

Gold Chapter 371

Fields of Gold Chapter 371 - Secret Recipe

At this time, Old Yu stepped into his older brother's courtyard. When he heard the sounds of his niece sobbing, the look on his face immediately changed. In previous years, when the weather suddenly changed, a lot of old folks with weaker bodies were unable to endure it. His eldest brother was older than him by eight years and was already past the age of sixty. Perhaps...

He quickened his steps and entered the room. Inside were his niece and nephew, and both of them seemed very distressed. Yu Lichun was lying on the bed with his eyes tightly shut. There was an unnatural flush on his face and there were a few sores on his cracked lips. His chest was still moving slightly, which allowed Old Yu to relax a little.

“Third Uncle? You got better, Third Uncle? Which medicine hall's doctor treated you? What type of medicine did you eat?” When Yu Jiang saw that Old Yu had come in, he was stunned for a second and then hope lit up his face.

A few days ago, Old Yu's illness was quite severe and had pretty much the exact same symptoms as Yu Jiang's father. He was feverish, coughing, and had fallen into an unconscious stupor due to the severity. After taking medicine that was prescribed by Tongren Medicine Hall, he still didn't get better. He had heard that Third Uncle's family had connections with Doctor Sun from Tongren Medicine Hall. Did Doctor Sun come back from the capital?

Old Yu hesitated for a moment and then stated with a bit uncertainty, “Doctor Sun had gone into the capital on the behalf of some noble. The person who treated me was his head disciple, who is also considered a very skilled doctor in town. However, my body was weak and didn't get better even after taking a dozen taels worth of medicine. Didn't your niece learn a bit of medicine in the past? People turn to any doctor when someone is ill, so she concocted a few tisanes for me. Perhaps the medicine I took earlier had finally taken effect but within a few days I was completely better...”

Yu Jiang's eyes flickered with a different light and knocked his head a few times as he repeatedly said, “That's right ah! Xiaocao also knows some medicine. How could I possibly forget this? Third Uncle, thank you for reminding me, I'm going to go invite Xiaocao over now...”

“Dajiang, how old is Xiaocao right now? She only knows a bit of basic medicine, so she can't be considered more skilled than the doctors in town right? Even the most skilled doctors in town are no use, so what would inviting her over do?” Yu Jiang's older sister didn't quite approve of her younger brother's decision.

Yu Jiang rubbed his sore and red eyes as he looked at his older sister, "Older Sister, you haven't spent a lot of time in Dongshan Village these past two years and don't know of your niece's abilities. Even the royal prince, after hurting his arm, had Xiaocao treat his arm. Also, Princess Consort Jing had also invited Xiaocao to craft medicinal cuisine for her to strengthen her body. That being said, if we don't ask her, are we just supposed to watch our father die in front of our eyes?"

Yu Jiang's older sister couldn't say anything. It was true. Even the doctors in town had said that her father couldn't get better, so they advised them to prepare for the future. Perhaps having Xiaocao come over to treat him was the only bit of hope they had left?

After Xiaocao got the message, she almost ran the entire way there. Her medicine box was carried over by Yu Jiang. When they entered the room, they were so winded that they continued to huff and puff for quite a bit.

Yu Xiaocao was very worried when she saw her granduncle's condition. When she first transmigrated over, her granduncle had treated her better than her grandfather and supported her family. Furthermore, he didn't even hesitate to give them all of his money to have her go into town and be seen by a doctor. After they split from the main family, Eldest Granduncle's family also helped them frequently when they were too busy. Their two families acted as if they were one whole family.

She resolved to do her best to save such a kind hearted and gentle old man! Yu Xiaocao took her granduncle's pulse and discovered that he was not doing well. She then took out a porcelain bottle from her medicine box and had her Third Uncle, Yu Jiang, pry his father's mouth open to drip two drops of mystic-stone water into his mouth. She noticed that everyone regarded the bottle in her hand with curiosity, so she explained, "When my grandfather got really sick recently, I used more than twenty medicinal herbs to extract an essence to combat cold illnesses. My grandfather has personally experienced its effects!"

She then had a person fill up a basin of warm water and also added a few drops of mystic-stone water to it. She instructed her Third Uncle to wipe her granduncle's body, "Eldest Granduncle's illness is a lot worse than when my grandfather was sick. We not only have to give him oral medication but we also have to wipe medication on his body! By washing his body with some warm water, it can help him reduce his fever. Right now Eldest Granduncle has a high fever that's not abating, so we need to lower his temperature before the fever damages him!"

After she finished her explanation, Yu Xiaocao stepped out of the inner room and took out a few medicinal herbs that had been filled with spiritual energy by the divine stone. She personally concocted

the herbs into a tonic. During the process, when other people weren't observing her, she also stealthily added a drop of mystic-stone water to the mixture.

Yu Jiang and his oldest brother, Yu Xi, were in the room as they continuously wiped their father's body with the warm water mixture. Within moments, the mystic-stone water started affecting the sick man. Yu Lichun's fever started to go down significantly. By the time the tonic was finished, he had already woken up from his stupor and everyone let out a sigh of relief.

Yu Lichun drank the medicine and then said a few words to his younger brother and children before he went back into a deep sleep. Yu Xiaocao was cleaning up her medicine box as she said, "The medicine I concocted should be taken three times a day. After three days, I'll come over to take Eldest Granduncle's pulse again. For the next two days, let Eldest Granduncle rest and he should be like my grandfather very soon and be able to walk around the village!"

When Yu Jiang's wife noticed that Xiaocao's medicine was very effective, she pulled on Xiaocao's hand as she sobbed, "Xiaocao, can you take a look at my daughter ah? She's also been sick for many days..." Yu Xiaocao entered the west room with Third Aunt and inside was a tiny, skinny baby sleeping there. Her face was ghost white and occasionally she would have a bout of hacking coughs. Perhaps she was feeling uncomfortable, but she started to wail. Her cries were weak and thin and sounded like cat crying.

Yu Jiang's wife picked up her daughter and gently patted her on the back. Yu Jiang's eyes became hot with tears again as he asked, "Xiaocao, can my little girl drink the essence that's in your porcelain bottle? It's only been a few days but she's already shrunken until she doesn't look human. She hasn't been able to drink any medication and often vomits. Every time she coughs, all of the medicine and gruel we managed to get her to drink comes back up..." She was, after all, his own blood and flesh. Yu Jiang was somewhat incoherent when he described his daughter's condition.

Yu Xiaocao looked at her younger cousin and nodded, "She also got sick after being exposed to the cold. This essence should also help strengthen her body. Third Uncle, go pour a glass of warm water!"

After the previously boiled water was poured, Yu Xiaocao dripped half a drop of mystic-stone water into it and had Third Aunt feed the mixture to the little girl. Yu Xiaocao also explained, "The baby is too young, so we can't use too much medicinal essence for her. Too much medicine is just as harmful as not taking any! Her cough is quite severe, so I'm going to go back to concoct some cough syrup. The syrup will taste sweet and is suitable for young children to use."

Yu Jiang's wife hesitated for a second before she finally decided to ask, "Don't we need to concoct some medicine for her?"

Yu Xiaocao lightly shook her head and stated, "Regular medications are too bitter and most children don't like to eat it. Even if you force them to, they'll often vomit it back up. The syrup I'm talking about is actually a type of medication. The only difference is that I also added some honey, so it'll taste more sweet. The efficacy of the medication is also not bad!"

After she left Eldest Granduncle's residence, Yu Xiaocao started to concoct the ginger syrup. This type of syrup not only had ingredients to suppress coughing but it could also treat illnesses caused by cold exposure. There were a few drops of mystic-stone water added so it amplified the effect of the herbs. There were quite a few children in the village who were sick, so Yu Xiaocao deliberately made a larger batch of this syrup. That way she could avoid having to make it again when someone inevitably asked for it.

That night, she didn't sleep as she made the syrup. The next morning, she went over to her eldest granduncle's house to deliver the new medication. Her eldest granduncle's fever had already disappeared, and he was currently leaning against some blankets as he talked to his family. They mentioned that his appetite that morning had been pretty good and he had even eaten two bowls of congee. When they saw Yu Xiaocao enter, everyone complimented her medicinal skills and proclaimed that they had faith in her skills now.

Yu Xiaocao took her eldest granduncle's pulse and then grinned, "Eldest Granduncle, you just need to take a few more bowls of medicine and then you'll be completely better. Rest well for the next few days. My grandfather is still waiting for you so he can play chess with you!"

"With your grandfather's poor skill at chess, I have no desire to even play with him ah! Xiaocao, I owe you this time. If it wasn't for you, I'm afraid that this old bag of bones would be gone..." Yu Lichun looked like he had aged several years after this bout of illness. His voice didn't have much energy to it but he seemed a lot more vigorous compared to before.

Yu Xiaocao hurriedly said, "Just look at what you're saying! Eldest Granduncle, the heavens help those who are worthy. Although it looked bad this time, in the end, you were able to escape calamity. Go rest, I'm going to go look at the baby."

"What's wrong with the baby ah? She's sick? Is it serious?" No one in the family had told Yu Lichun the news about the baby while he was ill, which was why he didn't know she was sick until now!

When Yu Xiaocao saw this, she hastily comforted him, "Eldest Granduncle, don't worry. The baby is fine. She's only been coughing these past two days. I came over to bring over the cough suppressant syrup I made for her. Children like this type of syrup and it works pretty well. Don't worry, with me around, the baby will be able to call you 'grandfather' tomorrow!"

Once Yu Lichun found out that the baby only had a cough, he relaxed a bit and then laughed, "You lass, you're quite good at calming people down. However, your little cousin still hasn't reached the age when she can talk. She can't even say 'father' or 'mother', so how would she be able to say 'grandfather'?"

Some children learned how to speak early, while others learned later. The baby was already over a year old but she hadn't started to talk yet. Yu Xiaocao felt a bit embarrassed and rubbed her nose before she dispiritedly said farewell to her granduncle and entered the west room.

The baby was currently awake and was lying listlessly in Yu Jiang's wife's arms. When the little girl saw Yu Xiaocao enter, she blinked her two eyes and then buried her face into her mother's arms and refused to come out.

"Oh! Our family's little girl is a bit shy now!" Yu Xiaocao looked at the little baby who was hidden inside Third Aunt's arms with her butt up in the air. She looked very cute so Xiaocao laughed and cracked a joke.

Afterwards, she asked her third aunt, "It looks like the baby is more energetic. Did she still have a fever last night? What about a cough?"

Yu Jiang's wife finally had a bit of a smile on her face. She looked gratefully at Xiaocao and replied, "Yesterday night, she slept quite well and didn't make a peep the entire night. In the middle of the night, I touched her back and saw that she was sweating. Thus, I followed what you said and used some warm water to wipe her body and then changed her into a set of clean clothing. She didn't cough much last night and also didn't vomit. Xiaocao, the medicine you made is better than the one the doctor from town made. What kind of doctor did your Third Uncle bring over from town? He even said that our family's girl wasn't looking too good!"

Any doctor in town had better medicinal skills and knowledge than she did. When she heard her Third Aunt complimenting her, Yu Xiaocao felt a bit sheepish and lightly coughed, "Everyone has their own speciality. Perhaps that doctor isn't as familiar with pediatric medicine ah! Third Aunt, the medicine I made is quite complicated and after treating Eldest Granduncle and the baby, I don't have much left. Please don't spread the word about this."

Her third aunt nodded honestly, "I understand! This is a secret recipe of yours. Normally, most people would hide it and deny that they knew of it. Who would brag about it?"

Fields of Gold Chapter 372 - Medicine

In regard to what Third Aunt had imagined, Yu Xiaocao didn't offer many explanations. She took out the syrup, poured it onto a small soup spoon, and added some hot water to it. As if she was a big gray wolf luring Little Red Riding Hood, she said, "Ni'er, Older Sister brought some sugared water. It tastes delicious. Would you like a taste?"

Ni'er could understand words now. Upon hearing it was sweet sugared water, she was like a little mouse checking the situation outside of its tunnel, revealing one eye from her mother's embrace. She looked curiously at the spoon in Yu Xiaocao's hand. She saw that it was black inside, similar to the bitter medicine her parents had fed her a few days ago, she hurriedly buried her head in her mother's arms. She wailed and began to cry.

Yu Xiaocao still has a trick with comforting children. She took out the small cake that Madam Liu made in the morning. It was covered in jam and had a honeyed strawberry. She used a soft and sweet voice, "Ni'er, Older Sister has a small strawberry cake here! It's fluffy, soft and sweet, and very delicious! Only obedient children will be rewarded a piece!"

Ever since Yu Jiang started helping to collect marine goods, the family's living standard had risen sharply. The children would occasionally eat candy and cakes. However, their family still had frugal habits. Candy and cakes couldn't be enjoyed by the children by their will, and thus being able to eat them once or twice a month was already great happiness.

Ni'er stopped crying when she heard that there was a delicious cake, and she even forgot to cry. She secretly looked at the cake in Yu Xiaocao's hand from her mother's arms. The red strawberry and the cake that was emitting a rich fragrance caught Ni'er's attention. She couldn't care about being shy, her little head finally popped out from Yu Jiang's wife's embrace.

"After you drink the medicine, I will give Ni'er a piece of cake. Your older brother and sisters won't be having any!" Yu Xiaocao continued to lure the shy 'little white bunny' by saying, "Older Sister promises you that the medicine isn't bitter at all. Ni'er is the bravest, do you want to give it a try?"

Ni'er looked at the medicine in Yu Xiaocao's right hand and the cake in her left. Her gaze moved back and forth many times before she made up her mind and gave a little nod.

Yu Xiaocao quickly put the medicine into Ni'er's open mouth. At first, Ni'er's face wrinkled as if expecting a bitter taste. After the medicine entered her mouth, her expression suddenly smoothed out. The little girl's eyes were round as she stared at the spoon in Yu Xiaocao's hand, which still contained some black liquid medicine. She smacked her lips twice as if recollecting the taste of it.

"Ni'er is the greatest! Come on, drink the rest and you can eat the cake!" Yu Xiaocao scooped some warm water from the bowl into the spoon. This time, Ni'er didn't resist at all and drank all the medicine smoothly.

Yu Xiaocao gave Ni'er a compliment again and fed her the strawberry cake spoon by spoon. The little one's shyness was all gone by this point. She ate the cake happily and danced with joy toward his family.

With the experience this time, Ni'er wasn't so resistant to drinking medicine anymore. However, the clever little one would lick the medicine before drinking it every time to try it out. Only when she found that it was sweet, she would drink it without resistance. Sometimes, she felt she hadn't had enough and she would cry to have another sip!

When a matron, who had a good relationship with Xiaocao's Third Aunt, saw that Ni'er had quickly recovered from her illness after she drunk all the medicine made by Yu Xiaocao, she hurriedly passed the news to her brother in the next village. The only child in her brother's family had also gotten sick, coughing really badly. The symptoms were similar to those of Ni'er but not as serious.

The matron's brother was almost thirty before he got a precious child, so his heart ached dearly when the child got sick. Hearing that the Yu Family had a certain cure, he came to ask for medicine with money.

Yu Xiaocao asked about the symptoms of the illness. With the confirmation, she was certain that her cold cough syrup was just right for the illness. She filled a bottle, enough for a week. However, this bottle of medicine wasn't cheap, five hundred copper coins for one bottle. After all, all the medicinal herbs cost money and a lot of honey was added. The cost alone was at least three hundred copper coins.

The man gritted his teeth and bought a bottle to take back. His family's baby son only ate it for one day before his cold lightened. After three days, he was basically well. Then, after stabilizing for two days, the illness was all gone. As a result, by word of mouth, the people of the nearby villages all came to Dongshan Village to ask for medicine.

In addition to children's cough syrup, Yu Xiaocao also made pills to combat the cold, cough relief, anti-inflammatory, and fever reduction, which were all packed in different porcelain jars. These pills were all improved from the basic common medicinal concoctions and with less honey inside, the price was much lower.

In addition to the children's cough syrup being sold, these kinds of pills were also sold. Due to the effectiveness of the Yu Family's pills, the public became gradually aware and more and more people came to seek medical treatment. Medicine practice wasn't Yu Xiaocao's wish, the reason she learned medicine was to cover up the results of the mystic-stone water. As a result, most of the people who came to seek medical treatment were rejected by her.

To the public, her excuse was "Royal Prince Yang is kind and rewarded our family with several prescriptions for treating colds and coughs. I am still young and my medical skills are as good. I dare not give treatment easily. The Tongren Medicine Hall in town has doctors with excellent medical skills and high medical ethics. You can go there for medical treatment; I only sell pills and medicine here..."

When the people who came to seek treatment saw that the rumored legendary doctor was actually a little girl in her teens, they had some doubts in their hearts. They dared not insist on her treating them after hearing her explanation. However, upon hearing that the prescriptions for the pills and medicinal liquids came from Royal Prince Yang, the villagers became convinced and the sales steadily rose.

When winter came, no one could guarantee that they and their families won't suffer from having a cold. The pills were sealed with wax on the outside, as long as they were properly sealed, there's no problem for them to sit for half a year. Thus, almost all the people who had the financial means would buy some pills as precautions!

Doctor Sun, who had returned from the capital, heard about the Yu Family's pills and rushed to Dongshan Village. He braved the snow and wind to sit down and have a long discussion with Yu Xiaocao and her father. It seemed like he was having a discussion with the pair of father and daughter, but in actuality, it was with Yu Xiaocao who was in charge.

The two sides came to an agreement: Tongren Medicine Hall would provide the medicinal herbs and the Yu Family would be in charge of the production. The profits would be split in half. In fact, Doctor Sun wanted to buy the prescriptions at a high price, but Yu Xiaocao didn't agree.

Once the prescription was taken out, Doctor Sun would have noticed something was fishy. The medicinal herbs, formula, and manufacturing weren't the most important things. The most important thing was the mystic-stone water in Yu Xiaocao's hands. Without this, even if Tongren Medicine Hall got the prescription, it would be of no use.

However, in this way, Yu Xiaocao, who had only rested for a few days, was busy again. Every day, she would crush herbs, mix them, roll them, and seal them... Although there were Yingtao and Yangliu to help her, Yu Xiaocao was still busy to the point as if she had two heads. The profit from the pills and the medicinal liquid was considerable. Her family had earned nearly one hundred taels in half a month from selling the pills and medicinal liquid alone. After cooperating with Tongren Medicine Hall, she basically had a business without making an investment. Why not share some of the profit and hire some people to help?

As a result, a production line had been set up for the production of pills. There were specifically assigned people in charge of the steps of grinding, rubbing, sealing and etc. The mixing was the only thing handled by Yu Xiaocao. The east and west wing of the west courtyard were vacated as the operation room of medicinal pills and liquid. She hired ten young matrons and maidens from the village. Although the weather was freezing cold outside, it was very busy inside the room.

The volume of sale for the medicinal pills and liquid was surprisingly good. Not only the Tongren Medicine Hall in town, as long as there was a branch of Tongren Medicine Hall in the area, they would sell the Yu Family's medicinal pills and medicinal syrups. Especially in the capital, if the children of the officials and nobility got sick, they didn't like to drink bitter medicine. With the medicinal syrup, it was no longer a problem to coax the children into taking their medicines. The medicinal liquids of the capital were sold out as soon as they arrived. In order to buy the sweet medicinal syrups, there was a long line in front of each Tongren Medicine Hall.

Because of the effectiveness of the pills and medicinal liquids became gradually known by the public, the sales became even better, and shortage became a common thing. Tongren Medicine Hall repeatedly urged the Yu Family to expand their production. The whole courtyard next door was used by the Yu Family as a workshop for making pills and medicinal liquid. They employed twenty more people, and had two work shifts, day and night. Yet they still couldn't meet the demands of Tongren Medicine Hall.

When Doctor Sun once again asked the Yu Family to increase production, Yu Xiaocao protested, "Doctor Sun, the most critical step in the preparation of medicinal liquids and pills is all done by me alone. Even if I had three heads and six arms, I still wouldn't be able to handle everything myself! Look at me, I'm so tired that I've begun to lose weight! If I keep pushing myself, my body will break down, and then I won't be able to make medicinal liquid and pills."

Doctor Sun saw that Yu Xiaocao's chin had become pointier. Although he wanted to talk about the prescription again, he also thought that if one didn't reach the end of one's resources, who would be willing to sell their golden goose? For the sake of long-term interests, Doctor Sun stopped rushing her. Instead, he told Yu Xiaocao to take a rest.

Yu Xiaocao was really tired recently. It wasn't hard to make pills and potions. She wrote down the proportion of the various medicinal herbs and gave it to the Yingtao, who had been helping. Yingtao was very flattered. Her young miss trusted her so much that she gave her the secret recipe for the medicine without any reservations...

The young girl was moved to tears and choked trying to show her loyalty. She repeatedly promised to keep and protect the prescription properly. The best way was to keep the prescription in her mind. It took her several days to be able to remember the prescription. The paper that Yu Xiaocao gave her was burned to ashes in the stove. Yingtao's heart was filled with fire, 'Only the young miss and her would be the only two people in the world to know the prescription for the medicines!'

Yingtao could stand out from so many maidservants in the General's Estate because she had her own outstanding points. Soon, she picked up Xiaocao's job and became even more efficient than Yu Xiaocao! After two days of observation, Yu Xiaocao was completely relieved. She left all the burdens behind and was only responsible for providing the mystic-stone water. Hence, the most leisurely person in the family was her.

After a while, in the villages near Dongshan Village, there was almost no one who didn't know that there was a teen girl in the Yu Family who could make very effective medicinal liquid and pills. Many people who came to ask for medicine would call her 'Little Doctor Yu'. In actuality, she was a pharmacist at best, and a cheating pharmacist at that.

Fields of Gold Chapter 373 - Gluttonous Insects Show Up

After entering the twelfth month, the preparations for the end of the year became more and more important. The New Year was the most important traditional holiday of the year. Even if a family was poor, when the new year arrived, they still made some good food for the family's improvement.

The end of the year was also the busiest time for the Yu's Braised Food Shop. After entering the twelfth month, the four burners on top of the stove in the store were kept burning day and night. Three to four pigs and about twenty pig's heads were being braised every day. Yu Caifeng and Xiaomei's mother both wished they could work during the time they spent sleeping. When the pickled food shop wasn't busy, Huang Xiaomei would also come by to help.

In the braised food shop, Liu Junping and his sister worked tirelessly. One was in charge of weighing the braised food, and the other was in charge of manning the cash register. Their movements were very quick but there was still a long line in the store. From time to time, people with impatient tempers raised their voices to urge them on faster.

Liu Hu, who was originally the manager of the shop, went back to the countryside to collect pigs again. The Yu Family's pig farm in Dongshan Village, with the exception of the pigs left behind for breeding, only had one or two left for their family to eat during the New Years. Now the braised pork sold by the shop was all obtained from pigs from the countryside.

Liu Hu and Huang Dachui went together. Every day they would leave before dawn and come back when the moon and stars were out at night. Only in this way could they supply enough meat to keep up with the amount of braised foods sold every day. The staff in the shop couldn't handle the booming business so they sent a message to Dongshan Village asking for help.

Yu Xiaocao gave Yingtao full authority on the matter of making the medicinal pills and liquids. After getting the message, she and Xiaolian, along with Yangliu, rushed to the prefectural city to help in spite of the cold. Yu Xiaocao took over the task of making roasted ducks, roasted chickens, and other poultry-based foods. Liu Yaner could finally concentrate on being the 'salesman' of the shop. Xiaolian was competent at both weighing food and collecting money, so she was also sent to the shop to help.

Liu Junping finally had free time and was able to run more meat stalls in town to buy more pig heads and pig offal. Although more than ten or twenty-some sets of braised pig heads and braised pig offals were prepared every day, these cheap yet delicious pig parts were also the first to be sold out. The number of workers in the shop who were in charge of cleaning up the pig's heads and offal also doubled. Pig's heads and offal were hard to prepare and these seasonal workers were usually busy all day long.

At the request of customers, Yu Xiaocao doubled the number of limited foods sold each, such as the roasted chicken and duck. Wealthier families sent their servants out to line up in front of the braised food store before dawn regardless of the weather in order to be able to buy roasted chicken and duck to entertain guests so they would have better reputations. When Liu Yaner opened the shop in the morning, she was scared by the snowmen standing in front of the door.

On the tenth day of the twelfth month, around noon, there was still a long line in front of the doors of The Yu's Braised Food Shop. Most of them were ordinary people in ordinary clothes, and many of them were villagers from nearby villages. At the start of the twelfth month, people from nearby villages often

came into the prefectural city to buy New Year's products. Now their first choice was to buy a few catties of braised food from the Yu's Braised Food Shop to take home.

The Yu's Braised Food Shop had rich and delicious food at a fair price. In particular, the price of pig's intestines wasn't much more expensive than buying raw pork. Ordinary people could easily afford it. In the past, the villagers who had difficulties at home would grit their teeth and buy a half a catty of pork meat to satisfy their children's hunger during the New Year's. Now, they switched to buying braised pig's head meat or intestines that were rich and fatty.

The dishes with limited sales were sold out as soon as they opened every day. This was still the case when they implemented the rule that everyone could only buy two. If they had let the customers buy all they wanted, it was likely that one person would buy all the limited dishes in the shop for that day. Even with these rules in place, there were still many families who sent several servants to line up at one time. These families did not lack money and had plenty of servants. It was better to prepare more roasted chickens and ducks so that when they had guests over, they would have face.

Yu Xiaocao asked Yangliu to go to the back kitchen to help her Oldest Aunt. She took the balance from the pickled food shop and began to help to weigh the braised food. As a result, sales were much faster. There was light snow outside, and the scene of those who were waiting in line to buy braised foods made Yu Xiaocao feel sympathy for those customers.

At this time, a carriage passed by the doors. The guard beside the carriage was a big man. With bright eyes, he glanced at the long line in front of the shop, seeming to be even more on guard.

"Stop, stop, stop!" A familiar voice came from inside, "So fragrant! This is the smell of braised pig's head meat! This smells more authentic than the work of an Imperial Chef; it's clearly the work of that lass from the Yu Family! Dequan, go and see where the fragrance is coming from."

The white-haired old man without a beard, who was around fifty years of age and was beside the carriage, jumped off his horse. His action was nimbler than that of a young man. The old man walked by the group and went straight to the doors of The Yu's Braised Food Shop. "Line up, line up! You're not a local right? You must line up first if you want to buy braised foods," shouted some people in the back who were unhappy.

The old man ignored them and looked up at the sign above the door and then glanced inside the shop. His eyes first stopped on Yu Xiaolian who was collecting money. A moment later, he turned to Yu Xiaocao, who was smiling and weighing braised pig's head meat for an old woman.

He didn't alert the people in the shop and turned around, going back to the side of the carriage. He bent his body and bowed to the person opposite him. In a slightly shrill voice, he said, "Master, you guessed right. It's a shop opened by Miss Yu. Both sisters are busy in the shop!"

"Haha! When did that girl open a shop in Jinwei Prefectural City? And she didn't even tell me, the Fifth Lord, a word. Fortunately, we didn't go on the small backroads or I would've gone to Dongshan Village for nothing." A strong hand came out from the inside of the carriage. On his thumb was a crystal clear jade ring.

The carriage's curtain was lifted and an old man with a chubby round face came out. He had white hair yet a childlike complexion and a long beard. He was wearing fine clothing and had an extraordinary presence.

The white haired old man without a beard held an oiled-paper umbrella above the old man wearing fine clothes. The old man wearing fine clothes strolled up to the braised food shop and shouted at Yu Xiaocao, who was engrossed in serving customers, "Lass, give me half a pig's head, and a pair of pig's ears. Slice the pig ears and mix them with red oil..."

The people in line behind him didn't yell at him to line up as they had at the other old man after they saw his extraordinary presence.

Yu Xiaocao heard the sound and found it familiar. She almost threw her balance when she lifted her head up. Oh my goodness, how did this Big Buddha come to this prefectural city? She opened her mouth, looked at the emperor emeritus's clothes and the people around him, and swallowed the title 'Emperor Emeritus' forcefully. She squeezed out a smile and asked "Fifth... Fifth Lord, why are you not in the capital at this time?"

"Argh...." The emperor emeritus sighed with a look of helplessness as he held his stomach. "I didn't want to run around in the cold either! The gluttonous insects in my stomach are making trouble, so I didn't have any other ideas!"

Dequan, who was beside him, quietly reminded, "Master, it's cold outside. Why don't you greet Miss Xiaocao inside?"

"Speaking out of turn! My body and bones are still fine! In the old days, in order to win an ambush, I waited in the snow for three full days. I caught the enemy by surprise and gained a complete victory— achoo!" Before he finished speaking, the emperor emeritus let out a big sneeze.

Yu Xiaocao quickly put down the balance in her hands, came out of the shop, and invited the old man into the yard.

"Fifth Lord, warm up on the kang bed first in the guest room. I'll cook you a bowl of ginger soup." Yu Xiaocao originally wanted to invite them into the living room, but the conditions of the courtyard were limited. There wasn't a heated wall in the living room, so it was as cold as outside. Without any other options, she had to invite them into the guest room.

The kang bed in the guest room was so hot that the emperor emeritus took off his shoes and sat down with a comfortable sigh. He spoke to Dequan, who was waiting on him at the side, "Dequan, we can't refuse to be old. Even with a brazier in the carriage, people will still get sick. Aigh...You should take off your shoes and warm up by the kang bed."

"This servant doesn't dare..." Dequan was an old eunuch who had served the emperor emeritus for decades. He was very considerate in his daily services but he had a more old-fashioned personality.

The emperor emeritus cut him off with a glance, smiled, and said, "Why do you not dare? Do you have foot odor and are afraid of suffocating me?"

Dequan responded to the emperor emeritus's joke in a flat voice, "Those with diseases or a strong body odor can't enter the Imperial Palace to serve!"

"Hold it! It's been decades, how could I still not know you? Come, this is an order! If you also get a cold, who will serve me? I'm not used to being served by other people!" After the emperor emeritus abdicated, he became more and more easy-going. In his eyes, social statuses were just a fart!

Dequan was deeply moved. Seeing the emperor emeritus's firm manner, he solemnly thanked his master. He took off his shoes and sat down at the far end of the Kang. The emperor emeritus threw over a blanket for him to cover his legs with.

Dequan was so devoted that he developed rheumatism in the legs in his earlier years. These two days, the stubborn old eunuch wasn't willing to ride in the carriage with him and rode on a horse in the snow and wind, so it must've been hard.

After covering his legs with the blanket, Dequan felt the kindness of his master in his heart again. At that time, after the collapse of the previous dynasty, he was sent to the palace to wait for a chance to kill the emperor emeritus who was still the emperor at the time. However, the master never treated him as a slave and instead treated him as an equal, with respect all the time. Even if the master guessed that he had ulterior motives, he was still valued...With time, even a stone heart would be warmed! He betrayed his former master and followed his current master wholeheartedly. It had been thirty years...He had never regretted his decision and even felt glad at the choice he had made!

"Cough cough cough...." The emperor emeritus coughed, interrupting Dequan's recollections. He hurried off the kang bed and poured a cup of warm water from the teapot, serving his master the drink.

Dequan looked at his master's face and said worriedly, "Master, we didn't bring an imperial physician with us on this trip. This servant will go inquire where the most famous doctor is in the prefectural city!"

The emperor emeritus waved a hand and shook his head, "No! Didn't we buy Tongren Medicine Hall's medicinal pills? I'll take a cold and cough pill and be fine! It's just a small cold, it won't beat this old man yet!"

Yu Xiaocao finished cooking the ginger soup and had added a drop of mystic-stone water before bringing it over. Seeing the pills in Dequan's hands, she hesitated for a moment and said, "Fifth Lord, can you let this ordinary girl take your pulse? Medicine is three parts poison. Although this pill is good, it can't be casually taken!"

"Haha....cough cough cough." The emperor emeritus coughed for a while. He looked at Yu Xiaocao and said with a smile, "I almost forgot that the legendary Doctor Yu is still here!"

Fields of Gold Chapter 374 - A Pie in the Sky

Yu Xiaocao seriously checked his pulse and said, "Fifth Lord, you have slight symptoms of a cold. You don't need to take any pills, but did you bring Tongren Medicine Hall's cough syrup?"

The emperor emeritus glared at her with his large bell-like eyes, which looked quite scary, "This lord and the people around me are all grown adults, so why would I have such a thing? Aren't those syrups for children?"

Yu Xiaocao explained, “The syrups are mostly made of relatively mild drugs and don't have any side effects. It's effective for treating mild cold and coughing. Fifth Lord, you have a strong body, so you can quickly recover after drinking cough syrup. Why would you eat bitter pills and spoil your appetite?”

The emperor emeritus, Zhu Huaiyong, thought about it and felt that the little girl's words sounded quite reasonable. It didn't matter what kind of medication he took, as long as it worked quickly and didn't delay him from enjoying delicious food.

After Zhu Huaiyong drank a sip of the syrup, he rinsed the sweetness within his mouth with warm water. Then he eagerly said, “Lass, quickly cut up some pig head meat and pig ears for me. Dequan, take out the wine that I told you to bring along. To drink wine and eat cold pig head meat, that feeling is... even better than living as an immortal!”

With a stern expression, Dequan looked at Yu Xiaocao and asked, “Miss Xiaocao, with my master's health, can he eat such greasy food and drink wine?”

Without waiting for Yu Xiaocao's reply, Zhu Huaiyong glared at him with his large bull-like eyes and shouted, “Why can't I? It's just a small cold. I've already drunk ginger soup and taken the medication. Didn't you hear what Lass Xiaocao said? My illness will get better soon! Dequan, stop wasting time and quickly go get the wine!!”

Dequan's feet didn't move at all, and his eyes were still focused on Xiaocao. Yu Xiaocao smiled at him and said, “He can eat meat, but he can't drink any alcohol at all!”

Seeing that the emperor emeritus wanted to say something, she continued, “Drinking alcohol is the most taboo thing for one to do when ill. If the illness becomes more serious, I'm afraid that, in the future, even eating meat will be forbidden and you will need to eat a light diet...”

When Zhu Huaiyong heard this, he quickly let go of his desire to drink. He didn't want to be a little white rabbit—be a vegetarian—under Dequan's supervision!

It was about time for lunch now. Yu Xiaocao cut up a small plate of pig head meat, which consisted of more lean meat than fatty meat, and mixed it with minced garlic and sesame oil. Responding to his

request, she also made a plate of pig ear strips with chili oil and cut half a roasted chicken. After that, she stir-fried several vegetable dishes and placed them all on a kang table.

Zhu Huaiyong complained about the lean meat of the pig head meat, but he unreservedly wrapped the pig head meat within a steamed bun and ate it in big mouthfuls. He devoured all the meat dishes on the table and drank a big bowl of soup, but he didn't eat much of the vegetable dishes. After he finished eating, he rubbed his belly with contentment and lay down to rest on the kang bed.

Yu Xiaocao also prepared a sumptuous meal for Head Steward Dequan and the imperial bodyguards. Most of the dishes were the braised food from the shop and a few stir-fried dishes. Everyone was very satisfied with her cooking. Originally, it was quite a difficult task to accompany their master on a trip in December. However, when the imperial bodyguards found out that their master wanted to go to Dongshan Village, they competed fiercely for this opportunity in private. None of the imperial bodyguards who had tried Yu Xiaocao's cooking didn't miss and yearn for it.

Yu Xiaocao had used mystic-stone water to make the soup that the emperor emeritus drank. Therefore, when Zhu Huaiyong woke up from his sleep, his entire body felt comfortable and refreshed. His fatigue from the trip was also gone.

Zhu Huaiyong, who had filled his stomach and rested, called Yu Xiaocao over and discussed with her, "Lass, the business of your braised food shop in the prefectural city is doing very good ah! Are there any plans to open a branch shop?"

Yu Xiaocao thought about it and seriously answered, "We're seriously understaffed here, so we can barely manage one shop! Where would we get the energy to manage another shop?"

Zhu Huaiyong widened his bull-like eyes and smacked the table, "Manpower? This lord has it ah! What do you think about this? I'll provide the workers, storefront, and money, while you provide the skills. Let's collaborate to open a braised food shop in the capital. You don't have to worry about anything, other than teaching the chefs to make the braised pig head meat to taste exactly like yours. You don't even have to come to the shop. You can take all the profits; I won't take a single coin!!"

'What? Emperor Emeritus, are you a fool? Or do you have so much money that you don't know how to spend it? You're providing the money, people, and storefront, as well as also doing all the work. Yet you're giving away all the profit and not taking a single copper coin? Did such a good matter like a pie-in-the-sky really happen to me?'

Yu Xiaocao slightly hesitated, and then asked, "Fifth Lord, didn't I already give you the recipes for braised food? The imperial chefs in the palace have already learned the method of making braised pig head meat, so why do you still want to open a store?"

When Zhu Huaiyong heard her mention those disappointing imperial chefs, he got angry, "Don't bring it up! When you were in the palace, the braised food that the imperial chefs made was still acceptable. But, after you left and there wasn't anyone supervising them, their cooking skills instantly decreased! Yet they're still claimed that they made it according to your recipe. Wouldn't that make you angry too?"

"Eh... Perhaps they're used to cooking exquisite and elegant food, so they still have a slight sense of disdain and resistance towards coarse dishes like braised pig head meat and offals. Mentality determines craftsmanship. So that might be why they can't meet Fifth Lord's standards, right?" Yu Xiaocao was very clear about the real reason, but she had to work hard to think of an excuse for the imperial chefs.

After thinking about it, Zhu Huaiyong completely agreed with her. He was so angry that he wanted to harshly reproach those arrogant and self-important imperial chefs.

Yu Xiaocao giggled and said, "Fifth Lord, have you never suspected that I might have given you a fake recipe, or held something back?"

Zhu Huaiyong glanced at her and firmly stated, "You won't! Your guts are even smaller than an ant, so you don't have the courage to play tricks with me. Besides, you personally taught those guys in the palace. Under your guidance, they were clearly able to make delicious tasting braised pig head meat. As soon as you left, there was something wrong with the taste. Those old fellows must be loafing on the job!! This won't do. Lass, you must cooperate with me and open up a braised food shop! Otherwise, this lord would have to run all the way to the prefectural city or Dongshan Village in order to authentic braised pig head meat!! I'm getting old and can't endure such trouble..."

'Tsk! He is even using the 'tactic of mourning soldiers'! Emperor Emeritus, this isn't the battlefield, so your tactics won't work here!'

"Since Fifth Lord already said that, I can't tactlessly ignore your kindness, right? Then it's settled. Selecting the location, renovation, hiring, management, and procurement... I won't interfere with any of those matters. I'm only responsible for training the cooks! But, I'm not a greedy person, so let's split 50-

50!” Yu Xiaocao thought that the emperor emeritus' proposal was good, but she didn't feel at ease. If she pulled the emperor emeritus onto the same boat, then no one would dare cause trouble for them.

“Sure! As expected, this lord didn't misjudge you. You're such a kind and righteous girl! I'll go back tomorrow to make the arrangement and strive to open the shop in December...”

Emperor Emeritus, weren't you being too impatient? It was already the tenth day of December. When you got back to the capital, you would have to choose the location, renovate the shop, and so on. Wouldn't that need at least two to three months to be completed?

Yu Xiaocao never expected that this wasn't an idea that the emperor emeritus suddenly came up with. Instead, he had long settled on a storefront, which was used to be the location of a long-established pastry shop. He forcibly exchanged the storefront with them by giving them a store that was located at an even better area and worth a higher price. He also compensated them with a lot of money for delaying their work.

By the time Yu Xiaocao was taken to the capital on the twentieth of December, the storefront was already ready for operations after being slightly fixed up. In addition to the oven, the back kitchen also had six stoves and various kitchenware were available. The staff was already in place, and they were just waiting for her, the 'main chef', to come over!

For this visit to the capital, Yu Xiaocao also brought along Yangliu, a maidservant who was obsessed with cooking, and her older twin sister, Yu Xiaolian. Yu Xiaolian had already mastered the skill of braising food, and the braised food she made tasted even more authentic than Yu Xiaocao's. It would be a waste not to use these free helpers.

Yu Xiaocao wandered around in the kitchen, and then went to look at the well in the backyard. She asked the little divine stone to turn the well water into mystic-stone water, and she also did the same for the water in the vats. She arranged Yu Xiaolian to teach the chefs, who were sent by the emperor emeritus, how to make braised food. Xiaolian had strict control over the ratio of the seasonings, as well as the heat for cooking.

Xiaocao, on the other hand, personally taught Yangliu how to make dishes like roasted chicken, roasted duck, salted duck, smoked duck, and more. Then she taught the recipes to the other chefs. Anyway, the emperor emeritus assured her that these chefs were trustworthy, and they would never leak the recipes. In order to not compete with Zhenxiu Restaurant, she specially requested to limit the sales of dishes that were the same or similar as the dishes sold at Zhenxiu Restaurant.

After being busy for two days, the shop that the emperor emeritus personally set up was finally ready for business. Originally, he had prepared open the shop in a low-key manner by just setting off a string of firecrackers and uncovering the plaque. Unbeknownst to him, many people had started watching him since he exchanged storefronts with the pasty shop. The news that the emperor emeritus had nothing to do and decided to open a store swiftly spread throughout the upper-level circle in the capital. All their preparation before the opening of the braised food shop were being watched by countless eyes in the dark.

On the day of the opening, an endless stream of high-ranking officials, aristocrats, and retired old officials had come. With a stern expression on his face, Head Steward Dequan greeted all the guests for the emperor emeritus. Fortunately, these people, with the exception of the old officials who had made great contributions when following the emperor emeritus, all tactfully left after leaving a gift.

From morning to noon, there was no stop in the people coming to congratulate them. Head Steward Dequan and the eunuchs who worked under him had to receive so many presents that their arms were tired. Even the one in the palace had joined in the fun and wrote a phrase of congratulation. He had Su Ran send it over, saying that hanging it up in the shop would give his imperial grandfather more face. Other people would definitely feel greatly honored to receive something personally written by the emperor, however, the emperor emeritus felt that his grandson was being too stingy. He had so many valuable goods, yet he only gifted him with some scribblings!

The matters outside weren't things that a little farmer girl like Yu Xiaocao needed to be concerned about. She just dutifully stayed in the back kitchen to teach cooking. She strived to ensure that these chefs could undertake the task without her help so that she could leave earlier and go back to celebrate the New Years with her family!

Fortunately, these chefs weren't stupid. They had a solid foundation and learned quickly. After the third day of opening, most of the chefs could do the work on their own. After the Yu sisters supervised the kitchen for a few more days, they felt that they could completely let go of their hands for the chefs to cook themselves. Even the emperor emeritus, who had a picky tongue, felt that the chefs could graduate from their apprenticeship, and finally agreed to let the sisters leave.

When they left, the sisters strolled around the capital under the protection of two imperial bodyguards. They bought many goods that couldn't be bought in the prefectural city and Tanggu Town, and prepared gifts for everyone in the family. They finally returned to Dongshan Village on December 28th. The family was pleasantly surprised to see the sisters because they thought that they wouldn't be able to return for the New Years!

Fields of Gold Chapter 375 - Rejoice

After a joyous and lively New Year, spring quietly approached. In the Yu Residence's courtyard at the foot of Dongshan Village's West Mountain, there was a strong scent of medicine. Yingtao had already become the maidservant in charge of the pharmaceutical workshop. The sense of immaturity on her tender face had decreased quite a bit, and she appeared somewhat more dignified.

Holding a jar of boiled herbal paste, she went through the moon-shaped door that connected the West Courtyard and East Courtyard. She greeted Madam Liu with a smile, and then walked straight into the backyard.

The matrons, who were gathering early-ripening vegetables in the courtyard, all watched her until she disappeared around the corner. Ergou's wife clicked her tongue and said, "Sister, is she the maidservant that the General's Estate sent over to serve Xiaocao? Look at her appearance; she looks even more pampered than the daughter of a humble family in town. With how she looks, can she really work?"

Auntie Fugui also curled up her lips, "I've seen that girl several times, and she's always dressed up beautifully. She looked even more like a young miss than the young miss! Dahai's wife, how exactly is that girl? There are some servants who bullies their master! If she's not a good servant, don't worry about offending the general's wife and quickly send her back!!"

The other women also echoed in agreement. With a gentle smile, Madam Liu said, "You guys are thinking too much! That lass Yingtao is kind and righteous, and she's also very capable. Without her help, Xiaocao would be so busy every day that she would barely have time to rest! As for her clothes, it was distributed by the General's Household, and all the head maidservants in the estate dressed in the same way. There are many high-ranking officials and noblemen coming in and out of the General's Estate, so wouldn't the masters lose face if their servants were dressed in old and shabby clothes?"

Auntie Fugui sighed and said, "Ay! Even the maidservants of a rich family dress and eat better than us. The comparison really makes one angry ah!"

Yingtao didn't know that she had become the topic of discussion of others. At this time, she was standing in the rear courtyard in a daze. Under a pink peach blossom tree, there was a young maiden dressed in a pink spring dress and her hair was tied up in two small buns with blunt bangs. With her neck craned up, she had a serious expression on her fair, jade-like face. She stretched out her hands, stood on tiptoe, and tried to pluck the beautiful peach blossom flowers.

"Young Miss, the herbal paste for muscle relaxation and blood circulation is ready, aren't you going to check it out?" Yingtao, who admired the picturesque view, was unwilling to disturb the beautiful scene

in front of her. Young Miss's homemade skincare cream was indeed effective. 'Soft and smooth' and 'fair and delicate' were perfect descriptions for her young miss's skin.

Yingtao freed a hand to touch her own face, and she was very satisfied by the smooth feeling. No matter what her young miss made, she would immediately share them with her. For example, Young Miss had given her a bottle of the skincare cream before she even used it herself (Author's note: Actually, her young miss is using her as a guinea pig.). She heard that the pearl powder inside could help brighten and smoothen one's complexion. Sure enough, she had only used it for a little over a month, but her skin had a lot smoother. Her skin, which had gotten tanner from the sea breeze, had also brightened up a lot.

It was really a blessing for her to be able to serve Young Miss. She was already promoted to a supervisory maidservant at the mere age of fifteen. The young miss trusted her so much that she left her in charge of the pharmaceutical workshop, and all the formulas of the pills and herbal pastes were in her hands. Every day, she ate and used nearly all the same things as her young miss. Although she had slightly more work than when she was at the General's Estate, she felt very fulfilled and happy to be busy in such a manner!!

She felt even more fortunate that she had come out of the General's Estate with Yangliu, and volunteered to come to Dongshan Village, which the other maidservants had described as a remote, backward village. Based on their qualifications in the estate, she didn't know how long it would take for them to reach their current achievements. Now, she was in charge of the pharmaceutical workshop, while Yangliu was managing the kitchen of the braised food shop in the capital. It was very rare among the noble household to have fifteen to sixteen year old maidservants supervising a dozen or so subordinates. Would Wutong and Pipa regret not coming out with them if they found out about their current situation?

As Yu Xiaocao turned around, the breeze blew behind her and the pink flower petals on the tree scattered onto the ground. She was full of spiritual energy as if she was a peach blossom fairy, or a flower spirit.

She carried a small basket full of peach blossom petals and walked over to Yingtao. She moved closer to smell the herbal paste in the jar, and then nodded her head and said, "Yingtao, you're getting better and better. I only wrote down the prescription for this herbal paste and dictated the process of making it, but you have made the exact paste! It seems like you have talent in making medicine! I was right about you. It was indeed a wise decision to hand the pharmaceutical workshop to you!"

Yingtao revealed a bashful smile and her almond-shaped eyes were full of happiness, “Young Miss, it was you who had taught me well! People often say that servants resemble their master. Doctor Sun also praised Young Miss for being talented in medicine. As your servant, I can't drag you down, right?”

Yu Xiaocao giggled and said, “That little mouth of yours really knows how to speak ah. I'm very satisfied with your flattery! Alright, after sealing the jars of this batch of herbal paste, send them to the Tongren Medicine Hall in town. After that, you can rest for a period of time. There's no end to making money, so you must balance work and rest. If you fall ill from fatigue, where am I supposed to find such a good right-hand man?”

When she heard that her young miss thought of her as her right-hand man, Yingtao was instantly full of energy. If she had a loyalty indicator on her forehead, it must be rising right now. Young Miss had never treated her like a servant, and she had never given her orders in a commanding tone. When her young miss made tasty food, she would give her a share. In the Yu Family, she felt the warmth of family, as if she was also an indispensable part of the Yu Family!!

“Young Miss, Young Miss!! There's a group of people and horses outside of the village. Among them, there's a carriage pulled by four horses. It looks very big and beautiful ah!!” A young girl, who was dressed in coarse cloth, yelled as she tottered over from outside. Her hair was tied into two braids, and she had slightly tanned skin.

“Acting so recklessly! Where are your manners! With your behavior, if we're at the General's Estate, you would have already been punished numerous times!! Erya, if you continue to act like this, how am I supposed to trust you to serve Young Miss?” Yingtao brought forth the imposing force of a head maidservant and chided the young girl.

The little girl named Erya was a maidservant who was bought by Yu Xiaocao beside the ox and horse market at the beginning of spring. There was a market formed spontaneously beside the ox and horse market. It was a place where there was no lack of people selling children and women. Erya's mother was seriously ill, and they needed the money from selling her to save her life. Yu Xiaocao paid five taels to buy this thirteen or fourteen year old girl, having her help the family do chores at home.

Erya wasn't afraid of her kind and amiable young miss. All the masters in the family... treated her very well. It was just this Yingtao who scolded her every time they met, as if Older Sister Yingtao was never satisfied with anything that she did. Erya was slightly stunned by Yingtao's stern expression. She looked timidly at her young miss in hope that she could help her.

“Alright, Yingtao, we're not at the General's Estate, so there's no need to be so strict. Relax a little, lest everyone feels uncomfortable!” As expected, Yu Xiaocao spoke up.

Yingtao looked at her young miss with slight aggrievement and said, “Young Miss, the mistress said that, when you're a few years older, they will take you back to the General's Estate and help you find a good husband. Since Erya is a maidservant that you bought, she will naturally follow you to the estate. If we don't change her bad habits now, she will definitely cry in the future!”

Yu Xiaocao glared at her and said, “Who said that I must get married in the capital? There are so many rules in those noble and wealthy families. 'The courtyard of a noble household is as deep as the sea', so I don't want to make trouble for myself! I have already thought about it. In the future, I'll build a manor in the outskirts of Tanggu Town. I'll buy and rent out all the surrounding land and rent them out so that I can be a carefree landlady! After my death, the manor and farmlands will be rewarded to my loyal servants to thank them for taking care of me in old age and burying me when I die...”

“Young Miss, what are you saying!! Which young maiden doesn't get married when she reaches an appropriate age? This won't do. I need to tell Madam Liu to have a word with you!!” Yingtao stomped her feet and went back to the front courtyard with a pout.

Seeing her figure disappear in the backyard, Erya became lively again. With a flattering expression, she moved closer to Yu Xiaocao and giggled foolishly, “Young Miss, Erya will serve you well! I'm not very greedy, so at that time, you can just give me five mu of farmland and two tiled-roof houses!”

Yu Xiaocao glared at her and sullenly said, “I, your young miss, will live a long life, so you better stay alive!”

Although Erya was a little naïve, she wasn't a fool. She pondered over her young miss's words. 'That's right! I'm two years older than Young Miss. By the time Young Miss died in bed due to old age, I might have died a long time ago. Even if I'm fortunate enough to be alive, I would already be in my seventies or eighties. I wouldn't be able to farm even if I got the land ah!' Erya's face scrunched up, and she looked as if she was 'grieving the loss of her parents'.

“Alright! Even if you passed away earlier, aren't your children and grandchildren still around? At that time, the rewards that belong to you will be given to your descendants. Do you really have to look like someone in your family died?” Yu Xiaocao scolded her for being hopeless in her heart.

When Erya heard this, she immediately became happy and said, "That's right! When I can't serve Young Miss anymore, I can have my daughter continue to serve you ah!!"

"How are you so certain that you'll give birth to a daughter in the future?" Yu Xiaocao teased her.

Erya replied matter-of-factly, "I will just continue to have children until I get a daughter!! Our village's Old Zhang's family had nine sons in a row before they finally got a daughter. I won't be as unlucky as them, right?"

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes, 'Most people longed for sons, yet you won't give up until you get a daughter!' This shameless girl hadn't even reached marriageable age yet, but she was already clamoring about giving birth to a daughter. Was this really okay?

"Oh right, you just mentioned something about a caravan of horses and horse carriage?" Erya was slightly stunned by Yu Xiaocao's sudden change of topic.

"It's the first time that I have seen such a large convoy and such a luxurious horse carriage. There must be a high-ranking official passing by our Dongshan Village!!" Erya had only arrived in Dongshan Village at the beginning of spring, so she didn't know that Imperial Prince Jing's Household had a mountain manor on the West Mountain. Thus, she was very surprised by what she saw.

Fields of Gold Chapter 376 - Devilish

"Cao'er, Royal Prince Yang is here..." As the master and servant talked about the grand carriage procession, a voice of greeting sounded in the front courtyard. Before Madam Liu had finished speaking, a tall figure had already walked into the backyard.

He was dressed in an ice-blue robe inlaid with gold embroidery at the border and looked like a person made of flawless jade. Even without excessive movement, he still gave off a sense of nobility, prominence, and aloofness. His pair of slightly slanted eyes were as clear as a black obsidian immersed in water. His pure pupils and the bewitching shape of his eyes were merged wonderfully into an extremely beautiful style...

"Wow!! Young Miss, it was him. He's the person who was riding on the tall, black horse in front of the procession!! Could it be that they were heading to our house?" Erya was first stunned by the gorgeous appearance of the man in front of her, and then her mind suddenly cleared up and she started screaming again.

Yu Xiaocao smacked away her finger that was pointing at Royal Prince Yang, and pretended to scold her, "No manners! Aren't you going to quickly ask the royal prince for forgiveness?"

"Pri... Prince?" In the plays, those who offended a prince would be killed. Erya immediately dropped down on her knees and kowtowed several times, banging her head on the ground. With the strength that she used, her forehead had bruised after kowtowing a few times, "Your Highness, please spare my life! Your Highness, please spare my life!!"

Yu Xiaocao didn't know whether she should laugh or cry. She put down the basket full of flower petals in her hands and stopped her from kowtowing. She whispered to Zhu Junyang, "Quickly say that you forgive her! This lass is slow-witted. If she continues to kowtow, she will faint."

Zhu Junyang glanced disdainfully at the ugly girl who was struggling to free herself from her young miss's grasp to continue kowtowing to him. He pursed his thin lips, which were as pale as water, and said, "Where did you find this dumb girl? If you need more people to serve you, this prince can gift you with a few maidservants! Any random maidservant in our prince's estate will be more clever than her."

When Erya heard this, she continued to kowtow with a crying voice, "Don't drive Erya away. I will take good care of Young Miss. If Young Miss tells me to go to the south, I would never go to the west. If Young Miss tells me to hit a dog, I definitely wouldn't chase a chicken..."

Yu Xiaocao burst out in laughter and said, "Yeah right! If I told you to hit Little White, would you dare? Even if it was Little Black, I doubt you even have the guts to touch him!"

Erya looked up at Yu Xiaocao and said with a distressed face, "Young Miss, that's because the two dogs in our family are too fierce, and they're even bigger than me. Can... Can we replace them with the dogs raised by your eldest granduncle's family?"

"So you think Eldest Granduncle's dogs are easy to bully? Why are you provoking Dahuang and the others for no reason at all?" Yu Xiaocao really didn't know what to do with her. She pondered if Erya could learn something if she handed her to Yingtao.

Zhu Junyang glared at the dumb maidservant and emitted 'cold air' at her. Erya couldn't endure the pressure that Royal Prince Yang gave her, so she dejectedly looked for an excuse and went to the West

Courtyard. Older Sister Yingtao had medicine. She needed to treat the bruise on her forehead with ointment for promoting blood circulation and dissolving bruises.

When the eyesore finally left, Zhu Junyang slightly raised his phoenix eyes to look at the graceful young maiden in front of him. After not seeing her for an entire winter, the lass had grown a little taller, and she was appearing more like a teenage girl. Some of the immaturity on her small face, which was as tender as a silky white tofu, had also faded. She wore a pink dress and looked slightly more charming than the peach blossom flowers. The 'heart disease' that hadn't acted up for the whole winter seemed like it might recur.

“Young Royal Prince, did you have any romantic encounters while staying in the capital for several months? Did Princess Consort Jing force you to go on blind dates? Your nominal age is nineteen after the New Year. Many of the noble young masters in the capital, who are around your age, probably have sons who run all over the place, right?”

Yu Xiaocao looked at Zhu Junyang, who looked more and more devilishly handsome the older he was, and wondered what kind of girl was worthy of such a seductively charming face. She also silently mourned for his future wife, 'To have a husband who's even more beautiful than herself, that must be so much pressure ah!'

Upon hearing her questions, Zhu Junyang immediately pulled a long face and snorted, “Are you really that eager to see this prince go on blind dates and get married? This prince can't stand those commonplace women!! I'm warning you, don't provoke me on purpose. Otherwise, this prince will get someone to flog you.”

In Yu Xiaocao's eyes, Zhu Junyang's threat was like Little White baring his teeth at others—they were just putting on a front. However, she could tell that Zhu Junyang didn't want others to mention this topic. She laughed and said, “It's a matter of course for people to get married, so what's there to be embarrassed about?”

“From which eye do you see that this prince is embarrassed?” With a dark expression, Zhu Junyang started emitting 'cold air' towards Yu Xiaocao, but, unfortunately, she was immune to it.

Yu Xiaocao shrugged her shoulders. In any case, the important matter of the royal prince's marriage wasn't something that a little peasant girl should be concerned about. She inwardly made a silent tribute for his mother, Princess Consort Jing—it must be so tiring for Her Highness to have such a troublesome son.

“Oh right! How's the red-clothed beauty who I met in the capital last time? Is she still staying at your house?” Yu Xiaocao's heart was burning with the desire to gossip, so she disregarded Royal Prince Yang's anger and fearlessly asked.

“Beauty? What red-clothed beauty? Can that ugly brat Jiang Zixian be considered a beauty? Are you blind!” Zhu Junyang scolded her, and then continued, “My lady mother had sent her back to the Jiang Family a long time ago! She doesn't have anything to do with this prince anymore, so don't put us together. Do you understand?”

Yu Xiaocao raised her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders. That girl Jiang Zixian indeed wasn't a very good person. She feigned an innocent appearance, but she wasn't really how she appeared. She also had a very bad temper, and she was very arrogant and willful. It would be so troublesome to have such a wife ah!

Seeing that the lass had obediently closed her mouth, Zhu Junyang shifted his gaze to the basket on the ground and asked, “Why do you need so many flower petals? How many peaches will be ruined because of this ah?”

“What do you know? These are all male flowers, which don't bear fruits! You just learned something, right? Quickly help me. Let's pick some more to make peach blossom cakes, peach blossom tea, and peach blossom wine!” Yu Xiaocao looked at Zhu Junyang's long limbs and felt that it must be very convenient to use them, so she used food as a bait to get him to help her.

It seemed like Yu Xiaocao was the only one who dared to tell the cold-faced god of death, Royal Prince Yang, to work for her! Zhu Junyang glared at the little lass, and then he stretched out his hands, accepting his fate. Under Yu Xiaocao's guidance, he plucked the peach blossom on the branch. Xiaocao had found this peach tree by chance in the valley and transplanted it over last year. After being irrigated with mystic-stone water every day, the flowers bloomed brilliantly this year. She wondered how the fruits would turn out!

When Meixiang, Princess Consort Jing's maidservant, came over, she saw two figures, one blue and the other pink, standing side by side amongst the flying peach blossom petals. The figure in blue was tall and upright, while the figure in pink appeared petite and delicate. With her clear and lively voice, the petite figure pointed in varying locations as she ordered the tall, blue figure to pick the flower petals on the branches. The blue figure let her have her way and did as she ordered...

Meixiang suddenly felt like she was watching a little pink fox ordering a lofty, loyal dog to work. No matter what request the little fox made, the loyal dog wouldn't get angry, and he also had to coax the cute little fox.

Meixiang couldn't bear to ruin this harmonious moment, so she just stood there in silence. In the end, it was Yu Xiaocao who had turned around and saw her out of the corner of her eyes. She asked strangely, "Older Sister Meixiang, when did you come? Did Princess Consort Jing need something?"

With a bright smile on her face, Meixiang looked at her family's young royal prince and the young daughter of the Yu Family and said, "Her Highness has already settled down on the mountain. She told this servant to ask if the royal prince will go back for lunch."

Yu Xiaocao looked at Zhu Junyang and figured that he intended to bum a meal at her house, so she quickly said, "Young Royal Prince, I'm letting you know beforehand that I didn't know you were coming over today so I didn't prepare anything special. If you want to stay, you can only eat vegetable dishes for lunch!"

Zhu Junyang looked at her obliquely with his charming phoenix eyes. When he saw her dazed look, he was in a good mood and said, "How stingy! You're reluctant to even let this prince eat one meal at your house! When you ordered this prince to pick the peach blossom petals earlier, didn't you say that you're going to make peach blossom cakes and peach blossom wine for me to try?"

Yu Xiaocao sighed and said, "It's not that I'm being stingy, but it's really 'even a clever woman can't cook without rice' ah! Making peach blossom tea and brewing peach blossom wine aren't things that can be done in a short period of time. If you really want to stay, I can make peach blossom cakes for you to eat. However, I know that you don't really like sweets. Peach blossom cakes have the effects of detoxification and beautifying. I'm afraid that your looks will be greatly enhanced after eating it. Can't you leave a way out for women?"

Meixiang was terrified in her heart. 'She actually dared to joke about the royal prince's appearance. Miss Yu, do you really think that you have nine lives?' The young prince loathed others complimenting his looks. The son of the imperial tutor had privately said that Royal Prince Yang looked pretty. When her young master found out about this, he beat him up until his own mother couldn't recognize him. With Miss Yu's small body, she didn't know if she could even take the strength of her young master's pinky finger. What should she do? Should she go back and ask Her Highness for backup?

In the midst of her hesitation and panic, she hadn't expected that her young master didn't react in his usual manner. Touching his own face, Zhu Junyang looked seriously at Yu Xiaocao and asked a question that made Meixiang's jaw drop, "Xiaocao, what do you think about this prince's looks? Be honest!!"

Yu Xiaocao also carefully looked at the young royal prince's facial features in a serious manner. She solemnly nodded and said, "Gorgeous, enchanting, exceedingly beautiful, and unrivaled! If I have to sum up your appearance in one word, I would use the term—devilish!!"

With every word Yu Xiaocao said, Zhu Junyang's face would darken even more. When he heard the word 'devilish', the young royal prince's face was as dark as black ink. Before he got angry, Yu Xiaocao spoke up again, "You're the one who told me to say it, so why are you getting angry? Besides, all the words that I used are praising terms, which aren't derogatory at all. From the bottom of my heart, I feel that you, Young Royal Prince, are very good-looking and fit my beauty standard. I'm complimenting you as a very good-looking man, yet you're still unhappy ah! So unreasonable!!"

Zhu Junyang sighed heavily and asked, "Tell me the truth! Don't you think that I look too feminine and don't have any masculinity?"

"Of course not!! Young Royal Prince, with your handsome appearance and cool and indifferent aura, you have a natural imposing force. You're bursting with testosterone. How is it possible for you to lack manliness?" Hearing Yu Xiaocao's series of flattering remarks, Zhu Junyang's face looked somewhat better.

Fields of Gold Chapter 377 - Feeling Ou

t

Meixiang was astonished in her heart. Miss Yu was glib-tongued, but her young master liked her acting like this. Had it been someone else, they would have already been smacked to death, right?

"Come, let's go make peach blossom cakes!! Older Sister Meixiang, please take a seat in the front courtyard. When the peach blossom cakes are ready, you can take some back for Princess Consort Jing to have a taste. Peach blossoms can enhance one's beauty and nourish one's skin. It's the most suitable for women to eat." Meixiang was interested after hearing Yu Xiaocao's words, so she stayed back to help in the kitchen.

Yu Xiaocao kept only the petals of the flowers, and soaked the petals in a light-concentration of salt water for ten minutes. She heard from Meixiang that Princess Consort Jing had high-quality West Lake lotus root starch, which was bestowed by the Imperial Palace, so she told her to go back and ask for some.

Without a food processor, Yu Xiaocao could only take out the pestle used to grind herbs and ask Royal Prince Yang to help pound the petals into a paste state. Then she mixed it with sheep milk that had been boiled with almonds. After that, she poured it into an earthenware jar and mixed it with lotus root starch. She added powdered sugar, stirred well, and boiled it over a small fire until it turned into a thick substance. While it was being cooked, it needed to be continuously stirred in a quick motion until it turned thick and smooth. Afterwards, she poured the cooked mixture into a container to let it cool down and solidify.

After solidification, she cut it into small cubes and put a few flower petals on top. It really enhanced one's appetite to see the creamy-white peach blossom cakes decorated with pink peach blossom petals.

After that, Yu Xiaocao made peach blossom soup, which was a dessert from the drama *The Journey of Flower* in her previous life. After cooking glutinous rice and sheep milk into gruel, she sprinkled some flower petals inside. Those who liked a sweet taste could add some white sugar. The two peach blossom desserts captured the hearts of all the women, and even Madam Liu couldn't help but eat a few more pieces.

In the end, Zhu Junyang followed Meixiang back to the manor in the West Mountain. Meixiang brought back a box full of peach blossom cakes, which caused the maidservants beside the princess consort to exclaim, "Miss Yu's skills in making pastries are even better than the pastry chefs of Daoxiang Village Pastry Shop [1] in the capital. People will drool just by looking at these peach blossom cakes!"

Princess Consort Jing, who was drinking the peach blossom soup and eating the soft and fragrant peach blossom cake, couldn't help but sigh, "Which lucky brat will end up marrying this lass Xiaocao? Whoever marries her must have accumulated a great blessing from his previous life ah!"

"Humph! Her? She's not good at any of the 'three morals and four virtues', so whoever marries her will surely be angered by that mouth of hers. It would be weird if she can get married!!" Zhu Junyang suddenly felt annoyed when he heard her words, and even the flavor of the peach blossom cake in his mouth changed. Thus, he coldly made a spiteful remark.

Princess Consort Jing could feel the change in her son's mood. She looked around and came upon a realization within her heart—her silly son liked that lass, but he hadn't realized it yet. This slow-witted kid.

Princess Consort purposely argued with him, “Why wouldn't Xiaocao be able to get married? It's already outdated to use the standard of 'three morals and four virtues' to measure women. Isn't the emperor advocating for the equality of men and women? Xiaocao looks so pretty and delicate, and with her big eyes and fair skin, she definitely won't be too bad looking when she grows up.”

She paused for a moment, glanced at her youngest son, and then continued, “The little girl has a kind and honest disposition. She's innocent and cute, and has a proper sense of propriety. Moreover, she has such superb cooking skills that even the emperor emeritus can't stop praising her! She's also good at doing business. She had opened braised food shops one after another, and there's also one in the capital! When coming back, I had wanted to buy two salted ducks to bring along on the trip, but I couldn't even get in line. Ay... If we prepare the ducks and all the other ingredients tomorrow, would Xiaocao be willing to make some salted ducks for us?”

“Will she dare to not agree if this prince asked?” Zhu Junyang replied with a snort. His mood was very complicated, but he also didn't know what he was troubled about.

Princess Consort Jing blinked her eyes, which were very similar to her son's, and went on, “The lass is concerned about your identity, but you also shouldn't go too far. Don't always bully her with your power as the royal prince! Where were we again? Oh right, Xiaocao is not only good at cooking, but she's also good at tending flowers and plants. My precious flowers, which were about to die, had come back to life in her hands. They look even better than when I first bought them back!”

“Oh! That's right!! The lass also has medical skills. She had unexpectedly saved the empress's precious baby and left a good impression on the emperor and empress. She had also nourished my health back to normal. In the past, I would feel dizzy after walking a couple steps. Now, I can even walk several kilometers on the mountain road without feeling breathless. Your lord father thought that it was the fengshui on the West Mountain that heals people!”

Princess Consort Jing beamed with joy as she talked about her increasingly stronger and healthier body. Her husband said that, when he had breaks, he would take her to go sightseeing and spend some alone time together as a married couple!

“Also...” Princess Consort Jing was becoming more and more enthusiastic as she spoke. However, she was interrupted by her youngest son.

“Lady Mother, Yu Xiaocao wouldn't be a long-lost child of you and Lord Father, right? You're working so hard to praise that you're giving off the feeling of Old Wang selling melons—praising his own products!”

Zhu Junyang felt even more irritated in his heart. He also felt puzzled, 'I have already passed the age of fighting for favor ah, so why do I feel displeased when Lady Mother is praising that lass so much?'

Princess Consort glared fiercely at her youngest son. 'If Xiaocao was really my child, then you, this brat, will be single forever!! He's seriously a stinky rock who doesn't know anything about romance!! You still don't understand? Then I'll hit you with something powerful!!'

"I also want to have such a considerate and talented daughter ah! It's a pity that the lass had already been adopted by Fang Zizhen and his wife. I heard that Lady Fang is planning on bringing the lass to the capital in two years. She wants to keep the lass by her side and help her find a good husband. Xiaocao is such a clever and cute girl, and she's also very skilled. There must be a lot of humble and talented gentlemen who will discover her beauty. It might be a fierce competition ah! Would the General Estate's threshold be stomped flat by all those people?"

"The lass is only eleven or twelve years old, yet Lady Fang is already making arrangements for her. Isn't it a little too early? Besides, what good match can a little farmer girl, like her, find in the capital?" Zhu Junyang felt a flickering flame within his heart, and it was getting bigger and bigger. Feeling increasingly irritated, he had the urge to throw things and beat someone up!!

Princess Consort Jing smiled and said, "She's the general's goddaughter, and also has some face in front of the emperor and empress. The emperor emeritus also speaks highly of her... With the most important people in the palace backing her, do you really think she can't find a good husband? Last year, when she cured the young imperial prince's illness, there were already people asking me about her!"

"Who? Who's that sicko?? Xiaocao was only around the age of ten last year. She's still a child!! Is that guy a pedophile?" Zhu Junyang nearly smacked the table and jumped up. His eyes were spewing with anger, as if he wanted to go harshly beat up that disgusting guy.

Princess Consort Jing glared at him and said, "What are you saying! It was the Senior Grand Secretary's daughter-in-law who asked about Xiaocao. She has a younger son who's around the same age as Xiaocao. At a young age, he has already shown his talent in the Imperial Academy. In the future, he may be able to join the Grand Secretariat like his grandfather!!"

Zhu Junyang seldom interacted with the other noble young masters in the capital. With his brows creased together, he thought for a long time before he vaguely remembered the appearance of the outstanding grandson of the Senior Grand Secretary. He looked so weak that he could barely withstand a gust of wind, and he was also as pale as a ghost. With a dull temperament, he appeared like an old

scholar. With Xiaocao's eccentric personality, she would definitely suffocate to death if she had to be with him!

“Lady Mother, Xiaocao is still so young, so you mustn't rashly promise to help them. It's impossible to judge people by their appearance. Since you like Xiaocao so much, if she isn't happy in the future, you will definitely regret it! It's fine to wait a few more years!” Zhu Junyang strongly opposed his mother trying to be a matchmaker for Xiaocao.

“She's not that young anymore! After the age of ten, young girls mature quickly and look different each year! She will unknowingly grow into a beautiful young maiden!! I think that the Senior Grand Secretary's younger grandson is very good. He's warm and friendly, and he doesn't have that high and mighty sense of superiority. He's a rarely found good match for young girls...”

“How is he a good match!! I can push that weakling down with merely one finger, and he can be easily blown away by slightly stronger wind. Xiaocao is frequently stirring up trouble, so she should find someone who is strong and skilled in martial arts. That way, there will be someone following behind and helping her take care of all the troubles!” Zhu Junyang interrupted his lady mother's words, and his eyebrows were creased so tightly that it could kill a fly.

Princess Consort Jing secretly laughed in her heart, but pretended to agree as she nodded and said, “You're right! What kind of man is he, if he can't protect his woman?”

Before Zhu Junyang could breathe a sigh of relief, she continued, “I have a person in mind. Yang'er, what do you think about the youngest son of the Nine Gates Infantry Commander? He's about four to five years older than Xiaocao. He's tall and handsome, and even the emperor emeritus praised him for being highly skilled in martial arts! I heard that the kid is planning to participate and win first place in next year's imperial military examination!!”

“Him? He's just a loser under my hands!! If he wants to be next year's martial arts champion, he will first need to ask if I am willing to let him!!” Zhu Junyang pondered if he should sign up for next year's military examination and take that fellow down a peg or two. This prince hadn't been in the capital in recent years, and now just any random cat or dog was trying to lord over others!! Did they forget how this prince had beaten them until they cried for their parents?

“What's more, I heard that when the son of the Nine Gates Infantry Commander was fifteen, he had taken in several bed-servants. He also has a concubine. That girl Xiaocao is like an innocent little rabbit. If she married into such a family, won't she be torn apart by those tigers and wolves?” To sum it up in one sentence, 'I don't agree!!!'

Zhu Junyang didn't want to continue listening to his mother talking about how good all those noble young masters in the capital were. He stood up and warned her sternly, "Anyway, Lady Mother, don't join in and cause trouble! If someone asks you to be a matchmaker, just pretend to be ill and ignore them! That way, we can prevent that lass from living unhappily, and thus resent you in the future!!"

After he said that, he quickly left without waiting for Princess Consort Jing's reply. Zhu Junyang, who had arrived at his own courtyard, tortured the imperial bodyguards around him for the entire afternoon in the martial arts field. He drilled those guys until they cried for their parents, but it still didn't clear up his gloomy mood.

He thought of the bright and lovely young girl under the beautiful peach blossom tree. Her smile was even brighter than the sunshine, and her voice was even clearer than the mountain spring... How could he allow her beauty to be tainted by those vulgar men?

If she got married, then she wouldn't be allowed to casually meet non-related men. When he was swallowed by his dark inner demons, there would no longer be a holy golden light to lead him out of the boundless darkness. When he got shackled down by the grim coldness, there wouldn't be a smile that was as warm as the sun to warm up the deepest part of his heart...

Fields of Gold Chapter 378 - This Prince Will Accept You

He didn't know if at that time, like in his dreams, he would degenerate into a killing machine? A ruthless demon? Zhu Junyang shivered in the warm spring sun at noon. He hastily left the manor and unwittingly walked to the black brick, tiled-roof residence at the foot of the mountain.

"Your Highness, the royal prince only ate half a bowl of peach blossom soup for lunch..." When Meixiang and Lanxiang brought the lunch over, they only saw the young prince's back view and were confused about where he was going.

"Don't worry about him. He won't starve!" Princess Consort Jing was in a good mood and thus had a good appetite. After she ate a few pieces of peach blossom cakes, she also ate quite a lot for lunch.

Unknowingly, Zhu Junyang had stepped into the Yu Family's East Courtyard again. Yu Xiaocao's family was getting ready to eat lunch, so when they saw Royal Prince Yang coming in, they all stood up.

With a smile, Yu Hai rubbed his hands and asked, "Royal Prince Yang, have you eaten lunch yet? If you don't mind, would you like to eat with us?"

Zhu Junyang glanced at the table and saw that the dishes on it weren't the vegetable dishes like Yu Xiaocao had said. Steamed eggs and clams, fried yellow croaker, grilled salmon... These were all dishes that he hadn't tried before. Zhu Junyang, who was originally in a bad mood, flared up in anger again.

“Yu Xiaocao! Do you really dislike me this much? Do you hold contempt for this prince?” Zhu Junyang's tone was filled with a sense of danger.

Yu Xiaocao, whose name was suddenly called, almost choked on a fishbone. She coughed hard twice and swallowed the fish meat in her mouth. Then she quickly went to put out the fire, “What do you mean, Young Royal Prince? Uncle Shuanzhu brought the yellow croaker and salmon over after you left. As you know, if sea fish is left out for a long time, it won't be fresh anymore. So...”

“Don't make excuses! Speak!! Are you annoyed at this prince? You don't want to let me stay to eat?” Zhu Junyang was acting somewhat unreasonable for no reason at all, like a sulky child.

Yu Xiaocao stopped her family members, who wanted to come help. She said with a smile, “Your Highness, you have misunderstood! With your noble status, you have traveled far and wide and possess exceptional knowledge. So, what delicacies haven't you tried before? Your willingness to eat at our house is an acknowledgement of my cooking skills. We feel deeply honored, so why would we push away such a great honor? You're quite lucky. You came over as soon as I succeeded in making the charcoal grilled salmon with herbs...”

“If this prince didn't come today, doesn't that mean that I wouldn't be able to eat this new dish?” Zhu Junyang continued to find fault for no reason. Looking at Xiaocao's beautiful smiling face, a gloomy feeling hit his heart at the thought of how her beauty would be presented to some unknown person in the future.

Yu Xiaocao widened her eyes with a look of disbelief, “I was just planning on preparing a feast to welcome the royal prince tomorrow! This dish was prepared for tomorrow ah! Since you're here today, that's even better! Why don't you see if it suits your taste?”

After over two years of interaction, Yu Xiaocao had already gotten a good grasp of this cold-faced royal prince's temper and knew how to get rid of his anger by joking with him. But, it didn't seem to be working today!

“Stop acting in such a frivolous manner. How can you be a girl like this? With you acting like this, it would be a wonder if you can get married!!” Upon hearing Zhu Junyang's vicious remark, Madam Liu, as her mother, immediately pulled a long face. Yu Hai, who was a fool for his daughter, also glared at Royal Prince Yang with a displeased expression. Had it not been for his identity, they would have stepped forward and ripped into him already.

“That's even better! I can stay with my parents and be filial to them right by their sides. That way, I don't have to be overly cautious and restrained at someone else's house. There's also fighting with my mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and other women... I'm tired just by thinking about it!” Yu Xiaocao, on the other hand, had a nonchalant expression.

Madam Liu could no longer be concerned about Royal Prince Yang standing on the side, and chided, “What are you saying!! How can a girl not get married? If you continue to speak nonsense, I'm going to hit you!!”

Madam Liu's threat didn't have any effect on Xiaocao because she knew that her mother wouldn't be willing to harm her at all! Since she transmigrated to this small fishing village, the most gratifying thing for her was that she had parents who loved her so much and allowed her to 'make trouble', and siblings who had a harmonious relationship and helped each other.

Hearing Xiaocao's words, the anger in Zhu Junyang's heart suddenly dispersed like a deflated balloon. He said without thinking, “Don't worry. If you can't get married, then this prince will kindly take you!”

Unexpectedly, Xiaocao had a horrified expression on her face when she heard this, like she had just seen a ghost. She hastily replied, “Royal Prince, please don't! I'm very grateful, but can you use your kindness on others? This lowly commoner acts in a boorish manner and looks ugly. I don't want to tarnish your saintly image of being graceful and handsome, wise and skilled in martial arts, and unattainable!”

“It's okay, this prince doesn't mind!!” Zhu Junyang was in a bright mood and felt that it was an excellent idea to take her into his household. This lass was still too young, but it didn't matter because he had the patience to wait for her to grow up.

"I'm the one who minds!!" Yu Xiaocao noticed that Royal Prince Yang was being serious, so she spoke without thinking, which caused the Yu Hai couple and Old Yu's hearts to tremble in fright! If she offended this great lord Royal Prince Yang, the entire Yu Family wouldn't be able to take the responsibility ah!

With his eyebrows raised, Zhu Junyang stared at her seriously with his phoenix eyes and asked, "Do you think that this prince isn't good enough for you? I was personally bestowed the title of royal prince by the Emperor of the Great Ming Dynasty, and I was also granted the authority to govern a piece of land. If you consent, you will be the mistress of the entire Tanggu area. You can open a shop anywhere you want and buy land wherever you want. Even if you don't want to do anything, this prince will be able to support you! Although I'm six to seven years older than you, people often say that older men know how to pamper women more! Moreover, this prince looks pretty decent, so you won't lose face when going out with me! So in what way are you unsatisfied with me?"

Xiaocao felt another headache coming when she saw him promote himself in such a serious manner, "My Lord, you are absolutely perfect! I am the one who isn't good enough for you..."

"This prince has already said that I don't mind!!" At the beginning, when Zhu Junyang blurted out this idea, he was being slightly impulsive. However, after carefully thinking about it, it wasn't a bad idea to keep the only source of light in his life by his side. In this way, he had resolved all the troubles that he had earlier at the mountain manor.

Yu Xiaocao had the urge to bite someone. Seeing the stunned expression on the faces of her family members, she knew that she couldn't count on them. She thought about it, and then seriously said, "Young Royal Prince! You should also know how much my parents value me. They won't agree to let me be someone's concubine. You won't use your authority to force me to be your concubine, right?"

"Who said I'll take you in as a concubine?" Zhu Junyang looked at her contemptuously. If this tactless girl got married into a disordered household, she would be tortured to death in a few days. Fortunately, the inner court of the Prince Jing's Household had always been rather peaceful. His lord father had acted in an absurd manner when he was young, but, at present, his mother was his father's only woman.

After his eldest brother married his eldest sister-in-law, he had sent away all his former bed-servants. As for himself, he didn't even have a single bed-servant. He was still a virgin at the age of eighteen or nineteen. If those profligate sons of wealthy families in the capital found out about this, they would definitely laugh at him. What exactly was this stinky girl unsatisfied with?

With a foul expression, Yu Xiaocao said, “To me, the position of ranked concubine and equal wife is the same as a concubine. I have a slightly domineering temper and I like to guard things that belong to me, so I won't permit anyone to share my man!!”

The Yu Family members all covered their faces, 'This shameless girl. How old is she that she's already casually talking about men? This won't do. When the royal prince, who is suddenly acting crazy, leaves, we must properly discipline her to let her know what can be said and what can't be said!'

“That's great! This prince hates those pretentious and ill-intentioned women! It's enough to have only one woman in the inner court. If there are more, it would be a disaster to the family!!” Zhu Junyang still remembered the source of his great change in temperament—that b*tch who wanted to harm his lady mother! She normally pretended to be a pure white lotus flower, but she was actually a black-hearted snake!

Yu Xiaocao didn't know if he was really being serious. Why was he playing with her, a little peasant girl, for no reason? She wrinkled her face and tried to reject him, “Young Royal Prince, since ancient times, one's marriage is decided by the orders of the parents and the words of the matchmaker. Your marriage needs to be decided by Imperial Prince Jing and Princess Consort Jing. Aren't you being too disrespectful of our family by making such a rash proposal?”

Yu Hai finally had a chance to interject, “Cao'er is right! Had it not been for your status as a royal prince, we would have already kicked you out with a beating for your absurd behavior! Although we're just commoners, Cao'er is also a pearl in our eyes—our beloved daughter. How can we just let you take her with merely a few words?”

Zhu Junyang looked at his future father-in-law with a serious expression and nodded, “Uncle Yu is right! This fellow is being rash!! Rest assured; I will make my own decisions regarding my own marriage!! I'll immediately go write a letter to ask my lord father to come to the mountain manor. On a later day, I'll come with my parents to discuss the matter between the two families...”

“Wait! Wait a moment!!” If Yu Xiaocao continued to remain silent, then her marriage was about to be settled. She shrieked and interrupted her father and the young prince, “Young Royal Prince, please carefully reconsider and don't act on impulse. How can two people without feelings stay together for a long time?”

“Xiaocao, do you dislike me?” Zhu Junyang felt uncertain in his heart. Many of the noble young ladies in the capital, who had heard of his reputation, would always have the complex emotions of fear, panic,

and adoration when they met him. He was afraid that Xiaocao would dislike him after hearing about his past.

Yu Xiaocao shook her head, and Zhu Junyang's eyes suddenly lit up. Yu Xiaocao's head slightly ached as she looked up at the royal prince, who was suddenly in a good mood. She helplessly said, "Not disliking you doesn't mean that I like you ah! I want to be a couple who loves each other, and not a couple who always acts courteous to each other."

"As long as you don't dislike me, then it's not a big problem! Isn't there something called 'familiarity breeds fondness'? My lady mother had also only seen my lord father several times before they got married. Aren't they happily married now? At present, which noble madam in the capital doesn't envy my lady mother for having the sole love of her husband?" What Zhu Junyang didn't say was that his lord father had seen his lady mother by chance and fallen in love with her at first sight. This marriage was requested by his lord father himself!

"Not all men are as devoted as Imperial Prince Jing!" Yu Xiaocao felt very helpless. Could someone come save her? Could someone please take away this royal prince who had suddenly gone crazy!

"Like father, like son! I'm my lord father's son, so if my father can do it, then so can I!" Zhu Junyang exclaimed with determination. Although he still wasn't completely clear about his feelings toward this lass, he had finally met a girl who he didn't hate and wasn't annoyed by. She was a little too young, but he didn't want to let her go!

Fields of Gold Chapter 379 - Women are so Troublesome

Was that a confession? It couldn't be, right? Although Yu Xiaocao had lived two lifetimes, she had never been pursued by anyone before, not to mention being forced into marriage—definitely a first! 'But are you sure that you're really serious about marrying me, and it's not just an impulsive decision, Young Royal Prince?'

"Young Royal Prince, I think we should give each other time to think this through. Besides, I'm only twelve, which is still very young. I'm still several years away from marriageable age. We should slowly discuss this matter with both of our families, don't you think?" Yu Xiaocao decided to delay the matter. Maybe the young prince would forget all about this when he went back, and the matter would be resolved by itself?

Zhu Junyang's captivating eyes stared at her for a long time. She was about to crumble under his stare when he nodded, "Although being rejected by you will hurt my pride, it won't discourage me from my desire to marry you! Since you say that you need time to think, I'll give you enough time—does tomorrow sound good?"

Before Yu Xiaocao burst in anger, Zhu Junyang hurriedly continued, "I'm kidding. I'm just trying to lighten up the mood since you and your family might be overly nervous. Don't worry, my intentions will never change. I'll wait for your reply, so don't let me down! Got it?"

It wasn't funny at all, okay? Whoever could laugh when they're facing a royal prince who proposes marriage without any warning?

After all that, Zhu Junyang was also embarrassed to stick around and dine with the Yu Family. But, before he exited the residence, he turned around to take another look at the figure standing gracefully like an orchid. Then, he left with an uncertain heart.

Once Royal Prince Yang's figure disappeared from their sights, the entire Yu Household exploded. Old Yu rubbed his chest in an effort to calm himself down, then hesitantly asked his son, "Just now... the royal prince proposed marriage? I'm not dreaming, am I? Such a noble person has his sights set on a daughter of our family?"

Yu Hai unhappily rebuked, "How is my daughter not suitable for him? The royal prince wouldn't be able to compare to Cao'er if he didn't have his title!"

Madam Liu held her youngest daughter's hand and worriedly asked, "What do you think, Cao'er? This match isn't well-suited, since our family's status differs too much from that of the Prince Jing's household. If the royal prince bullies you in the future, we won't be able to back you up."

Yu Hang, on the other hand, made a comment that pleased Xiaocao, "Youngest Sister, no one can force you if you aren't willing! If the royal prince uses his standing to pressure you, even if I will risk my life, your brother, I will go to the capital to file an imperial complaint and make sure that the emperor does you justice!"

Yu Xiaocao grumbled in her heart, 'Eldest Brother, you're so naive. The emperor? That's his older cousin! You'd expect him to help us rather than his own family? And besides, how easy do you think filing an imperial complaint would be, even more so when you're complaining about a royalty? Just the mere punishment of rolling on top of a bed full of nails will cost you half of your life!'

“Ai...” Yu Xiaocao sighed deeply, and the Yu Household immediately shut up to watch her.

“Let's eat! The dishes are already cold.” Yu Xiaocao weakly fell into her seat by the dining table and tastelessly stuffed a piece of fish meat into her mouth.

Madam Liu patted her lightly, “You still have a mind for food? How will we handle this matter? Why don't you give us some ideas?”

Her daughter's ideas had led them through the past two years, so the household had eventually made a habit out of asking her for her opinions every time they encountered a problem. Everyone had already forgotten that ultimately, she was only a twelve-year-old girl.

“What else can we do? We can only pray that it was an act of impulse by the young prince. Maybe he'd have regretted this decision by the time he reached his residence. That's enough, all of you shouldn't worry yourselves over it, even if the sky falls down, tall people will hold it up for us!” Although Yu Xiaocao said this, she still could not swallow her food—it was tasteless. God, who could tell her what kind of insanity Royal Prince Yang was on about? Proposing marriage without any warning, had he been possessed by something dirty?

“But...what if he's serious?” Madam Liu was still worried. She did not think that her daughter catching the eye of the royal prince was good at all.

Seeing that everyone seemed to disapprove of this marriage, Old Yu hesitated to talk. He secretly wondered why his son and daughter-in-law were dissatisfied with the royal prince. Besides, did it matter whether you were satisfied or not? Would the royal prince allow room for rejection, considering his standing?

Yu Xiaocao also had no confidence in the matter, so she said after a moment of thought, “When he comes, you all can tell him you want to keep me until I'm eighteen years old because you can't bear for me to leave so young. If he can't wait, then he can find another? I'm still young anyway, and there's six years until I'm eighteen years old. Perhaps he'll meet his true soulmate one of those days!”

Yu Hang quickly responded, “What if he's still determined to marry you when you're eighteen?”

“Then I'll marry him! It should be true love if he's waited for me for so many years, right? Shouldn't it be worth entrusting the rest of my life?” Yu Xiaocao opened her mind to the idea. The young prince was

quite good-looking and was not hard to get along with. Besides, there was really nothing bad she could say about him. If she kept him at home, he would still make a good eye-candy!

That's right, was there any option aside from marrying him? Yu Hai and Madam Liu shared worried glances with each other.

On the other side, Zhu Junyang's steps became light and quick once he left the Yu Residence. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that his decision was right! His cousin, the emperor, had once said, "There is an invisible pair of wings behind everyone's back. Only when you've found your other half, will you be able to fly freely." There were so many people in this world, and yet it was only her intentions that he could never tell. She was the only one whom he had the desire to get close to. Was she not the other half that the gods had prepared specifically for him?

"Lady Mother, I want to marry Yu Xiaocao!" Zhu Junyang rushed back to his mountain villa. He did not feel hungry, seemingly even forgetting that he had not even had lunch as his heart had never felt so fulfilled.

Princess Consort Jing, who had eaten her fill and was strolling in the gardens, raised her brow at his declaration, 'Oh! He finally understood his feelings after going out for such a short while? Could it be... this fellow was triggered by me and ran off to confess his feelings? He didn't get chased out by them? Er... How did Xiaocao react? Was she elated? Perturbed? Scared? Or...' Princess Consort thought heartlessly.

"Lady Mother? I've thought it through—all the noble young misses in the capital only make me annoyed. If they're not aloof and boring, then they're deceitful. Otherwise, they're stupid like pigs... You're right, I'm already of age and should consider marriage. If I really have to find someone to stay by my side, Yu Xiaocao isn't so bad!" Zhu Junyang did not seem to have grasped the true meaning of 'liking someone', but rather only had a muddled understanding of it.

Princess Consort Jing did not continue the topic, keeping silent. When she felt her son slowly losing his composure, she spoke, "And you visited the Yu Family just now?"

"Yes!" Suddenly, Zhu Junyang did not feel so sure of himself anymore, for fear that his lady mother might oppose his decision to be with Yu Xiaocao, "Hadn't you listed many of Xiaocao's good traits? I've thought about it—rather than letting her be taken by others, why not strike first and tie her down?"

“How did the Yu Family react?” That little lass Xiaocao was a good child. Although Princess Consort Jing had not had much opportunity to interact with her parents, she heard that they were honest folk. She just did not know if they had any worrying relatives, but with the Prince Jing Household's reputation, even difficult relatives should know to back down, right?

“Um... Yu Xiaocao's parents didn't say anything (Author's note: That's because you hadn't given them a chance to.). Yu Xiaocao made a few requests, but I think they're really nothing!” In Zhu Junyang's point of view, Xiaocao's biggest worry was the difference between their status and his parents' opposition, but his lady mother was not like the common folk who only looked at a person's birth... right?

Princess Consort Jing's brow rose even higher. 'Yu Xiaocao dared to personally make demands with Yang'er? What kind of reaction is this? As a girl, shouldn't she be shy and hide away from discussions about her marriage?'

“Lady Mother, you disapprove?” Zhu Junyang had misunderstood his mother's silence.

Princess Consort Jing smiled and asked, “Tell me, what requests did that girl make?”

“It's actually nothing. Her biggest worry is that her standing isn't high enough, so she's afraid that I'll have a bunch of bed-servants and concubines and they'll fight with her for my favor, but she's overthinking it. With my condition...if I'd never met her, I'd probably never marry in this lifetime.”

Suddenly, Zhu Junyang recalled that dream he had not so long ago—he turned into a murderer so uncontrollable he died in a storm of arrows surrounded by the imperial guards and Jin Wu Guards. He still remembered the dream with clarity even though a few months had passed.

He seldom lost control for the past two years. In those few times when he was about to lose control of himself, he was prevented from it by Yu Xiaocao, either wittingly or not. Head Steward Liu had also hinted to him about his tendency to become 'warmer' when he was around Yu Xiaocao—or rather, Yu Xiaocao was the sun in his heart, warming the cold and dark devil within him.

“Are you sure that Yu Xiaocao isn't eyeing your status and title? Would she have ulterior motives like those young misses from the prestigious families in the capital?” The more Princess Consort Jing said, the more upset she felt. Her poor Yang'er...

“She's not!” Zhu Junyang confidently said. Even though he could not perceive any of her emotions, he was sure in his heart that Yu Xiaocao was not a conniving person. Not only did she not approach him because of his identity, she also showed signs of withdrawing from him. However, he would never let her have the opportunity to push him away. His older cousin, the emperor, had said, “One must fight for their own chances, and hold them tight!”

“Let me think about it...” Princess Consort Jing was extremely careful and considerate of the marriage of her poor youngest son. Every mother hoped that their children could find the perfect match for themselves, and she was the same.

Zhu Junyang misunderstood his mother's meaning. Furrowing his brows, he thought, 'Didn't Lady Mother quite like Xiaocao? It seems like he was too confident in this matter! It couldn't be that Lady Mother also minded her family background?'

“Lady Mother? What more do you have to think about? You couldn't possibly want me to live alone for the rest of my life, right?” Zhu Junyang's lips thinned into a line and his expression turned into a sort of stubborn childishness.

Princess Consort Jing was angry and amused at the same time. He had not even married this wife and she, as his mother, was already being put to the side! She pretended to be angry and huffed, “You've really grown up, Yang'er! You're even threatening your own mother now! Those peasant women were right when they said, 'When the little magpie grows up and gets a wife, he forgets his mother...’”

“I didn't mean it that way! I just have a feeling that I'll really be forever alone if I let Yu Xiaocao slip away...” Zhu Junyang was a little anxious, but he could not let his lady mother have a grudge against Xiaocao... 'Ay! Women are so troublesome and so hard to deal with!'

Chapter 380 - Summoned for a Discussion

Princess Consort Jing amusedly watched her youngest son's anxious expression, feeling relieved . He had been displaying more and more emotions for the past two years and seemed more like a living person now . She could still remember being constantly on guard against that small, listless figure that could and would hurt someone at any moment . The entire family was very concerned for him, but it seemed like he started taking a turn for the better after he met that girl from Yu Family . Could it be . . . that Yu Xiaocao was Zhu Junyang's soulmate as mentioned before by the Chief Abbot of Xiangguo Temple?

“Only when Zhu Junyang’s destined benefactor is born will he be redeemed...” The Chief Abbot of Xiangguo Temple rarely read a person’s fortune . He only gave this small advice that year because he was touched by Princess Consort Jing’s love for her child .

For the past decade, the Imperial Prince Jing’s Estate had sent out many of their guards to search for Zhu Junyang’s supposed soulmate, but they had never found her . It seemed that they had misunderstood the Chief Abbot, the ‘birth’ he had mentioned probably did not mean newly-born infants .

But...Zhu Junyang was seven years old that year she dragged her sick body and kowtowed every step she made to the Xiangguo Temple and begged the Chief Abbot to help her find a way around his fate . Coincidentally, the Yu Family’s little miss was born that year . Was there a connection?

The more Princess Consort Jing thought into it, the more she felt her guess was logical . She flipped and turned the entire night but did not sleep much . On the morning of the second day, she let Meixiang go down the mountain to summon Yu Xiaocao .

This morning, Yu Xiaocao had brewed a cup of fragrant peach blossom tea and baked a few types of sheep’s milk biscuits . She was about to dig in when Meixiang knocked on the door and entered the courtyard . The Yu Residence was busiest in the morning, filled with the fellow villagers that they employed, who conversed with each other while they skillfully and carefully harvested the vegetables .

Two horse carts were parked outside the residence . The insignia on the carts showed that they were Zhenxiu Restaurant’s purchasing carts, and one of them was headed for the prefectural city . The horse cart would have to travel for about a day before it could reach the prefectural city, but the freshness of Yu Family’s vegetables could be preserved for a longer time . Even if it were a few days after harvesting, they would still taste as fresh as when they were reaped .

When Meixiang arrived at the Yu Residence, she saw the women load vegetables onto the cart and smiled at Yu Xiaocao as she quipped, “Miss Yu, since your vegetables are so high in demand, you should consider planting more . Otherwise, those people in town will fight with each other just for the right to buy from you!”

Sponsored Content

Remove Ads?

Yu Xiaocao nodded, solemnly replying, “Mhm, we are planning to do that . We’ll plant fifty mu of early ripening vegetables in our farmstead at the outskirts of Tanggu Town at the beginning of spring next year . If they can sell, we’ll continue to increase the production volume in the following years . ”

Watching the young girl who was sitting in a rocking chair leisurely sip her flower tea, Meixiang smiled as she watched the young girl who was sitting in a rocking chair leisurely sip her flower tea, “Miss Yu is indeed skilled in business—you’re capable and you have the courage . The Yu Family will never have to worry about not making a fortune . ”

Yu Xiaocao smiled in response, inviting Meixiang to sit while she poured a cup of peach blossom tea for her, “Older Sister Meixiang has overpraised me . There’s still my father, how can I be given credit for such a thing?”

Meixiang politely declined her invitation and grinned, “Miss Yu, spare me these courtesies . Frankly speaking, even if others weren’t aware, wouldn’t this servant know? It’s you, Miss Yu, who makes the decisions in Yu Family!”

Yu Xiaocao immediately denied her statement . She was guessing that Meixiang’s visit today might be because Princess Consort Jing thought she was seducing her son as Royal Prince Yang had gone crazy yesterday and proposed marriage .

Yu Xiaocao touched her face . Could it be that she also had the talent of a wily fox spirit? But currently, she was at most a little fox cub, how could she possibly know the ways of seduction?

“Older Sister Meixiang, was it the princess consort who told you to come here?” Yu Xiaocao decided that since the result would be the same no matter what she did, she might as well face it head on . She had a clear conscience, so what should she be afraid of?

Meixiang secretly glanced at Yu Xiaocao who seemed to have become prettier in a pure way and smiled, “Miss Yu is indeed clever . The princess consort has not seen you for a long while, so she sent me to invite you up to the villa for a chat . ”

Sponsored Content

Remove Ads?

Yu Xiaocao nodded slightly and asked for her to wait for a while . She kept the peach blossom tea that she had scented yesterday night, packed the biscuits she made that morning into a container and followed behind Meixiang up the carved stone steps to Prince Jing's luxurious yet low profile villa .

Yu Xiaocao did not exactly feel nervous, since she still had the mood to observe and guess Meixiang's true identity . Meixiang's steps were still light and she showed no signs of fatigue even after traversing a length of mountain road . Did this mean that she was not simply an ordinary girl, but rather one that was exceedingly skilled in martial arts?

At the villa's main compound, Princess Consort Jing was having breakfast with her son . When she saw Yu Xiaocao arrive with a packed box of food, she smiled and asked, "Xiaocao, have you had breakfast? If you haven't, let's eat together . "

Yu Xiaocao did not refuse the offer . Except for a cup of flower tea, she had not even had the chance to eat the sheep's milk biscuits that she had baked earlier for breakfast . Moreover, she had travelled about a little over a kilometer to come to their villa . She was ravenous!

"Many thanks, Your Highness . I won't be courteous, then!" Once she thanked Princess Consort Jing, she took a seat on her right and opened her container . Taking out the delectable biscuits, she calmly said, "Princess Consort, I baked these sheep's milk biscuits this morning . They're very nutritious and suitable for people with weak digestion . "

Although Princess Consort Jing's body had almost fully recovered, her stomach would still feel uncomfortable occasionally, so sheep's milk biscuits were just right for her .

Princess Consort Jing picked up a flower-shaped biscuit and took a small bite into it, carefully tasting it . Then, she nodded, "You have quite a skilled pair of hands . Not only are these biscuits delicious, their shapes are also very exquisite, making them look extremely appetizing . "

"If your highness likes them, I will definitely send a portion of the new pastries to you to try when I make them in the future . " Yu Xiaocao stuffed a shrimp crystal dumpling into her mouth and savored its taste . The cooks employed by Prince Jing were really skilled and made many exquisitely delicious foods .

Since Yu Xiaocao entered the compound, Zhu Junyang's captivating eyes had never left her figure . Yu Xiaocao was either mentally tough or resilient in her heart to be able to calmly savor the meal under his gaze .

Sponsored Content

Remove Ads?

“Xiaocao, have you decided on the matter I’ve mentioned yesterday? Let’s choose a date and get engaged . If you think yesterday’s proposal wasn’t proper enough, I can invite the prefectural magistrate to be our matchmaker . I’ll make sure you receive all the engagement gifts that are due...” Zhu Junyang panicked when he saw that Yu Xiaocao was completely unaffected by yesterday’s episode, as though she had forgotten all about it .

Yu Xiaocao paused in her chewing and sent a pleading look at Princess Consort Jing . ‘As his mother, shouldn’t you control your son when he loses his mind?’

Princess Consort Jing glared at her son . She had only just found out that her youngest son was actually an impatient person . Even if he wanted to bring this up, the least he should do was wait until she finished her breakfast! It was no wonder the girl rolled her eyes at him when he so hastily proposed marriage directly to her . Yang’er could not possibly have hot-headedly gone to them like this yesterday, could he? If she was Xiaocao’s family members, she would have definitely chased this dull lecher out with a bat—it was another matter altogether whether she was actually able to do so .

“Don’t bother with him, Xiaocao . Eat first!” Eating triumphed over all . You needed to wait until after the little girl finishes her meal before you could begin the ‘slaughter’, alright?

Yu Xiaocao misunderstood Princess Consort Jing’s meaning and thought that she actually disagreed with her son’s behaviour, so she sent a provocative look at Zhu Junyang .

Zhu Junyang was about to say something, but Princess Consort Jing’s gaze told him to be calm . Zhu Junyang suppressed the restlessness in his heart and, like a cow chewing on a peony, he carelessly ate a few mouthfuls without savoring the taste .

The three of them finished breakfast in silence, gargled with the gargling water that the servants presented them with, and scrupulously washed their hands at the end . With a gesture from Princess Consort Jing, all the other servants except Meixiang retreated .

“Xiaocao, Yang’er was too presumptuous yesterday and said some inappropriate things at your home . I hope you and your parents won’t take this to heart .” Princess Consort Jing first apologized for her son’s rash behaviour yesterday . She could not have the future in-laws think that they were disrespectful because they were of higher status .

Yu Xiaocao had an expression on her face that said ‘I thought so’ as she replied with a faint smile on her lips, “Rest assured, Your Highness, we’ll act as if nothing had ever happened .”

Princess Consort Jing knew that Yu Xiaocao had misunderstood her, but she continued to smile, “Yesterday, when Yang’er came back from your house, he told me of his true feelings . He said that among all the girls he’s met before, you’re the only one that he doesn’t detest .”

“It’s this commoner girl’s honor .” Yu Xiaocao’s expression was filled with humility . In her heart, her certainty of Princess Consort Jing’s true intention was wavering .

“I won’t say more of those courtesies . My youngest son has a bad temper and is quite dull; he also doesn’t know how to please girls and always displays an icy expression to keep others away from him, but as a mother, who wouldn’t want their children to find their perfect match? Don’t you think so too?” Princess Consort Jing smiled amiably, but did not leave Yu Xiaocao any space to shrink back or evade the question .

At the side, Zhu Junyang could not help feeling anxious . What was his lady mother’s intention, to speak of so many of his shortcomings to Xiaocao? Was she lying when she said she did not object this?

Yu Xiaocao discreetly licked her dry lips . Should she agree with Princess Consort Jing, or should she courteously comfort her that Zhu Junyang was not as bad as she claimed? Royal Prince Yang was dull? He kept people at arm’s length? Was the royal prince that she was familiar with fake? That thick-skinned glutton, that sarcastic youngster that loved to insult people with his poisonous wit, that royal prince who would act haughty at any moment . . . these depictions seemed like a wrong match for the person Princess Consort Jing was describing . Princess Consort, are you sure you know your youngest son? Or...did Royal Prince Yang have a twin with the exact same face but a totally different bearing?

As she did not respond, Princess Consort Jing could only continue, "Sigh...Many of the wealthy sons in the capital are already fathers even though they're younger than Yang'er . As his mother, I'm more anxious than anyone else, but Yang'er is stubborn . If he doesn't like the girl, then no one can force him to marry her . There are so many ladies in the capital of various appearances and attitudes but none have caught his eye . I also couldn't help but speculate if he has some kind of indescribable disease, or...if he doesn't like women?"

"Lady Mother! What are you talking about?!" Zhu Junyang could no longer stay silent at this point . He was about to become a homosexual if his mother continued to speak . Was this his biological mother? Working against him must be her profession!