

## Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

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## SDXL Chapter 26



### Chapter 26 – Divine Eagle's Heavy Sword

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*The clusters of swords hovering and fiercely swaying about amongst the three's weapons. Xiao Longnu was using the "Tight Encirclement Force" (Tian Luo Di Wang Shi), smoothly seizing a sword and lunging out several moves, then quickly retreating back from the enemy.*

Xiao Longnu saw the Quanzhen Sect's group of Taoists riot, the Mongolian warriors raiding on a large scale, every dispute seemed from her viewpoint like a cloud of mist, she paid no attention to them. But seeing Lu Qingdu raise his sword to kill Yin Zhiping,

how could she let someone try to kill him? Therefore, she immediately ran up front to block the attack.

When Zhao Zhijing saw Xiao Longnu suddenly advancing into the temple, he felt delighted: "Throughout the whole journey I've been chased by you without a moment's pause for breath; now, with so many experts around, you're literally searching for death, it truly is a gift from heaven!" He called out: "The demon girl is not a good person, seize her for me!" The Mongolian warriors didn't take notice of his orders; they didn't even lift a finger. Zhao Zhijing's two close followers heard their master's command, rushed forward, and tried to grab both her arms.

Before their hands reached her sleeve, the fight, from their perspective, was moving as fast as lightning, and then their wrists felt a burst of severe pain. In haste they leapt back. What had happened was that from her waist Xiao Longnu pulled out two swords. In the blink of an eye, their wrists were struck by the swords; the carpal bones were almost broken and the wrists were drenched with blood. The move was extremely quick; people did not have time to clearly see how she brought out the swords, attacked the two Taoists, wounded them and moved away. Those watching couldn't help but feel startled.

Lu Qingdu called out: "Great comrades let's attack together, our many hands will provide great strength. Who cares what that demon girl's origins are?" He thought that however skilful Xiao Longnu might be, she's merely a young woman; once everybody rushes forward, their victory is assured. The vanguard thrust their swords to pierce Xiao Longnu. Xiao Longnu's sharp swords vibrated, Lu Qingdu's left wrist, right wrist, left leg, and right leg had been struck by her sword, with a loud howl, he collapsed on the floor. The thrust of the two swords was even quicker than before; even experts such as Xiaoxiang Zi and Yin Kexi gazed at each other with pale faces. They'd previously seen her fight Gongsun Zhi at Passionless Valley. At that time her sword stances were fine and ingenious, but they were definitely not as unbelievable as they were now.

Xiao Longnu was taught how to separate her mind for two uses by Zhou Botong, the Left/Right Mutual Combat Technique; between her innate abilities and his teaching, her martial arts had multiplied. With Yang Guo forming the Dueling Sword Combination and using the 'Pure Heart of the Jade Maiden Sword Technique', few have matched it under the heavens. Now, as one person, she can use two swords simultaneously, with outstanding power. Regardless of how two people's intentions are interlinked with each other, it's still inferior to one person's lightning-like alertness during battle. At this

moment, although her sword method's energy and strength weren't as good as two people teaming up, her moves are faster in comparison by many times.

Throughout her lengthy trailing of Yin Zhiping and Zhao Zhijing, she was depressed for days on end, not knowing what way to dispose of them. Within that moment that the Quanzhen Taoist's commander launched an attack, she took the opportunity to retaliate. Once she saw blood on the tip of her sword, she felt grief and indignation; suddenly she broke away from her attackers. Seeing her white garment drifting about, like cold flickering light and both swords seeming like two silver snakes wandering inside the temple. Ding-dong, qiang-long sounds accompanied by comments of "Oh!", "This is bad" were heard. Instantly, the Quanzhen Taoists' swords dropped on the floor, everyone of them had felt the thrust of her swords on their wrists. Even more bizarre was that she used the same maneuver "Hoary Wrist Jade Bracelet", yet all that the Taoists saw was the flash of the sword brush past their eyes. Their wrists felt intense pain and they were left helpless. They had been easily disposed of with no chance to parry any of the strikes. This group of Taoists could have been killed effortlessly one by one.

After the Taoists were injured, they withdrew in deep shock. In front of the three statues were Yin Zhiping and a bunch of bound Taoists.

Xiao Longnu studied her Left/Right Mutual Combat Technique alone and practiced it a couple of times in the wilderness, but she'd never exchanged blows with anyone. Today she had the opportunity to try out these new techniques, and even she could not have dreamed of possessing such might; she was unexpectedly startled.

Realizing the situation wasn't fortuitous; Zhao Zhijing rapidly pulled a sword from his Taoist robe to protect himself, and at the same time retreated. Xiao Longnu was full of hatred towards him and as she moved in, both swords completely blocked the routes to his front and back. Zhao Zhijing brandished his sword in order to gain a path, but only the ding-dang sounds of swords clashing could be heard.

Yin Kexi said: "You won't succeed, get out of the way!" He had already obstructed Xiao Longnu's sword as he lashed out his Golden Dragon Whip. Xiao Longnu had injured 10 people one after another, up to this point, but one person was able to catch her single sword.

Xiao Longnu spoke: "Today I came here to seek my revenge against the Quanzhen Sect's Taoists, it does not involve others, stay out of the way."

Now Yin Kexi saw how her sword was chasing like wind and clouds, even he lost his nerve. But he was, after all, a first-class expert; he could not cower in fear because of someone's words. So he laughed and replied: "Among the Quanzhen Sect's Taoists the good and bad are intermingled; there are a dozen few who deserve to be killed, but who are those that offended you and deserve to die Miss?"

Xiao Longnu made an "ng" sound, and didn't pay further attention to him. Yin Kexi thought, "First I will establish a friendship with her so even if I'm no match for her, it won't result in death. If the situation is not right he would concede defeat. If other people know that we're acquainted with each other, they won't ridicule me for being cowardly". Consequently he laughingly called out: "Dragon Girl, don't waste any more time, your precious body is pure and healthy!" Xiao Longnu made another "ng" sound, her eyes did not move away from Yin Zhiping and Zhao Zhijing, fearing that they might seize an opportunity to slip away. Yin Kexi uttered: "Don't dirty your hands on the deceitful Taoists, just point them out. Let me offer my services, and one by one they will be punished for Miss."

Xiao Longnu replied: "Good! Then kill him for me first." She pointed at Zhao Zhijing.

Yin Kexi thought: "This person has been imperially conferred by the Mongolian Da-Han, how can I kill him?" Then he laughed: "Immortal Zhao treats others very well, I'm afraid there's been some misunderstanding Miss. I'll tell him to come to Miss and apologize in front of you!"

Xiao Longnu's beautiful eyebrows slightly frowned. She thrust her left sword out, as fast as a bolt of lightning, heading for Yin Kexi. Yin Kexi hurriedly raised his whip to ward it off. There was one sound of "Ah"; for standing behind was Zhao Zhijing who was stabbed in the shoulder. Xiaoxiang Zi and his class of experts couldn't tell how the thrust was made. They all assumed it was the right hand sword that was thrust out, twisting past Yin Kexi's body, and piercing the person hiding behind him.

Yin Kexi was deeply surprised, he thought, "This sword may not have hit me, but I was powerless to guard Zhao Zhijing, that is also a disgrace". His opponent's move was very fast, he just couldn't follow her twin sword's route and oncoming force; if he continued to fight her in this way he will definitely lose. The more he thought of this, the more cowardly he became; with a swing of the Golden Dragon Whip, he bellowed: "Miss Dragon Girl, please be merciful!" Xiao Longnu didn't care since she didn't regard him as an enemy, or a friend; without slowing her pace, she stepped twice to the left. Yin Kexi followed with one turn, still wanting to protect Zhao Zhijing, but suddenly heard moaning behind him. Slowly turning his head around, he saw Zhao Zhijing's robe

sleeves had been neatly split into two parts by the point of her sword and blood came running from the wounds. How Xiao Longnu had pierced him, the other people were still completely baffled by it. Her rapid and skilful sword methods had reached a point where not only do her routes leave no trace, it's as if she can block one person and still injure her foe at will.

Zhao Zhijing has been consecutively pierced twice. Realizing that Yin Kexi's martial arts were average, he knew he could not count on him for protection. In imminent danger he took a deep breath and scurried over to the side of Xiaoxiang Zi. Xiao Longnu acted as though she never noticed it. She turned her body and with force, aimed her left hand sword at Yin Kexi, yet her right sword was directed at Nimoxing's chest. Whilst supporting himself with his left hand on his crutch, Nimoxing's right hand used the steel snake to block. But then he heard Zhao Zhijing crying out loudly, followed by a 'qiang-long' sound, as his sword fell. His wrist has been poked by her sword yet again. That move was even more peculiar. It was obvious that Xiao Longnu was far beyond him. Somehow, while attacking two formidable fighters, she managed to find time to wound him again.

Xiaoxiang Zi grunted and said: "Miss Dragon Girl's sword techniques are not bad at all; I also want to challenge you." His left hand threw a palm from his side, but at that instant Zhao Zhijing felt a great force meeting his shoulder. He lost his footing, and flew several zhang (ten+feet) away. Fortunately his inner energy has considerable foundation; though his body may have been wounded three times, he was able to get up on his feet. Xiaoxiang Zi's palm force had not yet arrived and the cane attacked at the same moment.

Ma Guangzuo had long been good friends with Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu; his mind felt that this was far from right, and spoke loudly: "Three Wulin Masters ganging up on a young girl. Don't you want to save face?"

Once Xiaoxiang Zi and others heard this, their faces showed signs of anger. Throughout their lives they had paid no attention to such things as virtue or morality; however arrogance, pride, and dignity were still regarded as extremely important to their identity. To mention three people ganging up, why, they wouldn't even consider fighting such a young girl even one-on-one. But they knew, certainly, that relying on one person was impossible, since they wouldn't be able to resist her supernaturally unfathomable sword movements. They could only pretend not to have heard those demeaning comments made by Ma Guangzuo. They were thinking: "What a stupid fool! We're all handling the same affair here, and yet you help an outsider? When we're done I'll teach you a lesson." While their minds were filled with these thoughts, before their eyes, the

flash of the sword shone. Xiao Longnu had already made a move. The three fighters still couldn't follow the paths of her swords, so they leapt backwards together. They moved away a few zhangs, not wanting to get caught up with each other, all the while brandishing their weapons and protecting their body's vital parts.

Numerous Mongolian warriors led Yin Zhiping, Li Zhichang, Wang Zhitan and others near the temple wall. They all knew that the battle between the four was not to be taken lightly, all that was needed was for one person's weapon to be close to you; if you didn't die then you'd definitely sustain a serious injury.

Xiaoxiang Zi, Nimoxing and Yin Kexi all expected her to attack the other person first, so long as they're able to spot clues in her moves, then they will have chance of victory. The three fighters had the same intentions, consequently everyone of them executed unique skills, protecting their bodies without revealing vulnerable gaps, seeking a no win situation, in order to win. The three fighters, while attacking, adopted a defensive position together, this was a rare occasion in itself. But since their adversary is this strong, if they rush ahead and make an assault, the search for glory most likely would backfire on them.

Within the temple, Xiao Longnu's twin swords faced the floor, and she stood in the centre, while Xiaoxiang Zi and the other two placed themselves in an individual spot. Each one of them had a cold light shimmering about in front of them. Yin Kexi's Golden Whip flourished into a round yellow light; Nimoxing's Steel Snake illuminated strips of dark reflections; Xiaoxiang Zi's cane stirred into a grey screen, all blocking in front of them.

Xiao Longnu observed the three fighters one by one, thinking: "I have no enmity towards the three of you, and not enough time to fight with you?" Noticing that Zhao Zhijing was dodging and sneaking away and just when he was about to step behind a statue, she brushed her white sleeves, and moved in. Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi separately dashed to the left and right, the steel snake and cane rushed in front of her, they had allied themselves. Their attack may not have been enough, but protecting themselves was their priority. Seeing that there were no loopholes to exploit, Xiao Longnu's twin swords did not immediately move outward. She saw that Zhao Zhijing was trying to escape through the back; she held her swords and darted forward two steps; however Nimoxing's and Xiaoxiang Zi's weapons whizzed like the wind blowing and she was unable to get past them. Xiao Longnu said: "Will you not let me pass?"

Xiaoxiang Zi thought: "A feud has not started between us yet, she might not massacre any of us. What would I benefit from this Quanzhen ringleader; why should I bother to

make enemies with this strong girl?” He hesitated but did not answer.

Nimoxing replied: “We insist on not letting you past, what can a demon girl like you do about it? Why don’t you try and get pass us?”

Xiaoxiang Zi and Yin Kexi both stared down at him and both thought: “We’re stuck with not letting her past, but why must there be abusive remarks? Can it be that you alone can match her skills? You truly overrate yourself.” But since they’re uniting their efforts to ward off the enemy, it was not convenient to complain about each other.

They did not realize both legs of Nimoxing were removed because of Yang Guo’s and Li Mochou’s co-operation. He knew Yang Guo was Xiao Longnu’s sweetheart, so his anger must be released on her; at that point he made a move, the move was very different from the other two’s, his intentions were to fight desperately to see who dies and who lives.

Xiao Longnu showed no anger at all, only knowing that in order to kill the two Taoists Yin and Zhao she must drive away the three experts in front of her. She coolly responded: “Since you’re not going to let me get past, then forgive me!” Right after she finished her words, without warning her swords’ light flashed by and a single noise was heard; and it spread itself into the distance without pausing. The noise hadn’t yet subsided, but Xiao Longnu had already retreated back over ten feet returning to the centre of the temple. Xiaoxiang Zi’s and Nimoxing’s faces revealed no colour. The prolonged noise was formed by around forty continuous attacks in a greatly constricted amount of time. Within that moment, Xiao Longnu’s two swords slashed out, cut, skimmed and chopped, and made forty moves. Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi were defending as tight as could be imagined, every one of her moves collided with the top of their weapons. To the bystander’s ears, all that was heard were the recurring noises of the clashing weaponry and nothing was seen at all.

Her attacks were so fast that Xiaoxiang Zi and the others were even more panicked. When they were able to impede her sword slashes, they were totally dependant on their method of flourishing their weapons in such a way that nothing was going to get past them. They left barely a loophole to be seen. If they waited for her swords to extend completely, then both of them would have tasted the sharp blades. Xiao Longnu had admired their individual ways of defending closely and her swift range of assaults was to no avail. She paused for a slight moment, and drifted backward, but her eyes were still locked onto Xiaoxiang Zi. Then her two swords suddenly reversed their slashes and twelve rapid sounds of ding, ding, ding came so fast that even a skilled player of the lute’s complex way of playing wouldn’t have that kind of speed. Yin Kexi’s



golden whip never rested and was busy blocking those twelve attacks right from the start.

After two periods of attacking and defending were finished, the four of them understood each other. Xiao Longnu was unfortunate not to have stronger inner energy and therefore her sword moves lacked the potency that's needed to disarm her opponents. Had she roughly similar inner energy to either of the three, their defense would've been breached long before. Xiao Longnu backtracked to the centre of the temple, and tried to conceive a plan to break past the enemy. She saw that the more they brandished their weapons the faster they became; where can she find the least bit of a weak point?

She thought: "Wielding weapons at this sort of tempo will lead to an excessive exhaustion of inner energy, surely then I won't last for long. I need to be patient and wait for a change; as the time drags on I will then be able to find a flaw. Even if Zhao Zhijing manages to escape, no matter where he goes I'll find him in the end." Thereupon her two swords trembled slightly, appearing as though she's going to attack or maybe not going to attack. She was storing up valuable energy ready to be unleashed. But she won't make the move yet and thus not leave her three opponents any small moments of relaxation. However, although Xiaoxiang Zi and his partner's inner energy was deep and profound, wielding weapons in such a way will make their physical energy drop below normal levels in a short time period. As Xiao Longnu saw no loophole to exploit, she quietly stood there with an elegant expression on her face, her mood severe. With her temperament, she had generally never been anxious before. Throughout her journey of following Yin Zhiping and Zhao Zhijing for months she'd never even laid a hand on them. Now, if she had to wait for another day, why not? For 20 years she'd been quietly keeping watch over the Ancient Tomb and learned a unique and unrivalled way of maintaining her patience.

Nimoxing noticed that she held her swords in a state of idleness, as self-assured as he was; he would not tolerate this any longer. Without warning he roared out like a lion, and wielded his metal snake and drove swiftly towards her. Once he was on the offence, the left side of his body revealed a weak point. Xiao Longnu's sword trembled, Nimoxing's crutch violently rammed out and then he jumped back. He felt a slight pain in his shoulder; glancing down he was surprised to see the cloth on his left shoulder had a tiny hole pierced through it, and blood seeping out of it. If Xiao Longnu hadn't also been concentrating on defending against his metal snake, his left arm would've been detached from his body.

Nimoxing racing to the attack had no merit in it and instead he received a wound. He may be angry but now did not have the nerve to hastily advance again. The three men deployed to three separate positions and brandished their weapons. Xiao Longnu, standing in the middle, did not pay any attention to them. Yin Kexi's single "10,000 Yellow Sand Whip Technique" repeated four times, and then something abruptly popped up in his mind. He called: "Brother Nimo, Brother Xiaoxiang let's take half a step forward." Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi weren't too sure of his intentions, but since he's the Western Region's greatest asset, with extensive knowledge and intelligence, they complied with his words and did move half a step. Yin Kexi at the same time stepped forward half a pace, and commanded: "Defending must be well-knit, it's crucial for the steps to be slow. Let's take another step." Nimoxing and Xiaoxiang Zi proceeded forward as requested.

The three weren't at all slack or sluggish in any way. After a while, they stepped out half a foot. At that point everyone could make out what was happening; the circle of the three people surrounding Xiao Longnu was gradually shrinking, in the end they would force her into the centre. Although the three of them weren't confident about launching an assault, all of them continued to wield their weapons. They almost composed three impregnable fortresses progressively approaching the centre. The threatening defensive styles merged into a single mighty blitz, in which in its ferocity was incomparable. Everyone viewing this situation, especially the likes of the Mongolian soldiers, along with Zhao Zhijing and his fellow Taoists were secretly delighted. The other Taoists on the other hand were concerned for Xiao Longnu.

Xiao Longnu noticed them getting even closer and their weapons' movements still had no openings to exploit. Within a few moments, if she made an attack, their continued pressure forward would definitely crush her. So she attacked at once, her two swords in succession thrust out, with the sounds 'ding-ding' that were suddenly fast then suddenly slow. Every move met with the top of their weapons. She flashed out many sword thrusts persistently with every one of them blocked and returning back on her. The three of them moved up half a step once again. Xiao Longnu gradually felt alarmed and bewildered, as she backed away to the left side she tripped, and slightly staggered. Her sword techniques showed a great deal of weakness, if Xiaoxiang Zi and his crew had not been thinking of defending only, and had been confident enough to seize an opportunity, she would've been caught in an extremely deadly position.

The temple's floor was actually littered with many swords. The weapons belonged to the Quanzhen disciples and were abandoned on the floor after they were deprived from them earlier. A moment ago, Xiao Longnu's left foot trod on one of the sword handles that lay nearby, as a result her balance wasn't steady. Suddenly she recalled:

“Others are competent enough to use two swords with two hands; since I’ve mastered the art of splitting the heart for two uses, then two hands ought to wield four swords concurrently. I suppose it’s improbable to attain a true degree of power using four swords, but perhaps it can be relied upon to confuse the enemy, and I can get a chance to escape.” Almost immediately, her left hand that carried a single sword was swapped over to her right hand, she then stooped over and picked up two more swords. Both hands contained two swords now, and she began to wield her four swords at the same time.

Xiaoxiang Zi and others watched in disbelief and all thought: “This young girl’s moves get stranger all the time. This truly is the first time I’ve ever seen someone use four swords together.” But the three of them agreed on a plan to meet this contingency and settle with it. They weren’t at all bothered about what sort of weird move or strange art she’s going to use, they still thought only of defending and not attacking. They continued on pressing forward step by step.

Although Xiao Longnu’s four swords used together was frightening when heard and observed, the power used with two swords is superior to using four swords. Normally she focused on a single sword during her training. The coordination of the Quanzhen Sword Technique and Jade Maiden Sword Technique in her right hand was flawless. Now the transition to using two swords with each hand was hardly effective, the movement’s high level of proficiency was diminished. After several strokes, Xiaoxiang Zi and others realized her moves were somewhat slow. Each time she pushed out the swords, they had lost the immeasurable essence from before. Nimoxing’s larynx created ‘coo-coo’ noises, and he waved his steel snake to signal his lunge forward. Yin Kexi urgently cried out: “What you’re trying to do is useless, that’s more like a plan for luring the foe.” The warning jolted him and he thought “It’s fortunate somebody else noticed really fast”. Knowing how crafty the young girl was, once he attacked she would immediately respond with a counterattack. Not only will their besieging formation break down instantly, his life is very likely to be taken away.

In reality Xiao Longnu was not luring her enemy on purpose, however Yin Kexi’s information did make her think: “That dark short guy cannot keep himself calm, I must come up with a plan against him. He insists that I’m luring them into a trap; then I’ll show him what luring is all about.” Abruptly she raised her right hand and cast one sword vertically, she then followed up with a thrust using her right hand’s sword, and her left hand cast a sword into the air. Xiaoxiang Zi and the rest were surprised, and unsure of what tricks she’s playing, only seeing the two swords in midair had not yet descended. The other two swords that she carried were also tossed up into ceiling. This left her empty handed. Yin Kexi called out: “We must strictly defend with absolutely no

intention to attack.” He wasn’t perceptive of Xiao Longnu’s intentions, but he believed that providing they defend tightly and progressively press forward, then they’ll surely have a chance of success. Their opponent may be barehanded, but they’re not taking any chances to come out and attack.

Xiao Longnu bent over, without any hesitation both hands grabbed swords from the floor, and threw them one after another into midair. At the same time, they sunk down one by one. As she got a hold of them again, she threw them back up. Seeing those dozens of swords rise and fall, their cold lights glistening non-stop in the hall, it was very spectacular to watch. The Ancient Tomb Sect’s martial arts foundation doesn’t specialize in deep and profound inner energy, but rather relied on swift and rapid techniques to be victorious. That year when Xiao Longnu passed on martial arts to Yang Guo, he was required to block the escape of eighty sparrows with just his pair of hands. When this “Tight Encirclement Force” (Tian Luo Di Wang Shi) is used, then live sparrows could be impeded. Therefore the many swords flung and caught would be the same thing to her. Almost every split second there was a weapon in her hands. Catching sight of Xiaoxiang Zi and his comrades stupefied looks, their minds were ruminating; is this young lady performing some sort of magic trick or circus juggling?

Without warning Xiao Longnu’s left palm rose out and pushed up the handle of an idle sword. The sword traveled horizontally towards Yin Kexi at a fast pace. The tip of the sword ran into his golden dragon whip’s glossy cover, and then it swiftly at unbelievable velocity deflected back but this time sprang towards Nimoxing. Nimoxing’s metal snake was wielded with a sense of urgency, and repelled the sword back to hit Xiao Longnu. Right at this point, overhead there were two swords raining down, Xiao Longnu’s two hands diverted the three swords and allocated them towards each of the three people.

In a flash, the clusters of swords weren’t moving through the air, but rather hovering and fiercely swaying about amongst the three’s weapons. The sword sent towards Nimoxing tilted and was vigorously shattered into two halves thanks to Nimoxing’s metal snake. Xiao Longnu wore golden-threaded gloves and hit the tip of a sword, without a single wound being inflicted upon her. From her youth until now, she was very adept at the “Tight Encirclement Force” (Tian Luo Di Wang Shi); now, here in the hall, her advancing, retreating and avoiding skills were peerless under the heavens. Her eyes were sensitive and her moves fast, her spirit was crystal clear and the more she fought the faster she became. Her mind wasn’t phased by any distractions, and didn’t even think of whether she would win or lose in this fierce battle; or for that matter, who lives and who dies. At times smoothly seizing a sword and lunging out several moves, then quickly retreating back from the enemy. Previously with two swords,

Xiaoxiang Zi and the others found it difficult to withstand her moves; now with so many swords arbitrarily tossed and thrust out they were more confused. With her as the nucleus, the swords were flying out swiftly in all directions, how can it be possible for them to parry those attacks? Besides when the swords were knocked away by their weapons, they weren't in control as to where they headed or how powerful they were. Whether or not they would have to injure their companions, only heaven knew.

The act of Xiao Longnu throwing swords in the air was formerly used to confuse the enemy's eyes. But as the trend of events fluctuated, it exceeded her own expectations and conveniently became beneficial to her. In the midst of the weapons waving in the air, indistinctly could be heard of Yin Kexi's and Nimoxing's heavy breathing. Xiaoxiang Zi's cane, although wielded at a fast rate, seemed uneasy and weighed against his name "Xiao Xiang (Unrestrained)" and opposed its nature.

Suddenly Yin Kexi's right arm drooped downward and he cried out: "Crap!" As soon as three swords flew out, of all the places they could end up they eventually tangled up with his whip. His defense may have been tight but every one of these swords had been blocked by Xiaoxiang Zi's and Nimoxing's weapons. Three of them happened to arrive together and inexplicably ended up tangled in his whip. Yin Kexi used force and shook his whip to shed the three swords. But just as he was about to lift his whip, Xiao Longnu's sword flashed out and left Yin Kexi's wrist in severe pain, and he could not hold the whip any longer.

With the sound of 'chong-long', the golden dragon whip fell on the floor. Xiao Longnu's left palm struck out successively; seven or eight swords flew violently outwards and dispersed towards the three men. She moved both hands, catching a pair of swords; her body steadied and moved further out beyond Yin Kexi's reach. After Yin Kexi sustained the injury to his wrist, it left him deprived of a weapon. As a result his impregnable fortress like ring was eradicated in an instant. Once his eyes caught a glimpse of her lightning quick twin swords, he hastily retreated out of the way. Xiao Longnu's lightness neigong was superior to any one of the three, raising her Qi, she directly surged to the back of the temple in pursuit of Zhao Zhijing.

Xiaoxiang Zi and the others weren't able to gather their weapons for a short while and had to wait until the many swords from above fell to the floor; until then they were unable to cease their defensive activity. Yin Kexi had a look of shame on his face and said: "Xiao Di's incompetence has lead to her escape!" They were supposed to work as business partners and without any sentiment but none there admired or respected the other. As they fought, each was thinking of ways to force the others to be convinced of their own qualities. But after experiencing such a soul-stirring ferocious battle, all

three felt more like running away for their lives. In turn their hostility towards each other had been reduced substantially. Xiaoxiang Zi and Nimoxing both said: “We haven’t blamed you Brother Yin...” Before they even finished their sentence, they suddenly heard the ‘ding-dong’ sounds of weapons clashing, faintly transmitted from the rear of the mountain.

Hearing the battle from the temple, Xiaoxiang Zi and others were terrified, but amongst the weapons crashing against each other outside was mixed the sound of Fawang’s five wheels ‘moaning’/whistling noise. Evidently Xiao Longnu and Fawang have started the action. All three of them thought: “With such a tough fighter available to act as the commanding general; if we fight by his side, we’ll surely win.” Yin Kexi retrieved his golden dragon whip, and bellowed: “After her comrades!” So they raced ahead to locate the racket. Xiaoxiang Zi raised his staff, and led a bunch of Mongolian soldiers to follow through. At this point everyone’s archenemy was Xiao Longnu. They’ve never had any Quanzhen Taoists thoughts in their minds.

Yin Zhiping, Li Zhichang and others used this chance to untie each other’s ropes right after the Mongolian soldiers left. One after another they collected their swords and followed outside.

Xiaoxiang Zi and others arrived near the rear of Chongyang Palace where Cave of the Jade Void was situated. They could only see the wheels whirling in action and the sword qi in horizontal and vertical motion. Jinlun Fawang’s roar rumbled like the thunder. Xiao Longnu’s clothes were white as snow. The two were separated at around 10 feet, enabling them to engage in a long distance battle. All five elements of metal: gold, silver, copper, iron and lead were melded into large wheels, were twirling in flight. The vibration created a humming disturbance in everyone’s ears. Fawang’s previous wheels were lost in a number of fierce battles and not recovered. After losing them he tried to supplement with replacements. The size and weight were more or less equivalents of his earlier ones, but unfortunately the melded decorative patterns were missing. All there was were his mantra. In the process of utilizing them, his proficiency was very high.

Yin Zhiping and Li Zhichang both saw the Cave of the Jade Void entrance blocked by a large rock. They weren’t sure of their teacher’s life and death situation. With deep anxiety, they hastened towards the cave entrance. With Da’erba’s metal pestle and Huo Du’s wielding of his steel fan, the groups of Taoists were repulsed in only several moves.

Wang Zhitan cried out: “Master...master, are you safe and sound in there?” Because of his apprehensive state, his voice carried a whimpering tone. Li Zhichang carefully

thought: “On the basis of the five teachers’ profound cultivation, how could they let people fight like this outside the cave without doing anything? Their practice must have reached a critical stage and cannot afford to divert their attention and come out to deal with the foreign enemy. But with that call from Junior Wang, if they did happen to hear it, it will have thrown their minds into disorder.” He hurriedly spoke out: “Junior Wang, do not call out anymore. The five teachers cannot be subjected to any form of disturbance.” Wang Zhitan immediately realized his error, and helped a fallen Song Defang. He noticed his injuries weren’t light and tried to think of a way to help him out.

Xiaoxiang Zi and others were onlookers to the battle between Fawang and Xiao Longnu. They understood that although he was defending more than he was attacking, he still managed to return one move. The five wheels powers were strangely fierce and did not allow Xiao Longnu to get an inch closer to him. This defensive style was way more efficient than that of the other three fighters. The three showed admiration topped with envy, all thought: “That monk being conferred as the Mongolian’s No. 1 Guoshi (Protector) was no slander at all.” The three fighters had thought of helping out Fawang as a team, but in this sort of situation, their selfishness got the better of them. They did not wish to aid him to a victory.

But little did they realize that although Jinlun Fawang’s moves were fierce, in his heart he was actually complaining about his hardship repeatedly. Each of Xiao Longnu’s sword thrusts were differentiated from each other but still coordinated into an ingenious and unsurpassed way of fighting. Her left sword aimed at his front while her right sword was selecting a surprise attack from the back at the same time. It was a message to him that he had neither a way to retreat nor a way for him to advance. Every path that she chose struck at several places with both her swords, warning him to pay attention to mistakes, as her moves are difficult to defend against. Had he not reached the stage in his life where his internal force and external force were at their peaks, his eyes sensitive and his moves fast, and with his many variations of hard and soft, his body would’ve been hit by seventeen or eighteen sword strokes by now. All that was needed was a minor dip in his martial arts for that to happen. Actually, Xiao Longnu as one person delivering two types of sword techniques pales in comparison to her alliance with Yang Guo in terms of power, even though her moves were rapid. Not to mention that her real martial arts were a long way behind Fawang’s. Even Xiaoxiang Zi and others were stronger than her. But then again, once she stepped forward, her moves were as fast as a bolt of lightning. No one had ever seen anything like it. This allowed her fears to escape from inside of her. Fawang suffered from the “Pure Heart of the Jade Maiden Swordplay” the moment it appeared again in front of his eyes; all he thought about was how to protect himself and how to slip away free from injury. Xiao Longnu gained the upper hand because of the way she beat him to the punch.

By the time they reached fifty or sixty moves, Fawang looked to be at risk, he withdrew his golden wheel to shield himself and wasn't confident enough to launch it again. After several more moves, this time the silver wheel was withdrawn to tighten his defense further. By the time, all five wheels were back with him, his fighting style was all-defensive just like Xiaoxiang Zi and others fought her before. The five wheels weight, size, colour and shape were all different from each other. Either it was sharp or more curved; they organized into five rings of light, which rolled all over the place around him.

Then suddenly one heard Xiao Longnu's delicate shout: "Let's do it!" This was followed by Fawang's low voiced roar, echoing repeatedly. They both leaped vertically, and their moves were picking up pace. Xiaoxiang Zi and others did not hear their shouts clearly, not knowing an adjustment had already taken place. If Jinlun Fawang used his wheel's fierce power to attack her head on, Xiao Longnu would struggle to withstand them. However since he was timid, he didn't show the best of his qualities. Comparing his speed to Xiao Longnu, he's bound to be in a disadvantageous position.

Then suddenly, Nimoxing felt something on his face, as if a miniature hidden weapon had struck him. In a moment of shock he stroked the area of contact, but found no wound on his face; instead there was blood on his palm. His mind was dumbfounded for a while, but then he spotted a drop of blood flying towards Yin Kexi. Now he was well aware that one person was injured in the fierce battle. In a short while, Xiao Longnu's white garment was stained with over ten scattered splashes of blood. It was as if there were a few peach blossoms on a white silk fabric, which dazzled the eyes through its gay coloring. Nimoxing cheerfully spoke: "The demon girl has been injured!" Immediately after two flashes of the sword's reflection, Fawang quietly moaned. Xiaoxiang Zi coldly butted in: "No, it's the monk who got hurt!"

Xiaoxiang Zi's initial judgment was right, the blood from Fawang's injury sprayed over Xiao Longnu. He believed if Fawang was killed by her hands, then there's no way they can stop her. For that reason he called out: "Brother Yin, Brother Xiao, let's attack her together!" He wielded his metal snake and slowly pressed in behind Xiao Longnu. Xiaoxiang Zi and Yin Kexi also felt that they could not look on unconcerned, so they immediately split themselves left and right and approached them.

Fawang has been hit three times by her sword, but all were light injuries. But just when he's in grave danger, backup arrived. He felt a sense of relief, and saw Xiaoxiang Zi and the other two weren't at all opening up any sort of attack. They were rather using their weapons to protect themselves as they moved their positions to three sides steadily



closing in on her. They knew that if the conflict is slightly prolonged, Xiao Longnu's hourglass will run out.

In front of the Cave of the Jade Void, the pine lined paths showcased a fierce battle between four Wulin stranger guests gathering round a silk clothed young girl. The group of Mongolian soldiers and Quanzhen Taoists were motionless with fear, their faces resembled dying embers. They've never encountered such a violent struggle before in their lives!

The ear-deafening bumping sound of 'peng' shook the earth. Gravel was tossed out and the air was full of mist and dust. The dozen big stone blocks collapsed to one side in front of Cave of the Jade Void. Five Taoists that were inside slowly stepped out, they were the five Quanzhen Masters Qiu Chuji, Liu Chuxuan and the rest.

Yin Zhiping, Li Zhichang and others were very happy and called out: "Master!" and rushed forward. Da'erba and Huo Du were shocked when they saw the explosive power that blew the entrance of the cave open; like it was blasted open with gunpowder. The two grabbed their weapons and rushed forward. Qiu Chuji and the other five masters moved aside a bit and then all of them raised their ten palms and pressed at the backs of those two. A firm press was delivered and the two were thrown four meters away.

Da'erba and Huo Du's martial arts were of the same level as Hao Datong, though they were not as powerful as Qiu Chuji or Wang Chuyi. But they could not be defeated within one stance by them either.

The Five Masters were in retreat contemplating in the YuXu Cave [Cave of the Jade Void] to create a way to counter the "Jade Maiden Sword" technique; they were pondering intensively day and night. They felt that the martial arts displayed by Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu were the bane of the Quanzhen martial arts. It is impossible to surpass them with known stances; it was Qiu Chuji, who came up with an idea when he thought of the "Big Dipper Formation". He said, "We cannot overcome them with stances and varieties, but if we combine our internal strength we can use power to make for variety."

Hence, the five intensively thought of a way to merge their internal energies to overcome an enemy; every stance would be generated by the merged power of the five of them. They know that there are no exceptional talents within the third and fourth generation; the only way to survive is to unite the large number of disciples. Within two months time, they finally created "The Seven Star Assembly". This technique was de-

rived from the “Big Dipper Formation”, although it is called “The Seven Star Assembly”, it does not necessarily need seven persons to unite their internal strengths. Six, five, four or even three can perform this technique. When the Imperial Priest led the other warriors to seal the cave, the five masters were reaching the critical point of “The Seven Star Assembly” and could not be distracted. Even though they knew large numbers of foes have attacked, they had to ignore this for the time being. When they finally managed to merge their five internal energies perfectly, they blasted open the sealed cave. However, because of the urgent situation, this technique had only reached thirty or forty percent of its’ level of attainment. Even so, Da’erba and Huo Du were unable to cope with it and the Five Masters were triumphant with one strike.

Qiu Chuji and others now turned around and were observing the battle between Xiao Longnu, the Imperial Priest and others. After observing for a few moments, they looked at each other and looked very sad and depressed. They thought: “In vain.....everything was in vain. We never thought that the martial arts of the Ancient Tomb School would be this magnificent. We can never defeat her in this lifetime.”

The martial arts previously displayed by Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu were the blueprints for their ponderings and contemplation. But the incredible, fantastic swordplay of Xiao Longnu was too awesome. They could not even see what those stances were, so how could they think of a way to counter it?

The Imperial Priest and the other Mongolian warriors had higher martial arts than the Five Masters of Quanzhen. It was practically impossible for the Quanzhen School to even produce someone like them now.

Qiu Chuji and others thought: “If our late Master were still alive he would surely be superior to them; our Martial Uncle Zhou is probably also one level higher than these four men in the field of martial arts. Yet, when facing the combined forces of these four fighters, chances are high that even he will suffer defeat.”

The Five Masters were ashamed and depressed; they felt that Quanzhen was degrading with each generation. They could not carry on the legacy of their patriarch anymore. When faced with a great enemy it seems that the Quanzhen School has no leg to stand on anymore.

What they saw was that every move was brutal, every step made was critical. The more they watched the more worried they became and they weren’t eager to inquire of their disciples the reasons for this unforeseen event taking place in front of them.

As the five people, Xiao Longnu and others, battled on, the circumstances were contrasting again. Every move Xiao Longnu made was an attack, whereas Fawang and others were still engaging in obstructing her every move. Counterattacks were few, but they were gradually closing in on her. Xiao Longnu's situation became even more disadvantageous. Several times when she tried to evacuate the circle in order to slip away temporarily, her opponents' strict and concentrated defense was preventing it. Every move made brought her back well within the circle. She knew that with Jinlun Fawang as the driving force, it was useless to even try throwing her swords up in the air like before. Besides the two swords that she held, there weren't any other weapons available to her.

By herself in the main hall she injured Lu Qingdu, but by this point she had fought for close to two hours. Her physical strength was hanging on a thread, and the powerful enemies getting closer to her. Qiu Chuji and the others were lying in wait for her to one side. These five old Taoists were still very rare gems to find in the martial art world. Every corner was populated with enemies galore and she was only one person; she will definitely lose her life here at Chongyang Palace. Suddenly she remembered: "With me being brought to this predicament, what's the pity if I simply die here? But...but...at the brink of death, I dearly hope I can meet Guo'er at the same time. Where is he at this moment? He's bound to be getting intimate with Miss Guo, perhaps even already married to her. As a newly wed, why would he even think of a hopeless girl like me besieged from all sides? No it can't be, it can't be! Guo'er wouldn't be like that, even if he married Miss Guo, in no way would he forget about me. All I yearn for is to see him once again ..."

When she left Xiangyang and headed for the north, she'd made up her mind that she'll never meet Yang Guo ever again. But at this stage where she faced the final moments of life and death, she found it more and more difficult to stick to her vow. What was previously "Dividing Heart with Two Uses" is suddenly now "Heart Embraces Her Special One". Even though both her sword strike's activity was the same as before, her "Pure Heart of the Jade Maiden Manual" strength wasn't there. Fawang noticed a change in her sword style; he initially believed she intentionally showed weakness to tempt them. But after several moves passed, it didn't seem so. So he immediately stepped further forward, his left hand's silver wheel guarded himself, whereas his right hand's golden wheel aimed for one of her swords to smash into.

Only hearing the sound of 'dong', Xiao Longnu's left hand's sword flew out of her hand and landed with a 'pak', it broke into two pieces. Fawang was just probing and it actually worked. This was far better than what he expected so without wasting any chances his right hand's golden wheel rammed out. This stunned Xiao Longnu and she quickly

made an effort to suppress her perturbed mind. She brushed out three slashes. But since she was forced into using just a single sword, the martial arts difference between her and Fawang stretched further. Xiaoxiang Zi and his partners seeing the small advantages arising progressed forward with their own weapons.

Xiao Longnu revealing a grimacing smile and did not wish to continue the contest any longer. She caught a glimpse in the pine lined path a blooming rosebush nearby within thirty feet of her. The flowers were delicate and fragrant and seemed like they were about to fall. Suddenly she was reminded of the place where she was cut off by the rosebushes with Yang Guo while learning “Pure Heart of the Jade Maiden Manual”. She thought: “Since I’ll never see Guo’er again, then I’ll think of him before I die.” Her facial expression was gentle and soft as it is was absorbed into a moment of contentment.

Fawang and his teammates had surrounded her in all four directions; if they wanted to they could’ve finished her in one stroke. But suddenly they noticed a wave of abnormality highlighted on her face, appearing as though she had forgotten about defending herself from the enemy. All were astonished, and wondered whether she was up to those dirty old sorcery tricks again. Four different weapons wavered in mid-air but didn’t come down. But within that pause, Nimoxing’s steel snake was the first to move forward.

Then all of a sudden beside him was the sound of wind sighing; it appeared that someone had stretched out a sword to strike him. Nimoxing frantically got back his steel snake to obstruct the sword but hit nothing but empty air. Then he saw a person in motion, it was none other than Yin Zhiping who scrambled in front of Xiao Longnu. He was delivering his own sword to her. Xiao Longnu at this point seemed possessed as though nothing is within her sight, nor can she hear with her ear, and had already abandoned the matter of engaging in a hand-to-hand combat. Then she felt her left hand had been given a sword, and smoothly clung onto it.

The onlookers couldn’t help but cry out in alarm after suddenly catching sight of Yin Zhiping entering the danger zone of the five top-notch fighters. For him, it was no different than if he were digging his own grave.

Fawang was acquainted with him, and did not wish to harm his life. So thereupon his left arm met his shoulder by force and pushed him away. His right hand’s wheel swayed towards Xiao Longnu. Yin Zhiping was curious as to why she had no intentions to fight anymore. Desperately trying to think, his eyes understood that she’d be dead if this wheel grazed her. Without caring for his own safety he flung himself forward, and

screamed: “Xiao Longnu, watch out!” Then used the back of his own body and obstinately blocked against Fawang’s golden wheel.

Whenever Fawang’s golden wheel swings out, its remarkable power alone could split rocks and slice mountains, what chance does Yin Zhiping have of withstanding that? So he immediately dove out of the way. After Xiao Longnu caught the sword given her by Yin Zhiping, she was as immovable as before and she continued to firmly hold the sword erect whilst in a trance. Yin Zhiping flew out, and arrived on the sword’s end, spearing through his chest. When Xiao Longnu came to her senses, a dawning realization swept across her mind and she was certain that he saved her life. Staring down at his back wounded by the wheel and his chest pierced by his own sword, and she knew both were mortal wounds. In a split second her all consuming hatred converted to compassion, and softly spoke: “Why did you do this?”

Yin Zhiping’s life was near its last gasp; as soon as he heard the four words of ‘Why did you do this?’ couldn’t hold back his wild joy. And said: “Long Guniang, I’m deeply... deeply sorry for what I’ve done to you; I could never amend with my selfless actions. Will...will you forgive me?”

Xiao Longnu stared blankly again, and recollected the time when she heard his conversation with Zhao Zhijing at the Guo’s residence in Xiangyang. A thought just skimmed across her mind: “Guo’er had always been deeply affectionate with me, and even once swore that he would never be unfaithful to me. Then without notice he’s made up his mind to marry Guo Guniang and abandoned me like nothing happened, and didn’t give a second’s care about the after-effects. He must’ve learned that I was once raped by this filthy scoundrel.” Her heart was innocent, even when she followed the tracks of the two Taoists Yin Zhiping and Zhao Zhijing; this notion never came up in her mind. Once she was abruptly reminded by Yin Zhiping, her mind’s compassion immediately spiraled back into hatred. Her fury has in fact tenfold, clenching her teeth; her right hand’s sword immediately drew on his chest and pushed forward. However in all her life she had never taken somebody’s life. Although her bosom was filled with grief and indignation, the sword that was to be thrust through his chest never happened to everyone’s surprise.

Qiu Chuji observing to one side saw his beloved pupil die a violent death. He was distressed as though a dagger struck through his heart; the incident happened faster than anyone could imagine, and he failed to reach him in time to rescue him. Xiao Longnu’s first sword strike can be said to have been caused by Fawang. But the second sword strike was intentional. He didn’t have the slightest knowledge of the tortuous details. During these six months he’s been without rest, for the most part thinking of how to

negate Xiao Longnu's maneuvers. In the recent month apart from this he had nothing else to think about. Xiao Longnu had been established as his own Quanzhen sect's arch-enemy, but he definitely could not believe Yin Zhiping was willing to sacrifice his life to save her. His eyes seeing her sword strike out again he immediately leapt in front. With his left hand's five fingers whisking her wrist and his right palm aimed squarely for her face. Qiu Chuji's martial arts occupied first place amongst the Quanzhen Seven Masters. The circumstances forced him to make that move, and his palm's might was very forceful.

That jerk did manage to pull Xiao Longnu's wrist, and the sword was instantly out of her grasp. Without waiting for the sword to drop on the ground, she reached out her hand and regained possession of it. Then she followed up with a lunge forward across to Qiu Chuji's chest. During this moment, Yin Zhiping shrieked in pain as he sank down on the ground with blood gushing out of his wounds. Xiao Longnu's left sword pointed towards Qiu Chuji's lower abdomen. Now that both her swords have combined harmoniously, its power has rapidly amplified. Qiu Chuji's martial arts maybe profound, but within three strokes, he was in a helter-skelter state. Wang Chuyi noticing the situation wasn't right, dashed forward to lend a hand, pushing Fawang and others to one side.

Jinlun Fawang and his motley crew felt surprised when they saw Xiao Longnu fight against the Quanzhen Five Masters, but knew that this change of events was beneficial for them. He thought it would be a good idea to watch them commit fratricide. All of them gave each other a wink, and backed off several paces. They were waiting for a real victor to emerge between Xiao Longnu and the Quanzhen Five masters, and then they'd step in to tidy up the final phase of the chess game.

As the top fighters come to blows, every move was mortal; nobody dared to risk any room for error. That's why even when Qiu Chuji and his peers were aware that the situation was odd they knew it would be hard to solve easily. But since the battle had commenced, where could they find the spare time to consider all of this? The Quanzhen Five masters were unarmed, when confronting Xiao Longnu's marvelous and improper methods of swordplay, the single month spent on initiating a skill called "Seven Star Rally" did not even have any chance of being put to good use. In a moment, Hao Datong and Liu Chuxuan both were harmed by her swords, but both persisted and guarded every martial brother's safety. Then 'zung' sound, Sun Bu'Er was struck by a sword.

Other Quanzhen disciples seeing how the masters were failing in a dangerous situation couldn't help but cry out in fear. Li Zhichang called out: "Quickly deliver them a weapon!" At this point, the "Five Master's Palm" wind whizzed through the air, leaving the disciples unable to get near them. They could only throw the swords one by one

over to them. Xiao Longnu raced ahead and brandished her sword to push away the incoming weapons. Every sword arriving near them was knocked away. The advantage Xiao Longnu had of having a sword longer than their human arms meant the Five Masters were given no chance to grab a weapon. Suddenly the noise of ‘ding-dang’ was heard, Xiao Longnu’s left hand collected another sword thrown in the battle, and abruptly lobbed it backwards. Wang Chuyi couldn’t prepare himself in time; the corner of his left eye was slashed by an outsider’s sword. Out of the Five Quanzhen Descendants, four were injured; a conclusion as to who triumphed could be reached.

Jinlun Fawang laughed ecstatically, and called out: “My Taoist friends please step aside, let me take care of this Demon Girl!” Finishing those words he intervened. Xiaoxiang Zi, Nimoxing and Yin Kexi jointly attacked her as they wielded their weapons. It had escalated into a phase where nine experts are besieging a single Xiao Longnu.

As soon as Fawang got involved, Quanzhen Five Masters were instantly released from Xiao Longnu’s twin swords coercion. Five of them called out loudly, and stood shoulder to shoulder. Either it’s the right palm or the left palm, five streams of huge energies amalgamated into one that generated the “Seven Star Rally” attack. It maybe only “Five Star Rally” right now, but its’ power is out of the ordinary. She tilted her body to evade the attack; the noise of ‘peng’ was heard. The dust on the ground flew upwards, the attack left Nimoxing somersaulting in the air as he fell.

After both his legs were cut off, he had to rely on his crutches for support; his lower-body wasn’t stable enough to sustain the blow. At least when he was in imminent danger he managed to slip away from the direct force of the blow. He may have toppled over, but instantly got back up unscathed. With a few bawls of ‘wa-wa’, he raised his steel snake aimed down at Liu Chuxuan’s head. In front of the Cave of the Jade Void the sounds of calls reverberated in all directions adding to the confusion.

Xiao Longnu seeing Nimoxing turn on the Quanzhen Five Masters stroked her white sleeves, and wanted to pull out of the circle. Jinlun Fawang hurried over to hinder the attacks, and said: “Brother Nimo, it’s more important to deal with the Demon Girl.” Nimoxing who’s preoccupied with the fight did not pay attention to the calls of Fawang. Prodding outward with his steel snake, the assaults were laid upon the various Quanzhen Taoists. Xiao Longnu’s swords quickly thrust out at Fawang several times. Fawang felt the unbelievable speed from the oncoming force; giving him a hard time just to parry them, and had to withdraw a few steps.

Suddenly, Xiao Longnu gasped loudly, both cheeks lost color. With two sounds of ‘qiang-long’, both swords from her hands fell on the ground. Staring in blank amaze-

ment at the pine lined path's rosebush, she called: "Guo'er is that really you?"

At this juncture, Fawang's golden wheel had sliced her head-on; Quanzhen Five Master's "Seven Star Rally" pummeled her in the back. The attack was supposed to keep Nimoxing at bay, but the Indian short man had already suffered the bitter taste of the pile driver. So he had no second thoughts of matching it and evaded to the left. The attack was alternatively expended upon Xiao Longnu's garment.

She looked bewitched, and the reaction to evade wasn't there. Her vest had endured a palm, her chest struck by the wheel. Even with such a fragile body weathering these two tremendous converging forces, her eyes were nevertheless still fixed upon the external influence of the rosebush. At that moment, her heart was agitated and she turned her thoughts to her beloved, it seemed as though those two forces had not harmed her a bit.

The spectators felt in awe of her gaze, and all involuntarily turned their heads to see what was so strange about that rosebush. They noticed a human shadow fly out round the side of the pine lined field and sneak into the no-man's land between Fawang and the Quanzhen Five Masters. That person, darting past everyone, grabbed hold of Xiao Longnu with his left arm and had already leaped out of the ring. Without wasting a moment, sat beside the rosebush, and rested her against his chest. This person was of course Yang Guo!

Xiao Longnu's face lighted up, tears flowing from her eyes: "Guo'er, it's you. This isn't a dream?"

Yang Guo nodded, kissing her cheek, his voice soft: "Not a dream. Am I not holding you right now?"

But then he saw her clothes stained with blood spots, alarmed. He worriedly asked: "Are you seriously injured?"

Xiao Longnu earlier received two vicious attacks. Upon seeing Yang Guo, she didn't feel her injury. Only now she felt the searing pain. She placed her arm around Yang Guo's neck, saying: "I... I..." Her body hurt so much she couldn't get the words out.

Yang Guo couldn't bear to see her in pain, his voice broke: "Gu Gu I've come too late!"

Xiao Longnu said: "No, it's good that you've come. In this life, I thought I wouldn't be able to see you again."



Suddenly she felt cold as if her soul was leaving the body. She hung on to Yang Guo's arms yet her hold was slowly dropping. She said: "Guo'er, hold me."

Yang Guo's left arm slightly tightened, pulling her to his chest. He was overwhelmed by hundreds of feelings, his tears slowly falling down to Xiao Longnu's face.

Xiao Longnu said: "Hold me, use both...both hands!" Suddenly she saw his right sleeve empty. Strange, she cried out: "Your right arm?"

Yang Guo forced a smile, his voice cracked: "I've worried you. Don't worry about me right now, close your eyes quickly, don't use up your energy."

Xiao Longnu said: "No! Your right arm? How come it's gone...how come?" Even though her own life was hanging by thread, she didn't care the slightest about herself; she was determined to find out why Yang Guo was missing an arm. This was because in her heart, Yang Guo's well-being was 100 times, 1000 times more important than hers.

It had been like this since the time they were together at Gu Mu [the Ancient Tomb]. Only then she didn't know it was love, nor did Yang Guo. They only thought that their mutual concern for each other's well-being was right between the master and the disciple. Since there were only two of them living at Gu Mu, if one didn't care for the other, who else would they care for? Actually this was a feeling between a young man and woman; before they even knew it, they were in love with each other. One day they learned that one could not regard the other's life as important as one's own, let alone 100 times, 1000 times more important without being in love. Every couple who was in love could think like this. However, only these two people with truly deep feelings and innate passions who found each other and fell in love could treasure the other party more than they did themselves.

As far as Xiao Longnu was concerned, Yang Guo's one arm was much more important than her own life or death and thus she persisted on asking. She stretched her hand and gently stroked his sleeve, not daring to touch it too hard. But really, there was no arm under the sleeve.

Suddenly, she no longer felt the severe pain in her body. This was because her mind was occupied by Yang Guo's pain, making her forget her own suffering. She softly said: "Poor Guo'er. Has it been very long? You aren't in pain now?"

Yang Guo shook his head, replying: "It doesn't hurt anymore. As long as I get to see your face and never part with you again, what's so important about missing an arm? My left

arm can still hold you, can't it?"

Xiao Longnu let out a soft smile, deciding that Yang Guo was right. She lay down in his embrace. Even though he had only his left arm, she was content. She was facing death just before seeing him again. Right now it was very good, really very good.

Jinlun Fawang, Xiaoxiang Zi, Yin Kexi, Quanzhen Five Masters, their numerous disciples, the numerous Mongolian soldiers ... nobody made a sound but looked dumbfounded at the young lovers. At a time like this, they all were thinking about fighting with them, yet nobody dared to start it. The world waited. Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu no longer cared whether they lived or died. Having their love, what was so important about death?

Jinlun Fawang certainly was not afraid of the couple only astonished. He saw Xiao Longnu badly injured and Yang Guo having only one arm, and neither being able to withstand a fight again. However, the two people's affection for each other had an awe-inspiring and fearless effect, and was not something to be taken lightly.

Eventually, Xiao Longnu couldn't stay quiet, asking: "Your arm ... How did you lose your arm? Tell me quickly."

Yang Guo forced a bitter smile and said: "The arm was lost; naturally it got cut off by other people."

Xiao Longnu sadly looked at him. She hadn't thought that he wouldn't tell her who did it. That meant it didn't matter who. She again felt the rising pain in her chest. She knew her life wouldn't last much longer, lowering her voice: "Guo'er, I beg you one thing."

Yang Guo said: "Gu Gu, you've forgotten. At Gu Mu, I promised you, whatever you want me to do, I'll do it."

Xiao Longnu sighed quietly, saying: "That was a long, long time ago!"

"To me, forever is the same," replied Yang Guo.

Xiao Longnu smiled sadly and said: "I don't have long to live. You stay with me, until I die. Don't go accompany Guo.. Guo Fu Guniang [Miss Guo Fu]."

Yang Guo was sad yet angry, saying: "Gu Gu, of course I'll be with you. What does Guo Fu Guniang have to do with me? It was she who chopped off this arm of mine."

Xiao Longnu was alarmed, crying out: “What? It was her? Why was she so heartless?”

Is that... Is that why you don't like her?” Yang Guo said resentfully: “The two of us are very good together, why are you being suspicious? Except for one person, in my life I've never loved any girls. This Guo Fu Guniang, Hngg [expression of contempt]”

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That day Yang Guo and Guo Fu's quarrel escalated into a fight, Guo Fu's burning anger was hard to restrain. She grabbed hold of the 'Lady' sword and struck down at the top of his head. Yang Guo was poisoned and he hadn't fully recuperated yet, his four limbs had no energy to spare. Seeing the sword arrive, he was out of options and had to raise his right arm in front of his face. Guo Fu in furious vexation gave her all. The 'Lady' sword was as sharp as it gets and Yang Guo's right arm was silently cut off in a flash.

With that sword chopping down, Yang Guo's life changed. Yang Guo no doubt let out a fierce burst of anger; Guo Fu was quivering with fear and knew she'd made a huge mistake that could never be made up. But after witnessing the blood well up like a fountain, she hadn't a clue as to what to do. A moment passed, suddenly the sound of 'wa' was released, she covered her face and wept whilst pushing open the door and rushing out. After a short period of nervous discomfort, Yang Guo promptly relaxed himself. And extended his left hand to seal his right shoulder's "Loyal Shoulder Point", he tore up a bed sheet and firmly tied up his shoulder to prevent the continuous flow of blood. Then he applied the Golden Wound Medicine to his wound, and thought: "I cannot stay here any longer, I must hurry and get out of the city." Slowly holding the wall he walked a few steps. Because he'd bled excessively, he almost fainted several times as his vision became more and more blurred.

At this moment, he heard the loud calls of Guo Jing: "Come on, come on, how is he? Has he stopped bleeding yet?" The sound of his speech was filled with anxiety. Yang Guo's mind at that time only encompassed these thoughts: "No way am I going to see Uncle Guo. I don't want to see him." So he took a deep breath, and sprinted out of the room.

He rushed outside the mansion's gates, pulled in a horse, mounted it and galloped to the city gate. The officers and men that supervised the city had seen him rescue Guo Jing at the top of the city wall once before, they had a great deal of respect for him. So they immediately opened the city gate for him and he dashed past on the horse.

During this period the Mongolian armed forces had decamped a hundred-odd Chinese miles (li) away. Yang Guo did not take the route of the main road. The horse was ridden

through the desolated areas. He thought: “The time is up for the Passion Flower that’s infected my body, but I’m still very much alive. Perhaps it’s just like what the Indian Divine Monk said; after I sucked the poison of the “Soul Freezing Silver Needles”, the poison managed to counteract the other poison, which prolonged my life. But the poison has only subsided; sooner or later it’s inevitable for it to break out again. With severe wounds, if I were to head off to Mount Zhongnan to look for GuGu, I definitely won’t last very long. Could this be what fate has destined for me, and condemned me to die in such a strange place? He began to reminisce about his wretched orphaned life, other than those fond memories he had of being together with Xiao Longnu in Ancient Tomb; he rarely found any other specific moments of bliss. At this moment, the only close person he had has abandoned him and gone. Just when he’s recovered – part of his body is disabled. Already half-dead, when his thoughts reached this point, he was hardly able to restrain his tears.

Yang Guo laid flat on the horse’s back. In his wooziness, he didn’t care where the horse would take him, as long as Guo Jing wouldn’t be able to find him and he didn’t bump into any of the Mongolian army. Soon, the horse came near the desolate valley where the Wu brothers had fought each other the night before.

It was dusk already. The long grasses in the valley were even taller than knee-highs. Silence swept the night. Yang Guo was quite sure that he was all alone now, so he lay down in the bushes and tried to get some sleep. By then he couldn’t care less about his own safety, and didn’t even bother to guard against poisonous snakes or wild animals. But the excruciating pain from his wound never stopped throughout the night. He could barely fall asleep.

The next morning when he opened his eyes and sat up, something suddenly caught his attention. Only inches from him lay two dead centipedes, bloodstains in their mouths, stiff as sticks, with red and black stripes all over their bodies, looking frightful even after they were dead. In shock, Yang Guo examined them more closely and found a big pool of blood next to the centipedes. After a short ponder, he had it figured out. It turned out that the bleeding from his wound had created the pool of blood, and because of the strong toxin contained in his blood, the two poisonous centipedes had died.

A wry smile flashed across Yang Guo’s lips as he murmured, “Who would have imagined that even poisonous centipedes couldn’t stand my toxic blood.” Anger, indignation, sorrow and bitterness swelled in his heart. He could no longer control his surging emotions. Raising his head high, he burst into mad laughter.

Three chirps came from the top of a peak and caught Yang Guo's attention. He looked up. It was the Divine Eagle, its head held high, standing on the very top of the peak. Even though it looked ferocious and hideous, there was something about it that made it look majestic and awe-inspiring.

Yang Guo was overjoyed as if he had just seen an old friend. "Brother Eagle, we have met again!" he shouted.

A long chirp echoed as the Divine Eagle darted down from the peak. It couldn't fly because of the heavy body and the two short wings, but it could run like a stallion. Within moments, it had arrived by Yang Guo. Having noticed that one of Yang Guo's arms was missing the eagle fixed its stare at Yang Guo.

"Brother Eagle, great misfortune has fallen upon me. That's why I've come to you for shelter," Yang Guo explained with a wry smile.

He couldn't tell whether the eagle understood him. It simply turned around and started walking. So he grabbed the reins of the horse and followed.

Only after several steps, the Divine Eagle suddenly turned its head back and smacked the belly of the horse with its left wing. Taking a couple of steps back, the horse neighed in pain and bucked up and down.

"I see," Yang Guo nodded. "Once I enter Brother Eagle's valley, there will be no need to leave again. Why bother keeping the horse?" Deep in his heart, he was already convinced that the eagle was really no less intelligent than a human being, so he let go of the reins and followed the Divine Eagle in big strides. Because of his severe wounds, he had to sit down to rest every little while, and the Divine Eagle would then hold its steps and wait for him.

After close to two hours of walking and with many rest stops along the way, the two of them arrived at the cave where the Demonic Swordsman, Dugu Seeking-A-Loss, had been buried.

Seeing the grave made out of rocks and stones, Yang Guo heaved a long sigh. All sorts of feelings welled up in his mind. "If this legendary master was able to roam the Martial World with no equal, his Kung Fu skills must have been extraordinary," Yang Guo thought to himself. "But he must have also been very eccentric and arrogant because of his unmatched talents and didn't get along with ordinary people. That was probably why he just passed away so quietly in such a desolate valley while no great stories or

legends of him were told in the Martial World. And no sword art manuals or apprentices of his were left behind to pass down his invincible martial arts techniques. His life must have been very exciting and admirable, yet at the same time sad and gloomy. Even though the Divine Eagle is very intelligent, it is so unfortunate that it doesn't speak, otherwise it could have told a little about the Senior Master's life story."

He stared at the grave blankly, lost in thought. When he finally got hold of himself, the Divine Eagle had brought back two wild rabbits from outside the cave. Yang Guo barbecued the rabbits and made a good meal out of them.

Days went by and the wounds started to heal gradually, and Yang Guo found himself on the path to recovery. Every time he thought of the Xiao Longnu, he would still feel pain from his chest, but it was far from the kind of unbearable pain he used to have. Yang Guo was the restless type. Having spent so many days in the desolate valley accompanied only by the Divine Eagle, he soon became very bored.

On this no particular day, the verdant hill at the back of the cave caught his attention. It was a beautiful day, so he decided to take on a random scenic walk. About half a mile into the walk, he found himself in front of a big cliff. The cliff towered straight into the sky almost like a huge screen. In the middle of the cliff, probably two hundred feet above the ground, a huge rock, about thirty or forty feet wide, stuck out from the cliff like a platform, and vaguely, he thought he could see words carved on the rock. Raising his head high, he stared up. Only after a long while was he able to tell what they were. Carved on the rock were two large characters: 'Sword Tomb'.

"Why would a sword have a tomb? Could Senior Master Dugu have somehow broken his favorite sword and decided to bury it here?" Yang Guo's curiosity started growing.

He walked next to the bottom of the cliff and looked around. The cliff wall was made out of bald rock. There wasn't even any grass or bush on the rock wall. There were no rock edges for grabbing or stepping on, which made him wonder how the Senior Master had been able to climb up the cliff.

He stared at the rock wall for a good while, and the more he stared at it, the bigger the urge to climb up he felt.

"He was also just a human being," he thought aloud. "How did he climb up so high? He's got to have some kind of tricks. If he had been able to climb up there using pure martial arts skills, then his skills had to be god like."

He stared at the rock wall again even more carefully. After a while he noticed something. On the rock wall, there were dozens of patches of moss, each patch several feet away from the other, going upwards in a straight line. An idea popped out. He leapt up and reached for the lowest patch of moss. Not to his surprise, a small hole emerged after he scrubbed out the dark soil. He figured that Dugu Seeking-A-Loss must have dug these holes with sharp blades. After so many years, dirt had accumulated in the holes and mosses had started to grow.

Having nothing else urgent to do, Yang Guo decided to check out this Sword Tomb. But having only one arm left certainly made climbing a more difficult task.

“If I can’t climb up to the platform, then I can’t. Who’s going to laugh at me here?” he thought.

After tightening his waistband, he took a deep breath and leapt a few feet up, sticking his left foot in the first small hole. Then he leapt upward again, kicking his right foot toward the second patch of moss. The soft soil fell, and sure enough, there was another small hole on the rock wall just big enough for a foot.

His first attempt at climbing the cliff only lasted a little bit over one hundred feet before he ran out of breath, so he slid back down to the ground.

“I’ve already found over twenty stepping spots. The second attempt should be much easier,” he told himself.

After some meditation at the bottom of the cliff, he gathered enough strength and finally climbed up to the rock platform. Although he only had one arm left, his Qing-Gong skills hadn’t weakened a single bit. He couldn’t help but feel some relief.

Next to the two large characters “Sword Tomb,” there were two rows of words carved on the rock in smaller size:

“The Demonic Swordsman Dugu Seeking-A-Loss has become the invincible and unchallenged warrior under Heaven; he therefore buried his swords here. Alas, the heroes of the realm have laid down their arms, now my long sword is sharp as usual yet useless... the agony!”

A mixed feeling of shock and admiration welled up in Yang Guo’s heart. He couldn’t help but feel that this Senior Master’s personality was very similar to his own. Both of them were lofty and defied the entire world. But he himself was certainly far from in-

vincible and unchallenged. And now he only had one arm; even if he could survive this time, the chance of him becoming invincible would be very slim. He stared at the two rows of words for a while and then looked down. Rocks and stones formed a big pile in the shape of a tomb, its back facing the deep and broad valley. Putting aside the fact of how brilliant the Demonic Swordsman was, the sword tomb itself was impressive enough on its own. It was apparent that this Senior Master must have been outstanding in both his wits and his martial arts skills, and had high aspirations. He wished that he could have been born many years earlier so he'd have a chance to meet such a legendary master in person. Feeling thrilled, he shouted out loudly by the sword tomb in a long roar, and moments later, echoes rose in all directions. He suddenly remembered the kind of joy Huang Yaoshi had described to him: "To flick my robe on the zenith of the high peak and to wash my feet in the river thousands of miles long." At the current moment, he could almost feel the same kind of lofty sentiments and aspirations. Although he really yearned to find out what kind of blade had been buried in the tomb, he felt afraid to offend the deceased master, so he gave up the thought and simply sat down, holding his knees in his arm, and breathed in against the wind. Soon, he felt as if his chest had been filled with pure energy and he could just ride the wind and glide in the air.

Several chirrups came from the bottom of the cliff. Yang Guo looked down and saw the Divine Eagle jumping its way up the cliff by hooking the small holes with its talons. Although the eagle had a heavy body, its leg and talon strength was simply amazing. Only moments later, the eagle had made its way up to the rock platform.

After taking a brief look around, the Divine Eagle nodded toward Yang Guo and chirped. The sounds of the chirps were quite different from the sound of its regular chirps.

"Brother Eagle, unfortunately I don't have the skills of Gongye Chang and can't understand anything you say. Otherwise you could have told me the entire life story of this Senior Master Dugu," Yang Guo said with a smile.

The Divine Eagle let out several more chirrups and then reached out with its talons. Grabbing onto some of the rocks on the sword tomb, it started moving them aside.

A thought suddenly popped into Yang Guo's head. "Senior Master Dugu had superior martial arts skills. Could he have left behind some kind of sword arts manual or manuscript?"



The Divine Eagle's talons kept moving and soon had moved away all the stones on top of the sword tomb, exposing three long swords lying side by side. Between the first sword and the second sword lay a long rock strip. The three long swords and the long rock strip lay neatly on a stone slab.

Yang Guo picked up the first sword on the left and saw two rows of small words carved on the slab stone underneath where the sword was placed.

"Fierce, aggressive and able to penetrate any obstacle, with it, I competed with the heroes of the Northern Plains during my teenage years."

Looking more carefully at the sword, he found it to be about four feet long. The blade flashed in the daylight. It was indeed a very sharp sword.

Laying the sword back in its original place, he then picked up the long rock strip. There were also two rows of small words underneath carved on the stone slab.

"Flexible Sword of the Purple Rose, I used it prior to the age of thirty. With it, I accidentally wounded a righteous man. A weapon of doom, I abandoned it in a deep valley."

"The sword is missing because he had abandoned it," Yang Guo thought. "I wonder how he ended up wounding a righteous man. Perhaps no one will ever get to know the story behind it."

After a short contemplation, he reached out to pick up the second sword. But only inches off the slab stone, the sword fell out of his grip and smacked back onto the slab stone. A loud clank echoed as sparks flashed everywhere. It gave Yang Guo a good shock.

Although the sword looked dark with nothing unusual, it turned out to be extremely heavy. The sword was only slightly longer than three feet, but it weighed at least one hundred and ten to one hundred and thirty pounds, several times heavier even than the heaviest saber or halberd used on the battlefield. He had not expected it to be this heavy when he picked it up. Caught by surprise, he had lost grip on the sword. The second time he picked it up, knowing what to expect, he had a good grip on the sword. When prepared, something as heavy as one hundred and thirty pounds really wasn't hard for him at all. Taking a better look at the sword, he found both sides of the blade blunt, and the tip of the sword was more like a half circle.

“This sword is too heavy. How can someone wield a sword like this and still be able to control it well? Besides, the edges on both sides and the sword tip are all blunt. How strange!” he thought aloud.

Looking down on the stone slab underneath where the sword was, he also found two rows of small words.

“Heavy sword with blunt edges, simplicity brings superiority. Before I reached the age of forty, I used it to roam the entire world under Heaven.”

Yang Guo murmured the words “heavy sword with blunt edges, simplicity brings superiority” repeatedly. He seemed to have comprehended part of the idea, but the idea was still very vague in his head. There were many styles of sword arts in the world, but regardless of style or school, each sword art always emphasized flexibility and speed. How should this heavy sword be used? He couldn’t help imagining how the Senior Master had wielded the heavy sword and soon fell into a trance.

Only after a long while did Yang Guo lay the heavy sword down and reached out for the third sword. But this time something went wrong again. He had thought that this third sword must have been even heavier than the previous one, so when he reached out to pick up the sword, he made sure he had shifted enough strength to his left arm, but the sword turned out to be so light that he felt as if he had only picked up empty air. Casting a closer glance at it, he found a wooden sword in his hand. After the many years, part of the sword body and the hilt were almost completely rotten. The words underneath said,

“After the age of forty, I no longer relied on weaponry. Bushes, trees, bamboo sticks or rocks, all could be my swords. From then on, I achieved great progress and slowly reached the realm of overcoming the sword without a sword.”

Laying the wooden sword back to its original place respectfully, Yang Guo sighed in great admiration.

“The Senior Master’s brilliant skills must have excelled way beyond my imagination,” he murmured.

Thinking of the idea that there might be sword art manuals of some kind underneath the stone slab, he grabbed it and lifted it up. But there was nothing under except the hard surface of the rock platform. He couldn’t help but feel slightly disappointed.

The Divine Eagle let out a loud chirp. Lowering its head, he picked the heavy sword up with his beak and then placed it in Yang Guo's hand. With another loud chirp, the eagle suddenly swung his left wing and smacked down towards Yang Guo's head. The swing was so fierce and powerful that Yang Guo could feel the strong wind generated by it long before the eagle's wing even came close to him. In a split second, Yang Guo felt as if he couldn't even breathe, and when he finally broke out from the brief shock, the Divine Eagle had held its wing still about one foot away from his head. Another two chirps came from the eagle.

"Brother Eagle, are you interested in checking out my Kung Fu skills?" Yang Guo grinned. "I've got nothing else to do. Fine, let's have some fun."

But it would be too hard to wield the over-one-hundred-pound heavy sword, so he put it down and picked up the first sword. To his surprise, the Divine Eagle suddenly retracted its two wings and turned his head aside, paying no more attention to him, its face appeared covered with disdain.

Yang Guo immediately understood. "You want me to wield the heavy sword? But my Kung Fu skills are so ordinary. I am certain I would be no match for you, especially on top of this steep cliff, Brother Eagle. You've got to give me some leeway!" he said with a grin.

Picking the heavy sword back up, he gathered his inner energy around his lower stomach and shifted his strength to his left arm before thrusting the sword out slowly. The Divine Eagle didn't even turn around. Swinging its left wing backwards, the Divine Eagle attacked, its wing colliding with the heavy sword. Yang Guo felt a stream of vigorous force rushing toward him passing through the sword, so powerful that he almost ran out of breath. In a rush, he let out a roar and fought the force back with all his strength. The sword shook slightly between the two forces and suddenly all Yang Guo could see was complete darkness, and seconds later he fell unconscious.

Slowly, he regained consciousness, not knowing how much time had passed. Something incredibly bitter in his mouth immediately caught his attention, while, some kind of bitter juice kept dripping down his throat. He opened his eyes and saw the Divine Eagle placing a dark purple ball shaped thing into his mouth. This thing stunk like a rotten fish, but Yang Guo ate it anyway, thinking that since the Divine Eagle was extremely intelligent, this thing in its mouth had to be something good. With only a gentle bite, the skin of the ball shaped thing cracked open and immediately his mouth was filled with bitter juice.

The juice was extremely bitter and smelly and it tasted awful. Yang Guo really wanted to spit it all out, but he didn't want to go against the Divine Eagle's good will and finally managed to swallow it. A few moments later, he tried to slightly control his inner energy flow, and to his surprise, he found his breathing smooth and fluent. He stood back up, and again, not only did he not feel tired or exhausted, but instead, he felt totally refreshed, no, it was even better than before.

Yang Guo was puzzled. Logically, when someone got knocked out with a strong blow, even if the person was lucky enough to not get injured seriously, he would at least feel soreness all over his body. Could that dark purple ball shaped thing be some kind of magical cure?

He bent over and picked the heavy sword up. It felt as if the sword had become slightly lighter than before. Right at that second, the Divine Eagle let out another loud chirp before striking with its wing again. This time Yang Guo dared not take on the blow directly and dodged to the side. The Divine Eagle took a step forward and struck again with both wings, fierce and powerful. Yang Guo knew that the eagle had no ill intentions toward him, but even though the eagle was extremely intelligent, it was still just an animal. With the kind of mighty power it possessed, when it attacked with its wings, it wouldn't really know when to stop or how to restrain its power. If he had gotten hit by the wing and fallen off the rock platform, it would surely kill him. Seeing the two wings striking toward him, he took two steps back in a hurry. By then, his left foot was already on the edge of the rock platform.

Who would have thought that the eagle would show no mercy? With a quick stretch, its sharp beak shot out toward Yang Guo's chest. Having no space to retreat back, Yang Guo had no choice but to block the attack with the sword. The peck landed squarely on the sword. A tremendous shock ran through Yang Guo's arm and he almost had to let go of the heavy sword. The Divine Eagle immediately followed with a low sweep using its right wing and struck toward Yang Guo's ankles. Astonished, Yang Guo jumped up and leaped over the Divine Eagle's head, rushing toward the inside of the platform. In fear that the eagle would follow up its attacks, he waved the sword backward. A loud clank echoed as the sword collided with another peck from the eagle.

Having so narrowly escaped death, Yang Guo broke out in a cold sweat. "Brother Eagle," he shouted, "I am not Master Dugu!" Feeling achy and weak in the knees, he sat down. The Divine Eagle let out two low chirps and halted its attack.

Having blurted out the words "I am not Master Dugu" without thinking, Yang Guo suddenly thought of something. The eagle had been a long time companion of Senior

Master Dugu. The way it had struck and moved about actually had matched loosely with martial arts principles. Perhaps when Senior Master Dugu sometimes became bored living in the desolate valley all by himself, he had treated the eagle as if it was a sparring partner of his. Senior Master Dugu had long ago passed away, along with all his superior martial arts techniques. But it might be possible to find some traces of this great Master's martial arts style and essence from the eagle. At that thought, he became pleased and stood up.

“Brother Eagle, watch out!” he shouted. “Here comes another sword move!” Pushing the heavy sword forward as fast as he could, he thrust it toward the Divine Eagle's chest.

The Divine Eagle blocked the sword with its left wing and then struck another heavy blow with its right wing. Its strength was simply too strong. Every time it swung its wings, the force it generated was on par with the kind of force generated by several first-class fighters hitting out with their palm strikes at the same time. Besides, the sword in Yang Guo's hand was simply too heavy for him to use any sword moves out of the “Quanzhen Sword Art” or “Jade Maiden Sword Art”. So for defense, all he could do was to dodge to the sides, and for offense, all he did was thrust the sword forward clumsily.

After a few moments into the fight, Yang Guo became tired and sat down to rest. As soon as he sat down, the Divine Eagle would step aside. The two of them played like this for well over two hours before they finally slid down from the platform and went back to the cave.

When Yang Guo woke up the next morning, the Divine Eagle had already placed three dark purple stinking balls by his side. After some careful examination, Yang Guo finally realized that these were animal gallbladders. He remembered that when he met the Divine Eagle the first time, it was feeding on poisonous snakes and also fought with a giant serpent. These must be snake gallbladders. He wondered if the gallbladder of a poisonous snake would also be venomous; but after he had eaten a gallbladder the day before, he had felt totally refreshed and rejuvenated, and had even more strength in him than before. Besides, there were already strong toxins from the Passion Flower and the “Souls Freezing Silver Needles” inside his body; he really couldn't care less. So in a few bites, he quickly swallowed the gallbladders, and then sat up to meditate. To his great surprise, many of the pressure points along his inner channels that he had a hard time sending inner energy flowing through before suddenly opened up, and the energy flow inside him became quite smooth and fluent. With great happiness, Yang Guo uttered a loud cry of joy. Usually, when someone was in the middle of cultivating

his inner energy flow in a meditative state, it was critical for him to abstain from irrelevant thoughts, especially extreme joy or extreme grief. But this time his inner energy continued to flow smoothly around his body with no hitches or any blockage.

Jumping back onto his feet, Yang Guo picked up the heavy sword and stepped out of the cave for some more rounds of sword training. Having no more fear and worries, even though he still dodged a lot more than blocking, once in a while, he was actually able to organize some sneak attacks in between the fierce and powerful forces created by the Divine Eagle waving of its mighty wings.

This kind of training went on for several days, and gradually, he was able to wield the heavy sword with better control. It almost felt as if the heavy sword was no longer as heavy as the time he first wielded it. In the meantime, he also came to realize that all the sword arts he had learned before were too intricate with too many fancy techniques. He kept thinking about Dugu Seeking-A-Loss's words "heavy sword with blunt edges, simplicity brings superiority" on the slab stone. They had described a realm of sword art much more advanced compared to even the most ingenious sword techniques in the world. While sparring with the Divine Eagle, he concentrated on comprehending the movement of his sword, and what he started to realize was that the more ordinary a sword move is, the more difficult it was for an opponent to defend against it. For example, if he simply thrust out straight forward, as long as he had fierce and resourceful power to back it, the might of the thrust would be actually more powerful than the kind of sword arts like the "Jade Maiden Sword Art" that relied on fluctuating and unpredictable techniques. Even though he only had one arm, and after eating those snake gallbladders the Divine Eagle had brought to him, his arm had become much stronger than before.

One day while strolling about the valley, he discovered the bodies of three giant poisonous snakes on the ground. Their bellies had been ripped open and cuts from sharp talons left snake blood all over their bodies. By then, he was sure that the bitter things he had been eating were snake gallbladders. The bodies of these poisonous snakes shined in a vaguely golden color. He had never seen any snakes like these before and had no idea what kind of snakes they were.

"I suppose the reason why the Divine Eagle has such tremendous strength is because it had eaten a lot of gallbladders of this strange species of snakes," he thought to himself.

After over months worth of sparring, with some hard effort, Yang Guo could actually take on the Divine Eagle's mighty force head to head now. Each of his thrusts had also become so powerful that they would whistle in the air. He couldn't help but feel very

satisfied with himself. Since his skills in martial arts had advanced to a new level, the martial arts he learned before all seemed to be so insignificant. It was just like once one climbs to the top of Mount Tai, the whole world looked small and insignificant. But in another thought, he realized that without his previous foundation in martial arts training, he wouldn't have been able to advance to such a new level. After all, the Divine Eagle was just an animal that couldn't speak. It might be able to guide some, but it would never be able to explain things or provide advice. Besides, the Divine Eagle didn't really know any true martial arts skills. All it had was the god-given mighty strength plus the handful of moving and dodging techniques it had picked up while sparring with Dugu Seeking-A-Loss in the many years of companionship.

One morning, after Yang Guo got up, he found heavy rain pouring down from the dark cloud covered sky. "Brother Eagle, it's raining very hard. Are we still going to train today?" he asked the Divine Eagle. The eagle held Yang Guo's sleeve in its beak and pulled him toward the northeast. Then it let go of the sleeve and strode out. "Is there something strange again in the northeast?" Yang Guo thought aloud. He grabbed the heavy sword and then followed in the rain.

A couple of miles into the journey, some vague but continuous rumbling sound came to Yang Guo's attention. And the further they walked, the louder the rumbling sound became. It was the sound of a waterfall.

"With such a pouring rain, I'd better watch out for mountain torrents," Yang Guo reminded himself.

After turning round a mountain gorge the sound of the waterfall suddenly became so much louder; it could almost deafen one's hearing. Between two peaks, the waterfall crashed down and poured into the creek below like a white dragon. With thunderous echoes, the swift currents rushed downward with mighty force. The many broken branches and rocks, carried by the currents, only took a split second to be flushed down the stream.

By then, the rain had become even heavier and Yang Guo had become soaking wet. A thin mist from the smashing waterfall surrounded everything, creating a magnificent view. But seeing the mighty force from the mountain torrent, Yang Guo couldn't help but feel a slight dread inside of him.

Holding Yang Guo's sleeve in its beak, the Divine Eagle dragged him toward the creek as if it wanted Yang Guo to jump in.

“Why do you want me to go down there? The stream is running very swiftly. I am afraid that I won’t be able to hold myself steady,” Yang Guo asked in surprise.

The Divine Eagle let go of Yang Guo’s sleeve, and after a long and loud roar, it jumped into the creek and landed steadily on a huge rock in the middle of the creek. The eagle swung its left wing forward. A rock that had been carried down by the rushing current was sent back up the stream by the swing. As soon as the rock came back down with the current again, it swung its wing once again, and sent the rock flying up the stream a second time. The eagle did the same thing five or six more times, and the rock never made it past the eagle. By the seventh time, the Divine Eagle gave it a good smack, which sent the rock flying out of the water and it landed on the bank. The Divine Eagle then leaped back onto the bank and stood next to Yang Guo.

Yang Guo understood. Demonic Swordsman Dugu Seeking-A-Loss must have come here often to train sword arts in the mountain torrent every time it rained. But he knew very well that he didn’t yet possess such skills and strength. Feeling afraid, he hesitated.

Suddenly, the Divine Eagle extended its wing out and pushed Yang Guo on the arm. Since it was standing so close to Yang Guo, and the push caught Yang Guo by surprise, he lost his footing and fell into the stream.

In the rush, Yang Guo quickly used a technique called the “Thousand Pound Plummet” and landed on that huge rock the Divine Eagle had stood on. As soon as his feet entered the water, the great force from the swift current almost swept him off his feet. Yang Guo stumbled back and forth and had a hard time maintaining his balance.

“Senior Master Dugu is a human, I am also a human. If he could hold himself steady, why can’t I?” Yang Guo thought to himself. So he took a deep breath and then concentrated all his attention on the effort to fight the force of the swift currents. That alone had exhausted all his strength. It was simply impossible for him to spare any strength to hit the rocks in the current with the heavy sword.

In the amount of time it took to burn a joss stick, Yang Guo had exhausted all his strength, so he jabbed his sword on the rock, and with a push, leaped back on to the bank. Before he even had a moment to catch his breath, the Divine Eagle had already swung its wing toward him once again. Having being on his guard, he dodged the push swiftly. Quickly taking in a few deep breaths, he jumped back down into the creek himself, thinking, “This Eagle Brother is indeed a strict teacher and a forthcoming friend. He wouldn’t cut me any slack in the training. He certainly has high expectations, and I, of course, want good improvement.”



With this thought, he directed all his energy to the lower half of his body and held his footing steadily. As time went by, he gradually comprehended some techniques as to how to focus his energy and how to best utilize his strength. Even though the mountain torrent had grown larger and water had risen up to his waist, he was able to hold his own a little easier compared to the previous efforts. A few moments passed and by then water had risen up to his chest and soon up to his mouth.

“Even though I can hold my footing now, I don’t think I’ll just stand here and get drowned!” he thought. So he leapt back on to the bank.

Who had expected that the Divine Eagle had been waiting for this by the bank? Before his feet touched the ground, the eagle struck out with its wing. Yang Guo hurriedly blocked it using the heavy sword, but the striking force sent Yang Guo right back into the steam. With a splash, he fell back into the water.

When his feet touched the giant rock under the water, his entire body was under the surface. Water had filled his mouth as he was falling. Yang Guo knew that if he had spit the water out of his mouth, then his inner energy would shift upward, thus reducing the strength in his legs, so he held his breath and took a stable stance. A few moments later, he pushed hard with his feet and leapt in the air. A stream of water darted out from his mouth. After taking a quick breath Yang Guo fell back down to the stream bottom. The turbulence and swift currents rumbled past above his head. He simply stayed still like a firm rock in midstream. Gradually his mind calmed down.

“Brother Eagle wanted me to stand in the middle of the mountain torrent, but if I don’t hit the rocks in the current, for sure he would belittle me,” Yang Guo thought.

He was a man of great pride and was always eager to excel. Even though the eagle was only an animal, he would still rather not lose face in front of it. So when he spotted the branches and rocks brought down by the current, he jabbed and stabbed and tried hard to push them back the way they had come from. In the water, the rocks had become lighter. The heavy sword also felt lighter and easier to control when he waved it around under water. He waved and swung and jabbed and thrust the sword until he was completely exhausted and begun to have a hard time holding his footing. Then he finally leapt back onto the bank.

He was quite afraid that the Divine Eagle would once again force him back into the steam. Without some rest, his tiring legs probably wouldn’t be able to stand the forces from the mountain torrent. Not to his surprise, the Divine Eagle didn’t want him back

on the bank. As soon as it saw him leaping out of the water, the eagle struck out with its wing.

“Brother Eagle,” Yang Guo shouted in complaint, “do you know you are killing me right now?”

He jumped back into the creek for a little while but simply could not stand the current any longer and had to leap back to the bank. Seeing the Divine Eagle’s wing striking toward him, and not willing to sit down and give in, he had no other choices but to thrust the sword at the Divine Eagle. The two of them soon exchanged three moves, and to his great surprise, the Divine Eagle was forced to take one step back.

“Excuse me!” Yang Guo shouted as he extended his arm and thrust forth the sword again. Sound of whistling echoed as the blade cut through thin air – this was something quite different from his past experience.

Seeing the tip of Yang Guo’s sword approaching rapidly toward it, the Divine Eagle no longer dared to take it straight on and had to dodge aside.

Yang Guo knew that the half-day worth of training in the mountain torrents must have improved his strength tremendously. A mixed feeling of shock and joy swarmed in his heart. He couldn’t help but question himself, “It should certainly take more than a couple of weeks to increase one’s strength and power. How did I gain such great strength after wielding the sword underwater for a mere half-day?” He finally concluded that it had to be the gallbladders from the strange specie of snakes. Those gallbladders must have magical effects for increasing one’s power and strength. That was why his strength and inner power had increased tremendously, and he had only noticed it when he released the strength accidentally in dangerous circumstances.

He sat by the creek and meditated for a while. His strength soon replenished. This time he jumped back into the creek for more training without being forced by the Divine Eagle. By the time he leapt back up the bank, the Divine Eagle was no longer waiting by the creek, leaving no clue as to where it had gone.

The rain had begun to slow down. Yang Guo figured that mountain torrents would have to be a lot smaller and weaker the next day. Since he didn’t feel that tired, it would be better to train some more right now while the torrent still lasted. At that thought, he jumped back into the creek.

By the time he got back onto the bank the forth time, he found two snake gallbladders placed closed to the bank. Feeling utterly grateful for the Divine Eagle's caring, he ate them and then continued on with his training. Night came, and the mountain torrent had slowly become smaller and weaker.

That night he didn't sleep at all and kept on training in the creek. Gradually he began to realize many sword art principles such as piercing following the force, blocking against the force, slashing from the side, and chopping with a back swing. By then he finally understood: Wielding a sword this way, nothing would be strong enough to stand the force from the sword, and there would be no need for the sword to have a sharp blade. But without such a unique heavy sword, which was twenty or even thirty times heavier than a normal sword, this kind of sword art wouldn't have been effective. If it were just an ordinary blade, the force released from a gentle wrist snap would have shocked the blade into pieces.

The rain finally stopped, and the clear sky shone dimly in dark blue. Moonlight from a new moon illuminated the trees and the water in the creek, painting everything silver. Yang Guo watched the swift currents flushing down the steam path non-stop, his mind as clear as the sky. By then, he understood the principles behind the flow of currents and mastered the techniques with the heavy sword. He knew that he had learned the entire sword art of the heavy sword and there was no more to learn. Even if the Demonic Swordsman could have come back to life, all he could have taught would be the same. From now on as his inner energy grew, he would be able to use lighter swords, and eventually be able to wield a wooden sword like the heavy sword. But that could all be attributed to the advancement of his own abilities and skills. Regarding the sword art, this was as far as it would ever go.

Yang Guo paced back and forth along the bank. Raising his head high, he stared at the bright moon and soon was lost in thought. If Senior Master Dugu hadn't left him this heavy sword, or if there wasn't the Divine Eagle to guide him, and if he didn't eat those strange snakes' gallbladders and thus gain a tremendous amount of inner strength, then the entire world wouldn't have had the luxury of seeing this sword art once again. Dugu Seeking-A-Loss didn't have any help or references yet was able to comprehend such a pinnacle of sword arts all by himself. His cleverness must have been a hundred times better than mine.

Yang Guo's admiration and understanding of this past sword master kept growing as he imagined the Senior Master's demeanor in his mind. Suddenly, a thought popped into his head.

“If Gu Gu could see the great kung fu skills I possess now, she would be very happy for me for sure. Alas, where is she now? Is she also staring at the beautiful moon and thinking of me?” As soon as he thought of the Xiao Longnu, severe pain arose inside his chest.

“Even though I’ve comprehended the ultimate principles of the sword art,” Yang Guo thought, “what good does it do if I stay here in the remote mountains all by myself? What if the poison from the Passion Flower suddenly activated tomorrow and killed me? Wouldn’t this magnificent sword art get lost again for eternity?”

At this thought, aspirations arose again in his heart. “I shall follow Senior Master Dugu’s footsteps and defeat all heroes under heaven with this sword art. Then I can die with no regrets,” he spoke out this thought loudly.

Looking at what was left of his right arm, Yang Guo knitted his eyebrows into a straight line, and his hatred for Guo Fu, the person who had mercilessly cut off his arm, swarmed his heart once more.

“This girl relied on the fact that her father is a legendary hero and her mother is the chief of the Beggar Clan. She has never respected me. When I was still a kid and lived in her home, she treated me with much disdain and disrespect. I was actually doing her a favor when I lied to the Wu brothers. If any one of the Wu brothers ended up dead because of her, wouldn’t she be the one to blame for it? Humph! She took advantage of my severe illness and cut my arm off. If I don’t settle the score with her one day, I am not a true man!”

He had always been one who took in kindness and grudges to his heart. He was without a forgiving heart. Before, right after his arm was cut off, he had no other choice but to hide in the remote valley and wait for the wound to heal. Now his wound had sealed and his Kung Fu skills had progressed dramatically, he could no longer hold in his urge for revenge. Having made up his mind, he immediately returned to the cave.

“Brother Eagle,” he said to the Divine Eagle, “I’ll never be able to repay the great kindness you’ve shown me. There are still several matters in the Martial World that I need to take care of. That’s why I need to leave you temporarily. I’ll be back here again once I’ve taken care of that business. If you don’t mind, I need to borrow Senior Master Dugu’s heavy sword for the trip.”

He bowed down toward the Divine Eagle deeply and then knelt down in front of the stone grave of Dugu Seeking-A-Loss to salute before heading out of the valley. The

Divine Eagle walked with him all the way to the entrance of the valley. After many affectionate hugs between the man and the eagle, Yang Guo bid his farewell and got on with his journey.

The big sword was indeed very heavy. If he tied it to his waistband, the waistband would break in no time. Yang Guo cut down three old vines from the bushes and made a rope out of them. Tying the heavy sword on his back, he ran using his Qing-Gong (lightness kung fu) and headed straight toward the city of Xiangyang.

He arrived outside the city as the time of day approached dawn. He understood that settling his business in broad daylight is not the wisest of decisions. Besides he's due one night's sleep, and his energy level will have plummeted. Uncle Guo and Aunt Guo were experts in the field of martial arts. At this point in time their health must be restored, a fierce struggle is guaranteed if by chance he was to confront the both of them. Therefore he ferreted out a thick patch of grass near a cemetery outside the city and slept there for many hours. Later he performed breathing exercises and inner strength cultivation; and gathered some wild fruit to serve as meal. He waited for the first watch of the night before he set foot below the city wall of Xiangyang.

Xiangyang's imposing wall was like a fortress. That day when Jinlun Fawang, Li Mochou and others leapt from the top of the city wall, they still required padding for their feet set up to prevent possible injuries. Right now, trying to climb from the wall base to the top is not going to be an easy task. Yang Guo had already thought about this and came up with a method during his time resting near the cemetery. Thinking: "I will never have enough time to learn Uncle Guo's kung fu of "Walking on Heaven's Staircase". What ever method Senior Dugu used to get up that cliff, I will capitalize on to climb up the wall of Xiangyang." He proceeded towards a secluded area near the east gate, luckily the troops that guarded near the top of the city wall made their inspection from afar, much to the convenience of Yang Guo. As he leapt up, he straightened out his heavy sword and spared no effort to drive it into the city wall. The heavy sword might be blunt, but the ending force was unyieldingly strong. The city wall made use of extremely thick granite for its construction. Hearing the noise of 'peng', the wall was cracked open by the sword, which left a round niche. Yang Guo had never expected an effortless jab with the sword could have such power, and was pleasantly surprised about that. Next, whilst jumping up his left foot was placed in the cavity, he raised his sword and stabbed a hole into the wall just above his head. This time he didn't put a lot of power into it, just enough that he avoided alarming the garrison troops.

He helped himself up step by step until he was at the point where there're several zhangs left before he reaches the top. From here he displayed his "Gecko Crawling Wall

Skill” to rise over the top of the wall and hid in a secret place. Inside the city wall were a series of stony steps that sloped down. Yang Guo waited until the troops walked away and sneaked down past them and dashed ahead straight to Guo’s residence.

After taking nourishment from the snake gallbladders his inner energy rapidly increased. At the same time his body was more agile and his lightness kung fu was far greater than former days. But Guo Jing’s martial arts were still very dangerous, there’s a likely chance that the strength of his palms in the “Eighteen Dragon Subduing Palms” series is unchallengeable. In addition, there were the mysterious and diverse set of the “Dog Beating Techniques” used by Huang Rong. He only knew about 60% to 70% of it so he couldn’t be too careless. As he reached the outside of Guo residence, he quietly leapt over the wall and entered.

Bypassing the garden, he promptly glanced at the house where he originally stayed. He went up to its windows, listened, and found that no one was in there. He gently pushed open the door and entered.

In the darkness he noticed the bed curtains and other furniture were no different than when he left. All that was missing was the bed’s pillow. He lowered his body and sat on the edge of the bed, reminiscing privately about how his healthy right arm was lost forever within this bed. A stroke of sickness and anger latched onto his heart.

He was blessed with pretty and charming looks; by nature he was also somewhat lustful and cheerful. He may be passionately devoted to Xiao Longnu and thinks of her constantly, but there were many young girls who couldn’t help but pour out their affectionate feelings whenever they met him. Girls like Cheng Ying, Lu Wushuang and Gongsun Lu’E either secretly had a crush on him or openly flirtatious in front of him. His hand lightly stroked the side of the bed, and he faced the inconsolable truth that he had become disabled. If he ever bumped into those love-stricken girls, he will no doubt be viewed as a ridiculous and pitiful soul in their eyes. His martial arts maybe fantastic, but he’s still a mere freak that’s shocking to behold. Thinking of all the ups and downs and viewing all the events that happened in his life, he couldn’t help but quietly whisper: “It is only GuGu...it’s GuGu alone whose feelings for me won’t deteriorate. Even something as catastrophic as losing four limbs, it will be no different to her in the end.”

Convinced now, he suddenly heard on his east side the muffled sounds of an argument between two people. He could make out the voices were in fact Guo Jing and Huang Rong. Yang Guo was curious about the cause and thereupon tiptoed to search for where it originated. He found the room where the Guo couple were situated and eavesdropped outside their window.

All that was heard was Huang Rong yelling with rage: “Those two have plainly carried Xiang’er away to Passionless Valley to exchange for the antidote. How could you still go on and insist that Yang Guo is a good person? The child was just given birth two hours earlier and ended up in their hands. What chance does she have of surviving up to this point?” Those words dissolved into sobs.

Guo Jing said: “Guo’er is not that kind of person. Besides, time after time he’s saved our lives. If Xiang’er’s life could help him trade for his own life, then I’ll gladly accept it.” The sobs drowned out Huang Rong’s words: “You could do that, but I won’t...”

Then the sounds of a baby crying loudly interrupted the conversation in the room, the noise was loud and clear. Yang Guo wondered: “Did they somehow manage to snatch the baby girl back from the clutches of Li Mochou? Then why did she say: ‘What chance does she have of surviving up to this point?’” Holding his breath he raised his head against the window sill and looked around. He saw a baby cuddled safely in Huang Rong’s arms. It so happens that the baby was facing the window towards him, Yang Guo understood what he saw. He had a square-face with huge protruding ears, his skin was coarsely dark and covered with fine fuzz. He’d carried the female infant Guo Xiang for a long period of time, and remembered she was light skinned and petite with delicate features on her face. She’s the complete opposite to this plump baby. Huang Rong’s back faced the window, and quietly settled the baby down, and said: “It was nice when the siblings were together; you’d better find his sister and bring her back home.” Yang Guo only now comprehended that, from her womb, she gave birth to twins. She first gave birth to the baby girl Guo Xiang, and afterwards there arrived a male child. The moment her son entered this world, Xiao Longnu had already carried her daughter away.

Guo Jing wandered slowly and aimlessly around the room then said: “Rong’er, you usually recognize main principles. As soon as it involves matters of our children you lose your judgment. Can you not just put it to one side for the time being? At present the military affairs are in a state of urgency; how could I just leave Xiangyang and forget my responsibilities for an infant daughter?”

Huang Rong said: “I did say I wanted to look for her by myself, but you’ll never permit me to leave. Are you actually going to let our child die for no reason?”

Guo Jing said: “You haven’t recovered yet, how can you go?”

Huang Rong turned on him with rage: “A father not wanting his daughter? It’s a hard lot being a mother, what do you expect me to do?”

Yang Guo had been together with them for many years on Peach Blossom Island, and remembered them as a loving couple. No major arguments were involved. Now that their faces grew red with anger, all words were equally matched. It seemed clear that they've quarreled over this matter on many occasions. Huang Rong cried and spoke at the same time, Guo Jing showed a taut face while randomly walked back and forth around the room.

After a while, Guo Jing said: "Even if she's brought back, you'll treat her in the same way as you did Fu'er, pampering her till she's spoiled, she may as well count for nothing!"

Huang Rong loudly exclaimed: "What have you got against our Fu'er? She loves our daughter dearly, she may have been bit too reckless, but the reasons were quite understandable. If it was me, and Yang Guo insisted on taking my daughter, I'd even chop off his left arm for good measure."

Guo Jing's face contorted with anger and he bellowed out: "Rong'er, what are you talking about?" Raising his hand he heavily slammed the top of the table, 'peng!', scraps of wood flew all over the place. A practically rock-solid red wooden table was instantly broke in half by his strike. The baby boy was actually crying without knowing when to stop. When he heard the shout and the bang he automatically calmed down as a result of the fright he received.

Right at this moment, Yang Guo suddenly noticed a human silhouette below the window on the west side, also crouching down and quietly drawing back. Yang Guo thought: "So besides me, there's another eavesdropper outside the room, but who could it be?" So he tiptoed behind that person, and noticed that her figure was elegant, it's Guo Fu! The burning fury wasn't extinguished, Yang Guo thought: "Great! I've been looking for you!" Then behind him the light that radiated from inside was gone – the lamps were out.

Then he heard Huang Rong angrily speak: "Get out, stop frightening the baby!"

Yang Guo knew Guo Jing was about to come out, and his eyes would be able to locate Yang Guo very easily. So he shifted himself behind the rockery, and then quickly made his way outside Guo Fu's room. He launched himself high, and got himself on top of a tree, and concealed himself amongst the branches and leaves.

Within a moment, he saw Guo Fu return to her room. Then the voice of a woman said: "It's past the second period of night, sleep well Miss!" Guo Fu grunted: "I will sleep



when I am actually asleep! Get out.” The woman responded: “Very well.” Then he saw a maidservant leave the area.

After quite a while, he saw Guo Fu faintly heave a long sigh of relief. Yang Guo thought: “What is that sigh meant for? You’ve taken away my arm from me; now it’s your turn to lose an arm. But I’ll take it easy on you because you’re a woman, I won’t harm you for the moment. If I did, it’ll be just too easy. Such an act won’t conform to the ideals of a real man.” He paused in a moment of thought; he then came up with a strategy: “Alright then, I’ll call out loudly, to get Uncle Guo’s attention. Once I’ve defeated him, I’ll settle an old score with his daughter. As a man who’s got a clear conscience, no one will ever jest at my actions.” But then reconsidered again: “Uncle Guo’s martial arts are extraordinary, am I really able to triumph over him? I don’t think so! Will this mean I can’t take my revenge?” Recalling the way he lost his arm, the blood boiled up inside of him and his heart hardened. Just when he’s about to jump down from the tree, the sound of footsteps approached, and a person came striding his way.

He noticed the pace was stiff, the body was upright; it was none other than Guo Jing. He reached the outside of his daughter’s room, and gently knocked on the door, saying: “Fu’er, are you asleep yet?”

Guo Fu arose and replied: “It’s you father?” There was a hint of fear in her voice.

Yang Guo was surprised by this: “Is it possible that Uncle Guo knew I’ve arrived and so came to offer his daughter protection? Alright then! You’ll be my first opponent! If I lose to you, my life is yours to take.”

Guo Jing uttered an ‘ng’ sound. Guo Fu opened the door, raised her head and looked directly into her father’s eyes, and immediately hung her head.



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