

Gold Chapter 461

Fields of Gold Chapter 461 - Strawberries

Li Mengru was very well aware of the value of these small tomatoes. Although her family was lucky enough to buy them once or twice, one box only had around two dozen, so only the children of the legitimate wife were given one to two tomatoes. As for the concubine-born children, even those who were more favored weren't necessarily given the opportunity to try any.

She had never expected that the fruit that her older legitimate sister had talked about would actually show up next to her. Furthermore, it wasn't one or two tomatoes and was actually a whole fruit platter full of them. There were around a couple dozen on the plate!

“Try some. These were planted by me and my godmother and I think they taste better than the ones grown in the greenhouse pavilions!” Yu Xiaocao secretly watered these tomato plants with some mystic-stone water every day, so it was obvious as to why they tasted better. Furthermore, eating these were also beneficial to the body!

Li Mengru carefully used her hand to pick up one and glanced at Yu Xiaocao as if she was trying to assess if it was truly okay for her to eat them. When she saw Yu Xiaocao nod with a smile and also pick one up from the platter in front of her and deliver it to her mouth, Li Mengru finally cautiously placed the small tomato into her mouth. She lightly used her teeth to bite into it and slowly chewed.

A fresh taste of sweetness with a hint of sourness traveled throughout her mouth. It was an unfamiliar flavor but a sense of happiness and contentment spread from her mouth and into her heart. No wonder her older legitimate sister couldn't forget the taste of these fruits. It wasn't just the flavor of these small tomatoes that conquered people's hearts. These tomatoes also gave people a sense of satisfaction. It was the kind of feeling that she only had when her concubine mother was still alive and could still take care of and protect her.

She forcefully sucked on the sweet and sour juice within the cherry tomato, as if she was trying to preserve that feeling of happiness. Because she had been reminded of the good times she had with her concubine mother, Li Mengru's eyes started to shine with unshed tears while her face had a sweet smile on it.

After she slowly finished the tomato in small bites, Li Mengru gently sniffled and used her handkerchief to dab at the corners of her eyes. She smiled and said, “Forgive me, I was impolite earlier and let you see a joke!”

“No need to be so polite! I'm the same as you. Whenever I eat something that I like I can get overwhelmed by my feelings. Although these small tomatoes are considered quite expensive and valuable by other people, in my residence, they're as common as cabbages and radishes—I'm not trying to brag. I just want you to feel more comfortable and eat as much as you wish.” In order to soothe the other young maiden's heart, she made sure that her every expression and word showed how common these cherry tomatoes were to her.

As expected, when Miss Li heard her words, she let out a peal of laughter and said, “If you said this on the streets of the capital, there will definitely be plenty of people who want to beat you up! These fruits are so rare that even those with goblets of money may not be able to get any, but in your eyes, they're as common as cabbages and radishes. Aren't you looking for a beating?”

Yu Xiaocao casually shrugged her shoulders and waved a hand, “Everything I say is true. If you don't believe me, then you can come visit my family's greenhouse to take a look. My godmother says I don't understand elegance since I'm using her greenhouse, which she uses to raise rare and valuable plants, to grow some fruits. Truly a waste of prime resources!”

“Now that you mention it, I am now truly curious about your family's greenhouse!” Li Mengru was still quite young and usually spent most of her time in her own courtyard. She didn't have many opportunities to interact with and chat with other young maidens her age. Yu Xiaocao was very different from the other young ladies she knew, who always talked with deliberate politeness. Those maidens were only interested in the four arts and the womanly crafts. Xiaocao, on the other hand, was the exact opposite and it was very refreshing. The other girl was using an expensive greenhouse to grow fruits and vegetables, so she could see why Lady Fang would scold her daughter for being wasteful!

Yu Xiaocao also wasn't in a hurry to get to her reason for inviting the other girl. As long as she was able to let the other maiden let down her guard and see her as a friend, in the future, things would naturally go as they willed. She grinned and stood up, “If Miss Li doesn't disdain this, then you can come to the greenhouse with me. Other than tomatoes, I'm also growing some strawberries. This morning I took a peek and it looks like a few of them are pretty much ripe. We can go pick some and try!”

Strawberries? She was even growing strawberries? A glitter of delight flashed through Li Mengru's eyes. Her legitimate mother was considered quite generous and never shortened the allowances of the concubine-born children. In spring, Li Mengru loved eating the sweet and sour strawberries the most out of all the fruits! She never would have thought that there was someone who could grow strawberries in the middle of winter when the snow and winds blew fiercely. Her young maiden's heart immediately lightened and the curiosity within her also increased.

The two young maidens put on their thick outer clothing and left the room that was warmed with a heated floor to step into the blustering snow. Yu Xiaocao was in the front, leading the way while Li Mengru followed from behind. Before long, the two of them were in front of the greenhouse.

Since Lady Fang loved flora, General Fang had constructed a very large greenhouse for her in the corner of the back garden. It took up an area of at least three hundred square meters. All four sides of the greenhouse were constructed of transparent glass and even the connecting roof at top was made entirely of expensive glass. This greenhouse alone must have cost at least a thousand taels to construct. Li Mengru was quite flabbergasted at the sight.

When they entered the greenhouse, Li Mengru discovered that the flowers inside weren't left on the ground like she thought and instead were in pots that were stacked high on shelves. There were shelves on all four sides of the greenhouse. On the south side, there were two stacks and the rest of the sides had three stacks each. All of the shelves held a variety of valuable and rare plants, and orchids made up the largest number. In the best position in the greenhouse was the orchid that had caught everyone's eye at the flower war banquet, 'Elegant Lotus Crown'. Furthermore, it wasn't only just one pot! Some of the flowers had been suspended from above in an effort to save space in the greenhouse to allow vegetables and fruits to be planted below.

The ground in the greenhouse had been cleared. Half of it was used to plant tomatoes and the other half was used to grow strawberries. It was likely that most of the ripe fruits had been picked in the morning as the vast majority of tomatoes on the plants were still green in color. Occasionally, she could see a few that had some faint red coloring. As they walked by, Yu Xiaocao casually picked a few remaining ripe tomatoes that had escaped the earlier harvest and passed them to Li Mengru as she said, "In reality, the fruits that you pick yourself are usually the most sweet. Let's go, we should go further in to check the strawberry fields!"

The strawberry vines lay on the ground and some bright red fruits peeked out from within the vibrant green of the leaves. Li Mengru spotted a strawberry that was completely red and couldn't help but bend over to pick it. At this point, Tanchun, who was by Yu Xiaocao's side, picked up a water dipper from the corner of the greenhouse and walked over with a ladle full of water and smiled, "Miss Li, do you want to wash it?"

Li Mengru looked at the large and bright red strawberry in her hands that was wafting off a sweet fragrance. This strawberry was larger than any of the ones she had previously eaten and the smell it gave off was more dense too. She couldn't help but swallow down her saliva and then glance sheepishly at Yu Xiaocao.

Yu Xiaocao didn't even notice the embarrassed look in the other girl's eyes. She stepped onto the slightly moist soil and walked into the strawberry fields. She bent down as she searched within the strawberry leaves and picked the ripe ones she came across. She washed the ones she picked in a dipper of water that was in Wutong's hands and happily ate them after they were washed.

Li Mengru hesitated for a moment before she copied the other girl's movements. She placed the strawberry she had just picked into the water dipper to wash clean and then took a big bite from it. It was so sweet and fragrant! Li Mengru's eyes curved up in delight and finished the strawberry in another few bites. Then, she followed Xiaocao from behind and looked for new targets.

The two maidens had their heads lowered as they continued to search for ripe strawberries. Although they didn't speak much, their hearts had unconsciously become a lot closer. By the time they left the greenhouse, Li Mengru was no longer as stiffly polite as before. Even though she still wasn't very talkative, the smile on her face had become much more sincere. The friendship between these two young maidens had started like this.

While filling her stomach with a bunch of strawberries and small tomatoes, Li Mengru felt as if she was in a dream. She was in a comfortably warm greenhouse eating icy cool fruits that she had personally picked herself. It was truly a strange and eye-opening experience for her.

By the time they got back to the receiving room, the kitchen had sent a few plates of delicate pastries to them. After asking, Li Mengru discovered that Yu Xiaocao herself had come up with the recipes for all of these novel and beautiful desserts! A wave of admiration surged within her—it was no wonder that Xiaocao at such a young age was able to become the only female official in the Great Ming Dynasty. She truly had the talents to back it up!

Li Mengru tried a piece from every pastry and was at the point that her belly bulged from eating. The two young maidens had become close friends after eating and drinking tea together in a harmonious manner.

“Older Sister Mengru, I won't beat around the bush now and will just say it outright! This time I invited you over because I wanted to discuss with you about collaborating together in opening a store!” Yu Xiaocao stated her motives for inviting the other girl after drinking a sip of digestive tea.

“Collaborate in opening a store?” Li Mengru replied in a very surprised tone and then immediately added sheepishly, “I'm only the daughter of a concubine and I don't have a lot of money on hand. If Younger Sister Xiaocao doesn't disdain this, then I can have Jiner take out all of my savings and bring it over to you.”

Jiner, who was standing by her side, had also been given a few pieces of pastries to eat. She was quite grateful that she had gone out today with her young miss. When she heard her young miss offer her life savings, she couldn't stop her lips from twitching a bit as she thought, 'Young Miss ah! You probably don't have more than ten taels saved up right now and the only reason you have that much is because it's winter right now and you can't buy your ingredients for your cosmetics. Official Yu has so many money-making ventures in her hands, so how could she possibly lack your insignificant ten taels?'

As expected, Yu Xiaocao chuckled gently, "Older Sister Mengru, I want to open a cosmetics shop that targets women. I'm sure you've also heard of my residence's peach blossom tea, right? Since it's a beautifying cosmetics store, it can't just rely on flower teas alone and needs some products targeting the outer skin. I heard that you're quite good and creative at coming up with new cosmetic products. Thus, I boldly invited you over..."

"Are you saying that you want to sell the cosmetics that I make in this new store?" Li Mengru's eyes were opened wide in disbelief as she asked in a flabbergasted manner. Yu Xiaocao nodded her head and replied, "Yes! Not only you, but I also invited the daughter of the Prime Minister, Older Sister Yuan, to also collaborate with this venture and see if she wants to sell her products..."

"Oh no, oh no!" Li Mengru repeatedly waved her hand and said, "Those cosmetics are just some random things I made in my free time and they are nowhere near finished products. It's fine to take some out and play around but if I dare to sell them in your store, I'm afraid I might drag you down a bad road, Younger Sister. I absolutely cannot!"

"Older Sister, is it necessary for you to be so humble? Even Older Sister Yuan, one of the two beauties of the capital, praises the cosmetics you make without end. She also said that the products you make are even better than the cosmetics that are sold by Full Spring Fragrance. The other noble maidens who have tried your products also have the same opinion. Older Sister, do you still have any doubts now?"

"But..."

"No need for buts! People need to learn how to try before they know what they truly can or cannot accomplish! Back when the emperor titled me as a sixth-ranked official and put me in charge of managing the Imperial Plantation, I was also feeling a bit uneasy. However, now, didn't the facts show that I am capable of doing this?" Yu Xiaocao knew that the other maiden wasn't necessarily without talent but more had an issue with confidence. Thus, she tried to bolster the other girl.

Fields of Gold Chapter 462 - Demonic Side?

Li Mengru was already quite tempted. Although she had a timid personality, she also wanted to show that she wasn't a complete failure. Yu Xiaocao was younger than her by two to three years and was already so bold and courageous. Why couldn't she also try to be more like the other little girl?

“Then if...you're not afraid I'll ruin your store, then I'm willing to collaborate with you in opening this new business!” Opportunities in life didn't appear all the time. Li Mengru gritted her teeth and made her first daring decision in her entire life. Years later, the outcome would show that the step she took today was very worth it.

She had now convinced Li Mengru. In addition, she had already obtained the consent of Older Sister Yuan during her last visit with the other noble maiden. The daughter of the prime minister was quite intrigued by this beauty and cosmetics business and also agreed to work with her. With this, they were already halfway there to opening the beauty and cosmetics business.

“I'm planning on making our business into a special place for women to relax and beautify themselves. Other than selling some floral and herbal teas, we can also sell nourishing tisanes, cosmetics and other beautifying skin products. Furthermore, we can offer services to improve a woman's face and appearance. For example, we can have facial consultations, shoulder and neck massages, traditional medicine consultations and pedicures. Furthermore, we can also organize parts of the boutique such that the customers can admire flowers, taste tea, eat pastries, play cards, and play mahjong. Also, we will only allow female customers in the store so this will be a boutique that is solely for the purpose to help women take care of themselves...” Yu Xiaocao described the wide scope that she wanted to try to combine so that Li Mengru would have more confidence in becoming a collaborator.

Li Mengru's eyes started to glitter with excitement and a look of longing crossed her face. She murmured, “Originally, I thought that this was only going to be a store that sold cosmetics. But from what you're saying, even I want to come and try out the services!”

“Don't worry ah! Once the beautifying facility has finished construction, you, I, and Older Sister Yuan will all have our own special small courtyards in the building. Each mini-courtyard will have a perfect set of facilities, so you can experience any procedure that you want. Furthermore, it'll be free for you and any of your next of kin! Each of us will also be given three diamond cards that allow people to get fifty percent off, so you can give them to your good friends!”

“Wow! That good, huh? But...isn't that a bit too generous? Would our boutique not be able to cover our expenditures if we give out such good benefits?” Li Mengru was a bit hesitant at this. She had around six to seven sisters in her family. Although some had already married, they were still considered next of kin, right? If her sisters also brought other people along, would they be charging those people or not?

Yu Xiaocao grinned, “We can make the rules very clear. Only next of kin gets services for free. The people they bring along will at most get ten percent off, so it still gives them some face! Everyone is a well-bred lady in the capital and no one will dare to risk their personal reputation for the sake of getting a bit of personal benefits. We don't need to worry about this! That being said, I have all the power in this scenario. If they want to enter, then they need to follow my rules. Otherwise, if they don't, then they can enter the blacklist for all of my other enterprises! I'm sure that no one will be so stupid to try to do that!”

When she heard the word 'blacklist', Li Mengru recalled what had happened to Assistant Minister Li's entire family. It was said that they had already eaten only radishes and cabbages for the past half month. Although they didn't have to skimp on meat, they couldn't only eat meat containing dishes all the time, right? Even she, as an unfavored concubine-born daughter, still had a plate of fresh and green vegetables at every meal! Assistant Minister Li's family was so pathetic now!

However, who allowed their daughter to offend Younger Sister Xiaocao so much? Younger Sister Xiaocao was so friendly and adorable, yet Li Meirou unexpectedly hated her guts and even deliberately provoked her. The consequences were clear now. Li Meirou only brought disaster on her own family and they were now the laughingstock of the capital!

“Alright, let's discuss the divisioning of profits now. I've already drafted up a contract. I'll be in charge of obtaining the location, staff, materials, as well as bringing everything into operation and the marketing. You and Older Sister Yuan will only need to train a few maidservants such that they can make your special rouge, face powder, and duck egg powder. Both of you will get twenty percent, while I get sixty percent! How do you feel about that?” Yu Xiaocao took out a contract that had that all written out and gave it to Li Mengru to allow her to inspect it carefully.

Yu Xiaocao had just said that this beauty boutique spa was going to sell skincare products, cosmetics, cosmeceuticals, and beautifying procedures. Her rouge and face powder was only a small part of the business. Even if she didn't collaborate, Xiaocao could easily make a business deal with Full Spring Fragrance instead. She felt a bit guilty taking twenty percent of the profits!

“In actuality, I could just take a tenth of the profits instead...” Li Mengru was very satisfied with the contents of the contract. If things went all, even though it was only twenty percent, it was still likely going to be a large sum of money. She felt a bit lacking in confidence taking such a generous share.

“Young Miss...” Her maidservant, Jiner, quietly prompted her. Was there anyone else in this world who would push away offered money? Her young miss was not very favored by her family. Other than some

spending money, she never got rewarded with anything else. Furthermore, her entire allowance was pretty much spent on the ingredients to make her special blush and face powder.

Her young miss was almost fifteen and needed to start thinking for herself. Although Lady Li wouldn't stint on the young miss's dowry to embarrass her, she was still a daughter of the concubine at the end of the day. The young miss wasn't very close to the madam usually, so it was unlikely that her dowry would be filled with valuable items. A dowry determined a woman's status in her husband's family. Naturally, the more one had the better. Miss Yu was kind and honest and was offering to give twenty percent of the profits to her young miss. Who would have thought that her young miss was so silly that she would negotiate to have a smaller share. Sigh...following such an innocent and naive mistress made her worry to bits sometimes!

Yu Xiaocao smiled faintly and shot a glance at the worried maidservant before she said, "Twenty percent is what I negotiated with Older Sister Yuan. If you have problems, then I can also invite Older Sister Yuan over next time and you can discuss with her..."

"No, no! Twenty percent is also very good. There's no need to bother Miss Yuan about this!" The legitimate daughter of the prime minister was also known as the one of the two famed beauties in the capital. Compared to herself, who was merely the concubine-born daughter of an official in the Ministry of Ceremonies, Miss Yuan was the heavens to her ground. To her, Yuan Xueyan was someone she could look up to. Even her older legitimate sister wouldn't necessarily have the status to chat easily with Miss Yuan. How could she dare to question Miss Yuan's decision on something?

"Since you have no objections, then you can sign this contract!" Yu Xiaocao felt like she was the big bad wolf who was trying to abduct Little Red Riding Hood. She had Wutong grind the ink and then handed the brush over to Li Mengru.

Li Mengru signed the contract in a woozy manner. The contract that described her twenty percent share of the profits was now finally done. Jiner carefully placed Li Mengru's finished contract into her embroidered pouch and planned on immediately placing the precious agreement into her young miss's personal box when they got back to the residence.

At this time, Yingchun lifted the curtain and stepped inside. She used a crisp and clear voice to announce, "Young Miss, Royal Prince Yang has paid a visit!"

"I have a guest over, so go tell Zhuzi to bring him to the study in the outer courtyard and serve him some tea and light refreshments. When I'm done here, then I'll receive him!" Yu Xiaocao glanced at the color

of the sky outside. That fellow must have rushed over as soon as court let out. The smile on her face unconsciously deepened a bit.

After Yingchun left with her orders, Yu Xiaocao turned around and discovered that Li Mengru's face had suddenly turned so white that it was a bit scary. Yu Xiaocao's eyes filled with concern and she couldn't help but ask, "Older Sister Mengru, are you not feeling right? I know a bit of medicine, how about I take a look for you?"

Li Mengru forced the corners of her lips up and revealed a smile that was more ugly than a sob. Her voice shuddered as she replied, "I...I'm alright!"

After she finished replying, she picked up her teacup and suddenly drank a large gulp that almost ended up choking her. Yu Xiaocao gave her an odd glance. The other maiden was perfectly fine earlier, so what caused her to suddenly act like this? From the way she looked, she resembled a little roe deer who had been frightened to death.

Her eyes flickered and Yu Xiaocao finally revealed an expression full of doubt as she decided to try to ask, "Older Sister Mengru, are you...afraid of Royal Prince Yang?"

Li Mengru hesitated for a moment and then slightly nodded her head. She spoke in a quiet voice, "I heard...that Royal Prince Yang looks as crude as a bear and his face is as black as the bottom of a pot. His eyes are as large as copper gongs and his voice sounds like thunder! One slap from him is able to kill a startled horse on the scene. One kick from him can cause a man to spit up blood and die instantly. Just a single glare from him is enough to cause a person's blood to flow backwards....he's temperamental and moody to a fault. He can be fine for one second and then the next second he'll flip out! In a rage, he could rip a person in two..."

"Pffffttt——" Yu Xiaocao couldn't hold back her mirth when she heard the other girl's descriptions. She gurgled incessantly with laughter as she held her belly. Apparently, in the eyes of these young maidens who rarely stepped outside, Royal Prince Yang had such a bad reputation that he resembled the black bear demon in the Journey to the West. He could even rip a person in two! This was truly the same ability that those demons in the mythical stories had in her past life! That was too funny! When she saw Zhu Junyang later, she needed to make fun of him!

"Why are you laughing? I'm not done talking!" Li Mengru opened her eyes wide as if she wasn't as scared anymore. However, she still used a quiet voice to remind Yu Xiaocao, "Younger Sister Xiaocao, you must be very, very careful when you're interacting with Royal Prince Yang. You're so tiny so it'd be

easy for him to eliminate you with one finger! You absolutely must go with what he says and don't offend him!"

"Young Miss..." Jiner noticed that her young miss was becoming more and more ridiculous with every word she said. She stealthily pulled at Li Mengru's sleeve to remind her to say less. This wasn't the first time that Miss Yu had met with Royal Prince Yang. It was obvious that their relationship was quite good as Royal Prince Yang protected her fiercely and was willing to punish Assistant Minister Li's family for her. 'If you keep saying such things behind Royal Prince Yang's back to Miss Yu, is it really alright?'

However, Li Mengru threw off her maid's hand and continued, "Younger Sister Xiaocao, you absolutely need to believe this. Did you know that Royal Prince Yang's reputation is used to scare little children? When my fifth younger brother was being very naughty, my legitimate mother scared him by saying, 'if you refuse to behave, then I'll send you to Royal Prince Yang'. This saying is known throughout the capital and everyone uses it!"

"PFFFTTTT! Bwahahahaha, I can't take it anymore...my tummy is about to burst from laughing too much!! Wutong, quickly give me a belly rub! I laughed so hard that I'm bloated!" Yu Xiaocao laid on the table and continuously pounded the table in mirth. She was laughing so hard that tears were streaming down her face!

Wutong and Tanchun stifled their smiles. One maid started rubbing their master's belly while the other poured a cup of hot tea to serve to her. Apparently, in other people's eyes, that handsome and good-tempered Royal Prince Yang had a demonic side to him. The nicknames 'the cold-faced death god', 'grim demon king', and 'the calamitous star' were probably all given to him because of these false rumors, right?

How could these two maids know that if the prince hadn't met their young miss, then, other than his looks, he might be exactly like the man described in those rumors that Li Mengru mentioned. That prince would have been tormented by his inner demon and would have started to kill people willy-nilly, causing rivers of blood to flow. As time passed, he would become a blood-seeking demon and the court would need to take out their entire army, including Su Ran and the hidden bodyguards he commanded, to subdue him once and for all...

Fields of Gold Chapter 463 - Follow-up

Seeing that Yu Xiaocao had other guests, Li Mengru decided to leave now. She repeatedly reminded the other girl to be careful around Royal Prince Yang. Yu Xiaocao held back her laughter and easily promised the other maiden. She personally escorted Lin Mengru out of the drooping flower gate.

Suddenly, Xiaocao's second-rank maidservant, Yingchun, walked by with the elegant and handsome as a god Royal Prince Yang. When she saw everyone, Yingchun bent over and gave a greeting, "Young Miss, this servant is taking Royal Prince Yang to go see the mistress..."

Royal Prince Yang? Li Mengru had kept her head lowered down carefully when she heard that there was an outside man coming in. Her heart was filled with equal parts of apprehension and curiosity. She couldn't help but stealthily raise her head slightly to look at the dark, shadowy figure who was behind Yingchun. Unexpectedly, her eyes met a pair of cold and piercingly fierce eyes. It frightened her so much that her heart stopped for two beats. She quickly lowered her head to her chest as if she was a scared little rabbit.

So scary! Sure enough, the rumors were not wrong. Royal Prince Yang's gaze was as sharp as a knife and almost frightened her to death! Although she didn't have the time to clearly see the other person's external appearance, her mind automatically filled in the gaps to form a picture: a very tall figure that resembled an iron tower (Author's note: the prince is wearing a black cloak, okay?) and a piercing gaze that could kill a person instantly. Incredibly dreadful! Would Younger Sister Xiaocao be bullied by this man later on?

Zhu Junyang could sense someone feeling very apprehensive and was concerned that someone was trying to scheme against his little lass. He opened up his mind to his power and unexpectedly heard Li Mengru's train of thoughts. He didn't know whether he should laugh or cry at this new information—this young maiden, whose courage was smaller than a bunny's, had actually described him in such a fearsome manner and was even worried that he would harm Xiaocao? She was thinking too much, okay? He constantly thought about how to protect her better. How could he bear to harm a single hair on his lass's head?

When that maid came to get him, who did she say was meeting Xiaocao? The concubine-born daughter of a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Ceremonies? She dared to ruin his great and mighty reputation in front of his lass. Should he give her a lesson? Forget it! Since his lass was treating that young maiden quite well, he would let her go this one time! His little lass wouldn't be as timid as that girl. At most, he would likely be laughed at and teased by her. In any case, it wasn't the first time this happened, so he was indifferent to it! As long as his lass was happy, that was what mattered!

Zhu Junyang raised an eyebrow when he met the gleeful look in Yu Xiaocao's eyes. His lips slightly curved up and he gave her a look that said, 'this prince will be waiting for you'. Then, he left as if nothing had happened in that brief encounter.

Li Mengru, who had been scared speechless, clenched tightly onto her handkerchief and kept her head lowered as much as possible. Her legs were tightened in fear. Only after Royal Prince Yang's figure completely disappeared did she finally let out a long sigh of relief. She felt as if she had just taken a stroll next to the gates of hell.

Until she entered her carriage, Li Mengru still had some lingering sense of apprehension. Jiner, who was holding the gifted box, also patted her chest in relief and slowly let out a sigh as she softly said, "Young Miss, earlier Royal Prince Yang was too scary! I could feel the air freeze when I was only three steps away from him. This servant was so scared that I didn't dare to breathe! Oh right, Young Miss! Did you get a good look at what Royal Prince Yang looks like?"

"When I raised my head, I was so frightened by the sharp look in his eyes that I immediately lowered it again. I only saw that he was wearing all black and that he is very tall! Jiner, since Royal Prince Yang is so scary, do you think Younger Sister Xiaocao will be bullied by him?" Li Mengru was sincerely worried about the young maiden she had just gotten familiar with.

Jiner replied hesitantly, "I don't...think so, right? With Lady Fang there, she wouldn't let her daughter get pushed over! Furthermore...from what Miss Yu was showing, it's unlikely that she's very scared of Royal Prince Yang. Perhaps, those rumors...are all exaggerations! That being said, Royal Prince Yang can't just get angry for no reason at any time. Young Miss, don't be so worried!"

When they returned to their residence, the two of them were immediately escorted to the central courtyard where the legitimate wife lived by a maidservant who was waiting for them at the inner gate. Li Mengru's legitimate mother, older legitimate sister, and a few of her younger legitimate brothers were all waiting in the reception hall. The sight somewhat resembled a joint hearing.

Li Mengru appeared a bit wilted when she saw this and gave the proper greeting as she softly said, "Li Mengru greets Mother."

Lady Li had a sweet smile on her face as she waved a hand to summon this concubine-born daughter of hers who normally wasn't very eye-catching. When Li Mengru arrived next to her, Lady Li gently said, "There's no one that's an outsider here, so there's no need to be so stiff. Quickly sit down and drink a cup of hot tea to warm yourself up."

Li Mengru couldn't refuse an offer from the older generation, so she sat down on a small embroidered stool next to the chaise lounge in a reserved manner. She clasped a cup of tea in her hands and slowly drank it in small sips. Hm...the flavor of this tea was quite inferior to the tea at Younger Sister Xiaocao's place.

Her older legitimate sister, Li Mengqi, didn't wait before she finished her cup of tea before she impatiently came over and asked, "Younger Sister Ru, did Official Yu invite you over for some matter? Did she receive you with a platter of fruits?"

Li Mengru handed the teacup over to Jiner, who was standing next to her and gently replied, "Official Yu wants to cooperate with me as my ability to make cosmetics caught her eye. She wants to open a store together. Besides me, she also invited Older Sister Yuan from the prime minister's residence to also work on this business."

"Older Sister Yuan's handcrafted duck egg powder is very famous throughout the capital. I would have never expected that younger sister's dabblings in mixing cosmetics could also catch Official Yu's attention..." Yuan Xueyan had a cold and indifferent personality. Ordinarily, she only interacted with those who were close to her, like kindred spirits. There were no more than ten people in the capital who had entered her circle of friends. When she saw that her concubine-born younger sister had the opportunity to interact with the legitimate daughter of the prime minister in a business collaboration, Li Mengqi's voice became soured with a hint of jealousy.

Lady Li shot a faint glance of warning at her short-sighted daughter and smiled before she took over the conversation, "Mengru, were you able to get along with Miss Yu? How's her temperament? Is she as crafty and tricky as rumored? You are one of the daughters of our residence, so there's no need for you to cater to other people and wrong yourself!"

When she heard that her legitimate mother seemed to be defending her, the innocent and naive Li Mengru felt her heart warm. She replied in a moved manner, "Thank you, Mother, for thinking of me. Younger Sister Xiaocao is not as tricky and crafty as the rumors say. In fact, she's the exact opposite. She has a very sweet personality and treats people with respect and courtesy. There wasn't a hint of disdain in her demeanor when she talked with me, even though I am the daughter of a concubine. She not only took out good tea and refreshments but also presented a fruit platter of small tomatoes to me..."

A whole plate of precious and valuable small tomatoes was taken out to receive a concubine-born daughter as a guest? Lady Li's two underage sons revealed envious, jealous, and somewhat hateful expressions. Li Haoming, who was seven, pouted and grumbled, "I've only eaten cherry tomatoes twice thus far, and every time I've only gotten three at most. Older Sister Ru was actually able to monopolize a plate of them. It makes people feel very jealous."

“Ming'er!” Lady Li rebuked as she glared at her younger son and said, “Noblemen must be upright and elegant. How can they only desire good food? Be careful to not let your father hear you. Otherwise, he'll punish you by making you copy books!”

Li Mengqi loved her younger brother dearly and hurriedly changed the topic, “Only Official Yu could bear to use a plate of small tomatoes to receive guests. With her connections with Royal Prince Yang, her supply of fruits from the greenhouse pavilions will always be strong!”

Li Mengru lightly laughed and said, “Older Sister, you're wrong in this case! The small tomatoes that were used to receive guests at the Fang Residence weren't grown in the greenhouse pavilions. Instead, they are grown in their own greenhouse at home. Her family's greenhouse has been split into several levels. The precious and rare flowers are all arranged on shelves or hung in the air. The entire ground has been used to grow tomatoes and strawberries!”

Not every family could afford to build a greenhouse in their own residences as it easily cost over a thousand taels to craft one. It was a large amount of money for an estate like the official from the Ministry of Ceremonies. Lady Li also wasn't someone who loved flowers as much as the flower fanatics, so she naturally wouldn't bear to spend that large amount to build a greenhouse.

Li Mengqi remarked enviously, “Naturally it's more convenient to eat these fruits if you plant your own ah! Official Yu is talented at this so I'm sure the tomatoes she plants at home taste even better than the ones on the market!” “Older Sister Ru, did you finish an entire plate of cherry tomatoes?” Li Haoming was still obsessed over the fact that a concubine-born older sister of his was able to monopolize a whole plate of cherry tomatoes.

Li Mengru lowered her head and chuckled, “How could I? After all, I was there as her guest, so I needed to show a bit of restraint. I only ate a few of the small tomatoes on the plate. However, when I was in the greenhouse, I ate quite a few tomatoes that I had picked myself.”

Li Haoyu, who had been silent this entire time, finally opened his mouth when he heard this, “Official Yu also invited Older Sister Ru to pick tomatoes in the greenhouse? Are the tomatoes you pick yourself more tasty? I heard that, on Royal Prince Yang's farmstead, they have opened a business allowing guests to personally pick their own fruits. The entrance fee alone is a hundred taels but you can eat as much as you want while you are in the greenhouse. However, if you want to bring any of the fruits home that you picked, you need to pay more money. There are no restrictions on the amount of watermelons or cantaloupes by weight but every person can only buy at most five catties of the small tomatoes.”

“Every person can buy five catties of tomatoes? Then doesn't that mean that if we want to eat small tomatoes we can directly go to the farmstead instead of waiting in the wind and snow to buy it at the fruit stands?” Li Mengqi's eyes lit up as she started to consider begging her father on some day to bring them to Royal Prince Yang's farmstead to open their horizons.

Li Haoyu gave her a look and continued, “If you want to enter the greenhouse, every person needs to pay a hundred taels each as an entrance fee. Furthermore, the prices of the fruits at the farmstead are much higher than the prices set at the fruit stands. This type of expense isn't something that every family can afford to do!”

One visit there for one person would cost at least a hundred or so taels. With her father's official salary and her mother's income from her dowry shops, if their whole family went once, it was likely that they would have financial difficulties for the next few months. Li Mengqi wilted down and slumped her shoulders.

Li Mengru noticed that her older legitimate sister and two legitimate younger brothers all seemed to be somewhat downcast. She hurriedly looked back at Jiner and said, “Mother, Younger Sister Xiaocao said that we got along well, so she not only treated me very well but also gave me a present to bring back!”

Jiner was a bit unwilling to take out the small tomatoes and strawberries that Miss Yu had given her young miss. Usually, when the family was lucky enough to buy some tomatoes, she never saw the madam or the eldest young miss thinking of her young miss. Why was Young Miss being generous in light of her own poverty?

Although her heart was reluctant, Jiner didn't dare to reveal a single thought. She took out the two small and exquisite wicker baskets. The baskets had lids on them that prevented any of the people in the reception hall from seeing their contents. Li Haoming was very curious about this and stretched his neck forward in anticipation to see the present that Official Yu gave.

Lady Li revealed a happy expression on her face and said, “Miss Yu is truly too polite!”

Li Mengru placed the two small baskets on the small table in front of the lounge and then took off the covers, revealing the bright red small tomatoes and plump strawberries.

“Wow! A basket full of tomatoes. It must weigh around two catties ah? Official Yu is really generous!” Li Haoming exclaimed in pleasure.

“There are strawberries available in this season? No wonder the rumors all say that Official Yu can disregard the seasons and grow any fruit or vegetables at any time of the year!” Li Haoyu was also very surprised by this.

Lady Li stared at the sweet and attractive strawberries and small tomatoes while her heart made a few fast calculations. Hereafter, she needed to treat this concubine-born daughter better. Perhaps through her, they would be able to make a connection with Miss Yu...

Fields of Gold Chapter 464 - The Kitten and the Dog

The family looked at the bright red fruits on the table and, for a second, the whole entire room was silent. Even the youngest, Li Haoming, didn't start clamouring to eat the tomatoes. At this time, Official Li from the Ministry of Ceremonies walked in. He revealed a perplexed expression as it was currently lunchtime but there were no food dishes on the table.

When he noticed the small tomatoes and strawberries on the table, Official Li's expression lightened and he smiled, “Looks like our luck was pretty good today and we were able to buy such rare fruits. What a coincidence, tomorrow I'm inviting a few of my colleagues over. I can use such valuable fruits to serve them then.”

Unexpectedly, his youngest son, Li Haoming, pouted unhappily when he heard this, “Father, these fruits weren't bought by the servants from the kitchens. Fifth Older Sister had gone to Official Yu's residence as a guest today and these are her gifts!”

After he finished, he stared pitifully at his father and the expression on his face clearly said, 'These fruits are considered to be the property of Fifth Older Sister. Father, you don't even say a greeting before taking them over, is it really right?'

“Ru'er?” Official Li stared at his normally silent and taciturn concubine-born daughter with a flabbergasted expression. He would have never expected that she would catch the eye of Miss Yu and even be able to get some gifts from the other person.

After his daughter explained what had happened, he was silent for a moment before he stated, “Our ancestral background, if we go back three generations, is also from a farming family. We cannot use our backgrounds to humiliate other people! Assistant Minister Li's family is a great example of what could go wrong, so you must keep this in mind! This Miss Yu is very young but has already shown such talent at

farming and agriculture. In the future, the emperor will clearly view her with great importance. Since Ru'er has caught her eye, then collaborate well with her. Do not use your background and talents to bully the other person!"

"I will listen and obey Father's instructions!" Li Mengru seldom had the chance to talk to her own father, let alone receive any personal teachings from him. She was quite moved by this change.

Li Mengqi grinned, "Father, you don't know what type of personality younger sister has? If she was an arrogant and willful person, even if she had talent, Miss Yu might still not decide to work with her. Earlier when this daughter attended a banquet to admire the plum blossoms, I heard a rumor that Miss Yu is planning on opening a flower tea store and to sell her peach blossom tea that is able to improve a person's appearance. Even without Younger Sister's rouge and face powder, she wouldn't lack for business."

Official Li muttered to himself for a bit before he finally said, "You're normally just messing around when you make your rouge and face powder, so there's usually not a whole lot when you're done. It'd be hard to manufacture enough with your current process—how about this, have your mother take some money from the residence's budget and give it to you. If you need any particular materials, please tell your mother. Before the shop opens, you need to practice more in order to avoid ruining Miss Yu's business venture!"

"Yes! Thank you, Father!" Li Mengru's normally reserved expression revealed hints of happiness. If she had access to top-notch ingredients, she was sure that she would be able to make cosmetics that were much better than the ones sold by Full Spring Fragrance.

When he saw how obedient and sweet his daughter was, Official Li felt his heart relax a few fractions. He looked at his sons and daughters in the room and felt a bit of pride rise up—his children were all so obedient and understanding, so they definitely wouldn't do anything like Assistant Minister Li's daughter to bring calamity to their whole family!

His oldest son was only ten this year but he had already read through and knew the Book of Songs and the Book of History [1]. In the future, he naturally was going to become an official. His younger son was lively and clever. Although his personality was not as steady as his oldest son, he wasn't a stupid child either. His wife was virtuous and generous. People always said, 'a virtuous wife will reduce harm to her husband', and this ancient saying wasn't wrong! Wasn't Assistant Minister Li's wife short-sighted and

lacking in knowledge? After all, she had spoiled their daughter to the heavens, which caused them now to be the laughingstock of the whole capital.

“Hm hm...” Official Li looked at the valuable fruits on the table. There were even strawberries to be had in this season? Only Miss Yu's residence was able to bring out such rare fruits in this season so easily to give to other people, right? He looked at Li Mengru and then asked in a somewhat awkward manner, “Ru'er, what do you plan on doing with these fruits?”

Although Li Mengru had a weak and timid personality, she wasn't an imbecile. She hurriedly stated, “Whatever Father decides is best...”

“There are no outsiders here, so there's no need to be so cautious. In my heart, you, Qi'er, Ming'er, and Yu'er are the same. You are all Father's good children!” Official Li raised the status of this unassuming concubine-born daughter of his to the level of his legitimate children. This showed how much importance he placed on the recent events.

Lady Li was very skilled at guessing her husband's intentions and hurriedly interjected, “Ru'er lost her concubine-mother when she was young and has always been a sensible and clever child. I quite pity her. Husband, how about we record Ru'er's name under me. In the future, she can also get a good marriage because of this!”

“Then we will do as my wife says!” Official Li admired his wife's generosity and wisdom in this situation and now regarded her with even more importance.

Li Mengru almost couldn't believe her own ears. Being recorded under the legitimate wife's name was a very big honor for concubine-born children. This meant that, in the future, she would be of the same status as her legitimate born older sister and younger brothers and would be considered a legitimate born child under the legitimate wife...

She couldn't help but exclaim in happiness and repeatedly cried, “Thank you Mother for being so loving and generous...”

The smile on Li Mengqi's face didn't change at all as she said, “In the future, I will have a new legitimate younger sister! We're close in age so we should be more intimate together. Mother, the courtyard next to my Qinglan courtyard is still empty. How about we move Younger Sister Ru into that courtyard? That way, us sisters can easily spend more time with each other.”

“Okay! We will do as Qi'er suggests!” Lady Li naturally wouldn't refuse to go with her daughter's wise decision.

Only now did Official Li point at the two types of fruits on the table. Under the anxious gaze of his younger son, he proclaimed his decision, “These two fruits are indeed very difficult to get. If I took them both, I would be ruining everyone's mood here. How about this? We'll leave half of each fruit here and use them at the end of our noon meal! Ru'er, from today going forward, you should stay in the main courtyard and take all of your meals with your mother!”

Before Li Mengru could reply, Li Haoming already let out a scream of delight and had the servants bring a clean plate over. He personally divided the fruits by half and placed them on the plate.

Li Mengru felt like she was in a dream today. First she had been invited by the famous Official Yu and had signed a collaboration contract for a new business with her. Then, her father and mother started regarding her with importance and even, for some reason, elevated her status and made her a legitimate born daughter under her legitimate mother's name!

While the main courtyard of Official Li from the Ministry of Ceremonies were happily enjoying their tomatoes and strawberries, at Count Zhongqin's Estate, General Fang's residence, Royal Prince Yang was currently holding a bright scarlet fox pelt in his hands and showing it to Yu Xiaocao.

“This type of red fox fur is very warm. Winter in the capital is different than in Tanggu Town as it tends to be very dry and cold. You should take it to make a long coat. You're always going back and forth between the capital and the Imperial Plantation. How could it be okay if you don't wear warm enough clothing?”

Lady Fang sat on the side with a smile on her face as she looked at the chests full of furs in the hall. Her satisfaction towards Royal Prince Yang had gone up a few fractions. Originally, when she discovered that Royal Prince Yang liked her twelve year old daughter, she was quite opposed to this. Years ago, Royal Prince Yang's 'bad reputation' had long spread throughout the capital. The rumors made him seem more vicious than a wild beast and he couldn't be easily controlled.

Her daughter was weak and soft. If Royal Prince Yang exploded in temper, she would have no way to defend herself. She would rather find a more ordinary family for her daughter to marry into as long as the man was gentle and responsible then send such a weak lamb into the lion's den.

However, after observing for some time, she discovered that while Royal Prince Yang may still treat other people with a cold and lofty manner, he was as gentle as a tamed colt with Xiaocao. Her normally clever and obedient daughter quarreled, contradicted, ridiculed and even acted willful around the prince at times. It was as if she was a tiny naughty kitten using her claws to tease a gentle and honest large dog. That large dog could obviously eat the tiny kitten in one gulp but couldn't even bear to show his teeth to the small kitten when she dragged her claws over him. He was so good tempered that he allowed her to do whatever she pleased.

Recently, Royal Prince Yang's bad reputation was not as horrible as it was in years past, especially in these past two years. The prince hadn't lost control of himself and harmed anyone in recent times. It seemed like that wild beast within his heart had finally calmed down. The emperor also regarded him with increasing importance. Furthermore, every time he finished the tasks assigned to him, the emperor was always pleased with the outcome. Even if his tasks took him far away from the capital, Royal Prince Yang always thought of her daughter. For example, when he left to quell the rebellion in the north this time, he still remembered to buy Xiaocao tons of winter furs during the chaos of war.

The room was currently filled with top-notch furs and even people with money to spend in the capital wouldn't be able to buy them. Because of this, Lady Fang's heart relaxed perceptively.

When she came back to reality, Lady Fang could hear her daughter complaining, "It's such a bright red color. Using it to make a scarf or hat is fine, but if it's used to make an entire long coat, won't I resemble a red packet at the end being clothed from head to toe in red?"

"What's wrong with being clothed in red from head to toe? It's almost the New Years and red is such a festive color, right? If you wear a long red coat, you'll resemble the good luck child in the New Years pictures and everyone will find you adorable!" Royal Prince Yang did his best to persuade the little lass from the side.

Yu Xiaocao wasn't moved by his opinions. She frowned as she stared at the red fox pelt in her hands and shook her head, "What type of aesthetic do you have? What do old men know about beauty? It's better to use this to make a nice cloak. I can line the edges of the cloak with some white fox fur. This is the biggest compromise that I'll make!"

"Cao'er, how can you speak to Royal Prince Yang in that way? He's giving you furs out of the kindness of his own heart!" Lady Fang was afraid Royal Prince Yang would become unhappy and hurriedly pretended to scold her daughter.

Zhu Junyang noticed that Xiaocao was a bit upset as her lips were pouting and hastily interjected, “No worries, this prince is already used to her mannerisms. If she treated me with complete politeness, then I would find it too weird! Lady Fang, this chest of furs is for you and General Fang. You should go through it and see if there's anything else you want, okay?”

Oh ho, looked like he considered her an eyesore and was trying to send her off! Lady Fang was helpless at this and had Linglong stay in the room. Furthermore, before she left, she gave a few knowing looks to Xiaocao's other maidservants. With so many maids around, there was no way they could do something improper ah!

After the older generation 'eyesore' left, Zhu Junyang turned up his 'lady killer charm' and gently stroked the little lass's head. The smile on his face was extremely gentle and the destructive power of his devilish looks came out in full force as he said, “These two chests are all for you to pick through. Whatever you want to do with them is fine. This prince just got back from the battlefield and didn't come here to argue with you. You little lass, why are you like a fighting chicken day in and day out? Is there anyone else besides me who can handle your little temper all the time?”

Yu Xiaocao felt a bit embarrassed by his words. A few days ago, when she didn't have any news about him, she felt deeply concerned and worried all the time. It didn't matter how delicious the food she was eating, none of it seemed to have any flavor. Her face, which had originally plumped up under the care of her godmother, had returned to its usual slender and oval shaped structure.

Fields of Gold Chapter 465 - Only Because You're Too Gentle

But when she saw him, she could not resist bickering and bantering with him—perhaps this was the 'spoiled from pampering' that people always talked about? Sigh! Acting cute with a young handsome man who was not even twenty years old. The more she lived, the more she regressed!

When she lifted her gaze, she was once again stunned by this young man's outstanding features—how could a person be so beautiful? He was so beautiful that his gender could be disregarded, that no one could ever hold a single blasphemous thought towards him, so beautiful others could not help but...fall for him!

“Pfft—” Zhu Junyang saw that his little lass had gone into a daze while she stared at him. He had received quite a lot of infatuated stares like this in recent years, most of them from young girls in their teens...but some also came from disgusting old men! He disliked all of them, all of them except for this little lass's gaze. Not only that, but he also even felt elated that she would look at him like that!

Did this mean that the little lass was...beginning to like him? After the New Years, she would be thirteen years old, and in certain tribes in the north, girls who reach the age of thirteen were already eligible for marriage! Although, he was aware that it would be bad for both the girl's body and the future generation if the girl was to marry too early, if it were up to him, he still wished to marry her as early as possible. At most, they would only consummate the marriage after she turned eighteen!

Since the little lass looked at himself like this, did it mean that she was not completely indifferent towards him? This new understanding was a big thing for him. It made him happier than even when he was rewarded by the emperor after winning a war and making a huge contribution to the Great Ming Empire.

Zhu Junyang uncontrollably reached out his right hand and caressed the little maiden's soft cheek. He was addicted to this feeling, unwilling to part with it. If he could, he would hold the little lass's face as they stared at each other forever until the end of time.

“Ahem ahem!” Linglong had orders from the madam, so when she saw her young miss being taken advantage of by Royal Prince Yang, she hurriedly coughed loudly, reminding Royal Prince Yang to watch his actions. The madam had her 'eyes and ears' around!

Zhu Junyang's brows furrowed in displeasure from being interrupted. His icy gaze slid over to Linglong, coldly barking, “If you're sick, go see a physician. Don't stay here, lest you spread the disease to your mistress!”

Both Royal Prince Yang's expression and tone was saying: 'If you dare infect my little lass, you'd better fear for your life!'

Linglong, who had been dutifully preventing her young miss from being snatched away by a large wolf, felt aggrieved after she was threatened, 'I'm not sick, I'm just reminding you to be more respectful! Royal Prince Yang, is it really alright for you to dismiss us so 'justifiably' after you've taken advantage of our young miss?'

Yu Xiaocao scrutinized Linglong but saw that she looked normal, so she said, “Sister Linglong's body should be fine. She's probably feeling uncomfortable in her throat because of the difference in temperature indoors and outdoors. I have some Chinese liquorice root and malva nuts in my courtyard. In a bit, we'll brew medicinal tea afterward. You'll be fine after drinking it for two days!”

Linglong was even more aggrieved. 'Young Miss, please don't listen to Royal Prince Yang. He's a sly, old fox. My throat is fine, really!'

Maybe it was the psychological effect that, at this moment, she felt an itch in her throat. But she was afraid that her mistress would make her take some weird medicine, or that Royal Prince Yang would now have a reason to send her out, so she could only resist the urge to cough. It was uncomfortable to have an itchy feeling in her throat yet not being able to cough it out. She wanted nothing more than to reach into her throat and scratch at the itch.

Once more, Zhu Junyang glared at the maidservant who ruined the atmosphere. As he turned back around, he could not recover the previous feeling, so he could only point to another piece of pristine, white, snow fox fur and said to Xiaocao, "This kind of fur is the thickest. You should let the sewing department make a few coats so you can wear them interchangeably when you're out at the Imperial Plantation. It's the middle of winter and there's nothing really important at the farmsteads. You don't need to be so dutiful and travel to and fro the farmsteads when it's snowing!"

"Yes, there's nothing that needs my attention at the winter wheat plantation, but it's our first year testing out the greenhouse pavilions, I still need to make my rounds occasionally. Isn't it snowing already? I'm afraid that the snow will ruin the greenhouse. It's only a minor problem if we don't make a profit, but it'll be terrible if we delay the supply of fruits and vegetables to the capital!" Yu Xiaocao would never admit it out loud that she was actually just afraid of affecting her profits.

Zhu Junyang was well aware of his little lass's obsession with money, but he did not reveal her true thoughts. If she said she was worried about the meals of the prestigious in the capital, then it was what she meant! Was that not what his soldiers said? If he wanted to make a girl happy, he would first have to agree that everything that she said was right, even if it was really outrageous and even if he disagreed!

However, she wasn't wrong! It was easy to transition from rags to riches, but hard to adapt from riches to rags. The esteemed and wealthy folks of the capital were already used to such luxuries. If their supply of fresh fruits and vegetables were suddenly cut off, they would no doubt be quick to voice their complaints.

"What happened to the horse carriage that I gave you? Why didn't you ride in that? The carriage is wide enough for you to put some braziers and warming censers!" Zhu Junyang's heart ached whenever he recalled the sight of that thin figure standing in the snow and wind.

Now that he had mentioned about the horse carriage that he sent her, the edge of Yu Xiaocao's lips could not help but twitch. That horse carriage was awarded to Royal Prince Yang by the emperor. It was made to fit the status of a royal prince's personal carriage, but she was only a small sixth-ranked official. If she openly rode that horse carriage out to run her errands, the emperor would definitely receive many complaints about her on his imperial desk the next day.

Yu Xiaocao told him about her thoughts. Zhu Junyang looked at her resignedly yet blamingly, inwardly grumbling, 'Won't you be rid of one more worry if you married me earlier? It seems that she won't be using my horse carriage, but I can't deny that I wasn't thorough in my considerations. At the time, I only wanted the best for her, but I hadn't considered the restrictions on her status. I'll need to have them quickly craft another comfortable horse carriage suited for her rank!'

"Oh right, was that young maiden just now your new friend? It should be so. It's been a while since you've arrived at the capital, yet you only go to the imperial plantation while staying cooped up at home for the rest of the time. You're a young lady, you should interact more with your peers, lest you become a little 'old lady'!" Although Zhu Junyang didn't really like Li Mengru's cowardly temperament, he agreed that friends who were simple-minded and harmless were still better suited for Xiaocao.

Remembering a possible future source of income, Yu Xiaocao grinned at him, "Do you know which group of people spend the most money? It's children and women! Aren't there a lot of people in the capital who are envious of Godmother, who has fair and smooth skin, a great figure and looks younger than she actually is? I'm preparing to open a beauty salon that specifically provides services to women. As long as they're willing to spend the money, I'll make sure that they go out fair-skinned, slim and beautiful even if they come in dark-skinned, plump and ugly!"

Seeing her confident expression, Zhu Junyang was a little worried that she would accidentally expose her intentions and affect her good name. At this time, he recalled the rumors that spread in the capital that time before the rebellion was put down, and he could no longer hold back his thirst for blood. 'You brought up a good daughter and married a good wife, Right Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Appointments! Since you dare touch my person, you must be prepared to suffer the repercussions!'

The little lass was quite sensitive and seemed to have sensed the change in his emotions. Zhu Junyang met her questioning gaze and rubbed the top of her head, saying, "Promise me, no matter what happens, don't face the dangers by yourself! If you have any difficult decisions to make, you must consult me first. Remember, even if the sky falls down, I'll hold it up for you!"

"You're so hateful! You messed up my hair!" She was touched, but Yu Xiaocao pried off the outrageous hand on her head and bared her teeth at him in an attempt to hide it. Sigh...being pampered felt so good!

In her previous life, her parents had passed away very early, so in order to bring up her young siblings, she forced herself to grow up—keeping all her sorrow and anger in her heart and bearing all the pressure and difficulties on her shoulders. At the very beginning, she was only a teenager, a freshman in high school! There was no one to share her despair with, so she could only withstand the pressure herself and drink her own tears!

Now, there was a person who stood in front of her and told her, “No matter what happens, I'll protect you!” It would be a lie to say that she wasn't touched. She hadn't expected that ancient people would be so captivating!

“What's wrong?” Though Zhu Junyang could not read Yu Xiaocao's thoughts, his senses were still much more sensitive than ordinary people. He sensed that the little lass was feeling down all of a sudden and worriedly looked at her.

Yu Xiaocao sniffled and grinned at him, her voice louder and clearer than before, “Thank you, Zhu Junyang! Thank you for liking me, an ordinary person who couldn't be more common. Thank you, for your unconditional support and trust in me. Thank you for being willing to wait for me! If your intentions are still the same when I reach the age of sixteen, let's get engaged!”

Linglong panicked when she heard her young miss so 'casually' promise her hand in marriage. 'My dear Young Miss, shouldn't your marriage be decided by your parents? You're only so young, yet you've already promised your hand in marriage to the royal prince? Have you considered Madam Liu's feelings? Our madam's feelings? Oh my goodness! I have to send someone to inform the madam, Eldest Young Miss is too young and too easily tricked!'

At first, Zhu Junyang was stunned at her words, then, he was elated. 'The little lass finally gave her word and she also brought forward her age to sixteen! Mhmm! This age is very reasonable—proposal, engagement ceremony, and the exchanging of betrothal gifts and bride price between two families...all of these engagement and marriage ceremonies will take quite a while, and at that time, the little lass would be nearly eighteen years old!'

'The little lass will be thirteen years old after the New Years, so there's only three more years until she's sixteen!' Three years! It was a huge surprise for Zhu Junyang, who had prepared himself to wait for her for five years. Although the soldiers in the army were tactless, their logic was still right. Indeed, wives had to be coaxed and pampered!

In his exhilaration, Zhu Junyang could not contain his joy. He slid his arms around Yu Xiaocao's slim waist and held her up in the air like a child. Taken by surprise, Yu Xiaocao screamed in fear, shouting to be put down while hitting him with her small fists.

Fields of Gold Chapter 466 - To Live in the Lap of Luxury

The little lass's fists weren't very strong—they felt more like an itch when they hit Zhu Junyang. It was as though he was possessed, grinning like a fool as he stood there unmovingly, letting her hit him. Linglong watched them interact so naturally and suddenly, she felt that her young miss and Royal Prince Yang were probably made for each other. One had a cold temperament, but extremely pampered her young miss; the other was a long way off the image of a 'virtuous wife and good mother' in people's hearts, but Royal Prince Yang especially liked this type.

Although Royal Prince Yang enjoyed 'flirting' with his little lass, Lady Fang's 'eyes and ears' were still around them. No matter how much disregard he had for the views of others, he still could not completely ignore his future mother-in-law's opinions. Marriage was decided by the parents, wouldn't he get himself unnecessary bumps in his plan to marry his wife if his mother-in-law decided to work against him?

He caught the little lass's fists in his hands and lightly gripped them, unwilling to let her go. Zhu Junyang lowered his head to look at her reddened face, gently saying, "Where were we? You said you want to open a new shop? Have you picked an address? Do you need my help?"

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes at him for seizing the chance to take advantage of her, but she really did not take him for a stranger, so she uncourteously said, "I'd like a large residence, five-sectioned, if possible, and it should have several little courtyards inside. The surroundings should be more elegant, suitable for the standing of the madams and misses of the capital and up to their aesthetic standards. You're the overlord of the capital, just help me keep an eye out!"

"Why do you need to buy a property? I already own several properties that are quite good in both the east and west parts of the city, I'll bring you there on another day to have a look. If you like it, I'll just give it to you! Just take it as an early betrothal gift!" He couldn't keep the grin from his face whenever he imagined that this little lass would be marked as his in just three years.

Yu Xiaocao glared at this handsome man who had a rare, silly expression on his face and grumbled, "I don't want you to give it to me! This young lady has money, can I not even purchase a property? Not to mention, what kind of a relationship do we have that I can accept such a grand gift from you? What would those chatterbox madams outside say? They'd say that the newly-appointed Official Yu is a seductress, bewitching Royal Prince Yang at such a young age..."

“Who would dare! I'll cut off her tongue!” He was once again reminded that his little lass had almost been put in harm's way because of Assistant Minister Li's wife and daughter, and rage rushed to his head. 'I need to have the hidden guards look into Assistant Minister Li later, I don't believe I won't find any discrepancies! A family that has not even maintained its success for more than three generations dares to look down on my little lass?! I'll let you scam back to where you came from!'

“It is more dangerous to restrict the people's freedom of speech than to block a river. You're a crass man with thick skin. You'll be just fine, but I'm a just pure, delicate girl; I must avoid them!” Yu Xiaocao wasn't agreeing to marry Zhu Junyang because of his assets. Moreover, although her own assets weren't as bountiful as Prince Jing's, the fortune that she had collected these past years was not to be underestimated. Did she still need to covet the properties of others?

Linglong nodded in her heart when she heard this. 'Eldest Young Miss has really been enlightened. At the very least, she knew to maintain her distance. The madam's efforts were not a waste.'

"Alright, you're right. I've been careless in my considerations." 'First rule of the Code of Conduct for the Pursuit of a Wife: The wife is right no matter what she says. You have to agree with her even if she's wrong!' Royal Prince Yang nodded and, at the same time, thought about how to legally transfer his best property to under her name.

Yu Xiaocao's eyes flickered and then she continued, "Additionally, I have another profitable deal and I want you to come with me. Do you want to collaborate with me?"

"Of course I'll go with you!" 'Second rule of the Code of Conduct for the Pursuit of a Wife: Follow every order of the wife.' Moreover, if the little lass said it was a profitable deal, then it definitely will be a profitable deal! He would be stupid if he chose to not profit when the opportunity arose! Royal Prince Yang hurriedly said, "Is there anything you need me to do? Just say it!"

"I'm planning to open up a flower tea workshop at the start of spring and I'd like to use the empty land at the foothill of your farmstead. I'd also like to plant some flowers, grass and seeds on the small hill, and I'll need you to help me watch over it, too! At that time, we'll equally split the profit of the workshop." Xiaocao planned to make quality flower tea, so to share half of the profits in such a short time, her heart burned as though someone had dug out a piece of it.

Zhu Junyang didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he noticed the little lass's expression. She was the one who decided the profit-sharing; he didn't push for it at all, so why did she look like she was being

bullied? 'Third rule of the Code of Conduct for the Pursuit of a Wife: Everything should be done to the wife's liking, and the husband should unwaveringly side with her!'

"Half the profit is too much considering the fact that I'm only sponsoring some empty land. I can't take advantage of you like this. What about this, whatever help you need with the workshop, just tell me, I'll help you build it. At the same time, make a list of all the flowers and seeds that you need, I'll definitely get all of them for you as long as they can be found within our Ming Dynasty. And even if they can't, I'll look for ways to get them to you! Twenty percent of the profits of the workshop is enough for me." Just as Zhu Junyang finished his last sentence, he saw that the little lass was grinning from ear to ear.

In his heart, he couldn't help but shake his head, 'Who do you take after, to be so avaricious? Don't you realize that even if you gave me your money now, all of it would still belong to you in the future? At most, I'd only be safeguarding it for you for a few years...'

Yu Xiaocao was quite satisfied with Royal Prince Yang's 'tact', and in her state of happiness, she lost all sense of measure, heavily patting Zhu Junyang's chest a few times while she smiled, "Rest assured, if you follow this lady, I'll make sure you live in the lap of luxury!"

At the side, Linglong held her face in her hands, 'Oh, my mistress! What is Royal Prince Yang's status? Ever since he was born, he's led a comfortable life, whyever would he need to follow you? ...that's not right, when Royal Prince Yang was born, chilis had not yet been brought to our country, so it'd be a little difficult for him if he wanted to eat something spicy...'

Zhu Junyang, however, held in his laughter, lowering his head to look at the soft, warm, little hand that was rampaging on his chest, close to his left breast. He chuckled, "Very well, I'll be waiting to live well under Official Yu!"

"Hehe! You don't say; this lady will treat you to good food today!" Yu Xiaocao suddenly remembered that the kitchen had been able to procure a deer this morning and smiled, "I'll treat you to mala hotpot. Will you honor me, Royal Prince Yang who is always busy?"

"Even if I'm busy, I still won't miss your cooking!" 'Fourth rule in the Code of Conduct for the Pursuit of a Wife: Recklessly throw compliments—men who are sweet talkers get the prize!'

At lunchtime, General Fang braved the wind and snow and made it back home, and the whole family, along with a freeloader (Royal Prince Yang), enjoyed venison hotpot in the parlor room. The pot had been specially made according to the style and shape of Beijing hot pots, with a divider in the middle so as to accommodate Fang Haolin's tastes. One side of the pot used clear, black chicken soup for its soup base, while the other used authentic, old Chongqing mala hotpot ingredients as its soup base.

Plates of thinly sliced venison, lamb, various meatballs and fish balls, as well as tofu skin, tofu, spinach and other green vegetables were on the table. This was paired with a dip made by Xiaocao that had the entire family stuffing themselves full. Even Little Linlin ate a lot of meat and fish balls!

While helping her son to cook the lamb, Lady Fang pretended to ask casually, "Cao'er, are you going back to Dongshan Village this New Year's, or are you celebrating in the capital?"

"Er...I think I'll still go back to Dongshan Village. My family is there, so it wouldn't be right if I didn't go back." It had been a long time since Yu Xiaocao returned to Dongshan Village, and she missed her relatives who stayed there, as well as the simple Dongshan villagers.

"What's wrong about it? You've already spent a dozen New Year's with Brother Dahai, but you've never spent a New Year with me and your godmother! Don't go back this year, the four of us will have our own celebration!" Fang Zizhen was really treating Xiaocao like his own daughter. His daughter was such a lovely person, not to mention that she understood his temperament! It was a pity that Yu Hai kept trying to steal his daughter from him. It was so displeasing!

He didn't seem to recall that Yu Xiaocao was still surnamed Yu, after all, and she was Yu Hai's own flesh and blood. At first, Yu Hai pitied him because he had no children of his own, so he shared his daughter with him, but now it had become a case of Yu Hai stealing his daughter from him. Ai! You really couldn't reason with such a crude person!

"Er..." Both front and back sides of her hand had flesh on it, and both her godfather and biological father were still her fathers. Yu Xiaocao was put in between a rock and a hard place.

Even just his movements of cooking the ingredients in the soup was so pleasing to the eye. Zhu Junyang helped the little lass blanch a bowl of venison and lamb, then refilled her empty cup with fruit tea before he leisurely said, "What's there to argue about? Wouldn't it be simpler to just bring Xiaocao's family into the capital for New Year's?"

Upon hearing this, Fang Zizhen slapped his thighs and loudly concurred, "That's a good idea! Brother Dahai wasn't able to take a good look at the capital the last time he was here! It's much more lively in the capital than in Tanggu Town during the New Year! Cao'er, you should bring your siblings over, and when the time comes, you can bring them to the temple fair and enjoy the lanterns. Everybody can have fun together!"

"Father, Older Sister, Linlin also wants to see the lanterns!" Fang Haolin quickly juttled in after swallowing the piece of tofu that his mother fed him.

"Okay! When the time comes, I'll bring Linlin and your older sister to see the lanterns together, and buy Linlin a bunny lantern..." Fang Zizhen pinched his son's chubby little face, grinning so widely his eyes had turned into slits—as if the matter was already settled.

"Linlin wants a big tiger lantern, not a little bunny!" Ever since he heard his older sister's story of the mighty tiger, tigers had become the object of affection for our little friend, Fang Haolin, because it was the best of all the animals!

"Very well, we'll buy both the tiger and the bunny!" Fang Zizhen's laughter resounded within the parlor room.

Looking at her godfather's exuberant expression, Yu Xiaocao really couldn't bear to spoil it for him. However, if the entire family was to spend the New Year in the capital, disregarding all the effort it would take, it would already be a difficult challenge in itself to find a place to fit the entire family. If they lived in the Fang Residence, her family would definitely not feel at ease. Did she have enough time to buy a house now?

Sigh...why hadn't she thought of buying a yard of her own in the first place? She seemed to have had the intention at the beginning, but then her godparents were afraid that she would move out of the Fang Residence after she bought her own residence, so they had strongly opposed her, and that was the end of it.

Fields of Gold Chapter 467 - Uncontrollable Feelings

"Why are you so hesitant? Don't forget, you're now a court official and you don't get many days off for the New Year. In fact, you'd be spending most of your vacation days on the road. Uncle and Aunt Yu definitely wouldn't be willing to have you suffer like this if they found out that you'd be braving the wind and snow on your journey to and fro just to spend a few days at home. "If you're really worried that there's no place for them to live in, then there's still more than two months till the New Years. I'll be in charge of finding you a suitable residence within this time. Don't worry, we'll buy it with your money

and put it under your name. Won't that work alright?" Zhu Junyang was unexpectedly attentive and considered all of Xiaocao's concerns, leaving her without a worry. Yu Xiaocao thought about it for a while, then raised her head to look at this spirited, handsome man and said lightly, "Why not...put it under my father's name! I'm still young now, moreover I'm an official and I'm often busy with the Imperial Plantation. When I grow up and marry, it's generally unacceptable for me to still go out and take care of these matters. My father is as good as I am when it comes to agriculture, so my father will probably take over the matters at the imperial farmstead in the future. He's only in his early forties, and after two decades, my eldest brother should've already matured..." Did she take the Imperial Plantation as her family business? However, it was true that the Yu Family had the most skilled people in agriculture as of now. At the very least, only this family could cultivate six hundred catties of winter wheat in just one mu of land! Zhu Junyang's gaze was gentle as he stared at her and he lightly tucked strands of her hair that were out of place behind her ear, chuckling, "You don't have to be like this. Even if you've already married me, I won't care about the views and opinions of others, so if you want to be an official, you can continue to do so; if you want to cultivate land, you can cultivate land; and if you want to earn money, you can go ahead with it. I'll support you unconditionally!" Yu Xiaocao was touched upon hearing this. She really didn't think she could find another person who was so carefree, easygoing and wouldn't detest her for 'usurping authority' and publicly showing her face when taking care of official business in this male-dominated ancient era. Regardless of whether he would be true to his promise in the future, at the very least he wasn't like those obdurate old fellows who thought that she was disgraceful right now! Yes, she was touched, but the results of his probation still depended on his performance. She cutely rolled her eyes and lied, "Who wants to marry you! You're jumping to conclusions! We still have to evaluate your performance!" "You're right! I'll work hard during this probation so that you might reduce the probation period again!" Looking at the little lass who was beautiful and lovely, Zhu Junyang couldn't help the lament in his heart, 'Time passes too slowly. There's still three years until we can get engaged, whereas our marriage is five years away!' "You still want to shorten the probation period? Dream on! If I'm not sixteen years old, my parents would definitely not be willing to get me engaged! The reason why we want you to perform is to see whether or not you'll pass the probation, if you don't, you won't be able to become my husband!" Yu Xiaocao noticed that his hand was reaching towards hers, and lightly hit the back of his slender and large hand before he could do anything. Zhu Junyang rubbed the back of his hand that was hit although it did not hurt at all, "I'll definitely work hard to perform. I guarantee to meet Official Yu's demands, don't worry!" "What should I be worried about?" Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes at him again, "Back to the previous topic, I'd like to purchase a residence in the capital for my family. Even if my father doesn't get stationed in the capital in the future, Little Shitou would still need to come here to sit for his examinations. With his cleverness, it shouldn't be a problem for him to achieve second rank in the imperial examinations. When the time comes, he could even possibly be stationed in the capital as an official. It would be too impractical to not have a residence ah!" "Sure! I'll keep an eye out for another residence. Our little God of Money doesn't lack money anyway, so it shouldn't be a problem to buy two properties in one go, one under your name and the other under Uncle Yu's!" Zhu Junyang noticed that his cold image had long disappeared ever since he met the little lass. He was becoming more and more like a chatterbox. "That's not right, we still need the big property that's going to be turned into a beauty salon!" Yu Xiaocao was still concerned about her plan to make a fortune and hurried to remind him. "Alright, alright! And a large, elegant house!" Zhu Junyang watched her with a loving expression on his face. "Ahem ahem!" Fang Zizhen coughed loudly. If it weren't because his wife was holding him back, then he would've beat up this kid

who was acting as if no one was around! He actually dared to sweet talk his daughter and even wanted to take advantage of her right in front of them! 'Be careful lest I break your roguish hands!' Er...he would do his best even if he wasn't necessarily able to defeat Royal Prince Yang. Yu Xiaocao felt so speechless. The ancients were not wrong; beauty did, indeed, distract people! It must be because Zhu Junyang was too handsome, too considerate, and his voice too gentle, that she had completely forgotten that there were still three more people in the room. They had said so much publicly, and their conversation even sounded like they were flirting! Aiya, it was too embarrassing! It was all the fault of this handsome man in front of her! Her small hand reached under the table and pinched said person's thigh and even gave it a twist. It was so painful that Zhu Junyang gritted his teeth, 'She's right, it's all my fault!' Then, his gaze flitted to his future father-in-law's face which was dark, so he immediately sat upright. Could he still make up for it now? Sigh! What a hard life he led. Other people only had a pair of in-laws to deal with, but his little lass had to make it difficult for him and present him with two pairs of in-laws to tackle. Sigh...the road to pursuing a wife was so long, when would he reach the end? "Cao'er," Fang Zizhen placed some venison in his daughter's bowl and said in a serious tone, "You're still young, so there's no hurry for you to settle down! Besides, we're not just looking at the face when we look for a son-in-law, we also do an overall evaluation! Your godmother and I have met many more people than you have, so you must seek your godmother's and mine, as well as your parents' opinions regarding this matter in the future. You're a precious girl, so you can't make these decisions recklessly..." 'You brat, didn't they say that you were cold and a man of few words? How are you cold? How are you a man of few words? There's only incessant sweet talk coming out of that mouth of yours! You try to snatch my daughter away even when I'm right in front of you! I'll have to stay in the capital to keep an eye out in the future—to take precautions and strictly guard my daughter against you.' Yu Xiaocao was so embarrassed that she had nearly buried her face into her bowl. She didn't know how else to respond except to nod her head. Zhu Junyang had tried to interject several times, but he always retreated from Fang Zizhen's glare. 'What probation? Who's your wife? Have I, this father-in-law, agreed? There's no chance that you can steal my daughter away with your clever remarks!' Seeing her husband's raging expression, Lady Fang grabbed some vegetables for him and comforted, "Alright, don't get mad! No one will be able to steal our daughter away without your approval. Here, eat some vegetables, they're already cooked until soft!" Linglong had already told her every detail of the scene that occurred in the parlor room before lunchtime. Lady Fang was, of course, somewhat mad at her daughter taking matters into her own hands and promising her own hand in marriage. The young miss of their Count Zhongqin Household did not need to worry about her marriage! It was true that they would be marrying their daughter into a household of higher status, and that Prince and Princess Consort Jing were quite sensible and reasonable, but Royal Prince Yang was simply not a good partner! Regardless of the fact that he already held a noble title at such a young age; regardless of the fact that the emperor greatly trusted him in these recent years; regardless that he would later separate from the Prince Jing's Household and live in his own residence... However, his temper that was comparable to a volcano eruption was unpredictable. Simply this one point was enough to overshadow all his other good points. The previous Minister of Rites also seemed like a pleasant person on the outside, very polite and well-mannered, but once his temper flared, he wouldn't recognize even his own relatives. He had married three wives before, and it was announced that they either passed away from a disease or they died suddenly, but they were, as a matter of fact, actually personally murdered by the minister when he lost control of himself. Furthermore, there were the carcasses that were uncovered in the garden of his inner courtyard. Those poor people had all been the concubines and servants that he had killed when he lost control. When he

was exposed, the emperor had personally interrogated him. He sobbed, claiming that he didn't know how he came to be like this. When he lost all sense of rationality, he couldn't control himself at all, and when he came to, the people had already died...The emperor said that he probably had schizophrenia, so he would normally seem like any other person, but when his condition acted up, he would become a deranged murderer. The Royal Prince Yang mentioned in the rumors was exactly like the previous Minister of Rites! If it weren't because they had found out about his condition early and gave him 'guards' skilled in martial arts that were actually there to prevent him from acting up, then he would've probably killed a lot more people! She would not let her daughter jump into such a pit of fire! However, once she heard Linglong finish describing all that happened in the parlor room, Lady Fang began to hesitate. Even if she didn't completely understand her daughter's temperament, she still understood her enough to know that she wasn't the kind that could sit idly. Pray tell, which rich son of the capital wouldn't mind that his wife would be publicly showing her face outside, carrying out her official duties and running her businesses? If her daughter married into such a family, she would be akin to a bird whose wings were broken and put into a golden cage. She definitely would not be happy! It was hard to come by, such a person like Royal Prince Yang who was an outstanding character and came from a distinguished family, who didn't care for anything besides Xiaocao. He was already of marriageable age, yet he was willing to wait for Xiaocao alone, willing to pamper and support her unconditionally. If she didn't consider the dangerous side of his temper, then the two of them were really a match made in heaven. Lady Fang felt so conflicted, but she couldn't help but feel touched at the scene she just witnessed at the dining table. Every woman would definitely be touched by Royal Prince Yang's zealous side. As she thought of this, she sighed inwardly and began, "Royal Prince Yang..." "Madam, please speak openly!" Zhu Junyang put down his chopsticks and straightened his posture, looking as though he was a pupil committed to changing for the better. "Cao'er is still young, and she's the one that's the most well-behaved and pampered in the family. We don't really want to restrict her, so she might be a little clueless when it comes to the precautions of interactions between men and women, but you're different, you're born into a distinguished family and you're even of marriageable age. I hope...you can be more reserved, so as to maintain our Cao'er's good name. You know how important a woman's reputation is. If you really care about her, you won't bear to see her hurt in any way whatsoever, right?" Lady Fang currently felt just like any other protective mother: Her daughter was absolutely perfect—even if there were imperfections, it would be the fault if others! Cao'er was still a child, it must be Royal Prince Yang who coaxed her into promising her hand in marriage behind her parents' back. Royal Prince Yang was at fault for all of this!

Fields of Gold Chapter 468 - Meeting the Emperor

Since she had already phrased her words so clearly, Royal Prince Yang naturally wouldn't disagree, quickly nodding, "You're right, madam. I'll be more careful in the future!" "Our Cao'er is slowly growing older, so it's not so convenient for her to meet with a male outsider in the future. If you have any official business with her, please discuss it with her at the yamen or at the Imperial Plantation. Royal Prince Yang, do you think...I'm being reasonable?" Lady Fang's intentions were quite clear. First, have the two of them keep their distance, and if Royal Prince Yang was truly sincere, then she would follow her daughter's wishes and agree to their engagement in three years. At the very least, if he changed his mind, her daughter's marriage wouldn't be affected! Zhu Junyang felt troubled. Could he say no? But if he agreed, then it would be harder for him to see the little lass in the future. Passerbys, father-in-law, mother-in-law...they were all here just to meddle with his affairs! "But...Godmother, I've asked Royal

Prince Yang to help me find suitable residences!" Yu Xiaocao had abruptly transmigrated into this world, then brought up in the countryside, so she was not so concerned with the worldly decorum. Her heart mildly rejected the idea that she might not so easily see Royal Prince Yang in the future. Lady Fang glared at her daughter who interrupted her and said, "Even if you wanted to buy some properties, does it necessarily have to be Royal Prince Yang? Are your godfather and I decorations? Don't you worry, your godfather will take care of this matter!" "Why do you want to buy a residence? Wouldn't it be nice to have the whole family merrily celebrating New Year's together?" Fang Zizhen originally planned to have his daughter celebrate New Year's with them, but now it seemed that the plan was about to fall flat. Sigh! What was the point if it were just the three of them coldly celebrating New Year's? Cao'er, that little lass, was so determined to buy a house, and it seemed that he could only help her! He needed to keep an eye out for suitable, nearby residences that were for sale... Zhu Junyang's eyebrow twitched. In just a short period of time, the task he was entrusted to by his 'wife' was now snatched away by another person? Indeed, his father-in-law was made to suppress him! 'However, you can buy yours, but I'll still buy mine. We'll see which residence the little lass likes more!' When he exited the Fang Residence, Zhu Junyang paused in his steps, hesitating, then he turned his horse around and once again rushed in the direction of the imperial palace. After Zhu Junfan accompanied the empress and his son for lunch, he had wanted to return to Qianqing Palace to rest for a short while. He had not anticipated for a small eunuch to report that Royal Prince Yang was requesting to meet him. 'Yang'er? He'd hurriedly left the Hall of Supreme Harmony this morning, I heard he'd gone straight to the Fang Residence. Shouldn't he be flirting with his sweetheart in the Fang Residence now? How had he remembered to come to the imperial palace to see me?' "Let him wait for me in the Imperial Study!" Zhu Junfan was so curious he put off his rest, immediately changed his clothes and headed towards the Imperial Study. "Your Imperial Majesty!" Once Zhu Junyang went through the ruler-subject decorum, he didn't even wait for the emperor to start, "Official Yu of the Ministry of Revenue has cultivated a third more corn than last year, perhaps more than that. Even without mentioning the good growth of winter wheat, just the vegetables grown in the greenhouses alone enriches not only the meals of the people of the capital, but also fills your inner treasury. Shouldn't this be a cause for merit?" "Merit? Hadn't we already resisted the pressure and appointed her as a sixth-ranked official? Is that not enough? Did she complain to you? She's so young, yet has such a big appetite! Aren't a few plantations all she's relying on? Her accomplishments are so little and she's already beginning to feel conceited over her talent and act spoiled because she's special?!" Zhu Junfan pretended to be enraged and heavily slammed his hand on his desk! "No! She hasn't complained about anything. Rather, she only feels grateful towards your majesty. It is this subject that...thinks your majesty has not rewarded her enough, as merely anyone in the capital dares to scheme against her!" Zhu Junyang was absolutely unafraid of his cousin's act. There wasn't any sign of anger from him at all! "Then what do you suggest we reward, to show our favor and trust in her?" Zhu Junfan amusedly leaned into his seat, scrutinizing his younger cousin, trying to figure out what he was up to. Zhu Junyang ignored his scrutiny and said, "Official Yu intends to receive her family into the capital for a reunion, but she is currently staying in Count Zhongqin's residence and it is utterly impractical for her. So...shouldn't your majesty reward her with a residence?" "A residence? Which residence do you think is suitable for us to reward?" Zhu Junfan thought, 'What a good brat you are; you only know to side with your 'wife', and now you're even starting to stuff things into her hands? Most of the residences in the capital already have an owner, and haven't I already rewarded you with the best one? If you really want to please her, you could just give it to her, right?' "This subject thinks that the residence of the Grand Preceptor of the previous dynasty has been well preserved, moreover

the surroundings are elegant. It is perfect as a reward for a meritorious official!" Zhu Junyang suddenly raised his head to look at his cousin, the emperor, and enunciated. "The residence of the Grand Preceptor of the previous dynasty? Hadn't I already given it to..." Zhu Junfan's brows creased. He stared at his younger cousin for a while before he smiled. People always said that women always sided with their husbands, but it would seem that men, too, sided with their wives. His younger cousin had really given his all to court his 'wife'. But since his cousin was happy to do so, why should he become the bad guy? Zhu Junfan chuckled. Originally, he was worried that his younger cousin would live the rest of his life alone, but now it seemed his worries were for nought! Could this brat also have transmigrated? His tactics in courting girls were endless! Zhu Junfan somewhat admired him. However, as the emperor, even if he wanted to flaunt his tactics in courting women, he would first need to be presented with the chance! If he spent a fortune on just a woman, what would the future generations say of him? That he was lecherous? That he loved his women over his empire? Or would they say that the woman he courted was a seductress who bewitched the emperor? Zhu Junfan was slightly excited—er, still, let's forget it. Even if he wanted to be lecherous, he would still first need to have the conditions to do so. Now that there were still many things to be done for the Great Ming Dynasty, he was better off being a wise emperor! That very evening, Yu Xiaocao, who had been lying on a cushioned seat playing with Little Linlin, received the emperor's decree to attend court the next morning. As Yu Xiaocao was only a sixth-ranked official, she did not usually have the qualifications to attend court, unless the emperor specially allowed her to. The next day, before dawn, Yu Xiaocao, who was sleepy and hazy, was awoken by a few maidservants. They helped her dress, combed her hair, and even the washing up was done in a dazed state. 'I'm still a growing child, I need sleep, I don't want to go to work before dawn...' Yu Xiaocao, who had finished her breakfast with her eyes barely open, was hurriedly stuffed into a horse carriage headed towards the heart of the capital. At the side of the horse carriage was Fang Zizhen, who had only just returned to the capital yesterday. Royal Prince Yang, clad in black, waited atop his black horse at the midpoint of the journey. He almost blended in with the night, but his handsome, cold face was still so dazzling in the darkness. Yu Xiaocao yawned, thrusting her hands into mittens made from ferret fur. Hearing the familiar sound of a horse's hooves outside the window, she hurriedly lifted the carriage's curtains and looked straight into a pair of eyes as deep as ink. The moment their gazes met, the cold ice in the eyes that were as deep as ink instantly dissipated, and his cold face was dyed with a warmer color. Yu Xiaocao stared at his beautiful face, stunned to the point that she almost forgot what she was going to say. "My dear daughter, can we be more reserved, please?" Fang Zizhen bitterly laughed, but fiercely shot a glare at Royal Prince Yang. 'It's all his fault; why does a man need to be so beautiful? To seduce little girls?' "Keke!" Yu Xiaocao heard her godfather's words and awkwardly coughed twice. Zhu Junyang, however, worriedly looked at her and said gently, "It's coldest when it stops snowing. How do your servants take care of you? Don't they know to dress you in more layers? My cloak is made from sable fur and is the best at keeping warm. Why aren't you taking this and putting it on your mistress?" Seeing that he was left with only thin, black robes after he took off his cloak, Yu Xiaocao rushed to stop his movements and said, "I'm already wearing a cloak! It's made from ermine fur, and it's warm! Your size differs too much from mine, if I put on your clothes, I'll be able to take part in operas! By the way, do you know why the emperor suddenly decreed for me to attend court?" She cocked her head to one side and thought hard about it. She had not delayed a single matter concerning the Imperial Plantation, and nothing had gone wrong with the greenhouse-grown vegetables that were currently the chicken that laid golden eggs! Besides, it was currently the season when agricultural activities were most inactive, and all the farmers would be hiding at home. There shouldn't be any important matters that could alert

the emperor! Or did he...change his mind and set his sights onto her multicolored stone? "Don't think nonsense," Zhu Junyang wanted to soothe the folds in her brow, softly comforting, "Maybe the emperor wants to compensate you for the success of your greenhouse-grown vegetables!" Yu Xiaocao seriously scrutinized his expression, and when she saw nothing different, she put away her worries and a smile appeared on her face again, "Hehe, I've earned so much money for the emperor, so it's only natural for him to give me some reward. I still have a big gift for the empress at the beginning of spring!" "The empress gets a part in that beauty salon of yours?" In his heart, Zhu Junyang felt that the emperor was a little outrageous. It was enough that he got a portion since the greenhouse used to grow vegetables occupied imperial land and the Ministry of Works supplied the plastic film, but how could he let his sister-in-law exploit the little lass's salon that she was establishing with her own craft? Yu Xiaocao excitedly said, "The idea for this beauty salon actually sprouted from the empress's suggestion. Back then, how many people tried to get my flower tea recipes? If the empress hadn't spread word around, how could I, a pitiful girl without a backing, have possibly kept those precious recipes? As such, the empress deserves ten percent of the profit as this beauty salon will be run using the empress's good name!" Her words had caused the two men to take offense. Fang Zizhen: 'My dear daughter, with godfather around, how could you ever become a pitiful girl without a backing? Who would dare to covet my daughter's secret recipes? Come out and fight, we'll see if I can't kill you!' Zhu Junyang: 'Little lass, am I dead to you? You say you don't have a backing? I, Royal Prince Yang, and the entire Prince Jing Estate are your backing!' However, the Prince Jing Residence would eventually belong to his eldest brother, the heir of Imperial Prince Jing. Even if they were brothers, they still needed to maintain clarity with each other! It seemed that the title of 'Royal Prince' was still too low, so he needed to work harder and get more merit! That way, in the future, she would be able to parade around the capital as she liked because he could protect her.

Fields of Gold Chapter 469 - Feudal Princess?

The sky, that was washed by the falling snow, was now the bright mirror of high-quality black jade and the stars were glittering like diamonds. Venus was in the east shining with a silver light. Gradually the sky outside the palace walls became whiter... If it wasn't because the temperature was too low in the early mornings of winter and that the surrounding areas weren't covered with unmelted snow all around, Yu Xiaocao would still be in the mood to enjoy the clean and pollution-free sky of this ancient era. She was currently dressed in a dark red official's robe with a silvery-grey cloak wrapped on top. Around her neck was a bright scarlet red muffler made of fox fur and her hands were hidden inside her warm sleeves, which were lined with a thick layer of sable fur. Her feet were shod with a pair of leather boots. Even though these boots were lined with a thick layer of fur, they still weren't able to stop the cold feeling from seeping up the soles of her feet. She wrapped herself in a thick cloak and looked into the audience hall. With her insignificant official position, there was no place for her in the audience hall. The poor her could only stand in the corridor outside the audience hall and be blown by the chilly wind. Such an experience was unforgettable enough! What was the matter with the two old officials inside? Were they purposely messing with her to argue about a problem that was about as big as a fart for so long?! Fortunately, within her sleeves, she had the high-quality gold and copper hand warmer that Royal Prince Yang had stuffed into her hands before he went into the audience hall. It gave off a comforting heat and it was warming straight into her heart... "Calling for the Agricultural Official Yu of the Ministry of Revenue to enter the hall!" Eh? The eunuch who went to court with the emperor today wasn't the immortal-like Sir Su? Such a pity, she hadn't seen Mister Su in such a long time. His appearance, which

didn't seem tainted by earthly matters, would be hard for her to forget. Maybe because it had been frozen numb, but Yu Xiaocao's brain still had time to think about all this other extraneous stuff. Dressed like a small bear, she knelt clumsily on the ground in front of the emperor on the throne. Her attempts to give the greeting of a subject to the monarch, the compliments, and flatteries in her mouth were interrupted by a series of sneezes! Zhu Junyang looked over in concern. The lass's health wasn't good to begin with. No matter how much she ate, she didn't gain any weight. She was thin and weak. He could practically clutch her waist with one hand. She was just blown by the cold wind outside for such a long time, could she have gotten sick? His brows wrinkled and he thought about inviting the head examiner of the Imperial Physician's courtyard after court to examine the lass. "Oh! Did you get a cold? It was my negligence. We shouldn't have let you wait outside the hall for so long!" Zhu Junfan's casual tone and intimate expression all showed his favoritism toward this female official. "Quick, get up. Bring a chair for Official Yu. If she gets sick, then the large greenhouses in the Imperial Plantation won't have anyone to care for them. Then, everyone in this hall will have to eat radishes and cabbage for the New Years!" The two elder officials, who had been deliberately holding up the time to give Yu Xiaocao a show of power, had frozen expressions on their faces upon hearing this. Why did they forget to find fault? In the winters of the previous years, besides some meat dishes and dried vegetables, such as cabbages and radishes, there were also some other dried vegetables stored away for the winter. Since the beginning of winter this year, they hadn't felt the change on the dinner table. All kinds of delicious greens and fruits had almost made them forget the miserable conditions of the past. After the emperor's comment, they immediately realized that if the thin and just of age girl really did get sick from being frozen then they would have to go back to the previous years, bracing themselves to eat the few vegetables that they were already tired of eating. With this in mind, no one protested the imperial favor of Yu Xiaocao being allowed a seat in the audience hall. "Beloved Official Yu! We've heard that the Imperial Plantation's greenhouse grounds have doubled in size again? And that the variety of vegetables has increased too?" When rewarding others, he had to be clear about what it was for. Zhou Junfan asked about the project filling his small treasury like he was a family member asking about domestic trivia. This matter would involve the livelihoods of all the civil and military officials. Currently, vegetables and fruits were sold in limited quantities. The amount each household could get was only enough for a few dishes. Furthermore, if they went a little later, they wouldn't even be able to see a hint of the vegetables. Most of the officials in the audience hall had heard their wives mention that the output of the vegetables from the greenhouse was too small. The stewards in charge of purchases also had tearfully complained to them. They said that every time they lined up to rush for the purchase, it was like a tough battle. A moment of carelessness could prevent their masters from eating fresh vegetables and the pressure was too much. Increasing the supply of the greenhouses' vegetables was something everyone in the audience hall was happy to see. Yu Xiaocao, who was sitting comfortably on the cushioned chair and holding a warm hand stove in her hands, could finally squeeze out a smile. "Answering your imperial majesty, the green leafy vegetables, which have shorter growing periods, have reached a planting area of 500 mu. The fruit-like vegetables with longer growing periods have also doubled. There's more good news. In ten days, a batch of fruits and vegetables, such as cucumbers, eggplants, beans, and tomatoes will be out on the market. The volume of daily vegetable supplies should also double in size!" The daily supply of vegetables should be able to double? When the vegetables from the greenhouse expansion were on the market in one month, won't they be able to buy even more vegetables? Perhaps when the New Year came, the limited purchase of vegetables will be removed and they will be able to have a happy New Year! The civil and military officials all looked at each other and saw the traces of joy in each

others' eyes. Yu Xiaocao's words were interrupted by coughs. The two elderly officials, who had been deliberately quarreling to hold up the time, were stared at with reproach by everyone else. Their hearts were also full of remorse. The vegetables in the greenhouse in the plantation needed caring for now. If Official Yu got sick, then wouldn't it affect the vegetable supply plan? Official Zhang, who was informed of government affairs, said, "Official Yu, your job is related to the livelihood of the capital's citizens, take good care of yourself! Your Imperial Majesty, this subject asks for an Imperial Doctor to take Official Yu's pulse. Even a robust and strong military official wouldn't be able to stand in the cold outside for so long ah!" "Eh... Many thanks for your concern, Official Zhang. I have some understanding of medicine myself, so there's no need to bother the Imperial Physicians to come!" There were some old people in the Imperial Hospital that didn't like her. She didn't want to be messed around by those old guys and be prescribed some bitter medicine. "Doctors don't cure themselves. Since everyone cares so much about you, then how about... letting Imperial Physician Wang come check on you?" Zhu Junfan, who seemed to see through to her mind, said this with a smile. Imperial Physician Wang? When she was examining the little prince, she had realized that the medical skill of this physician was just barely passable, but his character wasn't good! She cured the little prince using a folk recipe and the old guy bore a grudge against her for stealing the limelight. If he were to check her pulse, then even if she wasn't sick, he would say she was sick. No way! "Thank you for your great kindness, Your Imperial Majesty! However, it's freezing right now. To let the civil and military officials delay getting off the court because of this official's minor matter, especially when there are elderly officials old enough to be this subject's grandfather, this official wouldn't be able to bear it. It's better to deal with business first and deal with other matters after court!" Yu Xiaocao still had confidence in her own body. Sneezing a couple of times and coughing a few coughs was nothing at all. It could all be solved by drinking a cup of mystic-stone water mixed with brown sugar when she got home! The emperor stopped teasing her and nodded, "It must be hard on beloved subject to be so reasonable and fair. We just wanted to give a definitive answer. Can you keep up with the supply of vegetables until the New Year?" Yu Xiaocao pondered for a moment before saying, "If we want to provide food for the tens of thousands of citizens in the capital, then this official doesn't have that confidence. After all, this is the first trial. No matter the planting area or the yield, it's not enough. However, the off-season vegetables are precious to begin with. The price is relatively high and only a few can afford it. Once the second batch of vegetables is on the market, the vegetable supply needs of most people who can afford them should be able to be met!" Upon hearing this, the civil and military officials were overjoyed. It seems that everyone's worries about the rush to buy vegetables for the New Year shouldn't be a problem anymore! "Good, good good! If Beloved Official Yu's greenhouse vegetable technology can be popularized, it will be good for the country! The people of the Great Ming Dynasty are not far from the days of eating vegetables in the winter! My dear subjects, tell us, should such contributions be rewarded?" Zhu Junfan looked around the audience hall at the officials who had a joyful look and rhetorically asked. Reward? So all of this prepping was because the emperor wanted to reward Official Yu again! No wonder, the emperor had a share of the profits of the greenhouses too. Since winter hit, Royal Prince Yang's vegetable and fruit shops had been thriving. Money was flowing like water into the emperor's personal treasury. The palace treasury, which had been emptied in earlier years, finally had some savings now. This was all due to the contributions of Official Yu! Since the founding of the Great Ming Dynasty, the emperor emeritus has fought in the north and south, crusading the world, leaving behind a heavily damaged national treasury for the emperor, who had been only twenty-five years old when he ascended the throne. Fortunately, the emperor was diligent and benevolent, worrying about the imperial court and the citizens every day. All the money in

his persona; treasury was subsidized into the national treasury, leaving behind an empty shelf. In recent years, natural calamities and man-made disasters coupled with unstable borders had left the national and palace treasury empty. Now, thanks to Official Yu, the palace treasury had finally improved. It was no wonder that the emperor was finding ways to reward her. Thinking of the information coming from the palace, it seemed that the empress also contributed to the flower tea shop opening next year. Official Yu was really the goose that laid the golden eggs to the emperor! Of course, he had to give a carrot to hang in front of her so she can continue to contribute to the country! However, how to reward and what to reward? That was the big problem again. A girl in her early teens was already a sixth-ranked official. If promoted, then there would be many more dissatisfied people. What's more, the official post wasn't offered long ago. If she was promoted so quickly, then what would those old fellows who had been in the same position for decades think? Just when the officials were struggling, the emperor opened his mouth again, "You've only been appointed as an official for less than half a year. If you were to be immediately promoted, it would be too fast! How about this, we will award you the title of feudal princess. Oh right, we heard that you were looking for a house in the capital? We have a residence where the Grand Tutor of the former dynasty lived. We will grant it to you too!" What? The officials didn't care about the so-called empty title of a feudal princess. However, wasn't that former Grand Tutor's residence already awarded to Royal Prince Yang yesterday as a reward for pacifying the rebels? Your Imperial Majesty, do you have selective amnesia? Is it appropriate to give the residence to someone when it's already been awarded to someone else? Some of the people present scented something out of the ordinary! The relationship between Royal Prince Yang and Official Yu started in Tanggu Town's Dongshan Village. The cold and aloof Royal Prince Yang seemed to have a deep connection with Little Official Yu. Allegedly, he went to Count Zhongqin's estate once he got off court yesterday, and he also took some good furs along that had people looking enviously. Did this mean...

Fields of Gold Chapter 470

Some officials looked at Royal Prince Yang with eyes filled with questions. How old was Official Yu? Twelve or thirteen? A few years ago, the little girl was even younger. Could Royal Prince Yang be into the young type? Was that the reason why he never even glanced at the other young ladies from noble families in the capital?

Zhu Junyang, who was affectionate, devoted, and deeply in love, didn't know that he had become a frivolous and perverted pedophile in the eyes of some people. At the moment he was looking at the little lass reclining leisurely on the back of the chair with eyes full of doting—only this girl would have the nerve to sit so leisurely and carefreely in front of all the civil and military officials like there was no one else, right? Maybe, the lass was currently thinking if there was a cup of hot sugared ginger water in front of her, then it would be even better!

In actuality, at that time Yu Xiaocao was dizzy with shock! How did she become a feudal princess in a moment of carelessness? Shouldn't a feudal princess be the title of the daughter of an imperial prince or a royal prince who was regarded with importance by the emperor? She was just a small peasant girl, so how did her status rise so much? Reaching the sky with one step couldn't be this easy, right?

There was more; there was more! The deeds of the former dynasty's Grand Tutor was something she had learned from the storyteller in the teahouse. He was a big corrupted official! It was said that he had everything the emperor had, and he even had things that the emperor didn't have! Allegedly, the floors of his home were paved with gold bricks; the trees in his garden were carved with green jade; the furnishings of his home are extravagant and luxurious!

Such an estate, even if it went through the war and the emperor's confiscation, a skinny camel was still bigger than a horse. This residence should still be something that everyone was aiming towards, right? There were so many meritorious officials and they were all staring at this fat meat. Why did it drop on her head? When she left today, she didn't step on any dog poop, so why was she so dog-gone lucky today?

Until she stepped out of Jinluan Hall, Yu Xiaocao's head was still in the clouds, not knowing what time of day it was. Zhu Junyang, who was beside her, saw that her steps were unstable. He thought she had been freezing outside the hall for too long and had caught a cold. When Xiaocao was walking down the steps, he offered her a hand in concern and softly asked, "Do you feel uncomfortable? I already sent someone back to the estate to invite Imperial Physician Zheng over. Once we get to the Fang Estate, he should almost be there!"

When he finished speaking, he moved his hand toward the little lass's forehead. Unexpectedly, before he could touch the clear and beautiful forehead, he was slapped aside by Fang Zizhen, who was watching hostilely, "What are you doing! You are taking too many liberties. Do you consider me, her father, to be dead at this moment ah?!"

At this time, Yu Xiaocao, who had been a bit lost in her head, finally moved. She grabbed Royal Prince Yang's hand, put it in her mouth, and bit down hard. She left deep bloody teeth impressions on his flesh. She raised her head, looked up at Zhu Junyang seriously, and asked, "Does it hurt?"

Zhu Junyang looked at the neat little teeth impressions in his hand. This was the mark left by the little lass and those tiny teeth marks looked incredibly cute to him. He raised his wrist and did something that made everyone's chin drop—he put the wound in front of his mouth and gently licked the blood beads that came from the teeth marks.

The scarlet blood droplets and the perfect outline of his lips made him even more attractive. It added a sense of temptation to his handsome appearance. Yu Xiaocao's face suddenly became red and couldn't lift her head under the strange looks of the officials who just got off from court.

"Don't worry, it doesn't hurt!"

'Who's worried about you? You're so shameless!'

Zhu Junyang stroked the little lass's head and softly said, " Don't worry, you aren't dreaming! The former Grand Tutor's residence will be yours from now on! Didn't you want to open a health club? The layout of every yard there has its characteristics, which is all in line with your requirements!"

Yu Xiaocao finally came back to herself and looked up at Zhu Junyang suspiciously and fiercely asked, "Talk! Did you ask the emperor to give it to me as a reward?"

"Don't worry about that. Won't it be alright as long as good things are in hand? The emperor gave it anyways, so there's no use in not wanting it! For residences like the former Grand Tutor's, even if it's just an empty shell now, you still wouldn't be able to buy it back even if you had ten thousand taels on hand. Furthermore, even if you had the money, you may not be able to find a place like this for sale! Just think of how much money you're saving now, right?"

Zhu Junyang knew that the little lass had a money-grubbing personality, so he went to the heart of the problem. He hoped she wouldn't worry about where these rewards came from. However, he didn't expect that his cousin, the emperor, would also award the fifth rank title of Feudal Princess Jinan to the little lass.

Although he didn't care about the world's view of him or the difference in their family status, he was worried that the comments of outsiders would make the little girl uncomfortable. Now it was fixed. The marriage between a feudal princess and a royal prince could be considered a marriage of equal status, right?

Sure enough, after hearing his words, the little lass's eyes brightened and she eagerly said, "Then let's go to that estate today, shall we?"

"What's the hurry? That residence is right there and it can't run anywhere! What matters most right now is going back to the estate and let Imperial Doctor Zheng take a look at you!" Zhu Junyang quickly rejected her suggestion. She was just sneezing and coughing in the audience hall. He didn't know if she had a fever. The little lass's health was the most important thing right now!

Yu Xiaocao protested fiercely, "I can be counted as half a doctor, so how could I be unclear of my body's situation? I'm alright; I want to see the estate where the former Grand Tutor lived!"

"That residence already belongs to you, so you can go anytime. Why does it have to be today? You said that you can be counted as half a doctor. Doctors don't heal themselves. Today you must let the imperial physician take a look at you!" In front of Yu Xiaocao, Zhu Junyang was rarely so insistent, but he was not giving her any chance to play around.

The officials passing by looked at the way the tall and short figure got along and were all shocked. The small and petite little Official Yu was like a fearless kitten constantly teasing the whiskers of the mighty lion. In front of this little kitten, the cold and tyrannical Royal Prince Yang became a big dog with a good temper, letting the little one chew on his head, not bearing to shake her off.

This truly was an example that every pot would have a fitting lid. Royal Prince Yang was really like what the rumors claimed as it was obvious that he had taken a fancy to little Official Yu, who didn't have the appearance of a daughter from a noble family. Was that why he could tolerate her provocations? If it was anyone else, he would have sent them flying with a palm strike!

In the end, little Official Yu still couldn't defeat Royal Prince Yang and was carried into the carriage by him. The maidservant serving inside had already made a cup of tea for her master using a pot to boil water on a small clay stove. The charcoal within her handwarmer, which had been slowly cooling, was also replaced. This evil feudal society was not without its merits. After all, look at how thoughtful the servants were.

As she held her cup of hot tea, Yu Xiaocao still felt infuriated! That wretched guy, she just wanted to see the residence she just got. Why didn't he let her? Too domineering, too strict, point deduction! Severe point deduction!

"Alright! Don't be angry anymore!" Zhu Junyang seemed to notice the sadness and anger coming from the carriage. He quickly tried to remedy the situation, "What are your requirements for the estate's repair and furnishing? I'll take care of it. Take it as an apology for this, okay?"

That was more like it! Yu Xiaocao wasn't polite, so she told Royal Prince Yang the appearance of the beauty and health spa she had in mind through the walls of the carriage. When she spoke about the

exciting parts, her hands would start gesturing, and she even stuck her head out of the carriage as if she was afraid that he wouldn't understand her explanations.

"That's it for now. I haven't seen the residence so that's all I can do for now!" Yu Xiaocao, who had spoken till her mouth was parched and her tongue dried, took a sip of the tea that had become lukewarm. Her expression showed the fact that she had wanted to continue.

In her previous life, she had once worked in a large-scale beauty and health club and became the store manager. If it wasn't because she met the lady boss who taught her how to braise food, then she would've probably opened a beauty salon after making enough money. Her wish that wasn't fulfilled in her past life could now be realized in this ancient era!

Along the way, Royal Prince Yang became a loyal audience. He made sure to engrave the strange things that came out of the little girl's mouth deeply in his heart. As long as it could be found on the market, no matter how hard it was, he would find it. If he couldn't find it, then he would make it for her no matter how many obstacles he had to push aside.

Even he was moved after hearing the description of the beauty and health spa that was currently in the little lass's imagination. Consequently, how could those women in the pursuit of beauty resist this place? Even if the spa was only a tentative plan, he still believed that in the near future it would become the most popular money squandering den in the capital!

"Only serving women? Isn't that a bit too biased?" Zhu Junyang put forth a small objection.

Build a money squandering den for men? The words 'Heaven and Earth' suddenly appeared in Yu Xiaocao's mind. This was the ancient era and it was permitted by law, could she...However, she soon dismissed the idea. If she were to make a place like a high-ranking brothel, not only would it be difficult to get the idea across to her friends and relatives, but it would also be difficult to get it across in her own heart. It was better to honestly open up a beauty and health spa and then pursue other things!

"If you're interested in the idea then you can make a similar place, just for men. Besides some Thai-style massages, you can also build some medicinal baths, medicinal fumigation, and some other facilities that can treat chronic illnesses. Also, those who are more into literary pursuits can enjoy flowers, listen to music, and have tea; those who are more open can participate in entertainments such as playing cards, mahjong, horse racing, pot throwing, and so on. It's a pretty good idea to build an entertainment place that keeps people coming!"

Yu Xiaocao kept egging him on. She was a girl, so doing these things might not be very appropriate for her but it was different for Royal Prince Yang. On the principle of making money together, she decided to give him this suggestion as repayment for him asking the emperor for her reward!

Zhu Junyang was also good at business. Presently, the most profitable business in the capital—foreign goods stores were established by him. Also, the most popular vegetable and fruit shop were made by him and the little girl. From the few words Xiaocao just said, he saw infinite business opportunities.

That being said the little lass could make so much money. He needed to work harder to avoid being regarded as a good-looking young man who could only live off a woman when he proposed marriage to her! He had to find time to have a good talk about the so-called entertainment club! Just the horse racing and horse betting that she mentioned were enough to make men become full of excitement!