

Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

SDXL Chapter 1



Chapter 1 – No Love under the Wind and Moon

Translated by Noodles



Within the boat were five girls picking lotuses ... a lonely heart like a string struggling to be untangled ... there are no lovers meeting under the wind and moon, the past is like a dream cut short.

The fog has lightened due to the strong winds, but as time approaches, solitude lies by the stream. A mysterious song is heard from afar, seemingly from the Jiangnan province. A soft and graceful tune was played which carried across the lake's surface under the cover of the mist. Once the song had finished, a small boat appeared. Within the boat were five girls who were singing and laughing, picking lotuses into the boat. The

lyrics the girls sang were from the poem *The Butterfly Loves the Flower*, written by the Song poet Ouyang Xiu, the words sung matched what the girl was feeling inside; though only sixty words were sung, the season, time of day, place, scenery and the girl's face, clothes, hair adornments, emotions were all described meticulously. The next part of the song is as if someone is narrating a scene, a love story, which is close at heart yet far away, but a love which isn't yet exhausted.

Ouyang Xiu was in Jiangnan as a court official where he lived a leisurely lifestyle, doing as he pleased, absorbed in what he was doing (reading, writing etc.,). People of Song shouldn't use their position to abuse the town's people, but it is not forbidden to use poetry for leisure. As long as a line of poetry came out, as long as there is well water to accompany a song, as the Jiangnan spring comes and the willow buds, as lotuses are on the autumn lake, everything that follows is an Ou poem.

It was during the year when Southern Song was established, and when the South Lake became popular. It was near mid autumn, as lotus leaves began to decay, and when lotus pods were at their best. A song spread across the lake to a Taoist priestess's ear. As she sat alone underneath a willow tree quietly, the night winds forced her to place an apricot yellow robe on. The winds managed to brush a piece of dirt on her neck. She hid her feelings, as 'a lonely heart like a string struggling to be untangled'. The song gradually moves away, the song is a verse of Ouyang Xiu's *Butterfly Loves a Flower*. A light breeze carried two sentences; "there are no lovers meeting under the wind and moon, the past is like a dream cut short". The song comes to a rest. A smile came upon her lips.

She let out a sigh and raised a left hand revealing a bloody palm. "What do you find so funny?" she mumbled to herself. She sang to herself, without understanding the regret and sorrow within the poem.

Standing about one hundred feet away from the priestess, a plainly dressed bearded old man was standing silently unmoved but as he heard the two sentences he let out an extremely quiet sigh.

A little boat gently glides across the blue jade lake. The girls on the boat were young; three of them about fifteen or sixteen, the other two were around nine. Two of the girls were cousins. The older of the two was called Cheng Ying; the younger was called Lu Wushuang. The difference in age was about six months. The other three girls were singing songs constantly, the boat emerging from a pile of lotus leaves.

Cheng Ying said, "Cousin, can you guess who that old man is?" pointing to the man underneath the willow tree.

The hair on that man is all messed up, his beard loose, the colour of his beard was black like a crow's, indicating that he is not very old, although his face has traces of wrinkles like those of a seventy or eighty year old. He is wearing blue, around his neck is hung a bright satin bib. On it was embroidery of cat jumping at a butterfly, though the picture is now old and fading away.

Lu Wushuang said, "That strange man has sat there for half a day now, why doesn't he move?"

Cheng Ying said, "If you want to call him something, call him old grandpa. If you call him strange, surely he would get angry."

Lu Wushuang laughed, "Is he not strange? He's old yet he is still wearing a bib. If the bearded man gets up and becomes angry, that is surely something to be watched."

From within the boat a disheveled lotus was lifted up and is thrown towards the man. The boat is about ten feet from the man. Lu Wushuang is young but the strength in her arms is not feeble, the one stroke was very accurate.

Cheng Ying shouted out, "Cousin!"

It was meant to delay her but she saw the lotus was in front of her face and flew past.

As the man looked up, he saw the lotus flying towards him, but he didn't put his hand up to catch it and let it hit him in the face. He started to eat the petals from his face and clothes even though the petals were bitter, and smiled as the boat is rowed closer and eventually came ashore.

Cheng Ying ran towards the man and tugged his clothes saying, "Old grandpa, those are not nice to eat."

She reached into a pocket and pulled out a lotus flower, split it open, peeled off eighteen petals, then split open the blue green skin of the lotus and removed the bitter core, and then passed it onto the man's hand. The man put it into his mouth and started to chew, and felt an extremely sweet taste, completely different to what he had eaten before. He cracked a smile at Cheng Ying and nodded his head. Cheng Ying did this again and gave another lotus to the man. The man put it in his mouth and chewed for a while

and then looked up at the sky and said, “Follow me?” While he said this he was striding in a westerly direction.

Lu Wushuang grabbed hold of Cheng Ying’s hand and said, “Cousin lets follow him.”

The one of the other three girls spoke up and said, “Let’s go home, if you go now, Lady will scold at us.”

Lu Wushuang put on a naughty face after she saw the strange man had run away extremely quickly and said, “If you don’t come, fine”, then released her cousin’s hand and chased after the man. Cheng Ying had come out to play with her cousin and couldn’t leave her alone and so followed. The other three girls were older than them, but they didn’t have the same courage and just called out a few times, as they watched the old man disappear into the mulberry forest followed by the two cousins.

The old man ran very fast, but saw that the two cousins couldn’t keep up so stopped and waited. However, in the end he would not wait any longer and turned around towards them, grabbed the girls, put one underneath each of his armpits, and flew towards his destination. The two girls could only hear the sound of the wind in their ear, the stones and grass on the ground flew past their eyes. Lu Wushuang became frightened and shouted, “Let me go! Let me go!” The strange man ignored her, and instead moved even quicker. Lu Wushuang looked up, and bit fiercely on the man’s hand. Teeth marks were left on the man’s palm but he hid the pain. Lu Wushuang loosened her teeth. She shouted and screamed with all her life. Cheng Ying stayed quiet.

The old man hurried for a while and then put the two girls down onto the ground. They had arrived at a cemetery. Cheng Ying’s face was pale white, while Lu Wushuang’s face was swollen and red. Cheng Ying said, “Old grandpa, we need to go home, we don’t want to play anymore!”

The strange man stared at her without flinching. Cheng Ying saw that his eyes revealed a sorrow, a lonely aura, and filled her with pity. She gently said, “If you’ve got no one to play with; then wait by the lake again tomorrow and I’ll peel lotus for you to eat again.”

The strange man sighed and said, “Yes, it has been ten years, I’ve had no one for company within these last ten years.” His eyes were still exuding an ominous light. He then fiercely said, “Where’s Yuanjun? Where do you live?”

Cheng Ying heard his serious voice, and became frightened. Quietly she said, “I, I? I don’t know.”

The man grabbed her arm, shook her a few times. His voice sunk, “Where’s Yuanjun?” Cheng Ying was scared and wanted to cry, tears rolled from her eyes. Yet she didn’t cry.

The old man clenched his teeth. “Cry, cry. You won’t cry? Hmm, you were like this ten years ago. I won’t let you marry him. You said you couldn’t bear to leave me, so why did you leave with him. You said you were touched by my kindness, leaving me would leave you heartbroken. Ha! Those are all deceiving words! If you are really hurt, why don’t you cry?”

He held onto Cheng Ying fiercely. Cheng Ying had been pale due to fright but still the tears wouldn’t come. The man shook her again. Cheng Ying clenched her teeth and said to herself “I won’t cry, I won’t cry!”

The strange man said, “You won’t even cry one tear for me, not even one. What use is my life now?” He suddenly let go of Cheng Ying, bent his legs, crouched, and thrust himself into a tombstone causing a crashing sound. He lay on the ground unconscious.

Lu Wushuang said, “Cousin, quickly escape” and grabbed hold of Cheng Ying’s hand, turned and ran. Cheng Ying hurried a few steps, but as she saw the strange man lying with blood on his head, her heart couldn’t stand it and said, “Old grandpa is dead”. Lu Wushuang said, “Now he’s dead, won’t he turn into a ghost?”

Cheng Ying gulped, scared that he would turn into a ghost, scared that he would suddenly wake up, and remembered the mad words he was saying. She saw his head covered in blood and felt pity, she comforted herself, by saying, “Old grandpa is not a ghost, I’m not scared, he won’t blame me”. She slowly walked towards the old man. “Grandpa, are you hurt?”

The man let out a groan. Cheng Ying got a bit braver, and tended to his wounds with a handkerchief. But the force of the collision was great, so the wound on his head was very severe. The handkerchief was soaked in blood. She used her left hand to press hard on the wound and after a while the bleeding stopped. The man began to open his eyes, and saw Cheng Ying by his side. “Why did you save me? Why don’t you let me die?” As Cheng Ying saw he had awakened, her spirits raised and said softly “Does your head hurt?” The strange man shook his head. “My head doesn’t hurt, my heart hurts.” Cheng Ying thought this was strange thinking, “There is a large wound on his head, yet while his head doesn’t hurt, his heart does.” She thought no more of this as she untied her waistband and gave it to the man to tie his wound.

The man took a breath and sat up. “You agreed not to see me ever again; we are going to part now. You won’t shed a single tear for me?”

Cheng Ying heard his words were full of sorrow; saw his head full of blood, eyes earnest, and couldn’t help but be filled with sorrow and two drops of tears emerged. As the man saw the tears, his face changed to a more joyful expression, but at the same time a mournful sound came out. Cheng Ying saw his sobs, her own tears like drops of pearls, rolled down her cheeks, then reached out and hugged his neck. Lu Wushuang saw how these two strangers are sobbing together, and wanted to laugh. She couldn’t hold it in any longer and burst out in a laugh.

The strange man heard this, and said to the sky, “The words that came out of your mouth said you won’t leave me, but as you grow older you will forget the things you’ve said; just remember the little white face. You laugh with real joy!” He looked down at Cheng Ying. “Yes, yes, you are Yuan, my little Yuan. I won’t let you leave, I won’t let you leave with the little white face”, as he held tightly onto Cheng Ying. Lu Wushuang saw he had become deeply disturbed and didn’t dare to laugh again.

“Yuan, I’ve finally found you. Let’s go home, from now on you will follow father.” Cheng Ying said, “Old grandpa, my father died a long time ago.” The strange man said, “I know, I know. I’m your stepfather, you don’t recognize me?” Ying shook her head. “I don’t have a stepfather.”

The strange man gave a howl, and pushed Ying away. “Yuan, you don’t even recognize step father?” Ying said, “Old grandpa, my name is Cheng Ying, not your Yuan.”

“You’re not Ah Yuan? You are not Ah Yuan?” he was expressionless for half an hour. “Hmm, around twenty years ago Ah Yuan was your age. Now Yuan has grown up and doesn’t need father anymore. The only thing in your heart is Lu Zhanyuan, that swine.”

Wushuang sighed knowingly; “Lu Zhanyuan?”

The man asked, “You know him, don’t you?? She shook her head smiling, “I just recognized that man is my uncle.” The man’s complexion changed to a vengeful colour. He grabbed hold of Wushuang and asked, “Where is that swine? Lead me to him.”

Though Wushuang is scared inside, she put on a smile and said, “My uncle lives close by. You really want to find him?”

“Yes, yes. I’ve been searching for him for three days, so I could settle my debt with that swine. Little girl lead me to him and old grandpa won’t trouble you.” As he said this, his voice changed tone from angry to gentle and released his grasp. She used her right hand to touch her sore left arm.

“You really hurt me. I don’t know where he lives anymore.” The man’s eyebrows rose, as if he was about to go mad again, but thought it is not right to force the little girl, and put on a clown like smile. He put his hand in his sleeve and said, “It was grandpa’s fault. You don’t have to follow me. Grandpa has some sweets for you.” He reached around his sleeve but couldn’t find any sweets. Wushuang smiled and clapped.

“You don’t have any sweets, aren’t you ashamed to lie? Alright, my uncle lives near here.” She pointed to two faraway giant trees. “It’s near there.”

The man reached out his long arm and carried the girls underneath his armpits again, and hurriedly flew towards the two trees. He followed the path in front, until there is a small obstruction but cleared it in a leap. In a flash, the three of them were by the two trees. The strange man dropped the two girls, and saw two grand tombs below the trees. On the tombstone was written: “Here lies the grave of Lu Zhanyuan.” On another was written “Here lies the wife of Lu.” The grass around the path to the tombs was knee deep, indicating that the tombs had been here a long time.

The man just stared at the tombstone and said, “Lu Zhanyuan is dead... how long ago?” Wushuang laughed as she replied, “Three years ago.”

“He deserved to die, good. What a pity that he didn’t die beneath my hands!” he said as he laughed at the sky. The laugh could be heard from faraway, but the laugh was a regretful, a lamenting laugh, not one of joy.

It was deep within the night, the field of grass covered by fog. Wushuang tugged at her cousin’s sleeve. “Let’s go now.” The strange man said, “The little white face is dead. Ah Yuan, where can you go now? I’ll take you back to Dali. Hey little girl, take me to your dead uncle’s wife.”

Wushuang pointed to the tombstone, “Can’t you see? My aunt also died.” The man picked himself up and his voice like thunder, shouted, “Are those words real or a lie? She... she really is dead?” Wushuang’s face turned pale, and in a quivering voice said “Father said not long after uncle died, my aunt followed. I don’t know anymore, I don’t know. Don’t shout at me, I’m scared!”

The man beat his chest and shouted, “She’s dead... she’s dead? No, you can’t die before seeing me again. I followed your instructions; ten years later, we’ll meet again. You didn’t wait for me?” He shouted wildly and jumped around madly, his cries like a wild tiger. He swept his leg across the right tree, which shook the branches of the tree. Lu Wushuang and Cheng Ying held each other tightly and retreated a few steps not daring to be closer. The man suddenly grabbed hold of one of the trees, and shook it violently, and tried to pull it out. The tree is around a thousand pounds so how could he pick it up? “You promised, but now you break it? You said we would meet again. Does the promise not count?” After a shout, the noise became quieter. He crouched down, and moved his chi through his two arms, his head gradually heated up and steam arose, the muscles in his arm clenched, and his back straightened. He shouted “Rise!” As the tree was being pulled, a strange noise occurred. Amidst the noise, there were now two pieces of the tree. He picked up one part of the tree and stood still before saying quietly, “Die! Die!” He exerted some strength and flung the piece of tree away far away. Like the handle of an umbrella it was flying through the air. He stood in front of the tomb and mumbled, “You are right, the wife of Lu is indeed Ah Yuan.” His eye blurred, the two tombs had become the image of two people. One of them a smiling young girl with the pupils in the eyes full of hope; the other is well dressed, collected young man. The couple was sitting together.

The strange man opened his eyes and said, “You seduced my daughter, I’ll kill you with my finger.” He stretched out his right hand and finger (the shi finger), stood up straight, blocking the path of the young man. A severe pain went through his shi finger and he released the pain. It hit the tombstone. However the image of the young man remained. The strange man shouted: “Where can you escape to now?” He struck out twice with his left palm, making two sounds, aimed at the same tombstone. He kept on hitting out, with each palm getting more severe each time. After ten palms, blood began to seep through. Cheng Ying could no longer hold back and shouted, “Old grandpa, stop fighting, you are going to hurt yourself.”

He laughed and shouted back, “I’m not hurt, I’m going to kill the swine Lu Zhanyuan.” He then laughed heartily, stopped and then said: “I must see your face, I must.” With ferocious strength in his two hands he plunged ten fingers into the ground of Mrs. Lu’s tomb. He pulled back with two arms, and two lumps of the ground came with him. His two palms like an iron spade, he dug lump after lump out of the ground.

The two cousin’s faces had become colourless, and they had the chance to escape. While the man was busy digging, they could leave unnoticed. The two girls hurried around a few bends, and as they saw the man didn’t follow, they relaxed a bit. The two girls were unfamiliar with the place, so they looked for locals to help them along the

road. They walked deep into the night when they eventually found their way back to the Lu house.

Wushuang shouted, “Something terrible is happening, something bad! A madman is digging up the graves of uncle and aunt!” She ran into the hall, only to see her father Lu Liding raise his head and stare at the wall. Ying followed into the hall, and their eyes followed Lu Liding’s, and saw three sets of palm prints, two at the top, two in the middle, below five, in total there were nine. Each one was printed with blood. Lu Liding saw his daughter and asked, “What are you talking about?”

“There is a madman digging up the graves of uncle and aunt,” said Wushuang. Her father stood up: “Nonsense!”

“Uncle, it’s true!” Cheng Ying replied. Lu Liding knew what her daughter was like, mischievous and naughty but Cheng Ying never tells lies. “What has happened?”

Wushuang told her father what happened. Her father was troubled, and before she finished, had picked up a blade and hurriedly headed for the graves. When he got there, not only did he see the graves had been disturbed, but the coffins had been opened. When he heard that someone was digging up the graves, he had known what to expect, but when he saw it with his own eyes, his heart skipped a beat. There was no sign of the bodies, the ash in the coffins, paper money, cotton cushions were all in a mess. It must be a god, and then saw on the lids of the coffins were traces of what looks like an iron tool. He looked in despair at the state of the graves. He didn’t ask his daughter who did this, but wondered who could have such debts with his brother and sister-in-law that even after their deaths, their graves and corpses wouldn’t be left alone. He held tightly to his knife.

He knew his brother had taught the martial arts. He was a careful, generous, dependable man, who didn’t dabble in Jianghu affairs. He was a learned man. After he circled the area, and couldn’t find any traces of the suspect, he waited for half an hour before finally returning to his home.

He approached the main hall. He sat down on a chair and placed his knife by his side, and stared at the nine blood prints on the wall. He thought, “Before brother died, he said he had an enemy, a Taoist priestess, named Li Mochou, with the nickname “Scarlet Serpent Deity”, whose kung fu was extremely high. She was cruel and vindictive person. He anticipated that after ten years of marriage, she would come and seek revenge on the couple. At the time Lu had said: “My illness is not getting better; I guess the ‘Scarlet Serpent Deity’ cannot take her revenge. In three years, it will be the time. You

must persuade my wife to go into hiding.” I had promised him, but who could have guessed that on the night he had passed away, sister-in-law would cut her throat? Brother had passed away three years ago, and the time approaches. The couple had passed away so why does she still come? Brother also said that before the priestess kills, she would place bloody handprints on the wall on the target’s home, with one print meaning one life. My home only has seven people in total so why nine prints? The two prints are for my brother and sister-in-law, but now they are dead she must have dispatched people to ravage their grave. I’ve been at home all day, so how did that evil witch manage to place the prints? Could she get in here without disturbing even gods and ghosts? He shivered.

Soft footsteps can be heard behind him, a small soft pair of hands covered his eyes. He recognized it was his daughter’s voice when she spoke. “Father, who am I?”

Lu Wushuang had always been close to her father. When she was three years old, she played this game with him. This made her parents laugh. He was sad, so now his daughter is trying to cheer him up. Under normal circumstances this would have worked. But today it would be no use as he pulled his daughter’s hands away. “Father has no time to play, let’s go inside and play!”

Lu Wushuang stood there. She always had the love of her father and now he had no time for her. She let out a sigh and wanted to share in her father’s misery only to see the male servant Ah Gen hastily arriving.

“There’s a guest outside master.”

“You tell them I’m not at home.”

“Master, she doesn’t want to see you. She just wants to spend the night here.”

Lu Liding said, “Who? Are they women?”

“No, it’s a mother with two small boys. They’ve been waiting a long time.”

When Lu Liding heard it was a mother with her two sons, he was able to relax a bit. “It’s not a Taoist priestess?”

Ah Gen shook his head, “No. It’s a plainly dressed woman, she looks like a mother of a respectable family.”

“Alright, take them to the guest room and treat them well. Give them something to eat.” Ah Gen hurriedly went out. Lu Wushuang said, “I’m going as well” as she hastily exited. Lu Liding stood up, he wanted to go inside to discuss how to face this enemy with his wife. He made his way into the hall. He showed her the prints, and told her about the missing corpses. Mistress Lu pondered and said, “We are going to have to hide the two girls?”

Master Lu pointed at the wall. “The girls are inside, but I fear that the monster that did this won’t let them escape so easily. We have practiced kung fu for several years now, when the person enters our home; remember not to show any emotion.”

Mistress Lu stared at the wall, “There are nine prints? We only have seven people within the household.” As soon as Lu Liding heard this, his limbs went numb and looked at his wife startled, and cried. He reached out and held her arms.

“Dear, when the time comes, there is no need to be afraid. The top two palm prints are for Brother and his wife, the middle two are ours. In the last group, two are Ying and Wushuang, there are three are for Ah Gen and our two maids. Blood will fill this house tonight.”

Mistress Lu quivered and said, “Brother and sister-in-law?”

“I don’t know what deep debt the witch is after, but brother and his wife are dead. She has sent people to dig up the grave and disturb the corpses.”

“You are saying that madman was sent by her?”

“Correct.”

Mistress Lu saw that her husband’s head was covered with sweat. “Why don’t you go into your room, clean yourself up, and rest a while before we discuss this again.”

Lu and his wife went into their room. “Wife, today it will be hard for the Lu family to avoid death, but if we survive we will honour Brother and sister-in-law’s name.” “You are correct,” replied mistress Lu.

The two of them thought, Lu Liding is not a famous name, but the name Lu Zhanyuan is. The He Yuanjun couple was famous throughout the Jianghu world. The Lu name was famous and no one in the Jianghu dared make fun of the name.

The two of them went to the back garden after they heard a sudden sound from the east wall. Near the top of the wall was a person. Lu stepped in front to shield his wife. He looked up and saw a young boy sitting on the wall, trying to pick a ling flower. By his leg, someone shouted out, “Careful, don’t fall.” It was Cheng Ying, Lu Wushuang and a boy picking flowers by the wall.

Lu thought, “The girls are naughty, getting someone else to do their errands.”

The boy on the wall managed to pick a flower. Wushuang shouted, “Give it to me-give it to me!” The boy smiled, and threw it to Cheng Ying. Cheng Ying caught it and gave it to her cousin. Lu Wushuang was angry, and threw the flower onto the ground. She took a few steps, and angrily shouted, “Who cares? I don’t want it anymore.”

Lu and his wife saw how the kids were playing and arguing, and sighed. They withdrew to their room. Cheng Ying saw Wushuang crush the flower and asked, “Cousin, why are you angry?”

“I don’t want his. I’ll pick one myself.” As she said this, she moved her right foot a little, and leapt. She hung onto a purple cane hanging from the tree. She used her strength and managed to leap up higher a few times, and landed on a silver branch of the Cinnamomum cassia tree (one of the group of aromatic trees like camphor and cinnamon) The boy on the wall clapped. “So you are joining me!”

Wushuang swung on the branch a few times and released her grip, throwing herself towards the wall. Although she has learned a little lightness kung fu, this leap was very dangerous. But since she was angry with the boy giving the flower to Ying and not her, she wanted to keep her pride in front of the boy. She wasn’t used to jumping such a distance. The boy gulped and said, “Stretch your hand out” as he reached out. If the boy hadn’t reached out, Wushuang would have made it, but when she saw his hand in midair she shouted, “Move!” and leaned to the side to avoid his hands. The ability to twist in the air is part of a higher level of kung fu; she had seen her dad perform this once before, but without the supervision of her parents how could she try it? As she turned, her hand wasn’t able to reach the top of the wall. She shouted, “Oh no!” before falling to the ground. Another boy near the foot of the wall reached out to catch her. The wall was about ten feet tall. Though Wushuang was light, the force of her hitting the ground would still be high. The boy managed to grab her waist, the both of them falling onto the ground. Only to hear two “ka ka” noises, as the bone in Lu Wushuang’s left leg snapped. The boy changed colour to that of the flowers on the stone altar, as blood spouted out. Cheng Ying wanted to help the boy who tried stopping the disaster

up. The boy got up, and pressed hard on the heavy wound. Wushuang had already fainted. Cheng Ying picked up her cousin and shouted, “Uncle, aunt, hurry!”

The couple rushed out of their rooms to see the injured children, as well as a middle-aged woman who also rushed out from her room. It was the woman who had come to ask for shelter for the night. They saw her pick up the injured children and rush into the hall. Ignoring her own child’s injuries, she tended to Lu Wushuang’s leg, intending to put the snapped bone back in place. Mistress Lu fetched a piece of cloth and tied it around the boy’s head before going to see her daughter. The woman then pressed down on the “bai hai” (white sea) pressure point and the “wei zhong” (middle gathering) pressure point on Lu Wushuang’s leg to ease the pain, as she placed one hand each on the broken pieces of bone, then put the bone into place. Lu Liding saw her movements were swift, her pressure point “dim yue” kung fu was at a respectable level, and his curiosity was raised. “Who are you? Why did you come here?” The woman was busy tending to Wushuang’s leg and didn’t reply to the questions.

At the same time, a laugh was heard on the roof. “I’m here to take the nine lives of the Lu family, come out.”

The woman heard the chilling laugh from the rooftop, swallowed, and continued to tend to Wushuang’s injuries. As she twisted her hands, Wushuang let out a scream in sheer pain and she fainted again.

Everyone went outside, only to see a young priestess standing by the overhang of the roof, the moonlight lit up her face. She was about fifteen or sixteen years of age, and a long sword with a blood red sash hung on her back, the sash moving in the wind.

Lu Liding said calmly, “I’m Lu Liding. Are you under the command of priestess Li?”

The priestess’s lips were skewed when she replied, “It’s good that you know. Go collect your wife and daughter, kill them and then kill yourself to spare me the trouble.”

The words were said with coldness, at a speed neither too slow nor fast, and with disregard for the audience. When Lu Liding heard these words, his body quivered. “You... you” He wanted to jump on to the roof and fight the girl, but she was young and was just a girl, how could he fight her? As he hesitated, suddenly something swept passed his body; it was the woman who had come to ask for shelter, in her hand was a long sword, ready to fight that young priestess.

The woman wore a grey traditional dress, the priestess an apricot yellow robe. Under the moonlight, the images of grey and yellow resembled some sort of flying dance; three flashes of light were produced as three sword-clashing sounds were made. Lu Liding's skills were taught by his brother, and though he has never fought an enemy before, his eyes weren't poor, and saw every stance of the two fighters. He saw the sword held in the priestess's hand turned from defense into attack, attack into defense, her sword stances were without mercy. The woman's sword matched hers. The sounds of clashing blades were heard, both swords turned over, suddenly the little priestess's sword flew into midair. The little priestess chased after her sword, her face losing its calmness and she shouted out, "I'm under the orders of my master to take the lives of the Lu family. Who are you, and why are you meddling in these affairs?"

The woman gave out a cold laugh and said, "It seems like your master has great ability, she went out to find Lu Zhanyuan to settle her debts, but she knew that he was dead, so she's taking out her anger on his loved ones, isn't that correct?"

The little priestess wielded three small silver needles with her right hand and threw them ferociously, two at the woman, one at Lu Liding who was standing in the middle of the courtyard. It was such an unexpected movement. As the woman fended off two needles with her sword, Lu Liding managed to catch the other needle with two fingers. The little priestess laughed out coldly and jumped down from the building, and quickly flew away hearing the chasing footsteps.

The woman jumped down to the courtyard, and saw Lu Liding was still holding the silver needles. She shouted, "Drop it!" Lu Liding hesitated before doing so. She cut off a piece of her belt and wrapped it firmly around the wound on his right hand.

Lu Liding jumped. "The needles have poison on them?"

The woman replied, "Nothing can compare to this poison." She gave him a granule of medicine to take. Lu Liding felt his arms swelling and numbing. The woman used her sword tip to cut deeply into the two infected fingers of Lu, and saw drops of black blood seeping out.

Lu Liding jumped and thought to himself, "My finger wasn't cut, I only touched the silver needles and the effects are so severe. If the needles actually cut me then my life would surely have been gone." He then looked in the direction of the woman and said, "I have eyes but I fail to see TiaShan Mountain*, please, can madam tell me her name?" (*This phrase basically means he didn't see his benefactors even though they were in front of him.)

The woman replied, “My husband is named Wu, Wu Santong.” Lu got up in awe and said, “So it is Madam Wu. I’ve heard the Wu’s are under the order of Reverend Yideng in the south in Dali, is that right?”

“You are right. Reverend Yideng is indeed my husband’s teacher. I have learned a little in terms of martial arts from my husband, who is nothing more than a farmer. I hope master Lu won’t laugh.”

Lu thanked her for the helping hand. He had heard from his brother, out of all the martial artists he had seen, those under the teachings of Reverend Yideng were the best. After Yideng had abdicated as the ruler of Dali, he became a monk and had four students, “Fisherman, Woodsman, Farmer and Scholar”. The farmer was called Wu Santong. Wu disliked his brother, but at the time his brother had not told him how the feud between them started. Why did Madam Wu not treat them as enemies but instead help them by fighting off the Scarlet Serpent Deity’s disciple? The reasons are hard to fathom.

Everyone went back to the main hall. Lu Liding carried his daughter inside, and saw she had regained her consciousness, her face now white. She’s holding in the pain and refraining from crying, not particularly aware.

Madam Wu said, “Now that witch’s disciple had escaped, she herself will come here. Master Lu, I’m not looking down on you but even if you and your wife joined forces with me, we are never going to be able to compete with her. But even if we run it will be no use. We might as well wait for her and let fate decide.”

Mistress Lu then asked, “Who exactly is the witch waiting for? And what feud has our family with her?” Madam Wu looked Lu Liding in the eye and said, “Master Lu never mentioned this before?”

Mistress Lu replied, “He only mentioned that it was something to do with brother and sister-in-law, something to do with love affairs, he isn’t exactly sure himself.”

Madam Wu sighed, “It must be something to do with that. I’m an outsider so it is not my place to speak. Master Lu’s brother went to Dali ten years ago. Li Mochou, the Scarlet Serpent Deity is now infamous throughout the Jianghu world, but ten years ago she was a gentle beauty, and wasn’t yet a priestess. This was before she sinned, after she saw your brother and fell under the enchantment of love. After many twists and turns, your brother eventually married Ah Yuanjun. However this wasn’t any fault of

Yuanjun. This kind of business is best kept under wraps; it's just today's events have forced me to retell these events. Yuanjun was my stepdaughter.”

The Lu couple simultaneously gave out an understanding sigh. Madam Wu touched her injured son's shoulder in comfort. She stared into the flame of a candle and carried on.

“Your sister-in-law He Yuanjun was an orphan. We took her in and she became our stepdaughter. We loved her dearly. Eventually she met your brother, and they fell in love with each other, and wanted to get married. Firstly, my husband didn't want her to leave the family; secondly, he was too strict saying Jiangnan people were crafty and cunning; they can't be relied upon and forbade the wedding. Ah Yuan secretly ran away with your brother. On the wedding day, both my husband and Li Mochou went to find the couple and cause them trouble. Luckily, a high monk from the Dali Sky Dragon temple passed by and took the matter in his own hands. He requested, on his behalf, that they would grant the couple ten years of peace. Li Mochou and my husband agreed to this. My husband was angry, and after this event he became confused and disturbed; his teacher, fellow students and even I were unable to persuade him, or understand him. He just counted down the ten-year deadline. According to my calculations, today ten years exactly has passed. It was hard to predict that the couple would not enjoy the ten years of bliss that they had been granted.” She dropped her head after she finished, her whole face changed to a mournful look.

Lu Liding said, “So according to what you have said, the person who dug up brother and sister-in-law's grave was your husband.”

Madam Wu replied in shame, “After hearing what the two misses have said, it is indeed my husband.”

Lu shaking his head said, “Your husband's actions are not trivial. There wasn't a feud in the first place. Even if there was, now that my brother and sister are dead, things should be bygones. But now he's stolen the corpses, is that the action of a hero?”

When it comes to status, the Wu couple is higher than that of Lu's. But now that his heart is full of fury, his words did not carry the proper tone of respect.

Madam Wu sighed, “Master Lu is right to blame my husband. He is confused and has stopped talking; he doesn't deserve any pity. I've brought my two children along here, to try and stop the wrong doings of my husband. Right now, I'm the only person who he takes any notice of.” She looked at her two children and said, “Go and kowtow (kneel

down) in front of Master and Mistress Lu to apologize for your father.” The boys did as they were told.

Mistress Lu gave a hand to help the boys up and asked what their names were. The one who threw himself down and cut his forehead was called Wu Dunru, the older brother; the younger was called Wu Xiuwen. The difference in age was one year, one of them twelve, the other eleven. The two had been taught martial arts and were relatively learned. Madam Wu and her husband were getting old, and hoped that they could reach a good level of kung fu and schooling, so they could withhold the Wu name in Wuxia, and not just rely on it.

Madam Wu did not divulge the darker reason for her husband’s behavior. She sighed and thought, “Those lies are only good for now. I mustn’t tell anyone about the truth.” In reality, when Yuanjun had grown to eighteen or nineteen she had become a beautiful woman. The feelings that Wu Santong had for her did not limit itself to the father daughter relationship. He was considered a hero in the Jianghu world so he could do nothing and he was relatively content. But when he saw that she had fallen in love with a Jiangnan youngster, he was angry that it wasn’t him. That’s why he said Jiangnan people are untrustworthy and unreliable, to get rid of his love rival. The reason he said this was that he had suffered the craftiness of Huang Rong. She tricked him into replacing Guo Jing in pushing down an ox and large stone, and couldn’t escape afterward. Although this matter was cleared up later, the words “Jiangnan people are untrustworthy” were etched into his head.

Madam Wu then said, “To think that before my husband had arrived, Li Mochou is already here seeking revenge.” As she said this, a voice was heard from the roof.

“Ru’er, Wen’er, come with me!”

The words were unexpected, as no footsteps had been heard on the rooftop, yet someone was up there calling. The Lu couple gulped as they realized it was Wu Santong. Cheng Ying and Wushuang also recognized it was the weird lotus eating man. They saw a blur, as Wu Santong flew down and grabbed his sons, one in each hand before returning to the roof. Madam Wu shouted, “Hey, why don’t you come and see master and mistress Lu, and return the corpses that you took from them? Hurry.” Wu Santong did not reply as he had already long gone.

He ran wildly for a while, and hurriedly entered a forest. He put down Xiuwen but still held on to Dunru, as his trace disappeared and his son was left alone in the forest. As

Xiuwen saw that his father had gone over hundred feet away, he shouted, “Father, father!” He heard a voice far away.

“Wait there. I’ll come back for you.” Wu Xiuwen knew his father was always acting strange, and doesn’t plan anything. Although he was frightened alone in the black forest, he thought his father won’t be long and sat down on a log. After a long while, his father still hadn’t come. He said to himself, “I’ll go and find mother!” as he headed back to the Lu home.

Jiangnan is a place where roads lead in all directions, where paths are twisty and windy; it is hard to travel by day so what about traveling at night? As he ran, the paths got narrower, and on numerous times he stepped into the middle of muddy fields. Eventually he came across a forest, and realized he had gone in circles. He wanted to cry, and shouted, “Father, father! Mother... mother!” Who would hear him in the middle of the night? He heard a few noises, and recognized it was the call of a falcon. He once heard that falcons love to count the brows on people and if they counted clearly, it would be an ominous sign for the person. Immediately he spat out some saliva to wet his fingers, and then moistened his brow, so that it would be difficult for the falcon to count. But the falcon did not stop calling, He hid behind the trunk of a tree, keeping his brows covered with his finger, his heart jumping, not daring to move. After a while he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

In the morning, in a sleepy haze, he heard few clear screeches. He opened his eyes and looked above, and saw two extremely big white eagles hovering, wings spread out, looking magnificent. He had never seen this type of eagle before, his interest was raised and shouted, “Brother, come look at the big eagle,” not realizing he was alone, as he was always by his brother’s side.

Suddenly he heard two whistles behind him; the sound was gentle and soft, coming from the mouth of a little girl. The two eagles circled twice before descending. Wu Xiuwen turned around and saw a young girl, who was raising her arm to the sky. The eagles came down by her side. The girl gave one look to Wu Xiuwen and then stroked her two eagles saying, “Good eagle...clever eagle.” Wu Xiuwen thought, “So the two eagles are her eagles. He looked at the eagles, which were exuding an air of superiority, standing taller than the girl. He walked up to the girl and asked, “Are those eagles yours?”

The girl pouted, and her face changed color. “I don’t recognize you. I’m not going to play with you.”

Wu Xiuwen touched the backs of the eagles without any intentions. The girl whistled, and the eagles raised their left wing. There was a high force behind the wings, and Xiuwen didn't guard against it; he ended up on the ground. He rolled around on the ground, eyes fixed on the eagles, and said admiringly, "Those eagles are great and they really listen to you. I'll get father to catch me one so I can train it."

"Huh, you think your father can catch one?"

Wu Xiuwen was just curious, but each time she caused embarrassment. He looked at her closely; she was wearing an elegant green dress, a pearl necklace hung around her neck, her face was white, almost like butter, her eyes moving and face delicate. Wu Xiuwen thought she was extremely beautiful, and wanted to approach her but saw she was cold, and stayed back in fear. The girl stroked the eagles back with her right hand, and examined Wu Xiuwen. "What's your name? Why are you alone?"

"My name is Wu Xiuwen. I'm waiting here for my father. What about you, what's your name?"

"I don't play with naughty boys," said the girl as she turned her back and walked away.

Xiuwen stood there before saying, "I'm not a naughty boy", and trying to chase the girl at the same time. He saw that the girl was younger than him by two, three years; her steps aren't very large and he should catch up with her very soon. Though he used his lightness kung fu, the girl's steps were very fast, and in a flash a distance of ten feet was between them. The girl hurried a few steps and then shouted back, "Hey, can you catch me?" "Of course", replied Xiuwen and immediately stepped up his efforts. The girl turned and ran, and then hid behind a tree. Wu Xiuwen followed. As soon as he was near, she suddenly stretched out her left foot, and tripped him up. He didn't anticipate this and fell forward. He wanted to use the "Iron Tree Stump Stance" but the girl stuck out her right foot and kicked him fiercely in the behind. Wu Xiuwen fell down, his nose hitting a stone as he fell, causing a nose bleed and blood poured over his clothes. When she saw the blood, she stopped, and wanted to run away and leave the boy there. Suddenly, a voice from behind said, "Fu'er, you are bullying again, aren't you?"

"Who says? He just tripped by himself, what does it have to do with me? Don't listen to what father says." she replied without turning back. Wu Xiuwen stood up and held his nose. Although it didn't really hurt, the blood made him nervous. As he heard the voice talking to the girl, he turned around and saw an old man holding a metal walking staff. The hair on the man's temple was like frost, his appearance was strange, his eyes where white, he was a blind man. He heard the man laugh and say, "Just because I'm

blind doesn't mean you can lie to me, I can hear everything. You act terribly now, so what's going to happen when you get older?"

She walked over to the man and held his hand, and gently said, "Grandpa, don't listen to what father says, okay. He tripped and he's got a nose bleed. Can you stop the bleeding?"

The old man walked forward and grabbed Wu Xiuwen's arm, then stretched out his right hand and used his finger to press on the "Wen Xiang Xue" (Smell Fragrant) pressure point by the nose. Wu Xiuwen's nosebleed was beginning to slowly stop, and as he touched his nose a few times, it did. He felt the man's fingers were like iron pliers, long and stiff, holding his arm tightly. He was scared, and didn't move; as soon as his hand was released, he used the grabbing hand kung fu taught by his mother, he pushed out a palm in a semi circle to repel the man. The old man wasn't anticipating this kid would strike out, and was hit by a sweetly timed palm. The man didn't react and gave out an approving sigh, while holding to his wrist. Wu Xiuwen tried to distribute his chi in case he can't escape and has to fight.

The old man said, "Little fella, don't be scared. What's your name?"

"My name is Wu."

"Your accent is not local. Where are you from? Where are your parents?" As the man said this he released his wrist. When he mentioned parents, Wu Xiuwen remembered that he has been away from his parents for a night and didn't know how they were. He wanted to cry. When the girl saw his expression she sang, "Ashamed dog, eyes are red, ready to cry!"

Wu angrily replied, "I'm not going to cry again!"

The family was waiting at the Lu home for the enemy, when his father came and took him and his brother away; he spent a night alone in the forest. He was getting aggravated, his words were jumbled but the old man managed to make out seventy or eighty percent of it. They were from Dali, his father's name is Wu Santong; his most refined kung fu was the "Solitary Yang Finger".

"Your father is a disciple of Reverend Yideng, correct?"

"Yes, you know our emperor? You've seen him? I've never seen him," said Wu Xiuwen.

Wu Santong was the head of the Imperial Wood Transport, when the Emperor was Duan Zhi. The emperor became a monk, with the new name “Yideng”. But Wu Santong couldn’t let the past go and still called him Emperor. That’s why his sons also refer to him as Emperor.

“I haven’t yet had the luck to meet the legendary “Southern Emperor”. This girl’s parents were the receivers of great kindness from him. That means we are not really strangers. Do you know who your mother’s enemy is?”

“I heard from mother and master Lu that it’s Scarlet something, something Chou.

The old man raised his head and mumbled, “Scarlet something?” He slammed his staff and said loudly, “Could it be the Scarlet Serpent Deity, Li Mochou?”

“Yes! It’s the Scarlet Serpent Deity!” The old man’s complexion changed completely. He said, “You two play here. Don’t leave. I’ll go and take a look.”

The little girl said, “Grandpa, I want to come.”

“Me too,” added the boy.

The old man said, “No! Never! That witch is really powerful; I can’t beat her. But when there are friends in need, one must go. You must listen.” He walked away, his staff digging into the ground as he took each step.

Wu Xiuwen said respectfully, “Old Grandpa is blind and lame, yet he moves so fast.”

The girl bent her lips and said, “What’s so strange? If you saw my father’s and mother’s lightness kung fu you would be even more shocked.”

“Your father and mother are also blind and lame?”

The girl angrily replied, “Your parents are blind and lame!”

It was now deep into the day, the farmers are in their fields; every man and woman was singing folk songs. He was originally from these parts. Though he was blind, he walked and asked for help at the same time, and in not too long he had reached the home of the Lu’s. From afar he heard the exchange of blades, the “ping ping pang pang” clashing indicating some ferocious stances. The Lu Zhanyuan family is a famous family in this area and he’s just commoner. Although he is now a fairly famous martial artist

he didn't approach and he also knew that he wasn't the Scarlet Serpent Deity's match. He knew that rushing in would just produce another corpse. But the matter involved a disciple of the Reverend Yideng and his debts to him were too many to measure (not exactly his debts, but what the girl's parents owed Yideng), he couldn't just stand by. He used more energy, and hurried to the village.

He heard fierce fighting on the roof involving four people. He turned his ear to one side to listen more carefully. From the breathing and sword clashing sounds, he could tell it was one versus three, though the three couldn't fend off the enemy and were losing.

Last night Wu Santong had carried off his sons, and the Lu couple wondered what he was up to now.

Madam Wu's spirits raised and said, "Though my husband acts wildly, when in danger he thinks clearly." Mistress Lu asked what she meant by this. Madam Wu replied, "I don't know if I've guessed correctly. Let's just wait and see."

As the night went on, Lu Wushuang fell asleep in her father's arms. Cheng Ying also eventually fell asleep. Mistress Lu wanted to take the children into their rooms.

Madam Wu said, "Leave them for a little longer." At that moment, someone shouted from the rooftop, "Throw them up here!" It was Wu Santong. His lightness kung fu was superb, mistress Lu didn't even notice he was on the roof. Madam Wu took Cheng Ying outside and threw her up to Wu Santong who caught her. The Lu couple swallowed, as Madam Wu threw Lu Wushuang up to Wu Santong as well, who then took them away.

Lu Liding was concerned and said, "Where are you taking them?" as he leapt onto the roof. But it was pitch black; there wasn't a trace of Wu Santong and the girls. Master Lu wanted to give chase, but Madam Wu shouted out, "There's no need to chase them, he's trying to do good."

Lu jumped down back into the hall and quivering asked, "What good deed?"

Mistress Lu said, "Wu Santong is scared that the witch is going to harm the children, so he has delivered them to a safe place." After he heard his wife say this he said, "Yes, it must be this." But as he thought about how Wu Santong took the corpse of his brother and sister-in-law away, he started to worry.

Madam Wu said, "Ever since Ah Yuan got married, every little girl he looked at reminded him of his troubles. I predicted that he would come back to carry the girls away

and try to protect them. The first time he came here and took Ru'er and Wen'er away, I caught him glancing at the girls a few times; his face had an affectionate look, with no evil intent. He's pretending that they are Ah Yuan. Indeed he did come back for them. I hope this time he's not going to do anything stupid." She sighed twice, "You two better get some rest, we don't know when the witch will come, there's no need to wait anxiously."

The Lu couple was extremely worried about their daughter and niece, but decided to rest a little. Their fear and hate for the enemy filled them as they waited for her in the main hall, the both of them carrying swords and concealed weapons. They did not rest anymore. The couple has been married for eighteen years; through that time, the everyday business of running the home had its fair share of problems. But now when they think about the enemy, and what Brother and Madam Wu said about the enemy's strength, her cruel and vindictive ways; they knew time was running out and held each other.

After a long while, in the midst of the solitude, a soft song was heard from afar, seemingly a long distance away but the lyrics were crystal clear, "O mortals, what is love, that binds beyond life on earth, to all corners, in pairs we fly" .

Each word seems to be getting closer and closer, the person singing the song seems to be approaching extremely fast. By the beginning of the third line, the person had arrived at the door.

The three of them were startled, as suddenly a crashing sound was heard; the bolt on the main door had broken, the door flew in two different directions. An attractive priestess, with an evil smile gently stepped in; she was dressed in an apricot yellow gown. It was the Scarlet Serpent Deity Li Mochou.

Ah Gen at the time was cleaning the courtyard; he spoke first. "Who are you?"

Lu Liding quickly said, "Ah Gen... runaway!" Could he escape?

Li Mochou moved her hand in a sweeping motion; Ah Gen's head was split open, dying without a sound. Lu Liding drew his sword. Li Mochou leaned to the side and brushed past him, and with another sweeping motion with her fly whisk, caused the two maids to die. She laughed evilly, "Where are your girls?"

The Lu couple had just seen three lives taken in the blink of an eye. They knew they would have no luck today; with swords in their hands they rushed to attack her from

the left and right. Li Mochou was about to attack again when she saw Madam Wu at the side holding a sword and cackled, “So an outsider wants to interfere, fine, you can join the dead in this house today!” Her voice was soft and graceful, her form exuding a delicate air. She had a pair of bright eyes, her skin white, and was a real beauty. They didn’t see her leg movements as she floated to the rooftop. The Lu couple and Madam Wu leaped up to follow. Li Mochou swept her whisk and the weapons flew out of their hands. She gracefully said, “Master Lu, if your brother was still alive and told me he would divorce He Yuanjun, that slut, then I could have spared your whole family. But now, your luck is bad; you can’t blame me, blame your short lived brother.”

Lu Liding said, “Who asked you to spare us?” as he waved and chopped his knife blade at her. Madam Wu and mistress Lu both attacked from the front. Li Mochou saw Lu Liding’s skills were very average, but the way he used his knife, his kicks and palms, reminded her of her loved one. Her heart ached, and she wanted to see this type of kung fu as long as she could. If she killed him, the “Jiangnan Lu Family Blade” kung fu would be lost forever, so she flung her whisk without any real intent, and allowed her three enemies to circle her, her heart in a tangle, unable to use her normal array of ruthless moves. Suddenly Li Mochou gently whistled, she moved from the house, and headed towards the river bank, and to a lame old man holding an iron walking staff, and swept her fly whisk at him trying to wrap it around his staff. Before her legs had touched the ground, she had already unleashed an attack on her enemy. Unleashing it when he wasn’t prepared, her moves ruthless; she could teach the enemy how she could kill at all costs.

The old man heard the incoming attacks clearly; he lifted his staff across his body, getting ready to fight. He was aiming to pierce her right wrist. The iron staff is a heavy and clumsy weapon, only being able to sweep and smash. The old man is using a “piercing” type of kung fu, using the staff as a sword, and the moves he will unleash will be light and leisurely. Li Mochou waved her fly whisk, the silver threaded end up, wrapping it around the old man’s weapon. She shouted, “Let go!”

They struggled, borrowing strength to use strength, the fly whisk using the force in the iron staff to pull and drag the enemy towards it. The old man’s arms were shaking severely, and struggling to hold on, he jumped up, his body slanting in midair to escape, and managed to fend off a skilful stroke of hers. He thought, “This tyrant does live up to her name.” Li Mochou used the stance “Great Granddad Goes Fishing” (tai gong diao yu) followed by “Luring the Old Man” (yuan zhe shang diao) to snatch away the enemy’s weapon. Usually this is a great move and would guarantee success, but before she could snatch away the iron staff, the man had anticipated this move. She thought, “Who is this lame old man? Why has he the ability to last this long?” On closer inspec-

tion, she could see that he was blind and immediately called out, “You are Ke Zhen’E!” The blind lame man was the head of the Jiangnan Seven Freaks “Flying Bat” Ke Zhen’E.

After Guo Jing and Huang Rong had participated in the Hua Mountain martial arts tournament, Huang Yaoshi organized their wedding on Peach Blossom Island. Huang Yaoshi had always been eccentric and disliked company, so after a few months of living with his daughter and son-in-law, he left the island in search of a more peaceful place to reside and left a letter. Huang Rong knew her father’s temperament, but couldn’t think of a solution so she reluctantly did nothing. At first her father would send news every few months, but after a year, news of him disappeared. Huang Rong missed her father and her teacher Hong Qigong, so along with Guo Jing, they went out in search of them, wandering Jianghu for months, but something made them return to the island. Huang Rong had become pregnant during this time. Huang Rong’s body and health wasn’t like normal people and she didn’t have a moment’s peace. Since she was pregnant, traveling was not convenient, her mind was troubled, and she blamed her problems on Guo Jing.

A pregnancy reduces the body’s ability to handle stress, although she loved Guo Jing deeply, she always found a reason to quarrel with him as he didn’t care about searching. Guo Jing knew his wife’s temper, so ignored what she said and treated it as a joke. She had a great deal on her mind and eventually stopped smiling; this troubled Guo Jing. Ten months passed and Huang Rong gave birth to a baby girl, and she was named Guo Fu. Huang Rong was unhappy during the pregnancy but after she gave birth, she spoiled her daughter. When she was just one, she exhibited the signs of disobedience and of being spoiled. Sometimes Guo Jing would not let things stand and scolded his daughter, but every time Huang Rong would protect her. The result was that the daughter became even more of a spoilt brat. When Guo Fu was five, Huang Rong began to teach her martial arts. Once, Guo Fu turned her room into her own animal playground when she cut and plucked every single insect, bird and beasts on the island. Their feathers and fur were gone, not even leaving any on their heads. Firstly, Guo Jing loved his wife dearly; secondly, he also loved his mischievous daughter very much. Whenever he tried to punish her, she would put on a pitiful face and say she was sorry; he would just sigh, and slowly put down his raised hand.

As time went on, there was still no news of Huang Yaoshi and Hong Qigong. The couple missed them terribly whenever they thought about them. Guo Jing also tried a few times to invite his Great Master Ke Zhen’E to the island to enjoy his old age. But Ke Zhen’E was a city dweller at heart, drinking and gambling was a hobby to him and so declined the invitation. One day he went to the island by himself, not being picked up by Guo Jing. What had happened was that he was having no luck, the more he gambled

the more he lost, and he ended up with great debts. He had nowhere to go, and had to escape his debts. Guo Jing and Huang Rong were delighted to see him, and kept him on the island not permitting him to leave. Huang Rong eventually found about the debts, and secretly sent out someone to pay them. Ke Zhen'E didn't know about this, so he dare not return to Jiaxing, and resided on the island with nothing to do. As a result he had become a playmate for Guo Fu.

A couple of years passed and Guo Fu had become nine. Huang Rong still missed her father and with Guo Jing was going to leave the island in search of him. When Ke Zhen'E knew about this, he insisted that he would come along. That meant that Guo Fu had to come along with him. When they left the island, Ke Zhen'E said, "We can go anywhere, anywhere but Jiaxing."

Huang Rong smiled and said, "Great Master, you don't know, I already paid your debts a long time ago." Ke Zhen'E laughed and insisted they go to Jiaxing first.

Once the four had arrived in Jiaxing, they stayed at an inn. Ke Zhen'E heard from his sources that a few days ago, an old man dressed in a blue green gown was drinking alone in the Smoke Rain inn. From the description it sounded like it was Huang Yaoshi. Guo Jing and Huang Rong were delighted by this news, and searched the town and villages of Jiaxing. It was a beautiful day, so Ke Zhen'E took Guo Fu along with the eagles to the forest to play, and by a coincidence bumped into Wu Xiuwen.

After Ke Zhen'E exchanged a few moves with Li Mochou, he knew that he wasn't her match and thought, "That witch's skills are high, not below the once alive Mei Chao Feng. He used the "Ambush Evil Cane" moves, guarding the door. Li Mochou thought, "I've heard from brother Lu that in Jiaxing the more famous of the martial artists was the Jiangnan Seven Freaks. Their kung fu not at all simple and they had a famous disciple, Guo Jing. He is the head of the Seven Freaks and he indeed lives up to his name. He is blind and lame, and now very old, yet he can still manage to last ten or so moves with me." Suddenly she heard the shouts from the Lu couple and Madam Wu heading up attack at her. "Hurting that old Ke Zhen'E is not a hard thing to do, but if I have the Guo couple tracking me, then that would make things hard. Today I'll just let him go."

The fly whisk extended, the silver threads stiffened, the whisk now like a spear heading towards Ke Zhen'E's chest. The whisk's threads are soft but behind a skilled force, the whisk is able to harm the major pressure points, any hits it lands will be lethal. Ke Zhen'E had planted the iron walking staff in the ground, relying on it to jump backwards. Li Mochou jumped ahead, advancing to attack from behind. Her waist extremely flexible, she turned and jumped behind him, with Madam Wu not further than

two meters from her shoulder. Madam Wu gulped, and hurried a left palm aimed at her forehead. Li Mochou gently moved her waist, like a flower floating in the wind, and escaped while unleashing a palm, hitting mistress Lu in the abdomen.

Mistress Lu walked forward three steps, and fell to the ground. Master Lu saw his wife on the ground and waved his blade with his right hand, using his lone blade to drive Li Mochou back. Then he used his two hands and rushed at her, wanting to perish together with his wife. Li Mochou, after she failed in love, she detested signs of love, and when she saw Lu Liding rushing at her, she was filled with immense hatred, and used her whisk to hit the lone blade. She swept her fly whisk, and after a “shua” noise, he was hit on the crown of his head.

Li Mochou had seriously wounded the couple in just a wink, even though they had the help of Ke Zhen'E and Madam Wu. She laughed and asked, “Where are the two girls?” Before Madam Wu could reply, a flash of yellow went into the house. Li Mochou searched high and low but there was no trace of the girls. She got a torch from the kitchen, and set the firewood alight in the room. She came out and laughed, “I don't have any past feuds with Peach Blossom Island, or Reverend Yideng. You two can leave.”

Ke Zhen'E and Madam Wu knew how ruthless and malicious she was and with hatred on their faces, they attacked her. Li Mochou dodged the sword and staff, and waved her whisk; Madam Wu's weapon was tangled. The two pulled their weapons, but the force behind the whisk was greater and after a sound, the sword had been broken into two pieces, the sword tip heading towards Madam Wu, and the handle towards Ke Zhen'E.

Madam Wu had lost her weapon, swallowed, and couldn't believe that she could use her fly whisk to break a sword in half, and immediately deflect the two pieces of sword towards the two. The blade was coming at her extremely fast; she quickly lowered her head, and felt the blade brush past her, cutting a segment of her hair.

Ke Zhen'E heard the sound of a sword breaking, and used his staff to dodge the flying handle. He heard Madam Wu shout. He moved his staff like wind, attacking with every movement. His left hand holding three small poisonous projectiles, poised, but thought about Li Mochou's deadly “Soul Freezing Silver Needles” If he used his projectiles, she would certainly use hers; since he's blind, he would not be able to see them so he refrained from using his.

Li Mochou still went soft on him, thinking, “The blind old man's not resorting to concealed weapons; he must be scared of me returning the favour.” She lightly twisted her

waist, and used her whisk to wrap around the old man's iron staff. Ke Zhen'E just felt a strong force pulling him, wanting to take his weapon out of his grasp. He circulated his internal energy, channeling it through his iron walking staff, and contested internal energy with his opponent. But didn't know exactly where she was. In a flash, his bones started to shake, his strength draining out of him. Li Mochou had used her left hand to push away the staff to one side; a left palm had already gently pushed Ke Zhen'E in the chest. She laughed, "Old Man Ke, the "Divine Scarlet Palm" has hit you in your chest!"

Ke Zhen'E had no ability to defend himself now, and thought, "Lowlife, you can finish me, what more do you want now?"

Madam Wu saw this, and felt deeply responsible. Li Mochou leapt up from the iron staff, and in midair stretched her hand out towards Madam Wu, gently touching her on the face. She laughed and said, "You chased away my disciple, you sure have guts." After a few graceful laughs she fled. Madam Wu had felt her soft and gentle palm, the place where she had touched had become relaxed. She saw her heading towards the thick growth of willow trees, and in a flash had disappeared. She thought about the few moves she exchanged with Li Mochou, her moves seemed designed to let her live and weren't at full strength. Suddenly she felt she had no strength and fell to the ground paralyzed. Ke Zhen'E was touched in the chest and he too was struggling by a rock, He breathed in quickly, then slowed his breaths.

After a long while, Madam Wu exerted some strength to get up, and saw black smoke rising, the Lu home in flames. At the time, Ke Zhen'E tried to carry the Lu couple out but saw they were short of breath and thought to himself; "If I move them now, they are just going to die quicker, but I can't leave them here. What should I do?"

In the middle of this problem, a loud voice suddenly called out, "Wife, are you alright?" It was Wu Santong's voice.



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