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At this time, the injured old man had just woken up. He was lying on the ground and just happened to see the scene of the white-clothed Su Ran descending from the sky. He was shocked, thinking that he had seen an immortal.

'Oh my! They all say that there are immortals in the deep mountain. I actually met one!' Xu Ziyi's eyes were wide open, and his mouth formed an 'O' shape.

Su Ran landed lightly on the ground, and when he noticed his line of sight, he looked at him indifferently. With this glance, he not only frowned, but he also stepped forward and stared at the old man's wrinkled face for a long time.

Xu Ziyi swallowed his saliva nervously. When he made eye contact with the questioning eyes of the 'immortal in white', he couldn't help but sigh, 'Immortals are indeed immortals. All of my disguises are useless in the other party's keen eyes.'

Just as this thought crossed his mind, something flashed past his eyes and he felt a sudden pain on his face. The words 'sure enough' appeared within Xu Ziyi's mind.

"Wow! It's the legendary human skin mask!!" A voice that was as crisp as an oriole coming out of a valley sounded above his head, and then a face as delicate as a fairy's appeared in front of him. Wow! It was indeed true that the immortals and fairies in the mountains lived together harmoniously ah!

Yu Xiaocao was both surprised and curious in her heart. She took the mask that was as thin as a cicada's wings in Su Ran's hands. The texture of the lines on the skin was very apparent, and even the long, white beard seemed to have grown out naturally from the mask. No wonder that she didn't notice anything despite examining his injuries for so long.

"Sir Su, how did you know that his face was fake?" Yu Xiaocao examined the mask over and over again, but still didn't see any flaws.

Before Su Ran could reply, Zhu Junyang had interjected, "Even for twins, everyone's face shape, facial bones and facial muscles can't be exactly the same. No matter how delicately-made the masks are, it's

still hard to perfectly fit the skin. However, this mask can be regarded as the product of a master craftsman. If I hadn't noticed that the skin on his body was different from his face when I was applying medicine on him earlier, I would have really been fooled!”

“So you also noticed that there was something wrong with him ah!” Yu Xiaocao curiously tried to put the mask on her own face.

Zhu Junyang didn't want the lass to have close contact with something that another man had worn, so he hastily scared her, “In order to be delicate and realistic, many human skin masks are peeled off directly from the faces of living people, and then processed...”

“Whoa—sh*t!” Yu Xiaocao was disgusted by his description. She immediately threw the mask in her hands away, as if it was a hot potato. Su Ran caught it with his empty hand.

“Skinning people alive! This guy is definitely a bad guy. Didn't all the good medicine that I just gave him ended up being fed to a dog?” Yu Xiaocao wiped her hands, which just held the mask, on the back of Zhu Junyang's black clothes. If there was water nearby, she would certainly rush over to wash her hands until a layer of skin fell off!

“Hey! Before the court convicts someone, he must be brought to trial first! You guys are just making up an unjust and fake case!” Xu Ziyi propped himself up with one hand and slowly sat up from the ground while he covered his injured ribs with his other hand.

He checked his own pulse and felt as if there was something repairing him. He found that his internal injury, which was quite serious, seemed to be 30% healed. Then he looked at the wound on his arm. The small scratches had already formed scabs and the bigger wounds had already stopped bleeding...

Xu Ziyi had a somewhat eccentric personality, but after hearing their conversation just now, there was no way that he hadn't realized that he was just imagining things. How could there be immortals and fairies? They were just experts with deceptive looks. Ahem, of course, the so-called experts that he mentioned also included the young maiden with an innocent expression.

But, according to her words, were his injuries healed by her medicine? Also, although the technique wasn't very professional, the broken bone on his leg had indeed been straightened and secured with two wooden sticks. However, he wouldn't complain too much about her technique. He was mostly

curious about what kind of medicine the young girl used. It was actually even more effective than the medicine made personally by his grandfather, who was the master of Medicine King Valley.

Xu Ziyi hadn't expected that during the brief moment he was in a daze, he would be accused of the evil crime of 'skinning people alive'. What a joke! He was the dignified heir of Medicine King Valley who was known respectfully as 'Divine Physician' in the jianghu and a genius in making medicine and medical studies. There was no way that he was going to accept this false accusation.

"There's solid evidence here, so what more can you say?" Yu Xiaocao pointed at the mask in Su Ran's hands with a look of disgust. She didn't want to touch it at all. The apparent look in her eyes made it seem like he was a heinous person, which made Xu Ziyi so angry that he was about to spit out blood.

Xu Ziyi gently rubbed his chest, which felt painfully stuffy. Just as he was about to say something, he felt a sudden surge in his chest and spat out a mouthful of fishy liquid, leaving dark red marks on the ground. The stuffy feeling in his chest had disappeared and his whole body had relaxed much more. However, he pointed at the blood that he spit out in a frivolous manner and accusingly complained to the innocent-looking girl, "Look! I spat out blood because of you. How are you going to compensate me?"

Yu Xiaocao curled up his lips, tsked, and said, "Are you trying to fool a child? That's clearly the extravasated blood from your internal injury. This proves that the medicine that I just gave you has worked! As a doctor, you don't even understand this. Are you a 'quack'?"

The young master of Medicine King Valley, who was ranked within the top three in terms of medical skills, was actually called a 'quack' by a young girl. Xu Ziyi didn't know whether he should be angry or amused!

"Young lass, when I started studying medicine, you were still drinking milk in your mother's arms!" He took in a deep breath and became even more convinced that the medicine that he took when he was unconscious was a sacred product of medicine. He couldn't help but ask, "Lass, what medicine did you give me earlier? Do you have anymore? Can you show me?"

"Why should I tell a bad guy like you? You still haven't honestly explained the matter of the human skin mask!" Like an angry kitten, Yu Xiaocao glared at the handsome young man with her big almond-shaped eyes. 'This annoying guy, who's still drinking milk in her mother's arms? You're not much older than this maiden, okay?'

If Xu Ziyi knew her inner thoughts, he would definitely be amused and annoyed. He didn't know whether it was a good thing or a bad thing to have a baby face. He was almost thirty years old, yet he still looked like a beardless young man who was too immature to handle important matters. Hence, when he went out to see patients, he had to wear a mask and pretend to be mysterious. He hadn't expected that this mask would cause such trouble for him!

“Does a human skin mask have to be made with human skin? Can you have some common sense?” Xu Ziyi glared at the handsome man in black, who had an indifferent expression on his face and was acting as if nothing had happened. His troubles were all caused by this guy's slanderous words!

Yu Xiaocao had a 'stop making excuses' expression on her face as she said, “If it's not made with human skin, then why is it called 'human skin mask'? Say it! Do you guys also make human skin lanterns...and so on!” Yu Xiaocao got goosebumps from her own words. She couldn't help but rub her own arms and move closer to Zhu Junyang.

“Little lass, aren't your imaginations too wild? This isn't some ghost story, so why would I need a human skin lantern?” Xu Ziyi was dumbfounded. It was true that 'a tiger who went down the mountains would be bullied by dogs'. As the respectable 'Divine Physician', who wouldn't give him some face in the jianghu? Now he was being questioned unreasonably again and again by a young girl. Who did he offend ah?

Yu Xiaocao blinked her big eyes several times and said with rich imaginations, “Who knows what you're going to do with a human skin lantern? Evil organizations like yours do all sorts of bad things. You people purposely do things that are ridiculous and harmful to others!”

“I'm being wronged ah! What great injustice ah! How come I didn't know that Medicine King Valley had turned into an evil sect that specializes in doing bad things?” Xu Ziyi felt like a scholar who had met a soldier——they couldn't communicate with each other.

“Medicine King Valley? You're really backed by a jianghu sect?” With a 'you've been caught by me' expression on her face, Yu Xiaocao excitedly said, “Is Medicine King Valley the kind of sect that specializes in making all kinds of poisonous and malicious drugs? For example, the 'Bone Dispersion Powder' that can turn people into a puddle of dead water when exposed to one's skin, or the 'Aging in a Flick of the Fingers' that makes people grow old instantly. Another example is the colorless and tasteless 'Seven-step Heartbreak Powder', which can kill people in seven steps. There's also the 'Crazy Laughter' that causes people to laugh until they die...”

Hearing the young girl's nonsensical words, Zhu Junyang and Su Ran looked at her with a gaze full of helplessness, shock, and powerlessness.

Xu Ziyi, on the other hand, looked very excited and acted crazy with her, "The 'Bone Dispersion Powder' you mentioned sounds very vicious. Quickly tell me, what happened? Did you see someone using the 'Bone Dispersion Powder'? Also, that 'Aging in a Flick of the Fingers', is there an antidote for it? If there is, can you give me one so that I don't have to cover my face with a mask everyday..."

"Don't act funny with me! Stop trying to change the topic!! Right now, we're interrogating you about this human skin mask. Why are you talking about all these irrelevant things?!" As soon as Yu Xiaocao heard the word 'mask', she immediately continued to interrogate him in a serious manner, "Say it! Which pitiful old man's face did you peel off to get this human skin mask?"

Xu Ziyi rolled his eyes at the sky. Who was the one who changed the topic? After drawing out his curiosity, the lass shifted back to the topic of 'human skin masks'. This caused his curious heart to be suspended in midair, which felt very uncomfortable.

"This mask was made from the silk of the silkworms raised in Medicine King Valley. It's breathable and realistic. The beard on the mask is from a goat's beard. It can't be said that there are no such things as peeling off human skins to make masks in the jianghu, but our Medicine King Valley has always been proud and confident in our status. We won't do such cruel things...aiya! It's useless to tell you, noble young masters and maiden, the matters of the jianghu! I don't care if you guys believe me or not!" Xu Ziyi expressed his helplessness and had a 'go-for-broke' expression on his face.

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Yu Xiaocao turned around fiercely and glared at Zhu Junyang. He had misled her and caused her to be embarrassed in front of a stranger! She took the realistic-looking mask, which was as thin as a cicada's wings, and carefully stroked the lines on the mask with her hands. It actually felt the same as the texture of one's skin. Even the so-called goatee on the mask was flawless!

"How many of these human skin masks do you have? Are there any suitable for a girl to wear? I want to buy it from you!!" Yu Xiaocao also wanted to buy a mask to wear. She could go out to play in disguise or scare her close friends. It seemed like a very cool idea!

With a helpless expression on his face, Xu Ziyi sighed and said, "The more exquisite the mask is, the more difficult it is to make it. Not to mention the rare and fine materials used for the masks to ensure

that others won't be able to see the flaws, but it might also take over a year to make a mask based on the bone structure and expression of a person's face. I was afraid that people would question my medical skills because of my young face, so I asked a master craftsman in the valley to make a mask for me. This one isn't considered a superior quality, otherwise, this brother wouldn't have seen through it with one glance!”

“You're wrong! The most top-quality human skin mask is one that can be worn by anyone and won't be seen through!” Su Ran looked at the mask. Like the person in front of him said, it indeed could only be considered an ordinary mask that was capable of fooling ordinary people. But it would be very difficult to fool experienced people in the jianghu.

Xu Ziyi was very surprised at this person's familiarity with the affairs of the jianghu. He continued, “The mask that you mentioned can only be made by Heavenly Mechanic. It's a pity that the old gentleman passed away a long time ago. All the masks he made were burned before he died, lest they fall into the hands of the bad guys and be used to do evil, and thus ruining the old gentleman's reputation.”

“All burned? Not necessarily!” Seeing that Xiaocao had lost interest in the mask, Su Ran decided to return it to the owner. After all, Medicine King Valley had a good reputation in the jianghu. There were many talented people in the sect, especially in terms of medical skills. It was possible that they might need their help in the future, so it was necessary to maintain a good relationship.

Xu Ziyi took the mask and casually stuffed it into his chest pocket. Then he nodded his head and said, “I also think that the old gentleman's manuscripts should still exist somewhere in the jianghu, but no one would easily show such a treasure.”

Su Ran lifted his eyebrows but didn't say anything more. He handed the ginseng wrapped in a handkerchief to Xiaocao. Since they came down the cliff, the little kitten had been eyeing him, as if it was guarding against him from taking the thousand year ginseng. He wasn't so greedy as to ruin his own reputation for a mere thousand year ginseng. Over the years, his subordinates had offered him countless good items as a show of respect. Thus, even a rare old ginseng might not catch his eyes.

Yu Xiaocao uncovered the handkerchief and casually glanced at the ginseng inside, revealing a money-grubber smile. She took out a wooden box from the medicine box and put the handkerchief-wrapped ginseng inside. Xu Ziyi, who had a nose that was comparable to a dog's, gently sniffed his nose as he anxiously watched her put the ginseng that caused him to fall off the cliff into her medicine box.

“You're...using an ordinary wooden box to store the thousand year ginseng. Isn't that too careless? Treasures like this must be stored in jade boxes, otherwise, they would lose their medicinal properties!” Although he knew that he wasn't fated to obtain this ginseng, Xu Ziyi couldn't help but remind her.

Before Yu Xiaocao stored medicinal herbs, she would have the little divine stone use its magic on them in advance. The little divine stone would cover the medicinal herbs with a layer of spiritual energy. Not only did it prevent the medical properties from dispersing, but it could also enhance its effects. But this was a secret that couldn't be known by others.

Her eyes shifted around, and then she bent down and looked at Xu Ziyi with a smile, saying, “So you have a jade box ah! Let me borrow it?”

“Why should I?” Xu Ziyi had originally planned on lending her a jade box, but when he saw her forceful and self-confident manner, he swallowed back the words that were on the tip of his tongue.

“Because I'm your life savior ah!” Yu Xiaocao had a matter of course expression on her face, “Don't you, noble and righteous sects, 'repay a drop of water with a spring of water'? I won't make you repay the favor of saving your life. Let's consider you giving me a few jade boxes as a show of gratitude for my kindness. How about that?”

It turned out that his status as the heir of Medicine King Valley was only worth a few jade boxes! Xu Ziyi didn't know whether he should be happy or depressed!

“There's also the saying 'bestow favors without expecting repayments' for upright gentlemen in the jianghu. What do you think about that?” Xu Ziyi suddenly thought that it was quite interesting to argue with this little lass!

“That's something people in the jianghu says, and I'm not someone from the jianghu. Moreover, I don't want to be an upright gentleman. I just want to be a quiet and cute young lady!” The smile on Yu Xiaocao's face became even broader as she roasted in her heart, 'Don't people say that people of the jianghu are vigorous and unrestrained, and spend money recklessly? Why is this guy such a miser? He's not even willing to give away a few jade boxes!'

Xu Xiyi was rendered speechless by her. He took in a deep breath and waved his hand as he said, “The jade boxes are in my medicine box. I don't know if they have been broken from the fall. I'm injured, so

please get it yourself!! Ay! I'm too unlucky today. I finally found a thousand year ginseng, but I got hurt because I didn't take precautions against the beast that was guarding it. I fell off the cliff and almost died, yet the thousand year ginseng ended up in others' hands!"

"You fell down because you were trying to get this ginseng?" Yu Xiaocao searched through the medicine box that Zhu Junyang picked up for her, and as expected, found several jade boxes of different sizes. This medicine box must have hung on a branch when it fell. There wasn't any damage to the things inside, and the jade boxes were perfectly fine.

"That's right!" Xu Ziyi lifelessly pointed at the poisonous snake not too far away that was thicker than Xiaocao's arm. Although it was already dismembered, it looked quite frightening. At least Xiaocao felt the hairs on her body all rise up.

Yu Xiaocao giggled and said, "It seems like we picked up a great benefit! Should we share half the ginseng with you?"

A thousand year ginseng may be rare, but there was no shortage of stock in Medicine King Valley's well-stocked storehouse. Xu Ziyi was more curious about what kind of internal injury medicine she gave him. It had such a miraculous effect.

"No thanks, but if you feel bad about it, then you can give me another medicinal pill. I still feel some pain in my chest, which should be an indication that my internal injury isn't completely healed." A hint of craftiness flashed through Xu Ziyi's eyes.

Yu Xiaocao put the ginseng into the jade box and carefully placed it in her own medicine box. When she heard his words, she looked at him with a spurious smile and said, "I don't feel sorry at all! Cherish precious herbs, and those who are destined will get it. Although you were the first to discover this ginseng, we were the ones who ended picking it. It can only be said that you're not fated to obtain this ginseng!"

Xu Ziyi nearly vomited blood. This lass was really good at irritating people. In comparison, his arrogant younger sister was much cuter.

"Even if you disregard the fact that I helped you deal with the poisonous snake, can't you help me to the end and give me another medicinal pill?" Xu Ziyi desperately wanted to get his hands on the holy

medicine for injuries. With his keen eyes and familiarity with the properties of medicine, he should be able to figure out the ingredients and develop the prescription.

Yu Xiaocao slanted her eyes at him and snorted, “Stop pretending! The dead can be brought back to life with just one pill of the holy medicine passed down by my ancestors! What's more, sacred medicines like this will decrease with each usage! My ancestors had only passed down three pills!! My heart is already aching after wasting one on you, a complete stranger. Do you think that I will be so foolish as to let you trick me into giving you another one?”

“Tsk! Why didn't you say so earlier?! It turns out that this young master's trick to appear pitiful just made myself look like a clown your eyes?” Xu Ziyi quietly told himself inwardly, 'Don't be angry, don't be angry, don't be angry...’

Yu Xiaocao giggled and said, “Since you worked so hard in your performance, this maiden will reward you with a bottle of wound balm! Don't underestimate this wound balm. It's used by the imperial army and its effect is ten times better than normal wound medications!”

The effects of the enhanced wound balm had been strengthened by spiritual energy, but its ingredients were not much different than ordinary wound medications. Therefore, she wasn't afraid of others wanting to get their hands on it.

Xu Ziyi had also heard of the wound balms provided by the imperial army. He had long wanted to bring a couple bottles back to study it. However, there was a gentlemen's agreement between Medicine King Valley and the imperial court. Thus, it was difficult for him to make a rash action. This wasn't bad either. Even if he couldn't get the internal injury medication, it was also good to get a bottle of wound balm.

“Thank you very much then!” After all, Xu Ziyi hadn't completely recovered from his serious injury. After squabbling with Xiaocao for so long, he couldn't support himself anymore and leaned weakly against a rock. His somewhat young-looking baby face was ghastly pale.

“Master! We finally caught up with you guys!!” Hou Xiaoliang and the two maidservants, Chunhua and Qiushi, finally caught up to their masters. They sat down on a stone and gasped for their breath.

Zhu Junyang had long been upset that his lass's attention had been taken by another man. Without waiting for Hou Xiaoliang to catch his breath, he ordered, "This gentleman's leg is injured. Go make a stretcher with Qiushi, and then carry him back to the village to recuperate."

'Ah?! Weren't they going to hunt for bears and tigers?' Hou Xiaoliang cried in his heart, and then looked towards Xu Ziyi with a bit of resentment.

"Don't cry anymore! We're going to return in two days. Remember that this gentleman's ribs and leg are injured, so he shouldn't be moved carelessly. Be careful when lifting him up!" In the spirit of humanitarianism, Yu Xiaocao casually advised. Just as she finished speaking, she was pulled away by the vinegar jar, Zhu Junyang.

"In the past few days, you have gotten a good harvest of medicinal herbs! The winter arrives earlier at the northern borders, but you didn't bring much thick clothing. This prince will hunt some furs for you to bring back to make clothes!" Zhu Junyang took her to the deep mountains. Su Ran followed them with a knowing expression, leaving behind Xu Ziyi, who had a sad expression on his face as if he had been abandoned by them.

"You actually have a discontented look on your face! I'm the one who should be discontented!! I came out to have fun with my master, but now I have to do hard labor!!" Hou Xiaoliang pulled a long face and grumbled angrily.

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Chunhua, the only one who wasn't called on, looked at them with a helpless gaze. Then she hurriedly followed her master and protected her closely.

In the following days, both Yu Xiaocao and Zhu Junyang were very satisfied with their harvest. Yu Xiaocao's medicine box was almost stuffed full. In addition to the old ginsengs and reishi mushrooms, there were also quite a lot of valuable medicinal herbs such as *Gastrodia elata*, *acanthopanax* root, Chinese gentian root, five-flavor berry, pine leaf, and so on. She collected everything that she wanted in her medicine box.

Now, the full medicine box was being carried by Chunhua. The box was quite heavy, and thus no longer something that her thin, weak shoulders could bear!

As for Zhu Junyang, he was hung up on getting furs. Speaking of furs, she had to mention the mink fur. The three treasures of the Northeast were ginseng, mink fur, and *Carex meyeriana* sedge. As one of the three treasures of the Northeast, mink fur was known as 'the king of furs'. Mink fur belonged in the category of fine furs. It had excellent quality pelts and was soft and sturdy. The dense fur also had a lustrous color. Fur garments made of it were graceful and luxurious, and thus it was loved by the noblewomen in the capital.

However, no matter if it was the sable, ferret, or marten, the colors of their furs were too decorous. It was only suitable for the older noblewomen. If a young girl like Xiaocao wore it, she would appear old-fashioned. But that was okay! Zhu Junyang had found a kind of ferret in the forest with pure, snow-white fur. If his lass wore it, she would definitely look very cute!

As a result, the nightmare of the ferrets in the forest had begun. In particular, the larger male ferrets with fuller furs were almost completely wiped out. Had Xiaocao not stopped him, the ferrets in the forest would have been hunted to extinction by Zhu Junyang! Looking at the pile of snow-white fur, Yu Xiaocao felt an apologetic sense of guilt.

Zhu Junyang couldn't understand her feelings. In his opinion, the value of game was either to be used as food or their fur. There was no need for compassion. In addition to minks, he also hunted a lot of silver foxes, black foxes, and red foxes.

Zhu Junyang still wasn't satisfied because the purpose of this trip was to hunt tigers and black bears. But, after wandering in the mountain for several days, they didn't even encounter a single beast. This was a very lucky thing for other hunters, but in Zhu Junyang's eyes, it had become bad luck!

He swept his slightly resentful eyes towards the black and white figures, who were guarding Xiaocao step by step. Perhaps it was to prevent unnecessary trouble and affect her mood of collecting medicinal herbs, but after they entered the mountains, Xiaocao had the two display their imposing force, which scared away many beasts.

Sometimes, they had clearly entered the territory of some fierce beast, but the two giant wolves, Little Black and Little White, had been raised with mystic-stone water and emitted a powerful force. Even a fierce tiger wasn't a match for them and would avoid confronting them. Who would dare come out to touch their 'tiger whiskers'?

When they decided to leave the mountains, Zhu Junyang suggested to the lass to have the two wolves restrain themselves a bit. In this way, he might be able to get a tiger pelt mattress or bear fur blanket for

her. Xiaocao patted the heads of the two little fellows and let them go hunting freely in the mountains. She also reminded them to be careful. If they encountered a beast that they couldn't beat, they should run away and avoid getting hurt.

Zhu Junyang rolled his eyes in his heart. When the two wolves were together, he reckoned that it was impossible to find anyone who could harm them in the human realm. They would have to search for one among the demonic beasts in the celestial realm.

The two black and white figures charged into the mountains like dragons entering the sea. Little Black was focused on medicinal herbs. During the past few days, its master had collected a lot of good herbs and it could also recognize the smell of several herbs. Every time it saw one, it would dig it out with its paws and bring it back to its master to get credit for its accomplishment.

Little White, on the other hand, was inspired by Zhu Junyang and ran deeper into the mountains to find animals with lustrous, dense fur. After a few trials, it had developed a skill—to bite the prey's neck without damaging its fur. At this time, the furs it hunted back were mostly intact.

Under this out of control situation, Xiaocao's luggage had seriously exceeded the standard weight on the way back. In addition to the few boxes of medicinal herbs she collected herself, there were piles of precious tanned furs. They really couldn't carry them all back, so with no other choice, they bought two carriages from the nearby town to transport the furs back. Xiaocao jokingly thought, 'I can open a fur shop when I get back to the capital!'

When they came out of the mountains, they didn't return on the same route. Instead, they opened up a new path. They had taken a longer detour, so they returned a few days later than expected.

As dusk approached on this day, one could look through the dense branches and leaves and vaguely catch a glimpse of the red clouds in the sky. The forest, which wasn't very bright originally, had gradually dimmed. Zhu Junyang found a dry cave in the mountains not too far away. They worked together to clean the rocks and dead branches inside, and then smoked the cave with herbs to prevent the appearance of poisonous snakes and insects.

With Chunhua, Yu Xiaocao picked up some dead branches nearby to be used as firewood and made a fire in the cave. After getting a jug of water from the nearby mountain stream, they boiled it on the fire and made a cup of herbal tea for everyone. With a light fragrance of medicinal herbs, one would have a warm feeling when drinking the tea. It helped drive all the fatigue on one's body.

Although they were in the deep mountains these past few days, they had the master chef, Xiaocao, with them. Therefore, they didn't have to suffer in terms of food. If others saw them right now, they would have thought that they had come to play instead of hunting in the mountains.

"I'll go around and see if I can hunt a hazel grouse!" Zhu Junyang knew that the lass loved to drink fresh and richly flavored hazel grouse soup. In the past, Little White was responsible for hunting the hazel grouse, but this fellow wasn't 'doing its job' these past few days. They hadn't eaten hazel grouse meat for two to three days.

Yu Xiaocao agreed with his suggestion. The meat of a hazel grouse was white, tender, and nutritious. No matter if it was roasted or used to make soup, it was a rare delicacy. In her past life, hazel grouse had become an endangered species and was listed as a protected animal. Thus, she had no chance to try the delicious taste of the hazel grouse. In this life, she had satisfied her desire for good food.

"Lass, Little Black and Little White aren't here, so don't casually wander around. If you want to go out, you must have Chunhua accompany you. Chief Steward Su, I must trouble you to take care of her!" After they entered the deep mountains, Zhu Junyang had turned into a loyal knight, never leaving Xiaocao's side. If he needed to leave, he would warn her repeatedly, lest the bold little lass unknowingly get herself into a dangerous situation again.

"Just go! I'm seriously tired of hearing you say that! Am I someone who would leave the lass in a dangerous situation?" A hint of impatience appeared on Su Ran's handsome and refined face.

'You, Royal Prince Yang, aren't the only one worried about the lass's safety. The cold-faced demon king, who has always been cold and resolute, has turned into a super nanny in front of the person he liked. He would only feel assured if he can have her tightly secured on himself. I'm seriously defeated by him. He's too cheesy!!'

Zhu Junyang ignored his ridicule and anxiously whispered to the young girl, who he was constantly worried about, "When I'm not around, you must not provoke Chief Steward Su. He's not as harmless as he appears, okay?"

With a confused face, Yu Xiaocao protested, "When did I ever provoke Sir Su? Don't wrongly accuse me!"

“Just...don't tease him about his appearance. That's taboo for Chief Steward Su. The grass on the grave of the last person who joked about his appearance is already very tall now. So be careful. When I'm away, you must remember to not mention the topic of his good looks!” Zhu Junyang was so frightened by the lass's unintentional actions that he broke out in cold sweat every time. Even if he was present, he still may not be able to handle Chief Steward Su's anger. Fortunately, Chief Steward Su never lowered himself to the lass's level!

“Why? What's wrong with praising someone's good looks? I also often compliment you for looking very devilish, enchanting, and bewitching... Did you ever have the urge to hit me?” Yu Xiaocao had a very innocent expression on her face.

Zhu Junyang grinded his teeth inwardly, and the expression on his handsome face was somewhat stiff as he replied in a stiff tone, “Yes! Had it been someone else, this prince would have smacked him to death! Also, how is that praising me? Can't you compliment me with some positive words?”

“In my heart, those are all positive words ah! They are such apt descriptions ah. Your face is enough to bring disaster to the country and the people...” Yu Xiaocao's big, round eyes were opened wide, and her long eyelashes flickered. Her expression appeared very innocent.

Su Ran, who had profound martial arts skills, naturally also heard their conversation. At the beginning, he felt relieved with Zhu Junyang's warning. However, unlike what Royal Prince Yang had said, he wouldn't actually do anything to the young girl.

But, a grown man...cough cough. Well, although he wasn't a complete man now, he had always regarded himself as a man in his heart. Coupled with his unpleasant experiences before and after he entered the palace, his handsome appearance had become a burden to him. Therefore, he could never feel happy to be praised as good-looking by a young girl, even if she was very sincere.

However, he seriously didn't understand what this lass was thinking. Compared with the words she used to describe him such as 'like an immortal', 'elegant and outstanding', and 'gentle like a jade', it seemed like Royal Prince Yang had it worse than him. Here, what exactly were these descriptions: devilish, enchanting, bewitching. Now, she also added a 'bring disaster to the country and the people'! His heart finally felt better now!

Zhu Junyang lowered his head to look down at the pair of clear, innocent eyes in front of him. A sense of helplessness flashed over his heart. He glared at Chief Steward Su, who was sniggering at the side, and then said to the lass in a lowered voice, "Stop! Why does this prince feel that your words are descriptions for a 'gorgeous enchantress'? Devilish... Do you think that I'm a fox demon from the mountains?"

"In my heart, you're exactly a man of unrivalled beauty. The term 'devilish' isn't what you think it means. It's used to describe the beauty of men! Anyway, I'm just praising you for being good-looking, beautiful, and breathtaking!" Yu Xiaocao realized that there was a generational gap between ancient people and modern people, so she hastily explained.

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Zhu Junyang felt even more helpless. He was a grown man, so could he not accept these 'compliments'? However, he felt a somewhat speechless sense of rejoice in regard to the lass's 'lust for beauty', 'Fortunately, his appearance was enough to get favor with the lass. Otherwise, his road of pursuing his wife would be much longer and more arduous.'

"Alright! In the future, just think about these adjectives in your mind and don't say them out loud, okay?" Zhu Junyang took the second-best option and made this small request.

"I can't even praise you when we're alone?" How could he refuse when faced with the lass's slightly pouted mouth, cute dimples, and innocent gaze? When they were alone in private? Well, he would just take it as a small amusement between themselves.

When he turned to leave, Xiaocao made a funny face at his back, 'Young fellow, do you think I don't know how to deal with you?!' It seemed like there would be expected gains from acting cute on occasions.

"You, this lass!" Holding his personal cup in his hands, Su Ran took a sip of the fragrant tea and shook his head with a smile, "I didn't expect that Royal Prince Yang, who has always been calm and wise, would actually be under the complete control of you, this little girl. Is this considered 'there is also one thing to overcome another'?"

Yu Xiaocao withdrew her arrogant expression and calmly replied to Sir Su's teasing, "In the relationship between two people, the matter of who subdues whom doesn't exist. 'Love' makes people change themselves to yield to others. Sometimes, I feel very lucky to be the person who made him change. However, more often than not, I feel that this luck is just an illusion and the person who ends up getting hurt will be me..."

Su Ran sensed her worry about losing, so he hastily withdrew the joking expression on his face and gently rubbed the young girl's hair. In regard to 'relationships', he was a complete blank sheet of paper. He had long lost the right to like others, and it was even more difficult for him to understand the mentality of people who were drifting in the feelings of love. He could only advise her in a somewhat listless manner, "Don't overthink it! I have a keen eye for people. Royal Prince Yang definitely isn't a fickle person! What's more, the emperor has mentioned promoting the awareness of women's rights many times. He appointed you as an official to encourage women living the shadow of men to boldly come out and show themselves! In a woman's world, there shouldn't only be the deep inner courtyard and love. Instead, they should face a broader world. The emperor said that women aren't subordinates of anyone, and that the 'the three injunctions and four virtues' is nonsense!"

"Pfft!" Yu Xiaocao's mood changed very quickly. She turned to look at Su Ran and asked, "If the emperor dared to say this in front of those old fogies, do you think it would cause those old officials to complain in tears, and even 'make threats of suicide to show their stance'?"

Seeing that she was no longer bemoaning her own fate, Su Ran's worried heart relaxed, "The emperor's idea is good, but after all, the view of 'men being superior to women' had been around for thousands of years. Thus, it's not something that can be changed overnight. However, with you as a role model now, many women have come out to display their talents in various aspects. I heard that the second madam of the Zhou Family asked for several shops from her son and has managed them quite well. Her skills in business have been unanimously affirmed by the Zhou Family!"

Second madam of the Zhou Family? Wasn't that Third Young Master Zhou's mother? She hadn't expected that the gentle and amiable noble madam, who usually grew flora and raised pets, would actually have the talent and potential to be a career woman!

"Sir Su, what's your opinion on this? Do you think, like most men, that women are meddling in politics and causing absurdity, and thus will bring disaster?" Since Yu Xiaocao took office in the Ministry of Revenue, she had heard a lot of these remarks. Fortunately, she had the strong heart of a modern person, so the public opinion couldn't influence her enough to make her lose confidence in herself.

"Man?" Su Ran mulled over the word for a moment, and then revealed a somewhat pitiful-looking bitter smile, "Even an incomplete person like me can be entrusted with important matters by the emperor. There are numerous women with knowledge and ability in the world. Why can't they have the opportunity to show their own talents?"

Looking at Su Ran's handsome face, the melancholy and sadness that seeped deep into his bones caused Yu Xiaocao's heart to feel a tearing pain as if it was seized by someone, "Sir Su, you have always been an upstanding and dauntless man in my heart! Because you are loyal, capable, resolute, clever, and wise... You have all the qualities of a true man! I believe the emperor also thinks of you in the same way. You're not only his subordinate and official, but you're also his indispensable right-hand man. Not just a mere friend or confidant, but more than that. You're someone who he can show his back to with complete trust!"

Su Ran turned around and stared at the young girl for a long time. From her eyes, he could see sincerity and respect. Suddenly, he smiled softly, as if a gentle breeze blew on one's face and the spring flowers blossomed in an instant, "Lass, sometimes, I think you're really similar to the emperor. It's hard for people to understand what you guys are thinking, and from time to time, you two will come up with some weird ideas. The emperor also has this inexplicable trust in you. There's an unexplainable connection between you two—tell me honestly, are you a lost pearl that the emperor left among the commoners?"

"Lost pearl?" Yu Xiaocao was taken aback, and when she understood the meaning of this term, she convulsed with laughter. She laughed so hard it almost felt painful to breathe, "Sir Su, I seriously admire your imagination!! How old was the emperor when I was born? Would he be able to father a daughter my age?"

"You're fifteen this year, and the emperor has already passed the age of thirty! When you were born, the emperor was already seventeen!" Su Ran also felt that his thought was ridiculous, but the age matched up.

At that time, the emperor, who was still the imperial grandson, established a shipyard in the area surrounding the capital, and often traveled to Tanggu. At the age of seventeen, one was very hot-blooded. Thus, it wasn't impossible for him to have an intimate night with a fisherman's daughter and ended up getting her pregnant!

"Ah? The emperor is seventeen years older than me?? I can't tell at all!" Yu Xiaocao mumbled softly. However, she had to defend her 'innocence', "When I was born, my eldest grandaunt helped with the delivery. Moreover, I'm twins with Xiaolian and we look extremely similar. People who aren't familiar with us often mistake us! I'm certain that I'm my mother's biological daughter!! You wouldn't be suspecting that the emperor had an affair with a married woman, right?"

"Of course not!" He knew that the emperor was a slight clean freak. If he wanted to get intimate with someone, he would have chosen a young maiden. Why would he like a peasant woman with an ordinary

appearance? In actuality, he was just speaking thoughtlessly earlier. The lass sometimes spoke in a nonsensical manner, so he was also led astray and made a thoughtless comment.

“I heard that Sir Su was already serving the emperor when he was in his teens. Would you not know about the women he had a relationship with in the past? Or...is the emperor a womanizer who flirts everywhere in your heart?” Yu Xiaocao had no doubts about her own identity. Her parents doted on her even more than her brothers, so she was certain that she wasn't adopted!!

“A big promiscuous radish? Can a radish be promiscuous?” Su Ran tried to change the subject to cover up his nonsensical remark.

Generation gap ah! Yu Xiaocao couldn't help but explain to him, “A big promiscuous radish isn't describing the radish. It's used to describe someone who is very flirty and fickle in relationships...”

“Is it really alright for you to say that about the emperor?” Su Ran sometimes felt that this girl was very bold. She even dared to joke about the emperor. Wasn't this a clear display that the emperor was reluctant to punish her?

“Uh...I didn't say that the emperor was this kind of a person. Don't slander me!” Yu Xiaocao was instantly led off topic. Did she call the emperor a womanizer earlier? She didn't, right? No, right?

“Don't worry, I know you didn't do it on purpose. I won't report it to the emperor. You ah, you should be careful when you speak in the future, lest someone with ulterior motives hears you and stirs up trouble in front of the emperor!” In a seemingly serious manner, Su Ran reminded her with an earnest tone.

Yu Xiaocao nodded obediently with a confused expression on her face, “Mhm! I will pay more attention in the future! Thank you, Sir Su! You're such a good person!”

Chunhua, who heard everything, had the urge to cover her face, 'My dear Young Miss, you just got led astray by Chief Steward Su! Wasn't he the one who suspected that you were the emperor's long-lost daughter? Wasn't he the one who suggested that the emperor was flirting everywhere? Shouldn't he be the one who should reflect and correct his mistakes? Why did you two switch roles?'

Su Ran cast a warning glance at her and laughed in his heart, 'This lass is really easy to trick.' She was fooled by just a few words. The way she thanked him just now was just like what the emperor said— foolishly cute. If he was Royal Prince Yang, he probably also couldn't help but be attracted by this cute yet somewhat muddle-headed girl, right? Su Ran quietly suppressed the weird feeling that emerged in his heart and shifted his gaze towards the outside of the cave that was gradually darkening.

“Eh? Why is that fellow Zhu Junyang gone for so long? Nothing happened, right?” Following his gaze, Yu Xiaocao looked towards the entrance of the cave and muttered to herself in a somewhat worried and concerned tone.

Su Ran turned his head and saw the worried expression on the lass's face. He finally understood why Royal Prince Yang saw him as an eyesore. At this moment, how much he hoped that the person she was concerned about was him ah!

“Don't worry!” He suddenly realized that there was something wrong with the fluctuation of his mood, so he hastily withdrew all his emotions and comforted her by saying, “Royal Prince Yang is strong enough to kill a bear with one punch. The only thing that can hurt him in this mountain would have to be a powerful monster! But, didn't you call him devilish? The situation of a fight between the same species probably won't occur. Therefore, your Zhu Junyang is safe!”

'Your Zhu Junyang? To be labeled as one who belonged to the lass, that fellow, Royal Prince Yang, is seriously lucky! What's with this slight sense of envy within my heart?' Su Ran, who had always been shrewd, felt somewhat confused.

“Hahaha...” The lass laughed heartlessly and almost fell to the ground, “That guy, Zhu Junyang, has hunted so many foxes recently. Do you think that some fox demon will come to settle accounts with him? The fox demon had originally come to get revenge for its fellow fox descendants, but when it saw that fellow's appearance, it was immediately attracted by his seductive phoenix eyes and decided to devote itself to him...hehehe... Aiya, this won't do! My tummy hurts from laughing so much! I can't continue to think about this!!”

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Su Ran felt the corner of his mouth involuntarily rise up. He looked at the little lass, who was laughing so hard that she had to hold her belly. His eyes had a gentle look in them as he said, “In that little head of yours, just what are you thinking about all day long? Did you read too many storybooks ah? Tell me, if Royal Prince Yang heard your earlier words, just what would he do?”

Xiaocao howled in laughter for a bit longer before she finally straightened up and weakly threatened Chunhua and Su Ran, "You two are not allowed to tell Zhu Junyang a word of what I said earlier. Otherwise, I'm not going to make food for you two tonight! Not only tonight, but also tomorrow...when we get back to the stud farm, you also won't be able to eat any food that I make either. Are you going to remember this ah?"

After she finished, she even waved a tiny fist in their direction, which wasn't the least bit threatening.

"Don't worry, I'm not the type of person who likes to gossip. It enters my ears and doesn't leave my mouth! I swear on my honor!" Su Ran readily promised her. As for Chunhua, if she dared to gossip, then Yu Xiaocao would send her back to Zhu Junyang! She gave her own maidservant another warning look.

Last time, Chunhua and Qiushi had almost been returned back to the hidden soldiers ranks by Zhu Junyang. If it weren't for their young miss pleading for them, they would have been locked in the hidden soldiers' torture room and might have lost their lives right then and there. The two of them were immensely grateful to Xiaocao. In addition, Wutong continuously reminded them about staying loyal to their mistress, so they had long changed their mindset and now only saw her as their master.

Chunhua knew if she dared to bring those words to Royal Prince Yang, the first one to suffer a calamity would be her. She could only have one master and be loyal to one person. That was the standard that every hidden soldier needed to follow. Therefore, Yu Xiaocao's warning was truly superfluous!

"They're back!" Su Ran slowly got to his feet. He, who was skilled at martial arts, could hear the sounds of numerous footsteps in the distance. No wonder it took them so long to come back. Apparently, they had been slowed down by some other people!

Yu Xiaocao threw the dry stick in her hands into the fire and also stood up. She arrived at the mouth of the cave and copied Sir Su's pose, cocking her head to the side to listen carefully. Her five senses had been slowly altered by mystic-stone water ingestion, so she was already at the level of Chunhua and Qiushi. After listening for a bit, she revealed a puzzled expression, "Sir Su, did Zhu Junyang come back ah? How come I hear more than one person coming back? It sounds like a whole group of people instead!"

Su Ran glanced at her in a flabbergasted manner. If he wasn't completely sure that the little lass hadn't learned martial arts before, he would start to wonder if she wasn't a hidden expert right now.

“Young Miss, there are truly a lot of people coming over this way! I don't know what type of people these are. Do you want to go into the cave and hide out until we figure out their identities?” Chunhua cautiously stepped in front of her young miss as she quietly advised her.

Yu Xiaocao glanced at Su Ran and shook her head, “Don't we have Sir Su here ah? Even that little monster, Zhu Junyang, isn't Sir Su's rival, so isn't it safer to stay by him?”

“Just who are you calling a little monster ah? How come this prince keeps hearing someone saying bad things behind my back?” Zhu Junyang's low and melodious voice suddenly transmitted through the darkness.

Yu Xiaocao's small face lit up in happy surprise and she hurriedly went forward, “Zhu Junyang you're back ah! You were gone for so long that I was worried to death!”

“Why are you mentioning the word 'death'? Quickly spit for good luck!” Zhu Junyang's tall and broad figure split apart the dusky darkness of the night, as if all of the remaining light was shining on him alone. His whole body seemed to emit a magnetizing aura that made it hard for people to look away from him. On his shoulders was a giant white tiger.

This white tiger was so large that, if it were standing on its four legs, it would absolutely tower over an adult man's height. However, when her man carried the tiger along on his shoulders, he acted as if it was as light as a feather. It didn't impede his light and fast steps at all. In fact, the group of panicked and scared people behind him had to run to keep up with him.

“Wow! A white tiger! Zhu Junyang, you are too awesome. You actually managed to hunt a white tiger! Can you give its pelt to me, ah? I really want it!!” Yu Xiaocao's excitement could be seen from head to toe. A white tiger was the product of a genetic mutation, so it absolutely was a rare find. Wow! Their luck was truly too good. Just as they were about to leave the mountains, they were able to come across and hunt such a surprising animal.

Zhu Junyang supported the tiger with one arm, making it seem weightless while his other hand was protecting his abdominal area. When he heard what she said, he slanted a look at her with his phoenix eyes and snorted, “What did you call this prince earlier?”

“Zhu Junyang...” Yu Xiaocao's entire attention had been taken up by the white tiger this entire time. When she raised her eyes and saw that the expression on his face wasn't quite good, she hurriedly corrected herself, “Ruizhi, Junjun, Yangyang, Jun Yangyang...as long as you give the tiger pelt to me, I'll call you anything you want!”

Zhu Junyang's heart skipped a beat and a suspicious smile crossed his lips, “Are you sure that you'll call me anything?”

Yu Xiaocao saw the evil grin on his face and stared at him alertly, “Just what sort of wicked idea is going through your head now? Lord husband, beloved husband, husband...if you want me to call you things like that, dream on! Now tell me straight, are you going to give it to me or not?!”

She had accurately guessed what he was thinking, so he felt a bit at a loss. He thought for a bit and decided that they needed to set their engagement next year. That way, his label would be all over the little lass. In another two years, the little lass would finally be married to him. Then, wouldn't these ways of calling him become the norm?

“Alright, I'll stop teasing you! Didn't this prince say so earlier? During this outing, all of the pelts we get during hunting are all yours!” When Zhu Junyang first spotted this fierce white tiger, he didn't feel nervous or alarmed at all. Instead, he felt pure joy. He finally had come across a fitting gift for his little lass ah!

“Eh? Who are they?” After she had finally gotten a satisfactory answer, Yu Xiaocao's attention was taken over by the messy group behind him. The vast majority of people had frightened and panicked expressions on their faces and there were also a few who were supporting the injured. The most gravely hurt one was a man who was lying down on a simple stretcher that was made out of woven rattan vines. He was a sturdy man whose face was pale from pain.

“They're the hunters from the village at the foot of the mountain! When this prince encountered them, the white tiger was currently fighting them, so I saved them while in passing. If we're going to save them, we should do it correctly. Take out some medicine and give it to them...the wound balm from Tongren Medicine Hall should do the trick!” Zhu Junyang didn't forget to give a pointed reminder to the muddle-headed little lass. A few days ago, when they saved the young master of Medicine King Valley, she had already aroused an outsider's interest in her wound palm. He was afraid that one day the little lass would reveal too much of her secrets and cause a problem.

The leader of the group of hunters was a man who had the typical build of a northerner. He had a tall and brawny body, broad shoulders, and a full beard on his face that were paired with his bushy eyebrows. His large eyes were bright and full of expression. He first had the injured hunters carefully placed down in a corner of the cave and when he heard what they said, he bowed deeply towards Zhu Junyang, "Although they say that a big favor cannot be repaid with verbal thanks alone, we are truly grateful that my lord came out to help us now. I, Jin Tiankui, will never forget this boon for the rest of my life!"

"No need for pleasantries now, quickly go treat those who are heavily injured. If we wait any longer, I don't know if they'll be able to live!" Zhu Junyang placed the dead white tiger in another corner and carelessly waved a hand at the hunter. His right hand was still covering his abdominal area.

Yu Xiaocao delivered the wound balm to that named hunter and taught him how to use it. She also gave him a pouch of diluted mystic-stone water. With these two items, the King of Hell wouldn't be taking their lives today!

After she saw them almost finish binding and treating the injured people's wounds, Yu Xiaocao suddenly had an idea flit into her head, "Older Uncle, your surname is Jin? Then are you familiar with Jin Xiaohu at the nameless village at the foot of the mountain?"

When Jin Tiankui heard her question, he threw her a startled look and asked, "How do you guys know my youngest son? Did you guys go past our village before you entered the mountains?"

"Before we entered the mountains, we lodged at Grandfather Jin's residence in the nameless village. You are Xiaohu's father, what a coincidence!" Yu Xiaocao smiled brightly and her two adorable dimples blossomed on her cheeks.

"Second Uncle, apparently our savior had lodged at our residence ah! Our savior is truly very skilled as he was able to knock down such a ferocious tiger in a few moves! If I could be as skilled at martial arts as he is, in the future, we don't need to be so scared whenever we enter the mountains!" Jin Xiaodong, who had overheard the conversation between the young girl and his uncle, sighed a bit enviously over this.

Xiaocao exchanged a few other words with Jin Tiankui before she turned around and noticed that Zhu Junyang was still holding his abdomen like he was earlier. She anxiously rushed over and pulled at his hand to ask, "What's wrong? Did you get injured there ah? Let me look to see if it's serious or not."

Zhu Junyang's left hand pulled at her arm, preventing her from pushing aside his clothes. He hinted that she should sit down next to him.

"This prince has a surprise that I want to give you!" Zhu Junyang pretended to smile mysteriously. His phoenix eyes seemed to shimmer with a watery light, causing his handsome face to look even more enticing.

Yu Xiaocao was stunned for a moment before she finally asked, "What sort of surprise?"

"Come look...what is this?" Zhu Junyang finally relaxed the hand that was covering his abdomen, revealing a shaggy and white little thing.

"Wow! A small white tiger? It's so small ah. It must have just been born not long ago as it hasn't even opened its eyes! So adorable!!" Yu Xiaocao had a pure look of delighted surprise on her face. She carefully took the weak and pitiful little animal from Zhu Junyang's hand. It was truly very tiny and was smaller than an adult cat at this point.

The little white tiger, which had been trembling in fear this entire time, gradually quieted after it reached Yu Xiaocao's hands. Perhaps the smell of mystic-stone water on Xiaocao's body naturally made animals want to get closer to her? The little white tiger calmly lay in Xiaocao's chest, acting as if it had returned back to its mother's embrace. The uneasiness and fright that surrounded it earlier had completely disappeared.

"Is this the surprise you were talking about ah? How did you find it?" Yu Xiaocao gently stroked the little white tiger's soft fur. The little thing licked her hand, causing a tickling sensation, which made her giggle a few times.

Zhu Junyang stared a bit unhappily at the little white tiger that was worming its way into the little lass's chest. He almost couldn't resist the urge to pluck the animal out and throw it away. His line of sight suddenly stopped at a certain area, as if his eyes were being magnetized there. The little lass had grown up. At least, her chest had finally started to develop and they were happily growing in his direction...

“Stinky pervert! Just where are you looking?” His ear suddenly hurt and the angry face of the little lass, which was paired with her blushing red cheeks, appeared before his eyes. This little lass was getting braver with every passing day. She was unexpectedly pulling on his ear to punish him.

How could she not give him any face in front of everyone here by pulling blatantly on his ears? In a moment, he needed to have a good talk with the little lass. If she was going to pull on his ears...she should wait until they got back to a more private setting where there were no other people around!

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They spent the night in the cave. Early in the morning on the next day, Yu Xiaocao checked on the two most severely injured hunters. The one who was most injured had gotten his left arm neatly bitten off from the elbow down. If they didn't use Xiaocao's wound balm and medication to stop bleeding, she was pretty sure that this guy would have died at this point. The other hunter had a nasty-looking gouge in his shoulder, which was missing a large piece of flesh. It was quite bloody and frightening looking.

This time, twenty-six hunters from the nameless village had gone into the mountains. They had appointed the experienced hunter, Jin Tiankui, as their leader. The vast majority of the hunters were father and son or had very good relationships with each other. Because of that, when the white tiger appeared before them, none of the group tried to leave the hunter who had gotten his arm bitten off behind to feed the tiger.

The hunters had already been out for about a dozen days now. At first, their trip had gone rather smoothly and they didn't encounter any fierce beasts. However, staying on the outskirts of the mountains meant that they weren't able to hunt many creatures that were worth a lot of money. For the sake of having more spending money in town during the winter, they had all participated in a vote, which was unanimous for going deeper into the forest.

In the previous few days, all of them felt gratified at their choices as they had encountered a lot more animals with valuable pelts. In fact, one sable fur pelt could be sold for a few dozen taels even to a middleman. If a person's luck was even better and he encountered the servant of a rich man out buying furs, then they could make double of what they could sell it for to the middleman. Now, every family had a few valuable fur pelts on hand to sell.

After tasting the sweetness of success, the hunters wanted to push their luck and gradually headed deeper into the mountains. Jin Tiankui relied heavily on his over twenty years of experience and sensitive senses to guide the group of hunters around several territories that were claimed by fierce beasts. In the end, however, they were unable to avoid a white tiger who was protecting its young.

Prior to Zhu Junyang appearing, Jin Tiankui and the other hunters felt complete despair in their encounter with the fierce and vicious tiger. The two heavily injured hunters wanted to use their own lives to stop the tiger and give their friends and family time to run away. However, not a single person in the group wanted to abandon these two and live the rest of their lives in guilt and regret. The group summoned their courage and used every skill they had in an effort to possibly scare off the vicious beast or maybe kill it with a lucky blow.

However, how could they know that this was a female tiger who had just given birth to its young? The mother tiger believed that they would hurt its child, so it went all out against them, leaving them no room for error. Their hunting forks and knives were mere toys in front of the white tiger. After fighting for half a day, other than inciting the tiger into a blood-frenzied rage, they had been unable to accomplish anything else or injure the creature.

As the number of wounded increased, the smell of their blood caused the tiger to become more ferocious. At the moment they were all in despair, ready to face their deaths, Zhu Junyang appeared like a black-clad god from the skies. The fierce and vicious tiger was like a weak little cat in front of him. In the blink of an eye, he ended up subduing and neatly killing the animal, leaving only a corpse on the ground.

Jin Tianjin managed to calm down a bit and came forward to thank their savior. However, the black-clothed man had a cold expression on his face and only glanced at him apathetically before he bent down to pick up the dead tiger. The white tiger, which had to weigh more than a few hundred catties, seemed as light as a feather in the man's arms and he easily carried the beast on his shoulders.

The man carried the dead tiger on his shoulders and walked around the vicinity quickly. When he got back, his right hand was in front of his abdomen in a protective manner. The hunters there didn't know just what valuable thing he came across. On the way back to the cave, Jin Tiankui had wanted to express his gratitude, but the black-clothed man had an aloof and cold expression the entire time, making it difficult for them to get closer.

It was only when they arrived at the mouth of the cave did the black-clothed man finally melt his icy exterior temporarily when he saw a young maiden dressed in a pink dress. His warm smile only blossomed for one person. The gentle and doting man in front of them was like a whole other person compared to the previous icy and cold iceberg of a man. Only then was Jin Tiankui able to fully express his thanks and gratitude to the whole group's savior.

They were truly very fortunate today. Not only had they been able to get a good haul of game, but they also had someone save them in their moment of crisis. Furthermore, a sweetly smiling young girl, who

looked as beautiful as a fairy, had even fervently taken out wound healing medicine made by Tongren Medicine Hall for them to treat their wounds.

Jin Tiankui had traveled to the prefectural city a few times and Tongren Medicine Hall's business was quite booming there. He had heard other people mention that their wound balm and patent medicine very quickly sold out as soon as they got new stock. This caused people to wait in front of the store for the exact moment when the supplying carts arrived. Once resupplied, these people would quickly stand in line, waiting anxiously to buy the medicines produced by the Yu Family.

There was a reason why Tongren Medicine Hall's wound balm and patent medicine sold so well. It was said that Tongren Medicine Hall's wound balm could staunch bleeding, reduce inflammation, and speed up the healing of wounds! As for their patent medicine, you avoided losing potency as you didn't have to brew it over a stove and it worked faster. Furthermore, compared to drinking the bitter medicinal brew, taking a pill or drinking a sweetened syrup was much more palatable to most people.

When Jin Tiankui found out that the wound balm was that effective, he had once wanted to buy some to bring back home. As a hunter, it was hard to avoid getting injured all of the time, so wound balm was an essential item back home. However, when he got to the sales counter, he found out a bottle of wound balm cost fifty taels. They would need to sell a lot of game in order to make enough money to buy one bottle of wound balm! Jin Tiankui couldn't bear to spend that much money and finally decided to buy some ordinary wound balm instead.

However, the young maiden in front of them was neither a relative nor a friend, yet she easily gave them a whole bottle of Tongren Medicine Hall's wound balm. This was a great kindness to them ah! Furthermore, there was a reason why this wound balm was so expensive because it worked very well. His nephew, who had gotten his arm bitten off by the tiger, had his suffering decrease significantly after the balm was spread on his ravaged stump. This morning, when he went to check on the younger man, the bleeding had completely stopped and there were even scabs starting to form. As for the other hunter, who had gotten a big piece of flesh ripped off his shoulder, he could walk around like nothing had happened.

“Uncle Jin, you should all come down the mountain with us ah. That way, we'll be able to keep each other safe and on the right track!” Yu Xiaocao had already come to an agreement with Zhu Junyang to escort this group of hunters safely down the mountain. After all, this area wasn't safe. Who knew whether they would encounter another fierce beast later?

Jin Tiankui had long wanted to travel with these people but he felt embarrassed to propose the idea. After all, they had the wounded among them, so their speed would be compromised traveling with

them. When he saw that the young maiden had taken the initiative to give them an invitation, he was overjoyed at the unexpected good news and gratefully thanked them repeatedly.

They had truly encountered a living Buddha today! From the way these people addressed each other, he could already guess that these three were absolutely extremely wealthy and powerful nobles, especially the man dressed entirely in black. He was, unexpectedly, a royal prince. However, none of these people had the arrogant and willful manner of most influential and noble people. In fact, they continuously helped them, mere commoners, without a hint of attitude. He had lived for over forty years and had never seen such esteemed nobles like them before.

Jin Tiankui didn't dare to let these nobles wait for too long, so he hurriedly had the other hunters pack up their things, load up their strings of game, support the wounded, and follow the nobles from behind at a close distance. He was afraid that they'd become impatient and regard them as an eyesore on the way back.

After he had leisurely finished his simple breakfast. Zhu Junyang once again put that white tiger corpse on his shoulders and also picked up a bag of fur pelts that had been skinned off of their other game in his other hand. Because they had hunted so much game, he had to skin the pelts in the mountains and the meat was left for the carnivores in the mountains to enjoy.

However, even though he had a few dozen pelts on him, he only had two hands. There was still a pile of fur pelts on the ground! He glanced at Chunhua, who was behind Xiaocao, and saw that she was carrying a basket full of medicinal herbs on her back and her arms were also holding more baskets. It was clear that she couldn't hold anything more. Xiaocao's medicine box was perched on her shoulders. It held the truly valuable herbs. In her arms was the white tiger cub. Chief Steward Su Ran, on the other hand, was empty-handed, which made him resemble a spoiled noble son out for a stroll in the woods.

“Chief Steward Su, please help with bringing the remaining two bags of fur pelts down!” Zhu Junyang naturally wouldn't let go of this opportunity to make the other man labor. He gestured with a pout towards the fur pelts on the ground.

Su Ran looked briefly at the pile of pelts that still stunk of blood and then looked down at his spotless white clothing. Then he raised an eyebrow at Zhu Junyang while revealing a helpless expression. He had mysophobia ah! Even if you beat him to death, he wouldn't be willing to get close to those dirty things! In addition, the high and mighty Royal Prince Yang in front of him looked incredibly foolish carrying game and holding fur pelts. He needed to retain an image of pure elegance in front of that lass Xiaocao. Thus, getting him to help— an impossibility!

Only now did Jin Tiankui notice the large pile of fur pelts on the cave floor. There were sable furs, marten furs, ferret furs, red fox furs, silver fox furs, and black fox furs...ferret furs made up the majority of the furs there. Did these people catch all of the animals whose furs were worth a lot of money in these woods?

“Benefactor, if you don't disdain our help, we are more than willing to help you bring these down the mountains!” Jin Tiankui and the other hunters had already hidden the ordinary game they caught earlier in a small cave further down the mountain. The cave had been securely sealed with a rock. Currently, each hunter didn't have much game on them, so they were able to free up three to four people to help these nobles transport the furs.

Zhu Junyang angrily glared at Su Ran and then threw the furs on the ground again. He nodded his head towards Jin Tiankui and said, “Apologies for the inconvenience!”

His courteous words made Jin Tiankui feel immensely honored and he hurriedly replied, “Not an inconvenience, not an inconvenience at all! Compared to you saving all of our lives, this is nothing worth mentioning! Xiaoshan, Xiaomu, Xiaobao, Xiaodong, give the game in your hands to other people. Come here and help our benefactor bring their haul back!”

These four youngsters were all nephews from his paternal family. Thus, he had no qualms in ordering them around. The four youths had tall and strong bodies, and were in the prime of their lives. Each of them carried a giant bag of fur pelts and followed their benefactor from behind as they all headed down the mountain.

Jin Tiankui supported his injured maternal nephew as he held his red fox and sable fur that he hunted himself in his other hand. He also followed closely behind the four youngsters.

Since the group of hunters were all helping their wounded descend, Zhu Junyang and the others deliberately chose a speed that wasn't too fast. They finally got off the mountain on the next day, at dusk. In the distance, they could faintly see the sparse houses in the nameless village in the distance.

Jin Tiankui gazed at the smoke rising from the roof of his own residence and almost had the desire to start crying. They were this close to never seeing the smoke rise above their homes again or seeing their family again. If the whole village was only left with the old, weak, women, and children, it was obvious what their fates would be.

“Uncle Jin, give Older Brother Zhuzi some water ah. He's heavily injured so it's important that he avoids getting dehydrated!” On the whole journey down, Yu Xiaocao would always send some of her own water to the more heavily injured hunters. Although they had walked for two whole days, all of them managed to endure the journey. When she saw that the color on Wang Dazhu's face, the hunter who had gotten his arm snapped, wasn't looking too good, Yu Xiaocao gave him another mouthful of diluted mystic-stone water.

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“Thank you, Your Royal Highness! If we hadn't encountered your group, I, Wang Dazhu, would be dead in the mountains now!” Wang Dazhu drank a few sips of water and felt a bit better. He gratefully expressed his thanks to the noble maiden who resembled a little immortal girl. Her Highness, the royal princess, didn't have any of the arrogance of her rank and was cordial and kind to all of them. She truly had a heart of gold. When he got back, he needed to erect a long life plaque to her to make sure his descendents would remember her great kindness to them!

Yu Xiaocao waved a hand at him in dismissal and stated, “When you get back, take good care of yourself ah! Here are two bottles of medicine. One is to be applied externally, while the other you need to take. Your wounds will very quickly heal if you take them consistently. It's not a big deal to be missing an arm. There is no difficulty that can't be surmounted by people, so treasure your life!”

Wang Dazhu was so moved by her words that tears streamed down his face. Miss Yu absolutely had to be an immortal who had come down to earth. Not only did she give him precious medicine but she also tried to comfort him. It was hard to find such a kind and sweet maiden in this world!

“Master, you're finally back!” Hou Xiaoliang had heard the ruckus and came out of the Jin Family's residence. He was so moved that he resembled a lost young kid who had finally been reunited with his mother. He rushed over and unexpectedly gave his master a giant bear hug. Zhu Junyang pushed him away in disdain.

Hou Xiaoliang took the dead white tiger from his master's shoulders and was so astonished that his mouth was wide open for a long time, “Master, you're truly too awesome. You actually encountered a legendary white tiger! Just this fur pelt alone is enough to make other people endlessly envious of you. Go wash up and rest first, this servant will help you prepare this white tiger.”

Zhu Junyang was afraid that this guy might end spoiling the tiger pelt and warned him, “Be careful ah, this is this prince's betrothal gift. If you ruin it, I will never forgive you!”

“Master, don't worry. This servant will be extremely careful and I will absolutely not delay your process to get a wife!!” Hou Xiaoliang glanced in the direction of Yu Xiaocao and had an ambiguous smile on his face as he hauled the dead tiger into the inner courtyard.

Although Qiushi was only a step behind him, she also came forward to take the medicine box from her young miss. She softly said, “Young Miss, the stove has hot water on it. This servant will help you take a bath and change your clothes.”

All in all, their journey into and out of the mountains took around a dozen days in total. Although her body and skin had been subtly altered after long-term usage of the mystic-stone water, such that her sweat didn't have a lot of impurities in it, Xiaocao still felt that she was about to stink to the high heavens. She had never been so eager to take a bath as she was today.

In her room, she scrubbed herself furiously in the tub. After she came out, she discovered that the entire Jin Family had already prepared a sumptuous evening feast for their whole group. Jin Tiankui had told the story of what had happened to Old Man Jin as soon as he got back. The whole Jin Family was immensely grateful towards Zhu Junyang and the others for their kind deeds and almost started treating them like living Buddhas.

Xiaohu's mother's illness had gotten better after taking two days worth of medicine. She had a good hand at cooking. In addition, the hunters in the family had brought back quite a bit of game, so they ended up with a dozen dishes on the table. As a sumptuous feast, it was quite fitting to serve to Xiaocao and their other benefactors.

“That uh...can you take out a pill of your Healing Panacea for me to look at?” During the meal, another youthful and pleasant looking man suddenly appeared next to Xiaocao. He had a simpering and flattering smile on his face as he shamelessly asked her about her medications.

Zhu Junyang was quite displeased that this young fellow was getting so close to his little lass, “Hou Xiaoliang! Why is this guy still here?” “Why can't I still be here? It's not like this is your own home!” Was a royal prince that special? As the young master of Medicine King Valley, he wasn't afraid of anyone!

Yu Xiaocao turned her head around and saw a round face shaped like a steamed bun. It was paired with large round eyes and a small delicate mouth. From the looks of his face alone, it'd be very easy for someone to mistaken him as a little boy. However, he had a large and sturdy body, broad shoulders, and a deep voice, which contrasted sharply with his childish face. With such a baby face, it'd be hard for

anyone to not doubt his abilities at medicine. It was no wonder he would paste on a mask on his face to alter his appearance.

Such an adorable steamed bun face was right in front of her eyes. Xiaocao suddenly had an itching urge to pinch his cheeks. However, there was a jealous little vinegar jar right next to her, so she needed to control herself...

“Didn't I tell you earlier ah? I only have three Healing Panacea that have been passed down by my family. I still regret being hot headed at the time and taking one out to save you! These are truly life-saving pills. You're neither related to me nor a friend of mine, so how could you have the nerve to ask for one from me?” Yu Xiaocao knew that her special pills had mystic-stone water added to them. The special water had the ability to improve the effects of medications, which was why the effects of her pills were at least double of the effects of ordinary ones.

This was the first encounter Yu Xiaocao had with someone from the Jianghu. The famous leader of the Medicine King Valley sounded quite mysterious and talented, so she didn't know if she took out her pills whether the other person would sense something fishy. Hence, she needed to be more cautious.

Xu Ziyi tried to move her emotionally and persisted, “Young Maiden, the reason why I am able to become the direct successor of Medicine King Valley is not only because I am the grandson of the current head but also because, compared to my peers, I am extremely talented and gifted.”

“What do your talents have to do with us?” Zhu Junyang picked up the stool that was under Xiaocao's butt and brought both person and chair closer to his side. What was this damned man trying to do by getting so close to his lass? If he needed to talk, he could just talk like a normal person. Although the youth's face looked quite youthful and tender, it was still quite good-looking, which made it likely that his lass, who loved handsome appearances, had no defenses against it.

Xu Ziyi glared at him and then scooted forward again. He opened his doe-like eyes wide and looked expectantly at Xiaocao, as if he was trying to say, 'Quickly ask me about my talents, quickly ask me...'

“Alright ah! Just what sort of talents do you have? Tell us now.” Yu Xiaocao casually asked as she continued to eat the corn porridge in front of her.

Xu Ziyi smiled and revealed his two dimples. He proudly stated, "For most ordinary medicines, all I need to do is just take a sniff and I will be able to identify the ingredients inside as well as the ratios used. For more complicated medicines, I just need to scrape a tiny bit off of the top and taste it to figure out the exact prescription. You said earlier that your family's recipe for the Healing Panacea has already disappeared. Don't you want to find the old recipe and benefit more people in the future?"

"You said so much, but aren't you just coveting the little lass's family's secret recipe ah? What's the point in trying to make your intentions sound so honorable and glorious?" Zhu Junyang sneered and then moved the little lass closer to him.

Xu Ziyi stared at him with wide eyes and slightly frowned a bit. Then, a smile blossomed on his face as he nodded, "Your Highness is right. This one is truly curious about the secret recipe to make this Healing Panacea. Similar to those who are obsessed about martial arts and books, I am truly a person who is obsessed about learning more about medicine. To tell you the truth, Miss Yu's family's panacea is even more effective than Medicine King Valley's 'Life-Returning Pill'. No one would believe me if I claimed I wasn't curious about this. However, if this panacea can be researched by me, wouldn't that be advantageous to both of us?"

Zhu Junyang had an expression full of disdain on his face and Yu Xiaocao gently patted his knee before she turned to address Xu Ziyi, "Young Master Xu is correct, if the prescription can be brought to light again, that would benefit many people in the future. Chunhua, bring out that purple glass bottle from my medicine box and cut the pill in half and give it to Young Master Xu."

"Wait a second! This one only needs to scrape a bit of pill powder from the top!" This young maiden was truly too much of a spendthrift. Such a precious pill would be hidden carefully by any other person. She, on the other hand, easily took it out to save a complete stranger and even offered to cut it in half to give to someone. This was a living saving pill ah. If she did that, the healing properties of the pill would definitely degrade as time went on! Xu Ziyi couldn't bear to let that happen and hurriedly stopped them.

Xu Ziyi carefully held the pill as he scraped off a tiny bit of pill powder before he impatiently used his tongue to lick it up. He concentrated on tasting the pill. Eh? How come the ingredients he was tasting seemed no different than the ingredients found in ordinary internal injury pills ah?

That couldn't be right...there had to be an ingredient in there that boosted the properties of the ingredients. However, even he, as an extremely experienced pill maker, didn't know what might be boosting the potency of the ingredients.

There were many ingredients that had the ability to boost the potency and effects of others. However, if you directly added them into a pill recipe, it would end up destroying the effects of the pill itself. His father had researched this painstakingly for twenty to thirty years but ended up with nothing so far. This pill had unexpectedly perfectly paired these two contradictions in one entity.

If the Yu Family's recipe hadn't been lost in the sands of time, perhaps his father, that crazy pill fiend, would do everything he could to get that recipe off of their hands so that he could compare it to his decades of research. That way, he could find out just where he went wrong.

“How is it? Doesn't taste too bad right?” Yu Xiaocao had finished eating the food in her bowl and delicately let out a burp. She noticed that the young master of Medicine King Valley was tasting the pill dust as if he was eating a delicacy, so she couldn't help but ask him what he thought.

“Not too bad...” Xu Ziyu replied absentmindedly without thinking much. Suddenly, he came to a realization and looked at Xiaocao, “Did your ancestors leave anything else along with these pills? Such as any special ingredients?”

“Nope, they didn't!” Yu Xiaocao naturally wouldn't tell him that there was mystic-stone water in these pills. Otherwise, he would interrogate her on the origin of the mystic-stone water, which would be a great bother.

Xu Ziyu looked at the pill paper in his hands that only contained the remaining pill powder and carefully folded it up. Suddenly, he raised his head and asked in a puzzled manner, “You said that these pills were passed down by your ancestors. How come the potency of the pills haven't decreased even a bit? It tastes like they were just made. Do you guys have some sort of secret recipe to preserve pills ah?”

“Since it's a secret recipe, how could I easily divulge it to you?” Yu Xiaocao seemed to regard him with a lazy expression. In actuality, she was feeling quite insecure at this moment. These pills had truly been made by her just before she arrived at the stud farm. Thus, it wasn't surprising that the potency of these pills were still quite good.

Xu Ziyu acted as if he was possessed. He lowered his head, staying still as if he was a sculpture. Even the half-eaten bowl of food in front of him had been completely forgotten. He was currently concentrating exclusively on trying to figure out this pill's properties. He needed to figure out just how it was possible to boost the efficacy of the ingredients while having them harmonize perfectly into a pill.

Originally, he believed that his father's research direction was just a waste of time and was never going to succeed. However, once a perfect example appeared before his eyes, Xu Ziyi was now completely obsessed with this idea, even more infatuated than his father.

That evening, Zhu Junyang discovered that the fellow who knew how to act cute had actually left without saying goodbye. The uncomfortable feeling within him had also dissipated a little. Why did good-looking men always seem to appear in front of his little lass, catching her attention...

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The experienced hunters in this area were all good at skinning and processing fur pelts, especially Old Man Jin. He was famous not only in the village but also in town for crafting the best fur pelts. Zhu Junyang and the other hunters had gotten so many furs. If they didn't handle them now, they would start to stink on the way home.

Thus, they spent a few more days at the nameless village. On the return journey back to the farm, they had an additional two large carts filled full of furs. The merchants they had encountered on the road all asked them where they had gotten these furs when they saw the piles of top-notch pelts.

When they got back to the stud farm, Steward Yan came over to greet his master and excitedly reported, "Master, the guards have seen a white stallion leading a herd of horses in the vicinity of the farm when they are patrolling. This servant followed your orders and made sure no one went to disturb them. From time to time, we also put out some top-notch fodder in the areas they tend to appear. Those wild horses seem to be more trusting of our farm and don't always flee when we let the other horses out. There was one night when that white stallion appeared in the farm and was slyly eating Black Whirlwind's special food ah!"

Ever since Xiaocao arrived at the stud farm, she had personally compounded Little Red's child's, Black Whirlwind, feed. Not only was the nutrition well balanced, but she also added a high concentration of mystic-stone water to it. That way, the feed would alter its body. There were quite a number of horses at the farm but there were very few horses who had the bloodlines of superior quality horses.

The foreign tribes only sold their mediocre and inferior horses to the Great Ming Dynasty. Thus, the probability of encountering a divine steed was about the same as a meat pie falling out of the sky! Therefore, they could only use the horses they had to breed better steeds. Out of all of the foals in the farm, Black Whirlwind was the best out of all of them and also the one with the most promise. Xiaocao planned on altering it and five other foals using the mystic-stone water. That way, they would become the hope of the stud farm.

The little fellow Black Whirlwind had absolute freedom on the farm. The small courtyard residence that Xiaocao and the others lived in almost always had its gates wide open for it. In addition, Yingchun especially liked the little horse and would always give it some rock candy that contained mystic-stone water in it. Thus, the little fellow frequently didn't rest in its own stable and instead shamelessly lodged at the small courtyard.

Since it had its own stable, there was no one there to fight for food. Thus, the grooms taking care of it would often add some superior fodder in its manger as a midnight snack. However, who would have expected that, for a few nights in a row, when the little fellow strolled back, it found out that its food manger was completely empty. It was quite displeased by this. Was someone secretly eating its food? Or were the humans shorting it on its midnight snack?

In the middle of the night, Black Whirlwind ran over to where the grooms lodged and made a fuss. Only after it was given a midnight snack did it calm down. After the grooms had been disturbed for a few nights in the row, they started to wonder. At first, they thought that the little fellow was having a growth spurt and needed more food. However, even after they added more fodder to his manger, it still continued to pester them. Thus, they felt that there was something fishy about this and began to stake out the little fellow's stable at night. That's when they discovered the wild white stallion coming over to steal the little foal's food. They reported these matters to Steward Yan.

After hearing Steward Yan's report, Zhu Junyang surreptitiously glanced at Xiaocao, who was organizing the fur pelts at the side, and then commanded the steward, "No need to do anything with that horse for now! How's the progress on the new horse stables going?"

"The construction on the new stables is already done. After letting it air out for a few days, it'll be ready to house horses! Master, the people that you've instructed me to find to help out with raising the horses are already here. They are currently being trained by Old Zhang!"

Old Zhang was the groom who was the most experienced at raising horses. In the past, he had been caught by some foreign tribes and forced to raise their horses for over twenty years. Recently, the Great Ming Dynasty's troops had won a series of victories and reclaimed a lot of their lost land. Thus, he was finally able to go home. When he found out that a noble from the capital was planning on establishing a horse breeding farm, he recommended himself to work there. Now, he was one of the small leaders here and had helped Steward Yan quite a bit.

"Make sure the new stables get cleaned. Tomorrow night, you can fill all of the feed troughs with some good quality fodder and there's no need to send anyone to keep a watch over it..." Zhu Junyang had

heard the promise that the little lass had given to the white stallion, so he instructed his subordinates to go through with her plan.

Steward Yan paused for a moment in surprise but very quickly understood what his master was trying to do, "Is the plan...for the new stables to serve the wild horses?"

Zhu Junyang nodded slightly and waved a hand in dismissal at Steward Yan. The little lass and her maidservants had already finished organizing the fur pelts. Right now, the young maiden had a bit of exhaustion visible on the face. Her usually bright and lively eyes seemed a bit unfocused, as if she was unconsciously relaxing.

Although this was supposed to be a leisurely hunting trip, they had still been camping out in the vast wilderness and had spent over twenty-some days out in the open. Even a strong and sturdy man wouldn't be able endure for so long, let alone a weak and delicate little maiden. These past few days had surprised him. She was the only one in their group who had no martial arts training. However, no matter where they were, whether traveling on the road or going into the mountains, she never complained about being exhausted. In terms of strength and energy, she had more than the average weak and delicate little maiden.

"Tired?" Zhu Junyang walked to Xiaocao and bent over to stroke the little lass's thinned out face. He gently said, "If you're tired, go rest now. No need to make yourself endure any longer."

"I'm waiting for the washing water to get heated up..." Yu Xiaocao yawned elegantly and two sleepy tears were squeezed out of the corner of her large eyes. After being on the road for a few days, it had been difficult for her to get a restful night's sleep. Fortunately, her maidservants were all quite perceptive and quickly heated up her bathing water on the stove before helping their mistress to wash herself in the warm water.

Xiaocao slept until the moon had risen high above the sky and the only reason why she woke up was that her empty stomach was complaining constantly. She ate some food that had been reheated on the stove and then dragged herself up to go to the private stall of Black Whirlwind.

The round bright moon was hung high in the sky, covering the entire stud farm with its silvery glow. With Xiaocao's current eyesight, it wasn't an issue for her to see clearly as she walked on the small paths towards the stable. Behind her, she could hear light tapping sounds and she didn't even need to look back to know that the fellow, Black Whirlwind, was following her. Whenever Xiaocao was around, that little fellow liked to stick around her. Even when it was resting, it would choose a place that was closest

to Xiaocao— which was right outside her personal room. Thus, as soon as Xiaocao left her room, this little fellow quickly sensed it and trailed behind her.

Eh? Its master was heading towards the building where it lived. Did the master know that it was getting close to when it usually ate its midnight snack and wanted to add some more food? Black Whirlwind blinked its large, gentle eyes as joy surged in its heart. The food that the master made, as well as the tasty blocks of sugar, were all more delicious than the food the grooms sent over. Yay! It was going to have a good snack! Black Whirlwind became immensely excited and even its steps were much lighter compared to before.

Wait! Why was there the smell of a strange horse in the air? Its stall was its own and it already knew the other horses that were stabled nearby. This strange horse had a strong aura about it; just where did it come from?

Black Whirlwind raised its head and looked curiously over in the direction of the stables. It discovered that there was a snow white, large horse that was currently inserting its head into its own stall and stealing food from its feed trough!

The little horse immediately became furious. It had wondered why it hadn't been able to eat any midnight snacks recently. Originally, it thought that the humans in the farm had carelessly forgotten to add its snack to its stall. It had never suspected that its food was being ruthlessly stolen by another horse!! Black Whirlwind felt its mind go blank and it charged forward as it wanted to warn the other horse and teach it a lesson.

However, when it reached the strange thief, it discovered that its 'tiny build' was like a tiny ant in front of the other horse. Wah wah wah...when could it grow up and beat this evil thief underneath its hooves?

The white horse heard Black Whirlwind charging over and turned its head to glance at the little colt. An angry little foal? It barely reached the height of its legs but it was quite brave. The young horse stood in front of it angrily as if it wished it could go up and bite. This little fellow quite had guts. Once it reached adulthood, it might be able to put up a fight with it. As for now...a tiny body and spindly legs, it had better obediently stand aside!

The white stallion had no intention of harming the little fellow. It gently used its head to nudge the foal away and continued to eat the delicious feed that was in the stall. It had been a long time since it last encountered that human little girl. However, it had not been able to forget the special sugar cubes that had the ability to change its constitution that the little girl had fed it. After resisting for a long time, it

brought its herd to slowly get closer to the stud farm to investigate just what the humans there were up to.

When it found out that neither the patrolling guards nor the staff of the farm tried to capture or shoo them away, the head stallion brought its herd closer and closer to the farm. It hoped to encounter that little girl again. However, it was destined to be disappointed as Xiaocao had already left the farm to go into the mountains to search for rare medicinal herbs.

However, it wasn't entirely without benefit. The humans at the farm seemed to know that they were there and stocked a bunch of feed near them. Within the feed provided was some food that had the same tantalizing smell as the special candy the girl gave it. The food was slightly inferior in taste to what the girl had, but it was still better than nothing.

The white stallion still longed for the taste of that rock sugar candy that emitted a faint spiritual energy. It dawdled around the vicinity of the farm for a few days and discovered that on a particular young foal in the farm, there was the faint smell of the sugar candy. Later, on a particular night where the wind was blowing hard, it followed the smell to the horse stables and discovered that the feed inside was the food that it couldn't seem to forget. It couldn't resist the urge to eat everything in there.

Following that, it came over every day to visit as if it was entranced and became a frequent visitor at the stud farm. Today was no exception. However, it didn't think it would be discovered by the owner of this stall—a black colored little colt had appeared. However, what did that matter? The white stallion continued to eat the food inside with large bites and glanced at the little colt with a look of disdain in its eyes.

Black Whirlwind let out a furious whinny at the sight of this. Although it was still very young, it had a quite imposing manner. That damned little thief was stealing food right in front of it without a hint of shame. The other horse was truly looking down on it. Black Whirlwind opened its mouth and rushed towards the white stallion that was more than twice as tall as it. It bit down hard on the strong and sturdy stallion's leg and ground its teeth. It needed to bite this damned thief to death!

The white horse, who was currently happily eating the food, only felt a light tickle on its leg followed by a bit of pain. It couldn't help but kick out that leg. Little Black Whirlwind ended up tumbling to the ground by the other horse's light kick. Although it wasn't injured at all, it was covered completely in dirt and had a huge blow to its ego.

Black Whirlwind pitifully ran towards its master as it whined and cried in a spoiled manner. Xiaocao stifled her desire to laugh and stuffed a rock candy into the little fellow's mouth to sooth its bruised little ego.

The head stallion sensitively could tell that there was spiritual energy that was coming off of the sugar lump. It hurriedly raised its head and followed the smell over. Under the light of the moon, a familiar figure was dressed entirely in white and her body seemed to emit a white glow like an immortal. The white stallion wasn't able to appreciate the looks of a small human girl as its entire attention was taken up by the rock candy that the little black colt was currently chewing on in pleasure.

The head stallion gracefully headed over in the direction of Xiaocao. Little Black Whirlwind could sense the wildness on the other horse and thought that it was going to try to harm its master, so it advanced a couple steps forward. It used its small and weak body to block Xiaocao from the older horse.

It was this fellow again! The white horse lowered its head to glance at the tiny Black Whirlwind and its eyes were full of disdain. If it wanted to harm this human little girl, did the little foal really think it could stop it? It gently used its foreleg to push the little fellow away and stopped in front of Xiaocao. Its large mouth beelined for that familiar embroidered pouch.

At this time, a black colored little figure swiftly rushed over in an attempt to smash into the white stallion's head. The white horse backed up a step and avoided the little exploding bomb's figure.

'Hissssss—You're not allowed to harm my master!!' Although Black Whirlwind had a small figure, the noise it made was both loud and trumpeting, 'Where is everyone? Where are the grooms? Where are the guards? Did everyone die in their sleep? There's a bad horse here bullying my master. People come here and help ah!'

When she saw little Black Whirlwind making a heroic stance, trying to protect her from this intruder, Yu Xiaocao didn't know whether she should laugh or feel touched by the little foal's protectiveness. She stepped forward, bent down, and gently hugged the little fellow's slightly trembling body. She stroked the foal's soft and downy fur to comfort it and smiled, "Don't worry, don't be scared. It won't harm us!"

Although Black Whirlwind was still quite young, its intelligence was already at around a five year old human child's. It was able to understand the vast majority of what its master was saying. 'What the? The master recognizes this scoundrel of a thief that had been stealing my midnight snacks?' Black Whirlwind swiveled its head around to look at Xiaocao doubtfully.

“However, Black Whirlwind is so brave. I'll reward you with a piece of sugar candy!” Yu Xiaocao took out a piece of rock sugar, placed it in her palm and was about to feed it to the little black foal.

Suddenly, a large head butted over and a warm tongue curled around the rock candy, stealing it from her hand. The white stallion closed its eyes in pleasure as it chewed on the sugar. It also silently complained that the amount of spiritual energy within the candy seemed to be less compared to the ones the little girl gave to him before. Not enough to satisfy its craving!

Black Whirlwind was infuriated by this! Not only did this interloper steal its midnight snack but it also blatantly stole its rock candy. This meant war! Black Whirlwind, whose head was filled with rage, seemed to go mad as it rushed towards the white stallion. It began to kick and bite at the other horse and was making quite a ruckus.

However, that white horse seemed to disregard the little fellow, who only reached the height of its knees. It sidled a bit to avoid the foal's attack and then just let the younger horse pummel it. That little bit of strength was only a tickle to it. The most important thing was to swindle a few more pieces of candy over!

“Black Whirlwind, there's still candy here, come back!” Yu Xiaocao was a bit afraid that the little fellow might be stomped upon by the white stallion. She hurriedly called it back and fished out another piece of candy. She avoided the white stallion's open mouth and stuffed the rock candy into the little fellow's mouth.

After chewing a bit on the sweet candy, Black Whirlwind's reason gradually came back and it cooled its temper. It glared angrily at the white stallion and raised its head arrogantly as if it was trying to say, 'See ah?! The master still likes me the most!'

The white horse cast a resentful glance at Xiaocao and stretched out its mouth to snatch at Xiaocao's embroidered pouch. Xiaocao dodged it and tried to entice it, “See ah? The treatment at this farm is quite good. If you decide to stay here, every day you'll get a piece of candy! How's that? Do you want to think it through?”

The white stallion momentarily stopped its attempts to steal food and then pretended to not have heard a single word as it resumed its attacks towards her embroidered pouch. Yu Xiaocao noticed that it was pretending and felt a bit helpless. However, since she had already said she wanted to say, there was no

need to press on. She was sure that, like a frog being gradually boiled in a pot of water, the white stallion and the other wild horses would soon be enticed and captured by the farm's benefits.

She shoved another piece of candy into the white stallion's mouth and patted its neck as she smiled, "Alright, you ate some food and got a few candy pieces too. Quickly go back to where you need to go, ok? Oh right, in the future, if you encounter any storms or nasty weather, remember that there's a new set of buildings over there that can shelter you. We especially prepared that for you and your herd! There won't be any people there to bother you. Trust me, even if you come to live at the farm, you will still have plenty of freedom. However, there is one thing I need to mention. If you want to find some wives here, you need to pick first from the horses here!"

After successfully getting another piece of candy, the white stallion was finally satisfied and stopped its attempts at stealing more. It knew that there was a limit on how much spiritual energy it could eat in one day. If it ate too much, it would end up being harmful instead of beneficial. It reluctantly glanced at the human little girl again before it finally turned away to leave.

Yu Xiaocao quietly watched as that snow white horse, who didn't have a single flaw on its body, gracefully treaded away under the gentle glow of the moon. She felt as if the horse had just come out of a storybook. It was so stunning that a person couldn't bear to take their eyes away.

The cold night breeze blew past and she shivered from the drop in temperature. She shook her shoulders a bit. During the tenth month in the north, many areas already had some snow falling. The stud farm had been built in a sheltered area in the north, so it took longer for winter to arrive there. However, the evening winds were still quite cold.

At this moment, a cloak that held the warmth of another had been gently placed on her shoulders and a familiar aura enveloped her from behind. She let the heat sink in and relax her.

"It has already left, so we should head back!" As soon as Xiaocao left her room, Zhu Junyang sensed it. He knew what the little lass was thinking about. In order not to startle that white stallion, he kept his aura back and followed the little lass from far behind, protecting her silently.

Zhu Junyang had seen the little black colt bravely protecting its master and his impression of Fierce Wind's descendant had gone up a few notches. A young foal who dared to attack a lead stallion meant that it was very courageous and loyal, which spoke volumes about its future. The stud farm desperately needed a horse like it to become its leader. Perhaps this little fellow was destined for that position.

When the grooms heard the ruckus, they once again added more fodder into the colt's stall. Yu Xiaocao also added some special food for Black Whirlwind. The little black colt was so happy that it was temporarily comforted about the previous insult and joyfully ate its midnight snack. Its small tail swished back and forth excitedly, which showed just how happy it was feeling at the moment.

Yu Xiaocao, who had been escorted back to her small courtyard by Zhu Junyang, naturally didn't know that when the white stallion left, it had stopped by the direction she had pointed in to take a look. At the outermost part of the stud farm, it saw the new large and clean stables. Each stall was filled with plenty of feed, just as the little human girl had said. There were no guards or other humans guarding the area and it knew it didn't have to worry about any traps or sinister plots.

It suddenly thought of the coming long and hard winter as well as the weaker and older members in its herd. Every winter, there would always be a few members of its herd that would end up dying from the harshness of the winter climate here. That was survival of the fittest. However, as the head stallion, it also felt grief and sadness at the death of its members. If there was such a shelter like this in the past, perhaps those herd members who had died in the past might be alive today. What was more important between life and freedom? The white horse now felt a bit conflicted...

Four nights after they came back from their autumn hunting, the icy cold northern wind blew around in the area for an entire night. Frosty chilliness enveloped the entire farm. In the beginning, snowflakes as bright as stars floated slowly to the ground and then the chill wind, which felt as sharp as a knife, began to reign, forcing people to cover up their extremities.

Yu Xiaocao curled up on the warm and cozy kang bed. She had nothing to do now and decided to do her best to make an embroidered pouch so that she could exchange the extremely ugly and faded one that still hung on that fellow's, Zhu Junyang's, waist.

Wutong, who was also on the kang bed, was currently dexterously sewing a set of clothing made out of ferret fur pets for her young miss. Winter came early to the north and they didn't prepare enough clothing to handle the cold. Thus, it was necessary for them to quickly craft some suitable clothing to help their mistress stay warm in the rapidly dropping temperatures. Out of all of the maidservants, Wutong wasn't the best at handicrafts but her skills at needlework were among the top. If she hadn't been selected by the young miss to become a personal maidservant, it was likely that she would have been recruited into the General's Residence's embroidery and sewing section.

Yingchun was currently on the kang bed spinning some thread. She asked her mistress out of puzzlement, “Young Miss, why are you telling us to spin such thick threads? What do you need to make with it ah?” If these thick threads were used to weave cloth, then how thick would the fabric end up becoming? Were they going to knit blankets?

Chunhua and Qiushi, who were currently whittling bamboo into needles on the side, glanced at the thick bamboo needles they made. They were also quite curious about their young miss's plans.

“Once it's all ready, you will all find out!” Yu Xiaocao smiled mysteriously and continued to work on her embroidery. She had already finished sewing the pouch. She turned it over a few times, inspecting her work. It looked like the seams in this pouch turned out quite straight, so she was quite pleased. The hardest part, however, was to embroider a design on top.

She had picked out the most simple embroidery pattern out of all of the ones Wutong had prepared for her—a few stalks of bamboo with leaves coming off of them. In actuality, a mischievous idea had popped up into her mind. She kind of wanted to embroider a cute and adorable cartoon figure on top. Would the cold and solemn Royal Prince Yang truly dare to hang such a pouch on his waist then?

At this time, a gust of cold wind preceded the person who had lifted the thick door curtain to come in. A tall and sturdy figure quickly stepped in. He sat next to Xiaocao and looked at the drawing that she was currently sketching out. It was a peculiar little dog that seemed oddly adorable.

Although it was merely a sketch, it was easy to tell what she was drawing. It had a small body, perked up ears, bright eyes, and there was even a scarf around its neck. From the slightly arrogant positioning, he could tell that it was somewhat related to Little White.

“What are you drawing? Looks pretty interesting!” It was the first time that Zhu Junyang had seen something so...abstract and cute. He couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

Yu Xiaocao stifled a giggle, “This is the design I'm preparing to embroider on the pouch. Since you like it, I feel relieved.”

As soon as Zhu Junyang heard this, the expression froze on his face. He glanced at the other patterns on the paper and picked the simplest bamboo sketch and squeezed out a somewhat unnatural smile, “That

design looks too complicated, just how long will you have to sew to finish? This prince doesn't want you to work so hard, how about you choose something simpler instead ah?"

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Yu Xiaocao 'dejectedly' lowered her head and shoulders, and said in a sorrowful voice, "You must have disliked my embroidery and thought that I couldn't embroider more complicated patterns, right?"

"Absolutely not! As long as it's embroidered by you, I will like it!" With that, he untied the purse from his waist and showed it to the lass who was 'depressed' to show that he was serious.

Yu Xiaocao snatched the purse that was worn to the point that its edges were frizzled. She really wanted to destroy it. It must've been difficult for him not to be afraid of being laughed at, carrying this ugly and deformed purse with him for two years.

"Then, if I embroidered Little White's image onto this purse, would you wear it?" As soon as Yu Xiaocao looked up, her eyes, which looked like a clear sky that had been washed by rain, stared at him without blinking.

Zhu Junyang nodded his head without even thinking about it, "As long as it's embroidered by you, I'll always carry it on my person! I'm just afraid your eyes will become tired..." He had carried such an ugly purse for two years. Although the pattern didn't match his temperament, it had to be better than the original one right?

Yu Xiaocao also drew a little cute yellow duck. Holding back a smile, she asked, "What about an embroidered pattern like this? With sky blue brocade as the background and yellow embroidery thread as the outline..."

Zhu Junyang imagined himself dressed in black with such a bright purse hanging at his waist, and he couldn't look directly at that image. However, what already came out his mouth had to be abided by. He nodded his head with great difficulty and said, "As long as you embroider it, I will wear it!"

He was the grand and intimidating chief military instructor of the firearms camp, yet he was going to wear such a foolish and cute looking purse. He didn't know how much the brats would laugh at him behind his back! Going with her idea, it would be better to not change it, at least the people he knew were already used to his ugly purse.

"Pfffttt——" Xiaocao couldn't hold it in any longer. She laughed and fell onto the kang bed as her hands kept pounding the mat. Out of breath, she said, "I was joking with you! These patterns are designed for pillows and satchels. How could I let you carry such a purse that contrasts with your heroic and dashing image so much?"

"Naughty girl!" Zhu Junyang was completely relieved when he heard her words and let out a sigh of relief. His slender hands rubbed her black hair. He remembered what he had come for and said, "The fodder in the new stables was eaten up a lot. The guards patrolling nearby saw a white horse, in the distance, bringing some wild horses to eat. They only left early this morning."

Yu Xiaocao wasn't surprised at all. She nodded and said, "It's possible that Snow Scar predicted the changes in the weather and brought the weaker horses to the horse farm to eat, hoping to enhance their resistance to the cold." Snow Scar was the name for that leader white horse that she had come up with. Compared to Little White, Little Black, and Little Glutinous Dumpling, she had made great progress.

"If it is as you've said, then the horses will come again. After all, the winter in the north is very long. Low temperatures and snowstorms will bring a fatal blow to the old, weak, sick, and pregnant horses in the herd." Zhu Junyang was curious about this horse's high IQ. However, once he thought of his lass's abilities and those evil pets at home, he felt that this matter should have something to do with her.

Zhu Junyang's prediction was soon confirmed. When Xiaocao was almost finished embroidering the green bamboo patterned pouch, the horse farm ushered in the biggest snowstorm of the winter. Snowflakes the size of a baby's fist were falling from the yellow sky. The visibility outside was only a few meters.

All the horses in the horse farm stayed in their stables. Even Black Whirlwind, who liked to wander and roam, returned to its warm single room. In every corner of the horse farm, fire pans were burning to keep warm. Every other day, Doctor Wang would take the veterinarian team at the horse farm and check the horses one by one to ensure that every horse could safely survive the long and cold winter season.

Head Steward Yan braved the wind and snow to come to report new discoveries to the master. In the master's room, he found that it was empty. He turned and went to Miss Yu's courtyard. Sure enough, he found his master there.

"Rest a bit. I'm not in a hurry to wear it, don't strain your eyes!" Zhu Junyang enchanting phoenix eyes were looking at the knitting needle in the lass's hands. The expression on his face was so soft that water

could've dripped out. Unexpectedly, the lass had this ability. Her fingers flew as they plucked the knitting needle up and down. The thing that was said to be a sweater was slowly gaining length under her skillful knitting.

The lass said that she wanted to knit him a close-fitting sweater, which was warm and light. In his heart, he was looking forward to it and was afraid that the lass would be tired, so he couldn't help but remind her to take more rest.

"It's ok. I'm free anyway! When I finish knitting it for you, I will also knit one for Sir Su. This place gets cold too early. It looks like Sir Su didn't bring any clothes for the cold weather!" Yu Xiaocao's speed in knitting the sweater didn't slow down as she talked.

In her past life, to save money, her brother's and sister's sweaters and woolen pants were all knitted by her. Although she hadn't knitted for a long time and was a bit rusty, she soon got back to the old days with a bit of practice. At her speed, it wouldn't take longer than a week to knit a sweater. Looking at the blue-dyed wool under her hands, she imagined the appearance of the handsome Zhu Junyang wearing it. He would definitely look very warm and handsome!

"What? You're gonna knit for that guy?" Zhu Junyang's happiness in his heart was suddenly mixed with a sour feeling. "You can teach Wutong and Yingchun. With the two of them knitting together, Steward Su can also wear it sooner."

He had to admit that he didn't want the lass to knit clothes for others. When he thought of other people wearing the stuff she made, he wanted to take it off them. He rather destroy it than give other men any hope!

"You're just a big jar of vinegar! So jealous!" Yu Xiaocao glanced over sideways at him and chuckled. How could she not understand the thoughts going through this guy's head?

"I'm just worried about tiring you!" Zhu Junyang stubbornly insisted.

"I just regard Sir Su as an older brother, so why are you getting jealous over nothing?" Yu Xiaocao put down her knitting needle and brought over a pillow Wutong had sewn. She put it behind her as a cushion so she could be more comfortable.

"Tired? Take a break and have some pine nuts and hazelnuts!" Zhu Junyang put the pine nuts and hazelnuts he had peeled into the lass's hands. He took the half foot long sweater she had knitted from her hands and carefully put it to the side.

When Yu Xiaocao received the bounty from his hands, she ate the nuts in small bites. Outside, someone reported that Steward Yan was requesting an audience. What important matter would let Steward Yan brave the snow and wind on this snowy evening to run back and forth to report on the affairs of the horse farm?

"Come in!" Zhu Junyang gently pinched open a hickory nut, carefully took out the kernel and put it on another plate that was on the kang bed table.

After Head Steward Yan came in and gave his greeting, he stood at the side, watching his master concentrate on peeling nuts. He was stunned for a moment and in his heart, he thought, 'Could he be peeling it for Miss Yu?'

As soon as this idea arose in his head, he saw his master take the empty plate from Miss Yu's hands and put the peeled hickory nuts into her hands. Head Steward Yan thought to himself, 'I didn't expect my master, who had the titles of a cold-faced calamitous star, would be just like his father, the imperial prince, someone who dotes on their wife to no end.'

"Is there a matter?" Zhu Junyang saw that the lass preferred to eat the pine nuts and patiently peeled them out one by one. His movement was extremely leisurely and elegant as if he wasn't peeling pine nuts but using his fingertips to dance instead. It was very pleasing to the eye.

Head Steward Yan hastily took back his gaze and with a smile reported, "As Your Highness has expected, the herd led by the white horse has moved into the new stables outside today. When the man in charge of the stable over there went to add the feed, the wild horses, although agitated, didn't attack the horse breeder nor did they seem to intend to escape."

"Lass, you guessed right. The white horse has come to the horse farm to seek shelter for his species!" The matter was expected by both of them. However, it was going to be a process to gain the trust of the lead white horse.

Yu Xiaocao smiled and said to Head Steward Yan, "Keep the people of the horse farm as far away from the new stables as possible. Besides sending water and feed, the horse breeders shouldn't go over there."

"Yes! I will tell the others now..." Head Steward Yan knew very well that Miss Yu's orders were the master's orders; thus, he very respectfully agreed.

"Wait!" Yu Xiaocao suddenly thought of something and called back Head Steward Yan, who had turned around to go out. "When the grooms add feed to the stables, let them take notice of whether there are any sick horses or horses about to give birth in the herd."

"Yes!" Miss Yu was very considerate but would the wild horses allow the veterinarians access to them even if they were sick? Head Steward Yan took a look in the direction of his master and left with doubts in his heart.

When Zhu Junyang's sweater only had the two sleeves left to sew, Head Steward Yan presented the statistics. The condition of the wild horse herd wasn't optimistic. There were seventy-five wild horses of all sizes, with more than a dozen sick or weak. There weren't many horses pregnant, only around two or three.

In the horse farm, the sick horses were quarantined to prevent other horses from getting infected. Fortunately, the wild horses had a warm shelter. Every day, they could eat grass laced with spiritual energy and drink from well water, so their resistance was greatly enhanced. Some of the less ill horses had begun to improve.

"It seems that the wind and snow outside is lighter. Ruizhi, I want to go to the stables and have a look. Will you accompany me over?" Yu Xiaocao saw that there were several seriously ill and mares about to give birth according to the statistics. She was a bit worried and used a coquettish tone to act cute with Zhu Junyang.

She knew that with Zhu Junyang, she might be allowed to go for a walk. If she was on her own, that overbearing wife maniac would absolutely not agree! Aiya! Having a man who cared too much about her was also a kind of sweet burden!

"Okay! I'll go with you—However, you have to put on the duck down cotton-padded trousers, as well as the sheepskin vest and wear the ferret fur lined coat on the outside..." Every time Zhu Junyang saw the lass's thin arms and legs, he always worried about her health.