

# THE MIRROR LEGACY

## Chapter 4: Li Yesheng

“Please spare my life, Big Uncle!”

The man was terrified. As soon as he hit the ground, he began begging for mercy, clinging to Li Mutian and curling up into a ball.

“Oh please, Big Uncle, spare me!”

Li Yecheng, who had only intended to steal a melon to satisfy his craving, was petrified to find his most feared uncle standing before him. The saber in Li Mutian’s hand only served to intensify his fear.

“Yecheng?” Li Mutian immediately frowned, his expression a mix of confusion and irritation. He stroked his beard, scrutinizing the young man.

Li Yecheng, known for being a freeloader at home and swindling others, was the older brother of Li Yesheng, whose father had been bedridden for years.

Hearing the commotion, the two teenagers rushed over. Li Tongya raised the long pole in his hand and pressed it firmly against Li Yecheng’s shoulder, causing him to break down in fearful tears.

Li Changhu, upon lifting the boy’s head for a closer look, was struck by a sense of recognition.

“Cousin?” Li Changhu exhaled deeply, his voice tinged with confusion.

“What are you doing here?” Li Tongya asked coldly, pressing his pole down harder.

“Stealing melons from our family!” Li Mutian answered coldly on behalf of the stammering Li Yecheng. With a flick of his saber, he turned and walked away.

“Please excuse us, Cousin,” Li Tongya said, lifting his pole. He threw one last glance at Li Yecheng before following his father back to the house.

Li Changhu remained, helping Li Yecheng to his feet. He wiped the guy’s face and offered a few comforting words before politely escorting him out of the courtyard.

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Inside the house, Li Chejing and Li Xiangping sat at the table nervously. The mirror was still hidden in Li Xiangping’s chest pocket, and he dared not move around recklessly.

Soon, their father and second brother entered the living room.

“Where’s Big Brother?” he inquired, looking around anxiously.

“He’s seeing a guest off,” Li Mutian replied, shaking his head. “I know Yecheng often comes to steal, but I’m afraid he’ll speak of tonight’s incident and possibly put our whole family at risk.”

Li Tongya took a seat on a small stool. He glanced at Li Xiangping and was about to speak when the door creaked open before quickly closing again.

Li Changhu took a seat and turned to his father with a puzzled look, shaking his head disapprovingly.

“Aren’t you overreacting, Father? Yecheng was just stealing a melon. Why risk offending his family instead of showing kindness?”

“What do you mean by his family? We’re two branches of the same Li Family,” Li Mutian retorted.

He leaned against the window and motioned to his wife and youngest son. "Watch the front and back doors. Alert us if anyone comes."

After they left, Li Mutian shut the door and window tightly then turned to Li Xiangping. "Tell them what happened!"

Li Xiangping nodded and began explaining in a quiet voice, "I found something while fishing in the Meiche River today."

After a pause, and seeing his father's nod, he took out the mirror from his chest pocket.

Li Changhu turned his gaze from his younger brother to his father, then took the bluish-gray mirror. He examined it closely, yet its purpose remained a mystery to him. ~~ANÓBÊs~~

Li Mutian retrieved the mirror from his eldest son and carefully placed it on a stone stool beneath a small hole in the roof. He then turned to look at his two sons.

Moonlight began dancing on the mirror's surface like water ripples, converging to form a mesmerizing white halo, jewel-like in its brilliance.

Li Changhu shot up from his seat abruptly, staring at the moon halo around the mirror. Li Tongya was equally spellbound, watching it in deep thought.

The Li Family gathered around the mirror in silence, each absorbed in their thoughts for the duration it would take to drink a cup of tea[1].

Li Xiangping was still visibly shaken despite witnessing this phenomenon for the second time. "I've never seen anything like this in my entire life..." he murmured to himself.

"Haha, not just you, son. Even your old man here has never seen such a wonder," Li Mutian chuckled, but his laughter did not reach his eyes, which remained stern.

“This might belong to an immortal,” Li Tongya commented softly. He picked up the saber and wiped it continuously, his eyes fixed on the mirror. Despite his apparent calmness, his trembling hands betrayed his inner turmoil.

“Such a discovery could bring about trouble for our family.” Li Changhu paced anxiously in the living room, his voice tinged with excitement and worry.

“What should we do if an immortal manages to find his way here tomorrow with some sort of tracking technique?” Li Tongya looked intently at his father, his expression serious.

Li Xiangping nodded, then remarked with a cheerful tone, “I’m sure the rewards he’ll offer us will be fantastic.”

“Nonsense.” Li Mutian dismissed the idea with a wave of his hand. “I’ve heard tales of immortals’ wrath. We must not keep it! If it had been important, its true owner would have reclaimed it long ago before any ordinary humans like us could. This might have been misplaced by an unlucky immortal.”

Li Changhu listened with growing apprehension, frowning deeply in thought.

A thought suddenly occurred to Li Tongya, and he spoke in a low, serious voice, “But didn’t Yecheng see this item as well?”

“Brother Yecheng was most likely in the fields when I was showing it to Father out in front of the house,” Li Xiangping replied, dropping his gaze to the ground.

“I’m going to kill him!” Li Tongya declared decisively, donning his rattan armor and grabbing his saber before storming out.

Li Xiangping, seeing this determined expression on his brother’s face for the first time, could not help but take a second look.

“Come back here!” Li Mutian called out sharply, halting Li Tongya in his tracks. He glanced at Li Xiangping, who appeared visibly shaken.

“But Father! Li Yecheng is an ungrateful and pretentious two-faced snake! It’s better to deal with him now rather than risk him carelessly revealing our secret and bringing ruin to the Li Family,” Li Tongya argued with a sense of urgency.

*It seems like Second Brother has learned some big words from the scholar in our village,* Li Xiangping thought to himself while listening silently.

He lowered his head, feeling a pang of shame, recalling how his father had sent them to study with a scholar in the village. His elder brothers were favored for their diligence, while he, being younger and more playful, now found himself struggling to even understand the big words in his brother’s speech.

“What if it was your youngest brother instead? Would you kill him too for spilling your secrets?” Li Mutian challenged his second son with a laugh.

“We have no such villains in our family!” Li Tongya retorted sharply.

Li Mutian shook his head and adjusted the wooden table. Then, with agile ease, he leaped onto the table and deftly retrieved a wooden box concealed in the roof beam.

Placing the box on the table, he addressed his three sons solemnly, “There are things you should know. I left home at the age of thirteen and joined the army on the Guli Road, in Anli County. General Yang, under orders from the court, was recruiting soldiers to fight against Mount Yue. With nowhere else to go, I became a soldier.”

“General Yang was a strict but fair leader. He treated us like family, sharing our hardships. He taught us the battle tactics of the Yue soldiers, emphasizing the importance of martial arts. This method is widespread and easy to learn, but difficult to master. Without proper training, it’s just physical exercise, nothing extraordinary.” Li Mutian paused and let out a sigh.

Seeing his sons listening intently, he continued, “I documented his teachings on a wooden tablet when I returned home. I’ve instructed you in these practices before, but I’ve yet to see any remarkable progress. That’s the first item in this box.”

He opened the wooden box, revealing its contents—a wooden slip, a talisman, several pieces of broken silver glaze, and other miscellaneous items.

1. Time taken to drink a cup of tea is estimated to be between 10-15 minutes.

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