

## The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming

### #Chapter 351 - Read The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming Chapter 351

#### Chapter 351 - Stinky Tofu

The man shook his head vigorously and retreated repeatedly.

He feared the lingering stench in his mouth would deter future customers from buying his wares.

“This actually tastes really good.”

Su Ming took out a bamboo skewer and pierced it through a piece.

Then he popped a piece of stinky tofu into his mouth and swallowed it down.

The man was petrified!

It was frightening!

“Try some!”

Su Ming extended the box toward him.

“No!”

The vendor shook his head and backed away in panic.

His son had just graduated from college and wasn't married yet—he needed to make money to buy his son a house!

Seeing the vendor's obstinate demeanor, Su Ming decided not to press the issue.

Since the stinky tofu was created by the System, he could sell it directly.

However, the tofu was cold.

Su Ming had observed others preparing stinky tofu and knew it had to be fried.

He had even consulted Yuyuv on the matter.

The stinky tofu could indeed be fried.

Frying wouldn't alter the taste, but it would warm it up.

He turned on the gas stove and set a pot on top.

He poured a kettle of soybean oil into the pot.

He took out several bags of stinky tofu and placed them into a large bucket nearby.

He fished out the tofu and arranged some disposable containers, along with disposable chopsticks.

He also had a small box filled with some change at the ready.

Half an hour later, Young Master Su, brimming with confidence, was dumbfounded.

Something was amiss.

Apart from the vendors, the street was deserted.

Su Ming felt a bit disheartened.

It couldn't be this deserted, could it?

Perhaps he had arrived at an inopportune time?

It was still morning, after all.

The peak hours were usually in the evening.

Su Ming glanced at the time.

In another half hour, the upgrade of his two-acre plot would be complete.

He contemplated whether to head home and plant the bananas first.

While Su Ming was lost in thought, the sound of a bell suddenly rang out nearby.

He looked up sharply!

His chance had arrived!

There were two schools in the vicinity—a middle school and an elementary school.

?At noon, some students dined in the cafeteria, while others ventured out for their meals.

This street, situated right beside the schools, presented a prime opportunity for business when students were dismissed.

Under normal circumstances, everyone would be on edge right now.

But today, nobody was stirring.

Their gazes were fixed on Su Ming, silently urging him to leave quickly.

The street was lined with food stalls offering an array of dishes.

Though the mingling scents were complex, they were undeniably appetizing.

People usually arrived with their appetites piqued, eager to indulge.

But today, there was only an offensive odor.

A few students approached, only to stop dead in their tracks.

They clutched their noses and quickly walked away.

The vendor next to Su Ming couldn't take it any longer.

He was assaulted by an overpowering stench.

Su Ming was barely 20 centimeters from his stall.

The vendor inhaled deeply, trying to hold his breath a bit longer.

?But he inadvertently got a stronger whiff and nearly passed out.

"Young man, could you please head home? We can't conduct business with you around!"

The vendor had reached his limit.

Su Ming looked confused. "I think it smells quite nice."

No sooner had he spoken than he felt a bit queasy.

He noticed all the stall owners glaring at him.

If looks could kill, Su Ming was sure he'd be reduced to dust.

?Feeling embarrassed, Su Ming had only wanted to sell some items and make a little money.

He hadn't intended to cause such a disturbance.

"I'll head home then."

With no other option, Su Ming began to pack up his things.

Just then, a luxury car cruised by the intersection.

The vehicle was worth over ten million, indicating the owner's status was far from ordinary.

?The driver navigated smoothly, while two individuals occupied the back seats.

One was a young, attractive, and slender secretary.

The other was a middle-aged man, scowling.

? "Mr. Sun, please calm down. Why not have something to eat?" the secretary suggested softly.

?The middle-aged man snapped his eyes open and bellowed, "Is that the way to prepare the Grand Peony? It should be made with carp that have grown in the lake for at least five years."

"Their rendition of the dish was a disaster. If not for Old Man Loong's sake, I would have trashed their restaurant!"

## Chapter 352 - This Wind Came at the Right Time

At the entrance of a five-star hotel, luxury cars were parked as far as the eye could see, and guests swarmed like the sea. A portly middle-aged man, dressed in a suit and tie but oddly wearing slippers, had his hair slicked back, gleaming with oil. He was sweating profusely and looked visibly distressed. With hands planted firmly on his hips, he paced back and forth impatiently.

?His anxious stride halted when he spotted a woman in uniform approaching briskly. The man, Wang Liang, the hotel's owner, stopped dead in his tracks, his eyes bulging with disbelief. He pointed accusingly at the woman's nose and bellowed, "What's going on with you? What is that smell?"

Today, the hotel was graced by the presence of a VIP—a chef of state banquet caliber. Renowned in the culinary circles of his homeland, he was as famous as Yao Ming in basketball, Zhong Nanshan in medicine, and Yuan Longping in agriculture.

The imperial court boasted a civilization rich and ancient. Over thousands of years, it had lost countless classical texts, traditional techniques, and many age-old recipes. Yet, this culinary maestro had dedicated thirty years to painstakingly recreate eight dishes from antiquity—one for each cardinal and intercardinal direction.

The culinary profession, part of the service industry, often goes unnoticed in society. Most chefs work in obscurity. But this chef was a household name, commanding respect for his exceptional talent. His culinary prowess was evident, making any of his appearances a sensational event.

Journalists with cameras in tow would clamor for an interview whenever he stepped out. Hotels vied for the honor of hosting him, hoping he would sample their signature dishes. More often than not, he would simply shake his head in disapproval. Nevertheless, his mere presence at a hotel was tantamount to the best advertisement they could hope for. People would flock to a hotel he had visited, eager to taste the dishes he had sampled.

And if the gentleman ever gave his nod of approval to a dish, the news would spread like wildfire. Crowds would descend upon the hotel, eager to savor the chef-endorsed culinary delight. The hotel owner would be overjoyed, laughing all the way to the bank as he counted his earnings until his hands ached.

Unfortunately, the chef had yet to arrive.

He had only confirmed two dishes.

These two dishes remained incredibly popular.

One could infer the chef's esteemed identity and status.

Wang Liang had paid a steep price for the opportunity to host this renowned chef on his business trip.

Moreover, his establishment was a five-star hotel with an excellent reputation.

At last, the esteemed chef came to Eastsea on business and agreed to sample the hotel's signature dish.

Wang Liang was thrilled, as if he had been given a shot of adrenaline, and began preparations a full two weeks in advance.

He instructed the chef,

“For the next half month, you have no other tasks. I've arranged a private room for you to focus solely on perfecting our signature dish. I will provide all the necessary ingredients and funds, and in return, I'll triple your salary.”

“You have free rein with the signature dish you create.”

“But I have one requirement: the flavor must be exceptional.”

Wang Liang had labored tirelessly for half a month.

He had just received a call that Mr. Sun was en route.

Suddenly, an unbearable stench wafted through the air.

The odor was a vile combination of sewer, durian, and canned herring, boiled together, then mixed with two pounds of rice noodles and five pounds of stinky tofu, left to ferment in a cellar for three months.

?The resulting smell was what now filled their nostrils.

If someone bedridden for years caught a whiff of this, they might leap out of bed.

The most critical elements of a perfect dish are its color, aroma, and taste.

If a dish looks appealing and tastes delightful,

But emits a foul odor, few would find it palatable.

Under normal circumstances, if a guest experienced this at Wang Liang's hotel, a simple apology and compensation would suffice.

But this was no ordinary guest; this was Mr. Sun, whom Wang Liang had invited at great expense.

Wang Liang had prepared meticulously for this moment.

With just ten minutes to go before Mr. Sun's arrival, the air was thick with the pungent smell.

?The stench was overpowering.

It was as if the foul molecules in the air were packed tightly together, impossible to separate or dilute.

The manager was drenched in sweat.

He had meticulously inspected every nook and cranny of the hotel.

Not a single shoe in the shoe cabinet corner was left unexamined—he sniffed each one.

Yet, he couldn't pinpoint the origin of the foul odor.

“Boss, I really don't think the smell is emanating from inside our hotel.”

Wang Liang was skeptical of the manager's claim.

“Our hotel is roadside, and it's the only one in this area.”

“If it's not our place that's reeking, then where is the stench coming from?”

Wang Liang was livid.

After all, this was a five-star establishment.

The property was expansive.

The main entrance of the hotel was a considerable distance from any surrounding structures.

To the left was the parking lot, and to the right, the dining and lodging facilities.

His worst fear was that even a burst sewer pipe wouldn't account for such a horrendous smell!

Wang Liang felt like his sense of smell was on the brink of failure.

“Find and fix the problem immediately, or I'll fire every last one of you!”

Wang Liang was seething with anger.

He had gone to great lengths and expense to bring Mr. Sun here.

The chef was all set.

Now, there was a real chance that Mr. Sun might leave due to the unbearable stench.

If that happened, it would be a disaster for Wang Liang!

Just then, a black sedan appeared in the distance.

Wang Liang felt a chill in his heart.

All his meticulous preparations could be for naught!

But Wang Liang was out of options. With Mr. Sun's arrival, he had to proceed as planned.

Taking a deep breath, Wang Liang forced a smile onto his face.

He hurried to the entrance to greet the approaching black car.

The sedan inched closer, nearly there.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind swept through.

?It was a powerful gust that dispersed the stench from the air.

Wang Liang was on the verge of tears!

He silently thanked the heavens for this timely blessing!

?Overwhelmed with relief, he watched as the car came to a halt.

Sun Jianjun stepped out, followed by his secretary.

?The reporters, who had been eagerly waiting, swarmed around Sun Jianjun, creating a bustling scene.

Several vans pulled up behind, and the security team quickly emerged to keep the reporters at bay.

“Mr. Sun, I've heard rumors that you've unearthed several ancient recipes. Can you confirm that?”

“During your recent trip to Eastsea, did you come across any dishes that particularly impressed you?”

“Mr. Sun.”

The journalists in Eastsea City were practically beside themselves with excitement.

A visit from a luminary like Sun Jianjun was a rare event in Eastsea.

They were determined not to squander this chance!

Chapter 353 - Special Hobby

The secretary quickly stepped forward. “I am Mr. Sun's secretary, and I am authorized to speak on his behalf. Please direct your questions to me.”

The reporters all nodded in agreement.

Mr. Sun held a very high status.



And they were merely local reporters.

They never expected Sun Jianjun to personally respond to their inquiries.

“Mr. Sun, how many dishes did you sample during your visit to Eastsea?”

A reporter eagerly raised his hand to ask.

“Mr. Sun sampled a total of fifteen dishes.”

“How many of those dishes met Mr. Sun's approval?”

“I'm sorry, but none.”

The secretary was blunt, but she was simply stating the facts.

“How many more hotels does Mr. Sun have yet to visit?”

“Three more.”

The scene was akin to a mini press conference, with the secretary acting as Sun Jianjun's spokesperson.

?Meanwhile, Wang Liang said in a rush, “Mr. Sun, welcome. You are an elder I've always held in high regard.”

But Sun Jianjun simply gestured with his hand, “Let's proceed to the tasting.”

Wang Liang quickly nodded in agreement and led the way.

?Soon, they entered a room.

“Please wait a moment, Mr. Sun. We didn't want the dishes to cool, so we only started cooking when we knew you were on your way. It will be just a few more minutes.”

Wang Liang said hastily.

Sun Jianjun remained silent, sitting down and closing his eyes to rest. Shortly after, the first dish was served.

It was steamed Wuchang Fish.

A renowned dish among the top ten of the imperial court.

Sun Jianjun slowly opened his eyes and took in the aroma.

?His face was impassive, and he refrained from commenting.

He then used his chopsticks to gently prod the fish before picking up a piece and tasting it slowly.

It was some time before he swallowed the morsel of fish.

“Mr. Sun, what do you think of this dish?”

Wang Liang asked with anticipation.

?The room was packed with people, including hotel staff and journalists.

Every camera was focused on Sun Jianjun.

The room fell silent, awaiting his verdict.

Everyone was eagerly awaiting Sun Jianjun's feedback.

After a long pause, Sun Jianjun finally spoke, “The steamed fish took a bit too long, and the oil wasn't hot enough.”

Wang Liang let out a silent sigh of relief.

If Mr. Sun wasn't pounding the table or yelling, it meant the dish was passable.

He had heard about the severe tongue-lashing Mr. Sun gave the last restaurant.

Soon, the second dish was served—fish-flavored shredded pork.

?Sun Jianjun, as before, carefully tasted a piece of the meat.

Fish-flavored shredded pork is a staple in Sichuan cuisine, yet its simplicity is a true test of a chef's abilities.

After some time, Sun Jianjun set down his chopsticks with a slight frown.

?”This dish is terrible.”

Wang Liang's hands shook with nervousness.

Mr. Sun had declared the dish terrible!

Mr. Sun then sampled two more dishes, shaking his head with dissatisfaction each time.

?As the next dish was presented, Sun Jianjun stood up, shaking his head, "I won't bother tasting any more. Inform the other restaurants I won't be visiting. The cuisine of Eastsea is mediocre at best. Old Man Loong's years of effort have been in vain."

With that, Sun Jianjun strode out.

The faces around him grew somber—they were all Eastsea locals.

Sun Jianjun's critique stung, but no one could deny his honesty.

?Wang Liang sighed again, realizing Mr. Sun was even more demanding than he had anticipated.

"Mr. Sun, please allow me to escort you out."

Despite his disappointment, Wang Liang had no choice but to see Mr. Sun off.

He had barely taken a few steps when a foul odor assaulted his nostrils.

?The stench had returned with the stillness of the wind!

If Mr. Sun caught wind of this, he would surely criticize the hotel's cleanliness.

Sun Jianjun paused, his brow furrowed, as he stood still.

Wang Liang's heart sank.

He was overwhelmed with anxiety.

"Please forgive me, Mr. Sun. I'm not sure what's happening. My hotel has never had this smell before, but it suddenly appeared just now. You might not believe me, but I'm telling the truth."

Wang Liang was desperately trying to explain himself.

Truth be told, he didn't think his explanation carried much weight.

Sun Jianjun remained silent, standing his ground.

Wang Liang felt a chill in his hands and feet.

His initial plan had been to invite Mr. Sun over for some free publicity, hoping to boost his own profile.

But now, things had taken an unexpected turn!

What in the world was happening?

And why did it smell so foul?

While Wang Liang's hands and feet shook with nerves as he pondered how to apologize, Sun Jianjun's eyes suddenly sparkled.

He turned around, his gaze intense and fixed on Wang Liang.

Wang Liang was taken aback.

What had just happened?

Seeking assistance, Wang Liang turned his gaze to his secretary.

She was just as perplexed.

Having worked with Mr. Sun for so long, she knew he seldom smiled, much less displayed such an eager look!

The journalists nearby were equally baffled.

They had never seen Sun Jianjun behave this way.

What was going on?

What had Sun Jianjun discovered?

Surely, there couldn't be a hidden secret to this horrible smell?

While it's true that some people enjoy the scent of paint or durian, surely no one would find this offensive odor appealing?

It was, after all, overwhelmingly foul.

Chapter 354 - So You Want to Eat Stinky Tofu

This group was always bursting with bizarre ideas.

?No wonder Mr. Sun was often seen shaking his head wherever he went.

It turned out he had quite the unique palate.

Everyone has their own tastes, after all.

What was Mr. Sun's preference? He had a fondness for pungent things.

It was hard to believe that Mr. Sun enjoyed such odors.

Wang Liang felt an overwhelming urge to cry.

Just as Mr. Sun was about to leave, right at the doorstep, Wang Liang learned of his penchant for stinky foods.

This revelation would surely spread like wildfire, and from then on, others would know to prepare such fare for Mr. Sun.

Life offered a myriad of flavors, but it seemed that the stinkiest were the best.

Wang Liang had uncovered this truth, yet he reaped no benefit from it, inadvertently passing the advantage to others.

He wanted to cry but found himself unable to shed a tear, feeling both helpless and aggrieved.

It seemed his luck was simply not on his side.

“Delicious! Top Grade!” Sun Jianjun exclaimed, his eyes wide with excitement.

He then closed his eyes and took a deep breath, a look of sheer bliss on his face.

Witnessing this, Wang Liang couldn't help but think to himself, “Mr. Sun, are you for real? You're not pulling my leg, are you?”

The situation was utterly baffling.

The scent nearly made Wang Liang gag, yet Mr. Sun was proclaiming it to be Top Grade?

“Boss Wang, what is this?” Sun Jianjun, eyes wide open, clutched Wang Liang's shoulder and asked with fervor.

Wang Liang was taken aback by the attention.

The crux of the issue was that he had no idea what the source of the smell was.

All he could do was respond truthfully, “I don't know.”

Wang Liang had the impulse to smack himself.

He was troubled by his own ignorance. How could he have predicted Mr. Sun's peculiar taste?

If only he had known sooner, he would have made preparations for Mr. Sun in advance.

Had the aroma been from a certain food, Wang Liang would have ensured it was ready beforehand, and today's events would have unfolded much more smoothly.

At that moment, Sun Jianjun turned and, with eyes closed, began searching for the source of the smell.

He sniffed to the left, then to the right.

He rushed to the doorway, continuing his quest for the elusive scent.

The reporters trailing behind him remained quiet, following in mute astonishment, none daring to utter a word.

The reporters were baffled. They couldn't help but notice that Mr. Sun's method of tracking down a scent was reminiscent of a police dog.

His technique was impressively professional.

As whispers of curiosity spread among the onlookers, Sun Jianjun's eyes suddenly sparkled with recognition.

He appeared to have pinpointed the origin of the odor.

Mr. Sun, elated, dashed off toward the location.

The onlookers were astounded by the sight.

The reporters and service staff had been waiting there for quite some time.

?They had all detected the odor earlier but had failed to locate where it was coming from.

Yet, Mr. Sun managed to identify the source in short order.

Everyone present couldn't help but admire Mr. Sun's keen ability.

Sun Jianjun led the way, with Wang Liang trailing behind him.

A host of security personnel followed Wang Liang, along with a throng of reporters.

And behind the reporters, a crowd of onlookers eager for news tagged along.

Their curiosity was piqued.

They could tell that the man leading the pack was no ordinary individual.

They were all eager to discover where he was headed and what he intended to do.

Had he stumbled upon something?

The spectators were adamant that they wouldn't be able to sleep that night unless they figured out what this man was up to.

Meanwhile, Su Ming was packing up his stall.

The System had tasked him with selling all his stinky tofu, but he wasn't about to undermine the livelihood of his fellow vendors just to fulfill this mission.

Life was hard for those running street stalls, enduring the sweltering heat of summer and the biting cold of winter, all while relying on their craft to make ends meet.

?Su Ming knew that if he took business away from others just to complete his mission, he would be wracked with guilt.

Having organized most of the items on the table, Su Ming crouched down to tidy up the contents of his cart.

He made sure the disposable lunch boxes were neatly stacked, and the gas canister was securely closed to prevent any leaks.

With everything in order, Su Ming looked up, ready to head home.

But as he was about to leave, he was met with an unexpected sight.

A middle-aged man stood before Su Ming, backed by an entourage of people.

?Su Ming was at a loss for what the man wanted.

Puzzled, he thought to himself that while his stinky tofu might have a strong odor, it surely couldn't have drawn such a crowd.

This is completely unreasonable!

Could they possibly be here to attack him?

Su Ming reassured himself internally, "We live in a society governed by the rule of law."

Sure, his stinky tofu was quite pungent, but he was just about to pack up for the day. Surely he hadn't offended anyone, had he?

The other vendors, witnessing the commotion, assumed the group had come to confront Su Ming.

They were thrilled at the prospect and hoped the group would swiftly send Su Ming on his way.

After all, the odor of Su Ming's stinky tofu was so overpowering that they found it hard to think straight.

They had encountered other stinky tofu sellers before, but none whose product was as malodorous as Su Ming's.

Yet, considering Su Ming's poor sales that day, the vendors found it in their hearts to forgive him.

Still, the mood on-site was incredibly awkward.

Su Ming stepped back, adopting a defensive stance.

Sun Jianjun was visibly eager, while his companion looked puzzled.

?Reporters swarmed in with their gear, encircling Su Ming's stall.

The other merchants watched with schadenfreude. They had warned Su Ming to leave earlier, but he had ignored them. Now, it seemed, he was facing the consequences.

They were also astonished that Su Ming's stinky tofu had drawn such a crowd.

The reporters felt a sense of resignation.

They too were struggling with the stench, but the story appeared to be a scoop they couldn't afford to miss.

Curiosity-seekers were also put off by the smell, yet they were reluctant to pass up the chance to uncover some juicy gossip.

After enduring for what seemed like an eternity, Su Ming could no longer contain himself.

He blurted out, "Sir, what exactly do you want?"

Taken aback, Sun Jianjun responded, "Didn't I explain it to you just now?"

Su Ming was puzzled. "When did you say that? I didn't hear anything."

"I didn't say it?" Sun Jianjun blinked, turning to glance at his followers.



"You didn't say anything," they responded in unison, shaking their heads.

Sun Jianjun paused, taken aback.

?Maybe his craving for the stinky tofu was so intense that he had imagined their entire conversation in his head, convinced he had already spoken to Su Ming.

"Give me some stinky tofu!"

Sun Jianjun rubbed his hands together, his face alight with desire and anticipation.

The people around were completely taken aback.

They couldn't believe their eyes.

Mr. Sun had gone to such lengths, sprinting all the way here, just for a serving of stinky tofu?

The nearby vendors nearly burst into tears.

They had assumed this crowd had come to chase Su Ming away, only to find out they were actually here to buy stinky tofu.

The vendors couldn't fathom that anyone would want to eat such stinky tofu.

And yet, this stinky tofu had drawn quite a crowd.

"Coming right up!" Su Ming answered with joy.

Su Ming had been eagerly awaiting customers for his stinky tofu, and now he wasted no time in preparing it.

He took out six pieces of stinky tofu and dropped them into the fryer.

Afterward, he lifted the tofu out, drizzled it with sauce, sprinkled cilantro on top, and skewered each piece with two bamboo sticks.

Finally, he presented the stinky tofu to Mr. Sun with great respect.

Chapter 355 - Bidding

"Thank you!"

Sun Jianjun gingerly accepted the stinky tofu, yet he didn't rush to take a bite. Instead, he held it in his hand and inhaled deeply. With a look of sheer bliss, he nodded, "This aroma is spot-on authentic!"

The onlookers were taken aback. But upon reflection, they agreed with him; the stench was genuinely authentic!

?Sun Jianjun popped a piece of the stinky tofu into his mouth, and a satisfying crunch resonated. The tofu was perfectly fried, crispy on the outside and tender inside. The rich sauce exploded with flavor, delighting his taste buds.

“Delicious!”

His eyes sparkled with happiness, clearly savoring the top-grade stinky tofu.

Someone nearby swallowed hard. “I don't know why, but now I'm craving some stinky tofu.”

“Same here.”

“If Mr. Sun is eating it, maybe we should give it a try?”

Witnessing Sun Jianjun's rapturous enjoyment, the crowd grew eager.

“Hey, young man, I'll take an order of stinky tofu!”

“And I'll have one too!”

“Extra sauce, please.”

The crowd swarmed around the vendor.

?Su Ming's face lit up with happiness. He had been worried about selling his stinky tofu, but now his concerns vanished. He cheerfully obliged and swiftly got to work frying up more servings.

?Wang Liang, the hotel staff, and the reporters each purchased a serving and eagerly dug in. They instantly realized why it was so praised—this stinky tofu was incredibly tasty!

As the group enthusiastically nodded in approval, the neighboring stallholders were puzzled.

“What's happening here?”

“Doesn't that guy leading the charge look familiar?”

“I thought so too.”

“I've got it—he's Sun Jianjun!”

“It's really him! I never miss his food critique show; it's rare to see him this impressed.”

“Quick, let's grab some stinky tofu to try for ourselves.”

“I'm getting a few servings for my wife and kids to taste too.”

The surrounding vendors buzzed with excitement and made their way over to join in.

Su Ming was completely worn out after an hour of non-stop work.

He tirelessly fried tofu.

Yet, there was a sense of joy in his heart.

In just one hour, he had sold over 200 servings.

His points were steadily climbing.

He was now eligible for an upgrade.

Only 20 portions of his stinky tofu remained.

Su Ming's stinky tofu had taken everyone by storm.

The crowd was substantial.

Numerous reporters were present.

Several Little Streamers were broadcasting live.

On top of that, Wang Liang couldn't stop boasting to everyone.

The news spread like wildfire.

Before long, the alley entrance was nearly jam-packed with cars.

Owners of five-star hotels and internationally acclaimed top chefs had all made their way here.

Truth be told, they were somewhat skeptical at first.

But upon arrival, they saw Mr. Sun enjoying himself immensely.

Their doubts vanished, and they started purchasing stinky tofu.

“Young man, I'll take two servings.”

“Young man, I want five servings.”

“How many servings are left? I'll buy the lot!”

“Are you sure you can eat all that?”

The group of elite chefs, faces alight with excitement, crowded around Su Ming's stall.

“Please, everyone, stay calm!”

Su Ming quickly interjected, “Let's not get too worked up.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, I only have 20 servings of stinky tofu left.”

After checking, Su Ming gave an apologetic smile and added, “To allow more people to try it, each person can only purchase one serving.”

“I'll take one serving!”

“Me too, I'll take one!”

“I'll add 100 yuan!”

“I'll raise it by 500 yuan!”

The chefs were beside themselves with excitement.

The other stallholders were dumbfounded.

Such esteemed chefs, vying for a few servings of stinky tofu, had started a bidding war.

The chefs were in disarray, scrambling for the stinky tofu.

Su Ming blinked in disbelief.

At that moment, Sun Jianjun cleared his throat.

Taking a deep breath, Sun Jianjun cast a stern look over the crowd, demanding their attention.

Silence fell.

It appeared Mr. Sun was ready to speak.

“I'll have another serving.”

With that, Sun Jianjun spoke up.

“Mr. Sun, how many servings have you already had?”

“Would you mind leaving some for the rest of us?”

His words sparked discontent among the onlookers.

Su Ming chuckled and said, “You’ve had ten servings already. Maybe it’s time to stop.”

Chapter 356 - Stinky Tofu Auction

As Su Ming’s words fell, those around him were taken aback.

“Ten portions?”

“Mr. Sun, you’ve consumed enough for ten people!”

“That’s quite unreasonable.”

Protests began to rise from the crowd around Sun Jianjun, “You simply can’t have the last twenty portions, no matter what!”

The crowd was fervently animated.

Couldn’t Mr. Sun spare some stinky tofu for the rest to try?

Sun Jianjun’s cheeks flushed with a hint of embarrassment.

He was aware that he had overindulged.

“Alright then.”

With a lingering glance at the stinky tofu simmering in Su Ming’s pot, Sun Jianjun swallowed hard.

It was a struggle for him to avert his eyes.

“Thank you, Mr. Su, for the opportunity to savor such exquisite food.”

Sun Jianjun expressed his gratitude with great reverence.

Despite his lofty status, Sun Jianjun was not one to be consumed by a thirst for power or prestige.

For him,

the only true conquest was the flavor of food.

Su Ming's stinky tofu was unquestionably Top Grade!

It was an exceptional gastronomic delight for the taste buds.

Among the many dishes Sun Jianjun had tried, none could hold a candle to Su Ming's stinky tofu.

Su Ming deserved the title of master for creating such a culinary masterpiece!

Then, Sun Jianjun turned, hands clasped behind his back, and addressed the chefs, "Fighting here is quite rude. How about I take over? Please, take a seat first."

The chefs promptly complied.

They each fetched stools from a nearby stall and sat down neatly in front of the stand.

"Anyone else interested?"

Sun Jianjun scanned the crowd, but no one stirred.

He then turned to Su Ming and suggested, "Mr. Su, please fry up a portion to start."

"Certainly!"

Su Ming nodded in agreement.

"Mr. Su's stinky tofu is crafted with meticulous care. The tofu itself is made from top-grade soybeans, and the sauce is particularly special. It contains not only the usual fermented black beans, alkaline agents, mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and salt but also a selection of medicinal herbs. This must be Mr. Su's proprietary blend."

"The result is a stinky tofu with an overwhelmingly pungent aroma, yet once tasted, it reveals a crisp, rich flavor with an unforgettable aftertaste."

Sun Jianjun stroked his goatee thoughtfully.

Cameras from all around were trained on Sun Jianjun.

Numerous Little Streamers, having caught wind of the event, were live streaming the unfolding scene.

"I'm a regular viewer of Mr. Sun's culinary show. If I recall correctly, the most he's ever said to praise a dish was three words: 'Not bad.'"

“Absolutely, he's never lavished such praise on a dish before.”

“It's incredibly rare for Mr. Sun to call someone a master. The flavor of this dish must have utterly captivated him.”

“It's unbelievable. Can anyone from Eastsea step up and sample this stinky tofu for us?”

“Ha! I've tried it already! It's truly Top Grade!”

“The previous speaker is despicable. We need to uncover his identity!”

“Exactly, let's give him a taste of what social obliteration feels like!”

“My apologies, dads!”

“I'm en route to Eastsea, hoping to get a taste of this stinky tofu.”

Netizens were losing their minds online.

No one anticipated that a serving of stinky tofu could create such a stir.

“Mr. Su's first batch of stinky tofu is almost ready. Get ready to place your bids!”

Sun Jianjun raised his hand, signaling the start of the auction.

“I'll start with five hundred!”

“Six hundred here!”

“One thousand!”

The crowd was taken aback.

They were accustomed to the auctioning of antiques and cars, but auctioning stinky tofu was unheard of.

Typically, stinky tofu would cost no more than ten dollars a serving.

Yet here it was, fetching a thousand dollars a serving.

Was this stinky tofu crafted from gold?

“Eight thousand!”

A chef interjected with a shout, raising his hand.

“Any more bids?”

Sun Jianjun scanned the crowd.

“Sold for eight thousand yuan! This stinky tofu is yours!”

He quickly determined the new owner of the stinky tofu.

?The chef was overjoyed.

Was a serving of stinky tofu really worth such a fierce bidding war?

Certainly not.

But the significance lay in Sun Jianjun's endorsement.

That changed the entire value proposition.

For these chefs, money was no object.

Their ultimate pursuit was culinary excellence.

If they missed out on the deliciousness before them, it would surely be a lifelong regret.

The chef jubilantly accepted the stinky tofu from Su Ming's hands, exclaiming, “Thank you, Mr. Su!”

He then happily squatted down to the side and began to savor his treat.

“Hot! Tasty!”

Onlookers watched the chef skewer a piece of stinky tofu with a bamboo stick and pop it into his mouth.

Despite the heat, the chef found it to be top grade in flavor.

The chefs who hadn't managed to secure a portion were green with envy!

They eagerly anticipated the second batch of stinky tofu.

“Come on, let's start the bidding for the second serving of stinky tofu!”

“I'll bid 5,000 yuan!”

“8,000!”



“12,000!”

The bids escalated wildly.

They had all received word from their bosses that the auction expenses would be covered.

?Determined, they were set on securing a portion at any cost.

The chef devoured half of the stinky tofu they purchased.

Of the other half, the boss tasted just one piece, and the rest was vacuum-sealed to become the restaurant's showpiece.

In an unassuming food street in Eastsea City, chefs earning millions annually sat on tiny stools, vying for a portion of stinky tofu like schoolchildren.

The competition evolved from a solo endeavor to a group effort.

Groups of six banded together, each member eager for their share of the prized tofu.

Ultimately, it took two hours to auction off twenty portions of stinky tofu, fetching a staggering 500,000 yuan!

?Each portion sold for an astonishing 25,000 yuan!

Stall owners nearby watched in awe, envious of the spectacle.

After years of running their modest stalls, they had never witnessed such a phenomenon.

The price of a single portion of stinky tofu had soared to rival that of gold.

Su Ming's stinky tofu was worth as much as some vendors made in a month or two!

Particularly regretful was the uncle from earlier, who now wished he had capitalized on his proximity to secure a few portions right from the start.

Later, he could auction it off and make a fortune to buy his son a house.

The uncle was heartbroken, feeling he had missed a golden opportunity to strike it rich!

However, nobody could have predicted the high value of Su Ming's stinky tofu.

“All my stinky tofu is sold out; I'm heading home now.”

Su Ming packed up his stall, beaming as he spoke.

“Mr. Su, here's our hotel's top-grade card. If you stay with us, you'll enjoy a 70% discount!”

“Your hotel is quite stingy! Mr. Su, this is our VIP card. Whenever you visit, regardless of how many people accompany you, their stay will be complimentary!”

“Mr. Su, this is our diamond card. You don't even need to be present; anyone carrying this card, whether family or friends, can stay for free!”

“Mr. Su.”

As Su Ming made his way from one end of the alley to the other, he was handed a plethora of VIP cards from various hotels.

These hoteliers were savvy.

Even though Mr. Su was merely a humble stinky tofu vendor, his tofu had earned high praise from Mr. Sun.

The power of advertising is unbeatable!

Should Mr. Su feel generous one day and gift them some stinky tofu, they could indeed become wealthy overnight!

Chapter 357 - Level Three Commodity

“Mr. Su, take care!”

“Mr. Su, when will you set up your stall again?”

“Mr. Su, we're looking forward to your return!”

Adjacent to a high school, on a nondescript street, a young man clad in cotton shorts and cloth shoes, topped with a straw hat, pedaled away on his electric bike, towing his stinky tofu stall behind him.

A crowd trailed behind him.

They were hotel magnates, elite chefs, and journalists from Eastsea City.

A throng of spectators gathered as well.

The most notable among them was Sun Jianjun, a renowned gourmet from the imperial court.

Tears welled in his eyes as he waved a heartfelt farewell to Su Ming.

The stinky tofu auction that took place in this alley today would go down in history.

Twenty portions of stinky tofu fetched a total of 500,000 yuan.

The highest bid for a single portion reached an astonishing 68,000 yuan!

In no time, the alley was renamed Stinky Tofu Alley.

Those who had purchased the delicacy but couldn't bring themselves to eat it immediately vacuum-sealed their portions and had them guarded vigilantly.

The media extensively covered the event.

It became known as the Stinky Tofu Incident!

Unaware of the frenzy, Su Ming cycled back to his home and shut the door behind him.

He then made a beeline for his two-acre plot of land—because the upgrade was complete!

Parking his bike on the path, Su Ming hurried to the field.

A dramatic transformation had taken place.

Previously, the soil had been a dull mix of black and yellow.

Now, the entire expanse was a vibrant green, shimmering with layers of light.

Crouching down, Su Ming scooped up a handful of the green soil.

The upgrade was indeed beneficial, despite the unusual color.

He pulled out his phone and launched the app.

Tapping on the warehouse, he redeemed several packets of banana seeds.

Next, he headed over to the thatched hut.

As expected, the packets of banana seeds were there.

Lifting the seeds, Su Ming placed them beside the path and hopped onto the tractor, tilling the land thoroughly.

?"The System has detected that you are about to plant Level Two crops!"

"The soil is Level Two, meeting the planting requirements. You may proceed with planting!"

A notification from the System chimed in Su Ming's mind.

He simply smiled, choosing not to elaborate further.

Then, he set to work digging holes and planting seeds.

Initially, he didn't notice anything amiss.

However, when he planted the second banana seed, he realized something was off.

Typically, he could plant at least 100 banana plants per acre.

Su Ming had acquired seeds based on that figure.

But the outcome defied his expectations.

The System suggested a much wider spacing between plants.

After a quick calculation, Su Ming was taken aback to find that he could only fit ten banana plants on the two acres!

A frown creased his brow momentarily.

Yet, he trusted that the System's guidance meant that a greater planting distance would yield superior produce.

With that thought, Su Ming's hesitation vanished.

He followed the System's recommended spacing, planted the seeds, and proceeded with watering and fertilizing.

"Excellent Banana successfully planted! Harvest time: 50 hours!"

Once he finished tending to the field, Su Ming headed directly for the breeding zone.

There, his points had reached a hefty sum of 500.

But the data panel displayed 600 points—where had the extra 100 come from?

"Yuvyuv, how did I suddenly gain an extra 100 points?" Su Ming inquired.

? "It's because your stinky tofu sale created quite the stir. Those 100 points are a bonus!" Yuvyuv responded.

? Su Ming paused, taken aback.

"The System is designed to reward your showmanship. Naturally, you get a bonus for causing such a sensation!" the System chimed in.

? Su Ming chuckled at the explanation.

He made a beeline for the control console.

"Yuvyuv, I'd like to upgrade the control console."

"I've confirmed you have enough points. Do you wish to proceed with the upgrade?"

"Yes, I'm sure!" Su Ming confirmed mentally.

? "Upgrading now."

"Upgrade complete!"

"Congratulations, your control console has been upgraded to a Level Two control panel!"

"New feature added to the control panel: Automatic water feeding!"

With Yuvyuv's voice fading, the control panel transformed noticeably.

It had been an old computer screen from the late 20th century with low image resolution.

? But now, the screen was evolving.

It morphed into a modern computer screen, with significantly improved clarity.

The control panel, once covered in rust, now gleamed with its original metallic sheen following the upgrade. Concurrently, a new pipe materialized in the corner of the wall, stretching along two rows of the breeding zone. Each individual room was now equipped with an automatic outlet.

Su Ming tapped on the console's screen and discovered that the System had gained a new feature: an automatic water-feeding function, in addition to its ability to open and close windows automatically. Su Ming was elated; things were unfolding just as he had anticipated. The upgrade had not only improved the console's appearance but had also unlocked additional functionalities. At present, he had only accessed the automatic

water-feeding feature, but Su Ming was confident that with further advancements in his level, he would unlock automatic feeding, harvesting, and even food distribution functions.

For the moment, he tempered his excitement. In high spirits, Su Ming fed the rabbits before proceeding to five vacant rooms, where he raised ten more rabbits. After setting the timer for the automatic water feeder, he secured the door to the breeding zone and made his way back to the villa.

The fields were abundant with crops, but planting remained his primary focus. As Su Ming contemplated his future endeavors, a sudden thought struck him—the store had updated! He dashed upstairs, powered on his computer, and launched the System software. He scrutinized the new offerings.

In the plantation area, five common crops had made their appearance. They were quite standard, yet Su Ming decided to store some. The herding and aquatic product areas featured similar ordinary items, which he also chose to keep. Finally, turning his attention to the breeding zone, Su Ming was met with a brilliant blue light—a Level Three product had surfaced in the marketplace! He eagerly examined it with great attention.

#### Chapter 358 - Pseudo Threelegged Golden Toad

Su Ming was thrilled.

He hadn't expected a Level Three product to make an appearance in the store!

Following a flash of dazzling blue light, his eyes locked onto the item.

Su Ming blinked in disbelief.

It was the Three-legged Golden Toad.

This creature hailed from the imperial court's mythological tales.

It resided on the moon, much like the jade rabbit.

Within the imperial court's traditions, the Three-legged Golden Toad was a harbinger of good fortune.

It symbolized wealth.

Many claimed to have encountered the Three-legged Golden Toad, and those who did often stumbled upon unexpected riches.

?Nowadays, it's common to see a Three-legged Golden Toad perched on shop counters, clutching a coin in its mouth.

While the Maneki-Neko serves as a wealth emblem in the island country, the Three-legged Golden Toad is the imperial court's enduring symbol of prosperity.

Su Ming never imagined that the System would feature a Three-legged Golden Toad!

As he marveled at the sight, his mouse cursor inadvertently hovered over it.

The label read, Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toad!

Su Ming paused, taken aback.

Was it a counterfeit?

"Yuvyuv, what's this all about?" he asked urgently.

"?Master, this isn't the true Three-legged Golden Toad; it's a descendant from many generations of the original," Yuvyuv clarified.

?That made sense.

Su Ming nodded, enlightened but slightly let down.

?He had hoped it was the genuine article, but it turned out to be merely a progeny of the original Three-legged Golden Toad.

?Nevertheless, Su Ming quickly adjusted his expectations.

?Given his current low level, it was understandable that the real Three-legged Golden Toad wouldn't appear.

But what did the presence of a Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toad imply?

It suggested that someday he might indeed acquire the real deal!

Especially now that the breeding zone's level had just been upgraded.

Su Ming was confident that, with a sufficiently high level, he would eventually be able to cultivate a host of legendary mythical beasts!

With this thought, he let go of his initial disappointment.

He glanced at the price tag.

One million for a Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toad!

Quite pricey!

Yet, Su Ming's excitement swiftly returned.

He trusted that the System would never allow him to come out at a loss.

He had to shell out a million to secure a Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toad, so it stood to reason that once the Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toad reached maturity, it would certainly be something valuable.

Su Ming was furiously clicking his mouse; he had set his sights on acquiring 100 Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toads.

However, the System notified him that he was limited to purchasing only 50 Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toads.

With no other option, Su Ming resigned himself to buying the 50 Pseudo Three-legged Golden Toads.

Currently, his breeding zone was at Level Three.

But the control panel was still at Level Two.

To breed Level Three creatures, he needed to upgrade the console to Level Three.

Su Ming was confident, though, that once the rabbit was harvested, the control panel would surely be upgraded to Level Three.

He clicked the mouse again.

?On closer inspection, Su Ming noticed a small black square on the screen, marked only with a question mark.

?When he inquired with Yuyuv about it, she simply told him his clearance wasn't high enough.

What could this be?

Su Ming stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"Master."

Yuyuv interjected, "Master, you have two options: ignore it and it will vanish after the overnight refresh, or you can lock it in. Other items will refresh as usual, but special



items will be retained if locked. Just remember, once locked, it cannot be unlocked, and it will cost you 100,000 a day to maintain the lock.”

“When will I be able to check it out?” Su Ming asked.

“Given his current balance, he could afford to keep it locked for quite some time.

His concern was that the requirements to access it might be too stringent.

That could potentially lead to a loss.

“You need to level up!” Yuvyuv informed him.

“Level up?” Su Ming blinked in surprise. “To what level do I need to upgrade?”

“My authority is insufficient to provide that information,” she replied.

Su Ming pondered for a moment.

Anything that appeared in the first refresh had to be worth keeping!

He decided to hold onto it.

Clicking the mouse, Su Ming locked in the item.

He was counting on the System to live up to his expectations.

Otherwise, he'd be at a loss!

After wrapping up most of the work in the field, Su Ming finally allowed himself to relax.

He was lounging in the villa, watching TV when Su Ming's phone rang. He checked the caller ID—it was his mother.

“Mom, what's up?” Su Ming answered.

“Do I need a reason to call you?” Lee Sumei's voice came through the line.

“Of course not!” Su Ming quickly responded. “I'm always happy to hear from you!”

“I actually do have a reason this time,” Lee Sumei admitted.

“What's going on?” Su Ming inquired.

“Do you remember your fourth uncle's granddaughter?” she asked.

Su Ming paused, blinking as he dredged up the memory. His grandfather had four brothers. His grandfather was the second oldest. The eldest and Third Brother had moved away when they were younger, while the youngest had relocated to a nearby town. Only Su Ming's grandfather and his fourth uncle had stayed put. His fourth uncle had one son, one daughter, a granddaughter, and two grandsons. The granddaughter was three years younger than Su Ming. They had spent summers together as kids and got along well, but they hadn't seen each other since they started junior high. It had been over a decade.

"Yeah, I remember her. What about her?" Su Ming asked.

"We've lost touch with their family over the years, but I just learned she's now a sophomore at Eastsea University," Lee Sumei explained.

Su Ming was taken aback. He hadn't expected her to be in Eastsea.

"Is she in trouble?" he asked, concern creasing his brow.

"Yes, she's been having a tough time at school. Her mother found a depression diagnosis in her room yesterday and was too worried to confront her about it. They know you're in Eastsea, so they reached out to me," Lee Sumei explained. "Could you visit her at school and see if you can help?"

"I'm on it. Just text me the school's name, and I'll head over there right away," Su Ming assured her.

"Will do," Lee Sumei said before ending the call.

Shortly after, a text message with the details arrived.

Chapter 359 - You Can't Graduate If You Don't Go

Eastsea University.

Economics Academy, women's dormitory.

It was a room for four.

The beds were lofted high, with desks nestled underneath each one. The dormitory boasted a private bathroom.

Clothes cluttered the modest space.

Cosmetics sprawled across the desks.

Two girls lounged in pajamas on their beds, absorbed in music and games.

Another girl sat on a chair, deep in a video call with her boyfriend.

The last girl, however, seemed somewhat out of place.

Her bed was immaculately tidy.

Her desk, spotless.

Her complexion was pale, her frame slight.

She gazed listlessly at a book when suddenly, her phone rang.

?Su Qiu jumped.

Breathing deeply, she flipped her phone open with trepidation.

The caller ID drained the color from her already pale face.

“Senior Ye calling again?”

“Su Qiu, if I were you, I would've said yes by now. Senior Ye is good-looking, comes from a wealthy family, and is the principal's son. He's such a catch.”

“Exactly. He's wealthy and handsome. If you're with him, you won't even have to worry about finding a job later on.”

The other three girls turned their attention to her.

?Su Qiu forced a weak smile.

She shakily answered the call.

“Senior.”

Her voice was sweet, yet frail.

“Su Qiu, are you free right now? I'm off this afternoon. How about we grab a bite and catch a movie? I've heard the latest release is quite good.”

“No, Senior, I'm busy,” Su Qiu cut in quickly.

?There was a moment of displeasure from the other end, but it soon passed. “Alright then, make sure you rest up this afternoon. There's a banquet at the school tonight. My dad has invited a lot of top entrepreneurs. You really should come. It'll be beneficial for your future career.”

Su Qiu was about to decline when he added,

“Su Qiu, I've heard you've failed a couple of courses. It might not seem like a big deal now, but if you continue to fail, you might not be able to get your diploma and degree, right?”

Ye Fenglong let out a cold laugh over the phone.

Su Qiu bit her lip.

Her face, already ghostly pale, had now lost all traces of color.

“I'll go.”

Su Qiu finally managed to utter those two words, her voice devoid of strength.

“That's good. I'll pick you up tonight. Get some rest this afternoon.”

Ye Fenglong was smug as he ended the call.

Clutching her phone, Su Qiu wrapped her arms around her knees. Curled up tightly, she couldn't hold back her quiet sobs.

On a bustling pedestrian street, Ye Fenglong sported an expensive outfit, his wrist adorned with a luxury watch.

He had just slipped his phone into his pocket.

Flanking him were two heavily made-up women, clinging to him incessantly.

“Darling, she's just a weakling. Why do you treat her so well?” one of the women asked in a flirtatious tone.

“What do you know? I can't stand it when women act all innocent in front of me. The less accessible she is, the more I want her,” Ye Fenglong scoffed. “She either succumbs to my advances, or I'll see to it that she fails and is sent packing. I've heard her family's struggling, and they're banking on her academic success. If she ends up failing and returning home, how will she ever face them?”

“Darling, you're so cunning!” chimed in the other woman, equally flirtatious.

“Let's go!”

Ye Fenglong laughed triumphantly as he wrapped his arms around the two women and strutted into the nearby inn.

As the principal's son, Ye Fenglong's arrogance knew no bounds at Eastsea University.

?Su Qiu had caught his eye early into her college days, her beauty and innocence making her a target.

?Ever since, Ye Fenglong had been relentless in his pursuit. He hounded her before and after classes and even had her followed.

Su Qiu's dorm mates had been bought off by Ye Fenglong, ready to report her every move.

?They stopped just short of invading her privacy completely.

Furthermore, Su Qiu was an outstanding student.

The subjects she had failed were those in which she excelled. She was confident she could score over 90 points in them.

But Ye Fenglong had used his influence to ensure she failed.

Su Qiu received daily calls from her family.

They urged her to study diligently.

"You're our family's hope," they told her.

Su Qiu resided on the campus.

Yet, she felt eyes constantly watching her.

She had no confidant or way to release her frustrations.

Over time, Su Qiu grew more withdrawn and quiet, battling severe depression.

She even contemplated suicide.

"I'm so jealous of Su Qiu. If the principal's son likes her, she'll have an easy time getting a job at a state-owned company, right?"

"Why would she even bother working at a state-owned company? It'd be better for Su Qiu to stay at the university. Imagine her as a top official there: how impressive that would be."

"But Su Qiu doesn't care for Young Master Ye at all."

"What do you know? She's just playing the innocent!"

“Exactly! The more innocent she acts, the more Young Master Ye will be smitten!”

“Su Qiu's the smartest in our dorm, isn't she?”

“Definitely! Not everyone gets to attend tonight's banquet, but Su Qiu does. I wish I were in her shoes!”

Her roommates sneered at her.

Su Qiu clenched her fists and bit her lip until her fingers turned white.

?She had done her best to avoid Ye Fenglong.

But she couldn't skip tonight's event. Not attending could mean failing her course or even expulsion.

The stakes were too high.

Yet, what if she did attend?

The banquet would be filled with Ye Fenglong's people.

Su Qiu feared for her safety.

?Her heart grew colder, her suicidal thoughts more persistent.

Just then, her phone rang again.

Startled, Su Qiu let out a scream.

“Why are you screaming? We know it's Young Master Ye calling. No need to flaunt it,” they taunted.

“You act so convincingly every day. But when Young Master Ye calls, you're thrilled.”

“Give it a rest. It must be exhausting.”

Her roommates, startled themselves, rolled their eyes and mocked her.

Su Qiu heard them and felt deeply aggrieved.

?She didn't argue, instead extending her hand to flip her phone over for a closer look.

Su Qiu wondered, “Why is it an unfamiliar number?”

“Who could it be?”

“A telemarketing call?”

But it was a number from Eastsea, not a virtual one.

After a moment's consideration, Su Qiu decided to answer the call.

“Hello? Su Qiu? Remember me? It's Su Ming.”

A warm and breezy voice came through the line.

Su Ming?

Su Qiu paused, momentarily taken aback.

Memories long buried began to resurface.

“Is that you, Mr Su?”

Su Qiu blinked in astonishment, seeking confirmation.

“Yeah, that's me. You went off to study at Eastsea University and didn't even drop me a line. I'm actually in Eastsea right now. I'm about to reach your campus's main entrance. Come out quick; I'm taking you out for some great food,” Su Ming said cheerfully.

Chapter 360 - Banquet

“Mr. Su, are you in Eastsea?” Su Qiu asked, her voice tinged with astonishment.

Su Ming chuckled, “I'm an Eastsea University alum, and I've been working here since graduation. I'll be there shortly; let's meet at the school gate.”

Su Qiu confirmed and ended the call, still struggling to process the news. It had been over a decade since they last spoke, and the prospect of seeing him again was disorienting. Yet, the call from Su Ming had lifted her spirits from their nadir.

It took her a while to compose herself and don her coat before she rushed to the school entrance.

“Mr. Su?” The sight of Su Qiu dashing out left her dorm mates exchanging puzzled glances.

“Who's this Mr. Su?”

“I have no idea. Never heard of him.”

“Could he be her secret boyfriend?”

"Remember when Young Master Ye was pursuing her? She insisted she had a boyfriend. We thought she was bluffing, but what if she was serious?"

"It's likely. We should tell Young Master Ye right away!"

The news quickly reached Ye Fenglong, who responded with a derisive snort. He doubted a girl from a humble mountain village could land an impressive boyfriend. He was acquainted with all the wealthy heirs in Eastsea City, and none bore the surname Su. They were probably just as impoverished.

Su Qiu ran to the school gate and spotted a car in the distance with a somewhat familiar figure standing beside it. Approaching cautiously, she inquired softly, "Mr. Su?"

Su Ming, engrossed in his phone, looked up, startled. Before him stood a beautiful, slender girl with a pallid complexion. Su Qiu had changed immensely over the years, yet he could still discern traces of the girl he once knew.

"You've really grown up; you're not the little girl who used to tag along with me anymore," Su Ming said with a warm smile.

"Mr. Su!" Su Qiu's face flushed with embarrassment, and she quickly averted her gaze. At the school gate, the possibility of classmates witnessing their exchange made her feel self-conscious.

Su Ming's smile broadened as he observed Su Qiu, realizing that her life had been challenging and that she was battling severe depression.

He needed to distract her with this topic to lighten her mood.

"Get in the car."

Su Ming invited Su Qiu to join him in the car.

Yet, Su Ming didn't rush to start the engine.

He reached over to the seat and picked up a bottle.

Inside was the Body-stretching Pill, along with a Chinese herbal medicine known for bolstering health.

Su Qiu paused, taken aback.

Was this ink? Did Mr. Su want her to practice her calligraphy more?

"Thank you, Mr. Su."



Despite her confusion, Su Qiu graciously accepted the medicine bottle.

Seeing the look on Su Qiu's face, Su Ming realized she had misunderstood: "This isn't ink; it's medicinal and meant to be drunk."

Su Qiu was momentarily stunned.

This was drinkable?

"Give it a try," Su Ming said with a smile.

Had anyone else given her this bottle, Su Qiu would have been skeptical. But she trusted Su Ming completely.

Without a second thought, she opened the cap and took a sip.

Expecting a bitter taste, she was surprised to find the medicine pleasantly aromatic.

A warm sensation spread through her limbs, revitalizing her once frail body with newfound energy.

Her previously heavy heart felt significantly lighter, and the suicidal thoughts that had loomed over her began to fade.

"Mr. Su, what is this?" Su Qiu asked, astonished.

"A friend gave it to me," Su Ming replied with a smile, offering no further explanation.

Just then, Su Qiu's phone rang again.

She checked the caller ID, and her face fell.

It was a call from Ye Fenglong.

"Who's calling?" Su Ming inquired, noting the change in her demeanor.

"It's a senior from my university," Su Qiu replied, hesitating.

"Does he often bother you?" Su Ming asked, understanding the situation from her expression.

Su Qiu nodded.

"Hand me the phone," Su Ming said, taking the call with a calm smile.

"Su Qiu, tonight's banquet will host many VIPs. I remember you don't have any suitable attire. Meet me on the pedestrian street later; I'll buy you a nice outfit," Ye Fenglong's voice suggested over the phone.

?Incredibly, the man had spent no more than ten minutes in the hotel.

"No need, I'll buy it for her," Su Ming said with a smile.

"Who are you?" Ye Fenglong was startled, but he quickly regained his composure. "Are you Su Qiu's boyfriend, the one who's never made an appearance?"

"Yes," Su Ming replied with a serene smile.

"Where are you working now?" Ye Fenglong asked, his smile broadening.

"I've just graduated and am currently job hunting," Su Ming informed him.

"Join Su Qiu and me tonight; I'll help you find a job. Let's meet at five o'clock sharp," Ye Fenglong offered before abruptly ending the call.

?As soon as the call ended, the smile vanished from Ye Fenglong's face. "A poor man trying to compete with me for a woman!" he scoffed.

"Young Master Ye, there's no need to get upset over someone like that."

"Let's ignore him and continue our shopping," the two women suggested soothingly, though they felt a twinge of dissatisfaction. His sexual performance was disappointing, failing to satisfy either of them.

Su Ming handed the phone back to Su Qiu, glancing at the well-worn device. "I'll get you a new phone, along with a laptop and a desktop computer," he offered with a smile.

?Su Qiu quickly shook her head in refusal. "I haven't reached out to you in years, and I didn't even send you a gift when you went to college."

"If you're still hesitant to accept them, then wait until you're employed and earning. You can pay me back then," Su Ming suggested with a smile.

?After a moment's pause, Su Qiu bit her lip and nodded, the resolve in her eyes strengthening. The medicine Su Ming had given her, along with his words, had given her a new reason to keep going. She was determined to live well and repay Su Ming.

? "I'll go with you to that banquet," Su Ming declared as he started the car.

? "Mr. Su, I can go to the banquet by myself," Su Qiu interjected.

?"The man on the phone believes we're a couple. He'll be let down if I don't show up," she explained.

Su Ming gave a nonchalant smile. "Besides, if I don't make an appearance now, you'll continue to be bothered by him. I'll take this chance to ensure he never dares to trouble you again."

"Really?" Su Qiu paused, her voice tinged with disbelief.

How could that be?

Ye Fenglong was the son of the principal.

No one at Eastsea University dared to cross him.

Not even the vice principal would risk offending him.

"When have I ever deceived you?"

Su Ming said with a smile, gently ruffling Su Qiu's hair.

Su Qiu became somewhat lost in thought.

It was as if she had been transported back to that worry-free time from over a decade ago.

Back then, she was blissfully unaware of poverty and hunger.

Despite wearing old clothes every day and having meals of just potatoes and pickles, she was genuinely content.

Even though it had been years since she last saw Su Ming, Su Qiu knew he was not one to lie.

A renewed sense of hope began to blossom in her heart.