

## Toddler 21

### Chapter 21 The Fragrance of Meat

This farmhouse courtyard seemed to be hidden in the depths of the forest and was deserted. However, there was already a small path in the forest made of jade. It meandered all the way to the entrance of the small

courtyard, but the entrance was set up with a smokescreen that ordinary people could not enter.

When Yan Jiuchao's carriage arrived at the small courtyard, the middle-aged man had already prepared a table of game. All of them were hunted by the guards in the forest.

They were not as big as the wild rabbits and pheasants that they raised. The meat was not fat and tender. Most importantly, their rabbits and pheasants were nurtured with countless natural treasures. One bowl of

them could extend one's life.

Thinking of those rabbits and chickens that had somehow disappeared, the middle-aged man felt a little pained. However, the Young Master didn't mind. He didn't care about his life and couldn't taste anything.

"Uncle Wan, do you want me to make another dish of wild vegetables?" The chef asked.

"What wild vegetables are there?" The middle-aged man called Uncle Wan asked.

The chef said, "There are shepherd's purse, small wild garlic, winter mushrooms and winter bamboo shoots."

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Uncle Wan thought about it and said, "We ate the winter bamboo shoots yesterday. You stir-fry some shepherd's purse together with some small garlic, winter mushrooms, and dried meat. Then, make an appetizing

sour soup.”

“Sour fish soup?” Chef asked.

“The sour fish soup is fine too.” Uncle Wan nodded.

“Aye, alright!” The chef agreed respectfully and went to the kitchen to cook the dishes.

Uncle Wan placed the dishes in the dining room.

Yan Jiuchao ate two mouthfuls as if he was chewing wax before throwing down his chopsticks.

Uncle Wan looked at the untouched rice in his bowl and frowned slightly. He said earnestly, “At least eat more. You didn’t even eat much for breakfast and lunch.”

Yan Jiuchao said impatiently, “No!”

The servants inside and outside lowered their heads.

Uncle Wan sighed helplessly. Although he couldn’t taste it, he could at least force himself to swallow a few mouthfuls in the past. Now, it was getting more and more outrageous. It was even harder to serve this master

than to be the top scholar.

Uncle Wan held his forehead. “Aiya, why didn’t I become the top scholar back then...”

While Yan Jiuchao was having his meal in the dining hall, Little Snow Fox had also started his dinner.

It jumped into Yan Jiuchao’s bedroom and secretly took out the bag that was hidden under the bed and placed it on the table.

There were a few plates of delicious snacks and fresh fruits on the table. It compared the size of the bag and picked the largest white jade fruit plate. With its small claws, it pushed the fruits on the plate out one by one.

Then, it bit open the bag and pushed the two fragrant meat buns up.

After that, it took out a small white silk handkerchief and wrapped it around its neck.

It was ready to eat.

The little snow fox took a satisfied breath of the meat fragrance on the bun and squinted its eyes in enjoyment. Then, it opened its bloody mouth and bit into the meat along with the skin!

The little snow fox was stunned. Three seconds later—

Dong!

Little Snow Fox fell!

He rolled onto the ground, stuck out his tongue, and rolled his eyes...

When Yan Jiu entered the house, the little snow fox had already rolled its eyes and fallen asleep. It was hugging a big meat bun that it had obtained from somewhere. That bun was really big, bigger than a human face.

When it was held in the arms of a young fox, it was simply unable to fit in.

Among Yan Jiuchao's exquisite young master life, there had never been a steamed bun of this size, making his brows jump. However, he did not say anything. It was not like he was the one eating!

Yan Jiuchao soaked in the medicinal spring for a while before resting. He was a light sleeper and would have a terrible temper if he was woken up.

No one dared to have a taste of Young Master Yan's temper. Once he took a break, everyone in the courtyard "took a break" as well. The small courtyard that was previously busy seemed to have fallen into a deathly

silence in an instant.

Yan Jiuchao was anorexic, but that didn't mean that he didn't need to eat. He would also go hungry. After eating too little during the day, his stomach began to growl in the latter half of the night.

There were already prepared dishes on the table. There was the soft and delicious date paste mountain medicinal cake, the sweet and clear crystal osmanthus cake, the soft and crisp golden hibiscus cake, a box of

savory and soft crab roe crispness, and a plate of freshly washed fruits.

Every snack was put into the most suitable exquisite utensils.

In contrast to these utensils and food, there was a large meat bun placed on a red jade flower crystal plate. It was as if a mighty and strong overlord flower had mixed into a small and exquisite hibiscus garden.

A hint of disdain flashed across Yan Jiuchao's eyes. After that, Yan Jiuchao looked at the food on the table again. The food was made in a fancy manner, but in reality, it was all the same taste. Or rather, there was no

taste at all.

Yan Jiuchao raised his arm, his long jade-like fingers reaching out towards the dazzling array of pastries. The date paste mountain medicinal cake, crystal osmanthus cake, golden hibiscus cake... His fingertips passed

through them, but in the end, they landed on the large meat bun that had long turned cold and looked like it had no appetite.

Yan Jiuchao had never eaten such an ugly bun before.

He picked it up somehow.

"It must taste awful!

“But I can’t tell anyway.”

Yan Jiu broke open the bun and took a bite. The skin of the bun was frozen stiff, and he chewed it noisily.

“It’s indeed tasteless...” He stopped mid-sentence. A fleeting taste flashed across the tip of his tongue, but it quickly disappeared.

He stared blankly at the black meat filling in the bun’s skin. He hesitated for a moment before taking another bite.

“Oh?” he exclaimed.

Following that, he held the cold and hard meat bun in his hands, one bite after another.

Uncle Wan only returned to the room quietly after Yan Jiuchao fell asleep. He did not dare to make any noise, but he could not allow himself to fall asleep.

Young Master ate too little in the day, so he would definitely be hungry in the middle of the night. Although there were snacks in the room, it was still better to eat something warm to warm up his stomach on such a cold day.

When he heard sounds coming from Yan Jiuchao’s room, he knew that the young master was awake. He quickly instructed the chef to add the fire under the stove while he went over to the young master’s side,

intending to ask if there was anything he wanted to eat.

Unexpectedly, just as he reached the porch, he heard Young Master’s faint threatening voice.

There was no one else in the room!

Uncle Wan's heart skipped a beat. He thought that Young Master's illness was acting up again, or that an assassin had come. He hurriedly walked over! He pushed open the door and saw that there were no assassins.

There was only a small snow fox that Yan Jiuchao forcefully shook awake.

The little snow fox had just woken up. The tufts of fur on its head were all standing up, but its mind was already awake! It hugged a huge meat bun that was almost bigger than itself and had been bitten by it. It glared

angrily at Yan Jiuchao!

Yan Jiuchao squatted down on the ground in a very down-to-earth manner. He pinched the bun skin with his fingertips and said tyrannically.

"Give it to me."

"Are you giving it to me or not?"

"I'll beat you to death if you don't."

Uncle Wan: "...".

## Chapter 22 Raising Chickens and Laying Eggs

On the other hand, Yu Wan had hunted five plump pheasants and a bunch of plump hares. The basket on her back was almost full, and there was no more space for winter bamboo shoots. She only dug a few and

carried them in her arms before she went down the mountain contentedly.

Little Bruiser thought that his sister had gone to dig bamboo shoots and fish. He was counting how many fish he could eat tonight when he saw his sister return with a few pheasants and rabbits.

Little Bruiser had never seen such a huge chicken and rabbit before, and his eyes were wide open. "Sis! Is this a chicken? Why is it so big? Even rabbits are big! Even bigger than the village headman's!"

Rabbits were rare and not something that just anyone could afford. Back then, when the village headman bought a rabbit in town, it had made everyone envious.

“Sis! Where did you get that rabbit?” Little Bruiser squatted down to grab the rabbit’s ear.

Yu Wan quickly grabbed his little hand. “Be careful of its bite.”

“Do rabbits bite people?” Little Bruiser asked in confusion.

“Of course.” Even domestic rabbits would occasionally bite, let alone these two wild rabbits. However, it was strange. They looked like wild rabbits, but they were much more docile than she had imagined. If she had

not found them in such a deserted place, she would have thought that someone had caught them and raised them.

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Yu Wan locked the hag in the temporary small outdoor chicken house. Although it was called a small chicken house, it was actually a small circle made of bamboo strips that were two feet tall and less than a meter in

diameter.

Little Bruiser obediently squatted outside the chicken house and looked at the fat rabbit without blinking.

Yu Wan smiled at him and asked, “Do you want to eat rabbits tonight?”

“Huh?” Little Bruiser turned around and looked at his sister in horror. Why would he want to eat such a cute rabbit?

“No, no,” Yu Wan quickly said.

Little Bruiser heaved a sigh of relief. Yu Wan said, "Then we'll sell it."

Little Bruiser : "..."

Yu Wan put the wild chickens into the chicken coop.

When Madam Jiang arrived at the backyard, Yu Wan was carrying the chicken coop under the roof of the backyard. It was freezing cold and it was unknown when it would snow. It was better to be prepared.

Yu Wan put down the chicken coop. When she turned around, she saw her mother leaning against the door frame at the back door of the central room, smiling at her.

Even though she was dressed in coarse linen clothes, Madam Jiang was still as beautiful as a forest fairy. It was truly impossible to not be stunned by such peerless beauty after seeing it a few times.

But what Yu Wan was more concerned about was Madam Jiang's meaningful gaze. Could it be that her performance in the past few days was too capable, causing Madam Jiang to suspect her?

"Mom..."

Yu Wan was about to find an excuse for herself when Madam Jiang spoke as if it was only right and proper. "I knew it. Your brain was damaged in the past."

Yu Wan : "..."

After cleaning the backyard, Yu Wan talked to Madam Jiang about her uncle. "Mother, how much money does Uncle need to treat his leg in the Capital?"

Madam Jiang held her chin and thought for a while. "At least... a hundred taels."

Yu Wan clicked her tongue. "So much?"

"Yeah." Madam Jiang calmly nodded her head. "Your uncle has already missed the best time to treat him. Ordinary doctors can't treat his illness, and the consultation fees for famous doctors aren't cheap either..."



else would people say that commoners can't get sick?"

When the word "commoner" came out of a peasant woman's mouth, it was like an outsider telling a story about another group of people.

Yu Wan glanced at Madam Jiang.

Madam Jiang also looked at her and smiled. "But I believe Ah Wan will definitely earn that much money."

That much money... This is what a peasant woman would say.

Yu Wan said, "I plan to sell half of the pigs at home. I'll sell all these pheasants and wild hares. The money I earn will be used to buy some goods for the family for the year. Mom, you should see if there's anything you

and Little Bruiser need."

She still had the remaining fourteen taels left from the previous salt sale. She did not need to use that money anymore and kept it for her uncle's medical fees and travel expenses.

Madam Jiang smiled, "Okay."

"Sis! Sis! Come and see!" Little Bruiser, who had been squatting beside the chicken coop, waved at Yu Wan. "The pheasant laid eggs!"

Ordinary chickens would not lay eggs during winter. If she had not seen it with her own eyes, Yu Wan would not have believed it.

Yu Wan picked up the piping hot wild egg and said in satisfaction, "Then I won't sell this one. I'll keep it to lay eggs. I will make eggs for you every day."

That night, the hen that laid the egg received special treatment from Yu Wan—it was valiantly moved to a large and comfortable "luxurious" chicken coop. Not only did it enter the house, there was dried grass and

placed feed.

The next day, when Yu Wan went to tidy up the chicken coop in the backyard, she found that the other four plump pheasants inside had also laid eggs.

The dumbfounded Yu Wan :” ...”

The pheasants... the pheasants were not for sale. Luckily there were the rabbits and pigs.

Tomorrow was the day for marketing. Before that, she could go into the mountains again.

She planned to call Yu Feng and Yu Song, but the moment she went out, she bumped into them. The two of them were carrying wooden buckets with fishing nets in them. Obviously, they had the same idea as her.

“Big Brother, Second Brother.” She smiled and greeted them.

Yu Song’s face darkened.

Yu Feng replied with his usual expression, “The weather isn’t too good. It might be snowing soon. When the lake freezes, we won’t be able to fish anymore. Yu Song and I will fish more today.”

Yu Wan looked at the dark sky and agreed, “Then I’ll dig more bamboo shoots too.” After a pause, she thought of something and said, “I’m afraid I’ll only be back at night. I’ll go make some rations.”

“We brought it!” The brothers said in unison!

Yu Wan turned around in a daze and looked at the two people who were reacting violently. “Oh.”

Perhaps realizing that he had overreacted, Yu Feng cleared his throat in embarrassment and said, “Let’s... eat at my house today. My mother said she’s cooking.”

“Okay.” Yu Wan smiled and did not refuse.

She had not eaten the pork trotters she bought yesterday and had been smoking them on the stove. Before she left, she sent the pork trotters, five eggs, and two fat pheasants to the old mansion.

Uncle Yu's family used to raise chickens too. Later on, they sold the last old hen to make money for Uncle Yu's medicine.

"Give it to me, give it to me."

Aunt Yu was sitting in the backyard peeling a dried corn stick. Uncle Yu walked over with his walking stick, grabbed a handful of corn, and walked towards the chicken house.

Aunt Yu was unhappy. "What are you doing? There are vegetables and leaves, and you're using these to feed the chickens! We're not even full!"

Uncle Yu chuckled. "Didn't you hear Ah Wan say? It's a chicken that can lay eggs."

Was it just the chicken? It should have something to do with the person sending the chicken, isn't it? Aunt Yu rolled her eyes and carried the dustpan to the kitchen. I can't be bothered with this person!

After feeding the pheasant, Uncle Yu limped after her. He took the kitchen knife from her and said to her, "Let me do it."

Aunt Yu looked at him as if she had seen a ghost!

Uncle Yu ignored her surprise, put down his walking stick, and happily went to cut the vegetables.

Aunt Yu looked at his busy and cheerful figure and was momentarily stunned.

"Isn't she just a girl? Is she worth you being so happy about?" Aunt Yu choked as she turned around and wiped her reddened eyes..

Chapter 23 A New Business Opportunity

This trip into the mountains had been quite fruitful. Not only had they caught a large number of fish and dug up even more winter bamboo shoots, they had also picked some wild mountain fungi. It wasn't the time for

fungi to grow yet, so they didn't pick much, but it was enough for the whole family to eat.

"It's getting dark. Let's go back," Yu Feng said as he looked at the dark sky.

Yu Wan nodded. "It's time to go back."

"Aren't we going to catch more fish?" Yu Song knew that the crucian carp here could be sold for a good price. There aren't that many times to go marketing anymore. He hoped that he could get more fish this time.

Yu Feng said, "It's not safe in the mountains. Once it gets dark, everything will come out. If we don't go back now, Father and Mother will be worried."

Although Yu Song was unwilling, he thought that his mother might be standing in front of the door looking around worriedly. He pursed his lips and went down the mountain with them.

As soon as the three of them entered Ah Wan's backyard, the sky began to snow.

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Yu Song opened his mouth. Luckily he was back!

Today, they were having lunch at the old mansion. Madam Jiang and Little Bruiser had already gone over before lunch. Yu Wan asked Yu Feng and Yu Song to go over first while she placed the winter bamboo shoots

properly. After feeding the pigs, chickens, and rabbits, she brought the two cattles of wild mountain fungus she picked to the old mansion.

Along the way, they met Aunt Zhang, who was collecting dried corn sticks. Aunt Zhang smiled. "Are you having dinner at your uncle's place?"

"Yes, Aunt Zhang, have you eaten?" Yu Wan greeted her warmly.

Aunt Zhang smiled. "I was just about to go home."

Yu Wan said, "Then Aunt Zhang, you should hurry up and go."

Aunt Zhang left after agreeing. After Yu Wan had walked far away, she turned around and looked at her back. Just now, she actually wanted to ask this girl what had happened between her and the Zhao family. Why did

she stop being close to them overnight and start getting close to her uncle's family again? Although it wasn't a bad thing, the villagers were still curious.

Yu Wan was focused on earning money, so she naturally wouldn't think too much about anything else. Moreover, her personality was very different from before, and she would inevitably attract gossip. However,

everyone didn't have any ill intentions, so there was no need for her to be calculative.

As she approached the old mansion, Yu Wan smelled a strong fragrance of braised meat. This was the first time she smelled such an alluring fragrance after coming to Lotus Flower Village for so long.

Yu Wan instantly felt hungry.

In the central room of the old mansion, Aunt Yu was bringing dishes to the table one by one. Madam Jiang helped take care of her youngest daughter while Little Bruiser followed Yu Feng and Yu Song to the water vat

and bucket in the backyard to store the fish.

It had been a long time since the two families had such a lively atmosphere. The adults could still maintain their composure, but the children could not. The daughter, who's still learning how to speak, followed behind

Madam Jiang. She grabbed onto Madam Jiang's skirt and kept babbling. From the backyard came the laughter of Yu Song and Little Bruiser.

It was not the New Year's yet, but it already felt like it was.

In the central hall, Aunt was serving dishes. Yu Wan went to help. Aunt Yu placed a bowl of piping hot vegetable and egg soup on the table and said to Yu Wan, "It's all done. Have a seat! What did you bring over again?"

Don't keep bringing things home. It's enough to eat!"

"A little wild fungus." Yu Wan smiled and handed the basket to Auntie. "Where's Uncle?"

"Yes, Mother, where's Father?" Yu Song had finished storing the crucian carp and came over with his forehead full of sweat.

Aunt Yu took the basket and placed it properly. "There's still one last dish. He'll come over once it's done."

Yu Song and Yu Feng were stunned. What did their mother say just now? Their father was cooking? Their father cooked?!

Yu Wan looked at the two brothers with a strange expression. Madam Jiang walked over with the youngest daughter and whispered into Yu Wan's ear, "Your uncle's culinary skills are very good. He was a chef in the

Capital, but after his leg was injured, he didn't cook anymore. Your uncle was happy because you came today, that's why he's cooking."

Because of... her? Yu Wan was stunned.

Yu Feng and Yu Song looked at Yu Wan at the same time. Needless to say, they knew why their father was so happy. Little Bruiser often came over, and they had never seen their father personally cook before. It

couldn't be just for Third Aunt. After counting all the times, it could only be this ungrateful girl.

Yu Song snorted.

“Brown Sugar Pig Knuckle is here!” Uncle Yu carried a big steaming bowl and limped into the hall.

“Didn’t I tell you to leave it!” Aunt Yu shouted. She rushed over and took the bowl from him. “Little Feng, come and help your father!”

Yu Feng had already walked towards his father before his mother could say anything. He held out his hand.

Uncle Yu looked at his son calmly and raised his chin. “I don’t need your help.”

The despised son :” ...”

Yu Wan curled her lips and walked over to help her uncle sit down.

Her uncle’s culinary skills were indeed very good. He had cooked those few unremarkable vegetables in the field into tasteful dishes. A plate of stir-fried corn with green peppers was so spicy that it was refreshing and

sweet to the heart. The sweet and spicy taste of the ingredients had been perfectly cooked. The corn grain was dried under the sun, but it didn’t have any dryness or hardness when eaten. It was simply like freshly

peeled corn today.

What made Yu Wan unable to stop was the plate of chives scrambled eggs. It’s as big as the round plate with a slightly burnt yellow side, but the center was so tender that one could suck it in in one mouthful. Her uncle

had used the salt bought from the shop, but Yu Wan could barely taste the bitterness.

“Egg.” His youngest daughter still wanted to eat. Yu Wan picked up a large piece for her and she started eating it clumsily with her chopsticks.

Of course, the most popular dish was still the bowl of rock sugar braised pork knuckle. Just looking at the glossy red pig knuckle skin was enough to make one drool. This was the most delicious pork knuckle that Yu

Wan had ever eaten. Even the braised meat of the White Jade Restaurant and Jadeite Pavilion was less than one-tenth of it.

Moreover, her uncle used the most astringent salt. If he could exchange it for snowflake salt, Yu Wan could not imagine how delicious this dish would be.

“] have an idea.” Yu Wan finished the last piece of pork knuckle meat in her bowl and put down her chopsticks. She looked at her family solemnly and said, “We won’t sell pork tomorrow.”

“Pork?” Yu Feng was stunned. “Wait, when did we decide to sell pork? We didn’t...” He paused. How could he forget that his third aunt had just extorted a pig from the Zhao family?

Yu Wan smiled and looked at Yu Feng, “That’s right. It’s the pig that the Zhao Family compensated us with. I originally planned to keep half of it and sell the other half at the market. But now, I’ve changed my mind.

Uncle’s culinary skills are so good, it’s a pity if he doesn’t show his skills. We won’t sell raw meat anymore. Let’s sell braised meat. Braised meat is more profitable than raw meat. We just have to work hard to make

braised marinade.”

Selling braised meat was indeed a good idea, but would his father agree? His father had sworn that he would never—

“What’s so hard about that!” Uncle Yu slammed the table. “Ah Wan, how much do you want? I’ll cook it for you right away!”

## Chapter 24 A United Family

Making half a pig into pork belly was not a small project. They still needed to prepare a lot of things.

“Before we start braising, we have to marinate the meat first. The weather is cold, I’m afraid we’ll have to marinade it till the latter half of the night.” Uncle Yu said.

“And salt. Our family doesn’t have that much salt,” Yu Song said.



“There’s not enough spices either.” Yu Feng had learned a bit of cooking from his father, so he knew that sauces needed a lot of spices.

“I say,” Madam Jiang, who had been silent all this while, said, “Should we kill the pig first?”

Everyone :” ...”

Slaughtering pigs was a technical job. The only butcher in Lotus Flower Village had been taken away along with Ah Wan’s father back then. There was also a butcher in the neighboring village, but unfortunately, he had

accompanied his wife back to her maiden home two days ago and had yet to return.

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“How about... I go look for Shuanzi?” Yu Song said. Shuanzi was the son of the village butcher. He was the same age as Yu Song and they had a good relationship. “At least he killed a few pigs with his father.”

Yu Feng shook his head and said, “How old was Shuanzi back then? He was just passing a bucket to his father. How could that be considered killing pigs? I think we should drag the pig into town to kill it.”

Uncle Yu disagreed. “If we go, not only will we have to spend money, but the meat won’t be fresh enough. We have to slaughter it and marinate it on the spot.”

The three of them chatted as they arrived at Yu Wan’s house. A faint yellow light came from Yu Wan’s house. Yu Wan had opened the door earlier than them.

Yu Song pouted and snorted. “What can we do? Can we slaughter it ourselves?”

Uncle Yu looked up at the sky and sighed. “It seems like I can only slaughter it myself.”

As soon as he said that, a groan came from the backyard. The few of them looked at each other in confusion and walked to the backyard to take a look. It was Yu Wan who had knocked the pig down with a stick. Then,

she grabbed the pig's front and back legs and threw it onto the bench. She held it down with one hand and quickly picked up the knife with the other.

The pig didn't even have time to feel pain before Yu Wan "exorcized" it.

The three of them were dumbfounded and swallowed their saliva. In the year that the girl disappeared, she was probably kidnapped to slaughter pigs.

Tonight was destined to be a sleepless night.

In order to make the most delicious braised food, Uncle Yu needed to make the best braised marinade. Yu Wan also needed to make the fine salt. The Yu brothers, on the other hand, went to town as fast as they could

to buy the necessary ingredients, side dishes, and brown sugar.

Yu Wan had bought ten pounds of salt. After purifying it, there would be less than six pounds left. Hence, she had Yu Feng and Yu Song buy an extra bucket of salt as well as the soybeans used for cooking salt.

Yu Wan handed the fine salt to her uncle. Her uncle began to marinate the pork. He made the marinade more salty for the New Year. As for the braised meat, it was slightly bland.

Aunt Yu also came over to help. It had been a long time since the family had been so busy. Aunt Yu looked at the yard full of meat and could not believe it.

"Take it and hang it where it's ventilated." Uncle Yu pointed to the meat in the barrel. These were for the New Years.

"I got it!" Aunt Yu left in high spirits.

Yu Wan's kitchen was too small, so he couldn't cook enough braised meat.

Madam Jiang left behind to take care of the two young children. Yu Wan and her uncle's family carried the meat to the old mansion.

That night, the fragrance of the braised meat spread throughout most of the village. The villagers were all stirred up!

It was already past midnight by the time all the braised meat was ready. At first, the three siblings were worried that Uncle Yu wouldn't be able to endure it. However, Uncle Yu became more and more energetic as he

worked. In the end, he was even more energetic than the three of them.

"Ah Wan, try this." Uncle Yu cut a slice of the most tender pork belly and handed it to Yu Wan.

The meat had a crystalline luster and was plump. The rich and fragrant taste bloomed layer by layer in her taste buds. It was fat but not greasy, and the marinade was thick. It was savory and soft, and it revealed a trace

of sweetness that was just right.

"How is it?" Uncle Yu asked with a smile.

"Delicious!" Yu Wan said without thinking.

Uncle Yu cut another large piece for her.

The two brothers were also craving for it and they quickly came over. Uncle Yu also cut two pieces for them.

The two of them looked at the braised meat in front of them that was the size of a fingernail. Then, they looked at the big fat meat that could not even fit into Yu Wan's bowl. The corners of their mouths twitched so

much that they were about to have a stroke.

"Uncle, are you not going to make these pork bellies?" Yu Wan asked as she looked at the meat on the counter.

Uncle Yu smiled and said, "These are pork bellies. Braising them isn't the best choice, but it's the best when made into crispy meat." The streaky pork was a piece of meat on the belly of a pig. It was fat and thin, and it

was most suitable for the texture of crispy on the outside and tender on the inside.

When Uncle Yu finished preparing a large plate of crispy meat, it was already midnight.

It was snowing late into the night, leaving a thick layer of snow on the road.

The few of them packed their things and hired an ox cart from the village. They stepped on the snow and walked away noisily. Although it was a small market, as it was close to the end of the year, it was not worse than

a large market. However, due to the snow, everyone arrived later than usual.

Yu Wan noticed that the stall fees had increased, which meant that their prices were also going up.

This was not a bad thing.

Yu Wan rented two stalls in one go, one for selling braised food and the other for selling wild game.

Yu Wan took a stool for her uncle to sit down as his legs were not in good shape. There were not many customers at the moment, so she and her two older brothers could handle it.

Yu Wan's crucian carp and winter bamboo shoots were a bit popular. After a while, a returnee came over.

"Lass, it's you again. How's the fish today? Is it fresh?" A fat auntie asked with a smile.

"Auntie Wu." Yu Wan greeted her politely. She squatted down and picked up a fat carp with her bare hands. The carp shook its head and wagged its tail. It looked very lively. "Are you still worried about the fish I sold?"

The weather is cold and the lake is frozen. This is the last batch of fish. We won't sell them this year after we've finished selling this batch."

Upon hearing this, Auntie Wu decisively asked for five!

On the other side, the cauldrons had also been set up. Uncle Yu slowly heated the braised marinade, and a tempting fragrance slowly wafted out.

Auntie Wu then looked at the stall beside Yu Wan. "Is this also yours?"

Yu Wan nodded. "Yes, it was only served this morning. My uncle's cooking is very good. If you don't believe me, try it."

Yu Wan cut a piece of pork belly that fit Auntie Wu and handed it to her.

Auntie Wu stuffed the hot streaky pork into her mouth and chewed carefully. Her eyes instantly widened. "Aiyo! Why is it so delicious! Give me a pound!"

Yu Wan asked, "Do you want pork belly? Or is it half a pound of pork belly and half a pound of lean meat? The price is about the same."

"How much for a pound?" Auntie Wu asked.

Yu Wan said, "If it's for other customers, it would cost thirty five copper coins. Since you're a returning customer and this is today's first business deal, I'll charge you thirty copper coins."

"It's that expensive?" Auntie Wu was shocked.

To be honest, it was indeed expensive, but putting aside the cost of manpower, their family used snowflake salt. The cost of salt alone was much higher than that of their peers, and this price was even specially lowered

to open the market.

"Your things are more expensive than others!" Auntie Wu complained.

Yu Wan said, "The workmanship is different, the cost of the ingredients are different, so the price is naturally different as well. You're someone who's experienced, so you can tell whether the taste is good or bad."

Auntie Wu didn't know what to say. Although she felt a bit pained, she wasn't short of a few copper coins. After some hesitation, she bought it. "Give me something else too."

"My family's braised pork skin is also not bad." Yu Wan cut half a roll of glistening pork skin and gave it to her. "Did you bring a bowl? I'll put some marinade back for you. My family's marinade isn't salty. You can use it

to mix the braised meat, stir-fry vegetables and rice. It's delicious no matter what you make."

Uncle Yu was sitting at the side collecting money. When he heard Yu Wan call him "my family", he was grinning from ear to ear..

#### Chapter 25 Teaching Rude Slave A Lesson

The braised meat business came easier than she had imagined. In less than an hour, she had sold everything except for one braised pork knuckle.

"Lass, lass!" The auntie who was her first customer came running. "I guessed you would come today. I'm not late, am I? There's still some fish and bamboo shoots left, right?"

"Yes, we do." Yu Wan smiled. Just not much.

"Eh? Braised meat? Your family sells meat?" The auntie asked in confusion.

Yu Wan nodded. She cut a slice and handed it to her. "Yes, today is the first day. There's only one pig knuckle left. Does Madam Huo want it? I'll sell it to you at a cheap price." Anyone who tasted her braised meat would

want to buy it.

Madam Huo decisively bought it, but when she opened the purse, she realized that there were not enough copper coins. "Wait for me, my son is right in front!"

Yu Wan said, "There's no hurry, I'll keep it for you."

Madam Huo went off with her basket.

As soon as she left, a beautiful lady in top-grade pink silk walked over. She was dressed luxuriously and her makeup was exquisite. She looked out of place in this messy market. She stopped in front of Yu Wan's stall and

covered her nose with silk embroidered with golden peony. She said indifferently, "I want this pig knuckle. Wrap it up for me."

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Yu Wan looked at her and said, "This pig knuckle is already sold. Miss, please pick something else. My fish and bamboo shoots are not bad."

The lady's face darkened. "I don't want anything else. I want this."

Yu Wan said, "Like I said, this is already sold."

The lady said coldly, "I'll give you double the price. Sell it to me!"

Yu Wan was short of money, but she still had her bottom line. "Miss, you should go to another house. There are also people selling braised meat there."

The lady refused to give up and said, "I want yours. Quickly wrap it up! Don't make my madam wait!"

Madam? So she was a maidservant. Nowadays, even maidservants were so domineering? If it were any other commoner, they would have been intimidated by her aggressive stance, but Yu Wan would not.

Yu Wan didn't even bother to look at her. She turned around and helped Yu Feng kill the fish. Most of the customers who came here wanted it live, but there was no lack of people who wanted it dead. Yu Feng was

inexperienced and couldn't quite kill them.

When the maidservant saw that Yu Wan was completely ignoring her, she was so angry that her eyebrows were raised! In the entire Lotus Flower Town, no one had ever dared to show her such an attitude!

“Do you know who I am? How dare you be so rude to me!” She rushed to Yu Wan and reached out to grab her hand! Coincidentally, Yu Wan took out a carp and she slapped it on the head of the carp. With a loud thud,

fish scales flew everywhere. It was unknown if the lady was frightened or disgusted, but she immediately retracted her hand and took a few steps back. Her face turned pale.

This comical look naturally caused the crowd to sneer.

Her face flushed red. She looked at Yu Wan again and felt even angrier. She pointed her finger at Yu Wan’s nose and charged over murderously.

The three Yu Family men stood up!

The maidservant was shocked by the imposing manner of the father and sons. However, she quickly regained her composure and said arrogantly, “How dare you! Do you know who my madam is? How dare you block

my path! Quickly move aside!”

The three of them did not move. The thin figures wearing cotton seemed to have built an iron wall for Yu Wan.

Yu Wan’s eyes sparkled.

The maidservant had been domineering in Lotus Flower Town for so long, but she had never been treated like this before. She couldn’t help but become anxious and her eyes turned red. “Alright, you guys! You actually

dare to humiliate my madam like this. Be careful that my madam won’t let you guys leave here!”

Yu Wan walked out from behind the father and son duo. “Who’s trying to humiliate your madam? Did your madam say that she must fight for food with the commoners? Or are you acting on your own accord and



acting unreasonably, but you're putting the blame on your madam?"

"You..." The maidservant choked.

Many of the surrounding commoners had clearly seen what had happened and felt that the maidservant was indeed bullying others. Yu Wan had already said that the braised meat had been sold, so she could just buy

from another stall. Why did she have to force her?

On the contrary, this family was not moved by money or power. It was truly moving.

However, there were also people who recognized the identity of the maidservant and began to worry about the "stupidity" of this family.

"She's the county magistrate's wife's personal maidservant! What good will it do to offend her?"

"That's right. Isn't it just a piece of meat? Just sell it to her. Why do you have to offend the people in the county yamen for an auntie?"

The maidservant heard everyone's whispers. She proudly straightened her back and looked at Yu Wan calmly. It was as if she was certain that Yu Wan would obediently come over and lick her boots after hearing her

identity.

Unfortunately, she was disappointed.

Yu Wan let her uncle and brothers return to the stall while she continued to kill fish. From the beginning to the end, she did not even look at her.

The maidservant was thoroughly enraged. She picked up a basket of dried corn sticks from the stall next door and smashed it at Yu Wan's face!

The granny, whose corn had been stolen, was in so much distress that she almost cried! Her family was about to run out of food! But what could she do? She was a member of an official's family!

The maidservant was aiming for Yu Wan. Although the father and sons rushed out immediately, they could not make it in time. Just as the cornstalk was about to hit Yu Wan's head, Yu Wan reached out and grabbed the

basket. Although the basket was caught, the corncobs rolled out and smashed onto the ground. Even the corn grains were smashed.

The old lady was so anxious that she cried. She wanted to pick it up but did not dare to.

Yu Wan's cold gaze landed on the maidservant's face. The maidservant felt her body turn cold and subconsciously shivered.

Uncle Yu went to pick up the corn but was stopped by Yu Wan.

Yu Wan said to the maidservant, "Pick it up."

The maidservant was somewhat frightened by Yu Wan's murderous aura, but she could not admit defeat in front of so many people. She rolled her eyes and said, "I'm not picking it up! If you want to pick it up, pick it up

yourself!"

Yu Wan said coldly, "I'll say it again. Pick it up."

The maidservant snorted. "No! What can you do to me?"

Yu Wan went to get the basket in her hand.

She played tricks and grabbed it. "Did I say I would give it to you?"

Yu Wan said indifferently, "Let go."

Of course, the maidservant was unwilling to let go. However, she could not snatch it away. At this moment, her uncle walked over with his walking stick. The maidservant had an idea and stretched out her leg to trip

her crippled uncle.

Yu Wan did not expect her to be so evil. She did not even let a disabled person off. Her eyes immediately turned cold as she grabbed her by the neck and pressed her hard against the ground!

## Chapter 26 Mysterious Visitor

There were a lot of people doing business at the end of the year, and there were also a lot of people who committed crimes. In order to strengthen the patrol, all the constables in the county office were mobilized.

Coincidentally, the scene of the maidservant being pressed down by Yu Wan was discovered by the patrolling constables.

There were five people in the constables' group. The leader's surname was Zhang, and he was a subordinate of the county magistrate. He had run errands for the county magistrate's wife and knew the maidservants.

At first, he thought it was just a spat between the hawkers, but when he walked closer to take a look, he realized it was Chun Zhi, the madam's personal maidservant. He frowned. "How dare you! Who dares to cause

trouble here!"

When Chun Zhi heard Constable Zhang's voice, she quickly turned her head away. Her previous domineering expression changed as she cried pitifully, "Big Brother Zhang! Save me!"

When the Yu father and son saw the officials arrive, they hurriedly stepped forward to pull the two apart.

Chun Zhi was really scared out of her wits just now. She was really scared that this crazy woman would push her down again. She almost scrambled to Constable Zhang's side. "Big Brother Zhang... you came at the

right time. There's a lunatic here bullying me!"

Chun Zhi was the head maidservant of the county magistrate's estate, and her status was precious. She was seventeen this year and hadn't been married yet. Constable Zhang had lost his wife two years ago and was

now a widower. He had long taken a fancy to the young and beautiful Chun Zhi, but Chun Zhi didn't take a fancy to him. When had she ever spoken to him so nicely like today when in the past, she didn't even look at

him? Constable Zhang instantly felt his heroic heart swell. He glanced at Chun Zhi and patted his chest. "Don't worry, Chun Zhi. I will definitely seek justice for you today!"

You? You think you're worthy? Chun Zhi cursed silently, but she didn't dare to offend her only savior. That crazy woman actually dared to embarrass her in front of so many people. She would definitely make her pay!

Constable Zhang waved his arm. "Guards! Arrest that woman and bring her back to the yamen! I want to interrogate her personally! Whoever dares to stop me, arrest them as well!"

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Several young constables swarmed over!

Yu Song secretly stomped his feet. /t was all this girl's fault! Now, they were going to be taken away!

"Hold on." Yu Wan walked out calmly. Her voice wasn't loud, and her aura wasn't oppressive, but for some reason, several constables simultaneously paused.

Constable Zhang's suspicious gaze fell on Yu Wan. This little village girl bullied Chun Zhi? He hadn't studied much, so he didn't know how to describe this girl's appearance. He felt that she was even more beautiful than

Chun Zhi. Unfortunately, she was a country bumpkin. No matter what, he wouldn't offend the county magistrate's wife's trusted aide for a country bumpkin.

"You're that madwoman?" Constable Zhang said unhappily.

Uncle Yu raised his walking stick in anger.

Yu Wan gently patted her uncle's arm, indicating for him to calm down. Then, she said to Constable Zhang, "This constable brother, you keep saying that you want to capture me. May I ask what crime have I

committed? To catch thieves, you have to find the stolen goods, to catch adultery, you have to catch the two lovers, so you have to give me a convincing reason. Only then can you take us poor people, who are weak,

away in public."

Weak? Chun Zhi's eyelids twitched! Who was the one who pressed her to the ground with just one finger?!

More and more people gathered around. Everyone began to point at the constables, clearly extremely dissatisfied with Constable Zhang's actions of arresting them.

Constable Zhang said righteously, "Reason? You've already bullied her to this extent and you still have the cheek to ask me why I want to arrest you?"

"Bullied?" Yu Wan said indifferently. "I only asked her to pick up the things that she dropped. If this is considered bullying, then she threatened me first, ruined the old lady's food, and even deliberately tripped my

uncle who was handicapped. Then may I ask what are her actions regarded as?"

Constable Zhang choked and turned to Chun Zhi. He had come late and did not know that such a thing had happened.

A trace of panic flashed across Chun Zhi's eyes. "Big Brother Zhang, you... don't listen to her nonsense. I didn't threaten her. She refused to sell the braised meat to me and even humiliated me."

How could Constable Zhang not see that Chun Zhi was lying? However, this was a great opportunity for Chun Zhi to owe him a favor, so how could he miss it? Besides, Chun Zhi was someone from the county yamen

after all. How could a poor village girl dare to be angry with her? How could she not weigh her own worth?

“When we return to the yamen, the county magistrate will decide who is right and who is wrong! If you are wronged, he will definitely clear your name! If you really bully her, the the prison food won’t be that good!”

These words sounded dignified, but who didn’t know that once they entered the county yamen, it would be their decision?

Everyone shook their heads regretfully. A perfectly fine lady had put herself out there to earn a living, but in the end, she was bullied by these animals?

“Little Feng, bring your younger brother and sister back.” After Uncle Yu instructed Yu Feng, he said to Constable Zhang, “This matter has nothing to do with my daughter. I will go with you to the yamen.”

Yu Wan said, “Uncle, don’t worry. I have my reasons for going to the yamen.”

Uncle Yu was naturally not afraid that she was unreasonable. She was no longer the same as before and would not be bullied by others. However, the yamen was not a good place. Even if a lady went in and came out

unscathed, her reputation would still be tainted. His brother had gone to the border for him. He couldn’t not protect his brother’s only daughter.

“Father! Your health isn’t good! It’s better if I go!” Yu Feng said.

“Stop arguing. I have thick skin! I’ll go!” Yu Song also said. Then, he glared at Yu Wan. “I’m not doing this for you!”

Yu Wan smiled. “There’s really no need to worry.”

“That won’t do either!” The three of them said in unison.

Just as the family was arguing endlessly, a luxurious carriage pulled by four horses slowly drove over.

The most luxurious carriage in town belonged to the county magistrate’s family, but they only have one tall horse. This carriage not only had four horses, but every one of them was a superior Mongolian warhorse.

There were a total of eight awe-inspiring guards in front and behind the carriage. The guards were wearing casual clothes, but even so, their majestic aura was not something that could be covered by a few pieces of clothing.

The commoners who were originally watching the constables and Yu Wan gradually became quiet, all of them revealing fearful expressions. Even Constable Zhang didn't dare act rashly. He originally planned to deal

with that girl after the carriage passed by, but who knew that the group actually stopped in front of Yu Wan's stall.

The curtain of the carriage was lifted, and a woman of about forty stepped down. Her clothes looked simple, but they were of top quality. More importantly, her temperament was much more elegant than the county

magistrate's wife. She stopped in front of Yu Wan's stall. Beside her feet was a cornstalk that wasn't picked up in time. She bent down and picked up the cornstick. She looked around and put it in the old lady's stall.

The granny was moved to tears.

She smiled amiably and looked at the piece of braised meat on Yu Wan's stall. "This braised meat is really fragrant. Can you sell it to us?"

Everyone turned to look at Yu Wan. This woman was not a servant of the county magistrate. How could she dare to refuse?

Yu Wan's expression didn't change as she said, "Sorry, it's already been sold."

"I see." The woman sighed regretfully. "Then there's no other way." After a pause, she looked at the steaming marinade. "Can you sell me a bowl of marinade?"

"Sure." Yu Wan nodded.

The woman went to get a bowl from the carriage. The bowl was made of gold and had a beautiful pattern engraved on it. When have the surrounding citizens ever seen such a valuable item? They were all

dumbfounded.

Yu Wan calmly took the bowl and filled it for her. "Three copper coins. Thank you."

The woman paid the bill, closed the lid of the bowl, and got into the car with the fragrant marinade.

The carriage moved, but suddenly stopped. The woman lifted the curtain of the carriage window and looked at Constable Zhang who appeared to be respectful and obedient. "My young miss said that the northern

borders are filled with wars, using farmers as soldiers. As officials, you should love the people like their children and not harm the common people. It will chill the hearts of the soldiers at the borders."

#### Chapter 27 Young Madam

The carriage slowly disappeared from everyone's sight.

Constable Zhang looked at Yu Wan coldly.

"I advise you not to act rashly. The daughter of the General Manor has already spoken. If you continue to arrest her, you will be going against her." Bai Tang appeared in the crowd at some point. As she spoke, she

walked towards Constable Zhang who was baring his fangs and brandishing his claws.

Constable Zhang pondered over her words, and the claws that he had just revealed obediently covered back. "You said that's the General Manor's carriage?"

Bai Tang shook her finger. "It's not an ordinary General Manor. The one sitting in the carriage just now was the granddaughter of the North Garrison Old General."

"The granddaughter of the North Garrison Old General, doesn't that mean..." It was unknown what Constable Zhang thought of, but his entire face turned pale. Afterwards, he didn't care about Chun Zhi anymore and



directly brought his brothers along and fled!

“Hey! Big Brother Zhang! Big Brother Zhang, why did you leave? Aren’t you going to arrest her?” Chun Zhi stomped her feet in anger, but since Constable Zhang had left, she could only tuck her tail between her legs and

escape.

The Yu father and sons heaved a long sigh of relief.

Yu Song was speechless. “That Garrison... The General Manor has such a powerful background. Even an official was scared out of his wits.”

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“Hasn’t the North Garrison General Manor already...” Uncle Yu had been in the Capital before. When he was a chef in the Capital, he had heard some news about the various aristocratic families. He vaguely remembered that because the North Garrison General Manor was involved in an unsolved case, their entire family had been thrown into jail. How could their reputation be so useful?

Bai Tang exclaimed in surprise. “Uncle, you’ve heard about the incident in the Capital! But you’re talking about the old incident from three years ago. When the General Manor was convicted, everyone was jailed and

sent to the Northwest to be charged with military service. Only one young lady escaped the disaster because she was staying at another village to avoid the heat. After that, that young lady disappeared without a trace.

Everyone thought she was dead, but not long ago, she came back.”

At this point, Bai Tang raised her eyebrows. “She came back with the child of the Young Master of Yan City. Do you know who the Young Master of Yan City is? He’s the only man in the entire Great Zhou who dares to

go crazy in the throne room and walk out unscathed after that. She gave birth to his child and now, her status is high because of her son. She even brought the entire General Manor back to power.”

Yu Wan was not interested in gossip in the circle of the rich and powerful. A country bumpkin like her who woke up early in the morning and worked late at night for a few copper coins would never have any interactions with the people at the top of the pyramid in her life. Whether it was the General' Manor or Young Master Yan, they had nothing to do with her. In Bai Tang's words just now, the only thing that caught her

attention was the sentence "the able-bodied men were sent to the Northwest to be charged with military service". If she remembered correctly, her father was also captured to fight in the northwest.

It had been six years. She wondered how her father was doing.

At the border, it was snowing heavily.

After a day of patrol, a few soldiers changed their posts. Stepping on the thick snow that had reached their thighs, they returned to their tents.

"I'm freezing to death!" Once he entered the tent, Wu San started shaking the snow off his armor. Some of the snow had frozen into ice, and he couldn't shake it off. "Old Yu, help me!"

He walked over to a man who was mending his armor. The man called Old Yu put down the tattered armor in his hand and took out a shining dagger from his boot. "Turn around."

"Aye!" Wu San obediently turned around.

Yu Shaoging started to pry the ice off his armor. The border was bitterly cold. There was not even a brazier in their tent. If they did not break the ice, they would not be able to take off their armor.

"Old Yu," Wu San, whose ice was being pried open, said with a smile, "I heard you're going to be a chiliarch. I think you'll definitely make it this time!"

Yu Shaoging did not make a sound. His scarred hands, which happened after fighting in wars all year round, gripped his dagger tightly as he methodically pried the ice.

“Don’t doubt me. You have already been a centurion for three years. It’s time for you to be promoted. Didn’t you cut off the head of a deputy general last time? This is a big military merit! If it were anyone else, they

would have been promoted to the Southern Camp. Your background is a little lacking, but I have seen the centurions this time. None of them are more experienced than you, and none of them are related to the

Southern Camp!”

The Southern Camp and the Northern Camp were what these soldiers privately called the orthodox and scattered soldiers. Most of the soldiers who were captured to serve as soldiers were from the Northern Camp.

“It’s time to eat.” After prying the last piece of ice, Yu Shaoqing took out the dry cloth and carefully placed the dagger back into its sheath.

Wu San took off his armor and changed into his own cotton clothes. The cotton clothes in the Northern Camp were made of old cotton and were damp. They were heavy and not warm, but they were still better than

nothing at home.

Wu San curled his lips when he saw the food on the table. “You’re a centurion. Why are you eating the same as us little soldiers?”

In the past few days, the snow had sealed off the mountains and both sides had called a truce. To conserve military food, the three meals a day had become two meals a day. Wu San was not full, so he kept coming to

eat at Yu Shaoqing’s place. Actually, there was not much of Yu Shaoqing’s food. It was all saved from him eating less.

Wu San picked up a steamed bun that was so cold that it was hard. He took a bite and could taste the bitter sand.

He immediately rolled his eyes. “Damn it! The Southern Camp is eating pork! When I was patrolling just now, I smelled the fragrance of the meat soup! If you were a centurion of the Southern Camp, you would already

be eating and drinking well!”

Yu Shaogqing ate a mouthful of tasteless pickled vegetables.

Wu San took a bite of his bun. “Don’t worry. When you become a chiliarch, you’ll be able to eat the food from the Southern Camp!”

The moment he finished speaking, there was a clamor outside the tent.

Wu San put down his bun and ran out. He grabbed a soldier with a hurried expression and said, “What happened? What happened?”

The soldier said excitedly, “Old Deng has become a chiliarch! My brothers are going over to congratulate him!”

Wu San frowned. “Old Deng became a chiliarch? Why is it him? Is there a mistake?”

The soldier said, “That’s right! General Gui De personally promoted him!”

“General Gui De?” Wu San was puzzled. When did such a person appear in their camp?

The soldier exclaimed, “You went on patrol just now. You haven’t heard about it, have you? Old Yan has been appointed as a fifth-grade General Gui De!”

Wu San gasped!

He knew Old Yan as well. Like Old Yu, he was also a centurion of the Northern Army Camp. He was also one of the candidates to be promoted to a chiliarch. However, that Yan fellow was a sinner’s slave. His status was

even lower than Old Yu’s. Furthermore, Old Yu’s military achievements were much better than his. He didn’t even have any hopes of becoming a chiliarch. How did he jump so many ranks in the blink of an eye and

become a fifth grade General Gui De? And he was appointed?!

The soldier said enviously, "I heard that his daughter is going to become the Young Madam of Yan City. In order not to let Young Master Yan suffer, His Majesty made an exception and promoted her father."

"You know Old Deng, right? It's Old Yan, no, I should call him General Gui De now. He's General Gui De's confidant. After General Gui De was promoted, he was immediately promoted! Aiya, General Gui De is really

capable! If I had known earlier, I would have followed him back then..."

Confidant? Bah! Just a follower! Capable? Not as capable as Old Yu! When he thought about how Old Yu's chiliarch was snatched away by a sly old man who only knew how to flatter, Wu San's lungs were about to

explode!

Wu San gritted his teeth and returned to the tent. He looked at Yu Shaoqing, who was silently eating pickles and steamed buns as if he hadn't heard anything. He suppressed his anger and said, "Old Yu, don't be sad."

"Yeah," Yu said..

## Chapter 28 An Illustrious Official

When Yu Wan and her group returned to the village, it was already evening. Every household had started cooking. Smoke curled up from the chimneys in the village. The heat of the villagers' discussion had already

passed, so they were naturally used to seeing the two families together.

Since they were going to smoke bacon today, Aunt Yu stayed at Ah Wan's house for the whole day and made dinner there.

"How's the business?" Aunt Yu asked rather nervously. This was the first time her husband had gone to town to show his face after he was crippled. She was worried that something had happened to him.

Uncle Yu smiled and placed the money bag on the table.

Aunt Yu opened it and was shocked. "Why is it so much?"

Uncle Yu said in high spirits, "It's all sold out. Even the marinade has been sold out!"

The servant of the North Garrison General Manor set the precedent. After that, many customers who didn't manage to buy the braised meat also followed suit. They bought some braised marinade and cooked it

themselves. There wasn't a lot of marinade, so they didn't sell for much. However, they couldn't stop people from fighting over it. Even when Uncle Yu was a chef in the Capital, he had never been so satisfied.

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"So many... are they all sold out?" That was half a pig, along with a whole set of pig offal!" Aunt Yu asked again, "Have you sold off the pig offal as well?"

In a poor village that wasn't sure of their next meal, pig offal was not something that could be thrown away at will. When they were extremely hungry, they could even eat grassroots and Guanyin clay. However, the

people in town were different. They did not think much of pig offal!

Yu Wan sincerely praised, "Uncle's cooking is delicious. There's no strange taste at all. After everyone tried it, they all said that it's even better than braised meat!"

Uncle Yu was laughing so hard that he couldn't find his bearings. He didn't know if he was pleased with his culinary skills or pleased with Yu Wan's praise.

Aunt Yu suppressed her smile and glared at him. "Moron!"

After that, Yu Song talked about Chun Zhi and the constable finding fault with them. Aunt Yu listened with trepidation.

"Thanks to the eldest daughter of the General Manor, the people in the county office didn't dare to make things difficult for us anymore," Yu Song said from the bottom of his heart. "Her servants don't put on airs.

They're gentle and polite. It's obvious that she's like that herself. She even spoke up for Third Uncle and asked those stinky constables not to bully us commoners."

"She's such a good person," Aunt exclaimed.

"Not as good as my sister!" Little Bruiser straightened his back.

"Sister good." The youngest daughter mimicked him.

Yu Wan was amused. She was just a country bumpkin. How could she compare to the daughter of a high and mighty family? Children were really silly and cute. She pinched the two little fellows' cheeks. "I didn't dote

on you for nothing. Come, see what I brought for you?" As she spoke, she took out two tempting paper bags from the basket.

Little Bruiser's eyes widened. "Osmanthus cake!"

"I want to eat," said the youngest daughter.

Little Bruiser dragged his sister to eat osmanthus cake happily. Madam Jiang smiled gently at them.

"You don't have to sell braised meat tomorrow, do you?" Aunt said. The next market would open three days later.

Yu Wan nodded. "We don't have to sell braised meat tomorrow, but we have to go to town to buy something."

Miss Bai's appearance at the market today wasn't just to help them out of trouble. Miss Bai had heard that the braised meat at the town's entrance was even better than the braised meat at the White Jade Restaurant, so

she had specially come to challenge the restaurant. Who would have thought that the other party was someone she knew? After tasting Yu Wan's family's braised food, she decisively changed her mind and directly

ordered their braised food.

Aunt Yu was so shocked that she did not know what to do. She had heard of the White Jade Restaurant before. It was the largest restaurant in town. Ordinary people couldn't sell their food there. Snowflake salt

couldn't be sold on the market so that was a special case. But braised meat wasn't such a rare thing. They had a chef, so how could they not make it themselves?

Yu Wan replied, "We were also lucky. Miss Bai's father was busy with his birthday, so the chef couldn't handle it, so she asked us to make her father's braised food."

Ever since White Jade Restaurant changed to the snowflake salt, the taste of the dishes had increased by more than a level. There were so many customers that the chef could not wait to split himself into two.

It was a good thing to have business. It was even better for her depressed husband to pull himself together again. Aunt Yu did not disagree.

"After we finish this business with the White Jade Restaurant, we can have a good New Year!" Yu Song said with anticipation. Then, he looked at Yu Wan with a straight face. "I don't want to spend it with you!"

Aunt Yu glared at him.

Yu Wan smiled. He was a child after all.

Uncle Yu was suddenly silent. He thought of his brother from the Northwest Army Camp. Their family was bustling with activity, but his brother was risking his life at the border.

"Uncle," Yu Wan called softly.

Aunt Yu sighed. "He misses your father."



Yu Wan paused and looked towards Madam Jiang. She saw Madam Jiang, who was originally beaming with joy, was also staring blankly at the horizon.

Mom... must be missing Father too, right? Little Bruiser hadn't even been born when his dad left. Six years had passed in the blink of an eye, and he was already so big.

At noon, in the wind and snow of the Northwest Army Camp, smoke could not be seen at all. Ever since the three meals a day were canceled, the boiler in the kitchen had not been heated up at noon.

Yu Shaoqing was wearing the old armor that had just been repaired the night before. His expression was as cold as ice as he went to a newly built tent that was built overnight.

Outside the tent, there was a young soldier with a spear in his hand waiting. Seeing Yu Shaoqing walk over, he reached out to stop him. "What are you doing?"

Yu Shaogqing glanced at the wooden box in his hand and said, "This is what General Gui De hasn't finished packing. He got someone to pass the message to me to deliver it to him. Hand it over to him."

"Wait," said the soldier. "It's better if you hand such valuable items to General Gui De personally."

Yu Shaogqing glanced at the tattered cotton wool in the box and said expressionlessly, "Okay." As he spoke, he was about to walk in.

The soldier stopped him again. "Eh? Did I say that you can go in? General Gui De arranged the troops last night until late at night. He didn't sleep for more than a few hours. He's resting now. Wait for him to wake up."

"Then I'll come back later," Yu Shaoqing said.

The soldier added, "What if General Gui De wakes up after you leave? You might as well wait here! General Gui De sleeps lightly. He might wake up soon."

Yu Shaoqing waited outside the tent with an expressionless face.

The soldier glanced at him and smirked.

Yu Shaogqing waited for four hours in the snowstorm. His hands and feet were frozen to the point where he couldn't feel anything. Heavy snow fell on his body, and his lips cracked slightly, causing blood to flow out.

"Annoying!" A sweet voice came from the tent, followed by a charming woman. The woman pulled up her shirt and gave Yu Shaogqing a meaningful look.

Yu Shaogqing didn't even blink.

The woman swayed her soft waist as she walked past him.

The soldier fetched some hot water and entered the tent. When he came out with a basin of used hot water, Yu Shaogqing said expressionlessly, "Can I send General Gui De's things in?"

The soldier mocked, "I'm afraid that won't work, centurion. The General has just given the order for General Gui De to go immediately to his tent to discuss government affairs when he wakes up. Why don't you... come

back later?"

"Chiliard? That must be Big Brother Yu!"

"Yan Congming is no match for Big Brother Yu!"

"How many barbarians has Old Yu killed? His stomach has been stabbed a few times! Can that coward Yan Congming compare?"

"The chiliard is Old Yu! Yan Congming is nothing!"

Looking at Yu Shaogqing's back that was gradually being drowned by the blizzard, the soldier scoffed. "You are the one who's worth a fart!".

## Chapter 29 Father and Daughter's Heart Connected

After cooking braised meat overnight, the entire family was exhausted. They went back to their house early to rest. Madam Jiang and Little Bruiser also went to bed. Yu Wan lay in bed, tossing and turning, unable to fall

asleep.

It started snowing outside the house again. It was quiet but cold.

Yu Wan touched the thin cotton blanket on her body. She had been busy earning money these few days and didn't have the chance to buy anything. After she finished Miss Bai's business, she would bring her mother

and her brother to town to buy some things. They would add whatever they needed and also settle the New Year's goods.

At the mention of New Year's goods, Yu Wan suddenly thought of her father who was far away at the border and could not fall asleep. She simply got off the bed, put on her clothes, and carried the oil lamp to the

kitchen.

This kitchen was no longer as shabby as when she had first arrived. There was rice in the rice bucket, noodles in the cupboard, seasonings and salt. In the basket in the corner were a few radishes and cabbages that her

aunt had plucked from her own fields. There were also a few fresh carp in the wooden bucket. Of course, the most delicious thing was the cured meat hanging on the wall and on the counter.

The cured meat was marinated by her uncle and was left in the kitchen to dry. The kitchen was usually ventilated and was full of smoke when cooking. It had only been a day and the saltiness was not obvious. The meat

was still fresh.

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Yu Wan cut a piece of good hind leg meat. The meat here was fat and lean, but not too fatty. It was very suitable for making meatballs. However, this was not enough. She still cut off some of the meat from the front

legs, the meat from the butt, and the pork top. She remembered that in her previous life, her aunt liked meatballs made from pork top meat and said that the meat was more tender.

After chopping up the meat, she placed the sliced ginger, minced garlic, onion, and a few fresh wild eggs into the minced meat. Then, she added soy sauce, starch, snowflake salt, sesame oil, and pepper.

Her movements were very fast, and in no time at all, she was starting to get excited. She took out a large bowl of sesame oil. The sesame oil was too expensive and she usually used pig oil. However, this time, she

poured all the sesame oil into the pot. The aroma of fried meatballs soon wafted out of the oil pot. After making the meatballs, she took out the wheat flour from the cupboard and started making the pancakes.

The fire in the kitchen continued until dawn. Yu Wan wiped the sweat from her forehead. It was almost time for breakfast.

Yu Wan used the unfinished ingredients to make a few scallion pancakes. Before Madam Jiang and Little Bruiser woke up, Yu Wan sent them to the old mansion.

Because they were going to town to buy ingredients for the business, the family woke up early. When they saw Yu Wan, they were all very surprised.

“Why are you up so early?” asked Aunt Yu who opened the door.

Yu Wan pushed the pancakes wrapped in the basket forward and said with a smile, “Good morning, Aunt. You haven’t had breakfast yet, right? I’ve made a few pancakes. You guys take them to fill your stomachs.”

At this moment, Uncle Yu and Yu Feng had just finished washing up and were walking over. When they heard that she was here to deliver pancakes, their faces turned pale!

“Oh my, I think I forgot to put salt in it.”

Their pale faces turned red.

“I also made quite a few dishes for Dad... Fortunately, I didn’t forget to put salt in it.”

The blood drained from their faces again.

After breakfast, Yu Wan and her brother Yu Song boarded the ox cart to town.

“Are you really going to send something to Third Uncle?” Yu Song walked beside the ox cart and asked Yu Wan with the vegetable jar.

Yu Feng was leading the ox.

Yu Wan nodded. “That’s right. We’re going to celebrate New Year’s soon. I hope Dad can have a good year too.”

“He won’t receive it,” Yu Song mumbled. Before his third uncle left, he said that he would send letters once he reached the border. However, six years had passed and they had not received any news from him. The

letters they wrote to him had also not returned. Sometimes, they even suspected that their third uncle had already encountered misfortune.

However, they heard that even if they could not transport back the bodies of the sacrificed soldiers, they would try their best to bring back the iron plates with their names engraved on them. Since they did not receive

his third uncle’s iron plate, they would pretend that he was still alive.

“Dad will definitely receive it,” Yu Wan said with certainty as she hugged the jar in her arms.

Yu Song opened his mouth, wanting to persuade her not to be silly. But just as he was about to speak, he received a warning look from his brother and shut his mouth resentfully.

Yu Feng continued to drive the ox cart, its feet stepping deeply into the snow. "Let's go buy groceries first. Once we're done, Little Song will drive the ox cart back. I'll bring you to the courier station."

Yu Wan smiled. "Okay."

The ingredients were the freshest in the morning, but if they didn't go back immediately after buying them, it would easily affect the quality and texture of the braised food. Thus, Uncle Yu had very high requirements

for the ingredients.

The three of them went to the vegetable market in town. The ingredients here were much more expensive than at the market, but when they thought of the price Miss Bai had offered, they felt that it wouldn't hurt to

spend more money.

They bought some fresh pork, mutton, chicken, duck, and vegetables. Today, they were not cooking for a banquet, but sending them to Miss Bai for a taste test. Those dishes that she's satisfied with would be cooked

during the banquet.

Yu Song dragged a cart of ingredients back to the village.

Yu Wan went to buy a thick cotton shirt and a box of the best frostbite ointment in town. The borders were so cold, Dad should be able to use them.

To the north of Lotus Flower Town, there was a courier station ten miles on foot. This courier station was the largest one outside of the Capital. It was mainly used to deliver official letters and supplies. As long as they

could afford it, they could also accept the order.

Today, the courier station was packed with people. Some were feeding horses, some were changing horses, and some were resting.

"Over there." Yu Feng led Yu Wan to a stable on the right side of the courier station.

Yu Wan saw that there were three carriages here. The first two carriages were full, but the last one was mostly empty.

“This is for the Northwest Army Camp,” Yu Feng said, pointing to the insignia on the wheels.

“Is it far from here to the Northwest Army camp?” Yu Wan asked.

“They are walking on the official road so they are not afraid of going far.” As if guessing Yu Wan’s worries, Yu Feng added, “The weather is cold, we can keep things for a long time.”

“Okay.” Yu Wan nodded. She did not know if it was because the ecology of the ancient times had not been destroyed or because there was no greenhouse effect, but she felt that the winter here was exceptionally cold.

Besides, she had sealed the jar tightly.

A courier holding a horsewhip walked over, intending to set off.

Yu Feng called out to him, “Mister, we want to bring something along.” Although it was said to bring something along, they actually needed to give money.

“Where to?” The courier asked.

Yu Feng said, “To the Northwest Army Camp.”

“The Northwest Army Camp, is it? Come here.” The courier brought the siblings to the third carriage. “This is the last trip this year. You came at such a good time. How many things are there?”

Yu Feng looked at the big jar in his arms, then at the two small jars that Yu Wan was carrying. He said, “Just these three and the bag on my back.”

“The last trip will cost more than usual.” The courier said.

Yu Feng glanced at Yu Wan and said, "Alright."

The courier pressed his hands together.

Yu Feng placed the jar in his sister's arms.

Just as the courier was about to collect the money, a carriage arrived at the entrance. A pageboy jumped down from the carriage and hurriedly walked over.

The pageboy called the courier to the side and said something. The courier frowned and returned with a troubled expression. "We can't bring your things."

"Why?" Yu Wan asked.

The courier glanced at the carriage, only to see the pageboy and the coachman unloading boxes from the carriage. The courier said, "See that? Those things can't be stored. Where else can I give you?"

Yu Wan said solemnly, "We came first."

The courier looked at her with an amused expression and said, "Do you know whose New Year's goods it is for? It's for the Emperor's newly promoted General Gui De. Those goods were personally chosen by the

daughter of the General Manor. If you know what's good for you, then quickly take your things back!".

Chapter 30 First Appearance of Medical Skills

Yu Wan did not move. Yu Feng did not either.



Although Yu Feng didn't think that these things could really be delivered to his uncle's hands, not being able to deliver them was one thing, being forced to not deliver them was another. "Which General Manor is it?"

Yu Feng asked.

"The North Garrison General Manor!" The courier grew impatient.

When Yu Feng heard that it was the North Garrison General Manor, he calmed down instead. Just yesterday, the young miss of the North Garrison General Manor had helped them out of trouble. Perhaps it wasn't her

intention to seize the carriage. After making things clear, he believed that they wouldn't force him.

Yu Feng decisively walked towards the General Manor's carriage.

"Make way! Make way!" The pageboy moved another chest down.

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Yu Feng hesitated and blocked him.

"Didn't you hear me?" The pageboy impatiently asked.

As the servant of the General Manor, the servant's conduct was too different from yesterday's servant. But perhaps it was because he was too young and anxious to do things.

Yu Feng said to him, "Little brother, we're also going to bring something to the Northwest Army Camp."

The pageboy looked at him strangely. "What does it have to do with me?"

When Yu Feng heard this, a trace of a bad feeling arose in his heart, but he still said patiently, "You have too many things, and the carriage can't fit all of them. The courier wants to take our things down."

The pageboy said unhappily, "Then hurry up and take it down! If you delay my Young Miss's business, can you afford to compensate? All these New Year's goods have to be delivered to my master's hands before New

Year's Eve!"

"But..." Yu Feng did not expect the other party to say such heartless words. He wanted to say something else but was stopped by Yu Wan.

Yu Wan shook her head at him. "It's no use, Big Brother."

Yu Feng said with a depressed tone, "They're surely deceiving his Young Miss, and they've taken a chicken feather as a token of authority! If their Young Miss was here, she would surely not allow them to bully the

commoners like this!" She had said before that an official should never harm the common people and disappoint the hearts of the soldiers in the borders.

Yu Wan said indifferently, "Whether it's lying to the higher-ups or using chicken feathers as a token of authority, aren't they all from the General Manor?"

"You mean..." Yu Feng was taken aback.

Yu Wan looked at the white snow on the roof and said, "I didn't say anything, but these are the things she bought. It's also her order to deliver them all before New Year's Eve. To arrive at the Northwest Army Camp

before New Year's Eve on a snowy day like this, I'm afraid it would have to travel fast on an urgent basis."

To travel fast on an urgent basis. A single mistake could result in the deaths of countless horses and people!

Yu Feng was stunned.

"Then... then what about the things we prepared for Third Uncle?" Yu Feng asked after he returned to his senses.

Yu Wan did not say anything. She only stretched out a pair of slender hands that had many scratches from years of hard work. This pair of hands could dig bamboo shoots, chop firewood, farm, and carry the heavy

burden of a family, but they could not send the things that they had stayed up all night to their father who was far away at the borders.

“Courier Wang! Courier Wang! Something happened!” A courier ran over in a panic and interrupted Yu Wan’s thoughts.

The courier, who was helping to load the goods for the General Manor in the carriage, turned around coldly. “It’s broad daylight. What are you shouting about? Don’t you see that there’s proper business?”

This courier didn’t recognize the identity of the General Manor’s subordinate, but he knew he was from an impressive family. He swallowed his saliva and carefully said, “I-I want to talk about proper business too. The

horse that was transported from the Western Regions... seems to be...”

“Seems to be?” Wang Yi asked.

“Dying soon!” The courier said.

Wang Yi’s expression suddenly changed!

That was not an ordinary horse, but a Ferghana horse bought from a caravan of the Western Regions after much difficulty! Not long after they bought it, they discovered that it was already pregnant. This meant that

they would get one adult Ferghana horse and at least one young Ferghana horse. This was a good thing that couldn’t be found even if you searched with a lantern!

This horse had already been chosen by a noble in the Capital. When the weather was better, they would have to send it to the noble’s residence! This was just great. The horses are dying soon. How were they going to

answer to the noble?!

“Quickly... quickly notify the official!” The courier said while trembling.

The courier said with a mournful face, "It's too late! You... you can go take a look for yourself!"

Courier Wang quickly put down what he was doing and followed the courier through the inner hall to a horse shed that was many times better than the outer court's horse shed.

The horse shed was even bigger than the Yu Residence. It was clean and tidy. There was soft dry grass and top-notch red coal on the ground. The fodder was plentiful and there was sufficient water.

The only flaw was that the carefully protected horse had suddenly collapsed to the ground!

Courier Wang was frightened. "What did you feed it?"

The courier said, "I didn't give it anything to eat!"

"Then how did it become like this?" Courier Wang asked.

"I... I... [don't know either!]" The courier was on the verge of tears. He was only a lowly courier, so he was the first one to be punished after something like this happened.

On the other hand, as his direct superior, Courier Wang was not let off either, and it might even implicate the official.

"Where is the doctor?" Courier Wang asked.

The courier cried, "He has returned to his hometown for the New Year's. He left half a month ago. Have you forgotten?"

What should he do? It was not that there was no medical center in town, but in this day and age, there were many doctors who could treat people and few who could treat horses.

"Can I come in and take a look?"

A tranquil woman's voice suddenly appeared at the horse shed's door. Courier Wang and the other courier turned their heads and saw the village girl standing in the snow.

Courier Wang said in a deep voice, "What are you doing here? Get out!"

Yu Wan's lips curved into a smile as she pointed at the horse lying on the ground. "Are you sure you want me to go out? I can treat it."

"What nonsense are you talking about?" He would never believe that a village girl could treat a horse!

Yu Wan said, "But I can't treat it for free. You have to agree to help me deliver things to my father."

"You..."

Yu Wan continued, "As for the consultation fee, I'll only charge you half as much as you charge me for transport. It's a good deal, right?" She sighed as if he had taken advantage of her.

But did she know how much transportation fees were needed to travel from here to the Northwest Army Camp?!

Courier Wang gritted his teeth and looked at her. "Can you really treat it?"

"If you don't believe me, then forget it." With that, Yu Wan turned around and left.

"Wait!" Courier Wang spoke. "I can help you take your things, but I can't offend the daughter of the General Manor, so I can only help you take one."

"Three."

"Two."

"No more treatment!"

“Come back!”

Yu Wan turned around.

Courier Wang was so angry that he was twitching. “Three... three then! But let me be frank, this is not an ordinary horse. If you can’t treat it, you will lose your life!”.