plate of roasted duck for sampling.

During lunch time, there were more than fifty tables in the dining hall and private rooms. Of course, they couldn't send a whole duck to each table. Each table would get half a duck and a total of twenty-five ducks would be roasted. Yang Feng, who was indeed very talented, quickly mastered the technique of making the roasted ducks.

Yu Xiaocao personally roasted more than ten ducks before letting Yang Feng handle the rest while she gave directions on the side. By noon, thirty roasted ducks had been made. Yu Xiaocao also took advantage of the extra time to make a pot of sweet bean sauce.

The roasted duck alone wouldn't be able to show the uniqueness of Zhenxiu Restaurant, so Yu Xiaocao also launched a 'one duck, three meals' menu. First of all, cut and put the crispy duck skin with a thin layer of meat on a plate. Serve it with cucumber strips, scallions, and other side dishes. When eating, add sweet bean sauce and wrap it in a thin pancake. For the next dish, cut thin shreds of meat off the duck and make 'stir-fried shredded duck'. Lastly, the bones were used to make delicious duck bone soup.

When the fruit-scented roasted duck was served to the tables, it was met with many praises. At this time, Yu Xiaocao, Royal Prince Yang, and Third Young Master Zhou sat in their exclusive private room enjoying the delicious 'one duck, three meals'. With an 'outsider' in the room, Prince Yang saved Yu Xiaocao's reputation and didn't let her serve him. Yu Xiaocao breathed a sigh of relief—she could finally have a peaceful meal!

Yu Xiaocao put the duck meat and duck skin, sweet sauce, green onions, and cucumber on a thin pancake and rolled it up. She opened her mouth wide and ate it in one mouthful. She chewed it carefully with her eyes closed, and her expression looked like a cat that was eating a fish.

The chef of the Zhenxiu Restaurant had really good skills with the knife. The slice of duck meat was thin and even, the shredded duck meat was long and thin, and the bone soup was also delicious. Yu Xiaocao hadn't had such delicious roasted duck in a long time; her hands kept wrapping the pancakes and she kept eating with gusto.

Head Steward Liu got the look his master gave him and quickly learned from Miss Yu's actions, making a duck meat roll. Zhu Junyang glanced at him and lightly said, "I don't eat green onions!"

Head Steward Liu hurriedly asked for forgiveness. Why did he make such a low-level mistake? Putting down the duck roll in his hand, he made another one without green onions and placed it by his master's mouth. Zhu Junyang took a bite in a refined manner. The skin of the duck was crispy, and the duck meat was tender with a light fruity fragrance. When paired with the unique taste of the sweet bean sauce, it made people unable to stop eating.

"The meat is tender and the flavor is rich. It's not bad!" Zhu Junyang gave a positive opinion after eating a roll.

Third Young Master Zhou nodded his head and said, "Xiaocao's products are all top quality! I've eaten Defeng Restaurant's furnace roasted duck. That taste is nothing compared to our fruit-scented roasted duck! The Zhenxiu Restaurant in the capital is saved!"