

Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

SDXL Chapter 27



Chapter 27 – Fighting Strength with Wisdom

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Li Mochou was wary seeing Huang Rong meticulously wound thorn canes around the big trees surrounding Guo Xiang. Huang Rong's face was bearing a mocking smile so she got scared and shouted: "That's enough!"

Guo Jing walked through the door and went to sit in a chair in front of the bed, not saying a word. The two people have been tense and quiet for half the day. Finally, Guo Jing asked: "Where have you been all this time?"

Guo Fu said: “I...I’ve wounded Yang da ge (Big Brother Yang). I was afraid you’d punish me, so...so...”

Guo Jing said: “So you went out to avoid me for several days?” Guo Fu bit her lip, nodding. Guo Jing continued: “You were waiting for my anger to pass before coming back?”

Guo Fu nodded, suddenly throwing herself into his arms. She said: “Father, are you still mad at daughter?”

Guo Jing stroked her hair gently, lowering his voice: “I wasn’t angry. I haven’t been angry. I was only sad about you.”

Guo Fu cried out: “Father!” and sobbed on his chest.

Guo Jing looked up and gazed out at the roof, not saying a word. He waited for her weeping to subside then said: “Yang Guo’s grandfather Tie Xingong and your grandfather Xiao Tiangong were sworn brothers, so were his father and yours. You know that.” Guo Fu made a low sound: “Hmm.” Guo Jing then continued: “Even though this boy Yang Guo has always done things as he pleases, he has a heroic heart. He has so many times saved your father and mother’s lives, and even yours. He is young in years but to our country and people, his contribution is not small. You should know that.”

Guo Fu heard her father’s tone getting more and more serious, even more afraid to continue. Guo Jing got up, adding: “There is another matter you don’t know about. Today I will tell you. Guo’er’s father Yang Kang’s conduct during those years wasn’t very scrupulous. I was his sworn brother, yet I couldn’t change him. He eventually died a tragic death at the Jiaying Wang Tie Qiang temple. Even though it wasn’t your mother who took his life, his death was caused by her. Our Guo family and his Yang family heavily...”

Yang Guo [hidden outside] heard the words ‘Died a tragic death at the Jiaying Wang Tie Qiang temple.’ This was the first time he heard someone talking about his father’s place of death. Filled with hatred in his heart, he was about to jump out ferociously but then Guo Jing continued: “I originally thought about betrothing you to him to make up for the hatred in my lifetime, who would have thought... who would have thought... alas!”

Guo Fu lifted her head, saying: “Father, he kidnapped my sister and said a lot of rubbish, slandering daughter. Father, even though his Yang family and ours go back a long way, that is not to say I have to let him bully me and not resist, does it?”

Guo Jing jumped up, shouting: “Apparently you cut off his arm, just how could he bully you? If he really wanted to, even if you had ten arms, he would have already cut them all off. Is that the sword handle?” Guo Fu, not daring to say anything more, took out the ‘Lady’ sword from under the pillow. Guo Jing reached out, his hand slightly shaking. The edge of the blade made a chilling sound. His voice trembled: “Fu’er, this must be done. Even though I’m being severe with you, in my heart I love you just the same as your mother.” His voice turned gentle at the end of the speech.

Guo Fu let out a soft cry: “Daughter knows.”

Guo Jing then said: “Good, stretch out your right arm. You cut off another’s arm; I’ll cut off yours just the same. Your father has lived a righteous life and can’t follow selfish instincts like shielding his own daughter.”

Guo Fu knew perfectly well that this time for her father must be difficult, but she hadn’t expected him to go as far as demanding her arm. Frightened, the color drained out of her face. She called out loudly: “Father!” Guo Jing paled, both eyes gazing at her.

Yang Guo hadn’t expected Guo Jing to be this righteous. He considered the situation, heart beating fast, thinking: “Should I or should I not stop all this? Should I call out to spare Guo Guniang [Miss Guo]?” While still trying to make a decision, Guo Jing’s long sword was raised. Then it cut down through the air, about to chop off Guo Fu’s arm.

There suddenly came a shout. Someone jumped through the window in a swift movement. Even before the body arrived, a stick reached out, blocking Guo Jing’s long sword. That person was of course Huang Rong.

She didn’t say a word, sending out three successive hits, all Da Gou Bang Fa “Dog Beating Stick Technique” tricks. First, her beating stick technique was profound. Second, she caught Guo Jing by surprise, forcing him to move back two steps. Huang Rong called out: “Fu’er, why are you not running away?”

Guo Fu didn’t have her mother’s wits. Facing a crisis, she was scared frozen, unable to move. Huang Rong’s left hand carried her baby while her right hand held the stick. She pushed her daughter’s body out of the window straight onto the ground, crying out: “Quickly head back to Peach Blossom Island [Tao Hua Dao]. Ask Ke Gonggong [Grandpa Ke] to come plead with your father.” At the same time, she wielded the bamboo stick, using Da Gou Bang Fa’s “tangle” and “seal” tricks to block Guo Jing from following his daughter. She called out: “Go quickly, Go quickly! Get the small red horse at the mansion’s entrance.”

From the beginning, Huang Rong had understood her husband's straight forward character, quite old-fashioned and extremely righteous. This time her daughter created a big disaster and then hid away for several days before coming home. In case her husband was still enraged, and had decided on a severe punishment, she had already arranged for someone to bring the red horse to the outside of the mansion's entrance, along with a saddle, clothes, and some silver coins. If he could be persuaded, she would let him beat their daughter to settle the matter. That would be extremely lucky. If not, Guo Fu had better be sent far away and, after a long while, come back to seek a reunion with her father.

The husband and wife quarreled. Moving towards his daughter's bedroom, Guo Jing's face was anguished, but in his heart he knew it was fortunate that his daughter's arm was saved. Huang Rong, relying on Wu Gong [martial arts] alone, wouldn't be able to stop her husband. But Guo Jing was disadvantaged by seeing his wife carrying the baby and was not able to get to Guo Fu before she rushed out into the garden outside the mansion's entrance.

Yang Guo was hiding in a tree, and watched what happened. While Guo Fu was coming out through the window, he only had to raise his sword to strike, how would she be able to get away? But then he thought about Guo Jing and Huang Rong's earth-shattering fight caused by him; he would be taking advantage of someone fleeing from danger, he just couldn't do it.

Then Huang Rong lashed out several repeated strikes, forcing Guo Jing to fall back a couple of steps. This time Guo Jing was leaning against the bed with nowhere to retreat. Huang Rong suddenly called out "Take him" and tossed her baby to her husband. Guo Jing was alarmed, stretching his left hand to catch him. Huang Rong let down her bamboo staff, walking over to her husband. She pleaded: "Jing ge ge [Brother Jing], please spare Fu'er!"

Guo Jing shook his head, saying: "Rong'er, It's not that I don't love Fu'er. But she did this terrible thing. If I ignored it, how would it ever be settled? How would we apologize to Guo'er? Gods...his arm was cut off, with nobody to care for him. Whether he lives or he died by now we don't know. I...I really wouldn't mind cutting off my own arm..."

As Yang Guo heard Guo Jing's genuine words, he couldn't bear the heartache, his eyes turning red.

Huang Rong said: "Day after day we've searched for him and we haven't even seen his tracks. If something bad happened, there must have been a clue. Guo'er's Wu Gong

[martial arts] are beginning to rival ours. Despite a serious injury, it wouldn't be a great obstacle."

Guo Jing said: "I hope so. I will go bring back Fu'er. We can't leave the matter like this."

Huang Rong smiled, saying: "She has already ridden the little red horse out of town. Why would you bother going after her?"

Guo Jing replied: "It's already past 3 AM; without Lu Da Ren's [Your Excellency Lu] or my command emblem, who would dare open the city gate at night?"

Huang Rong sighed, saying: "Good, I'll follow you then!" She reached out to take back her son Guo Polu.

Guo Jing handed the baby over, his face full of regret. He then said: "Rong'er, I'm so sorry. But after Fu'er has been punished, even though handicapped, she will change as she won't have the advantage of..."

Huang Rong nodded: "That is so!" As her hands touched the baby swaddling cloth, they suddenly dropped down to Guo Jing's sides. She used her family's "Orchid Brushing Accupoints" (Lan Hua Fu Xue) skills to seal his pressure points, "Deep Pool Liquid Accupoint" (Yuan Ye Xue) on his left arm and "Capital Gate Accupoint" (Jing Men Xue) on his right arm at the same time. These two points were under Guo Jing's arms so that he couldn't use his Wu Gong [martial arts]. If she didn't use such a dirty tactic, how would she be able to seal his pressure points? When Huang Rong threw the baby to her husband, she had already planned all this. Tricked by his wife, Guo Jing collapsed painfully onto the bed, unable to move.

Huang Rong picked up the baby. She removed Guo Jing's shoes, socks, and outer clothing, placing him nicely in bed. She put a pillow under his head, making sure he could rest comfortably, and then took the command emblem from his waist. Guo Jing looked at her, his eyes wide open, yet had no way to resist. Huang Rong put the baby next to him, leaving the two gentlemen lying together, and then covered them both with a cotton blanket, saying: "Jing ge ge, today I am temporarily to blame. As soon as I've seen Fu'er out of city, I will come back to personally cook for you several dishes, kowtow to you three times, and admit my crime."

Having said that, Huang Rong lifted his body up, giving him a kiss on the cheek. Guo Jing had heard such a speech before, then realized that his wife, who was already a mother of three children, was being mischievous, and was not listening to her husband.

He dumbfoundedly watched her pursing her lips and floating out of the door. Then he thought about his two sealed pressure points. She probably wouldn't come back to release him, so he quickly used his internal energy to clear the pressure points. He wouldn't be able to catch up with his daughter anyhow. And for that matter, he didn't quite know whether to laugh or to cry.

Like most mothers Huang Rong was very concerned about her daughter's well-being since her daughter had to cover an arduous and dangerous journey (the more beautiful the daughter, the more hazardous the journey) to Peach Blossom Island (Tao Hua Dao). That's why, after leaving her husband and her baby, she went to her bedroom to fetch her ruan-wei-jia (Hedgehog protective suit), Peach Blossom Island's most treasured object, which she wrapped and clasped under her arm before chasing after her daughter, using her qing gong (lightness kung fu).

As she approached the Nan Men (Southgate) she watched from afar how Guo Fu on the red horse was bickering loudly with the garrison commander. The officer behaved very courteously but strictly. Without being shown a ling-pai (command emblem) he dared not open the city gate; a violation of this rule and he would be sentenced to death. Huang Rong thought: "This blockhead daughter of mine has been overprotected all her life; never being confronted with any problems, she doesn't try to solve difficulties using strategy, she can only shout angrily, which worsens the matter." Huang Rong hurriedly approached, held the ling-pai (which she had snatched from Guo Jing's waist belt) high and shouted: "This is the ling-pai of Honorable Lu! Please examine!"

As we know, the commanding general of Xiangyang was Lu Wende, although in practice it was Guo Jing who lead the city's defense; officially he was only a 'ke qing' (guest minister) who ordered on behalf of Lu.

Seeing Mrs. Guo with the ling-pai, the officer, smiling, immediately commanded the city gate to be opened. He personally led his horse to Huang Rong and said: "Mrs. Guo, in case you need the horse of this junior officer, please take it".

"Fine, I'll borrow it." Huang Rong said leaping on the horse.

After leaving Xiangyang, mother and daughter rode side by side. Several times Huang Rong wanted to bid farewell and ride back to Xiangyang, but each time she postponed it. So she accompanied her daughter further and further.

At that time, the region encompassing hundreds of li north of Xiangyang was already occupied by the Mongolian soldiers. Most of the Chinese had moved out. But the region

south of Xiangyang was still dense with people although they lived in fear.

After about twenty li, dawn was setting in, Huang Rong and her daughter arrived at a small town, its shops and restaurants beginning to open.

“Fu’er”, the mother said, “Let’s have some breakfast before I return to Xiangyang.”

Guo Fu nodded with tears flowing down her cheeks. In her heart she already deeply regretted having cut off Yang Guo’s arm in anger, causing her now to be caught in such a horrible mess.

They went into a restaurant and ordered cooked beef and rice cakes. In a short time the meal was served but because they were depressed they didn’t have much of an appetite.

Huang Rong gave the wrapped up ruan-wei-jia with the advice to wear the protective vest later on when Guo Fu stayed in an inn. She gave advice and admonitions with Guo Fu listening and nodding several times, still weeping. Seeing her daughter in such a pitiful state Huang Rong actually felt very reluctant and sorry to leave her, but her duty as wife and mother forced her to return to Xiangyang.

Suddenly, looking westwards she caught a glimpse of a basket filled with big red apples in a fruit shop. “Before I bid farewell to Fu’er I’ll buy her some apples”, she thought.

“Fu’er”, she said rising, “You should force yourself to eat even though you don’t have any appetite. In times of war you never know at what time you can get food again. Wait a moment; I’ll buy you some fruit.” She went out to approach the fruit shop.

After choosing ten scarlet apples, putting them in her bosom, Huang Rong groped in her pocket for money. Suddenly, a very loud woman’s voice was heard: “Give me twenty catties of rice and one catty of salt. (1 catty = 1.1 pounds/ 500 grams) Put them all in this sack, please.”

Huang Rong cast a glance. The person speaking was a Taoist priestess [dao gu] wearing a yellow robe, standing in front of the neighboring shop.

The Taoist priestess was holding a baby with her left hand and groping in her pocket for some money. The baby’s clothes were made of lake green satin with a small dark red horse embroidery, an embroidery Huang Rong used to sew. As soon as she noticed

that, her hand trembled and her heart pounded, the money in her hand fell into the basket. That baby must certainly be her own daughter Guo Xiang!

Huang Rong had never actually met Li Mochou before. But with one look she saw the fly whisk, the Taoist robe and she was able to deduct in an instant that this Taoist priestess was the infamous Scarlet Serpent Deity, Li Mochou.

At the time she gave birth to Guo Xiang, the Mongolian enemy was attacking and the situation was chaotic; she'd had no chance to examine the baby's face. That's why, like being magnetized, she was drawn to look several times at the baby. Although the baby was still diminutive, it already showed signs of natural female beauty. With her cute features and ruddy complexion, she seemed well-fed and healthy looking. Huang Rong was pleasantly surprised, she almost shed tears. Polu, the baby she breast-fed herself, didn't look nearly that healthy.

After paying some silver, Li Mochou took the sack and left.

Huang Rong understood the urgency of the situation; without informing Guo Fu she gave chase. She thought: "This poisonous female is terribly cruel. Should I try to use brute force, she might harm Xiang'er."

After leaving the city, Li Mochou ran westwards. While following, Huang Rong thought: "Li Mochou is Guo'er's Martial Uncle. Although they don't have a good relationship, after Fu'er cut-off Guo'er's arm, we could say that the GuMu Pai (Ancient Tomb sect) and the Guo Family were bound in a feud. If this woman is going to meet Guo'er and Miss Long, I won't be a match against all three of them together. It's wiser to force a one-to-one fight with her now".

Li Mochou changed course to the South and entered the woods. Huang Rong accelerated, circling the woods and confronted the demoness. Seeing the sudden appearance of a beautiful woman, Li Mochou stopped short in surprise.

"If I'm not mistaken, I'm facing 'Chi-lian xian-zi' [Scarlet Serpent Deity] Taoist Elder Li", Huang Rong said with a smile. "I'm very pleased to meet you!"

Noticing the lithe and swift movements of the woman, the pale-yellow bamboo cane in her waist belt, Li Mochou at once put the sack down, she saluted smiling: "Junior has admired Mrs. Guo's famous name for ages, I feel delighted to meet you now."

At that time in the martial realm, the most famous female martial experts were Huang Rong and Li Mochou. ‘Qing-jing san-ren’ [Sage of Tranquility] Sun Bu’Er was already famous before them but her wugong (martial arts) were inferior. Xiao Longnu was good enough wugong-wise but she was still too young and not experienced; she was barely known.

Both tigresses faced each other. One was the pampered daughter of the Eastern heretic Huang Yaoshi, wife of Da Xia (great hero) Guo Jing, Bang Zhu (clan chief) of Gai Bang (Beggar Clan), the other was the notorious cruel demoness armed with a fly whisk, “Soul Freezing Silver Needles” and “Five Poisons Divine Palm”, three lethal skills which had caused much trembling and fear in the Jianghu realm.

It’s the first time these two people have met, they scrutinized each other carefully, and each marveling about how unexpectedly beautiful the other was. But secretly each was on guard because surely each other’s fame was based on real ability.

Mrs. Guo said with a smile: “Taoist Elder Li, junior has always revered you, don’t be over polite”.

Li Mochou answered: “Mrs. Guo is chief of the Beggar Clan and a leading personality in the martial realm, junior regrets not having met you much sooner.”

After both sides exchanged the usual pleasantries, Huang Rong asked: “Elder Li, the baby you carry is very sweet and cute. Whose baby is it?” As she said that, Huang Rong had already thought of ways to get the baby back before they began the duel.

“This is very shaming for Gu Mu Pai” [Ancient Tomb Sect], the demoness answered. “Junior has not been able to guide my shi mei (younger apprentice sister) on the right path. This is Long shi mei’s baby”

Huang Rong was surprised. She couldn’t guess why Li Mochou was lying.

But the demoness wasn’t deliberately lying. She did believe the baby was Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu’s child. Because she was enraged that her shifu only taught the Jade Heart Manual to her shimei, she used this opportunity to mention her shimei’s sins.

“I thought Miss Long a decent girl”, Huang Rong said. “It’s unbelievable such a thing has happened. Who’s the father?”

“The father?” the demoness said. “Hmm...It’s definitely shameful to mention! The father of this child is Yang Guo, my shimei’s disciple.” Huang Rong, who was usually good at faking, couldn’t help reddening, and anger swelled up.

But she only changed colour briefly and instantly her expression returned to normal. She said: “That is deliberately creating trouble. But the baby is so cute. Elder Li, may I hug it?” She took an apple from her bosom and moved it to-and-fro in front of the baby. “Good child, your round face certainly resembles this apple.”

After stealing Guo Xiang, Li Mochou hid herself in the woods and happily played everyday with the baby. Each morning she would milk the leopard to feed the baby. Li Mochou had committed abundant crimes, but basically she wasn’t cruel at heart. Because of rejected love, she hated the world and its inhabitants, she turned cruel. Since meeting the cute and sweet Guo Xiang, her inborn mother instinct was awakened. Often in the deep of the night she would think about the baby. Deep in her heart she was uncertain that she would agree, in case Xiao Longnu wanted to exchange the ‘Jade Heart Manual’ for the baby.

As Huang Rong wanted to hug the baby, like all mothers, who were always pleased if their babies were praised, she also was happy and was ready to give in.

Huang Rong’s hands barely touched the baby’s clothes, she couldn’t hide the loving expression on her face, the radiant expression of a loving mother who had thought of her missing child day and night without knowing its fate and whereabouts. Now the child in question was at arms length. Li Mochou noticed the look and thought: “If she only wants to hug the baby, why that sudden change?” She hurriedly pulled back and leapt two zhangs backwards. She barely touched the ground as Huang Rong followed closing on her. Expecting an attack, Li Mochou heaved the sack at Huang Rong’s face.

Huang Rong leapt to evade, causing the rice and salt to scatter on the ground. Li Mochou, whisk in the hand, said with a smile: “Mrs. Guo, do you intend to help Yang Guo get his child back?”

Huang Rong, reasoning the demoness to be suspicious already, now had decided to use force. She said smilingly: “I only want to hug that lovely child, you think too lowly of me.”

Li Mochou said: “Guo Family’s renowned name shook the martial realm, junior admired it greatly. Today I have seen the display of skills; the fame is really not an empty

one. But junior has to deal with another matter and must leave.” She was afraid that Guo Jing would appear, she turned and walked away.

Huang Rong leaped up and in midair drew her bamboo stick. The original “Dog beating Stick” was passed on to Lu Youjiao, the stick she had now was of the same length and weight but of a light-yellow colour. In midair she aimed at an Accupoint on Li Mochou’s back. Li Mochou angrily thought: “We don’t have any enmity for each other. Today we’ve met for the first time, I’ve talked with due respect to you, why do you attack me without any reason at all?” She checked the stick with her whisk. Huang Rong attacked continuously with six or seven moves, forcing Li Mochou to the defensive. Li Mochou’s wugong was actually slightly below Huang Rong’s and further, she carried a baby, a few stances more and she was in great difficulty.

After several moves Li Mochou saw that Huang Rong didn’t aim her attack at the baby, she thought: “Each time I fight carrying this baby seems to be an advantage.” She said smilingly: “Mrs. Guo, the world is vast and there will be other occasions, why do you choose here and now to try my skills? Should you make a mistake, you will hurt this lovely child.”

Huang Rong thought: “Doesn’t she really know this baby is mine, or is she just pretending? I’ll try her first.” She said: “Thinking of this child, my first ten moves were not seriously executed, if you still want to carry that baby it’s not my fault should she get hurt.” With her stick she aimed at Li Mochou’s right leg, the latter used her whisk to parry, before both weapons clashed Huang Rong already changed direction to the left chest. The attack threatened both Li Mochou and the baby. If it was successful, not only would Li Mochou be injured but the baby would lose its’ life.

Using the stick, Huang Rong had natural control, the stick’s end neared Guo Xiang’s clothes and it seemed the baby couldn’t be saved. But in reality Huang Rong had perfect control on the force and reach of the stick. Li Mochou, who was very worried, surely didn’t know that, she hurriedly evaded to the right, unavoidably revealing a flaw, the stick touched her left shin. Nearly tripping she took two steps before regaining her balance again. She wielded the whisk in front of her body for protection, turning around she said angrily: “Mrs. Guo, you are so famous; how can you be that cruel to a baby?”

Huang Rong, who saw Li Mochou wasn’t pretending, felt great happiness and mused: “You want to protect my daughter; I’ll frighten you a bit.” With a faint smile she said: “Elder Li said this child is illegitimate, why should you want to keep it alive?” With that she launched a chain of attacks all aimed at Guo Xiang. Li Mochou hopped to the left and right frantically, holding the baby tightly. The baby, who now cried loudly, was feel-

ing uncomfortable due to the jolting movements. Huang Rong said silently: “My clever child, don’t be startled. To rescue you, mom is forced to do this.” Although in her heart she felt pity, she launched several swift and lethal attacks in the direction of Guo Xiang. Li Mochou anxiously drew back several steps lifting the whisk in front of Guo Xiang to protect her and called out: “Mrs. Guo, what do you really want?”

Huang Rong said smilingly: “In this era, the martial realm only acknowledges Elder Li and junior as the outstanding female fighters. This time we met by chance, why not use this occasion to arrange a little try out between us?”

The attacks on Guo Xiang had angered Li Mochou; the challenge had angered her even more. She thought: “If your husband was here I will probably be afraid, but we are both females, do you think I fear you?” Immediately she humphed, saying: “Mrs. Guo intends to grant me a lesson; that is what junior always has hoped for.”

Huang Rong: “If you carry a baby during the duel and I win, it won’t satisfy either of us. Put it aside, and then we can move more freely.”

Li Mochou thought: “Guo husband and wife are renowned for their righteousness, but judging her ferocity towards a mere baby makes me believe that fame is much too exaggerated.” She looked in all directions and saw in the East several big trees with a strip of thick grass beneath. She put the baby on the grass, patted it to sooth it, turned and invited Huang Rong to begin.

After ten stances Huang Rong realized that their wugong was about the same level. If she tried now to snatch Guo Xiang away and fight the demoness, then it was probable that Guo Xiang might get hurt. If she killed the demoness first, she wouldn’t have any trouble at all. This female had committed all sorts of crimes, thinking of that, Huang Rong developed a killing intent. Li Mochou thought that her adversary would stop at nothing, seeing Huang Rong often glancing at the baby, she was worried that Huang Rong would carry out a sudden, fake attack and hurt the baby instead. That’s why she positioned herself between Huang Rong and the baby.

During the fight Huang Rong had thought up seven or eight stratagems, each of them would dispatch Li Mochou but unavoidably also endangered Guo Xiang. She pondered: “Looks like this demoness truly cherishes Guo Xiang. If the baby is in her hands and I couldn’t snatch it for a while, it wouldn’t matter much, whereas if I take risks the baby could be endangered.” Suddenly she had an idea: “Elder Li, our wugong doesn’t differ much, a decision would take some time. If meanwhile a wild animal appears and devours the child, wouldn’t it divert our concentration? The best way is to take that little

bastard's life now, and then we could fight at ease." After saying that, she bent, picked up a pebble, and with her middle finger flicked it, whizzing in the direction of Guo Xiang.

She had used the unique Huang family skill "Divine Flicking Finger" (dan zhi shen tong). Li Mochou, who knew that lethal skill, hurriedly fended off the pebble with her whisk and shouted: "What has this child done to you? Why do you repeatedly try to kill her?"

Huang Rong secretly thought this was funny, she actually flicked with a retracting force, as soon as the pebble was in the vicinity of Guo Xiang, it would fly back. Huang Rong smiled and said: "Elder Li, you certainly defend that child with all your might. People who don't know would certainly think it is...it is your..."

Li Mochou: "... is my child?" After saying that, she blushed.

Huang Rong said smilingly: "You are single, so naturally you can't have a child. I mean people would think it is your younger sister." Li Mochou humphed, thinking nothing of it. She didn't realize that the competitive Huang Rong also wouldn't want to lose even in a battle of insults. If Guo Xiang was Li Mochou's sister, then Guo Jing and Huang Rong would be Li Mochou's parents. That's Huang Rong's hidden revenge for Li Mochou's recent remark that Yang Guo was the father of Guo Xiang.

Li Mochou: "Let's start again!"

Huang Rong: "You are thinking about the child and can't concentrate, even if I win, it wouldn't be a fair win. I'll surround the child with thorn canes, so wild beasts can't come near her, and then we can both concentrate on the fight." Saying that, she took a golden knife from her waist to cut canes and wound them around the big trees surrounding Guo Xiang.

At first the demoness was wary but she observed that Huang Rong did it very meticulously and she thought: "In the Jianghu realm Mrs. Guo is praised as multi talented, she really lives up to that reputation." But seeing Huang Rong's face bearing a mocking smile she got scared again and shouted: "That's enough!"

Huang Rong: "If you say it's enough, that's all right with me. Elder Li, you've met my father, haven't you?"

Li Mochou: "Yes, I have."

Huang Rong: “Yang Guo told me you’ve composed a poem of four lines to ridicule my father, haven’t you? It sounds like this:

‘Peach Blossom Island’s master,

Has numerous disciples,

Five against one,

The laughing stock of the Jianghu realm!”

Li Mochou thought: “Stupid of me not to think about that. Now I understand that she hampers me because of those four lines.” She retorted coldly: “That day it was five against one, wasn’t it?”

Huang Rong: “Today it’s one against one; we’ll see who will be the laughing stock of the Jianghu realm.”

Li Mochou: “Stop being arrogant! I’ve seen a lot of Peach Blossom Island’s wugong (martial arts), it’s mediocre at the most.”

Huang Rong sneered: “Not to mention the Island’s wugong, I think you can’t even cope with the Island’s non-wugong. If you don’t believe me, just try to get that child back.”

Li Mochou was startled: “Has she injured the child?” Hurriedly she jumped in the cane circle following its turns, hearing the baby cry she felt relieved, but after several turns she ended up out of the circle again. She was puzzled, trying to leap in again she was not careful enough, a thorn had ripped her Taoist robe. She didn’t dare to be careless again, looking where to land her feet she suddenly saw Huang Rong standing in the middle of the circle bending down to hug the child. She was shocked and immediately shouted: “Put the child down!” She deliberately tried and tried to bridge the circle to get in but ended on the outside again. The seven or eight big trees occupying an area of about several zhangs formed a maze. She saw Huang Rong putting the child down and dexterously leaping to the East and the West to leave the circle easily.

The ‘Scarlet Serpent Deity’ now remembered the fight against Yang Guo and Chen Ying with them using piled earth before the hut, preventing her from attacking them directly. Now Huang Rong probably also had used the “Eight Diagrams of the Nine Palaces Divine Method” (Jiu gong ba gua shen shu) of Tao Hua Island in arranging the cane circle. Li Mochou decided to beat the enemy first and rescue the child later. She

leapt several zhangs away and was ready to fight again. When Huang Rong saw her adversary confused she secretly rejoiced but seeing Li Mochou's firm decision she also felt a kind of admiration. After successfully securing her daughter in a safe place, she attacked Li Mochou with the stance "To Push the Dog to Lower its Head" (an gou di tou). Li Mochou entangled the stick with the whisk and further attacked Huang Rong. Both had swiftly exchanged several stances.

Li Mochou changed her fighting tactics but her adversary's bamboo stick technique was really incomparable, with much effort she managed to resist about ten stances, this was already a rare feat in the martial realm. The bamboo stick was a light weapon and could by no means kill like a sharp weapon, but it managed to threaten all main 36 acupoints on the body. Li Mochou again managed to resist several stances; there was sweat on her forehead. Li Mochou put the whisk in front of her body to protect it then leapt backwards, saying: "Mrs. Guo, your Bamboo Stick Technique (zhu bang fa) is really superb, junior admits defeat. But junior has a question which needs an explanation."

Huang Rong: "Can't imagine what matter I'm able to explain to you!"

Li Mochou: "The bamboo stick technique is a unique skill of the Nine Fingered Divine Beggar, whereas Tao Hua Island's wugong is famous in the realm, why doesn't Mrs. Guo use your own family's wugong?"

Huang Rong thought: "This person is tricky; she isn't able to win against my stick and tries to provoke me." She said with a smile: "If Elder knows this stick method is Nine Fingered Divine Beggar's, then you also know what it's called?" Li Mochou humphed but didn't reply. Huang Rong sneered: "It's called 'if you meet a dog, flog it' stick method."

Li Mochou resigned. She didn't succeed in luring Huang Rong to use her palm instead of the stick; the enemy even mocked her, using her glib tongue. Inserting the whisk on her waist she said: "Beggars use to chant the lian-hua (begging) chant, their Bang Zhu is no exception." She strode to the nearest tree and sat on a branch.

That Li Mochou admitted defeat was what Huang Rong wanted. But the demoness didn't leave and Huang Rong could guess her intention very well, she would immediately attack as soon as Huang Rong tried to get the baby. With Huang Rong holding the baby and hampered by it, their skills would even out. So, with the baby practically in her hands, she couldn't bring it safely home without killing or injuring the demoness.

Suddenly Huang Rong moved, approaching Li Mochou with three steps to the left and four steps to the right. Those steps seemed common, but they bore the intricacies of the “Eight Diagrams” (Ba-gua), in whatever direction Li Mochou would try to flee, Huang Rong could still have blocked her path, that’s the purpose of the movement. Huang Rong already threatened her left elbow with the stick.

Li Mochou parried with her palm and shouted: “After Chen Xuanfeng and Mei Chaofeng died, Huang Yaoshi truly has no disciples who have inherited his skills.” What Li Mochou said not only ridiculed Huang Rong for using the ‘foreign’ “Dog Beating Stick” method but also to try to humiliate her father as well. Actually Huang Rong had inherited the Huang family’s skill “Jade Flute Sword Method” (Yu xiao jian fa) with profound mastery, but using a sword and not a stick, she was unsure of winning against such a formidable adversary. She answered faintly smiling: “It is true that my father had unworthy disciples, they certainly can’t be compared to pure and chaste apprentice sisters like Elder Li and Miss Long.”

The demoness went sick with rage. Waving her sleeve, two “Soul Freezing Silver Needles” were shot, aiming at Huang Rong’s lower abdomen. Although she was incomparably cruel and could kill without batting an eye, she was still a virgin. Hearing Huang Rong put her on par with her ‘dishonored’ apprentice sister, made her use her lethal poisoned needles.

Huang Rong, staying very close, never had a chance to dodge them. But having perfect command of the Dog Beating Stick method, she still could hurriedly fend them off with the stick. The needles flew about two inches past her face; she could faintly sniff their poisonous smell. She remembered her eagle whose foot was hit by such a needle and it took about six or seven months to cure. Meanwhile another pair of needles shot out.

Huang Rong hastily leapt up and ran towards the East, two needles whizzing near her ear. She thought: “This place is too near to Xiang’er; if she got struck by a random flying needle, it would be lethal for her.” She rushed further, leaving the forest.

Li Mochou chased joyfully, she felt that with the exception of ‘Da gau bang fa’, her other skills were superior to that of Mrs. Guo. She shouted: “Victory or defeat hasn’t been decided, why do you run away?” Huang Rong stopped, faintly smiling.

Li Mochou said reproachingly: “Mrs. Guo, do you need the stick to keep my needles away?”

Huang Rong knew that as long as she used the stick, Li Mochou wouldn't accept her defeat. She inserted the stick on her waist and chuckled: "Li dao-zhang, I've long heard about your incomparable "Five Poisons Divine Palm" (Wu du shen zhang) and how it has killed numerous people, junior wants to try out that ominous palm."

Li Mochou was rather startled: "She is aware of my fierce (li hai) palm but wants to try it." She channeled her inner force to the palm and said: "I also want to try Tao Hua Island's "Luo Ying Divine Sword Palm" (luo ying shen jian zhang)." She moved her left palm to parry Huang Rong's palm, her right palm aiming for the shoulder. Both palms moved at the same time, but the right palm also ejected two needles aiming between Huang Rong's chest and belly. This striking and simultaneously ejecting needles stance had been developed by herself after leaving Gu Mu. The adversary who only guarded against the palms wouldn't think of being attacked with the needles at such a close distance. Many wuxia experts had been killed by this move of hers.

Huang Rong retracted her left palm to parry, her right hand moving about her bosom as if she herself wanted to pull out a hidden projectile (an qi) but it was already too late, the needles were already about five inches near her ribs, even someone with a much higher ability than her wouldn't avoid being hit. Li Mochou felt up surging joy as she saw the needles penetrating the cloth. "Oh!" Huang Rong cried bending, her right hand touching her stomach, her left palm striking Li Mochou's chest. That palm really came swiftly, Li Mochou cried: "Good! She dodged and struck with both palms aiming at Huang Rong's chest. She knew the poison would instantly show its effect. So her stroke only was meant to shove Huang Rong a bit before she died of the poisoning. She saw Huang Rong's upper body only showing a slight reaction and she wondered how the poison could paralyze that quick. Her pair of palms soon touched the chest of her adversary; she felt some slight pain from being pricked. Hurriedly and in great surprise she leapt backwards, looking at her palms she saw two tiny holes, black blood oozing out, revealing she had been injured by her own needles. She was startled, angry and didn't understand how it could have happened. She saw Huang Rong taking two apples from her bosom with a smile, lifted them high, and showing a needle in each apple. Li Mochou now realized that Huang Rong hid the apples, didn't try to parry her stroke, put her hand in her bosom to hold the apples, receiving the needles and lured Li Mochou to strike the apples herself.

Li Mochou was not a stupid person, but in a duel of cunning today she had to admit defeat, she moved her hand to her bosom to take the antidote. But with a windy sound Huang Rong had attacked her face. Li Mochou hurriedly lifted her left hand to fend, suddenly Huang Rong's snow white palm opened, its five fingers, shaped gracefully like an orchid, threatened the xiao hai accupoint on her right elbow. She thought: "Is that

the famous “Orchid Hand Strikes Accupoint” (lan hua fu xue shou)?” Her right hand, which had failed to take the antidote, was trying to grasp Huang Rong’s hand. Huang Rong retracted her right hand, her left hand aiming at the que pen accupoint on the neck. She attacked using Luo ying palm alternately with orchid hand, her moves were not only swift and fierce but also utterly graceful. Li Mochou couldn’t help thinking: “Today I have witnessed Tao Hua Island’s divine techniques, it is really superb, and even if I was not poisoned I wouldn’t be her match.” She eagerly withdrew to take the antidote, but Huang Rong attacked again, not giving her time for it. The “Soul Freezing Silver Needle” had severe poison on it, hadn’t Li Mochou been used to it, she would already have broken down. But even so, as soon as the poison had reached the pit of her stomach, it would be hopeless for her. Huang Rong observed her face getting paler, her adversary got weaker and weaker, Huang Rong thought of the demoness killing the Wu brothers’ mother, at last now she would succumb to her own poison, Huang Rong pressed steadily on, but also guarded herself, fearing a last counter attempt by her adversary.

Li Mochou felt a numbness creeping up her elbow, after several stances more the numbness had reached her armpit, her arm couldn’t bend anymore. She called out: “Hold a minute!” Stepping aside she said: “Mrs. Guo, since I’ve killed many people, I hadn’t expected to live this long. In martial arts and cunning I’m inferior to you; it’s fitting to die by your hands. But I must be bold and beg something of you.”

Huang Rong: “Beg for what?” She guessed the demoness was trying to use delaying tactics so she watched her hands carefully; she saw her arms sagging and she then listened to her adversary saying: “I don’t have an affectionate relationship with my shi mei, but her child is adorably cute, I beseech you to show a forgiving heart and not to take her young life.”

Huang Rong felt the Scarlet Serpent Deity spoke with sincerity, she was unable to suppress being moved. She thought: “This demoness’ misdeeds heaped up like a mountain, who would have thought that in the time of approaching death she would show such a loving concern for my daughter.” She answered: “The parents of this child are no ordinary people, if I let her live she would pose a great danger to me.”

Li Mochou sighed and said with a failing voice: “I understand, but I’m still hoping you would be forgiving”

Huang Rong was very moved, but wanted to try her further, she approached and hit an accupoint before taking a bottle out, asking: “Is this the antidote?”

Li Mochou: “Yes!”

Huang Rong: “I can’t forgive two people at the same time; should I forgive you, I have to kill the baby. If you yourself choose to die, I will save the baby.”

Li Mochou was totally dumbfounded. Never did she dream of getting a second chance to live, but she was unable to ask Huang Rong to kill the child, whereas to sacrifice herself in order to save the child, she saw Huang Rong in front of her, waving a pill from the bottle, waiting for her reply. She trembled, stuttering: “I, I”

Huang Rong thought: “The fact alone that she is hesitating counts as a plus point for her. No matter what choice she makes, I must let her live. She has accumulated such a huge blood debt; there will certainly be someone in the future that will take revenge on her.”

Thereupon she said smilingly: “Elder Li, many thanks to you for showing such a loving care for Xiang’er.” Li Mochou, confused: “What?” Huang Rong chuckled: “The baby is surnamed Guo with the name Xiang, she is my and Guo Jing’s daughter. Soon after her birth she fell into Miss Long hands, I don’t know how you came to your misunderstanding. Because you have taken good care of her, then junior must thank you profusely.”

Saying that, she bowed clasping her hands, then put a pill in Li Mochou’s mouth, asking: “Is this enough?” Li Mochou answered sorrowfully: “I’m heavily poisoned, I need three pills.” Huang Rong answered: “Very well”, gave her two more pills, then thought that the antidote could be of some use later on, so she put the bottle in her bosom, saying: “Your accupoints would unseal in three hours time.”

Huang Rong returned to the forest and thought: “Fu’er would be impatiently waiting for me, but if she sees her sister she will be very happy.” Entering the cane circle her body went cold like entering an icehouse. The cane circle looked no different but Guo Xiang was nowhere to be seen!. Huang Rong’s heart beat madly, although usually very smart, she didn’t know what to do.

After a while she calmed herself down and thought: “I must not worry, if a person took Xiang’er during my fight with Li Mochou, he can’t be very far.” She climbed up the highest tree to look off in the distance from that high place. The surrounding area of Xiangyang was flat; she saw nothing suspicious within a radius of several li. Huang Rong thought: “This person must still be in the near vicinity.” Thereupon she looked carefully for traces around the cane circle but nothing was moved away. She pondered: “This cane maze is arranged according to Jiu Gong Ba Gua positions according to my

own father's concept; except Tao Hua Island's [Peach Blossom Island] disciples nobody has an inkling of it. Even Jinlun Fawang (Golden Wheel Monk) with his broad knowledge couldn't solve its secrets. Has my father arrived?...Oh my god!"

She remembered her meeting with Jinlun Fawang several months ago, she had arranged a stone maze, she had explained to Yang Guo about the system, although he was not yet skilled in Jiu Gong Ba Gua, he wouldn't have difficulties solving this cane maze. Thinking of Yang Guo she couldn't help but be anxious: "Fu'er cut off his arm so he has a feud with the Guo family and now Xiang'er is in his hands; he doesn't have to kill her, he could just leave her in the wilderness and she would certainly die." Thinking about the baby, she thought of her bad luck of being taken soon after she was born, she uncontrollably shed a tear. But being very experienced, she looked again very carefully for traces around the spot but couldn't find any. She mused: "Although his qing gong is extraordinary, he must have left traces here in the mud, or could he possibly fly?"

This guess of Huang Rong was correct. Guo Xiang was taken by Yang Guo and he got into the cane maze from the air!

That day Yang Guo observed how Huang Rong hit Guo Jing's accupoint and then followed her daughter out of town. Yang Guo also followed them from afar, thinking: "Aunt Guo, your daughter owes me an arm, if your husband doesn't succeed in cutting it off, let me do it. I can see you, you can't see me; if you want to save your daughter's arm, I think that won't be easy." Huang Rong and her daughter being preoccupied didn't realize they were being followed. The meeting with Li Mochou in the small town and the fight, all were observed by Yang Guo. As the fighters left the forest, he immediately jumped up a tree, bound the end of a cane to the tree, slid into the middle of the cane circle on the cane, clamped Guo Xiang's waist with his feet, then pulled his body up again into the tree. After landing on the ground again after several tree jumps, he returned to the small town. He saw Guo Fu on the street corner, holding the reins of the hong ma (red horse) waiting impatiently for her mother. Yang Guo leapt to sit astride the red horse. Guo Fu was startled, turning she saw that the unexpected rider was Yang Guo. She unsheathed her sword, her normal sword, not Xiao Longnu's "Lady Sword", which she didn't like using.

Yang Guo saw her face turning pale with a frightened look, if he had wanted to cut her arm off now it would be all too easy. Somehow in the last moment he moved his right shoulder, the empty sleeve wrapped around the sword and flung it away. Guo Fu had let the sword go and it hit the corner of a wall. Yang Guo's left hand snatched the reins; clamping his legs to the horse's belly urged it to gallop away like the wind. Guo Fu slowly walked to pick up her sword; it was bent like a square.

To use soft material as a weapon was GuMu Pai's [Ancient Tomb's] unique wugong, Li Mochou used a whisk and Dragon girl used a silk belt. Yang Guo used his strong inner energy and the sleeve had struck like a steel whip. Yang Guo, holding Guo Xiang, sped the 'han xue bao ma' (precious horse with sweat like blood) soon leaving the small town a couple of li behind, that's why they couldn't be detected by Huang Rong from the tree top.

Yang Guo rode speedily; he saw the trees on the roadside flying away. He looked at Guo Xiang on his bosom, seeing her tender and delicate small face, he thought: "Uncle and Aunt Guo, your youngest daughter will always be mine, think of it as a kind of compensation for my lost arm. They would feel grieved and dejected, especially because they excel me." After a while he thought: "Why didn't I take revenge directly? Is it because Guo Fu is a beautiful young girl? If the one who cut off my arm was a male, would I also have forgiven him?" Thinking about it half a day he could only shake his head and smile wryly. He himself couldn't understand his unstable and unpredictable behavior.

After traveling two hundred li there gradually appeared houses with smoke coming from them. He got something to eat and Guo Xiang some goat milk. He decided to go to the Ancient Tomb looking for the Xiao Longnu. After several days he arrived at Mount Zhongnan. As the horse climbed the mountain and found the right path to the Ancient Tomb he pondered about past things.

The inscription 'Tomb of the Living Dead' still stood on the majestic tombstone. After Li Mochou's attack, the tomb had been sealed, if one wanted to enter, they had to use the secret entrance through the water. For him it wouldn't pose a problem but what about Guo Xiang? She would drown in the water. But the thought of soon meeting Xiao Longnu in the tomb greatly excited him. He took a pastry from his pocket, chewed a bit for Guo Xiang, and then he found a cave nearby. He put Guo Xiang in it and hid the cave mouth with thorny wood. Whether he met Xiao Longnu or not in the tomb, he planned to return and put the baby in a safer place.

Suddenly he heard the far away sound of weapons clashing coming from the direction of the Chongyang Palace. He was suspicious for a bit and then saw a buzzing silver wheel flying fiercely into the sky. That was Jinlun Fawang's weapon. Growing curious, he hurriedly followed the sound to the Chongyang Palace. During this time, Xiao Longnu was enduring Quanzhen Five Masters' "Gathering of the Big Dipper" (Qi Xing Ju Hui) and Jinlun Fawang's wheel strike, her body seriously injured. Had Yang Guo arrived earlier, he could have prevented the disaster. But how could things be as easy as one desired? Life was full of sorrow and joy, the difference between disaster and good fortune was often very small.

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Upon seeing Yang Guo, the Quanzhen Five Masters knew this mess was escalating. Qiu Chuji cried out: “My Chongyang Palace has been a respected place but today all of you are here to violate it. Why is that?”

Wang Chuyi was also furious, shouting: “Long Guniang [Miss Long], even though your Gu Mu sect and our Quanzhen sect share the same mountain ridge, we both stick to our own sides. What is the reason you are leading these foreign people from the West, these evil miscreants, to kill many disciples of mine?”

Xiao Longnu, badly injured, thought, these people couldn’t tell right from wrong, why bother arguing with them? Their many disciples witnessed how Yin Zhiping was pierced by her sword and how Zhao Zhijing was wounded but, in this time of trouble, nobody came forward to explain the truth.

Yang Guo gently stretched his left arm to support Xiao Longnu’s waist, softly saying: “Gu Gu, let us go back to Gu Mu. Don’t pay attention to these people!”

Xiao Longnu then asked: “Does your arm still hurt?”

Yang Guo shook his head, replying: “It’s all fine.”

Xiao Longnu continued: “Has the Passion Flower (Qing Hua) Poison in your body acted up again?”

Yang Guo replied: “A few times, but it’s nothing to worry about.”

After being slashed by Xiao Longnu, Zhao Zhijing went to hide, not daring to show his face. Seeing the Quanzhen Five Masters coming out, he realized that after a series of investigation, he would be expelled from his charge and also severely punished.

Originally he was only of a short-tempered and narrow-minded nature, not really a traitorous and wicked person. Only he was considered the first at Wu Gong in the third generation disciples, yet the Zhang Jiao (leader of the generation) position fell to Yin Zhiping. His resentment festered, trapping him into his erroneous way of thinking. Quickly looking at the situation, disturbed and afraid of his five teachers, he grasped at the present opportunity. Suppose Jinlun Fawang and the Mongolian warriors wiped out the Quanzhen Five Masters, he would be able to escape forever. Also, he saw Yang Guo’s right arm missing and left arm holding Xiao Longnu, looking like his hands were bound, waiting for violent death. To the betraying disciple, Yang Guo was his most

hated person, now he had a good opportunity, why would he let it pass? Glancing at Lu Qingdu who was nearby, he loudly shouted: “Treacherous disciple Yang Guo, your two masters are speaking to you. You don’t kneel down and kowtow, how dare you to pay no attention?”

Yang Guo turned back, his eyes filled with hatred, and thought: “Gu Gu has already wounded one Quanzhen smelly priest. Today I’ll temporarily pay no mind to you. I’ll deal with you later.” Sweeping his empty sleeve at the crowd disgustedly while supporting Xiao Longnu, they then moved forward.

Zhao Zhijing shouted: “Fight!” He and Lu Qingdu both pulled out their swords, attacking Yang Guo’s right side. Although Zhao Zhijing had been wounded earlier, the damage was not severe. His sword was thrust towards Yang Guo’s missing arm to stop him from fighting back but it was held down by a strong wind, which was actually caused by Yang Guo’s cultivated internal energy.

Even though Qiu Chuji didn’t particularly care for Yang Guo’s arrogant ways of doing as he pleased, and not honoring traditions, he thought about Guo Jing’s great trust and also his master-disciple bond with Yang Guo’s father, Yang Kang. He shouted: “Zhijing put down your sword. Show mercy!”

On the other side Ma Guangzuo loudly cursed: “Old fart, aren’t you ashamed? Stabbing a person’s missing arm!” He and Yang Guo were very good friends. Seeing Yang Guo in danger, Ma Guangzuo rushed to help but he was a distance away so his help was too late.

There suddenly was a flashing gray shadow; Lu Qingdu’s fat body flew up. He let out the Wah-Wah battle cry before a crashing sound came as the fat body hit Nimoxing. Based on Nimoxing’s Wu Gong, even though it took him by surprise, he shouldn’t have been hit. Since both his legs had been removed, he used both hands to prop himself with a crutch, and was not able to push out to defend himself. He was hit immediately, and collapsed. While trying to support him self on the ground, Nimoxing’s crutch hit Lu Qingdu in the back, knocking him out.

On this side Yang Guo’s right foot stepped on Zhao Zhijing’s long sword, Zhao Zhijing used his force to pull it out, his face turning bright red. Unexpectedly, the long sword wouldn’t move an inch.

At the time both swords were thrusting towards him, Yang Guo’s empty right sleeve fiercely brushed out, sending a rush of great force to throw Lu Qingdu to the ground.

Zhao Zhijing, however, felt the sleeve abruptly sinking, caused by an “extremely heavy” body anchor. This forced the long sword down. Yang Guo stepped out with his foot, stepping on the blade of the sword. He had practiced his swordplay and anchoring technique in mountain streams and even strong current couldn’t topple him. This time, when he put his foot down, it was like the weight of a mountain, how would Zhao Zhijing’s force be able to pull away the sword?

Yang Guo coldly said: “Zhao Dao Shi [Priest Zhao], at the time I was with Guo Da Sha [the Chivalrous Guo] at Da Sheng Guan, you pronounced yourself my master. Today how would you be able to go on saying that? Considering that in the past I used to call you master, I’ll let you off!” Saying that, without moving his right foot, the powerful force beneath it suddenly vanished without a trace.

Applying full force to pull back the sword that was suddenly released, Zhao Zhijing’s hand was suddenly in the air. The sword snapped back, making a crashing sound as its handle hit his chest hard. Undoubtedly, the sword handle struck him with his own force. With this strength, if used to hit an enemy, the enemy wouldn’t be able to block and must use internal force to counter the strike. Now hitting himself involuntarily with no counter-force, Zhao Zhijing felt severe pain in his chest and coughed up blood. His vision went dark, his eyes rolled upwards and he collapsed.

Wang Chuyi and Liu Chuxuan pulled their swords out from their sheaths, dividing themselves left and right to attack Yang Guo. Suddenly, a shadow dashed out, knocking the two swords out of the way. This person was of course Nimoxing. Even though he did hit Lu Qingdu, throwing him onto the ground, his mind was hateful. It was originally Yang Guo who started his troubles. Whirling his crutch and leaping forward, his left crutch struck the two swords while the right one attacked Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu.

Knowing Nimoxing’s Wu Gong by heart, Yang Guo would only use his empty sleeve but then was afraid that he wouldn’t be able to subdue Nimoxing in one strike. By now Xiao Longnu’s body was powerless, leaning feebly against Yan Guo’s so his body slanted to the left while he was wielding his right empty sleeve. Rolling Xiao Longnu’s delicate waist, he let her body lean on the right front of his chest. Then his left hand drew out the black heavy iron sword [Xuan Tie Zhong Jian] that he carried on his back. ‘Pu’ the sword hummed, sounding both deep and dull like a wooden stick beating leather. Nimoxing’s right hand cracked and a shadow darted into the sky. It was actually his iron crutch fiercely flying upwards. This crutch was extremely heavy but unexpectedly flew up 20 feet high in the air and then dropped down behind Yu Xu Dong Shan [Cave of the Jade Void].

This was the first time Yang Guo used demonic Dugu Qiubai's [Du Gu seeking a loss] heavy sword on an enemy. Seeing it had such power, he couldn't help being secretly startled.

Nimoxing felt half his body in pain, his right arm uncontrollably shaking. But he had lived an incomparably brave life so, with a roar, using his remaining crutch, pushed up ten feet in the air and came down with the left iron crutch in his palm. Yang Guo thought since he had already tried the hard strength of the sword, he would now try the supple strength. The tip of the heavy sword trembled. With his internal energy pouring out, Nimoxing would be thrown 20 or 30 feet, it would be impossible not to injure muscles and bones. Seeing Xiao Longnu severely injured, Yang Guo was filled with bitterness in his heart, deciding this time he would strike with no mercy. But just when his arm was about to release his internal force, he saw Nimoxing's body in midair with both legs cut off, fiercely reminding him of his own missing arm. He couldn't help but think that they shared the same problem so he didn't wield his heavy sword up but pushed it down instead. The iron crutch pierced down, dust flew up, and half the crutch was stuck into the ground.

Nimoxing grasped the iron crutch, thinking to use force to pull it out but suddenly his right arm was pressed by the heavy sword. Unexpectedly his pressure point was sealed so he couldn't use any strength in the least. Yang Guo said: "Today I'll spare your life. Just hurry back to India." Nimoxing's face turned ashen. Perfectly still, he couldn't say a word.

Although Xiaoxiang Zi and Yin Kexi saw this turn of events, they didn't think Yang Guo could advance his skills in just months, thinking it had to be because Nimoxing's amputated legs were of no use. Yin Kexi rushed forward a few steps, pulling out the iron crutch and handed it over to Nimoxing. Having the crutch, Nimoxing used it to prop himself up, thinking to leap far away. Who would expect that his arm was numb and limp? As soon as he tried, he collapsed with a plop.

Xiaoxiang Zi always took pleasure in others' misfortunes. As long as other people were having bad luck, regardless of whether friend or foe, he found it joyful. He thought: "This Indian dwarf has always been arrogant, not submitting to me, this is at last over. Just now you rushed out to capture Yang Guo. That was precisely what gave him a good opportunity." Then he jumped out, shouting: "Baby Yang Guo, you've wronged our Prince several times, quickly come with father!"

Yang Guo thought: "Gu Gu is heavily injured. We must hurry to go and treat her. Right now surrounded by many powerful enemies, if I don't kill anyone, it will be hard to es-

cape.” In a low voice he asked Xiao Longnu: “Are you hurting very much?”

Xiao Longnu replied: “You are holding me, I... I am very happy.”

Yang Guo lifted his head up, facing Xiaoxiang Zi, and said: “Fight!” He drew out the black iron sword from between his waist, the sword tip approximately two feet from his body. He held it out steadily. Xiaoxiang Zi saw this crude black sword with a blunt tip and no edge, appearing to be a dumb piece of iron. He thought: “Sure enough, this boy’s swordplay is very fast and his agile movements fluctuate but, with this iron bar, his sword skills won’t be of much use.” He then said: “Shit” While saying that, he wielded his steel “Melancholy Rod” to hit the heavy sword.

Yang Guo’s sword stayed motionless while he channeled his inner strength into it. Only a ‘puff’ sound could be heard as the sword and the iron rod clashed. The “Melancholy Rod” broke immediately, sending several pieces flying. Xiaoxiang Zi cried out: “Heavenly gods!” and then scrambled backwards. Yang Guo then stretched out his sword and struck left and right, breaking both of Xiaoxiang Zi’s arms.

Yang Guo had repeatedly defeated opponents, Lu Qingdu, Zhao Zhijing and Nimoxing, creating sensation among the various people in front of the Cave of the Jade Void. But this time he didn’t even move his body, nor lift his arm, but simply used internal energy to break Xiaoxiang Zi’s weapon, these people were even more puzzled, looking at each other in disbelief, all thinking: “This person’s martial skills were really unbelievable!”

Yin Kexi was a merchant from the Western region so he knew a treasure when he saw one. Seeing Yang Guo’s heavy sword sending Nimoxing’s iron crutch flying, he was already secretly startled, thinking: “A sword this powerful is really not common. The blade is deep black with a hint of red glow, is it possible that it was actually forged from black iron? This black iron is the world’s most precious metal. Even an ounce is very difficult to find. By adding just a little to a common sword or spear, ordinary iron would become a sharp weapon. Where did he find that much of the black iron? Also, if the sword was indeed made from the black iron, how could it not weigh 40-50 catties [1 catty = 1.1 pounds/ 500 grams]? If so, how could Yang Guo be this agile?” Actually, this sword weighed 64 catties altogether. If it was not this heavy, even though Yang Guo’s internal force was strong, he still wouldn’t be able to send out such power. Now Yin Kexi saw Xiaoxiang Zi’s “Melancholy Rod” scattering all over the place so he was even more convinced that this sword was a divine object. Yet he still acted nonchalant. He was in the jewelry businesses, once he saw a rare treasure; his heart would be filled with delighted greed. It didn’t matter if he had to buy or cheat, to rob or steal; it just had to be

quick. As soon as he saw Yang Guo's heavy sword, he was burning with greed. So he jumped out immediately, shaking his Jin Long whip to grab the sword.

Yang Guo had spent time with him in the Passionless Valley [Jue Qing Gu] and saw him always laughing politely and amicably so he didn't have any hostility towards Yin Kexi. Then he saw the Jin Long whip coiling his way. This whip was heavily decorated with precious stones, diamonds and jades. He let the whip wrap around his sword and said: "Yin Xiong [Brother Yin], you and I have yet to celebrate with a drink, pull back the whip and make way. Looks like you've got quite a few jewels on your soft whip. If damaged, it would be a pity." Yin Kexi smiled and said: "Is that right?" and then applied force to snatch the sword. Yang Guo just stood still, not moving in the least.

This time Yin Kexi stood near, analyzing the situation. This sword was cast from black iron. Diamonds were the world's hardest object, and could cut anything without damaging themselves. But surprisingly the big diamond embedded at the tip of his whip couldn't scratch the black iron sword. His heart was on fire as he knew that his opponent's martial skills were ferocious. If not attacking him by surprise, it would be difficult to snatch the sword. So he said: "Yang Xiong [Brother Yang]'s Kung Fu is excellent. Congratulations! I admit defeat." While his mouth was saying these sweet words, he flicked his right wrist. Suddenly metal flashed. In his left hand was a dagger. His arm flew out fiercely to stab Xiao Longnu's chest.

He did this not because he wanted to injure Xiao Longnu. Only he knew that Yang Guo loved her and if he saw her in danger, he would have to save her life. By creating a diversion, he would be able to snatch the precious sword. Yang Guo saw the situation, alarmed. Yin Kexi shouted: "Let go of the sword!" and sent all his body strength to the right arm, pulling the whip to seize the sword.

Hearing "Let go of the sword," Yang Guo did as he was told, sending out the sword. The sword was long while the dagger was short. The heavy sword was between the three of them so the dagger couldn't reach Xiao Longnu's body. At that time, Yang Guo was desperate so he sent out the sword with a force that was extremely fierce. Yin Kexi knew perfectly well that this sword was heavy so he had already braced himself against the force. However, he didn't expect the coming force to be this violent. Seeing that it was too late to escape, he summoned his internal energy while both hands pushed out. Then there came a crashing sound before he fell back five or six steps. He managed to stand firm and put on a smile on his face to cover his misery. Only in a short while he felt as if his internal organs had been turned inside out. He stood still, not daring to breathe or move even half a step, just like a stiff corpse.

Yang Guo walked over to him and extended his hand to retrieve his black iron sword [Xuan Tie Jian]. He lightly shook the sword, and then heard a “ding ding dong dong” sound. Under the bright sunlight, precious stones sparkled everywhere. These were the stones embedded in the Jin Long whip that had just broken into fragments.

Yang Guo called out: “Jinlun Fawang, do we settle our business today or wait for some other day?”

Jinlun Fawang saw him successively defeating the three big masters, Nimoxing, Xiaoxiang Zi, and Yin Kexi, injuring each opponent in only one move. How this young man’s martial skills were so high was actually quite unconceivable. If he himself stepped forward to fight, even though he would not be defeated like the other three fighters, to seek victory would not be easy. At this moment all the heroes were gathering, if he walked away, how would he keep face? He thought: “Yang Guo has a missing arm. Even though his left hand is fierce, his right side is disadvantaged. I will just keep attacking his right side. He’s worried about Xiao Longnu’s injury. As time drags on, his mind must be restless.” As a result, from his sleeve he took out the five wheels — gold, silver, copper, steel, and lead. In his heart, he knew that this was really a moment of life or death, of honor or shame. He was not careless in the least yet his expression remained casual like he had no cares. He strolled out, smiling: “Yang Xiong Di [Brother Yang], I congratulate you as we meet again. You’ve obtained this powerfully divine sword! This is quite a magical weapon. I only fear this old monk also can’t handle it.” He still didn’t have a strategy to win so he used the situation to his benefit. He heavily praised this black iron sword, leading the crowd to think that this youngster was only lucky to obtain this God-sent weapon.

Xiao Longnu leaned against Yang Guo’s chest, in her dazed state seeing Jinlun Fawang holding his wheels. She thought that, depending on Yang Guo’s strength alone, he wouldn’t be able to beat the enemy so she said in a low voice: “Guo’er, go find me a sword, we... we... together... together use Yu Nu Su Xin swordplay “Pure Heart of the Jade Maiden Swordplay” to get rid of him.” Yang Guo felt pain in his heart, softly replied: “Gu Gu, you set your mind at ease. Guo’er alone can handle this.” Xiao Longnu moved to the left to shield his body as much as possible, trying to keep him out of danger. Yang Guo felt both gratitude and joy so he said out loud: “Gu Gu, today we two will fight this devil crowd together. In this life, I have no regrets.” and pointed his black iron sword straight out.

Fawang didn’t dare to meet Yang Guo’s force directly, he jumped backwards. Immediately there came a Wu-Wu sound from a spinning lead wheel Fawang tossed out. Yang Guo lifted his sword to cut it but the lead wheel flew past his body back to

Fawang, unexpectedly untouched. Then there came a loud rumbling buzzing Wu-Wu, Weng-Weng sound and flashing gold and silver lights. The five wheels flew towards him from five different directions.

For fear that he would affect Xiao Longnu's injured condition, Yang Guo stood there motionless. Fawang's five wheels were only a deceptive attack, just to try out Yang Guo's actions. The five wheels circled close to the two persons' bodies, flying back and forth repeatedly. He saw Yang Guo would certainly not lift his sword to pursue, then understood and was secretly delighted: "You don't dare to move your body, afraid that you would worsen Xiao Longnu's injured condition. The situation is bad and there is no way out. My Zong Yue Yuan attack "Vertical Jump from Distance" can not be defeated." The opponent has a missing arm and also had to protect the injured girl. According to Fawang's rank, there couldn't be a fight like this. However, he knew that a good opportunity of this kind was hard to come by. If Xiao Longnu recovered, the two persons combined couldn't be defeated. Even if Xiao Longnu was injured to near death and Yang Guo was distracted, he himself might not necessarily be able to beat Yang Guo. He only had today to take advantage of the situation and kill them once and for all so there would be no more trouble in the future. As to whether or not it would be fair, let's not pay much attention to it.

The crowd nearby also understood the circumstance and thought Fawang had stepped over the line. Ma Guangzuo loudly shouted: "Big Monk, are you a hero or a scum?"

Fawang appeared not to hear the comment. The five wheels were continuously thrown out and then came back, still circling around Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu. Then the wheels flew high and low, straight and slanting, making both soft and loud noises. The spectators were all bedazzled and anxious.

Suddenly Ma Guangzuo loudly cried out "Ohh". This was the slanting copper wheel flying by, curving fiercely and just passing the top of his head. The wheel cut a piece out of his scalp, which still had a chunk of hair. Blood dripped profusely to the ground. Ma Guangzuo held his head with both hands, cursing, but didn't dare rush out to fight.

Yang Guo knew Xiao Longnu was severely injured. The more they were delayed, the less time for treatment there was. Anxiety filled his heart. Fawang called out: "Be careful!" Suddenly the five wheels returned again, coming side by side about to strike the two people like five powerful waves. Yang Guo's whole body strength rushed to his left arm, the tip of his sword vibrating. 'dang' 'dang' 'dang' sounds echoed as the sword brushed away the gold, copper and steel wheels. Everyone was alarmed, dust flew up, and the silver wheel and the lead wheel were broken, dropping on the ground.

Fawang cried out loudly, flying upwards. His left hand pushed aside the steel wheel while grabbing the gold and copper wheels and he then ferociously smashed down for the top of Yang Guo's head. Yang Guo didn't ward him off but the black iron sword thrust out from his chest. The sword was long while the wheels were short. The wheels were yet to smash his head but the tip of his sword was already less than half a foot away from Fawang's chest. Fawang immediately retreated. His forward attack was no doubt very fast but the retreat was also fast. It was not so clear how he cross stepped, going left and then suddenly jumping back several feet. This was actually quite rare in the martial world. The spectators were dazzled, cheering the one they were rooting for. One cried out loudly: "Good!"

Yang Guo suddenly wielded the black iron sword to the back. Then came a sound, from behind and the copper wheel was chopped in half. And even before the copper wheel hit the ground, the sword whipped out horizontally and the two pieces turned into four. Although the blade of the black iron sword had no sharp point, he applied his internal energy to break the wheel. When the spectators saw Fawang's lightness Kung Fu, they shouted in appreciation. Now they saw the strange power of Yang Guo's divine sword, they all were startled, falling silent.

In just a short while, three out of five of Fawang's wheels were destroyed. Still he was not discouraged, brandishing his gold and steel wheels around without fear. Yang Guo stretched out his sword while Fawang sidestepped to evade Yang Guo's sword strikes. This time he didn't throw out his wheels. Even though he wouldn't be able to attack from afar, this was actually more powerful. When he saw Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu together, attacking on the left side and resisting on the right side, he jumped up high in the air and bore down with both wheels, sending out the Wu-Wu humming sound. Yang Guo's black iron sword did appear quite dull but no matter how Fawang changed his moves, he couldn't get within two or three steps of the couple. Forty or fifty moves passed, both Fawang's wheels returned again and were about to pound into Xiao Longnu. Yang Guo thrust out the black iron sword, and the soft clattering sound was heard as the two weapons met. Both Yang Guo and Fawang sent out their internal forces to their weapons. Both refused to budge and were now motionless in a deadlock situation.

Yang Guo could feel that the opponent's continuing waves of energy growing stronger and stronger, he was secretly alarmed: "This person's internal energy is surprisingly high." He also thought: "We're already matching internal forces and the full power of the black iron sword can't be lashed out. If this battle of internal forces goes on for a long time, the one with more profound energy would have the upper hand. If he moves his body forward further, I'll use the sleeve to strike him by surprise." As a result, his

left arm was slowly pulled back. The two people were originally five feet or so apart. The distance was gradually reduced to five feet and then four and a half, from four and a half to four feet.

As Fawang's disciples Da'erba and Huo Du, who were constantly guarding their master's body nearby, saw that their master was gradually gaining the upper hand, they were delighted, moving forward several steps. While Da'erba cared about his master's safety, he also hoped that his master would not injure his reincarnated "Da Shi Xiong" [big apprentice brother]. Huo Du on the other hand was secretly plotting against Yang Guo. He wielded his folding fan, appearing to be cooling himself, but he actually was waiting for an opportunity to launch his fan attack.

As Qiu Chuji and Wang Chuyi saw Huo Du's eyes glinting as he moved forward, they knew that he thought to help his master. The two persons looked at the situation and thought: "Even though Yang Guo has become our sect's enemy, real men are open and upright. Losing or winning depends on the original fight. How could Mount Zhongnan allow this scheming disciple to act?" They pulled out their long swords, stepping forward and at the same time sending Huo Du a warning stare. Priest Qiu and Priest Wang's beards and hair were all white but the two had practiced martial arts for a long time; their faces had a red glow. The two swords also emitted blue-green lights like a rainbow, showing their own chilling power. Intimidated, Huo Du dare not act rashly.

By now Yang Guo's left arm gradually shrank and he was already only three feet away from Fawang. He thought: "If this monk moves forward another half foot, my right sleeve will strike him. Although it may not be enough to take his life, it will knock him out." As Fawang saw his right shoulder slightly moving, he understood what Yang Guo meant to do, thought: "Even though your arm has been cut off, you still have the shirt sleeve. If applying internal force and sending it out, it will be the same as a sharp soft whip. I'll let you do this and deflect your strike. When you wield your sleeve, the strength in your left arm must lessen and then I'll take advantage of the situation by using my full force attack and as a result your body will be heavily injured."

Xiao Longnu leaned against Yang Guo's body in a perpetually dazed state. As Yang Guo was summoning his internal energy and accelerating it, his body became hotter and hotter. Xiao Longnu felt his face emitting a steam so she opened her eyes, seeing the beads of sweat seeping out at the side of his forehead. She used her sleeve to gently wipe the sweat for him. Then she saw his serious expression, both eyes looking straight ahead so she followed his gaze and turned her head to look. She couldn't help being startled by Fawang's wide-open copper eyes in front of her. Seeing these two eyes with fierce glows, she shut her eyes quickly and then opened them again. Fawang's eyes

were still near. Xiao Longnu was cuddling and leaning against her loved one. Having a pair of wicked eyes fixedly gazing at her was really disgusting. This time she didn't think that Fawang was fighting with Yang Guo. She only knew that this monk was a really evil person and also she was not willing to let him disturb her sweet time right now so she quickly dipped her hand into her bosom, took out a jade bee golden needle, and slowly extended her hand towards Fawang's left eye.

Aside from the fact that this golden needle had a virulent poison on it, any ordinary embroidery needle pricking an eyeball would blind that eye. This time Xiao Longnu only wanted to get rid of the big disgusting eyes, she didn't mean to shoot it out fiercely. With her severe injury, her stretched hand was soft and weak. Her hand was really very slow.

But Fawang and Yang Guo were in a deadlock situation. In this critical stage, one who moved even a little would be paying dearly. Xiao Longnu's golden needle slowly coming near, Fawang could not resist in the least bit. Seeing the golden needle moving closer, from two feet to one foot, from one foot to half a foot, Fawang cried out loudly, pushing both wheels out to the front while struggling to flit backwards. But after all, the overwhelming force from both weapons could not be unloaded so he just firmly stood there and then sat down on the ground. Da'erba and Huo Du called out "Master!" and rushed out to hold Fawang.

Yang Guo's sword then moved twice, splitting both gold and steel wheels in half. Then he moved forward two steps, wielding his sword to cut the top of Fawang's head. Fawang just breathed in, only feeling melancholy death coming. He was weary and did not have the strength to resist. Da'erba lifted his golden rod and Huo Du raised his steel fan, together blocking the black iron sword. But the strength of the sword blow was strangely fierce. Da'erba and Huo Du's knees felt weak, unable to stop the falling sword. They knelt down on the ground but still held their weapons, desperately shielding Fawang.

As the force from the black iron sword was growing stronger, Da'erba and Huo Du felt as if their backs were about to break, their body joints rumbling. Huo Du said: "Shi Ge (older apprentice brother), you hold on alone for a moment. Little brother will save the master first and will be back to help you." Originally the two people's combined force was already unable to resist the force. Now with only Da'erba, how could he block the power of the heavy sword? But he would give up his life to protect his master so he called out: "Good!" and furiously pushed his golden rod upwards.

The two of them were speaking in Tibetan, which Yang Guo could not understand. He only felt the increasing force from the golden rod and was about to apply more force to press down but then Huo Du jumped out.

Who would have thought that Huo Du didn't plan to save his master but only to seek his own retreat? He called out: "Shi Ge [Apprentice Brother], little brother will go back to Tibet and diligently practice martial skills. After ten years I will certainly look for this Yang boy and avenge you and master!" As he said that, he turned around and leapt away as if flying.

Da'erba was duped by his apprentice brother; he was unable to control his anger. He also remembered that Yang Guo was his reincarnated big apprentice brother, how could he heartlessly wrong their master like this? He loudly said: "Da Shi Ge [Big Apprentice Brother], please spare little brother's life. Wait for me to save the master and search for that scum [heart of a wolf & lung of a dog] of a disciple so I could break him into ten thousand pieces. After that I'll voluntarily throw my life into Da Shi Ge [Big Apprentice Brother]'s hand. At that time you'll kill me or cut me, little brother won't even dare to frown."

Yang Guo listened to him mumbling a long speech, he naturally didn't understand. However, Huo Du narrowly escaped death but this person was loyal and did right by his master. He actually understood. Yang Guo saw that his expression was earnest and respected him as a true man who was not too smart. He also saw Xiao Longnu's tender eyes gazing at him. Suddenly his thought to kill and take revenge was dissipated, only feeling that it didn't matter if all the lifetime grudges were not resolved. He immediately lifted his black iron sword and said: "You are released!"

Da'erba got up, but only after a great effort. Strength escaped his whole body and he couldn't hold on to his golden rod. A 'tang' sound was heard as it dropped on the ground. He bent down and bowed to Yang Guo several times, thanking Yang Guo for not killing them. At this time, Fawang still sat motionless on the ground. Da'erba carried his master on his back and went down the mountain in big strides.

Yang Guo alone used his sword to defeat six Mongolian masters. The numerous warriors saw their six leading people either defeated or wounded, they dared not to attack. Instead they picked up Xiaoxiang Zi and Yin Kexi and quickly ran away, leaving no trace.

Ma Guangzuo, with his head still dripping blood, walked over to Yang Guo, waving fingers at him and saying: "Xiao Xiong Di [Little Apprentice Brother], you are really good!"

Yang Guo said: “Ma Da Ge [Big Brother Ma], these people you run around with are not a good kind. If you mix up with them, you will definitely suffer. It would be better to say goodbye to the Mongolian prince and go back to your native land!” Ma Guangzuo said: “You are right, Xiao Xiong Di [Little Apprentice Brother].” He looked at Xiao Longnu, seeing that although heavily injured, she was still full of grace and beauty. He struggled to find sweet words, asking: “When do you and the bride get married? I’m waiting to drink your celebration wine, is that good?” When he first met Xiao Longnu at the Passionless Valley, he saw her as a bride and from then on he always called her the bride.

Yang Guo forced a smile and shook his head. He then rounded up several hundred Taoist priests. Ma Guangzuo said: “Oh, there are still these many stinky priests to be taken care of. I’ll help you.” Yang Guo thought: “If fighting one on one, not even one of these priests is my rival. But if they together close in on me, circumstances will be terribly dangerous. It’s not worthwhile to let him die in vain with me.” So he said loudly: “You’d better be off quickly. I alone can handle this.” Ma Guangzuo now understood, applauding: “Right, that’s right! With all those big priests, not one could defeat you. What’s with all these stinky little priests? Xiao Xiong Di [Little Apprentice Brother], the bride, I’m leaving!” Dragging his copper rod and laughing merrily, he turned and left, only the sound of his copper rod bumping stones could be heard on his way down the mountain. And the sound gradually quieted.

Yang Guo propped his heavy sword on the ground. His fight with Fawang had used up a lot of his internal energy. He pondered: “Jinlun Fawang, Xiaoxiang Zi and others all worried about one another so they fought with me one on one in the hope to get rid of each other and leaving only himself at the end. I was benefiting as a third party in a dispute. Had those six people together attacked me, it would have been very difficult to withstand. Let alone the fact that I competed with internal energy with Jinlun Fawang. I was certainly going to lose but fortunately Gu Gu [Xiao Longnu] pulled out a golden needle so I could win by luck. These Quanzhen priests’ minds and bodies fight as one, all obeying their five masters’ commands. Although the Taoist group’s martial skills can’t match those of Fawang and others, numerous wills build a city. Their combined power really was much stronger than Fawang and the gang. Anyway, Gu Gu and I are already together here. We fight until we have no strength left, then we two will die together.”

Qiu Chuji said in a clear voice: “Yang Guo, so your martial skills have reached this stage; our generation is much, much inferior. But our sect has several hundred people; do you think you can break through our blockade by yourself?”

Yang Guo looked out into the distance, seeing four swords glinting. Every seven priests formed a row, tightly encircling himself and Xiao Longnu. The priests using this “Seven Man Circle” martial skill all united their swords and formed a first-class defense. This time the force around him was an equivalent of having tens of sword masters surrounding them from all sides.

Yang Guo had earlier disregarded life and death so he snorted and moved forward one step. Seven priests were holding their swords out to block him. Yang Guo thrust his sword out and seven swords simultaneously dashed out to counterstrike. A ‘qiang’ sound was heard as the seven swords were all broken and the seven priests holding the rest of their broken swords were quickly leaping aside.

The power Yang Guo sent out from his sword was this incredible. Although Qiu Chuji and others had for a long time fought powerful enemies, they had never seen anything like this. Wang Chuyi called out: “Xuan Ji “Jade Pearl” formation followed by Yao Guang “Moving Light Strike!” Yang Guo thought that he would pay no attention to the Quanzhen master’s big and small orders and rely on the power of sword thrusts to rush outside. He was carrying Xiao Longnu and moving two steps forward, and then he saw another seven priests circling and blocking his way so he immediately wielded his sword. This seven- priest formation did not seek to counterstrike but the priests appeared like a curtain, crisscrossing and changing their positions. He swept past them; two of them cried out — one had an injured waist, the other a broken leg — they collapsed on the ground.

But this time fourteen long swords were pointed at Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu’s backs, seven for Yang Guo and seven for Xiao Longnu. If Yang Guo turned back to strike, he would be able to knock down the fourteen swords but Xiao Longnu would also be injured. At his slight hesitation, another seven swords pointed at Xiao Longnu’s right side. At this point, he couldn’t even sacrifice himself and also didn’t have a way to rescue Xiao Longnu.

Qiu Chuji lifted his hand and shouted: “Hold!” The lights emitting from the twenty-one long swords glittered. Every sword pointed a few inches away from the couple, then stayed very still. Qiu Chuji said: “Long Guniang [Miss Long], Yang Guo, our respective honored founders shared a long, long history. We, the Quanzhen sect, have today won by numbers, which was not a glorious thing, and Long Guniang [Miss Long] had already been severely wounded. Wrongs should be righted by untying the problem, not by making it more complicated. You two please go. No matter who did or didn’t do something, let us wipe the slate clean today.”

Yang Guo and Quanzhen sect's feud was already huge. In the early years, Sun Po Po [Grandma Sun] was killed by Hao Datong, who was remorseful and willing to give up his life to make it right. This matter was also unresolved. Yang Guo came to Mount Zhongnan to search for Xiao Longnu and really didn't mean to battle with the Quanzhen sect. As he heard Qiu Chuji's speech, he was thinking: "Saving Gu Gu's life is important. If I fight with these little priests, regardless of victory or defeat, honor or disgrace, what good could come of it?" He was just about to say that he agreed, Xiao Longnu's eyes slowly scanning from left to right. In a low voice she asked: "Where's Yin Zhiping?"

Yin Zhiping's back was struck by a wheel and his chest was pierced by his sword. These were two fatal wounds, but he hadn't died yet. He was rescued by his apprentice brothers and taken to one side. His breathing was already heavy and his eyes were blurry. Then he heard a gentle voice asking: "Where's Yin Zhiping?" These four words were actually said lightly but to his ears they were like a thunder strike. Not knowing where he got the extra strength but he got up from the ground, waded through all the swords, and called out: "Long Guniang [Miss Long], I'm here!"

Xiao Longnu stared at him for a moment. Seeing his Taoist robe drenched with blood and his face ghostly pale, she couldn't help but feel her heart sinking. Her voice trembled: "Guo'er, this person has defiled me. Even if he recovers from his injuries, he still couldn't fight you. But he... but he gave up his life to save me... so you must not give him any more trouble. Such is my brutal fate." She decided that she had to say this. Even though it was in front of several hundred people, she spoke honestly out her grief.

Yin Zhiping heard her saying: "But he gave up his life to save me, you must not give him any more trouble. Such is my brutal fate." As these words went through his ears, he couldn't help feeling like his heart was being cut out. Out of his own dark desire, he had made a grave mistake. He revered her as if she was a goddess, yet he caused her a lifetime of sadness. To die a hundred times over would still not be enough to redeem him. He cried out loudly: "Master, Four Martial Elders, this disciple's sin is atrocious. You and the others cannot bother Long Guniang [Miss Long] and Yang Guo." Having said that, he jumped up and plunged into the eight or nine long swords that the priests were holding in front of him. Many swords pierced through his body, killing him instantly.

This was an unforeseen incident. Many people had not anticipated it so they couldn't help crying out in alarm. The priests heard Xiao Longnu's words. Then they saw Yin Zhiping acknowledged the crime and committing suicide. It looked like he didn't adhere to the rule and despicably disgraced Xiao Longnu. The Quanzhen Five Masters

were priests who strictly adhered to the Taoist rules. Thinking about the wrongs that were done, they all felt greatly ashamed. But when it came to an apology, they found it difficult to express.

Qiu Chuji glanced at his four apprentice brothers and then shouted: “Put down the swords!” Then only the ‘qiang’ sound could be heard. The priests had put their swords back into their sheaths, making a pathway.



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