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Fields of Gold Chapter 721

Perhaps he was frightened when Xiaocao gave birth last time, Zhu Junyang had secretly gotten a contraceptive prescription from the imperial physician. As a result, Little Baozi had already reached the age of five, but he was still the only child in Imperial Prince Xu's Household.

Princess Consort Jing felt very anxious ah! Why were they all like this? Her eldest daughter-in-law also couldn't get pregnant for many years after giving birth to her first child. It was after Xiaocao helped her nourish her body that she was able to successively give birth to three sons and a daughter. Her second daughter-in-law's mother had died early, so there weren't any female elders to look after her. There was severe coldness in her uterus. After she got married, she had nourished her body for two years before she finally received good news and consecutively gave birth to three sons.

But, that wasn't right ah! Her youngest daughter-in-law was a doctor herself. Even if she had hurt her body when she gave birth to Little Baozi, shouldn't she have already recovered after recuperating for so many years? But it had already been five years. Why hadn't there been any good news at all? Could it be that 'doctors didn't treat themselves'? After Princess Consort Jing privately murmured to her husband several times, she finally couldn't resist looking for her youngest son, "Yang'er, perhaps you should get an imperial physician to check on your wife?"

Zhu Junyang, who had just led the Xishan Barrack to suppress bandits and returned victorious, was startled by her words. He repeatedly asked, "What's wrong with Xiaocao? Where does she feel unwell? When I saw her earlier, she was playing hide-and-seek with our son. Was she trying to make our son happy while putting up a front?"

The young heir, Zhu Yunxuan, had a helpless expression on his face, 'Lord Father, are you sure it's not your son who's playing with your wife to make her happy?'

The five-year-old Little Baozi had a relatively precocious temperament and gave off a sense of maturity for his young age. He had long been dismissive of 'childish games' like hide-and-seek, rolling iron hoops, and throwing sandbags, ok? He was now more interested in writing, mounted archery, and practicing martial arts.

He enjoyed all of these activities, but his lady mother didn't think so. She felt that her son, who was so young, was very pitiful to be 'forced' by his lord father to study and practice martial arts. He was such a tiny person, yet he had to half-squat under the blazing sun for over an hour. His little face was flushed red from the sun and sweat trickled down his face. As his mother, her heart pained to see this ah! In

order to not destroy the nature of a child, Yu Xiaocao used her spare time to play parent-child games with her son. However, she didn't know that these games, which she thought were interesting, were extremely childish in her son's eyes.

Seeing that his lord father often went out for official business for many days, Little Baozi, who loved his lady mother, reckoned that his lady mother was too lonely and thus she wanted him to accompany her. He was filial, so although he was annoyed by these childish games, he still impatiently accompanied his lady mother and tried to make her happy. Old Laizi still wore colorful attires to entertain his parents when he was over eighty years old. So what was wrong with him sacrificing a little to accompany his lady mother to play these stupid and simple games?

However, his lord father obviously didn't understand his act of filial piety. He thought that his wife had gotten sick from exhaustion from playing with their energetic son. He felt very anxious ah! He chided his 'ignorant' son in his heart!

Seeing that her son's mind had wandered elsewhere, Princess Consort Jing quickly pulled on him and asked after a moment of hesitation, "No, that's not it. Lady Mother wanted to ask you...there's nothing wrong with your wife's health, right?"

"What could be wrong?" Zhu Junyang suddenly thought of his wife's medical skills and how there weren't anyone in the Great Ming Empire who could surpass her in making medicine. If she was ill, she would be fine after taking some medication. What exactly did his lady mother mean by talking about this?

"She's fine ah...then..." Princess Consort Jing paused for a long time and hesitated to speak as she looked at her son. Could it be that there was something wrong with her son? Men usually had strong self-esteem and were unwilling to accept the truth. It was quite possible for him to avoid getting medical treatment.

"Lady Mother, what exactly do you want to say? Can you stop beating around the bush?" Princess Consort Jing hesitated to speak and looked at him from time to time. Zhu Junyang felt weird from his lady mother's staring, so he couldn't help but ask.

Princess Consort Jing told him about the worries in her heart. Zhu Junyang didn't know if he should cry or laugh, "Lady Mother! Your son is in perfect health! You should focus your energy on Second Brother's daughter. Second Sister-in-law doesn't look like someone who can take care of children, so you need to stay beside her and help her out more."

“If you are both healthy, then...why aren't you guys giving Xuan'er, who is already five, a younger sibling?” Princess Consort Jing finally expressed the purpose of her visit.

Zhu Junyang didn't know whether he should laugh or cry. He coaxed his lady mother, “You can rest assured! We will definitely give you another grandchild next year, okay?”

“You make it sound so easy ah! It's not something you can control...” Princess Consort Jing grumbled as she returned to Prince Jing's Estate. Then she complained to her husband, who had 'retired' and was staying at home. Imperial Prince Jing was so annoyed that he went to Duke Rongguo Estate everyday to play go and drink tea with his old friend.

Imperial Prince Xu, whose 'ability' was questioned by his lady mother, tried to prove his capability with his wife throughout his entire break. Xiaocao's whole body felt sore everyday, and she kept scolding her man for acting crazy. The filial Little Baozi saw that his mother often held her waist, and thus thought that she was ill. He thoughtfully helped massage her back and waist and seriously reminded her to rest more.

Under Imperial Prince Xu's hard work, the good news of Princess Consort Xu's pregnancy finally came out of Imperial Prince Xu's Estate. At this time, the yield of winter wheat, which produced a thousand catties per mu, had finally stabilized. The common people said that this younger son of Princess Consort Xu would be born with good luck.

The current Great Ming Dynasty had truly become an empire that was strong, prosperous, and peaceful. In Jiangnan, hybrid rice with a yield of over one thousand catties per mu had been popularized. The breeding base for hybrid rice had expanded to ten thousand mu and provided seeds for most paddy fields in Jiangnan.

Old Official Wu had been promoted three ranks for his contribution to the research on hybrid rice. However, he had declined the good opportunity to work in the capital and insisted on staying at the breeding farm in Jinling to continue working in the improvement of hybrid rice. The Clerk of the Capital for Grain had once mentioned that it was not a dream for super hybrid rice to produce two thousand catties per mu. This had become a lifelong goal of Old Official Wu! Old Official Wu's achievements were later recorded in the Annals of History, and he became known as the 'Father of Rice'...

The seeds for high-yielding winter wheat, corn, and potatoes were widely planted in the northern regions. This was especially important in the most impoverished regions, the northwest and the northeast, where only one crop could be harvested in a year. These high-yield crops had freed the people there from the threat of starvation.

The Xishan Armory under Imperial Prince Xu's supervision was producing more and more sophisticated weapons. No matter if it were the refined steel weapons or firearms such as muskets and cannons, the productions were increasing year by year. The armory had also improved the firearms and produced a firearm that could shoot continuously. The range and accuracy had improved significantly.

In short, the Great Ming Empire was like an enormous dragon entrenched in the east side of the world. The small neighboring nations and belligerent tribes in the north had to submit to them for fear of being swept by the tail of the soaring dragon. Fortunately, the emperor wasn't a militant and ambitious man. He had no intention of occupying the smaller nations around the empire. Otherwise...the territory of the Great Ming Empire would expand to the max!

Princess Consort Xu and Imperial Prince Xu, who were great heroes in the eyes of the common people and imperial officials, were currently suffering from morning sickness and anxiously loitering on the side while feeling heartache for his wife, respectively.

“What's wrong? Everything was fine when she was pregnant with Xuan'er. Why is she vomiting whenever she eats this time? The lass has already lost so much weight in just a few days!” Seeing that his wife immediately vomited as soon as she smelled the scent of scrambled eggs with shrimp, which was a dish that she usually liked, Zhu Junyang hastily ordered the maidservant to take the dish away. Then he got a cup of water and personally helped her rinse her mouth.

Yu Xiaocao vomited so much that she didn't have the strength to speak. Her eyes were rimming with tears as she looked at her husband with a wronged expression. She was clearly very hungry, yet she puked out everything that she ate. The mystic-stone water had sustained her through the past few days, otherwise, her constitution would have gotten very bad.

Zhu Junyang was very distressed, but he didn't know what to do. He stared at his wife's belly and said, “How can this child be so different from its older brother? It's torturing its mother so much. When it is born, I must teach it a lesson.”

The little fellow Zhu Yunxuan stayed by his lady mother's side with tears in his eyes. He had never seen his lady mother suffering so much. Hearing his father's words, he glared angrily at his mother's belly

with phoenix eyes that were very similar to his father's, 'Younger Brother (Younger Sister) is naughty. In the future, I must help Mother look after my younger siblings, lest they cause trouble and make things difficult for Mother.'

In the years to come, Zhu Yunxuan gave full play to his role as the eldest brother and acted very strictly to his younger siblings. The future little buns weren't afraid of their cold-faced lord father, nor their gentle lady mother. They were only afraid of their extremely beautiful older brother who had a smile on his face all day long. This was a story for the future.

In the first trimester of her pregnancy, Xiaocao often vomited almost everything that she ate. Even if Yangliu took a break from managing the business and personally prepared delicious medicinal cuisines for her mistress, she still didn't change this condition.

Xiaocao, who was in the early stages of her pregnancy, felt very painful and often puked out everything in her stomach. In order to ensure the nutrition of the mother's body and the fetus, she had to force herself to eat. She would immediately vomit and then continue eating. She, who was originally very thin, was about to turn into a stick from losing so much weight.

Xiaocao's mother, godmother, and mother-in-law were all very worried and decided to stay in Prince Xu's Estate. This made it more convenient for them to take care of her. Knowing that she could eat some fresh fruits, the fruit orchards, greenhouses, and icehouses of the plantation all did their best to send seasonal, off-season, and refrigerated fruits to the Prince Xu's Estate.

However, the appetite of the child in Xiaocao's belly constantly changed. Today, she might be able to eat a few bites of an apple, but on the next day, she would vomit after just eating a couple bites. However, she would be able to eat a few pieces of grapes... It was unknown how the news spread to the outside, but when others heard this, they all said that this was only possible because Princess Consort Xu owned many businesses so they were able to get many different types of fruits. Had it been other families, they wouldn't be able to do anything about it.

This torture lasted for three months before all the symptoms came to an abrupt end. Yu Xiaocao's appetite gradually improved. With Yangliu and the kitchen maids of Prince Xu's Estate, their mistress soon regained all the flesh that she had lost.

Yu Xiaocao felt that the child in her belly would surely be a picky eater. Today, it learned to eat spicy food. There was a layer of chili pepper on top of the Sichuan poached fish in chili sauce. Her mouth was numb from the spiciness, but she still ate with relish. The chili pepper in the spicy chicken bites were

crisp and fragrant. She could eat half a plate of the chili pepper. Princess Consort Jing happily said, "Sourness for sons and spiciness for daughters; it must be a delicate little royal princess this time. With a boy and a girl, we'll have the character 'good'.

But, on another day, she would like sour food. She could eat an entire plate of extremely sour green plums without a change on her face. She ate two or three lemons, which were shipped back from the southern coast, in succession without even blinking her eyes. Her mother and mother-in-law were afraid that she would eat too much of the sour food, and thus took turns to keep an eye on her.

At times, she would be very interested in food with a very strong smell. For example, she would find the foul-smelling stinky tofu and durians, which had an extraordinary scent, to be very delicious.

When she was five to six months into her pregnancy, her tummy inflated like a balloon and was much bigger than the average pregnant woman. But, with their prior experience of her first pregnancy, no one paid too much attention to it. However, they had prepared the delivery room and invited the midwife to the estate before the seventh month, for fear that they would be caught off guard like when the heir was born.

However, this child was not as impatient as his (her) older brother. It stayed in its mother's womb for more than nine months. By the time that Yu Xiaocao was about to give birth, her belly was so big that her skin nearly appeared transparent, which made others worry that it might explode at any time. Her swollen legs looked like radishes. When one poked on it, a deep pit would appear. She couldn't fit in her own shoes, so she had to totter around in her man's shoes. She didn't like to wear the shoes that the sewing department made for her.

When she was seven months into her pregnancy, Imperial Prince Xu had requested for a break and stayed around his wife everyday. Especially when she strolled around in his big shoes. He was afraid that she would trip on the shoes, so he carefully supported Xiaocao like how Li Lianying served the empress dowager.

When Xiaocao got cramps in her legs in the middle of the night and teared up due to the pain, he would get up and gently massage her to relieve the symptoms. Her belly was too big, and she often needed to use the bathroom at night, so he would carry her over. Every day, he personally helped her soak her feet and massage her lower legs. He completely followed through with the role of a perfect husband.

The director of the Imperial Hospital had warned them that there might be more than one baby and that they should prepare all the necessary supplies. Therefore, they weren't taken by surprise when the boy-girl twins were born.

However, the delivery didn't go as smoothly as the last time for Xiaocao. It took six to eight hours for the two little fellows to finally arrive in this world. Since they were full-term babies, Little Mantou and Little Guozi weighed about the same as their older brother when he was just born. One weighed 3.2 kg and the other was 3.1 kg. Their thunderous cries were enough to prove that the two little fellows were in good health.

After the two little fellows grew older, those who didn't know would often mix up their genders. The reason was simple. Little Mantou, the baby boy, looked 80% similar to his mother. He had cute, round almond-shaped eyes and thick, long eyelashes, just like Xiaocao. The baby girl, on the other hand, had inherited her father's phoenix eyes. In particular, her dashing eyebrows caused others to mistake her gender.

It was apparent that Zhu Junyang favored their second son, who resembled his wife. When he had time, he would carry him in his arms and be unwilling to let go. Princess Consort Jing, on the other hand, preferred her young granddaughter. She often imagined what her youngest son's facial features would look like if it was on a girl. Her young granddaughter had satisfied her imagination—she looked exactly the same as when she dressed her youngest son up as a girl when he was an infant.

When Yu Xiaocao gave birth, she almost had a massive blood loss, which hurt her vitality. Thus, her husband forced her to have a two-month post-natal confinement period. Zhu Junyang had also been frightened by his wife's dangerous childbirth process, and secretly decided that they wouldn't have any more children. He secretly took the 'sterilization pill' made by his wife.

According to the Annals of History, Imperial Prince Xu and Princess Consort Xu had two sons and one daughter. They lived past the age of one hundred, and passed away in their sleep on the same day...

Fields of Gold Chapter 722

“Little Mantou, Little Guozi, Maternal Uncle has come to see you guys—eh? What are you guys doing?” When Yu Fan walked through the garden and passed by the lotus pond, he saw two tiny little fellows squatting beside the pond. He felt alarmed in his heart.

Little Mantou, who had big eyes that were similar to his mother's, looked at him with his round eyes and showed a cute smile, “Uncle Shitou, we're teaching the little chick to swim.”

Little Guozi, who was beside him, narrowed her slender phoenix eyes and said with a look of disdain, "Second Brother is so stupid! I already told you that little chicks can't swim—it's little ducklings that can!"

"They don't know how, so they need us to teach them ah! Won't they know after they learn?" Little Mantou, who was holding a furry little chick, seemed like he wanted to throw the little chick into the water. The pitiful little chick was trembling in his hands, as if it had foreseen its fate.

Little Guozi rolled her eyes cutely and replied in a sharp voice, "Do you know how? You don't even know how to swim, so how are you going to teach the little chick? If you want to teach the little chick to swim, you need to first learn it yourself!"

Yu Fan thought that his nephew and niece looked extremely adorable. Why were they so cute? Especially his little niece, when she reasoned in such a serious manner, she looked exactly like his second sister when she was a child. However, there didn't seem to be much logic in her reasoning. Even if Little Mantou learned how to swim, he still wouldn't be able to teach a little chick how to swim.

"Zhu Yunxiao! Did you steal a little chick from the east side courtyard again?!" Zhu Yunxuan, the Heir of Imperial Prince Xu, had returned from outside. He was already nine years old, and he looked exactly like his lord father when he didn't smile.

The east side courtyard used to be a huge garden, but it was later transformed into a rural scenery. There was a uniquely shaped thatched pavilion, a house with earthen walls and a thatched roof, as well as a fishing pond with rippling waves. There was also a lush green vegetable garden and a wheat field with a promising harvest. The reason Imperial Prince Xu did this was because Princess Consort Xu had expressed, "I'm really afraid that our children will neither do physical labor nor be able to distinguish the five grains." Hence, he plowed down the garden and planted wheat. Although two of the three children of Imperial Prince Xu's Household were only four years old, they all participated in the field work. But, of course, the two younger ones tended to cause trouble more often than not.

In order to cultivate the children's compassion, a chicken coop was built next to the vegetable garden. A group of chicks were hatched for the children to raise. They were supposedly responsible for raising them, but, in actuality, they just needed to use some time every day to feed them a handful of grains and some water. There were servants in charge of cleaning the chicken coop.

Today, when Zhu Yunxuan came back from horse racing at the racetracks, he went to the chicken coop to feed millets to the little chicks. However, he found that one was missing. Due to the fact that his younger brother had done something similar in the past, he charged directly to the lotus pond. Sure enough, he found the missing chick in his younger brother's hands.

“Didn't I tell you already? Little chicks can't swim! If you throw it in, you'll just end up killing it. Did you forget about Little Black Mouth? Didn't it drown because of you?” Zhu Yunxuan was about to cry because of his younger brother's stupidity.

“But...” Little Mantou pouted and still wanted to say something.

“No buts! Now, this instant, take Little Ball back immediately!! In the future, you're not allowed to catch the little chicks to play again! Do you hear me?” Zhu Yunxuan stated each word clearly, and his plump lips were pursed into a line.

Little Mantou knew that his older brother was upset. He was unwilling, but due to his older brother's imposing force, he had no choice but to answer, “I understand...”

This was because he knew that if he didn't listen to his older brother, he would be the one who would suffer in the end. When he was about to finish drinking his porridge, he would find a fat bug at the bottom of the bowl. There would be a hole in the back of his clothes, which would cause his friends to laugh at him upon seeing the white flesh of his butt. When he practiced calligraphy, ink would 'accidentally' stain his completed works and he would have to rewrite them...

There were many similar situations. When he went to tell his parents about his older brother, Eldest Brother got praised instead. Over time, he had learned from these suffering that he couldn't offend his older brother. He couldn't disobey his older brother's words, otherwise, he would suffer badly.

Although he really wanted to teach the little chick a new skill, he had no choice but to give up on this plan. The little chick named Little Ball had escaped a disaster.

Seeing that his younger brother was so well-behaved, Zhu Yunxuan decided to 'give some sweets after a scolding', “If you show improvement in your handwriting, can memorize the Thousand-Character Classic, and can do the half-squat for an hour, I'll help you persuade Lady Mother to let you raise a duck as a pet. But, you have to take care of the duck yourself and can't let others help you!”

When Little Mantou heard this, he instantly became energized, “Eldest Brother, I have already memorized the Thousand-Character Classic. Listen—The sky is dark, and the earth is yellow; the space is vast and limitless. The sun and moon wax and wane; the stars lodge in their constellations...I practice calligraphy seriously everyday, and even Lord Father has praised me for being talented. Also, also...I persisted in squatting for an hour this morning. If you don't believe me, you can ask Little Wu'zi.” Little Wu'zi was his personal manservant. He was only ten, but he was a very clever fellow.

Little Mantou was very envious that his lady mother could raise two 'big dogs' as pets. He had always wanted to have a pet of his own, regardless of what it was.

Yu Fan, who was watching the interaction between his nephews, laughed incessantly in his heart. There were so many options, so why did he want to raise a duck? He looked forward to seeing his little nephew's anxious expression when the little duck jumped into the water

“Uncle Shitou, did you come to see my lady mother? Right now, she should be in the small study of Jiale Hall.” Every day at this time, as long as Lord Father was at home, Lady Mother would accompany Lord Father to study—one grinded the ink, while the other practiced calligraphy.

Practicing calligraphy was just an excuse for them to spend some time together. The three children of Imperial Prince Xu's Estate were all used to their lord father being clingy to their lady mother. At the beginning, Little Mantou and Little Guozi had protested against their lord father for frequently stealing their lady mother from them. After repeated failures, they finally admitted their fate.

Yu Fan nodded his head and patted his oldest nephew's shoulder. Then he caressed Little Mantou's head and pinched Little Guozi's cheeks. He said with a smile, “Maternal Uncle needs to first find your lady mother for official business. I'll play with you guys later. Little Baozi, take good care of your younger siblings ah!”

Seeing Zhu Yunxuan wrinkle up his face, which looked very similar to Imperial Prince Xu's, Yu Fan snickered in his heart. He did it on purpose. He knew that his oldest nephew didn't like others calling him by his nickname, but he wanted to see a helpless expression on a face that looked similar to the guy who stole his second sister from him.

“Uncle Shitou came to fight for Lady Mother with Lord Father again. Lord Father is so pitiful!” Little Guozi ate a piece of candy that her younger maternal uncle brought over from the candy shop and sighed. But, could she somewhat suppress her expression of wanting to see a good show?

Little Mantou opened his mouth to let his younger sister put a candy into his mouth. He said in a muffled voice, “Is this retribution for Lord Father because he's always stealing Lady Mother from us?” This brat, if his lord father heard what he had said, who knew where the retribution would fall on?

“You two, it's time to study so come to the outer study with Eldest Brother. Be careful that the teacher will hit your palms if you're late!” Zhu Yunxuan took his younger siblings, who had wanted to join in the fun, all the way to the side courtyard.

Little Guozi looked around and revealed a pitiful expression, “Eldest Brother, today, Little Mantou pulled me along to watch him teach the little chick to swim, so I didn't get to eat my afternoon snacks. I'm so hungry...”

“Don't you have candies in your hand? Eat two pieces for now; we'll have dinner soon!” Zhu Yunxuan was used to his younger sister's tricks, so he replied indifferently.

Little Mantou held the little chick in his hands in front of his older brother, “Eldest Brother, don't we have to take Little Ball back before going to the outer study? If the teacher sees it, he will throw him out. At that time, it will become a pitiful stray chicken——a beggar chicken. That's so pitiful ah!”

“Little Wu'zi, bring the chick in Second Young Master's hands back to the east side courtyard!” There were no emotions in Zhu Yunxuan's voice. Without stopping, he took the two little fellows to the outer courtyard.

Little Mantou opened his hands and wailed, “Eldest Brother, there's chicken poop on my hands. So stinky! Can we go back to my room to wash it first?”

“There's a wash basin, as well as hand soap, in the outer study.” Zhu Yunxuan spoke in a tone that didn't allow any doubt. His younger siblings were very smart and learned very quickly, but they just didn't like learning. Since they started studying at the age of three, they would try to challenge the teacher every day in an attempt to slip away.

Although the teacher was very knowledgeable, he had a rather pedantic temperament. Thus, the two little fellows often succeed in skipping classes. After Lady Mother heard the teacher's complaint, she handed the task of supervising his younger siblings' studies to him, the eldest brother. He would rather use this spare time to read another book or practice another set of boxing with his martial arts teacher.

As a result, the earlier situation would repeat every day. The two little fellows would try their best to escape from the classroom or delay entering the classroom. He, on the other hand, would foil their little schemes one by one—Ay! It was so tiring to be the eldest brother!

After Zhu Yunxuan threw the two little fellows in the outer study, he warned the two people who were obviously thinking of bad ideas, "You two better behave! If I hear the teacher complain about you two being disobedient, then Little Mantou will be served a bug feast tonight and Little Guozi won't be allowed to eat sweets for a month!"

"Ah—don't, Eldest Brother—" The two little fellows wailed. Little Mantou was a boy, but he was the most afraid of squirmy bugs and so on. Allegedly, he had been scared by a little green insect that had fallen on his nose when he was younger.

As for Little Guozi, like other children, she loved to eat sweets. Especially when her lady mother was suddenly in the mood to cook, the pastries that her lady mother made herself were her favorite. Her lady mother was afraid that her teeth would rot so she only permitted her to eat two pieces of candy and a piece of cake each day. She must brush her teeth after eating.

Zhu Yunxuan grasped the weaknesses of his younger siblings, so even if they were the Monkey King, they still wouldn't be able to escape from his palm. Uh...would Lady Mother continue with yesterday's Journey to the West for tonight's parent-child storytelling time? He really looked forward to it ah!

"Disciples follow rules, while the sage teaches. Filial piety comes first, and sincerity is next..." The childish voices of his younger siblings reciting sounded from the room. Zhu Yunxuan went into the adjacent room and listened with relish to his lord father's former subordinate telling him about the arts of war and military tactics.

He liked to read books, but he was even more interested in listening to his lord father and Second Paternal Uncle talk about the ups and downs of the battlefield. His lord father said that when he reached the age of ten, he would take him to experience life at the Xishan Barracks. Before that, he must be fully prepared so that he wouldn't disgrace his lord father...

Fields of Gold Chapter 723

The imperial family's academy was located on the east side of the imperial city and was a school for the 'rich and nobility'. It started off from 'kindergarten' all the way to the 'class for people taking the metropolitan civil exam'. The academy only allowed members of the imperial family as well as the children of fourth-ranked officials and above to attend.

The teachers in the academy were all extremely qualified as they were all well-known scholars who had gotten either first, second, or third place in the imperial exams. The current prime minister was also an instructor there and the martial arts instructors were all experienced generals. Imperial Prince Xu had also been invited over to teach the students martial arts and equestrian skills...

It was now a known fact that the crown prince was going to become the next emperor and that the imperial academy was established for the crown prince to find talented folks. In order to enter the imperial family's eyes, many people in the capital racked their brains to find a way to get their children in. This was because the academy had strict entry requirements. One not only had to have the right status, but the school also cared about the morality and behavior of the prospective students. Those who didn't meet these standards were asked to leave.

Currently, a little issue had occurred at the imperial family's academy. The wife of the imperial tutor was leading along a pale and fat... 'panda', and she was currently vehemently arguing with Yu Fan, who was unfortunately on duty that day, "Just look ah! My grandson has been beat up into a pulp. Isn't the academy a safe place for learning ah? Isn't it important that all of the students behave properly and correctly ah? As teachers, how could you indulge the members of the imperial family and allow them to bully other students ah?"

The little fatty that she was holding onto had two black eyes and a split lip. It was obvious at a glance that he had been pummeled by someone.

"Paternal Grandmother, Paternal Grandmother, please don't say anymore! I already told you that I had gotten accidentally injured when I was sparring with one of my classmates. It was truly an accident. Don't make a fuss anymore!" The little fatty pulled anxiously on the older woman's hand. Sweat poured down his face.

The wife of the imperial tutor felt even worse now. Her eyes turned red, "Just look, just look! The child is this scared now! He doesn't even dare to speak up after being pushed around! Teacher Yu, just look at his injuries. It's obvious that he had been beaten heavily by someone. He not only has wounds on his face but also his body. Who would believe that it was a mere accident ah? Today, if you don't resolve

this in a satisfactory manner, I will change into court dress and ask the emperor to take charge of this!! We absolutely cannot allow some relative of the imperial family to use his power and background to bully the weak!”

“That's right! The imperial family's academy absolutely would not allow anyone to bully other students. Beloved Official Yu, I assign this task to you and you must investigate it thoroughly!” The crown prince, Zhu Hanwen, walked into the room. He was eighteen years old and had a tall and handsome figure. His body gave off a kind of aura that awed people instantly.

Yu Fan bowed in greeting and murmured in agreement. He first asked the wife of the imperial tutor to sit down and had the servants serve up a cup of flower tea. Then, he pulled on the little fatty's hand and gently asked, “Liang Guodong, please tell me exactly what happened to you.”

“It's just like I said. I was practicing martial arts and accidentally got injured...” Liang Guodong stiffened his neck but he refused to look Yu Fan in the eye. He had an unconfident expression on his face.

The wife of the imperial tutor became incensed and exclaimed, “Dong'er, my good grandson! With me as your support and His Highness, the crown prince, on your side, there's no need for you to feel afraid. Tell us the perpetrator's name. Actions always have consequences. By shielding the other person, you're actually hurting them!”

Liang Guodong was so anxious about this that beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. He looked at his paternal grandmother with a begging look and quietly said, “Paternal Grandmother, I already said that it wasn't an issue. Can you not make a fuss about this anymore?”

When the crown prince saw this, he felt that there was more to this situation that met the eye. He asked, “It's Liang Guodong, right? Let me ask you, were the injuries on your face caused by someone in the academy?”

Liang Guodong didn't dare to lie to the crown prince, so he obediently said, “Yes...that's right!”

“Was it someone in your same class who did this?” Zhu Hanwen continued his line of questioning.

“No...no, it wasn't!” Zhu Hanwen noticed that an awkward expression had appeared on Liang Guodong's face and that the boy looked even more uncomfortable.

“Your Highness, you must take our Dong'er's side ah! It must be someone in a higher grade who bullied our young fatty here by taking advantage of their superior height and weight. Bullying the weak isn't the type of behavior that should be allowed at the academy!!” The wife of the imperial tutor was so furious that her chest was heaving up and down. The hand holding her cup of tea trembled violently and tea spilled all over.

“It's not that, Paternal Grandmother...you don't understand the situation. Please don't say anymore!!” Liang Guodong was about to cry at this point. If the truth came out, he was certain that the one being expelled from the academy would be him.

“Younger Maternal Uncle! Liang Guodong was beat up by me!” A clear and melodious voice could be heard from outside the room. Following that, a young girl who was wearing a bright yellow dress with her hair combed into two buns came in. Behind her was a young boy who was about the same size of her and he was dressed in white scholarly attire.

When the wife of the imperial tutor heard this, she slapped the table and stood up to see just who had hurt her grandson. What she saw astonished her. It was a sweet and adorable little girl who was shorter than her grandson by a head. The scathing words that were about to tumble out of her mouth choked in her throat.

Yu Fan felt a headache appearing. The last time he had gone to his second sister's home, he had persuaded his second sister and brother-in-law to send their children into the imperial family's academy. He had encountered his younger nephew teaching some chicks to go swimming. He had originally thought that only his young nephew was naughty and didn't expect that, out of his second sister's three children, the one that caused the most trouble was actually her youngest child, her only daughter.

This was because—her lord father had brainwashed her into believing that fists did all the talking. If someone said something that she didn't like, she needed to beat them up. Furthermore, she was also incredibly talented at martial arts. This was probably the so-called one in a million talent that his second sister had talked about that she had seen in wuxia books.

They had only been at the academy for a short period of time but there had already been a slew of complaints from other parents. They all claimed that Zhu Yunxin had held onto the collars of their children, threatening them until they cried. Zhu Yunxin, on the other hand, wasn't the least bit

remorseful. In fact, she even mumbled quietly on the side, “If it weren't for the fact that my lady mother told me I can't just hit anyone I pleased, then I would have long beat them into a pulp!”

When he asked her why he frightened the other children, she merely said, “They just didn't look right to me,” and even glared ferociously at the victims while their parents were there. She had a pair of phoenix eyes similar to Imperial Prince Xu and was quite imposing when she used them to stare down other people. As for the parents of these unfortunate children, they decided to let it slide since her parents were Imperial Prince Xu and Princess Consort Xu. Later on, these parents had all warned their children to stay far away from Zhu Yunxin, so none of them dared to provoke her in the future.

However, in the past, she had only scared the other kids in the same year as her and had never touched a single hair on their heads. He really wasn't sure how the little fatty had offended her to make her beat him so hard that it wasn't even funny.

Liang Guodong covered his face and cried out loudly, “No, no! It wasn't her ah...”

The fact that he had gotten beaten up by someone who was younger than him by two years and was a girl to boot was the most disgraceful thing that had ever happened to him. He was trying to do his best to conceal this had ever happened, so how could he possibly tell the teachers about this? However, he would have never expected that his grandmother, who spoiled him, didn't believe the excuse he had painstakingly come up with. Furthermore, she had even caused a ruckus at school. He truly had no face left anymore!!

Little Guozi marched forward to him and used her little fist to gesture at his eyes, “Why do you say it wasn't me? Just look at these bruises. Compare them to my fist and you can tell that I did it. Also, I had kicked you in the thighs. How about you drop your pants and compare them to my feet to see if they match?”

Yu Fan really wanted to cover his face——‘My dear niece, as a girl, is it really proper for you to say ‘drop your pants’? I thought you were a gentle and exquisite young maiden ah? How did you suddenly become a vicious T-rex that blows flames out of your mouth?’ He felt his head hurt for his second sister.

Liang Guodong held onto his pants tightly with an alarmed look on his face. He shook his head vigorously, “No need to compare. I admit that you beat me up, alright?”

Zhu Hanwen was almost about to explode from holding in his laughter. Oh ho ho! His younger female cousin from Imperial Prince Xu's Household was truly too funny. Such a bad temper was akin to how his uncle had acted when he was young. When he got back and told his story to his imperial father, he was sure his father would find it hilarious as well.

The wife of the imperial tutor really didn't know what to say or think at this point. She looked at the young maiden in front of her, who looked to be around four to five years old and was as pretty and delicate as a sprig of winter jasmine. How could her grandson, who was already seven years old, not be able to win over a kid who was only around four to five? Furthermore, this child was also a sweet and adorable young maiden. No wonder her grandson begged her not to come to the academy to make a fuss. This was truly too embarrassing!

“Uh...Young Miss, can you tell Grandmother just how Liang Guodong offended you ah?” The wife of the imperial tutor had a bad premonition about all of this. Was her own grandson the person who was actually bullying others but he had unluckily come across a little flower who had vicious thorns? Was that the reason why he insisted that he had merely gotten injured during a practice session and refused to admit that he had gotten beaten up instead?

Little Guozi slanted a look at Liang Guodong and coldly huffed, “If the person he had offended was me, then he wouldn't be able to walk anymore. They'd have to carry him out instead!”

The wife of the imperial tutor was so shocked by this that she couldn't reply for a long time. Was she supposed to be grateful that the girl had been lenient? Princess Consort Xu seemed to have a polite and amiable temperament, so how did she have a daughter that was a hot chili pepper?

“Little Guozi, come here to me ah,” Zhu Hanwen was afraid that the wife of the imperial tutor might explode from fury and hurriedly called his younger cousin over, “Tell me, why did you beat up Liang Guodong? Don't give me the excuse that he just didn't look right to you. I believe that you wouldn't beat up a person for no reason ah!”

The little lass, Zhu Yunxin, bounced towards Zhu Hanwen and pulled on his hand. She stuffed a chocolate drop in his hand and smiled sweetly. Although her eyebrows completely resembled her father's, she had inherited her mother's dimples. When she wasn't smiling, she looked very imposing but as soon as she smiled, she became a cute and adorable young girl.

“Older Brother, this is a new form of candy that my lady mother made, it's called 'malted chocolate drops'. The outside has a coating of chocolate and the inside is fragrant and crispy. It's super delicious!

Try some.” The cute and adorable girl had a very sweet smile on her face, which caused everyone in the room to feel their hearts soften.

Zhu Hanwen also couldn't defend against this attack and grinned as he nodded, “Okay okay! I'll try the taste of these 'malted chocolate drops' so I can see whether if Little Guozi was right about how fragrant and tasty they are.”

Liang Guodong watched this enviously and couldn't help but nod in agreement, “These 'malted chocolate drops' are very delicious and they taste better than regular chocolates and cake. If they could be sold at the Yu's Dessert Shop, I will definitely line up to buy them!”

“My family's dessert shop is no longer called 'The Yu's'. It's now called Jinan Dessert Shop, so make sure you remember that!” Little Mantou who had been silent this entire time finally opened his mouth.

Liang Guodong replied, “Isn't that the same ah? Although the name has changed, many people in the capital still call it by 'The Yu's'. In any case, it's still owned by your family!”

Fields of Gold Chapter 724

“Your Highness, the young royal princess has beaten someone up at the academy. The victim's relative is currently at the academy, asking for an explanation!” Weizi hurried in from the outer courtyard and ran towards Princess Consort Xu, who was feeding the fish by the lotus pond. Her voice held a hint of alarm and impatience.

Yu Xiaocao currently had four first-ranked personal maidservants and they were named after the four famous peonies. They were Yaohuang, Weizi, Doulu, and Zhaofen.

Yu Xiaocao picked at her ear and asked doubtfully, “Who? Who did you say beat up someone else?”

Weizi slightly panted as she replied, “Your Highness, you didn't hear incorrectly. It was the young royal princess who beat up another student. It's said that the student has two black eyes and a split lip. He looks quite pitiful apparently.”

“Little Guozi is only four, yet she's able to beat someone to that degree?” Yu Xiaocao didn't quite believe this, “That can't be right! Are you telling me that my sweet and adorable girl had actually fought with

someone at the academy? Are you sure this is right and not someone mistaking Little Mantou for Little Guozi ah?”

Little Mantou's face resembled Xiaocao's more, so many people often mistook him for the young royal princess from Imperial Prince Xu's estate who liked to wear boy's clothing. Furthermore, the true royal princess, Zhu Yunxin, looked more like her father and older brother and was often mistaken as the male twin out of the two.

Weizi also felt a bit doubtful after hearing his mistress's questions. She quietly continued, “Your Highness, how about...this servant could go to the academy and get the details?”

Yu Xiaocao had just been at home with nothing to do, so she put down the fish feed in her hands and said, “Regardless of whether it was Little Mantou or Little Guozi, someone had beaten another student up. As their parent, if I don't show my face, that wouldn't be proper. Have Pipa come and dress me, I need to go to the school.”

Her previous four first-ranked personal maidservants had all been married off when they reached the age of twenty. Only Pipa stayed behind as she decided to stay with her mistress and be in charge of her clothing and jewelry.

Yu Xiaocao changed into a set of gorgeous clothing that was finely embroidered with peonies. Her hair had been combed into a simple flying immortal knot, which revealed her bright and clear forehead. It was decorated with fine pearl flowers, which made her look fresh and elegant. It contrasted beautifully with Xiaocao's fair and exquisite skin, making her look like a fresh young maiden.

Imperial Prince Xu's residence wasn't very far from the academy. She got off from the carriage and had just entered the chair's 'office' with the help of the doorman when she heard a familiar voice that seemed sweet and shrewish at the same time, “Shut your mouth! Even if we add them to the store, we won't sell them to you!”

When she clearly saw the young girl inside, she didn't expect to see her usually clever and gentle little girl currently standing in an aggressive manner with her two hands on her hips as she regarded the little fatty in front of her with a contemptuous look. Eh? Was she truly mistaken earlier? Was this really her daughter?

“Lady Mother...this son greets Lady Mother!” The first one to spot Yu Xiaocao was her clever and quick-witted son, Little Mantou. He gave a look at his younger sister and hurried forward as he supported Yu Xiaocao's left hand in a flattering manner.

The expression on Zhu Yunxin's face changed slightly as she recalled what her father had repeatedly warned her about: 'Daughter, in front of your lady mother, you must act like a young gentlewoman and not make your lady mother worried about you, alright ah? This is especially important when I'm not home. All of you must take good care of your lady mother...'

She immediately snapped her feet together and placed both hands on her abdomen as she revealed a sweet smile. The little dimples on her face were faintly discernible and her voice had become as gentle as the spring wind as she said, “Lady Mother, when did you come over? Lady Mother, please sit down. I'll make some tea for you...”

Whether it was the wife of the imperial tutor or the crown prince, everyone's eyes almost bugged out of their heads. Was...was this the overbearing and aggressive little tyrannical flower from earlier ah? How did she suddenly change into a sweet and adorable little child? Just what was going on?

Yu Fan was already used to his little niece's 'quick transformations' and it no longer phased him. Since his second sister had arrived, he could now sit back and allow this headache inducing little kid to be put into order by her mother. He leaned against the back of his chair calmly and drank the fragrant tea in front of him in a pleased manner.

“Alright ah, stop pretending! You've already revealed your little tail and I have a grasp on it ah!” Yu Xiaocao used her forefinger to poke at her daughter's forehead. Apparently, the little lass was only pretending to be sweet and obedient in her midst! She really was in the running for the title, 'the Emperor of Acting'!

“Lady Mother...this little fatty hit me and wanted to steal my things, wah wah wah...Lady Mother, you must get justice for this daughter ah!” Tears came to Little Guozi's eyes on command and everyone could see the trail of two tears on her sweet and tender little face. Her rosy lips trembled as she raised her tearful eyes to look at Yu Xiaocao. Her whole appearance roused pity within people's hearts.

Even the wife of the imperial tutor, who had come rampaging over, felt her heart soften. She looked at her grandson, who was taller than the girl by a head and had a body about twice the size as well. Why did she suddenly feel like the one bullying other people was her own grandson? She glanced at Little Guozi, who was silently shedding tears, and gently said, “Your Highness, it wasn't right for Dong'er to

bully you! When we get back, I'll make sure his father punishes him appropriately. Don't cry, if girls cry too much, they won't be pretty anymore!"

Liang Guodong opened his two panda eyes wide and stared blankly as his grandmother, who had been 'completely fooled' by that lass's tears and had defected to her side. 'Grandmother, look again at your own grandson, just who was bullying who?'

"Child! How could you possibly steal things from your younger brothers and sisters just because you're bigger than them? Was everything your father taught you in vain ah? You even made this old lady come out to support you. I've almost lost all of my face because of you!" The imperial tutor's residence had an abundance of males and a dearth of females. In Liang Guodong's father's generation, they had four sons and only one daughter. In the grandchildren's generation, there were only grandsons. Thus, the wife of the imperial tutor really had no defenses against a cute and adorable little girl.

Liang Guodong pouted a bit and had accidentally hurt his split lip again. He sharply inhaled in pain. He was feeling really quite wronged, 'Paternal Grandmother, just who was the one who insisted on making a ruckus ah? Clearly I was the one who was trying to avoid things from happening, okay?'

"Hmph! Using your strength to bully the weak has finally come back to you ah?" The wife of the imperial tutor felt her heart soften again after looking at her grandson's colorful face.

"Come here and let Auntie take a look—oh my, just who beat you so hard ah? Look at those black eyes and your swollen lip...does it hurt? Auntie has some medicine here and as soon as you spread it on, it'll reduce the swelling. Don't worry, it won't hurt a bit!" Yu Xiaocao took out a tiny medicine box from Doulu's hands and took out a bottle of ointment.

After the sweet-smelling ointment was spread on his face, Liang Guodong felt a cooling effect and the painful heat had immediately disappeared. It was so comfortable. Princess Consort Xu was so gentle and had such a sweet-sounding voice. She was also beautiful and smelled fragrant. Furthermore, she made top-notch cakes, pastries and candies. Wouldn't it be great if he was Princess Consort Xu's son...

The wife of the imperial tutor knew immediately what her grandson was thinking. He had forgotten his own mother! He was so shameless to forget his own ancestors for the sake of food.

"Do you have any bruises on your body?" Yu Xiaocao was about to lift up his sleeve.

The six year old little fatty was already aware that there was a difference between sexes. He hurriedly grabbed onto his sleeve and blushed, "No, I really don't have any..."

"Oh! It looks like you're a little embarrassed!" Yu Xiaocao quipped as she offered the ointment in her hand to the wife of the imperial tutor, "This ointment was personally made by me. Young kids, ah, always end up hurting themselves in some manner or another. After using this ointment, it can reduce swelling and pain. My children had ended up beating up your grandson so badly, so I apologize to you. I'm truly very sorry!"

Her children? Little Mantou wanted to express his own innocence. It was clearly the sole work of his younger sister, so why was he getting pulled down into the mud?

The residence had hired a famous teacher to teach the children martial arts and equestrian skills. In Yu Xiaocao's eyes, her daughter was only joining in on the fun. How could she know that her youngest daughter had already been trained by her father into a thorny little tyrannical flower when she was unaware? When she looked at the wounds on the little fatty's face, she felt like it had to be the joint work between the two twins.

"Lady Mother, do you not love Guozi anymore ah? Lady Mother...wah wah wah!" She had cried so pitifully yet her lady mother had summarily ignored her. In fact, her mother spent more time with that despicable fatty and even personally spread ointment on him.

Her father had once told her that if they didn't listen and used their skills to bully others, their mother wouldn't love them anymore. She didn't want that! She didn't want her mother to dislike and ignore her! The fake tears she had originally been crying were now transformed to true distress.

Yu Xiaocao sighed and used a handkerchief to wipe away the tears on her daughter's face before bending over and carrying her. She looked at the little lass in her arms and asked, "I haven't scolded you or punished you. Why are you crying then?"

"Lady Mother, Guozi knows that I was wrong. In the future, Guozi will never hit other people again." Zhu Yunxin hugged her mother's neck and candidly admitted her fault in the matter.

Xiaocao stroked her daughter's head and gently asked, "If you understand that you did something badly and apologize, you're still my little treasure. So tell me, why did you fight someone else?"

Little Guozi buried her face into her mother's neck and stated in a somewhat embarrassed manner, "Today, I wasn't good and brought the malted chocolate drops you made to school."

When Yu Xiaocao heard this, she already had a good idea of what had happened. Her daughter must have bragged about the new snacks she made and the little fatty couldn't resist the temptation. In the end, he had become like that.

"Liang Guodong stole the malted chocolate drops that I had given Liang Guoquan, so I couldn't stand it and beat him up. Lady Mother, I was wrong, I shouldn't have brought the food you made to school to show off. I shouldn't have beat someone up and done it such a fierce manner..." Little Guozi truly expressed her remorse in a very sincere manner.

The wife of the imperial tutor felt her face first turn green, then red, and finally white out of fury after hearing the story. No wonder when she asked her grandson what had happened, he had hemmed and hawed and refused to tell the truth. All this ruckus had happened because he was the one trying to steal food from others ah! She even ran over furiously to find the academy to make them explain things in a proper manner to her...she truly had no face left to see people!!

"Child, how could you possibly steal food from your thirteenth younger brother? Didn't I tell you that as the older brother, you need to take care of your younger brothers ah?" The wife of the imperial tutor pulled on his ear and scolded him roundly.

Liang Guodong had a wronged expression on her face, "In the past, my thirteenth younger brother had asked for my sponge cake to eat when he was hungry. He promised me then that the next time he had something good to eat, he would give it to me...who would have thought that he didn't truly want to give the malted chocolate drops to me? When I ate them, he suddenly started crying."

Following that, he had been beaten up. Furthermore, he had been pummeled by a little girl who was much younger than him and it had been a one-sided fight. He was innocent, alright?

The truth was now in the open. Although her daughter had fought for the sake for her classmates, it was still wrong of her to hit others. Yu Xiaocao had her daughter apologize to the little fatty and then gave

him a box of malted chocolate drops as an apology gift. She also gave him an invitation to come over whenever he was free along with his thirteenth younger brother to the prince's estate to play.

However, many people now knew that the young royal princess from Imperial Prince Xu's estate was a tyrannical flower and shouldn't be offended...

Fields of Gold Chapter 725 – The Two

“Your Highness, Your Highness, are you sure you want to personally race this time? You have an illustrious and prominent background, so there's no need for you to fight with a parvenu, right? If a single hair on your head gets hurt, how could this lowly one possibly explain this to Their Highnesses?” Zhu Yunxuan's personal servant, Dong Ming, was so anxious that his forehead was dotted with sweat.

The thirteen year old Zhu Yunxuan had inherited his father's tall and lofty stature and looked to be around sixteen to seventeen years old. He coldly snorted and said, “My lady mother has already been insulted in such a poor manner by that person. If I endure this, am I still human ah? Would I still have the gall to call myself a man ah? Or be able to call myself the heir of Imperial Prince Xu's Estate ah? That being said, isn't he just flaunting the fact that his family has some stinky money? He wants to strut and show off his stuff on my domain, so just watch as I bankrupt his pockets in one go and make him have to leave this place completely naked!”

Apparently, a man who called himself the richest person in Jiangnan had burst into the 'Celestial World Entertainment Facility' that was in the suburbs of the capital and had been causing trouble. This Celestial World wasn't the same as a certain not fit to be seen by place of entertainment. This place had elevated eating, drinking and entertainment to a whole other level.

This place not only congregated the most famous dishes in the capital, but it was also the place where people could taste the fine wines personally brewed by Princess Consort Xu. There were all sorts of games and entertainments that people had never seen or played. Those who came here were able to relax and enjoy themselves to the utmost, relieving themselves of pressure and forgetting their worries. They could indulge in pleasure and forget about the outside world.

This so-called richest man in Jiangnan was in the silk business in Jiangnan. After the Chen Family fell, he rapidly overtook all of the silk business that the Chen Family had and, overnight, became the richest individual in Jiangnan. The silk business in Jiangnan gradually wasn't enough to hold his ambitions and he wanted to expand his business into the capital. It was said that he had latched onto a high-ranked official at court and had gifted a large amount of money to that person.

Many successful merchants had a couple of worthless sons that only caused trouble for them. Jiangnan's richest man, Long Yikui's, youngest son, Long Tianba, was one of those sons.

Long Tianba flaunted the fact that his mother was in favor with his father and had begged his mother to say a few words to his father to allow him to come to the capital to gain some experience. In a moment of madness, Long Yikui had agreed to allow him to come along. However, he also knew that his son had a worthless personality and had warned his son many times before they entered the capital to not cause any trouble.

Long Tianba had originally promised he would be good. However, after they arrived at the capital, his father was so busy that his feet almost never touched the ground. He often didn't even have the time to eat a proper meal, let alone have the time to keep his son in check.

Thus, Long Tianba was like a wild horse that was freed from its restraints and became an arrogant young master in the capital. He was very generous in spending money and didn't know how to be subdued. Consequently, a group of wastrels in the capital had their eyes on him. Wasn't the sole purpose of dumb fools with lots of money to spend money on them ah?

These wastrels also had decent background and the lowest ranked out of all of them was still the grandson of a fourth-ranked official. They had deliberately leaked their identities to Long Tianba and this idiot immediately took the bait. Long Tianba had heard his father saying that they needed to get a firm footing in the capital by finding a powerful backer.

Thus, his thought process was quite simple. If he was able to get a good relationship with these young noble masters, then wouldn't he be able to help his family business? Then, his father wouldn't dislike him for only knowing how to spend money and not knowing how to make money.

Once he did something great for the family, perhaps the position of the head of the family would then become his. After all, wasn't the head of the imperial merchant family, the Zhou's, now their previous third young master? Didn't he get that position by working extremely hard and expanding the family's business? By doing so, didn't he manage to surpass the legitimate son of the first branch, cementing his status as the next family head?

In order to get into the good graces of these young masters, Long Tianba spent money like it was water. The pocket money that he had saved up had all been invested into these new friends of his. Every day he accompanied them to eat, drink, and play around. Although it was 'accompanying' them, in actuality, he was mostly just paying their bills like a foolish spendthrift.

Long Tianba's saved up pocket money was actually quite large and was equivalent to a middle-sized family's entire savings. However, it also couldn't survive being spent like water! Before long, the money he had brought along with him was all gone.

Naturally, these wastrels would give him a taste of sweet in order to get more money out of him. They introduced a few merchants in the capital to him and Long Tianba had actually managed to make a few deals with them. Even his own father complimented him after that!

Since he had just gotten the sweet taste of success, Long Tianba naturally wouldn't let go of such a good opportunity to show off in front of his father. Once he ran out of money, he asked his father for more. Using the excuse that he was furthering the family's connections and not spending money recklessly, he was able to confidently hold his hand out.

Long Yikui had also gotten the news that his youngest son was quite close to these young masters who liked to play around. After asking around a bit, he discovered that these young fellows all had very good backgrounds in the capital. In the future, they really might be able to ask these families for help. Thus, when his son asked for money, he gave a few thousand taels to him.

Long Tianba had somehow gotten the information that the best place for women to go to in the capital was 'Blossoming Beauty', whereas the best place for men to go was 'Celestial World'. Those who hadn't been to the entertainment facility weren't considered true wastrels. Thus, he was easily convinced by his group of friends and arrived at the entertainment facility with all of his money in his pockets.

The wastrels very quickly regretted their decision to bring him along. Long Tianba was the type of person who liked to claim he looked down on things even when he was shocked by what he saw. It was as if he was trying to boast and show off how experienced and cosmopolitan he was.

In actuality, how could he know that he was overreaching himself? Everyone who heard his boasts all looked at him with disdain, as if he was the biggest fool they had ever seen. Even the wastrels who brought him along felt as if they had lost all face.

As soon as Long Tianba entered the gambling facility, he began strutting around as if he was a high and mighty lord. How could he know that the people who played around here all had illustrious backgrounds? They were either astoundingly wealthy or incredibly powerful, so how could he, as the son of a merchant outside of the capital, possibly afford to offend them?

While they were eating, Long Tianba continuously looked down on the food they were eating, claiming that the taste was ordinary or the food was not crafted finely enough. The waiter, who had a good temper, almost couldn't keep the polite smile on his face. At this time, Long Tianba began to claim that the waitstaff weren't satisfactory in their service.

The wastrels who brought him along were almost ready to blow their tops and continuously gave him looks to shut him up. Unfortunately, Long Tianba acted as if he was blind and never received the hints that they were giving him.

They were screwed, completely screwed! Although the staff at the facility looked very ordinary, all of them could be spies of Imperial Prince Xu. If Imperial Prince Xu found out that they had brought along such a foolish and crazy guest, they didn't know what might happen to them. Seeing Imperial Prince Xu's cold and icy eyes made them want to pee in their pants.

They hastily finished their lunch and pulled Long Tianba to the racetrack to bet on horses. They had originally thought that betting on racehorses was a novel event and this greenhorn wouldn't have much to say. All they had to do was buy their tickets and then wait for the result of the race. Who would have expected that this idiot would talk big and claim that he had gambled a lot on racehorses before and such a thing was boring for him now? He even stated that whoever came up with this idea was only plagiarizing others and not creative at all.

Unfortunately, the heir of Imperial Prince Xu's Estate had heard these insulting words. Who in the capital didn't know that this Celestial World Entertainment Facility was the work of Imperial Prince Xu and that many of the fun activities were the ideas of Princess Consort Xu? Someone who continuously looked down on these facilities was also someone who belittled Princess Consort Xu, right? Imperial Prince Xu was infamous in the capital for loving and coddling his wife. Insulting her was the same thing as insulting him as well as the entire estate!

When they thought of how much the prince loved his wife and how much the heir loved and respected his mother, the wastrels all felt their faces turn gray. They looked at each other silently and began to surreptitiously distance themselves from Long Tianba. When he wasn't aware, they disappeared...

Zhu Yunxuan, who had heard the insults and boasts from Long Tianba, was like his father. He always fiercely protected his family members, especially his lady mother. Whoever touched her was destined to experience a calamity!

Naturally, Zhu Yunxuan wasn't as direct as his father in his ways of obtaining revenge. When he decided to act, he could torment a person until they were begging to die but there'd be no clues leading back to him. The people who faced him could only bite their tongues and admit defeat. Although the heir to Imperial Prince Xu's Estate was only thirteen years old, he had already obtained the nickname, 'The Smiling Asura', and was quite powerful and famous in the capital.

The gambling tickets for the racetrack were all printed in advance and the numbers on the racehorses were all fixed. The only thing that could possibly change was the jockey on the horses. Good jockeys often could turn a defeat into a victory, creating a miracle.

This was the first time this wealthy fool had been to the racetrack, so he wasn't at all familiar with the horses there. Thus, he could only pick without knowing anything—basically blind. However, who would have thought that this fellow actually had decent luck? The ticket that he bought was on a very vigorous colt named Thunder and this horse was favored to win the race. In the past half year, Thunder had obtained eight first places and five second places.

The only horse that could possibly beat Thunder was a white horse called Swift Wind. However, it wasn't optimistic. This was because Swift Wind had once lost to Thunder in the past. However, Zhu Yunxuan had confidence that his consummate equestrian skills would allow Swift Wind to produce an upset at this race!

The manager of the horse track saw that the young master was personally going to ride in this race, so he hurriedly came up to ask, "Your Highness, how about...we switch the jockey on Thunder?"

"No need! The vast majority of gamblers in this crowd are all old customers. If we switched the jockeys now, it'd be hard to avoid people complaining! Could it be...that Manager Fang doesn't believe in my equestrian skills?" All of the regular customers at the racetrack knew that the horses who had the best odds of getting the championship had regular jockeys that rode them.

In the gambler's eyes, Thunder had the best odds of winning this race. If a jockey was switched at the last minute, it was likely that the customers would cry foul play. Zhu Yunxuan wanted to win this beautifully and without any doubts!

The result of this race was completely in the bag now. Zhu Junyang had personally taught Zhu Yunxuan's equestrian's skills. It was very likely that one day he'd surpass his father's skills. Thus, the jockey on Thunder was a mere joke in his eyes.

However, for the first few circles, he stayed half a horse's length behind Thunder. He could hear the crowds cheering for Thunder, especially during the first half of the last circle around the track. Thunder was still in the first place and the crowds in the racetrack were almost ecstatic with glee.

Long Tianba was so excited that he was about to do flips in his seat! Although the odds on Thunder were only 1 to 3, he had bet all of the money he brought along with him on the horse. If he won, the eight thousand taels he had bet would become twenty-four thousand. That'd surpass the amount of money that his father made from a business deal! Hah! The people in the capital were truly stupid with money. It was too easy to make money here!

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Before long, the saying 'extreme joy turning into sorrow' had quickly appeared before him. In the last circle around the track, the white horse that was numbered 5, had slowly shortened the distance between it and the horse numbered 8 in the front. In the last ten meters of the race, the number 5 white horse had a burst of energy and sprinted forward, succeeding in reversing the course of the race and seizing first place.

The audience was deathly silent for a moment before raucous cheers and shouts of joy filled the air. Although not as many people bought tickets for horse number 5 as they did for horse number 8, there were still a good number. Prior to the start of the race, horse number 5 and horse number 8 had the most tickets bought.

Long Tianba, who had already stood up in excitement in anticipation of making it big, felt the smile on his face congeal and freeze. He almost couldn't believe the sight in front of his eyes!

On another viewing stand was Zhu Yunxin, who was dressed in men's attire. Her phoenix eyes crinkled up in happiness and adorable dimples appeared on her face. She spoke to the handsome young boy next to her, "Second Older Brother, quickly thank me now! I helped you earn a giant fortune ah! Aren't I the smart one ah? Betting on Eldest Brother is the sure choice!"

Zhu Yunxiao had nothing to say. Wasn't the person who first bought the tickets on their eldest brother him ah? Who in the family didn't know that their eldest brother had fully inherited their lord father's equestrian skills and that their usually strict father had even complimented him? Only fools wouldn't bet on their eldest brother ah!

Now all of the praise had gone to his younger sister. Argh...who told him to be a good older brother ah? It was better to let his little sister's words slide. After all, it was fine as long as she was happy.

Zhu Yunxin's eyes flickered a bit and the smile on her face became so sweet that it could sicken a person. She looked at him and Zhu Yunxiao shuddered. He rubbed at the goosebumps on his arm and sighed, "Alright ah, there's no need to ask. I know what you want! The money that I won will also be given to you to spend, alright?"

"Second Older Brother, you're so good to me. Second Older Brother, you're the best older brother in the world!" Zhu Yunxin didn't stint on her compliments to him. Haha! The pink crystal bracelet that she had been eyeing was now going to be hers! Her lady mother was so stingy ah! She insisted that they save up their own money to buy the things that had caught their eye, even if it was from their own shops!

After marriage, Yu Xiaocao took all of the businesses under Imperial Prince Xu's Estate into her hands. She had her hands tightly around the wallet. When she was teaching her children, she made sure to teach them the right way of handling money and never allowed them to take their wealth for granted. For her three children, they only had a set monthly allowance and if they wanted to buy something, they needed to use their own money to get it.

Take Zhu Yunxin for example. She was the high and noble young royal princess, but she even needed to work at 'Blossoming Beauty's' skincare store on her days off in order to make some money. She already had her eye on a pink crystal bracelet at Wisdom Jade Pavilion for a long time. After saving up two months worth of allowance, she still had another half to go. With the money she won in the bet, she could finally buy the bracelet that she had admired for so long!

"Do you dare repeat what you just said in front of Eldest Brother ah? Aren't you afraid he'll scold you for lacking a conscience?" Zhu Yunxiao wasn't easily fooled by his younger twin's tricks and coldly huffed. It looked like even the money he set down for the initial bet wouldn't go back into his pockets.

Zhu Yunxin giggled and said, "You both are the best older brothers in the world! Eh? Eldest Brother is planning on riding in the next race? So weird, Eldest Brother never participates in these things. Just what is going on ah? However...who cares, whichever horse that Eldest Brother rides is the one we need to bet on because it's sure to win!"

When he saw how excited and exuberant she was, Zhu Yunxiao shook his head and was resigned to his fate of keeping close to her. He had a responsibility today. He needed to keep a close eye on his younger sister—stop her from causing trouble!

There was another person who had the same thought process as Zhu Yunxin and that was Zhu Yunxuan's best friend, Lu Junbo. Lu Junbo was the precious son of He Wanning and Lu Hao. He was born three years after they had married and was younger than Zhu Yunxuan by a year. The two families had a good relationship with each other so they had played together since they were young.

This fellow was similar to his father and didn't like to use his head. Oftentimes, Zhu Yunxuan would come up with a scheme in the shadows while he acted in the front. Lu Hao frequently scolded him to use his head more and not be led around by the nose by the heir of Imperial Prince Xu.

In actuality, Lu Junbo wasn't someone who was dumb. He was just lazy. Furthermore, he knew that Zhu Yunxuan was the type of person who treated his friends well. He not only would shield them from trickery but would also think about what they preferred as well.

Consequently, Zhu Yunxuan's connections with people were a lot better compared to his lord father's. All of the noble young masters who were around his age were willing to hang out with him. The adults of these families were also secure in letting their sons play with the heir of Imperial Prince Xu.

What was the point of using his head when he had such a reliable and good friend around? Too tiring ah!

At the area where they placed bets, Zhu Yunxin saw the tall and sturdy Lu Junbo and greeted him warmly, "Older Brother Junbo, did you come here with my eldest brother ah? How much did you make from the earlier race? Dividends, dividends, you must split me some!"

Lu Junbo looked back and saw two twins who looked nothing like each other and chuckled loudly, "Yunxiao and Little Yunxin also come here to play? How come you guys didn't go to the children's section and decided to go to the racetrack instead? If your lady mother finds out, I'd be surprised if she didn't spank you two!"

In Lu Junbo's eyes, this pair of twins were like his own younger brothers and sisters. Thus, when he spoke to them, he used an easy and intimate manner.

"We don't have a lot of opportunities to come out and play, so don't be such a wet blanket ah, Older Brother Junbo!" Zhu Yunxin pouted her little mouth.

Everyone said that Imperial Prince Xu was a stern father while Princess Consort Xu was a loving mother, but it wasn't true. Ever since they were little, their father had never hit a single one of the three siblings—naturally, he didn't need to. After all, one glare from him was more than enough to stop them in their tracks. Their lady mother, on the other hand, was able to harden her heart and slap their wrists when they were naughty. Other than their eldest brother, who was incredibly clever and never let himself get caught, Zhu Yunxin and her second older brother had both been punished by their mother before!

“Alright, I won't say any more! Don't worry ah, I won't tattle on you. However, earlier today Xiaoqing had told me she was going to find you to play. Looks like she's missed you then.” Xiaoqing was Lu Junbo's younger sister and was older than the twins by two years. Her full name was Lu Yuqing.

It was said that on the day He Wanning gave birth to her, it was storming very hard. However, as soon as she was born and gave her first cry, the clouds dissipated away and the rain stopped. A clear and boundless sky appeared, so that's how she got her name.

Zhu Yunxin also really liked Older Sister Xiaoqing, who had a frank and lively personality. She grinned, “When I get back, I'll give Older Sister a ruby flower as an apology gift—that's right, Older Brother Junbo, you haven't told me how much you won from the last bet ah!”

“Not much, not much. Here, look!” Lu Junbo waved his winnings in front of her face and raised his eyebrow proudly.

“Wow! Older Brother Junbo is so rich ah! —Can you lend me some ah?” Zhu Yunxin never saw herself as an outsider when interacting with the Lu Family's siblings.

Lu Junbo rubbed her little head and began to open his wallet, “Your eldest brother is participating in the race, so how could you not bet on him? Oh? Did you not win enough money to buy your crystal bracelet ah?” As he spoke, he fished out two banknotes worth five thousand taels each.

Zhu Yunxin took out one from his hand and gleefully said, “You also know that my second brother and I don't get a lot of pocket money, so our wallets are a bit thin. We don't have a lot of capital to go off of so we naturally can't win a lot at one time. I have just enough to buy the crystal bracelet but I also want to buy the rest of the pink crystal jewelries in the store to complete the set. My lord father had said that

that type of crystal is rare. Furthermore, I love the color pink the most. Older Brother Junbo, I'm only borrowing this from you and I'll return it in a bit!"

After she spoke, she took out the five thousand tael banknote and combined it with the two thousand she and her second brother had just earned and used it all to bet on the horse her eldest brother was riding on, horse number 6. The earlier race had a payout of 1 to 10 and the current one was a bit lower, 1 to 5. If she won, she'd have around thirty thousand taels! Ah ha ha, she'd become rich in a moment! The little mini-her in Zhu Yunxin's heart was currently laughing gleefully with her hands on her hips.

After the race, Lu Junbo and Zhu Yunxin had their pockets full of gold. The pitiful Long Tianba, on the other hand, was left with nothing and didn't have a copper coin to his name. When he left to settle the bill, he had forgotten that he still had to pay for the things he and that group of wastrels consumed earlier. Altogether, it came out to five thousand taels and six hundred copper coins. Where would Long Tianba, who had lost all of his money, come up with the cash needed to pay the bill now?

This fellow was a stupid one as he decided to make a fuss at the office, "I just ate a table of food and took a bath, yet you guys want five thousand taels and six hundred copper coins? Just what are these ridiculous prices? This isn't a 'Celestial World'; this is a bandit's den! You're not asking for people's money; you're asking for their deaths!"

The customers who were near the office were all regular members here and had noble and wealthy backgrounds. Naturally, they all knew that this was one of Imperial Prince Xu's businesses. Why was there an idiot trying to cause trouble here? Looked like that guy's guts were quite big! Within moments, many people stopped what they were doing and stared at this fool in anticipation of what the idiot might do next.

Long Tianba had actually thought that he was successful in bringing together other dissatisfied customers and became even more confident.

The manager of the entertainment facility was a retired officer from the Xishan Barracks. He had a tall and sturdy figure with a body full of sinewy muscle. There was a long scar on his face and he looked quite frightening.

When he stepped towards Long Tianba, the fool began to yell in alarm, "What are you trying to do? Are you going to hit me? Let me tell you, when I left this morning, everyone at home knew I was coming here. If you try to imprison me here, my father won't let you off!"

The manager quickly stopped moving and didn't try to get closer to him. He calmly said, "Guest, please calm down a bit. No one will try to hurt you here and no one will dare to imprison you to force you to pay. If you have any questions about your bill, please ask me. Our facility makes it very clear the prices of our services and we're an honest business. We wouldn't cheat any customer here."

Long Tianba swung the stack of receipts in his hands and argued loudly, "This young master just ate a few dishes and had one hot bath, yet it cost five thousand taels ah? Are your facility's dishes made of gold ah? Or...is your facility's baths made of molten silver?"

After hearing his words, the other guests who were in the area began to laugh under their breaths. Would you dare to go into a bath made of molten silver?

When he heard the snickers, Long Tianba became even more confident. He puffed out his chest and raised his head up high and an arrogant expression appeared on his face. How could he know that all of his posturing and strutting just made him look like a complete fool in other people's eyes?

The manager of the entertainment facility took the bill from his hands and scanned it. An ambiguous smile arrived on his face, "Whether or not our facility is cheating our guests, everyone else can find out after hearing what this guest has enjoyed here!"

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After receiving Long Tianba's permission, the manager began to read off of the items listed on the bill, "Six portions of cheese lobster, seven hundred and twenty taels. Two pots of Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, four hundred and twenty taels. Six portions of top-notch abalone, nine hundred taels. Sea cucumber special rice...from the food and drink alone, you spent four thousand and five hundred taels. As for the baths, you chose the milk bath with added flower petals and special infused medicinal herbs as well as massages...in total that was a thousand and a hundred taels. Thus, in total, your bill comes out to five thousand and six hundred taels. The other customers can tell you whether we are cheating you out of your money or not."

All of the other guests suddenly realized that this fellow only ordered the most expensive items on the menu and ordered several of the same dish! Furthermore, for his baths, he had ordered a bunch of extra services added! No wonder his bill was so large! Immediately, a look of disdain appeared on their faces. The entertainment facility's prices were all posted clearly on their restaurant menus and at the bathhouses. If someone thought the prices were too high, then they didn't have to spend their money on the expensive foods and services! Instead, this fellow was trying to claim foul play and run off on the bill!

What had just happened? Long Tianba noticed that the looks that everyone had in their eyes had changed. After all, his family was one of the wealthiest in the Jiangnan region and he had experienced different scenarios before. He had also heard the manager of the facility narrate out the contents of his bill. Out of the food he ordered, just the lobster, abalone, sea cucumbers, and shark fins alone were very expensive ingredients. However, what the heck was the Buddha Jumps Over the Wall? Why was it even more expensive than all of the other delicacies?

Despite his confusion, he didn't ask the questions he had in his heart. From the looks of everyone else around him, he could tell that the bill for his expenditures was fair and without any tricks. When he had ordered these things, he didn't look closely at the prices because he was confident in the size of his purse. In order to show off to his friends in the capital, he made sure to order a portion of everything good they said for every person...

Eh? Where did his good friends go? It looked like they had disappeared while they were at the horse track. These people were really too much as they didn't even say a word of farewell when they left! Although Long Tianba was upset about this, he didn't think too much about it.

"Honored Guest, do you...have any other questions ah? If you don't, then please pay your bill right here." The manager of the entertainment facility was still as polite and courteous as ever.

"That uh...the prices here are truly quite expensive! However, my Long Family's fame as a wealthy family in Jiangnan isn't for nothing, so I'm more than able to afford it." An awkward expression appeared on Long Tianba's face as he continued to state confidently, "Earlier I was too excited when betting on horses and lost all of my money there. Can you be a bit flexible...I'll bring the money I owe here tomorrow!"

The look of disdain deepened on all of the guests around him. He had no money yet still boasted about his family's wealth? Wasn't he just claiming that the facility was blackmailing him? It looked more like he was trying to dine and dash!

The smile on the manager's face gradually disappeared. He snorted quietly, "Honored Guest, I must apologize, but this facility does not allow customers to stay on credit! If you don't have any money on you, you can have someone go and bring it back. Our facility is open all day and night and you don't need to worry about inconveniencing us."

The awkward expression on Long Tianba's face deepened, "I didn't bring my servant along when I left this morning. My friends who came with me had something come up and had to leave early..."

"If you have a member of our facility vouch for you, you can also delay paying your bill by a couple days." The look on the manager's face became more dignified.

Long Tianba looked at the crowd around him and didn't see a single familiar figure. He hadn't been in the capital for long. Other than that pack of hooligans he hung out with, he really didn't know anyone else with any status or power. He hesitated before he replied, "I haven't been in the capital for a long time and don't know anyone here..."

"Look here, you don't have anyone who can vouch for you nor do you have a method of getting in contact with your family. Earlier you also said that you had come from Jiangnan, if we just let you go, you might just flee to Jiangnan. Jiangnan is very large, so how are we supposed to find you?" The manager asked intently.

"I am the Fourth Young Master of Jiangnan's Long Family. My word is my guarantee. How could I possibly renege on my bill?" Long Tianba was starting to get impatient and shouted loudly.

The manager replied in a calm manner, "Who can say for sure? You claim you are the Fourth Young Master of the Long Family, but do you have anything that can back that up? If everyone all claimed to be some family's young master to delay paying their bill, can this entertainment facility still operate in the future?"

"I really am the Fourth Young Master of the Long Family...Uh, look at this jade pendant. It has the Long Family's crest on it. Only the direct blood descendants of the Long Family can have something like this. Also, look at the clothes on my body, it's made of the best sky silk there is to be had, and costs around a thousand taels for a bolt in the capital. I also have..." Long Tianba was anxious to prove his identity and revealed every thing of value that he had on his body.

The manager took the pendant over for a look and then casually handed it over to one of the workers next to him as he said, "Young Master Long is providing us an ordinary mutton-fat jade pendant as a security, looks like it's worth around two thousand and six hundred taels. Here's one jadeite ring worth around six hundred taels...a set of clothes made of sky silk is worth around eight hundred taels. All in all, this stuff is worth around five thousand and two hundred taels. Write out a receipt for him as well as an IOU for an additional four hundred taels."

Long Tianba watched as all of the items on his body had been taken away by the manager. Even the clothes from his body were not left out from this process. He opened his eyes wide as he exclaimed with a voice full of disbelief, "Just what are you guys doing here? Why are you taking away my jade pendant...you den of robbers, return my stuff back to me..."

The manager didn't pay attention to him. Once the entire receipt was written, he stuffed it in the youth's hands and said, "Paying up one's debts is the law of the universe. By taking away your items as a security deposit, we're already given you enough face. If you continue to cause a ruckus, then we will no longer be polite to you!"

As he spoke, a few large men with a murderous aura around them appeared around Long Tianba. Only now did this foolish fellow become terrified. He stuttered repeatedly, "A misunderstanding, a misunderstanding! Keep those things as a security deposit for now. I will definitely come back tomorrow to pay my debt and won't leave out a single copper coin!"

Finally, Long Tianba could only tremble as he left the entertainment facility's office, clothed only in his undergarments. It was late autumn now and the weather had turned chilly. He hugged himself as he left, wanting to cry.

"Second Older Brother, that fellow is so funny! He didn't have any money yet still strutted about like a cocky young lord!" Zhu Yunxin laughed so hard after seeing this event that her belly was aching. Was this guy a clown that was sent over by his family of monkeys?

The gentle expression on Zhu Yunxiao's face hid exactly what he was thinking. A dangerous light flashed through his large round eyes, which resembled Xiaocao's, "I heard that this fellow had said many insulting things about the entertainment facility while he was at the racetrack and he even insulted the owner of this facility..."

"What??!!" Zhu Yunxin bit down hard on the lollipop in her mouth, breaking the candy in two, "Second Older Brother, why didn't you mention this earlier?! Insulting the facility is one thing but he also insulted our lady mother! How can I allow this to slide?"

"There's no need to endure something more than you can bear," Zhu Yunxiao snarled in an angry manner.

When Zhu Yunxin heard this, she knew that her second brother wouldn't try to stop her if she decided to teach that oaf a lesson. She waved her fists around excitedly, "Let's go! If I don't beat up that guy surnamed Long so hard that his own mother wouldn't recognize him, then I'm not surnamed Zhu!"

Zhu Yunxiao reached out a hand to stop her.

Zhu Yunxin became agitated, "Second Older Brother, are you starting to feel bad for that guy ah? He insulted our lady mother in such a manner, which is the same as slapping our estate in the face and hitting our faces. If we let him go so easily, how can we repay the love and affection that our mother gives us?"

Zhu Yunxiao grinned, "What are you in a hurry for? No wonder our lady mother wanted me to come along with you as I need to make sure that you start using that brain of yours more! Just wait a bit, I'm going to have the manager prepare a burlap sack for us..."

"Second Older Brother, are you telling me that we're going to toss a burlap sack over his face? That sounds so fun! I've never done this to anyone else!!" Zhu Yunxin became even more excited and almost was about to bounce up in glee, "Hurry up, we can't let this guy go too far!"

"No worries, his horse has also been confiscated by the facility as a security deposit. He'll be walking back and is not familiar with the roads. How far can he get?" Zhu Yunxiao narrowed his eyes and the corners of his lips curved up.

Long Tianba felt as if today was just a really bad day. When he was gambling, he had especially asked around about the horses' conditions and made sure to buy the ticket of the one that had won the most races previously. However, he didn't win a single bet. While betting at the race track, he had forgotten that he still needed to pay the bill from earlier. Thus, not only were all of the valuable items on his body taken away, but even his clothes and horse were also confiscated as well.

On the way back, he also didn't know just what bandit had come across him and decided to toss a bag over his head before beating him to a pulp. He had never been subjugated to such pains before in his life!

What had happened was this: Long Tianba was shivering as he pitifully walked back to where he and his father were lodging. From time to time, there would be people on horseback or in carriages passing by him on the road and all of them would look at him with flabbergasted gazes. He was feeling quite embarrassed and covered his head with his two hands as he tried to quickly walk on the side of the road.

He was passing by a small grove of trees when he suddenly felt his foot slip and he fell to the ground. He had thought he had accidentally stepped on a stone and sprained his ankle. Just as he was about to crawl up, his eyes turned dark. Before he could react, he had been pulled into the glade by some people.

Following that, fists and kicks rained upon him like a storm. Why did it feel like there were two people beating him up? One seemed to be focused on his head, raining punches and kicks in quick succession. The other villain was quite crafty and focused on his vulnerable spots. That person only hit the spots that hurt the most and it was so painful that he felt himself going faint.

Long Tianba howled and pleaded loudly, but there were fewer people in the suburbs. In addition, it was getting late, and not many people passed by this little grove of trees. Just as he was about to cry himself hoarse, he finally heard the sound of people approaching. The perpetrators had 'no choice' but to let him go.

After he managed to take off the burlap sack from his head, his head, face, and body hurt all over. His eyes were so swollen that they looked like a pair of slits and he couldn't see very well. Underneath his nostrils was a trail of blood and his inner white colored clothing was dirty from blood and mud. It was likely that if he stood in front of his father at this moment, he wouldn't be recognized.

Long Tianba didn't know how he managed to get back to the guest house. By the time he got back, the sky had turned completely dark. When he went to greet his father, Long Yikui saw that his face had swelled up like a pig's and was completely startled. Then he furiously said out of pity, "Just who did this to you?"

Fields of Gold Chapter 728

Long Tianba told his father everything that had happened today to him and even grumbled in a righteous manner, "It must be the people from 'Celestial World' who did this to me! They are a bunch of bullies. Not only did they take all of the valuables off of me, but they also sent people to beat me up...Father, you must support me on this!"

As soon as Long Yikui entered the capital, he made sure to ask around for some information. The person who was the best at doing business and had the most talent at making money was Princess Consort Xu.

All of the merchants used the phrase: 'we can only see her dust and have no hope of catching up' to describe her.

She was in her preteens when she first entered the capital. Despite her young age, she managed to create her own business kingdom in the span of a few years. Furthermore, the businesses she made were unable to be copied by other people. If she truly wanted to, she could have expanded her ventures throughout the whole country and become the richest person in the Great Ming Dynasty. However, she also knew to stop before going too far and only developed her businesses within the capital.

When one spoke of her, one couldn't forget Imperial Prince Xu. That year, he had pretty much given all of his belongings to the Yu Family as his betrothal gift to her. Now, all of the industries in his hands had been given to his wife to manage. He was afraid this might tire her, so he also found a lot of talented subordinates from other places to assist her.

As for the entertainment facility, Celestial World, it'd be too difficult for Long Yikui to not hear about it. All of the influential officials congregated there to play. It was said that one could merely stretch out one's hand and end up hitting a few sons or grandsons of these high and mighty nobles. The wealthy and powerful could be found everywhere there. Furthermore, what made him even more cautious was the fact that this place was owned by Imperial Prince Xu. It was rumored that Princess Consort Xu had given him many ideas for this place before she married him.

His son actually daringly insulted their 'Celestial World' when he was on their turf and several times to boot! The fact that they didn't shoo him out immediately was already courteous of them. As for taking all of his valuables as a deposit, that was a very light punishment with all things considered.

How could he, a very shrewd businessman, end up with such a stupid and idiotic son? Why didn't his son think a little and realize that no matter how much money they had as merchants, there was no way for them to win against the high and noble officials? Imperial Prince Xu not only was a member of the imperial family and a close relative of the emperor, but he also was in charge of the Great Ming Empire's most elite troops. Furthermore, he was one of the most trusted and favored officials of the emperor. With his high and mighty status, could mere commoners like them afford to offend him?

If anything that his son said today got transmitted to Imperial Prince Xu, the Long Family would not only be screwed in the capital but it'd be hard to say if they could also keep their place in Jiangnan either...The more Long Yikui thought about it, the more fearful he became, and the more he felt that the worst was yet to come. That night, he went through a lot of effort and spent a lot of money to get an audience with a first-ranked official in the capital.

Although that first-ranked official was quite irritated at being disturbed during the middle of the night, he was reluctantly willing to meet them after seeing the vast amounts of valuable gifts they had given him. However, when he found out that the Long Family had offended Imperial Prince Xu, the expression on his face immediately changed. He quickly told the main steward to return all of their gifts to them and had the servants shoo them out of the residence as quickly as they could.

If Imperial Prince Xu found out that he had taken the Long Family's bribes, then it'd be hard to say if he'd even be able to keep his own official's hat anymore. Furthermore, he warned Long Yikui, "Remember, you don't know this official and have never come to this official's home. Don't you dare to drag me down to calamity after you guys provoked the dragon's wrath!"

As they shooed them out, the head steward gave Long Yikui a tip out of kindness, "There's nothing you can do or say. No matter who you beg, no one in the capital will be willing to brave Imperial Prince Xu's wrath to say a word for you. If you're smart, then you will obediently head to Imperial Prince Xu's residence and admit your guilt and ask for your punishment ah..."

Only now did Long Yikui realize the severity of the matter. The next day, he brought his son along as they both went to 'Celestial World' to apologize. Not only did they bring double the amount of money that was owed, but he also had his son kneel in front of the office to beg for forgiveness.

The manager of the entertainment facility merely took five thousand and six hundred taels out of what was offered to them, which was the amount Long Tianba owed. Then he returned all of the items he had taken from Long Tianba on the previous day and said, "As for the matter in regards to you insulting our master, we, as servants, have no right to offer an opinion. Master of the Long Family, please leave ah!"

Finally, the manager gave them a 'good intentioned' tip, "The heir of the master is currently at the office. If your sincerity is enough to move his heart, perhaps..."

After getting some 'advice' from the manager, they asked to have an audience with the heir to Imperial Prince Xu's Estate. Zhu Yunxuan didn't put on any airs and courteously allowed them to meet him.

The father and son pair trembled as they explained the situation to him. Long Tianba, who finally knew how to be afraid, sobbed piteously in front of the heir. Furthermore, he even began slapping his still swollen face with his own hands as he berated himself for not knowing right from wrong, insulting the entertainment facility, and insulting Imperial Prince Xu and Princess Consort Xu. He claimed he deserved

death for this and that no matter how the heir decided to punish him, he was willing to do it. He was willing to do anything to make up for his mistakes ah!

Zhu Yunxuan waited until Long Tianba had hit himself around twenty to thirty times before he finally opened his mouth as the other youth was about to turn dizzy, "This heir has already received your apology. You have also been duly punished for your insulting words. This heir will leave you with a parting word: 'A loose tongue may cause a lot of trouble', and it'll be good for you to take mind of that in the future."

After he spoke, he courteously escorted them out.

By the time Long Yikui and Long Tianba had left 'Celestial World', they were still confused. What did the heir mean earlier? Did he actually forgive them or not? When they left, the expensive and precious gifts they had brought along with them had all been summarily given back.

Zhu Yunxuan snorted coldly and spoke to himself, "Do they really think that by using the trick of injuring themselves to soften my heart and a mere apology would work on me? They insulted Lady Mother, so they won't be let off that easily!"

If Long Yikui was smart, he would have taken his son back to Jiangnan and never let the Long Family set foot in the capital again. However, he had been dazzled by the profits he had earned in the capital. After observing for a few days and discovering that everything was calm, he thought that this issue had blown over and began bustling about in the capital again.

As for Long Tianba, once the wounds on his face healed, he became unruly again. The original group of wastrels he had hung out with were nowhere to be found now but, before long, he found a few more friends who were only interested in having fun and also had decent backgrounds. Long Tianba felt quite content now!

Within this group of friends was a fellow surnamed Dong who was the son of a general. This friend's favorite activity was collecting jadeite stones. In order to get into his good graces, Long Tianba had given him a hanging green jadeite ornament that was made of the finest glass-quality jadeite before this guy had finally 'deigned' to treat him in a friendly manner.

On one particular day, Long Tianba had taken this Young Master Dong along to Wisdom Jade Pavillion and generously offered him to pick out any jadeite ornament he liked. Young Master Dong looked at all of the valuable and expensive jadeite specimens and sighed, "Although the jadeite ornaments here are very beautiful, I always feel like they're missing something. I heard that Imperial Prince Xu also has a shop that sells raw jadeite ores. If I could personally pick out an ore that held beautiful jadeite, that would be so awesome ah! Unfortunately, my father is very strict and doesn't allow me to participate in anything that involves gambling..."

Shrewd people would notice that this Young Master Dong was actually the personal bodyguard of Imperial Prince Xu's heir, Dong Ming. In fact, he was the son of Dong Dali, who used to be Imperial Prince Xu's personal bodyguard. Dong Dali was a valued subordinate of Imperial Prince Xu and was now the commander of the Firearms Barracks. Thus, saying that Dong Ming was the son of a general wasn't a lie!

All of the people in the noble circles in the capital knew that the Long Family had offended Imperial Prince Xu's Household. When they saw Dong Ming appear next to Long Tianba, they knew that the heir to Imperial Prince Xu was getting ready to strike. Thus, the noble customers here all observed this Long Tianba with barely concealed glee.

When Long Tianba found out that this was one of Imperial Prince Xu's businesses, he immediately became a lot more timid. However, after thinking a bit, he decided that he was going to be spending money and not causing trouble, so it should be fine as long as he watched his tongue. Furthermore, he might even spend quite a bit of money, which might let the people from Imperial Prince Xu's Household see him in a new light! This was also considered sending gifts to Imperial Prince Xu's Estate too, right?

He went to speak to his father. Long Yikui considered this carefully before he finally warned, "It's fine for you to take a look as it might be a good opportunity to see whether Imperial Prince Xu's Estate has changed their outlook on us! However, you need to keep that mouth of yours shut tight this time and hold back on that arrogant side of yours! If you screw up this time, I will disown you from the family to avoid causing the rest of us calamity."

Long Tianba hurriedly assented, "Father, don't worry ah. I will make sure to do everything properly for you this time!"

The next day, Long Tianba invited Young Master Dong over to the 'stone gambling hall'. At first, Young Master Dong declined, stating that he was afraid that his father would throw him into the army for some grueling training as punishment. Long Tianba said, "Young Master Dong, it's not as if you're participating

in gambling personally, you'll just be accompanying me to take a look. If your honored father finds out, he won't blame you either!"

Young Master Dong hesitated for a long time before he finally 'reluctantly' agreed.

The gambling stone hall was a very large courtyard residence and a bunch of raw jadeite ores that didn't look very impressive were inside the courtyard. When he saw these 'stones', Long Tianba was not impressed and silently cursed, 'These stones can also be sold for a sky high price? Imperial Prince Xu is clearly ripping people off!' However, since he had learned his previous lesson, he kept his thoughts to himself.

"Young Masters, do you want to participate in a 'full gamble' session or a 'half gamble' session?" The two of them had been led in by a clever young shop assistant. After greeting them, he politely asked them where they wanted to go.

Young Master Dong asked, "What does 'full gamble' and 'half gamble' mean?"

The shop assistant pointed at the ores in the space and smiled, "This courtyard's jadeite ores all have not been opened. Whether or not they contain jadeite is all dependent on luck, so it's called a 'full gamble'. As for the rooms around the courtyard, all of them contain ores that have mostly been opened on one side and you can see the jadeite peeking out. However, the amount of jadeite inside is not guaranteed, so it's called a 'half gamble'. If you are proficient in examining the outside of these ores, then you can look at the ones in this courtyard. If this is your first time here, then we recommend that you look at the stones that have already been opened."

Young Master Dong looked at Long Tianba and said, "I have no knowledge in betting on stones. What about you, Brother Long?"

Long Tianba coughed dryly a few times before saying, "Although I have some knowledge, I'm not proficient either. How about...we go into the room and then decide?"

They entered the room and there were all sorts of raw jadeite ores displayed on the shelves. Each ore had been sliced open, revealing the sparkling jadeite within.

“Wow! These rocks really have jadeite in them ah!” Long Tianba exclaimed in astonishment.

Young Master Dong and the shop assistant exchanged looks as they both disdained this Fourth Young Master Long to the extreme. The fact that the Long Family had such a stupid descendant meant that the family hadn't accumulated enough merit. Was he truly doubting the fact that these ores had authentic jadeite in them? Or was he suspecting Imperial Prince Xu's Estate for fooling the masses and practicing fraud? Even if one had doubts, one shouldn't show it to the outside! He was truly idiotic to the extreme!

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Naturally, since it was more likely for someone to get jadeite when choosing the stones from the half gamble area, the cost of buying these ores were much higher too. A stone that was about the size of a medium-sized ball was actually around ten thousand taels. Of course, if more than half of this type of raw ore was occupied by jadeite within, it could be sold for at least twice the previous buying price. Thus, getting rich overnight wasn't an uncommon thing at the gambling stone hall.

Dong Ming noticed that Long Tianba was hesitating and proposed an idea, “We don't know much about this, so how about we first go outside and take a look?”

Long Tianba had gotten his father's permission this time before he came here. Thus, he had around fifty thousand taels in banknotes on him. However, even with that much money on hand, there weren't a lot of options for him to pick from, especially in the half gamble array of stones. Any one of those partly opened ores commanded a price in the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands.

Long Tianba was well aware of the sky-high price of jadeite. He had given Young Master Dong a hanging ornament made out of bright green jadeite that was of glass quality. It was only about the size of half a palm's length but cost him over thirty thousand taels. As for the piece of high-quality majestic green jadeite, which was the size of his head, it'd be able to supply enough material to make tens of hanging ornaments with extra material to spare. If it was used to make a fine jadeite bracelet, it could be sold for around the high price of a million taels.

After calculating it in his head, asking for a hundred and fifty thousand taels for a raw ore really wasn't that bad! After all, that high quality jade had immediately been bought by someone as soon as it was revealed. Furthermore, the man who bought the jadeite was named Businessman Liu and had been congratulated by everyone around him, “This piece of majestic green jadeite can make around eight to nine bracelets as well as some hanging ornaments and face ornaments. You could make ten times the profit after selling those off. Businessman Liu, you move too fast ah!”

"I was lucky, just lucky!" Businessman Liu gleefully held onto his newly bought jadeite. Of course he needed to be fast and swift when a good piece of jade came out. Otherwise, wouldn't everyone else steal it away from him?

Didn't getting ten times the profits mean that he would make ten million taels soon? Long Tianba's previously hesitant heart suddenly became interested again.

However, he still decided to follow Young Master Dong's proposal and arrived at the full gamble stone hall to watch how other people picked their stones. Young Master Dong was quite well-known in these circles. Many of the more knowledgeable people here all treated him with politeness and patiently answered his questions.

The people here blabbered on about gambling on 'color, type, clarity' as well as looking at ores outer shell, pine-flower patterning, and python marks...Long Tianba felt his head spin after hearing all of this and his temples began to pound.

Young Master Dong seemed to be the same as him and didn't seem to quite understand what was going on. In the end, he said, "Older Brother Long, how about...we first choose a couple stones from these bins that are sold by weight. In any case, they're not very expensive, so we wouldn't lose too much anyway..."

"Jackpot! Hit the jackpot ah! It's the three fortunes three color jadeite!" In the northwest corner of the stone gambling hall, they could suddenly hear a ruckus that interrupted Young Master Dong's words. The two of them exchanged a look and began to move to that area.

There was a youth around twenty years old holding onto a piece of jadeite that was about the size of a basketball. He had a giant foolish smile on his face. The jadeite had stripes of green, purple, and red colors. Even though it hadn't been polished yet, it still glittered with a mesmerizing glow.

"This young master, are you willing to sell the jadeite or not?" A middle-aged merchant came up and asked the youth.

"Sell! I'll obviously sell it!!" The youth looked like he came from a relatively ordinary family and the clothes he wore were only of middling quality. Those who knew him knew that his family had only opened a couple of grocery stores in the north part of the city. Thus, his family was only moderately

well-off. He didn't have a lot of money on hand and could only buy from the general bin of stones, spending three hundred taels in total. Who would have thought that he'd encountered Lady Lucky today and the stone would reveal a decent quality three fortune's jadeite?

The middle-aged merchant took the jadeite over and looked at it before saying, "I offer you thirty thousand taels for this jadeite. What do you think?"

Thirty thousand taels? He had actually made a hundred-fold profit in mere minutes? Long Tianba was so shocked that his mouth fell open. The youth who owned the jadeite was so excited that his face turned red.

"Businessman Xiang, the price you offered isn't fair. You only want to offer thirty thousand taels for such a good quality three fortunes jadeite?" Another old man showed up. He had a large belly and snowy white beard. He rubbed at his whiskers as he addressed the young man, "This old man never cheats the old or young when doing business. Young man, I offer you fifty thousand taels."

The middle-aged man who had been addressed as Businessman Xiang didn't expect that someone would butt in halfway through his deal. He huffily said, "He's offering you fifty thousand, but I'll offer you sixty thousand!"

"Eighty thousand!" The fair and fat old man countered. Long Tianba recognized this man. He was a famous jewelry merchant in Jiangnan. He would have never expected that he'd see him here, buying jadeite in the capital.

"I offer a hundred thousand!" If this material was used to make bracelets, they'd be able to be sold for twenty to thirty thousand taels each. Paying a hundred thousand would still allow him to make a tidy profit.

Finally, the three fortunes jadeite had been bought by the fair and fat old man for a price of a hundred and fifty thousand taels. Jiangnan's market for jadeite jewelry and accessories had just started, so the prices there were higher than the ones sold in the capital. After going through processing, the material he bought for a hundred and fifty thousand taels could be sold for at least an additional thirty to forty thousand taels in profit. The reason why Businessman Xiang couldn't go higher was because of where he sold his goods. He was closer to the capital, so the prices of jadeite were a bit more suppressed by Wisdom Jade Pavilion.

“Three hundred taels to buy the ore but the jadeite inside was sold for a hundred and fifty thousand...he made five hundred times of what he invested ah!” Long Tianba muttered to himself in disbelief. The fire in his heart had been ignited by what he had just seen.

Young Master Dong sighed, “If I could be that lucky, it'd be worth it even if I got beaten by my father!”

“How about...we try our luck?” Long Tianba was thinking. Let alone three hundred taels, even if he had to spend three thousand or thirty thousand taels, it'd be worth it if it sold for a hundred and fifty thousand. He might be unlucky with the first one, or the first ten, but if he bought a hundred, he had to be lucky with one of them, right? Otherwise his luck would be too crappy right?

Long Tianba and Young Master Dong both chose two pieces from the general pile and it came out to be around a thousand six hundred taels. Long Tianba insisted and ended up paying for the both of them. Furthermore, he also picked out an ore from the full gamble pile, which cost around five thousand taels, to bring to the opening table.

The two that Young Master Dong picked out cost around six hundred taels total. After opening them, one revealed a white milky stone and the other one had some jadeite but it was only the size of a baby's fist. It could, at most, make two jadeite buttons. At best, it would be worth around five hundred taels.

“Sigh...my luck is not good, darn it!” Young Master Dong sighed heavily.

The older gamblers comforted him, “That's already considered quite good! Some people bought ores worth tens of thousands but ended up with absolutely nothing! They lost a lot!”

When it came to Long Tianba's ores, he became incredibly nervous. He stared rigidly at the stonemason who was opening the stones with his hands balled up in his fist. His lips were pressed into a thin line.

“There's jadeite!” After the stone mason created his first slice, he used some water to wash the surface and shouted out in excitement, “It's red jadeite! Clarity looks very good; you've hit the jackpot!”

He had selected this jadeite from the general bin and spent eight hundred taels on it. When the entire jadeite was extracted from the ore, it was about the size of two fists and flickered with a red glitter under the sun.

“The color of this red jadeite is pure and is of icy quality. Not bad, young man, are you willing to sell it for twenty thousand taels?” The man surnamed Xiang sidled over and asked him anxiously.

The fair and fat old man had recognized Long Tianba and came over with a smile on his face, “Fourth Young Master Long, this old man will offer twenty-six thousand taels, what do you...”

“Old Man Zhao, are you here today to fight against me?” Businessman Xiang saw that the old fat man had come over to steal business again and was so angry that he was about to start hopping.

“Not selling, not selling!!” Does this young master look like I lack that kind of money?” Long Tianba was starting to act arrogant again, “I plan on using this jadeite to make my mother and younger sister a set of bracelets.”

“Fourth Young Master Long is a filial child who loves his mother and younger siblings. When you get back to Jiangnan, you can find this old man to turn the raw jadeite into bracelets. I'll give you half off the fee!” The old man, who was named Zhao Xing, smiled.

The second ore that was opened revealed nothing and was a complete dud. Not even a single speck of jadeite could be seen. However, with this red jadeite on hand, even if everything else was a dud, he still made back his investment.

The last ore he had bought had cost five thousand taels. A man who knew more about jadeite nodded in approval, “The outside has a speckled sand appearance and has a pearly-white shell. It has a high chance of revealing bright green jadeite inside...”

Long Tianba grinned widely and attentively watched as the stonemason began moving.

“There's jadeite, more jadeite! This is pure golden-green jade and looks to be around at least ice quality!” When the first slice was opened, the people nearby howled in excitement.

“Younger Master Long, your luck is quite good ah! This piece is a true good find!” Old Man Zhao Xing had an expression full of envy. He had also tried buying a few stones but all of them were duds. This rash

young fellow had actually managed to hit the jackpot with two stones, so his luck was out of the ordinary.

“Haha! Young Master Dong, earlier, this younger brother said that I knew a bit about jadeite but I was only being modest. I've truly spent quite a lot of time studying jadeite ores in the past!” Long Tianba was so ecstatic that he couldn't even remember his own name anymore.

“Older Brother Long is truly quite skilled! That'll be enough for me today. I still have stuff to do, so let's meet up together some other time.” Young Master Dong refused Long Tianba's offer to give him the golden-green jadeite before he separated from the other youth at the door.

After he watched Young Master Dong leave, Long Tianba struggled inwardly for a long time and finally remembered his father's cautious words. He went back to the guesthouse to see his father and report on his doings.

After he left, Young Master Dong appeared at the inner office of the stone gambling center to report back to his master, “Your Highness, the bait has been set, so now we're just waiting for the fish to bite!”

Zhu Yunxuan nodded and a cold smile curved up on his lips, “The bait is so attractive so I have no doubt that that idiot will take it!”

After tasting the sweet flavor of success, Long Tianba threw all of his father's cautionary words out the window. He started to appear more and more frequently at the gambling stone hall and began spending more and more money on the raw ores. At first, he had both successes and failures, with the successes outranking the failures. Thus, he ended up with quite a collection of jade that was worth more than ten million taels.

Following that, he had spotted an ore that had been already opened at the half gamble section. The jadeite that peeked out was of glass quality and it was a majestic green color. The price marked on the ore was twenty-six million taels and the raw ore was around three hundred kilograms in weight. Even if the jadeite inside only took up ten percent of the raw material, he'd get at least double his investment back.

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Long Tianba felt his heart race, but he had never had that much money on him. The only he could do was shamelessly beg the manager of the gambling stone house to use his Long Family's identity jade

token as a deposit and get a IOU slip for 15 million taels. By doing that, he finally managed to buy that ore from the half gamble area.

The results were obvious. Although the sliver that had been sliced off showed a bright green jadeite, the rest of the ore only had a little bit of gemstone and the rest was just granite. The ten million he had previously made had completely disappeared and now he had a 15 million debt to pay. Long Tianba immediately felt cold sweat pour down his body and his legs trembled before he fell to the ground. There was no way for him to get back up.

This was worse than the time he had screwed up at Celestial World and only owed a few thousand taels. Then, his father was still able to wipe his bum for him. 15 million taels, on the other hand, was likely how much his whole family made in an entire year. Even though he was only an idle young master at home, he at least had this much knowledge!

He suspected that the gambling stone hall had set a trap for him. However, no one at the hall forced him to buy this ore. If he wasn't too greedy and decided to leave after making ten million, then how could something like this happen later?

This wasn't something he could hide and hope it went away. Long Tianba somehow managed to get back to the guest house. When he saw his father, he knelt immediately in front of him and sobbed out the story.

Once Long Yikui understood the situation, he kicked his son hard and then kicked him a few more times. He sat down heavily on his chair, holding his chest while breathing heavily before finally retrieving a calming pill from his chest pocket and taking it down with a cup of tea. Then, he threw his teacup to the ground in a pique of fury. Shattered porcelain bits flew through the air and one of them even cut Long Tianba's face.

“Father, beat me heavily to relieve your anger ah! It's all this son's fault for losing my head and not staying in control!” Long Tianba hugged onto his father's legs and cried like a child. He was truly frightened this time and relentlessly promised that he would be good in the future and not cause any trouble for the family.

At this time, Long Yikui had pretty much had a good idea of what had happened. There was someone in the shadows who had set a trap for this unfilial son of his ah! Perhaps there were other people who had lay down family fortunes in the course of one night at the gambling stone hall. However, even the most proficient stone identifiers wouldn't be as lucky as his son to get jadeite with every stone he chose. His

son wasn't someone who had a heart of steel. Thus, he had naturally been blinded by the prospects of incredible wealth and fallen into this perfect trap that someone else had set.

He thought back to the day when he brought his son along to Celestial World's office to apologize to the heir of Imperial Prince Xu. At that time, he was wondering why the heir would let them off so easily. After all this time, the crux of the matter had finally appeared. However, if they were able to appease the heir by spending 15 million taels, that might actually be a worthwhile investment.

The only thing he didn't understand was how the trap had been set so well. Was there actually a hidden expert at Imperial Prince Xu's Estate who was able to clearly tell which stones had jadeite or not? The last ore that his son had bought was especially astounding. There was a sliver of bright green jadeite in the giant stone, so the odds had to be high. Nine out of ten people would have bet that the raw ore would have a jackpot waiting inside. If that expert had made an error of judgement, wouldn't that have let this stupid son of his out of the trap?

Inside Imperial Prince Xu's residence, the heir, Zhu Yunxuan, was currently pouring a cup of tea for the little divine stone. He smiled, "Older Brother Yuan, this was all thanks to your help. I know you don't drink wine, so let me use some tea to thank you instead."

Zhu Yunxuan was very curious about this Yuan Zi's true identity. The youth was able to identify with a hundred percent accuracy which ores had jadeite and how much they'd be worth. Furthermore, he was even able to tell that an ore held some top-notch green jadeite, could it be...that he had x-ray vision? However, his lady mother had once solemnly warned him to not investigate the secrets that orbited around Yuan Zi. Thus, no matter how curious he was, he could only restrain himself.

The little divine merely took a small sip of tea before placing the cup down. He gave his master's eldest son the side eye before huffing, "Call me Uncle Yuan! In fact, when you were in your mother's belly and a tiny sprout, I, your Uncle Yuan, had saved yours and your mother's life. If it weren't for the fact that I showed up in the nick of time, you and your mother would both be long dead ah!"

Zhu Yunxuan felt his lips twitch, "You always use that fact to make me quiet. If you're not tired of saying that, I'm tired of hearing it! Alright ah, since you don't want to talk about this, we won't talk about it any longer. However, you look to be around my age. Isn't calling you 'uncle' making you seem too old?"

"I'm of the older generation ah! Little Xuanxuan ah, children should act like your children. Stop acting like your father all the time with that stiff look on your face!" The little divine stone reached out a hand to ruffle Zhu Yunxuan's hair but the youth avoided his grasp.

“I'm already thirteen years old and no longer a child! At around the same age, my lord father got the heavy responsibility of traveling with the imperial ships to find high-yielding crops for the Great Ming Dynasty and came back gloriously!” Zhu Yunxuan rolled his eyes at the little divine stone. He only revealed his more childish side in front of trusted people.

The little divine stone shook its head, “Your father was fifteen years old when he traveled to the west and came back when he was seventeen years old. If you want to compare yourself to him, wait a few more years and grow up first!”

“Your Highness, Her Highness asks that if you're not too busy to go see her.” Princess Consort Xu's first-ranked personal maidservant, Chuntao, came into the study after obtaining permission and smiled at the prince.

Zhu Yunxuan replied, “Alright, go back to my lady mother. I'll head over right now.”

Seeing that Chuntao had gone a good distance, he spoke to the little divine stone, “Older Brother Yuan, what do you think my lady mother wants me for? Did you tell her everything?”

“I told you, call me Uncle Yuan!!” The little divine stone succeeded in ruffling Zhu Yunxuan's hair as it grinned proudly, “Do I look like someone who can't keep a secret ah? Your mother is in charge of all of the businesses under the estate, so did you really think you could hide anything from her? Go see her quickly and don't let her wait too long for you!”

When Yu Xiaocao saw her son, she passed over a piece of a new pastry she had made and smiled, “Come try the new apple pie that I made. I know you don't like sweets so I especially made sure to not add too much sugar.”

“Mhmm! Delicious!!” Zhu Yunxuan finished the entire slice of apple pie, leaving only crumbs. He was similar to his father and didn't know how to use pretty words to compliment the taste of food. He could only use his actions to show how much he truly liked this apple pie.

“Little Baozi, I know everything you've done recently with the businesses. It's time to let it go ah. Otherwise, people will start gossiping maliciously, stating that our Imperial Prince Xu's Household only

knows how to use our power to bully others.” Yu Xiaocao picked up a piece of caramel apple pie and ate it with obvious pleasure as she casually spoke to her son.

Zhu Yunxuan smiled, “Lady Mother, there's no need for you to worry about this. Are you not confident in the things I arrange? Before Lord Father left the capital with his troops, he had especially warned me to protect you and Younger Sister well. If I let someone who insulted you off too easily, that would go against my moral principles!”

Xiaocao felt a bit troubled by her son's desire to protect her and show his filial respects. She stroked her son's silky hair and smiled, “Our Little Baozi has grown up and is a tiny man who knows how to protect his own mother!”

Zhu Yunxuan grumbled a bit awkwardly, “Lady Mother, can you get rid of the 'tiny' you like to use so much? I'm not a kid anymore!”

“But in my eyes, you will always be a tiny, soft, and red little bun!” Yu Xiaocao hugged her son, who was now taller than her, and saw that his ears were slowly turning so red that it looked like blood was coming up. Yu Xiaocao was the best at teasing her own son.

The situation at the gambling stone hall was only resolved once Long Yikui managed to somehow scrape up 15 million taels and personally delivered it to the place to resolve the lingering debt.

However, Long Yikui gradually discovered that it was getting harder and harder for him to do business in the capital. First he was swindled out of a large bunch of silk bolts, which was worth more than eight million. For the Long Family, who was now short on cash, that was just adding insult to injury.

Following that, he discovered that the customers he previously had at the silk shop slowly disappeared and business cooled down. Another silk shop had opened across the street from his and its business was booming. It was as if it had stolen all of his customers. Furthermore, the merchants behind that silk shop were the arch-enemy of the Long Family, the Qin Family. In the past, the Qin Family had been suppressed for many years by the Long Family and had nowhere left to grow.

Long Yikui also discovered that the Qin Family had also begun to overthrow the steel hold the Long Family previously had on them and slowly became more prominent. It looked like all of the silk merchants in the north had decided to buy in bulk from the Qin Family. Even when the goods at the Qin

Family were not as good or if the Long Family tried to lower their prices, the merchants still only went to the Qin Family.

In Jiangnan, the bitter fight between the Long Family and Qin Family came out in the morning as they struggled for business...the Qin Family had been suppressed by the Long Family for many years. If it hadn't been for the fact that someone had given them a lot of support, the Qin Family absolutely would not have developed as quickly as they were. Only now did Long Yikui realize that the 15 million taels hadn't resolved Imperial Prince Xu's Household's fury against them. In fact, that was only the prelude to the rest of this disaster.

It was no longer suitable for him to continue doing business in the capital. Long Yikui made the hard decision to close the silk shop and sell all of the remaining silk bolts at a lower price. However, even when he lowered the prices so much that he wouldn't even get back how much he originally spent on them, no one would buy any. If he brought it all back, he'd have to spend a lot of money on transportation and storage. Helpless, he put out a sign that stated that everything was seventy percent off. A strange customer bought everything that remained in the store.

Just as Long Yikui finished wrapping up everything inside to leave, he inadvertently looked towards the Qin Family's silk shop and discovered that the customer who had bought everything from him was bringing everything into their warehouse. It was very obvious that the silk had come from his shop earlier. What made him more angry was that the Qin Family took out a sign stating they had a fifty percent sale for the next two days. The bustling busy shop across from his contrasted sharply with his pitifully empty one.

This wasn't the end. The fight between the Long Family and the Qin Family in Jiangnan had just started. For a very long time, the Long Family had encountered setback after setback and the title of the richest family in Jiangnan had been given to the Qin Family. Because of the giant mistake that occurred in the capital, the Long Family had also stripped the position of the head of the family from Long Yikui and had given it to Long Yixing from the fourth branch.

Although Long Yixing was very talented, he could only pause the inevitable decline of the Long Family by seceding some of the benefits the family previously had. Then, he trusted someone with connections to beg the soft-hearted Princess Consort Xu for mercy before the Long Family finally avoided complete defeat.

When Zhu Junyang came back from his trip, he heard about what had happened and praised his son to the skies. This also succeeded in winning a stern look from his wife.

Consequently, the saying that 'the heir to Imperial Prince Xu's Estate isn't someone to be messed with' was now engraved deeply within the hearts of all of the nobles in the capital. Thus, the legend that Princess Consort Xu was the person who could not be touched became even more prominent...