

E Monarch 261

Chapter 261: I Shall Give Up On the Heavens, But Not On My Beloved

Ye Gu Han's sword had shot out and pierced the armpit of the black-clothed man whose sword had pierced his lower abdomen. The black-clad man exerted himself to draw his sword out of Ye Gu Han's body. But, it did not budge. Ye Gu Han was actually using his own muscles to jam that person's long sword!

This was a real fight.

The blood-red sword in that assailant's armpit had started to move upwards within this short pause. The black clothed assailant was scared out of his wits at this. He then made a prompt decision to abandon his sword in Ye Gu Han's abdomen.

He dodged and prevented his entire body from a miserable death of getting slashed into two. Unfortunately, it was already late. His arm didn't receive the luxury of that narrow escape. The blooded sword went forth and separated the arm from his body; and the half of his shoulder. The sword went a little further and peeled-off the layers of his skin — all the way up to his facial muscles. What was left behind... was terrifying to behold — his white bones were bared; his twisting-worm-like veins could be seen very clearly... along with the wisps of blood that flowed inside them.

This person screamed a blood-curling cry as he retreated; it sounded more beast than human. His eyes were exposing the shock that had been bestowed upon his conscious, "My hand! My face! Ah!"

However, Ye Gu Han recovered his sword at an incredible speed. He then quickly took advantage of that moment and stabbed again; it was lightning fast.

Ye Gu Han's actions; his lack of hesitation in getting hit by the enemy — it had all been for this one moment.

This one blow...

Ye Gu Han knew that his strength wouldn't hold out in a drawn-out battle. He knew that he wouldn't be able to face the combined strength of these five Sky Xuan assailants. Therefore, all he could do was fight with everything he had. However, Ye Gu Han was a very experienced fighter. Anyone could tell that all five of them were Sky Xuan experts. But, he could clearly sense that the Xuan Qi of two of his enemies was unstable. He could sense that they had sustained serious injuries in the past and hadn't healed yet.

He himself was now a spent force. So, the most he could do was take the two of them down with him. However, the remaining three attackers were in good condition. Therefore, he couldn't be as sure about dealing with them. Therefore, those two injured enemies were his primary targets. In fact, they were his only targets.

Ye Gu Han's sword stabbed him repeatedly. But, the palms of one of the enemies hit his chest. He was happy that he had dealt such a blow to the enemy, but hadn't expected that his own ribs would be shattered. However, his chest now resembled a whirlpool as it sucked in the enemy's palms, and held them in place.

That person was aware of the danger and was vigorously tried to free himself from Ye Gu Han's grasp. He was about to succeed when a cold light rose from Ye Gu Han's sword, and made its way towards his chest.

The sword of death!

A blood curling scream escaped that man's mouth as he desperately tried to evade the oncoming attack. But Ye Gu Han's sword swooped-up in a moment, and pierced him right up to its hilt; it didn't pierce his heart. However, the Xuan Qi attached to that sword left his five frail visceral points[1] in shambles!

However, Ye Gu Han had finally run out of steam now. He had stuck his sword into his enemy's chest, but didn't have the strength to draw it out this time.

One of his remaining opponents bellowed. However, Ye Gu Han didn't even have the strength to pull his sword out. His right hand was cut-off by his enemy's sword. But surprisingly, no blood flowed out of that wound — the blood in his body had already flowed out by now!

His face was revealed in a mocking smile. Yet, his eyes were still full of tender affection as he looked in a particular direction...

...the direction of the Imperial palace;

One of the black clad people leapt-up and kicked Ye Gu Han hard. His body was sent flying-up in the air. Ye Gu Han fell down heavily. But still, Ye Gu Han stubbornly turned his body over. Suddenly, there was a loud and terrifying sound; the sound of his ribs being crushed. However, there was not a single sign of pain on his face.

His eyes had never so proud before; neither had they ever been so desolate...

They were full of inexhaustible gentleness and yearning...

Not a lot remained of his life, yet he couldn't see his beloved. So, looking at the place where she resided... the direction in which she was... would have to do...

He had hidden his feelings for a long time, but all of them came gushing out. [I think of you, Xiu Xiu! I think of you! I... think of... you...]

Ye Gu Han's mind was suddenly hit by an incomparably-bright light, and many memories from the past started flooding it. He was already in a state of trance, but these images inside his mind were lifelike; this dream seemed real. And then, he heard a gentle voice. It was lightly reading a small poem again and again. It seemed to go on endlessly; like a tiny thing that was floating in a vast area — it was just like a dream.

[Don't regret such deep affection,]

[I willingly fall and wither into loneliness;]

[The regret of my beloved can haunt an eternity,]

[I shall give up on the heavens, but not on my beloved.]

These were the parting verses which Ye Gu Han had written for Murong Xiu Xiu; eighteen years ago.

[I shall give up on the heavens, but not on my beloved.]

[I shall give up on the heavens, but not on my beloved.]

Ye Gu Han couldn't speak. However, his lips still opened and closed slightly. And if one were to pay close attention, they would notice that he was repeating the last line of that poem.

[Xiu Xiu, I had left eighteen years ago, and I lost you forever. I had left you with this poem... And you cried incessantly as you read the last verse. I remember to this day... the way your long hair was disheveled in the wind then...

[Now, I'm leaving once again. And I will never return after I leave this time. You may become aware later... that just like before... I was recalling the last lines of that poem in my final moments...]

[I shall give up on the heavens, but not on my beloved.]

[Xiu Xiu, I could never turn my back on you all my life! I have never turned my back on you!]

Zhou Jian Ming roared like a mad-man and rushed to cut Ye Gu Han's body into pieces. But Lei Jian Hong called-out to him in a loud voice, "Enough! His Xuan Qi is already exhausted, and his five visceral points are done for. We need to pick up the injured fourth and fifth, and capture that little girl! Hurry; we need to move quickly! We can't stay here for long!"

Zhou Jian Min and the female combatant were very angry. They screamed their frustrations out. Then they each picked-up their fourth and fifth brother. They then departed like lightening towards the direction where Princess Ling Meng had escaped...

Meanwhile, Princess Ling Meng was being pulled by her two sisters. They were trying to force her to escape. But, she kept looking back at the raging battle. However, when she saw Ye Gu Han covered in blood from head to toe — she collapsed. The Princess then suddenly turned towards that direction, and screamed in a wild fit, "Uncle Ye!" Her voice was extremely sad and shrill.

The Princess' feet were rooted to the ground as she refused to move even half-a-step. Suddenly, she unintentionally welled up, and tears started gushing out of her eyes.

Uncle Ye had always protected her since childhood. To her... he was unrivalled in his generation. She knew that he had felt desolate and heartbroken every day of his life; he was a sad and lonely man. And today... he had fallen... just to protect her...

Princess Ling Meng suddenly felt a searing pain in her chest. She felt as if her lungs had been split open.

There was no bonding in the Tian Family.

She knew that her father, the Emperor, was very fond of her; she had known this since the day she was old enough to understand things. In fact, he would go to the extent of spoiling her, and indulging in her appearance. However her father, the Emperor was too dignified. Even when she missed him, and acted spoilt in order to be embraced by him — her father would give her a cherished hug... but he never held her for long. He would always have some matter to take care of. He would then return to being the dignified Emperor once again.

Father and Emperor. When these two are considered together — the Emperor would always be given more importance than the Father. Father, the Emperor... Her father would turn into the Emperor whenever the need arose. Then, she couldn't act like that person's daughter.

Ye Gu Han felt more like a real father to her. She could act like a spoilt child in front of him without any inhibitions, and could throw small tantrums whenever she felt like. So, even if she called him 'Uncle,' she considered him her father.

He would always pamper her. However, he would scold her without mercy if she made a mistake.

[But he was really nice to me!]

[He has always been guarding me in silence. He never appeared in public. He never strove for anything. He never even demanded anything for himself! He just stayed in the shadows. And he seemed very satisfied.]

[But he was the first one to appear and defend me whenever I faced any danger!]

[He was the first one to stand up to my brothers when they bullied me.]

[He would give his all to look after me! Even now, he lies fallen for my sake. He has finally collapsed... in all these years... he must've become very tired. Uncle Ye, do you want to rest?]

[Don't you want to see your little Ling Meng? Do you have the heart to cast away your little Ling Meng and leave? Do you have the heart to...? Do you have the heart to...?]

[Uncle Ye, you know that in my heart... you will always be my father...]

[Father! Please don't leave me...]

Princess Ling Meng stood there motionless. She didn't know what she was doing or thinking. Dugu Xiao Yi and Sun Xiao Mei tried their best, but she remained motionless...

[Why hasn't my father, the Emperor arrived yet? Why?! Why hasn't he showed-up when Uncle Ye is doing his best?! He ought to come!]

[If Uncle Ye truly leaves me... I will retaliate! I will go crazy and take revenge against everyone!]

[I will dedicate my life to my revenge!]

Princess Ling Meng roared in her heart, and it seemed that her chest was about to explode with anger. However, she was unable to say it out loud. Tears blurred her vision and it seemed that a five thousand Kg rock had blocked her throat. Her hands and feet were cold. Her entire body shuddered as if she had been transported to a world of ice and snow.

The three black-clad assailants with masked faces overtook them. Lei Jian Hong angrily rushed towards Princess Ling Meng to capture her. However, Princess Ling Meng just stood there with a blank expression. She didn't react to this situation in any way.

Dugu Xiao Yi and Sun Xiao Mei threw themselves in front of her. Their bodies were glowing with a golden light...

The fact that they had reached the edge of the Gold Xuan level was quite remarkable; especially when one considers their ages. The two women took out a knife and a blade, and prepared to fight.

However, the opposite party's strength...

"F***k off!" Lei Jian Hong waved his hands, and the two women were thrown back, "I don't wish to kill you! Don't force me!"

"Who are you? Who are you?!" It seemed like Princess Ling Meng had just been roused from a dream. She didn't feel frightened... she had to avenge her Uncle Ye.

Her eyes were full of hatred, "Who are you people? Why am I so important to you? Why did you kill my Uncle Ye?!" the Princess had roared-out the last sentence.

The loud shout startled Lei Jian Hong. [Such a delicate and frail woman can issue such a sharp and resounding sound...]

Notes:

The five visceral points. This refers to the five main organs in a person's chest cavity in traditional Chinese medicine. The organs consist of heart, liver, spleen, lungs and kidneys. This will obviously raise a doubt with the fight sequence. His sword doesn't pierce the heart. But the energy in his attack still shattered the organ.

Chapter 262: To Save or Not to Save?!

“You do not need to know our identities. And you certainly don’t need to know the reason behind our actions. You anyway have no chance of living!” Lei Jian Hong had no idea why he had divulged their intention to this woman.

“I won’t let you off for this! I will kill you and your family! I will kill you!” Tears suddenly filled Princess Ling Meng’s eyes. However, she forcefully opened them and stared without blinking, “I won’t even spare your ghosts!”

It seemed that her shrill and mournful scream had split-open the blue dome of heaven. The autumn wind rustled. Her hair started to drift about like dead leaves as the whistling sound of the blowing wind got louder and louder. Even then, she somehow exuded a sense of beauty.

The pupils of Lei Jian Hong’s eyes suddenly shrank behind his mask. He felt a chill run through him. He trembled a little as his intuition warned him about her. He felt somewhat ashamed at getting frightened. [I am a great Sky Xuan expert. Yet, just a few words from this young woman made me nervous? That’s unreasonable!]

“Bang!” Lei Jian Hong flew into a rage because of his shame, and gave a tight slap to Princess Ming Leng. He then rebuked, “Smelly whore! Your death is at hand, and yet you talk like this?! Don’t trust too much in your confidence; else I’ll kill you right now!”

Princess Ling Meng’s face swell with the man’s palm-print and her hair scattered down from the wind. However, she stubbornly kept-on staring him. And her gaze was full of bitter hatred.

Lei Jian Hong looked at the venomous expression on Princess Ling Meng’s face again. An obscure anger rose inside of him when he realized that the Princess still hadn’t given-up. Moreover, this Princess had an important connection with those throwing knives which had killed four of his fellow disciples. And tonight, this woman’s bodyguard had seriously injured two more of his brother-disciples. Anger rose unabated in his heat for a moment, and extreme hatred was soon stemmed from his guts as he thought of killing her there and then.

The Third female disciple saw her brother-disciple filling with the desire to kill. She hurriedly advised, “Senior brother, this woman is related to that person. So it would be better if we don’t kill her till that man arrives to save her.”

Lei Jian Hong clenched his teeth. He then suddenly chopped down on the nape of the princess' neck; she fainted. He then picked her up and tossed her to the Third Disciple. Then, he ordered everyone to move out.

"Put the Princess down!" Dugu Xiao Yi and Sun Xiao Mei rushed to stop the opposite party. They were aware that they would be no match for them. However, they just couldn't allow the enemy to capture Princess Ling Meng and get away.

Lei Jian Hong snorted coldly. The female disciple rose to meet them, and then, "Bang! Bang!" the two young women were struck by a palm each. They flew backwards with wisps of blood flowing from the corners of their mouths. The three black-clothed individuals then flew up and disappeared.

It's not that Lei Jian Hong didn't wish to kill the two women — he just couldn't.

His hatred dictated no other option in the Princess's matter. However, in the case of the other two women — one had the support of the Sun and the Tang Family, while the other had the backing of the Dugus. The three great families would come together if something were to happen to those two. They would become a problem-big-enough to put his younger brother Li's family in a disadvantageous position.

A little while later...

A little white shadow flashed past. It was followed by hoof beats; their sound resembled that of a rain-shower. The hoof beats had sounded only a moment ago, and a strong horse was already turning the street to arrive at the scene of the battle. Silhouettes flashed as two men descended from the horseback.

There was a pool of blood on the ground. Ye Gu Han's lone body lay in the midst of it.

"Little Ye! Ye Gu Han!" Jun Wu Yi exclaimed in alarm. He dropped down beside Ye Gu Han's body. He was supposed to hide the truth about his healed legs, but he had abandoned that appearance now. He knelt beside Ye Gu Han, and took his left wrist in his hand. Then, pure Xuan Qi started to flow from Jun Wu Yi, and into the seriously injured man. Ye Gu Han didn't have much life-force left in him.

Ye Gu Han had suffered major blood loss. His body had also been inflicted with serious injuries. His energy reserves had all but dried up. His chances of survival looked very slim. Had it not been for the concerns and anxiety of his heart — perhaps he wouldn't have survived till now. However, his expression had already started to slacken. It seemed as if his spirit had started to leave his body. He had incomparable willpower, but it's hard to resist elapse of life-force when the angel of death descends.

Then, Ye Gu Han's consciousness cleared because of the pure Xuan Qi that flowed into his body from Jun Wu Yi's. He forced his eyes open, and saw Jun Wu Yi's thin face. His eyes lit-up as an expression of urgency overtook his face.

Anxious... plea... Ye Gu Han was full of such emotions.

"What happened here?" Jun Wu Yi asked with a sense of urgency, but Ye Gu Han was unable to speak. Jun Wu Yi then looked around. [This street is supposed to be bustling with people. But there is no one else here; it's so quite!]

[Isn't this very strange? Where has everyone gone off to?]

"Does anybody know what happened here?!" Jun Wu Yi roared in anger. The entire street reverberated with his shout.

Still... no one replied.

Ye Gu Han and Jun Wu Yi were contemporaries of their generation. In fact, the Third Master of the Jun Family was a little older than Ye Gu Han. The Ye and the Jun Family used to have a somewhat friendly relationship. Therefore, Jun Wu Yi and Ye Gu Han used to be friends. Then, the Ye Family's power declined. And so, Jun Wu Yi and Ye Gu Han hadn't seen each other since. That happened around ten years ago. Jun Wu Yi hadn't expected to see his dear friend after ten years... and that too when the man was on the brink of death.

Ye Gu Han felt Jun Wu Yi's pure Xuan Chi enter his system. He was surprised to realize that Jun Wu Yi had surpassed his cultivation. Jun Wu Yi had reached the upper reaches of the mid-Sky-Xuan level. It was very astonishing. However, Ye Gu Han also felt his chances at living fade away at the same time. Therefore, his eyes become more and more urgent as the pure Xuan Qi entered his body... but it was soon replaced by a look of pure wrath.

Jun Wu Yi looked-on as Ye Gu Han's aura became weaker and weaker. He then looked up "Mo Xie... can you... save him?"

Jun Mo Xie sighed, [Third Uncle is asking me to do this... even he can't do it himself.] Truth to be told, the Young Master Jun had full faith in the Hongjun Pagoda's abilities. He was sure that he could revive a person regardless of the extent of their injuries. He had been able to eliminate the poison that had plagued his Uncle's body for a decade. In fact, it had even worked when Hai Chen Feng had smashed his own Dantian and Xuan Qi circulation to pieces.

Ye Gu Han's condition was very precarious; in fact, he was almost done for. However, Jun Mo Xie never considered himself a savior. Moreover, he didn't have any favorable opinions of Ye Gu Han and Princess Ling Meng. In fact, assisting them was likely to result in more trouble for him. Hence, there wouldn't be the slightest advantage in helping him — this transaction would result only in a loss.

However, it was his Third Uncle who was asking for help; it was difficult for him to refuse his uncle in such a situation. Therefore, Jun Mo Xie unhurriedly and unwillingly crouched alongside his uncle. He reached with his arm and took Ye Gu Han's hand from Jun Wu Yi. He then slowly closed his own eyes. Next, he initiated the Art of Unlocking Heaven's Fortune. The pure Xuan Qi started to pour out steadily. However, his eyebrows couldn't help but twitch a little.

The Young Master Jun was startled by the extent of Ye Gu Han's injuries. [They can't be taken lightly. His injuries are similar to the ones Hai Chen Feng had suffered. It's almost certain that he will die from these injuries. In fact, it's a miracle that he has held-on, and hasn't died from his wounds! It seems that he doesn't have even half-of-his-breath left. It seems that his conviction is the only thing that remains in his body!]

Jun Mo Xie's aura covered the injured man's body. He had been injured in many places. There must be at least thirty places where he suffered injuries... perhaps more. His lower abdomen was pierced, his shoulder was damaged seriously by sword energy; the sides of his body had been opened, the palm attacks on his chest had completely shattered his rib cage... and his five vital points had been displaced. He was in a very bad state. [Damn!]

Jun Mo Xie had the utmost confidence in his Art of Unlocking Heaven's Fortune when confronted with such a condition. However, he didn't see the slightest of chance of curing Ye Gu Han... Jun Mo Xie could only extend the man's life by preventing his injuries from getting worse — by ensuring that he didn't die from them. However, he couldn't provide surety of healing the man...

Dugu Xiao Yi and Sun Xiao Mei staggered towards them from the distance. They called-out in a loud voice, “Brother Mo Xie, the Princess has been captured! We must quickly save her!”

Jun Mo Xie could tell that the two women had been injured badly as well. He was about to welcome them. However, he remained seated after he heard their words. He thought, [how is the Princess’s fate any of my business? Why on earth are you demanding ‘me’ to do my utmost for her? I’ve got nothing to do with her. And can’t you see Ye Gu Han’s condition? And now you want my Third Uncle to do his utmost? Why? And for what reason?]

However, Ye Gu Han’s entire body started to tremble when he heard this. His face, which was deathly pale, suddenly flushed with a bit of color. His eyes became a little brighter and warm with hope. He looked at Jun Mo Xie and Jun Wu Yi — entreating them to save the Princess.

Ye Gu Han was grasping at straws. He had noticed that Jun Wu Yi’s level had exceeded his own, and that he was at the border of the Sky Xuan realm’s mid-mark. Therefore, there would still be a chance of saving the Princess if were to undertake the task.

Jun Wu Yi thought for a moment and asked softly, “You want us to save the Princess?”

Ye Gu Han’s eyes showed a shred of happiness in response.

“Stop with the fuss. How do you think we will save her with our strengths? Just speak frankly; you want us to throw away our lives!” Jun Mo Xie continued to use the Art of Unlocking Heaven’s Fortune. He didn’t even raise his eyebrows, “Third Uncle’s Xuan Qi has reached a high level. But his body is still weak. His health is infirm, and he is unable to walk. And they had the strength to leave you like this; not only are you asking my uncle... but you’re even asking someone as weak as me? Moreover, I don’t have any intention of saving her; nor do I have the strength. There is an ancient saying — Life and death, the fates are decided by the heavens. This must an act of fate.”

[Do you think that I’m foolish? Work hard to no avail... What good would it bring us if save that stupid Princess? My third uncle’s recovery will be exposed along with his strength. Not only that, my strength will be exposed in that process too. Is it not enough that I’ve stopped you from dying? Can’t you be content with that? Even if there were others in my place... even the Eight Great Masters wouldn’t have been able to use this method; not even Yun Bei Chen!]

Ye Gu Han's breathing was already weak, but now it became urgent and frantic since he had started to pant heavily due to his anger. Jun Mo Xie could feel a rapid increase in his pulse. His chest shook as he gasped for air. And because of that a bone in that area got fractured; it made a distinct sound...

Ye Gu Han stubbornly looked at Jun Mo Xie. His expression was one of inexhaustible anger at first... then, one of sadness before it eventually turned into one of a 'pleading' man. Jun Mo Xie's heart shook as he witnessed such a mournful expression. He was sure that Ye Gu Han would've undoubtedly abandoned his self-respect and pride if he could speak, and would've then beseeched the Young Master Jun to save the Princess.

Suddenly, Ye Gu Han's face flushed, and a gurgling noise emanated from his throat. It seemed that he was using the entirety of his remaining strength for one last effort. His mouth opened, but he was barely able to spit out two weak words, "Request... save..."

Then, his head crooked and he fainted without a whimper.

Ye Gu Han had chosen to burn the last of his life-force to say these words.

He hadn't been able to finish his sentence. However, Jun Mo Xie and Jun Wu Yi clearly understood what he meant to ask of them, "I request you; save Ling Meng!" He had spent the last moments of his life and his life-force to make this request...

"Is he... dead?" Jun Wu Yi seemed sad and anxious as he asked.

"He hasn't died yet... though he's nearly dead. He is in a somewhat 'suspended' condition near death." Jun Mo Xie's hand was still pouring pure aura into Ye Gu Han. "However, things could take a turn for the worst if his condition remains the same."

"To save people is like putting out a fire; you still haven't saved everyone!" Dugu Xiao Yi rushed over. She cried-out as she grabbed the front of Jun Mo Xie's jacket. "Hurry up and save Princess Ling Meng; what are you waiting for?!"

“How is this my concern?” Jun Mo Xie looked at inexplicably, “Why do you want me to save the Princess? A Prince or something should be dealing with this matter. You want me to go and throw away my life? Ye Gu Han is Sky Xuan expert. Can’t you see how they’ve turned him into a mere sack of blood? I’ve no strength in comparison; yet you want me to go and save her? How can those words even come out from your mouth?”

Jun Mo Xie rebuked in his heart, [Princess Ling Meng is not you; so why on earth should I exert myself for such a stupid matter? I had rushed over for your sake; who thought it would turn into such a big problem...]

“You... uhh... then what do we do?” Dugu Xiao Yi recalled that Jun Mo Xie was that powerful. In fact, he couldn’t even match her. So how would he deal with multiple Sky Xuan experts? What had she just said? She suddenly regretted her words, and was now at a loss, “Why... haven’t those guards from the Imperial Palace arrived yet?”

Those words were of no interest to the listeners. Jun Wu Yi and Jun Mo Xie looked at each other in tacit understanding.

“Mo Xie, as an act of kindness to Ye Gu Han... we should help. And after all... she is the Princess.” Jun Wu Yi said in a tactful manner. He knew that his nephew wasn’t interested in Princess Ling Meng. He was well aware that his nephew would actually sit and watch idly.

Hence, he decided to use Ye Gu Han’s name instead of the Princess. He had said this since he had already figured that his nephew would make no attempts to rescue her otherwise.

He knew his nephew well. He knew his nephew was more than capable of doing just that. In fact, that would be the youngster’s natural instinct — and he’d bear a clear conscious in the regard as well.

“I won’t do it! I have no interest!” Jun Mo Xie refused his Third Uncle as well. He had a faint feeling that, [This doesn’t seem like a minor matter... the cost of my identity’s exposure would be... would be far from inconsequential...]

[I wouldn’t do anything since it has nothing to do with me — even if she were the daughter of a deity; let alone she’s a princess; I would rather use this free time to tease Little White...]

[Then again... the Great Assassin Jun won't work when I have no advantage from the transaction...]

"I will go; even if you don't!" Jun Wu Yi angrily propped-up from the ground and jumped onto the horse. "I do not go for the Princess; but I go for Ye Gu Han! Ye Gu Han would commit a bloody purge of the city for the Princess — just as your grandfather did for you! How can we sit back and ignore such affections?!"

Chapter 263: Get Someone Else to Do One's Dirty Work?[1]

Jun Mo Xie wouldn't have agreed irrespective of what his uncle would've said — except that he mentioned that incident. And this moved the Young Master Jun deeply.

Jun Mo Xie's heart shook. He suddenly remembered the manner in which Jun Zhan Tian had issued a call to war; the manner in which his grandfather had led his troops to commit that purge in the capital. This memory suddenly warmed his heart.

This memory moved Jun Mo Xie the most.

Hit-man Jun was aware that his third uncle's decision was based more on sentiment than reason. However, it would result in a lot of harm to the Jun Family if Jun Wu Yi truly undertook that task — regardless of his success in saving the Princess. However, the heavens find a way when a man of noble character sets out on a righteous task.

It would be difficult to cover-up his uncle's involvement if the well-known general was to get involved in the matter. However, if Jun Mo Xie himself undertook the task, then...

"Fine then; I'll go! Damn!" Jun Mo Xie took a deep breath. Then, he quickly transferred the pure Xuan Qi into Ye Gu Han's dry meridians to keep him alive for the time-being. "But you need not accompany me, Uncle — I alone will be more than sufficient. So, you first return home. But ensure that his body doesn't sway much on the way back..."

"I understand these rescue operations; unlike you," Jun Wu Yi interrupted him. "But I will unwillingly step back."

“You’re correct to have faith in me... however; those are five Sky Xuan experts,” Jun Mo Xie smiled bitterly. He got up and mounted his horse. Then, he pressed his legs to the horse’s side, and prepared to speed away.

“You... scoundrel! You... be careful!” Dugu Xiao Yi’s heart was suddenly seized by her affection for Jun Mo Xie. She was ‘very well aware’ of the Jun Scoundrel’s strength. She felt like blocking his way to prevent him from leaving. Dugu Xiao Yi was extremely anxious. So much so, that she temporarily harbored a selfish thought... [its better to keep this scoundrel safe than rescue the Princess.]

Jun Mo Xie mounted his horse and paused for a moment. He decided that he wouldn’t look back since he had chosen a course of action. His horse neighed and raised its hooves. It then galloped-off at great speed.

Dugu Xiao Yi’s delicate body trembled. Sun Xiao Mei slowly came up beside her, and held her hand. She then said, “Don’t worry; nothing will happen to him.”

“Elder sister Xiao Mei, I was too much... compelling him like this... what would I do if something happened to him?” Dugu Xiao Yi asked hesitatingly. She was worried out of her wits.

“He won’t; relax!” Sun Xiao Mei thought, [How did you force him? It was the Third Master Jun’s words. He probably wouldn’t have listened if you had tried to force him ten thousand times. You couldn’t have forced him. I’m afraid that the present ‘you’ is incapable of compelling him to do anything...]

However, these words would’ve left Dugu Xiao Yi heartbroken. Therefore, Sun Xiao Mei could only think about it.

As chance has it... the attack on Princess Ling Meng, Ye Gu Han’s arrival, his fierce battle, him getting seriously injured and finally, Lei Jian Hong grabbing the Princess and leaving — all of it had been observed by an individual hidden in the darkness.

This person was none other than Mr. Wen. He had followed Princess Ling Meng into the Aristocratic hall as the second black-clothed man. The Aristocratic Hall allowed each invitee to have two companions. The Emperor had taken one place in Princess Ling Meng’s party. Mr. Wen had then become her second guest, and had filled the last spot.

Besides his status, Mr. Wen possessed enormous strength. So much so, that even Hai Chen Feng wouldn't be able to deal with him. Things would've naturally been very different in case he had decided to lend a helping hand.

It was a pity that he didn't.

Mr. Wen admired the loyalty and affection which Ye Gu Han had displayed. He felt the urge to assist Ye Gu Han several times during the battle. However, he unfortunately could not. The Emperor had made a plan to draw out that mysterious Master, and this plan would've come to naught if he had attacked.

That Sky Xuan expert had become a nightmare for Tian Xiang's Emperor after he had saved Princess Ling Meng! The Emperor simply couldn't allow such powerful and unknown Sky Xuan experts in his Empire; especially when he couldn't keep an eye on them.

It wouldn't have mattered if this man were just a hermit. However, he had some connection to Princess Ling Meng and could get involved in Imperial disputes. The possibility of such a powerful entity's involvement in Imperial matters wasn't good news to the Emperor's ears. Therefore, the Emperor couldn't tolerate his existence.

His intentions may have been good. But it was still important to understand this man. The Emperor wouldn't be at ease until this man's position was clear to him.

This mysterious Sky Xuan expert was one matter. But the mysterious man behind the Aristocratic Hall had also turned into a nightmare for the Emperor.

Mr. Wen felt a sense of contradiction within himself... for the first time since his birth.

He had helplessly looked-on at Ye Gu Han as he fell to the ground, and lay there in silence. Mr. Wen was usually a calm man... however, he had grinded his teeth so hard that they almost snapped off. [He's a great man! He burned every bit of his energy in order to help the Princess. And the person who could've actually helped the Princess is being forced to sit and watch from the sidelines!]

[Conscience? What conscience? Ah!]

However, Princess Ling Meng had been captured. [That mysterious Sky Xuan Peak expert must be drawn out. And nothing should happen to the Princess!]

The Emperor had entrusted him with this task.

[What to do with Ye Gu Han? He's breathing his last breaths!]

Mr. Wen didn't have a choice. He didn't have the heart to ignore this. However, he couldn't do anything about it. Therefore, he looked-on with regret as Ye Gu Han's body fell on the ground, and sighed with remorse. Then, he shot-off in the direction where those assailants had escaped with the Princess, and started to give them a chase.

A strong wind blew in his face as he started pursuing them. And at that moment, he realized something. This whole plan was put together to draw out that mysterious expert, and to find the culprit behind the attacks on Princess Ling Meng. However, he knew the Emperor well. [The Emperor may have other selfish motives behind this matter!]

They had never talked about it since the great and wise Emperor obviously must've been embarrassed to admit it. However, Mr. Wen could understand — Ye Gu Han's existence was a matter of anxiety for the Emperor. In fact, it was a matter of great anxiety.

No man could endure another eyeing his wife for more than a decade. It was out of question to discard such a situation even when it came to the Great Emperor's heart. The Emperor was, after all, also a man. In fact, his desire for control would be greater than others — it certainly couldn't have been weaker.

It didn't matter that the man hadn't crossed the line. As long as the thought was there... it was a huge crime warranting no pardon from a capital punishment.

It was necessary for Ye Gu Han to die.

This thing was the real purpose among several other more pressing matters. The Emperor had in fact killed with a borrowed knife.

[He planned this arrangement!]

[No wonder the Princess's bodyguards were so weak, and had no desire to act... no wonder he sent just me to rescue the princess; and no one else! No wonder! It was almost the same as a 'ban' on any other help... so that's what's going on!]

Mr. Wen had no choice but to admire the conduct of the country's Emperor. His plan was precise and accurate. His thinking was cautious and meticulous. [My own schemes can't be as malicious as his.]

He could see the three people in the distance ahead of him. However, Mr. Wen was having a tough time in understanding his own emotions.

Jun Mo Xie rode his horse swiftly and quickly crossed several streets. He was ruthless whipping the horse, and it was travelling at the speed of an arrow. The corners his powerful horse's mouth had started to foam. The Young Master Jun quickly looked around to see that no one else was there. Then, he tightened his grip on his horse using his legs. He then tossed away the reins. Then, Jun Mo Xie's towering silhouette disappeared from on the horse's back...

The horse let out a long neigh and stopped as the Young Master Jun disappeared. The reins thrown away by the Young Master Jun got entangled in a nearby tree, and formed of a tight loop.

He would either do something or not. But when he did act; he'd do it with a sense of swift decisiveness. He would give his all.

This was the Hitman Jun's code of conduct. Nothing would matter once he had made up his mind.

It wouldn't have mattered if Princess Ling Meng was hacked to pieces in front of him if he had decided against saving her. Hit-man Jun would just calmly look-on. In fact, he might've commented on how the knife technique wasn't good... or how the weapon wasn't sharp enough. However, since he had decided to save her — he would ensure that not a hair on her body was harmed. He would rescue her whole, and then escape.

Strong Aura was flowing all around. It was as if a meteor-shower had slammed forcefully into the ocean, and had evoked large waves in the sky. These waves then rolled around in all the four directions; endlessly.

Jun Mo Xie initiated the Yin-Yang Escape. His speed increased tremendously in comparison to his regular swiftness. He was like an illusion; he was at one place at one moment, and at another the next. There was no one who could see this mysterious scene. However, the Young Master Jun was really enjoying himself.

Jun Mo Xie had realized that he had started to get increasingly proficient at controlling Yin-Yang Escape ever since he had unlocked the second level of the Hong Jun Pagoda. In fact, he could now use it according to his desires. Jun Mo Xi was wholeheartedly making use of this skill right now. He felt fully integrated with the world, and had a feeling of detachment from all worldly matters. It felt as if he could go anywhere in this vast world; no place was beyond as long as he desired it...

The Art of Unlocking the Heaven's Fortune was flowing like the Yangtze river[2] inside his body; unending and unlimited. Aura was continuously seeping out of the Hongjun Pagoda... the Art of Unlocking Heaven's Fortune was working without any clogs. There was a flow of unceasing Aura within his body since he had opened the Art of Unlocking the Heaven's Fortune. And this entire Aura was going straight into the Hongjun Pagoda again...

These things had apparently taken the form of a loop; a perfect loop.

Jun Mo Xie couldn't help but recall some of the Daoist teachings from his previous life even though he hadn't been able to understand them at that point — Life is like a sea of misery, and the human body is the only raft available to cross it.

Jun Mo Xie felt that those words were very much in line with his present condition.

The Young Master Jun wanted to remain in that wondrous state for a longer period of time. However, the prevailing situation didn't allow him extend the time period for which he could remain in that state. It was truly a pity...

How could reality ever fulfill people's expectations?

Suddenly, there was a change up ahead.

Jun Mo Xie 'whooshed' across and silently covered over thirty meters in one step. He only left behind one whirlpool of wind after another in that illusory state. And these whirlpools were slow to subside...

Three people were continuously changing direction as they moved towards the outside of the city. They were like wisps of smoke. Their movements were swift and nimble. The motion of their limbs was smart. However, he could see that those three people were quite formidable. These people would somehow know of if someone was coming towards them from the front. They would then shift their positions to avoid meeting the person. These people hadn't bumped into anyone the entire way; except for a few common people.

And a common person wouldn't be able to detect them given the speed they were moving at. He would just feel a burst of cool breeze blowing towards him, and the assailants would continue without leaving a single trace.

Notes:

To get someone else to do one's dirty work/ to kill with a borrowed knife, is an art of Warfare Deceptions. More details can be found in the 36 stratagems of Chinese warfare.

Yangtze river; Long river in China. One of the longest in the world.

Chapter 264: You Got Framed!

Jun Mo Xie took a deep breath, and then increased his speed further. He stayed a bit over a hundred meters behind the three black clothed people, and matched their pace. He suddenly detected a fluctuating aura, and realized that someone else was also shadowing these three. And he could tell from that person's movements that his cultivation was much higher than the three he was chasing...

[Don't tell me; is he from the Imperial palace?] Jun Mo Xie contemplated for a while and came up with a plan...

Mr. Wen also felt someone else's presence. However, he couldn't locate this person when he looked around. However, Mr. Wen had a very powerful awareness, and he could tell that this other person was an inconceivably-formidable expert.

[But why can't I locate him?]

The area opened-up ahead. The three indistinguishable shadows jumped over the city walls, and fled far away in a matter of moments. Mr. Wen chose that moment to investigate, and halted there on purpose for a while. He didn't believe that those 'youngsters' could break away from him. So, he decided to see how that man could hide himself in that wide-open expanse.

[I don't think that the greatest of the senior-most generation could hide themselves from my eyes in this large and open area!]

However, Mr. Wen would be disappointed.

He waited for a moment, but couldn't catch that person. All he could do — was feel a strong and formidable aura arrive, and then go away into the distance. In fact, the aura traversed into the distance through that bare space. Yet, he couldn't even see the man.

[This... how is this possible?]

[A man such as this exists in the mortal world!] Mr. Wen took a deep breath. However, his insides were now brimming with burning aspirations. [What a great life it would be... if I were to fight such an expert hand-to-hand?]

Mr. Wen quickly adjusted his personal state after-almost spitting out air, and then lightly jumped off as well. He floated down the city walls as light as a strand of hair. And then, he too faded away in the distance. The sleep-deprived soldiers guarding the gate didn't notice any of it, and remained ignorant of what happened.

"Big Brother, the condition of Fifth doesn't look very good. I've been pouring Xuan Qi into him, but it's not making any difference. We need to cure his injuries quickly. Otherwise, I'm afraid..." Zhou Jian Ming's voice had a sense of urgency to it.

“Ye Gu Han was truly fierce! The fourth’s condition is also bad,” Lei Jian Hong gnashed his teeth with hatred. He then rapidly said, “The fifth’s condition is quite serious. But he will be back to normal if we heal his injuries successfully. However, fourth has been permanently disabled. His shoulder has been cut off and his face has been disfigured... damn that Ye Gu Han!”

“I didn’t expect this Ye Gu Han to be that much of a problem! We’re each at Sky Xuan level; we aren’t inferior to anyone in this Empire! That man had to face us all at once, and yet things still turned out this way!” The Third-female disciple, Fang Piao Hong sighed. “Fortunately, he was left for dead! Though it is a pity what he did to the Fourth Brother...”

“This is all because of this b*tch Ling Meng!” Lei Jian Hong roared angrily. “I’ll make this b*tch regret her life after I find out about that mysterious man with the throwing knives! I’ll take care of her... what a bullsh*t princess she is!”

“We must wait till Master arrives even if we get our desired outcome,” Fang Piao Hong sighed again. “The Fourth and the Fifth brothers are dying; the Sixth has no hope for recovery. The Seventh-to-Tenths’ bones have already been buried in the Tian Xiang City. Who would’ve thought that such a thing would happen... that things could turn out like this?!” she continued with another sigh, “Master will fly into a rage when he hears about this! Big Brother, Master will arrive in two days. You must make preparations for his arrival!”

“What preparations can I make?” Lei Jian Hong said somewhat despairingly. “If our father doesn’t beat me to death — I fear he will put me in condition where I’ll be bedridden for half-a-year! I had led nine disciples here... and now, only the three of us remain. Won’t this be a huge blow to our old man? It’ll be a miracle if he forgives me easily!”

Zhou Jian Ming also sighed, “I suppose we three can’t take it easy now. Master will arrive after two days. At the appointed time... oh dear! I don’t have the guts to imagine how the old man will react.”

“Master had poured all his heart into us eleven disciples... now... oh dear! I don’t know how he’ll grieve!” Fang Piao Hong said sadly. She couldn’t prevent her eyes from becoming red...

A small grove appeared in front of them as they talked. They first looked behind to see that they weren’t being followed. Then, they entered it without hesitation. Hit-man Jun followed them from behind like a ‘formless being’ without any physical properties. He floated in the air as he followed them in.

Jun Mo Xie had listened to the kidnappers very carefully. Lei Wu Bei's disciples had also taken part in the raid for the Xuan Core on that night with the thunderstorm.

Jun Mo Xie was startled by what he heard; [Lei Bu Wei, the Cold-Blooded Master is arriving in Tian Xiang City in two days?!]

[This is big news!]

The three people were cautious even though they were inside dense woods. They changed directions and turned twice; first left, and then right. Then, they stopped in front of a dry tree stump. Then, their senior-most disciple Lei Jian Hong extended his hand, and pressed something at an unknown place. The tree stump suddenly moved away, and revealed a huge stone slab. And that slab then moved away to reveal the round entrance of a cave.

Jun Mo Xie took a single step and disappeared inside the moment it was revealed. The cave was genuinely safe at that moment since there was no one inside. The three people including Lei Jian Hong adjusted their positions, and entered deeper; slowly and cautiously. This cave was very narrow, and two people couldn't go inside at the same time without bumping into each other. Had they known that the Young Master Jun was already there... quietly waiting for them to enter...

The tree stump slowly returned to its original position after they entered. The ground once again looked undisturbed; not a single sound of any activity could be heard...

Mr. Wen had followed those three people till the grove. They hadn't been able to evade him, or go out of the range of his sense of detection. In fact, he had seen them enter the woods. However, he had wasted some time in an attempt to search for that formidable person. Therefore, he had arrived a little too late at the cave's entrance. The stump had returned to its original place by the time he had arrived. There wasn't even a single abrasion left to indicate the entrance. He searched everywhere, but couldn't locate where the people he had followed had gone-off to. Mr. Wen could only feel their auras. He could clearly feel that they were nearby, but he couldn't locate them. He couldn't help but worry. This was truly a case of 'an old cat burning its whiskers'.[1]

Mr. Wen was certain that these people must've gone underground using a mysterious mechanism in order to hide their trail. However, where did they go after digging into the ground? He was sure that he could draw them out if he launched his skill to sweep across the area. But that would arouse their

suspicion. It was a pity that he had to beat the grass to scare the snake[2]. He couldn't think of another plan.

[However, Princess Ling Meng would remain in their hands if they didn't show themselves. And what will I do if something bad happens to her...? How will I face the Emperor?] Mr. Wen felt somewhat embarrassed as he frowned. He thought hard and incessantly about countermeasures for that eventuality...

The cave led to a huge space. The soil was patted down firmly. However, the place had a somewhat damp smell to it since it was underground.

"You two, hurry up and heal the Fourth and Fifth. I will question this b*tch!" Lei Jian Hong had a somewhat murderous look about him.

"Big Brother, I know they're your junior-disciple-brothers, and you're angry with Princess Ling Meng. But I must urge that you consider your methods for bit." Fang Piao Hong hesitated, but she continued nevertheless, "I can see that this matter has brought pain to Brother You Ran. I can see... that our identities haven't been exposed. If we ask Brother You Ran to arrive while feigning to be a good person... and he comes as a 'hero saving the Princess from danger'... If You Ran is successful in this way... it would be considered..."

"...That's good. Contact Brother You Ran! I won't harm her," Lei Jian Hong gnashed his teeth.

Fang Piao Hong cleared her throat, but remained silent. She then diverted her full attention and energy to heal her fellow disciple.

Jun Mo Xie's heart started to beat wildly in the darkness, "Brother You Ran?!"

These two characters, "You Ran"... Li You Ran... this meant that the youngster couldn't be taken lightly anymore.

[Don't tell me... Li You Ran is involved with these people in this huge incident?]

Lei Jian Hong picked Princess Ling Meng in his arms, and then set her down against the wall. He then reached above and placed his hand on her head. Pure Xuan Qi entered her body. This made the Princess wake-up.

“You rascal! Let me go!” Princess Ling Meng had barely opened her eyes and was already very angry. She shouted, “I want to go to Uncle Ye! Let me go!”

“Your Majesty, you wish to be free, and you will be... easily. All I need from you is an answer to one question. And then, you’ll be allowed to leave.” Lei Jian Hong snorted. He said this to her as he sneered, “Your Highness, you embrace several throwing knives and hold those damaged knife very dearly. Isn’t that strange, Princess Ling Meng? Honorable Princess, I’ll set you free if you tell me who the owner of these knives is... I won’t break my promise.”

“The owner of the throwing knives?” Princess Ling Meng opened her eyes in astonishment. These people had kidnapped her just to ask about this matter? “I have never seen that highly-skilled person; so, how would I know?”

“Ha Ha! ...Princess, when you speak like that... do you take the three of us for children!” Lei Jian Hong smiled ruthlessly. “Many of my junior-brother-disciples were killed by him. In fact, we had never heard of anyone that skilled in the ‘secular’[3] world. But the first task he had undertaken was meant to save your life! Don’t tell me that the Princess has forgotten?! That man had arrived the last time you had encountered assassins; his first and only action was to save your life! But he truly is a ghost if the Princess insists on not knowing his identity!”

Jun Mo Xie shook on the inside! He had saved the Princess in secrecy the last time she was attacked. [Have I implicated her by saving her?] This resentment was hard to figure...

[How did these people know the connection between these two independent matters?] Jun Mo Xie’s train-thought immediately went to Li You Ran.

[So that’s how it is! Everything gets resolved if we take the Li Family into consideration!]

“You killed Uncle Ye for this question?” Princess Ling Meng couldn’t move. However, her eyes bulged as she looked at her captor with utter hatred. It seemed like she would start to shoot flames at him soon.

“Well! The Princess she can forget about leaving this place since she insists on not telling us about the origin of these knives...!” Lei Jian Hong gave an evil smile as he said this in a low voice. “We have several other methods with which we can make you speak.”

Jun Mo Xie was urgently thinking of the actions he could take. He had thought that he would approach Princess Ling Meng, and then disappear with her by using the Hong Jun Pagoda. However, he was unsuccessful despite several tries. [Apparently the Hong Jun Pagoda can't accommodate anyone besides me...? Or perhaps my cultivation isn't enough?]

Jun Mo Xie's wishful thinking was shattered into pieces since that plan didn't work. It would've been very easy for him if the Princess could've been transported into the Hong Jun Pagoda. Jun Mo Xie was confident that he would've been able to take advantage of the chaos that would've unfolded. He would've then whisked her away. In fact, he could've even injured or killed one of the assailants.

Saving the Princess still wasn't that difficult. However, these people were Sky Xuan experts. So he'd end up in a dire position if they found out about his whereabouts.

Lei Jian Hong pinched the Princess's jaw and forced her to look up. He then asked her maliciously, “I'll ask you for the last time; will you still not speak? I'll have no choice but to punish the Princess if she remains firm on this!”

Suddenly, a lofty, cold, severe and mocking laugh rang out of nowhere; it echoed cruelly inside the cave. “Lei Wu Bei teaches such trash? What a cold blooded senior is he? This is truly laughable!”

The voice hadn't yet faded when a blue light covered the area. Then, a delicate throwing-knife came flying out of nothingness. It then transformed into a dream-like azure color as it reflected everyone's face.

Whoosh!

The throwing knife embedded itself into the earthen wall. It unexpectedly issued the same sound as a rotten piece of logs'.

The three people jumped in shock. Lei Jian Hong covered his chest with his hands to protect it. He then shouted loudly, "Since your honored self has arrived... what do you want? Why are you in hiding? I've been waiting for you for a long time!"

Zhou Jian Ming and Fang Piao Hong grabbed the handle of their swords and drew them out. They kept their swords horizontally in front of their chests; they then looked around as if facing a very dangerous enemy.

A faintly discernable voice was heard laughing, "You youngsters of the younger generation truly overestimate your capabilities in challenging me!"

Princess Ling Meng's eyes welled-up with tears since she was emotionally moved. She struggled as she asked, "Senior... is that you? I beg you! I beg you; take me to Uncle Ye! I beg you to kill these people and avenge my uncle!"

This underground movement — especially Lei Jian Hong's loud bellowing was clearly heard by Mr. Wen outside. This helped him in locating their position.

He had been paying attention for the slightest of clues. However, Lei Jian Hong's loud bellowing had provided him with the best possible orientation for locating them. He quickly arrived in front of the entrance of the cave, and held his breath as he attentively listened. He could enter their hide-out as long as he could find its exact location.

However, Lei Jian Hong and his two companions had just discovered a shocking incident. In fact, it was a terrifying, strange and an astonishing occurrence... Princess Ling Meng's delicate body had been propped up against the wall; but it was suddenly raised into the air with a 'whooshing' sound. It then started to float in the air. It was like an arrow had suddenly been released from a bow.

Lei Jian Hong jumped in alarm, and pounced at the Princess. However, he was little late. Jun Mo Xie had already broken through the stone slab at the entrance with a loud "Bang!"; with the Princess in his arms. The bright sunlight seeped into the cave.

Lei Jian Hong and the others shouted as they followed after them.

Mr. Wen was pacing in front of the tree stump. He had been hesitantly thinking about destroying the surface in order to rescue Princess Ling Meng... or something even quicker. Then, he heard the loud rumbling-like landslide. This was then followed by a sudden explosive sound as the entrance to the cave crumbled. Mr. Wen was caught off-guard and fell to the ground. He was about to open his mouth to curse when he saw a body coming towards him; it was almost as if it had been thrown towards him — this delicate body was Princess Ling Meng's...

The three black-clothed and masked people hurried outside and surrounded him. Then, one of them shouted, "You bastard! You stayed hidden the last time. And you hid yourself again now! But you didn't escape, did you?! I'll see how you manage to flee now!"

Mr. Wen had just extended his hands to catch Princess Ling Meng. He then suddenly found himself surrounded, and confronted. He couldn't help but whine about his hardships...

This person had framed him!

Notes:

Chinese Idiom: Even experts can sometimes make mistakes.

Chinese Idiom: To make a din to draw the enemy.

Secular world means the usual/mundane/ordinary world. It's different from the world of martial arts. This term basically refers to the materialistic world, and is usually looked down upon by the top most figures of the martial world.

Chapter 265: I Will Withdraw When the Task Is Completed

How could the experienced Mr. Wen not understand the situation he was in?

He had been planning to save the Princess. However, this person had then appeared very inconveniently. Moreover, it was evident that this person had the strength to rescue the Princess. But,

he had tossed the Princess into his arms as soon as he had escaped outside. [But... how was this man certain that I've come to save her?]

[This hateful man! He framed me for his actions to cover his tracks... now what do I do?]

[This is very problematic!]

He had initially decided to follow them in secrecy. It would've been a case of a mantis hunting a cicada unaware of the oriole behind it.[1] Or perhaps it was like an elderly fisherman taking advantage of the fight between two cranes. However, not only was the elderly fisherman unable to take the advantage — he had been made a scapegoat! This was ridiculous.

His presence had been exposed. He would no longer be able investigate the mysterious Sky Xuan expert anymore... Moreover, he had been rendered incapable of capturing each of the kidnappers since the Princess was in his arms now. And his plan to interrogate them individually had obviously gone down the drain as well. This had obviously turned into a big problem for him since he had no one to look for help. Hence, he was left staring at the kidnappers with a stupefied expression on his face.

He analyzed the situation, [I won't be able to investigate anything since these young kidnappers have spotted me...]

Mr. Wen was obviously much more powerful than Lei Jian Hong and his companions. However, his mood was still very regretful.

[That mysterious man had come to save the Princess... but then why would he bring her here? And why would you leave her mid-way; especially with these three in pursuit? They could've captured her back again! Let's say your plot worked... how could you call yourself a 'man' even if you were to succeed like this?]

Princess Ling Meng was still struggling and pleading non-stop, "Senior, I beg you to kill these people and avenge my uncle Ye..."

Princess Ling Meng hadn't been able to see the mysterious 'senior' properly — despite the fact that she had been in his arms. However, she had still felt safe. [He is very much like Uncle Ye. I'll be in no danger as long as he's here.] Hence, her mind had subconsciously shifted to Ye Gu Han's well-being.

Then, that towering person had tossed her away. She had then been caught by another person. The young girl had been born with a keen sensing ability. She could tell from his person's odor that he was the Imperial Palace's honored guest; the Emperor's mysterious friend — Mr. Wen.

[He has also arrived here! Now these two extremely skilled people can join hands! No one can escape their combined strength. They'll be able to avenge Uncle Ye! And such skilled people can also save Uncle Ye's life...]

Mr. Wen's arms were also warm. But they lacked that inner-warmth which gives rise to a sense of security...

Princess Ling Meng's thought process was wonderful. However, it was also naïve and fantastical. How could life ever move according to one's wishes? The reality of this matter was as different as from her wishes as it could've been. In fact, there were no similarities between them...

Mr. Wen had already been angered by the way things had turned out. Naturally, he was more than brimming with a desire to fight. He secured Princess Ling Meng with one hand — the other he positioned in front to fight with. That hand didn't bear any weapon. Yet, it looked like he held a huge cleaver in it. He seemed so formidable that he had already secured an advantage. He fiercely looked at the three individuals from his younger generation; it seemed as if he would cut them up to pieces.

Mr. Wen had figured that the man had somehow managed to follow their trail without getting discovered. He was sure that the mysterious expert had saved the princess, and had then choreographed this ridiculous scene to protect his own identity. He could tell that this mysterious man didn't wish to expose his identity since it could've meant a great deal to him. Hence, this highly skilled person had shifted the blame on Mr. Wen. — The person who stands up first is always considered superior; such was the thought process of this world. Naturally, Mr. Wen was somewhat embarrassed to be the 'second'. However, what pinched Mr. Wen the most was the fact that he hadn't been able to catch a single glimpse of that mysterious expert.

He had been left with a sense of gloom and inferiority, and had hence remained silent. This was the main reason behind his enraged state of mind. He was a man of extraordinary self. But Mr. Wen had never felt so inferior in his entire life. Mr. Wen's strength was unpredictable. No one could ever consider

him a mere peak Sky Xuan expert. In fact, even the Eight Great Masters wouldn't find him an easy opponent.

However, Mr. Wen had been caught up in a tricky play here. But he was an experienced man, and was quickly able to assess the variables involved. He jumped out of the circle and spoke with a solemn expression on his face, "So, you guys are the Supreme Cold Blooded Master's disciples? I am not aware of the Supreme Master Lei's well-being of late. And I certainly don't know how my Tian Xiang Empire has offended the Supreme Master Lei! What could have we possibly done for him to take an action such as this... sending his disciples to capture our Imperial Princess? Has the honored senior forgotten the treaty we have as allies?"

"Supreme Master? What do you speak of Old Man? Come here and die by your father's hands!" Lei Jian Hong denied and abused. Though, he was rather amazed by these turn of events.

[Who is this old man? His strength is barely at the peak Sky Xuan realm. He's alone, and surrounded by enemies on all sides... but he's so calm in this situation... His strength is nowhere near my father's... and what's more... he even knows about the 'treaty of alliance' that was signed all those years ago! How did such a high-level personality arrive here at this critical juncture? This matter just got harder to get over with!]

[However, this old bastard's Xuan level must be very high. He had managed to kill four of my brother disciples with those throwing knives... But such an enmity cannot be recompensed very easily!] "Old fool, have the guts to tell us your name! We have a deep-seated blood feud with you, and it is important to settle that debt!"

Mr. Wen snorted. He knew that he had been unjustly implicated. He was aware that it wouldn't be worthwhile to explain his true status to these argumentative youngsters. And even if he did try to explain... would he be able to do it properly?

But, he was angered by the rude manner in which Lei Jian Hong spoke to him. He then suddenly flew towards Lei Jian Hong and hit his face hard. Then, he shouted, "You're not fit to know this old man's name! You youngsters have ruined Lei Wu Bei's reputation! Lei Wu Bei won't be able to save you from my wrath if you violate the alliance-treaty again — not even if you're his own flesh! Now get lost!"

His feet left the ground once he finished speaking; he was still facing Lei Jian Hong and his companions, and was still holding the Princess's body. Then, he slowly started to float backwards and deeper into the lush woods. But he didn't bump into a single tree — it seemed like he had eyes at the back of his head. It

even looked as if he was riding a cloud... However, they heard his faint voice again, "Tell Lei Wu Bei that the old man you spoke to is called 'Wen'. Be sure to tell him properly so that he understands it clearly."

Lei Jian Hong and the others couldn't help but be overwhelmed with shock as they looked at each other. Zhou Jian Ming shouted angrily after a good while had passed, "That old bastard kills four of my brothers, and yet he shamelessly talks big! We must settle this debt! We'll see where this bastard escapes-to when the Master arrives!"

Lei Jian Hong and Fang Piao Hong agreed in unison. Their enemy's skills were extraordinary. There was no way those three could've dealt with him by themselves. Therefore, they were left with no option but to give-up on fighting him at that point... even if they did so unwillingly. They could just wait for their master's arrival, and then make a plan...

Young Master Jun whistled as he slowly and leisurely returned to his tethered horse. The strong horse freed itself, and Jun Mo Xie mounted it. The Young Master Jun felt rather proud of his achievement. He raised his whip to urge his horse to return home.

He had quickly laid out the whole plan when he had realized that the mysterious expert was also following Lei Jian Hong's trail. He knew that no one could see him once he'd initiate the Yin Yang Escape. [Humph! First, come to find me; then you dogs can fight each other! This uncle doesn't have free time to play with you!]

[This is good; I've saved Princess Ling Meng without exposing my identity. I've completed my task with above satisfactory rating. The Princess should thank me by clapping her hands.]

He returned home to find Jun Wu Yi anxiously waiting for his arrival.

[What? But why?]

Ye Gu Han's condition had become so bad that he could stop breathing any moment... Even asking the Solitary Falcon to transfer his Xuan Qi had been useless. Even the so-called 'pure Xuan Qi' didn't have any effect on Ye Gu Han's condition... even an excess of Xuan Qi had been useless in his case...

...because he lacked the vitality needed to produce flesh and blood...

Even Solitary Falcon was unable to help — he didn't have any means to! The Solitary Falcon had transferred a lot of pure and high-level Xuan Qi into Ye Gu Han without knowing if the man was capable of supporting it...

Everyone stood-up as Jun Mo Xie walked in. His face immediately deflated as they asked, "Did you find the Princess?" Jun Mo Xie shook his head listlessly as he sat down on a chair. He then drank some tea and complained, "You thought too highly of me! Those people had captured her, and had escaped a long while ago. How would I be able to find her? I couldn't!"

Jun Wu Yi sighed and kept quiet. Dugu Xiao Yi wanted to say something but remained shut since Sun Xiao Mei took her small hand and pinched it. But Solitary Falcon snorted and said, "This old man has squandered a lot of Xuan Qi by pouring it into his man. I will waste no more since the Jun Kid has returned. This old man shall return to his cultivation," Then, he suddenly left without any indication. He seemed very carefree as he left.

Dugu Xiao Yi's lips twitched, "This old man is a quack. He just checked the pulse and nothing else... how could your Jun Family invite in such a swindler? What a waste of food!"

The Solitary Falcon had reached the door. He staggered when he heard this line; in fact, he almost collapsed. He snorted angrily, [what is wrong with this little girl? This injured boy couldn't have lasted if it weren't for this old man's assistance. He wouldn't have survived till this scheming Jun 'Brat' returned unless this Old Man had poured his Xuan Qi and replenished his life-force!]

However, the Solitary Falcon couldn't remain angry after he looked at that little girl's pretty face. He then waved his sleeves and disappeared without a trace.

Jun Mo Xie and Jun Wu Yi's expression turned strange. They would've noisily laughed-out if it weren't for Ye Gu Han lying at the doors of death.

Sun Xiao Mei, the Sun Family's eldest daughter had more experience and knowledge than the other little girl. She couldn't completely understand Solitary Falcon's origins. But she could tell that this person was someone very extraordinary by just looking at how he had prolonged the near-dead Ye Gu Han's life by transferring his pure Qi until now. She could tell that this seemingly powerful expert was quite smart as well since he had restrained his temper when he was provoked by a naïve and inexperienced girl. [The consequences could've been very serious if he had lost his cool.]

“Mo Xie, hurry up and take a look at little Ye! His condition is quite serious!” Jun Wu Yi said.

Jun Mo Xie cleared his throat and sat down besides the injured man. To be honest — he didn’t like Ye Gu Han. And similarly, Ye Gu Han didn’t like the debauchee of the Jun Family. However, he would save the man’s life since he had promised his uncle.

Either don’t try saving him or revive him completely. This was Hit-man Jun’s ‘standard’ behavior.

Moreover, Ye Gu Han was an iron-boned warrior, and a good man. There was no harm in saving him.

Notes:

A proverb derived from a popular Chinese story. There isn’t much of an equivalent in English. The reference can be looked up very easily, and a summaries of it are easily available in all languages.