

Chapter 85

Who Was At Fault?

It was raining outside but completely dry inside the house. There was a single small window that was very high up from the ground.

That window was always closed. Sunlight rarely shined through and rain never poured in.

The walls were coated with paint so thick and white that no one could tell whether the walls were made of earth and clay or iron and metal. But one thing that was very apparent was that these walls were extremely thick, thick enough to border off the world outside.

Besides two beds and a large table, there was nothing else in that house. No chairs or stools, not even a single cup could be found.

The house and its surroundings seemed more frugal and ascetic than the abode of a monk.

Who could have ever guessed that the wealthiest, most influential, and most powerful person in the pugilistic world, Chief ShangGuan JinHong actually lived in a place like this?

But Li XunHuan couldn't bother to be surprised.

ShangGuan JinHong stood right next to him and said, "Is this place satisfactory?"

"At least it is dry." Li XunHuan said with a forced smile.

"It is indeed very dry. I can guarantee that you won't even find a single drop of water here." ShangGuan JinHong said, "Tea, wine, and water has never been served here before. Not even a single tear has ever been shed here."

"What about blood? Has anyone ever bled here before?" Li XunHuan said.

"Never - even if somebody wanted to die in this place, they would have bled themselves dry before ever reaching the door." ShangGuan JinHong said, "If I did not want someone entering this house, whether they're dead or alive, there's no way that they would ever get in."

Li XunHuan let out a slight laugh and said, "Honestly speaking, living in a place like this can't be comfortable at all. But dying here wouldn't be that bad."

"Oh?" ShangGuan JinHong said.

"Because this place is like a grave anyway." Li XunHuan said.

"Since it is to your liking, I will bury you right here." ShangGuan JinHong said with a sadistic smile on his face. He pointed to the ground with his foot and continued, "I will bury you right under here so that when I stand on top of this spot everyday knowing that Li TanHua is under my foot, I will feel very refreshed."

"Refreshed?" Li XunHuan asked with a furrowed brow.

"Because if I don't stay refreshed, I might wind up under someone else's foot. But once I remember your situation, I will be reminded to stay alert." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"But if a person is alert and refreshed for too long, it will undoubtedly bring about pain." Li XunHuan said.

"I have never felt a single ounce of pain. Never in my entire life." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"This is because you have never been happy before either... I really wonder sometimes, just what exactly are you living for?" Li XunHuan said.

ShangGuan JinHong's eyes flickered as he looked deep in thought, after a while he responded, "Some people really have no idea what they're living for. But even worse are those who don't even know what they will have died for."

"Hmm?" Li XunHuan said.

ShangGuan JinHong looked at him and said, "Such as you, you won't have any idea what you died for."

"Actually, I never really wanted to know in the first place." Li XunHuan said.

"You don't." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"Because I have already realized that death isn't that big of a deal." Li XunHuan said.

He did not wait for ShangGuan JinHong's reponse and continued, "In your eyes, I am already a dead person anyway, right?"

"You really do know yourself well." ShangGuan JinHong said.

"Since my death cannot be avoided, why bother letting anything bother or worry me?" Li XunHuan said.

He suddenly sat down on the ground and sprawled himself out comfortably. With a smile, he said, "If I wanted to sit right now, I can sit, and if I wanted to close my eyes, I could close my eyes. Can you do the same?"

ShangGuan JinHong clenched his fists.

"Of course you can't because you still have lots to worry about, you still have to be wary of me." Li XunHuan said.

"At the very least, I am much more comfortable than you right now." Li XunHuan said.

ShangGuan JinHong smiled and said, "Since I promised not to let you die all all damp and wet, I had planned to make a move once your clothes had dried. But I have changed my mind now."

"Oh?" Li XunHuan said.

"Not only am I going to give you a fresh set of clothes, I am also going to give you a jar of wine. Because the words you speak are a real pleasure to my ears, to be able to hear such words coming from a dead person really delights me." ShangGuan JinHong said.

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Long Xiao3Yun laid curled up in a bed fast asleep. There were several damp and muddy footprints on the floor.

A lamp was lit but the dim light made the inn look even gloomier and completely devoid of life.

Lin ShiYin slowly opened the door and walked inside.

A mother's footsteps were always light. She would rather not sleep the entire night than risk waking up her child from a peaceful slumber.

But Long Xiao3Yun was no longer a child anymore, he was more worldly and mature than most people in the world. But when he was sleeping he still looked like an innocent child.

His face was still so young, so pale, and so thin. No matter what he had done, he was still just a lonely, helpless little child, still confused and bewildered by the large world around him.

Lin ShiYin walked up to the bed and stared at him intently, she felt a certain bitterness in her heart.

This was her only child, her own flesh and blood, her only comfort in this world.

In the past she would have rather died than to ever part with him.

But now...

Lin ShiYin lifted up her lamp and kept turning back to look at him.

"I just want to look at him a little longer, just a little longer, because in the future..."

She was afraid to think about the future, she did not want to think about the future.

Tears erupted from her soft eyes.

Even though Long Xiao3Yun's eyes were shut very tightly, tears started to flow as well.

His body started to shake. Was it because of the cold? Or was he having a nightmare?

Lin ShiYin bent over and wanted to tuck him under his covers tightly.

She suddenly realized that the blanket was wet, Long Xiao3Yun's clothes were soaked as well.

Lin ShiYin was slightly startled but after settling down, she said, "So you have went out as well."

Long Xiao3Yun's eyes and mouth were still shut very tightly.

"Were you following behind me the entire time?" Lin ShiYin asked.

Long Xiao3Yun finally nodded his head.

"So you heard everything I said before?" Lin ShiYin asked.

Long Xiao3Yun suddenly took out an oilpaper wrapped package from under the covers and said loudly, "Take it."

Lin ShiYin knitted her brow and replied, "What is this?"

"You really don't know what this is? Did you not decide to come back just to get this?" Long Xiao3Yun said.

A look of sadness swept over Lin ShiYin as she said, "I... I came back to see you."

"If it wasn't for this, would you have still come back to see me?" Long Xiao3Yun said.

He suddenly opened his eyes and stared at his mother.

A look of sadness swept over Long Xiao3Yun as well as he said, "You have already decided to leave me, if it weren't for this, you would have left a long time ago."

"You are right, I have decided to go to a far away place. But I..." Lin ShiYin said.

Long Xiao3Yun cut her off and said, "You don't even have to tell me, I know where you are planning to go."

"You know?" Lin ShiYin said.

"You are going to save Li XunHuan right?" Long Xiao3Yun said.

Lin ShiYin was startled again.

"You are preparing to use this 'LianHua Compendium' to go save Li XunHuan aren't you?" Long Xiao3Yun said.

He held the package in front of him and said, "So why haven't you taken it yet? Why haven't you left yet?"

Lin ShiYin's body started to waver back and forth as if she could no longer support herself up.

"Once you show this 'LianHua Compendium', ShangGuan JinHong will definitely come to see you, because he is also a practitioner of the martial arts, he wouldn't be able to resist his curiosity." Long Xiao3Yun said.

He gnawed on his teeth and said, "You are planning on using this opportunity to save him, because you know that dealing with ShangGuan JinHong won't be an easy task. So your whole goal is to stall him with this for as long as possible so that Li XunHuan can live on just a little longer, and so that Ah Fei will have just a little longer to rush to his aid."

Lin ShiYin had nothing to say.

Long Xiao3Yun was indeed a smart child, his every word mirrored her every thought.

So now she was left speechless.

"Li XunHuan really is good to you. Such that even if you were to throw away your own child, and even your own life for him, no one could say that you were wrong to do so." Long Xiao3Yun said.

He started to tremble even more as he continued, "But have you ever thought about anyone else? Have you ever thought about me? I am your SON... I... I..."

Lin ShiYin felt as if her heart was being pierced by needles. She couldn't help but take her son's hand and said, "Of course I have thought about you. I..."

Long Xiao3Yun pushed her away forcefully and shouted, "Of course you have thought about me, you want me to go with you to meet with them tomorrow morning right? Seeing as to how you are going to throw your life away for them, of course they're going to treat very well and take care of me."

He continued, "But how do you know that you can definitely save him? If you were to die in front of him, he'd be in even more disarray. And even if Ah Fei could rush there to save him in time, he probably wouldn't last until then."

Lin ShiYin started to tremble as well.

"And even if he was able to survive, and even if he was willing to take care of me, there's still no way that I would follow him, I don't even want to lay my eyes on him!" Long Xiao3Yun said.

"Why?" Lin ShiYin asked.

"Because I hate him!" Long Xiao3Yun said.

"But you have already learned..." Lin ShiYin said.

Long Xiao3Yun cut her off and said, "I don't hate him for destroying my martial arts."

"Then why do you hate him for?" Lin ShiYin said.

"I hate him for not being my father, why couldn't he have been MY father! Why couldn't I have been his son? If he was my father, he would have never left me, everything would have been so much better!" Long Xiao3Yun said.

He suddenly fell to the floor and started crying his eyes out.

Lin ShiYin's heart shattered, her entire body fell to pieces.

She felt as if she couldn't stand up anymore and she fell down onto a chair that was behind her.

"If only this child were his son, if only he were my husband..."

She had never even dared to entertain that thought, but deep down inside her heart, how could she not have secretly craved for it?

The child of an unhappy couple will only be even more unhappy and suffer even more pain.

But fault lies only with the parents, not with the child. Why did he have to follow them in enduring punishment and suffering?

Lin ShiYin pulled herself up and walked over beside her son. Tears rained down as she said, "Son, I have really wronged you... I have really wronged you... With parents like us, it must have been extremely difficult being our son..."

A sad and decrepit voice suddenly rang from outside the window.

"You have done nothing wrong. I am the one who is at fault."

Long Xiao4Yun.

No one would have ever guessed that he would ever look so distressed and worn out.

He stood at the door, scared to even take a step inside.

Long Xiao3Yun lifted his head and his lips moved as if he were about to call out, "Father."

But not a single sound came out!

Long Xiao4Yun sighed and said, "I know that you are not even willing to accept me as your father."

He turned to Lin ShiYin and said, "And I know that you are not willing to accept me as your husband. My life really is pointless."

"You..." Lin ShiYin said.

He did not let her continue and said, "But I have always tried my hardest to be a good father, and to be a good husband. But it looks like I have failed, it looks like I have done everything wrong."

Lin ShiYin stared at him.

He had always been a solemn and strict man, always full of vigor and energy.

But what about now?

Feelings of pity suddenly rushed through her as she said, "I have wronged you as well. I haven't been a very good wife at all."

Long Xiao4Yun let out a laugh, a very sorrowful laugh, and said, "That's not your fault, everything really is my fault. If I had never met you, if I had never met Li XunHuan, everything wouldn't have turned out like this. Everyone would have been happy and prosperous."

Was his own fate completely changed by that incident?

If he had never met Li XunHuan, would he have never turned out the way he did?

Lin ShiYin started to weep as she said, "Regardless of what you have done, it was all for the sake of protecting this family, it was all for the sake of protecting your wife. So... you really weren't at fault. There's no way that I can blame you."

"But if both of us are not at fault, then who was at fault?" Long Xiao4Yun said.

Lin ShiYin stared out the window into the rainy night. "Who was at fault... ? Who was at fault... ?"

She did not have an answer.

No one had an answer.

There are some things in this world which humans will never understand and will never have an answer for.

"I originally did not plan on seeing you two again. Since you had left this time, I had figured that you were leaving me for good. That is why I did not want to bother to urge or beg you to stay, because..." Long Xiao4Yun said.

He let out a long sigh as tears started to fall, "I know that the things I have done not only have hurt you, but have disappointed you as well. But I just couldn't help but follow the two of you. Even if it was just to glance an eye at you from a distance, I was satisfied."

Lin ShiYin burst into tears and cried, "Please, don't say anymore... please..."

Long Xiao4Yun nodded his head and said, "I really shouldn't say anymore, because anything I say right now is already too late."

"You know that I owe him too much, I can't just watch as he dies." Lin ShiYin said.

"I owe him too, I owe him much more. That's why there are things that you should let me do instead." Long Xiao4Yun said.

It seemed as if he had made up his mind as he strode over.

"What... what do you want to do? Don't tell me..." Lin ShiYin said.

Long Xiao4Yun suddenly sealed her pressure points. "You can't die, you shouldn't die, I am the one who should die. The longer I live, the more that everyone will suffer. If I died instead, all of you will be much better off."

He grabbed the 'LianHua Compendium' and rushed out of the door.

In the distance, his voice could be heard shouting, "Son, take good care of your mother. As for this no good father of yours... it really doesn't matter whether or not you will accept me."

Long Xiao3Yun's eyes were wide opened as he stared out into the rain.

He was no longer crying.

But the look in his eyes was even more depressing than tears.

After who knows how long, he suddenly shouted out loud, "I accept you, you are the only one who can be my father! And you are the only one I'd ever accept as my father! Other than you, there's no one else, no one else..."

This was the remorse shown from a child to his father. It was a bond that was shared between a father and a son, something that nothing in the world could replace.

It is a pity that the father will never hear those words.

All humans have moments of sudden realization.

Did he have that realization because he was forced into a deadend situation? Or was it that he felt genuine respect?

Blood is thicker than water.

Only blood can wash away shame and hatred.

Life eventually has to end in blood.

But life also begins in blood.