

Chapter 81

An Unintentional Tragedy

Sun XiaoHong quickly added, "But this is because he never had the chance to, he never needed to."

"He never needed to?" Li XunHuan said.

"Because he has no equal." Sun XiaoHong said.

"But what about ShangGuan JinHong?" Li XunHuan said.

"He..." Sun XiaoHong said.

She suddenly stopped talking, did something just occur to her?

"Your grandfather must have objected to ShangGuan JinHong's actions and deeds." Li XUnHuan said.

"He... he really was very annoyed with the way that ShangGuan JinHong acted." Sun XiaoHong said.

"But he never went to face him." Li XunHuan said.

Sun XiaoHong lowered her head and said, "No, he didn't..."

"Why would he just tolerate it for so long? And why would he only decide to confront ShangHuan JinHong after you had asked him to?" Li XunHuan said.

Her mouth suddenly felt parched, she was at a loss for words.

"When a person's martial arts reaches its peak, a certain fear is bound to arise. Fear that others will catch up with you, fear that your own skills will recede. And when that time comes, you will try your best to avoid it. In fact, you will try your best to avoid doing anything at all." Li XunHuan said.

He sighed and continued, "And the more that you refuse to act, the sooner that you will really be unable to act. Some suddenly decide to go into seclusion, while others become self-destructive - preferring to just end everything in death... this has always been the common trend in history. Unless you are really able to step past the

material world and enter a stage where you forget about human emotions, and become completely oblivious to the world and its people."

Sun XiaoHong felt her body slowly stiffening up, cold sweat covered her face.

Because she knew that her grandfather was not 'emotionless'.

He still cared about a lot of things, and a lot of people.

"But I could be wrong..." Li XunHuan said.

Sun XiaoHong suddenly flung herself over and embraced him tightly.

Her body was shaking like the cotton underneath a bowstring.

She was scared, very scared.

Li XunHuan gently brushed her hair. Was it compassion? Sympathy? Or sorrow?

A person who did not have feelings would never do such a thing.

A person like that would never make a mistake.

But why did the heavens always force the passionate ones in this world to make mistakes that could never be corrected?

Was a person wrong simply for being sentimental?

Sun XiaoHong started to twitch as she burst into tears, "Please, please hurry back with me. Just as long as we can hurry back there... no matter the price... I will do anything."

There were sounds of horses neighing coming from the window, they were in a stable.

If there was one thing Li XunHuan could do, it was picking out horses. Many people knew that this was so, Li XunHuan was not only an expert with woman, but also with horses. It wasn't easy to be an expert in these two fields.

Because horses and women were both very difficult to understand.

He picked out the two fastest horses he could find.

The prettiest woman was not necessarily the most lovable one. The fastest horse was not necessarily the strongest one. Beautiful women lack sincerity, fast horses lacked endurance.

Two horses fell over.

Two people started to run frantically.

The evening sun drew near.

Two people ran as hard as they could, they did not care what the people around them thought, they did not care how tired their bodies felt.

They did not care about anything.

The night drew near.

There was no longer anyone on the road.

The stars and the moon were nowhere to be seen on this night, there was not a single light in sight.

A dark forest lay to the side of the road, outside of the forest was the outline of a pavilion.

Wasn't this the arranged place for the duel?

In the middle of the dark night, there seemed to be a glimmer in the distance.

As the light started to get brighter, an outline of a person could be seen.

Sun XiaoHong suddenly let out a sigh of relief as her entire body loosened up.

It was a miracle that she was able to keep running for so long, or perhaps she was driven by fear.

Fear can bring out a person's hidden strength.

But now, she saw it, she saw the one thing that she was hoping to see. Her panting suddenly stopped.

She collapsed onto the ground.

Li XunHuan did not dare to let out a sigh of relief yet.

As he saw that light flash back and forth, he noticed that it flickered in a strange rhythm. Sometimes it was exceedingly bright, while other times it would dim dramatically.

Suddenly, that light flared up like a giant lantern.

That day, outside a different city, under a different pavilion, Li XunHuan had seen this exact type of flickering light.

That day, Old Mr. Sun was in that pavilion puffing on his pipe.

With the exception of Mr. Sun, Li XunHuan had never seen that bright of a light come from someone smoking on a pipe.

Li XunHuan felt warm tears swelling up in his eyes.

Sun XiaoHong was on the floor, slowly sobbing as she got up.

These were tears of joy, these were tears of gratitude.

The heavens really did not dictate that she would commit a grave mistake.

Li XunHuan helped her up as the two walked towards the pavilion.

The pavilion seemed to be full of smoke, a person was sitting right in the middle.

The fragrance of the smoke was very familiar to Sun XiaoHong.

She felt a surge of warmth in her chest, she let go of Li XunHuan's hand and dashed towards the pavilion.

She only wanted to run straight into her grandfather's arms to tell him how grateful she was.

She couldn't help and screamed out, "Grandpa! We're back... we have come back!"

The light in the pavilion suddenly went out.

Then, they heard a person solemnly say, "Excellent, I have been waiting for the two of you!"

The voice was cold, aloof, and resolute, completely void of tone and completely void of emotion.

Sun XiaoHong suddenly stood still. The warmth that she felt suddenly turned freezing cold, so cold that it froze her in place.

That voice was like a club, striking her from heaven back down to earth.

Suddenly, four lanterns lit up.

Four yellow lanterns hung from sticks of bamboo.

Under the glowing yellow light, sat a single person. He looked as cold as gold, as resolute as gold, even his heart seemed to be forged out of gold.

He was puffing on a pipe.

The pipe that he was puffing on was Old Mr. Sun's pipe.

But he was ShangGuan JinHong!

The person puffing on the pipe in that pavilion was ShangGuan JinHong!

Blistering cold wind, torridly freezing rain.

Nobody knew when it had started to pour.

Sun XiaoHong just stood in the rain, her body entirely still, entirely stiff.

She wanted to scream, but did not have the strength. She wanted to rush in, but her body wouldn't move.

Her chest was convulsing, she was about to vomit.

But not even a single tear would come out.

Li XunHuan had been walking at a slower pace than her, but now he just kept walking towards the pavilion, his steps hadn't stopped.

But his breath had already stopped.

He slowly walked up to the pavilion and stood face to face with ShangGuan JinHong.

ShangGuan JinHong did not turn his head towards him, his eyes were still focused on the pipe in his hands.

"You are late."

After a long pause, Li XunHuan responded, "Yes, I am late."

He felt his entire mouth dry up. Bitterness. It was as if his tongue was rubbing up against iron, it was an indescribable taste.

Could it be the taste of fear?

"Better late than never." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"You should have known that I would come sooner or later." Li XunHuan said.

"It is a pity that the person that should have come arrived late, and the person that shouldn't have came early." ShangGuan JinHong said.

After those words, both of them fell silent. They stood face to face staring at each other, none of them moving a muscle.

They were both waiting for the opportune moment.

Once they made a move, it could not be taken back!

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In the midst of the rain and wind, under the dark forest, there were two more people, two more pairs of eyes.

Those two pairs of eyes were fixed on Li XunHuan and ShangGuan JinHong.

One pair of eyes was as soft and gentle as water, bright and radiant like stars. Even if you searched the entire world, it'd be hard to find another pair of eyes as beautiful as this.

The other pair of eyes was deathly pale, they seemed to meld into the lifeless night. Even if you searched all of hell, it'd be hard to find another pair of eyes as frightening as this.

Even if there were ghosts and demons secretly hiding in that forest, they would have long fled.

This pair of eyes could make ghosts and demons tremble on their feet.

Lin XianEr and Jing WuMing had arrived long before anyone else, and they had been hiding here for a very long time.

Lin XianEr stood beside Jing WuMing and was clenching tightly onto his shoulder.

Jing WuMing did not make a sound, and did not move a muscle.

"If you want to kill him, now is the best chance, there won't be a better one than this." Lin XianEr said.

"Someone else is trying to kill him right now. There is no need for me to attack." Jing WuMing said.

"I am not telling you to kill Li XunHuan." Lin XianEr said.

"Then who?" Jing WuMing asked.

"ShangGuan JinHong, kill ShangGuan JinHong!" Lin XianEr said.

She was trembling with excitement, her fingernails dug into Jing WuMing's skin.

Jing WuMing did not move, nor did he feel the pain.

But there was a strange fire in his eyes, it looked like the flames of hell.

"He is fully concentrated on Li XunHuan right now, he won't have the strength to deal with anyone else. In addition, he has no idea about your right hand, you will definitely be able to kill him." Lin XianEr said.

Jing WuMing still did not move.

"You are the most familiar with the operations of the 'Gold Currency Union', once he is gone, you will be its new Chief." Lin XianEr said.

She started to grunt under her breath.

Her grunting did not sound very pleasant at all. She sounded like a pregnant dog.

"Even if you don't want that position, you should at least pay him back for what he did to you. So that when he gets to hell, he will regret how he treated you." Lin XianEr said.

Jing WuMing's eyes still looked like they held the flames of hell. Those flames started to flare intensely.

"Go, hurry, if you miss this chance, you will be the one who will regret it, not him." Lin XianEr said.

Jing WuMing nodded his head and replied, "Okay, I will go!"

"Hurry, I will wait for you here. Once you succeed, I will be yours forever." Lin XianEr said.

"You don't have to wait for me." Jing WuMing said.

"Why?" Lin XianEr said.

"Because you are coming with me!" Jing WuMing said.

Lin XianEr suddenly felt that something was wrong.

A hint of fright showed in her beautiful eyes as Jing WuMing started to squeeze her wrist.

Lin XianEr never liked to fall to tears. She felt that women who had to turn to tears were not only weak but repulsive and foolish as well.

Besides, she had much better ways to get men to do what she wanted.

But now, she was in so much pain that she couldn't help but start tearing.

She could almost hear the bones in her hand shattering, "What did I do wrong? Why are you treating me like this?"

"In your whole life, you have made one mistake." Jing WuMing said.

"What?" Lin XianEr said.

"You shouldn't have assumed that everyone loves you the way that Ah Fei does!" Jing WuMing said.

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Li XunHuan had his back to the forest.

He did not see Lin XianEr and Jing WuMing as they emerged from the forest, he was focused solely on ShangGuan JinHong. But what he did see was a strange look come over ShangGuan JinHong's face.

ShangGuan JinHong's concentration was suddenly broken.

He never gave his opponent such an opportunity before, and he definitely would never reveal such an opening ever again.

But Li XunHuan did not strike, his dagger stayed in his hand.

Because he felt a terrifying killer aura coming from behind him.

His flying dagger was not thrown with just his hand, it was thrown with his entire body and essence. If he had released his dagger, he would have had no way to defend an attack from behind him.

His foot turned and slid seven feet. And he saw Jing WuMing.

Jing WuMing was standing directly behind him.

Then, he saw Lin XianEr, he had never seen such a look of distress on her face.

It started to pour even harder.

Every one of them was completely drenched.

Even though lanterns hung from the corners of the pavilion, their lights paled in the darkness of the night.

Jing WuMing stood in the darkness, he looked like a shadow, as if he wasn't even there.

But Li XunHuan had shifted his gaze from ShangGuan JinHong to him.

ShangGuan JinHong had also shifted his gaze from Li XunHuan to him.

Because they both felt that victory and defeat no longer lay in their hands, but in Jing WuMing's.

Jing WuMing started to laugh, very loudly.

In his entire life he had never laughed so hard before.

ShangGuan JinHong let out a sigh and said, "Just keep laughing, because you have every right to be laughing."

"Why aren't you laughing?" Jing WuMing said.

"It just won't come out." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"Why's that?" Jing WuMing said.

"You know the reason." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"You are right. I do know the reason." Jing WuMing said.

He stopped laughing, slowly stood up straight, and said, "Because now I am the one who can decide both your fates, while both of you won't even dare to attack me."

He was right, no one dared to attack him.

If ShangGuan JinHong made a move on him right now, he would leave his defenses wide open for Li XunHuan. There was no way he would risk giving Li XunHuan such a chance.

Li XunHuan was in the same exact situation.

"I can help you kill Li XunHuan, or I could help Li XunHuan kill you." Jing WuMing said.

"I believe that is so." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"Do you? I am not just a cripple who has outlived his usefulness anymore?" Jing WuMing said.

"Everyone makes mistakes in judgment from time to time." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"How do you know you have made a mistake? I really could be just a cripple." Jing WuMing said.

"Your right hand is even stronger than your left." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"How can you tell?" Jing WuMing said.

"Lin XianEr is not a weak woman, it'd be difficult for anyone to hold her down with just one hand." ShangGuan JinHong said.

Jing WuMing slowly nodded his head and said, "You really can tell. It is a shame that you realized a little too late."

"Not only can I see that, I can see that I have made a mistake as well." SHangGuan JinHong said.

"You really regret what you have done to me?" Jing WuMing said.

"Yes I really do regret what I have done to you, I should have killed you instead!" ShangGuan JinHong said.

"So why didn't you kill me?" Jing WuMing said.

"I couldn't bear to." ShangGuan JinHong said.

A strange look came over Jing WuMing's face, "Even you can't bear to kill sometimes?"

"I am also human." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"So you think I won't kill you either?" Jing WuMing said.

ShangGuan JinHong glanced over at Lin XianEr and said, "She definitely wanted you to kill me."

"She did." Jing WuMing said.

"But if you really wanted to kill me, you wouldn't have brought her over here." ShangGuan JinHong said.

Lin XianEr suddenly burst out in laughter.

She had fallen to the ground and was laughing madly, it really was quite a startling sight.

"Of course he is afraid to kill you. If you were dead, he wouldn't be able to live on either. I finally understand now that he only lives for you. He came here because he wanted you to acknowledge his worth. But in front of anyone else, he wouldn't be worth a penny." Lin XianEr said.

"But it'd be very easy for him to kill you." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"You think he is willing to kill me?... When you wanted to kill me, he wanted to save me, do you know why?" Lin XianEr said.

ShangGuan JinHong said coldly, "Because he wants to kill you in front of me."

"You are wrong, he doesn't want to kill me in front of you, he wants you to kill me with your own hands..." Lin XianEr said.

She laughed and said, "When we were together, he was insane with jealousy. Back then I thought it was because of me, but now I understand that it was because of you. He despises anyone who gains favor with you. Even your son is not an exception... you do know who killed your son, don't you?"

"As long as he kills for me, it doesn't matter who he kills." ShangGuan JinHong replied emotionlessly.

The smile on her face slowly vanished. She let out a long sigh and said, "I always thought that I understood men very well, but I really don't know what the two of you are thinking. I really don't understand what the relationship is between the two of you."

She smiled coldly and continued, "All I know is that whatever is is, it is undoubtedly disgusting. I don't care what the two of you have to say, I won't hear a word of it."

"Although you know very little, you have said way too much." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"But no matter what I say, there is no way I can convince you to kill him, isn't that right?" Lin XianEr said.

"There is no way!" ShangGuan JinHong said.

Lin XianEr turned to face Jing WuMing and said, "And there's obviously no way I can convince you to kill him either, right?"

"Right." Jing WuMing said.

Lin XianEr let out a sigh and said, "It looks like I am going to die in your hands. The only question is by whom? Will it be you? Or you?"

Jing WuMing did not say another word.

He lifted his hand and threw Lin XianEr towards the ground at ShangGuan JinHong's feet.

Lin XianEr did not struggle to get back up this time, she did not move at all. She just crawled up into a ball on the ground.

But she was a woman.

You could expect her not to move and not to resist, but you couldn't make her shut her mouth.