

## Fields of Gold Chapter 9

Yu Xiaocao rubbed her nose, embarrassed by her ignorance. She was a girl who lived in the inner regions of the mainland, so she didn't understand the dangers of the sea. It just looked like a milky-white and crystal-like 'mushroom', but it actually had the potential to be deadly. She really learned something new today!

'Slosh!'

The siblings heard the sound of slashing nearby and turned their heads towards the direction of the sound. They looked over and saw Yu Hai coming out of the water. He wasn't wearing an upper garment, exposing his lean and sturdy chest.

"Cao'er, look at what I found!" Yu Hai exclaimed with a grin and revealed a mouth full of white teeth, which made his complexion appear even darker. However, his tan skin made him look even more masculine!

Little Shitou immediately rushed over and shouted, "Abalone! It's an abalone! Father, you found abalones!"

Xiaocao was curious and hastily went over. She saw several dark greenish-brown colored shellfish within Yu Hai's big hands. Each one was around ten centimeters in length and looked rather unassuming. Was this the highly popular abalone?

"Such a large abalone would cost at least a few hundred copper coins [1] if we sell it in town. Father got nine of them. If we sell them to a big restaurant, we should be able to get two or three taels!" Yu Xiaolian also came over and exclaimed in surprise.

Two or three taels? Based on Xiaocao's understanding of the current economy, two or three taels can buy three to four hundred catties [2] of first-class white rice, one hundred catties of first-class pork, around seventy or eighty chubby live chickens... Two to three taels were enough to buy one year's worth of food for her entire family, which consisted of over ten people.

However, Yu Xiaocao knew an abalone's nutritional value. Her original plan of using the abalones to nourish her family's health was disrupted by the value of abalones.

Xiaocao had a basic grasp of her new grandmother's personality. With her grandmother's temperament, she would tear down whoever dared to suggest that they eat the abalones! If they take them home, then it would just be like throwing a meat bun at a dog—it will never return!

Yu Xiaocao's eyes darted about, then she acted like a spoiled child and asked, "Father, are these all for me?"

After hesitating for a moment, Yu Hai nodded and said, "I already mentioned it earlier, if we find abalones, we'll use it to cook nutritious foods for you and your mother. We were quite lucky today. If we can't finish them, then we can slowly eat them after they're dried."

Yu Hang and Yu Xiaolian casted a skeptical gaze at their father. They knew exactly what kind of person their father was. He was someone who would work wholeheartedly without any complaint. Even if Madam Zhang made unreasonable demands, he would never refute her.

Even Shitou, who was five years old, knew that if they brought the abalones back, then they wouldn't even be able to touch them, let alone slowly eat them!

Yu Hai felt uncomfortable by the way his children were staring at him. He pretended to cough and bent down to carefully put the abalones into the bucket.

Yu Xiaocao's eyes darted around and said, "Father! Let me handle the abalones."

Yu Hai stuffed the abalones, which were worth around three taels, into his daughter's hands without hesitation. He stood up, looked at the sky, and said, "It's getting late. We collected a lot of seafood today, so let's go back now!"

Yu Xiaocao poured all the seafood within her basket into her father's large barrel, and then carefully placed the abalones into inside her basket. She looked around and ran towards the cliff. She picked up some kelp and sea lettuce, and then used them to securely cover the abalones.

They really collected a lot of seafood today! The barrel that Yu Hai was carrying was as tall as Shitou and filled with their harvest. Yu Hang and Xiaolian were also holding small buckets that were full to the brim. Even Little Shitou's small basket was packed with seafood.

On the way back, villagers, who they were acquainted with, greeted them with admiration, "Dahai is seriously still the most skilled among us. He arrived later than us, but he also obtained so much more than all of us!"

"Brother Dahai, this mussel that you caught is at least twenty to thirty catties. When it's dried, it would still weight around five catties. Brother Dahai never fails whenever he makes a move! Do you have any tips? Teach me some!" The speaker was a young man in his mid-twenties. He had a short stature, upright face, and tanned complexion.

In order to prevent disputes when hunting at the sea, the villagers each have their own fixed spots. Thus, their results would depend on their own luck. However, it was different for Yu Hai. He didn't frequently gather seafood at the sea, but he returned with fruitful results every time.

Many of the villagers wanted to learn from him, but they couldn't bring themselves to ask. After all, it was his own know-how to make a living and feed his family. If they learned his skills, it would be the same as snatching food from his mouth. It was fortunate that Liu Shuanzhu was close friends with Yu Hai. If another person asked, they might end up having a fall out!

"Uncle Shuanzhu, there're a lot of reefs around the cliff that no one has been to. You can go check it out when the tide recedes!" Yu Hang knew Liu Shuanzhu was close friends with his father, so he didn't hide it from him. However, he didn't reveal his family's treasured hunting spot.

Liu Shuanzhu looked at the villagers who were eavesdropping on them and laughed loudly, "Xiaosha, do you think we can climb cliffs, hike up mountains, and enter the sea, just like your father? It's so dangerous over at the cliff. That was where Uncle Liu Si died! Your Uncle Shuanzhu still wants to live for a few more years!"

Yangfan's wife walked over with her daughter and asked, "Dahai, where's your wife?"

"She wasn't feeling very well today, so she stayed at home to rest! How's Brother Yangfan's leg?" Li Yangfan was another good friend of Yu Hai. He recently encountered a storm on his way back from the sea. His ship crashed into a reef and he injured his leg. Thus, he was recuperating at home right now.

Yangfan's wife asked about Liu Muyun's health with concern, then replied, "He's fine. The injury on his leg wasn't very serious. However, our family's ship was damaged quite badly. Dahai, when you're free, can you come over to check if it can be fixed?"

Everyone in the nearby fishing villages knew Yu Hai was a very capable person. When it came to fishing in the sea, even three to five ordinary people were incomparable to him. A recent example would be early spring this year. At that time, Old Yu's family caught a shark that weighed around three hundred catties. They had earned several taels with just the shark's fin. It's not that the villagers were looking down on Old Yu and his stepson, but without Yu Hai, they wouldn't even be enough to feed a shark, let alone to hunt for a shark.

In addition to his fishing and hunting skills, Yu Hai also learned how to repair ships without a teacher. He was capable of fixing most issues and defects of a normal fishing ship. Thus, although many villagers of Dongshan Village were envious of Yu Hai's skills, they would only gossip behind his back and wouldn't dare to offend him.

"Alright! Tomorrow, when I return from the mountains, I'll go over to take a look. Yangfan's wife, here's some barnacles' meats. Brother Yangfan really likes eating this. Take some back for him, so he can eat it when he drinks wine." Little Shitou's basket was filled with barnacles' meats and Yu Hai generously offered them without any hesitation.

Yangfan's wife smiled and shook her head. She looked at the quiet Xiaocao, who was standing beside them, and said, "Keep it for the children to eat! Xiaocao, how's your health? Does your head still hurt?"

Yu Xiaocao politely smiled at her and replied, "It doesn't hurt anymore. Grandpa You said I can take off the bandage in two days."

Yu Hai briefly chatted with them before taking the children home. When he entered the door, he saw his wife, who was supposed to be resting inside the room, serving dinner from the kitchen. Thus, his expression immediately turned grim.

"Oh! You guys caught quite a lot of good things at the sea today. We're going to have a feast tomorrow!" Madam Li's piercing voice sounded behind them.

Yu Xiaolian was so angry that she threw the bucket on the ground and shouted at her eldest aunt, who was halfway into her room, "Eldest Aunt, didn't Grandmother tell you to cook at home? You were wandering around the village and had just returned. You just want everyone to starve, right?"

Madam Li glanced at her, but she didn't actually care about that little brat. She sneered, "Someone can pretend to be sick, but I'm not allowed to go out for an errand? How dare you speak to me like that? You have no manners at all. If you're not careful, you won't be able to get married in the future!"

[1] Copper coin (文) - a form of currency used in ancient China (1 tael = ~1000 copper coins)

[2] Catty (斤) - 1 catty = 0.5 kg