

Gold Chapter 36

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Although the mountain creek also contained spiritual energy, using it didn't have the added benefit of aiding its master. To put it into perspective, absorbing ten days worth of energy from the creek did not give itself as much benefit as it received from creating one pitcher of mystic-stone water for its master.

A weak, little human had actually had its fate in her hands! 'Just you wait, once this divine stone breaks free of its restrictions, don't even think about trying to threaten me again! That's when you will beg me for help!' The little divine stone's spiritual form thrashed harder in the water out of rage.

Yu Xiaocao ignored its antics. Other than her, no one else could see the divine stone's spiritual form, so it didn't matter. Instead, she and her siblings fed their family's new favorite, the little roe deer, until it was full.

"Second Sister, it's cold at night now. Tiny is really too small, what if it froze to death?" Little Shitou squatted down with his arms around the newly named roe deer and was clearly reluctant to let go of the animal. Both of them had clear, dark eyes that looked adorably at Yu Xiaocao.

Yu Hai pinched the fattier part of his son's face and grinned, "If it's not sleeping outside, do you plan on giving your blanket to it?"

"I'll hug Tiny to sleep. It's not as if it takes up a lot of space." Little Shitou pouted as he tried his best to think of something to convince everyone else in the room.

Although Xiaolian also really liked the cute and clever roe deer, she did not think having the animal indoors was a good idea. "I don't want it to sleep on our kang bed. What if it pooped in the middle of the night? Then mother would have to wash the sheets tomorrow."

Yu Xiaocao also didn't want to raise the roe deer indoors. The animal would start leaving its distinctive odor in the room if it spent a long time inside. However, she was more concerned about leaving it in the courtyard overnight. It was possible that other members of the family might decide to kill it to make some meat stew. Even though the animal didn't have much meat on it, the soup would still taste very good.

She went outside, gathered some soft straw, and made a small nest next to the corner near the door for the little animal. She tapped the roe deer's wet little nose and said solemnly, "Tiny, if you need to go potty, go outside. If you make a mess in the room, I'll roast you over a fire to eat!"

Tiny gazed trustingly at her and even licked the finger she was using to point at it. It acted as if it truly understood what she was saying.

Little Shitou was at a loss for words and let out an adult-sounding sigh, "Tiny was caught by Second Sister, so it's closest to her."

Yu Xiaocao pinched his nose and smiled, "The next time something good like this happens, I'll make sure you go first."

Hearing that, Little Shitou became happy and jumped up in glee, "Okay, okay! We should bring back another roe deer to give Tiny some company!"

Whether the creature understood Yu Xiaocao's threats or whether it was because it gained some brains from the mystic-stone water, it was hard to say. However, the little roe deer, who wasn't more than a month old, had never had an accident in the west room since it started living there. Even if someone accidentally shut the door, it held its waste until someone came to let it out. Only then would it scramble outside quickly to relieve itself.

In addition, the animal never acquired the wild and gamey smell of a wild roe deer. Even in the height of summer it still smelled fresh and sweet. Yu Xiaocao and her siblings all loved and cherished Tiny. Even Madam Liu said that this was a special roe deer that could understand what humans said to it.

Ever since Yu Xiaocao became interested in learning medicine from Doctor You, she relentlessly pursued that goal. In the following days, she became quite busy.

Every morning, she got up early from bed and went to join Zhao Han. The two of them would divide up the areas for trapping and then head their separate ways to set their traps. With the help of the mystic-stone water as bait, she never left the forest empty-handed after walking around the forest once.

In fact, she usually ended up with twice the haul as a regular person got from traps. Sometimes, she would take the two hour walk with Zhao Han to go into town to sell her game. Other times she would ask Uncle Zhao to help her sell her game when he went into town.

Luckily, Zhenxiu Restaurant was becoming more and more popular with every passing day. They had hired a new chef in charge of preparing wild game, and his specialty was roasting and cooking meat. Their need for fresh, wild game slowly increased, so Yu Xiaocao and Zhao Han never had to worry about where to sell their live game.

Sometimes, they would catch too much game by accident. However, even without Yu Xiaocao there herself, Zhenxiu Restaurant still preferred their game over game caught by other hunters. After all, newly slaughtered meat had a better flavor and texture compared to meat that was not freshly harvested.

In the afternoons, Yu Xiaocao often would go to Doctor You's home to learn how to identify herbal medications. She wasn't sure whether it was because she had the mystic-stone water helping her or whether she had a good memory, but, to her, learning these medications was as easy as pie for her. Everything she learned was retained perfectly.

Originally, Doctor You did not have any expectations for her but after seeing her talent in this area, he began to cherish her abilities. In fact, she had basically become his disciple in all but name, and he instructed her personally. Whenever he needed to go up into the mountains to gather medicinal plants, he never forgot to bring her along. From time to time, he would test her while in the forest to see her abilities in identifying plants.

Gradually, Doctor You realized that all the herbs he recognized, Yu Xiaocao had also memorized completely. He started to teach her on how to utilize these plants as medications.

Hence, Yu Xiaocao distinctly started to feel that she didn't have enough time anymore. Oftentimes, she went with Doctor You at the crack of dawn to gather medicinal plants in the mountain, so she naturally didn't have enough time to set traps to catch wild hares anymore.

From her standpoint, money could be earned at anytime. However, the earlier she gained a practical knowledge of herbal medicines and treating illnesses, the better it would be for her. She thought that she had talent in this area. Maybe in the future she could even become a female doctor!

Thus, Yu Xiaocao began to spend more time with Grandpa You than she did with her own family. Doctor You had lived alone for thirty years after settling in Dongshan Village. He had been so obsessed with learning and practicing medicine that he never ended up marrying a wife and been a solitary bachelor for all his life.

Although Yu Xiaocao was still a little girl physically, mentally she had the thought processes of an adult. With someone like her by his side, You Yong discovered that his days had become more interesting lately. In the past, whenever he started to research a new medicinal, he often lost track of time. Skipping meals was a common pastime for him.

Now, he had a helper at his side. Even if he didn't remember to eat, she still needed to eat! When he was lost in his thoughts, she would sensibly start cooking some food and place it in front of him. The smell of delicious food would entice him to snap out of his thoughts.

He had never thought he had a dormant foodie within him. However, the little girl's culinary skills were surprisingly good. Even simple ingredients like leafy green vegetables and daikon could be transformed by her into several different types of delicious dishes.

The little girl was seriously too clever. She not only learned the medical knowledge he taught with ease but also could make connections and point out something that would lead him into a breakthrough. After studying for just a month, the little girl could independently prescribe some simple prescriptions without any problems.

At this point, Doctor You had already regarded Xiaocao as his official disciple and taught her accordingly. When he went out to practice medicine, he always brought his little apprentice along. As time passed, most of the nearby villages all knew that Doctor You had accepted a little girl as his disciple. And she was treasured beyond expectations.

By the time Yu Xiaocao felt that she could accurately diagnose and treat the common illnesses on her own, her teacher, Doctor You, had left behind a letter for her and hastily left Dongshan Village on a short notice.

In the letter, he explained that he had heard that there was information about his long lost relatives who had been separated from him during the chaotic warring times. He needed to travel afar. However, he repeatedly warned Yu Xiaocao that she should not let her natural talent for medicine to go to waste. She needed to continue to review the material on a daily basis. If there was anyone near her who had

gotten mildly sick, she could extend a helping hand towards them. Of course, if they refused her help, there was no need to force them.

Yu Xiaocao had finally been released from her busy duties. However, she continued to go to Grandpa You's house every couple of days to help him tidy up his rooms and to nurture his herbs. She even attempted to compound some medicines used to treat external wounds, such as the ones used to slow and stop bleeding. Medications that had been sprinkled with mystic-stone water were much more potent than the ones that even Doctor You made! However, not many people were brave enough to use the medications that she had prescribed.

It wasn't surprising as outwardly she was still a small kid who hadn't even reached the age of nine. The truly odd scenario would have been if the villagers actually believed that she could treat illnesses. Thus, she only switched out the wound balm that her father normally carried when he went hunting with a wound balm she made on her own. Little did she know that her

That day, the always busy Yu Xiaocao who now had free time, turned to speak to Little Shitou who was in the courtyard feeding Tiny. "Little brother, isn't this about the time our father got back from fishing today?"

Little Shitou didn't even raise his head as he replied, "Still too early! Second Sister, you've been so busy outside of home lately that you don't even remember what time our father normally gets back. After he catches fish, he still needs to first go to the docks on land, then unload the fish from the boat and give them to someone. Sometimes, if he has a lot leftover, he even needs to go to the fish market on the wharf and sell the extra off."

The docks? Her eyes lit up and her mouth curved up into a toothy grin, as if she was the wolf trying to lure a little bunny rabbit into a trap. "Shitou, do you want to go to look at the docks? I heard there are a lot of shops there that sell almost everything! Good food, fun things..."

"Second Sister, you want to go? If you go, I'll go. However, should we also bring Tiny with us?" Little Shitou was very protective of the little pet. The roe deer went wherever he went.

However, there was a reason for his paranoia. The pitiful little roe deer, who didn't have much meat on its bones, had almost been killed by Madam Li and Yu Heizi. The two of them had anchored the animal down to the ground with a butcher's knife in their hands. Had Little Shitou and Xiaolian not arrived in time, Tiny would have been fated to become the main dish to the meal.

Afterwards, Zhao Han took Yu Heizi aside and taught him a small lesson that 'Tiny' was a pet that he had lent to Shitou to play with. If he ever found out that Heizi still wanted to eat the little roe deer, he would knock out all of his teeth!

Hunter Zhao's family was relatively well-known in Dongshan Village. It was said that some years ago, during a particularly harsh winter, a starving wolf pack had entered the village. The wolves not only stole many chickens, but also hurt some people. Just as the crisis seemed to escalate, the entire Zhao Family went into battle with the creatures. Even the outwardly gentle and elegant Auntie Zhao bent a bow and shot some arrows. The more than dozen wolves were not a match for them.

Although the four members of the Zhao Family had become heroes to most of the villagers, there were some who felt alienated by their actions. After all, no one liked having their deficiencies being pointed out by the deeds of others!

After Yu Heizi's 'small lesson', he came back home with a bloody nose and black eyes. Even Madam Li, who often liked to make mountains out of molehills, could only throw a tantrum within the courtyard walls as she was too scared of the Zhao Family to cause any large waves. With Heizi as an 'example', the rest of the Yu Family who were not from the second branch no longer dared to steal the little roe deer anymore.

Despite that, Little Shitou still didn't feel safe leaving the roe deer alone. The sight of Yu Heizi holding a cleaver over a helpless Tiny had engraved itself into his mind. Wherever he went, Shitou would always bring the little roe deer along with him.

Dongshan Village now had an oddity to see: a little boy walking in the front and a tiny roe deer blindly following him from behind. Anyone who saw the unlikely pair couldn't help but let out a knowing smile...