

Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

YTTLJ Chapter 9



Chapter 9 – Eternal Delight as the Seven Heroes Reunited

Translated by Meh



At this moment, he felt the plank giving away below his feet, as it was cut in two. He tried to jump up, but as he was right in between two boats, there was nothing to hang on to. With only the deep, blue sea under him, Splash! XiHua Zi fell into the water.

After a long time, Kong Dong and E Mei each had six, seven people enter the cabin. They greeted Yu LianZhou, XiHua Zi, and Wei SiNiang. The Kong Dong group is headed by an old, skinny man. The E Mei group is headed by a middle-aged nun. These two groups were quite surprised to see the Heavenly Eagle Sect people here.

XiHua Zi said loudly, “Hello, venerable Jing Xu, Third Master Tang. Unfortunately, Wu Dang and Heavenly Eagle Sect have joined forces.” That short, old man is called Tang WenLiang, one of the ‘Five Elders of Kong Dong’. The middle-aged nun, Jing Xu, is E Mei fourth generation’s eldest disciple. Both are renowned experts in the martial world. They couldn’t believe what XiHua Zi just said. Jing Xu is a very careful person, knew about XiHua Zi’s bad temper, and didn’t say anything. However, Tang WenLiang’s eyes immediately glared at Yu LianZhou. He said, “Is this true, Second Hero Yu?”

Before Yu LianZhou could respond, XiHua Zi cut in, “Wu Dang and Heavenly Eagle Sect are now relatives through marriage. Zhang CuiShan is Yin TianZheng’s son-in-law...” Tang WenLiang said with surprise, “You’ve found the Zhang CuiShan who had disappeared for ten years now?”

Yu LianZhou pointed at Zhang CuiShan and said, “This is my fifth martial brother, Zhang CuiShan. Fifth brother, this is an elder of Kong Dong Sect, Third Master Tang WenLiang.” XiHua Zi added, “Zhang CuiShan and his wife know ‘Golden-Haired Lion King’ Xie Xun’s location. Yet instead of saying it, they chose to make up a huge lie.”

Tang WenLiang’s turned incredibly angry upon hearing Xie Xun’s name, and yelled, “Where is he?” Zhang CuiShan said, “I must consult with my master on this matter first. So I’m sorry to withhold this information for now.” Tang WenLiang yelled furiously, “Where is this bastard Xie Xun? He killed my nephew. There’s no way I can coexist with him in the same world. Are you going to tell me his location or not?” He spoke in such a deafening voice, without a hint of courtesy.

Yin SuSu said coldly, “You’re just one of the older guys in the Kong Dong Sect. What right do you have to question Fifth Hero Zhang this way? Are you the Martial World’s most venerable? Are you the Head of Wu Dang, Taoist Zhang?”

In his rage, Tang WenLiang was about to attack Yin SuSu. But he held back at the last moment. Yin SuSu was simply a young woman. It would be very rude for an elder like him to attack her in such a manner. So he asked Zhang CuiShan, “Who is she?”

Zhang CuiShan said, “She is my wife.” XiHua Zi added, “And also the daughter of Heavenly Eagle Sect’s Leader Yin. Humph, just a wretched demonic lady of an evil sect.” ‘White-Browed Eagle King’ Yin TianZheng’s kung fu is quite incredible. No one who fought him had lasted more than ten exchanges. So when Tang WenLiang heard that she’s Yin TianZheng’s daughter, he hesitated to speak further, and said, “Good! Good! Absolutely marvelous!”

Jing Xu had been silent ever since entering the room. She chose to speak up at this moment, “Can Second Hero Yu tells us the story behind all this?” Yu LianZhou said, “This is indeed a long story, as it covered events over a ten-year period. How about this, Wu Dang will host a gathering at Wu Chang city’s Yellow Crane Restaurant. We will welcome all heroes who wish to attend. There, the entire story will be told, and we can resolve this issue. Is this ok with everyone here?” Jing Xu nodded, said, “This is fine with me.”

Tang WenLiang said, “We can wait to hear the story three months later. But as for Xie Xun’s location, I’d like to know now, Fifth Hero Zhang.” Zhang CuiShan shook his head, said, “I’m afraid I cannot tell you right now.” Although he didn’t like the response, Tang WenLiang knew he couldn’t offend Wu Dang and Heavenly Eagle Sects. Besides, there’s no way Zhang CuiShan can withhold the truth in three months. Without further words, he stood up, waved at his constituents, and said, “Let’s meet in three months. Goodbye.”

XiHua Zi said, “Third Master Tang, can we hitch a ride back on your boat?” Tang WenLiang said, “Sure.” XiHua Zi said to Wei SiNiang, “Martial Sister, let’s go!” He came here on the same boat as Yu LianZhou, so this act clearly showed enmity towards Wu Dang. Yu LianZhou did not make a comment, and courteously showed them off the boat. Then he said, “After reporting to our master, we shall send out invitation letters to everyone.”

Yin SuSu suddenly said, “Taoist XiHua, I wish to ask you something.” XiHua Zi turned his head, said, “What?” Yin SuSu said, “You said that I was a demonic woman of an evil sect. But how am I ‘demonic’ and ‘evil’?” XiHua Zi froze for a moment, then said, “You’re a devilish fox who belongs to an infamous evil sect. What’s more to say? Otherwise, why would a righteous Fifth Hero Zhang fall for you?” Yin SuSu said, “Thank you for your explanation.”

XiHua Zi was surprised that Yin SuSu did not try to rebut. Hearing no further words, he walked over to Kong Dong Sect’s boats on the plank.

Even though the boats are next to each other, it still takes a seven-meter plank to connect the two. By answering Yin SuSu’s questions, XiHua Zi walked across last. Just as he walked toward the middle of the plank, sound of wind came from behind, followed by a scraping noise. Despite his temper, XiHua Zi’s kung fu is quite formidable, and certainly very experienced. Thinking that someone attacked from behind, he quickly drew his sword. At this moment, he felt the plank giving away below his feet, as it was cut in two. He tried to jump up, but as he was right in between two boats, there was nothing

to hang on to. With only the deep, blue sea under him, Splash! XiHua Zi fell into the water.

XiHua Zi didn't know how to swim, and immediately swallowed a large amount of water. His hands waved like mad, when suddenly the hands found a rope. In his joy, XiHua Zi held on to the rope tightly, only to feel a person pulling him up. XiHua Zi looked up, and saw that the person pulling him is actually Branch Leader Cheng, who looked at him in a smug expression.

Yin SuSu really despised XiHua Zi's rudeness, and made this trap for him. Branch Leader Feng's thirty-six flying daggers are renowned in the martial world. He's both fast and accurate. Each dagger was exquisitely made by the best blacksmiths with the best materials. Thin as a feather, astonishingly sharp, so should his opponent try to block with a weapon, that weapon usually breaks in half. When Branch Leader Feng used the dagger cut off the plank, it split apart easily. Branch Leader Cheng prepared a rope at the same time. After XiHua Zi had drunk some seawater, he pulled XiHua Zi up.

When Wei SiNiang, Tang WenLiang, and others saw XiHua Zi drop into the sea, they knew it was a trap. But Branch Leader Feng was too quick, and they had all been looking the other way. So no one knew exactly what had happened.

As Branch Leader Cheng pulled him up, XiHua Zi held back his anger. He waited to get on the deck first to attack these people. However, after pulling him up a bit above the water, Branch Leader Cheng stopped. He yelled, "Old Taoist, don't move. I'm not all that strong. If you move and I can't hold on, I'd have to release the rope." XiHua Zi didn't want this person to throw himself back into the water again. So he held on to the rope tightly.

Branch Leader Cheng yelled, "Be careful!" He then swung the rope, XiHua Zi's body flew back over twenty meters, then this momentum was used to send him over to the other boat.

XiHua Zi let go of the rope, and landed on the boat's deck. He had just lost his sword to the sea, and was about to go berserk. Only to hear thunderous laughter coming from the Heavenly Eagle Sect's boat. XiHua Zi quickly grabbed Wei SiNiang's sword and was about to go duel with them. But then realized that the two boats are too far apart now. So other than cursing loudly, he couldn't do anything else.

Yu LianZhou saw exactly how Yin SuSu ridiculed XiHua Zi. He felt that this woman is quite cruel, not a good match for fifth brother, and then said, "Hall leaders Yin and Li.

Please tell your sect leader that should he have time, we welcome him to the Yellow Crane Restaurant gathering. Now let us part. Fifth brother, are you coming with me to see master?” Zhang CuiShan said, “Yes.”

Yin SuSu knew that Yu LianZhou wanted to separate her and Zhang CuiShan. She looked up at the sky, then down on the deck.

Zhang CuiShan knew what she meant, ‘On Heaven or in Hell, never to part’. So he said, “Second brother, how about I take your sister-in-law and nephew to see our master. Then, with his permission, we would then go see my father-in-law. Is that alright?” Yu LianZhou hesitated, but knew that he can’t truly separate this family of three, and nodded.

Joyous at his approval, Yin SuSu turned to Li TianYuan, said, “Martial uncle, please send these words to my dad. Tell him his daughter can’t visit him right now. I will go back home as soon as I can.”

Li TianYuan said, “That’s fine, I’ll wait surely wait for you. He then stood up, and waved goodbye to Yu LianZhou.

Yin SuSu asked, “How is my father’s health?” Li TianYuan said, “Excellent! He’s more energetic than ever.” Yin SuSu then asked, “How is my brother?” Li TianYuan said, “Also excellent! His kung fu has accelerated greatly these past years. Not even this martial uncle is his match now. Pretty ashamed of myself, really.” Yin SuSu smiled, and said, “Oh, you’re just joking with me.” Li TianYuan said seriously, “Actually, I’m not kidding. Even your father’s said that his son would soon surpass himself. Don’t you think that’s amazing?” Yin SuSu said, “Oh, I can’t believe you’re gloating like this in front of outsiders. You’re not afraid that Second Hero Yu would laugh at you?” Li TianYuan said with a smile, “Fifth Hero Zhang is now our leader’s son-in-law. How could Second Hero Yu be an outsider?” As he spoke, Li TianYuan bowed with his fists together, and walked out the cabin.

Yu LianZhou felt quite annoyed upon hearing these last words. He raised his eyebrows, but did not speak.

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After the people from the Heavenly Eagle Sect had left, Zhang CuiShan asked in a hurry, “Second brother, what happened to third brother afterwards? Did he...recover?” Yu LianZhou sighed, but did not respond for a long time. Zhang CuiShan waited in suspense. He kept examining Yu LianZhou, afraid that he’d say the word ‘died’.

Yu LianZhou then said, “Third brother’s still alive. But quite frankly, he’s not much different from a dead person. His whole body’s permanently crippled. There is no longer a Third Hero Yu in the martial world now.”

Zhang CuiShan was happy that Yu DaiYan was alive, but cried at third brother’s crippled condition. He then asked, “Have you found out who injured my third brother?” Yu LianZhou didn’t respond. Instead he turned toward Yin SuSu. His eyes glared like lightning, and asked, “Miss Yin, do you know who injured my third brother?” Yin SuSu shuddered and said, “I heard his joints were broken by Shaolin’s Golden-Steel Finger.” Yu LianZhou said, “That’s correct. Do you know who did it?” Yin SuSu shook her head, said, “I don’t know.”

Yu LianZhou then ignored her, and said to Zhang CuiShan, “Fifth brother, Shaolin said that you killed everyone in the Dragon Gate Escort Agency, including servants and relatives. Plus you killed several Shaolin monks. Is this true?”

Zhang CuiShan said, “Well...” Yin SuSu cut in, “This doesn’t concern him. I killed all of them.”

Yu LianZhou glanced at her, with eyes full of hatred. But after an instant, his expression quickly returned to normal, then said, “I knew fifth brother would never kill mindlessly like that. Because of this matter, Shaolin came to Wu Dang Mountain three times. But since everyone knew fifth brother disappeared, they can’t really do anything. We kept saying that Shaolin injured third brother. They kept saying that fifth brother murdered all those people. Thankfully, the Shaolin Abbot Kong Wen is a cautious person, and quite respectful of our master. He told his disciples not to view us as enemies. So we never had any open conflicts with Shaolin these ten years.”

Yin SuSu said, “This is all due to the mistakes of my younger days. But since I’ve already killed them, let’s just not tell them the truth. They can’t figure it out anyway.”

Yu LianZhou showed an astonished expression, and glanced at Zhang CuiShan. He thought, “How could you marry a woman like this?”

Yin SuSu saw Yu LianZhou’s cold expression toward her, including calling her ‘Miss Yin’ rather than ‘sister-in-law’. Frustrated, she said, “I will take responsibility for my own actions. Don’t worry, Wu Dang will not get dragged into this. If Shaolin wants revenge, then they can seek my Heavenly Eagle Sect.”

Yu LianZhou said, “Nothing in the martial world is above the word ‘reason’. Even if we’re not dealing with the powerful Shaolin, but rather a lowly farmer, one still cannot be unreasonable.”

If this had been ten years ago, Yin SuSu would’ve drawn her sword in anger. But she heard Zhang CuiShan say, “Second brother’s words are quite right,” and thought, “Do you think I really care about your righteous crap? I just don’t want to burden my husband by arguing with you.” She then grabbed WuJi’s hands and walked out the deck, said, “WuJi, let me show you around this boat. You’ve never seen one, right?”

After his wife and son left the cabin, Zhang CuiShan said, “Second brother, in the past ten years, I...” Yu LianZhou held up his hand, said, “Fifth brother, you and I closer than even blood brothers. No matter what you did, I will stand by your side. As for your wife, there’s no need to explain everything. Just tell master everything when we return. Should he truly oppose this marriage, us seven brothers will get on our knees and beg him. After all, even your son’s grown up now. Surely master would not separate you and your wife.” Exhilarated at these words, Zhang CuiShan said, “Thank you, second brother.”

Yu LianZhou is cold on the outside, but warm inside. Among the seven brothers, he is the most stern and jokes the least. Although the younger brothers respect him a great deal, they also fear him much more than their eldest martial brother, Song YuanQiao. In reality, Yu LianZhou’s also incredibly caring of his brothers. When Zhang CuiShan disappeared, his heart was broken. But on the surface, he maintained the same, cold expression. Seeing his long, lost brother today is one of the happiest moments of his life. Yet he still carried that cold expression, and even scolded Yin SuSu. Only when alone with his brother, did Yu LianZhou speak his true feelings. He’s mostly afraid of one thing, Yin SuSu’s murder of those Shaolin disciples. Nonetheless, Yu LianZhou made a promise in his mind. He would protect fifth brother’s family with his life.

Zhang CuiShan then asked, “Second brother, how did we become enemies with the Heavenly Eagle Sect? Did my wife and I cause the conflict?” Yu LianZhou did not respond, instead asked, “What exactly happened on Wang Pan Island?”

Zhang CuiShan told the whole story, from going to the Dragon Gate Escort Agency, till Xie Xun forced them out to sea. Then Yu LianZhou inquired about Kun Lun’s Gao ZeCheng and Jiang Tao.

Afterwards, Yu LianZhou pondered for a long time, before saying, “So that’s what happened. If you hadn’t came back, I doubt we’d ever find the truth.” Zhang CuiShan said,

“Yes, my sworn brother... Sigh. Second brother, Xie Xun really isn’t as terrible as everyone thinks. He only did so many bad things because of a terrible tragedy. Now, he is my sworn brother.” Yu LianZhou nodded, thought, “This is another troubling issue.”

Zhang CuiShan continued, “When my sworn brother howled, he turned everyone on the island insane. That way, no one could reveal his secret.”

Yu LianZhou said, “Although Xie Xun’s actions are very brutal, he is, undoubtedly, a very ingenious person. However, despite his careful planning, Xie Xun forgot one person.” Zhang CuiShan asked, “Who?” Yu LianZhou said, “Bai GuiShou.”

Zhang CuiShan said, “Heavenly Eagle Sect’s Branch Leader Bai?” Yu LianZhou said, “That’s correct. You said that his internal power was the best among the people there. He fainted when Xie Xun shot him with the poisonous wine. Had he been awake, I doubt he could’ve withstood the howl...”

Zhang CuiShan said, “So that’s what happened. Bai GuiShou was still unconscious during the howl, so he kept his sanity. My sworn brother never realized this.”

Yu LianZhou sighed, said, “It seemed that only Bai GuiShou was able to make it out of Wang Pan Island unscathed. Although Kun Lun inner power is quite strong, Gao and Jiang had only rudimentary knowledge of it. They have since become mentally retarded. When others ask them who made them this way, Jiang Tao simply shook his head, while Gao ZeCheng kept repeating a single person’s name, Yin SuSu.” He paused a moment, then added, “Now I know that it’s because he couldn’t forget sister-in-law. Humph, the next time XiHua Zi utters such nonsense, I’ll certainly give him a piece of my mind. Obviously it’s the Kun Lun disciples who are unruly, yet he had to blame it on someone else.”

Zhang CuiShan said, “If Bai GuiShou was fine, then he should’ve explained everything.” Yu LianZhou said, “But he won’t say anything. Do you know why?” Zhang CuiShan thought for a moment, realized the reason, and said, “That’s right. The Heavenly Eagle Sect wants the Dragon Saber. They obviously don’t want anyone else to know about this.” Yu LianZhou said, “That’s how the conflict started. Kun Lun Sect kept saying that Yin SuSu destroyed Gao and Jiang. We thought the Heavenly Eagle Sect killed you.”

Zhang CuiShan said, “Did Bai GuiShou tell you that I went to Wang Pan Island too?” Yu LianZhou said, “No. He wouldn’t say anything. Fourth brother, sixth brother, and I went to Wang Pan Island. We saw you wrote those twenty-four characters. That’s how we knew you went to that ceremony. When we couldn’t find you on the island, we

asked Bai GuiShou. He didn't respond, and instead attacked us. I managed to injure him with my palm. Later on, Kun Lun Sect started sought the Heavenly Eagle Sect out, but lost pretty badly. Then things started to get more and more out of hand.

Zhang CuiShan was quite remorseful. He said, "I feel so awful, knowing my wife and I had caused so much problems in the martial world. After reporting to master, I'll personally apologize to each sect."

Yu LianZhou sighed, said, "Actually, it's just all a coincidence, rather than your making. Remember that day ten years ago? When master asked seventh brother and I to go protect the Dragon Gate Escort Agency? On the way, we encountered an unjust situation. We just had to stop and take care of the matter. And in the process saved more than ten innocent lives. But by the time we got to Lin An, the murder at the Dragon Gate Escort Agency had already occurred. Actually, you and your wife only caused the hostilities between Wu Dang, Kun Lun against the Heavenly Eagle Sect. But since the Heavenly Eagle Sect wanted the Dragon Saber, they never brought up Xie Xun's name. So Sea Sand Sect, Huge Whale Clan, and Divine Fist Sect all believed that the Heavenly Eagle Sect killed their leaders. As a result, the Heavenly Eagle Sect developed quite a bad reputation."

Zhang CuiShan sighed, said, "Actually, the Dragon Saber is hardly anything remarkable. Why would my father-in-law sacrifice so much for it?"

Yu LianZhou said, "I had never seen your father-in-law. But I do respect his strong, fighting spirit, as he fought off waves of enemies."

Zhang CuiShan said, "Shaolin, E Mei, and these other sects did not go to the Wang Pan Island ceremony. How did Heavenly Eagle Sect offend them?" Yu LianZhou said, "This concerns your sworn brother Xie Xun. In order to get the Dragon Saber, the Heavenly Eagle Sect continuously sent ships out to sea, hoping to find Xie Xun. You can't contain a fire by wrapping it with paper. No matter how tight Bai GuiShou's lips, the secret eventually got out. Your sworn brother committed over thirty crimes using 'Lightning Fist of the Originating Formation' Cheng Kun's name. Countless people in the martial world want him dead. Do you know about this?"

Zhang CuiShan whispered, "They finally figured out that he did it." Yu LianZhou said, "Every time he commits a crime, he'd write 'The murderer is Lightning Fist of the Originating Formation: Cheng Kun'. At that time, we all investigated into this matter, but couldn't find any leads. Things changed once people knew that Heavenly Eagle Sect is seeking Xie Xun. They remembered that Xie Xun is Cheng Kun's only disciple, and

that Xie Xun despised his master. Obviously, the killer framing Cheng Kun is likely Xie Xun. Think about just how many people Xie Xun killed, and how many people it affects. Just the murder of Shaolin's Reverend Kong Jian alone, was enough to make him a very wanted person.”

Zhang CuiShan sighed, said, “My sworn brother has changed his ways. But too much blood covers his hands... Second brother, I really don't know what to do.”

Yu LianZhou said, “Wu Dang became the Heavenly Eagle Sect's enemy due to you. Kun Lun due to Gao and Jiang. Huge Whale Clan and others due to revenge for their leaders. In addition, countless groups and people, led by Shaolin, sought out the Heavenly Eagle Sect due to Xie Xun. In the past years, there had been five major battles, and countless minor skirmishes. The Heavenly Eagle Sect lost every single major battle, but still hung on despite everything. Your father-in-law has truly done a remarkable job. Of course, the major sects like Wu Dang and Shaolin did not attack with full force. One, we didn't want to act rashly before finding out the truth. Two, the Heavenly Eagle Sect didn't look to be the main culprit. This time, we got information that their Heavenly City Hall's Hall Leader Li headed out to sea, to look for Xie Xun. So we tried to follow them. But Hall Leader Li saw us, told us to leave. Kun Lun Sect then attacked them. Had you two not been here, both sides would've have suffered many more casualties.”

Zhang CuiShan remained silent, while examined his second brother. Only to see his hair beginning to gray, and his face full of wrinkles. Zhang CuiShan said, “Second brother, you've been through a lot this past ten years. After surviving through these years, I was finally able to see you. I... I...”

Yu LianZhou saw the tears on Zhang CuiShan's face, and said, “It's fantastic to have the seven brothers united again. After third brother got injured, and you disappeared, everyone renamed us ‘Five Heroes of Wu Dang’. Now we can changed it back to seven heroes again...” He then thought of Yu DaiYan's crippled condition. Even though there are seven of them again, no longer can all seven roam the martial world together. Yu LianZhou's heart saddened upon this realization.

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After sailing southward for about ten days, they arrived at the mouth of the Yangtze River. They switched to riding a riverboat, and rode up the river.

Zhang CuiShan and Yin SuSu changed into robes, looked no less amazing than ten years before. Wuji wore a new shirt, and a new pair of pants. He looked very cute with two

pigtails tied on his head.

Yu LianZhou spent his whole life on martial arts, never married or have kids. So he was very fond of WuJi. But due to his aloofness, Yu LianZhou's face remained cold. However, WuJi knew this cold-faced uncle is quite nice to him. When he has spare time, WuJi would ask Yu LianZhou all sorts of questions. Grown up on a deserted island, WuJi knew almost nothing about the mainland, and found everything interesting. Yu LianZhou didn't find WuJi annoying, and often hold him up on the front of the boat, to observe the river scenery. WuJi would ask nine or ten questions, and he'd just give a short answer to one.

This day the boat arrived at the foot of the Tong Guan Mountain, in the An Hwei province. At dusk, the boat docked at a nearby town. The boatmen left the boat to go buy food. Zhang CuiShan, Yin SuSu, and Yu LianZhou stayed on the boat to chat.

WuJi played by himself at the head of the boat. He saw an old beggar on the dock, sitting on the ground and playing with a snake. A green snake rested on his head, while a black snake danced on his hands. That black snake quickly jumped onto his head and slithered its way down the man's back. WuJi had never seen a snake on the Fire-Ice Island. So he found it very interesting. When that old beggar saw him, he smiled, and flicked his finger. That black snake suddenly jumped up, did a flip in midair, and dropped into the beggar's chest pocket. WuJi stared intently. That old beggar gestured at him, hinting that he has more tricks should WuJi get closer.

WuJi quickly jumped off the ship toward him. The old beggar took out a sack, opened it up, and said, "There's something really fun inside. You want to see?" WuJi said, "What's inside?" That old beggar said, "It's very interesting. Take a look and you'll see." WuJi put his head close to look, but still couldn't see anything. He moved even closer, when that old beggar suddenly flipped his hands, covering WuJi's head in the sack. WuJi let out an 'Ah', but the old man quickly covered his mouth. Afterwards, WuJi felt his whole body being lifted up.

WuJi's scream within the sack was hardly loud. But both Yu LianZhou and Zhang CuiShan heard him. They were quite far away, sitting inside the cabin. But upon the scream, they immediately rushed out to the front of the boat. Only to see the old beggar holding WuJi.

The two was about to jump off the boat, when that old beggar yelled, "If you value the child's life, then stay where you are." As he spoke, he tore off a piece of WuJi's shirt, and put that black snake next to WuJi's skin.

By now Yin SuSu also arrived. In a hurry to save Wuji, she immediately tried to throw the silver needles. But Yu LianZhou stopped her and said, “No!” He recognized that this black snake is called ‘Shadow Star’, a very famous breed of poisonous snake. The shinier its body, the more poisonous it is. This black snake shined brightly. Its mouth opened, aimed at Wuji’s skin. Due the poison’s potency, Wuji would die immediately if bitten. Even if the old man has the antidote, it would still be too late. Yu LianZhou’s expression remained unchanged, and said, “May I ask. Why you are holding this child?”

That old beggar said, “Ask your boatman to immediately lift anchor, and move the boat out at least sixteen meters. Then we can talk.” Yu LianZhou knew the old man was guarding against a rescue attempt. Should the boat leave shore, it would be much harder to rescue Wuji. But at this moment, he had no other choice. Yu LianZhou picked up the anchor-chain. With a light flip of the wrist, a sixty-some pound anchor came out of the water.

When the old beggar saw this scene, he was astonished at Yu LianZhou’s inner power, and shuddered. Zhang CuiShan picked up the barge pole, pointed at the shore, and the boat backed away from the dock. That old beggar said, “Back off a little more!” Zhang CuiShan said calmly, “Isn’t this more than sixteen meters?” That old beggar said, “After seeing Second Hero Yu’s anchor-raising talent, I’d feel safer if you back off some more.” Zhang CuiShan could only move the boat back some more.

Yu LianZhou said, “May I ask your name?” That old beggar said, “I’m a nobody in the Beggar’s Clan. There’s no need to clutter Second Hero Yu’s ears with my name.” Seeing six pouches on his chest, Yu LianZhou thought that this must be a six-pouch member within the Beggar’s Clan. That’s a fairly high rank. Why would he do something like this? Besides, the Beggar’s Clan is a righteous clan, and its leader Shi HuoLong is quite renowned. This whole thing doesn’t make sense.

Yin SuSu suddenly yelled, “Since when did Witch Mountain Clan join the Beggar’s Clan? How come I didn’t know?” That old beggar gasped, but didn’t respond. Yin SuSu added, “Old Man He, what on earth are you doing? If you hurt a single hair on my son’s body, I’ll chop your Mei ShiJian into tiny pieces!”

That old beggar trembled, said, “Miss Yin really has incredible vision, and recognize me. I am simply following Leader Mei’s orders, to welcome your son.” Yin SuSu said angrily, “Move the snake away! The nerve of you Witch Mountain Clan. You dare offend the Heavenly Eagle Sect?” Old Man He said, “I only wish an answer from Miss Yin, and will then immediately release your son afterwards.” Yin SuSu said, “What’s your question?”

Old Man He said, “Leader Mei’s only son died in Xie Xun’s hands. Something I’m sure you’ve heard. Leader Mei wishes to ask Fifth Hero Zhang and Miss Yin... sorry, my mistake. I should call you Mrs. Zhang. If the two can give the location of Xie Xun, everyone in my clan will thank you.”

Yin SuSu’s eyebrows rose up, then said, “We don’t know the answer.” Old Man He said, “Then I wish you could find the answer for me. In the meantime, we’ll take good care of your son. When you’ve found Xie Xun’s location, Leader Mei will personally return your son.”

Seeing the snake slithering next to her son’s skin, Yin SuSu stirred. She wanted to give him the answer. But as she turned her head toward Zhang CuiShan, Yin SuSu saw her husband’s determined expression. After ten year of marriage, she knew that Zhang CuiShan values loyalty and honor above all else. Should she reveal Xie Xun’s location, and cause his death, their marriage could very well break apart. So at the last moment, Yin SuSu stopped herself.

Zhang CuiShan said loudly, “Fine. Then go ahead and take my son. Do I look like someone who would betray his friends? Surely you didn’t expect that from the Seven Heroes of Wu Dang.”

Old Man He froze. He figured that with WuJi in his hands, Zhang CuiShan and his wife would surely divulge Xie Xun’s location. Who’d have thought that Zhang CuiShan would not be moved at all? Unsure of his next move, Old Man He said, “Second Hero Yu, Xie Xun’s crimes can fill a whole mountain. I know Wu Dang Sect is righteous. Surely you could help me on this matter.”

Yu LianZhou said, “But first, we must seek our master’s advice. Then we plan to host a gathering at Wu Chang City’s Yellow Crane Restaurant. Leader Mei is welcome there. At this gathering, we will have an answer.”

The boat rested about twenty meters from shore. Plus Yu LianZhou said this in a natural voice, yet Old Man He could hear each word clearly. With deep respect for the man, Old Man He thought, “The Seven Heroes of Wu Dang certainly lives up to their incredible fame. How could my little Witch Mountain Clan possibly go against the likes of Wu Dang and the Heavenly Eagle Sect? Unfortunately, Leader Mei must have his revenge.” So he bowed and said, “If so, then sorry for this inconvenience. I will take care of this child for now.”

Suddenly, Yin SuSu pushed a boatman from behind, and kicked another boatman. Both of them let out a yell, and fell into the water. Yin SuSu screamed, “Oww! Fifth brother, why did you hit me?” and started to shout and jump wildly. Yu LianZhou and Zhang CuiShan both stood there stunned, not knowing what to make of her behavior. Old Man He was even more surprised, as he stared intently from afar.

It only took an instant for Yu LianZhou to realize what’s going on. Seeing Old Man He watching Yin SuSu attentively, he quickly drew out his sword, and threw it out with his inner power. The sword flew across the air. It sliced the poisonous black snake into two, and even cut off the four fingers holding the snake. At the same moment, Zhang CuiShan grabbed onto a rope hung on the ship’s mast. Pushing off with his feet on the ship, Zhang CuiShan swung toward the shore. He arrived just a bit later than Yu LianZhou’s sword. Before landing, Zhang CuiShan shifted his upper body forward, and the left palm shot out, striking Old Man He back a few meters. At the same time, his right hand grabbed onto WuJi.

Old Man He lied on the ground, unable to get back up again.

The two boatmen in the water didn’t know why Yin SuSu was enraged. They were afraid to return. Yin SuSu chuckled and said, “You can come up now. Allow me to apologize. Here’s a tael of silver each.”

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They continued the journey up the river. Zhang CuiShan was in a hurry to see his master and fellow brothers. So he wanted to switch to horses upon reaching An Qing city. But Yu LianZhou said, “Fifth brother. I think its better to stay on the boat. It might take longer, but it’s certainly safer. After all, who in the martial world doesn’t want your sworn brother’s location?” Yin SuSu said, “Surely no one would dare block Second Hero Yu’s path.” Yu LianZhou said, “If we seven brothers were together, I would be confident. But with just fifth brother and myself, there are no guarantees. Besides, we don’t want to stir things up even more.” Zhang CuiShan nodded, said, “You are right, second brother.”

A few days later, they’ve arrived at the city of Wu Xue, in Hu Bei province. This night, the boatmen anchored the boat, and prepared for sleep. Yu LianZhou suddenly heard horses galloping by the shore. He looked out, only to see two riders turn around at the dock, heading back to the city. Yu LianZhou only saw the riders’ backs, but could tell that both knew kung fu. He turned and said to Zhang CuiShan, “It’s not safe to remain here. Let’s leave immediately.” Zhang CuiShan said, “Ok!” He deeply appreciated his second brother’s suggestion. The Seven Heroes of Wu Dang all have incredible kung fu,

and do only righteous deeds. Generally, only people run from them, and not the other way around. In recent years, Yu LianZhou's reputation had grown tremendously, exceeding even the likes of Kong Dong and Kun Lun leaders. He must really care for Zhang CuiShan's family to run from these riders.

Yu LianZhou went to the head boatman, gave him three taels of silver. Then asked him to set sail immediately. Although the boatmen are tired, three taels of silver is just way too much money to pass up. The boatmen immediately pulled up the anchor, and left the dock.

The moon shined brightly in the sky, while a gentle breeze blew through the boat. WuJi had gone to sleep already. Yu LianZhou and the Zhang couple sat outside, enjoying the scenery.

Zhang CuiShan said, "Our master's about to have his one hundredth birthday. I'm so glad that I can see this momentous event." Yin SuSu said, "Too bad we're in such a hurry. Otherwise, we really should have prepared a present."

Yu LianZhou said, "Sister-in-law, do you know who's my master's favorite disciple?" Yin SuSu said, "His favorite disciple? Obviously you, second brother-in-law." Yu LianZhou said with a smile, "That's a pretty insincere statement. You knew the true answer, but purposely gave the wrong one. Among us seven brothers, the one master cares for the most, is your handsome husband." Yin SuSu heart warmed. She shook her head and said, "I don't believe you."

Yu LianZhou said, "We seven brothers each have our own strengths. Eldest brother has profound comprehension of the Book of Changes. He's humble and forward thinking. Third brother's is the best at accomplishing tasks. He never failed any job master gave him. Fourth brother is the cleverest. Sixth brother is a master of the sword. Seventh brother has been concentrating on hard techniques. Soon, he'd have the best combination of inner power and outer strength, soft and hard molded into one." Yin SuSu said, "What about you?" Yu LianZhou said, "My aptitude is too low, and therefore lack a strong point. You could say that I practice master's kung fu more meticulously than others." Yin SuSu smiled and said, "You have the best kung fu among the Seven Heroes of Wu Dang. But you're too modest to say it."

Zhang CuiShan said, "Among us, second brother always had been the best at kung fu. Ten years apart, now I'm even further behind second brother. After missing out on ten years of teachings, I'm definitely the lowest ranked among us brothers."

Yu LianZhou said, “But among us, only you are skilled at both kung fu and academics. Sister-in-law, I’ll let you in on a secret. Five years ago, at master’s ninety-fifth birthday, we held a banquet to celebrate. During the banquet, master suddenly frowned. He said, ‘Among my seven disciples, the one with the best comprehension, the only one who is knowledgeable in academics and in martial arts, is CuiShan. I had hoped that he would be the disciple to carry on my legacy. But alas, fate had decided otherwise. Five years of disappearance does not bode well for his fortune.’ You tell me, sister-in-law, does master like fifth brother the most?”

Yin SuSu’s face brightened like a flower. Zhang CuiShan felt deep gratitude, and tears came out of his eyes.

Yu LianZhou said, “So the best present for master, quite frankly, is the safe return of fifth brother.”

At this moment, they suddenly heard horses galloping on the shore. The sound went from east to west, quite loud in the silent night, a total of four horses. The three of them glanced at each other. They knew that these riders are likely seeking them out. Although they didn’t want trouble, none of them are scared of anyone. So they simply ignored these riders.

Yu LianZhou said, “When I came down the mountain this time, master was meditating in seclusion. Hopefully, he’ll be finished by the time we get back.” Yin SuSu said, “My father once told me, he only respected two people in life. One is Leader Yang of the Ming Sect. One is your master Taoist Zhang. My dad didn’t even respect the Shaolin’s four divine reverends all that much. Considering your master’s old age and unparalleled martial arts ability, why would he still need to meditate in seclusion? Is he trying to obtain eternal life?” Yu LianZhou said, “No. Master’s studying martial arts.” Yin SuSu said in shock, “He’s martial arts ability is already unparalleled. What’s the point of further studying martial arts? Is there actually someone who’s his adversary?”

Yu LianZhou said, “Upon reaching ninety-five, master would meditate nine months out of the year. He once said, Wu Dang martial arts came mostly from a book called the . Unfortunately, master was too young, and didn’t know martial arts, when he learned it from martial grandfather Jue Yuan. Martial grandfather Jue Yuan also wasn’t purposely teaching him the scripture. He simply recited it by chance. Therefore, there’s always this gap within our school of martial arts. Supposedly, Originator Da Muo wrote this . But according to master, this is not likely the truth. First of all, the contents of this Holy Scripture are quite different from Shaolin’s martial arts style. It resembled Taoist philosophy instead. Also, this was written in Chinese, not in Sanskrit. All the words are

situated on the borders of a Sanskrit-worded . Despite Originator Da Muo's brilliance, he's still from another country. It's unlikely that he's proficient in writing Chinese. Plus, for such an important martial art scripture, why would he write within another book, rather than on separate papers by itself."

*Note: This is the same [Jiu Yang Zhen Jing] in Athena's translation.

**Note: Sorry, I have no clue as to what this book is.

Zhang CuiShan nodded, asked, "So how did master explain all this?"

Yu LianZhou said, "Master doesn't know the exact story either. He figured that a Shaolin monk wrote it, but penned under Originator Da Muo's name. Master thought, if the he memorized was not complete, why not try to create the rest? Therefore, he has spent much time developing a new type of martial arts philosophy, one different from all others in the world."

Both Zhang CuiShan and Yin SuSu sighed in admiration. Yu LianZhou said, "Reverend Jue Yuan recited this in front of three people. One is master, one is Shaolin's Reverend Wu Se, one is a young woman. She is the founder of E Mei, Heroine Guo Xiang." Yin SuSu said, "I've heard my father speak of her. He said that Heroine Guo is a very significant individual. Her father is Guo Jing, Hero Guo. Her mother was Huang Rong, former leader of the Beggar's Clan. When the city of Xiang Yang fell to the Mongols, Hero Guo and his wife both died in the city's defense."

Yu LianZhou said, "You are correct. Master actually met Hero Guo and his wife at the peak of Mount Hua. Every time he brings up the couple, master would praise their heroism. He says that anyone who practices martial arts should look at them as role models." Yu LianZhou paused for a moment, then continued, "Each of the three people learned the differently. Reverend Wu Se had the strongest martial arts among the three. As the daughter of Hero Guo and Clan Leader Huang, Heroine Guo had the richest martial arts background. Master knew basically no martial arts at the time. But for this reason, he learned the scripture in its purest form. Therefore, Shaolin, E Mei, and Wu Dang each gained 'strong', 'rich' and 'pure' aspects of the scripture, respectively. Each sect has its own strengths, but also weaknesses."

Yin SuSu said, "This Reverend Jue Yuan must've had incredible martial arts skills."

Yu LianZhou said, "No. Martial grandfather Jue Yuan did not know kung fu. He was the librarian for Shaolin's library of scriptures. He absolutely loved book, and read every

single one. He found by accident, and read it like any other scripture. As for the martial arts philosophies, he understood them, but just the inner power portion, not the techniques.” Yu LianZhou then told the story of to the couple.

Zhang CuiShan had already heard the story from master. But Yin SuSu had not, and was quite fascinated. She said, “I didn’t know E Mei and Wu Dang had such a relationship. Why didn’t this Heroine Guo marry your Master Zhang?”

Zhang CuiShan said with a smile, “Oh, don’t be ridiculous.”

Yu LianZhou said, “After parting under the Shao Bao Mountain, master and Heroine Guo never met again. Master said, Heroine Guo could not forget one person. He is the one who killed the Mongol Emperor outside Xiang Yang with a stone pellet, Condor Hero Yang Guo. Heroine Guo searched the whole world, but could not find Hero Yang. At the age of forty, she finally found enlightenment, gave up the search, and became a nun. Afterwards, she founded the E Mei Sect.”

Yin SuSu gasped, and felt pity for Guo Xiang. She glanced at Zhang CuiShan, who glanced back the same time. They both thought, “In Heaven or in Hell, we shall never be apart. Our fate is certainly much better than this Heroine Guo.”

Normally, Yu LianZhou would almost never speak. Yet after reuniting with Zhang CuiShan, he lightened up a great deal, even enjoying chats with the couple. After spending some days with Yin SuSu, he found that her nature is benign. It’s her upbringing that made her so cruel and merciless. But after ten years of marriage with Zhang CuiShan, her temper had subsided a great deal. Yu LianZhou had changed his first impression of her. In fact, he admired her straightforward tendencies, much more pleasant than those self-righteous, arrogant members of the righteous sects.

At this moment, sound of horses could be heard again. Zhang CuiShan ignored the noise, said, “Second brother, if the master welcomed Shaolin and E Mei elders to study the scripture with him, all three sects would benefit greatly.”

Yu LianZhou said, “That would be a great idea. No wonder master said that you’d be the one who’d carry his legacy.” Zhang CuiShan said, “Master only felt that way because I was not around. After all, the child away is the one parents think about the most. Not only is my ability worse than eldest or second brother, even sixth and seventh brother are much better than I am now.”

Yu LianZhou shook his head and said, “You can’t look at it that way. From a pure martial arts standpoint, I am better than you. But master always says, the world is so vast, the honor of Wu Dang itself is insignificant. The importance is to research into the depths of martial arts philosophies, and pass them down to future generations, so the righteous martial arts will overcome those of evil. In addition, we could unite practitioners throughout our land, drive out the Mongols, and reclaim our country. These are the reasons why we practice martial arts. To carry on our master’s legacy, one must first have a good heart. Then have incredible comprehension skills. When it comes to heart, there’s no different between us brothers. But in terms of comprehension, you are certainly the best.” Zhang CuiShan shook his head, said, “I’m sure the master just said it at the spur of the moment. Surely I’m not worthy of such a praise.”

Yu LianZhou smiled, and said, “Sister-in-law, go take care of WuJi. Don’t let him get scared. Fifth brother and I will take care of the problems outside.” Yin SuSu looked around, but didn’t find anything unordinary. As she hesitated, Yu LianZhou said, “Behind the bushes on the shore, there are weapons flashing. Which means someone’s trying to ambush us. There should be enemy boats up ahead.”

Yin SuSu did not notice anything, and thought that perhaps there’s something wrong with Yu LianZhou’s eyes.

When suddenly, Yu LianZhou spoke loudly, “Wu Dang’s Second Yu, Fifth Zhang, are passing through this area. If friends would like to chat, feel free to come have a drink with us.” When he finished speaking, sounds of paddling came from the reeds. Six small boats came at them. A sound-arrow shot out of one boat, and ten or so people on the shore began to move. They all wore black clothes, held different types of weapons, and covered their faces with masks.

Yin SuSu thought in awe, “Second brother-in-law really is amazing.” With the enemy coming in, she hurriedly went inside the cabin, only to see WuJi already awake. Yin SuSu helped him put on some clothes, and whispered, “Don’t be afraid, honey.”

Yu LianZhou spoke again, “Who are you? Wu Dang’s Second Yu, Fifth Zhang, says hello.” Other than a single boatman paddling each ship, no one else even appeared, much less responded.

Yu LianZhou suddenly came to a realization. He yelled, “Oh no!” and immediately dived into the water. Having grown up near a river, his swimming skills are excellent. He immediately saw four people swimming underwater, each holding a sharp prick, as if wanting to make a hole to the ship.

Yu LianZhou waited till they were close, and quickly attacked with both hands, sealing two enemies' pressure points. His leg shot out and hit the pressure point on the third enemy's waist. The fourth tried to swim away, but Yu LianZhou quickly grabbed his feet, and threw him up onto the boat. Realizing that with their pressure points sealed, the other three people would die underwater, Yu LianZhou threw them onto the boat too. That fourth person rolled once on the deck, and stood up. He then immediately attacked Zhang CuiShan. Zhang CuiShan saw that the attacker's kung fu is mediocre, didn't block, and simply grabbed his wrist with the left hand, then struck that person's pressure point on the chest with the left elbow. That man let out a light yell, and fell to the ground.

Yu LianZhou said, "There are some decent fighters on the shore. Enough talk, let's break through." Zhang CuiShan nodded, and ordered the boatmen to just keep going. When they sailed near the six small boats, Yu LianZhou picked up those four men, unsealed their pressure points, and threw them over to the other boats. Oddly enough, no one on the other boats made a sound. Even the people on the shore remained silent, as if they're all mute. The four men Yu LianZhou threw went into the cabin.

Just as their boat passed by the six opposing boats, one of their boatmen suddenly threw something with his hand. After hearing two 'ping' sounds, the wood on their boat started flying everywhere, and an explosion destroyed the rudder. The boat itself suddenly turned horizontally. That sailor had thrown two fish bombs, which fishers use to catch fish. However, the one he used had much more explosives than a typical one. So it could destroy parts of the boat.

Yu LianZhou remained calm, and quickly jumped to the neighboring boat. Confident of his abilities, Yu LianZhou went empty-handed.

The boatman did not react as he landed. Yu LianZhou yelled, "Who threw that fish bomb?" The boatman did not respond. Yu LianZhou walked into the cabin, and saw two men sitting inside. Neither reacted upon his entrance. Yu LianZhou grabbed one of them, yelled, "Where's your scoop to throw out water?" That person did not respond. Yu LianZhou didn't want to force him, and returned back out. He saw that the Zhang family had already made it to this boat.

Yu LianZhou snatched away the oar, and began to paddle this new boat. After a moment, Yin SuSu yelled, "They've scuttled the boat!" as they saw water seeping through the bottom. There was a hole on the bottom of the boat, which was covered by a cork. But now that the cork has been removed, water flooded in. Yu LianZhou jumped to the second boat, and saw a small pool of water on the deck. He turned around and said,

“Fifth brother. Since they’re forcing us to land, let’s grant their wish!” Those six boats are perfectly positioned as stepping-stones, allowing them to easily jump to shore.

The remaining ten-plus hooded figures positioned in a semi-circle, surrounding them. The majority held long swords, but a few held double sabers, or whips, but no heavy weapons.

Yu LianZhou looked around, but didn’t say anything.

The person in the middle gestured with his hand, and the crowd split apart. All of them bowed, their weapons facing the ground, opening a path. Yu LianZhou returned a bow, and walked through the opening. Just as he left, the people returned to their positions, surrounded the remaining three people.

Zhang CuiShan laughed, and said, “Oh, so you are all here for me. I’m quite honored that you’ve spent so much effort to capture me.” That middle person thought for a moment, and the crowd opened up a path again. Zhang CuiShan said, “SuSu, you go first!”

Yin SuSu, carrying WuJi, began to walk out, when suddenly the sound of wind surrounded her, as five swords came right at WuJi. Yin SuSu retreated in shock. Those five people continued to pursue her, the sword tips continuously vibrated, but always near WuJi.

Yu LianZhou leapt forward, and flew toward the battle. His two hands quickly shot out four times, each time hitting one of the hooded person’s wrist. In a flash, their four swords flew up into the air. Yu LianZhou quickly followed the four strikes by grabbing the fifth person’s wrist, and sealed that hand’s pressure point. The hand he struck felt quite soft, like that of a woman, so he quickly let go. That person’s hand became numb, and immediately dropped the sword.

With no swords in their hands, all five hooded figures retreated. Two more sparkles appeared under the moonlight, as another two swords came at Yu LianZhou. The sword edges pointed horizontally, the tips slashed from left to right, both attackers used the technique ‘Calm Desert Sand’. But there’s not much force behind the technique, as if they didn’t want to hurt him.

Yu LianZhou thought, “Kun Lun Sword Art! These are from the Kun Lun Sect!” When the swords reached about a feet from his chest, his chest contracted, two arms swept down from above, striking the flat area of the two swords.

These two strikes applied Wu Dang's inner power. Normally, this should result in both swords dropping from the hands. However, during the moment of contact, Yu LianZhou felt a soft force coming out of the sword, which neutralized part of his power, and allowed the swords to remain in hand. But even so, Yu LianZhou's power still pushed back the two attackers. One couldn't maintain balance, and fell to the ground. The other let out a cry, and coughed out some blood.

This was the first time any of these people let out a sound. The cry sounded like a woman's voice.

The middle hooded person waved the left hand, and everyone retreated away. Most of these people looked quite lean, most likely women dressed in men's clothing. Yu LianZhou said, "Second Yu, Fifth Zhang, wish to apologize to 'Mr. Iron Zither', for causing all this trouble." Those hooded figures did not respond, but one of them chuckled ever so slightly, in a woman's voice.

Yin SuSu put down Wuji, grabbed his hand tightly, and said, "The majority of them should be women. Second brother-in-law, are they from the Kun Lun Sect?" Yu LianZhou said, "No, they are E Mei disciples." Zhang CuiShan asked in surprise, "Then why did you mention 'Mr. Iron Zither'?"

Yu LianZhou sighed, and said, "They covered their own faces, unwilling to speak a word. So they obviously wished to hide their identity. When the five swords attacked Wuji, they used Kun Lun Sect's 'Winter Plum Sword Formation'. The technique against me was 'Calm Desert Sand'. I played along, went ahead and apologized 'Mr. Iron Zither' He TaiChong."

Yin SuSu said, "But how do you know they're E Mei disciples? Did you recognize someone?"

Yu LianZhou said, "No. None of their martial arts abilities are deep. Probably two generations removed from E Mei's Master Mie Jue. Or perhaps some of her latest disciples. I don't know any of them. However, they did indeed use E Mei's inner power to neutralize my two strikes against their swords. It's not hard to copy someone else's techniques. But you can't cover up your inner power."

Zhang CuiShan nodded, said, "When you struck their swords, they should've let go to avoid serious injuries. E Mei's inner power is quite powerful. However, they didn't have the ability to utilize it to full potential. Had second brother been fighting for real,

both of them would've been dead by now. But E Mei and Wu Dang had always been on friendly terms.”

Yu LianZhou said, “E Mei founder Heroine Guo helped out our master in his youth. For this reason, he always told us not to offend E Mei Sect, for old times sake. When I realized those two people were E Mei disciples, I tried to retract my inner power, but was too late. I didn't mean to hurt them, but nonetheless disobeyed master's orders.”

Yin SuSu said, “Thankfully, you pretended that they're Kun Lun Sect. So you didn't officially offend the E Mei Sect.”

The boat they were on kept sailing during this whole time. By now it's long gone. The six smaller boats have sunk. Its occupants all swam ashore. Yin SuSu said, “Are these also E Mei disciples?” Yu LianZhou whispered, “Most likely Lake Chao's Grain-Boat Clan.” Yin SuSu looked at the five swords on the ground, and wanted to examine them. Yu LianZhou said, “Don't touch these weapons. If they have names on them, we'd have trouble claiming ignorance on the matter. Let's just leave now!” Yin SuSu nodded in agreement and said, “You're right.” She grabbed WuJi's hand and walked towards the road.

After walking for a while, they saw three horses tied to a tree. WuJi yelled happily, “Horses! Horses!” WuJi had always wanted to ride a horse since coming to the mainland. But because they kept traveling by boat, he never got the chance.

When the four got close to, they saw a note stuck to the tree. Zhang CuiShan took down the note, and read it, “Please accept these three horses, as an apology for inconveniencing you.” The characters were written in charcoal, very delicately, in a lady's writing style. Yin SuSu said with a smile, “Looks like this E Mei lady wrote to Heroes of Wu Dang using a charcoal pencil for drawing eyebrows.” Yu LianZhou said, “Well, they're certainly quite courteous.” He untied the horses, and everyone got on. WuJi sat in front of his mother, feeling very excited.

Zhang CuiShan said, “Since everyone knows our movement anyway, we might as well ride horses. Yu LianZhou said, “You're right. There will surely be more troubles ahead. If we must fight, don't be too ruthless.” He still felt quite uneasy for hurting those two E Mei disciples.

Yin SuSu felt ashamed, thought, “Second brother-in-law only used a bit too much force. He didn't even intend to hurt anyone. They only sustained injuries because they wouldn't let go of the swords. We really shouldn't let second brother-in-law get further

involved in this matter.” So she said, “Second brother-in-law. These people came for my family. If we encounter any trouble, my husband and I will take care of it. If we can’t handle them, then we can ask you for help.” Yu LianZhou said, “Do not treat me as an outsider. After all, we brothers live together and die together. Your problems are my problems.”

Yin SuSu stopped discussing this matter, and asked, “If they knew you were with us, why did E Mei just send some younger disciples to block our way?” Yu LianZhou said, “They probably didn’t have time to gather the more powerful disciples.”

Zhang CuiShan figured these disciples came because of Xie Xun, and said, “Looks like my sworn brother is also an enemy of E Mei. How come he never told me back on Fire-Ice Island?”

Yu LianZhou sighed, and said, “E Mei’s a very strict sect, with mostly female disciples. Master Mie Jue doesn’t let her female disciples wander around freely. So even we used to find it strange that E Mei would go against the Heavenly Eagle Sect. However, we recently found out the reason. One night, ‘Golden Hammer’ Fang Ping, Old Hero Fang of the Kai Feng City in He Nan province, was killed. The words ‘The murderer is Lightning Fist of the Originating Formation: Cheng Kun’ were written on the wall.” Yin SuSu asked, “Is Fang Ping a member of the E Mei Sect?” Yu LianZhou said, “No. But Master Mie Jue’s surname was ‘Fang’ before becoming a nun. That Old Hero Fang was Master Mie Jue’s brother.” Both Zhang CuiShan and Yin SuSu gasped at the same time.

WuJi suddenly asked, “Second uncle, is that Old Hero Fang a good person or a bad person?” Yu LianZhou said, “I heard that he was a recluse, and spends his days farming and reading. So he should be a good person.” WuJi said, “Oh, godfather really shouldn’t be killing so recklessly.” Yu LianZhou was overjoyed, reached out for WuJi’s arms, and took him from Yin SuSu. He said, “Son, your second uncle’s very happy for you, since you know to not kill recklessly. A person who dies cannot be resurrected. So even if your opponent is the most devious, vicious person in the world, you still shouldn’t automatically kill him. Try giving people a chance to reform.”

WuJi said, “Second uncle, can you do something for me?” Yu LianZhou asked, “What?” Wu Ji said, “If they really do find godfather, can you tell them not to kill him? His eyes are now blind, and can’t beat these people.” Yu LianZhou thought for a moment, then said, “I don’t have the power to do this. But I myself will promise not to kill him.” WuJi did not speak further, but tears came down his eyes.

The next day, they've arrived at a town. After sleeping for a while in an inn, they continued in the afternoon. Sometimes Yin SuSu and Zhang CuiShan would ride together, so WuJi could get a taste for riding alone. As a child, WuJi forgets his worries quickly. After riding alone for a while, he quickly forgot about Xie Xun's problems.

Following a day of riding, they almost reached the city of An Lu. Suddenly, ten or so merchants hurried past them. When they saw Yu LianZhou, one quickly shook his hand and yelled, "Turn round quickly! Mongolian soldiers are killing and pillaging ahead." Another said to Yin SuSu, "You are one brave lady. But you really shouldn't let the soldiers see you." Yu LianZhou asked, "How many soldiers?" One merchant said, "Ten-plus. All looked really mean." He quickly ran away as he spoke.

The Seven Heroes of Wu Dang hated cruel Mongolian soldiers more than anything else. Zhang SanFeng is very strict about combat. Unless it's absolutely necessary, his disciples should never get into fights. However, if the opponents are Mongolian soldiers acting viciously, then they have the go-ahead to kill. For this reason, if the seven heroes see large contingents of soldiers, they'll simply hide. But if they meet only a few soldiers, then they'd eliminate the soldiers. So when Yu and Zhang heard that there are only ten or so soldiers, they immediately galloped ahead.

After riding for another mile, they heard loud cries ahead. Zhang CuiShan went in front, and saw over ten soldiers holding spears and sabers, terrorizing a group of civilians. The ground is filled with blood, as seven or eight civilians were already dead on the ground. Only to see one soldier picking up a child of about three or four, and then kicked him into the air. When the child came down, another soldier kicked him up again, like kicking a bouncing ball. After a few kicks, the child's breathing stopped. Filled with rage, Zhang CuiShan flew off the horse. Before hitting the ground, his fist struck one of the soldiers, who instantly fell to the ground. At this time, another soldier came at him with a spear.

WuJi yelled, "Daddy, watch out!" Zhang CuiShan said, "Watch your dad beat up on Mongol soldiers." When the spear nearly reached him, Zhang CuiShan grabbed the spear tip, and pushed it backward into that soldier's chest. That soldier let out a loud scream, fell to the ground, seemingly dead.

Upon seeing Zhang CuiShan's actions, the other soldiers surrounded him. Yin SuSu got off the horse and quickly snatched one of the soldier's sabers. She immediately killed two soldiers with it. The other soldiers quickly realized that something's wrong, and began to run away. Yu LianZhou yelled, "Don't let them get away." He quickly went west to block four of the soldiers. Zhang CuiShan and Yin SuSu also split up to catch the re-

maining soldiers. All three knew that these soldiers' fighting abilities are very mediocre, not even WuJi's match. So they were comfortable leaving him alone.

WuJi jumped off the horse. He saw his parents and second uncle leap as if they're flying, clapped his hands and yelled, "Great! Great!" When suddenly, the soldier Zhang CuiShan knocked down with the spear sprung up. He quickly grabbed WuJi, jumped onto a horse, and began to gallop away.

Yu LianZhou and the Zhang couple gasped in shock. They quickly gave chase. Yu LianZhou leapt just two times before catching up to the horse. He jumped up again, and shot out with his left palm, aimed at that soldier's back. That soldier didn't even bother to turn around. His palm came out behind, matching Yu LianZhou's palm. Yu LianZhou sensed the opposing palm sending out an extremely powerful force, filled with incredibly icy yin-based inner power. Yu LianZhou felt like his whole body was frozen. He stuttered a bit, and retreated a few steps.

That soldier also couldn't handle Yu LianZhou's palm either, and fell off the horse. He then carried WuJi and ran forward. Applying lightness kung fu, he was already forty-some meters away in an instant.

When Zhang CuiShan caught up to Yu LianZhou, he saw a pale expression on his second brother. Knowing that he's seriously injured, Zhang CuiShan went over to help him.

Yin SuSu cared deeply for her child, and kept chasing. But that Mongolian soldier's lightness kung fu is much better than hers. He quickly disappeared into the distance. Even so, Yin SuSu still wouldn't give up. She only had one thought in mind, "Even if it costs me my life, I still must get my son back."

Yu LianZhou whispered, "Quick, get sister-in-law to stop chasing..." Zhang CuiShan raised his spear and killed the two soldiers besides them. He asked, "How's your injury?" Yu LianZhou said, "It's no big deal. First... first catch sister-in-law." Zhang CuiShan was afraid that there are more kung fu experts among the remaining soldiers. So he went around and killed all the soldiers first. Then he got on a horse to chase after Yin SuSu.

After a few miles, he finally saw Yin SuSu. But her steps are staggered, obviously from exhaustion. Zhang CuiShan picked her up onto the horse. Yin SuSu pointed forward, and cried in tears, "He's gone. I couldn't catch up, couldn't catch up." And then her eyes closed, and fainted.

Zhang CuiShan worried about Yu LianZhou, and thought, “I must first take care of second brother, then worry about WuJi.” He turned his horse around, and returned to Yu LianZhou, only to see him meditating on the ground, readjusting his flow of chi.

Yin SuSu slowly regained consciousness, and immediately yelled, “WuJi! WuJi!” Yu LianZhou’s face also slowly regained its color, opened his eyes, and said softly, “What amazing palm power!”

Upon hearing his second brother speak, Zhang CuiShan knew the injuries aren’t life threatening. Zhang CuiShan calmed a bit, but still afraid to converse with Yu LianZhou. Yu LianZhou slowly got up, and said softly, “Is he gone?” Yin SuSu cried, “Second brother-in-law, what... what should we do?” Yu LianZhou said, “This person’s kung fu is very good. He won’t harm a little kid.” Yin SuSu said, “But... but he kidnapped WuJi.”

Yu LianZhou nodded, and put one hand on Zhang CuiShan’s shoulder. After thinking for a while, he said, “I can’t figure out the origin of his kung fu. Let’s go ask master about it.” Yin SuSu felt extremely irritated, said, “Second brother-in-law. We have to find a way to get back WuJi first. The kidnapper’s origin doesn’t matter right now.” Yu LianZhou shook his head.

Zhang CuiShan said, “SuSu. Second brother’s seriously wounded. That person’s kung fu is also incredibly high. Even if we catch up, what can we do?” Yin SuSu said impatiently, “So... so are we just going to give up?” Zhang CuiShan said, “Even if we don’t find him, he’s going to come to us.”

Yin SuSu is normally very intelligent, but the loss of her child really messed up her mind. But upon her husband’s words, she immediately understood everything. If that soldier could injure Yu LianZhou in one blow, he could easily kill her and her husband. But instead, the soldier simply kidnapped WuJi. Obviously, the soldier wants to know Xie Xun’s location. When Zhang CuiShan knocked him down with the spear, none of them cared to examine his appearance. Now that they thought back to it, that soldier looked like a typical Mongol soldier.

Zhang CuiShan sent his second brother onto the horse, and grabbed the horse’s leash. The three horses strolled forward. Upon reaching An Lu City, they rested at a small inn. After asking the worker to send in food, the three stayed in the room. They were afraid of meeting more soldiers and get into trouble.

After killing those soldiers on the road, they knew the government would retaliate by killing more innocent people. But at that moment, they could hardly ignore the situa-

tion. This is called 'The cruel fate of a conquered nation, country rich and vast, yet people live in torment'.

Yu LianZhou kept circulating his chi, trying to heal his injury. Zhang CuiShan sat besides him. Yin SuSu leaned back on her chair, but could not sleep. At midnight, Yu LianZhou stood up, and walked around the room three times to loosen up. He said, "Fifth brother, other than master, I've never met such a powerful person."

Yin SuSu only had her son in mind, and said, "He kidnapped WuJi, obviously to find sworn brother's location. I wonder if WuJi would say it." Zhang CuiShan said, "If WuJi said it, would he still be our son?" Yin SuSu said, "Right! He absolutely would not say it." Suddenly, she began to cry. Zhang CuiShan quickly asked, "What's going on?" Yin SuSu choked with sobs, said, "If WuJi won't answer, that monster... that monster would certainly beat him, perhaps they'd even use... use the torture chamber."

Yu LianZhou sighed. Zhang CuiShan said, "If jade isn't carved, it won't turn into a tool. This might be a good experience for him." Although he says this, Zhang CuiShan's heart is filled with grief, and the hope that WuJi's ok. But if WuJi is resting peacefully right now, then he must've told his godfather's location. It's much better for WuJi to be tortured than for him to be ungrateful and dishonorable. Zhang CuiShan thought, "Rather for him to be dead than live as a dishonorable person." He glanced at his wife, only to see tear-filled face with a grief-stricken, pitiful expression. He shuddered and thought, "If that person came and pressured with WuJi's life, perhaps SuSu might give in." So He said, "Second brother, are you alright now?"

The two brothers grew up together. Through just a single question and expression, they could read each other's thoughts. Yu LianZhou looked at the couple's expressions, and realized Zhang CuiShan's intention. He said, "I'm fine. Let's leave tonight."

Under the cover of darkness, the three traveled on the smaller roads. They weren't afraid of that person coming to kill them, but rather he torture WuJi in front of them.

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But by traveling this way, they had no problems on the road. However, grief-stricken by the loss of her son, Yin SuSu became ill. Zhang CuiShan hired two mule-carts to carry Yin SuSu and Yu LianZhou. He himself rode his horse on the side. They finally passed by the city of Xiang Yang, and stopped at an inn in the town of Tai Ping Dian to rest.

Zhang CuiShan took care of his second brother, and was about to return to his own room. When suddenly a man opened the door and came in. This person held a horse-

whip in his hand, and looked like a cart-driver. He looked at Zhang and Yu, let out a snicker, and walked back out. Zhang CuiShan knew he's up to no good, and felt quite annoyed at his blatant disrespect. Just as that man released the door curtain to leave, Zhang CuiShan grabbed the curtain, applied his inner power, and sent it forward. The bottom of the curtain swung up, and hit that man squarely on the back, sent him flying before falling flat on his face.

That man got up and yelled, "Wu Dang punks. Don't be so smug. You're all about to die!" Despite talking this way, the man ran away as fast as he could. However, he must've been injured, for he kept staggering while running.

Yu LianZhou saw the whole event, but didn't say anything. At dusk, Zhang CuiShan said, "Second brother, lets go!" Yu LianZhou said, "No. We stay tonight. Let's leave tomorrow." Zhang CuiShan paused for a second, then realized his brother's intentions. He said, "You're right. We're only two days away from the mountain. Even though the seven brothers are not together, we still cannot let down our sect's reputation. How can we hide from others at the bottom of Wu Dang Mountain?"

Yu LianZhou smiled lightly and said, "Since our tracks have already been exposed, I want to see just how we're about to die."

The two walked over to Zhang CuiShan's room, sat by the fire and meditated. That night, seven or eight people kept walking around their room, but none dared to go in. Yin SuSu slept through the entire night, not knowing what's going on. Zhang and Yu simply ignored the people.

The three of them left after finishing breakfast. Yu LianZhou told the driver to take off the cover on his cart, so he could see outside.

After traveling a few miles out the town, three riders caught up from behind, and followed the mule-carts. They kept about thirty meters back, and didn't try to get any closer. After a while, they found four riders in front. After the mule-carts passed them, these four riders joined with the previous three. A few miles later, four more riders caught up, with eleven total now. The cart-drivers began to panic, and whispered to Zhang CuiShan, "Sir, these people don't look right. Perhaps they're bandits. You should be careful." Zhang CuiShan nodded.

By noon, six more people joined up. These riders all looked different. Some dressed in expensive, silk robes, while others look like beggars. But all carried weapons. None of them spoke, so one can't tell their dialect. However, all of them are short and have dark

skin. So they're likely from the south. By the afternoon, twenty-one riders had gathered behind them. Some of the more daring riders got as close as about ten meters, but wouldn't dare get closer. Yu LianZhou simply meditated in the cart, ignoring them.

By dusk, two riders came from the front. The first rider is an empty-handed old man. The second rider is a colorfully dressed married woman, holding a pair of sabers. The two horses stopped in the middle of the road, blocking their path.

Zhang CuiShan held down his anger, and said courteously, "Wu Dang's Second Yu, Fifth Zhang, says hello. May I ask the elder's name?" That old man said, "Where is Gold-Haired Lion King: Xie Xun? If you tell me, I will let you through." Zhang CuiShan said, "I cannot answer this question. Allow me to ask master for permission first."

That old man said, "With Second Yu's injured, you're only one person. Don't think you can defeat all of us." As he spoke, the old man took out a pair of judge's brushes. The tips of the brushes are in the shape of serpent heads.

Zhang CuiShan uses a judge's brush himself, so he's familiar with all of the famous brush users in the martial world. Upon seeing this serpent-like brush tip, he recalled that his master once said, there's a sect in the Gao Li* region who specializes in judge's brushes. Their brush tips are in the shape of serpent heads. They also use different moves and pressure point techniques compared to brush users in the central plains. Perhaps due to the serpent head tip, their techniques are quite vicious. The sect is called the 'Green Dragon Sect'. The most renowned member is someone with a surname of 'Quan'. But master did not know of his name. So Zhang CuiShan put together his fist and said, "Is elder a member of Gao Li's Green Dragon Sect? How do you refer to Elder Quan?"

*Note: Gao Li is in the present day Northeastern region of China. It was an independent country for a short while in history.

That old man froze, thought, "This person looks to be thirty-some years old. How could he know my background?" This old man is head of the Gao Li's Green Dragon Sect. His name is Quan JianNan. Sourthern Ling region's 'Three River Clan' leader requested his help, and even offered large amounts of gifts. Quan JianNan has only been in the central plains for a short while, and had not fought. So he was very surprised when Zhang CuiShan pointed out his origin. and said, "I am Quan JianNan."

Zhang Cuishan said, "The Green Dragon Sect never associates with people in the central plains. What had Wu Dang done that angered Old Hero Quan? Please enlighten us."

Quan JianNan said, “I have nothing against you. I also know about a Wu Dang Sect back in Gao Li. And that the Seven Heroes of Wu Dang are all righteous men. I just have one question, ‘Where is Golden-Haired Lion King: Xie Xun?’”

Although these words didn’t seem disrespectful, they showed clear hostile intentions. At the same time, Quan JianNan waved his judge’s brush. The riders behind them quickly scattered, surrounding the carts. Their intentions are obvious. If Zhang CuiShan did not reveal Xie Xun’s location, they will attack.

Zhang CuiShan said, “What if I don’t want to say the location?” Quan JianNan said, “I know Fifth Hero Zhang’s kung fu is formidable. Even though we have many people, I doubt we could keep you here. However, Second Hero Yu is injured, and your wife is ill. Given such an opportunity, we’ll have to take advantage, and capture them. But you are free to leave.”

Zhang CuiShan did not like his tone at all, and said, “Fine. If so, then let me see just how good Gao Li martial arts is. What if Elder Quan loses?”

Quan JianNan said, “If I lose, then everyone will attack at once. We’re not going to use that stupid one-on-one rule here. If Wu Dang had more people, you can also try to win through numbers. Back when Sui YangDi*, Tang TaiZong*, and Tang GaoZong* invaded Gao Li, didn’t they also win through numbers with their large number of troops? Since the beginning of history, people had been using numbers to their advantage.”

*Note: ‘Sui YangDi’ is the imperial name for Yang Guang, the infamous second(and last) emperor of the Sui Dynasty. Tang TaiZong and Tang GaoZong are the imperial names for Li ShiMin and Li Zhi, respectively. They are the second and the third emperor of the Tang Dynasty. These emperors ruled pretty much in succession, with Li ShiMin’s father Li Yuan ruling in between them. However, Li Yuan ruled during much civil strife, which is probably why he didn’t bother attacking Gao Li.

Zhang CuiShan knew he couldn’t talk out of this situation. He figured that capturing Quan JianNan might get them to back off. So he got off the horse, and took out a silver tiger hook with his left hand, and an iron judge’s brush with his right. Zhang CuiShan said, “After you.” Zhang CuiShan’s previous judge’s brush fell into the sea. After returning, he bought a new one. Although it’s not as good as the previous one, it was the best available.

Quan JianNan also came down the horse, and attacked. His right brush pointed gently, while his left brush still hasn’t came out, as his body had already reached the opponent.

Zhang CuiShan thought, “Today I’m fighting for my sworn brother. As his sworn brother and sworn sister, my wife and I can die for him. But this doesn’t concern second brother at all. And he shouldn’t get hurt because of this.” As Quan JianNan’s right brush nears, the hook came up to block, which used twenty percent of Zhang CuiShan’s power. As the hook and brush met, Zhang CuiShan’s body shook.

Quan JianNan thought happily, “The Three-River Clan kept saying how powerful Wu Dang is. But this guy’s nothing. They must’ve been exaggerating.” He quickly followed up with his left brush. Zhang CuiShan had trouble blocking, but still hung on. Quan JianNan thought that should he defeat Fifth Hero Zhang, his fame would rise dramatically. With this thought, his brushes came even faster, each attack pointed at Zhang CuiShan’s vital area.

Zhang CuiShan blocked tightly, while carefully examining his opponent’s moves. Quan JianNan’s moves looked light and flexible, but there’s great power on the tip of the brush. The brush targets emphasized the lower body and the back, much different from brush users in the central plains. Upon further examination, his left brush attacked only the back’s ‘Ling Tai’ or lower points, like ‘Zhi Yang’, ‘Jin Sui’, ‘Zhong Shu’, ‘Ji Zhong’, ‘Xuan Shu’, ‘Ming Men’, ‘Yang Guan’, ‘Yao Yu’, and ‘Chang Chiang’. The right brush emphasized on attacking the opponent’s legs, like ‘Zi Wu Shu’, ‘Wei Dao’, ‘Huan Tiao’, ‘Feng Shi’, ‘Zhong Du’, and the calf’s ‘Yang Ling’ Point. Zhang CuiShan figured out that his left brush really only aimed at the several points along the ‘Du Artery’. The right brush aimed at only the several points in the front of the leg and foot. Despite the complicated appearance, it’s actually quite easy to counter. Zhang CuiShan thought, “Master once said, the Green Dragon Sect’s point-sealing technique relied on its oddity. So despite its ferociousness, their technique is nothing to worry about. Looks like master’s correct.” After he understood his opponent’s attack pattern, the silver hook and iron brush only protected the particular points that Quan JianNan aimed for, ignoring all other parts of the body.

Quan JianNan fought with more and more energy as the battle went on. Zhang CuiShan thought, “You dare come to the bottom of Wu Dang Mountain with such pedestrian skills?” Suddenly his silver hook came scooping down using the hook in the character ‘Dragon’. The hook slashed through Quan JianNan’s right leg’s ‘Feng Shi’ Point. Quan JianNan let out a scream, and fell down.

At this moment, Zhang CuiShan’s brush came straight down, sealing ten pressure points on Quan JianNan’s ‘Du Artery’, the same ten Quan JianNan aimed with his left brush during the fight. This brush came down fast as a shooting star, strong as a charging ox, fully immobilizing Quan JianNan. Quan JianNan sighed, and thought, “I give up. Even

against a wooden sculpture, I wouldn't be able to attack ten points in one single move. I'm not even worthy to be his disciple."

Zahng CuiShan put his hook by Quan JianNan's throat, and yelled, "Everyone stand back! After escorting this elder to Wu Dang Mountain, I'll release him." He thought these people must be Quan JianNan's subordinates, and would listen.

But instead, that colorfully-dressed married woman yelled, "Everyone attack together. Break the carts." Zhang CuiShan yelled, "If anyone moves any closer, I'll kill this man!" That woman smirked and said, "Everyone just attack." The riders immediately charged, ignoring Quan JianNan's safety. This woman is one of the helmsmen of the Three-River Clan. They came here to capture Yu LianZhou and Yin SuSu, in order to get Xie Xun's location. Quan JianNan is just a guest helper. So they hardly cared for his safety.

Zhang CuiShan gasped, as he realized that even killing Quan JianNan would be useless. At this moment, six people had surrounded Yin SuSu's cart, and six more surrounded Yu LianZhou's cart. The rest gathered around the married woman. Just at this moment, Yu LianZhou suddenly yelled, "Sixth brother, come get rid of these people!"

Zhang CuiShan thought, "What's second brother doing?" When suddenly, he heard a yell in the distance, "Sure thing! Fifth brother, how are you? Your little brother really misses you." A shadow appeared from behind a nearby tree, with a sword in hand, coming closer. He is indeed the sixth hero Yin LiTing. Zhang CuiShan was simply overjoyed, and he yelled, "Sixth brother. Great to see you!"

Several people from the Three-River Clan went to block Yin LiTing's path, only to hear a continuous stream of 'ah' yells and 'ding ding' sounds. Each person's wrist was slashed by sword on the 'Divine Gate' Point. All of them immediately dropped their weapons. The 'Divine Gate' Point is located on the back wrist. Once struck, the hand immediately becomes numb, unable to exert any more pressure. Yin LiTing walked briskly towards the carts. When an enemy comes, he would wave his sword, and the opposing weapon would drop. That woman yelled, "You're Wu Dang's..." With two 'Dang Dang' sounds, her two sabers both left her hands.

Zhang CuiShan said ecstatically, "So master finally figured out the 'Thirteen Divine Gate Swords'." This 'Thirteen Divine Gate Swords' has a total of thirteen moves. Each one different from another, but all aimed at the opponent's 'Divine Gate' Point. When Zhang CuiShan left Wu Dang ten years ago, Zhang SanFeng had started to invent this sword art. He discussed with his disciples several times, but couldn't overcome several major problems. Now as Zhang CuiShan watched Yin LiTing use this sword art, no one in the

Three-River Clan could block even one blow. Every single one of Yin LiTing's strike was incredibly exquisite. After only five or six blows, he had already dropped over ten people's weapons.

That woman yelled, "Let's get out of here!" The clan members immediately began to run away. Zhang CuiShan unsealed Quan JianNan's pressure points and returned his brushes. Quan JianNan instantly ran away in a shameful expression.

Yin LiTing returned his sword to its sheath, and grabbed Zhang CuiShan's hands tightly. He said with joy, "Fifth brother. I missed you so much!" Zhang CuiShan said, "Sixth brother, you've grown taller." When they parted, Yin LiTing was only eighteen. After ten years, the young boy had grown into a mature adult. Zhang CuiShan held Yin LiTing's hand as he walked over to his wife.

Yin SuSu is still quite ill. So she could only smile lightly, and said faintly, "Sixth brother-in-law." Yin LiTing said with a smile, "So fifth sister-in-law also has a surname of 'Yin'. That's great. Not only are you my sister-in-law, but also my sister."

Zhang CuiShan said, "Second brother really is much better than me. You were hiding on that tree the whole time. He recognized you, but I never noticed."

Yin LiTing then spoke of why he came.

A while back, fourth hero Zhang SongXi went down the Wu Dang Mountain to buy some items for master's one-hundredth birthday. He saw two suspicious people walking around, and thought, "Considering Wu Dang's fame, why would anyone want to cause trouble in this area?" So he followed them to see what they're up to. Only then did Zhang SongXi know that Zhang CuiShan is back, and met up with Yu LianZhou. Both the 'Three-River Clan' and the 'Saber of Five Winds Sect' wanted to block their path, to ask for Xie Xun's location. Zhang SongXi ecstatically went back up the mountain. At the time, only Yin LiTing was there. The two split up to look for their brothers. They both thought, at the time, that their second and fifth brother could easily take care of these people. But both were too impatient to meet up with their fifth brother. So they came down the mountain together. Neither knew about Yu LianZhou's injury, for those people did not bring it up. Zhang SongXi followed 'Saber of Five Winds Sect', while Yin LiTing followed 'Three-River Clan'.

Yu LianZhou said, "If it weren't for fourth brother, I don't know what would've happened today." Zhang CuiShan said shamefully, "I couldn't even protect second brother myself. After leaving for ten years, my martial arts ability had lagged too far behind."

Yin LiTing said, “Don’t be so hard on yourself. Even if I hadn’t appeared, you still could’ve easily taken care of them. It’s just that you couldn’t protect second brother and fifth sister-in-law at the same time. Think about the techniques you used against that old man from Gao Li. Master never taught it to anyone else. Master will be overjoyed to see you back. He’s bound to have lots and lots of stuff to teach you. Just hope you can remember them all. Hey, do you want me to teach you the ‘Thirteen Divine Gate Swords’?”

Due to their bond, and being reunited after so much time apart, Yin LiTing is just dying to teach Zhang CuiShan everything he missed. As the two walked side by side, Yin LiTing talked endlessly, and kept making gestures to demonstrate various techniques.

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That night the four rested in an inn. Yin LiTing wanted to sleep next to Zhang CuiShan. Zhang CuiShan also really likes this sixth brother. Although Yin LiTing’s already grown up, his personality still resembled the youngster ten years ago. Muo ShengGu might be the youngest of the seven brothers, but he matured at a very young age. So Yin LiTing actually has a weaker personality than his little brother. Zhang CuiShan’s age has always been close to Yin LiTing’s, and had always taken extra care of his sixth brother.

Yu LianZhou chuckled, and said, “Fifth brother is already married. Do you think he’s still the same person from ten years ago? Fifth brother, you came back just in time. After we’re done with master’s birthday celebration, we will be following up with sixth brother’s wedding celebration.” Zhang CuiShan clapped his hands and laughed, said, “Awesome! Awesome! Who’s the lucky lady?” Yin LiTing’s face turned bright red, but won’t speak.

Yu LianZhou said, “She is the daughter of ‘Golden Whip’ Old Hero Ji in Han Yang City.” Zhang CuiShan said with a smile, “Sixth brother, you need to stop acting like a kid now. It’s no fun getting whacked by a golden whip.” Yu LianZhou chuckled, said, “Miss Ji is actually a sword user. Thankfully, she was not among the hooded-women back at the river.” Zhang CuiShan asked in surprise, “You mean Miss Ji is an E Mei disciple?” Yu LianZhou nodded, said, “Those E Mei disciples we met by the river had ordinary kung fu. So Miss Ji couldn’t have been among them. Otherwise, if I offended sixth sister-in-law, while helping fifth sister-in-law, people might say I’m being unfair. This future sixth sister-in-law has great moral fiber, and excellent martial arts. She’s a top disciple of a righteous sect, very suitable for sixth brother...”

When he got here, Yu LianZhou suddenly remembered that Yin SuSu is from an evil sect. Praising Miss Ji this way might hurt fifth brother’s feelings. Just when he wanted

to change the subject, someone came to the door and said, “Mr. Yu, several people want to see you. They said they’re your friends.” This was the voice of a worker at the inn.

Yu LianZhou asked, “Who are they?” The worker said, “There are six people total. They said they’re from the ‘Saber of Five Winds Sect’.” The three brothers were quite surprised. Zhang SongXi said he’d get rid of these people, so how did they manage to get here? Could something have happened to Zhang SongXi? Zhang CuiShan said, “Let me go out and see what’s going on.” Because of second brother’s injuries, Zhang CuiShan didn’t want to fight inside the room. Yu LianZhou said, “Let them come in.”

A while later, five coarse men and a beautiful young married woman came in. Zhang CuiShan and Yin LiTing sat right next to Yu LianZhou, preparing for possible fighting. Yet these six people all had shameful expressions on their faces. None of them had any weapons. Hardly looking like they want to cause some trouble. The first man of about forty stepped up, bowed courteously with fists together, and said, “Are you Wu Dang’s Second Hero Yu, Fifth Hero Zhang, and Sixth Hero Yin? I am a disciple of the Saber of Five Winds Sect, called Meng ZhengHong. Nice to meet you.”

Yu, Zhang, and Yin returned bows, all surprised at his actions. Yu LianZhou said, “Nice to meet you, Mr. Meng. Everyone, please sit.”

But Meng ZhengHong did not sit. He said, “My sect is located in the Shan Xi region. Although the sect is small, we nonetheless have heard of Wu Dang’s reputation. Today, upon reaching the foot of Wu Dang Mountain, we really should go up to respects to Master Zhang. But we heard that he’s already one hundred years old, and leads a quiet life. So we really shouldn’t bother him. We wish you could send a message to him. Tell him that the disciples of the ‘Saber of Five Winds Sect’ send their greetings, hoping he would have forever-good health, and many blessings.”

Yu LianZhou said, “You are too kind. Thank you for your thoughtful words.”

Meng ZhengHong then said, “We really were foolish and ignorant, to even dare come offend Wu Dang. Thankfully, the Heroes of Wu Dang were benevolent, and actually helped us out in our time of need. I really am very thankful, and therefore came to first express my gratitude, then express my apology. Hoping you could forgive us.” As he spoke he got on his knees.

Zhang CuiShan quickly picked him up, said, “Mr. Meng, you don’t need to be so courteous.”

Meng ZhengHong stuttered a bit, as he wanted to say something, but was afraid to. Yu LianZhou said, “Just speak what’s on your mind, Mr. Meng.” Meng ZhengHong said, “I wish for Second Hero Yu to say that Wu Dang forgives us. So we would have face to meet our master.” Yu LianZhou said, “I take it you came to seek Golden-Haired Lion King: Xie Xun’s location, right? What’s your reason for doing so?” Meng ZhengHong said, “Xie Xun killed my elder brother.”

Yu LianZhou’s heart shook, said, “We really have our reasons for not giving this info. Hopefully you can understand. As for forgiveness, you don’t have to ever speak of it again. When you see your master Old Master Wu, say that Second Yu, Fifth Zhang, and Sixth Yin send their greetings.”

Meng ZhengHong said, “If so, then we shall go now. If Wu Dang ever needs help in the future, you can simply send us a letter. Although we are just a small sect, we would still help in any way we can.” He then bowed again with the five other people, and left the room.

That young married woman suddenly got down on her knees and whispered, “Thanks to Wu Dang’s help, I was able to keep my innocence. I’ll never forget your kindness.” The three brothers didn’t know what she’s talking about, but felt it would be inappropriate to ask further on this subject. So they just said some modest words. That young woman kowtowed several times, and left.

Just moments after these people left, the door opened. A man flew in at lightning speed, and immediately hugged Zhang CuiShan.

Zhang CuiShan said cheerfully, “Fourth brother!” The person who came in was indeed Zhang SongXi. Zhang CuiShan added, “Fourth brother. You really are amazing. Turning the ‘Saber of Five Winds Sect’ from enemy to friend. Zhang SongXi said with a smile, “It was just a coincidence. I can’t really claim credit.” He then explained how everything unfolded.

That young married woman’s surname is Wu. She is the sect leader’s second daughter. That Meng ZhengHong is her husband. The six of them came here to search for Xie Xun. On the way, they met up with the Three-River Clan, who said that Zhang CuiShan know of Xie Xun’s location. That Wu lady was pampered since childhood. She proposed to capture Zhang CuiShan, and torture him into submission. Meng ZhengHong had always been afraid of his wife, but wouldn’t agree with her this time. He said that Wu Dang’s too powerful. They should instead ask politely. Should Wu Dang not acquiesce, they’ll find some other way to get the information. That Wu lady said, “This is a once in

a life time opportunity. Once Zhang CuiShan get back to Wu Dang, he'd be with his martial brothers, and be protected by Zhang SanFeng. How do we ask then?" The two then began to bicker. The other disciples were beneath them in seniority, and didn't dare interfere.

That Wu lady said, "You are such a coward. Look, we're trying to avenge your brother here, not mine. Humph, you're not a man at all. Don't you have any courage? Even if that Zhang CuiShan tells you Xie Xun's location, I doubt you'll have the guts to find him. The biggest mistake of my life is getting married to a coward like you." Meng ZhengHong is used to giving in to his wife, and stopped talking. But he still won't follow his wife's plan: catching them using sleeping powder. In her frustration, that night when his husband fell asleep, the Wu lady secretly left.

She wanted to do the deed alone, and embarrass his husband in the process. Unfortunately for her, a helmsman of the Three-River Clan saw everything. Lusted at her beauty, he followed behind secretly. He tried to apply some of the sleeping powder on her. However, Zhang SongXi was following their movement this whole time. At the last second, he came out of hiding and beat up on that helmsman, before chasing him away. Zhang SongXi didn't say his own name, only mentioned that he was a Wu Dang disciple. The Wu lady was both surprised and embarrassed. She quickly went back and told her husband what happened. This way, Wu Dang turned into their savior. That's why the couple came to thank the three Wu Dang brothers. Zhang SongXi didn't want to further embarrass them, and therefore didn't appear until they had left.

Zhang CuiShan said, "It's not difficult to send these people away. But it's much more to master's taste that you turned them into friends."

Zhang SongXi said with a smile, "Ten years apart, and the first thing you do is to flatter me."

That night, the four brothers slept in the same room and chatted. Despite his cleverness, Zhang SongXi could not figure out the origins of the man who kidnapped WuJi either.

The next day, Zhang SongXi met Yin SuSu. The five of them traveled for a whole day before arriving at Wu Dang Mountain that night.

As he returned to his childhood home, Zhang CuiShan's first thought was to pay respects to his master. Then meet up with eldest brother, third brother, and seventh

brother. Even though his son is missing and his wife is sick, Zhang CuiShan nonetheless felt more happiness and sadness.

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Upon reaching the mountaintop, they saw eight horses tied by the front door. These horses don't belong to Wu Dang. Zhang SongXi said, "There must be guests here. Let's not bother them, and use the side door instead." Zhang CuiShan held his wife and walked through the side door. When the priests and servants saw Zhang CuiShan back safely, they were all overjoyed. Zhang CuiShan really wanted to see his master. But the apprentice priest for Zhang SanFeng said that he's still meditating in seclusion. Zhang CuiShan paid his respect in front of Zhang SanFeng's meditation room. Then went to see Yu DaiYan.

The apprentice priest who served Yu DaiYan whispered, "Third Martial Uncle's asleep. Do you want to wake him up?" Zhang CuiShan shook his head, and walked into the room. Only to see Yu DaiYan sleeping soundly, with pale face and sunken cheeks. A righteous hero ten years ago, had turned into a sick man seemingly on his last breath. Zhang CuiShan watched for a while, and tears came down his eyes.

After a long time, he finally walked out, and asked the apprentice priest, "Where's your eldest and seventh martial uncles?" That apprentice priest said, "In the main hall." Zhang CuiShan walked to the back room of the main hall to wait for them. After a long time, they still haven't appeared. Zhang CuiShan finally asked the servant sending the tea, "Who are the guests?" That servant said, "They seem to be in the escort agency business."

Yin LiTing wanted to be with his long lost brother, and soon joined Zhang CuiShan. When Zhang CuiShan asked him about those guests, Yin LiTing said, "All three are top agency leaders. 'Tiger Den Escort Agency' Leader Qi TianBiao from Jin Lian City, 'Rising Sun Escort Agency' Leader Yun He from Tai Yuan City, and the third is 'Sparrow Cloud Escort Agency' Leader Guan JiuJia from the capital city."

Zhang CuiShan said with surprise, "All three of them came? Ten years ago, these are the most renowned escort agencies in the country. And their leaders have the best martial arts among escort leaders. Is that still true today? Why are they here?" Yin LiTing said with a smile, "They probably lost some shipments on one of their escort trips. The person who took their shipments is too powerful. So they came to ask big brother for help. Fifth brother, big brother has been helping more and more people recently. Every time someone has an unsolvable problem in the martial world, he'd ask for big brother's help."

Zhang CuiShan said, “Big brother has a heart of Buddha. He never turns down anyone’s request. I wonder if big brother looks older now?” Unable to further suppress his urge to see his big brother, Zhang CuiShan said, “Sixth brother, I’m going behind the screen to take a peek at him, ok?” He walked up and peeked into the main hall.

Only to see Song YuanQiao and Muo ShengGu sitting in two host seats. Song YuanQiao dressed as a priest, with a peaceful expression on his face. He looked similar to ten years ago, except there are some gray hairs on the side, and he looked chubbier. Song YuanQiao is not a priest. But since his master is a priest, and Wu Dang is a place of worship, he tends to wear a priest robe on Wu Dang Mountain. Muo ShengGu had already grown into an adult. Although only twenty-some years old, he had grown a long beard, and looked even older than Zhang CuiShan.

Only to hear Muo ShengGu say loudly, “My big brother is a man of his words. Are you saying that you don’t trust his reputation?” Zhang CuiShan thought, “Seventh brother’s temper hasn’t changed at all. I wonder what he’s arguing about?” He turned and looked at the guest seats. Three people sat there, each about fifty years old. One looked very fiery. One is tall and skinny, looking composed. The third one looked terribly sick, his face seemingly a dry root. Only to hear the tall thin man say, “Of course we trust Hero Song’s words. But can you tell us when Fifth Hero Zhang would be back?”

Zhang CuiShan thought, “So they came for me. Probably seeking my sworn brother’s location.” Only to hear Muo ShengGu say, “We seven brothers might not have great abilities, but we are proud of our righteous deeds. We thank our friends in the martial world for giving us the ‘Seven Heroes of Wu Dang’ title. Although we don’t really deserve it...” Zhang CuiShan thought, “After ten years, seventh brother’s much better at talking now. When I left, he would take forever answering questions from strangers. Other than third brother and I, everyone else has improved dramatically.”

Muo ShengGu continued, “but we have indeed been bestowed this honor. Due to our master’s teachings, none of us dared make any mistake. Fifth Brother Zhang is one of my brothers. Among us, he has the best temper. If you keep saying that he killed those people at the ‘Dragon Gate Escort Agency’, Humph, that’s just nonsense.” Zhang CuiShan shuddered, “So it’s about the Dragon Gate Escort Agency again. Looks like they’ve heard about me coming back, and came to question me on the matter.”

That fiery old man said, “No one questions the reputation of ‘The Seven Heroes of Wu Dang’. Seventh Hero Muo, you didn’t need to self-praise to tell us of your incredible fame.”

Muo ShengGu frowned at his sarcastic remark, said, “What do you really want, Leader Qi? Just go ahead and say it.”

That fiery man is indeed the leader of the ‘Tiger Den Escort Agency’, Qi TianBiao. Qi TianBiao said loudly, “The Seven Heroes of Wu Dang are men of their words. So did Shaolin Reverends lie? Shaolin monks personally saw Zhang CuiShan, Fifth ‘Hero’... Zhang, killed every member of the Dragon Gate Escort Agency.” He purposely emphasized the word ‘hero’, and said it in a mocking tone.

Yin LiTing was furious. Ridiculing his fifth brother is ten times more unbearable than mocking Yin LiTing himself. He was just about to go out and argue, when Zhang CuiShan pulled him back, and shook his head. Yin LiTing saw a painful expression on his face. He didn’t know what to make of it, but thought, “Fifth brother’s temper is so great. No wonder master always compliments him.”

Muo ShengGu stood up, and said loudly, “First of all, my fifth brother is currently not here. But even if he were, my answer is still the same. Zhang CuiShan and I are brothers in life and death. His problems are my problems. You have to falsely accuse my fifth brother on this murder charge? Fine! Just put it all on me. If you want revenge, come to me. My fifth brother is not here, but Muo ShengGu is also Zhang CuiShan. Zhang CuiShan is also Muo ShengGu. To be honest, my kung fu and intellect are both beneath my fifth brother. So you are quite lucky to meet me today.”

Qi TianBiao fumed, stood up and yelled, “Before coming to Wu Dang, many people laughed at me. They said that my kung fu was not worthy of challenging Wu Dang. But there’s no way we can simply forget what happened to Du DaJin and his people. After killing over Dragon Gate Escort Agency’s ninety-plus people, I’m sure Wu Dang won’t mind killing another Qi TianBiao. Looks like I will be dying on Wu Dang Mountain today. When we came up the mountain, out of respect for you, we carried no weapons. So I’ll seek my death under Seventh Hero Muo’s fists.” As he spoke, he walked to the center of the room.

Song YuanQiao had been quiet this whole time, but he stepped in at this moment, and held back Muo ShengGu. With a light smile, Song YuanQiao said, “Let’s look at the purpose of your visit. You came because you are certain that my fifth brother killed everyone in Lin An City’s Dragon Gate Escort Agency. Good news is, he will be back soon. Why don’t the three guests be a bit patient, wait till he’s actually back. Then wouldn’t the truth be revealed?”

That sick-looking old man, 'Sparrow Cloud Escort Agency' Leader Gong JiuGui, stood up and said, "Escort Leader Qi, please sit down. Since Fifth Zhang has still not returned, we can't get a resolution. How about we first see Master Zhang, and ask his opinion. As the most esteemed individual in the martial world, surely he would be objective, and not just shield his own disciple."

Despite his courteous tone, these words carried a threatening message. Muo ShengGu said, "Our master's in seclusion right now for meditation. Besides, my big brother handles most of the Wu Dang matters now anyway. Other than some of the most highly esteemed individuals of the martial world, my master would not greet any guest." In another words, he meant that the three escort leaders were not worthy of meeting their master.

That tall skinny man, Escort Leader Yun He, said, "Humph, what are the odds. So your master just happened to be meditating the same day we come, eh? Well, Master Zhang can meditate in seclusion whenever he wants. But does he think that by hiding, he can avoid the payment for the ninety-plus lives of the Dragon Gate Escort Agency?" Gong JiuGui realized that these words were too nasty, and quickly gestured for him to stop. But Muo ShengGu could not hold down his rage. He yelled, "Are you saying that my master's hiding from you?" Yun He smirked, but did not respond.

Despite his good temper, Song YuanQiao could not bear these people mocking his master. No one in over ten years had dared to mock Zhang SanFeng in front of the Wu Dang heroes. Song YuanQiao said calmly, "Since the three are guests, we dare not offend you. However, I must ask you to leave now!" And with these words he whisked his sleeve. A light wind left the sleeve. The three teacups by Qi TianBiao, Yun He, and Gong JiuGui were swept by the wind, and flew onto the tea table besides Song YuanQiao. The three cups flew up leisurely, and landed evenly. Not a single drop of tea came out in the process.

The three escort leaders, at the moment Song YuanQiao whisked his sleeve, felt a seemingly soft, but actually powerful force pushing into their chests. The force was so dominating they couldn't even breathe. The three immediately started to gather their inner chi in defense. But the soft wind came quickly, and left quickly, as they regained the ability to breathe again. The escort leaders were incredibly shocked. They knew that had Song YuanQiao followed up with a whisk of his left sleeve, the second wave of wind would have reversed the chi-flow that they gathered. Even if they don't die from the reversed chi-flow, at least their inner power would be destroyed. From this one act, the three escort leaders realized that the soft-spoken eldest hero of Wu Dang has unbelievable martial arts.

In the back room, Zhang CuiShan thought about Yin SuSu's murder of Dragon Gate Escort Agency again. He felt very remorseful about the act. When he suddenly saw Song YuanQiao's whisk of the sleeve, Zhang CuiShan felt awed, and thought, "Wu Dang inner power really does grow quicker the more the practitioner trains. When my sworn brother wanted to kill big brother, big brother really had no chance. But today, even if my sworn brother weren't blind, his martial arts wouldn't be much better than big brother's, if at all. In another ten years, my big and second brother should surpass my sworn brother."

Only to hear Qi TianBiao say, "Thank you, Hero Song, for sparing our lives. Goodbye!" Song YuanQiao and Muo ShengGu sent them out the door. Qi TianBiao said, "No need see us out." Song YuanQiao said, "It's not often that such renowned escort leaders would visit Wu Dang. Why shouldn't we escort you out? In the future, I'll surely visit your agencies should I get the chance." Qi TianBiao said, "Oh, you are too kind." After Song YuanQiao showed off his martial prowess, his demeanor remained the same, with no arrogance. Qi TianBiao gained a lot more respect for this eldest Wu Dang hero, and had lost most of his urge for revenge.

At this moment, Qi TianBiao suddenly saw a short but gallant looking man walk in the front door. Song YuanQiao said, "Fourth brother, let me introduce you to these guests." He then introduced everyone.

Zhang SongXi said, "The three came just in time. I have some items you might wish to see." And he took out three small packets, and gave one to each person. Qi TianBiao asked, "What are these?" Zhang SongXi said, "This is not a good place to open them. You should look at the contents outside." The three Wu Dang brothers then escorted the guests out the door.

Immediately afterwards, Muo ShengGu asked impatiently, "Fourth brother, where's fifth brother? Did he not come back with you?" Zhang SongXi said, "Go back inside to see your fifth brother. Your big brother and I will wait for these three guests to return." Muo ShengGu yelled, "Fifth brother's inside? These three escort leaders are coming back? What do we do then?" In his haste to see Zhang CuiShan, Muo ShengGu didn't even wait for Zhang SongXi's explanation, and hurriedly inside.

Just as he went back to the main hall, the three escort leaders really did return. They immediately bowed to Zhang SongXi and Song YuanQiao, who quickly returned bows. Yun He said, "I finally know now that the Wu Dang heroes were my saviors. To think that I derided your Master Zhang... I feel incredibly ashamed." As he spoke, Yun He

picked up his hands, and slapped himself on the face ten times, until his face is pure red. Song YuanQiao doesn't know what's going on, and quickly stopped him.

Zhang SongXi said, "Escort Leader Yun is a true loyalist of China. All patriotic Chinese wish to get rid of those Mongols, and return China to its rightful owner. Helping in this regards is what people like us should do. No need to say thanks."

Yun He said, "You saved my whole family, and everyone in my escort agency. To think that I had no clue these last five years. I really hope you two can hit me a few times, to lessen my emotional embarrassment."

Zhang SongXi said with a smile, "Don't worry too much about the past. Out of respect for your actions, I'm sure even master would not mind those words you just said." But even so, Yun He still felt uneasy.

Song YuanQiao doesn't know what's going on, and simply said a few courteous words. Qi TianBiao and Gong JiuGui also thanked profusely, but Zhang SongXi didn't seem to care much for them. He only had kind words to say for Yun He. The three escort leaders insisted on paying respects to Zhang SanFeng. They each bowed in front of Zhang SanFeng's meditation room. Then insisted to see Muo ShengGu to apologize. After more apologies and words of thanks, the three finally left.

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Afterwards, Zhang SongXi said, "Although they feel indebted to us, none of them spoke about the Dragon Gate Escort Agency. Looks like we still can't resolve this issue."

Song YuanQiao was about to ask what's going on, when Zhang CuiShan came out from the back room. He yelled, "Big brother, I missed you so much."

Song YuanQiao is a very mannerly person. So even though he's meeting his long lost brother, and felt exuberant in his head, Song YuanQiao nonetheless simply bowed courteously, and said, "Fifth brother. You've finally come back."

Before Zhang CuiShan could respond, Muo ShengGu asked impatiently, "Fifth brother. Didn't you hear how rude those people are? You really do have a good temper. I would've taught them a lesson." Zhang CuiShan sighed, and said, "It's a long story. After I tell you all, we really should try to seek an effective solution together."

Yin LiTing said, "Don't worry, fifth brother. The Dragon Gate Escort Agency failed in their duty to escort third brother safely back. Even if fifth brother really did kill them

all, it would be because of your love for third brother, and so wouldn't be that..."

Yu LianZhou yelled, "Sixth brother, are kind of nonsense are you speaking? If master hears these words, he'd lock you up for at least a month to repent. How can any of us kill a whole agency, including the elderly and the children?"

The other brothers all looked at Zhang CuiShan. All saw the solemn expression on his face. After a while, Zhang CuiShan said, "I didn't kill anyone in the Dragon Gate Escort Agency. I didn't forget master's teachings."

Song YuanQiao and his fellow brothers all breathed a sigh of relief. They didn't really believe that Zhang CuiShan could do such a thing. But Shaolin was just so adamant about it, even said that they witnessed the whole event. And when the three escort leaders came to question him, Zhang CuiShan did not speak up and claim his innocence. So all the brothers felt some uneasiness. Only when Zhang CuiShan spoke these words did they finally put to rest these nagging thoughts. They all thought, "There must be some problematic details that will make this hard to resolve. But as long as he didn't kill them, everything will eventually be ok."

With this thought, Muo ShengGu asked why those three escort leaders returned. Zhang SongXi said, "Among these three leaders, Yun He's character is the best. Using his fame, Yun He helped organized many people in his region to rise against the Mongol government." The other brothers immediately expressed their admiration for his actions.

Muo ShengGu said, "Never thought he'd some this type of a person. Hold your story until I come back..." As he spoke, Muo ShengGu quickly ran out the room.

Zhang SongXi stopped talking, and they asked Zhang CuiShan about Fire-Ice Island. When Zhang CuiShan spoke about the six months of mostly daylight, six months of mostly night, everyone gasped in astonishment. Zhang CuiShan said, "It's hard to tell the directions on that island. The sun doesn't exactly rise in the east." He then talked about the different strange plants and animals on the island.

Muo ShengGu came back in the midst of his tale, said, "I went to apologize to Escort Leader Yun. Told him I respect him as an upright man." Everyone knew this little brother's straightforward temper, and had long figured that this was his reason for leaving.

Yin LiTing said, "Seventh brother. Fourth brother held off his tale for you. But fifth brother's story about the Fire-Ice Island is even more exciting." Muo ShengGu jumped

up and said, “Really?” Zhang SongXi said, “Yun He had prepared everything in detail...” Muo ShengGu shook his hand, said, “Fourth brother. Terribly sorry, but can you hold on a moment...” Zhang CuiShan chuckled, and said, “Seventh brother doesn’t want to miss out on anything.” So he repeated his tale about the Fire-Ice Island. Afterwards, Muo ShengGu said, “Odd, so odd! Fourth brother, you can speak now.”

Zhang SongXi said, “Yun He prepared everything in detail. At the right moment, he’d start the rebellion. But a major participant was a traitor. Three days before the rebellion would start, this traitor took the list of rebel names to the government.”

Muo ShengGu yelled, “Oh, no!”

Zhang SongXi said, “There was some coincidence involved. I had a beef with the mayor of his home city Tai Yuan. That night when I entered the mayor’s mansion, I saw that traitor and the mayor having a secret discussion. I heard their plan to give this info to the national government, and to put down the rebellion using troops. So I went into their room and killed both people. Then took the list of names and returned to Wu Dang. When they found the list of names missing, Yun He and his cohorts knew how terrible the consequences would be. Not only can they not start the rebellion now, but every person on that list would in grave danger. They wanted to send a message to all people involved, but the city gate was closed for the night already. The next morning, the city gate remained closed due to the mayor’s assassination. Yun He and his cohorts were sweating out the situation, as their crime would mean execution of their families, plus the families of their friends on the list. But as the days passed, everything remained fine. Since the police could not capture the assassin, this whole thing eventually passed away. When Yun He found out that the traitor died in the mayor’s mansion, he thought that someone helped him. But didn’t realize it was me.

Yin LiTing said, “I bet you gave him the list of names in that packet, right?” Zhang SongXi said, “That’s correct.”

Muo ShengGu said, “What about Gong JiuGui? How did you help him?”

Zhang SongXi said, “Gong JiuGui’s kung fu is certainly quite formidable, but his character’s not nearly as good as Yun He. Six years ago, he escorted a shipment to the Yun Nan province. At the city of Kun Ming, he took an order of jewelry worth about six hundred thousand taels of silver. Which he needed to escort back to the capital city of Da Du. But he encountered a problem in the Jiang Xi Province. When passing by the city of Po Yang, three of the ‘Four Brothers of Po Yang’ attacked him, and took his jewelry. Not even Gong JiuGui’s entire fortune comes close to the worth of these jewels.

Besides, this failed delivery would surely destroy his reputation. After pondering for a while in the inn, he wanted to commit suicide.

“‘The Four Brothers of Po Yang’ are certainly not bandits. So why did they take these jewels? You see, the eldest brother got in trouble with the law, and landed on death row in prison. About to be executed, his three brothers tried twice to bust him out of prison. They failed both times, and the prison became even more closely guarded. Knowing that officials are corrupt, the three brothers wanted to bribe them using this jewelry, to lessen their big brother’s crimes. I was moved by their friendship, and helped sneak their big brother out of prison. In return, I asked them to give Gong JiuGui his jewelry. Gong JiuGui might not be the greatest person in the world, but haven’t really done anything bad in his life. He didn’t befriend any officials in Da Du, nor ever oppress the poor. So I figured his life was worth saving. I told ‘The Four Brothers of Po Yang’ not to mention my name, just leave me the jewelry bag. So when I handed him the bag, Gong JiuGui understood what had happened.”

Yu LianZhou said, “You did the right thing, fourth brother.”

Muo ShengGu said, “Fourth brother, what did you give Qi TianBiao?” Zhang SongXi said, “I gave him nine ‘Soul-Splitting Centipede Darts’.” The five listeners all gasped. ‘Soul-Splitting Centipede Dart’ is very famous in the martial world. It’s the hidden weapon used by the rich aristocrat Wu YiMang.

Zhang SongXi said, “Thinking back, I was too reckless when I dealt with this situation. That day, while Qi TianBiao was escorting a shipment, he offended a disciple of Wu YiMang. The two fought, with Qi TianBiao seriously injuring that disciple with a punch. Qi TianBiao immediately realized that he’s in trouble after landing this punch. So he quickly completed the shipment, and hurriedly back to his hometown Jin Ling, where he can ask several friends for help. But unfortunately, Wu YiMang caught him up at Luo Yang city, and challenged him to a duel at the city’s western gate.” Yin LiTing said, “Wu YiMang’s kung fu is very good. Qi BiaoTing is not his match.”

Zhang SongXi said, “You’re right. Qi TianBiao knew this too. So he asked the Qiao brothers of Luo Yang to help him. The Qiao brothers agreed immediately, and said, ‘You should know that with our kung fu ability, we are no match for Wu YiMang. So you just want us there for support. Don’t worry, we will arrive on time.’”

Muo ShengGu said, “The Qiao brothers are hidden weapon experts. With their help, three against one, they might have a chance. But did Wu YiMang get any help?”

Zhang SongXi said, “No. But something happened to the Qiao brothers. The next morning, Qi TianBiao went to the Qiao brothers’ house to discuss battle plans. But the servant said that the brothers had left town for an emergency. Qi TianBiao was furious. Several years before, Qi TianBiao helped the brothers out of a major dilemma. He didn’t expect these brothers to sneak away during his moment of need. Knowing Wu YiMang’s merciless ways, Qi TianBiao knew he would not survive this encounter. He wrote a will and gave it to a subordinate. Then went to the west gate for the appointment.”

“Of course, I saw everything. So that day I disguised myself as a beggar, and sat under a tree outside the west gate. Wu YiMang and Qi TianBiao came one after the other. Soon after they started fighting, Wu YiMang used his ‘Soul-Splitting Centipede Dart’. Qi TianBiao knew he couldn’t evade it, and simply closed his eyes to wait for death. I swooped in at this moment, and caught the dart. Wu YiMang was shocked and furious. He asked if I were a member of the Beggar’s Clan. I just smiled in silence. He then fired eight more darts. I caught every single one. His darts really were quite powerful. But if I had used Wu Dang skills, catching them would still be easy. However, I didn’t want him to know who I am. So I pretended to have a crippled left leg and right arm. Then using only my left hand, I caught them all using Shaolin skills. The seventh dart was a really close call, as the tip narrowly missed my palm. Wu YiMang really did thought I was a Shaolin disciple, and asked which divine reverend was my master. I pretended to be a deaf-mute, and just muttered some nonsensical stuff. Knowing that he couldn’t defeat me, Wu YiMang went away angrily. He never left home after that event.”

Muo ShengGu shook his head and said, “Fourth brother, Wu YiMang might be a bad guy, but Qi TianBiao isn’t a good guy either. Why did you risk saving him?”

Zhang SongXi said, “I was just felt nosy at the time. Besides, I also didn’t know the prowess of Wu YiMang’s darts.”

Being a straightforward person, Muo ShengGu didn’t figure out Zhang SongXi’s reasoning. But Zhang CuiShan did so immediately. His fourth brother did all this to lessen the hatred for him, due to the Dragon Gate Escort Agency murder. Zhang SongXi knew the importance of these three escort leaders. Should there ever be any problems with the escort agencies, these three people would surely represent them. So Zhang SongXi purposely helped them beforehand in case of an event like this. Despite looking like ‘coincidences’, Zhang SongXi must’ve spent countless hours waiting for these events to occur.

Zhang CuiShan said, “Fourth brother, you and I are closer than blood brothers. I won’t need to say the word ‘thanks’ to you. This whole incident, unfortunately, was all caused

by your fifth sister-in-law.” Then he told what exactly happened at the Dragon Gate Escort Agency that night. At the end, he said, “Fourth brother, do you know how we should resolve this?”

Zhang SongXi thought for a while, then said, “I have to ask the master first. But we can’t bring the dead back alive. Fifth sister-in-law has also changed her ways. A person who has corrected his mistakes should be given a second chance. Big brother, don’t you think so too?”

Song YuanQiao hesitated a moment, due to the severity of a ninety-plus murder case. But Yu LianZhou nodded and said, “I agree!”

Yin LiTing was most afraid of second brother. He knew that big brother has a soft heart, and can be easily persuaded. But second brother is cold and objective, and might be too harsh on fifth sister-in-law. Yin LiTing didn’t know that Yu LianZhou had already heard this story. He had long forgiven Yin SuSu. Seeing his second brother’s nod, Yin LiTing said happily, “Yeah, if others ask. Fifth brother can just say that he wasn’t the murderer, and nothing else. He wouldn’t be lying this way either.” Song YuanQiao said in a scolding tone, “How could fifth brother purposely hide the truth like that? This is not an option.” Yin LiTing asked, “Then what do we do?”

Song YuanQiao said, “In my opinion, after master’s birthday. We should first find fifth brother’s son. Then we’ll have the gathering at the Yellow Crane Restaurant. After taking care of the Xie Xun issue, us six brothers, plus fifth sister-in-law, will go down to the south. Each of us will do ten good deeds within three years.” Zhang SongXi said, “Good idea. If we could save one or two hundred people, we can partially make up for these deaths.” Yu LianZhou said, “I like this idea. There’s no point in further punishing fifth sister-in-law. Even her death wouldn’t solve any problem.”

Zhang CuiShan was exhilarated at the solution. He said, “Let me tell SuSu.” He then told his wife what Song YuanQiao proposed, and that his brothers would look for WuJi after their master’s birthday.

Yin SuSu’s illness was due to the loss of WuJi anyway. So these words settled her down a great deal. She thought that with the Six Heroes of Wu Dang’s abilities, they could surely find WuJi.

Zhang CuiShan then went to see Yu DaiYan. The brothers both felt joy and sadness as they reunited.



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