

Gold Chapter 38

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Yu Xiaocao noticed that a couple of people in the nobly dressed group turned their heads to look in their direction and hastily covered her little brother's mouth with her hand. Who knew what kind of tempers these old officials had? If they ended up clashing, they were the ones who would suffer.

Next to the robed youth was an extremely pale old man. The elderly man's eyes flashed and he lowered his head to speak something to the young man. The youth pulled on the reins and turned to look in the distance towards where the two siblings were.

Now Yu Xiaocao could clearly make out the young man's appearance. He had a pair of eyes as dark as obsidian and they emitted a heroic aura. At first glance, his expression seemed tranquil but, on closer inspection, one could see that he was hiding a decisive and shrewd mind. When paired with a handsome face that seemed to have been carefully sculpted, his entire demeanor became even more imposing. For a split second, Yu Xiaocao felt as if the person in front of her was fierce tiger on hunt and not a fifteen to sixteen year old youth.

However...after a closer look at his face, why did it seem like she had seen him somewhere before? Maybe...she had seen too many celebrities in her previous life, so now every handsome man looked similar to someone she had seen before...

"Second Sister, I remember him!" Little Shitou said quietly after he broke free from her restraining hand. The people around them all looked at them with expressions of disbelief.

Yu Xiaocao let out a hollow laugh and discretely shook her head at her brother. A bailiff had turned his head to look at them, and Xiaocao bowed towards him, "He's just spewing nonsense. Don't mind the ignorant words of a little child, hee hee, don't mind the ignorant words of a little child..."

However, the imposing youth already directed his horse to walk to this area. At his side, the people continued to crowd around them, or was it that they were protecting him?

We're screwed! If we fled now, would it be too late? Yu Xiaocao scanned the surroundings in an attempt to find an escape route. Unfortunately, her earlier attempt at finding her younger brother a better location to watch the proceedings had trapped them to an area where they were surrounded on all

sides by people. Slowly squeezing through the crowd was out of the question, let alone trying to escape quickly.

The emperor had selected Left Commander of the Imperial Guards, Fang Xun, to be in charge of keeping Royal Prince Yang safe. He blindly followed the prince who had been selected by the emperor himself for the Royal Prince title and found himself incredibly surprised when he saw the figures of the two siblings in the crowd.

The older sister had bright and lively large eyes that were oddly familiar to him. Ah, that's right, about a month ago he had seen this pair of siblings in front of a woodworker shop in Tanggu Town. She had a demeanor that was neither arrogant nor servile, and seemed to be calmer than her age. It had left an impression on him.

Royal Prince Yang reined his horse into a stop right in front of the two siblings. Zhu Junyang stared at the little girl's pale, delicate face and the somewhat familiar large eyes and seemed to be lost in his memories.

He continued to sit, silently, on his horse as he regarded the two siblings without a change in expression. His lips were pressed into a single line. Yu Xiaocao felt flustered under his unrelenting stare. Is that killing intent I sense? Please stop staring at us, neither of us are beauties beyond compare.

"Head Steward Fu, are you certain that they are my saviors?" Zhu Junyang finally said after a long period of silence.

Ever since his accident a few months ago, his mother had kept him home to recuperate. Although he had originally planned on sailing in September, it had been pushed back for almost a month longer.

He had also thought of finding his savior but there were a lot of fishing villages in the area he had almost drowned in. He didn't want to conduct the search with great fanfare. After all, almost drowning after being capsized from a ship he was testing out wasn't something that was glorious.

However, Zhu Junyang also didn't feel comfortable not rewarding someone who had saved his life. Had the head steward not seen the people involved and reminded him, he would have just missed out on the opportunity to meet his saviors again.

"Second Sister, that's the guy we fished up on the day we went out to gather seafood. Look at his ears, there's a red birthmark on one. I couldn't forget something like that." Innocent to the possible implications, Little Shitou eagerly told Yu Xiaocao all of his findings.

An awkward expression flashed through Zhu Junyang's normally stern face. He had been the butt of many jokes when he was younger due to the red birthmark on his ear. Other people often teased him that it was a rouge mark and that it was a sign that he was a woman in his past life. Those seeing it at a glance would often think he was wearing an earring. For his entire life, his birthmark had been a source of shame for him. After being titled a Royal Prince, there were very few people who would dare to mention it in front of his face.

Yu Xiaocao could sense that this noble in front of them was displeased and wished she could just glue her brother's mouth shut. That little imp! How can commoners like us discuss the appearances of the nobility?

The awkward memories of his youth had stymied Royal Prince Yang's desire to pay his debt of gratitude to his saviors. In a fit of arrogance, he turned his horse around to go back. From the back, his spine was ramrod straight and his entire body held tension.

"Give them some money!" The haughty royal prince suddenly halted. After thinking about the shabby conditions of the two siblings' clothes, he had a feeling that these two were about as well off as a streetside beggar. Thus, he dryly commanded the steward to give them some money.

Head Steward Fu bowed his head slightly after receiving his master's orders. He looked around him and then commanded the bailiffs to bring the two siblings to him. Before the steward could say anything, a tall man broke through the layers of guards, pushed the two children behind his body, and knelt down in front of him.

"These two children are ignorant and offended noble sir. It's all this worthless father's fault for not teaching them better. Please, great lord, let these two children go. I, Yu Hai, am willing to take their punishment instead."

Apparently, after Yu Hai sold his fish, he had also heard of the nobles passing by to go out to sea, and came by to join in on the fun. He had seen everything that had happened earlier. A father's protective instinct for his children could not be underestimated. Seeing his beloved children get into trouble, he recklessly rushed up to shield them.

"Father!" The rims of Yu Xiaocao's eyes turned red with emotion. Previously, she had some pent up frustrations regarding this ordinary and easy-going father. He wasn't incapable at earning a living but he still let his wife and children live in such poor conditions. A man who couldn't protect his wife and family wasn't considered a truly good man.

However, his actions today obliterated her initially poor impression of him. He was willing to sacrifice his life to save his children. That wasn't something that every father would do. In Xiaocao's heart, her father's ranking had increased perceptibly.

Seeing that Yu Hai was a loving father, Head Steward Fu also increased his respect for the man. He personally supported this tall and robust man up with a smile on his face. His usually sharp voice had tempered down into a gentler tone and he said, "Benefactor, I'm not sure if you still remember sajjia."

Sajjia? Isn't that how court eunuchs usually referred to themselves? So the white-haired, beardless old man in front of them was a court eunuch? After hearing the word 'benefactor', Yu Xiaocao felt relieved and regarded the slender court eunuch with a stealthy, curious gaze.

Would this head steward be like the head steward court eunuch in [Dragon Gate Inn [1]] who was also really good at martial arts? Classmate Xiaocao, you have hit the bullseye! Just think, would a Royal Prince who was given the heavy responsibility of making an ocean voyage by his imperial majesty not have any experts at his side?

Yu Hai took advantage of the situation to get up. When standing, his body seemed even more tall and sturdy. He inspected Head Steward Fu carefully and then looked down to think carefully before he finally nodded and said, "Any fisherman, not just me, would have done the same thing had they encountered someone drowning. I'm really not worthy of being called a 'benefactor'."

Eh! My old father is quite good! He seems calm and cultured in front of this court eunuch who's a head steward and a whole slew of nobility. In fact, the words he just said sound very educated and literate. Yu Xiaocao gazed at her father with an additional hint of worship in her eyes.

Head Steward Fu nodded his head and smiled, "Perhaps to you, benefactor, it was as simple as threading a needle. However, you did save the life of our Royal Prince. This is the same as saving this one's life and the entire Royal Prince's Household. Please receive my respects!"

Enough of the pretty words. No one really wants your respects, okay. Can you give us some tangible benefits, eh? Yu Xiaocao's eyes flashed as she watched the head steward. Her impatience was clawing at her—like there was twenty-five mice scratching at her at the same time.

How could Yu Hai receive the respects from a royal household's head steward? This eunuch was someone who spent time everyday with the emperor's relatives and served them. How could he receive anything from this high personage? He hastily supported Head Steward Fu up and repeatedly said, "I can't receive this, by the heavens, I absolutely can't receive this!"

Head Steward Fu gently shook off his restraining hand and bowed solemnly. After he finished expressing his gratitude, he turned to give a hint to the eunuch behind him and said, "Our meeting today was not planned, so I didn't have the time to prepare a suitable thank you gift. For now, all we have is a small token that is not worthy enough to convey our respect. Please take it as a substitute for now, benefactor, and accept it. Once our Royal Prince has journeyed back from the West Seas, I will definitely come to your home to pay you a visit and bring more gifts to thank you."

They could only see that he took a heavy object wrapped in a cloth from the court eunuch's hands. The head steward held the mysterious object with two hands, presented it to Yu Hai, not giving him any avenue to refuse, and said, "The ship is about to sail, I shall take my leave now!"

When Yu Hai was about to chase after them to return the gift, a couple of bailiffs politely blocked his way. They could care less about whether there was a benefactor or not. Their duty was to protect the nobility from any sign of danger or hostilities.

"Father, can I see what the head steward gave us as a gift?" Yu Xiaocao impatiently grabbed at the item in her father's hands as he led her back into the crowd. Wow! The object was heavier than she thought as it had almost slipped out of her hands.

Yu Hai had just enough time to say 'Don't expose the gift in front others!' when he saw Old Yu and Yu Dashan heading towards them with grim faces.

Yu Dashan's honest face looked anxious and his eyes were full of alarm and rage, "Dahai, your two children really can cause too much trouble. Those were all officials and nobility from the capital, and princes too. How can people like us cause trouble? And you! How could you just recklessly rush up? If you had offended these people, our whole family would have gotten involved!"

Hearing this, Xiaocao felt unhappy, "Eldest Uncle, how did we cause trouble? Did we kill someone or set something on fire? The people from the capital are fair and reasonable, okay? They just called us up to ask us a couple of things. How can we bring you trouble?"

Yu Dashan glared at them with eyes that resembled Madam Zhang's and huffed, "Dahai, look at these children you have spoiled! How are they acting like this? How can they speak to their elders like this? The nobles are generous in their conduct and don't deign to step down to our level. However, if we offend them, you'll be subject to nine familial extermination [2]! Won't the whole Yu Family be destroyed by you?"

"Nine familial extermination? That's only reserved for the worst of crimes: treason! If you claimed that us two kids were conducting treasonous activities, who'd believe you? Eldest Uncle, you've heard too many stories from the storytellers!" Yu Xiaocao found herself tickled by her uncle's patent ignorance. The scene that happened earlier was at most a crime of disrespect. The punishment for that was not even close to nine familial extermination. Ah, Eldest Uncle, you're such a worrywart.

Yu Hai looked at his father and eldest brother. He was at a loss as to how to feel about them. Earlier the two of them clamped onto him and refused to let him go in and save his two children. His kids were his closest blood and bone. Sacrificing his life to save theirs was normal and just.

He stared at his eldest brother, turned to his father, who had been silent the entire time, and said, "Father, Cao'er and Shitou didn't offend any nobles. They had actually recognized the two of them and called them over to ask them something."