

Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

SDXL Chapter 29



Chapter 29 – Ultimate Disasters

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In the smoke Guo Fu was disoriented and about to faint. She was so frightened that she couldn't even cry out. Suddenly she heard someone's shouting from the east side, only to see a whirlwind that wrapped around a gray shadow coming towards her. Wherever the spinning wind passed through, the fire would split open into two sections. The shadow was of course Yang Guo.

Guo Fu called out, "It's my little red horse. It's my..." As she was saying that, the red horse rushed in front of them. Guo Fu leapt forward. The red horse recognized its mas-

ter and didn't need for her to pull the reins. It fought to stop, raised its head, and neighed.

Guo Fu saw that mounting on the horse was a young girl dressed in black. When they met before, Guo Fu was fighting side by side with her against Li Mochou. This girl was indeed Wanyan Ping. Her hair was disheveled. Her face was greenish pale. And she looked extremely distressed. Seeing that, Guo Fu asked, "Wanyan Zi Zi [Elder Sister Wanyan], what's happened to you?"

Wanyan Ping pointed her finger to the path she just came from and said, "Quick... Quick..." Suddenly her body toppled, falling down from the horse.

Guo Fu cried out in alarm and reached out to support her. She turned to her mother and said, "Ma, this is elder sister Wanyan." While saying that, she gave Li Mochou a stare.

Huang Rong mused, "She raced the precious horse [Han Xie Yu] like this. Nobody in the world could catch up with her so of course she was not in danger. But when she pointed her finger to the North, she had a distressed look. She must be worried about other people. We must rush out to help them." So she told her daughter to help Wanyan Ping sit up on the horse and also said, "This horse's feet are too swift. You can't rush ahead of me no matter what!" Guo Fu asked, "Why not?" Huang Rong quipped, "There's a great danger lying ahead. How have you not figured it out?" After saying that she gave Li Mochou a hand signal and the two galloped north.

After rushing for ten li, as expected they heard the faint sounds of weapons clashing from the other side of the mountain. Huang Rong and Li Mochou urged the mules to go around the mountain and then in the field before them they saw five people engaging in a wicked fight. Two of them were the Wu brothers. There were also a young man and a young woman Huang Rong did not recognize. The four of them were fighting against a middle-aged man and even though it was four against one, they were defending more than attacking. The Wu brothers were both wounded and the young man was fiercely brandishing his long sword against that middle-aged man's better moves. Lying down on the ground nearby was another person, Wu Santong, who was incessantly yelling and shouting.

Huang Rong saw that man's left hand holding a large flashing gold knife and his right hand wielding a thin, long, black sword. His sword moves were strangely fantastic and not something she'd seen before. If she herself didn't jump in, the Wu brothers would

definitely be in imminent danger. So she said to Li Mochou, “Those two young men are my disciples.”

Li Mochou let out a laugh and said, “Their mother was killed by me. How can it be that you don’t know?” Li Mochou saw that the middle-aged man’s martial skills were strangely high. She’d never heard that there was such a person in Jianghu and she was secretly quite astonished. Finally, she faintly smiled and said, “Let’s fight!” Li Mochou pulled out her fly whisk while Huang Rong also held firm the bamboo stick in her hand. Then together the two of them approached that man from left and right. Li Mochou’s brush attacked his black sword while Huang Rong’s bamboo cane tangled his gold knife.

This middle-aged man was of course the master of the Passionless Valley sect Gongsun Zhi. As he suddenly saw two middle-aged beautiful females coming to attack in pair, his heart shook. But then he heard Li Mochou shout, “One!” and her whisk flashed out. “Two!” she called out again. At first she and Huang Rong were secretly comparing their strength to see who would first beat this person but as she continuously counted to “ten”, Gongsun Zhi was still attacking and defending. Then, with three stances, the young man’s sword was thrust to the back of Gongsun Zhi. These sword stances were packed with fierce strength. Gongsun Zhi knew he’d eventually lose if he continued to fight so he didn’t try to block them but instead jumped forward over ten feet. He looked at Huang Rong and Li Mochou and secretly thought, “Where did these two ferocious women come from? But oh, how beautiful they are!” Having thought that, he clashed his knife and sword, making a weng-weng sound, and then leapt up again.

Huang Rong and Li Mochou didn’t dare to underestimate the enemy so they tightened up their guards. Gongsun Zhi turned his body around in midair and when he dropped to the ground, he got up again and rushed up the mountain. With a smile, Huang Rong and Li Mochou looked at each other and both thought, “This person had powerful martial skills and was also cunning. If fighting by myself, I’m afraid that I wouldn’t be his match.”

The Wu brothers pressed their wounds with their hands and moved forward to kowtow to their Shi Mu [Martial Mother]. Then they both stood up and angrily stared at Li Mochou. Huang Rong said, “You won’t settle the old debt today. Your father’s injury would be in the way, wouldn’t it? Who are these two people? Ai yo, wretched! Li Zi Zi [Elder Sister Li] come with me quickly!” She didn’t even waste time getting on the mule but flew her body toward the road and rushed out. Li Mochou didn’t get her meaning but still followed her. Then she asked, “What’s the matter?” Huang Rong answered, “Fu’er, Fu’er will run right into this person!”

The two used their internal energy to pursue him but Gongsun Zhi was really fast. Only with a somewhat small delay, he'd already left them far behind.

Guo Fu was supporting Wanyan Ping with both hands. Both of them rode the red horse and slowly emerged from behind the mountain. Huang Rong saw them from a distance so she used her internal energy to call out, "Fu'er, be careful!" Her sound hadn't even faded when Gongsun Zhi quickly approached them and jumped up onto the horse's back. He stretched out his hand to hold Guo Fu still while pulling the reins to turn the horse's head around. Seeing that, Huang Rong puckered her lips to whistle and then rushed forward.

Gongsun Zhi was startled and thought, "How come today all my affairs went wrong like this? Can't I even befriend a domesticated animal?" Then he exerted his strength to rein in the horse. This force was not weak and so the red horse let out a long neigh and reared up. Thinking to flee southward, Gongsun Zhi forced the horse to turn around but instead it flitted about and kicked up its legs. And then it unexpectedly moved backwards step-by-step. Delighted, Huang Rong sped up. Gongsun Zhi saw that the red horse was incredibly stubborn and that Huang Rong and Li Mochou were closing in, he sheathed the weapons. Holding Guo Fu with his right hand and Wanyan Ping with his left, they got off the horse. Now Huang Rong and Li Mochou, with their lightness kung fu, were approaching fast and were only a short distance away.

Gongsun Zhi turned around and said with a smile, "If I squeeze my arms, will these two beautiful and delicate girls still live?"

Huang Rong asked, "Who are you, sir? You and I have never met. Why would you capture my daughter?"

With a smile Gongsun Zhi said, "This is your daughter? Are you really Wanyan Fu Ren [Madame Wanyan]?"

Huang Rong pointed at Guo Fu and said, "That one is my daughter!"

Gongsun Zhi looked at Guo Fu and turned to gaze at Huang Rong. With a grin he said, "Tsk...tsk...tsk, very beautiful. Mother and daughter are both beautiful, very beautiful!"

Although Huang Rong was furious, her daughter was in his hands. She had to be careful not to fight the enemy and harm her daughter in the process. Therefore she had used a delay tactic and reasoned with him. But suddenly she heard the two 'Sou...Sou' whishing sounds from behind. Two long arrows flew past her own left cheek and

straight towards Gongsun Zhi. The arrows were fiercely fast and they made extremely loud sounds while cutting through the air. Upon hearing the sounds of the arrows, she was so happy she almost cried out, thinking it was surely her husband arriving. The martial masters in the central plains of China rarely learned arrow techniques. And even though Mongolian warriors' bow techniques were refined, without solid internal energy it was difficult to send an arrow very far. These two arrows were making such loud and solid sounds. Except for Guo Jing, she'd never seen any other person who could do it. But this arrow skill was actually still far from Guo Jing's level. By the time the arrows were halfway, Huang Rong realized that the shooter was not her husband.

Seeing the arrows zooming in, Gongsun Zhi opened his mouth and bit the tip of the first arrow and at the same time stepped aside, using the arrow shaft in his mouth to brush away the second one.

Huang Rong thought, "If it were Jing Ge Ge [Brother Jing] who shot those arrows, I bet using your mouth to catch an arrow like that would give you a hole in your throat." As she was about to move forward, she heard a series of 'Sou...Sou' whishing sounds again. Nine arrows flew in one by one, aiming at the area between Gongsun Zhi's eyebrows. And this time, in a tight situation, Gongsun Zhi had to put down the two girls and pull out his sword to block the arrows.

As Huang Rong and Li Mochou quickly rushed forward to rescue the two girls, they saw a flashing gray shadow rolling Guo Fu to the roadside. When that body turned over to get up, Gongsun Zhi, ignoring his gold knife, shot out his bare palm to strike the top of that person's head.

Lying on the ground, that person turned over his palm to block the attack. There came a clashing sound. Dust flew up all over the place. Gongsun Zhi then called out, "Good!" and sent out his second strike, with more strength this time. Seeing that it would be difficult for that person to block the attack, Huang Rong lashed out her "Dog Beating Stick", using the "seal" stance to intercept that palm strike. Gongsun Zhi saw himself surrounded by the enemies. He knew that he couldn't win today. So with a 'Ha-Ha' laugh, he backed up three steps and turned his body to walk away. He appeared to carry himself naturally, with martial grace. Huang Rong and the others didn't dare to pursue.

While still holding Guo Fu, the person stood up. Then he dropped his arms. Huang Rong saw that he had a tall body with broad biceps, with a long bow hanging from his waist. This was precisely that youth who fought with a sword earlier. Also, naturally he was the one who shot out those eleven arrows. Even though Guo Fu fell into Gongsun Zhi's

clutches just now, she wasn't injured at all and so she said, "Yelu Da Ge [Big Brother Yelu], many thanks for saving me." While saying that, she blushed prettily.

By this time Wu Xiuwen and a young girl caught up with them, leaving Wu Dunru to take care of his father. Normally, Wu Xiuwen should be the one introducing everybody but he was filled with rage and was viciously eyeing Li Mochou. He forgot everybody else at present. Huang Rong called him twice but he didn't even hear it. Li Mochou actually moved far away from them with her hands behind her back, watching the scenery. She of course didn't pay attention to these people.

Guo Fu pointed at the young man who had just rescued her and said to her mother, "Ma, this person is Yelu Qi, Yelu Da Ge [Big Brother Yelu]." Then she pointed at the tall young girl and said, "And this is Yelu Yan, Yelu Zi Zi [Elder Sister Yelu]." Huang Rong then praised them, "You two have quite wonderful kung fu!" The Yelu siblings together replied, "Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] praises us!" and moved forward to pay respect.

Huang Rong then asked, "It looks like you two use the Quanzhen sect's kung fu. May I ask which of the Quanzhen Seven Masters your master is?" She saw Yelu Qi's martial skills and, except for Yang Guo, couldn't think of any other fourth generation disciple of the Quanzhen sect. Yelu Yan said, "My brother taught me my martial skills." Huang Rong nodded and turned to look at Yelu Qi. Yelu Qi felt quite awkward and said, "Elder asked me a question, I really should give you a truthful answer. Only my master has forbidden me, the young generation, to mention his old name. Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo], please forgive me."

Huang Rong was startled and thought, "Would the Quanzhen Seven Masters come up with this strange rule? This young man's martial skills were quite excellent, why couldn't he say his master's name?" Having thought this out, she suddenly burst out into a laugh and bent over with hands on her belly. This matter was really extremely funny. Puzzled, Guo Fu asked, "Ma, what's so funny?" She heard her mother seriously asked Yelu Qi which sect he belonged to. And suddenly she breaks out laughing like this. She was afraid that Yelu Qi would be upset so, embarrassed, she asked again, "Ma, Yelu Da Ge [Brother Yelu] can't say it. That's okay. What's so funny?" Still laughing, Huang Rong didn't answer. Yelu Qi had a smiling expression on his face and said, "Seems like Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] guessed correctly." Guo Fu was at a loss. She turned her head to look at Yelu Yan and saw that she was also in the dark, not understanding what the two were laughing about.

Right now Wu Xiuwen was kneeling down to bandage Wanyan Ping's injury. Just now, while she was held hostage by Gongsun Zhi, she twisted her left ankle while escaping.

Huang Rong asked, “Xiu’er how’s your father’s wound?” Wu Xiuwen replied, “Father was cut by that old Gongsun’s sword. His left leg was injured but luckily the sword didn’t damage his bone.” Huang Rong nodded and walked over to lightly stroke the precious horse’s mane. She gently said, “Horse, oh horse, our Guo family won’t be able to repay you for your deep loyalty.” Then she saw that Wu Xiuwen, with his rather strange expression, didn’t speak to Guo Fu at all but took extremely good care of Wanyan Ping. But she didn’t know whether he did this to show Guo Fu he was over her or he really was fond of this girl. She decided not to pursue the matter and said, “Let us go get your father.”

Wu Santong was sitting on the ground. When he saw Huang Rong approaching, he called out, “Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo]!” and got up. He had a leg wound so his body was swaying. Wu Dunru and Yelu Yan reached out to hold him at the same time. As their hands bumped, they looked at each other with a smile.

Huang Rong secretly laughed in her heart, “How nice, another couple! Just a few days ago, the brothers were willing to kill each other for Fu’er, not thinking about their blood ties. Now that the boys have met pretty girls, they’ve instantly turned around and forgotten all about their original feelings.” Suddenly she thought about Guo Jing and her heart couldn’t help but swell with pride. Jing Ge Ge [Brother Jing] always stayed true to her and never changed, be it in good or bad fortune. How would these youths be able to compare to him? Then she thought about Yang Guo. She felt that his relationship with Xiao Longnu was unseemly. But she also knew that he was smart about relationships and stayed faithful to his love both in life and in death. That was actually something to be revered and respected.

The Wu brothers and Guo Fu grew up together on Peach Blossom Island. Firstly, on the island there was no other girl of their age. Second, time made the hearts grow fonder. If the two brothers didn’t fall in love with Guo Fu, that wouldn’t make sense at all. Later on, they suddenly found out that Guo Fu didn’t return their feelings; they were brokenhearted and said that they would live a life without joy forever. They had no way of knowing that a short while later they would meet Yelu Yan and Wanyan Ping who they really should sympathize with. This time when the Wu brothers ran into Guo Fu, they secretly compared their sweethearts to her. The brothers felt that their loved ones were not only not inferior to Guo Fu but also even better. One thought, “Yelu Guniang [Miss Yelu] is open and kind. How could she be like you who are scheming and narrow-minded?” The other thought, “Wanyan Guniang is clearly sympathetic. She is also gentle and polite. How could she be like you who everyday makes people miserable?” The brothers had earlier vowed not to see Guo Fu again but had now ran into her by acci-

dent and couldn't quite escape. They both thought, "Today I didn't intend to go looking for you so this can't be regarded as breaking a vow."

In Guo Fu's mind, she only thought about how she had been captured by Gongsun Zhi just now and how Yelu Qi had saved her. She stole a look at him several times and saw that he was tall and handsome. She couldn't help secretly thinking, "I met him for the first time last year and later forgot all about him. At that time I didn't know that his martial skills would be like this. Mother and he were laughing together. What were they laughing about?"

Huang Rong examined the sword wound on Wu Santong's leg. Fortunately, it wouldn't be a great obstacle. Then everybody shared their stories.

On the day that Wu Santong, Zhu Ziliu and the Martial Uncle Indian monk left for the Passionless Valley to seek the antidote for Yang Guo, just outside of Xiangyang, Wu Santong ran into his two sons. Startled and afraid that they would fight again, he quickly told Zhu Ziliu to accompany Martial Uncle on ahead. Then he rushed out to stop the Wu brothers and asked questions. As it turned out, the Wu brothers both followed their vow spoken to Yang Guo about not seeing Guo Fu again so they didn't want to stay in Xiangyang any longer. Wu Santong was reassured so he praised them, "Good boys, you've got guts!" He also said, "Yang Xiong Di [Brother Yang] risked his own life to save us. Now he is in trouble, how can we not try to help him? The three of us, father and sons, should go to the Passionless Valley together."

The Passionless Valley was like a paradise outside this world. Although Yang Guo had told them about its approximate location, it was actually not easy to find the entrance. The three people went around in circle and took many paths but still they couldn't find the Valley entrance. The Indian monk and Zhu Ziliu had already fallen into the enemy's trap and been captured by the fishnets of Qiu Qianchi's disciples. Wu Santong and his sons tried many times to help them without success and almost fell into the gorge. With no choice but to retreat, they thought that they would go back to Xiangyang to find help. Unfortunately, they ran into Gongsun Zhi who said the three of them were trespassing and then attacked them. Wu Santong was not his match and was cut on the leg. Gongsun Zhi didn't really want the three people's lives and so he just forced them to leave quickly and told them never to come back.

By this time, the Yelu siblings and Wanyan Ping happened to ride into view. The three people and the Wu brothers used to fight together so they got off their horses and started talking about the old times. Gongsun Zhi was looking at them coldly from the side. He failed to marry Xiao Longnu and got kicked out of the sect by his wife so he

was actually bored to death. Seeing that Wanyan Ping was young and beautiful, he couldn't curb his evil desires and suddenly snatched her away with him. This time, the Yelu siblings and the Wu brothers all immediately jumped in to fight. If Wu Santong hadn't been injured, it would be six people joining forces and they would have had a chance against Gongsun Zhi. However, his leg was wounded so Yelu Qi was the only strong fighter among them but they couldn't fend off Gongsun Zhi. It just so happened that the precious horse [Han Xie Yu] was running back by himself from Mount Zhongnan and heading towards Xiangyang. Wu Xiuwen grabbed him and let Wanyan Ping ride away; hoping that Gongsun Zhi would lose interest after the swan was gone. They didn't expect that Huang Rong and Li Mochou would rush into the scene like this.

Huang Rong listened to the stories and talked briefly about how Yang Guo got his arm chopped off and how he snatched her young daughter. Wu Santong was greatly alarmed and quickly explained the root cause. He said, "Yang Xiong Di [Brother Yang] is brave and warm-hearted. Everything happened because, without thinking about himself, he saved these two animals of mine and didn't let them destroy themselves. Who would have thought that it would lead to these matters?" He thought about how Yang Guo got his arm chopped off, all because of his two sons. And the more he thought about it, the angrier he became. He suddenly pointed at the two sons and scolded them.

On the side, the Wu brothers, the Yelu siblings, and Wanyan Ping were all talking enthusiastically. A little while later, Guo Fu came in to join the discussion. The six people were of the same age and just went through a fierce battle together so with gusto they talked about how fierce and evil Gongsun Zhi was and how he finally fled into the wild. Suddenly they heard Wu Santong bellowed out a shout of outrage, "Wu Dunru, Wu Xiuwen, you two little animals, Yang Guo Xiong Di [Brother Yang Guo] was so good and kind to you but you caused him to lose his arm. You stop and think, how would our family Wu ever face him?" Both his face and ears turned red and the more he scolded, the fiercer he became. If not for his injured leg, he would have thrown himself out to strike them. The two brothers were baffled, not knowing how their father got so mad. Each of them stealthily looked at Yelu Yan and Wanyan Ping. They felt that in front of beautiful ladies, having their father calling them 'animal this' and 'animal that' was a great loss of face. But if they were still fighting over Guo Fu like before, that would be distressing too. The two brothers looked at each other at their wits' end, not knowing what to do.

Huang Rong saw the situation to be quite awkward so she intercepted, "Wu Xiong Di [Brother Wu], don't be so upset. Yang Guo's losing an arm was all little sister's fault for not teaching my child better and letting her get away with being spoiled. At that time, father Guo was also so mad that he wanted to chop off her arm." Wu Santong then gave

out a loud shout, “That’s right. Good! Her arm should be chopped off!” Guo Fu’s eyes turned white with fear. She thought, “Did you just say ‘her arm should be chopped off’?” If her mother weren’t there, Guo Fu would have said something in protest.

Huang Rong said, “Wu Xiong [Brother Wu], we’ve talked clearly enough about how your children wronged Yang Guo. Right now we have two important matters ahead. First, we must find Yang Guo to discover his condition.” Wu Santong agreed, “Very good...Very good.” Huang Rong then continued, “The second important thing is that we have to go to the Passionless Valley to rescue Martial Uncle and Zhu Da Ge [Brother Zhu] and at the same time get the antidote for Yang Guo. But do you know anything about Zhu Da Ge’s condition or whether or not his life is in danger?”

Wu Santong said, “My Martial Uncle and apprentice brother were trapped by the fish nets and imprisoned in a stone chamber (kiln). It seemed like that old woman still hasn’t thought to harm them.” Huang Rong nodded and said, “Hmm, in that case we go to find Yang Guo first and go with him to the Passionless Valley to save those people. And once the antidote is obtained, he can take it immediately to avoid any more delays, and hence more dangers.” Wu Santong said, “That’s right. But do we know where Yang Guo is right now?” Huang Rong pointed at the precious horse [Han Xie Yu] and said, “This horse was just borrowed by Yang Guo. If we follow the road that this horse came from, we can find out where he is.” Wu Santong was delighted and said, “Today, if not for the wisdom of Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo], the old Wu here would have flown into a fit of rage and made matters worse.” This time Guo Fu couldn’t bear to be quiet so she chimed in, “Isn’t that right?”

Huang Rong smiled faintly. She didn’t say a word about seeking her younger daughter but all about getting Wu Santong to follow her. She mused, “If the Wu father and sons come with me, the other three young people will definitely tag along. Then there will be more people to help us. Isn’t that wonderful?” She then turned to Yelu Qi and said, “If Yelu Xiao Ge [Little Brother Yelu] doesn’t have any pressing matters to attend to, how about you come along with us just for fun?” Yelu Qi had not yet answered, but Yelu Yan clapped her hands, crying out, “Okay... Okay! Ge Ge [Brother], let’s go with them!” Yelu Qi couldn’t bear Guo Fu’s gaze. Seeing that the glint in her eyes conveyed an encouraging message, he bowed and said, “If Elder Wu and Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] wouldn’t mind, Junior could only benefit from your guidance. This is precisely my greatest wish.” With a pleased expression on her face, Wanyan Ping also slowly nodded.

Huang Rong then said, “Look, we are a group of many people, we must have someone to give orders. Wu Xiong [Brother Wu], from now on everybody will listen to your commands and nobody can disobey.” Wu Santong waved his hands and said, “We have in

you a wonderful strategist who can match Zhuge, who would dare to give orders? Naturally, it has to be you in charge.” With a smile Huang Rong said, “Really?” Wu Santong replied, “How can that be wrong?” Huang Rong laughed and said, “Giving orders to the juniors is quite easy. I’m only afraid that your old self wouldn’t listen to me.” Then in a loud voice Wu Santong said, “Nonsense. I won’t do such a thing. If you tell me to jump in water and walk on fire, I won’t say no in any circumstances.” Huang Rong said, “In front of these many juniors, how could you say things you don’t mean?” Wu Santong blushed and responded, “Even if there were no one else here, how could I fail to keep my word?”

Huang Rong said, “All right! This time we will go find Yang Guo, get the antidote, and rescue your Martial Uncle and brother. We must work together. For any previous gratitude or grudges, we’ll put them aside for the time being. Wu Xiong [Brother Wu], you, the Wu father and sons, cannot settle your debt with Li Mochou at this time. After we’ve accomplished our important mission, it will not be too late for shedding blood!” Wu Santong was startled. He hadn’t thought that Huang Rong’s spoken words would unexpectedly be meant for this matter as well. He and Li Mochou had wife-killing hatred to settle, how could he actually bear the rage in his heart? So he hesitated and didn’t respond. With a gentle voice Huang Rong said, “Wu Xiong [Brother Wu], your leg has been injured. For a gentleman, revenge in ten years is still not too late. It won’t hurt to wait a little while longer will it?” Wu Santong then replied, “Good, whatever you say, I’ll do it.”

Huang Rong raised her voice to call Li Mochou, “Li Zi Zi [Elder Sister Li], let’s go!” They let the precious horse [Han Xie Yu] lead the way and the people followed. The red horse originally wanted to return to Xiangyang but had instead run into its master. Huang Rong was now walking in front of him and heading towards Mount Zhongnan.

Wu Santong and Wanyan Ping were injured so they couldn’t just speed away. They all traveled a hundred li for each day and then stopped to rest. Li Mochou stayed clear of other people at night and hurried along with them at a distance during the day.

Traveling by day and resting by night, the six young men and women were having a good time chatting and laughing. And the further they went, the friendlier they became. When the Wu brothers originally were bickering over Guo Fu, their brotherhood ties were greatly strained. Now that each had his own love, the two brothers were on the best of terms. Wu Santong looked at them and his heart was greatly consoled. But also every time, he also thought, “That day, even if the two brothers weren’t poisoned by Li Mochou, they could have destroyed each other. I’d have been left with only one... I couldn’t even call him a son. And today the two animals are surprisingly having a

good time while Brother Yang has lost an arm. Alas, what can I really say? Only cutting off an arm from each of these two little animals and putting them on Brother Yang's body would make sense." As for the fact that Yang Guo would end up with three arms in that scenario, he hadn't actually thought about it.

And then one day they reached Mount Zhongnan. Huang Rong and Wu Santong led the group up to the Chongyang Palace to greet the Quanzhen five masters. Li Mochou stood at a distance and said, "I'll wait here then." Huang Rong knew Li Mochou and the Quanzhen sect had a grudge so she didn't press the matter and went up the path towards the Chongyang Palace.

Liu Chuxuan, Qiu Chuji and others were informed about their arrival so they quickly came out of the palace to welcome them. They entered the palace hall together and sat down at a provided place. As they were exchanging their greetings, they suddenly heard someone shouting loudly. Huang Rong was very delighted and called out, "Old Urchin, won't you come out and see who is here?"

Recently, Zhou Botong had been obsessively studying ways to command the Jade Bees. He was by nature intelligent and tenacious. But to everybody's surprise, he was happy with small successes and only wanted to play and have good times. Suddenly, he heard someone shouting. That was Huang Rong's voice. He was thrilled and so he said, "Aha... that is my brother's crafty and eccentric wife!" Then he made loud noises and rushed out from behind the hall.

Yelu Qi went forward and kowtowed. He said, "Shi Fu [Master], I pay you respect. May happiness be with you, Great Elder, forever." With a laugh Zhou Botong said, "Enough, just get up! May happiness be with you little baby forever too!"

Hearing that, the people all found it strange. Nobody would have expected Yelu Qi to be Zhou Botong's disciple. This Old Urchin was madly crazy but his chosen disciple was a skilled gentleman. Together, they were nothing alike. Qiu Chuji and others saw that their Shi Shu [Martial Uncle] had accepted a disciple; they were all very happy and then busily congratulated him. And this time, Guo Fu understood what her mother and Yelu Qi were laughing about the other day. It was because her mother had guessed correctly that Zhou Botong was Yelu Qi's teacher.

Yelu Qi had met Zhou Botong twelve years ago. At that time he was still quite young so he and Zhou Botong played together quite nicely. Zhou Botong then accepted him as a disciple. Although Zhou Botong didn't teach him a lot of kung fu, Yelu Qi was talented and determined. He practiced his martial skills diligently and surprisingly became an

outstanding character of the young generation. Sadly for him, Zhou Botong saw him growing up well-behaved and nothing like a small mischievous child. His heart was filled with regrets and therefore didn't allow Yelu Qi to call himself the Old Urchin's direct disciple. But by this point, Zhou Botong couldn't get rid of him either.

Amid all the excitement came sudden sounds of battle cries from below the mountain. The sect disciples reported that the enemy was gathering for an attack. The other day the Quanzhen sect refused to bow down to the Mongolian Prince's imperial decree and also killed many of them. Qiu Chuji and others knew that this matter couldn't easily be resolved and that the Mongolian army would sooner or later come back up the mountain. They also realized that the Quanzhen sect would not be able to fend off the Mongolian army so they had already arranged a plan to abandon the palace and retreat to the West. By this time the Zhang Jiao [sect chief] position had already been assigned to a third generation disciple, Li Zhichang, but, facing this important matter, it was still left to the Quanzhen Five Masters to make decisions. Qiu Chuji turned to Huang Rong and said, "Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo], the Mongolian army has attacked! This is such an inopportune time. Please don't think badly of our hospitality."

Then everybody heard the deadly sounds of drum rolls and battle cries from below the mountain. Just now Huang Rong had come up the mountain from the southern side while the Mongolian army took the northern route. They had arrived roughly about the same time.

Zhou Botong said, "Are the enemies coming? How really wonderful! Come, we'll go make mincemeat out of them." Then he stretched out his hand to grab Yelu Qi's wrist and said, "You show the kung fu Shi Fu [Master] taught you to these several old sect brothers. I say you are not worse than the Quanzhen Seven Masters. Add you to them and we'll make the Quanzhen Eight Masters." In general, when small children had a beloved toy, they would want to show it off to people. If people liked it, then they'd become very happy. At first Zhou Botong had forbidden Yelu Qi to tell people who his master was because Yelu Qi lacked naughtiness and didn't in the least bit resemble the famous Old Urchin's skilled disciple. But today the master and the disciple met again and were delighted to see each other. Zhou Botong totally forgot the rule he himself set up before.

Qiu Chuji said, "Shi Shu [Martial Uncle], our sect has existed for many decades. It is the lifetime blood and sweat of my late master and can't be ruined in just one moment. Today the best plan is for everybody in our sect to retreat." Not waiting for Zhou Botong to voice his opinion, he gave orders, "Everybody carry all the things and go down the mountain according to our planned course." The many disciples replied in

one voice, carried the packages that had been prepared earlier, and rushed down the east and west sides of the mountain in rows. A few days earlier, the Quanzhen Five Masters and Li Zhichang had properly divided people, detailing who would dash to the front and who would guard the back, where they would meet, and how to communicate. Also, they'd many times rehearsed the plan and so there was no chaos at the last moment.

Huang Rong said, "Qiu Dao Zhang [Taoist Elder Qiu], in a situation like this a small mistake could lead to a disaster. Your honored sect has arranged everything in order, indicating a great ability. When you stage a comeback, your sect will be even more prosperous. This time we are here to look for Yang Guo so we will take our leave right now." Qiu Chuji said with surprise in his voice; "Yang Guo? Do you know if he's still here on the mountain?" With a faint smile Huang Rong replied, "We've got someone who knows his whereabouts."

Having said this, she heard the loud battle cries again from below the mountain. Huang Rong thought, "The Quanzhen sect has earlier made an arrangement. They can withdraw themselves. I came up the mountain to look for Yang Guo and get my daughter. Let's not get into the battle and delay our important matter." Immediately she bid farewell to Qiu Chuji and others, called out to those who came up the mountain with her, and rushed out to the back of the Chongyang Palace. Then she said to Li Mochou, "Li Zi Zi [Sister Li], please tell us how to get into the tomb."

Li Mochou asked, "How do you know he's inside Gu Mu? Huang Rong chuckled and said, "Even if Yang Guo isn't inside Gu Mu, the Jade Heart Manual definitely is." Li Mochou shivered and secretly thought, "This Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] is indeed deadly. How did she know about my concern?"

Li Mochou followed this group of people from Xiangyang to Zhongnan. Except for Huang Rong, nobody paid attention to her. Along the way, there was nothing interesting and, needless to say, the Wu father and sons were secretly waiting to set a death-trap for her. In her mind, Huang Rong thought, "Even if she likes Xiang'er very much, she won't be willing to put herself in a great danger. There surely must be an important scheme." Having mulled over this, she remembered that Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu had used the "Jade Maiden Swordplay" to defeat Jinlun Fawang. Li Mochou obviously didn't know these skills of the sect, otherwise she'd have used it. How wouldn't she be interested? She was actually going to get the Jade Heart Manual but was afraid that the seven people would get inside Gu Mu before her and take it. Huang Rong put two and two together and guessed correctly what Li Mochou was thinking.

Li Mochou thought that since Huang Rong already knew her intention, she could just make it bluntly clear. She said, “I’ll help you get back your daughter and you must help me get my sect’s martial manual back. You are the Chief of the Beggar Clan and also a world-renowned heroine; you cannot say things you don’t mean.”

Huang Rong then said, “Yang Guo is the son of my husband Guo’s deceased friend. He and I have some small misunderstandings, which will easily disappear when we see each other. If my daughter is really with him, he’ll return her to me himself and there’s no need to talk about baby snatching.” Li Mochou retorted, “If that’s the case, we’ll go our own separate ways and say goodbye here.” After saying that, she turned to walk away.

Huang Rong gave Wu Santong a meaningful glance. Wu Santong unsheathed his long sword and shouted, “Li Mochou, do you still think you can leave Mount Zhongnan alive today?”

Li Mochou thought that she herself was not even Huang Rong’s match. Now adding the Wu father and sons, the Yelu siblings, and others, how would she be able to break her way out? Originally she had a clever plan but she ran into Huang Rong and surprisingly found her hands and feet tied, not being able to use all her sly tricks. So indifferently she said to Huang Rong, “Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] can cleverly change. Since Yang Guo is on the mountain, why are you still worried about not finding him? Why do you need me to lead the way?”

Huang Rong knew that Li Mochou had to be forced so she said, “Little sister actually doesn’t have the ability to find the entrance to Gu Mu. However, even if Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu have secluded themselves inside the tomb, eventually they must come out to buy rice and cut firewood. If seven of us scatter around and wait patiently, surely we’ll run into them some day.” The meaning of this was that – if you were not willing to guide us, we’d immediately kill you. Finding Yang Guo a few days later was not that important.

Li Mochou thought about it. The opponents were really strong and secure. Right here on the flat land, she was overwhelmed by numbers. However, if she led these many people to the underground tomb, where she was familiar with the terrain, she could find a way to secretly kill them off one by one. So she said, “Today you won by numbers, I have nothing to say. Anyhow, I also want to find Yang Guo. Come with me!” She pushed aside prickly shrubs and walked inside the tree thickets.

Huang Rong and others followed her close behind, fearing that she would suddenly run away. She saw Li Mochou making her way through clusters of rocks. Many parts were obviously not passable, with zigzagging paths that led to a dead end. This terrain was all natural, with no human interference. So even though Huang Rong knew the “Five Phrase Marvelous Gate” art, she couldn’t use its logic to figure out the way. She thought, “There is a saying ‘Wonderful workmanship exceeds nature.’ In fact, how could human beings ever surpass the work of nature?”

They walked for a while and then arrived at the bank of a small creek. At this time they could still hear the sounds of the Mongolian battle cries but as they were deep in the woods, the shouting sounded as if it was coming from very far away.

For several years, Li Mochou had planned to steal the Jade Heart Manual. Last time, she left the tomb from the bottom of the creek; she nearly died because she didn’t know how to swim very well. Later she practiced her water skills in a river to prepare for this. She stood by the creek and said, “The main entrance to Gu Mu has been shut. To open it, you must use years and years of work. We can dive into this creek to get to the back entrance. How many people will come with me?”

Guo Fu and the Wu Brothers grew up on Peach Blossom Island. In summer, they swam in the rough sea everyday so they were excellent in water. The three people said at the same time, “I’ll come!” Wu Santong could also swim. Although not very well, he wasn’t worried about this small creek and said, “I’ll come too.”

Huang Rong thought about how cruel and cold-blooded Li Mochou was. If she suddenly turned violent on them inside Gu Mu, Wu Santong and others wouldn’t be able to defend themselves. She would have gone to watch over things herself but she just gave birth not long ago and was afraid to get sick from swimming in cold water. While hesitating, Yelu Qi said, “Guo Po Mu [Auntie Guo], you stay here to keep watch. I’ll go along with Uncle Wu.”

Huang Rong was delighted. This person was smart and skillful. His martial skills were also strong. With him going with the four people, she could put her mind at ease. She asked, “Do you have water skills?” Yelu Qi replied, “My swimming is not very good but I can manage diving.” Huang Rong thought about something and asked, “Did you practice at the bottom of the ice?” Yelu Qi replied, “Yes, I did.” Again Huang Rong asked, “Where did you practice it?” Yelu Qi explained, “When I was young, I lived with my father on the banks of the Gannan River for many years.” Mongolia was bitterly cold. For most of the year, the Gannan River was covered in snow and ice. Among the Mongolian

warriors, those extraordinarily strong would practice ice bottom diving by setting up a rule that the last one who got out on the ice surface would be the winner.

Seeing Li Mochou and others were ready and about to go down in the creek, Huang Rong didn't have time to say much. With a low voice, she said to Guo Fu, "People's hearts are difficult to measure. Be very careful!" She taught her daughter many times but this young girl was rash by nature. Repeated warnings were useless. Only by bumping herself against the wall many times, would she then learn a lesson.

The two girls, Yelu Yan and Wanyan Ping, didn't know how to swim so they stayed ashore with Huang Rong. Li Mochou led the way. She dove in the water at a cave entrance in the creek. Yelu Qi followed her closely. Guo Fu and the Wu father and brothers trailed behind.

Li Mochou led Yelu Qi and others diving into the creek undercurrent. The path at the bottom was sometimes wide and other times narrow. The undercurrent was alternately fast and slow. The water depths also vary from very deep to the waist-level. They went underwater for a long time and then finally arrived at the tomb entrance. Li Mochou proceeded to go inside. The five people followed in a line and all thought, "If not for her leading the way, who would have thought there would be another world under the creek bottom?" By this time, although they were out of water, it was pitch black inside. The five people held hands so nobody would get lost. They then followed Li Mochou on the winding path ahead.

They walked for quite a while but sensed that they were getting to higher and dryer ground. Suddenly they heard a crunching sound. It was Li Mochou pushing open a stone door. The five people went inside and heard Li Mochou say, "We are already inside Gu Mu. Let's take a little break. Then we'll go find Yang Guo." Since entering Gu Mu, Wu Santong and Yelu Qi had stayed right behind Li Mochou's back, guarding themselves against her trickery. They couldn't even see the five fingers on their hands and had to rely on their ears, listening to everything with great attention. Guo Fu and the Wu brothers wanted to come to show their great courage but now that their eyes couldn't see a thing, they couldn't help but feel the thumping of their hearts.

Even if they used their weapons and sent out poisoned needles, they might not be able to avoid hurting their own people. Yelu Qi thought that if they let her lash out her secret weapons at random, the five of them would definitely be injured or killed. The only way out was to go forward to attack and not to give her a chance to launch her poisoned needles. Guo Fu thought the same thing. The two of them moved at the same time and threw themselves in the direction from which Li Mochou was making a noise.

Nobody could have expected this. As Li Mochou finished saying those three sentences, she took the opportunity to move quietly to another door. Yelu Qi and Guo Fu jumped out and started fighting; trying to catch each other's wrists and elbows to stop the opponent from launching secret weapons. The two exchanged four stances before Guo Fu felt that something didn't feel right and let out an "eh" sound. Both Yelu Qi's hands were grabbing her two wrists. He felt that the flesh and skin were smooth and could smell a whiff of sweet scent in the air. Then he heard Guo Fu's crying out and became startled.

Then they heard a crushing sound of a stone door moving. Yelu Qi and Wu Santong cried out, "Oh, no!" and rushed forward to the nearby door. But there came 'Sou"Sou' whishing sounds. Two silver needles were shot out their way. The two people sidestepped to avoid the needles while extending their hands to push the stone door. That door was already closed. Pushing against it was just like trying to move a mountain. No matter how hard they tried, it wouldn't move.

Yelu Qi reached his hand out to feel the stone door from all directions but there was neither an iron hoop nor a door handle. He followed the wall and went around the room. Then he found out that the size of this stone chamber was about twenty square feet. The four-side walls were made of rough thick stones. He drew out his long sword and knocked the stone door several times. The sounds were dull, indicating that the door was extremely heavy. This stone door could be opened from the inside and only needed to be pulled open but it was most difficult with no place to pull to begin with. Guo Fu hurriedly said, "What are we going to do? Wouldn't we suffocate to death in here?" Yelu Qi heard her voice sounding like she was about to cry so he comforted her and said, "Don't worry. Guo Fu Ren [Madame Guo] is waiting for us outside. She'll definitely have a plan to help us." Then he started groping at the walls, trying to find a way out.

Having trapped Wu Santong and others inside the stone chamber, Li Mochou was extremely pleased and mused, "These people can't get out. Shi Mei [Apprentice Sister] and Yang Guo didn't know I could swim and thought I wouldn't be able to sneak back in from the secret route. But where are they?" She knew perfectly well that, to make her wish come true, she couldn't make even a bit of noise. Otherwise if they began to fight, she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to defeat them. Therefore, she took off her shoes and only left her stockings on. She held the Soul Freezing needles in both hands and slowly moved forward step-by-step.

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For the past few days, Xiao Longnu had been sitting on the chilled jade bed and circulating her energy flow according to the reverse energy flow principles. One by one, they cleared the thirty six pressure points on her body. Right now the two were working on Xiao Longnu's "Middle Altar" point. This was on her chest and a couple of inches below the "Jade Hall" point. The ancient medical text called this the "Sea of Air" because it regulated air in a human body and, as a result, was the most critical pressure point. The two people were in full concentration and didn't dare to be careless. Xiao Longnu felt the three pressure points "Purple Palace", "Flowery Roof", and "Jade hall" below her neck fill with hot air. But whenever the air reached the "Middle Altar" point, it wouldn't pass through. She knew that if she could clear this "Middle Altar" point, her body injury would be healed. But she only had to wait and couldn't force it. Xiao Longnu by nature had never been an anxious type. Time in Gu Mu was slow. If today she couldn't clear this pressure point, why couldn't she wait until tomorrow? So she alternated between stopping and continuing and had no worries in the least.

Yang Guo, however, was really impatient. He only wanted Xiao Longnu to recover soon so he could set his mind at ease. But he also knew that the matter of energy transfer couldn't be rushed. Adding the fact that they were using the reverse energy flow technique, how could it not be twice as difficult? Then he felt Xiao Longnu's pulse on her wrist was suddenly strong and suddenly weak. Even though they were not fluctuating, it was not really a bad sign. He then slowly transferred the energy, adding more strength to it this time.

In this depth of lonely silence, he suddenly heard a 'ta' sound. This sound was extremely light. If not for Yang Guo's concentrating on his breath and the blank state of his mind, he wouldn't have heard it. A long time passed. There came another 'ta' sound, about three feet closer this time.

Yang Guo thought this was strange but he was afraid that he'd divert Xiao Longnu's attention. If she was distracted in a critical moment like this, at the very least it would be very difficult for her injury to ever recover and at the very most she could be killed instantly. How could there be any small mistakes? So even though in his heart he felt something not quite right, he feigned ignorance. But only a short while later, there was another 'ta' sound moving three feet closer. This time he knew that someone had entered Gu Mu through the water route and that that person didn't dare to barge in but just slowly moved forward. After another while, there came two light crunching sounds and then it stopped. These crunching sounds came from someone pushing open the stone door very, very slowly. If Xiao Long could manage to clear her "Middle Altar" point before the enemy got too near, it would be wonderfully lucky; otherwise it would

be extremely dangerous. By this time they had already passed the point of no return. Even if they wanted to stop pushing the energy, they could not.

Then he heard a light ‘ta’ sound again, indicating that that person had just come one step closer. Yang Guo’s mind was frantic but he didn’t know what to do. Suddenly he felt his palm shaking and the heat energy was forced back to him because Xiao Longnu was also frightened. He quickly drew a breath and then pushed his internal energy out to Xiao Longnu’s palm. In a low voice he said, “The terrors within can’t be smelt, nor can they be seen. It is really the truth.” When one practiced martial arts to a certain limit, there would often emerge illusions, like hearing thundering cries or feeling itchy pains. One just had to know these were illusions and pay no attention to them whatsoever to avoid fire deviation. By this time, Yang Guo heard the footsteps very clearly and knew that it wasn’t just his own imagination. But Xiao Longnu was at a life or death critical moment so he had lied to her, saying that it was her mind tricking her and that no matter how fiercely evil it was, she had to ignore it and it would just disappear. As Xiao Longnu heard these words, she immediately calmed herself down.

At this time, while the sun outside was glowing red, it was actually dark like late night inside Gu Mu. Yang Guo heard every single footstep, every time several feet nearer. He thought about how in this world, except for themselves husband and wife, there were only Li Mochou and Hong Lingbo who knew about the secret path under water. So it had to be them, master and disciple, coming in. Based on Yang Guo’s martial skills, there was nothing to fear. It was only that he had to wait, not knowing for certain when the attack was coming. With this slow encroaching, he couldn’t help but feel uncertain and anxious, not knowing how to defend himself. The more the enemy came closer, the more he felt like his heart was on fire. Great dangers were approaching step by step. His hands were tied, waiting for death. Beads of sweat slowly seeped out on his forehead. He thought, “On that day Guo Fu cut my arm off, despite the pain, at least the sword strike was swift. Being forced to endure a slow blow like this was actually much worse.”

After another while, Xiao Longnu also heard the sound quite clearly and knew in her heart that it was not just an illusion. As danger was nearing, she wanted to increase the tempo of her inner air, pushing to clear her “Middle Altar” point. But her mind was slightly disturbed, causing her energy flow to go forwards and backwards and almost back up from her chest. And during this time, she heard light footsteps. Then suddenly from the door came ‘sou...sou’ whishing sounds of four Soul Freezing Needles being shot her way.

At this moment Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu were no different than average people with no martial skills whatsoever. Luckily, the two of them were prepared. Hearing the poisoned needles shot their way, they dropped backwards at the same time, without separating their palms. The four needles swiftly passed the sides of their faces. Li Mochou still hadn't figured out that they were circulating energy to heal an injury so she was afraid that they would counter-attack. So she immediately leapt backwards after sending out the poisoned needles. If she hadn't been afraid and followed up with another four needles, it would have been difficult for the two people to avoid getting hit.

Li Mochou only vaguely saw the two people sitting side by side on the Chilled Jade Bed. Missing her first strike, she herself was now quite worried. Seeing that Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu didn't get up to fight back, she still didn't understand but instead stepped back to the nearby stone door. With a fly whisk in her hand, she coldly said, "The two of you have been well since we last met!"

Yang Guo asked, "What do you want?" Li Mochou retorted, "How is it you don't know what I want?" Yang Guo continued, "You want the Jade Heart Manual, is that it? We've secluded ourselves inside Gu Mu, staying away from the outside world. Just go and take it." Li Mochou didn't know if she should believe him or not so she said, "Bring it!"

This Jade Heart Manual was engraved on the wall in another stone chamber. Yang Guo thought, "I'll just tell her the truth. The manual was obscure. Let her learn it by slowly pondering over it. We only need some more time for Gu Gu to clear her "Middle Altar" point. At that point, how would killing her be difficult?" But right now Xiao Longnu's pulses were wildly fluctuating and so she was leaning on Yang Guo, not saying anything.

Li Mochou widened her eyes to observe the two people carefully. In a dark blur, she saw Xiao Longnu stretching her palms out against Yang Guo's. Her thoughts moved and then she immediately understood, "Yang Guo's arm injury was heavy. And this little person was helping him healing the wound with her internal energy. I've arrived at the crucial moment during the energy transfer. If I don't kill them both today, how would I have such a good opportunity like this afterwards?" Even though her deduction was only half right, the fear in her heart immediately disappeared. She jumped up and, with the fly whisk, bore down on top of Xiao Longnu.

Feeling a whiff of strong wind coming down on her and stirring up her neat hair, Xiao Longnu closed her eyes for the coming death. But Yang Guo opened his mouth and blew a gust of energy towards Li Mochou's face. At this time his whole body strength was channeled to help Xiao Longnu's clearing her pressure point so the force of air sent

out from his mouth was not very strong. But seeing Xiao Longnu in a dangerous situation, he had to blow out air to disturb the enemy.

Li Mochou knew perfectly well that Yang Guo was full of tricks. But as she felt the heat licking her face, she was startled and leapt backwards a foot. After being defeated by Huang Rong's wisdom, she'd always been extra careful everywhere, not being rash in trying to hurt the enemy but protecting her own body first. But after leaping back, her face felt nothing unusual. She then shouted, "You want to die?"

With a laugh Yang Guo said, "The other day I loaned you a robe, have you come today to return it?" Li Mochou thought about the time she fiercely fought with the blacksmith Feng Mofeng and the clothes on her body were burned by the red-hot huge iron hammer. If not for Yang Guo's robe covering her body, she would have been shamefully distressed. Reasonably speaking, today she couldn't take the two people's lives. But after another consideration, she changed her mind. A moment of soft feelings like this would cause her to forever worry about them afterwards. She straightened up her body and slapped out her left palm.

Even in the face of this calamity, Yang Guo still fought for wisdom. He thought about how earlier he and Xiao Longnu were joking. He once said if both his arms had been cut off, she would have had to hold the soles of his feet instead. Then he heard the sound of wind made by a palm as Li Mochou's "Five Poisons Divine Palm" arrived. He had no time to think it over so he immediately lowered his head and lifted his feet up. At the same time he kicked out both feet to get rid of the shoes. He shouted, "Long'er, grab my feet!" and then wielded his left palm. With a 'Pa' sound, his palm made contact with Li Mochou's. Originally he'd passed his whole body strength through Xiao Longnu and right now the energy level was suddenly dropping. He forced out the energy again while matching Li Mochou's palm. All this while, Xiao Longnu was holding his right foot.

As Li Mochou suddenly saw Yang Guo's strange posture, she couldn't help being startled. But then she remembered the other day Yang Guo was fighting her own "Three Without Three Without Hands" strikes and no matter how he tried, he couldn't beat them. So she immediately increased the palm strength, trying to finish off Yang Guo. Years ago, when she'd used this "Five Poisoned Divine Palm" to slaughter the entire Lu Family, the palm was already incredibly fierce. Now that she had cultivated strength over the years, it became most violent and evil. As Yang Guo sensed the heat passing through his palm, he didn't resist. Instead he added his own strength and passed the energy on to Xiao Longnu's body.

As it turned out, Li Mochou and Yang Guo's combined strength was helping Xiao Longnu clear her pressure point. Li Mochou's strategic moves were quite inferior to the Yang-Long couple but speaking of cultivated energy, hers was far deeper than theirs. Suddenly receiving such strong energy, Xiao Longnu felt the energy push vigorously through her "Middle Altar" point and that heat filled up her abdomen. Her spirits lifted and she called out, "Wonderful, many thanks to Shi Zi [Apprentice Elder Sister]!" She let go of Yang Guo's right foot and leapt down from the Chilled Jade Bed.

Li Mochou was surprised. She thought Xiao Longnu was helping Yang Guo heal his injury. So she lashed out her palm strength, thinking to use this opportunity to shock Yang Guo's energy flow. She hadn't expected that she would be helping the enemy instead. Delighted, Yang Guo turned his body around and stood there barefoot. With a laugh he said, "If not for you rushing in to help, your Shi Mei [Apprentice Younger Sister] wouldn't have been able to clear her "Middle Altar" point this easily." Li Mochou hesitated and didn't answer. Suddenly Xiao Longnu let out an 'Ah' sound. Holding her chest, she dropped down on the Chilled Jade Bed. With a start Yang Guo asked, "What is it?" Xiao Longnu panted, "Her, her, her palm was poisonous."

By now Yang Guo also felt dizzy in his head and realized that when Li Mochou used her "Five Poisons Divine Palm," she sent out the poisons from her palm. By matching palms with her, not only had the poisons entered his body, they also passed on to Xiao Longnu's.

Yang Guo lifted his black iron sword and shouted, "Quickly take out the antidote!" and chopped down his sword. Li Mochou lifted her fly whisk to protect herself. And with a clang, the fly whisk forged from fine steel broke into two pieces. With its supple strength, this fly whisk had defeated who-knows-how-many great heroes in the world. But now that it was chopped and broken like it'd never been before, she was frightened to the core and hurriedly leapt out of the stone chamber. Yang Guo lifted his sword to pursue and wielded out his left arm. He saw that Li Mochou couldn't hold herself against this sword. But all of a sudden the poisons in his body acted up and he saw stars before his eyes. His arm went limp and painful, with no strength left, with a 'Dang' sound, the black iron sword dropped down on the floor.

Li Mochou didn't dare to stop. She fled ten feet ahead and then eventually turned her head back, only to see Yang Guo was shaking violently with his hand against the wall. She thought, "This boy's martial skills are extremely strange. I'll wait for a bit for the poisons to bring him down. Then I'll approach."

Yang Guo's throat was dry and painful. His head felt swollen and aching. He immediately passed strength to his left arm and waited for Li Mochou to come forward. Just one strike would kill her and his palm was holding firm the handle of the black iron sword. Li Mochou became frightened again and didn't dare to approach recklessly. By her calculation, she'd stay where she couldn't be defeated. And she stood there, carefully observing any change.

Yang Guo thought that if it dragged on like this, the poisons in his and Xiao Longnu's body would become stronger. With this delay, the enemy would have the upper hand. So he took a deep breath and circulated his internal flow. When the dizziness stopped, he grasped the handle of the black iron sword and stood up. He extended his arm to hold Xiao Longnu's waist and bellowed, "Make way!" and went out in big strides. Seeing his confident air, Li Mochou didn't dare to stop him.

Yang Guo only wanted to get into another stone chamber and close the door so Li Mochou couldn't follow in. Xiao Longnu had already cleared her pressure points and, in another while, the two of them could force out the poisons in their bodies. This matter was actually a hundred times easier than clearing the pressure points. When Yang Guo was young and was poisoned by Li Mochou's needles, Ouyang Feng taught him how to expel the poisons. At present the two of them had internal energy like this so getting rid of the poisons was really not difficult.

Li Mochou also knew his intention. How could she allow the two people to begin driving out the poisons? She didn't dare to attack and only kept following them from a safe distance, always five feet away from Yang Guo. When Yang Guo stood there and waited for her to come. She also merely stood there motionless.

In his chest, the more Yang Guo's heart beat, the fiercer the poisons became. He felt as if his heart would spill out of his mouth and couldn't really support himself again. He unsteadily dashed into a stone chamber and put Xiao Longnu down on a tabletop. He propped himself against the table and loudly gasped for breath. He knew perfectly well that Li Mochou would follow shortly after but didn't pay attention. After a little while, he then realized that they'd arrived at the coffin chamber. And the table, that he was propping himself against and that he was just placed Xiao Longnu's body on, was really a stone coffin.

At the time Li Mochou was a disciple of the sect, she'd lived here at Gu Mu for quite a long time. And even though her knowledge of Gu Mu secret matters was inferior to the Yang-Long couple's, she could see clearly that there were five stone coffins in the chamber. At the bottom of one of the coffins was a door to the secret path, from where she

came in. She thought, “Are you thinking about escaping from here? This time it may not be so easy.”

Of the three people, one was sitting; one was standing; and the other was leaning against another. At this time, only the sounds of Yang Guo's heavy breathings could be heard. Yang Guo's body swayed several times. And with a clanking sound, the black iron sword dropped to the floor. Then he tumbled down Xiao Longnu's body. His hand threw out something. A ‘Pa’ sound was heard as that thing flew into an empty coffin. He called out, “Li Mochou, I can't let this Jade Heart Manual fall into your hands. Aiyo...” With a long miserable cry, he became motionless.”

There were five stone coffins in this chamber. Three of them contained the bodies of Lin Chaoying, her disciple, and Sun Po Po [Grandma Sun]. The other two were actually empty. Of these two, one was a door to the secret passage and its lid was left two feet open so people could come in and go out. The other coffin's lid was left open just a little. As Li Mochou saw Yang Guo throw the “Jade Heart Manual” in this empty coffin, she was pleasantly surprised. But she was still afraid that it would be a trick. Another while passed and he was still motionless. So she bent down to feel his cheek. It was icy cold, meaning he was already dead. With a loud ‘Ha-Ha’ she said, “Little rascal, even with all your wickedness you also have failed today!” Then she stretched out her hand into the coffin to get the manual.

But Yang Guo had thrown the “manual” into the other end of the coffin. Li Mochou's fly whisk had earlier been broken; otherwise she could have used it to sweep it out. She used her arm to grope at it twice but still couldn't grab it. So she shrank her body and got into the empty stone coffin through this foot-wide opening. She crawled inside the stone coffin to the other end and finally grabbed the “manual.” Her hand then felt something not very wonderful. The manual appeared to be a shoe.

And by this time, Yang Guo lifted his body up. His left arm dashed out to the front, using the tip of the black iron sword to push the coffin lid. He sent out a ferocious force and the coffin lid was perfectly closed, trapping Li Mochou inside the coffin!

From the beginning, Li Mochou didn't know that the “Jade Heart Manual” was actually carved on the ceiling of a stone chamber and always thought it was a book. Yang Guo pretended to cry out in misery, throwing himself on Xiao Longnu's body. At the same time, he quickly took off his shoe and threw it into the empty coffin. A soft object landing on a stone sounded just like it was a book. After throwing in the shoe, he immediately reversed his energy flow and turned himself stiff like he was dead. In fact, even if he'd died of poisons, his body wouldn't have turned icy cold in the blink of an eye like

this. When a man's pulse stopped, it would actually take at least half an hour for his whole body to lose all the heat. Li Mochou was so happy that she lost her power of observation. This plan of his was extremely dangerous. If Li Mochou didn't care if he'd actually died or not and struck his head with her "Five Poisons Divine Palm" to guarantee his death, his playing dead would unavoidably change into real death. But he was in a desperate situation so he took a desperate measure, hoping for some luck. To his surprise, it was actually a success.

To push a coffin lid, Yang Guo passed the strength to his left arm and then used his heavy sword to lift it up. Then he shouted, "Up!" and the other empty coffin was raised. A thundering 'Peng' sound followed and the coffin crushed down on top of the first coffin. This coffin and lid together weighed six hundred catties at least. Adding the bamboo top on the lid, it was extremely secure, with a perfect seam. Even if Li Mochou's martial skills were high, there was no way she could get out in any case.

After being poisoned, Yang Guo's heart was beating fast and his head was hurting. But as they were facing a great enemy, he couldn't allow himself to be dizzy and entirely relied on his fierce determination to sustain himself. Having used the sword twice to push the coffins, his mind was tired and his strength depleted. He flung down the black iron sword and struggled to walk over to Xiao Longnu's side. Using the method of Ouyang Feng, he first drove out most of the poisons in his body. Then he reached out his hand to match Xiao Longnu's and helped her get rid of the poisons.

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Guo Fu, Yelu Qi, and the others were trapped in the stone chamber. These people entered the secret passage from the bottom of the creek and the fire kits they carried inside were all soaked and hence difficult to catch fire. They groped around in darkness. How could they possibly find a way out? The five people were at their wits' end so they just sat there idly on the floor.

Wu Santong was incessantly cursing Li Mochou's treacherously evil trick. Guo Fu, who was already extremely anxious, heard Wu Santong's non-stop scolding and became agitated. She couldn't bear to keep her mouth shut and so she said, "Wu Bobo [Uncle Wu], you knew before that Li Mochou was treacherous and evil, how come you didn't guard against her? What use is cursing when the damage is done?" Wu Santong was startled and couldn't say anything in response.

Since the Wu brothers had met Guo Fu again, each was sick at heart. While with the Yelu siblings and Wanyan Ping, everybody was having a good time together but they

didn't really have a chance to talk to Guo Fu directly. This time Wu Xiuwen heard her snapping at his father. He couldn't bear it and said, "We came to Gu Mu to help your little sister and unfortunately met with a disaster. Everybody is about to perish together and you still let out your lady's temper..." He was about to continue but then Wu Dunru called out, "Di di! [younger brother!]" This time Wu Xiuwen shut up. He spoke out of irritation. But after the words were uttered, he even greatly surprised himself. He'd always complied with Guo Fu's every wish and in no way would dare to cross her in the slightest. Who would have thought that today he would unexpectedly rebuke her in a severe tone like this?

Guo Fu was also startled. She was going to back talk but couldn't think of anything to say. She thought about how she would definitely die a sad death inside Gu Mu and from now on wouldn't be able to see her parents again. Her heart was aching. In the darkness nobody could see anything so she let out a whimpering cry. Hearing her crying, Wu Xiuwen felt sorry and said, "Okay, what I said was wrong. I apologize." Guo Fu sobbed, "What good is an apology?" and cried even harder. She pulled up a piece of cloth that was by her hand to blow her nose. Then she realized that she was leaning against someone's leg and the cloth she used to wipe her nose was shockingly that person's gown.

Guo Fu was alarmed and hurriedly sat up. She heard Wu Santong and his sons speaking and knew that the three people weren't by her side. That left only Yelu Qi who had been keeping silent. So the person naturally was him. Her face reddened and she babbled, "I..."

Yelu Qi suddenly said, "Listen, what is that sound?" The four people tilted their heads to listen but couldn't hear anything. Yelu Qi said, "Hmm, it is a baby crying. Guo Guniang [Miss Guo] that must be your little sister." This sound traveled through a stone wall and was particularly feeble. If not for his cultivated internal strength that heightened his aural senses, he wouldn't have been able to hear it. As he got up and walked a few steps, the crying sound immediately weakened. He figured out, "Since the baby's cry can pass through, this stone chamber must have a ventilation space." Immediately he concentrated on listening, trying to identify where the cry came from.

He walked a few steps to the west, the crying sound slightly weakened. He turned back to the east, the crying was louder. Then he dashed towards the northeast and heard the sound quite clearly. So he walked to the northeast corner and extended his sword to hit the stone wall lightly. The 'kong-kong-kong' sounds were slightly different as if the wall there was especially thin. He sheathed his sword and used both palms to push out against the stones but nothing moved. He took a deep breath and sent his strength to

both palms, using the “stick” technique. The strength was sent out, making a crashing sound. That stone chunk was indeed drawn out by the strength of his palm and fell on the ground.

Guo Fu and the others were pleasantly surprised. They cheered out loud in one voice and scrambled forwards to pull out three chunks of stone. This time a body could pass through and the people got out one by one. Following the sound, they entered a small stone chamber. In the darkness, Guo Fu heard that baby crying out extremely loudly and stretched her hand out to hug her immediately.

This baby was of course Guo Xiang. As Yang Guo was helping Xiao Longnu to clear her pressure points and also fighting with Li Mochou, he missed the baby’s feeding time, causing her to cry out fiercely. Guo Fu did all she could to coax the baby, both patting and rocking her. But Guo Xiang, with someone holding her, cried even harder. Guo Fu ran out of patience and gave her to Wu Santong. She said, “Wu Bobo [Uncle Wu], please take a look what’s wrong with her.”

Yelu Qi traced his hand on a table and found a candle, along with a knife and flint. He immediately lit the candle. These people had been in the gloomy darkness for a very long time. Now there was light. They were all overjoyed and cried out in delight.

Wu Santong actually had sons. Hearing Guo Xiang crying like this, he knew that she was hungry. On the table, he saw the fine bee honey water and a small wood-carved spoon so he scooped up the honey water to feed her. As it passed through her mouth, Guo Xiang stopped crying as expected. Yelu Qi laughed and said, “If not for little Miss Guo’s crying out from hunger, I’m afraid we’d all have died in that stone chamber.”

Wu Santong bitterly said, “We’d better go find Li Mochou.” Then each person broke off the legs of the table and chairs and lit the fire to make torches to be used on their way. At every corner, Wu Dunru used his sword tip to make a mark for fear that they would get lost on their way back.

As the five people entered a room, there was also another room. They raised their torches to search for Li Mochou’s traces and saw that this ancient tomb was gigantic, with winding corridors and great many rooms. All were endlessly amazed. Nobody could have expected that a magnificent construction like this would be hidden above a small mountain creek. Then they entered Xiao Longnu’s bed chamber and saw several “Soul Freezing Needles” lying on the floor. Guo Fu wrapped her hand with a piece of cloth and picked up two needles. She said, “This time I will return these poisoned needles to the evil witch.”

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As Yang Guo used his internal energy to help Xiao Longnu expel the poisons, he saw dark liquid slowly seeping out from the five fingertips on her left hand. It would take a while to remove all the poison. Suddenly he heard the sound of footsteps coming from the corridor. There were five people coming in total. Yang Guo was secretly startled and thought that the enemy always came to attack at every critical moment. Li Mochou alone had been difficult enough. How would he deal with five people? Xiao Longnu had just cleared her pressure points and her internal energy was weak. If the poisons weren't driven out immediately, they were bound to enter her pressure points and spread out. Suddenly he saw lights flashing from the distance. Those five people were moving closer. Yang Guo then reached out his arm to carry Xiao Longnu and then jumped onto the empty coffin that was on top of Li Mochou. He pushed open the coffin lid with his palm.

The two people were hiding in the coffin when Yelu Qi and the others came in. Seeing that there were five coffins in the room, the five people became startled, faintly feeling that this was too big a coincidence and a bad omen. Guo Fu couldn't bear it and said, "Hmmp, there are five of us here and there are five coffins!"

Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu inside the stone coffin heard Guo Fu's voice. Puzzled, they thought, "How come she's here?" Yang Guo's left hand had never left Xiao Longnu's palm, still forcing out the poisons. He heard that Guo Fu was among the five people. Even though surprised, he was relieved, thinking that she wouldn't dare to take advantage of someone in a precarious situation. So he said nothing and kept concentrating on sending out his energy to expel the poisons.

Yelu Qi already heard the breathing sound from the stone coffin and thought it was Li Mochou who hid in there with a devious trick. This time he wouldn't be fooled again and so he immediately made a hand signal, calling the four people to surround the coffin. Guo Fu noticed that the coffin lid and the coffin itself were not aligned and she could see the hem of a gown through the crack. She concluded that it was Li Mochou hiding in there. She laughed and thought, "I'm going to pay you back in your own coin!" She used her energy to push the coffin lid with her left palm and then fiercely shot out the two "Soul Freezing Needles".

These two needles were sent out at close range. Also, there was no room in the coffin to move aside. The Yang Long couple cried out in surprise, "Ayo!" One needle hit Yang Guo's right leg while the other struck Xiao Longnu's left shoulder.

Having sent out the needles, Guo Fu was very pleased with herself. But then she actually heard the surprised cries from a man and a woman inside the coffin. Her heart jumped and she also let out an 'Ayo' cry. Yelu Qi kicked out his left leg. There came a crashing sound while the coffin lid fell down on the floor. Trembling, Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu stood up. Under the torch lights, the two people's faces were pale as they sadly looked at each other.

Guo Fu didn't know that this time she herself had created a bigger disaster than cutting off Yang Guo's arm and only felt slightly sorry. She said apologetically, "Yang Da ge [Big Brother Yang], Long Zi Zi [Elder Sister Long], little sister didn't know it was you two and accidentally shot out the needles. Luckily, my mother has the antidote to this poison. Years ago, my pet eagles were injured by Li Mochou's needles and it was mother who cured them. Why were you hiding inside the coffin? Who would have thought it was the two of you?"

She thought about how she herself had cut off Yang Guo's arm and how he'd bent her sword. She figured that they were about even. Let alone the fact that her mother had already scolded her vehemently for this. She mused, "I didn't come to blame you. That should be enough." She'd always had the upper hand since childhood. Others looked up to her parents and always gave in to her. Therefore, she only thought about herself and didn't take other people into consideration. Speaking in retrospect, the Yang-Long couple was not supposed to be hiding in the coffin and therefore gave her a fright. She would not have thought that at the time Xiao Longnu was hit by the silver needle, the poisons inside her body had just stopped flowing out. Suddenly she was violently hit like this, the poisons from the "Five Poisons Divine Palm" all flew backwards, entering the major pressure points on her whole body. This time even if there were a divine pill of immortality, there wouldn't have been a way to save her. Li Mochou's silver needle inflicted no more than a flesh wound and, with a proper treatment, one could be cured. However, the poisons inside her were severe beyond reason.

Xiao Longnu was still for a moment but then she felt as if her chest was empty like there was nothing inside and her heart went missing. Then she turned her head to look at Yang Guo and saw in his eyes heartache, a combination of grief and indignation. His whole body was trembling. He looked as if the lifetime of sadness and abuse all came out at this time. Xiao Longnu couldn't bear to see him bitter and miserable like this so she gently said, "Guo'er, our destiny is like this. Let's not resent other people. Don't be so bitter." She then stretched out her hand to pull out the silver needle from his leg and then later the other poisoned needle from her shoulder. Unlike the "Five Poisons Divine Palm" that Li Mochou had created herself, the "Soul Freezing Needles" were passed on by her ancestor master and so she carried the antidote with her. She gave Yang Guo

one grain and she herself took another. Filled with immense hatred, Yang Guo made a sound and spat out the antidote onto the ground.

Guo Fu angrily said, “Ayo, very big of you. Is this to say I came here to harm you on purpose? I did apologize and that should be enough. What’s with the temper? They were only two small needles. What’s a big deal?” Wu Santong saw the sad expression on Yang Guo’s face gradually concealed and replaced by a rising anger. He also saw him picking up the shiny big black sword from the ground. Knowing something was not right, he quickly went forward and coaxed, “Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang], please don’t be upset. The five of us were trapped inside a stone chamber by Li Mochou and escaped with great difficulty. Guo Guniang [Miss Guo] was rash, mistaking.. ..”

Guo Fu butted in, “What? Was I rash? You yourself also thought it was Li Mochou. If not, why haven’t you said something?” Wu Santong eyed Yang Guo and then looked at Guo Fu, not knowing how to appease them.

Xiao Longnu took out another grain of antidote and in a low voice she said, “Guo’er, take the antidote. Don’t you listen to my words anymore?” Hearing Xiao Longnu’s gentle urge, Yang Guo opened his mouth and swallowed. He thought about how the two of them wrestled with life and death with difficulty for the last few days and how finally it was all for nothing. He couldn’t bear it any longer and suddenly knelt down to loudly cry on the stone coffin.

Wu Santong and the others looked at one another in blank dismay. All were thinking that he had always been extremely strong and full of spirit. How come today, after being hit by just a small needle, he was weeping so bitterly like this?

Xiao Longnu reached out her hand to stroke Yang Guo’s hair and said, “Guo’er, you tell them to go. I don’t like them in here.” The plain sentence “I don’t like them in here” contained all her hatred and resentment.

Yang Guo stood up. His eyes began with Guo Fu and then scanned the people one by one. Even though he was extremely angry and hateful, he eventually realized that Guo Fu’s launching the silver needles was an inadvertent mistake. Except blaming her for being rash, he couldn’t say she was wrong. Let alone the fact that even if he used the sword to split her open, he still wouldn’t be able to save Xiao Longnu’s life. He picked up his sword with rage in his eyes. Suddenly he raised his black iron heavy sword and there came a thundering sound and flying sparks. Surprisingly he only chopped the stone coffin they were hiding in earlier into two sections. This strike was executed not only out of male strength, but also out of bottomless grief and indignation.

Seeing his strike to be this incredibly powerful, Guo Fu and the others couldn't help becoming startled. They saw with their own eyes how thick and heavy the coffin was. It was chiseled from granite. To break it into two pieces, a stone mason using a big axe to cut it for half a day still wouldn't be able to do it. If Yang Guo had used a large mountain-cutting axe or a thick machete, it might have been conceivable. But long swords were originally light and quick weapons, which were treasured for their sharp blades. If colliding with a solid stone like this, they would immediately snap. Who would have thought that this sword could cut through a stone like it was clay. As soon as the blade dropped, the coffin broke.

Yang Guo saw the five people looking at each other in alarm. He then fiercely bellowed, "What did you come here for?" Wu Santong answered, "Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang], we followed Guo Fu ren [Madame Guo] to come look for you."

Yang Guo angrily retorted, "You came here to bring back her daughter, didn't you? To get this little baby, you were willing to kill my dear wife."

Wu Santong was startled and said, "Kill your dear wife? Ah, that is Long Guniang [Miss Long]." Then he noticed that Xiao Longnu was wearing a bridal gown and immediately understood. He quickly said, "Your wife was hit by a poisoned needle. Guo Fu ren [Madame Guo]'s got the antidote. She is just outside."

Yang Guo made a spitting sound and shouted, "You people came in to cause ruckus like this, the poisons in her body turned to attack all her major pressure points. What would Guo Fu ren [Madame Guo] do? Does she have the skill to bring back the dead?"

Wu Santong owed Yang Guo for saving his sons and therefore was extremely respectful of him. Although hearing him lashing out an accusation like this, he didn't think to be defiant in the least bit. He only mumbled, "The poisons turned to attack all her major pressure points. This is not good."

From the side, Guo Fu was getting mad. She heard Yang Guo speaking disrespectfully of her mother and flew into a rage. She shouted, "What has my mother done to you? At the time you were young, you were homeless. Wasn't it my mother who sheltered you? She fed you. You... Hmmph.. Instead, you turned out to be ungrateful and stole my little sister." By this time, she already knew that even though her sister fell into Yang Guo's hand, he had no evil intention. But as she was in a verbal fight with him, she didn't think about what could or couldn't be said and brought up this issue.

Yang Guo sneered and said, “Right, today I am ungrateful. You said I stole this child. I’ll take her and never return her. How will you catch me?” Guo Fu tightened her left arm and firmly held her little sister. With her right arm, she raised the torch high to block the front part of her body.

Wu Santong anxiously said, “Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang], your wife has been poisoned. We must soon detoxify the poisons...”

Yang Guo bitterly responded, “Wu Xiong [Brother Wu], it’s useless.” Suddenly he let out a long, loud roar and sent out his right sleeve. Guo Fu and the others all sensed a gust of wind blowing their way and their faces felt burning hot and painful like being scraped by a blade. The five torches were blown out and so the place immediately turned pitch black. They gave out a loud ‘Ayo!’ cry. Yelu Qi was afraid that Yang Guo would hurt her so he jumped forward, only to hear Guo Xiang’s wailing from outside of the stone chamber. They were all alarmed. The wailing sound was already 20 or 30 feet away. They were moving fast, just like spirits.

Guo Fu cried out, “He snatched my little sister.” Wu Santong called out, “Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang]... Long Guniang [Miss Long]! Yang Xiong di...Long Guniang!” But there was no one to answer him. They had no light and in the darkness couldn’t see what was going on.

Yelu Qi said, “We must get out of here quickly. Don’t let him close us in here.”

Wu Santong indignantly said, “Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang] was very kind and very righteous, why did he do this?”

Guo Fu retorted, “His being kind and righteous... We should go quickly. What are we waiting here for?” Having said those few words, she suddenly heard two ‘ka-ka’ sounds from inside a stone coffin. And since the sounds were muffled by the coffin lid, they appeared really melancholy.

“There’s a ghost!” Guo Fu screamed, pulling Yelu Qi’s arm which was nearby. Wu Santong and the others clearly heard that the sounds came from inside the coffin as if a corpse was scrambling to get out. In the darkness, everybody was absolutely terrified.

Yelu Qi said to Wu Santong in a low voice, “Wu Shushu [Uncle Wu], you stay here. I’ll go over there. If a corpse comes out, we’ll use our four palms to beat him to pulp. Then he grasped Guo Fu by her wrist and pulled her to stand behind his body for fear that the ghost would harm people.

Then they heard a sudden sound of something flying out of the coffin. Wu Santong and Yelu Qi had earlier prepared to send out their energy. As they heard the whooshing sound, they lashed out their strikes. When the two people's hands made contact with that thing, they together cried out, "Wretched!" What they actually hit was a chunk of long stone, which was laid in the coffin as a stone pillow. The two people used their whole strength in the attack. As that stone chunk was fiercely hit, it dropped onto the stone coffin and smashed it into flying fragments. The stone pillow itself split into several pieces. At the same time, there was another whooshing sound of something flying past them. Wu Santong and Yelu Qi were about to raise their palms to attack again but that thing had already floated away from them. They heard a 'hei-hei' cold laugh and then immediately came a bleak silence.

"Li Mochou!" Wu Santong said with a start. Guo Fu cried out, "No that was the corpse! How would Li Mochou be inside the coffin?" Yelu Qi let out a groan with his mouth hanging open. He didn't believe that there were ghosts in the world but to think that it was Li Mochou was actually quite unreasonable. Obviously she and he came in together while Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu had actually been inside Gu Mu for many days. How could she be right under the Yang Long couple's coffin? Wu Santong said, "Then where has Li Mochou gone to?" Yelu Qi said, "Everything inside the tomb is becoming weird. Let us get out of here first." Guo Fu asked, "What should we do about my little sister?" Wu Santong then said, "We ran into a dead end but your mother will surely have a great plan. Let's go out and ask her what to do."

So the people searched for the way out and returned to the mountain creek. From under the water, all they saw was red. The woods on both sides of the creek had caught fire and hot steam was attacking them. Horrified, Guo Fu called out, "Ma, Ma!" but didn't hear any reply. Suddenly on the bank a big burning tree toppled down. Yelu Qi pulled her up and quickly jumped upstream, just in time to dodge the danger. It was deep winter at this time of year and all the plants were dried out and withering. So the mountain became a sea of fire. Even though the five people were soaked in the middle of the creek, the big fires were encroaching and their faces felt boiling hot.

Wu Santong said, "The Mongolian army must have been attacking the Chongyang Palace. They suffered defeat and then set fire to the mountain to vent their anger.

Guo Fu worriedly cried out: "Ma...Ma! Where are you?" Suddenly on the left side of the creek she saw a woman's figure skipping around to avoid the flames. "Ma, Ma! She cried out in delight and jumped up from the water to rush ahead. "Be careful!" Wu Santong called out after her and there suddenly came chaotic 'ka-la' sounds. Two big trees fell down, blocking his view.

Guo Fu rushed through the smoke and fire. At this time she was still in the water. First she thought about her mother. Second, she just came out of the darkness inside Gu Mu and into the sudden brightness. Her eyes couldn't adjust and so she couldn't see things very clearly. As she got closer, she then realized that the back side of that figure didn't seem right. She became nervous. And when that person turned her body around it was, unexpectedly, Li Mochou.

Earlier Li Mochou was trapped under the stone coffin by Yang Guo and had no way to get out. But afterwards Yang Guo struck the top coffin out of anger, causing the coffin lid below to also crack. She therefore escaped death by throwing out the stone pillow and leaping out after it.

Even though she was confined inside the coffin for less than an hour, she got a taste of what it was like being suffocated to death inside a coffin, which was truly the most painful and miserable situation. During this short period of time, she clenched her jaws, detesting every living person in the world. She thought to herself, "After I die, I must become an evil spirit. I will kill Yang Guo, Xiao Longnu, Wu Santong, Huang Rong.. ." Not discriminating who it was, all she wanted was to kill everybody. Although she could escape by luck later, the hatred in her heart was actually not lightened. Suddenly seeing Guo Fu, she let out a smile and gently said, "Guo Guniang [Miss Guo], it's you. The fires are burning with such ferocity. You must be careful."

Guo Fu saw her friendly expression and was quite relieved. So she asked, "Did you see my mother?" Li Mochou moved a few steps closer and pointed to the left. She said, "She went that way, didn't she?" Guo Fu looked towards the direction she just pointed. Li Mochou suddenly closed in and reached out to seal a pressure point below her waist. With a laugh she said, "Don't worry. Your mother will come to look for you." She saw that the fires were nearing from all directions. If she was delayed again, her own life would be in danger. She jumped up and took off towards the west. Guo Fu was left paralyzed on the ground, only hearing the chilling sound of Li Mochou's singing from behind the violent flames. She sang, "I ask the world. What is this love that makes people live and die for?"

The singing gradually faded away and the wind suddenly blew a thick plume of smoke, enveloping Guo Fu. She couldn't move her limbs and so, choking in the smoke, she coughed loudly. The Wu father and sons and Yelu Qi were standing midstream, with burning ashes falling on their heads. Between the small creek and Guo Fu was a raging fire twenty feet high. They knew perfectly well that Guo Fu was in imminent danger but if they were to go in and rescue her, they would only accompany her in death and so they couldn't come up with a plan to save her.

In the smoke Guo Fu was disoriented and about to faint. She was so frightened that she couldn't even cry out. Suddenly she heard someone's shouting from the east side so she turned her head, only to see a whirlwind that wrapped around a gray shadow coming towards her. Wherever the spinning wind passed through, the fire would split open into two sections. That whirlwind reached her in just a short while. The shadow inside was of course Yang Guo. Guo Fu originally thought it was someone coming to rescue her and was delighted. But then she clearly saw that it was actually Yang Guo. Even though it was broiling hot outside, in her heart she felt as if she was drenched with cold water. She thought to herself, "I'm about to die and now he had to come to ridicule and humiliate me." After all she was the daughter of Guo Jing and Huang Rong so she just viciously stared at Yang Guo and surprisingly was not afraid in the least bit.

Yang Guo rushed to her side and thrust out his sword. It was placed at the area below her waist. "Be careful!" He shouted and wielded out his left arm. With his vigorous internal energy sending through the black iron sword, Guo Fu felt like she was riding a cloud while flying away in midair. She went over ten big trees that were burning and sending flames into the sky. And then with a splash, she fell into the creek. Yelu Qi quickly rushed forward to support her and unseal her pressure point. Guo Fu was confused and disoriented. And after a while, she was weeping like a baby.

When Yang Guo first brought Xiao Longnu and Guo Xiang out of the tomb they saw the Mongolian soldiers setting fire to the mountain. The Yang-Long couple had spent a great many years together among these big trees and flowers. Suddenly seeing the fires, they felt great pain and regret. But the army was big and powerful and they had no way to fight them. Yang Guo didn't know how long Xiao Longnu would last after the poisons had entered her major pressure points so he found a small cave covered with thatches to hide in temporarily.

A short while passed. From the distance they saw Guo Fu hurt by Li Mochou and the raging fires were about to burn her body. Yang Guo said, "Long'er, this girl not only harmed me, but also had hurt you. Today, she's finally getting what she deserves."

With a bright glow in her eyes, Xiao Longnu gazed at him and asked in bewilderment, "Guo'er, are you saying you aren't going to save her?"

Yang Guo bitterly replied, "She's hurt us like this and yet I'm not killing her with my own hand. I'm already doing right by her parents."

With a sigh Xiao Longnu said, "We are unfortunate. That is our sad fate. If we could make other people happy, wouldn't that be wonderful?"

Despite Yang Guo's saying all these things, when seeing that the big fires were about to reach Guo Fu, he eventually couldn't bear it and harshly said, "Great! Our fate is sad. Everybody else's is fine!" Then he soaked the long gown on his body and strapped on the black iron sword. He quickly conjured up his internal energy and from the sword created a whirlwind that blew away the raging fires. Then he sent Guo Fu out of danger. After that he returned to Xiao Longnu's side. The hair on his head and his gown were all singed by the fire. His pants were on fire and even though he quickly put it out, the burned areas on his legs already had countless blisters.

Xiao Longnu was carrying Guo Xiang and they retreated to the thatches they were hiding in earlier. While she stretched out her hand to tidy Yang Guo's hair and clothes, she felt that she had married such a heroic husband. She couldn't restrain the pride in her heart. Standing in between the strong winds and the roaring flames, she leaned on Yang Guo and her face revealed a peaceful and joyous expression. Yang Guo focused his eyes on her, only to see that the big flames were bringing red to her cheeks, multiplying her delicate beauty and so he placed his arm around her waist. During this slice of time, the two people conveniently forgot all the sufferings and sorrows in the world.

Two people were standing on a high place. The Wu father and sons, Guo Fu and Yelu Qi five people, who were standing in the middle of the creek to avoid the fires, looked up and saw the married couple, with floating clothes and solemn postures. They looked just like deities among mortals. Guo Fu had always looked down on Yang Guo but this time she suddenly felt inferior.

Yang Guo and Xiao Longnu stood there for a moment. Xiao Longnu gazed at the blazing fires on the mountain. She sighed and said, "This place is being burned to the ground. It will take a long time for the flowers, plants, and trees to grow back. Do you think in the future this will ever be a beautiful scene again?"

Yang Guo didn't want her to feel bad about these things so with a smile he said, "We are newly wed. The Mongolian army set fires to congratulate us. How would they not use tons and tons of flowers as candles? Xiao Longnu giggled. Yang Guo then said, "Let's go rest in that cave. How do you feel?" Xiao Longnu replied, "I'm still okay." Then, side by side, the two people walked off towards the back side of the mountain.

Wu Santong suddenly remembered something. He raised his voice and called out, "Yang Xiong di [Brother Yang], my master and Zhu Shi di [Apprentice Brother Zhu] have been trapped in the Passionless Valley [Jue Qing Gu]. Are you going to go and rescue them?"

Yang Guo was startled and didn't reply. He spoke to himself, "How am I involved in these many things?" He was deep in thought but for a while his feet didn't stop. They walked to the back side of the mountain where it was all rocky and nothing grew. Although Xiao Longnu's poisons were severe, they were yet to act up. Her pressure points had earlier been cleared so her martial skills were gradually coming back. With Guo Xiang in her arms, she walked quickly along the way. After walking for half an hour, the two people were already far away from the Chongyang Palace. When they turned their heads to look back, the big fires were burning so intensely that half the sky was glowing red.

The north wind was blowing more and more heavily. It was so cold that Guo Xiang's small face became red like an apple. Xiao Longnu said, "We must go look for something to eat. The child is both cold and hungry. I'm afraid that she won't be able to stand it."

Yang Guo then said, "I was really foolish. I don't know why I snatched the baby and caused us an unnecessary burden."

Xiao Longnu bent down to kiss Guo Xiang's face and said, "This little sister is very lovable. Don't you like her?"

Yang Guo laughed and said, "What's so special about other people's children? Of course except we make one ourselves."

Xiao Longnu's face turned red. Yang Guo's words touched a mother's instinct deep in her heart. She thought to herself, "Only if I could give you a child... Alas, how would I have such a good fortune?"

For fear that she would be sad; Yang Guo didn't dare to look her in the eyes. Instead, he lifted his head to check the weather and then saw that the northwest sky was low and heavy as if it would crush down any minute. He said, "Looks like today it will snow heavily. We'd better stay overnight in someone's home." When they were evading the fires, they walked down the back side of the mountain to a remote and uncultivated no-road area that was filled with scattered rock piles and thorny bushes. They climbed up to the high ground and looked in all directions. Unexpectedly there was no smoke from a house within a ten li radius. Yang Guo said, "The snow definitely won't be light. If we get snowed in on the mountain, that could be pretty bad. Let's push a little harder. Today we must get off the mountain."

Then Xiao Longnu asked, "Do you think Uncle Wu and Guo Guniang [Miss Guo] will run into the Mongolian army? And could the Taoist priests from the Quanzhen sect get

away with their lives?” While saying this, she was genuinely concerned about these people.

Yang Guo said, “Your conscience is really too good. These people have wronged you and yet you still don’t forget all about them. No wonder years ago your master realized that your conscience was too good. Afraid that you’d be miserable later on, she had you practice cutting off all emotions and desires, not involving yourself in all matters. Yet you’ve been caring for me, wasting your over ten years practice. You are also concerned about everybody.”

Xiao Longnu faintly smiled and said, “Is that so? I’ve made your life miserable. In bitterness there is sweetness. My worst fear is that you wouldn’t want me to be concerned about you.”

Yang Guo said, “That’s right. The more bitter... the sweeter. It’s much better than no pain and no gain. I can be madly crazy but can’t stand too many quiet and peaceful days.”

Xiao Longnu giggled and said, “Didn’t you say we’d go south to farm, raise some chickens, and enjoy the sun?”

Yang Guo sighed and said, “I only hope we can always be like this.”

They walked for another several li and then the empty sky was filled with flying snow. At the beginning it was quite light but then the north wind gradually picked up and the more it snowed the heavier it became. The two people knew they couldn’t set their minds at ease until after the blizzard; they used their lightness skills to rush ahead.

Xiao Longnu suddenly asked, “Guo’er, where do you think my shi zi [Apprentice Sister] has gone to?”

Yang Guo responded, “You are still worried about her. We didn’t kill her this time and don’t know... and don’t know...” He originally was going to say “and don’t know if we will be able to when we run into her again” but he was afraid that he’d give Xiao Longnu grief so he decided not to say it.

Xiao Longnu said, “Shi zi [Apprentice sister] is actually a very pitiful person.”

Yang Guo said, “She isn’t willing to be pitiful alone but is determined to make everybody in the world miserable like herself.”

While they were saying this, the sky became even gloomier. But as they came around the corner of the mountain, they suddenly saw a tiny little wooden house between two big pine trees. Several inches of thick white snow were accumulated on its roof.

Yang Guo said in delight, “Great. Let us stop here tonight.” They rushed forward but noticed that the door was left ajar, with no trail of footprints in the snow outside the house. In a clear voice he said, “We passers-by are out here in the snow. May we stay overnight at your place?” A while passed and there was no reply from inside the house.

Yang Guo pushed the door open and saw that there was no one inside. All the tables and benches were covered in dust, indicating that no one had occupied this place for a long time. He then called Xiao Longnu to enter the house. She shut the door and started a fire. A spear was hung on a wooden wall and there was a rabbit snare in one corner of the room. It looked like this place was a temporary hunting shack. In another room there was a bed, with several already tattered wolf skins piled on top. Yang Guo picked up the spear and went out to hunt a deer. He was successful and when he came back, he skinned and dressed it. He used the snow to scrub it clean and then roasted it over the fire.

During this time it snowed even harder outside. But the fire was burning bright inside the house, making it warm like spring. Xiao Longnu chewed the deer meat before feeding it to Guo Xiang. While flipping the meat back and forth over the fire, Yang Guo looked at the two of them with a smile.

The fire was gently crackling. The room was filled with the smell of roasted meat. The small shack on the wild mountain was indeed a warm and deliciously smelling world.

