

7 Killers – Chapter 5

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Chapter 5 – Lovesickness will make you grow old

Part 1

The lamps in the inn shone brilliantly.

Two of the waiters who had just arrived were arranging chopsticks at one of the tables, and the seven finely dressed young women were sitting in a row of chairs. Some were whispering amongst themselves, others were sitting quietly, thinking.

The men who were coming to tear down the building had not yet arrived, but Liu Changjie had.

Kong Lanjun had told him not to act rashly, and not to come to this place.

Yet he came anyway.

He was the type of person who did things his own way.

As he entered the inn, everyone seemed to be frozen in shock—this was not who they were waiting for.

Other than those people, no one else should have arrived.

Liu Changjie seemed not to notice. He swaggered in and sat at the table the waiters had just set. “Bring me three cold appetizers, four hot dishes, and five bottles of ‘Jia Fan.’”

“Jia Fan” was a famous brand of wine in Hangzhou. Experienced drinkers said that the flavor was even more satisfying than “Ku Niang” wine. [1]

The waiters stood by, panic-stricken, unsure whether or not to pour wine.

This was not an ordinary inn, but Liu Changjie treated it as if it were. With a smile, he beckoned at the seven young women and said, “Come over here, all of you. A man drinking without a woman to accompany him is like a plate of food with no salt.”

The young women looked at him, and he looked at them. They seemed too terrified to even move.

“I’m not a man-eating tiger,” said Liu Changjie. “What are you afraid of? Come on over.”

Just then, laughter rang out, delicate, like the sound of silver bells. And then a charming voice could be heard, “I’m here!”

When the laughter started, it appeared to be coming from very far away. But by the time the voice had finished speaking, its owner had already arrived. She flew in like a gust of wind, and sat down next to Liu Changjie.

She was a woman, and a very beautiful woman at that. Not just beautiful, but entrancing, especially her two eyes, which had the ability to charm a person to their bones.

If you looked at this person from all sides, you would say that from head to toe she was a woman, every inch.

Liu Changjie looked at her and laughed. “I want to drink with women!” he said.

She laughed charmingly. “Cant’ you see that I’m a woman?”

“You don’t look like one.”

“How could I convince you I’m a woman?”

“Take off all your clothes, then we’ll see.”

Her expression changed and she giggled.

Suddenly, someone outside spoke. “It looks like our friend here has a lot of experience with women. He can’t be fooled by a fake woman.”

By the time these two sentences were uttered, there were five more people in the room.

One of them had a pale white face, and was dressed in expensive garments. Clean shaven, with wrinkles in the corners of his eyes, it was a middle aged man who obviously was “Little Fifth Omniscient” Tang Qing.

The huge, towering monk was clearly Iron Monk.

“Ghost Meteor” Shan Yifei and “Soul Enticing” Lao Zhao were both sickly and old in appearance, looking like thirty percent ghost and seventy percent killers.

What Liu Changjie could never have anticipated was that Li the Mastiff was actually a refined, gentle-looking young man. Except that his face was covered in scars, and he was missing half an ear.

Hu Yue’er had guessed correctly on all counts.

But Liu Changjie suddenly thought of something—she had only described six people, not seven.

And right now, there were only six.

Who was the other person?

Why hadn’t Hu Yue’er mentioned him?

And why wasn’t he here?

Five of the people wore no smile on their face. Only Tang Qing was smiling, and he was clearly the person who had just spoken.

Liu Changjie laughed. “Your Excellency’s experience with women clearly is not any less than mine.”

“You know me?” asked Tang Qing.

“If I didn’t know your Excellency, how else could I know that you have a lot of experience with women?”

Tang Qing’s expression changed. With a stern voice, he said, “You came here looking for me?”

“I came here to drink,” replied Liu Changjie.

“You specifically came here to drink?”

“That’s right.”

“There are thousands of places to drink in the world, why would you pick this place?”

“Because I like this place. It’s new, and I’m a fickle person.” [2]

Suddenly, the Iron Monk spoke out: “It just so happens that I really don’t like fickle people.”

“What do you like?” asked Liu Changjie.

“I like killing people. And I especially like killing fickle people such as yourself.”

The Iron Monk had ferocious looking eyebrows and fierce eyes. His face was filled with hatred, and his eyes seethed with murderous intent. They were extremely frightening in appearance.

Liu Changjie just laughed. “So you definitely want to kill me.”

“You guessed correctly.”

“Then why haven’t you come over here to try?”

The Iron Monk was already moving forward.

His whole body appeared to be sculpted from steel, and his carriage as he walked was like that of a gorilla.

His footsteps were heavy and stable, and every step he took left footprints behind in the floor.

The Iron Monk’s external power was clearly exceptional. As for his Thirteen Heroes Skill, who could say whether or not it had reached the level that his body was impervious to blades?

Liu Changjie had nothing in his hands, not even a kitchen knife.

Tang Qing watched him the same way he might look at a corpse.

The gorgeously dressed young women were shaking in terror.

The joints in Iron Monk's body made cracking sounds as he took four steps forward.

It appeared as if he was preparing all his kung fu to attack, and that this attack could clearly not be defended against.

But before he could attack, the refined and gentle-looking young man suddenly lunged toward Liu Changjie.

His eyes were blood red, and he opened his mouth to reveal a set of ghastly white teeth. He really did appear to be a wild dog, unable to refrain from ripping out Liu Changjie's throat.

It seemed like Liu Changjie didn't even notice him.

In a flash, he was looming over Liu Changjie's body, his two hands grasping toward Liu Changjie's throat.

And then strange snapping sound could be heard.

Liu Changjie was still sitting there motionless.

Li the Mastiff was also motionless. His two hands gripped Liu Changjie's neck. Except, his own head was twisted at a strange angle, and his eyes bulged from their sockets. A strange expression covered his face.

Moments later, blood exploded from his mouth.

The blood didn't splash onto Liu Changjie

Liu Changjie's body suddenly slid away like a fish, away from the woman and Li the Mastiff.

Li the Mastiff toppled over onto the woman.

The woman didn't move out of the way. Instead, she fell with him to the ground. She also had a bizarre expression on her face. Her eyes bulged from her face like those of a dead fish.

Two faces looked at each other, two sets of eyes stared at each other. They fell to the ground, motionless.

Two bodies, already growing cold and stiff.

Tang Qing's face was ashen. He knew they were dead.

And yet, he had never seen Liu Changjie move a finger.

No one had seen Liu Changjie move.

It was as if he didn't need to move a muscle to kill people.

The Iron Monk had stopped walking. Blue veins pulsed in his forehead, and cold sweat dripped down his face.

He liked to kill people, so he understood killing.

And because of that, he was even more frightened than the others.

Liu Changjie let out a long sigh. "I said I don't like to kill people. I just want to drink."

Tang Qing said, "But you just did kill people, two of them."

"That's because they wanted to kill me. And I didn't want to die, because dead people can't drink."

"Soul Enticing" Lao Zhao suddenly said, "Okay! Let's drink. I'll drink with you."

He placed a pot of wine down onto the table.

He first poured himself a cup, and then poured one for Liu Changjie. "To you!" he said.

He downed it in one gulp.

The two cups had been poured from one pot.

Liu Changjie looked at the cup in front of him and laughed. "I didn't come here to drink just one cup."

Soul Enticing Lao Zhao responded, "After you drink this cup, you can have another."

"If I drink this cup, I'll never have a chance to drink a second."

Soul Enticing Lao Zhao laughed coldly. "Don't tell me you think the wine is poisoned?"

"Originally there was no poison in the wine. But there was poison on your pinky fingernail."

Soul Enticing Lao Zhao's face twisted.

When he had poured the cup of wine for Liu Changjie, he had dipped his pinky fingernail in just a bit. His movement was nimble and dexterous, and impossible for others to see.

And yet Liu Changjie knew.

Liu Changjie looked at him and smiled. "The wine you drank originally didn't have poison in it either."

"And now?" he asked.

"You should be able to tell whether or not there's poison in it."

Soul Enticing Lao Zhao's face suddenly darkened. He jumped up. "When did you make your move?" he shouted hoarsely. "When did you put the poison in?"

"I knew you would want to drink from these cups, so when you went to get the wine, I put the poison in the cups. How I did it was very simple, even you could pull it off."

Soul Enticing Lao Zhao didn't open his mouth again. It seemed as if an invisible rope was tightening around his neck.

His breathing stopped, and he fell to the ground, his body convulsing.

Liu Changjie sighed. "I don't like killing people, but I was willing to kill three people just now. And yet the people who do like killing are just standing there motionless."

The Iron Monk said nothing. He just turned and dashed out of the room.

Hu Yue'er had been correct.

People who like killing are the ones who are most afraid of death.

Liu Changjie had also been correct.

Because the monk was afraid to die, he had practiced a type of kung fu that could make his body impervious to blades.

But as soon as he met someone who didn't need blades to take the lives of others, he fled faster than anyone.

Ghost Meteor fled just as quickly.

Actually, the speed of his retreat really was like that of a meteor.

Tang Qing didn't leave.

Liu Changjie looked at him and laughed. "Does your Excellency also want to come have a try?"

Tang Qing laughed. "Like you, I hate killing people. And like you, I came here to drink."

"Good."

"Like you, I have a lot of experience with women, and like you I am a fickle person."

"Great!"

"So, we're birds of a feather! Let's have some drinks and chat. We can be friends." Smiling, he walked over and sat down. "After all, there are wine and women here."

"There's definitely sufficient wine for us two."

Tang Qing laughed. "And there are sufficient women, as well."

"The women aren't sufficient," replied Liu Changjie.

"Not sufficient?"

"Even though there are enough women, they just aren't pretty enough."

Tang Qing laughed loudly. "So, it turns out your Excellency's way of looking at things is a bit more refined than mine."

"Actually, these women aren't really ugly, it's just that they can't really make you sick with love." [3]

The smile on Tang Qing's face suddenly froze. He looked at Liu Changjie in amazement. He appeared even more shocked than when he had just observed Liu Changjie kill the others.

He finally understood Liu Changjie's purpose, but he still could not believe any person would have this amount of guts.

Liu Changjie began tapping a cup with a chopstick, and slowly sang: "It's said that you should never be sick with love, because lovesickness will make you grow old

"But after you consider it over and over again, you realize that lovesickness really is better, lovesickness really is better..."

Tang Qing took in a deep breath, and then forced out a laugh. "So, your Excellency specifically came to this place to look for lovesickness?"

Liu Changjie sighed. "What in the world is better than lovesickness?"

"Nothing," replied Tang Qing.

"Definitely nothing."

Tang Qing's eyes turned up in thought, and then he smiled eerily. "Your humble self also knows a song. I'd like to sing it for your Excellency."

Liu Changjie let out a breath. "Listening to men sing is boring, unless it's your own singing. But, if you really want to sing, go ahead."

Tang Qing began singing, "It's said that you should never be sick with love, because lovesickness will make you grow old,

"If you grow old, you will eventually die, and dying is never good."

Liu Changjie shook his head firmly. "Not very good."

Tang Qing said, "Maybe my singing voice isn't very good, but the words are true."

Liu Changjie had to agree. "Correct. The truth never sounds good."

"If your Excellency wants to find lovesickness, you'll not only grow old, you'll grow old exceptionally quick. Which means you will die sooner."

"Are you afraid of death?"

"Who in the world isn't afraid of death?"

"Me." He stared at Tang Qing, and continued coldly, "Because you are afraid of death, and I am not, you will take me there."

Tang Qing continued to play dumb. "Take you where?"

"To find lovesickness."

Tang Qing forced himself to smile. "And what if I can't find it?"

"Then you will never grow old," replied Liu Changjie evenly.

Tang Qing couldn't force himself to smile any more.

He understood Liu Changjie's meaning—only dead people don't grow old.

Liu Changjie continued to stare at him. "They say that you guard a mountain cave for her. Since you're here, then she's definitely guarding the cave herself. So, you'll definitely be able to find her."

Tang Qing wanted to deny that he understood what Liu Changjie was saying, but couldn't.

"Do you want to die?" asked Liu Changjie.

Tang Qing shook his head.

Liu Changjie drank a glass of wine. "Then what do you want?"

"I want you to die!"

He suddenly flew up into the air, spinning; at the same time a vortex of sand shot toward Liu Changjie. [4]

This was the Tang Clan "Bark Cloth Tree" poison sand.

Surprisingly, Liu Changjie made no move to evade. Instead, he opened his mouth, out of which shot a shining spray; it was the wine he had just gulped down.

In an instant, every single granule of sand, each smaller than a sesame seed, was blown back and embedded into the freshly painted wall. [5]

Tang Qing's face fell. He never imagined that someone could have this shocking ability.

Liu Changjie smiled. "This wine is called Fishing Hook Wine, but sometimes it's also called 'Worry-sweeping Broom.' And sometimes it can be used to sweep away poison sand."

Tang Qing laughed bitterly. "I never imagined that drinking wine could have so many benefits."

"Yes. You really should drink more."

"I'll drink."

"Dead people can't drink."

"I know."

"So, now what are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking I should take you there immediately."

Liu Changjie laughed. "I picked you because I could tell you are an intelligent person. I only have dealings with intelligent people."

Tang Qing sighed. "And because of you, intelligent people are often faced with vexation." [6]

"Having vexation is better than not having vexation."

"Why is that?"

"Because in this world, the only people who don't experience vexation are the dead."

**

Lovesickness is a vexation, and so it makes people old.

But if you think about it for a moment, really think about it, you will understand that if a person can experience lovesickness, it's better than not being able to experience lovesickness...

Part 2

Where there are mountains, there are mountain caves.

Some mountain caves are large, some mountain caves are small; some mountain caves are beautiful, some mountain caves are treacherous; some mountain caves are like a nostril that everyone can see, some mountain caves are like the navel of a fair maiden, which even though everyone knows exists, has never been seen.

This mountain cave was more mysterious than the navel of a virgin.

After traveling through seven mountain passes, and climbing six treacherous slopes, they arrived at a cliff.

The cliff was immense, so much so that the bottom could not be seen.

Across from them was another precipice, about fifteen or twenty feet away. The two cliffs faced each other, and far above, only a sliver of sky could be seen.

Tang Qing at long last let out a long breath. "We're here," he said.

"Where are we?" asked Liu Changjie.

Tang Qing pointed at the cliff on the opposite side. "You should be able to see it."

Liu Changjie obviously had already caught sight of it. The opposing cliff face was as bare as if it had been carved out with a sword. There, amidst a wild growth of wisteria, was the black mouth of a cave.

White clouds wafted to and fro, and eagles could be seen soaring about.

Even though Liu Changjie could see the cave, he wasn't sure how to get there.

Tang Qing suddenly asked, "Have you read the poem 'Call of the Waterfowl' from the Book of Odes?" [7]

"No, I haven't."

"The idea behind the poem is that there is a fair maiden standing at an estuary. On the other side is a horny prince. Even though he can see her, he has no way to reach her, no matter how hard he wants to. This cave is like that fair maiden." [8]

"And I'm the prince?"

"You only asked me to bring you here, and so I have."

"I never imagined that you were an educated man."

Tang Qing laughed. "I wouldn't dare claim to be."

Liu Changjie glanced at the treacherous cliff face. "If an educated man fell down this cliff," he said coolly, "I wonder if he would die the same as an uneducated man?"

Tang Qing tried to laugh, but couldn't. He couldn't even speak. Suddenly, he squatted down and twisted a piece of nearby rock. A wire cable shot forth, at the head of which was a steel awl.

A dinging sound rang out as the awl imbedded itself into the opposite cliff face, just below the cave mouth, forming an extremely narrow bridge.

Tang Qing bowed and said, "Please, after you."

"I would rather the educated man go first."

Tang Qing's face lost its color. "You want me to go with you?"

"Yes, and I want you in front. If we fall to our deaths, you can fall first."

With a long face, Tang Qing replied, "If Madam Lovesickness finds out that I brought you here, I'm dead."

"That's better than falling to your death right now. Life is a treasure. Being able to live even one moment longer is good. And who knows, maybe I can think of a way to keep you alive."

"Really?" asked Tang Qing.

"I'm an uneducated person. The word of an uneducated person is generally dependable."

Tang Qing let out a long sigh, and then laughed. "As it turns out, reading a lot of books isn't such a good thing after all."

Part 3

The wire was slippery, and the mountain wind blew violently. They walked across, knowing that with one slight misstep they would plummet down.

And if they fell, they would become flat meatcakes.

Luckily, the distance between the two cliffs was not great. As soon as they stepped forth onto the cable, they heard a friendly

voice from inside: "Close your eyes as you enter. I'm bathing!"

**

The entrance to the cave was deep. From the outside it appeared pitch black, but as they walked in, they could see that it was illuminated by lamps.

The pink-colored lamplight was soft and entrancing.

The voice was even more soft and entrancing than the lamplight.

Liu Changjie didn't close his eyes. In fact, it would have been strange if he had.

As he walked forward, his eyes widened, as if he had just entered a fairyland. Except, this cave was more beautiful than a fairyland.

In the middle of cave was a cistern formed by a hot spring, encircled by a balustrade of white wood.

There was a woman in the cistern, only her head visible above the surface of the water.

Black hair floated like storm clouds, further drawing attention to the woman's face. It was like a spring flower, and her skin was extremely smooth.

Sadly, the water was not clear.

Liu Changjie let out a breath. He knew that what was beneath the water was even more amazing.

Madam Lovesickness's radiant, enchanting eyes really were like undulating ripples on the limpid waters of an autumn pond. [9] She was staring at him with those eyes, seeming to be smiling without smiling, both happy and angry. Her voice was as beautiful as the call of a mountain oriole.

"Didn't I tell you to close your eyes?" she asked.

"You did," replied Liu Changjie.

"Your eyes don't appear to be closed."

Liu Changjie sighed. "I've braved countless dangers, narrowly escaped from death, all just to be able to lay eyes on you. At long last, I'm finally here, how could I possibly close my eyes?"

"But I'm taking a bath at the moment."

He laughed. "After I heard you were taking a bath, I was even less willing to close my eyes."

Madam Lovesickness let out another breath. "It seems you are not only disobedient, you're also dishonest."

"Everything I said was completely honest."

"Aren't you afraid that I might dig out your eyes?"

"I'm not afraid of you chopping off my head, much less digging out my eyes."

"You're not afraid of death?"

"Fear death? Why fear death? The world is like an inn, and people are like customers. What happiness is there in life, what fear is there in death?"

"So, it turns out you're an educated man," she said in her beautiful voice.

He smiled. "The ancients said, 'if a man in the morning hears the right way, he can die in the evening without regret.' As long as I am able to see the Madam, I'm just as willing to die." [10]

She looked at him seductively. "Haven't you already seen me?"

"I yearned for day and night, and finally my desire is fulfilled."

"So that means you're ready to die now."

"Not yet."

"You haven't seen enough yet?"

He laughed. "I haven't. In fact there are quite a few places I still haven't seen at all yet."

Madam Lovesickness stared at him, a look on her face that made it seem she didn't understand.

He stared at her, looking as if he wished his eyesight could penetrate the water. "What I can see now is only a small part. The most important part, I can't see."

"How much do you want to see?"

"All of it."

It seemed as if Madam Lovesickness's face was reddening. "You're quite ambitious!"

"Men who aren't ambitious don't count as true men."

She bit her lip. "If I really let you see, who's to say you wouldn't have further ambitions?"

He laughed. "Who says I don't already?"

Her two captivating [11] eyes stared at him, unblinking. "You don't really count as a good-looking man."

"Of course I'm not."

"But, you're different from most other men."

He laughed again. "Maybe in more way than one."

"I like men who are out of the ordinary," she said softly.

"Every woman under heaven likes men who are out of the ordinary."

"Leave," she said, suddenly.

Liu Changjie didn't move.

He knew that she wasn't talking to him, she was talking to Tang Qing.

Tang Qing left immediately, his eyes still closed. He had never opened them.

Liu Changjie laughed. "It looks like he's an obedient man."

"He doesn't dare to be disobedient."

"So, if he leaves, I definitely have to stay."

"Women don't like men who are too obedient, but you..."

She looked at Liu Changjie out of the corner of her eye, her look as smooth as silk. "You're just standing there like a simpleton, are you willing to do anything else?"

He didn't say anything in response.

He used actions as a response.

Women also don't like men who don't take action.

He suddenly walked to the edge the cistern, throwing off his shoes.

Madam Lovesickness's eyes widened, as in shock. "You dare come in?"

Liu Changjie had already begun throwing off other items of clothing

"You obviously know who I am, aren't you afraid I'll kill you?"

He didn't say anything; he was in too much of a hurry.

"Can't you tell there is a special quality to this water?" she asked.

Apparently, he didn't.

After all, he wasn't looking at the water. His gaze was fixed on Madam Lovesickness's eyes.

"There's a special drug dissolved into the water," she said. "Other than me, anyone who enters will die."

He had already jumped in."

There was a splash, and water flew everywhere.

"It seems you really aren't afraid of death." She sighed again. "Many men have said they were willing to die for me, but the men who were really ready to do so, other than you, you ..."

She didn't say anything more; she couldn't.

Because she couldn't exhale.

**

There is only one method to defeat a woman.

And Liu Changjie used the correct method.

People don't necessarily smile when they are most happy, and they don't necessarily moan only when they are pain.

At this point, the moaning had ceased, and all that remained was panting; rapturous panting.

Surging ripples of water finally subsided into calmness.

"People talk about 'heaven-like libido,'" panted Madam Lovesickness, "but your libido is larger than the heavens." [12]

Liu Changjie closed his eyes, lacking the energy to speak.

"Actually," continued Madam Lovesickness, "I know that you didn't just come here for me. You have some other goal."

Women usually like to talk, and at this time they usually have more energy than the man.

So, she continued. "But for some reason, I decided not to kill you."

Liu Changjie suddenly laughed. "I know why. Because I am not an ordinary man."

She sighed, unwilling to argue.

"So, the water wasn't poisoned," said Liu Changjie.

Madam Lovesickness didn't deny it. "There are plenty of ways to kill you if I want to."

"If a woman wants a man dead, there definitely are lots of ways to do it."

"Therefore, you'd best tell me why you really came here. Immediately."

"You mean you're already thinking of killing me?"

"Only new men can be considered out of the ordinary," she said levelly.

"So I'm already not new?"

"Women are the same as men," she said in a sweet voice. "We also are fickle."

Liu Changjie sighed lightly. "But you forgot something."

"Oh?"

"Some men are like women, in that, if they want a woman to die, they can find lots of ways to do it."

"Well, it depends," she said ingratiatingly, "on what type of woman the man was dealing with."

"Any kind of woman."

She laughed even more haughtily. "Even a woman like me?"

"As for you, I probably would only use one method. If it was effective, then I wouldn't need to think about other ways."

"Then why don't you give it a shot?"

"I already did," he replied.

She laughed even harder. "And was it effective?"

"Of course!"

"What method was it?"

"The water didn't have poison in it before," he said in a relaxed tone. "But now it does."

Her voice suddenly became stiff. "You..." she whispered.

"I already took the antidote, of course."

"When did you put the poison in?" she asked, seeming unconvinced.

"The poison was hidden under my fingernail. When I jumped in, it dissolved into the water."

"And the antidote..."

"I took it when I was taking my clothes off. I know that a man taking his clothes off is not a pretty sight, and that women generally don't want to watch."

Emotions flickered across her face. Suddenly, she slid toward Liu Changjie like a fish, her ten fingers extended, clawing toward his larynx.

And that was when she found out that Liu Changjie wasn't lying—she suddenly felt her body grow soft, her hands weak. All her energy seemed to have disappeared without a trace.

Liu Changjie grabbed her hand gently. "Men are also fickle," he said softly. "You're already not so new, so you'd better be a good girl."

Her face was draining of color. "You ... you really want to kill me?"

He sighed. "I don't want to ..." [13]

Even before he finished speaking, he had sealed three of the acupuncture points on her large, firm chest.

**

Everything else was relatively simple.

The hidden door was located behind a large Persian felt that hung on the cave wall. The thousand-pound door wasn't actually one thousand pounds, and wasn't that difficult to open.

Liu Changjie's hands really were incredibly dexterous. [14]

Tang Qing had disappeared without a trace, but the cable bridge was still there.

Another person might think that they had struck it very lucky, but Liu Changjie was not that type of person.

"If a person's method is correct, things will go smoothly, no matter what difficulty they encounter."

His methods definitely were out of the ordinary.

The inn that had been built to be destroyed was still there. Of the people sent to destroy it, three were dead and three had fled.

There are many such situations under heaven; foolproof plans that go awry and impossible tasks that are unexpectedly accomplished.

There really is no distinct line between success and failure, so one should not take matters too seriously.

The lamps in the inn were still lit, and the people inside were still waiting.

The sky was still dark, and until it was light, they dared not leave.

Carrying a small sandalwood box wrapped up in cloth, Liu Changjie strolled in.

"So it turns he didn't die after all; he actually returned."

The girls' eyes were wide as they looked at him; they could see that he was clearly a very capable person.

There was wine on the table.

Liu Changjie sat down and made himself comfortable. Now really was an appropriate time to be comfortable and have a drink.

He was thinking of pouring himself a drink, but before he could, the girl with the largest eyes of them all approached. She seemed to be the most intelligent of them all as well. Her hips swayed as she walked over, smiling sweetly. "How is lovesickness?"

"Good. Very good"

She smiled enchantingly and took in a deep breath, causing her chest to stick out. "My name is Satisfy. I'm also good." [15]

He laughed. "You do look good. But sadly, although you might be able to satisfy me, I wouldn't be able to satisfy you."

"Why?" she asked, with a seductive glance.

"Because what I have wrapped up in this bundle is neither gold nor jewels."

Satisfy didn't seem to be disappointed. She continued to smile bewitchingly. "What I want isn't gold or jewels. What I want is you."

"Unfortunately," said another voice, "he has already been bought by another." [16]

The voice came from outside. Satisfy turned her head and saw a beautiful woman, as ethereal as an orchid, as proud as a peacock. She walked in from the darkness.

Kong Lanjun had also come.

In her presence, Satisfy suddenly felt like she looked like a chicken. She let out a soft breath and quietly said, "Who would have that that there were men in our line of work, and that they could be bought."

Liu Changjie also sighed. "I do a pretty good job, although maybe not as good as you."

She smiled sweetly. "But, I really like you. One day when you're free, I'll buy you for a few days." She chuckled and pinched Liu Changjie's cheek. Then she gathered the other girls together to leave. "It looks like there's no business here. Let's go back and get some rest."

Liu Changjie's eyes followed them as they left, looking a little disappointed.

Kong Lanjun had already sat down and was staring at him. "You can't bear to part with them?" she asked coldly.

He let out a breath. "I'm a very sentimental person."

She ground her teeth. "You really are inhuman," she said venomously.

"Luckily, a lot of women actually like inhuman men."

"Those women are also inhuman."

"What about you?"

She let out a light breath. "It seems I'm quickly becoming inhuman," she said softly.

In a moment, her entire countenance changed, from that of a proud peacock, to that of a gentle dove.

It seemed Liu Changjie had used the correct method to deal with her as well.

Some women are like hard-shelled nuts. You need to use a hammer to break them open.

Right now she looked like a hart nut that had been cracked open to reveal a tender and supple heart.

Looking at her, Liu Changjie felt like he had won a great conquest, and there is nothing that can make a person happier than this type of feeling.

And then, he suddenly seemed to soften.

After you have conquered a woman, there's no need for the hammer any more. He reached out his hand and took hold of hers. "Actually," he said, "I know that you that you treated me well."

She lowered her head. "You ... you really believe that?"

"I also know that you had a good plan."

"But ... but you didn't do anything according to my plan."

"Because I'm an impetuous person. I usually like to use a more direct method."

She lifted her head and stared at him, her beautiful eyes swirling with concern.

"But, I really think your way was just too dangerous."

He laughed. "It doesn't matter now, the matter is handled already."

Her eyes shone. "Really?"

"Yes."

"You have the item already?"

He pointed at the bundle on the table.

Kong Lanjun looked at him, exuding both affection and admiration. Seemingly unable to hold back her emotions, she grasped his two hands and placed them on her face. "Now I know, you're not just a real man, you're an amazing man."

Liu Changjie was even more happy than before. Upon hearing words like this, any man would be just as happy.

He couldn't help but smile. "Actually, I'm not that amazing, it's just..."

He didn't complete the sentence, and he probably never would.

Because at that moment, Kong Lanjun suddenly grabbed him with both hands, digging her fingertips into his wrists. She flipped him up and tossed him, using an advanced Mongolian wrestling technique.

She flipped his body over like a dead fish and slammed him face-first onto the table.

Her hand sped down his spine, sealing all of the acupuncture points. She laughed coldly. "You obviously aren't amazing at all, you're just a cocky rabid dog!"

Liu Changjie was speechless.

"Do you really think I would be won over by that kind of method?" She was still laughing coldly. "Mark my words, you screwed up! It doesn't matter who strikes me, I will pay them back tenfold."

Her hand laid hold of a wooden plank and she began slamming it down onto his butt. Over and over she hit him, not holding back in the least bit, thirty times in total.

He could do nothing but wait, wait until she finished the beating.

"This time I'm just teaching you a lesson," she said. "From now on, don't underestimate women!" She grabbed the bundle from the table. "I'll take this. I just hope that your luck isn't too bad, and that Qiu Hengbo, Tang Qing and the others don't come back looking for you."

How bitter to see the meal you so carefully prepared suddenly being eaten by the mouth of another.

Who could imagine the feeling in Liu Changjie's heart as her voice faded into the distance?

It's not that he was incapable of speaking, but what was there that he could say?

Women ... Ai ...

Liu Changjie sighed, suddenly coming to the realization that one should not offend a woman.

Unfortunately, he had offended a lot of women.

He couldn't even bear to think about what would happen if Madam Lovesick really did come looking for him.

Let alone Shan Yifei, Iron Monk, Tang Qing ...

Each and every one of them would certainly have plenty of ways to torment him.

He could only lay there on the table waiting. At this point he didn't look like a rabid dog, he looked like a dead dog.

It was hard to say how much time passed. It seemed like millions of years.

The sun had long since risen.

Luckily, the waiters and the girls had left, otherwise he would have to stand up and beat his head against the wall until he died.

(1) The characters for Jia Fan are 加饭 which literally means "add rice." And Ku Niang is 苦酿. The first character "ku" means bitter, and the second "niang" is a verb meaning to brew, ferment, or make alcohol.

(2) What I'm translating as "fickle" is actually a pretty cool Chinese expression 喜新厌旧 which means "to like the new and hate the old."

(3) At this point in the story, there is a lot of wordplay revolving around the use of the Chinese word 相思 which can be translated as "languish with lovesickness, pine with love, yearn for someone's love, to yearn, to pine for, to be lovesick, lovesickness." These same two characters make up the name of Madam Lovesickness 相思夫人. In order to make the English sound right, I'll adjust how I translate it, but the original Chinese is all the same word.

(4) Sometimes the action doesn't translate well into English. Here is the literal translation: "He suddenly flew into the air, his body spinning, and a sheet of flying sand, carrying a gust of wind, shot spinning toward Liu Changjie." I left out the "gust of wind" part because I couldn't think of a way to make it flow well in English.

(5) Here again I sacrifice some of the Chinese to make a better (in my opinion) English translation. Here is the literal translation: "In an instant, the sand which blotted out the heavens was spun away, and was sprinkled onto the freshly painted wall, a thousand granules of sand smaller than sesame seeds, were all embedded into the wall." The Chinese is pretty cool, but the literal translation sounds weird in English so ... I did my best.

(6) In the Chinese, I think he's actually implying that because Liu Changjie only deals with intelligent people, intelligent people therefore face vexation. But, I couldn't think of how to express this implication using English, thus my translation.

(7) The Book of Odes is one of the five classics of the Confucian canon. Here is more information: <http://goo.gl/C2ld5>

(8) The poem is relatively famous, and is about a fair maiden and a virtuous young man. In his explanation, Tang Qing changes the meaning of the poem. He adds the word 好色 to describe the man, which makes him sound perverted. For a deviant like Tang Qing, it seems really appropriate for him to do this. Here is a link to a (pretty bad) English translation of the poem that I found: <http://goo.gl/zcSHVx>. Thanks to LuDongBin for a link to another translation of the poem: <http://goo.gl/aULYZ4>. If anybody knows of a link to a better translation of the title, or a better translation of the poem itself, please let me know.

(9) This part contains a sort of play on words of Madam Lovesickness's different names and nicknames. It describes her eyes as 明媚如秋水橫波的眼睛. I'm translating 明媚 ming mei as "radiant, enchanting." After that is a four-character adjective phrase. The first part of the phrase is 秋水 qiu shui, which means "limpid autumn waters." This is what I earlier shortened into "Autumn" in her nickname "Madam Autumn." The next two characters are 橫波 heng bo which the dictionary says is "transverse wave" and I'm translating as "undulating ripples," which I think imparts the meaning and flavor better. These two characters are also her given name, Hengbo. So, he uses the different parts of her name and nickname to describe her eyes. It's pretty cool.

(10) This is a quote from the Analects of Confucius. The original Chinese is really hard to understand, unless you have studied that stuff. The English translation is actually much more clear than the original. Here are two external links: <http://goo.gl/iffPXq> and <http://goo.gl/y6HC9h>

(11) The expression is 勾魂摄魄. The literal translation would be "soul-captivating, spirit-assimilating." He uses a common and clever way of splitting up one word 魂魄 which means soul, and then adding two other characters which basically have the same meaning, to create a cool expression.

(12) This is a pretty literal translation. She uses an idiom 色胆包天 which means that one's sexual desire encompasses the heavens.

(13) This is a place where my translation differs a bit from the literal Chinese. Here, she says 你真的忍心杀我 and he replies 我实在不忍心. The word they both use 忍心 means to have the heart to do something, or to be hard-hearted enough to do something. But to me it wouldn't flow well to have her, with her (potentially) dying breath say, "are you really so hard-hearted as to kill me," or "do you really have the heart to kill me," and then he replies "I am not that hardhearted." Thus, my

translation choice.

(14) The adjective he uses to describe Liu Changjie's hands is the same one used to describe Gongsun Miao's.

(15) Her name is 如意 which basically means "to fulfill one's wishes or desires." A good name for a prostitute I guess...

(16) What I'm translated as "bought" is 包下来, which is the situation where a rich guy basically pays for a prostitute to be his permanent mistress for a period of time.

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