

## Gold Chapter 39

### Chapter 39

Following that, Yu Hai explained what had happened the last time they went to gather seafood. From beginning to end, he described how he resuscitated the royal prince and transported him over the treacherous reefs. After hearing this, Old Yu's eyes had finally lifted from the ground and he slowly nodded his head. "Good, everything you said is correct. Saving a drowning person is the duty of us fishermen. It is fortunate that the nobles remembered this event. We certainly aren't the type of people to demand a reward for doing something good. In the future, we shouldn't bring this up again."

She didn't expect her grandfather to have this type of wisdom. Yu Xiaocao felt she had a whole new understanding of the normally silent and taciturn old man, who had the voice of highest authority in their household.

Yu Dashan's expression finally turned clear and his face perceptibly relaxed, "Second Younger Brother, I never would have thought you would have the kind of good luck to save a prince while gathering seafood from the beach. Although we're not the type of people to demand a reward from nobles, we also shouldn't reject their good intentions, right? Quickly open it and see what good thing the prince gave you!"

Old Yu also glanced over at the cloth-wrapped object in Yu Xiaocao's hands.

This was the token of gratitude that the royal prince's Head Steward gave to father, what does it have to do with you guys? Yu Xiaocao felt incredibly resentful but was helpless in this situation. Anything good that was seen by people outside their branch would never be left for them alone.

She inwardly sighed as she opened the wrappings on the small, yet heavy object. Inside were ten ingots of shiny silver neatly stacked together and a single jade pendant. Judging from the appearance, this token of gratitude had been hastily put together. Although the texture of the jade pendant wasn't bad, it clearly wasn't a top-notch piece of jade. It was likely something that was usually used to reward servants and the like.

"The aristocrats are truly generous nobles, look, they easily give out a couple hundred taels of silver. And this jade pendant must be worth at least around a hundred and eighty taels!" Yu Dashan clicked his tongue in wonder. "Looks like we have enough money to pay Third Brother's studies for ten years!"

Yu Dashan felt faint looking at the glittering silver and the quality jade pendant. None of these were things that people in their household would normally ever see.

Yu Xiaocao sneered slightly. This money was given in exchange for her father risking life and limb to save someone from the hostile seas, okay? How is it that in the eyes of these people that the money had suddenly become Younger Uncle's schooling fees for the next ten years?

Old Yu reached out a large, calloused hand and gently caressed the translucent and white jade pendant. He glanced at his second son and then made a decision, "This jade pendant is not something one can merely be bought with money. In the future, no matter how poor we are, we cannot sell this. It shall become a family heirloom, passed down the oldest legitimate descendants of the Yu family, and serve as a memento for future generations to come."

Yu Dashan's face froze. The Yu Family's oldest legitimate descendants? That didn't include him! Everyone in the family knew that even though he, Yu Dashan, had changed his surname, wasn't a blood and flesh relation to the Yu Family.

Madam Zhang was Old Yu's second wife and was the maternal cousin of Yu Hai's deceased mother. Back when Madam Zhang was newly widowed, she had been driven away from her husband's family. Out of kindness, Yu Hai's mother took her in. Later on, Yu Hai's mother passed away from an illness and thus, Old Yu took Madam Zhang as his second wife.

The eldest son, Yu Dashan, was the son from Madam Zhang's first marriage and was only two months older than Yu Hai.

Oldest legitimate descendants? To put it another way, didn't it mean that Yu Hai was the oldest in the Yu family? In the end, wouldn't this mean that the beautiful jade pendant would end up in his second brother's hands?

Yu Dashan wholeheartedly didn't want that to happen but he wasn't in a position to object. Anything was better than the jade pendant being owned by Yu Hai, who he didn't have any blood relations to. However, he knew the circumstances were not in his favor. Even his tiger of a mother, Madam Zhang, couldn't change the old man's mind when he made a decision. Yu Xiaocao felt her heart settle down after hearing this. The Yu Family's oldest legitimate descendants—that would be her eldest brother! Luckily, this good deed wasn't done in vain! At least her branch would have a jade pendant in the end.

However, the hundred taels of silver had slipped out of her grasp. If she had only been faster, she could have purloined a couple ingots. Yu Xiaocao cried inwardly: a hundred taels of silver is a lot of money!

Once they all arrived home, Yu Xiaocao saw that all of the shiny silver had disappeared into her cheap grandmother's purse and felt forlorn again. Madam Liu noticed her daughter's listlessness and couldn't help but feel Xiaocao's forehead out of worry that she was getting sick again.

The past three months were the most comfortable stretch of time that Madam Liu had experienced in the previous seven to eight years. Even though her workload had not decreased and she still got yelled at every day, her normally sickly daughter wasn't ill even once in the past couple of months. In fact, she was able to run and play like the other village children and even learned medicine from Doctor You.

In fact, they were always able to eat enough to fill their stomachs even though it wasn't always the type of food they craved. Furthermore, the children had also learned how to set traps and occasionally caught a couple of animals. They would cook the game outside and have a great feast, but they were filial and never forgot to surreptitiously give some roasted meat to her and their father.

Seeing that her children's cheeks were rosy and that their once skinny bodies filling during bathtime, Madam Liu felt like their lives had finally turned around for the better.

"Dashan's wife and Dahai's wife, there was frost on the ground this morning. We should harvest the sweet potatoes tomorrow to store in the cellar." After receiving the hundred taels of silver, Madam Zhang finally had a smile on her face.

Yu Hai doted on his wife, so he put down his bowl full of rice and interjected, "How about us men don't go out to sea and instead harvest the sweet potatoes instead?"

After hearing his suggestion, Madam Zhang's expression immediately darkened, "We only have three plots of poor and rocky land. I could harvest them all myself in my younger days. What's the point in postponing the true business of fishing out in sea? You need to take advantage of the days you can go out before it gets too cold."

Yu Xiaocao glanced at her miserly grandmother and thought 'This old lady really does love money! A hundred taels of silver would last us for an entire year even if we didn't continue to go out to the sea to catch fish! She's pretty much the female version of Ebenezer Scrooge [1]!'

The next day at the crack of dawn, Yu Xiaocao groggily put on her thick cotton coat after being woken up by Madam Zhang's shrill voice. It was only the 10th month of the lunar calendar but there was already a thick layer of frost on the ground. If she didn't wear her winter coat during the day, she didn't think she could stand the cold air.

"Littler sister, you should go back to sleep. I'll help mother dig up the sweet potatoes." Yu Xiaolian swiftly got up but when she saw her sleepy sister, she quickly went back to push her back into the bed.

The warmth of the bed and covers made it hard for people to leave it in the morning. However, the family's real eight year old daughter had already gotten up to go to the fields, how could she, an inwardly thirty-something woman, stay in bed shamelessly?

After washing her face and rinsing her mouth, Yu Xiaocao yawned as she followed her mother listlessly from behind. She turned her head slightly to see her fat aunt, Madam Li, also yawning and rubbing the sleep from her eyes. Seeing that made Yu Xiaocao immediately feel better about herself. Look, it's not as if I'm the only one who wants to stay on the kang bed and not get up.

All of them walked on a narrow and curvy trail towards the fields. After walking for about half an hour, Yu Xiaocao could finally see their plots of land filled with lush green sweet potato vines. The verdant plants, the azure sky, and the smell of rich earth that came in with every chilly breath she took all helped to wake her up.

"Dashan's wife and Dahai's wife, you guys are here to harvest the sweet potatoes!" An average looking man with a warm smile on his face greeted the group of women eagerly.

"Good morning, Third Uncle! Are you also here to dig up some sweet potatoes?" Yu Xiaocao had a good impression of her father's cousin. Shortly after she first transmigrated over, she had even been carried home by this man.

Yu Jiang grinned as he ruffled her hair. He noticed that she had a small hoe in her hands and teased, "Oh! Looks like our Xiaocao is a little adult now. Third Uncle's family has already finished digging up our sweet potatoes. After we make one last sweep over the grounds, how about we come over and help you guys?"

"No need, we only have three plots of land to go over. We'll be done after a day's work. Please carry on with everything else you have to do." Madam Liu gracefully declined his offer in the presence of Li Guihua. Xiaocao's extended family also had a lot of people in the household and all were busy in this season. How could they possibly delay their chores? Madam Li glared at her sister-in-law. Declining another person's offer of help only meant that you would be tired at the end of the day. If it was only you getting fatigued, it would be one thing. But why do you have to drag me into this too?

Yu Xiaocao noticed the large pile of sweet potatoes that other people had dug up lying on the side of the road and was reminded of all of the sweet potato food she had in her past life. Images of baked sweet potatoes, soft and sticky glutinous balls made with yams, and the crispy and sweet potato pancakes floated through her mind. Excited at the prospect of food, she eagerly picked up her hoe and stepped into the field. It was time to harvest!

As her mother and her third uncle continued to talk, she pushed aside the vines and aimed her hoe at the thickest portion to start. After she heaved the hoe up, she was duly rewarded with the sight of a half-buried sweet potato. Yu Xiaocao trembled with excitement. Although her family had some land in her previous life, they only grew wheat and soybeans and had never planted any yams. They would only occasionally come across some that were on the border where other people had planted some and reap the benefits.

Yu Xiaocao carefully used the hoe to push away the surrounding soil and continued to dig a deeper and larger hole. To avoid damaging any of the sweet potatoes, she abandoned the hoe and dug the rest of the dirt with her bare hands. At last, she could feel the yam loosening from the ground. From her perspective, it looked as large as volleyball. She gripped onto it and pulled with all her might as if she was pulling daikon from the ground. Finally, the sweet potato popped out of the ground.

The effort caused her to fall unceremoniously on her butt as she lost her balance. Luckily, all of the vines and dirt she had cleared earlier cushioned her fall, so she didn't feel much pain. She casually patted off the dirt from her bottom, picked up the sweet potato she had harvested on her own, and announced, "Mother! Look, look! I dug up a really big sweet potato!!"

Third Uncle also came over and a surprised expression crossed his face, "Oh! Xiaocao really has talent to be able to dig up such a big yam on her first try! I gotta say, this one could probably take the crown for size."

Yu Xiaocao was overjoyed as she held her "spoils of war", but the voice of the little divine stone suddenly sounded in her mind,

[Why are you so excited? Did you forget? About two months ago, it was getting dry, so you took some of my special water and mixed it with some other water and used that to water the fields. Without my help, how could such barren, sandy land raise sweet potatoes this size?]

"So mystic-stone water can also promote the growth of crops, eh!" The farmer's child, Yu Xiaocao, felt her heart skip a beat at this thought. In the future, if she could grow some out-of-season crops, wouldn't she be able to make a lot of money?

[Out-of-season crops? What's that?] The little divine stone was flabbergasted at the odd term it took from her mind.

Yu Xiaocao continued to dig up the yams as she replied, "That is...growing spring vegetables in the winter."

[Oh that's not hard! As long as it doesn't blizzard, I, this divine stone, can naturally hasten the growth of vegetables.] If the little divine stone had a tail, it would have long been cocked up to the sky proudly. Although only a fraction of the stone's innate powers had been restored, it had more than enough to accelerate the growth of plants.

Yu Xiaocao excavated the nearby smaller sweet potatoes from her initial find and tampered down her joy and said, "If what you're telling me is true, I'll make sure to let you absorb some energy from Grandpa You's herbs."