

## Chapter 37

### Old Man

While Li XunHuan concentrated on the left-handed swordsman, Sun XiaoHong's attention was on something else.

These two people walked slowly, and their steps are big. At first glance, their movements seem fairly ordinary. But Sun XiaoHong couldn't help but feel that something's wrong.

After a while, she realized what was wrong.

Normally, two people who walk together would be in sync with each other.

But these two people are different. As the first person's foot touches the ground, the second person's foot is in the air, right in the middle of his step.

It's as if all the feet belong to one person.

The first person takes the first step, the second person takes the second step, the first person takes the third step, and the second person takes the fourth step, in total harmony.

Sun XiaoHong has never seen two people walking like this before. She found it amusing.

Li XunHuan, however, did not find it amusing.

He felt scared.

Their harmony in walking showed that their minds are also in harmony.

Should they fight together, their moves would complement each other perfectly.

ShangGuan JinHong by himself is already one of the best fighters in the world. He can't imagine what would happen if Jin WuMing fought beside him.

Li XunHuan's heart sank.

He can't think of any way to find a weakness against the combined attack of these two people.

He also doesn't think that old man in the pavilion can send them away.

The old man in the pavilion still kept smoking his pipe. The light from the pipe sometimes bright, sometimes dim.

Suddenly, the light became incredibly bright, as bright as those lanterns.

Li XunHuan never knew anyone could make such bright light using a pipe.

ShangGuan JinHong also saw the light, because at this moment, he stopped.

The light in the pavilion disappeared.

After a long time, ShangGuan JinHong started to walk again, this time up to the pavilion, in front of that old man.

No matter where he goes, Jin WuMing would always be by him.

He's like ShangGuan JinHong's shadow.

The lanterns also made their way up the pavilion, surrounding the place with light.

ShangGuan JinHong did not speak. He kept his head low, as if he didn't want anyone to see his face.

But his eyes constantly gazed at the old man's hand, watching its every movement.

The old man took out some more opium, and put them into his pipe. Then he took out a flint and tinder.

His movement was quite slow, but very steady.

ShangGuan JinHong suddenly walked up to the old man, and picked up the paper match on the stone table.

He examined the match closely, before putting it close to the flint and tinder.

The match lit up with fire.

ShangGuan JinHong put the match into the pipe.

Although Li XunHuan and Sun XiaoHong hid far from the pavilion, they saw each movement clearly.

Li XunHuan asked, "Should we go over there?"

Sun XiaoHong shook her head, said, "No need. My grandpa would find a way to get rid of them."

She sounded very sure of herself, but Li XunHuan felt her hand turning very cold, as if she's sweating cold sweat.

He obviously knows why she's so worried.

The pipe is not long. ShangGuan JinHong could've taken this opportunity to seal any pressure point on the old man's body.

But he did not do so. Is he waiting for an opening?

The old man tried to smoke his pipe.

But for some reason, perhaps the tobacco too moist, or it was stuck too tightly, the pipe never did light up. The paper match is nearly burnt.

ShangGuan JinHong held the paper match with his thumb and index finger, his other three fingers curved behind them.

The old man's ring finger is only several inches away from ShangGuan JinHong's wrist.

The fire burnt ShangGuan JinHong's hand.

ShangGuan JinHong did not seem to notice this.

At this moment, 'poof' the pipe lit up.

Then it seemed as if ShangGuan JinHong's three free fingers moved a bit, and so did the old man's little finger and ring finger. All the movements are very quick and very light.

Then ShangGuan JinHong backed away.

The old man began to smoke his pipe again.

During this whole time, neither person even looked at the other one.

At this moment, Li XunHuan breathed a sigh of relief.

From the eyes of a normal person, it was simply a process of lighting up a pipe, but Li XunHuan realized that it was an amazing battle!

ShangGuan JinHong kept on waiting for his chance. Waiting for the old man to drop his guard, waiting for an opening to strike.

But he never got that chance.

Finally, he couldn't resist, he attacked with his three free fingers.

But it was quickly parried by the old man's ring and little fingers.

This is the type of battle only Li XunHuan can appreciate, since it incorporates the highest level of martial artistry.

Hidden behind those simple finger movements were thousands of variations.

Now, the danger has finally passed.

ShangGuan JinHong backed off three steps, returning to his previous position.

The old man smiled, and then said, "You're here?"

ShangGuan JinHong said, "Yes."

The old man said, "You're late!"

ShangGuan JinHong said, "Since you're here, does this mean that you knew I was going to take this route?"

The old man said, "I was just hoping that you won't come."

ShangGuan JinHong asked, "Why?"

The old man said, "Because even if you come, you still have to leave immediately."

ShangGuan JinHong took a deep breath, and then said, "What if I don't want to?"

The old man said calmly, "I know you'll leave."

ShangGuan JinHong tightened his hand.

Air of murder filled the pavilion.

The old man smoked the pipe yet again, then blew out the smoke.

The smoke came out in a straight line.

Then, in the middle of the air, it changed direction, and flew towards ShangGuan JinHong's face.

ShangGuan JinHong looked very shocked.

At this moment, the cloud of smoke dissipated.

ShangGuan JinHong bowed, and said, "Amazing."

The old man said, "You're too kind."

ShangGuan JinHong said, "It's been twenty-seven years since our last meeting. After today, I wonder when we'll meet again."

The old man said, "There's really no need for us to ever meet again."

ShangGuan JinHong thought for a moment, and wanted to say something. But he stayed silent.

The old man went back to smoking his pipe.

ShangGuan JinHong turned around, and left.

Jin WuMing followed him like a shadow.

Li XunHuan kept staring at the pavilion, thinking about something.

Right before ShangGuan JinHong left, he took a peek at where Li XunHuan was hiding. This was the first time Li XunHuan had ever seen ShangGuan JinHong's eyes.

From his eyes, Li XunHuan can conclude that ShangGuan JinHong's inner power is even better than the legend says!

But even worse are Jin WuMing's eyes.

Anyone who saw those eyes would feel disturbed, perhaps even find them disgusting.

Because that is not a pair of human eyes, nor a pair of animal eyes.

It's a pair of dead eyes!

It lacked emotions, life.

Sun XiaoHong did not notice any of this, because she was looking at Li XunHuan.

This was the first time she took a close look at Li XunHuan.

Even in the dark, she could see the contours on his face clearly, especially his eyes and nose.

His eyes are big and bright, filled with intelligence. His gaze carried some weariness, some disdain, but also a great deal of compassion.

His nose was tall and straight, like his mind, very righteous.

There are some wrinkles by the corner of his eyes, making him seem mature, charming, and gives off a sense of security. As if he's someone you can trust your life with.

He is exactly the type of man young women dream about at night.

Neither person noticed that old man coming towards them, smiling with satisfaction.

He looked at them for a long time, before asking, "Would you mind chatting with an old man?"

The moon has risen.

The old man and Li XunHuan walked in the front, with Sun XiaoHong behind them.

She did not speak, but her heart wanted to just scream with joy, because all she had to do is look ahead to see the man she admire the most, and the man she adores.

She's simply elated.

The old man said, "I've heard of you for a long time. I've long wanted to invite you for a drink. And now that we have met, I find that chatting with you great."

Li XunHuan smiled. As did Sun XiaoHong, who said, "But all he said was hello."

The old man said, "That's what makes him so great. He never asks any questions that he shouldn't ask. Anyone else would've asked for my identity."

Li XunHuan said, "Maybe it's because I already know your identity."

The old man said, "Really?"

Li XunHuan said, "There aren't many people in this world who can scare off ShangGuan JinHong."

The old man said, "If you think I scared off ShangGuan JinHong, you'd be wrong."

Before Li XunHuan could speak, he continued, "You probably have a good feel for ShangGuan JinHong's ability, as well as that young man behind him. Should they combine forces, no one in the world can withstand more than three hundred moves from them, much less defeat them."

Li XunHuan's eyes flashed, and then asked, "Not even you?"

The old man said, "Not even me."

Li XunHuan said, "But they did leave."

The old man said, "Maybe it's because they don't want to kill me yet. Or perhaps they found you here, and weren't sure if they can beat the two of us."

Sun XiaoHong couldn't help but cut in, "Even if they knew there was someone behind the tree, how can they be sure that person was Li.. Li Tan Hua?"

The old man said, "Because should an elite fighter like Li TanHua feel enmity towards someone, his body would release air of murder."

Sun XiaoHong asked, "Air of murder?"

The old man said, "Correct. But only an expert like ShangGuan JinHong could feel such air."

Sun XiaoHong sighed, and said, "You're being too mysterious. I don't understand any of this."

The old man said, "Martial arts is a mysterious thing. Only a few people can understand."

Li XunHuan said, "No matter why they went away, I'm still grateful for your help."

The old man said with a smile, "I simply want people like you to live on, because there aren't enough of people like you in this world."

Li XunHuan could only smile, staying silent.

The old man said, "Although we just met, I know your temper well. So I won't try to convince you to leave."

He looked at Li XunHuan deep in the eyes, and added, "But I do want you to realize one thing."

Li XunHuan said, "Please do instruct."

The old man said, "Lin ShiYin does not need your protection. You can only help her by leaving."

Li XunHuan fidgeted.

The old man continued, "No one really wants to hurt Lin ShiYin. If they are trying to hurt her, it's because of you, because you are protecting her. If you leave her, no one would have any reason to hurt her."

Li XunHuan felt as if someone had just smacked him with a whip, making him sore all over.

The old man didn't seem to notice his pain. He simply continued, "If you're afraid that she may be too lonely, you don't have to worry about that any longer. Long Xiao4Yun is back. You'll only make things worse by staying."

Li XunHuan looked up into the dark sky, thought for a long time before sighing. He then said, "I was wrong, I was wrong, wrong again..."

He bent over, because he could no longer stand up straight.

Sun XiaoHong looked at him from the back, her heart full of pity, full of compassion.

She knows that her grandpa is trying to stimulate him, making him painful. She also knows that this is helping him, but she just couldn't bear to look at him like this.

The old man said, "Long Xiao4Yun came back because he has finally found a person who can kill you."

Li XunHuan said, "Why does need someone like that? I still think of him as my friend."

The old man said, "But he doesn't think like this. Do you know who he found?"

Li XunHuan said, "Hu BuGui?"

The old man said, "Correct, that crazy man indeed."

Sun XiaoHong cut in, "Is that crazy old man's kung fu really that good?"

The old man said, "There are two people in this world that I can't accurately gauge their fighting skills."

Sun XiaoHong asked, "Which two?"

The old man said, "One is Li Tan Hua, the other is Crazy Hu."

Li XunHuan said, "You're being too kind, elder. My friend Ah Fei's kung fu is just as good as mine. Plus there's Jin WuMing..."

The old man cut in, "But Ah Fei and Jin WuMing are in the same group, those that don't know any martial arts."

Li XunHuan said in a stunned manner, "Did you just say that they don't know martial arts?"

The old man said, "Exactly. Not only that, they're not even fit to talk about martial arts.

They can only kill people. They only know how to kill people."

Li XunHuan said, "But Ah Fei is different from Jin WuMing."

The old man asked, "How so?"

Li XunHuan said, "They might kill people in the same way, but certainly not for the same purpose."

The old man said, "Really?"

Li XunHuan said, "Ah Fei only kills when he has to. Jin WuMing kills for the sake of killing."

Li XunHuan lowered his head, and added, "I..."

The old man cut in, "If you want to see him, there's still time. Otherwise, you might be too late!"

Li XunHuan stood back up, and said, "In that case, I'll go see him right now."

The old man said with a smile, "Do you know where he lives?"

Li XunHuan said, "I do."

Sun XiaoHong suddenly walked to the front of Li XunHuan and said, "But you still might not be able to find the place. Maybe I should take you there."

Before Li XunHuan could respond, the old man said coldly to Sun XiaoHong, "You still have things to do. Besides, he doesn't need your help."

Sun XiaoHong looked like she's about to cry.

Li XunHuan said, "Goodbye."

He wanted to say more, but he chose to only say this word.

The old man held up his thumb, and said, "Great. Leave when you want to leave. That's what true men do."

Li XunHuan really did leave immediately. He didn't even look back.

Sun XiaoHong watched him disappear, her eyes now red.

The old man patted her on the back, and asked, "Are you feeling very sad right now?"

Sun XiaoHong said, "No."

The old man chuckled. It's a kind and gentle chuckle. He said, "Oh, foolish girl. You think your grandpa doesn't know your heart?"

Sun XiaoHong bit her lips, but finally couldn't help asking, "If you knew, then why did you separate us?"

The old man said, "You have to realize that it's not easy to catch a man like Li XunHuan. If you want him, you must first get his heart. That's not easy to do at all. You must take it slowly, or you run the risk of scaring him off."

Although Li XunHuan acted as if he left decisively, he still felt a twinge of pain in his heart.

He doesn't know when he'll see Lin ShiYin again.

It's so painful to see her, and so painful to leave her.

In the past ten years, he has only seen her three times. Each time he only caught a glimpse of her, sometimes he didn't even converse with her. But there's a thread attached to his heart, a thread forever in the hands on Lin ShiYin. If he could just see her, just even knowing that she's near, he would be satisfied.