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In fact, whether it was the generals of the Xishan Barracks or the Firearms Barracks, all of them were people of some clout in the capital. Thus, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that they were all proud and arrogant. Naturally, not just anyone could command these generals without an issue. At that time, when Zhu Junyang was still Royal Prince Yang, he relied on his hard fists and inconceivable strength to subdue these generals. Even when he wasn't physically present, the two barracks went through their training exercises without an issue. At this time, only their leader could make them back down, so if they switched leaders, what would happen?

In actuality, the emperor had been bothered by the officials so much that he had no choice. Thus, he sent people over to transmit his oral order to have Zhu Junyang come back. However, the first time he sent people, they came back with the news that the great imperial envoy was currently researching something called 'hybridized rice paddies'. Because there was the attack on their ships along the way there to Jinling, as the bodyguard in charge of the envoy's safety, he needed to stay there and ensure her safety.

The second time he sent people over, they didn't even get to see heads or tails of the married couple. This was because Imperial Prince Xu had accompanied his wife to travel around the scenic areas. Since they didn't know where they went, how could they possibly find them?

The third time he sent people over, they had finally seen the two in question. However, at that time, Yu Xiaocao had just been rescued. Thus, they could only bring back the report that Imperial Prince Xu had written. The report stated that the evil remnants of the previous dynasty had wanted to destroy the experimental fields at Jinling in order to ruin the lives of the people. Furthermore, they had also captured the great imperial envoy to steal the method away from her. Although she had been rescued, she was gravely hurt.

Zhu Junyang had written his wife as someone who was faithful and unchanging. In order to save the 'hybridized rice paddies' methods from being stolen, she had withstood the enemy's torture, threats, and promises, and truly became an incorruptible official who wasn't swayed by any means. By the time she was rescued, she had almost lost her life. Not only was she seriously injured, with fractures all over her body, but the most grave injury was that she had also almost lost the unborn child in her belly.

When the emperor read this report during court, all of the officials trying to cause trouble immediately shut up. Although this married couple had been gone from court for more than half a year, one of them had begun research on 'hybridized rice paddies' that could produce a thousand catties per mu, while the other one had rooted out a malignant tumor from the previous dynasty and captured one of the of the

direct descendants of the old dynasty's imperial family. In addition, he had eradicated a hidden traitor from the previous dynasty. Although neither of them were at court, who could compete with their accomplishments?

The great imperial envoy had become severely injured and almost lost her unborn child for the sake of the empire. It wasn't that the other party didn't want to come back. In fact, it was because she was trying to preserve her pregnancy and couldn't come back! Who else dared to say another word now?

“Your Imperial Majesty, this official requests that we use the navy to welcome them back to the capital!” When he returned to the capital, Zhao Han had been promoted to a third-ranked commander in the Jinwei Navy. Currently, he was asking the emperor for permission to escort Imperial Prince Xu and his wife back home.

Ever since Xiaocao got married, Zhao Han had been telling himself to let her go. In the past few years, he had spent all of his time in the navy patrolling the waters. He completed his missions successfully and had been steadily promoted over time. He had originally believed that news about her no longer had any hold over him.

However, when he heard the emperor state that the weak and delicate girl, in order to keep the empire's secret on high-yielding rice, had been imprisoned, tortured and almost lost her life, he felt as if his heart was being squeezed by a vice. Xiaocao had always been so delicate, even when she was young. In childhood, she would even run to Uncle Yu in a spoiled manner when she only had a minor cut on her finger.

Severe internal injuries, multiple fractures, almost had a miscarriage...he really couldn't believe that such a weak and delicate girl could manage to withstand the horrible tortures from the remnants of the previous dynasty. If it weren't for the fact that there was a vast difference in their statuses, Zhao Han really would have liked to run over to Jinling and to lift Imperial Prince Xu by his collar, asking him just how was he, the bodyguard, protecting Xiaocao.

He inhaled deeply and tried to calm the waves within his heart. Zhao Han wasn't so naive to believe that by eradicating a nest of old traitors in Jinling meant that all of the remnants of the previous dynasty were gone. A cornered dog was a dangerous one. It was very possible that other traitors would try to do something now! Furthermore, they had captured one of the descendants of the previous dynasty's imperial family. Thus, it was obvious that their journey home would be fraught with danger.

After thinking all of this through, Zhao Han asked for this appointment at court. It would be much safer for them to travel in the open seas, with the navy escorting them, compared to traveling by river or on land roads.

Zhu Junfan also wanted to make sure these two officials were safe and was currently wondering what would be the best course of action to bring them back from Jinling. When Zhao Han proposed his idea, it was as if the youth was offering up a soft pillow to a sleepy individual. How could the emperor not agree to his request? He immediately set that task upon Zhao Han and ordered to take the most elite soldiers from the navy as well as the most modern ships to pick the great imperial envoy and Imperial Prince Xu and bring them back home safely.

“Older Brother Han?” Yu Xiaocao exclaimed in happy surprise when she saw Zhao Han arrive in the outer courtyard of the guest residence. He was dressed in military attire and seemed very energetic.

Zhu Junyang had always disliked his wife's 'childhood friend' and naturally didn't have a pleased expression on his face, “Why are you here?!”

“The emperor had gotten the news that the great imperial envoy had gotten injured and was worried that having only two bodyguards was insufficient for her safety. Thus, he sent this official over to bring the navy to escort the great imperial envoy back to the capital.” Zhao Han was very displeased with Imperial Prince Xu as Xiaocao had gotten injured. The prince couldn't even guarantee his wife's own safety, so how could he possibly give her happiness?

Su Ran had been drinking tea under the tree. After being inadvertently insulted, he rubbed his nose and decided to leave as he didn't want to be in the crossfire between these two jealous men.

Zhu Junyang could hear the unspoken words within Zhao Han's words and his gaze sharpened, 'If this prince isn't able to make my princess consort happy, who could? You, ah? You're a coward who doesn't even have the guts to confess your feelings. You deserve being left behind by the object of your affections!'

Zhao Han didn't back off after receiving Imperial Prince Xu's sharp look. He stared back and sparks flew between them. The tension was palpable.

“Oh wow! We can travel on seafaring ships back ah! Doesn't that mean we'll pass by the harbor at Tanggu? I might even have some time to visit my family for a couple of days!” Yu Xiaocao inserted herself between the two men with the help of Wutong. She cradled her belly that was already a bit prominent and immediately dissolved the awkward atmosphere between the two.

Zhao Han carefully looked at Xiaocao from head to toe. When he saw that her face was rosy and bright, he knew that she had been nursed well recently. He glanced briefly at the slight swell of her belly and then pretended that he hadn't seen anything. He smiled, “Get everything ready. We will do our best to get to the harbor at Tanggu before the ice starts to spread. When I left, I had someone send a letter over to Uncle Yu. He said that he will personally receive you at the harbor.”

“There's not much that needs to be packed. All of the gifts and presents I bought in Jiangnan have long been sent away. As for my personal belongings, we're pretty much done organizing them in the past few days. If all goes well, we can head out tomorrow.” If it weren't for the fact that her husband had insisted on having her stay in Jinling longer to recuperate her body, they would have headed back half a month ago to the capital. Even if the emperor didn't send anyone over to take them back, they would have begun traveling within the next few days.

Although Zhu Junyang wasn't pleased by the fact that Zhao Han was here, for the sake of his wife's safety, he was willing to pinch his nose and deal with it. With his wife's current condition, he didn't want to take any unnecessary risks.

They took a ferry from Jinling before they reached the open waters and boarded the seafaring ships. Their journey back was not completely smooth. Fortunately, Zhao Han was very experienced in battles on the water and he easily defeated the attacks sent over by the traitors. The enemy wasn't even able to get close to the official ships before they were eliminated by the navy.

The well equipped warships leisurely embarked away from the docks. Xiaocao stood on the deck and breathed in the familiar fishy smell of sea air. She opened her arms out wide, looking as if she was trying to hug the entire ocean as she yelled, “Great ocean, I, Hu Hansan, have come back again ah!”

“Who is Hu Hansan?” Zhu Junyang appeared behind her and helped her put on a silver fox cape. It was now the eleventh month of the year and Jiangnan was also more chilly. With the billowing ocean winds, he was afraid that the lass would catch a cold from getting chilled.

“'Hu Hansan' is me, and I am 'Hu Hansan'!” Yu Xiaocao didn't want to tell him that this name had come from an old film she had watched in her previous life. It was the name of a stereotypical villain and it was a well known catchphrase of this character.

Zhu Junyang was quite curious by this obviously male name. He really didn't understand why his wife would come up with such a common and crude name for herself. However, as long as his wife wanted it, even if she wanted to call herself 'Ergouzi', he would pinch his nose and endure it.

“You like the ocean this much?” He helped his wife fasten the hood on her cloak and then bent over to tie the waist tie for her. Then he glanced briefly at a certain area of the warship—“'Hmph! Are you trying to sneak a peek at my wife? Let me infuriate you!’ He leaned over and planted a kiss on his wife's forehead, 'I'm doing this on purpose, but what can you do?’

As a third-ranked military official, Zhao Han saw the scene in front of him and his eyes dimmed. Su Ran, who was holding a bamboo fishing pole, appeared behind him. The older man looked in the direction he was looking and also saw the 'eye-blinding' scene as well. A wicked smile curved up on Su Ran's lips as he said, “Let's go and do some deep ocean fishing. I'm sure that lass Xiaocao will be very interested.”

Zhao Han naturally saw the evil smile on the other man's face. He paused for a second before he immediately reacted. He nodded, “Good idea. Younger Sister Xiaocao is very talented at cooking seafood. I don't know if she had taught any of her maidservants her skills.” Younger Sister Xiaocao was pregnant and naturally wouldn't be suitable to spend a long time in the kitchen. This was mostly an excuse. After all, he just needed to find something plausible to interrupt the sickly sweet alone time between Imperial Prince Xu and his wife!

When the two of them arrived by the couple, Xiaocao was currently jabbering away, telling the prince that she had come up with a bunch of expensive ingredients on the first time she went gathering seafood with her father. During the hardest time of her family, they had relied on selling pig's head meat and pig intestines to make a living. They had also relied on the sea then because their customer base were the dockworkers working at the docks. Only then were they able to change their family's living conditions step by step.

In her previous life, Xiaocao didn't have much opportunity to see the ocean. However, after transmigrating over into a fisherman's family, she had been intimately connected with the ocean. With the help of the little divine stone, she had gathered abalone and sea cucumber from the deep waters, helped her father hunt sharks, participated in the pearl hunting contest, and became acquainted with the adorable dolphin named Xiaobu...being able to be so close to the sea again made her happy.

Zhao Han and Su Ran came over with fishing poles in their hands, “Younger Sister Xiaocao, do you like to eat lobster ah? Watch Older Brother Han today. I'll make sure to fish up a lobster as large as a serving plate for your lunch today.”

“Be careful that you're not promising too much. Do you really think that you'd be able to catch a lobster as large as a serving plate?” Zhu Junyang had an unpleasant expression on his face after his sweet time with his wife was interrupted by the two men. If the look in his eyes could kill, then Su Ran and Zhao Han would be dead many times over.

“Okay ah, okay ah!” Unfortunately, his wife didn't sympathize with his plight and, instead, excitedly took a fishing pole and enthusiastically added herself to the competition.

Hu Hansan - a despicable landlord from the film 'Flickering Red Stars'. He had gotten overthrown by the peasant farmers but then came back while screaming 'I, Hu Hansan, have come back again ah!'

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“Let's have a lobster fishing competition then! I'll use the lobsters we catch to make lobster broiled with minced garlic. There's a lot of seafood that I like to eat and my favorite is crabs. At this time of year, the crabs are fat and full of flavor. It's a pity I have a little one inside me, so I can't eat too many.”

Yu Xiaocao rubbed at her small belly and silently spoke to her unborn child, 'Sweetie, for your sake, your mother has made many sacrifices. In the future, you must be a filial child to me ah!'

Ever since she found out she was pregnant, her husband had abruptly transformed into an old nagging nanny. She wasn't allowed to eat many things or do many things. He was very strict with her. Crabs were a cold-natured food, so Xiaocao, who was pregnant, wasn't allowed to eat much and could only pathetically watch as other people ate the in-season delectable and fat crabs. She wasn't even allowed to eat her favorite crab roe soup dumplings, so she thought that she lived quite a pitiful life now.

Although they were said to be deep sea fishing, it was mostly an excuse to pass the time. Since they were on a fast moving ship, how stupid would the fish and other sea creatures have to be to get caught ah? Consequently, by the time it was lunch, the group of them had nothing to show for their efforts. Although Xiaocao was quite hungry, she had no appetite as she saw that they had caught no seafood to add to her table. The little divine stone sighed and then changed into a swimsuit. Despite the fact that other people tried to stop it, it jumped off the ship and into the water.

“Uh...Younger Sister Xiaocao, does this younger adopted brother of yours have good swimming skills? Will he be alright ah? Should we have the ship stop for a bit and wait for him?” Zhao Han asked with a bit of worry.

Ever since the little divine stone decided to stay in its human youth form, Xiaocao proclaimed to everyone else that it was her adopted younger brother. She also said that 'he' was her savior. If it weren't for the fact that he had appeared in the nick of time and prevented the traitor from the previous dynasty from killing her, she might not have lasted long enough for Imperial Prince Xu to save her. Thus, everyone around her treated this youth named 'Yuan Zi' with great respect and gratitude. Wutong was especially deferential to this youth and almost was at the point where she was burning incense to him every day.

As someone who loved the crow because he loved the house, Zhao Han was worried about the little divine stone because it was the savior of Xiaocao.

Yu Xiaocao held onto the deck rails and stared out into the sea. Her expression, however, belied that she wasn't the least bit worried. In fact, she had a somewhat excited look instead. Oh ho, when the little divine stone decided to go out, he absolutely wouldn't come back empty-handed. Her mouth was in luck today. Giant lobster, crab, sea fish...once they were cleaned, they were just waiting to be sent to her table!

Ever since she discovered she was pregnant with her baby, Yu Xiaocao felt like she had become incredibly picky. In the past, even if she encountered a dish she wasn't fond of, she was able to stomach a few bites. Now, she didn't even want a whiff of the not favored dish. If someone tried to use the excuse that it would be good for her body and unborn child to eat the food, she would even throw a temper tantrum. At the same time, if she craved something and wasn't able to eat it, she immediately lost her appetite. Even if her stomach flipped and she was weak from hunger, she wouldn't even move her chopsticks one iota.

She also refused to admit that she was the one being picky and difficult. In fact, she complained to her husband and claimed that the reason why she was so picky now was all related to the baby inside her tummy and that it was the baby's fault. The poor little fellow had already been used as a scapegoat for his mother before he (she) was even born.

And just who was the little divine stone? He didn't have her wait for long before he came back with a basket full of top-notch seafood. Other than a giant lobster that was more than a foot long, he also

brought back the best quality sea cucumber, abalone, and other types of tasty seafood that were appropriate for pregnant women to eat.

Both Zhao Han and Su Ran were stupefied by the incredibly varied haul the youth came back with in so little time. However, they only thought that he had good swimming skills and had taken advantage of the good conditions in the sea. Even if someone else had other doubts, they wouldn't investigate much given that this youth had the identity of the younger adopted brother of the princess consort.

Although they had missed lunchtime, Yu Xiaocao was very pleased with this table full of seafood. She ate with great relish. There was lobster broiled with minced garlic, steamed turbot in a light broth, sea cucumber bone soup, abalone cooked in oyster broth, salted egg and crab meat rice, broiled cod steaks...

After inquiring a bit, Zhu Junyang found out that, other than the crab meat, the rest of the seafood was safe for pregnant women to eat without limits. Thus, he allowed her to eat until her belly turned round.

However, Yu Xiaocao's tastes changed constantly. After eating seafood for a few days in a row, she suddenly wanted to eat fresh vegetables. It was already the winter season, and the ships were traveling from south to the north. Not all of the prefectures along the way had shops that were supplied with greenhouse grown vegetables. Consequently, the fact that Xiaocao was keen on eating vegetables became a big headache for everyone else on the ship. It was harder to find fresh vegetables in winter than seafood, alright?

Fortunately, the child within Xiaocao's womb wasn't picky about what type of vegetable she ate (she insisted that it was the baby that was picky, so everyone could only hold their noses and assent). The relatively in-season spinach, Chinese chives, daikon, cabbage, and potatoes were all eaten by her with relish as long as they were cooked properly.

With the Jinwei Navy's ships, which had the best ships in the Great Ming Dynasty, it ordinarily should have only taken them seven to eight days to arrive at Tanggu Harbor. However, it took them half a month for them to complete the journey despite the speed of the ships. There was nothing they could do. After all, in order to satisfy Yu Xiaocao's incredibly hard to please palate, they needed to supply the ships with a vast variety of foodstuffs every time they went to shore. This was to avoid being out at sea and having nothing to satisfy the little ancestor that was Yu Xiaocao.

Just as the men were about to become exhausted from figuring out the food situation, the Tanggu Harbor could be seen in the distance. Zhu Junyang, Su Ran, and Zhao Han all let out a sigh of relief in their hearts.

Perhaps it was because the Jinwei Navy was known to be tough fighters with excellent warships on their side, their journey to the north had been very smooth other than the fact that they had to deal with a certain person's changing appetites. When the warships reached shore, Liuzi got the news immediately and brought a few of his capable subordinates along to welcome them. He personally helped Xiaobao and the others to transport their luggage to land.

Among the people there was Yu Heizi, who could be technically considered to be Xiaobao's older paternal cousin. Ever since Madam Zhang had left to go to the prefectural city with her youngest son, her eldest son's family, who had been 'abandoned', were left to their own devices. Madam Li was greedy and lazy, so she always tried to find ways to slack off at work. Yu Dashan, on the other hand, was slow and incompetent. Thus, the family now relied entirely on Yu Heizi to support them.

At the port, Brother Six had taken decent care of him because of his relationship with Xiaobao. In addition, because Heizi was willing to work hard and was also on the clever side, he had slowly moved up the ranks and became Brother Six's right hand man. Thus, his monthly salary was considered quite good. He had bought a house close to the harbor and had gone through an intermediary to find a wife. Although she was only average in the looks department, she was a hardworking and capable partner to him.

As for his parents, they weren't too old and were still rather healthy. Thus, he gave them five taels a month as a living allowance. Madam Li had originally wanted to move in with her son and daughter-in-law, hoping to take her son's entire salary into her hands. Yu Heizi, on the other hand, wasn't someone who took filial piety to the extreme. He knew just what type of personality his own mother had, so he gave her an ultimatum: she could either continue to make a fuss about this until they no longer were on speaking terms with each other and he would no longer deal with her, or she could quietly live in Dongshan Village and get the five taels a month from him as a sign of his filial piety.

Madam Li only had one son and was truly afraid that her son would break off all relations with her and refuse to support her. That being said, in Dongshan Village, there were many people who worked from dawn to dusk and weren't able to make five taels a month. Thus, she finally agreed to his conditions.

With a capable wife handling the household, Yu Heizi was able to work without any worries at the harbor. Thus, his life was going rather well at this point. On this particular morning, Yu Heizi, who was

now in control of many affairs at the port, had found out that the great imperial envoy's ship was about to dock at Tanggu. Consequently, he immediately reported this to Brother Six.

After Yu Heizi saw the light and turned his life around, he had become pretty close to his second uncle's entire family. On the major holidays, he would always bring a present along to pay them a visit. Thus, he naturally knew that his second uncle's youngest daughter had become an official at the imperial court and even had a higher position than his second uncle. Then, she got married to Imperial Prince Xu and was appointed as an imperial envoy to complete her task at Jinling. The emperor had even personally sent the navy over to escort her back, which clearly showed just how much importance the emperor viewed her with.

When Brother Six got the news, he naturally wouldn't dare to slight the imperial envoy. Even if the entire Tanggu area wasn't the fiefdom of Imperial Prince Xu, just the fact that Princess Consort Xu had arrived meant that they couldn't treat her poorly due to her status. Although she had been born in an ordinary family, she had the skills to make her an important official at court. That being said, the reason why he was able to do so well at the port and monopolize the freight transport business was because Princess Consort Xu had given him a few pointers all those years ago. She was coming back triumphantly, so he absolutely could not slight her. Furthermore, he could use this as an opportunity to show his face to the high and mighty Princess Consort Xu. There were only advantages to this and no disadvantages.

“Eh? Brother Six? Older Brother Heizi? Foreman Sun? How come you are all here?” When Xiaocao had disembarked from the ship like a pampered queen, with her husband on one side and Wutong on the other, she immediately felt a sense of intimacy seeing all of these familiar faces.

When Brother Six heard the way the princess consort had addressed him, cold sweat immediately appeared on his body. He immediately stated in a frightened manner, “Your Excellency...Your Highnesses, this lowly one, Liuzi, greets you all with respect!”

“This lowly one, Yu Heizi, greets Your Highnesses...”

“This lowly one, Sun Youwei...”

Zhu Junyang noticed that his wife was starting to pout unhappily and hurriedly addressed the kneeling group of people in front of them, “Alright ah, you're all excused from kneeling!”

Afterwards, he asked his wife in an amicable manner, “Are you hungry? Should we first go to Zhenxiu Restaurant to have the noon meal and go back to the villa for the evening meal later?”

The Tanggu Harbor had been growing faster than the town itself in recent years. In terms of restaurants, it already had four to five big ones open. Naturally, Zhenxiu Restaurant was the one who beat them all in terms of taste, presentation, and atmosphere.

“Okay! We'll eat Zhenxiu Restaurant's roasted chicken and duck for lunch!” Although Jinling also had a branch of Zhenxiu Restaurant, it had altered the flavors of its roasted duck and chicken to suit the taste buds of the southerners. Consequently, when she was in Jinling, Xiaocao ate more braised duck in brown sauce and osmanthus duck. She only tried their roasted chicken and duck once before deciding to not eat it again. After being gone for more than half a year, she had really missed the tastes of northern style roasted duck and chicken!

Yu Xiaocao went forward a few steps before turning her head around to address the still respectful Liuzi and Yu Heizi, “Come along with us. I want to hear about what has happened at the harbor.”

The group walked on the streets to Zhenxiu Restaurant after disembarking from the ship. When she saw the vastly different harbor that was now bustling and glorious and compared it to her memories of the old docks that were simple and crude, Xiaocao couldn't help but fall into contemplation.

At that time, in order to use the braised food recipes she brought over from her past life to supplement her family's income, she procured the cheap ingredients, pig's head meat and pig offal, and sold them at the docks at one copper coin a portion. The men who relied on the docks for a living had become her primary customers. During that time, she would call them using 'older brother' and 'uncle'. If she still reverted back to her old ways of interacting with them, they would only become scared and frightened by her current status. They respected her now but were afraid of becoming too close. After her status in life had changed, it was inevitable that she would end up losing many things, including the warm feelings she had with her fellow citizens in the past.

Liuzi and Yu Heizi described all of the changes and events at the harbor in great detail with some anecdotal stories thrown in. Yu Xiaocao listened with great interest. Before she knew it, they had arrived at Zhenxiu Restaurant.

The current manager of Zhenxiu Restaurant was informed in advance about their arrival, so he waited deferentially for them outside the main entrance. Under the envious gazes of the other managers of the

nearby restaurants, he respectfully greeted Imperial Prince Xu, Princess Consort Xu, and Chief Steward Su.

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Yu Xiaocao smiled happily when she saw the familiar face, “Manager Liu, I trust you've been well since we've last met ah! When were you transferred over to the branch at the harbor ah?”

Manager Liu was very touched by the fact that Yu Xiaocao, who was now an important imperial envoy and a princess consort to boot, had still remembered him. He replied emotionally, “In reply to Your Highness, something came up at the harbor and the master let this one come over to smooth things over. I would have never have expected to have the honor to see both Highnesses here...”

“No wonder ah! It was a bit odd to me that you'd leave the capital and come back to Tanggu instead. Apparently, the owner needed the great expert, Manager Liu, to get things into shape here ah!” Xiaocao's attitude to this familiar person was just as sweet and accommodating as before.

Manager Liu, on the other hand, was incredibly honored by her familiarity with him and gratefully thought, 'Miss Yu truly has a kind heart and treats people well. Even after she's become a high and mighty princess consort, she's still as sweet as ever.' Thus Manager Liu waxed on excitedly, “Your Highness is much too kind. This one is incredibly honored, incredibly honored...Your Highnesses, please come to the third floor. We've already reserved two private rooms for you. Is that enough space?”

Since they had the Jinwei Navy escorting them back home, Imperial Prince Xu had already sent the hidden guards and bodyguards back on their own. Thus, with only a few people present and not that many servants, the two private rooms had more than enough space for them.

After Yu Xiaocao finished an incredibly sumptuous and satisfactory meal, her father and older brother had rushed over from Tanggu Town. When they got the news that she had arrived, the father and son pair set down everything they were doing and didn't even bother to eat the noon meal before galloping over on horseback. They wanted to see their daughter and son-in-law as soon as possible.

“Cao'er——” Yu Hai carefully inspected his daughter from head to toe. When he saw that her complexion was bright and that she had gotten plumper, he finally relaxed a bit.

However, when he saw Zhu Junyang, it was hard for him to not frown at his son-in-law, “What did you tell me on the day that you two got married? That no matter what, you would make sure to protect

Cao'er completely and wouldn't even let a single hair on her head be harmed. But what happened now? You let her get so injured even when she was pregnant! Fortunately, Cao'er's body was relatively healthy in her youth, otherwise...that'd be two lives lost at once ah!”

As he spoke, Yu Hai's eyes turned red. His poor daughter ah! When she was young, she had endured so many illnesses and accidents and it was a miracle that she had survived early childhood. As she got older, she became healthier and their lives became better. She even ended up marrying an imperial prince. He had originally thought that her life would only get better from then. Who would have thought that she'd become so injured while out on an official duty in Jinling even with her husband by her side? She almost had a miscarriage too.

In order to make the emperor sympathize with them, Zhu Junyang had deliberately written about Xiaocao's injuries in a frightening manner. However, he didn't expect that this would come back to hit his own toes right now.

Despite the fact that he was an imperial prince, Zhu Junyang could only keep his head lowered meekly in front of his father-in-law, who deeply loved Xiaocao. He repeatedly murmured that it was his fault and that something like that would never occur again.

“Don't blame me for being too coarse in my talk ah! She's my daughter and I had transferred her care to you. However, then I got news that she 'had a severe internal injury', fractured a few ribs, and 'almost had a miscarriage'. As her father, how could I possibly be okay with this ah?!” Yu Hai still remembered to leave some face for his son-in-law. Although he had a belly full of complaints, he restrained himself as much as he could.

Yu Hang spoke up, “Your Highness, you're almost a father yourself so you should be able to understand a father's love for his children. When we first got the bad news, my mother fainted from shock. If it weren't for the fact I begged my father not to, he would have packed his bags and gone to Jinling to find my younger sister. You two are really too much ah! Why didn't you bring more bodyguards along after leaving your safe residence? Not only did you encounter pirates on the road, but my younger sister also got kidnapped...argh...”

Zhu Junyang was being scolded roundly but what could he do? One was his father-in-law and the other was his older brother-in-law. That being said, it truly was his fault. He had been too confident and allowed the lass to get hurt. It was only right and proper that he was getting scolded for this.

When Xiaocao found out that her mother had fainted, she felt guilty and anxious. She hurriedly asked, "Older Brother, how's mother? Is she a bit better?"

"Princess Consort Jing sent an imperial physician over to treat her. He said that she had become sick with worry and prescribed a few calming pills, so she's alright now." Fortunately, Madam Liu's body had been well nourished these past few years. If this had happened right around the time Xiaocao had first transmigrated over, she might have become severely ill.

"It's all my fault to let everyone in the family worry about me." Yu Xiaocao relaxed as she stated remorsefully.

Yu Hai looked at his daughter's belly, which was already protruding, and sighed, "Cao'er, ah, I know you have high ambitions and don't like to lose. However, you're someone's wife and about to become a mother. If you're able to, don't take on more official duties ah."

Yu Hai loved and worried about this daughter of his. He didn't know who she took after. Ever since she was young, she acted more like a boy. She was hardworking and incredibly trustworthy. In the short span of ten years, she had managed to build a bustling family empire for the family. As a girl, she was also the first female official in the Great Ming Dynasty, and was a fourth-ranked official to boot. However, in his eyes, no matter how capable she was, she needed to settle down after marriage. The most important thing for her now was to take care of her husband and children.

"Father, don't worry ah! I know what's important." Yu Xiaocao had already come to a decision. Once the yields of the high-yielding wheat and the Jiangnan hybrid-rice experiments were a success, she was going to retire...and focus solely on her own businesses.

Xiaocao couldn't help but smile when she remembered the talk she had with the little divine stone the other day.

After being rescued, Xiaocao lay in bed, resting with nothing to do. She took advantage of a time when no one else was near her and asked the little divine stone, "Why did you come back? Didn't you say that once your cultivation returns, you'd be able to break through the barrier between dimensions and go back to your own world ah? Did you end up reaching a bottleneck or something?"

[Stop saying such inauspicious things! Can't you tell that this immortal is perfectly fine ah?] The little divine stone rolled its eyes in a very human-like fashion and continued, [This immortal went back to my dimension. I had a simple bath, changed my clothes and only had a short conversation with Goddess Nuwa before you almost ended up losing your life. You're such a

"I also didn't expect this to happen. Who would have thought that those traitors would be so tricky and cruel ah?!" Yu Xiaocao quietly replied in a somewhat sheepish manner.

[You're also a complete ditz. You believe whatever other people say. Your husband even told you that you shouldn't leave the courtyard residence, so why didn't you listen to him? Your husband has spoiled you too much. From my perspective, you deserve a big spanking before you'll finally grow some brains!] The little divine inwardly shuddered. If it had been just a few seconds slower, this lass would have already entered the King of Hell's domain with no return ticket home. They had been 'linked in all ways' for many years, so it'd be impossible to say that there wasn't some attachment between the two of them.

It thought back to when it first arrived back home. Goddess Nuwa had told it, "If you truly want to reach the peak of cultivation, you cannot rely only on training alone. What's more important is you strengthening your heart and understanding emotions. The so-called 'heart' is becoming connected with human emotions. If you never understand the word 'affection', then you won't be able to become a true immortal."

At Xiaocao's side, the little divine stone realized that it had finally understood what it meant to care for someone else, love someone else, and be friends with someone else...in its heart, the master that it used to disdain had gradually become someone who it really cared for. In the upper dimension, even when it was bickering playfully with the Goddess of Spirits, in the back of its mind, it was still worried about that stupid and kindhearted lass. Without it by her side, would she be bullied by other people? Would she sob pitifully when she had difficulties?

Humans only lived up to around a hundred years. To the immortals like him, that was the blink of an eye. After twiddling its thumbs for a few days in its world, the little divine stone finally couldn't take the thoughts tormenting it anymore and left the Goddess Nuwa to return to the mundane world. It was fortunate that it decided to go back when it did, otherwise...it had followed the smell of its owner's breath to find her. By the time it arrived by her side, she was already breathing her last.

It was also fortunate that it had stolen the 'rise from the dead' elixir from the Goddess of Spirits to infuriate her. Otherwise...in that moment, it had truly experienced what it felt like to feel fury, grief,

pain, and the desire to destroy everything. Apparently, the so-called 'seven emotional states and six desires' were that close to its psyche.

After grasping these feelings, would it finally become a true immortal ah? However, it wasn't happy because of this. Instead, joy bloomed in its heart because its master had been saved. Perhaps, this was also an important experience for it as well?

It lowered its head to look at Xiaocao, who had hung her head down, and sighed, [When that little one leaves your belly, you better become much more mature than you are now.]

“Then—you're not going back?” Yu Xiaocao suddenly raised her head and her bright large eyes stared at the youth. She was full of hope.

[You're sooooo stupid! If this immortal doesn't stay by your side, I'm sure you'd end up losing your life for some stupid reason or another. I don't have a second divine elixir to save you!] Although the little divine stone's words were quite harsh, the tone of voice it used betrayed the fact that it was quite worried about her.

Yu Xiaocao, who had just been told off as 'stupid', was in bright spirits. A large smile curved on her mouth and her bright eyes crinkled up into crescents as she joyfully said, “That's wonderful! To tell you the truth, I felt quite sad when you left before!”

[Be a bit more careful! Do you still want your ribs or not? That child in your belly is relying on you, his stupid mother. Poor thing!!] Happiness bubbled through the little divine stone's heart. It was in a great mood but its tongue was as poisonous as usual.

The little divine stone, who had decided to stay in the mundane world, had been using its status as the savior of Princess Consort Xu. It was now her adopted younger brother and was staying by her side.

At this time, Yu Hai was currently holding on its hand as he gushed gratefully, “Many thanks, Young Master, for arriving at the nick of time to save my Cao'er. You're our savior ah!”

The corner of the little divine stone's mouth twitched. It wasn't used to other people touching it. It did its best to resist the urge to pull his hand out of the other man's grasp and glared surreptitiously at

Xiaocao, who was snickering quietly, before it patiently said, "Uncle Yu, we are all one family. There's no need to be so polite."

"Oh right! Father, Yuanzi has been an orphan ever since he was young. You and Mother should pour more love on him." Yu Xiaocao noticed that the little divine stone looked uncomfortable so she deliberately made things worse.

"Don't worry ah, Ah'zi, in the future, I will definitely treat you like my own son!" Yu Hai took this to be the truth and his eyes held a bit of pity in them as he looked at the little divine stone.

'Gee thanks ah! I don't need your pity though, alright?' The little divine stone kept an aloof look on his face. However, the other man's warmth had seemed to ignite a flame inside its heart and made it feel quite cozy. Perhaps this was the taste of familial affection ah?

Fields of Gold Chapter 714

After staying in the villa in Tanggu Town for two days, Yu Xiaocao and her husband traveled back to the capital with the escort of a thousand soldiers from the Firearms Barracks. The journey was uneventful and took only a short three days complete. Naturally, this was the stretch of the journey that was most vulnerable to attack.

If the enemy didn't bring a large number along, then it wouldn't be an issue. After all, with the two great experts, Imperial Prince Xu and Chief Steward Su, along it'd be difficult for anyone to gain the upper hand. However, if the traitors from the previous dynasty decided to use the tactic of flooding them with people who were willing to use suicidal tactics, they'd be hard pressed to protect the now already four-month pregnant Xiaocao.

Thus, when the emperor got notice that the party had reached shore, he had sent out the Firearms Barracks to escort these two important officials back. The thousand or so soldiers from the Firearms Barracks were led by the second-in-command and they arrived in a grand manner to the Tanggu Harbor. If people didn't know better, they would have thought that a large-scale battle had broken out at the docks!

With the fierce and well-equipped soldiers escorting them, the enemy naturally wouldn't try to attack them in vain and end up dying for no reason. Thus, they had a relatively quiet journey back to the capital. The carriage that Xiaocao sat in had also been especially prepared for her. The shock absorption had been upgraded and all of the furnishings were renovated in order to increase her comfort to the max. Even with these accommodations, Xiaocao still slept heavily for two days after getting to the capital before she finally felt like herself again.

As the imperial envoy, she naturally needed to report on her mission after arriving back. Yu Xiaocao donned her official's attire and appeared at court with the swell of her pregnant belly visible under her clothing. As she greeted the emperor, Zhu Junfan personally came down from the dais and bent over to support this interesting official.

Yu Xiaocao, on the other hand, didn't stand up and instead hugged the emperor's calf as she wept loudly, "Your Imperial Majesty ah—this official almost died and wouldn't be able to see you again. Wah wah wah...it's not important whether I die or not but this official hasn't finished her dream of seeing rice paddies that produce a thousand catties per mu, allowing the people of the empire to be able to not starve anymore. Even if this official died, I wouldn't be able to close my eyes out of regret—wah wah wah!"

Zhu Junyang didn't expect that the little lass would play this type of scenario. His phoenix eyes bugged out in shock and he stared fixedly at the calf that his wife was hugging in a furious manner—he needed to chop that leg off ah!

The emperor: 'You dare! This is plotting to harm the ruler! Think again and open up those dumb eyes of yours! Your wife is holding onto us, why don't you chop off your wife's hands instead of our leg?'

Zhu Junyang: 'Can't bear to hurt her!'

The emperor: 'You can't bear to hurt your wife but you're okay with hurting us?! You're truly our good official and good cousin!'

When the officials in the court saw this scene, they couldn't help but feel tears stinging their eyes. Originally, the report that Imperial Prince Xu sent back had seemed a bit exaggerated as he had described Yu Xiaocao's wounds in a pitiful manner. Now, when they saw her obviously pregnant self, crying like a child, they suddenly realized that the imperial envoy was only a young eighteen year old lady. Furthermore, she was also the mother of an unborn child.

In addition, this mother who almost lost her child was sobbing, not because she had become injured or that she had almost had a miscarriage, but because if she had died at this time, she'd be letting down the country's experimental fields and all of the empire's people. The officials who had gotten word that the imperial envoy and Imperial Prince Xu had been using her time in the south injudiciously to travel and play around now felt guilty that they had planned on making things difficult for them at court.

The emperor's lips twitched and he hurriedly supported Xiaocao up. He gave her a look that said, 'You're being a bit too dramatic now. Looks too fake!' However, the words that came out of his mouth were different, "Beloved Official, it was we who were not thoughtful enough and allowed you to come into harm's way!"

"If I'm able to make the rice yields from the hybrid rice crops stable, it'd be worth it no matter how hard!" Yu Xiaocao switched out the handkerchief in her hands and wiped her eyes. Oh my goodness, the pepper water she had used was a bit too fierce and her eyes were now swollen!

Yu Xiaocao's tactic of crying out in lamentation had earned many compliments and sympathy from the other officials at court. After the session, Minister Liu from the Ministry of Revenue came over with an excited expression on your face, "Official Yu, is the hybridized rice you speak of truly able to get up to a thousand catties per mu?"

"But of course!" Yu Xiaocao replied in a confident manner. Although hybridized rice was something that would take awhile to experiment, with the right direction, they would reach what their goal was eventually. With Official Wu's research, they had already seen the possibility of success. She was sure that hybridized rice would be able to appear in this world soon.

Official Liu had a gratified look on his face as he asked, "Then what about wheat? Would you be able to develop a type of wheat that can produce a thousand catties per mu?"

People in the north relied more on wheat for their staple food. Thus, more wheat was planted there. If they were able to develop wheat that could reach a thousand catties per mu, Official Liu could foresee a glorious future. In his history books, he recalled that during the time of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the country was flourishing and the strings that held their copper coins in the treasury were rotting. The grain warehouses were so full with surplus food that they would pile up the new harvest on the old and they had run out of space, so they had to store the excess grain outside the buildings.

When he had read that, he couldn't help but wish that he could live in such a flourishing period. If he was able to become an official like Sang Hongyang, that'd be for the best! Although his current contributions to the country were still quite lacking compared to Sang Hongyang's, if he was able to guide the country while the head minister of Ministry of Revenue into an era where it was so prosperous that 'grain was rotting in the warehouses', that'd be a glorious sight indeed!

Xiaocao thought for a moment. In her previous life, it wasn't an impossibility to have wheat that reached a thousand catties per mu. However, the current era's fertilization technology and field management weren't up to par. Thus, this issue was even a bit tricky for her. When she got back home, she needed to ask the little divine stone on what it thought about the problem.

“It should be possible. However, Official Liu, you also know that the yield of a crop isn't dependent only on the seed quality. There are also other ancillary things, such as land management and fertilization, that affects the crop yield, so...don't worry ah, I will continue to work hard in this direction!”

Official Liu wanted to say something more but was interrupted by Imperial Prince Xu, “Official Liu, Official Yu's body is still weak and she shouldn't be discussing official matters for this long. The emperor has already approved a length of vacation for her. When the vacation is done and her body is up to it, you can discuss more then!”

He didn't give Official Liu any chance to reply as he escorted his wife out of the main hall.

“Your Highnesses, the empress is worried about Princess Consort Xu and allowed this servant to prepare a sedan for her, please enter...” The person who spoke was the head eunuch of the empress. Behind him were four strong body servants and they were currently carrying a comfortable sedan on their shoulders in silence.

“Please thank her imperial highness for her kindness. On another day, Xiaocao will personally visit her to give thanks.” Xiaocao felt exhausted from head to toe. She had to wake up early to make morning court and had stayed there for two hours. After thanking the head eunuch, she entered the sedan with the help of her husband and sat down. The sedan slowly left the palace. The other officials leaving court saw this and were incredibly envious of her good fortune of being favored by the empress.

However, did it matter that they were jealous? Were they as hardworking as Official Yu? If they wanted to be favored, how come they didn't come up with a method to produce rice paddies that yielded a thousand catties per mu? The vast majority of officials now saw the light. With Princess Consort Xu around, Imperial Prince Xu's relationship with the emperor would only get better with passing time. Whoever tried to drive a wedge between the emperor and Imperial Prince Xu would have a very bad outcome now!

Following that, for a long period of time, Zhu Junyang discovered that things had gotten a lot easier for him at court. In the past, all of the fellows who liked to cause trouble for him were now quiet and obedient. In order to understand the change, he had secretly used his powers to glimpse into their

mind. The answers he got made him want to either laugh or cry. Apparently, it wasn't because they now acknowledged his abilities but it was because they completely acknowledged his wife's abilities.

As for Xiaocao, now that she had a proper vacation time, she continued her days of 'being a pig'. Every day she ate and then slept, followed by more sleeping and eating. Her husband pampered her and made it such that she never had to lift a finger. Fortunately, he didn't restrict her from leaving the residence. Otherwise, she might have gone insane.

However, she still wasn't as free and independent as before, going to wherever she pleased. She still needed to have her husband accompany her. If he didn't have the time, she needed to go out with her 'adopted younger brother'. She also couldn't go too far and could only visit her maternal family, her godfamily, and a few of her close friends. That was because these places weren't too far from Imperial Prince Xu's estate.

Imperial Prince Xu wasn't as lucky as his wife. When he got back from the capital, the emperor had sent him off to the Xishan Barracks to continue drilling them. Zhu Junyang knew that Yuan Zi's identity wasn't normal, so when he wasn't around, he always asked him to keep an eye on her wife.

The little divine stone was starting to get annoyed by this. Xiaocao was also its master and her safety was within its realm of responsibilities. Was it really necessary that the prince nag all the time?

Naturally, the place that Xiaocao visited the most was her maternal family! At the beginning of the eighth month, her older sister-in-law had birthed a nephew for her. Now, he was already three months old and was a bright and adorable little fellow. Her favorite thing to do was to sit on the warm and cozy kang bed and watch the little fellow huff and puff as he tried to flip over. When he finally succeeded, she would gleefully flip him back over. The little fellow had a good temper and continued to use great effort in flipping back over.

"You, ah, only know how to bully your nephew!" Madam Liu felt a bit bad seeing that her grandson had been flipped over for the nth time by his aunt. She gave her daughter a look and hugged her grandson in her arms before feeding him a bit of warm water.

"Wah wah wah...now that Mother has a grandson, she doesn't love me anymore. I'm so pitiful, there's no one who loves and pampers me..." Yu Xiaocao covered her face and pretended to cry.

Madam Liu had a helpless expression on her face as she said, "How old are you now to still strive for favor with your nephew ah? You're about to be a mother but you've made no personal progress!"

Xiaolian, who had just discovered she was pregnant, was currently sewing a tiger cap for her nephew. She smiled at this, "Younger Sister, who said that you have no one to love you? Imperial Prince Xu would carry you everywhere if you asked him to!"

Yu Xiaocao reached out a hand to tickle her, "Alright ah! Since you're making fun of me, just watch me make you..."

"Slow down a bit, my little ancestors. Be more careful! Cao'er, you and your older sister are both pregnant and shouldn't be horsing around!" Madam Liu saw that her youngest daughter was jumping around and was so scared that cold sweat poured out of her body.

Her youngest daughter had gotten pregnant but ended up suffering such horrendous injuries shortly thereafter. She almost lost her unborn child. If it weren't for the fact that the imperial physician and her own daughter had promised her that her body and her baby were perfectly healthy now, Madam Liu would still be so worried that she wouldn't be able to sleep well.

Yu Xiaocao saw the worried expression on her mother's face and hurriedly sat down in an obedient manner. She watched her plump little nephew wriggling around on the kang bed like a worm. Even when he reached an obstacle, he didn't cry or throw a tantrum. She chuckled, "Feng'er's personality must be like my older brother's. He has a very good temper."

"Younger Sister, those words make me unhappy. You make it sound like I have a really bad temper or something!" It was almost the twelfth month of the year and there were more things to manage in the residence. Liu Huifang had been busy up until now and had just gotten some time to chat with her younger sister-in-law.

Sang Hongyang - an official under Emperor Wu of Han who was famous for his economic policies.

Fields of Gold Chapter 715

"Second Older Sister, Second Older Sister!" Little Shitou's clear, bright, and gentle voice can be heard from the courtyard. In a brief moment, the hanging screen to the door was pushed open, and a handsome young boy walked in, "Did the little nephew bother you today?"

Following the twelfth month, the fetus in Xiaocao's stomach started to move for the first time. At that time, Xiaocao was leaning against the kang bed in her maternal family's house as she watched her mother knit small pieces of clothing for the child in her womb. Xiaocao acknowledged that she has no talent for needlework and, up until now, the embroidered pouches she made still had crooked threading. Madam Liu complained that she was lazy and didn't try to learn earnestly; however, she immediately started to sew hats, shoes, and socks for her unborn grandson.

Yu Xiaocao was pleasantly surprised when she felt the fetus move, and immediately shared the good news with her mother. Her brother was there at that time, and he happily and earnestly 'taught' his nephew to be more obedient, be more considerate of his mother, and not to cause too much of a fuss. After that, whenever he saw Xiaocao, his first question to her was to ask whether his little nephew had caused her any trouble.

Although her little brother always addresses her child as 'little nephew', and her mother also addressed her child as 'little grandson', Yu Xiaocao believed that the child in her stomach should be a girl. Why would she believe that? It was because the child in her belly had always been well-behaved. After the first time, she felt the fetus move, the fetus stayed in her belly without moving again. This caused Xiaocao to believe that what she felt before was merely an illusion.

Speaking of this, Zhu Junyang remained upset for a long time because he missed his child's first movements. As the commanding drillmaster of the army, his unhappiness caused the soldiers under his wing to suffer. The soldiers practiced every day like dogs, causing their complaints about their commanding drillmaster to rocket towards the sky! But behind his back, the soldiers secretly discussed whether their leader had offended his wife and was punished to sleep in a separate room...

Xiaolian, who was doing needlework at the side, deliberately put on an unhappy expression and said, "Younger Brother, aren't you acting too biased? You have more than one little nephew, besides the one in your second sister's belly!"

"Eldest Sister, isn't the little nephew in your belly still small? Once he starts moving around, I will also greet him every day." Xiaolian took over half a year to recuperate her body and had smoothly become pregnant with a baby. However, the baby in her belly was two months younger than the baby in Xiaocao's belly. The baby wasn't even three months old yet, so it didn't look obvious that she was pregnant.

"Did our top scholar finish his work? Come and taste the egg tarts and puddings that Yangliu had specially made for you," Yu Xiaocao jokingly teased. She pointed her finger at snacks and pastries on the table of the kang bed. She picked up a walnut and used a small hammer to crack it open. Then, she ate

the pulp inside the walnut shell. It was often said that eating walnuts during pregnancy would make the children intelligent. Although she didn't know whether there was any scientific research backing the claim, she still persisted in eating a few walnuts every day.

Little Shitou complained, "Second Older Sister, I am no longer a child, so stop using snacks to cajole me like I'm still a little kid." While he said that, his hand faithfully stretched toward a piece of egg tart. The egg tart was flaky and sweet, which was his favorite type of pastry.

Speaking of which, when Xiaocao was commanded to leave the capital, the date of her little brother's metropolitan exams hadn't been released yet. She also missed his palace examinations. It was only later that she received a letter from her family stating her little brother placed first on the metropolitan exams. He also did well on his palace exam. When the results of the examination were released, people both envied and admired the sixteen year old who had gotten the best score on the exam.

Little Shitou had his wish fulfilled, becoming the 'top scorer of three governmental examinations', and couldn't wait to write a letter to his second sister, who was in Jinling. Xiaocao also sent some specialty products from Jinling as a gift for her younger brother.

After that, he also took the examination for a temporary position at the Hanlin Academy, officially starting his career. His workload every day was not heavy. He just needed to help the emperor draft some edicts and explain some religious text and so on. After hearing Imperial Prince Xu's explanation, Xiaocao understood that the temporary position was offered to the member of the emperor's inner ministerial circle and was a cabinet consisting of talented scholars.

Prime Minister Yuan, who was above ten thousand people and only below one person, was someone who had started out as a temporary position at the Hanlin Academy. Many people from the imperial court said that in the future, Yu Hang would be walking the same path as Prime Minister Yuan. If there were no mishaps, then his future was boundless. Families with daughters around Little Shitou's age all revealed that they want to marry into the Yu Family.

Even though Little Shitou was only sixteen years old this year, there were many young men around his age in the countryside that had already started to look for a wife. Madam Liu discovered that her peaceful days were gone forever. Madams whom she recognized and didn't recognize, all brought their daughters to visit their residence as guests, praising their daughters incessantly. Although Madam Liu was not familiar with dealing with these scheming madams, she was not stupid.

Before Xiaocao got married, Xiaocao told her parents not to worry about her little brother's marriage. Little Shitou's master was well-known in the north and south, and his senior brother was the current prime minister of the empire. Furthermore, he also had her and Imperial Prince Xu backing him up. His future achievements were not going to be small. They couldn't just casually pick his future wife, otherwise, she might hinder his achievements in the future.

Madam Liu had a weak temperament, but she never made an important decision on impulse. When her youngest daughter was still at home, she would always ask her daughter for her opinion whenever she encountered these matters. After her youngest daughter got married, she would ask her god family or her younger son for their opinion whenever she didn't know how to make a decision.

Therefore, she withstood all the pressure from the matrons in regards to her youngest son's marriage and responded to them according to Lady Fang's words.

“Fan'er's marriage will be arranged by his master...”

“Fan'er told me not to worry about his marriage...”

“My Cao'er said that she will personally help pick out her younger brother's wife...”

“I'm someone from an uninfluential and small background, so I won't hinder my son. He always had his ideas. As his mother, my duty is to prepare the betrothal gift and the wedding ceremony...”

After this, people started to gossip about how 'small-minded and petty' she was, but people gradually stopped bothering her about her youngest son's marriage. She didn't care what other people said about her as long as it didn't affect her children's future.

In fact, Little Shitou didn't have high standards about his marriage. As long as his future wife was pleasant to the eye, had a good temper, and was clever... and wouldn't hinder him, then she would be good enough for him. But if she could be similar like his second sister, who had a good temperament, was efficient, witty, and competent, then it would be even better. He didn't mind if his future wife didn't have the talent as his second sister had in business and money-making; as long as she was dependable and was able to take care of the residence in his absence so that he would not have any worries while he served the emperor in the imperial court, that was all he needed.

Following the twelfth month, all the families were busy preparing for the festival. In Prince Xu's Estate, Imperial Prince Xu has specially commanded the stewards that, if they could make the decisions themselves, to do it themselves. If they couldn't, then they should report to him and that under no circumstance were they allowed to disturb the princess consort who was caring for her unborn child.

The matters related to the outer courtyard were all taken care of by the head steward of the outer courtyard. Meixiang and Wutong were in charge of the inner courtyard matters. Xiaocao was able to spend her simple life comfortably and peacefully. Her two best friends, He Wanning and Yuan Xueyan came to visit her and were both envious of how carefree and leisurely she is.

After marriage, a woman had her father-in-law and mother-in-law watching over her, as well as numerous aunts and sisters-in-law. As a result, there were more matters to attend to and they weren't as carefree as the time when they were not married. After Xiaocao got married, she didn't have her in-laws watching over her shoulder nor did she have aunts and sisters-in-law to please. The two of them were jealous that she was able to live such a comfortable life.

“Don't be too avaricious and insatiable. Lu Hao and Ning Donglan are not the eldest sons of the family, so you naturally aren't the eldest daughter-in-law of the family. Compared to those who are in charge of preparing the food and clothing for the entire household, the two of you are already very blessed, alright?” Yu Xiaocao glanced at the two women who were commenting how envious they were of her as she ate the cold grapes that were sent from the plantation.

He Wanning nibbled at a fragrant and sweet pear as she laughed mischievously, “I'm just shocked by how comfortably you're living. You might not know, although I have two older sisters-in-law, my mother-in-law was afraid that I would have complaints, so she forced me to manage the household. I don't have the talent to manage an entire house! Do you think my mother-in-law is trying to torture me on purpose? As a matter of fact, I came here under the pretext of visiting you to take this opportunity to avoid work. My husband has also participated in the training exercise, so he won't be home until the beginning of the new year. Tell me, should I head back and tell my mother-in-law that I'm worried about you living home alone, so I'll be moving in with you to keep you company?”

“No!” Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes at her as she teased Yuan Xueyan's six month old daughter. The young child has inherited her parents' good looks. Her adorable appearance made it impossible for people not to love her dearly.

Before Yuan Xueyan married, she appeared cold and indifferent, completely different from other people. After she married Ning Donglan, the two treated each other with mutual respect, but Xiaocao couldn't help feeling like something was missing between the couple. But after the birth of their

daughter, Yuan Xueyan's motherly nature caused her to bloom brilliantly. She appeared to be more approachable. Her relationship with her husband also started to warm up all thanks to her daughter.

“Since you like Chan'er that much, why don't you become in-laws by marriage?” He Wanning had a straightforward temperament. Her habit of speaking her mind had not changed, so it could be seen that she also lived comfortably in her husband's family. Her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law weren't purposely making her life difficult, so her temperament never changed.

Now it was Yuan Xueyan's turn to roll her eyes at her, “Don't let Ning Donglan hear what you had just said, otherwise, he will fight you as if his life depends on it!”

Everyone in the capital knew that Ning Donglan loved his daughter dearly. As soon as she was born, he visited every jewelry shop in the capital to buy custom made jewelry and pendants for his daughter. Even though he was a man, he visited numerous clothing stores, ordering enough clothes for his daughter to wear until the age of ten.

When he was home, he refused to let his daughter leave his hand. Even if his daughter is asleep, he will still hold onto her. The little child was now so used to being held, that she started crying if she's not constantly held, even when she fell asleep. As soon as she was placed on the bed, she would cry until her voice was hoarse. Yuan Xueyan was so angry that she had a huge quarrel with him. She solemnly warned him that if he tries to spoil their daughter anymore, she would take her daughter back to her maternal family. This caused Ning Donglan to finally stop.

These were all rumors that she heard of after she returned to the capital. She rubbed her five month pregnant belly and softly said, “I think the child in my belly should be a little girl. She's so obedient. If she doesn't occasionally move around to remind me of her presence, then I would've long forgotten that I'm a pregnant woman.”

Fields of Gold Chapter 716

"Little girls are the best! Obedient, considerate, and quiet!" He Wanning gave Ning Yuchan's chubby bottom a little squeeze as she continued to complain, "Listen, my older brother's second son is just so naughty! He's just learnt to walk and hasn't had a quiet moment since! His elderly grandmothers cannot keep up with him at all. I'm really afraid that Marquis Dingyuan will produce a demon king!"

“What about you? It's been more than two years since you got married. Xiaocao got married more than a year after you did and is already five months pregnant. Yet, there's no good news from you at all. Does your mother-in-law nag you about it? Is Lu Hao getting anxious?” Yuan Xueyan asked in concern for her sister.

He Wanning touched her stomach, and the smile on her face faded. "What else can they do? They can only blame me for not being able to get pregnant, as usual." It was not that they weren't anxious about it, but...

"By the way, Xiaocao, aren't you quite skilled with treating infertility? You were the one who treated my brother, and now my two nephews and little niece are running amok all day in our house. Could you take a look and tell me if there's anything wrong with me?" He Wanning looked at Xiaocao hopefully.

Yu Xiaocao took her pulse. She remarked that while there was some coldness in her womb due to an imbalanced diet, there wasn't anything severe enough to cause infertility. If there wasn't anything wrong with Lu Hao, then perhaps it was just that they were not fated to have children at the moment.

Upon hearing Xiaocao's words, the weight on He Wanning's heart lifted. She had been married for two years and still had not been able to conceive. Although her mother-in-law didn't say much about it, she sometimes seemed at the verge of wanting to speak out. People have also started to gossip that the He Family had fertility issues, and that she might have similar ailments as her brother.

He Wanning was not one who would endure the slander of others silently. She used to have quite a temper when she was younger and would beat up anyone who dared to talk behind her back. But this matter was one that persistently troubled her. She had feared that there was an issue with her that resulted in their infertility.

With Xiaocao's reassurance, a smile returned to her face, "When my husband returns, take a look at him as well. If there's an issue, we will treat it, and if there's nothing wrong, we would also be more at ease. Xiaocao, prescribe me some medicinal remedies that will help to balance the coldness of my womb. I remember you saying that if one's womb is cold, even if they got pregnant, it will not be good for the baby."

"That's right! The womb is where the fetus grows and develops. What will happen to you if you live in a cold and dark environment for a long time? It will be uncomfortable for sure, and you might even fall sick. The same is true for the fetus, if they grow in a cold environment, it might curb their development and even lead to miscarriage. Moreover, the babies born from cold wombs not only have weak immune systems, but are also prone to attention deficit disorders, and are not easy to bring up." The latter part of her statement were things that Xiaocao heard in her previous life, and she wasn't sure if there was any actual basis for those claims.

Xiaocao prescribed some medicinal herbs for He Wanning and told her to prepare and drink it according to the method that she wrote. Soon, the coldness in her womb was alleviated. Not long after spring in the following year, the good news of a pregnancy came out. Xiaocao didn't dare to take credit for it this time. The couple had no major issues that would affect fertility to begin with. It was probably just a matter of time before they would conceive.

She did teach He Wanning how to calculate her ovulation period—increased intimacy between the couple during that period naturally increased the chances of pregnancy. Apart from that, He Wanning's pregnancy really had nothing to do with her. But that wasn't what the people thought. They believed that Princess Consort Xu had excellent medical skills, especially with regards to the treatment of infertility. Didn't Lady Fang, who was already over forty at the time, manage to conceive? Weren't the He siblings also able to have good results after her diagnosis and treatment?

However, due to her elevated status and her being a pregnant woman herself, not many people came to seek medical treatment. Those who were able to enter the gate of Imperial Prince Xu's Estate were all children of powerful nobles or high-ranking officials. As long as it did not affect her own rest, Zhu Junyang did not prevent his wife from prescribing treatments.

As Princess Consort Xu treated more people, Imperial Prince Xu's standing in court also improved. This is all due to his princess's efforts!

On the 28th of the twelfth lunar month, the demonic training at the Xishan Barracks came to an end. When Zhu Junyang returned to his estate and saw his little wife's bulging belly, he said with a little alarm, "This... is your belly growing a little too fast? It's only five months along, right? Why do you look like you've got a big watermelon strapped on your belly?"

"Shut up! You're the one with a watermelon stomach!" Yu Xiaocao threw a pillow at him, which was easily caught by the man's long arm. During this period of time, she had always felt that her stomach was like a bottomless pit that she couldn't fill. Even if she ate a lot during the regular meals, she got hungry easily, and had to have something extra like a bowl of wontons or chicken noodle soup between meals. She hadn't gained much weight in spite of all the extra food— it all went straight to her belly.

Her mother said that the nutrition had all been absorbed by the child. She advised her to relax, eat less at every meal, and walk about more often, so that the fetus will not get too big and cause unnecessary complications during birth.

Madam Liu was not without suspicion about the prospect of twins. However, Xiaocao got the little divine stone to use its spiritual power to check her body, and was told that it was indeed just one child. Seeing that she was still a little anxious, the little divine stone reassured her that the child was developing well, so she didn't have to worry. With it frequently nourishing the little fetus with its spiritual power, the little one could only get healthier. As for the concern of the fetus being too big, there was no need to worry at all. With its reassurance, Xiaocao set her worries aside and ate and drank as she liked.

Every night before bed, Xiaocao would rub oil on her stomach to prevent stretch marks. The lightly aromatic body oil was made from pure plant extracts. Nourishing to the skin, it was a gentle and soothing remedy that was completely safe to use.

Zhu Junyang took the body oil from her hands and gently massaged it onto her round and delicate belly. "Are you sure they are not twins? Isn't this belly too big?" He asked.

"I already told you that I am only carrying one child. The imperial physicians have confirmed it. So, you are destined to be disappointed!" Yu Xiaocao gave him a look and continued. "Some people's wombs tilt forward, and that can make the belly seem very big. For those who tilt backwards, the belly is still small even when they give birth. And then there are some who don't even seem pregnant with just a bit of weight gain. Now, in my belly, our little bean is still small. Everything else is amniotic fluid and so on..."

Xiaocao gestured with her hands to indicate the size of their baby. Zhu Junyang's eyes suddenly grew wide. He stared at her belly with a look of incredulity and stammered. "He... I think he kicked me!"

Xiaocao also felt the strong fetal movements, which took her by surprise. The little one had always been relatively calm, and there'd been only a few occasional movements. Even then, the baby only wriggled slightly. This time, however, the fetus was giving his father a rather hard kick.

Yu Xiaocao touched the spot where the baby was moving and smiled. "Our baby must know that his father is back. He's saying hello to you."

Zhu Junyang put his hand over his wife's little hand and asked with a mixture of delight and concern, "He gave such a strong kick, was it uncomfortable for you? Will it cause you any harm? Son, be good. Show a little more compassion for your mother, it's not easy for her to be carrying you..."

As soon as he finished, a small bulge protruded from Xiaocao's stomach as if in response. This time however, it was much less intense. Zhu Junyang gently rubbed his wife's belly, hoping to relieve her discomfort.

Fortunately, the little one was not a mischievous one. After the two interactions with his father, he calmed down and was quiet. Zhu Junyang quickly finished applying the body oil. He then held his wife in his arms with a gleam in his eyes. "My wife, I heard that except for the first three months and the last three months, as long as we are careful, we can still..."

In Jinling, he had been meticulously caring for his wife in the first trimester of her pregnancy. After the initial three months, he went back to the capital. He was worried that his wife would suffer on the journey, and did not want to trouble her. After returning to the capital, he was thrown into the barracks by the emperor, and had spent a month with a group of rowdy men. After all this time, now that he finally had his beautiful wife by his side, how could he be expected to hold back?

It is said that pregnancy would make one ugly, but that was not true at all for Xiaocao. Instead, because of her nutritious meals and ample rest, her complexion was even more radiant and flawless. There was not even a trace of the tiniest pores, and her skin could be said to be even smoother and more polished than the most luxurious suet jade. Apart from her bulging belly, the biggest change to her body was probably her chest. If there were soup dumplings previously, now, they've developed into good-sized meat buns. Zhu Junyang's hand cupped one, and it was just the right...

"Get your hands off me!" Yu Xiaocao slapped her husband away as he started caressing her breasts. Just as she was straightening her clothes, he started caressing and kissing her again. Since she became pregnant, her body had become more sensitive. Soon, she melted under his unrelentless caresses, and gave in to his whims...

On the 30th, Zhu Junyang brought his wife back to Imperial Prince Jing's Estate. His second brother, Zhu Junxi, had also returned from the border with his fiancée. There was a big and happy reunion as they celebrated the new year.

Looking at her eldest son's family of three... No, they were soon to be a family of four. After more than half a year of treatment, the heir's wife had finally conceived a second child, only a month later than Xiaocao. In the coming year, the family would have another two little beans. Princess Consort Jing drank a cup of mellow wine and a contented smile spread slowly on her face.

Then, she looked at her second son, who was serving Han Xiaomu some food. The wedding date for the couple had already been set, and it was to take place in the second month of spring. Her second son had also said that when he returned to the capital to submit his report, he would also apply to remain in the capital. Anyway, the border was currently peaceful, and there wasn't much for him to do. He would rather be near his mother and carry out his duties as a son.

The youngest son who had worried her the most in recent years had not only married a wife, but was also about to become a father. He also held an important position in the court and was considered to be the most promising one in the family. Turning her gaze to her youngest daughter-in-law, she thought to herself that the transformation in her youngest son all began when they first met. It was said that Yu Xiaocao was a fairy who had descended from heaven— she not only saved the lives of the people, but also gave her Yang'er salvation.

Wasn't she also a beneficiary herself? Without Xiaocao's medicinal prescriptions and years of meticulous care and treatment, her body would never have held out long enough to be able to see her second son and youngest son settle down and start families! And he—she turned her attention to the man who had cherished her her entire life—without her, would he be able to be as energetic and full of life as he was now?

Gazing at the happy family, Princess Consort Jing suddenly felt that her life was complete...

Fields of Gold Chapter 717

The upper-class nobles in the capital all praised the yet to be born heir of Imperial Prince Xu as the most filial and compassionate child towards his lady mother. There was a reason for this.

First, when Imperial Prince Xu's heir was still a fetus, Princess Consort Xu often forgot that she was pregnant. She didn't have any morning sickness in the early stages of her pregnancy and her feet didn't become swollen or cramped in the later stages of her pregnancy. As Imperial Prince Xu's heir, the fetus has been quiet and had never troubled his mother.

Second, Princess Consort Xu was expected to be due in mid-May (lunar calendar), towards the beginning of summer. Women were most afraid of convalescing for a month during the summer. They wouldn't be able to wash their hair or take a bath for an entire month. Wouldn't they smell bad in the summer?

Imperial Prince Xu's heir decided to come out two months earlier, arriving into this world in the spring of March. At that time, the spring flowers bloomed beautifully and the weather was neither hot nor cold, which was perfect for convalescing. If this wasn't showing compassion to his mother, then what was?

Yu Xiaocao didn't expect that she would give birth prematurely. Without any sign, her belly started to hurt. At that time, she was eating tasty roasted hazelnuts and walnuts, while drinking juice from freshly squeezed fruit from the plantation's cold warehouse. She was lying on the couch happily and comfortably as she basked in the warmth from the spring sun.

During her pregnancy, she was spoiled by her husband, and pampered by her mother and godmother. Her mother-in-law would frequently come over to take care of her. She was living so comfortably that the Heaves couldn't stand it anymore and had played a joke on her.

She had just finished drinking half a cup of strawberry juice. Yu Xiaocao reached out her hand towards the hazelnut kernels that her husband had peeled for her. She grabbed a handful of hazelnut kernels and was just about to put them in her mouth when she suddenly felt a wave of pain from her stomach. She didn't take the incident to heart at the beginning because she thought she still had two more months before her due date. Who would've known that her body, which had been nourished until it was healthy by the little divine stone, would actually go into labor prematurely for no apparent reason?

However, the attentive Zhu Junyang noticed the momentary discomfort displayed by his wife. He asked with concern, "What's the matter? Is it because one of the hazelnut kernels is bitter? That shouldn't have happened because I hand picked them one by one."

The wave of pain quickly disappeared, making it seem as if the pain was merely an illusion. While Zhu Junyang was pinching the walnuts open, Yu Xiaocao picked up a piece of hazelnut kernel and stuffed it into his mouth. She smiled and said, "It's nothing. Have a taste of this hazelnut kernel. I had someone roast this with the new recipe I made. How does it taste?"

Zhu Junyang opened his mouth obediently and ate the hazelnut kernel that his little wife had fed him. Just as she was about to pull her finger away, he gently nibbled on her finger and grinned, "Sweet! It's very fragrant!"

Yu Xiaocao rolled her eyes at him and asked, "Are the hazelnut kernels fragrant or are my fingers fragrant?"

Zhu Junyang hurriedly used his beautiful phoenix eyes to stare at her. His gaze was filled with electricity as he said, "No matter how fragrant the hazelnut kernels are, they still can't compare to my wife's fingers..."

“Elegant but insincere words... hiss!” The expression on Yu Xiaocao's face suddenly changed. She touched her bulging belly and frowned slightly.

Zhu Junyang hurriedly put down the hazelnuts in his hand and wiped his hands on his clothes. He supported her into a sitting position and impatiently asked, “What's wrong? Where do you feel uncomfortable?”

“My belly suddenly started to hurt...” Yu Xiaocao subtly noticed that something was wrong.

Stomach pain? “Could it be that you're about to give birth?” Zhu Junyang's first thought was this. After all, he had noticed that his wife's belly, which had supported their child for seven months, was almost the same size as other women's who were about to give birth.

“That can't be because I'm less than eight months pregnant! Isn't it the norm for a woman to be pregnant for ten months before giving birth? My mother said that I need to carry the child at least nine months before giving birth!” Yu Xiaocao held her stomach with a puzzled and doubtful expression on her face.

Zhu Junyang frowned and asked, “Could it be that you ate something bad that caused you stomach pain? That shouldn't be right either. In the past few days, I have personally checked all the food you consumed and there's nothing different or spoiled!” The past few days, it was his turn to take a vacation from work, which was why he was leisurely staying at home today. He willingly allowed himself to be his wife's walnut clamp.

“Hiccup...” Xiaocao suddenly turned red from embarrassment. The corners of her mouth turned downward as she looked at her husband. She stammered, “I...I seem to have...peed my pants!”

In the later stages of pregnancy, due to the fetus repressing the belly, it was normal for pregnant women to frequently urinate. However, urinating without any sign was something to be concerned about.

At this time, Senior Servant Li walked over with a bowl of bird's nest lotus seed congee. Once again, it was time for the princess consort to have an afternoon snack. Senior Servant Li was one of Princess Consort Jing's servants. She also raised Zhu Junyang when he was still young. When Xiaocao became

pregnant, Princess Consort Jing became worried because there wasn't anyone with experience around, so she sent Senior Servant Li to serve them.

Zhu Junyang hurriedly explained the situation to Senior Servant Li. Senior Servant Li's expression immediately changed as she said, "Could it be that Princess Consort Xu's water broke? Quickly send someone to invite a midwife over! Your Highness, don't worry. This is your first child, and the young heir probably won't be born so soon, so please drink the bird's nest congee first."

Yu Xiaocao obediently listened to her words and drank the bird's nest congee, which was currently cooled to the perfect temperature in one breath. After she let out a hiccup, she cupped her belly and endured the pain as she asked, "I didn't knock or bump into anything, so why am I giving birth prematurely?"

Senior Servant Li didn't know the situation well either. She hesitated a little before she said, "This servant doesn't know either, but I've heard that a small number of women would give birth after being pregnant for only seven months after their water broke... don't worry, a premature child can survive at seven months old, but not at eight months... the young heir will definitely be fine!"

"What do you mean by living or not living? Don't you know how to speak?!" Zhu Junyang was so angry that he almost slapped the old thing to death. Didn't she see how scared the princess consort appeared to be? Why would she still say these frightening words? Was she trying to deliberately make his wife uncomfortable? Imperial Prince Xu, who had always been an unwavering mountain, stuttered as he tried to comfort his wife, "Don't listen to her. How can my seed not be able to withstand even a small storm? You and the baby will both be fine..."

Yu Xiaocao endured the pain and rolled her eyes at her husband, "What do you mean by 'your seed'? It's unpleasant to hear! Moreover, my baby is strong!" Even though she said that she was still very nervous. In her previous life, there were many babies who were born prematurely and died even though the medicinal treatments and conditions were so advanced in modern times. It was impossible for her not to worry at all.

"Where is Yuanzi? Invite him here for me!" The little divine stone could sense her baby's life force. As long as he was there, Xiaocao would feel much more at ease. On the other hand, if there was something wrong with the child, it could also guard the baby with its spiritual power, so that the situation would not worsen.

Zhu Junyang was currently confused and didn't know what to do as he stared at his wife who was in pain while letting out cold sweat. But after hearing his wife's request, he straightened up immediately and said, "Yes, that's right, yes! Bring the guy named Yuanzi here. He will definitely have a solution!"

He had long guessed Yuanzi's identity; however, since his wife didn't want to discuss it, he didn't ask her. There were many mysterious and unsolved riddles surrounding his wife, but he was willing to guard them for her until she planned on disclosing it.

"Your Highness, please carry the princess consort to the delivery room first. Be careful not to let the wind blow her..." Senior Servant Li, who had just been reprimanded, saw that her master was still standing rooted in place like he didn't know what to do. The princess consort was still sitting on the couch!

"Oh right, yes, you're right! Little lass, let's head to the delivery room first. The midwife should be here soon. don't be afraid, I'm here and I will stay by your side!" Zhu Junyang bent down and picked up Xiaocao. He strode towards the delivery room that had been prepared in advance.

After another wave of pain passed, Yu Xiaocao looked up and saw that her husband's forehead was covered in a thick layer of sweat. She was still in the mood to tease him, "Look at how much you're sweating. If other people didn't know the truth, then they would've thought that you're the one who's experiencing labor pain!"

"If I can, then I would rather experience the pain in your stead!" Zhu Junyang was very distressed when he saw how his wife was biting her lip to endure the labor pain. In all their years together, except for the one time in Jinling, when did his little lass ever experience such pain?

The little lass had always been delicate. When the needle pricked her finger while she was embroidering a purse, she would cry and complain to him. If pain was divided into twelve different levels, then the pain a woman experienced during childbirth would reach the highest level of pain. How could he not feel distressed for her after seeing how pale her face was while she forced herself not to let out any cries of pain?

"Where's the midwife? Why isn't she here yet? Also, where's Yuanzi? On a regular day, he would always hover around the princess consort, but when she needs him, he can't be found anywhere..." Zhu Junyang paced back and forth in front of the delivery bed. The floor was about to be worn down from all the pacing.

“Your Highness, don't worry! This is princess consort's first child, so she wouldn't be delivering the baby so soon...” Senior Servant Li couldn't help but try and comfort him.

Zhu Junyang suddenly stopped pacing and looked towards her, “Senior Servant Li, is there anything that can help ease the princess consort's pain? Don't you see how much pain she's experiencing?”

“Uh...Your Highness, women are bound to experience pain like this, you...” Senior Servant Li expressed her disapproval. Who didn't experience pain when having a baby? Even the empress had to experience pain for over five hours when she was giving birth to the crown prince. If there was a method to ease the pain, then wouldn't it be used on the empress, who was the mother of the country?

But this was not what Zhu Junyang wanted to hear. He waved his hand impatiently at her and said, “Okay, fine! I don't even know why my lady mother has sent you here. You can't help with anything and instead, all you do is say things that make me angry...”

Senior Servant Li felt quite aggrieved by this. What did she say wrong? All she said was the truth, okay? Alas, she didn't expect the young imperial prince to be such an unreasonable master!

“Your Highness, Young Master Yuanzi is here!” Yingchun ran until she was out of breath. She was currently dragging the little divine stone, who had been fishing in the lotus pond of the back garden.

When she found the little divine stone, she didn't say anything and just pulled him away. The little divine stone was still dumbfounded and puzzled as he was shoved to the front of the delivery room. At this time, he finally understood everything after he saw how much pain Xiaocao was experiencing from labor.

He asked Imperial Prince Xu to make all the people in the delivery room that didn't have a specific duty to leave. He put his right hand two centimeters above Xiaocao's belly and a golden ball of light scattered from the palm of his hand. The soft light enveloped Xiaocao's belly. Xiaocao suddenly felt the pain from her stomach easing significantly.

“Yuanzi, can you help me check to see if my baby is okay?” When she saw the little divine stone, who was her pillar, Xiaocao relaxed immensely. When Zhu Junyang took notice of it, he felt a burst of anger rising from his heart. It seemed like he was not the only person who could give her a sense of security.

The little divine stone used his spiritual power to softly placate the little bun inside her belly. After he retracted his hand, he said, [The baby is in good health!]

convalescing for a month - needs to follow a special diet, observe various taboos to protect the body from exposure to the "wind"

Fields of Gold Chapter 718

“Then...do you know why I'm giving birth prematurely? Will this have a bad effect on my child?” Although the child had yet to be born, as a mother, Xiaocao's heart was full of worries for the child's health.

[Melons fall when ripe, and you'll naturally give birth when it's time! As I told you, the child is fine, so stop overthinking and scaring yourself!] The little divine stone rolled its eyes at her.

Yu Xiaocao completely relaxed after hearing its words. However, she still grumbled in her heart, 'Others are pregnant for ten months, but how come I'm ready for labor in just eight months?'

With the 'painkiller', the little divine stone, here, Xiaocao didn't have to suffer much pain during the process. In order to not arouse the suspicion of the servants outside, Xiaocao pretended to groan every once in a while.

Zhu Junyang knelt on one knee beside the bed and held his wife's hand. He had more sweat on his face than Xiaocao, who was in labor. From time to time, he would yell out, “Where's the midwife? Why isn't she here yet? Are you guys crawling over to fetch her?”

They had already found a midwife, and they planned on bringing her into the estate in the fifth month, to be on standby. Who would have thought that contractions would start so early for the princess consort. Fortunately, the midwife, who had a great reputation in the capital, didn't get called to another household. Otherwise, it would be problematic!

The midwife, who was in her fifties, was basically carried over by Hou Xiaoliang. There was no choice because her bound feet made it difficult for her to walk. Hou Xiaoliang was afraid that his masters couldn't wait for too long, so he half-dragged and half-carried her for most of the trip. Even so, he was still scolded by his master, “Are you a snail or a tortoise? How can you be so slow when you're just going to fetch someone?!”

Hou Xiaoliang felt wronged in his heart. He drove the carriage at top speed all the way to the north side of city and dragged the midwife away without wasting any time. He was almost taken as a bandit and reported to the yamen. This was the fastest speed, okay? Another person may not even be as fast as him.

Fortunately, he was comforted by Wutong, "His Highness is worried about the princess consort. Even if you flew over, the prince would still think that you're too slow. No matter who went on this trip, he would still be scolded. Take a sip of pear juice to moisten your throat. Look at all the sweat on your head!"

Hou Xiaoliang lowered his head and let Wutong wipe off the sweat on his face, enjoying the rare gentleness of his fiancée. He had originally wanted to set the wedding date in the second or third month, but Wutong insisted on waiting until her mistress gave birth and finished her post-natal confinement period before she was willing to marry him. Therefore, the date was set for autumn of this year.

Hou Xiaoliang and Wutong had reached a consensus that after they got married, it was up to her whether she wanted to enjoy her happiness at home or stay beside her mistress. He would respect her decision. Wutong intended to wait until her subordinating maidservants were capable of handling matters themselves, and then she would shift her attention to taking care of her family.

"Wahhhh——" A loud cry of the baby indicated that the young heir of the Imperial Prince Xu's Estate was born.

Hou Xiaoliang hadn't even finished drinking his cup of pear juice. He looked at Wutong with a dumbfounded expression and foolishly asked, "She gave birth so quickly? The midwife just went inside..."

"Shhh——don't let His Highness hear what you just said. Otherwise, you'll be thrown to the Xishan Barracks to train for half a year. What would you do then?!" Wutong glanced at the imperial prince who had been driven out by the midwife and pacing back and forth. At this time, the imperial prince must feel that time was passing very slowly. Who would dare to say the word 'quick' in front of him?

The door of the delivery room opened and Meixiang came out with a basin of bloody water. Zhu Junyang was alarmed, "Why is there so much blood? Is the princess consort alright?"

Meixiang reported the good news with a smile on her face, "Congratulations, Your Highness! The princess consort gave birth to a little heir. Both mother and son are safe...ay, ay, ay! You can't go inside right now. We have to clean up before you can go in. Don't worry, Her Highness is fine!"

Senior Servant Li came out with a tightly swaddled newborn in her arms. With a joyous expression, she said, "Congratulations, Your Highness! Congratulations, Your Highness! The young heir weighs 3.4 kilograms. His cry sounds very strong, and one wouldn't be able to tell that he was born prematurely. Your Highness, look at his big eyes and tall nose. He will definitely be a beautiful young man when he grows up."

Zhu Junyang looked over and couldn't see the word 'beautiful' from the wrinkle-faced red monkey. He thought in his heart, 'So ugly!' But he said, "What's the point in a boy being so beautiful? Such a waste!"

Senior Servant Li suddenly recalled that this prince hated when others complimented him on his looks. So she hastily changed the subject, "Your Highness, would you like to carry the little heir?"

"Uh...as the eldest son, he will inherit the household in the future, so we can't spoil him." The little baby was delicate, soft, and tiny. Zhu Junyang wouldn't admit that he was afraid that he couldn't control his strength and ended up hurting the child painstakingly birthed by his wife. Thus, he simply pretended to be a 'strict father'.

Senior Servant Li thought, 'How old is the little heir? He doesn't know anything, so how would holding him be spoiling him?' However, as a servant, she couldn't refute the master's words, and could only echo in agreement.

The midwife came out and informed them that they could enter the room. Before she had finished speaking, a figure had flashed past her, walked around the screen, and entered the inner room of the delivery room.

The midwife stuttered slightly, "That...that...Your Highness??"

Wutong quickly handed a pouch to her and said with a smile, "Many thanks to Matron Liu! You have worked hard today!"

The midwife squeezed the pouch. It was very light, so it was obviously not gold or silver ingots. When she thought of all the businesses under the princess consort's hands, she reckoned that she definitely wouldn't be stingy. A bright smile immediately appeared on Matron Liu's old face, and she hurriedly said in a polite manner, "Her Highness is blessed, and the young heir is also a filial one. This old lady has never delivered a baby so smoothly for someone giving birth for the first time! The princess consort and the heir will surely be blessed for a long time in the future..."

"Thank you for your well wishes. These pastries are for your young grandson. Yingtao, escort Matron Liu back." Wutong considerately handed a paper box to her.

Matron Liu smiled so much that her teeth were showing. Who didn't know that Princess Consort Xu was famous for her skills in making pastries ah? It was said that any one of her maidservants could make pastries that didn't lose to those sold in pastry shops. She thanked her repeatedly, "Aiyo, Young Maiden, you are so considerate. Then this old lady will shamelessly accept it."

After getting on the carriage, she eagerly opened the box, took out a small piece of cake, and stuffed it into her mouth. The cake melted in her mouth, and the enticing fragrant spread inside her mouth. Matron Liu felt as if she was floating and intoxicated. Matron Liu was afraid that she couldn't resist the temptation and eat all the remaining pastries, so she quickly closed the lid.

She smacked her lips a few times, and then took out the pouch that was given by Imperial Prince Xu's Estate from her sleeve. Sure enough, it was a hundred taels banknote! She helped deliver babies for rich and influential noble madams all year round, so it wasn't that she hadn't received such a heavy reward for her service. However, she seldom encountered a situation like today, in which she easily earned a hundred taels by just going into the delivery room for less than an hour. Furthermore, it would cost at least several dozen taels to buy this box of pastries at 'Jinan Pastries Shop'.

Needless to say, when Matron Liu got home, her family all held the box of pastries in high regard. As for Zhu Junyang, he was currently staring fixedly at his wife's sleeping face, for fear that she would leave him if he blinked his eyes.

Many people in the capital privately gossiped about Princess Consort Xu being an immortal girl descended from the heavens. How could Zhu Junyang, who had seen her extraordinary abilities, not also think the same? But, no one could understand the uneasiness in his heart. There was also a time when Imperial Prince Xu, who others viewed as omnipotent and fearless, was afraid. Yes, he was afraid! He was afraid that his little wife would return to her world one day and leave him alone in this world.

Looking at the nearly transparent face on the bed, he grasped onto her hands tightly, for fear that his wife would leave him as soon as he loosened his hold. He shifted his gaze to the small, delicate bundle beside his wife. He was their son! Although the child's little face was bright red, wrinkled, and very ugly, his heart still instantly softened.

His little wife had once said that the child was the fruit of their love, the proof of their love, and the continuation of their blood. Alright, he had decided to accept the fact that their son was ugly. After all, his wife gave birth to him so he wouldn't dislike him.

When the little heir grew up, he inherited the good looks of his parents and was hailed as the 'most beautiful youth in the capital'. He never knew that when he was just born, his lord father had 'scorned' him for being outrageously ugly.

When Yu Xiaocao woke up, her mother, her godmother, her mother-in-law, and Auntie Zhao had all received the good news and came to see her.

They had supposedly come to see her, but they were all currently circled around the newborn. Even a minor frowning expression would cause them to fawn over him. Yu Xiaocao expressed that she was jealous!

Princess Consort Jing carried the little monkey-like heir and happily said, "Look, come look! These eyes and this nose...look exactly like his lord father's. He looks so handsome!"

Zhu Junyang, who was the first to notice that his wife had woken up, was currently feeding brown sugar water to his wife. When he heard his lady mother's words, he couldn't help but curl up his lips. Lady Mother was seriously lying with her eyes wide open. The little fellow looked like an ugly monkey, yet she said that he resembled him. If he looked like that, would his wife, who liked good-looking people, take a fancy to him?

Lady Fang echoed in agreement, "Yes, that's right! Look at his skin. He must have taken after his mother. It's so smooth and fair ah!"

Lady Fang, could your words be more fake? The little fellow's skin was bright red and his face was full of wrinkles. How exactly did you see that he looked fair and delicate? It was completely different to that of his wife's skin ah!

“In-law, let me hold him!” Had it not been for her identity of Princess Consort Jing, Madam Liu would have long snatched the little bundle from her. When the little guy was transferred from his paternal grandmother's hands to his maternal grandmother's hands, he seemed to be slightly annoyed that his sleep was disturbed. He frowned, slightly opened his eyes, and then continued to sleep.

“This child, it's apparent that he has a good temper.” Auntie Zhao commented on the side.

Princess Consort Jing quickly agreed, “Isn't that so! Senior Servant Li said that when the child was just born, he only cried when they patted his bottoms and remained quiet throughout the rest of the time.”

“A quiet child is easy to take care of! Our Cao'er is blessed.” Madam Liu touched the little guy's face and liked him even more.

Fields of Gold Chapter 719

Madam Liu was stunned when she received the news. She hadn't expected that her youngest daughter would give birth prematurely without any warning. In the countryside, there was a very low survival rate for premature babies. This was her daughter's first child, so things must not go wrong ah!

When she saw her young maternal grandson, her heart completely relaxed. Her young grandson wasn't small, and he was just slightly thinner than a full-term baby. The situation wasn't too bad. It was much better than when her daughter was just born.

Her two daughters were twins. Her eldest daughter was alright. She was somewhat small, but she had a strong cry. Her younger daughter, on the other hand, was not much bigger than her father's palm. She cried softly, like a little cat. Even the midwife said that she wouldn't be able to survive to adulthood!

When her youngest daughter was a child, she was indeed brought up on medicine. Fortunately, her health gradually recovered. It was often said that 'one who escaped from a great disaster was blessed with great fortune afterwards'. Wasn't this true for her youngest daughter? Not only did she gain such a big family business with her own abilities, but she also married Imperial Prince Xu. Even her maiden family was blessed thanks to her.

To be reborn in her daughter's belly, her young grandson must also be one who was blessed. However, what was wrong with this child? They had been taking turns to hold him for a long time. During that period, he had woken up and opened his eyes to look at them, but he didn't cry at all. Earlier, she had deliberately poked his chin. Although the little fellow showed an annoyed expression, he still didn't cry. This didn't seem right ah...

Just as she was thinking about this, the little fellow wrinkled up his face and grunted twice. Seeing this, Princess Consort Jing hastily said, "Is he hungry? Where's the wet nurse? Quickly come feed my dear little grandson."

Yu Xiaocao and Zhu Junyang were stunned for a moment, and then they looked at each other. Princess Consort Jing saw this and asked, "It can't be that you guys didn't hire a wet nurse, right? Just look at these two kids. How can there not be elders around to look after you guys? Senior Servant Li, what did I send you over for? The young imperial prince and young princess consort are inexperienced, but how can you not know about these matters?"

"In reply to Your Highness, the young princess consort said that those who have been nursing for more than half a year have little nutrition in the breast milk. Therefore, we selected two wet nurses. One hasn't given birth yet, while the other still has ten or so days until she's done with her one-month post-natal confinement..." Senior Servant Li felt wronged.

The young princess consort was famous for her medical skills in the capital, so her words must be right. But, who would have thought that the young princess consort would give birth two months ahead of schedule? This proved that saying, 'plans could never keep up with the changes'.

Seeing that her in-law was anxious, Madam Liu hastily comforted, "When a child is just born, he needs to discharge meconium first. I reckon that the child doesn't seem to be hungry. Let's first check if he has defecated."

With that, she skillfully unwrapped the swaddled cloth and pulled out his diaper. Sure enough, it was stained with dark green feces. Madam Liu cleaned her young maternal grandson's butt with warm water, and then put on a clean diaper. The little fellow felt comfortable now. He opened his gleaming black eyes and stared fixedly at his maternal grandmother. He kicked his legs and appeared very clever.

A group of granny-aged women were fawning over him. However, they encountered slight difficulty when they were rewrapping the swaddling cloth. The little fellow had experienced the taste of freedom, so he no longer wanted to be tied up and unable to move. He worked hard to kick his two little legs,

which weren't considered very strong. Madam Liu wrapped up her little grandson again with much difficulty.

When her eldest grandson was born, Princess Consort Jing was unable to take care of the child even for a day due to her health. She hadn't touched an infant in over twenty years, so despite being worried, she couldn't help with anything. Seeing that her little grandson's face was wrinkled up with a displeased expression after being wrapped up again, Princess Consort Jing tapped his little forehead and lovingly said, "You, this naughty little fellow, made your maternal grandmother so tired. So disobedient!"

The little fellow stared at her without blinking, and then...blew a bubble at her. Princess Consort Jing liked it so much that she laughed for half a day.

Princess Consort Jing took the baby and under Madam Liu's guidance, she gently patted him to sleep. She suddenly thought of her grandson's source of food and instructed, "Oh right, Senior Servant Li, check the servants of the two estates to see if there are any with children born within the past two to three months. Find one who is neat and nimble and has an upright character. We can let my little grandson go hungry."

Yu Xiaocao touched her swollen chest and said in a low voice, "Lady Mother, actually, I can feed the child myself. I heard that the first mouthful of milk is the most nutritious and good for the child's health..."

Princess Consort Jing had always treated her youngest daughter-in-law like her own daughter. She looked at somewhat haggard Xiaocao and said hesitantly, "Isn't it very tiring to take care of the child yourself? Wouldn't that affect your recuperation during your post-natal confinement?"

"It won't. Look, the little guy is so well behaved. He doesn't cry and throw tantrums. Moreover, I'm just nursing him. Isn't Meixiang and Senior Servant Li usually here to help me? How could it be tiring?" Yu Xiaocao strived for rights to take care of her own children. She felt uncomfortable with the thought of her child growing up being nursed by other people.

"It's often said that a child would be closer to the person who nursed him. In-law, you should just let her try." In the countryside, which family didn't raise their children themselves? At that time, they had to care for their children, as well as do the housework. Didn't all married women go through the same experience? When her eldest grandson was born, it was also her eldest daughter-in-law who took care of him while she helped on the side. They raised him into a fair and plump child, and he was very close to his maternal grandmother and mother!

Before Xiaocao began breastfeeding, she applied a hot towel for a while and carefully cleaned the tip. It was finally her, the mother's, turn to hold the baby. When the little fellow stared earnestly at her with his damp, dark eyes, the corners of Xiaocao's eyes turned red. A thing called 'familial affection' slowly flowed within her.

Infants were born with the innate ability to suck for milk. As soon as he was in his mother's arms and smelled the special scent, the little fellow relaxed his brows and opened his mouth to firmly grasp onto his 'source of food'. His small face was completely red as he worked hard to suck a few mouthfuls. The sweet milk flowed into his mouth.

Madam Liu guided her daughter on her posture of holding the baby. After nursing for a while, she told her to change to the other side. Newborns had a small appetite, so he stopped sucking after less than ten minutes. The little fellow, who was now full, looked at Xiaocao with his dark, gem-like eyes. The mother-son pair stared at each other until the little guy couldn't stand it anymore—he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

Zhu Junyang was afraid that his wife would be tired, so he hastily picked up his son and held him in a clumsy manner. His stiff posture looked more tiring than having him lift a stone dumbbell two hundred times.

Princess Consort Jing held back her laughter and reached out her hands to save her foolish son. Zhu Junyang finally felt relieved inwardly after he handed the little fellow into his lady mother's hands. He was seriously afraid that he couldn't control his strength and hurt the child.

Madam Liu, Lady Fang, and the others spoke briefly with Xiaocao. Seeing that she was tired, they got up and bid their farewells. Lady Fang said, "When Little Linlin heard that I was coming to see you, he pestered me for a long time, insisting to come along. I was afraid that he would cause a disturbance, so I persuaded him not to come."

"Godmother, bring Linlin along next time. He has always been an obedient child. We should let the little uncle see his nephew." Yu Xiaocao could imagine the disappointed expression of Fang Haolin, this little friend. Fang Haolin had grown up in front of her eyes, and thus the sister-brother pair naturally had a close relationship.

Lady Fang thought about it and nodded her head, "Okay! I'll bring him along the next time I visit! That fellow has been clamoring to see his older sister for a long time!"

Madam Liu shared some child-rearing experiences with her daughter. Upon leaving, she said, "I'll come to see you tomorrow. Remember that during the confinement period, you should not get chilled, take baths, and most importantly, exhaust yourself..."

"In-law, rest assured. I'll stay to look after her." Princess Consort Jing was reluctant to let go of her young grandson. Lanxiang and the other maidservants looked at each other. Her Highness didn't mention this before coming out ah. They didn't bring any change of clothes and necessities that the princess consort normally used...

The elders knew that Xiaocao liked to be clean. In the past, when they didn't have good living conditions in Dongshan Village, she still insisted on bathing daily. After she came to the capital, she had specially built a bathroom with heated flooring. She must take a bath every day. As her elders, they were afraid that she wouldn't listen to them and wash her hair and take baths during her post-natal confinement period.

Princess Consort Jing had suddenly proposed to stay for two reasons. On one hand, she was reluctant to leave her dear little grandson. On the other hand, she also wanted to watch her daughter-in-law. It was really worrying to not have an elder to watch over these two children.

The little guy grew very fast, and his facial features soon became apparent. He had charming phoenix eyes that indeed resembled his father. His nose was very delicate, and his mouth was slightly more plump than his father's. Princess Consort Jing held her young grandson in her arms everyday and was unwilling to put him down.

There was something different about the little guy every day, and he was so endearingly well-behaved. He never caused trouble and would only grunt a few times when he was hungry or needed to change his diapers. He was always quiet when they took care of him. When they played with him, he would stare at them with his gleaming black eyes and from time to time, show a toothless grin. He also didn't throw tantrums when he wanted to sleep. His eyelids would droop, and then he would try hard to open them. After a few times, he finally couldn't resist the calling of the 'God of Sleep' and fell into a slumber.

Such a clever and lovely little grandson. The longer Princess Consort Jing took care of him, the more she liked him. Thus, she decided to stay long-term at Imperial Prince Xu's Estate. Imperial Prince Jing

couldn't persuade her against the idea, so he could only let do what she wanted. Everyday, after attending court, he would also directly go to Prince Xu's Estate.

To have an elder at home was the same as having a treasure. The young couple were naturally willing to let their lady mother care for the child. Furthermore, Princess Consort Jing treated Xiaocao even better than her own son. There was no discord between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The three generations got along quite well.

The Heir of Imperial Prince Jing felt very helpless. His lord father and lady mother didn't stay at Prince Jing's Estate and insisted on living at his youngest brother's residence. Fortunately, his lord father had yet to pass his title to him. Otherwise, what would outsiders say about him? The eldest son, who had inherited the title, drove his parents out to live at his youngest brother's residence. How improper ah!

The heir personally visited the estate several times, but his lady mother rejected him with the reason that she was unable to leave the child because he was too young. 'Lady Mother, can you find a more genuine excuse? As the dignified Imperial Prince Xu, would Youngest Brother not be able to hire a wet nurse? Take a look at the other powerful and influential families. Which one of them didn't have several people, such as wet nurses and senior servants, taking care of their newborns? Would your help be needed?'

However, after he visited Prince Xu's Estate several times, he realized that his lady mother really wasn't just making up an excuse. Each time he saw his lady mother, she was holding his young nephew in her arms. He had also seen his lady mother skillfully change his young nephew's diapers and clean his butt!

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Perhaps his gaze had stayed on his lady mother and little nephew for too long, as his lady mother actually comforted him, "When Di'er was born, Lady Mother's health wasn't very good and couldn't help you take care of him. Don't think that your lady mother is being partial. By the time that the child in your wife's belly is born, Xuan'er wouldn't need me around all the time. At that time, Lady Mother can help you take care of your child! Lady Mother will have experience, so I will surely take good care of the baby!"

'Lady Mother, please don't say that. If Youngest Brother or Youngest Sister-in-law heard you, they might think that you're practicing with their son!'

Zhu Yunxuan was the name that Imperial Prince Jing gave the little fellow. His nicknames were Baozi and pork steamed bun, both of which were given by his 'unreliable' mother. As the heir of Imperial Prince Xu, it was quite silly for him to have such humble nicknames. When he grew up, he was often teased by

other kids. In the end, after these people were made very miserable by this black sesame filling steamed bun, there was gradually no one who dared to make fun of his nickname.

Little Baozi was different from his lord father, who subdued others with his strength. He would use his intelligence to make others unable to lift their head. When he grew up, he appeared handsome, gentle, and harmless on the surface. But, in fact, he was actually very black-bellied. Almost all of the noble young masters, who were around his age, in the capital had stumbled in his hands. Later, there was a saying in the capital, 'It's better to offend Imperial Prince Xu than to provoke his heir'.

At this time, Imperial Prince Xu's heir was still an adorable little bun. After the wet nurse completed her post-natal confinement period, Imperial Prince Xu, who felt bad that his wife had to get up multiple times every night to feed the child, gave Little Baozi to the wet nurse to be taken care of. However, Little Baozi was already accustomed to the usual taste and was desperately unwilling to consume the wet nurse's breast milk.

Zhu Junyang hardened his heart and decided to let him starve for two meals. Little Baozi, who had never been troublesome, cried until his voice was hoarse and still refused to drink even a mouthful. Even if it was placed into his mouth, he would push it out with his tongue. If he couldn't push it out, he would just hold still and not suck or swallow. With his mouth blocked, his cries were soundless, and he could only shed silent tears.

Princess Consort Jing's heart pained to see this. She snatched her grandson from the wet nurse's arms and carried him to Xiaocao. With reddened eyes, she choked, "How can there be such cruel parents like you two? The child has been crying all day and hasn't even drunk a mouthful of milk. Do you guys want to starve him to death ah? My pitiful Little Baozi, your parents don't care about you, but your grandmother does. If your parents don't want to raise you, Grandmother will bring you back to Prince Jing's Estate to raise!"

When Yu Xiaocao heard Little Baozi's low and feeble cry, she felt as if her heart had been pulled out by someone. She glared fiercely at Zhu Junyang and asked angrily, "Didn't you say that Little Baozi is doing very well with the wet nurse—eating well and sleeping well? Why didn't you tell me about Little Baozi refusing to drink the wet nurse's breast milk? Why didn't you carry Little Baozi back when he's crying so much that he can barely breathe? You're abusing my son; I won't let you off!!"

Seeing this, Princess Consort Jing realized that it was her son's fault. She quickly put Little Baozi into her daughter-in-law's arms. Then raised her hand and smacked her youngest son a few times. She hit him so hard that even her hand had turned red. "Is there such a father like you? Is your heart made of stone?"

Little Baozi is only around a dozen days old, so he can't miss a single meal. How can you be so cruel that you let him starve for an entire day?"

Little Baozi, who had arrived in his mother's embrace, stopped crying upon smelling the familiar scent. His little face was still wrinkled up in aggrievement, and from time to time, he would sniffle, appearing extremely pitiful.

With a pained heart, Xiaocao kissed her son's forehead and opened her clothes. When Little Baozi, who had been starving for a day, smelled the luring fragrance of milk, he accurately located his 'source of food' and sucked and swallowed big mouthfuls.

It was no wonder that Little Baozi refused to drink other people's breast milk. Xiaocao's body had been nourished and transformed by mystic-stone water since childhood. Her breast milk contained a faint amount of spiritual energy, and thus it had a better taste and higher nutritional value than that of normal people's milk. This was similar to suddenly letting a nobleman, who was used to eating rich feasts, eat a coarse grain steamed bun. It would be strange if he was willing to eat it!

He was his own flesh and blood after all. How could Zhu Junyang not feel distressed? He believed that boys should be raised in a rough manner, especially the eldest son. In the future, he must be able to stand on his own and not be used to relying on him for everything.

In his opinion, his refusal to drink the wet nurse's breast milk was probably because he wasn't accustomed to it. Habits were developed slowly. Besides, drinking milk was an innate skill for young children. He would naturally eat when he was hungry. However, he hadn't expected that his son would go against his thoughts—no matter what he just refused to eat.

Zhu Junyang, who was criticized by his lady mother and ignored by his wife, completely gave up on the idea of letting the wet nurse take care of their son. He repeatedly apologized and tried to put in a good word for himself in front of his lady mother and his wife. But, unlike before, Yu Xiaocao didn't easily forgive him. She didn't hit or scold him, let alone pulled a long face. Instead, she ignored him completely.

When Zhu Junyang spoke to her, she directly disregarded him. When Zhu Junyang loitered in front of her, her gaze went straight through him and fell behind him. When Zhu Junyang pulled on her arm, she would only stare fixedly at the hand on her arm until it withdrew from her staring...

For Zhu Junyang, this felt even worse than being beaten and scolded. As for his son, who was the 'culprit', he acted just like his mother and didn't act in accordance with his father.

As long as Zhu Junyang appeared in Little Baozi's line of sight, he would wrinkle up his little face and whimper. It was a tearless cry that only had sounds. Once Zhu Junyang retracted his head and was out of his sight, he would immediately be all sunshine and rainbows again, showing a toothless grin to his mother and grandmother. If his father wanted to get close to him and hug him, that would provoke him and lead to a loud, deafening cry. As soon as he put him down, even if he was just placed on the bed, he would abruptly stop crying as if there was a switch on his body.

Tsk! Imperial Prince Xu felt very aggrieved that both the mother and son didn't want to see him. Princess Consort Jing just had to make things worse at this time, "Serves you right! Let's see if you would do such a stupid thing again in the future?! My dear grandson, your lord father is a baddie. Let's not forgive and teach him a lesson!"

Ay! Even his own mother was pulled into the enemy camp. Zhu Junyang felt utterly helpless ah!

This situation lasted for ten or so days, and it wasn't until Little Baozi's full moon banquet that his wife finally slightly softened her stance. Because Little Baozi was a premature baby, his washing ceremony was held in a simple manner with some close friends and relatives coming to see the baby.

Imperial Prince Xu and his wife also didn't plan to host a big event for Little Baozi's full moon banquet. Zhu Junyang felt bad for his wife, who had just finished her post-natal confinement period. He was afraid that she would be tired, so the full moon banquet was held in Zhenxiu Restaurant. Even though they didn't send out many invitations, there were many who came uninvited.

Imperial Prince Xu's position in the imperial court was rising like the morning sun, and Princess Consort Xu's reputation among the common people was becoming better and better. There was absolutely no harm in becoming acquainted with them ah! It would be very foolish of them to not come to increase their sense of presence! Even if they weren't qualified to sit at the banquet, their names would be recorded on the gift list when they delivered their presents. When Imperial Prince Xu and his wife looked over the list, their names would eventually appear in the couple's eyes.

There were many people who had such thoughts, and thus Imperial Prince Xu's huge outer courtyard was nearly swamped with gifts. The full moon banquet was also very lively with friends and family gathered together. Little Baozi was first carried by his mother to walk amongst the womenfolk and

received a lot of valuable gifts. Then his father carried him away to show off among the male guests. One would be tired from holding all the presents that he had received.

Little Baozi gave his father a lot of face. At the full moon banquet, he was carried around by his father for half a day, but he didn't cry at all. Zhu Junyang inwardly pondered, 'Does this brat's attitude towards him depend on his mother's attitude? It can't be. This little fellow is so young, so what would he know?'

In the evening, after Little Baozi fell asleep, Zhu Junyang scooped closer to his wife and told her his guess. Yu Xiaocao thought about it seriously and nodded, "That's quite possible! Infants don't know anything, but they should be able to feel their parents' emotions. Perhaps Little Baozi felt my indifference towards you, so he also didn't like you."

Zhu Junyang had a wronged expression on his face that looked exactly like his one-month old son, "Wife, you're being too cold and indifferent to me. We can't let this happen again in the future."

"Who told you to do something so vexing? He's only around a dozen days old, moreover, he's a premature baby. How can you let him starve for a day? If something bad happens, do you think that I will let you off easily?" Yu Xiaocao still felt infuriated when she spoke of this matter. Had it not been for her meticulous care, Little Baozi might have already fallen ill from being starved by his father!

Zhu Junyang sincerely admitted his mistake, "This prince is indeed at fault for this matter! I didn't expect that the little guy would be so persistent—he would rather starve than give in. To have such a resolute, firm, and tenacious temperament, he is indeed this prince's son..."

"You still dare to mention it! Have you ever thought that if something bad happened, how in the world would you give me back my son?" Yu Xiaocao grabbed his ears and pulled them hard towards opposite directions.

Unexpectedly, when this guy heard her words, his phoenix eyes instantly lit up. He hugged his wife and jumped onto the bed. With a smile on his face, he hinted, "Our son is fine, but that doesn't stop me from giving you another son. Cao'er, my dear sweetheart, this prince really misses you——"

"Scram! Where did you learn to speak in such a tone as if you're flirting with naïve women?" Yu Xiaocao's mouth was soon blocked, and the clothes on her body fell to the ground like autumn leaves. Then it was followed by the gasping sounds that could cause one's face to flush...

Imperial Prince Xu, who had been 'starving' for several months, could finally eat a delicious meal. Furthermore, it was a huge banquet— an all 'milk' feast. The taste was extraordinary!

That night, the young heir, who was having a midnight snack, worked hard to suck tasty breast milk. However, today's 'food bag' seemed to be quite empty— he had to suck very hard ah! Little Baozi exerted a lot of strength yet only ended up half-full before he pitifully went back to sleep.

Yu Xiaocao was so angry that she twisted and pinched the flesh on her man's body. This guy was so shameless that he even stole his son's food. How could there be such a father! It was no wonder that Little Baozi didn't like him! He was a father who didn't act like a father!

With a contented expression on his face, Zhu Junyang let his wife pinch him as if she was just giving him a massage. But she had inadvertently lit up a fire with her pinching. As if she was a salted fish, Yu Xiaocao was flipped around and tossed about for most of the night. She was so tired that she didn't even have strength to move her fingers. When their son woke up hungry in the middle of the night, it was Zhu Junyang who carried him over and placed him in front of her chest to be fed. As for the exhausted Xiaocao, she had no idea about this matter and slept until the late morning.