

## Fields of Gold Chapter 5

The morning sun quietly lit up the night sky of early spring. In the courtyard, chickens began to crow with their necks stretched out. Yu Xiaocao's older twin sister, Yu Xiaolian, quietly dressed herself.

Yu Xiaocao slept a lot during the day, so she was immediately stirred awake by her older sister's movement. She rubbed her eyes, looked through the window paper, and noticed that it was still very early outside. She muttered, "Why are you waking up so early?"

Yu Xiaolian yawned as she put on a jacket that was covered with patches. She glanced at Madam Liu, who was sleeping on the kang bed, and whispered, "Did I wake you up? Mother slept really late yesterday. I'll do more work and let her rest some more. It's still early, so you should sleep a little more ..."

Xiaocao stared at this young girl's thin back. She was only an eight year old child. In modern times, she would just be an elementary school kid who was still acting like a spoiled child in front of her parents. However, she was already one of the major contributors in this family.

In the courtyard, their grandmother began screaming again, "What time is it? Why haven't you started cooking yet?! Don't think that you can't do whatever you want just because there's a patient in your family!"

This person was also someone who strategically chose her victims. She knew that Madam Liu had a soft personality and Yu Hai was an obedient son. Thus, she was able to grasp all of them within her hands. She was probably somewhat worried about Old Yu, so she treated them slightly better when the men are home.

Yu Xiaocao frowned with annoyance when she heard Madam Zhang shouting early in the morning again. She had a biased grandmother and her eldest aunt was always nitpicking on them. Furthermore, she also has a greedy and lazy older cousin who was always bullying them... In her previous life, she had raised her younger brother and sister up all by herself. Even though they were in a difficult situation, but they had never experienced such grievances.

For these past few days, besides doing heavy household chores, Madam Liu also had to take care of her daughter at night. Thus, she barely had any time to sleep. Her body had originally been weak and she was so thin that she barely had any flesh on her body. Moreover, her face was so pale that there didn't seem to be a trace of blood on her face. She also had dark shadows under her eyes.

Madam Liu hastily stood up when she heard the screaming outside. However, when she got off the bed, she staggered for a few steps before steadying herself.

Yu Xiaocao hastily got off the kang bed to support her mother, helped her sit on the bed, and said, "Mother, your health doesn't seem that well either. You should rest some more. They won't starve just because you didn't cook for a day! If you got sick, then father would be heartbroken..."

Based on her observation, her new father, Yu Hai, not only spoiled his children, but he also loved his wife dearly. If he was at home, he would always rush to take over his wife's duties. However, he was usually out fishing, selling fish, and hunting every day. Thus, he seldom spent time at home. Otherwise, Madam Liu's health wouldn't have deteriorated so much.

"You silly girl! Where did you learn to speak like that?!" A rosy blush emerged on Liu Muyun's wan face.

"Xiaolian can't finish the work by herself. I'll go help her..." Liu Muyun wanted to walk toward the door to leave, but she was pulled back to sit on the bed by her daughter.

"Just ignore grandmother. She's on menopause! Just pretend you can't hear her complaints and don't take her words to heart..." Yu Xiaocao paused briefly before she suddenly shouted loudly, "Mother, Mother! What's wrong?! Grandmother come in quickly! My mother fainted!"

Liu Muyun sat on edge of the kang bed and stared at her daughter dumbfoundedly. Before she could even react, Yu Xiaocao swiftly whispered to her, "Mother, you fainted out of exhaustion. Why aren't you lying down?"

After her younger daughter woke up from her injuries, she became more intelligent. She also has a brighter and sharper disposition. However, she didn't know who her daughter had learned this from. Liu Muyun lightly tapped her little forehead and lay down cooperatively.

As soon as Liu Muyun closed her eyes, Madam Zhang pushed the door open and came in while grumbling, "What's the matter now? Such a troublesome family. Xiaocao, why did your mother faint?"

"My mother hasn't slept for days in order to take care of me. When Grandmother was yelling that no one was cooking earlier, she got up in a hurry and fell down to the ground. She's still unconscious now. I helped her onto the kang bed after much difficulty... Grandmother, we should ask Doctor You to come check on her. I'm so scared that my mother won't wake up. Waahhh..." Yu Xiaocao covered her face with her hands and pretended to cry.

Madam Zhang wrinkled her brows and looked at her second daughter-in-law, who was so skinny that she barely had any flesh on her body. She couldn't help muttering inwardly; 'Yu Hai's sickly wife wouldn't really have gotten sick, right? If she's really ill, then we'll have to spend money again!

She turned towards Yu Xiaocao and said, "There's no need to call for a doctor. Your mother is just sleeping because she's too tired. Stop being so easily scared. Don't bother your mother and let her rest some more!"

When Madam Zhang went out and heard her eldest daughter-in-law indiscreetly making remarks about no one cooking, she finally exploded in anger, "Eat, eat, eat! You won't die by just missing a meal! Is it not enough that our family was already in a mess! Stop being so noisy in the morning! If you want to eat earlier, then make it yourself. Can't you see that Xiaolian is busy working now?!"

Xiaocao's younger aunt, Yu Caidie, quietly came out of her own room. She picked up some firewood and wanted to go to the kitchen to make a fire. However, Madam Zhang was unwilling to let her daughter cook. She swiftly picked up a broom and smacked the arm of her eldest daughter-in-law, who was leaning against the wall and basking in the sun, "You're such a tactless person. Hurry up and go cook! You want your youngest sister-in-law, who is still in her teens, to serve you?!"

Yu Xiaocao was speechless by her words. She was just selfishly taking care of her own daughter without concern about other people's daughters. Yu Xiaolian was only eight years old and much younger than her daughter. Xiaolian was busily working throughout the day, yet she didn't even care. However, her heart ached just because her daughter was carrying a bundle of firewood?

Madam Li covered her arm that was hit and grumbled as she entered the kitchen. She grudgingly made a fire and began preparing breakfast while cursing.

When Yu Xiaocao saw that her mother had fallen asleep shortly after lying on the bed, she quietly left the room and gently closed the door. She took a basin and went to help Xiaolian feed the chickens.

However, Yu Xiaolian quickly grabbed it from her. She looked at her bandaged head and whispered, "You're still injured. How can I let you work? Are you hungry? Go sit down first. Breakfast will be ready soon!"

Madam Li hasn't worked in the kitchen for many years, so she was sweating profusely while preparing breakfast for the entire family. During this era, people ate twice a day, which was usually around ten in the morning and four in the afternoon. However, it was nearly noon when breakfast was finally served.

The bean paste soup [1] tasted burnt, while the mixed flour flatbread [2] was so dry that it could choke people death. The eldest son, Yu Dasan, had just returned from fishing. After tasting the bean paste soup and flatbread, he couldn't hold back his anger, "How are people supposed to eat this? The flatbread is also as hard as a rock. Is it even edible?"

"Ask your wife! I asked her to cook and she was in the kitchen since nine in the morning. However, this was what she made after working in the kitchen for nearly four hours!" Madam Zhang broke off a piece of flatbread and tried hard to chew it in her mouth. She finally swallowed it after drinking two mouthfuls of the bean paste soup.

The Yu Family's bean paste soup was made with soybean powder and mixed with a small amount of millet. There was originally a strong

bean flavor within the soup, so the taste became even more sour when burnt.

"Where's Second Daughter-in-law? Why didn't she come out to cook?" Old Yu's brows creased as he set down the flatbread in his hand and asked.

Yu Xiaocao swiftly answered, "My mother was so exhausted that she fainted. She's still unconscious and lying on the kang bed.

"What? Your mother fainted? I'll go check on her!" Yu Hai hastily rushed towards his room without even eating.

[1] Might not be exactly the same, but here's a picture of a type of bean paste soup.

[2] Flatbread