

## Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

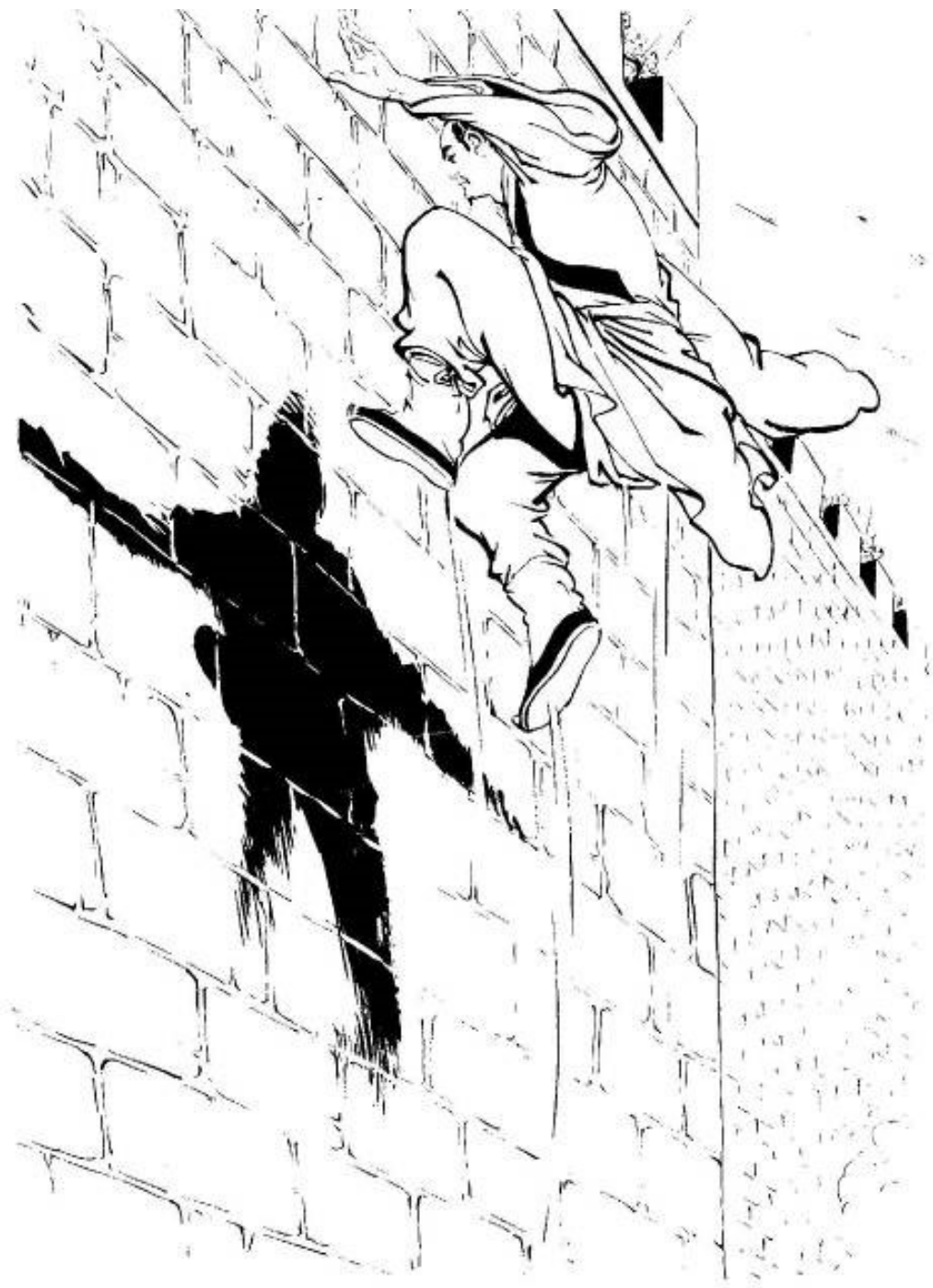
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## SDXL Chapter 21



### Chapter 21 – Fierce Fighting at Xiangyang

*Translated by Noodles*



*Guo Jing's left foot flicked up against the wall and he flew up over ten feet. His right feet followed and he rose up another ten feet. Silence broke out on the battlefield as tens of thousands spectators fixed their eyes on him.*

Yang Guo was just about to take his dagger out and stab Guo Jing when he suddenly heard three light flicks on the outside window. He quickly shut his eyes and kept still.

Guo Jing immediately woke up alarmed and said, "Rong'er? Is there some kind of problem?" No more noises came from the window.

Guo Jing saw that Yang Guo was in a deep sleep and could hear his even snoring. He saw how easily he slept and didn't want to wake him, so he got up from the bed quietly and went to the door. He opened the door and saw Huang Rong in the courtyard signaling him with her hand. Guo Jing went to her and said quietly, "What's the matter?"

Huang Rong did not reply and lead him to the garden. She took a look all around before saying, "I heard you and Guo'er's conversation. He's up to no good, do you know that?"

Guo Jing was startled and asked, "He's up to no good?"

Huang Rong replied, "I could tell from his words that he's been suspicious of you killing his father."

Guo Jing said, "He may be suspicious but I've promised that I'll tell him all about the reasons for his father's death in detail."

Huang Rong said, "Are you really going to tell him everything?"

Guo Jing said, "I have always blamed myself for his father's tragic death. Though Brother Yang Kang went down the wrong path, we did nothing to save him."

Huang Rong gave a 'humph' and said, "How could he be saved? I just wished that I'd killed him earlier. If I had, would your Masters have died on Peach Blossom Island?" When Guo Jing recalled this bitter event, he couldn't prevent himself from heaving a long sigh. Huang Rong said, "Brother Zhu sent Fu'er to tell me that there's something odd with Guo'er and she told me how you two were going to sleep on the same bed. I was worried that something might happen and I have been on guard by the window all along. It's better not to sleep in the same room as him. You should know that people's thoughts are hard to fathom. His father... his father died from poison as a result of striking me on the shoulder."

Guo Jing said, "It can't be said that you killed him."

Huang Rong said, "Both of us had the thought of killing him in our minds and in the end he did die because of me. Although we didn't kill him with our own hands, there's not much difference."

Guo Jing thought deeply for a while and said, "You're right. I won't tell him about this. Rong'er, you've been up for half the night, quickly go back to your room and rest. After tonight, I'll move to the camp." He knew that his wife's wisdom exceeded his a hundred

times and although he didn't believe that Yang Guo had any ill intent towards him, he did as she said. He stretched out his hand and put his arm around her waist and led her slowly into the inner halls. He said, "Guo'er used every ounce of strength he had to take back the position of the Chancellor of Wulin for us. He knows what's right and wrong when it comes to matters of the country; he risked his life in saving you and Fu'er twice; how can his father compare with his heroic nature?"

Huang Rong nodded her head and said, "Yes, this is something that's wonderful to see in this young man, but he has two clouds hanging over him. One is the reasons for his father's death and two, his relationship with his Master. I made Miss Long leave him but Guo'er seems to be all-knowing; somehow he found her again. From their expressions, it looks like they'll never be separated again."

Guo Jing kept silent for a while and then suddenly said, "Rong'er, you're even more all-knowing than Guo'er; think of a way to stop Guo'er from going down the wrong path."

Huang Rong sighed and said, "I don't even know what to do about our daughter let alone Guo'er. Brother Jing, I just have you in my heart and you have just me in yours. But our daughter isn't like us; she has two men in her heart, she treats each of the Wu brothers the same. This makes things difficult for us parents."

Guo Jing accompanied Huang Rong to her room and helped her onto her bed. He covered her with a blanket and held her hand, sitting by the bed waiting for her to go to sleep. The pair had been busy with defending the country and hadn't had a chance to spend any quiet time with each other like this. The two looked at each other, in silence, in peace.

Huang Rong held her husband's hand and brushed it gently across her cheeks. She whispered, "Brother Jing, you name our second child."

Guo Jing laughed, "You know I'm not good at that; why are you making fun of me?"

Huang Rong said, "You still say that you're not able. Brother Jing, there's no one in the world that's better than you." She said these words with great sincerity.

Guo Jing lowered his head and kissed his loving wife on her face gently. He said, "If it's a boy, we'll call him Guo Polu, but what if it's a girl?" He thought for a while and shook his head saying, "I can't think of one, you think of a name."

Huang Rong said, “Elder Qiu named you ‘Jing’ so that you would not forget the shame of the Jing Kang years. The Jin have been destroyed but now the Mongolians are threatening us. This child is going to be born in Xiangyang; we’ll call her Guo Xiang so in the future she’ll remember that she was born in this city when it was surrounded by warring soldiers.”

Guo Jing said, “Good, but hopefully she will not be like her sister. She’s grown up now and she still makes us worry about her.”

Huang Rong smiled lightly and said, “It doesn’t matter if we have to worry but...” She gave a sigh and said, “I really hope that it will be a boy so that the Guo’s will have an heir.”

Guo Jing stroked her hair and said, “A boy or a girl; will it not be the same? Just go to bed, don’t think too much.” He pulled the blanket over her and blew out the candles. He returned to his room and saw Yang Guo in a deep sleep. The chime for the third hour could be heard. He returned to the bed and slept.

How would he know that when he was talking to his wife, Yang Guo was hiding behind the pavilion and heard every single word they said? When Guo Jing returned to the inner halls with his wife, Yang Guo stood there in a daze. His mind was repeatedly going over what Huang Rong had said, “I just wished that I killed him earlier... his father died from poison as a result from striking me on the shoulder... both of us had the thought of killing him in our minds and in the end he did die because of me.” He thought, “There’s no more doubts, my father died because of the two of them. Huang Rong is really wily; she’s already suspicious of me. If I don’t make my move today then I don’t think I’ll ever get another chance like this.” He then returned to the room and slept on the bed quietly, waiting for Guo Jing to return.

Guo Jing slipped himself on to the bed and heard Yang Guo’s faint snoring. He thought, “This child sleeps so soundly.” He rested his head lightly on the pillow, afraid that he would wake him up. A short while passed and he was about to fall asleep when he suddenly felt Yang Guo turning his body around slowly but while he was turning over, his snoring continued. Guo Jing was startled, “Everyone stops their snoring when they turn over in their sleep. There’s something wrong with his breathing, could it be that when he’s practicing his internal energy he circulated it in the wrong way? This isn’t anything trivial.” The thought of Yang Guo pretending to sleep never entered his mind.

Yang Guo slowly turned around slowly and saw that Guo Jing did not notice him so he continued his faint snoring and got down from the bed. He had wanted to make his

move while he was beneath the blanket but he was worried about how close he was to Guo Jing. It would be extremely dangerous for him. If Guo Jing sends out a last gasp palm at him then surely he would be killed. He had thought about sitting up to do it but he was still worried about how good Guo Jing's martial arts were. In the end he decided to first get off the bed and stab Guo Jing in one of his vital areas before escaping out of the window. He was also afraid that if he stopped his snoring, Guo Jing would notice, so he kept up the pretence while he got down from the bed. But by doing this, Guo Jing was fooled even more. Guo Jing was thinking, "Could it be that the child has a sleep-walking disease? If I make a noise now, he would break out in a shock, his chi in his dan tian would surge the opposite way and he would immediately fire deviate." So he didn't make a move and listened out for his actions.

Yang Guo took out his dagger slowly and braced it against his chest with his right hand. He made his way to the bed step by step and suddenly gathered his chi into his arm to make his attack. Just as he was about to thrust the dagger, he heard Guo Jing call out, "Guo'er, what kind of nightmare are you having?"

Yang Guo was extremely shocked and he immediately darted out of the window. He was fast but Guo Jing was faster; before he touched the ground Guo Jing had already managed to grab him. Yang Guo's thoughts went to despair, he knew that his enemy was much stronger than him and it would be of no use to resist so he closed his eyes and kept silent. Guo Jing carried him back into the room. He placed him on the bed and sat him up with his hands hanging down in front of him, assuming the form of practicing Xuan Men chi. Yang Guo was bitter and afraid, "I wonder what kind of evil method he's going to use to torture me." He suddenly remembered Xian Long Nu. He breathed in deeply and wanted to call out to her, "Gu Gu, I've been captured, quickly run away."

When Guo Jing saw him suddenly breathe in deeply and circulate his chi, he was even more convinced that he was having problems with the circulation of his chi and thought, "In a situation like this one can only breathe in slowly and shallowly, it's extremely dangerous to breathe in so quickly and deeply like this." He quickly placed his palm against Yang Guo's lower abdomen.

Yang Guo's 'dan tian' was suppressed by Guo Jing's profound internal energy and he couldn't call out. He was concerned for Xiao Longnu's safety and struggled until his face went red but with his 'dan tian' suppressed, he couldn't move an inch. Guo Jing said slowly, "Guo'er, you were too anxious in circulating your chi; this is called desiring speed and not transmission. Stop moving, I'll help return your chi back to their original sources."

Yang Guo was startled and didn't know what he meant by this; but then he felt a warm gradual chi entering his 'dan tian' from his palms that was extremely comforting. He then heard Guo Jing say, "Slowly expel your chi and slowly let this warm chi transmit through the 'Water Divide' to the 'Interior Strengthening' through the 'Great Tower Gate', 'Turtledove Tail' to the 'Jade Hall', 'Florid Canopy', first clear the conception vessel, ignore the other meridians.

After hearing these words and feeling his chi clearing his meridians, he more or less gathered what was happening. He thought, "Shocking! He thinks I've lost my mind due to me suffering a fire deviation." He secretly circulated his internal energy and deliberately let his chi run wild, appearing not to be in control. Guo Jing was worried and increased the power in his palms, gathering his wild chi into one place. Yang Guo's internal energy was now not shallow. Guo Jing found it slightly difficult to cope for a while when Yang Guo sent his chi surging wildly around his body. He had to waste around an hour's time before he managed to return his contrary chi back into their original channels.

After this struggle, Yang Guo was completely drained of strength and Guo Jing too was extremely tired. The two of them sat in meditation. The sky lightened before they had recovered.

Guo Jing smiled, "Guo'er, are you okay now? I didn't know that your internal energy has reached such a good level already; even I almost couldn't control it."

Yang Guo knew that in trying to save himself, Guo Jing had wasted a lot of his internal energy and was touched by this. He said, "Thank you uncle Guo for saving me; last night I was almost crippled."

Guo Jing thought, "Last night while you were confused, you actually raised a dagger to kill me; luckily you didn't know about this, otherwise wouldn't you be ashamed of yourself?" He was afraid that if Yang Guo knew about this he would feel sorry about it so he changed the subject and said, "Come with me outside of the city, we'll take a look at the city's defenses."

Yang Guo replied, "Yes!" The two of them mounted a warhorse each and rode shoulder to shoulder outside of the city.

Guo Jing said, "Guo'er, the internal energy of the Quanzhen sect is the most orthodox in the world, though progress is slow, you will not run into any trouble. You can learn other sect's and school's martial arts but when it comes to internal energy it would be

advisable to practice Xuan Men martial arts. We'll study this together once the enemy has retreated."

Yang Guo said, "Don't tell Auntie Guo about me fire deviating last night. If she finds out she'll laugh at me for learning Long Gu Gu's unorthodox martial arts and blame me for making Uncle Guo suffer."

Guo Jing said, "Of course I won't say. Miss Long's martial arts aren't unorthodox; it's just that you weren't concentrating and didn't practice with a clear mind." Yang Guo knew that if Huang Rong found out about this she would immediately know the truth. When he heard Guo Jing promise not to tell Huang Rong, his mind relaxed.

The two of them headed west of the city and arrived at a stream. Guo Jing said, "Though this is a small stream, it is very famous; it is called the Tan Torrent."

Yang Guo said, "Oh. I have heard people talk about the story of the Three Kingdoms; they mentioned that Emperor Liu of Shu leaped over the Tan Torrent on horseback. So, the Tan Torrent is located here."

Guo Jing said, "The horse that Liu Bei rode that year was called De Lu; the horse handler said that it would harm its rider. But in the end De Lu actually leaped over the Tan Torrent and escaped from the pursuing army, saving Emperor Liu of Shu's life in the process." When he talked about this, he couldn't stop himself from thinking about Yang Guo's father Yang Kang. He gave a heavy sigh and said, "The people of the world are just the same as the horse Du Lu; to the good it does good, to the evil it does evil. Is there such a thing as a definite good or evil person? The only difference between the two is that there is a contrast in thought."

Yang Guo's heart trembled and he took a look over at Guo Jing. There was an extremely hurt expression on his face; it appeared that these words weren't meant as an attack on him. Yang Guo thought, "Your words might be right but what is good? What is evil? You and your wife killed my father, could that be the actions of someone who's good? Your words really are brash; you don't know how shameful you are." He had always had great respect for Guo Jing; but from now, whenever he remembers how his father died at their hands, evil thoughts filled his mind.

The two rode on for a little while and arrived at the top of a hill. From above one could see the flow of Han going southwards; refugees from all over were descending on Xiangyang. Guo Jing stretched out his horsewhip and pointed at the refugees. He said,



“The Mongolians must have intensified their slaughter of our people in Sixiang, destroying the homes of our citizens. They’re abominable.”

Looking down from the hill, one could see, by the side of the road, a stone slab with some words written on it. It said: Minister of Works for the Tang Dynasty, Du Fu’s hometown lies there.

Yang Guo said, “Xiangyang is no ordinary city. So the hometown of this great poet is here.”

Guo Jing swept his whip and recited, “The great city unlike metal, the small cities of over ten thousand zhangs... the joined clouds of lined up battles, the flying birds unable to rise beyond. Self-guarding with ruin, how can Xi Dou be recovered? ... Struggling with long halberds, history needs one man.”

Yang Guo heard him recite this with great passion and he recited it himself; “Self-guarding with ruin, how can Xi Dou be recovered? Struggling with long halberds, history needs one man. Uncle Guo, this is a really good poem, was it written by Du Fu?” Guo Jing said, “Yes. A few days ago, your Auntie Guo and I were discussing the defense of Xiangyang and this poem by Du Fu came up. She wrote it out for me. I really like this poem but my memory is bad. I went over this poem many times but all I can remember are just a few lines. There have been many educated men in our history who have written poems; but over the years, they have proclaimed Du Fu as the greatest poet of all and it’s all because of his worry for his nation and people.”

Yang Guo said, “You said, ‘a hero’s imperative is to serve your country, serve your people’, literature and martial arts are different but the same can be applied to both.”

When Guo Jing heard him grasp this he was delighted and said, “I do not understand much about literature; but no matter what one becomes in their life, a merchant, a slave, a soldier, as long as the thought ‘serve your country, serve your people’ is there, one can be a true man, a true hero.”

Yang Guo asked, “Uncle Guo, do you think you will be able to defend Xiangyang?”

Guo Jing thought for a while and then pointed to the hills and trees to the west before saying, “In Xiangyang’s history, the most famous person is Zhuge Liang. Twenty ‘li’ (10km) west of here is a thriving place. It was the place where he lived in seclusion. Coarse people like me can’t fathom the deeds that he did saving our nation and bringing peace to our people. He once said that all he knew was that one must follow the

phrase 'bending your body to the task until your dying day'. Whether it would lead to success or failure, he didn't know. When your Auntie Guo and I talked about whether Xiangyang can be defended or not; we ended up with these same words."

Just as they were talking, they saw that the refugees who were at the doors of Xiangyang had suddenly turned around while the refugees behind kept on flowing forward towards Xiangyang. It was chaos.

Guo Jing was shocked and said, "Why aren't the guards letting them into the city?" He galloped towards the city and saw a line of archers with their bows armed pointing at the refugees.

Guo Jing called out, "What are you doing? Quickly open the gates." When the guards saw that it was Guo Jing, they quickly opened the gates and let him and Yang Guo in.

Guo Jing said, "These people are being persecuted by the Mongolians, why aren't you letting them in?"

The general guarding the gates said, "General Lu said that spies have hidden themselves amongst the refugees; we cannot let them in for that reason."

Guo Jing shouted, "Even if there are one or two spies, how can we show no regard for these hundreds of lives? Quickly open the gates."

Guo Jing has been guarding the city for a long time now and had many great achievements; though he did not have an official post, the general guarding the city did not dare to disobey his orders and opened the city gates. At the same time, he ordered a messenger to report this to Lu Wende.

Old and young all converged on the city. Suddenly, a dust cloud appeared far away; the Mongolian army was moving in from the north. The Song soldiers scattered and went back inside the walls of the city. A large group of people stood out in front of the oncoming enemy; they were all clothed in rags and all had a stick in their hands, none had a real weapon and they were scattered. They called out, "Don't shoot arrows here; we're Song citizens as well!"

The Mongolian army however sheltered themselves behind the refugees.

Ever since the times of Ji Si Khan, whenever the Mongolian army attacked a city, they would first send the citizens of the surrounding country towards the city they were at-

tacking. If the soldiers who were guarding the city weakened their resolve at this sight, the Mongols would immediately come forward and attack. By using this method, the Mongolian army was able to slaughter the citizens of the nation they were attacking and defeat their opposition in the city, killing two birds with one stone. It was extremely brutal and cruel but effective. Guo Jing had been with Mongolian army a long time and knew about this tactic, but there was nothing he could do to counter it. The Mongolian soldiers held the spears and long sabers to the front as they forced the citizens of the Song forward. The people were forced closer and closer and the people closest the city began to climb up the ladders.

Lu Wende rode his horse and took a look around at what was happening. When he saw the urgent situation they were in he immediately ordered, “Defending the city is the main priority, fire the arrows!”

Arrows rained down and many people were struck. Those who weren’t fell back. The Mongolian army chopped heads with their sabers and pierced bodies with the spears and the refugees were forced back towards the city. Yang Guo stood next to Guo Jing and watched this tragic scene in anger.

Lu Wende called out, “Fire the arrows!” Arrows rained down once more.

Guo Jing shouted, “Stop, you can’t kill good people!”

Lu Wende said, “In such an urgent situation, even if it is a good person, we have to kill them.”

Guo Jing shouted, “No, how can you kill good people wrongly?”

Yang Guo’s heart trembled, “You can’t kill good people wrongly! How can you kill good people wrongly?”

Guo Jing called out, “My Beggar Clan brothers and my Wulin friends follow me!” He then rushed down towards the city gates. Yang Guo followed him.

Guo Jing said, “You suffered an injury when practicing chi last night; you cannot exert any kind of strength today. Go back to the city wall and watch what’s happening.”

Yang Guo saw his fellow Han being treated worse than animals by the Mongolian army and wanted to go down with Guo Jing and do some killing. He was startled when he heard this but he couldn’t tell Guo Jing that last night was just an act; so he returned

back up the city wall. Guo Jing led a group of people and opened the western gate. They rushed out and attacked the Mongolian flank. The Mongolian troops who were forcing the refugees forward turned towards Guo Jing.

The people Guo Jing was leading were good fighters of the Beggar Clan and patriots that had been gathered from all over China. They shouted and attacked; over a hundred Mongolian soldiers were immediately forced off their horses. The Mongolian army saw that their thousand soldiers were not able to fend them off and so another thousand came forward from the side. The Mongolian soldiers were all experienced, brave and vicious; though the group Guo Jing was leading knew martial arts, they were not able to subdue the Mongolians for the time being. When the refugees saw that the Mongolian soldiers were not pushing them forward any longer, they scattered.

A horn blew from the east and two Minghan regiments (division of 1000 men) surged forward. Another two Minghan regiments from the west dashed forward and surrounded Guo Jing and his group. Lu Wende was scared witless when he saw the might of the Mongolian army; how would he dare to send men out for a rescue?

Yang Guo stood at the top of the city walls and kept on going over what Guo Jing had said, “You can’t kill good people wrongly! How can you kill good people wrongly?” When he saw Guo Jing surrounded he thought, “All the guards had to do was to let some arrows fly and kill a few people and they would have been able to stop this Mongolian attack. The reason Uncle Guo is in all this danger is because he didn’t want to kill good people wrongly. He doesn’t know these people yet he risks his life to save them; why did he want to kill my father?”

He saw the tragic killing below but all he could think about was this riddle; “He and my father were sworn brothers; this isn’t any ordinary kind of relationship, but in the end he still wanted to harm him. Could it be that my father was an evil person?” Ever since he was little he had always thought of his father as someone who was chivalrous, brave and heroic; one of the greatest men on earth. To acknowledge that his father was an evil person was something that he could not do. But in his heart, he had the feeling that his father could not compare to his Uncle Guo; but whenever he had this feeling, he forced it back down. Right now however, he couldn’t stop himself from thinking about this point.

The cries below the city walls were ear shattering. Guo Jing and his group dashed left and surged right but they still were unable to break out. Zhu Ziliu led a group of men and the Wu brothers and Guo Fu led another to save them; but the Mongolian horn was blown once again and another four Minghan units surged forward to the city

gates. Khubilai was indeed skilled in warfare. If the city gates opened to save Guo Jing and the others, the four divisions would break into the city.

Lu Wende was shocked senseless now and ordered, “Do not open the city gates!” Two hundred men who were ordered to guard the gates were told to kill anyone daring to try to open the gates. General Wang led a group of archers at the top of the city walls and they fired their arrows incessantly.

Chaos ruled both outside and inside the city while Yang Guo’s mind was in the same state; sometimes he wished that Guo Jing would perish in this battle, while at others, he wished that Guo Jing would be able to drive the enemy back.

Suddenly, the formation of the Mongolian soldiers was broken up; thousands of mounted soldiers collapsed back to the sides as though the tides swept them. Guo Jing galloped ahead with a long spear in his hands. The Han behind him formed a tight formation and they surged forward. They managed to get to the city gates. Guo Jing turned his steed around and went to defend the back of the group. His long spear knocked seven or eight Mongolian Generals off their steeds. The Mongolian soldiers stopped pressing for the time being.

Lu Wende relied on Guo Jing heavily and when he saw him escape danger he was ecstatic; he quickly called out, “Open the gates! But only a little, don’t open the gates too wide!”

The city gates opened three or four feet and just allowed one rider in at a time. All the men returned to the city. The yellow flag of the Mongolian army was waved and two divisions of soldiers on horseback charged forward from both sides.

Lu Wende called out, “Brother Guo Jing, quickly get back into the city! We can’t wait for the others.”

How could Guo Jing enter the city while he still had men outside? He turned his horse back and killed two Mongolian soldiers that had ridden up to him.

But once the army was in motion, they moved like the waves of the sea. Guo Jing was skilled in martial arts, but how could one person defend against the attack of a large army?

Zhu Ziliu saw the situation was urgent and quickly lowered down a rope. He called out, “Brother Guo, grab it.”

Guo Jing turned his head and saw the final Beggar Clan member had entered the city but he was followed by ten Mongolian soldiers. The guards at the gates fought them off and began closing the city gates. The two foot thick metal gate slowly closed. Guo Jing shouted and killed an Arban Chief with his spear before leaping up to take the rope. Zhu Ziliu pulled up with all his strength and Guo Jing rose up ten feet.

The Noyan who was supervising the troops ordered, "Arrows!" Immediately, a thousand bows released their arrows. Guo Jing was prepared for this. He tore off the lower part of his gown and swung it in front of his body with his left hand like a shield while he kept hold of the rope with his right hand. The gown was unyielding and blocked off all the arrows; but the steed that he had left behind outside the city walls was killed by the raining arrows. Zhu Ziliu pulled with both hands and pulled Guo Jing up higher and higher.

Guo Jing was around twenty feet away from the top of the city wall when a tall skinny monk appeared amongst the Mongolian army. He was wearing a yellow Buddhist gown; it was none other than Jinlun Fawang. He took a bow from one of the Mongolian soldiers and raised it. He knew that Guo Jing and Zhu Ziliu's martial arts were high and would be able to avoid any arrows he shot at them so instead he aimed for the rope. It was a vicious move. The arrow was ten feet away from both Guo Jing and Zhu Ziliu; the two had no way to stop this arrow. Jinlun Fawang was afraid that the two might come up with a way to stop this arrow so he fired two more arrows, one at Guo Jing and the other at Zhu Ziliu. The first arrow severed the rope while the second and third arrow headed for Guo Jing and Zhu Ziliu with great force.

When the rope severed, Guo Jing dropped and the arrow aimed at him missed. Zhu Ziliu felt the weight in his hand lessen and called out; "Oh no!" The arrow had arrived. It was a very forceful arrow; the person who fired it must have very profound internal energy. The top of the city walls were filled with people, if Zhu Ziliu lowered his head to avoid this arrow, someone behind might be injured. So he stretched out the second finger on his left hand and touched the stem of the arrow, diverting it back down the city wall.

Guo Jing was slightly alarmed when he felt the rope part; though he won't be injured by the fall, he would be surrounded by thousands and thousands of soldiers. How could he fight his way out of that? The Mongol army is right next to the city gate now; if my side opens it to let me in, the Mongols would definitely take the opportunity to push through. There was no time to think in this danger; his left foot flicked up against the wall and he flew up over ten feet. His right foot followed and he rose up another ten feet. Very few people were proficient in this "Stairs to Heaven" technique. Even those

who were well versed in it could only manage two or three feet per step; but on this slippery wall, each step of Guo Jing's took him over ten feet. Guo Jing's martial arts were frighteningly good. Silence broke out on the battlefield as everyone fixed their eyes on him.

Jinlun Fawang was slightly startled when he saw this. However, he knew that when one uses the "Stairs to Heaven", they must make their leap in one breath. If Fawang could distract him and disturb his breathing then Guo Jing would not be able to make his third step, so Fawang raised his bow again and shot an arrow towards Guo Jing's back.

The arrow flew like the wind. Shouts of, "No arrows!" were heard from soldiers from both the top of the city walls and down below. Both sides saw the terrifyingly good skills of Guo Jing and were in awe; they all hoped that he would make it. The Mongolians were the enemy but had much respect for great heroes and great men, they were all furious when they saw someone had fired an arrow at Guo Jing.

Guo Jing knew that the arrow behind him had a tremendous force behind it. He called out in alarm, "Not now!" He had to use his hand to deflect it away. Both sides cheered when they saw that the arrow failed to hit him. But with this earth shattering noise, Guo Jing was falling back down the city wall. There were only a few feet to the top of the city wall but Guo Jing had no way to climb up it.

When the two sides were fighting, the same was happening within Yang Guo's heart. In the short space of time that Guo Jing climbed up, dropped down, climbed up and dropped down again, Yang Guo's mind repeatedly went over, "He killed my father, should I kill him or not, or should I save him or not?"

When Guo Jing was using the "Stairs to Heaven" technique, Yang Guo had thought about throwing out a palm at Guo Jing. Guo Jing was in midair and had nothing to support himself with; he would definitely suffer a serious injury and fall back down from the city wall.

But as he was hesitating, Fawang had already fired an arrow at Guo Jing that stopped him from coming up. Yang Guo's mind was in confusion. Suddenly, he grabbed the severed rope in Zhu Ziliu's hand with his left hand and leapt down from the city wall towards Guo Jing, grabbing Guo Jing's arm with his right hand.

This was a move out of the blue but Zhu Ziliu responded with great speed. He first lowered the rope down slightly before gathering strength into his arms and urgently pulled

the rope upwards. Yang Guo and Guo Jing arced in circle like two large birds flying in the sky. The soldiers on both sides watched with their mouths open.

When Guo Jing was in midair he thought, wouldn't it mean he had lost in this exchange if he doesn't reply to this sneak attack by this evil monk? He saw Fawang had fired another arrow. As soon as his left foot touched the top of the city wall he immediately grabbed a bow from one of the guards and fired an arrow of his own towards Fawang's arrow. The arrows collided in midair and Fawang's arrow was split into two. Fawang was stunned. Suddenly, a fierce gust arrived; a 'zheng' sound was heard as the metal bow in his hands snapped in two.

Though Guo Jing's and Fawang's martial arts were within a hairsbreadth of each other, Guo Jing's archery skills were unsurpassed. He had learned archery from one of the greatest Mongolian archers, Zhe Bie (Jebek), when he was young and his internal energy was profound – when it came to archery, Fawang lost out.

Guo Jing had fired three arrows; the first divided Fawang's arrow, the second snapped Fawang's bow and the third was fired towards Khubilai's flag staff.

Khubilai's flag had fluttered in the wind gloriously amongst the thousands of soldiers, but now it had fallen. Soldiers from both sides shouted and hollered.

Khubilai saw his army's morale drop after Guo Jing's display and immediately ordered his men back.

Guo Jing stood at the top of the city wall and watched the Mongolians retreat. They were marching back in formation and in line; those who were at the front didn't rush and those who were at the back showed no fear. He couldn't stop himself from sighing and thinking, "Our weak Song army cannot compete with the great Mongolian army." He frowned as he worried about the fate of his nation.

Zhu Ziliu, Yang Guo and the others were in awe of Guo Jing when they saw that he had no signs of pride of his face even after displaying his might in front of thousands.

Khubilai pulled his men back tens of miles and then started to think of a plan to take the city. With Guo Jing at the helm, it would be difficult to take it.

Fawang said, "Your highness saw for yourself; if it weren't for Yang Guo, Guo Jing would be dead now. I knew that Yang Guo was not a man of his word."



Khubilai said, “No! I think it’s because he wants to Guo Jing to die by his own hands and not at the hands of others. He appears to be a brave and valiant man; he is not a con-niving fellow.”

Fawang didn’t agree but he didn’t dare to answer back, he just said, “Hopefully your highness is correct.”

Xiangyang city was safe now that the Mongolian army had pulled back. Lu Wende was delighted and threw another banquet to celebrate it. This time, Yang Guo was also invited.

Everyone praised him for his swift and life risking actions in saving Guo Jing. The Wu brothers sat at another table and were filled with jealousy. Yang Guo had made a great achievement immediately after arriving at Xiangyang. They were also afraid that after this event, Guo Jing would again insist on betrothing his daughter to Yang Guo. The brothers didn’t say a word and just sat there, drinking wine.

Everyone returned to the Guo residence when the banquet finished. Huang Rong invited Yang Guo into the inner halls and praised him. Yang Guo replied with modest words.

Guo Jing said, “Guo’er, you’ve just exerted a fierce force, does your chest hurt?” Guo Jing was worried that by using unrestrained force, Yang Guo’s internal injury would flare up.

Yang Guo was worried that Huang Rong would ask about this further and see through this so he quickly replied, “I’m fine...I’m fine.” He changed the subject immediately and said, “Uncle Guo, the kung fu that you used to fly up the city wall was excellent, there isn’t another who can match that in the world of Wulin.”

Guo Jing gave a little smile and said, “I learned this kung fu a long time ago and haven’t practiced it for years; I’m a little rusty with it and that was why I ran into a bit of trouble.” In actual fact, if he hadn’t used his chi and internal energy to help Yang Guo protect his ‘dan tian’ last night, he would have been able to fly up the city wall using the “Stairs to Heaven” technique even with Jinlun Fawang’s interference. Naturally, he didn’t mention this and said, “Years ago in Mongolia, the Red Sun Elder Ma taught me this skill; who would have thought that I would have to use it today. If you like this skill I’ll teach it to you in a few days time.”

Huang Rong saw that Yang Guo seemed absent minded and his thoughts were somewhere else. His rescue of Guo Jing was seen by thousands, there was nothing suspicious about this but she still felt uncomfortable and said, “Brother Jing, I’m not feeling well tonight, stay with me.”

Guo Jing nodded and said to Yang Guo, “Guo’er, you’re tired, go and rest.”

Yang Guo said his goodnights to the two and went back to his room alone. He heard the call for the second hour. He sat in front of the table and stared at the flickering candlelight with many thoughts running through his head. Suddenly, a noise came from the door. A girl’s voice said, “You’re not sleeping?” It was Xiao Longnu. Yang Guo leapt up in delight and opened the door. Xiao Longnu was standing in front of him dressed in a light green gown.

Yang Guo asked, “Gu Gu what’s the matter?”

Xiao Longnu said, “I wanted to see you.”

Yang Guo held her hand and said tenderly, “I was just thinking about you.”

The two of them strolled out to the garden. The scent of the flowers and trees filled the air. Xiao Longnu looked at the semi-circled moon in the sky and said, “Do you have to kill him with your own hands? We haven’t got much time left.”

Yang Guo quickly whispered into her ear, “The walls have ears here, don’t talk about it.”

Xiao Longnu looked at him enraptured and said, “When the moon is full, the time will be up.”

Yang Guo was alarmed and counted with his fingers; it had been nine days since they parted from Qiu Qianchi. If he doesn’t kill Guo Jing within the next two days, there will not be enough time to hurry back to the valley before the poison reacts. He let out a sigh and sat down on a taihu stone (limestone rocks found in Lake Tai) with Xiao Longnu. The two looked at each other without saying a word and they became wrapped up in their love, forgetting all about matters of killing and avenging.

Suddenly, the sounds of footsteps could be heard from behind the garden fountain, two people were approaching.

A girl's voice said, "If you're going to keep nagging me then you might as well just get a sword and slit my throat to stop my torment."

An angry male voice said, "Huh, don't you think I don't know that you've got more than one man in your heart? That Yang punk showed off in front of everyone after arriving in Xiangyang. Do you remember what you said before?" It was Guo Fu and Wu Xiuwen.

Xiao Longnu made a face at Yang Guo, trying to scold him for flirting with girls everywhere and tormenting them. Yang Guo gave her a smile and pulled her closer to him. He shook his head lightly, telling her not to make a noise.

When Guo Fu heard these words, she became furious and raised her voice, "Since you've made your mind up then forget everything I said before. I'll go somewhere far away by myself; I'm not going to see Yang Guo and I'm not going to see you." A tearing sound was heard; Wu Xiuwen must have tugged her sleeve and Guo Fu must have pulled it back.

Her voice became even angrier as she said, "What are you doing? So what if he shows off? What's it got to do with me? If my parents betroth me to him I'd rather die than agree to it. If father forces me then I'll run away. That Yang Guo has always been an attention grabber since he was young, but I choose not to give a damn about him. Father thinks he's some kind of treasure whereas I think that he's not a good person."

Wu Xiuwen said quickly, "Yes...Yes. I was stupid just now, please forgive me sister Fu. If I act like that again, then I won't have a good death and when I reincarnate, I'll reincarnate as the king of cowards." Feelings of joy seeped through as he said this. Guo Fu giggled.

Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu looked at each other and smiled; one was thinking, "Look, look at how others view me." The other thought, "I was wrong just now, I love you but others love someone else."

Though Guo Fu had a scolding tone in her voice and treated Wu Xiuwen almost like a child, making him obedient and completely enchanted. She had tender feelings for him.

Wu Xiuwen then said, "Master wife loves you very much; beg her day and night non-stop. If Master wife agrees not to betroth you to the one named Yang, then master will not be able to say anything."

Guo Fu said, “Huh, what do you know? Father may listen to mother but when it comes to important matters, mother will not stand up to father.”

Wu Xiuwen gave a sigh and said, “It’ll be great if you treat me the same.” Suddenly, a ‘pa’ sound was heard and Wu Xiuwen called out in pain. He said quickly, “Why are you hitting me”

Guo Fu said, “Who told you to say things like that? I’m not going to marry Yang Guo, and I’m not going to marry you, you little monkey.”

Wu Xiuwen said, “Fine, fine. Finally you’ve admitted it. You don’t want to be my wife but you want to be my sister in law. Let me tell you something... let me tell you something...” He was flustered and couldn’t finish his sentence.

Guo Fu’s voice suddenly became gentle and tender as she said, “Little brother Wu, you’ve told me a thousand times, a million times how you feel about me, I already know. Though your brother hasn’t even said one word of this kind, I know that he loves me. No matter who I pick, one of you brothers will be broken hearted. Don’t you know how hard it is for me?”

Wu Dunru and Wu Xiuwen had always relied on each other ever since they were young because they lost the care of their parents; but in the last few years, the two of them had fallen madly in love with Guo Fu and both were troubled by the other. Wu Xiuwen’s heart was filled with angst and tears actually fell from his eyes.

Guo Fu took out a handkerchief and gave it to him. She sighed, “Little brother Wu, we all grew up together, I have great respect for your brother but I find it easier to talk to you. I am not biased towards any of you. You’re trying to force me to make a clear choice now, if you were me, what should I say?”

Wu Xiuwen said, “I don’t know. All I know is if you marry someone else, life would not be worth living.”

Guo Fu said, “Let’s stop talking about this. Father fought for his life against the enemy today while we’re talking about some trivial stuff here in the garden; if father finds out about this then we’ll both be in trouble. Little brother Wu, let me tell you, if you want to please my parents then why don’t you try to stand out, achieve some great deeds in battle? Won’t my parents look down on you if you keep on hanging around me?”

Wu Xiuwen leapt up and said loudly, “You’re right, I’ll go and assassinate Khubilai and rid the threat to Xiangyang. When that happens, will you agree to marry me?”

Guo Fu smiled, “If you can do such a thing then I would have no other choice but to marry you, wouldn’t I? But Khubilai has many guards around him. Even my father may not be able to beat that Jinlun Fawang. Stop dreaming, just go and sleep.”

Wu Xiuwen stared at Guo Fu’s elegant face and said, “Fine, you go and sleep as well.” He turned around and walked away a few steps before suddenly stopping. He turned and asked, “Sister Fu, are you going to have a dream tonight?”

Guo Fu laughed, “How do I know?”

Wu Xiuwen said, “If you do dream, what do you think you will dream about?”

Guo Fu gave a little laugh and said, “Most probably about a little monkey.”

Wu Xiuwen was filled with joy and skipped away.

Xiao Longnu and Yang Guo listened to their words behind the flower thicket. They couldn’t stop themselves from grinning at each other and comparing themselves with them: one was madly in love with the other while the other didn’t have a set mind; while they had only each other in mind and could die without regret. That couple’s joy and happiness could not compare with the joy and happiness of themselves.

After Wu Xiuwen left, Guo Fu sat on the stone bench and looked up at the moon in deep thought. She stared at it for a long while before letting out a sigh.

Suddenly, someone came out from behind the garden fountain and said, “Sister Fu, why are you sighing?” It was Wu Dunru.

Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu were both slightly startled. Wu Dunru must have hid himself here a long time ago, he was here even before they in fact, otherwise the two would have noticed him when he arrived here.

Guo Fu said with a slight angry tone, “You are always weird like this. You heard everything we said, right?”

Wu Dunru nodded and stood opposite of Guo Fu at quite a distance away but his eyes were still filled with love. The two looked at each other in silence.

After a while, Guo Fu said, “What do you want to say to me?”

Wu Dunru said, “Nothing. You know what I have to say.” He turned around and then slowly walked away.

Guo Fu stared at his back while he walked away towards the garden fountain. He didn't turn around even once. She thought, “Wouldn't it be great if only one of them existed?” She gave a deep sigh and returned to her room alone.

Yang Guo waited until she had gone before laughing, “If you were her, who would you marry?”

Xiao Longnu turned her head slightly and thought for a while before saying; “You.”

Yang Guo laughed, “I don't count. Miss Guo does not like me one bit. I said if you were her, which one of the Wu brothers would you pick?”

Xiao Longnu compared the two Wu brothers in her mind but still came up with, “I'll still marry you.”

Yang Guo was amused and touched. He embraced her and said tenderly, “Others have more than one in their hearts but my Gu Gu loves me only.”

The two of them stayed in each others loving arms until daylight.

The sun was on the eastern horizon. The two still did not want to part. Suddenly, a servant rushed up to them and greeted them before saying, “Master Guo requests Master Yang's presence immediately,”

Yang Guo saw that his face was anxious and knew that it was something important. He left Xiao Longnu and followed the servant to the inner halls.

The servant said, “I searched for master Yang everywhere; master Yang was appreciating the scenery in the garden.”

Yang Guo said, “Has Master Guo been waiting a long time?”

The servant whispered, “The two masters Wu's suddenly disappeared, Master and Madam Guo are worrying about them and Miss Guo cried a few times!”

Yang Guo was startled when he heard this but he knew what had happened. “The two Wu brothers are trying to fight for the hand of their apprentice sister and want to do something outstanding; they must have gone to assassinate Khubilai. He hurried inside and saw Huang Rong looking distressed in her nightgown with Guo Jing pacing to and fro. Guo Fu’s eyes were red and it looked like she was going to cry at any time. There were two swords on the table.

As soon as Guo Jing saw Yang Guo he quickly asked, “Guo’er, the Wu brothers went to the Mongolian camp, do you know why?”

Yang Guo glanced over at Guo Fu and said, “The Wu brothers went to the Mongolian camp?”

Guo Jing said, “Yes. You young ones always talk to each other, do you have any clue about why they went?”

Yang Guo said, “I didn’t notice anything. The two Wu brothers did not say anything to me. It’s probably because they were worried about the danger that Xiangyang was in so they went to the camp to kill a few senior generals. It’ll be a great achievement if they succeed.”

Guo Jing sighed and pointed to the swords on the table. He said, “Even if their hearts are in the right place, they don’t know what they are getting into; their weapons have been taken away and sent back here.”

Yang Guo was rather surprised by this. He knew that the Wu brothers would not be able to succeed with such great fighters such as Jinlun Fawang, Yin Kexi, Xiaoxiang Zi and the likes around; but he wouldn’t have predicted that it would happen in the past few hours and that their weapons would be sent back.

Guo Jing gave the letter that was on top of the weapons to Yang Guo and glanced at Huang Rong. The two of them shook their heads. Yang Guo opened the letter and saw:

To Hero Guo of Xiangyang from the First Protector of Mongolia Jinlun Fawang,

Last night when I was hunting, I unexpectedly came upon your disciples by the name of Wu. People say that great Masters will produce great disciples; I cannot deny this. I have long admired and marveled at Hero Guo’s great name. Last time we meet at the heroes’ feast, we did not get the chance to make acquaintances. I have written to you to

invite you the camp so we may do so and share wine. As soon as you arrive, your disciples will be returned safely. Will you accept this invitation?

The letter had a humble tone and it appeared to be an ordinary invitation for Guo Jing to go to the camp and make acquaintances with Fawang. But what the letter really was saying is that the Wu brothers will only be released if Guo Jing agrees to go to the camp.

Guo Jing waited for Yang Guo to finish reading before saying; “Well?”

Yang Guo knew what this was about, “Auntie Guo’s wisdom is ten times greater than mine, Auntie Guo would have come up with any plan that I could think of. The reason she summoned me to discuss this matter is for one reason only; she wants me and Gu Gu to accompany Uncle Guo to the Mongolian camp. Fawang, Xiaoxiang Zi and the others together might beat Uncle Guo but it isn’t guaranteed that they’ll be able to kill and capture him. If Gu Gu and I help him, Uncle Guo will be able to escape.” He then immediately came up with, “But if Gu Gu and I suddenly changed sides, to harm him will be as easy as turning my palm. If I can’t kill him with my own hands, then I’ll just let Fawang and the others to do it for me, wouldn’t that be great?” He then gave a wry smile and said, “Uncle Guo, my Master and I will go with you. Auntie Guo has seen our swordplay defeat Jinlun Fawang; they might not be able to keep us there if the three of us go together.”

Guo Jing was delighted and smiled, “No one can compare with your intelligence apart from your Auntie Guo. This is the exact thing that your Auntie Guo came up with.”

Yang Guo thought, “Huang Rong, oh Huang Rong, you’ve been clever all your life but today you lose out to me.” He said, “We’ll go right now. Gu Gu and I will pretend to be your attendants, that way we will be able to emphasize your heroic manner in coming to this meeting all by yourself.”

Guo Jing said, “Good!” He turned to Huang Rong and said, “Rong’er, you don’t need to worry, with Guo’er and Miss Long, even if it was a dragon’s lagoon or a tiger’s lair, we’ll still be able to return safely.”

He straightened his gown and said, “We’ll get Miss Long.”

Huang Rong shook her head and said, “No, I just wanted Guo’er to go with you. Miss Long is like a porcelain doll, I cannot let her meet any danger. I want her to stay with me.”



Yang Guo was startled but then immediately understood, “Auntie Guo is indeed wary of me. She wants to keep Gu Gu with her as a hostage, that way I won’t be able to do anything. If I insist of having Gu Gu with me, she will be even more suspicious.” He didn’t say anything about it.

But Guo Jing said, “Miss Long’s swordplay is excellent, it would be a great help if she comes with us.”

Huang Rong countered, “Your Polu or Xiang’er are about to be born. If Miss Long is here to guard me, I can relax a bit more.”

Guo Jing said quickly, “Yes, yes, I’m so dumb. Guo’er, let’s go.”

Yang Guo said, “Allow me to tell my Gu Gu.”

Huang Rong said, “I’ll tell her in a minute, you two are just going to the camp for half a day, it’s not some great event.”

When it came to using their minds, Yang Guo found himself losing out to Huang Rong every time. So he decided to use his against the honest and sincere Guo Jing instead. He’ll make his move against him in the camp and then come back to save Xiao Longnu afterwards. He made his mind up and left the city with Guo Jing.

Guo Jing rode the precious red horse and Yang Guo rode his skinny yellow horse. The two horses were fast and they arrived at the camp within one hour.

Khubilai was startled and delighted that Guo Jing had actually decided to come here and he quickly invited him into his tent.

Guo Jing entered the tent and saw a middle-aged Prince sitting in the middle of the tent. He had a square face and large ears with deep-set eyes; Guo Jing was stunned when he saw this and thought, “This person looks so much like his father Tuo Lei.” He was very close to Tuo Lei [Tolui] when he was younger but now he had passed away; his eyes turned red at this thought and he almost cried.

Khubilai left his seat to greet him and bowed down to him, saying, “When my father was alive, he always praised the heroic and righteous Uncle Guo. I have always admired Uncle Guo. To have the opportunity to meet you is the fulfillment of my lifelong dream.”

Guo Jing bowed to him and said, “Tuo Lei and I were like brothers; when I was younger, my mother and I lived in Genghis Khan’s territory and it was your father who looked after us. It is very sad that he died suddenly at such a young age.”

Khubilai heard that his words were sincere and they moved him. He then introduced Xiaoxiang Zi, Yin Kexi and the others to him and then invited him to his place.

Yang Guo stood behind Guo Jing and pretended that he didn’t know any of them. Fawang and the others did not know why he came but when they saw him ignoring them, they ignored him.

However, Ma Guangzuo called out, “Brother Ya...” Before he finished saying ‘brother Yang’, Yin Kexi had pinched his leg tightly. Ma Guangzuo called out, “What are you doing?”

Yin Kexi turned his head around and ignored him. Ma Guangzuo didn’t know who did this and kept on shouting out insults. He forgot about greeting Yang Guo.

Yang Guo sat down and drank some Mongolian milk wine. Yang Guo saw that the Wu brothers were not present and was about to ask their whereabouts when Khubilai ordered his attendants; “Invite the Masters Wu in.” The attendant did as he was told and pushed Wu Dunru and Wu Xiuwen into the tent.

Their hands and legs were tied tightly with cowhide. The restraints between their legs were just a foot long so the two couldn’t take their normal strides. They could only struggle slowly forwards. Their faces were filled with embarrassment when they saw their Master. They called out, “Master!” and then lowered their heads in silence.

Guo Jing had been extremely angry with them for taking such a risk without telling anyone and causing this mess, but when he saw the two, his feelings changed. Their clothes were torn and blood stained and they were tied up so pathetically, his anger turned to pity. He thought that although the two were reckless, their hearts were in the right place by trying to help the nation, so he said warmly, “A martial artist will endure countless sufferings and countless defeats, what you’ve suffered is nothing.”

Khubilai pretended to scold his attendants and said, “I ordered you to look after these two Masters Wu with great care, why have you treated them like this? Quickly untie them.” The attendants followed his orders. However, the cowhide was soaked in water after being tied and had shrunk tightly into the skin, the attendants couldn’t untie it.

Guo Jing left his seat and took the ends of Wu Dunru's restraints. He pulled outwards lightly and the restraints snapped. He then did the same with Wu Xiuwen's restraints. Guo Jing's movements looked plain, ordinary and seemed to lack sufficient force, but by succeeding, he showed he possessed great internal energy. Xiaoxiang Zi, Yin Kexi, Nimoxing and the others looked at each startled, and all secretly praised his martial arts.

Khubilai said, "Bring some wine quickly so you can apologize to the two Masters Wu."

Guo Jing thought, "Today's not going to be plain sailing; something's going to happen soon. If the Wus don't leave now, I'm going to be distracted." He then made a bow to everyone in the tent and said clearly, "Thank you your Highness for teaching my disciples a lesson for their insolence." He then turned to the Wu brothers and said, "Go back and tell your Master wife that I'm going to stay here for a while and talk with an old friend's son, I'll be back soon."

Wu Xiuwen said, "Master, you..." Last night they failed in their assassination attempt and were captured by Xiaoxiang Zi. He knew that the camp was filled with great fighters and he couldn't stop himself from worrying about Guo Jing.

Guo Jing waved his hand and said, "Leave now! Go and tell General Lu to guard the city tightly and no matter what happens, do not open the city gates in case of an attack by the enemy." Guo Jing said this with a mighty aura and was telling Khubilai that even if something happens to him, Xiangyang will not surrender.

When the Wu brothers saw that Guo Jing had come personally to save them, they were touched but also ashamed of themselves. They didn't say anything else and made their goodbyes with Guo Jing before returning to the city.

Khubilai laughed, "Uncle Guo must not have known about your disciples coming here to assassinate me."

Guo Jing nodded and said, "I did not know about this. My disciples don't know how tall the sky is and how deep the earth is, they were extremely impudent."

Khubilai said, "Yes, Uncle Guo and my family have deep ties with each other, the thought of assassinating me would never cross Uncle Guo's mind."

Guo Jing said with a serious expression, "You're wrong here. The matters of the people are more important than my own. Years ago when Tuo Lei led an army here to attack

Xiangyang, I once thought about trying to kill him to force the army to retreat. But at that exact time, Genghis Khan fell ill and the army retreated and so our brotherhood was preserved. There's a saying, 'place righteousness above family loyalty', since a family can be gotten rid of, why not friends?"

These words were said with a righteous air and Fawang, Yin Kexi and the others all looked at each other with changed faces.

Yang Guo's chest trembled and he thought, "Yes, killing brothers is his best skill. I wonder what my father did all those years ago to eventually die by his hands. Guo Jing, oh Guo Jing, could it be that you've never made a mistake in your entire life?" As he thought about this, hate and fury slowly filled his chest.

Khubilai did not show any signs of anger and had a smile on his face as he said, "So why does Uncle Guo reproach your disciples when you have the same view?"

Guo Jing said, "Looking at their lowly abilities, what chance had they of succeeding in this task? Their failure is not important, it's just that once they failed, you will be even more wary of someone assassinating you; this task would be made even more difficult for later assassins."

Khubilai laughed and thought, "I've heard that Guo Jing is an honest and simple person who's not very good with words, who knew that he can actually speak with such spirit and gusto."

Actually, Guo Jing was just saying what was on his mind and because he knew what he wanted to convey; he was able to say it with great sincerity.

When Fawang and the others saw that he came alone and empty handed to this vast army without any signs of fear on his face; they were in complete awe of him since none of them could match the spirit that he was displaying.

Khubilai couldn't stop himself from admiring Guo Jing. When he saw Guo Jing's lofty air and thought that if he could convince him to join his command, it would be better than taking down ten Xiangyang cities. So he said, "Uncle Guo, the Song are in disarray. You have an Emperor who is blind to the people's plight, you have scoundrels in your courts and those who are loyal are punished, am I right?"

Guo Jing said, "Correct, Emperor Li Zhonghuang is a blind man and the Prime Minister Jia Sidao is the biggest crook of them all." No one guessed that he would actually insult

his own emperor and leaders. Everyone was startled.

Khubilai said, “Yes. Uncle Guo is a great man and a hero of our time so why do you work for such men?”

Guo Jing stood up and said clearly, “Even if the one named Guo is unworthy, why would I allow myself to let those people use me? When I see you violent Mongols invading our land and killing my people, my blood boils. I’m doing this for my people; the angry blood that flows through me is because of them.”

Khubilai patted on the arms of his chair and said, “What great words. Everyone, give a toast to Uncle Guo.” He raised his bowl and downed the wine in one go.

Everyone was getting anxious and they were all afraid that with these stirring words and his relationship with Khubilai’s father, Khubilai might actually let him go. It would be extremely difficult to capture him again but no one could do anything. When they saw Khubilai raise his bowl, they did the same and drank it down in one go. The attendants filled their bowls once more.

Khubilai said, “I once heard an old man say, ‘It’s the people of the land that are important, not the Khan.’ What a truthful phrase. The land of Mongolia is in a state of peace; my people live happily and have what they need. My Khan could not bear to see the people of the Song suffer and when he saw that no one was doing anything about it, he sent his troops south to help end the troubles of the people. This thought is the same as Uncle Guo’s, we both have the same heroic view. Come, let’s toast again.”

Fawang and the others all raised their bowls to their lips. Guo Jing swept his sleeve and sent a gust of wind over. There was a bout of ‘qiang lang lang’ noises as everyone’s bowls fell to pieces on the floor.

Guo Jing angrily shouted, “Stop! Ever since you Mongols invaded our land, you have killed and slaughtered; corpses and bones mount up while blood flows like rivers. My citizens have lost their homes and countless have died by your army’s sabers and arrows. What troubles of my people are you ridding them of?”

Though this sweep of the sleeve was extremely sudden and was completely unexpected, it still managed to knock the bowls out of the hands of Fawang and the others who possessed great martial arts. Everyone felt shame and they all stood up, waiting for Khubilai’s orders to attack.

But Khubilai gave a long laugh to the sky and said, “The Generals of the Mongolian army say that Uncle Guo is a hero without a match, everyone is full of admiration for Uncle Guo. Indeed after seeing you with my own eyes, I now know that your great name is not a myth. I do not dare harm the brotherly relationship of my father; because of the past let’s stop talking about matters of the country?”

Guo Jing saluted with his hands and said, “Tuo Lie’s son is a magnanimous and open-minded man, and none of the other Mongolian princes can compare with him. He will no doubt lead the country one day. I have some advice for you, would you like to listen?”

Khubilai said, “I am willing to listen to Uncle Guo’s teachings.”

Guo Jing folded his arms and said, “The land of the Southern Song is vast and the people many. Talented and learned men are everywhere, and since history began, these kinds of men have not submitted to anyone. You Mongols might be able to expand your territory for a little while but in the future, you will be forced back north. When that happens, it will be disastrous for you and to regret it then will be too late. Please reconsider what you are doing.”

Khubilai smiled, “Thank you for your words.”

Guo Jing heard him say these words casually and said, “We’ll say our goodbyes at that. Goodbye.”

Khubilai waved his hand and said, “Escort the guests out.”

Fawang and the others looked at each other startled and all thought, “It wasn’t easy to catch him, how can we let the tiger escape back into the mountains?” When they saw Khubilai sending Guo Jing out politely, they all felt that it was inappropriate to make a move on him.

Guo Jing strode out of the tent and thought, “This Khubilai is no ordinary person; he is indeed a strong foe.” He signaled with his eyes towards Yang Guo, telling him to hurry towards their steeds.

Suddenly, eight Mongols dashed forward from the sides. The leading Mongol said, “You’re Guo Jing? You injured many of my brothers at Xiangyang and you’ve actually dared to come here to our camp to show off your might again. His highness has allowed you to go but we cannot allow it.” With a shout all eight men dashed forward towards

Guo Jing. These eight men all used Mongolian wrestling techniques as sixteen hands went to grab Guo Jing.

Mongolians are unmatched in wrestling and these eight men were first-rate fighters in the Mongolian army. Khubilai had hid them nearby to capture Guo Jing. But Guo Jing grew up in Mongolia and was well versed in riding, archery and wrestling; when he saw the eight pair of arms coming towards him he stretched out his hands and swept his right leg. In a flash, he had flung four men over ten feet away and tripped the other four onto the ground. He used orthodox Mongolian wrestling techniques but because he had advanced martial arts as a base, the strength in his arms and legs was stronger than any normal men. How could the eight men defend against this?

Khubilai had stationed his personal Minghan unit outside the tent and each one of them was skilled in wrestling. They saw how fast and clean Guo Jing's movements were in throwing down eight men to the ground in one go. They had never seen such a display and they all cheered.

Guo Jing held out his fist towards the crowd and took off his hat, spinning it in his hand. This was the routine that one did to the crowd after winning a wrestling match. The crowd cheered even louder when they saw him do this. The eight men picked themselves up from the ground and looked at Guo Jing in shock. They didn't know whether to go again or just leave it at that.

Guo Jing said to Yang Guo, "Let's go!"

Suddenly, a horn could be heard and Minghan regiments from everywhere galloped towards them. Khubilai had moved his troops and surrounded Guo Jing and Yang Guo.

Guo Jing was slightly shocked and thought, "Even if we had the greatest of skills, how could we break out of this? Who would have thought that Khubilai had gone to such lengths to get me captured?" He was afraid that Yang Guo would get worried so he kept a normal expression and said, "Our steeds are fast horses. Our main priority is to break out of this encirclement. We need to get two shields to protect ourselves from their archers." He then whispered into his ear, "First gallop south and then go north."

Yang Guo was shocked, "Xiangyang is south of here, why go north?" But he immediately understood, "Hmm, yes, Khubilai must have placed his men around Xiangyang in case he went south. The north will be free of soldiers. First go south and then go north unexpectedly; they will not be able to respond in time and we can escape. How should I stop him?"

Yang Guo was trying to make his mind up when he saw a few people dart out of the tent. These people had blocked their path. A ‘ming ming’ sound followed as a bronze and iron wheel flew towards the steeds; it was Fawang.

Guo Jing saw that the wheels were coming in with great force and did not dare to use his hands to catch them. He lowered his head and pressed down on the necks of the two horses with his hands; the horses lowered their front legs just in time for the iron and bronze wheel to brush over their heads. The two wheels turned in midair and flew back into Fawang’s hands. This slight delay allowed Nimoxing and Yin Kexi to arrive in front of Guo Jing and Yang Guo. Fawang and Xiaoxiang Zi arrived a little later and the four surrounded them.

Jinlun Fawang, Xiaoxiang Zi and the others were all first rate fighters and normally would not lower themselves to fight in numbers, but Guo Jing was too strong and they were all thinking about the title of ‘The Greatest Warrior of Mongolia’. White and golden light glimmered as all of them took out a weapon.

Fawang was holding a bronze and iron wheel. Yin Kexi was holding a golden jewel embedded whip. Xiaoxiang Zi was holding a short Ku Sang Rod. The person holding the strangest weapon was Nimoxing. In his hand was a short iron Snake whip that looked like a live snake as it was moved on his arm.

From their running movements and their hand movements in taking out their weapons, Guo Jing could see that the weakest out of the four appeared to be Yin Kexi. He immediately threw both his palms forwards towards Xiaoxiang Zi. Xiaoxiang Zi extended his rod forward, aiming for Guo Jing’s palm. Guo Jing looked at his weapon and saw white silk twirling around it and there was hemp at one end. Guo Jing saw that Xiaoxiang Zi’s martial arts were high and his weapon strange, he’ll definitely have some strong points about him, so he turned his right arm around and used a stance of “Divine Dragon Sweeping its Tail”, he immediately grabbed Yin Kexi’s golden whip. Yin Kexi wanted to use his whip to attack his opponent but it had already been grabbed. He followed the opponent’s pull and threw his body forward with a glittering dagger in his left hand. This stance was using an attack as a defense and it was the top skill of the “Eighteen Little Grabbing Hand Technique”.

Guo Jing called out; “Good!” He used his grabbing hand technique on him again. His right hand still held onto the whip as he went for his dagger. Guo Jing’s arms were crossed over as his right hand held onto the whip in Yin Kexi’s right hand and his left hand held onto Yin Kexi’s left hand. Yin Kexi was sure that by thrusting his dagger for-



ward, his opponent would have no choice but to let go of his whip and avoid the dagger. Who would have thought that his dagger would also be held?

At this time, Fawang's wheels and Xiaoxiang Zi's short rod attacked. Guo Jing did not manage to snatch away the golden dragon whip with his first pull and he shouted out; a surge of great chi went through the whip into Yin Kexi. Yin Kexi felt as if a metal hammer had struck his chest heavily, his eyes saw stars and he threw up a mouthful of blood. Guo Jing let go of the whip and blocked the attacks. Yin Kexi knew that he had suffered a severe injury and he pulled back slowly. He sat down on the ground and circulated his chi through his 'dan tian' and held back the urge to vomit more blood.

Fawang, Xiaoxiang Zi and Nimoxing were both delighted and afraid when they saw Guo Jing injure Yin Kexi with his first attack. They were delighted because there was now one less competitor for the title of the 'Greatest Warrior of Mongolia', but they were also afraid because they saw how powerful Guo Jing was. They themselves might suffer the same fate if they weren't careful. The three of them did not dare make any rash moves and defended themselves.

Guo Jing responded to every stance that came to him and studied the strange weapons of Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi carefully. The Ku Sang rod was made out of pure iron and apart from being heavy and sturdy; he couldn't see anything special about it. Nimoxing's snake shaped weapon was very strange, the head of the weapon was like the head of a poisonous snake and the body of the weapon was soft and crooked. Both the head and tail of the snake shaped weapon were sharp but the most powerful aspect of the weapon was that it was hard to predict the weapon's movements. One couldn't tell when the body of the snake would bend over, the head and tail of the weapon had no certain direction; the iron snake whip would suddenly leap up and whirl around in Nimoxing's arms and then suddenly curl up and slither around, the weapon had hundreds of variations.

In his younger years, Guo Jing had seen the stances of Ouyang Feng's snake staff; the staff was like a real snake and it had venomous poison with it. Even if Nimoxing's weapon was extremely powerful, it was still a dead object. When he attacks and when he takes the snake back, there will be certain principles behind it that can be seen through. Because of this, the only person that Guo Jing was worried about was Jinlun Fawang.

The four of them had exchanged several moves when suddenly someone shouted and stepped forward, a man mountain appeared; it was Ma Guangzuo. He was holding a thick and long bronze rod in his hand and smashed it down towards Guo Jing's head

from behind Nimoxing. The four of them were in a heated battle and all of them defended tightly, there was not an ounce of spare space in between any of them. The exchange from Guo Jing's palms, Jinlun Fawang's wheels, Xiaoxiang Zi's short rod and Nimoxing's iron snake had formed a net of force around them. By smashing the rod down, Ma Guangzuo was running up against the force created by the four. Ma Guangzuo's rod suddenly bounced back up as it met this invisible force. He noticed something was wrong and shouted out as he gathered strength into his arms to keep control of the rod. Even though he managed to do this, the joints in his hands bled. He called out loudly, "Evil, evil!" He increased the strength in his arms and smashed down once more.

Fawang was standing in front of him and he saw what was happening, the greater the force he smashes down with, the more he'll suffer and Fawang just chuckled.

Yang Guo watched from the side and knew what would happen; though Ma Guangzuo was strong, his martial arts could no way compare with that of Guo Jing. If he makes a fierce attack blindly and meets up with the world's most yang and unyielding "Eighteen Dragon Subduing Palm" of Guo Jing head on, what chance would he have of living? Even if he doesn't die under the palm of Guo Jing, he would be seriously injured by the weapons of Fawang, Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi. He liked this dim-witted person for his simple and straightforward character and for standing up for him on many occasions. If Ma Guangzuo strikes down he would definitely meet great danger so Yang Guo called out, "Ma Guangzuo, watch out for my sword!"

The gentlemen sword went for his back.

Ma Guangzuo was stunned and stopped his bronze rod in midair. He said with shock, "Brother Yang, why are you fighting me?"

Yang Guo insulted, "You Dumbass, what do you think you're doing? Get away!" The long sword quivered as several stances were thrust forward. Ma Guangzuo could do nothing but retreat. Yang Guo pierced forward furiously and forced him back step by step. Ma Guangzuo had long legs and every step of his was the equivalent of two ordinary steps by a normal person. Ten steps later and they became quite a distance away from Guo Jing and the others.

The sword glimmered in front of his eyes. He could never have dreamed that Yang Guo would suddenly try to kill him and even if he used every ounce of strength he had, he would not be able to fend off these attacks by Yang Guo.

Yang Guo waited until he had retreated back a few more steps before quietly saying, “Brother Ma, do you know that I’ve just saved your life?”

Ma Guangzuo said loudly, “What?”

Yang Guo said quietly, “Keep your voice down, don’t let the others hear.”

Ma Guangzuo said with his eyes wide open, “Why? I’m not afraid of that Guo Jing.” These words were still said clearly and loudly. To him, he was speaking at a normal tone but to others his voice was like someone was shouting and hollering.

Yang Guo said, “Okay don’t speak, just listen to me.” Ma Guangzuo listened to him and nodded. Yang Guo said, “That Guo Jing knows witchcraft. All he has to do is to recite a curse and he’s able to chop someone’s head off. It’s better if you run away as far as possible.”

Ma Guangzuo’s eyes opened wider when he heard this and believed his words though he had doubts.

Yang Guo wanted to save his life and he knew if he said that Guo Jing’s martial arts were too high, he would never admit defeat; but if he said that Guo Jing knew witchcraft, this slow witted person would probably be scared. He continued, “You tried to smash his head in with your rod but before you even touched his head, the rod bounced back up, isn’t that strange? That merchant’s martial arts are excellent but how come as soon as he went up to fight him, he was injured?” Ma Guangzuo was becoming slightly more convinced and nodded his head but looked over at Fawang and the others.

Yang Guo knew what he was thinking and said, “That monk knows how to write charms. He gave one to that zombie and one to that dwarf, if you have one on your body, you will be protected against witchcraft. Did that monk give you one?”

Ma Guangzuo said angrily, “No.”

Yang Guo said, “Yes, that old baldy didn’t give me a charm as well. We’ll sort him out afterwards.”

Ma Guangzuo said loudly, “You’re right. What should we do?”

Yang Guo said, “We’ll watch from the side, the further away the better.”

Ma Guangzuo said, “Brother Yang, you’re a great friend. It was lucky you told me about this.” He put away his weapon and watched the battle from afar.

Guo Jing was using the great Wulin skill the “Eighteen Dragon Subduing Palms”. Fawang and the others kept tight on him thinking that even if his internal energy was more profound, he would not be able to keep up so powerful a palm technique for much longer. But Guo Jing had been practicing the “Nine Yin Manual” diligently for the last twenty years; at first his real power did not show but tens of stances later, the “Eighteen Dragon Subduing Palms” suddenly became powerful and then suddenly gentle, from great hardness came softness. This was something that Hong Qigong did not manage to grasp all those years ago. By using this kind of palm technique to fend off these three fighters, not only did he remain on an even level with them, he was able to counterattack when he had the chance and he was getting more and more fluent as he went on.

Yang Guo watched in awe from the side. He too had practiced the “Nine Yin Manual” in the ancient tomb; but because he had no one to instruct him, he didn’t know that the manual’s arts were this extraordinary. He followed Guo Jing’s palm techniques with the teachings of the manual in mind and immediately he understood countless profound fist theories. His mind concentrated on this and for the time being, he forgot about killing Guo Jing to avenge his father.

Fawang’s martial arts and Guo Jing’s martial arts were separated by the smallest of margins; Guo Jing may have had more fortunate encounters than Fawang but Fawang was twenty years older than he and had twenty years worth of internal energy more than Guo Jing. If the two fought one on one, they would have to exchange over a thousand stances to decide who was better. With first-rate fighters such as Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi by his side, it shouldn’t have been difficult to gain victory over Guo Jing. But Guo Jing’s “Eighteen Dragon Subduing Palms” were too powerful and along with his palm technique, he was using Quanzhen’s “Big Dipper Formation”. He went to and fro as he fought and it was as if he had separated into seven. Another reason why he was still holding them off was because of his immediate victory over Yin Kexi; this was a warning to the others and the remaining three made defense their main priority and did not dare to make a rash attack. Although it was three against one, Guo Jing still held his own against them.

After a few more stances, the power in Fawang’s wheel gradually increased. The force of the attacks from Nimoxing’s iron snake was increasing as well.

Guo Jing was getting anxious and thought, “If this continues, I won’t be able to hold them off. Guo’er is over fighting with that giant. That giant’s martial arts are just average, Guo’er will be able to manage. I need to get over to him as soon as possible and think of a way to get out of this place.” The four were putting all their concentration into their battle and did not dare to even blink; they did not notice Yang Guo and Ma Guangzuo were just watching their battle.

Suddenly a strange whistling noise was heard. Xiaoxiang Zi leapt up several feet into the air and pointed his Ku Sang rod downwards. Guo Jing stepped to the side to avoid it when suddenly everything went dark; a black smoke was being emitted from the Ku Sang rod. A stench filled Guo Jing’s nose and he felt slightly faint. He called in alarm to himself and knew that there was something poisonous within the Ku Sang rod and he quickly moved backwards.

Xiaoxiang Zi had seen Guo Jing had definitely taken in the black smoke but he did not faint. He was extremely shocked and thought, “Lions, tigers and any kind of wild beast would faint as soon as they come across my toad poison. But it doesn’t seem to have any kind of effect on him; that is strange.” He leapt up once again and shot out some more poison from his rod.

Years ago when Xiaoxiang Zi was practicing martial arts in the wild mountains of Hunan, he saw a toad that was hiding itself in a broken coffin. It had poisoned a large python to death. He understood what the toad had done and gathered some toads to extract the venom from them. He developed a poisonous dust and secreted it in the Ku Sang rod. There was a lever at the end of the rod. When his finger pressed down on the lever it would shoot the poison out. The higher above he fires the poison from, the more effective it becomes. He has used this poisonous dust on pythons and wild beasts before and it knocked them out immediately; but he could not have guessed that Guo Jing’s internal energy was so profound that he was actually able to suppress the effects of the poison.

Fawang and Nimoxing were to the side of Guo Jing and although they did not come in direct contact with the dust, they had smelled a little and they immediately had the urge to vomit. They quickly leapt away from it. Xiaoxiang Zi had plugged the antidote to this poison in his nose beforehand and he dashed forwards into the black smoke, waving out his rod to attack.

Guo Jing used a stance of “Seeing the Dragon in the Field” and sent it towards Xiaoxiang Zi’s kneecaps. Xiaoxiang Zi used his rod to block the attack and before he had

any more time to fire some more poison out, he had been forced back five feet by the palm.

Guo Jing slanted his body to the side only to see Nimoxing coming in with an attack with his iron snake. He sent out a stance of “The Forbidden Submerged Dragon”. Nimoxing quickly placed the Iron Snake across his chest and held each end with his hands. However, the power of this palm of Guo Jing’s came from the area around the palm and not in the palm itself. Though the palm was going for Nimoxing’s chest, there was no kind of force going towards it and he blocked thin air. By the time he knew something was wrong, his abdomen and his face had felt the power of the palm. Luckily for him, he was very short and as a result was very nimble, he quickly threw himself down and rolled away on the ground like a ball.

Guo Jing saw his chance to escape and called out, “Guo’er, let’s go!” He leapt out into the open plains. Fawang flew after him. Guo Jing’s back was just a few feet away from the Mongolian soldiers and immediately over ten spears were pointed towards it. Guo Jing used his arms to parry away the spears and then grabbed and threw two soldiers towards Fawang. He called out, “Catch!”

If Fawang caught them, it would slow him down and give Guo Jing the chance to run further away so he slanted his left shoulder and knocked into the soldiers and sent them flying over ten feet away. He threw his golden wheel towards Guo Jing’s back.

Guo Jing knew if he returned just one stance, he would get caught up in a fight with Fawang. When Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi catch up, it would be difficult to escape again, so he grabbed two spears and thrust them backwards. He did not slow down one bit as he did this and it was as if he had a third eye on his back; one of the spears went towards Fawang’s right shoulder and the other for Fawang’s chest. Both the direction and power behind it was complete. Fawang secretly praised this and then swept his golden wheel across, smashing the spears in two. By the time his sights were back on Guo Jing, he had already darted into the Mongolian army.

This division of soldiers was ordered by Khubilai to station themselves deeply around the tent to capture Guo Jing. But when Guo Jing darted into their formation, the soldiers could do nothing about him; they could not capture him nor harm him. Sounds of spears and sabers could be heard along with calls and shouts. These soldiers actually hindered Fawang and the others in their chase after Guo Jing.

Guo Jing hiding himself amongst the soldiers and horses was like hiding himself in a dense forest; it was actually easier for him to escape danger like this than in the open

land. He ran up to a Noyan and pulled him down from his horse. He leaped on the horse and galloped left and right amongst the crowd of soldiers. Soon he managed to break through the rear of them and he galloped forward, whistling as he went. The red horse was left at a faraway place and when it heard its master summoning it; it galloped like the wind towards him.

Yang Guo watched from afar as the red horse galloped towards Guo Jing. He thought to himself, "Oh no!" He knew that once Guo Jing got on the red steed, Khubilai would have no way to catch up with Guo Jing even if he sent all the world's men after him.

In this urgent situation, he suddenly called out, "Oh no, I'm feel as if I'm dying!" He wobbled a bit as if he was about to fall down onto the ground. He then whispered to Ma Guangzuo, "Don't say anything, run away now! The further away the better." He had circulated his chi through his 'dan tian' when he called out and even in this clamor, Guo Jing would definitely be able to hear it. When Guo Jing heard this, he would definitely come back for him, but if he sees Ma Guangzuo with him, Guo Jing might actually throw out a palm and send Ma Guangzuo to his death. Ma Guangzuo was very obedient to Yang Guo's words and although he didn't understand what he meant by this, he ran away towards the royal tent.

When Guo Jing heard Yang Guo's call, he was indeed worried. He didn't wait for the red horse and turned his horse back towards him. He went back into the swarm of soldiers and galloped towards where Yang Guo was standing.

A thought went through Fawang's mind and he knew what Yang Guo was trying to do. He allowed him to pass and instead blocked his escape route.

Guo Jing rode up to Yang Guo and said anxiously, "Guo'er what's wrong!"

Yang Guo swayed a little and said, "That giant is not a match for me but for some reason, whenever I try to use any real strength, a surge of chi runs through me and my 'dan tian' feels as if it's being cut up by knives."

This was a completely believable lie; Guo Jing could tell that Ma Guangzuo's martial arts were very ordinary when he attempted to smash down on him with his rod, so if Yang Guo said it was Ma Guangzuo who injured him, Guo Jing would be suspicious. But if he said that something's wrong with his chi, Guo Jing would not be able to tell if he was lying or not from the outside. There was also the fact that Guo Jing mistook Yang Guo for fire deviating the previous night. The likelihood of this type of injury recurring again in the heat of battle is not uncommon.

Guo Jing saw that he was holding his abdomen with his left hand and his head was covered in sweat. It appeared that the injury was not light and he said quickly, "Get on my back; I'll carry you out of here."

Yang Guo said with a false pretence, "Uncle Guo, quickly go, my life isn't worth anything but Xiangyang's fate depends on you. The country, the army, the people, and all their hopes rest on you."

Guo Jing said, "You came here because of me; how can I leave you here? Quickly get on."

Yang Guo dallied as Guo Jing lowered himself. Guo Jing pulled him onto his back. Just at this time, the horse that Guo Jing had snatched was killed by the Mongolian soldiers' arrows.

Guo Jing had experienced countless dangerous situations in his life; the more dangerous the situation the greater his bravery. He pondered on how to get out of this situation and he said to Yang Guo, "Guo'er, don't be afraid, we are going to fight our way out of here." He stood up and dashed north.

Fawang, Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi were now attacking Guo Jing once again. Guo Jing looked around and saw that soldiers surrounded them; this situation was even direr than the previous time that they were surrounded.

Beneath the camp's banner stood Khubilai. He was holding a bowl of wine and was watching the battle with a monk by his side. There was an arrogant expression on his face as he watched on with victory assured.

Guo Jing gave a shout as he carried Yang Guo towards Khubilai. He arrived in front of Khubilai after just three leaps. Khubilai's bodyguards were alarmed and they pointed their spears at Guo Jing. Guo Jing's palms overcame all obstacles as it sent one of the guards flying away. Just a few more feet forwards and Khubilai would be in range of Guo Jing's palm. All Khubilai's guards defended him with their lives but how could they stop Guo Jing?

Fawang saw it was getting desperate and he threw his golden wheel towards Guo Jing's head. Guo Jing lowered his head to avoid the wheel but did not stop and continued forward.



Yang Guo thought, “If he holds Khubilai hostage, the Mongolians will have no choice but to let him go. If I don’t make my move now, when am I going to make it?” He hesitated a little and eventually said, “Uncle Guo was my father really a tyrant that left you with no choice but to kill him?”

Guo Jing was stunned with this question but he had no time to give it much thought in his reply in their present situation and immediately replied, “He took a scoundrel as his father, he betrayed his country and plotted against his people, he deserved to die.”

Yang Guo said, “Fine!” He hesitated no longer and raised his gentlemen sword and thrust it towards Guo Jing’s back.

Suddenly, a white blur appeared and a rod swept across and blocked his sword. Yang Guo followed the rod and dispersed the opponent’s force. He looked carefully and found out that it was Xiaoxiang Zi who had stopped his sword. He was surprised and thought, “My sword was just about to go through Guo Jing, why are you stopping me?” But he immediately understood his reasons, “That’s right; if I kill Guo Jing then the title of ‘Mongolia’s Greatest Warrior’ will be mine. Huh, this zombie doesn’t know that I’m just trying to avenge my father; I don’t care about titles and whatnot.” He unleashed several stances and forced Xiaoxiang Zi’s rod away. He turned his sword back towards Guo Jing and thrust it towards him once again. Xiaoxiang Zi used his rod and blocked his sword.

At this moment, Guo Jing was fending off Fawang’s wheel and Nimoxing’s Iron Snake with his palms; he didn’t know what Yang Guo was up to. He just thought that Yang Guo was trying to fight Xiaoxiang Zi with all his might and he said, “Be careful of the poison in his rod.”

Fawang and Nimoxing were in front of Guo Jing and could see what was going on clearly and both shouted, “Xiaoxiang Zi, what are you doing?”

Xiaoxiang Zi cackled and suddenly swept his rod towards Guo Jing. Guo Jing moved out of the way. Yang Guo was about to send his sword through Guo Jing for the third time but once again, Xiaoxiang Zi blocked his sword.

Guo Jing was worried about Yang Guo’s injury and was afraid that he would not be able to cope with Xiaoxiang Zi’s rod so he sent out his left palm towards Xiaoxiang Zi’s chest. Xiaoxiang Zi quickly jumped out of the way.

Yang Guo had no one to stop him now and he sent out his sword towards Guo Jing's back. However, Xiaoxiang Zi was worried that Yang Guo would succeed and he advanced immediately after his retreat and sent his rod towards the vital pressure points on Yang Guo's back, forcing Yang Guo to save himself first.

Guo Jing was using his right palm to compete advanced internal energies with Fawang. Both he and Yang Guo were in great danger. He ignored his own safety and tried to save Yang Guo first. His left palm used a stance of "Divine Dragon Swinging its Tail" and collided with Xiaoxiang Zi's short rod. Xiaoxiang Zi's arm burned and his ghastly white face turned red.

But at that exact time, Nimoxing had rolled towards him and extended his Iron Snake towards Guo Jing's left side. Guo Jing was using seventy percent of his energy against Fawang and the remaining thirty percent in blocking Xiaoxiang Zi's rod. He had nothing left to block this attack of Nimoxing and could only move his left side back half a foot. He was able to avoid the iron snake's main attack but the head of the iron snake still managed to embed itself inches into his side.

Guo Jing circulated his chi and his muscles flexed and stopped the head of the iron snake from going in any further. He immediately followed this by a flying left kick and sent Nimoxing tumbling. Nimoxing saw that his iron snake had struck one of his vital areas and thought that the title of the 'Mongolia's Greatest Warrior' would be now be his. But he would never have dreamed that his enemy would have such incredible martial arts that would allow him to grasp victory from the jaws of defeat. This kick landed on Nimoxing's chest and broke three of his ribs.

Xiaoxiang Zi and Nimoxing had both been defeated but Fawang took this opportunity to gain victory and quickly increased the strength in his palm. Guo Jing's chi on his left side has now been disturbed and he could hold on no longer. He felt a mountain shattering and ocean turning force coming towards him. If he continued to take this head on, the result would be death. He could only disperse the power in his palm and rely on his twenty years worth of internal energy to take this stance. His body swayed continuously and he threw up a mouthful of blood. His life was in danger but his thoughts were still on Yang Guo. He called out, "Guo'er, go and get a horse, I'll hold them off."

After seeing Guo Jing protect him with his life, Yang Guo's emotions were stirred and he no longer cared about his revenge. He thought about how righteous and virtuous his Uncle Guo was, if he didn't repay a life with a life then he will have wasted his life on earth. He leapt off his back and flurried his 'Gentleman' sword to protect Guo Jing. He was like a mad tiger and fought with his life with every stance.

Fawang and Xiaoxiang Zi were stunned and shouted, “Yang Guo, what are you doing?”

Yang Guo did not reply and sent out a stance towards Fawang. The tip quivered and another stance was sent out towards Xiaoxiang Zi. The two saw that his eyes were red and that he had a strange expression on his face; they both took two steps back. They assumed that he wanted to kill Guo Jing himself in order to get the title of the ‘Greatest Warrior of Mongolia’.

Guo Jing said, “Guo’er, don’t worry about me, save yourself.”

Yang Guo replied, “Uncle Guo, it’s my fault that you’ve ended up like this. I’m going to die with you.” The sword glimmered as he ignored his own safety and protected Guo Jing.

Fawang and Xiaoxiang Zi raised their weapons and attacked Guo Jing together. But Yang Guo’s sword stances were extremely lively and he actually kept the two at bay. The Mongolian army surrounded them and roared as they watched the three fights. Guo Jing kept on urging Yang Guo to run away but all he saw was Yang Guo protecting him with his life. He was worried but also touched. His internal injury flared up and he could hold on no longer; his knees went limp and he fell to the ground.

Nimoxing held down the pain of his broken ribs and advanced forward slowly with his iron snake to kill Guo Jing. Yang Guo sent out several wild stances and then put Guo Jing on his back. He dashed north. His martial arts could not compare with Fawang normally but now with Guo Jing on his back, how long could he last? Several exchanges later, his left arm was slashed open by Fawang’s golden wheel.

