

Fields of Gold Chapter 6

"Why did she faint? What did the doctor say?" Old Yu had seen his second daughter-in-law taking care of his younger granddaughter without rest.

"Grandmother didn't let us call for a doctor. She said my mother will be fine after sleeping!" Yu Xiaocao found the perfect opportunity to tattle.

"Nonsense! When we finish eating, go ask Doctor You to come and check on Second Daughter-in-law. Don't let a minor illness turn into a major illness." Old Yu frowned as he forced himself to finish the bean paste soup and wiped his mouth.

Madam Zhang reluctantly muttered, "We'll have to spend money if we seek a doctor! Our third son needs to participate in the district examination soon. He'll need to travel to the prefectural city for the examination! If we waste all our money on Yu Hai's family and can't gather enough money for travel expenses, then he would definitely be resentful towards you..."

Old Yu frowned, slammed his chopsticks on the table, and said, "Our family isn't as poor as you're making us out to be! Every year, Yu Hai earns more than a dozen taels [1] from just hunting, let alone his earnings from fishing daily! Our third son has been studying for so many years, but he hasn't even passed the county-level examination. I reckon he should stop studying. He should just save some money to buy a few acres of land to farm on."

With the Yu Family's circumstances, if they weren't funding for their third son's studies for more than a decade, they could live more comfortably. Even if they freely ate white rice and wheat flour on a daily basis, they would still have more than enough to eat. However,

the payments for a private tutor and the cost of living in town were enough to wear down a middle-class farming family.

"What? Old Man! The fortune teller had said that someone in our family is fated to become a government official! I'm still counting on our third son to earn me a title of 'noble madam'! Even if I must give up everything, I'll still fund his studies!" Although Madam Zhang was slightly afraid of her husband, she decided to fight to the end for her son's future and her own glory.

Old Yu glared at his wife, but didn't continue on the topic. He threw the bowl in his hand and spoke in a muffled voice, "I'll go tidy our three acres of farmland! By the way, Xiaolian, go cook a bowl of noodles for your mother and add two fried eggs in it. She must have been exhausted from these past few days!"

"Alright! Thank you, Grandfather!" Yu Xiaocao rushed to answer in a loud voice and had a bright smile on her face.

"Xiaolian! Xiaolian, you wretch! Why are you still dawdling in the room? Can't you see that it's about to rain? Hurry up and go retrieve the clothes that are being dried!" Every day, Yu Xiaocao was woken up by her grandmother's shrill scolding.

Madam Liu, who was used to being oppressed by her mother-in-law, wanted to get up out of habit. However, Yu Hai stopped her, "You should rest some more! I'll go take a look!"

It was unsuitable to sail out to the sea because it was too windy today. Thus, Yu Hai was able to idle at home on this rare occasion.

After changing his clothes, he came in again and spoke to his sons, "Today is the second day of June and the tide is receding right now. I

just went out to check. It's cloudy and the wind is blowing in the southwest direction. More marine goods could be found when the tide recedes quickly. Thus, it's the best weather to go gather food by the sea! Let's go! Father will take you guys to search for some oysters, crabs, fish, and shrimp. If we're lucky, we might even find abalone!"

"Collecting seafood by the sea? Father, I've never gathered food at the sea before! I want to go too. Bring me along!"

In her previous life, Lin Xiaowan's hometown was located in the inner regions. She had only seen the ocean once in the twenty-nine years that she had been alive. It was all thanks to that one time she had visited her younger sister, who was studying in a university beside the sea.

She had transmigrated to this fishing village for about five or six days. However, Madam Liu had kept her at home in order to recover from her injury. She never went out of the house, let alone go to the sea. When Yu Xiaocao heard that there was a chance to go gather food at the sea, she decided that she'll follow along even if she had to throw a fit. Well, wasn't she a child now? Thus, she had the right to be willful and mischievous.

Madam Liu had been frightened and quickly coaxed her daughter, "It's windy today and your injury hasn't completely healed yet. Wait a few more days and I'll let you go anywhere you want. I won't stop you."

Xiaocao refused to comply. She was about to become moldy from staying at home. Moreover, today was a rare opportunity for her. Her father, an excellent fisherman, was going to accompany them, so they would definitely catch a lot of seafood. How can she miss this perfect opportunity?

"Mother! Grandpa You had already said that my injury is fine and I'm also much healthier now. My health is really good now and I also have a great appetite! Grandpa You said that moving around more is good for my health. Please let me go with them!" As she spoke, Yu Xiaocao looked at her father, who was known for pampering his children endlessly, with a pleading gaze.

Yu Hai had never been able to refuse his youngest daughter, so he immediately surrendered, "Muyun, I'll look after Xiaocao, so don't worry! Rest at home with ease and wait for us to come back. We'll catch some abalones and make congee for you, to nourish your body!

As he spoke, he signaled his younger daughter with his eyes, telling her to quickly leave the room. Thus, Yu Xiaocao happily pushed the door open and left.

In the courtyard, Yu Hang had already prepared all the equipment needed for collecting seafood by the sea. With a bucket and shovel in their hands, Xiaolian and Shitou happily waited for their father to come out. In the children's hearts, there's nothing that their father wasn't capable of. They were already anticipating fruitful results before they had even left.

In June, the cloudy Dongshan Village was hot and humid. Xiaocao, who was only wearing a single thin garment, held a small bamboo basket as she tried to keep up with her father's footsteps.

Yu Hai, who was tall and burly, seemed to be over 1.8 meters tall [2] . The eight year old Yu Xiaocao was chronically ill for a long period of time, so she about half a head shorter than Yu Xiaolian, who was just fifteen minutes older than her. She was already doing her best to move forward with her short legs, but she was still falling behind them.

Yu Hai was constantly paying attention to his children and noticed his younger daughter's situation. He chuckled, lifted her up with one arm, and carried her on his shoulder.

Yu Xiaocao was initially somewhat nervous and embarrassed. Mentally, she was almost the same as Yu Hai, but she was still being treated like a child. Even Shitou, who was five years old, didn't receive this kind of treatment. Thus, Xiaocao couldn't help blushing.

As the eldest brother, Yu Hang was also quietly observing his frail youngest sister. When he noticed that her face was flushed, he handed her a straw hat woven with bamboo strips. He spoke with concern, "Youngest Sister, although it's cloudy today, but you're rarely exposed to the sun. Thus, it's very easy for you to get sunburned. See, your face is already red."

During ancient times, time was calculated based on the lunar calendar and June was considered to be midsummer. Even though it was cloudy by the seashore, the intensity of the UV rays wasn't low. However, the redness on Yu Xiaocao's face wasn't due to the sun.

The lowest tide phase was a rare opportunity for the villagers of Dongshan Village to increase their incomes. Experienced old fishermen were already familiar with the time for the ebb tide. Today, the lowest tide period was around noon. The mudflat was already full of men and women of all ages who came to gather seafood.

Yu Hai's family had arrived late, so all the good spots were already taken. Shitou was slightly disappointed and muttered, "If it hadn't taken Eldest Aunt so long to prepare a meal, we could had gotten a good spot."

Yu Hai caressed his little head and said with a smile, "Don't be discouraged! Father knows a good spot. I can guarantee that no one else will be there."

The good spot that Yu Hai mentioned was a region of reefs beside a cliff. The location of these reefs was rather dangerous. It was usually covered by the sea and hit by high waves during high tide. The only time it emerged completely was when the tide completely recedes. Moreover, this place was far from the village and most people wouldn't think of coming this way.

The sea reefs in this area seemed dangerous, but it was actually just difficult to reach. It was hard to pass the cliff on the way to the reefs. However, this was a simple matter for Yu Hai. He helped the children pass the difficult paths one by one and bypass a cliff. Their eyes lit up when they finally reached their destination.

[1] Tael (两) - a form of currency used in ancient China (1 tael = ~1000 copper coins), also used as a unit of measurement

[2] 1.8 m = ~ 5'10