

Chapter 5

Chase on a Snowy Night

Li Xun Huan picked up the wine bottle, finishing the rest of the wine, then just kept coughing and coughing, his pale white face showing a blood-red color. His hand holding his chest, and talking to himself, "Xiao Yun, ShiYin. I would never blame you two. No matter what others say, I still do not blame you, because you did nothing wrong, all the mistakes were made by myself alone."

Suddenly, the wooden door slammed open.

A person crawled into the room, he's like a meatball, full of fat on his body. His hair and mustache look horrible, as if he hasn't bathed in years. One can smell his stink from miles away.

He crawled into the room, because his legs are broken.

Li Xun Huan raised his eyebrows, saying, "If you're here to beg for food, you've come at a bad time."

This person didn't hear him. The person may be handicapped, but his movement is still very fast, one quick roll and he arrived in front of the fireplace.

Li Xun Huan asked, "Are you also here for the Golden Thread Vest?"

This person's hand gave a push, and he arrived at the corpse. Of course, the vest is on this corpse.

Li Xun Huan said coldly, "The dagger in my hand is quite capable of killing. If you do not stop, I'm afraid there will be an extra corpse in this room."

This person still did not listen, proceeded to take off the Golden Thread Vest. It only looks like a gold-colored vest, without any mysteriousness to it.

Only to see this person holding the vest tightly, laughing out loud. "When snipe and oyster fight, the fisherman gets the award*. I can't believe this treasure is in my hands now."

*[The above saying means that when two powerful parties fight each other over something, it's the third party that wins by coming in after the

first two parties are both deeply wounded from fighting each other. Or something like that...]

Li Xun Huan said coldly, "My dagger is still here. I'm afraid your words might've been spoken too soon."

This person bounced again with his hands like a toad towards Li Xun Huan, smiling as he looked at Li Xun Huan. His teeth was all yellow.

He chuckled as he spoke, "Since you have the dagger, why don't you kill me? Little Li's Flying Dagger never misses. If you simply use your dagger, there's no way I, a handicap, can possibly dodge it."

Li Xun Huan also smiled, saying, "I think you're interesting, so I can't bring myself to kill you."

This strange person laughed a few times, then said, "If you don't want to say the truth, I'll say it for you."

He then continued while laughing, "Everyone else might think you weren't poisoned, but I know you were. Except you're very calm, so you were able to fool everyone else."

Li Xun Huan still did not change his expression. "Really?"

This strange person said, "But you can't possibly fool me, because I know that the poison in the wine has neither color nor taste. Even if your nose can smell better than a dog's, you still can't smell the poison."

Li Xun Huan looked at him for a long time, then showed a faint smile. "Are you really this clear on the whole matter?"

This strange person chuckled again. "Of course I'm sure, because I put the poison into the wine. I can obviously tell whether you've been poisoned or not. You can fool everyone else, but not me."

Li Xun Huan's expression still did not change. But the muscles around his eyes are already starting to move, after a long time, he let out a sigh, saying, "It's been less than a day, yet I already met six, seven big events. Looks like my luck is pretty good."

This strange person said, "You mean you don't want to know whose hands you'll die under?"

Li Xun Huan answered, "I was just about to ask."

This strange man said, "You're so knowledgeable, so you should know that there are 7 most devious people in the martial world."

Li Xun Huan shockingly said, "Seven Ingenious People."

This strange person said, "Correct. These seven people really are treacherous to the extreme. Their kung fu might not be top notch, but when it comes to poison, stealing, scheming, and lying, their skills have no equal."

Li Xun Huan lit up his eyes. "So are you one of the Seven Ingenious People?"

This strange person said, "The most devious of the Seven Ingenious People is..."

Li Xun Huan said, "Flower Bee Ingenious Gentleman."

This strange person said, "Almost right. His full name is the 'Black Heart Ingenious Gentleman'. This person's abilities are quite limited. He's a coward, even afraid to do much stealing and womanizing. Yet when it comes to poison, even that famous 5-Poison Kid has to call him Grandfather sometimes."

Li Xun Huan said, "You sure know a lot about this person."

That strange person answered, "Of course. Because he is me, and I am him."

Li Xun Huan sighed, shutting up.

Flower Bee [I swear to God this name doesn't sound this stupid in Chinese] laughed, "Are you so surprised that an Ingenious Gentleman is a chubby meatball?"

Li Xun Huan said, "If you are capable of seducing woman, then those woman must be blind."

Flower Bee said, "You're wrong again. Not only are they not blind, their eyes are also very pretty. Except if a person has been locked up, with his feet broken, with only fatty food every day for years, then they have to become meatballs."

Li Xun Huan said, "I take it this is the work of Sun Kui couple."

Flower Bee thought for a while, then smiled. "Sun Kui told you a story earlier. I'll tell you another story. Except mine is a lot more interesting."

"Really?"

Flower Bee continued, "That year I had some really bad luck. I was so into women at the time that I seduced Big Beard's wife [Ms. Qiang Wei from the previous chapter], and even had a child. So she had to run away with me."

Li Xun Huan's shocked. "So the person that he said was you? He's the one who paid for your mistake?"

Flower Bee said, "He lied a little bit. I did not steal her treasures. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't. She's too cunning for me to do so. However, we really were being chased by Big Beard. I've always been a coward, so I persuaded her to find someone to take my place for a moment. She hesitated at first, saying Sun Kui's face isn't white enough. But later agreed."

Li Xun Huan said, "So you two planned the whole thing."

Flower Bee continued, "If I had really left her then, everything would've been ok. But I really couldn't give up her treasures, so I said that once everything's calm again, we'd kill him and get back together. Who would've thought that she fell in love with him. And they end up breaking my feet, then jailed me like this for almost twenty years."

Li Xun Huan asked, "Why didn't she kill you?"

Flower Bee said, "If I knew how a woman thinks, then I wouldn't be in this state. You know, I used to think I knew women's hearts. That's why I ended up like this. If a man thinks he understands women, then he should accept whatever problems that might befall him."

Li Xun Huan said, "This is indeed a great story."

"But you haven't heard the most interesting thing yet."

"What would that be?"

Flower Bee said, "After you had been poisoned, not only can you not use your flying dagger, you can't even live for more than six hours. That's why I won't kill you now, since I want you to know how it feels to wait for your death."

Li Xun Huan calmly said, "This really isn't necessary. I've waited for my death many times."

Flower Bee laughed, "But I can promise this is the last time."

Li Xun Huan laughed a bit too. "If that's the case, then I have nothing more to say. Except there's much wind and snow outside, so how are you going to travel?"

Flower Bee said, "You don't have to worry about this. My legs might be broken, but I can still ride a horse."

"In that case, travel safely. I'm sorry I can't see you out the door."

But by that time, the sound of the horse steps were starting to disappear.

Li Xun Huan sat there and smelled the wine. "It really does have no smell and no taste. His poison skills really are quite good."

He drank another cup, then closed his eyes. "But this wine really is good. I'll die from one cup. I'll also die from one bottle. Why not drink the whole thing?"

So he drank the whole bottle of poisonous wine.

He then started to speak to himself. "Oh, Li Xun Huan. You should've been dead a long time ago. What's wrong with dying? But you really should not die in a kitchen, with these corpses."

So he got up, and wobbly made his way towards the door.

The footprints on the snow crossed each other, heading southeast.

Li Xun Huan picked the cleanest part of the field, sat down, then took out that unfinished human figure.

The figure just stared at Li Xun Huan.

Li Xun Huan suddenly laughed, saying, "Why do you still look at me? I'm just a hopeless loafer, a drunk. You did the right thing by marrying Xiao Yun. Only I'm wrong."

He tried to use his dagger to finish the figure.

But he doesn't have the energy anymore.

Li Xun Huan kept coughing and coughing. Each cough seems to yell "Shi Yin, Shi Yin."

Can Shi Yin hear him?

There's no chance for Shi Yin to hear him. However, someone else heard him.

The driver carried Li Xun Huan on his back, furiously running through the woods.

"If we can find a broken-foot man who look like a meatball in 2 hours, I might have a chance to live. Because the person who applied the poison must also have the antidote."

This is the last sentence Li Xun Huan has the energy to say.

The driver used every ounce of his energy, his tears became ice, welcoming the dagger-like wind.

Suddenly, a sound came from afar.

The driver hesitated, then started to run towards the sound. He first found a horse by the road. He did not see Flower Bee. Because he only saw Flower Bee's corpse.

On his body were countless hidden weapons of all sorts. The driver could not help but feel bad for him. But then he remembered the matter at hand.

He quickly asked, "Is this the person?" He's still hoping against hope that this corpse is not the person Li Xun Huan needs to see.

Li Xun Huan replied, "Correct."

The driver bit his teeth, took off his coat and put by a tree. Then he sat Li Xun Huan down. "The antidote may be on him. Let me check."

Li Xun Huan said, "Be careful. Don't get scraped by the hidden weapons."

Even when his own life is in jeopardy, he still thinks of others first.

The driver felt hot blood rising from his stomach, then forced himself to hold down the tears, trying his best to look for the antidote on the body.

After a long time, he finally stood up again.

Li Xun Huan said, "No antidote."

By this time, the driver is tongue-tied, unable to speak.

Li Xun Huan smiled, saying, "Actually, I should've known that after all these years of imprisonment, he can't possibly have any antidote on him."

The driver tightened his fist. Then started to hit his own head, saying, "If only I knew who killed him... Maybe that person took the antidote."

Li Xun Huan closed his eyes, his face very heavy, "Maybe... maybe not."

The driver said, "Unfortunately, these hidden weapons are very common. Many people can use them."

"Yeah."

The driver added, "He has so many hidden weapons on him, meaning that more than one person is involved."

"Yeah."

His breathing slowed, as if he's asleep. He worries so much for others' safety, yet care so little for his own life.

The driver continues to hit his hand, suddenly jumped up. "Yes! I know who killed him!"

"Huh?"

The driver ran to Li Xun Huan's side. "Only one person killed him. One person fired all thirteen types of hidden weapons."

"Huh?"

The driver continued, "There are thirteen types of hidden weapons on him. Any single one could've taken his life. For a person to be this vicious and mad, you can't find a second person on this Earth."

Li Xun Huan sighed. "You're right. There's only one. Thousand Hand Luo Cha [Sorry I can't find a way to translate 'lou cha'. The person's not important anyway]. Looks like Flower Bee still died in the hands of a woman."

The driver added, "Other than her, no one else can fire thirteen different hidden weapons at the same time."

He suddenly stopped, then said. "You should've figured it all out a long time ago."

Li Xun Huan's lips showed a hint of a bitter smile, saying, "What does it matter if I noticed or not? Thousand Hand Luo Cha travels mysteriously, she's long gone by now. No reason to go after her."

The driver said, "But we must find her no matter what."

Li Xun Huan shook his head, saying. "Don't bother. If you can just find me some wine, let me die drunk, I'll forever thank you. I'm so very, very tired. I really just want to rest peacefully."

The driver knelt onto the ground, no longer able to hold his tears, "Young master, I know you're tired. In all these years, you've never been happy. Sadness and hardship, really does make tire a person easily."

He suddenly started to hold Li Xun Huan's face, saying out loud, "But young master you cannot die, you must gather your energy. If you die with everyone thinking you're really a loafer, a drunk, old master [Li Xun Huan's dad] would not rest peacefully in the underworld."

Li Xun Huan closed his eyes tightly, tears already becoming ice.

Yet he's still smiling, saying, "Loafer, alcoholic, they're not so bad. At least better than those fake gentleman, right?"

The driver's face is still full of tears, saying, "But... but young master you should have the best reputation in the world. Your kindness no one can compare. Why do you torture yourself? Is it worth it for that Lin Shi Yin woman?"

Light suddenly shot out of Li Xun Huan's eyes, angrily said, "Quiet. You have the guts to say her her name?"

The driver lowered his head again, saying, "I'm sorry."

Li Xun Huan stared at him for a while, then closed his eyes again. "Alright. If you want to find her, we'll go look. The world is so big, and we have so little time. Where should we go?"

The driver immediately stood up again. "The Heavens help those with bitter heart, we'll certainly find her."

Just as he's about to carry Li Xun Huan on his back, a snow fell from the tree, falling on him. When he tried to get it off, he found blood on it.

There's actually a person on the tree.

A dead person. A dead woman.

She was stuck on the trunk, her body already frozen. With a short sword stuck to her chest, nailing her to the tree.

The two people only noticed the corpse on the ground, but did not see the corpse on the tree. The driver, like an eagle, went up to bring her back to the ground.

Only to see her face covered with ice, so people cannot tell her age. But can tell that she was very pretty before death.

Li Xun Huan suddenly laughed. "I guess Heaven really did sort of help us find her."

The driver tightened his fists, saying harshly, "I heard that Thousand Hand Luo Cha is extremely vicious, yet after this person killed her, why did he take off her clothes?"

Li Xun Huan said, "Probably because her clothing are worth so much."

The driver's eyes suddenly brightened. "You're right. Rumor has it that she really cared about her clothing. Her clothes are made of gold, plus it's full of expensive jewelry."

Li Xun Huan laughed bitterly. "If deer horns weren't so valuable, and if deers didn't have horns, then they wouldn't be killed by hunters."

"Yet this person came for this priceless Golden Thread Vest, but still could not pass over a far less valuable clothing. There's only one person this greedy."

Li Xun Huan said, "You're right. I also think there's only one."

This driver hurriedly chimed in. "Hands in Casket, 'Die for Money'."

Li Xun Huan said, "Take out that sword."

This sword is quite intricate, plus it has some jade designs.

Li Xun Huan added, "Yao Xian views money as life, so how could he possibly leave such a precious weapon here?"

The driver thought a moment, then said, "There aren't many such precious weapons in the world, could this be the work of Fan Xiao An?"

Li Xun Huan said, "Yes. They worked together."

The driver said, "One person views money as his life, the other views money as dirt, the two have totally different personalities. So how could they get together?"

Li Xun Huan laughed. "Mr. Fan is famous for being extravagant at everything, clothing, food, living, traveling. Yao Xian following him can get endless benefits, why not?"

The driver's face suddenly lit up, saying proudly, "This is great. In this horrible weather, Fan Xiao An would not ride a horse, and definitely won't walk. He must be in a carriage. If he's in a carriage, then we can catch him."

There really are wheel marks outside on the road. They really are traveling by carriage.

This type of carriage is quite comfortable, but not fast.

The driver ran with all his might. Even with a person on the back, he still moves fluidly and quickly. No one would believe that a person with such great lightness kung fu would be servant. Plus, a person with such lightness kung fu must be quite famous.

After a while, he suddenly found that the tracks ended. The lack of marks showed that no one had traveled through here for at least four to six hours.

He then noticed a side road. He did not think much of this side road before, as it seems to lead to a grave of a very rich person.

He followed this side road. It is indeed a dead end.

The carriage is in front of the grave. The horses are gone. Three people with sheepskin coats lie on the ground. In the cart is a person wearing neat clothes, white-faced, looks about forty, yet still shaved cleanly.

Just looking at his incredibly expensive ring showed that he must be Fan Xiao An.

There are two women by his side, all died the same way, their fatal pressure point heavily sealed.

Who did this?

The driver said, "Could this be the work of Yao Xian?"

Before he finished this sentence, another body appeared from the grave. His head bald, face facing the ground. Only his two hands are holding... like he was trying to hold something before death, but didn't succeed.

This is Yao Xian. However, he'll never be able to take any more things from caskets.

Li Xun Huan said, "It doesn't matter if a person gambles or visit brothels, but he really should not make friends with the wrong people. Or they'd end up like Fan Xiao An, not even knowing who kill him before dying."

"But"

Li Xun Huan continued, "Other than Fan Xiao An, everyone else are astonished. They wouldn't believe Yao Xian could possibly do this. Especially these two women, who might've even had some intricate relationship with Yao Xian before death. So they really could not believe this."

The driver suddenly said, "I heard that Yao Xian's finger technique was number one in the Shan Xi province, used to be called 'One Finger Chase Soul'. Looks like this really is his work. But..."

Li Xun Huan then added. "Yao Xian's probably been with Fan Xiao An for quite a while now. This time Fan Xiao An wants the Golden Thread Vest, Yao Xian wants to continue leech off of Fan Xiao An, so he went along with it. Who would've thought that the vest can be so alluring. Yao Xian stopped caring about friendship and killed them."

"But he's dead too."

Li Xun Huan laughed. "Maybe when he's killing, someone nosy was watching from this grave. Yao Xian saw him and wants to kill him to close his mouth. Who would've figured that he couldn't close that person's mouth, but instead got killed."

"But Yao Xian's kung fu is quite good, who can possibly kill him?"

He moved closer to the grave, then found that there's no wound on the body. Only his throat has added a hole.

Li Xun Huan's still on the driver's shoulder. Two people looked for a moment, then both sighed, yet the corner of their mouth showed hint of a smile. Both said together, "Looks like its him."

The driver laughed, "Master Fei's sword is faster than flying, no wonder Yao Xian couldn't defend himself."

Li Xun Huan closed his eyes, smiling. "Very good. Very good. The vest has finally found a proper owner with him. Now the Plum Flower Bandit should be caught."

The driver then said, "Let's look for Master Fei. He couldn't possibly be gone long."

Li Xun Huan asked, "Why bother?"

"To find the antidote."

Li Xun Huan said, "If Flower Bee really had the antidote, and has been taken away, then Yao Xian must still have it. Ah Fei would never take another person's item. He took away the Golden Thread Vest, but only because he thinks the vest belongs to me."

The driver looked at all the jewelry on Fan Xiao An and those two women, then sighed. "You're right. Even if ground is filled with gold, Master Fei would still not pick them up."

"That's why if Yao Xian doesn't have it, then it's useless to look for Ah Fei."

So the driver picked up the body. This is really his last chance.

He then noticed words on the wall.

"I helped you get revenge,

I rode your horse."

Li Xun Huan burst out laughing. "I originally figured it was him. Now I'm certain. Only Ah Fei would not even let a dead person owe him."

He continued with a bright smile. "This child really is lovely. Unfortunately I..."

He did not finish the sentence, yet the driver knew what he wanted to say, looks like the antidote is not here either.

It's unfortunate that he'll never see this lovely kid ever again.

The driver no longer has any more energy left. He's almost about to fall.

Li Xun Huan is still smiling, though. "You don't have to worry about me. Death is not as bad as you think. Now that I have no energy, I feel rather peaceful, just wanting to have some wine."