

## Foxs' Wuxia

Wuxia Fan Translation

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## SDXL Chapter 15



### Chapter 15 – The Disciples of Eastern Heretic

*Translated by Noodles*



*Yang Guo saw a girl in blue green by the window, her left hand was holding down a piece of paper, her right holding a pen, she was in the middle of doing calligraphy. Her back was towards the couch and he couldn't see her face, her back was slender with a fine waist, extremely elegant and beautiful.*

Inside the formation were the extremely shocked Wu brothers and Guo Fu; outside the formation were Da'erba and the Mongolian warriors. They dashed forward to rescue Fawang. Da'erba had terrifying strength, there were many skilled fighters within the crowd of Mongolian warriors; how could Guo Fu and the Wu brothers fight them off?

Suddenly a swaying Jinlun Fawang stood up and waved his iron wheel, the ‘qiang lang lang’ sounds were soul disturbing, his face was pale. He laughed out at the sky yet his laugh was filled with a cold and mournful feeling; the band of people all looked at each other startled and stopped their advance.

Jinlun Fawang hissed, “I have never suffered even half an injury whilst in battle in my entire life; today I actually injured myself.” He stretched out his hand and grabbed Huang Rong’s back.

Yang Guo’s chest was severely injured by Jinlun Fawang’s palm, he didn’t have any strength to stand up and crawled across the ground; when he saw Huang Rong in danger he again swept out his stick to repel this grab. But as soon as he used any strength, he spat out a pool of blood.

Huang Rong said mournfully, “Guo’er, we give in, don’t fight on, take care of yourself.”

Guo Fu raised her long sword and protected her mother.

Yang Guo quietly said, “Sister Fu, run away quickly, it’s important to tell your father about this.”

Guo Fu’s mind was in a mess, she knew her martial arts were poor but how could she leave her mother?

Jinlun Fawang swung his iron wheel slightly and the wheel collided with Guo Fu’s sword, a ‘dang’ sound was heard and a white light glimmered, the sword flew up into the air and landed in the forest.

Jinlun Fawang was about to push her out of the way and grab Huang Rong when suddenly a girl’s voice from behind said, “Wait!”

A blue green flash leapt out of the forest. She stretched out her hand to catch the sword and hurried to the middle of the pile of rocks.

Jinlun Fawang saw that her face was extremely terrifying; it looked three parts human and seven parts ghost, he has never seen such a strange face before in his life. He couldn’t stop himself from being startled and said, “Who are you?”

The young girl didn’t answer and pushed a rock in between Jinlun Fawang and Huang Rong. She said, “You’re the famous Jinlun Fawang?” Her face was ugly but her voice

was gentle and tender.

Fawang said, "Correct, what is your name?"

The girl replied, "I'm a nameless young girl, you won't know me." As she said this, she moved another slab of stone three inches.

The sun had gone down long ago; the forest was full of darkness. Jinlun Fawang's mind lit up and shouted, "What are you doing?" He was about to stop the girl from moving the stones when she suddenly called out, "The Horned Wooden Dragon Changes into the Overbearing Golden Dragon!"

Guo Fu and the Wu brothers were startled and they all pondered, "How does she know the changes of the formation?" But they heard her voice had a commanding tone and immediately started to move the rocks according to her instructions. Four, fives stones were moved, the scattered formation changed again.

Jinlun Fawang was alarmed and angry, he shouted, "Little girl, you dare to come and mess things around!"

He just heard her say, "The Moon Fox Turns into the Day Rabbit, the Crow of the Final Moon Shifts into the Wooden Wolf of 'Kui', Bat of the Earth Enters the Room of the Fire Pig." All the things that she called out were the twenty-eight positions of 'su'. Guo Fu and the Wu brothers felt that the way she led the formation was exactly the way that Huang Rong did while she led formations. They were delighted and used all their efforts in moving the rocks; they saw that they were about to trap Jinlun Fawang in the formation again.

Jinlun Fawang had circulated his internal energy with force to protect himself from the wound from the collision with the rock; though the injury didn't react for now, he actually had a serious internal injury. He had no way to start kicking the stones again. He knew that in just a little while he would be trapped in the stone formation again; his disciple Da'erba was brave but he doesn't understand the formation and so it would be difficult for him to help. He saw that Huang Rong was picking herself up, struggling to stand upright; all he needed to do was take a few steps forward and he would be able to capture her. But saving himself was more important right now; he picked up his iron wheel and sent an attack towards Wu Xiuwen's head.

After he suffered the injury his arms had no strength; he was forcing himself to move the iron wheel. If Wu Xiuwen had a sword, he would be able to knock the wheel out of

his hands. But Fawang was surrounded by a powerful air; though the stance had no force behind it, it still looked like the real thing. How could Wu Xiuwen dare to take this attack; he immediately withdrew back into the formation.

Jinlun Fawang slowly walked out of the formation and stood there in a daze for a while thinking, “I’m afraid that I’ll never get an opportunity as good as this again. Could it be that heaven is protecting the Song and stopping me from succeeding? The Wulin of the central plain have many able people; these few youngsters are already versed in both the arts and martial arts. Just they alone make strong opponents; our Mongolian and Tibetan warriors pale by comparison.” He held his chest and sighed. He turned around and walked away. Ten or so steps later, a ‘qiang lang lang’ sound was heard; the wheel had fallen to the ground as he struggled to stay up.

Da’erba was alarmed and called out, “Master!” He dashed over and held him up and said, “Master, are you alright?” Fawang frowned and didn’t reply, he stretched out his arm and leaned on his shoulder and quietly said, “What a pity! What a pity! Let’s go!” A Mongolian warrior led a horse over. Due to his injury, Jinlun Fawang had no strength to pull himself up on the horse. Da’erba used his left palm and pushed his master’s waist and helped him up on the horse. They left heading east.

The girl in blue green slowly walked towards Yang Guo. She stopped and bent down to examine his face, wanting to see how seriously injured he was. It was now deep into the night; things couldn’t be seen clearly even if it was just a distance of one inch away from your face. She went up to Yang Guo’s face and saw that his eyes were open wide, seemingly in a trance; his cheeks were red and his breathing rapid, it appeared that his injury was not light.

In this blurry state, all he saw was a pair of soft and gentle eyes in front of his face, like the way Xiao Longnu’s eyes appeared when she looked at him. It was soft and gentle, understanding and caring, he opened his arms and grabbed the girl and called out, “Gu Gu, Guo’er is hurt, don’t leave me.”

The girl in blue green was embarrassed and flustered, she struggled slightly. Yang Guo’s chest immediately suffered a flash of pain and he couldn’t stop himself from calling out ‘ai ya!’

The girl didn’t dare to struggle and quietly said, “I’m not your Gu Gu; let me go.”

Yang Guo stared at her eyes and pleaded, “Gu Gu, don’t leave me... I’m... I’m... I’m your Guo’er.”

The girl's heart softened and said gently, "I'm not your Gu Gu."

The sky was even darker now; the girl's terrifying face was hidden, showing only a pair of bright pupils.

Yang Guo pulled her hand and pleaded, "You are, you are! Don't... don't leave me again."

The young girl was held by him. Her body burnt up with embarrassment; she didn't know what to do.

Suddenly Yang Guo's mind became clear; he saw that the girl in front of him was not Xiao Longnu. He was extremely disappointed, his mind turned upside down and he fainted.

The young girl was shocked. She saw Guo Fu and the Wu brothers surrounding Huang Rong, showing concern and serving her yet Yang Guo had no one. She knew that his injury was serious, if he doesn't take her Master's medicine, his life will be in danger. She supported his waist and pushed and pulled him out of the formation and then slowly walked out of the forest. The skinny horse was very sharp; it recognized its master and rushed towards him. The girl put him on the horse's back but she didn't get on, she held the horse's reigns and walked on.

Yang Guo was conscious one moment and in a daze the next; sometimes he thought that the person next to him was Xiao Longnu and he called out in delight; other times he found out that she wasn't and his whole body felt as if it was in an ice cellar.

After sometime, he felt a clear fragrance enter the places where his chest was injured, it was extremely comfortable. He was startled and discovered that he was now lying on a couch, a thin blanket covered his body; he wanted to sit up but suddenly felt a severe pain going through his chest, he couldn't move. He turned his head and saw a girl in blue green by the window; her left hand was holding down a piece of paper, her right holding a brush, she was in the middle of doing calligraphy. Her back was towards the couch and he couldn't see her face; her back was slender with a fine waist, extremely elegant and beautiful. He took a look around and found out that he was in the room of a thatch house; the benches, chairs, table and bed were all simple and crude, the four walls were gloomy, yet it felt peaceful and serene. Beside the bed were a long zither and a jade flute. All he remembered was how he fought with Jinlun Fawang in the forest but his mind was a blank as to how he got to this place. He concentrated harder and

recalled that he was on his horse's back; someone was leading them, a girl. Now he remembered, the girl in front of him was that girl.

She was now concentrating on her calligraphy; he saw her arm moved lightly, her form graceful and elegant. There wasn't a sound in the room; it felt like he had arrived in a completely different world to the heated battle he had just been in. He didn't dare to make a noise and disturb the young girl, he just lay down on the couch peacefully; it was like settling down again after a dream, he really didn't know what world he was in.

His mind suddenly lit up, the girl in blue green in front of him was the girl who gave him the warning on the Changan road, and later on she helped him save Lu Wushuang. There were no ties between him and her, why was she treating him so well? He couldn't stop his mouth from opening, "Sister, so it's you who has saved me again."

The girl stopped her brush but she didn't turn around, she said softly, "You can't really say I saved you. I happened to be passing by and saw how unreasonable that Tibetan monk was, and you were injured as well..." She lowered her head slightly after she said this.

Yang Guo said, "Sister, I... I..." He was touched but his throat choked up and he couldn't make a sound.

The young girl said, "You have a good heart; you save other people without regard for your life. I just gave a little help; it's nothing."

Yang Guo said, "Auntie Guo raised me, of course I had to use all my efforts in saving her when she was in danger, but sister and I..."

The young girl said, "I'm not talking about your Auntie Guo, I'm talking about Lu Wushuang sister Lu."

Yang Guo hadn't heard the name Lu Wushuang for a long time, when he heard her mention this name he quickly asked, "Is Miss Lu safe? Has she recovered from her injury?"

The young girl replied, "Thank you for your concern, she has recovered from her injury. You haven't forgotten her."

From her tone, Yang Guo could tell that she and Lu Wushuang are very close. He asked, "I wonder how sister greets Miss Lu?"

The young girl didn't reply, she gave a subtle smile and said, "Don't call me elder sister this, elder sister that, I'm not older than you." After a while, she laughed and said, "I'm afraid that it's a bit too late now to change your greeting after calling me 'Gu Gu' a few times."

Yang Guo's face went red; he knew that when he was dazed and unclear after the injury, he must have wrongly recognized her as Xiao Longnu, incessantly calling out, 'Gu Gu'. It could be that he also said some tender and affectionate things, the more he thought about it, the more uneasy he got, he stuttered, "You... you... you're not offended are you?"

The young girl laughed and said, "Of course I'm not offended; just rest here peacefully. You can search for your Gu Gu when you've recovered from your injury." She continued, "Don't be too worried, you'll eventually find her."

Those few words were affectionate and considerate and within the softness there was respect; it made a person feel at ease and happy. This was completely different to all the other girls he knew. She wasn't like Lu Wushuang who was vivacious and wily, and even further away from the unrestrained pride of Guo Fu. Yelu Yan was straight to the point and Wanyan Ping was long-suffering and piteous. When it came to Xiao Longnu: at first she was cold as frost and unfeeling, but eventually she fell in love and all her emotions were stirred and brought forward. This girl in blue green was cultured and refined, warm and attentive. She knew that he missed his 'Gu Gu' so she advised him to rest peacefully first, and once he had recovered he could go and find her. He felt that being with her made him feel relaxed and calm. After she said these words she picked up her brush again.

Yang Guo said, "Sister, what is your surname?"

The girl said, "Don't ask questions, just rest peacefully on the bed and stop thinking so much, your injury will recover quicker."

Yang Guo said, "Fine. Actually, I knew that I was asking in vain, you wouldn't even let me see your face let alone know your name."

The young girl sighed and said, "My face is ugly, you've seen it before."

Yang Guo said, "No...no! That's when you had the human skin mask on."



The young girl said, “If I’m as beautiful as your Gu Gu, why do I need to wear this mask?”

Yang Guo was pleased when she praised Xiao Longnu’s beauty, he asked, “How do you know my Gu Gu is beautiful? You’ve seen her before?”

The young girl said, “I haven’t seen her before. But the way you think about her, spell bound and completely enchanted, she must be the number one beauty in the world.”

Yang Guo sighed and said, “I long for her not because of her beauty, even if she was the ugliest woman in the world, I would still long for her like this. But... but if you see her yourself you will definitely praise her beauty even more.”

If Guo Fu or Lu Wushuang heard these words, they would definitely answer back with some chiding comment; but this young girl replied, “It must be true. Not only is she beautiful, she treats you extremely well.” After she said this, she continued on with her calligraphy.

Yang Guo looked up at the ceiling for a while, but he couldn’t stop himself from turning around and facing the slender back of the young girl. He asked, “Sister, what are you writing?”

The young girl replied, “I’m practicing calligraphy.”

Yang Guo said, “What ‘bei tie’ (beautiful calligraphy written on silk/beautifully presented calligraphy) are you copying?”

The young girl replied, “My writing is ugly, how can one describe it as a copy of a ‘bei tie’.”

Yang Guo said, “You’re too modest, I can tell it’s definitely great.”

The young girl laughed and said, “Strange, how can you tell?”

Yang Guo said, “Someone as elegant and refined as you must have calligraphy that is also elegant and refined. Sister, how about letting me look at what you’ve written?”

The young girl gave another light laugh and said, “My writing can’t see the light of day; I’ll need to ask you for lessons when you’ve recovered.”

Yang Guo secretly said, “Shameful.” He couldn’t stop himself from appreciating the lessons of literature and calligraphy that Huang Rong taught him on Peach Blossom Island. If he didn’t have that experience, he wouldn’t be able to tell what someone was writing let alone distinguish the difference between beautiful and ugly calligraphy.

As he was lost in thought, he felt a throbbing pain in his chest. Immediately he circulated his internal energy, chi flowing through his pressure points. He gradually felt comfortable and at ease and soon he fell into a deep sleep.

By the time he woke up, the sky had already gone dark. The girl had prepared a few dishes and had put them on a short table next to the bed he was on. She helped him to eat. Though the bamboo chopsticks and clay bowl were coarse implements, they were all new and specially prepared for him.

The dishes were nothing special, just ordinary vegetables, tofu, eggs and fish, but they were all cooked deliciously. Yang Guo ate three bowls of rice in one go and kept on praising her cooking. Though her face was hidden by the mask and covered her expression, her bright eyes showed signs of delight.

Yang Guo’s injury had recovered a little more by the next day. The young girl had moved a chair next to the end of the bed. She sat there and mended his long gown. She lifted up the gown and said, “How can a person like you wear something like this?” After she said this she left the room and returned with a roll of blue green fabric and started to prepare a gown according to the fitting of his old one.

From her voice and figure, she was no older than seventeen or eighteen; but not only was she like an older sister to Yang Guo, she was tender and loving to him like a mother. His mother had passed away a long time ago but today he experienced the feeling of being that child once again; he was touched and surprised and asked, “Sister, why are you treating me so well? I really can’t accept it.”

The young girl replied, “What’s so difficult about making a gown? You risked your life to save someone; that was a much harder task.”

The morning of that day passed peacefully. After midday, the girl once again sat at the table and practiced calligraphy. Yang Guo really wanted to see what she was writing but after pleading a few times she still said no. She practiced for about two hours; she wrote one piece and then thought for a while before she ripped it up and started another piece. It appeared that she couldn’t get what she wanted; she wrote a piece and then ripped it up. It seemed like she was writing some sort of martial arts manual.

Eventually she gave a sigh and asked, “What do you want to eat, I’ll make something for you.”

Yang Guo had an idea and said, “I’m afraid that it might be too time consuming.”

The young girl said, “What? Tell me.”

Yang Guo said, “I want to eat zong zi (glutinous rice dumplings wrapped in leaves).”

The young girl was startled and said, “What’s so hard about wrapping a few zong? I’d like to eat some myself. Do you like sweet or savory ones?”

Yang Guo said, “Whichever is fine. As long as I can eat some I’ll be satisfied, how can I be picky?”

Indeed, that night the young girl did wrap up a few zong zi for him. The sweet ones were filled with soy beans, the savory filled with ham; they were both delicious. Yang Guo ate and praised her incessantly at the same time.

The young girl sighed and said, “You really are clever, you’ve finally guessed who I am.”

Yang Guo was surprised and thought, “I haven’t guessed! How have I guessed who you are?” But his reply was, “How did you know?”

The young girl replied, “Jiangnan, my home, is famous for its zong zi; there were many things for you to pick from but you had to pick zong zi.”

Yang Guo recalled the events of years ago in Zhexi where he met the Guo couple, the fight with Li Mochou, how he became Ouyang Feng’s godson but he could not remember who this girl was.

He wanted to eat zong zi for another reason. When he finished eating, he waited for the moment when the young girl was not looking and placed a piece in his palm. When the girl collected up the chopsticks and bowls, he quickly took a piece of fabric that the girl had left behind when she was making the gown for him and attached some zong to one end and then shot it out towards the pieces of torn paper on the table. When he pulled a piece back and took a look, he couldn’t stop himself from being startled. The words that were on the paper were: ‘since a gentleman has passed my eyes, the clouds are not pleasant.’ That phrase was from the ‘Shi Jing’. Years ago Huang Rong had taught him the meaning of this phrase: ‘since I’ve seen such a man, how come I am not pleased?’

He shot out the piece of cloth again for another piece. The same thing was written on it but the 'since' word was torn in half. Yang Guo's heart ran, he had collected ten pieces of paper but the same thing was written on all of them. He carefully thought about the meaning and went off into a daydream.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps, the young girl was returning to the room. Yang Guo quickly hid the pieces of paper underneath his blanket. The young girl gathered up the rest of the pieces of paper and burned them outside.

Yang Guo thought, "She wrote 'since a gentleman has passed my eyes', could that gentleman be me? I've only spoken a few words with her, what could she see in me that she likes? Anyway, how can someone describe me as a gentleman? But if it isn't me, who else can it be since there's no one else around."

Just as he was in deep thought, the girl returned to the room. She stood quietly by the window for a while and then blew out the candle. The pale light of the moon shone through the window, covering the floor.

Yang Guo called out, "Sister."

But the young girl did not reply and slowly left the room.

After a while, he heard the sound of a flute coming through the window. Yang Guo had seen her use a jade flute to fight with Li Mochou, her martial arts weren't weak; her musical skills with the flute were great as well.

During his time in the Ancient Tomb, Xiao Longnu would occasionally play the zither and he would sit by the side and listen to her explain the meaning of songs; thus he was coarsely learned in music. He could tell that she was playing a tune of 'Wu She Shang', the song of 'qi ao'. This song was peaceful and serene; Yang Guo had heard it a few times but he didn't love it. He heard that she kept on repeating the first five phrases, 'Looking into the distance of the mysterious Qi, the green bamboo aplenty, there's a gentleman, like a clean cut, polished and carved jade.' Whether it's high or low, whether there are sudden drops and rises, the tunes are variations of these five phrases, winding and drowning in its meanings. Yang Guo knew that these five phrases also came from the 'Shi Jing', it praises the elegance of a male, cut and polished elegantly like the smoothness of beautiful jade.

Yang Guo listened for a while and couldn't stop himself from quietly reciting, "Looking into the distance of the mysterious Qi, the green bamboo aplenty..." The flute suddenly

stopped after these two phrases. Yang Guo was startled and lamented his actions, “She was playing the flute to comfort herself; by quietly reciting those lines I showed that I understood what she was thinking, that is a bit too impolite.”

When the young girl brought breakfast in the next morning, she saw that Yang Guo was wearing the human skin mask, she was taken aback, and then laughed and she said, “Why are you wearing that?”

Yang Guo said, “You gave this to me; you don’t want to show your true face so I’m wearing this.”

The young girl said calmly, “That’s fine.” After she said this she placed the breakfast down and left the room; she didn’t say anything else to him that day.

Yang Guo was feeling uneasy; he was afraid that he had offended her and wanted to say a few apologetic words. She didn’t stop in the room for the rest of the day. Later on during the evening, she waited for Yang Guo to finish eating supper before returning to collect the bowls and chopsticks; as she was about to leave, Yang Guo said, “Sister, you play the flute really well, can you play a tune for me?”

The young girl gave a subtle moan and then said, “Fine.” She left the room and collected her jade flute. She returned and sat by Yang Guo’s bed, playing a tune on the flute. This time she played the song ‘Ying Xian Ke’ (Meeting the Divine Guest), it was a graceful and joyous tune, a song that greets a guest.

Yang Guo thought, “So your flute also wear’s a mask, not willing to show the song that is in your heart.”

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps could be heard in the midst of the flute’s music; someone was hurrying towards this place. The young girl placed the flute down and went to the door, calling out, “Cousin!”

Someone rushed to the house and was panting as they said, “Cousin, that witch has picked up our traces and she’s on her way now; let’s go!”

Yang Guo was pleased when he heard Lu Wushuang’s voice, but he was alarmed when he heard that witch Li Mochou was on the way. He then thought, “So that girl is Wifey’s cousin.”

He heard the young girl say, “Someone’s injured and is recuperating inside.”

Lu Wushuang said, “Who?”

The young girl replied, “The person that saved your life.”

Lu Wushuang replied, “Sha Dan! He’s... he’s in there!! She dashed into the room as she said this.

The joy and delight on her face could be seen in the moonlight; she called out, “Sha Dan, Sha Dan! How come you’re here? This time, it seems like it’s your turn to be the injured one.”

Yang Guo said, “Wifey...” He could only say one word before he thought about the elegant and refined young girl in blue green standing aside, he stopped joking and took back his words, he asked, “How did Li Mochou find you again?”

Lu Wushuang said, “After that battle at the restaurant, you suddenly left and my cousin took me to this place to recuperate. Actually, I recovered from my wound a long time ago; I was feeling bored so I went to Xiangguang for a little while. That day, I bumped into two beggars, I eavesdropped on them and heard that there was a ‘Heroes’ gathering at Da Xingguan. I hurried to Da Xingguan to take a look but by the time I got there, it had finished. I was afraid that my cousin was worrying about me so I hurried back. Outside a teashop at the town ahead, I saw that witch’s donkey, her donkey has changed but the ringing of the golden bell hasn’t...” As she got to this point, her voice trembled as she continued, “At least my time wasn’t up yet, if I had bumped into her head on, I wouldn’t have been able to see you two.”

Yang Guo said, “This girl is your cousin? She saved me but I still don’t know her name.”

The young girl replied, “I...”

Lu Wushuang suddenly stretched out her hand and pulled their masks off at the same time and said, “That witch is going to get here soon; why are you two still mucking around with these masks at a time like this?”

A bright light shone in Yang Guo’s eyes; the young girl had an oval face that sparkled, her skin glimmered like snow; though her beauty couldn’t match Xiao Longnu’s, she was still an extremely beautiful girl.

Lu Wushuang said, “She’s my cousin Cheng Ying, a disciple of the Master of Peach Blossom Island, Master Huang.”

Yang Guo bowed and greeted her, “Miss Cheng.”

Cheng Ying returned the greeting and said, “Young Hero Yang.”

Yang Guo thought, “She’s of such a young age, yet she’s actually a disciple of Island Master Huang? Counting back from Auntie Guo’s status, doesn’t that mean I’m a generation lower than her?”

Years ago when she was captured by Li Mochou and almost lost her life by the Scarlet Serpent Deity’s hand, it was Peach Blossom Island’s Island Master Huang Yaoshi who rescued her while passing by. After his daughter married, Huang Yaoshi roamed Jianghu making the world his home. He was old and by himself, so it was unavoidable that he would get lonely. When he saw that Cheng Ying was weak and had no where else to go, he couldn’t stop himself from pitying her. After he cured her poison, he took her with him. Cheng Ying served him carefully and meticulously. This was much better than the naughty, restless and unruly Huang Rong. Huang Yaoshi grew from his pity to love her and took her in as his disciple. Though Cheng Ying’s intelligence could not compare to Huang Rong’s, she was extremely careful and paid attention to everything. She studied the lesser points but she still managed to learn a considerable number of skills from Huang Yaoshi.

This year, her martial arts became able and she told her Master that she was going north to search for her cousin. On the Guanxia road, she bumped into Yang Guo and Lu Wushuang; it was she who gave the warnings along the way and she who gave news of Lu Wushuang’s capture. After the battle with Li Mochou in the restaurant with all the other youngsters, she took Lu Wushuang to a secluded place and built a hut to allow her to recuperate.

The day before, Lu Wushuang had left by herself and had not returned after a long period of time. Cheng Ying worried about her and went out in search of her. Instead of finding her, she saw Huang Rong using the stone formations to fend off Jinlun Fawang. She had learned the formations from Huang Yaoshi; although she didn’t know much, the things that she did know were learned thoroughly. And so, by coincidence, she managed to rescue Yang Guo.

Lu Wushuang said, “In a situation like this, why are you two still so formal?”

Yang Guo said, “Did Li Mochou see you eventually.”

Lu Wushuang said, “You really are naïve! If she saw me and you weren’t there to rescue me, how would I be able to escape from her? As soon as I heard the donkey’s bell, I hid behind the teahouse; I didn’t even dare to breath. I heard her ask the manager of the teahouse if he had seen two girls, one was a little lame and the other one was an extremely ugly girl. Cousin, she said you were an ugly girl, but she didn’t know that you are the exact opposite, a beautiful girl...”

Cheng Ying’s face went slightly red and said, “Don’t talk rubbish, Young Hero Yang will laugh.”

Yang Guo said, “I can’t take a title such as Young Hero Yang; just call me Yang Guo.”

Lu Wushuang angrily said, “As soon as you saw my cousin, you’re all nice and polite; you even told her your name, yet with me you lied and messed me around.”

Yang Guo gave a light laugh and said, “You called me ‘Sha Dan’, I listened to your orders and pretended to be a ‘Sha Dan’, isn’t that obedient enough?”

Lu Wushuang pouted and said, “I’ll deal with you later on.” She turned around to Cheng Ying and said, “Cousin, whenever you went into town to buy things, you would wear your mask, the townspeople recognized you. The manager of the teahouse could never have dreamed that a courteous and polite Taoist priestess would have ill intentions, so of course he would tell her where we are. The witch thanked him and asked him where she can seek lodgings and then she took apprentice sister Hong to search. She has always killed people at the first light of day; it looks like we’ve got six hours.”

Cheng Ying said, “Yes. That day when she attacked cousin’s home, it was ‘yin mo mao chu fen’ (I think it’s the fourth hour).” The three of them talked about how Li Mochou killed Lu Wushuang’s parents and then realized that they had met before in Jiaxing when they were kids. The cousins recalled staying in the old kiln that Yang Guo lived in, and then remembered that they have indeed met before; they all felt a close and intimate feeling.

Yang Guo said, “That witch’s martial arts are extremely high; even if I wasn’t injured, the three of us would not be able to beat her. Let’s just leave everything as it is, leave the lamps lit and escape.”

Cheng Ying nodded and said, “We’ve got six hours left. Brother Yang’s horse has great speed and stamina, if we leave now the witch might not be able to catch up.”



Lu Wushuang said, “Sha Dan, you’re injured, can you still ride?”

Yang Guo sighed and said, “I can’t but I’ll force myself; at least it’s better than falling into the hands of that witch.”

Lu Wushuang said, “We’ve only got one horse. Cousin, take Sha Dan and head west, I’ll head east and lure her away.”

Cheng Ying’s face went slightly red. She said, “No, you go with brother Yang. I don’t have any ties or debts with Li Mochou, even if I do fall into her hands, she might not harm me; if you fall into her hands, you’ll suffer.”

Lu Wushuang said, “She came for me, if she sees me with him, won’t his life be lost in vain because of me?” The cousins reasoned with each other, trying to push the other into accompanying Yang Guo in escaping.

Yang Guo was extremely touched by this, these two girls were filled with loyalty, yet in this danger they were both willing to risk their lives for him; even if I die at the hands of this witch, my life wouldn’t exactly have been lived for no purpose.

He then heard Lu Wushuang ask, “Sha Dan, say something, do you want my cousin to go with you or me?”

Before Yang Guo replied, Cheng Ying said, “Why do you keep on calling him Sha Dan this, Sha Dan that, are you not afraid of making brother Yang angry at all?”

Lu Wushuang stuck out her tongue, she laughed and said, “Look at how courteous and considerate you are to him; brother Sha would definitely want you to go with him.” Changing her greeting from ‘Sha Dan’ to ‘Brother Sha’ was her way of showing her sincerity.

Cheng Ying’s face was distinctly white and it was very easy to make her blush, so when Lu Wushuang said this, Cheng Ying’s face immediately turned red as a rose. She gave a slight laugh and said, “He calls you ‘Wifey’, doesn’t he? How can the wife not go along with him?”

This time it was Lu Wushuang’s turn to blush. She stretched out her hand and tried to tickle Cheng Ying; Cheng Ying turned around and leapt away. In a short while, the room felt as if a gentle relaxing breeze was blowing through the room, the three of them didn’t appear to be as worried and frightened as they were at the start.

Yang Guo thought, “If Miss Cheng escapes with me, then Wifey’s life would be in danger. If Wifey goes with me, then Miss Cheng would be in extreme danger.” He said, “I am extremely touched by the way you two treat me. I say that you two should escape and let me handle the witch. My master and she are apprentice sisters; she would still have some respect towards that relationship. Not only that, she’s afraid of my master, she wouldn’t dare to do anything to me...”

Before he finished, Lu Wushuang interrupted, “That won’t do...that won’t do.”

Yang Guo knew that the two would not abandon the other so he said clearly, “The three of us will escape together. If we do encounter that witch then we’ll fight for our lives; whether we live or die, let the heavens decide.”

Lu Wushuang clapped her hands and said, “Fine, let’s do that.”

Cheng Ying said grimly, “That witch comes and goes like the wind, if the three of us travel together, she will definitely catch up with us. We’re going to fight with her on the way so why don’t we remain here and wait for her to come when she’s exhausted.”

Yang Guo said, “That’s right. Sister knows how to use formations, she could even trap that monk Jinlun Fawang, the Scarlet Serpent Deity may not be able to break through it.”

Once he said this, the three’s eyes lit up softly.

Cheng Ying said, “That formation was set up by Mrs. Guo, I just added a few variations to it, I can never set something up like that. We’ll do our best and let fate decide. Cousin, come and help me.”

Yang Guo thought, “When Auntie Guo taught me the formation, I could only remember ten or so different types and it could only be used to lure the rusty Jinlun Fawang into the formation; it would have no use in blocking that heaven hating and world resenting Li Mochou. This type of art is extremely complicated; to be well versed in it requires at least one year’s worth of work. Miss Cheng is young so of course the things that she has learned cannot compare with Auntie Guo, she wasn’t trying to be modest. But no matter how simple and crude her formation is, it’s better than nothing.”

The two girls picked up an iron shovel and a hoe, they went outside and started to dig up earth and move stones as they started to set up the formation. They had worked urgently for two hours when the faint calls of cockerels could be heard from faraway.

Cheng Ying's head was covered with sweat as she looked at her efforts. She saw that her formation was miles apart from the rock formation that Huang Rong had set up; she was slightly depressed as she thought, "Mrs. Guo's talents exceeds mine by a hundred times over. It really would be extremely difficult to try to fend off the Scarlet Serpent Deity with such a coarse earth formation." She was afraid that her cousin and Yang Guo would get depressed about it so she did not tell them her thoughts.

Under the moonlight, Lu Wushuang saw something was wrong with her cousin and knew that her cousin wasn't completely confident. She took out a book from her pockets and returned to the hut and handed the book over to Yang Guo. She said, "Sha Dan, this is my master's 'Five Poison Codex'."

Yang Guo shivered slightly at the sight of the blood covered book.

Lu Wushuang said, "I lied to her about the book falling into the Beggar Clan's hands; if she catches me she will definitely search me and discover the book. Take a good look and once you've memorized it, burn it." She had never talked in a serious manner with Yang Guo before, but she had no interest in joking around in this time of danger. Yang Guo saw her expression was bleak and just nodded and accepted the book.

Lu Wushuang also took out a handkerchief and quietly said to him, "If you're unlucky and fall into the hands of that witch, when she wants to take your life give this handkerchief to her."

Yang Guo saw that one side of the handkerchief looked that it was torn from somewhere, the embroidered red flower on the handkerchief was torn in half, he didn't know what she meant by this and was startled, he did not take it and asked, "What is this?"

Lu Wushuang, "I'm asking you to give this to her, are you going to promise me?"

Yang Guo nodded and placed it by the side of the pillow. Lu Wushuang picked it up and put it in his pockets and whispered, "Don't let my cousin know." She suddenly smelt the manly scent on him and remembered how he undressed her and helped her fix her broken rib in place on the Guanxia road. And how they slept on the same bed; her heart stirred and she stared at him in a trance before turning around and leaving the room.

Yang Guo saw that her eyes were filled with boundless love, his heart raced. He opened the 'Five Poison Codex' and flipped through a few pages and remembered the antidote

to the “Five Poison Palm” and the “Soul Freezing Silver Needles”. He thought, “These two antidotes are both extremely hard to create but if I don’t die today, these two antidotes will eventually have a use later.”

He heard the hut’s door creak as someone pushed opened the door. He raised his head and saw Cheng Ying with red cheeks, she came over to the bed and he could see pearls of sweat on her forehead. Her breathing was slightly fast. She said, “Brother Yang, the earth formation that I have set outside is not good enough to hold back the Scarlet Serpent Deity.” She then took out a handkerchief from her pockets and offered it to him. She continued, “If she breaks through and enters the house, give this to her.”

Yang Guo saw that it was only half a handkerchief, the decoration and quality was the same as the one that Lu Wushuang gave him. He was surprised and raised his head, his eyes met hers and he saw eyes that glistened with tears, she was embarrassed and pleased at the same time. He was about to ask further when Cheng Ying suddenly blushed and whispered, “Whatever you do, don’t let my cousin know about this.” When she finished, she swiftly exited.

Yang Guo took out the handkerchief that Lu Wushuang gave him and lifted it up. Indeed, the two pieces of handkerchief came from the same one; the handkerchief was old, the white silk was now a pale yellow colour, but the embroidered red flowers were still as beautiful as before. He looked at the handkerchiefs and knew that there was something behind this. Why did the two of them each give half the handkerchief to me? Why did they want me to give it to Li Mochou? Why did they want to keep the fact they gave the handkerchief to me away from each other? Why was it that when they handed the handkerchief over to me, their faces were filled with awkwardness and embarrassment?

He sat on the bed, thinking to himself in a trance. He heard the faraway faint calls of a cockerel followed by music from a flute, he knew that Cheng Ying had finished setting up the formation and was now playing the flute to comfort herself. She was playing the song ‘Liu Bo’ (Flowing Waves). The flute was soft and gentle, there was no sorrow within the music, and instead there was a soothing feeling, like the feeling of being carefree. Yang Guo listened for a little while and quietly followed along with it.

Lu Wushuang sat behind the pile of earth and listened to her cousin’s flute and Yang Guo following along to it. Dawn was gradually approaching in the east. She thought, “My master will be here very shortly, my life won’t be able to pass this hour. I hope that when master sees the handkerchief pieces, she will spare cousin and him, the two of them...”

Lu Wushuang had always been sharp and astute; her cousin had always given her some degree of leeway ever since they were kids. But in the face of danger, she truly hoped that Yang Guo would be able to avoid harm. She loved him in her heart and secretly wished that he would be able to escape, even if he married her cousin, she would have no regrets in death.

Just as she was thinking about this, she raised her head suddenly and saw a Taoist priestess dressed in apricot yellow standing outside the earth formation. Her right hand held a fly whisk, her gown fluttering in the wind; it was her master Li Mochou.

Lu Wushuang trembled. She picked up her sword and stood up. Li Mochou stood there without moving, just listening with her ears.

When she heard the flute and song, she recalled events of years ago when she was playing music along with Lu Zhanyuan. One played a flute, the other a panpipe, this song 'Liu Bo' was the song that they used to play.

This was twenty years ago; now the music was of old yet for her there was 'no secret exchange of the lover under the moon and wind'. When she heard the soft and tender tune of the flute and song, she felt pain and sorrow and eventually couldn't stop herself from crying.

Lu Wushuang could not have expected this sorrowful crying by her master; she had always known her to be a ruthless killer, where did this gentle and tender side come from? She has come here to kill, how come she's crying? But her cries were extremely sorrowful and somber; she couldn't stop her heart from suffering the sadness.

Yang Guo and Cheng Ying were startled when they heard the crying of Li Mochou and the song became disorganized.

Li Mochou had a thought and suddenly started to sing, her voice graceful and mournful, she sang:

*"O mortals, what is love? That binds beyond life on earth?  
To all corners, as pair we fly... braving summer and winter, by and by...  
Union is bliss, parting is woe, agony is boundless, for a lovelorn soul, sweetheart...  
Give me word, a trail of clouds drifting forward...  
And mountains capped with snow, whither shall my lonesome shadow go?"*

The flute was originally joyous, but Li Mochou's song was filled with sorrow, her tone mournful, it was completely different from the tune of 'Liu Bo'. The voice became quieter, but the quieter it got, the higher it got.

Cheng Ying was slightly disturbed, she actually began to follow the song from 'union is bliss' and by 'parting is woe', she could no longer stop herself from following her. She was alarmed and quickly changed the tune, but the music from a flute is peaceful and serene but her internal energy was shallow, she could not produce a high tune to subdue the song of Li Mochou. She stumbled slightly and headed into the hut. She placed the jade flute down and sat aside. She began to play the zither. Yang Guo also started to sing to help.

Li Mochou's song was becoming more and more mournful; Cheng Ying's strings were producing higher and higher notes, a 'zheng' sound was heard as the first 'zheng' string on the zither suddenly snapped.

Cheng Ying was startled and her fingers became slightly disorganized, the zither's second 'yu' string snapped. Li Mochou's prolonged song was filled with tears, the third 'gong' string also snapped. Huang Yaoshi taught Cheng Ying the flute and zither; though she learned from a great master she was still young, her abilities with them were not profound.

Li Mochou had originally wanted to take the chance, when the opponent was disturbed and distracted with the broken strings, to break straight through. But she thought that, although the earth formation outside the hut seemed to be in a mess, yet hidden within were the changes of the five elements. She didn't understand this particular art and she had suffered many times in the ancient tomb, there were some worries in her mind. She suddenly had an idea; she wound around to the right and crashed through the wall in the midst of the music and song.

Cheng Ying's earth formation was placed to protect the front of the house and it slipped her mind that the sides of the house weren't guarded. Li Mochou slipped around the house and with her two palms crashed through the earth walls. Lu Wushuang was alarmed; she raised her sword and rushed into the house.

Yang Guo was injured and had no strength to stand up and fight, he could only lie there, not moving. Cheng Ying knew that if she fought Li Mochou she would lose her life in vain. She made a decision and forgot about life and death; she started to play the zither, a song of 'tao yao'. It was a beautiful tune, flowing with joy. In her heart she was thinking, "I have had a life of hardships, dieing here by brother Yang's side means at

least my life hasn't been in vain." She looked towards Yang Guo. Yang Guo gave a subtle smile towards her, Cheng Ying was filled with joy and bliss, she sang:

*"The beauty of the blossom burns brightly,  
The zither flows the ocean spray,  
The music carries the fragrance of flowers, the soothing spring breeze."*

The bitterness on Li Mochou's face gradually disappeared, she asked Lu Wushuang, "Where's the book? Was it the Beggar Clan who took it?"

Yang Guo took out the 'Five Poison Codex' and threw it over to her. He said, "The Beggar Clan's Chief Huang and Chief Lu are righteous and virtuous people, what do they want with this evil book? They long ago passed down an order to Beggar Clan members to not to open even one page of this book."

Li Mochou saw that this book was in its original condition; she knew the Beggar Clan was a righteous clan and had strict regulations; most probably they did not take a look at her book.

Yang Guo also took out the two half pieces of handkerchief from his pockets and placed it down on the end of the bed and said, "Take these handkerchiefs away!"

Li Mochou's face changed completely, she waved her fly whisk and wrapped it around the handkerchiefs bringing them towards her. She held them in her hand, startled, her thoughts stirred, and her state of mind unstable.

Lu Wushuang and Cheng Ying looked at each other and both were red faced; they didn't guess that the other would give a handkerchief half to Yang Guo, who now had brought them out into the open.

As one looked at the other, their hearts were filled with many thoughts and their eyes glistened. The air of death that was in the hut had now changed into an air of love. Cheng Ying's song 'Tao Yao' was played with even more happiness.

Suddenly, Li Mochou tore the handkerchief in four and said, "The past is the past, why is there a need to return there?" Her hands ripped urgently for a while and then flung the pieces into the air; the pieces of the torn handkerchief fell like descending petals.

Cheng Ying was startled and after a 'zheng' sound, another string of the zither snapped.

Li Mochou angrily shouted, “Break another string!”

In the midst of the mournful song, the fifth ‘gen’ string did indeed snap. Li Mochou chuckled and said, “Now I’m going to make you suffer, you won’t be able to beg for your life nor death, quickly wail for me.”

The zither had two strings remaining, Cheng Ying’s abilities with a zither were ordinary and it was difficult for her to form a tune.

Li Mochou said, “Quickly play mournful notes! There is too much suffering in the world, what joy is there in living?”

Cheng Ying played two notes, although it didn’t form a tune, it was still following the music of the ‘Tao Yao’.

Li Mochou said, “Fine, I’ll first kill one of you, will you be mournful then?”

That severely toned shout caused another string of the zither to snap, she raised her fly whisk, about to strike down on Lu Wushuang’s head.

Yang Guo smiled and said, “The three of us dying together today is a much happier experience than you will have living alone in the world. Sister Ying, Sister Shuang, come over here.” Lu Wushuang and Cheng Ying went over to the bed. Yang Guo’s right hand held Lu Wushuang, his left held Cheng Ying, he smiled and said, “The three of us dying together will allow us to chat and joke on the Huang Guan path (road to underworld), isn’t that ten times better than being that evil woman?”

Lu Wushuang smiled and said, “Yes, good Sha Dan, you’re right.” Cheng Ying gave a warm smile. The two cousins were both enchanted as Yang Guo held onto their hands.

Yet Yang Guo was thinking, “It’s a pity that it isn’t Gu Gu who is by my side.” But he forced a joyful smile, he lightly pulled the two closer against his body.

Li Mochou thought, “He’s right, those three dying like this is better than living like me.” She pondered, “How can you have things that are to your advantage on this earth? I’ll make sure that you’re filled with sorrow and grief before you die.” So she lightly swung her fly whisk and with a face resembling bitter frost, she started to quietly sing. She was singing the ‘O mortals, what is love? That binds beyond life on earth?’ song; the song and tone was filled with sorrow and grief, like an abandoned woman crying, like a night ghost wailing.



The three of them held hands together as they listened, after a while, they couldn't stop themselves from feeling hurt in their hearts. Yang Guo's internal energy was relatively profound and wasn't moved, his face still carried a subtle smile; Lu Wushuang was strong, she would not be easily moved; Cheng Ying however could endure no longer and tears flowed. The longer Li Mochou sang, the quieter it became, eventually, it was as if there was no song.

As soon as the three cried, the Scarlet Serpent Deity will wave out her fly whisk and kill them all. Just as soon as the song was becoming extremely sad and depressing, someone from outside the hut suddenly laughed out loud and clapped as they made their way towards the hut.

It was a woman's voice, it appeared that the voice was not young but what she was singing was a naïve and innocent song: "Sway, sway, sway, sway until granny's bridge falls, granny calls me my precious, sweets in one bag, fruit in the other, once I've finished I'll take another."

The song was filled with joy and happiness, Li Mochou's sadness and the sorrow in her song was disturbed. The song was getting closer and closer. After a while someone entered the hut from the front door, it was a middle-aged woman with disheveled hair and clothes, her eyes round and wide open, she laughed foolishly and her hand held a fire fork (fireplace fork).

Li Mochou was startled, "How did she get past those piles of earth and enter through the main door so easily? If she isn't with them then she must be versed in art of formations and changes." As she concentrated on this, the power of her song immediately decreased.

When Cheng Ying saw this woman she was delighted and called out, "Senior Apprentice Sister, that woman wants to hurt me, help me."

That disheveled hair woman was Sha Gu. She was actually a generation lower than Cheng Ying but she was a lot older, that's the reason why Cheng Ying called her senior apprentice sister.

Sha Gu clapped her hands and laughed, she started to sing some songs at the top of her voice, she would sing songs like 'Sparkling star in the sky, nothing on the ground my oh my', 'Precious Pagoda tip, surging up, the sky it rips'. Sometimes she would remember the wrong lyrics and replace them with whatever she thought of.

Li Mochou wanted to use the sorrowful and mournful song to subdue her but how would she know that it wouldn't affect her. Love comes from the heart, but since her heart was full of confusion and disorder, even if the outside influence was stronger there will be no way to create and stir up these feelings. Instead, Sha Gu's muddled up songs disturbed Li Mochou's sorrowful tones, it ended her control over Yang Guo and the others.

Li Mochou was furious and thought, "I need to get rid of this person first." Before the song finished, she waved her fly whisk and attacked her head.

Years ago, Huang Yaoshi punished his innocent disciples out of anger and as a result caused his disciple Qu Lingfeng to die at the hands of his enemies. He regretted this and so took in Qu Lingfeng's daughter Sha Gu under his care and decided to teach everything he knew to her. However, when Sha Gu saw her father being harmed, she suffered a severe shock and it remained in her mind, no matter how many times Huang Yaoshi tried to make her better. A man cannot turn time back, without mentioning the futility of trying to teach her all the arts and martial arts he knew. Even trying to get her to recognize a few words and learn a few coarse martial arts was something that he couldn't do. But over the last ten years, under the instruction of a great master, Sha Gu had learned a set of palm techniques and a fork technique. It's called a set but really there were only three stances of palm and fork techniques.

Huang Yaoshi knew she would not remember any sort of variations or extraordinary stances so he thought deeply and came up with three palm stances and three fork stances. Those six stances were ordinary and didn't have any variation behind them; the power of these techniques all comes from practice. When normal people practice martial arts, a little practice will lead to only tens of stances being learned, a lot will lead to variations surpassing a thousand. Sha Gu only practiced the six stances so as time went by, naturally these stances will be refined and precise; though there are few stances, it was not anything ordinary.

As to how she went through the formation, it was because she had lived on Peach Blossom Island for a long time, the formation that Cheng Ying had set up was a coarse and basic skill of Peach Blossom Island. Sha Gu didn't even need to take a look and just naturally followed her steps forward to the hut.

Now, she saw Li Mochou's fly whisk coming towards her; she thrust out the fork towards her chest. Li Mochou heard that the sound of air being sliced through and was furious, she couldn't stop herself from being alarmed, "Hard to predict that this woman possesses such profound internal strength." She quickly stepped to the left and sent the

fly whisk towards her head. Sha Gu didn't care what the opponent's stance was and just thrust her fork forward. Li Mochou's fly whisk twisted and wrapped around the head of the fork. It was as if Sha Gu didn't see what had happened, the fork kept on going forward. Li Mochou circulated her internal energy to fling the weapon away but the fire fork didn't move an inch, in a flash it was now in between her breasts. Li Mochou's martial arts were high and she managed to use "Steps of the Turning Seven Stars" in this danger, and leapt out of the hole in the wall, avoiding this lightning like attack but, because of the fright, she broke out in a cold sweat.

She concentrated and leapt back into the hut and attacked with her fly whisk in midair. Sha Gu didn't change her stance with the enemy's and just thrust forwards again but because the enemy was in the air, the fork was now aiming for her opponent's abdomen.

Li Mochou saw the incoming attack was fast and powerful; she turned her fly whisk around and used the handle to block the attack and used its force to dart away. She looked at her stunned, thinking, "Just know, my three attacks contained nine different variations and twelve different follow ups; a skilled fighter of Wulin would not be able to see through them just like that. This woman just uses one fork and neutralized my sixty-three variations in these stances. This person's martial arts are excellent, I'd better leave!"

She didn't know that Sha Gu's fork technique only had three stances; if Li Mochou fought for a little while longer she would be able to see through her martial arts and win easily. Sha Gu had three fork stances, just by using one fork stance she scared away an extremely powerful enemy, the master of Peach Blossom Island should be very proud.

Li Mochou turned around and was about to leap out of the hut through the hole in the wall when she saw someone sitting down by the hole. The person was in a blue green gown and had a long beard; it was the person who saved Cheng Ying from her clutches all those years ago, Huang Yaoshi. Island Master Huang. He was sitting down and had placed Cheng Ying's zither on a stool.

When Li Mochou was in battle, her eyes and ears were extremely alert; how had Huang Yaoshi entered, how had he taken the zither and when had he sat down on the floor? She failed to notice all those things; if he had ambushed her from behind, wouldn't taking her life be as easy as turning his palm?

When Li Mochou was exchanging stances with Sha Gu, she was worried about Cheng Ying and the others joining in to help so she did not stop her song, keeping their state of mind unbalanced. As she saw Huang Yaoshi sitting there quietly strumming the zither, she trembled and her song stopped.

Huang Yaoshi played one note on the zither and sang; “O mortals, what is love? That binds beyond life on earth?” He sang Li Mochou’s song. The zither only had the ‘yu’ string remaining but he still managed to play the notes of the ‘gong’, ‘shang’, ‘jiao’, ‘zheng’ and ‘yu’. With the mournful tone of the zither, Huang Yaoshi overwhelmed Li Mochou’s song.

Li Mochou was extremely familiar with this song; as soon as Huang Yaoshi added the tune, she was affected ten times deeper than when Yang Guo and the others were affected by her song. Huang Yaoshi had known long ago about her evil ways, today he wanted to take the opportunity to get rid of her.

Years ago he had used his jade flute to compete against Ouyang Feng’s iron zither and Hong Qi Gong’s whistling and fought to a draw. That was many years ago; because of his age, his vigor wasn’t what it used to be but his internal energy became more and more profound as he practiced. How could Li Mochou resist? In just a short while she felt her mind slipping out of her control.

Huang Yaoshi’s song and tune would suddenly turn joyous, then anger, resounding and overbearing, then suddenly lowly and humble, many changes in the wink of an eye. He was forcing Li Mochou to suddenly feel delight and then sorrow, suddenly anger then worry; when this song finishes, Li Mochou would have been forced to go mad.

Just at this time, Sha Gu turned her head around and suddenly saw Yang Guo, under the candlelight; he was an image of his father Yang Kang. The thing that Sha Gu is most afraid of are ghosts; the images of what had happened when Yang Kang died due to poison were deeply etched into her mind. She would never forget it. When she saw Yang Guo sitting there, she knew that it was Yang Kang’s ghost coming back to haunt her. She quickly leapt up and pointed to him, saying, “Brother... brother Yang, don’t... don’t hurt me... it... it wasn’t me who killed you... go... go and find someone else.”

Huang Yaoshi wasn’t prepared for her disturbance and a ‘zheng’ sound was heard as the final string on the zither snapped.

Sha Gu hid behind him and called out, “Ghost... ghost... grandpa, it’s brother Yang’s ghost.”

With this pause, Li Mochou quickly used her fly whisk and extinguished all the candles in the room and leapt out through the hole in the wall.

Huang Yaoshi had yet to take her life and eventually she managed to escape; he had to uphold his status and so he could not go and chase after her.

Sha Gu was even more afraid in the dark and called out even louder, “It’s an evil ghost, grandpa, beat that ghost, beat that ghost!”

Huang Yaoshi kept Sha Gu in check. Cheng Ying lit the candles and then knelt on the floor and bowed to her master. She stood up and then told him the simple background of Yang Guo and Lu Wushuang.

Huang Yaoshi laughed and said, “My martial grand daughter has always been simple like this. She knew your father. You indeed do look a lot like him.”

Yang Guo bent his waist and bowed to him from the bed and said, “Forgive junior, I have an injury and cannot bow properly.”

Huang Yaoshi’s face was very friendly and said, “You didn’t give a care about your life and saved my daughter and granddaughter, you really are a good child.” Huang Yaoshi had seen Huang Rong and knew what had happened, he heard that Cheng Ying had rescued him so he took Sha Gu with him and searched for them.

Huang Yaoshi took out some effective recuperative medicine and gave it to Yang Guo to take. He then circulated his internal energy and passed it into Yang Guo through his palm to help him recover. Yang Guo felt as if his arms were on fire, his body started to create a force to repel this. Huang Yaoshi felt him tremble and noticed that his veins and chi were circulating, there was a resisting internal energy that was being created so he increased the strength in his hands. After a while, Yang Guo felt his limbs and bones were at ease and soothed, and gradually he fell into a deep sleep.

When Yang Guo woke up the next day, he opened his eyes and saw Huang Yaoshi sitting at the end of the bed. He quickly sat up and greeted him.

Huang Yaoshi said, “Do you know what title I go by in Jianghu?”

Yang Guo said, “Senior is Island Master Huang?”

Huang Yaoshi said, “And?”

Yang Guo felt that it was inappropriate to say the words 'Eastern Heretic' but he had a thought, since his nickname is 'Eastern Heretic', his character will be different to normal people so he boldly said, "You are the 'Eastern Heretic'!"

Huang Yaoshi laughed and said, "Correct. I've heard that your martial arts are not bad, your heart is good but you do things in heretical ways. I also heard that you want to marry your Master, is that right?"

Yang Guo said, "Correct, senior, no one will allow me to do this, but even if I'll die I still want to marry her."

Those words were like a nail striking metal; Huang Yaoshi stared at him for a while and then suddenly raised his head and laughed towards the sky, shaking the grass on the roof.

Yang Guo said angrily, "What's so funny about that? I thought that because you are called 'Eastern Heretic', you would have some extraordinary opinion, but who would have thought that you are just like the others."

Huang Yaoshi loudly said, "Good, good, good!" After he said this, he turned around and left.

Yang Guo sat on the bed startled, he thought, "My words really offended that senior. But how come he didn't show any signs of anger on his face?"

He didn't know that as Huang Yaoshi roamed the world and the one thing he hated most were the present custom and traditions of the world. His actions and words did not match with the normal and because of this he was given the name 'Heretic'. He had met many people, but in his life, he did not have an understanding friend. Though he had a daughter and son-in-law as loved ones, they did not understand him. He didn't know that in his later years he would come upon Yang Guo.

The events of the heroes meet had already spread to his ears and Huang Rong told him about this young man's actions and behavior. After speaking to him a few times he found that Yang Guo matched his expectations even more.

That night, Huang Yaoshi returned to the room and said, "Yang Guo, I heard you expelled yourself from the Quanzhen sect and beat up your Master, you are rather heretical. Why don't you leave the Ancient Tomb sect, and then enter my tutelage."

Yang Guo was startled and said, “Why?”

Huang Yaoshi laughed and said, “First you’ll acknowledge that Xiao Longnu is not your Master and then marry her, won’t that be proper?”

Yang Guo said, “That’s a good idea. But who set the rule that you can’t marry your Master? I want her to be my Master and my wife.”

Huang Yaoshi clapped and laughed, he said, “Good! The way you think is a level higher than me.” He stretched out his hand to help him recuperate through his palms and said, “I originally wanted you to enter my tutelage so I could let the world know that after Senior Heretic Huang, there’s a young Heretic Yang. You don’t want to be my disciple; I can’t do anything about that.”

Yang Guo said, “I don’t have to be your disciple to spread your ‘Heretic’ name. If you don’t mind me being of a young age and have poor martial arts, we could be friends or else we could become brothers.”

Huang Yaoshi angrily said, “You sure are bold for a little kid. I’m not the Old Urchin Zhou Botong, how can there be no order between us?”

Yang Guo said, “Who’s the Old Urchin Zhou Botong?”

Huang Yaoshi then told him a few things about Zhou Botong’s character and how he became sworn brothers with Guo Jing.

The two of them chatted and hit it off perfectly, there’s a saying: ‘A thousand cups is too little for understanding friends who meet through wine, half a word is too much for those whose words don’t get along’.

Yang Guo was good with words and they got along because of the closeness of his character to Huang Yaoshi’s. Whenever he spoke, Huang Yaoshi would sigh as someone who understood him. For Huang Yaoshi, it really was like the first meeting of an old friend, a meeting that has come extremely late in life. Though he didn’t admit it through his words, in his heart he treated him as a friend of old. That night he told Cheng Ying to prepare another bed for him in the same room and the two continued their exchange.

Days passed and Yang Guo recovered from his injury. He and Huang Yaoshi were like glue, like paint, it was difficult to separate the two. Huang Yaoshi had originally wanted to take Sha Gu south but now he didn’t mention one word about leaving. Cheng Ying

and Lu Wushuang watched the old and young with amusement; in the day they would drink wine together and at night, they would talk in the candlelight without end. They felt that the old man didn't maintain the status of a Senior and the young man was too unrestrained and fearless.

When it came to discussions of knowledge, Yang Guo wasn't anywhere as knowledgeable as Huang Yaoshi. But whatever Huang Yaoshi said, Yang Guo would concentrate on understanding. When he made a comment he would just add a single word yet his comment had its fine points. Huang Yaoshi couldn't stop himself from treating him as the closest friend in his life.

In these past few days, apart from spending time with Huang Yaoshi talking, he would always think about how Sha Gu mistakenly recognized him as his father and the words that she said, "It wasn't me who killed you, go and find someone else!" He knew that Sha Gu must know who had killed his father; other people might not say, but Sha Gu is mad and crazy and maybe he could get the truth from her.

After midday, Yang Guo said, "Sha Gu, come, I have something to say to you."

Sha Gu felt that he looked too much like Yang Kang and was still afraid; she shook her head and said, "I don't want to play with you."

Yang Guo said, "I know circus tricks, are you going to watch?"

Sha Gu shook her head and said, "You're lying, I don't want to watch." She closed her eyes after she said this. Yang Guo suddenly flipped upside down with his legs above his head and called out, "Quickly look!" He used the martial arts that Ouyang Feng taught him of walking upside down and leaping forward. Sha Gu opened her eyes and was delighted as soon as she saw this, she clapped and cheered and followed behind him.

Yang Guo kept on leaping forward and arrived at a hidden and covered wood faraway from the hut, he turned upright and said, "Let's play hide and seek, you want to? But the loser has to be punished."

Sha Gu has been following Huang Yaoshi for the past few years; nobody played with her. When she heard Yang Guo say this, she was ecstatic and clapped her hands, most of the fear she had for him disappeared and she said, "Yes, yes. Good brother, what is the punishment?" She called his father brother, and she also called him brother.



Yang Guo took out a handkerchief and blindfolded her and said, “Come and catch me. If you catch me, then whatever question you ask I’ll have to answer it truthfully. If you can’t catch me then I get to ask you a question, you have to answer it truthfully as well.”

Sha Gu replied, “Good, good!”

Yang Guo called out, “I’m over here, come and catch me!”

Sha Gu opened her arms and followed the calls. Yang Guo possessed the lightness kung fu of the Ancient Tomb sect, even if Sha Gu wasn’t blindfolded she would not be able to catch him, after chasing for a while, she crashed into a tree and bruised her forehead as a result; she started to cry out in pain.

Yang Guo was afraid that Sha Gu would not want to play anymore so he deliberately slowed down and made light noise. Sha Gu rushed forward and grabbed his back and called out, “I’ve caught you, I’ve caught you!” Her face was full of delight as she took off her blindfold.

Yang Guo said, “Fine, I’ve lost, ask me ask a question.”

She stared at him, startled, her mind was uncertain; she didn’t know what to ask. After a long while, she asked, “Good brother, have you eaten yet?”

She thought for so long but came up with such a simple question, Yang Guo almost laughed. He didn’t make a sound and seriously replied, “I’ve eaten already.”

Sha Gu nodded and didn’t say anything else.

Yang Guo said, “What else do you want to ask?”

Sha Gu shook her head and said, “I don’t want to ask anymore, let’s play again.”

Yang Guo said, “Fine, come and catch me.”

Sha Gu touched the bruise on her forehead and said, “This time it’s your turn to catch me.” This time, she didn’t act crazy, Yang Guo didn’t predict this but since this was what he wanted he took the handkerchief and blindfolded himself. Though Sha Gu was mad, her lightness kung fu was pretty good; Yang Guo couldn’t see, how could he catch her? He leapt forward a few times and then secretly he tore an opening in the blindfold and

saw her hiding on the right behind a large tree. He deliberately faced the left, pretending to think, he said, “Where are you? Where are you?” He suddenly flipped over and caught her wrist. He quickly put the handkerchief in his pockets with his left hand in case she saw the ripped handkerchief. He laughed and said, “This time it’s my turn to ask you a question.”

Sha Gu said, “I’ve eaten already.”

Yang Guo laughed and said, “I’m not asking about that. This is my question, you know my father, right?” His face was extremely serious as he said this.

Sha Gu said, “Who’s your father?”

Yang Guo said, “There’s a person who looks just like me, who is that?”

Sha Gu said, “Ah, that’s brother Yang.”

Yang Guo asked, “You saw that brother Yang being killed by someone didn’t you?”

Sha Gu said, “Yeah, it was in the middle of the night in a temple, there were lots of crows calling out ‘wu ai’, ‘wu ai’, ‘wu ai!’” The forest was covered and hidden and was already dark; the calls made the forest seem even more eerie.

Yang Guo trembled and asked, “How did brother Yang die?”

Sha Gu said, “Auntie wanted me to say something but brother Yang didn’t allow me to say it; he struck Auntie with a palm and laughed out loud, ha-ha! Ha-ha! Ha-ha!” She used all her efforts in copying Yang Kang’s laugh before he died, her laugh even scared herself and her face was filled with fear.

Yang Guo listened puzzled, he asked, “Who is Auntie?”

Sha Gu said, “Auntie is Auntie.”

Yang Guo knew that the puzzle to his father’s death was about to be solved, he was full of emotions and was about to ask another question when suddenly someone from behind said, “What are you two playing here?” It was Huang Yaoshi’s voice.

Sha Gu said, “Good brother is playing hide and seek with me. It was he who wanted me to play, not me wanting him to play. Don’t scold me.”

Huang Yaoshi smiled a little and then looked at Yang Guo, he looked as if he has seen through what Yang Guo was thinking about.

Yang Guo's heart raced, he was about to say a few words to cover it up. Suddenly, foot-steps could be heard from outside the forest, Cheng Ying was holding Lu Wushuang as they hurried towards them and she said to Huang Yaoshi, "Master is right, she is still around." She then pointed to the hill in the west.

Yang Guo asked, "Who?"

Cheng Ying said, "Li Mochou!"

Yang Guo was extremely shocked; he was thinking why on earth was she so bold, he looked at Huang Yaoshi, hoping that he will be able to explain.

Huang Yaoshi gave laugh and said, "Let's go over there and take a look." None of them had any fear with him around, so they headed towards that hill in the west.

Cheng Ying knew that Yang Guo had questions in his heart and quietly said, "Master said that Li Mochou knows that he has the status of a great Master. That night he wanted to take her life but he was unable to at the first attempt, a second attempt on her life would be shameful."

Yang Guo understood. Alarmed he said, "Because of this she could guard this place confidently and wait for the chance to take our lives. If Island Master Huang hadn't seen through this, we would have thought that she had long gone and let our guard down and eventually suffered by her hands."

Cheng Ying smiled warmly and nodded. Lu Wushuang interrupted, "You think you are cleverer than most people; but compared with Island Master Huang, there's a long way to go."

Yang Guo laughed and said, "I'm Sha Dan, I'm dumber than most people; I'm Sha Gu's good brother."

The five of them soon arrived on the hill. There was a small hut beside a large tree, it was broken and dilapidated; there was a piece of paper nailed onto the door. On it were four lines:

The master of Peach Blossom Island,  
Disciples he has many,  
Five against one,  
It's the laughing stock of Jianghu!

Huang Yaoshi laughed and casually picked up two pebbles and placed them in between his middle finger and thumb, after a 'chi' 'chi' sound, the pebbles shot forward forcefully. A 'pai' sound was heard as the two small pebbles, from over ten paces away, knocked the doors open.

When Yang Guo was on Peach Blossom Island, he heard from Guo Fu that her grandfather had a skill called the "Divine Flicking Finger"; today, he saw it with his own eyes and it far exceeded the tales about it; he was in awe.

Once the doors opened, they saw Li Mochou sitting on a mat on the floor, her hands holding her fly whisk, her eyes closed; she looked collected and was meditating just like a Taoist. She was in the hut by herself; Hong Lingbo was nowhere to be seen. A thought went through Yang Guo's mind and he understood, "She's laughing at Island Master Huang for having many disciples and winning through numbers, that's why she sent Hong Lingbo away to make it even more apparent. She's confident not because she can defend against Island Master Huang, it's because since she's by herself. With Island Master Huang's status, it would not be appropriate to attack her."

The memories of her parents death and the torment she's had through the years stirred in Lu Wushuang; she suddenly drew out her sword and called out, "Cousin, Sha Dan, we don't have the same restraints as Island Master Huang about fighting her, let's all attack her."

Sha Gu rubbed her knuckles and palms and said, "And me!"

Li Mochou opened her eyes and glanced across at the five; a look of contempt was on her face and she closed her eyes again; it was as if she was ignoring the enemies in front of her. Cheng Ying looked at her master, waiting for his orders.

Huang Yaoshi sighed and said, "Indeed, old Heretic Huang has many disciples, if any of my four senior disciples Qu, Chen, Mei, Lu were here, how would she be allowed to say a word?" He then waved his hand and said, "Let's leave."

The four of them did not understand what he was thinking and followed him back to the hut. They saw that he was unhappy; he went to bed and didn't even eat supper.

Yang Guo slept on the bed next to his and recalled the things he said with Sha Gu; he then pondered about Li Mochou, and he thought, “She’s laughing at us because its five against one. I’ve recovered from my injury now, with my strength alone I might not lose to her; why don’t I sneak away and fight a round with her. This way I can clear her insults about me and Gu Gu and help Island Master Huang vent his anger.”

He made his decision and dressed himself quietly. Though he was impulsive, he did things rather carefully; he knew Li Mochou was a very strong foe, if he made just one wrong move he would die by her hands. So he sat on his bed circulating his chi and prepared himself, once he was at his peak, he would go and fight the duel to the death.

He had sat there for around an hour when suddenly his eyes lit up, chi was everywhere in his body and he couldn’t stop himself from calling out. The call was like the roar of a dragon, like a tiger bellowing in a deep valley, the sound spreading far and wide.

Huang Yaoshi had noticed that he was awake when he had got up to dress himself; when he heard this extraordinary call, he was shocked and delighted. He hadn’t predicted that Yang Guo’s internal energy would make a break through right at this time.

When someone’s internal energy reaches a certain stage, they would unconsciously call out.

Later on in the Ming Dynasty, the Da Ru King Yang Ming was practicing his chi in the middle in the night in his encampment when he suddenly made a prolonged call, shocking his entire camp.

Yang Guo’s chi was abundant and it was hard for him to control, the bellow spread for many li.

Cheng Ying and Lu Wushuang were extremely startled; even Li Mochou was frightened when she heard it. But she thought that it was Huang Yaoshi who was exercising his chi, there was no need to be afraid since he wasn’t going to do anything.

Yang Guo had the help of the ‘Chilled Jade Bed’ and had practiced the important aspects of the “Jade Heart Manual” and “Nine Yin Manual”; his accumulated internal energy had become profound. A few days before, Huang Yaoshi had helped him to recuperate, but Island Master Huang’s internal energy was of a different nature to his. It was provoked by this extremely profound internal energy, now he couldn’t control himself and released a long bellow.

The bellow continued for a while before gradually it quieted and then stilled.

Huang Yaoshi thought, “I have always thought that my talents were not of this earth, yet I had to wait until I was thirty before reaching such a stage. This young man has reached this stage at least ten years before me; I wonder what events he has encountered?” He waited for Yang Guo to finish and stand up before asking, “Tell me, what do you think is Li Mochou’s most powerful skill?”

When Yang Guo heard this, he knew that his intentions had been seen through and replied, “It is the “Divine Five Poison Palm” and her fly whisk techniques.”

Huang Yaoshi said, “Correct, since your internal energy has some foundation it shouldn’t be difficult to neutralize her most proficient skill.” Yang Guo was delighted and bowed down to him. Yang Guo was very proud; though he recognized Huang Yaoshi was a senior and his abilities were superb, he wouldn’t lower his head to him. Now that he heard that the martial arts Li Mochou used to roam the realm could be neutralized, how could he not be in awe?”

Huang Yaoshi then taught him the skill of the “Divine Flicking Finger” to neutralize Li Mochou’s “Divine Five Poison Palms” and a sword technique derived from his “Jade Flute Swordplay” to neutralize the fly whisk techniques.

Yang Guo listened to him point out the important aspects of these techniques and then asked him to explain some of the difficulties; he concentrated and committed them to memory. But he felt that although these two types of martial arts are profound and masterly, to make some progress, one will need to practice for at least a year. If he wanted to reach a stage where he would be able to beat her, it would take three years and no less. He said, “Island Master Huang, there is no way to beat her right now.”

Huang Yaoshi said, “Three years will pass in the blink of an eye. Then you’ll be twenty one or twenty two years of age, and will have learned these two types of martial arts. Isn’t that enough?”

Yang Guo said, “I’m... I’m not doing it for me...”

Huang Yaoshi patted his shoulder and said warmly, “When you kill her for me three years from now, I will be extremely touched. Years ago I destroyed my disciples, shouldn’t I get some kind of payback today?” He gave a long sigh after he said this.

Yang Guo knelt down and kowtowed eight times to him and then called out, “Master!” He knew that Huang Yaoshi had passed on martial arts to him so that he will be able to cleanse the four lines of Li Mochou’s insult. To do this, they will have to be recognized as master and disciple. But Huang Yaoshi knew that his ties with the Ancient Tomb were extremely deep, he would be unwillingly to accept another master so he helped him up and said, “When you fight that witch, you are my disciple, at all other times, you are my friend. Little brother Yang, do you understand?”

Yang Guo laughed and said, “To be able to make a friend like you really is a glorious event.”

Huang Yaoshi said, “The two of us meeting is the luck of three generations.” The two of them laughed, their sounds moving the four walls.

Huang Yaoshi once again explained in detail the secrets and ideas of the “Divine Flicking Finger” and the “Jade Flute Swordplay” to him. Yang Guo noted that he was explaining them thoroughly and knew that he was about to leave.

He said gloomily, “We’ve just met and now we are about to part; when will we be able to meet again?”

Huang Yaoshi laughed and said, “The two of us are linked; even if we are at the opposite ends of the world, we’ll still be like neighbors. If in the future I find out that someone is blocking your marriage, even if I’m ten thousand li away, I will rush back and help you.”

Yang Guo was comforted by this promise and laughed, “I’m afraid that the first person who will come out and stop this marriage will be your loved one.”

Huang Yaoshi said, “She marries her ideal man and forgets about the suffering and bitterness of others? My precious daughter only listens to her husband, ha-ha, ‘obey the husband when married’, that really is something!” He laughed loudly after he said this and turned around and left the room, in a flash his laughter could be heard tens of feet away, he really moved like a divine dragon leaving no trace.

Yang Guo stood there for a while stunned and then sat down and went over the two martial arts that he had just learned. Not long after, the sky became bright. He saw the door open, Cheng Ying had entered with blue green cloth and a blue green gown in her hands; she gave a little smile and said, “Try this on, see whether it fits you.”

Yang Guo was extremely touched; his hands trembled slightly as he received it.

Their eyes met and he saw that Cheng Ying's eyes were full of love and boundless tenderness. He went over to the side of the bed and tried the new gown. He felt that the gown fitted perfectly and said, "I'm... I'm... I'm really grateful."

Cheng Ying showed another smile but immediately a depressed expression was on her face, she sighed and said, "Master has gone, I don't know when I'll be able to see him again." She was about to sit down and say something when she saw a yellow image at the door that immediately disappeared. She knew it was her cousin outside and thought, "That girl has too many thoughts, it's not appropriate for me to stay in his room for too long." She stood up and slowly walked out.

He carefully studied the gown and noticed that the stitching was careful and tight, he thought, "She and Wifey treat me the same but my heart belongs to someone else, I can't love any others. If I don't leave soon, I'll be giving those two a lot of grief." He thought about this for half a day. He was also afraid that when he leaves, Li Mochou would come and attack them. He went to her hut to take a look and saw that in its place was a pile of ash, Li Mochou had burned the hut and left.

The enemy had left and so that night, he wrote a parting letter by candlelight; he thought about the two girls' love and felt depressed. He saw that his letter wasn't worded with great aptitude and his handwriting was poor; he was afraid that Cheng Ying would laugh and so ripped the letter up. That night he tossed and turned in his bed as he tried to sleep.

In his blurry state, he suddenly heard Lu Wushuang tapping his door and calling out, "Sha Dan, Sha Dan! Quickly come and take a look." Her voice sounded rather anxious and afraid.

Yang Guo got up, dressed himself, and opened the door; he felt a slightly chilly breeze and the sky wasn't bright yet.

Lu Wushuang's face was filled with fear and pointed at the outside of the door. Yang Guo followed her hand and was shocked; there were four blood red handprints on the door. Li Mochou must have come over to survey the group and found that Huang Yaoshi had left; the four prints were left to tell them that she was going to kill the four of them.

Cheng Ying came out after them and asked, "When did you see this?"



Lu Wushuang said, “Before the sky started to get bright.” Once she said this, her face went red. She was longing for Yang Guo and had paced back and forth below his window.

Cheng Ying pretended that she didn’t know and said, “Luckily you didn’t bump into her. The sun has begun to rise, that witch won’t come again today. We’ve still got time to plan.” The three of them returned to Yang Guo’s room and discussed what to do about the situation.

Lu Wushuang said, “She had a taste of Sha Gu’s kung fu the other day, how come she’s not afraid of her?”

Cheng Ying said, “Apprentice sister’s fork technique only has a few stances. She went away and thought about it carefully and must have come up with a way to neutralize it.”

Lu Wushuang said, “However, Sha Dan has recovered from his injury; with the two Sha people together, won’t their power be great?”

Yang Guo laughed and said, “With Sha Dan plus a Sha Gu, you’ve got dumb and dumber, what power?”

The three of them continued their discussion for a while but couldn’t come up with any great plan. They thought about the four of them fighting together; they won’t be able to beat her but could protect themselves. They decided on fighting her with all their might when she came again the next day.

Yang Guo said, “The two Sha people will join up and fight her from the front, you two attack from the sides. Let’s go find Sha Gu and practice our plan.”

The three of them called for Sha Gu but there was no reply. They didn’t know where she was and the three of them began to worry. The three of them split up to search for her.

Cheng Ying searched for a little while and suddenly saw Sha Gu lying on a pile of rocks, her breathing was weak. Cheng Ying was alarmed and quickly took off her clothes to take a look; she saw that there was a red palm print on her back; she had fallen victim to Li Mochou’s “Divine Five Poison Palm”. Cheng Ying quickly called for Yang Guo and Lu Wushuang and then fed a ‘Nine Flower Jade Dew’ pill to her.

Yang Guo remembered the method to cure this palm from the 'Five Poison Codex' and quickly circulated his internal energy and controlled her pressure points.

Sha Gu laughed foolishly and said, "Evil woman, behind, hit me. Sha Gu, hit back, hit her." The counterattack that Sha Gu used was one of the three palms techniques that Huang Yaoshi taught her. Though Li Mochou succeeded in her ambush, she was struck on the arm and her arm was almost broken; she was frightened and in pain so she left swiftly, not daring to continue her stances and take Sha Gu's life.

The three took Sha Gu back to the hut and sat anxiously; with one of the good fighters hurt, in tomorrow's battle it would be even harder to defend against her. Sha Gu had a serious injury; if they escaped with her in tow, they would definitely be caught by Li Mochou.

Yang Guo looked at Cheng Ying and then at Lu Wushuang. Then he then picked up a piece of string from the needle basket that was at hand and then grabbed a pair of scissors and started to cut.

Sha Gu was lying on the bed and suddenly called out "Cut it; cut that evil woman's broom! Cut that broom!" She didn't know it was called a 'fly whisk' and called it a 'broom'.

Yang Guo had an idea, "That witch's fly whisk is a soft weapon and she uses it superbly; precious sabers and sharp swords can't harm her. If there really was a large pair of scissors that could be used as a weapon and cut her fly whisk, that would be great." As he thought about this, the string in his left hand started to move like a fly whisk, the scissors in his right hand came forward and cut the string in two. He then pondered about the fly whisk's movements and how to control the scissors to attack; dreaming up a set of techniques.

Cheng Ying and Lu Wushuang watched for a while and then understood, delight was on their faces.

Cheng Ying said, "There's a blacksmith seven or eight li north of here..."

Lu Wushuang interrupted and said, "Good, we'll go and get that blacksmith to forge a large pair of scissors."

Yang Guo thought, "It would be difficult to forge this weapon in such a rush and I'll have to adjust to the change of battle. This is a lot easier than learning the "Jade Flute

Swordplay”, and anyway, we don’t have another plan so we’ve got to give it a try.”

If one of them leaves and takes the order to the blacksmith, it will be extremely dangerous if Li Mochou were to suddenly ambush that person. Right now the four of them could not be separated. So Cheng Ying and Lu Wushuang set up some bedding on the horse and placed Sha Gu on the back of the horse. They made their way to the blacksmith.

After the Mongols conquered the Jin, they entered the boundaries of the Song land. This place was the northern frontier of the Song borders, the Mongols had ransacked cities and towns and the whole place was in ruins.

The blacksmith shop was very simple; in the middle was a large anvil, on the floor were pieces of coal and fragments of metals and there were a few plows and sickles hung on the wall. There was no one in the shop.

Yang Guo looked at the shop and thought, “How can weapons be made here!” But since they’ve made their way here, he might as well ask so he called out loudly, “Is the blacksmith home?”

After a while, an old man entered from a side room; his beard and hair was grey, he was about fifty years old. The man had a hump, most probably from bending down to forge metal over a long time; his eyes were red and small because of smoke from the fires. His left leg was crippled and he had a crutch under his arm. He said, “How can I help you?”

Yang Guo was about to reply when suddenly the noise of galloping horses could be heard; two horses rushed towards the shop. On one of the horses was a Mongolian captain, on the other was a Han, Yang Guo didn’t know whether he was a translator or a guide.

The Han loudly said, “Blacksmith Feng? Come over here and listen to the orders.”

The old man greeted them and said, “I am he.”

The Han said, “The captain has the following orders: all the blacksmiths of this town have three days to gather together at Xian city to aid the army. You have to be there tomorrow, you hear?”

Blacksmith Feng said, “I am old...”

The Mongolian captain raised his whip and said a few words.

The Han said, "If you're not there tomorrow, you'll watch your head get cut off." After he said this, the two left.

Blacksmith Feng stood there and was lost in thought. Cheng Ying saw that he was old and pitiful; she took out some money and placed it on the table. She said, "Master Feng, you're old and can't move well, won't working in the Mongolian camp lead to losing your life for no reason? Take this money and run away!"

Blacksmith Feng sighed and said, "Thank you for Miss's kindness. This old blacksmith has lived for so long, living and dying isn't much to me. But the thousands and thousands of lives of Jiangnan will be in danger."

The three of them were startled and asked, "Why?"

Blacksmith Feng said, "The Mongolian army is gathering blacksmiths to forge weapons. Once they have enough, they will definitely invade south into the land of the Song."

The three of them heard that his words were carefully thought and were very reasonable; they wanted to ask further when Blacksmith Feng said, "What do you three want to order?"

Yang Guo said, "Since Master Feng has other matters to attend to, I shouldn't disturb you but I need it urgently so I have to trouble you." Yang Guo then described the form and size of the scissors to him. The scissors were a special object but no one would have thought that as soon as Blacksmith Feng heard it, there were not any signs of surprise on his face. He nodded and pushed and pulled the air bellows and started the furnace up. He then placed two pieces of iron into the furnace.

Yang Guo said, "Will it be forged by tonight?"

Blacksmith Feng said, "I will do my best and go as fast as possible." He pulled and pushed the air bellows furiously, the coals turned a blood red color.

Sha Gu was on a table; half lying down and half sitting up. Yang Guo and the others whose homeland was Jiangnan, though young, when they heard their homeland was in danger, they were worried. The three of them looked at the furnace and thought about the trouble and strife of the world. Human lives weren't regarded as important and

there was worry, hardships and danger everywhere. Though they were facing difficulties the next day, the fear in their hearts diminished a little.

In a little over two hours, blacksmith Feng had heated the iron. He used tongs in his left hand and placed the softened metal on the anvil, with his right, he used an iron hammer to forge the metal. Though he was old, he was still strong; it seemed as if he didn't use any effort in using the hammer. After a while, the two pieces of metal started to take the rough shape of a large pairs of scissors, forming gradually.

Lu Wushuang said happily, "Sha Dan, it's going to be made in time."

Suddenly a voice from behind said coldly, "Making a pair of scissors to cut my fly whisk?" The three of them were startled and turned their heads around, only to see Li Mochou standing at the entrance, lightly waving her fly whisk about.

The weapon had yet to be finished but the enemy had arrived. Cheng Ying and Lu Wushuang both drew their swords. Yang Guo looked at an iron rod by the furnace, as soon as the enemy makes her move, he will grab the rod and use it.

Li Mochou chuckled, "Forging a pair of large scissors to cut my fly whisk; only you kids would think of that. I'll sit here and wait for you to finish, there's still time." She then sat on a bench, and looked upon the three as nothing to worry about.

Yang Guo said, "That's good. I say that your fly whisk will definitely be cut by the scissors."

Li Mochou saw Sha Gu sitting up on the table and thought, "That woman took a palm of mine and is still able to sit up, she's quite good." She asked coldly, "Where's Huang Yaoshi?"

When Blacksmith Feng heard the three words 'Huang Yaoshi' he shivered and looked up at her and then immediately lowered his head, continuing with the forging.

Cheng Ying said, "You know that my master is not here, so why ask? If you knew he was still here, even if you've got the greatest gall of anyone, you wouldn't dare come."

Li Mochou gave a 'humph' sound and took out a piece of paper from her pockets and said, "Huang Yaoshi got his fame by taking in many disciples and relying on numbers to win. Huh! Out of all his disciples, which one was really able?" She waved out her left hand and the paper flew away, her arm moved slightly and a silver needle shot out,

pinning the piece of paper on a pillar. She said, "I'll leave this as evidence. When that old 'Heretic' Huang comes back, he'll know who killed his two precious disciples." She turned her head around to Blacksmith Feng and said, "Work quicker, I'm getting impatient."

Blacksmith Feng squinted his red eyes and looked at the piece of paper, he saw the words:

The Master of Peach Blossom Island,  
Disciples he has many,  
Five against one,  
It's the laughing stock of Jianghu!

He looked up at the roof and was lost in thought.

Li Mochou said, "Why aren't you working quickly?"

Blacksmith Feng lowered his head and said, "Yes, quicker, quicker." His left hand stretched out the iron tongs and held the needle and paper, he placed them into the flaming fire of the furnace; in a flash the paper burned to ash.

Everyone was extremely surprised by this event. Li Mochou was furious; she raised her fly whisk and wanted to strike down on his head but thought, "This small town blacksmith is extremely bold, could it be that he is an extraordinary person?" She was now standing, she then slowly sat down asked, "Who are you?"

Blacksmith Feng said, "Can't you see? I'm an old blacksmith."

Li Mochou said, "Why did you burn my piece of paper?"

Blacksmith Feng said, "The words on the paper are wrong; it's best not to hang it in this shop."

Li Mochou said sternly, "What's wrong with the words?"

Blacksmith Feng said, "The Master of Peach Blossom Island has the ability to move heaven and earth, all his disciples need to do is to learn one art of his and they will be able to roam the realm. His first disciple is called Qu Lingfeng, his lightness kung fu is divine, and he is specialized in the art of the Iron Eight Trigram Palms, the variations in his martial arts are incredible. His second disciple is Chen Xuanfeng, he has trained his

body to the point of that his bones and muscles are as strong as bronze and iron, impenetrable by sabers and spears. Have you heard about this?” When he was talking, he was still forging at the same time; the hammering sounds increased the force of his words.

Li Mochou was surprised when she heard him mention Qu Lingfeng; Yang Guo and others were also surprised. They would never have thought that an old blacksmith in a place like this would know about the people of Jianghu.

Li Mochou said, “Humph, there’s a tale around Jianghu, that someone snuck into the imperial palace to steal treasures and he was killed by the imperial guards. That was the Qu Lingfeng with his incredible variations in martial arts. As for the Bronze Corpse Chen Xuanfeng, I heard that a little child stabbed him to death, what is so powerful about him? Impenetrable by sabers and spears, bah, such nonsense!”

Blacksmith Feng said: “Hmm, hmmm....The Master of the Peach Blossom Island’s third disciple is called Mei Chaofeng, although she is a woman. Her claw and whip techniques are very fierce.”

Li Mochou laughed and said, “Yes, that woman’s claw and whip techniques were just too fierce, because of this the Seven Freaks of Jiangnan blinded her and later on, Western Poison Ouyang Feng shattered her lungs.”

Blacksmith Feng was stunned for a while and then said bleakly, “That happened? I didn’t know about it. The Master of Peach Blossom Island’s fourth disciple is Lu Chengfeng, his lightness kung fu is divine, the “Slashing Air Palm” extraordinarily powerful.”

Li Mochou said, “Someone with two broken legs and who can’t walk, that must be Lu Chengfeng with his divine lightness kung fu. Without working legs, he should rely on the wind (Chengfeng means ‘ride on the wind’) to fly, Ha-ha! Powerful “Slashing Air Palm”... every palm that comes out meets thin air; that is the “Slashing Air Palm” of the Master of Peach Blossom Island.”

Blacksmith Feng lowered his head, two ‘chi’ sounds were heard as two tear drops landed on the heated iron and turned into steam.

Lu Wushuang was sitting the closest to him and saw his tears clearly; she secretly wondered what it was about. She just saw him raised his hammer even higher, the striking sounds of the metal now even louder.

After a while, Blacksmith Feng continued, “Peach Blossom Island has four senior disciples; Qu, Chen, Mei, Lu. The fourth disciple Lu Chengfeng had not only great martial arts; he was also well versed in the arts of formations and changes. If you meet him, you definitely won’t be able to escape.”

Li Mochou chuckled and said, “What use is the art of formations and changes? He built the Returning Cloud Manor by Lake Tai, the men of Jianghu said that it was extremely ingenious, but someone burned it to the ground. From then onwards there was no news of him; most probably he got burned to death along with his manor.”

Feng Mofeng continued: “The beloved daughter of the Master of the Peach Blossom Island is also the leader of the Beggars’ Clan. Chief Huang’s intelligence is unsurpassed and she is famous throughout the realm. If she wanted to deal with you, you would never be able to see it coming.”

Li Mochou scoffed: “Young Huang Rong, I dare to say that she doesn’t really have any true martial arts. She just relies on her husband’s fame and great martial arts. The reason why she could become the leader of the Beggars’ Association is due to the fact that her teacher was Hong Qigong and he supported her in becoming the leader.”

Blacksmith Feng raised his head and said sternly, “You talk rubbish priestess, all the disciples of the Master of Peach Blossom Island are highly skilled in martial arts, how could they all fall at the hands of others? Are you trying to take advantage of this country bumpkin not knowing the matters of the world?”

Li Mochou chuckled and said, “Ask those three kids and you’ll know.”

Blacksmith Feng turned his head towards Cheng Ying, his eyes inquiring.

Cheng Ying stood up and said gloomily, “My apprentice brothers and sisters have been unfortunate, they have all passed away. I haven’t been in the school for long, my martial arts are low and I can’t help Master fight. I really am ashamed. Do you have ties with my Master?”

Blacksmith Feng didn’t reply and examined her; he looked suspicious and said, “The Master of Peach Blossom Island took in another disciple in his later years?”

Cheng Ying saw that Blacksmith Feng’s left leg was crippled, she suddenly had a thought and said, “Master was lonely in his later years, he ordered me to serve him at his side. With my age and study, I really wouldn’t dare to say that I’m a disciple of



Peach Blossom Island, I haven't even taken a single step onto Peach Blossom Island.” The way she phrased her words, she admitted that she was a disciple of Peach Blossom Island.

Blacksmith Feng nodded, his eyes were very gentle, there was a feeling of being close to someone, he lowered his head and continued to forge metal, it was as if he was in deep thought about something.

Cheng Ying saw that when his hammer was in the air, it made half a circle, when it descended onto the anvil, it was tilted and dragged, the hand movements were extremely similar to her school's "Divine Descending Sword Palm Technique", she understood further and said, "When Master had spare time, he would talk to me; he talked about how years ago he sent his disciples away from the island, Chen and Mei were the ones who did wrong. Qu, Lu, Wu and Feng were innocent but because of those two they were punished. What was especially tragic was apprentice brother Feng, Feng Mofeng. He was young and had a harsh background; when Master thought about this, he would feel uncomfortable and extremely regretful."

In reality, Huang Yaoshi's character is eccentric, though his heart had these thoughts, he would never say them. Cheng Ying was warm, kind and understanding, when her Master was lonely and chatted with her, he would reveal a little of his thoughts through his words. She herself guessed what he wanted to say, though what she said right now was not exactly from her Master's mouth, it wasn't against his intentions.

From the way the two talked, Li Mochou had guessed who he was; then she heard Blacksmith Feng sigh and his tears fell like rain, 'chi' 'chi' 'chi'. As the tears struck the hot metal and turned into steam, she couldn't stop her heart from softening, but after thinking, she became strong again. She thought, "Even if they got another fighter, the old blacksmith is crippled, how could he help?" She chuckled and said, "Feng Mofeng, congratulations on your reunion with your apprentice sister."

That blacksmith was Huang Yaoshi's junior disciple Feng Mofeng. Years ago when Chen Xuanfeng and Mei Chaofeng stole the "Nine Yin Manual" and escaped from the island, Huang Yaoshi broke the legs of all the remaining disciples before expelling them from the island. Qu Lingfeng, Lu Chengfeng and Wu Tianfeng had both their legs broken, but when he came to Feng Mofeng, because he was young and his martial arts low, pity stirred in his mind and he just broke his left leg. Feng Mofeng was extremely hurt inside; he eventually came to this place and made a living as a blacksmith. He didn't keep any contacts with the Jianghu world and had silently lived here for the past thirty years. He couldn't have predicted that today he would have news of his Master and ap-

prentices again. Huang Yaoshi saved his life from his enemies. Huang Yaoshi brought him up, his debts to him were great; no matter how Huang Yaoshi had treated him, there was no hate in his heart. When he heard the words of Cheng Ying, his emotions were stirred and his grief and sorrow came out.



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