

Chapter 3

Sinister and Ruthless

Hong Lianhua assured Yu Peiyu by saying: “An intelligent and strong girl like her is very capable of taking care of herself. Don't worry about her, she will be fine.”

Hong Lianhua put the letter back into the pouch, Yu Peiyu thought he was going to give the pouch to him. But Hong Lianhua carefully put the pouch back into his robe.

Yu Peiyu said: “If we could get in touch with her, we will certainly... ”

At this moment reverend Tiangang entered and sighed: “Another difficult issue is at hand.”

Mei Simang asked with a shock: “What kind of trouble do we have now?”

Reverend Tiangang said: “That Yu Fang... he asked me to become the counsellor of Wulin.”

Yu Peiyu said in surprise: “Counsellor?”

Hong Lianhua explained: “Besides electing a new chancellor it is the custom to appoint a counsellor. The counsellor is the second in command, in the previous years Shaolin took the leading position and Wudang became the counsellor.”

Reverend Tiangang said: “If Yu F... appoints reverend Chuchen of Wudang, it would be difficult for them to carry out their secret agenda. But I live on Mount Kunlun in the western regions therefore makes it difficult for me to question their activities.”

Hong Lianhua said with a smile: “Reverend, also your excellent reputation has something to do with it. They could have asked that Iron Overlord. But what was it earlier that you wanted to discuss?”

Reverend Tiangang said: “The thing that worries me most is that this Yu person would demand that young master Yu would go back with him. What should we do aboutt that?”

Hong Lianhua exclaimed: “You're right,... ”

Reverend Tiangang continued: "If young master Yu returns to them, he could be ambushed at any time. But when a father demands that his son goes back with him we cannot say no to him, can we."

Hong Lianhua looked very worried and said over and over again: "What can we do? What can we do?"

Mei Simang said: "Young master Yu must run as soon as possible."

Reverend Tiangang shook his head, Mei asked: "If he cannot run what other option is left."

Reverend Tiangang said: "Young master Yu must find a new teacher. When a teacher wants his new disciple to go with him, and learn new martial arts not even a father can say no."

Mei Simang clapped his hands and said: "A good plan!"

Hong Lianhua smiled: "Congratulations brother Peiyu for finding an excellent teacher! Congratulations reverend Tiangang for accepting a brilliant disciple!"

Yu Peiyu was stunned and reverend Tiangang said: "I am not fit to become young master Yu's teacher."

Hong Lianhua interrupted with a smile: "Reverend, if you're not fit in becoming the teacher of young master Yu no one is. Besides this matter concerns the lives of hundreds perhaps thousands Wulin people. Reverend, you must accept young master Yu as your student."

Yu Peiyu knelt down and suddenly a voice outside called out loudly: "Is young master Yu here? Chancellor Yu wishes to talk to you."

Hong Lianhua looked at Yu Peiyu and sighed: "It seems everywhere you go they are watching you."

Mei Simang broke out in a cold sweat.

They walked outside and saw everyone was enjoying the feast. Yu Peiyu felt sad and useless, his life was in the hands of others and he felt like a puppet.

A man in a black robe walked up and said: "Chancellor Yu is in the tent of abbot Tianyun."

They arrived outside the tent of abbot Tianyun. Abbot Tianyun spoke: "Is master Hong Lian here as well?"

Hong Lianhua laughed: "Abbot Tianyun's cultivation is very high, could it be that you have mastered divine abilities?"

Reverend Tiangang entered the tent too.

Yu Fanghe sat next to abbot Tianyun drinking tea, Lin Shoujuan, the Dragon king of Taihu etc. were not present.

Yu Fanghe sat there very tranquil and said: "Peiyu, are you feeling well?"

Yu Peiyu bowed and said: "Father, I'm feeling fine."

Yu Fanghe said: "You have never left home before in your life. From now on everything you should behave correctly. You should listen to the teachings of seniors."

Yu Peiyu replied: "Yes, I will."

One of them was pretending to be a caring father the other was trying his best to look like a filial son.

Yu Peiyu knew that this man was his enemy but still put a very respectful and obedient look.

That Yu Fanghe also knew that this young man

wasn't his son. And nothing would make him more happy as to kick him dead right now. But he put up his facade as a caring loving father.

Hong Lianhua who was watching this entire scene was very much amused.

He knew that it was practically impossible to imagine how difficult it was for these 2 men to act as nothing has happened while in fact everything is different.

Abbot Tianyun smiled: "Young benefactor Yu is a very intelligent handsome young man. I am sure that later on his abilities and prospects will not be beneath you, benefactor Yu."

Hong Lianhua happily said: "I'm happy to inform chancellor Yu that young master Yu has not only an excellent father but also a good teacher."

Yu Fanghe said in surprise: "A good teacher?"

Reverend Tiangang smiled: "I saw that your son is a very intelligent young man with a remarkable talent for martial arts. Therefore I couldn't resist to accepting Peiyu as my disciple, I hope chancellor Yu can forgive me."

Hong Lianhua said: "Wonderful, not only will young master Yu have mastered the martial arts of Xiantian Wuji School but also the martial arts of Kunlun. Young master Yu will certainly become a worthy hero fit to carry the name Yu. Don't you think so, chancellor Yu?"

Yu Fanghe said: "(*cough)... Thank you, reverend Tiangang."

Although Yu Fanghe was smiling but everyone could see that this smile was not very natural and certainly not a happy smile.

Reverend Tiangang said: "Tomorrow morning I will return to Mount Kunlun, Peiyu..."

Hong Lianhua quickly said: "Of course young master Yu will go with his teacher. Chancellor Yu, don't be worried, the special skills of Kunlun are known far and wide. If young master Yu can study those skills as soon as possible it will be a good thing. Also chancellor Yu has to lead Wulin now and must have so many formalities to take care of."

He held Yu Peiyu's arm and said: "From now on you will have to train very hard. No more relaxing for you! I think the next time we will see each other will be at least 3 years later. When that happens we will drink to a heart's content."

Hong pulled Yu outside very quickly, Yu Fanghe was bemused with this situation.

Abbot Tianyun laughed: "Your son is very fortunate to have a good friend like master Hong Lian."

Yu Fanghe smiled dryly: "Yes, indeed very fortunate."

The next morning all the faces of the heroes looked very red as result of yesterday's drinking.

No matter how drunk the Kunlun disciples are they had to compose themselves. They had to see their leader off.

Inside the tent Yu Peiyu kowtowed to Yu Fanghe, then 8 purple-robed young Taoist priests saw reverend Tiangang and Yu Peiyu off.

Hong Lianhua held Yu Peiyu's hand and said: "Take care of yourself. Don't forget me!"

Yu Peiyu said with a trembling voice: "I... I"

And was very touched.

Suddenly someone said loudly: "Peiyu, I think you won't see Daiyu for a long time. Why don't you see her one more time."

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw Lin Shoujuan and Lin Daiyu.

Yu Peiyu stared into her beautiful eyes and was captivated by her beauty. She stared back to and forgot everything around her.

Hong Lianhua looked at them and just stood there.

Reverend Tiangang suddenly said: "The time on the mountains will pass slowly with loneliness. Love and emotion are not meant to last. Let us go!"

Lin Daiyu watched them go and her ever so strong and cool eyes were filled with tears.

A tenderly voice laughed: "Seeing your fiance gone must make you feel lonely, right?"

Lin Daiyu could smell a very sweet and strong flower fragrance and wanted to turn around.

But Wang Yuluo and Ximen Feng coldly told Lin Daiyu: "Daiyu, let's go."

The sweet voice said: "Women amongst each other have a lot of things to say."

Wang Yuluo said: "Xiantian Wuji School and Baihua Association have no close relations."

Lin Daiyu now saw a beautiful woman in front of her, the figure was the ever so charming leader of the Baihua Association Madame Hai Tang.

Ximen Feng and Wang Yuluo wanted to intervene between Lin and Madame Hai Tang. But Madame Hai Tang gently waved her hands and a thin fog rose up and Ximen and Wang paced back one step and saw that Madame Hai Tang pulled Lin Daiyu away.

She smiled to Lin Shoujuan: "The Flowered Chestnut Sword, you won't mind if I take your daughter away for a few days. Just like men when I see a pretty girl I just want to chat to her for days."

Lin Shoujuan didn't know what to say and was totally lost.

Hong Lianhua was secretly laughing when he saw this.

The 14 flag-poles stood there and the banners defied the wind as usual.

The gathering of Lake Huang every 7 years has now become overblown blossoms. All the heroes gradually left. Seeing that some of the seniors of Wulin are now old and weak, the young ones are showing their ambition. Will the older generation feel melancholic?

Someone sang a tragic song: " Within 7 years,
how many heroes have turned old?

The ambition of Wulin, will it belong to their old dreams... "

Hong Lianhua looked up and saw the banner of the Xiantian Wuji School and heard that tragic song and sighed: "Everything till the end will end like a dream. Ceased! Ceased!"

The overblown blossoms, the flowered butterfly... "

Someone said: "You cannot cease! If you stop who will continue?"

The speaker was Xie Tianbi, the leader of Diancang School.

Hong Lianhua laughed: "Brother Xie is a young hero, how can you understand the melancholy of the famous Song poet Su Dongpo."

Xie Tianbi smiled: "Although I don't understand much aboutt poetry I am still capable of understanding the poems of Su Dongpo. But you have just begun with your work in Wulin and the Beggars Association why the melancholy?"

Hong Lianhua smiled lightly: "Not even heroes can resist the pain of parting. But who is capable of resisting that pain."

Xie Tianbi asked: "Has your new friend, young master Yu left? With reverend Tiangang?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Yes! For some time now."

Xie Tianbi's face changed and stamped his foot and said: "Why did he leave this early?"

Hong Lianhua was surprised by his look and asked: "Early? What do you mean with that?"

Xie said with a gloomy face: "Forgive me, master Hong Lian. I am too late."

Hong Lianhua quickly held his arms and asked: "What are you talking about?"

Xie Tianbi asked: "Have you ever heard of The Wanderer of the Corners of the World?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Of course I have heard of him. He is a mysterious wandering hero and even reverend Chuchen of Wudang once openly praised his chivalry."

Xie Tianbi said: "I just received a carrier pigeon from him with an important message."

Hong Lianhua asked with anxiety: "What?... What is the message, quickly?"

Xie Tianbi sighed deeply and closed his eyes and said: "The Wanderer wrote that the leader of the Kunlun School, reverend Tiangang passed away half a month ago."

Hong Lianhua cried out with shock: “NO!!!!”

Hong Lianhua asked again with a trembling voice: “Are you certain your information is correct?”

Xie Tianbi said: “The Wanderer used more than 10 days to look for the truth and when he actually saw the body of reverend Tiangang he sent a carrier pigeon to inform me as soon as possible.”

Hong Lianhua was shaking: “In other words this reverend Tiangang is an imposter too?”

Xie Tianbi sighed deeply: “When I saw that he didn't say a word on the platform I was a bit suspicious and when he became the counsellor. I was... ”

Hong Lianhua interrupted him: “Why didn't you tell me earlier?”

Xie Tianbi said: “I wasn't sure at that time.”

Hong Lianhua said: “Now I have sent Yu Peiyu right in the hands of the enemy. Damn it! Out of the frying-pan into the fire.”

Xie Tianbi: “That's why I rushed over here after immediately receiving the news.”

Hong Lianhua broke out in a cold sweat and stammered: “That's why he left his disciples here and only took Yu Peiyu with him. It... it will make it easier for them to kill him. It is my fault!”

Xie Tianbi said: “Everything was planned with the upmost precision. Otherwise the Kunlun School has very strict rules aboutt accepting new disciples, how come this reverend Tiangang can accept a new disciple that easily? I'm afraid... ”

Hong Lianhua laughed sadly: “What a flawless, evil plan! You cannot defend and protect yourself against it... ”

He turned to Xie Tianbi and said: “Thank you for telling me! Perhaps it is not too late.”

Xie Tianbi asked: “Aren't they gone for some time now?”

Hong Lianhua said: “With our speed we can certainly catch up with them.”

Xie Tianbi said angrily: “We needn't uphold any Wulin rules against evil,vile men like them. When we see him we might as well play along for a minute and see what his intentions are first.”

Hong Lianhua agreed: “You're right! Let us go!”

The fog was getting thicker, Yu Peiyu was walking behind reverend Tiangang. He was looking at the long beard and the grand posture of reverend Tiangang.

He was thinking aboutt everything that happened these past days. Not knowing whether to feel sad or happy aboutt his current situation. The Kunlun School is renowned in the world, becoming a Kunlun disciple is a very difficult thing.

The rules and regulations are very strict, but without his unfortunate encounters he wouldn't have become the disciple of reverend Tiangang.

Reverend Tiangang said: “ We have to travel a long way, we must make haste.”

Yu Peiyu replied: “ Yes, master.”

Reverend Tiangang said: “ Kunlun has very strict rules and requires a very high discipline. Are you ready for that?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Master, I'm not afraid of hardship.”

Reverend Tiangang said: “ You're my youngest disciple after we return you'll have to do many tasks. You look too gentle and frail. I wonder whether you can stand it.”

Yu Peiyu said: “ Master, at home I had to do lots of hard jobs. I'm not afraid for any kinds of hardships.”

Reverend Tiangang said: “ Very good, up ahead is a well. Get some water!”

Yu Peiyu answered: “ Yes, master.”

Farther up ahead was indeed a well. He lowered the bucket to get some water. The surroundings here reminded him of his home, courtyard and his father. His tranquil, benevolent smile.

He couldn't stop his tears from rolling anymore, he used his sleeve to wipe them away. Unfortunately he lost his grip and the bucket fell into the well again. He tried to grab it but slipped and fell into

the well.

It was impossible to climb out of it even with his superior martial arts. But the strange thing was he started to learning martial arts at a very young his footwork was very stable.

The water was very cold and Yu Peiyu tried his best to climb but with no luck. Every time he slips because of the slimy walls. But why didn't reverend Tiangang save him after all this time?

He didn't cry out for help and at some point he heard the galloping sound of a horse. Suddenly a girl asked: "Who has fallen into the well? Is it... could it be... Yu...?"

Reverend Tiangang said: "Yes, it is Yu Peiyu."

The girl asked: "Reverend, you saw him fall into the well. Why won't you save him? Do you want him to die?"

Reverend Tiangang said seriously: "He said that he was ready to face all kinds of hardship. But he doesn't understand that many trials in life come unexpectedly. I want to condition him now so he will be prepared for the trials to come."

The girl said: "Reverend, please forgive me for being rude. But I think he has suffered enough now."

Reverend Tiangang smiled: "Benefactress, why are you this concerned?"

The girl didn't say a word for some time, she seems to have difficulty answering that question. In the end she said loudly: "I followed you here because I wanted to say something to... him."

Reverend Tiangang said: "In that case, I will help him get out now."

He lowered a long rope into the well and Yu Peiyu climbed the rope to get out. His clothes were wet, his face turned red from embarrassment and didn't dare to raise his head.

The girl handed him a silk handkerchief with her beautiful white hand and said with a tender voice: "Wipe away the water on your face."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head even lower now because he heard that this simple sentence was filled with care and love. He didn't know whether he should accept the handkerchief or not.

Reverend Tiangang loudly said: "Raise your head like a true man!"

Yu raised his head and saw Jin Yanzi, this straightforward girl was looking at him with care and tenderness.

Reverend Tiangang said: "Benefactress, you can tell him what you wished to say. But please hurry we have a long way ahead of us."

This stern old Taoist priest saw that this matter had to do with love and stroked his beard and gave the 2 of them privacy.

Jin Yanzi smiled lovingly and said: "Take the handkerchief."

Yu Peiyu couldn't tell anymore if the liquid on his face was water or sweat and stammered: "Thank you, Miss."

Jin Yanzi said: "You must be surprised, why I followed you here?"

Yu Peiyu was drying his face and said: "What can I do for you, Miss?"

Jin Yanzi sighed: "I don't know but ever since I met you I just couldn't bear to part with you. So I followed you here. Whenever I want something I just act on my feelings and do it."

Yu Peiyu stuttered: "I... Miss... "

In the distance he saw another horse and somebody standing next to the horse.

Yu Peiyu coughed: "Miss, I understand your feelings. However the young master of the divine sabre is standing there waiting for you. Miss, I think it is best that you... "

Jin Yanzi interrupted him with a cold laugh: "Don't mind him. He can wait as long as he wants to. Why worry about him."

After saying this her voice became tenderly again: "I just want to ask you, do you want to see me again in the future?"

Yu Peiyu was stuttering again: "I... I... "

Jin Yanzi bit her lip and said: "I'm a girl and I am bold enough to tell you my intentions. Why don't you speak?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I'm an unfortunate man, I think it is best that we won't see each other anymore."

Jin Yanzi was shocked and stood there for some time and said with a trembling voice: "Fine,... good!"

She mounted her horse and rode off.

Yu Peiyu stood there holding her handkerchief and saw her off with his eyes. Feeling melancholic, all of a sudden a horse rode towards him and a sabre hacked at him.

The horse was as fast as a touring dragon and the sabre was swift as the wind. Judging by that hack the wielder is fit enough to be called a top martial artist.

Yu Peiyu couldn't leap away so instead he rushed forward. He felt the sabre passing by his back.

The young master of the divine sabre laughed arrogantly: "This hack is only a small warning. The next time if you're in the way I will chop off your head."

Yu Peiyu was bemused by this entire incident and saw that his robe was cut open by the sabre. Just another centimetre he was dead.

Reverend Tiangang sighed: "These love tribulations are very troublesome, I hope you can cope with them."

Yu Peiyu said: "I... I... "

Reverend Tiangang said with an earnest face: "Don't say a thing! Let us go."

Reverend Tiangang walked with a normal pace but Yu Peiyu had difficulty catching up. The past events of these few days have taken its toll on his energy and also his wet clothes were not making it any easier for him to travel. But he didn't say a word in front of his strict teacher.

The fog was gone but it was still very clouded much like the face of reverend Tiangang. The dried clothes of Yu Peiyu were wet again by sweat.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help panting and his legs felt tired, his head was feeling woozy.

Luckily reverend Tiangang stopped in front of a abandoned temple. He looked at Yu Peiyu and shook his head: "Peiyu, you're still not strong enough to endure hardships. Let us rest inside."

Yu Peiyu saw the statue of the local god and saw his face was looking very sinister and had a mysterious grin.

Yu Peiyu couldn't stand it anymore and lay down in front of the shrine.

Reverend Tiangang said: "Get up! Don't lie in front of the shrine."

Yu Peiyu got up but didn't resent his teacher. He felt that only a strict teacher can produce extraordinary disciples.

Reverend Tiangang continued: "All the Kunlun disciples have to endure hardships. Especially you, you have many trials in front of you that is why you have to prepare yourself for them."

Yu Peiyu said: "I understand, master."

Reverend Tiangang was looking outside and saw the leaves were blown off by the wind. This world famous Kunlun leader was captivated by the arrival of Autumn and said softly: "It is aboutt to rain again... Heaven is so unpredictable, but life is unpredictable too. Child, remember this. You can never rely fully on anyone, you can only rely on yourself."

The wind started to blow harder and Yu Peiyu shivered now. This sudden change of weather could be a sign of a bad omen.

Reverend Tiangang said: "Peiyu, come here."

Yu Peiyu walked over to his teacher. Reverend Tiangang took out a rice cake out of his sack and handed it to Yu Peiyu.

With a seldom seen warm smile he said: "Eat up, child. When I was your age I got hungry particular easy too."

His ever so strict teacher showed his affection towards him. Yu Peiyu held the rice cake and wept and said: "What aboutt you, master?"

Reverend Tiangang smiled: "This rice cake is very special, not everyone can eat it. After you have taken it you will understand."

Somebody outside laughed: "Since this rice cake is so special I would like to taste it too."

The speaker walked inside, he was panting and there was something funny aboutt his laugh.

Yu Peiyu said happily: "Master Hong Lian, why are you here?"

Reverend Tiangang stroked his long beard and smiled: "I don't think you have rushed over for this rice cake."

Hong Lianhua said with a laugh: "Reverend, you're very sharp. But I do have something to show you."

He took out an object out of his robe and presented it in front of reverend Tiangang.

The object was very small and because it was dark no one could see clearly what it was.

Reverend Tiangang bent over to take a closer look and smiled: "Whatever it is, it must be very special since master Hong Lian... "

Before he could finish Hong Lianhua used his hand to smack up and hit reverend Tiangang on the eyes. Suddenly a flash of lightning brightened the temple and a sword pierced through reverend Tiangang's back.

He called out and struck out a palm. Hong Lianhua made a somersault in the air and landed 2 metres away.

The force of that palm destroyed the shrine and the statue came crackling down.

Reverend Tiangang fell to the ground and blood oozed out of his wound. He asked with his dying breath: "Why... you... you... !"

But he was dead before he could finish.

Yu Peiyu was too surprised to react and the rice cake fell out of his hands. Hong Lianhua was backed against a wall and was panting heavily also the colour of his face was a bit strange.

However, he wasn't too late Yu Peiyu was still alive.

Xie Tianbi appeared too and exclaimed: "Fortunately, we were not too late."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "You should not have killed him, we could have interrogated him."

Xie Tianbi said: "What is there to interrogate? Furthermore,..."

Yu Peiyu shouted: "What are you doing? Why did you kill my master!"

Xie Tianbi said: "If we didn't kill him, he would have killed you!"

Yu Peiyu said with a shock: "WHAT!"

Xie Tianbi said: "You will understand later on."

He held on to Yu Peiyu's arm and said to Hong Lianhua: "The conspirators must have henchmen around to rendezvous with this imposter. I will bring young master Yu to a safe location and will return to help you."

He pulled Yu outside and the 2 of them quickly left. Yu Peiyu was too flabbergasted to say anything now and just walked along.

Hong Lianhua stood at the door of the temple and said softly: "Bring it on."

He pulled out the sword out of reverend Tiangang's back, there was another flash of lightning. The blood dripped of the sword and Hong Lianhua saw something. All of a sudden he began to shake and coughed up blood.

Xie Tianbi explained to Yu Peiyu: "This reverend Tiangang is a fake too. They want to take your life and if you had eaten that rice cake, you would be dead now."

Yu Peiyu was shocked and exclaimed: "Really?"

Xie Tianbi said: "If you don't believe me, fine. But you mustn't doubt the intentions of master Hong Lian."

Yu Peiyu said: "But... but, he... he.."

He remembered the incident with the well, could it be that reverend Tiangang really wanted to harm him? But the grandeur he had, that couldn't be faked, or could it?

He was really confused and was pulled by Xie Tianbi. Suddenly he felt the hand of Xie Tianbi was very cold. Extremely cold...

Yu Peiyu shivered and said: "There is something strange aboutt your hand."

Xie Tianbi turned around and smiled: "What are you talking aboutt?"

Yu Peiyu watched him and replied: "I mean, I mean you look like... "

Suddenly he yelled: "You are the imposter, your eyes... "

Xie Tianbi quickly sealed the 3 acupoints on Yu's palm. And he flung Yu over his head.

Xie Tianbi laughed evilly: "You're very smart. But smart people die quicker."

He wanted to used his foot to step on Yu Peiyu's chest, Yu couldn't move anymore. But he could use his left hand to grab his foot.

Xie Tianbi scoffed and used more force into his foot.

Yu Peiyu couldn't stop his foot and said angrily: "You're the one that killed my father. I have looked everywhere for you."

Xie Tianbi laughed: "Now you have found me. What do you want to do? Your father died at my hands and now you will die at my foot. HAHAAHAHA!"

Yu Peiyu couldn't block his foot any longer also he kept hearing Xie Tianbi laughing.

Finally, he coughed his blood on Xie Tianbi's robe.

Suddenly Xie Tianbi heard a sound and saw a sword flying towards him. He leapt up and with a somersault he landed a few metres away.

He saw a person floating towards him, looking very angry and his eyes were set to kill.

The sword pierced through a tree and was stuck there. Hong Lianhua threw the sword with everything he had.

Xie Tianbi's face changed and with difficulty put a smile on his face and asked: "Master Hong Lian, have you defeated the henchmen so soon?"

Hong Lianhua stared at him with his bright eyes and said slowly: "Who are you?"

Xie Tianbi raised his head and laughed: "Me?... Who I am?... Brother Hong Lian, don't you recognize me anymore?"

His laughter sounded worse than any form of crying.

Hong Lianhua walked up and said again slowly: "I ask you again: Who are you?"

Xie Tianbi backed a few paces and said: "I... brother... "

Hong Lianhua said coldly: "You look like the real Xie Tianbi, too lifelike even. I would like to slice off your flesh bit by bit. I want to see how it is possible to impersonate my friend Xie Tianbi."

Hong Lianhua said these words with calmness and coldness, it had more effect than cursing these words.

Indeed, Xie Tianbi shivered when he heard that threat. And laughed arrogantly: "Good, Hong Lianhua! I never thought you would see through my disguise. I used 3 years to study Xie Tianbi and finally after 3 years of hard work I succeeded. Not even himself would be able to tell the difference. What gave me away?"

Hong Lianhua said: "That sword! The leader of Diancang would never use that kind of sword. And you should remember the following, Diancang disciples don't casually throw or leave their swords behind.

If the sword is present, so is the wielder. If the wielder is dead, the sword will be lost."

Hong Lianhua was stunned and regretfully said: "Yes, of course. I have totally forgotten aboutt that. Hong Lianhua, you are very sharp. No wonder my master told me that you're a very difficult person to deal with."

Hong Lianhua made a fist and asked: "Who is your master?"

Xie Tianbi arrogantly laughed: "You will never know, and when you do find out you will die! Even people thousand times superior to you have died at the master's hands."

Hong Lianhua laughed tragically: "You're right in the entire analects of Wulin nobody can matches his vile and despicable plans."

Xie Tianbi said loudly: "Wulin will fall under his rule. Hong Lianhua, you are a smart man. Think carefully and you will know what to do."

Hong Lianhua walked a few paces towards him and said: "I want to kill you. At this moment I just want to kill you."

Xie Tianbi said: "I have my orders to kill Yu Peiyu, therefore I had to kill reverend Tiangang. But don't forget you're my accomplice, if you want to kill me you have to punish yourself too."

Hong Lianhua said regretfully: "That was the biggest mistake in my entire life. I was so stupid in believing you. I will punish myself for this in the future. But you... you.."

With speed Hong Lianhua attacked with 3, 4 fists. Not many people in Wulin have duelled with Hong Lianhua. But now Xie Tianbi realized that this young leader of the Beggars Association had awesome fist and palm stances. Every stance was generated with extremely powerful internal energy.

Especially now, he generated his anger into his fists and palms. This alone could struck fear in the hearts of people.

Yu Peiyu now shouted: "You cannot kill him!"

Both Hong Lianhua and Xie Tianbi were surprised by his roar. Hong Lianhua asked angrily: "Why can't I kill him?"

Yu Peiyu used his left hand to unseal his three sealed acupoints and stood up. He looked very pale and his eyes were filled with hate. This normally frail, gentle-looking young man has turned into a savage now.

Yu Peiyu said loudly: "Not only did this fiend kill my father he also killed my teacher. ONLY I AM ALLOWED TO KILL THIS BASTARD!"

Hong Lianhua smiled wryly: "Alright! He is all yours."

Yu Peiyu stormed towards Xie Tianbi, Hong Lianhua saw that his footwork was not stable and his movements were flawed. Those were the effects of his pain and anger, Hong Lianhua warned Yu Peiyu: "You must be cautious."

Xie Tianbi laughed sinisterly: "If someone's near him to help why should he be cautious."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said: "No one is going to help me kill you."

Xie Tianbi felt assured and said arrogantly: "That is more like it! I hope you will stick by your word."

If he warded off the attack while he was talking and backed up against the tree and pulled out the sword.

He used the sword to attack with 7 fast techniques.

This "Swift Rapid Gale Sword" was not a Diancang skill, but when it came to the viciousness of the techniques it was above any Diancang swordsmanship.

Yu Peiyu chose the attack as a form of defense and didn't care anymore. Xie Tianbi's techniques seemed to be losing effect against his powerful will to win.

Suddenly Xie's attacks sliced open Yu Peiyu's robe and made three flesh wounds. But the heavy rainfall washed away the blood very quickly.

Hong Lianhua stood there worried about Yu Peiyu. He finally realized that this refined young man was a formidable fighter.

But although Yu Pei had had the will to kill this Xie Tianbi, but his strength was gradually weakening. And Hong Lianhua couldn't intervene.

Xie Tianbi began his assault again, his plan was to weaken Yu Peiyu out first by only defending and attack when he was tired.

Yu Peiyu was wounded at several places by his sword.

Hong Lianhua was feeling very sad by this battle. All of a sudden Yu Peiyu's chest was left unguarded. Xie Tianbi saw his chance and aimed his sword directly towards his chest. Hong Lianhua cried out and rushed forward. But this wicked Xie Tianbi was too quick, Hong Lianhua closed his eyes couldn't bear to watch anymore.

Xie Tianbi laughed evilly, he was certain he was going to kill Yu Peiyu.

But somehow Yu Peiyu placed his palms mysteriously on the blade and pressed on both sides. The sword couldn't advance forward, Yu Peiyu used his elbow to hit Xie Tianbi on the chest.

Yu Peiyu consequently used his palm to smack Xie Tianbi on the face. The force of that smack sent Xie Tianbi flying in the air.

The press against the blade, the elbow and the smack were performed almost in one breath.

Yu Peiyu didn't give Xie Tianbi the chance to land and caught him in the air and used his palms to press against his chest and a few of his ribs were broken by that squash.

At first Hong Lianhua could hear Xie Tianbi panting heavily after Yu Peiyu began pressing Xie Tianbi's chest his panting became weaker and weaker.

Hong Lianhua yelled: "Don't kill him yet! I want to question him first!"

Yu Peiyu dropped Xie Tianbi on the ground and raised his head and said: "Did I finally defeat him?... I finally have defeated him..."

Xie Tianbi collapsed on the ground and couldn't move anymore.

Hong Lianhua took Yu Peiyu by the hand and asked excitedly: "Those techniques you used, are they the famous "An Antelope Putting Up His Horns" and "The Outer Sky Rainbow?"

I have heard that old master Yu was renowned for these 2 techniques and were 2 special skills of the Xiantian Wuji School."

Yu Peiyu said tragically: "My father never used these stances to harm anyone in his life. But I... I..."

Yu Peiyu couldn't stop himself from weeping again.

Hong Lianhua was impressed with those 2 stances and sighed: "Very sophisticated stances! Very superb martial arts! Truly perfect and miraculous. The skills of ancient Wulin seniors are truly amazing."

He tapped on Yu Peiyu on the shoulders and laughed: "Why didn't you tell me earlier that you had such high martial arts. I was worried sick."

Yu Peiyu said: "I... I... "

Suddenly he fell into Hong Lianhua's arms. The fight had exhausted him.

Hong Lianhua quickly took out a pill and put it in Yu Peiyu's mouth and said: "This is The Lesser Return Pill of Kunlun, it is known to be the best herbal stimulant in the world."

Yu Peiyu asked: "The Lesser Return Pill? That's a very precious medicine, you should keep it yourself."

Hong Lianhua looked sadly and said after awhile: "It... reverend Tiangang gave it to you."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed: "Master, master... he... he.."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "I found the pill in the rice cake. I thought there was poison in the rice cake, I never thought..."

Yu Peiyu wept: "That's why master said the rice cake was very special not everyone could eat it. Xie Tianbi, the bastard!"

He turned around to look at Xie Tianbi and was horrified.

Xie Tianbi still lay there but his head was gone.

They now had a headless corpse, Yu Peiyu and Hong Lianhua looked at each other with with disbelief.

Both of them wondered what happened to the head, no one could have chopped off his head in a few moments and disappeared in a flash.

Although Hong Lianhua was a very intelligent man, he couldn't figure out what happened to the head of Xie Tianbi.

Hong Lianhua and Yu Peiyu looked at each other with disbelief and surprise.

When they took another closer look of the body, they saw that a part of the shoulders was gone too.

Hong Lianhua exclaimed: "I understand now!"

Yu Peiyu asked: "You have figured it out?"

Hong Lianhua sighed: "Take another closer look of the body."

Yu saw that the corpse was dissolving piece by piece. The flesh and blood turned into this pus and the rain washed it away.

Yu Peiyu was horrified and disgusted when he saw this, he almost threw up.

He took a deep breath and asked: "Could this be the infamous poison, the Bone Melting Pellet?"

Hong Lianhua answered: "I'm afraid so. He knew he was going to die anyhow so he wanted to take all the secrets down to the grave with him."

Yu Peiyu said: "I broke his arms how could have taken the pellet?"

Hong Lianhua deducted: "I think the pellet was hidden somewhere in his mouth. When he was defeated by you he must have bitten into the tip of his tongue and crushed the protective layer around the pellet. It is said that the Bone Melting Pellet becomes poisonous after mixing it with blood. So the blood of his tongue started the process. (sigh*) He would rather rot away than reveal any secrets."

Yu Peiyu said with a hint of respect: "Never thought he would be that brave!"

Hong Lianhua smiled wryly: "If you think he was brave you were wrong. He knew if he revealed anything to us his fate would be even worse."

Yu Peiyu smiled tragically too: "You're right. All these men were not afraid of death but feared the mastermind. Who can this man be? Death is something dreadful but somehow he managed to become even more dreadful than death itself."

Hong Lianhua said softly: "He is truly more dreadful than death. I can't possibly imagine what kind of man he is."

Yu Peiyu said suddenly: "This fake Xie Tianbi did this because he wanted to protect the secret of his disguise. Because if he died "normally", we could have examined his mask carefully and perhaps find some clues.

Hong Lianhua said: "You're absolutely right."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said: "That's why the mastermind prepared those pellets. Dying is not enough for him, his henchmen were to disappear completely if they were captured."

He took Hong Lianhua by the hand and said: "At this moment I know that at least 6 people are imposters. And except for you no one else believes my story. And up till now nobody knows aboutt their plans. But how many imposters are there? That is something which I do not know either but every time I think aboutt that I'm chilled to the bone."

Hong Lianhua felt depressed too when he thought of this problem.

Yu Peiyu continued: "When your family, friends become the lackeys of this monster. What can you do? There is nobody left you can believe and trust. What options are there?"

Hong Lianhua said: "The fake Xie Tianbi is dead now, but who are his other henchmen?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Wang Yuluo, Ximen Feng, Lin Shoujuan, the Dragon king of Taihu, Silver Spear Shen and that Yu Fang... that Yu character are his men. Because I know that my father and his friends are dead."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "I think there couldn't be more than these 6 men."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How can you be that certain?"

Hong Lianhua explained: "The art of disguise is very difficult to master. And when you have mastered it, it is very hard to disguise yourself as someone else perfectly.

It takes years to learn the way of talking, walking of that person. And not to mention his martial arts."

Yu Peiyu called out: "Of course! Martial arts! If they want those men to look real they have to learn their martial arts."

After saying this he started walking.

Hong Lianhua blocked his way and said calmly: "An Antelope Putting Up His Horns and The Outer Sky Rainbow, right?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Right, these 2 stances belong to us, the family Yu. No one else in the world knows these 2 techniques. If that Yu character cannot display these 2 techniques I will have proof he is an imposter."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "This is a good plan but it will be useless against your father's reputation."

Yu Peiyu asked why.

Hong Lianhua explained: "Old master Yu was a famous gentleman. Nobody could have forced him to use martial arts when he was alive."

Yu Peiyu understood where he was getting at and felt lost again.

At this time the entire corpse of the fake Xie Tianbi was gone washed away by the rain.

Hong Lianhua was lost too and said softly: "At least the murderer of reverend Tiangang is dead. But to be honest who did actually kill him? Who can proof it?"

Yu Peiyu shivered when he heard Hong Lianhua talking and said: "But you... you don't have to..."

Hong Lianhua laughed: "Don't worry! I want to punish myself but I won't commit suicide and make those conspirators happy."

Yu Peiyu felt relieved and said: "I knew you were an extraordinary man."

Hong Lianhua looked up and said: "But there is one thing that I have to do."

Yu Peiyu watched him and said: "Going to Mount Kunlun?"

Hong Lianhua said: "The Kunlun disciples deserve to know what happened to reverend Tiangang. It is my duty to inform them."

Yu Peiyu said: "I will go on your behalf."

Hong Lianhua looked at him and smiled: "Alright!"

There was no need for pleasantries or formalities. That's the way of a true man a true hero.

They two of them stood there in the rain looking at each other. Hong Lianhua said: "You have to be careful. Just keep focus on your objectives. Your life is very important."

Yu Peiyu said: "I understand."

Yu Peiyu picked up the sword that he hit out of Xie Tianbi's hands and stuck it into his girdle.

Hong Lianhua added: "Before I forget, a bit of good news."

Yu Peiyu quickly asked: "What?"

Hong Lianhua said: "It is aboutt your fiancée, Lin Daiyu. You don't have to worry aboutt her anymore."

There was always something very strange aboutt Hong Lianhua's expression when he mentioned Lin Daiyu. Although he was smiling his smile wasn't very convincing.

Yu Peiyu didn't notice the change in Hong Lianhua's expression and asked: "How come?"

Hong Lianhua said: "She is being protected by a very formidable Wulin dignitary."

Yu Peiyu said: "I feel assured when the leader of the Beggars Association is keeping an eye out for her."

Hong Lianhua said with a smile: "It isn't me." His face changed again.

Yu Peiyu was puzzled and said: "A formidable Wulin dignitary? Reverend Chuchen of Wudang?"

Hong Lianhua laughed: "Although this person isn't as famous as reverend Chuchen. But people would rather offend him than offend this person."

Yu Peiyu suddenly thought of someone and said: "The most gorgeous of flowers! The Cherry Blossom Hai Tang. Madame Hai Tang of the Baihua Association."

Hong Lianhua praised: "Very good! I think she suspects something and is starting her own investigation."

Yu Peiyu said: "It seems we're not alone in our quest."

Hong Lianhua suddenly called out: "Damn! I forgot another important thing!"

Yu Peiyu asked carefully: "Is this "thing" good or bad?"

Hong Lianhua stamped with his feet: "There is a fake Xie Tianbi running amok. What happened to the real Xie Tianbi? I hope he is alright. I have to look for him."

As soon as he finished he was gone.

Yu Peiyu softly sung to himself: "Here he comes, here he goes. Unmatched throughout history. He is very intelligent and enlightened. Unparalleled by others. He roams the world and is very righteous..."

It was still raining, suddenly 7, 8 horses rode by. Yu Peiyu didn't pay attention to them. But one of the riders dismounted and flew in front of Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was startled to paced back one step.

Yu Peiyu recognized this rider, it was the Diancang disciple he met earlier, Yang Junbi.

Yu Peiyu remembered what Hong Lianhua said before he left and asked: "Did something happen to master Xie?"

Yang Junbi wanted to greet him but when he heard Yu Peiyu's question his face changed.

He asked: "Young master Yu, how do you know?"

Yu Peiyu was startled and stuttered: "I... I..."

Yang Junbi looked even more serious now and his eyes were brightening up and said loudly: "I wanted to inform young master Yu aboutt this tragedy. But it seems you already knew. Isn't that a strange thing?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "I just asked casually."

Yang Junbi said: "My leading martial arts brother has been missing since last night. Even abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen were informed just awhile ago. Young master Yu left early in the morning, how did you know?"

His words were sharp and insinuated that Yu Peiyu had something to do with the disappearance of Xie Tianbi.

At this point the other Diancang disciples rode back and were looking at Yu too with stern eyes.

Diancang disciples were known to be friendly and gentle but when something is amiss they are very vigilant and cautious.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Master Xie could have met up with some old friends. But with Master Xie's martial arts he is very capable of taking care of himself."

Yang Junbi said sharply: "Diancang disciples always carry their swords with them. If the sword is present so is the wielder. If the wielder is dead, the sword will be lost. Young master Yu must have heard of this saying before. We discovered the sword of leading brother Xie outside his tent somewhere in the grass. Unless something has happened to him he wouldn't be that careless."

Yu Peiyu said: "This... this... "

Suddenly he realized he knew a lot of secrets but he couldn't tell anyone anything aboutt these secrets and furthermore no one would believe him.

Another Diancang disciple on a horse asked loudly: "Young master Yu, why are you alone? Isn't reverend Tiangang with you?"

Another disciple on the horse said sharply: "Judging by young master Yu's clothes you must have fought someone."

Another disciple said loudly: "There is no one around here. Young master Yu, who was your adversary?"