

Chapter 12

Unexpected Mysteries

Guo Pianxian saw that Hong Lianhua couldn't prove he used hypnotism, so he scoffed: "Hong Lianhua, if you can find one person who can prove that I used hyponotism I will admit my defeat. However if you fail to produce any evidence you are guilty of slandering an elder of the association. As I am an elder appointed by the late master I can and will punish you for this insolence."

Guo Pianxian was a sly devil and could twist and turn his way out of the most peril situations. Hong Lianhua was shocked to see this change of events and was thinking: I am wrong! I underestimated him, I thought I could easily expose his crimes. I am so wrong. What the master couldn't do in twenty years, how could I possibly accomplish that with one mere plan.

Suddenly a girl loudly said: "What is this place? Why am I here?"

Hong Lianhua saw that Jin Yanzi woke up and was extremely happy and said: "Guo Pianxian, do you really think no one can prove that you used hypnotic spells to do evil?"

When the black pearl was shattered the spell on Jin Yanzi was also broken, she felt dizzy for a minute and passed out. She now gradually woke up and was totally disorientated.

Hong Lianhua asked her: "Miss Jin, do you remember why you are here?"

Jin Yanzi looked around and saw Guo Pianxian, she immediately shouted: "It's him, this monster! He used some sort of hypnotic spell on me and told me I was his lover, disciple and friend."

At this moment all the disciples of the Beggars Association were very angry.

Mei Simang yelled: "Guo Pianxian! Today you will receive retribution for your crimes."

Guo Pianxian saw all the surrounding disciples moving in on him. Guo Pianxian shouted: "What do you want?"

Mei Simang replied: "We are going to punish a traitor to the association."

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "You're not fit to judge me! None of you are! Take a close look at this!" He took out an old painting of a pair of dragon and phoenix dancing. There was a small row of characters on the top of the painting: *Seeing this painting is like seeing me.*

Mei Simang was shocked and exclaimed with shock: "Where did you get this painting?"

Guo Pianxian ignored him and turned to Hong Lianhua and said: "You must know who drew this painting, right?"

Hong Lianhua lowered his head and answered: "300 years ago, our founder patriarch Zhu drew this painting."

Guo Pianxian shouted: "Bow before this painting! Now!"

Hong Lianhua sighed deeply and bowed, the rest of the beggars had no choice but to follow the example of their leader.

Guo Pianxian was laughed loudly: "Even if I have committed a series of unforgivable crimes no one is allowed to punish me. The only person who has the right is patriarch Zhu, but he is dead for about 300 years."

Suddenly his laughter stopped and he looked very pale.

Everyone heard a girl saying: "I don't belong to the Beggars Association and I don't care what painting you have in your hands."

Jin Yanzi had already drawn a short dagger and attacked him while he was laughing happily. When he noticed someone ambushed it was too late, the dagger had already pierced him in the back.

All the beggars were happy to see this, Guo Pianxian said: "I never thought I would be ambushed by a little lass like you..." He waved his palm and hit Jin Yanzi on the shoulder. This wave was generated with his powerful internal strength. Jin Yanzi flew aside and fainted immediately.

Guo Pianxian held on to the painting and staggered away from the beggars, he laughed evilly: "With this in my hand, none of you can touch me."

Everyone could see that Guo Pianxian was severely injured anyone could capture without any trouble but nobody dare to move forward.

Suddenly two figures blocked Guo Pianxian's way, the first person was a young pretty girl and the second was a middle-aged good-looking Taoist priestess.

This priestess wore a yellow robe and carried a long sword on her back.

She was the leader of the HuashanSchool, the Lotus Fairy Xu Shuzhen.

And the young girl was her disciple Zhong Jing.

Hong Lianhua was happy to see them, Xu Shuzhen coldly said: “Guo Pianxian, I have finally found you.”

Guo Pianxian roared loudly and wanted to escape, Xu Shuzhen swiftly advanced forward and sealed seven of his acupoints. At this time he was already severely injured and couldn’t even use 10 percent of his martial arts.

Hong Lianhua asked with surprise: “Master Xu, do you have grudges with this man?”

Xu Shuzhen sighed deeply: “Ever since the gathering at LakeHuang I have been tracking him. This man is the enemy of the HuashanSchool.”

She waved her hand and Zhong Jin picked up the painting and presented it to Hong Lianhua. Xu Shuzhen said: “I’m returning the painting to you, but could I take this man away.”

Hong Lianhua respectfully took the painting and said: “If master Xu didn’t come, he would have gotten away.”

Xu Shuzhen smiled: “More than ten years ago the late master of the Beggars Association already banned him. His ties with you and the association are severed.”

Hong Lianhua said: “Indeed.”

Xu Shuzhen said: “Thank you, master Hong Lian.” And put her palms together and gave Hong Lianhua a Taoist greeting.

She turned to Jin Yanzi and said: “Thanks to this Miss we were able to capture Guo Pianxian this easily. Would you tell her that she can always rely on my help and the help of Huashan in the future.”

Hong Lianhua smiled: “Miss Jin is very fortunate to receive such privilege.”

With this Xu Shuzhen and Zhong Jin took Guo Pianxian away, Hong Lianhua went over to check on Jin Yanzi and was about to revive her when he saw another shadow moving by.

Although the level of art of levitation of this person was not high, the posture was very elegant. Hong Lianhua frowned: “Are you an emissary of the Baihua association?”

A young woman gracefully paid her respects to Hong Lianhua: “My name is Hua Xun, my respects to you, master Hong Lian.”

Hong Lianhua smiled: “Miss, are you here on orders of Madame Hai Tang?”

Hua Xun answered: "Madame Hai Tang wants to thank master Hong Lian for bringing back sister Lin. Madame Hai Tang also has a small request."

Hong Lianhua smiled: "I'm happy to help out whenever possible."

Hua Xun smiled: "This matter concerns an elder of your association, elder Guo Pianxian. He disappeared 15 years ago and has resurfaced recently. My eldest martial arts sister has recently seen him, Madame Hai Tang deducted that master Hong Lian has organized this assembly of beggars to think of a way to deal with elder Guo. Madame Hai Tang..."

Before she could finish, Hong Lianhua asked her: "Does Madame Hai Tang have any resolved issues with this Guo Pianxian?"

Hua Xun sighed lightly: "Indeed she has, when elder Gou appears could you immediately notify us. Madame Hai Tang is just around the neighbourhood and will come here at once."

Hong Lianhua was silent for a moment and smiled wryly: "I am too happy to comply with Madame Hai Tang's request. However, I am afraid you're just too late."

Hua Xun asked with surprise: "Has he been executed?"

Hong Lianhua sighed: "Would Miss be so kind as to inform Madame Hai Tang that Guo Pianxian is banned from our association. His ties with us are severed. He is being held captive by the *lotus fairy* master Xu, leader of the HuashanSchool."

After about an hour Jin Yanzi gradually woke up. Hong Lianhua immediately said: "Thank you very much, Miss Jin for helping us. All the disciples of our association will remember your kindness."

Jin Yanzi smiled lightly and said: "You're too kind."

She suddenly remembered something and quickly asked: "Is that monster dead?"

Hong Lianhua replied: "He is seriously injured and is being held captive by master Xu Shuzhen. It seems that he and the HuashanSchool are mortal enemies. Knowing master Xu's character he will not live for long."

Jin Yanzi was silent for a minute and sighed: "To be honest I'm still a bit worried. Only after seeing his corpse with my own eyes I will be sure."

Hong Lianhua laughed: "This man has enemies through the entire realm of martial arts. Even if master Xu will spare him, Madame Hai Tang will surely deal with him."

Jin Yanzi frowned and said: “Madame Hai Tang?”

Hong Lianhua explained: “Madame Hai Tang sent a disciple to question the whereabouts of Guo Pianxian.”

Jin Yanzi quickly asked: “You didn’t tell her, right?”

Hong Lianhua was surprised and said: “Actually I did. Why are you this surprised?”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “I’m afraid that from now on the Baihua Association and the HuashanSchool will become enemies.”

Hong Lianhua quickly asked: “How come?”

Jin Yanzi asked him: “Does master Hong Lian know what the relationship is between Guo Pianxian and Madame Hai Tang?”

Hong Lianhua frowned and said: “I don’t know.”

Jin Yanzi said: “Doesn’t anybody know that they are husband and wife?”

Hong Lianhua was surprised and exclaimed with shock: “Husband and wife?”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “Even if there are some misunderstandings between Guo Pianxian and Madame Hai Tang, she will not allow him to die at the hands of others. It is likely she has now become the enemy of master Xu and the HuashanSchool.”

Hong Lianhua sighed: “No wonder Hua Xun quickly left when she heard the whereabouts of Guo Pianxian. Both Madame Hai Tang and master Xu are formidable women in Wulin. If the two of them really would fight each other things will really get out of hand.”

Jin Yanzi said: “What’s done is done. By the way the reason why I came to look for master Hong Lian is, that I want to ask you something.”

Hong Lianhua laughed: “Whatever you want to know I will gladly share it with you, Miss Jin.”

Jin Yanzi lowered her head and said: “Could perhaps tell me what precisely happened between Miss Lin Daiyu and young master Yu in that inn the other night?”

Hong Lianhua’s face changed a bit and sighed: “May I ask why Miss wants to know about this matter?”

Jin Yanzi smiled wryly: “I hope you can tell me what happened. I would rather not tell why I’m interested in this matter.”

Hong Lianhua was silent for some time and sighed: "That day I was at that little village too and I saw Miss Lin Daiyu travelling with another young man. Because I know Miss Lin I went over to greet them."

Jin Yanzi said: "Master Hong Lian, you were close friends with the late Yu Peiyu, I think you must have felt a bit angry when you saw Miss Lin travelling with another young man."

Hong Lianhua was surprised by this question and laughed: "No, you are wrong. I am not a conservative man, furthermore Miss Lin wasn't not even married to the late young master Yu. And even if they were married I don't expect her to stay a widow for the rest of her life. If she has met another person. As a friend I'm very happy for her."

Although he was laughing, there was no joy in his voice. In fact he sounded rather sad.

Jin Yanzi didn't hear that but smiled: "Master Hong Lian is indeed an open-minded man. I do apologize for my words."

Hong Lianhua smiled too and continued: "When I walked over to greet them, the young man seemed to be quite pleased still didn't speak but Miss Lin ignored me. Which was strange because we've known each other for a long time."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she was a bit angry that day."

Hong Lianhua said: "Possibly, but I remember about a month ago she did a similar thing. At that time she was in a dangerous position and ignored me with a purpose."

Jin Yanzi said: "So you suspected there was something amiss too this time."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "Indeed."

Jin Yanzi said: "That's why master Hong Lian went over that evening to investigate."

Mei Simang who never left Hong Lianhua suddenly spoke: "Miss Jin, you're right. If someone else who saw a similar situation would certainly investigate this matter in the evening. Even if this matter concerns some private matters of young women. But Miss shouldn't forget that master Hong Lian is the leader of our association. His status is not the same as all and sundry, so he couldn't just go and investigate."

Jin Yanzi's face turned red and said: "I'm sorry. So master Hong Lian didn't go and investigate?"

Mei Simang said: "Master Hong Lian was very worried about the safety of his friends. So being careful he still had to look into this matter with precision."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Master Hong Lian is a true righteous friend, everyone in Wulin knows that. Elder Mei doesn't have to remind me of that."

Mei Simang's face turned red and continued: "Master Hong Lian instructed a disciple to disguise himself as a waiter in the inn. And told him to observe the room of Miss Lin."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What time was it?"

Mei Simang looked at Hong Lianhua first and saw that Hong Lianhua nodded and replied: "Around dusk..."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Master Hong Lian, if it is not too much to ask could you tell me what happened? Because if every time elder Mei has to ask for your permission to reveal something it will take forever when he is done."

Mei Simang laughed loudly: "Jin Yanzi is truly a very straightforward heroine. I just offended Miss Jin without intention and still Miss Jin is able to get back at me."

He bowed to Jin Yanzi and remained silent.

Jin Yanzi said: "Master Hong Lian, you have a very loyal confidant. But what did the disciple see?"

Hong Lianhua said: "He saw that Miss Lin looked very angry and totally ignored him."

Jin Yanzi said: "But why would she pay attention to a waiter?"

Hong Lianhua explained: "She knew that disciple, a month ago the same disciple went over in a disguise to make contact with her."

Hong Lianhua continued: "So this time I believed her situation must be more dangerous than the last time."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she wasn't in any danger that's why she didn't pass any message to that disciple."

Hong Lianhua said: "If that's the case why didn't she greet me when she saw me."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she was feeling not too comfortable in greeting you while someone else was around?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Impossible."

Jin Yanzi looked at him for awhile: "You're very confident."

Hong Lianhua said: "Yes."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "You must be very close to Miss Lin, right? No wonder you're so concerned about her safety."

Hong Lianhua's face changed a bit but smiled too: "Seeing that Miss Jin is so concerned too about this matter and Miss Jin is defending young master Yu all the time. I take it you must be very close to him too."

Jin Yanzi was stunned for a moment and laughed: "Master Hong Lian is a very formidable person."

Hong Lianhua laughed too, but their laughter seemed to a bit artificial. Although both of them were very open persons, they had very deep emotional issues to deal with.

Hong Lianhua said: "That disciple, Song Si entered the room twice. The second time he saw that Miss Lin was crying softly and used the sheets to cover her head. And young master Yu had his back to Song Si all the time. It seems that he didn't want anyone to see his face. When Song Si reported what he saw to me, I was thinking about whether I should go myself. During this time I noticed a few dark figures passing by, judging from the movements they were martial arts experts. And they were heading to the inn too so I followed them."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Do you know who these men were?"

Hong Lianhua said: "All of them wore black robes and used a black cloth to cover their faces. However I managed to identify at least one of them by his martial arts. That was Ximen Ruo."

Jin Yanzi said: "But why would Ximen Feng and others follow them?"

Hong Lianhua sighed deeply: "Concerning this matter I cannot reveal too much. But I can tell you that because Miss Lin is the fiancée of my late brother Yu. They will investigate and follow every person close to him."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "This matter is becoming more and more complicated."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "This entire incident is all connected to a big mystery. Miss Jin is the benefactress of our association that's why I am revealing this secret to you."

Jin Yanzi said: "I will keep this a secret. No matter whether this concerns the late Yu Peiyu or the live Yu Peiyu I will promise I won't reveal a word to anyone."

Hong Lianhua continued: "That night those men in black robes surrounded the inn and that Ximen Feng silently sneaked into the inn to spy on them."

Jin Yanzi said: "Were they plotting something against Miss Lin?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Yes, they were."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What were they planning?"

Hong Lianhua didn't say anything for some time.

Jin Yanzi loudly said: "No matter what! For Yu Peiyu I will never reveal a word to anyone. I will rather die!"

Hong Lianhua said: "They were ordered to to bring back Miss Lin. If they cannot bring her back alive, they will have to bring back her corpse."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked: "Why?"

Hong Lianhua said with a smile: "This doesn't really concern that incident."

Jin Yanzi said: "But Ximen Feng and Lin Shoujuan are close friends if Ximen Feng killed Miss Lin the *Flowered Chestnut Sword* will surely avenge his daughter."

Hong Lianhua said: "A lot of strange things are happening lately. These people wanted to deal with Miss Lin for a long time. Luckily she was saved by Madame Hai Tang. But they will not leave her alone whenever she is alone they will and shall try to harm her."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Why didn't they attack Miss Lin that night?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Perhaps they were a bit afraid of young master Yu, or perhaps they wanted to see what the relationship was between Miss Lin and this Yu Peiyu. These people are still very suspicious about my late brother Yu, but they are also suspicious about the live Yu Peiyu. They think that he is still alive and both Yu Peiyus are the same person. And because Miss Lin is travelling with him makes them more suspicious."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Master Hong Lian, are you also thinking that both young masters Yu are the same person?"

Hong Lianhua shook his head: "Brother Yu is dead, if this young master Yu is my brother Yu he wouldn't just ignore me."

Jin Yanzi was silent and said: "Both young masters Yu are truly good friends."

Hong Lianhua said: "I know that those five men were good martial artists and I was worried about the safety of Miss Lin. But I couldn't attack them first without knowing their intentions. So I stayed behind them and observed their movements."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Was there anything happening in Miss Lin's room?"

Hong Lianhua said: "There was nothing happening in the room but the candles were still burning. I thought they had already slept. However suddenly Miss Lin stormed out and started cursing and so."

Jin Yanzi loudly said: "Now I understand. She was deliberately creating a scene because she noticed someone was spying on them. The commotion attracted a lot attention so those five men couldn't go through with their planned attack."

Hong Lianhua said: "Miss Lin has always been a very careful and vigilant person. So your deduction could be right, but although the arguing part could be an act but she did use her sword to stab this young master Yu."

Jin Yanzi said: "But she didn't really injured him severely, right?"

Hong Lianhua said: "His wounds were not too light but also not too deep. Miss Lin did the wrong thing by creating a scene. Because these five men were a bit afraid of this young master Yu. But now seeing the two of them weren't friends and one was wounded they instantly wanted to come out."

Jin Yanzi said: "But those people in the inn..."

Hong Lianhua said: "They will not have any reservations because of a few bystanders."

Jin Yanzi said: "So that's why master Hong Lian came out to stop Miss Lin. In fact you wanted to stop those men from taking actions. Everyone thought that master Hong Lian saved young master Yu, but in fact you saved Miss Lin."

Jin Yanzi continued: "The deduction I made earlier is also wrong. So Miss Lin really did want to kill young master Yu. Because if she knew she was in danger she wouldn't have stabbed him. I mean she needed all the help she could have."

Hong Lianhua said: "I don't think so. She could have known that I was around to save her."

Jin Yanzi asked: "But why did she ignore you all the time?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Perhaps she was afraid these five men would think this young master Yu was my late brother Yu. She wounded him for the purpose of protecting him from those men."

After saying this he slightly trembled.

Jin Yanzi said: "In other words she injured in order to save him."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "But that is my deduction."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Didn't you ask her when you saved her?"

Hong Lianhua sighed: "What right do I have to question her."

Jin Yanzi was silent and looked at Hong Lianhua for a moment. She smiled: "Don't worry she won't have any feelings for this young master Yu. In fact I think she really might want to kill him."

Hong Lianhua felt a bit awkward and said: "Why... why should I not worry."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "You cannot fool me; I know what your feelings are for Miss Lin. Does she know your feelings for her?"

Hong Lianhua laughed but looked very sad: "No matter what she is the fiancée of my brother Yu."

Jin Yanzi said: "But Yu Peiyu is dead."

Hong Lianhua said: "He is always alive in my heart."

Jin Yanzi said: "Because of him you're willing to put aside your feelings for Miss Lin for the rest of your life. I think Yu Peiyu would want you to comfort Miss Lin."

Hong Lianhua loudly said: "She doesn't need comforting."

Jin Yanzi said: "You're wrong; she needs someone to comfort her. And that person is you."

Hong Lianhua looked at her for some time and scoffed: "You want me to comfort Miss Lin because you're afraid she will steal your young master Yu away from you. You hope she will hate him and even perhaps you wish she really does kill him. You would rather see him dead than seeing them together."

Jin Yanzi trembled and lowered her head and said in a sad tone: "You're right. Absolutely right. I am a very selfish person."

She started to weep.

Hong Lianhua felt sorry for the way he talked to her and said apologetically: "Who is not selfish when it comes to love."

Jin Yanzi looked up and said: "You're not selfish. You're willing to give up your happiness for the one you love. And you don't expect people will know about your sacrifice. Why can't I be more like you? Why? Why?"

Hong Lianhua didn't know what to say, but he was hurting too now when he heard Jin Yanzi's words.

He quickly changed the subject and asked: "Miss Jin, I have a few questions for you?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I will be happy to answer your questions."

Hong Lianhua asked: “How come you knew of that incident at the inn?”

Jin Yanzi wiped her tears and said: “That night Sima Bin¹⁷ was at the inn too. Didn’t master Hong Lian see him?”

Hong Lianhua was surprised and said: “He was there too? I didn’t see him.”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “When he told me what he saw I thought it was not so complicated but after hearing your detailed story about what transpired I’m even more confused.”

Hong Lianhua said: “I’m confused too about the entire situation. I had my attention on Ximen Feng and others; I didn’t noticed the young master of the divine sabre. I’m not surprised if there were others lurking about too at that time.”

Jin Yanzi said: “There was another person observing the entire incident.”

Hong Lianhua asked with utmost surprise: “Who?”

Jin Yanzi replied: “A mysterious young woman but when young master Yu saw her he immediately ran off.”

Hong Lianhua asked: “Who was that woman? Why was Yu Peiyu afraid of her?”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “I’m afraid only young master Yu knows that secret.”

Hong Lianhua looked up and said: “Yu Peiyu... Yu Peiyu... Why is this name filled with mystery?”

Jin Yanzi said: “Why... why won’t you ask me what happened between young master Yu and Miss Lin before they went to that inn? I do know a bit what happened between them?”

Hong Lianhua smiled sadly: “If one knows too many secrets one will only feel more frustrated. I already know too many secrets, I really do hope I won’t know anymore mysteries or riddles.”

Jin Yanzi’s injuries were quite serious although she was given the best medicine available she was still in not fit to travel yet.

Hong Lianhua advised her to rest for a few more days but being a forthright person she didn’t like the idea of just resting for another few days. Hong Lianhua instructed Mei Simang to take her to the Family Li Village.

The disciples of the Beggars Association had already prepared a carriage for them.

¹⁷ The young master of the Divine Sabre

Mei Simang rode the carriage and soon they were headed for Family Li Village.

After riding for a day they reached Family Li Village, and it was already night now.

Mei Simang asked: "Miss Jin, where were you supposed to meet with your sister?"

Jin Yanzi replied: "Well, two years ago I passed through this village and I lodged at the family Li inn, so I told her to wait for me there."

Mei Simang smiled: "This is the first time that I came to this village, I don't know where the inn is. Could you tell me what street it is located?"

Jin Yanzi said: "There is only one main street in this little village, and the inn is right in that street."

Suddenly they heard loud strange noises coming towards them.

It was very difficult to tell what that noise was, it sounded like wild animals roaring but they could hear drums, cymballs too.

Mei Simang said: "Miss Jin, hide in the carriage. No matter what don't come out and try to keep quiet."

They quickly got off the road and soon some very suspicious characters passed by. Judging from their postures they were martial artists too.

One of those characters said: "The old one looks annoying there, shall I kill him?"

The other said: "Our brother is waiting for us; we don't have time for this."

The other scoffed: "The old fool is lucky tonight."

And with that they were gone already, Jin Yanzi now came out the carriage and asked: "Sir, why didn't you do something?"

Mei Simang smiled wryly: "They didn't attack us, did they? We shouldn't be bothered with the likes of them."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Are they troublesome characters in Wulin?"

Mei Simang looked rather surprised at Jin Yanzi: "Haven't you heard of them before?"

Jin Yanzi asked: "Who are they?"

Mei Simang said in a serious tone: "They are the infamous *Four Beasts*."

Jin Yanzi said: "They belonged to the Four Beasts?"

Mei Simang nodded and said: "It seems that all four of them are assembling further ahead."

Jin Yanzi said: "Although these four rogues are supposed to be sworn brothers, but they always operate alone. What brings them here?"

Mei Simang replied: "They are infamous robbers so they must be here for a big job. But what is here in this little village?"

Jin Yanzi felt uneasy and asked: "Where were they heading for?"

Mei Simang said: "Just straight ahead."

Jin Yanzi said: "They are headed for the family Li inn... "

Mei Simang asked: "Does your sister have any precious jewelry with her?"

Jin Yanzi said: "Yes, and lots of it too." She wanted to get off the carriage and rush over to the inn. Mei Simang stopped her and said: "You're still recovering from your wounds."

Jin Yanzi said: "The Four Beasts are not to be trifled with; my sister cannot fight them by herself. I can't watch her just die at their hands."

Mei Simang said: "But if you go too you will be in danger as well."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What shall we do?"

Mei Simang smiled and said: "With me around they won't succeed." Although he said that he wasn't sure whether he really could stop the Four Beasts.

Jin Yanzi asked: "Do you have a plan?"

Mei Simang said: "We have to be careful because the four of them are very cautious."

Mei Simang and Jin Yanzi reached the family Li inn, Mei Simang smiled: "Miss Jin, I'm 68 years old if you don't mind that I'm a smelly old beggar please climb up my back. We will observe them from the roof first."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "There is nothing else we could do right now, is there?"

Mei Simang climbed up the roof and he found a spot where they could oversee the entire room.

Jin Yanzi was very worried and thought: Why is she still sleeping? She should be more alert.

The four rogues had drawn their sabres and were standing outside of Silver Blossom's room and readied themselves.

Suddenly a light burnt in the room and sweet laughter was coming from the room.

The door opened and a beautiful young woman stood there smiling at the Four Beasts. She wore a thin dress revealing her wonderful figure and she had a very sweet innocent but sexy look on her face.

The Four Beasts were stunned and just gazed at her, even the old Mei Simang thought: My goodness! This is the sister of Jin Yanzi?!?

Silver Blossom laughed: "Good evening! What can I do for you?"

The four robbers stuttered: "I... we... I... eh... "

Saliva was practically drooling from their chins.

Silver Blossom said: "Please come in, don't just stand there in the cold. Do you like a cup of tea?"

The Four Beasts were too captivated by her charm and beauty. The four of them are accustomed to stealing, killing and raping. But somehow they didn't know what to do when they saw this young girl this friendly towards them.

One of the men composed himself and loudly said: "We are lucky that such a beautiful Miss is inviting us for tea. I, the Black Panther, Qin Biao will drink the first cup."

A tall man in a black robe entered the room, his face was full of scares and he looked quite gruesome.

Silver Blossom greeted him: "I'm the one who is lucky. It is seldom that I can entertain such a noble hero like you."

Qin Biao laughed loudly, another man spoke: "Damn it! I will drink a cup too."

The remaining three men entered too. The first one was big and fat, the second one was very skinny and was missing half an ear.

The third one looked rather normal but somehow his movements were very fallacious. Giving people an uncomfortable feeling.

Jin Yanzi was disgusted by these men and felt that none of them looked human.

But still Silver Blossom remained smiling and gave each and everyone a sweet smile.

The fat man began to laugh: "What a sweet lass! I, the Red Tiger Zhao Gang, have roamed the world many years. But never have I seen a girl like you. I want to devour you right now."

The third man said: "Miss, please forgive him. He doesn't know any manners, but he is quite nice."

After he spoke his body sort of coiled up.

Zhao Gang said: "Although I don't have a nice face like you, I'm much more of man than the *White Snake Lord*."

All of four of them weren't suspicious of Silver Blossom and talked and laughed loudly. Only the second man was still silent he didn't look at Silver Blossom. But when he walked by her he pinched her on the buttocks. Silver Blossom pouted in his ear: "I thought you were a gentleman."

The man coldly replied: "I'm no man, I am a wolf."

Silver Blossom smiled: "You're a wolf?"

The man said: "Yes, I am *Greywolf*."

Zhao Gang was inspecting the bed and said: "She sure smells nice. I sure want to put her on the bed and... hmmmmm"

Greywolf scoffed: "Don't forget we are here on business."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Do all of you rather drink wine?" She poured four cups of wine. The White Snake Lord smiled: "You have very pretty hands, but I don't know if you have used your pretty hands to put poison in our cups."

Zhao Gang jumped up and loudly said: "Even so I will drink the first cup."

With that he grabbed a cup and drank the wine, Qin Biao who looked at Zhao Gang for a minute and saw he wasn't poisoned also drank. He said: "This Miss is a smart girl, she wouldn't dare to poison us."

Mei Simang asked Jin Yanzi: "Do you think she put poison in the wine?"

Jin Yanzi said: "No, I don't think so. But she should have."

Mei Simang smiled: "Miss Jin, you're wrong. Putting poison in the wine is too obvious and easy detectable. Your sister won't use such a silly plan."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "What is she planning?" Mei Simang said: "Your sister has thought it out how to deal with them. Her plan is ten times better than Miss Jin's plan and also ten times better than my plan. I don't think we shall have to intervene tonight."

Silver Blossom asked the White Snake Lord: "Won't you drink the wine?"

The White Snake Lord smiled: "I like to have something with my wine."

Silver Blossom asked: "What do you want with your wine?"

The White Snake Lord said: "I think you know, also you must know our intentions now."

Silver Blossom said: "But those things aren't tasty with wine."

The White Snake Lord said: "But when I look at those things I can drink three cups of wine."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Very well!" She went over to the corner of the bed and took out a big parcel.

She opened and the four beasts were staring at those treasures before them.

Zhao Gang said: "I have never seen such a treasure before in my life. After this I can rest for a very long time."

The White Snake Lord smiled: "Just a minute! We should ask the permission of this young Miss here first."

Zhao Gang yelled: "What? Asking permission?!? I do as I please here."

The White Snake Lord laughed: "Asking doesn't hurt."

Zhao Gang asked Silver Blossom: "Sweetheart, do you want to give us this treasure or not? Stupid me! Why do I use the word not, like she has a choice... hahahahaha"

Silver Blossom said: "I already prepared this for you. You can take it away. And I want to present another treasure to you."

Zhao Gang immediately asked: "What is that treasure? Show us!"

Silver Blossom said in a very seductive manner: "To me that is the most precious thing I have. Care to guess?"

Zhao Gang shook his head and said: "I don't know."

Silver Blossom said: "Perhaps a glance is enough." With that she removed her dress and stood naked in front of these four men.

Their eyes were all focussed on her beautiful body and it seemed like their eyes were glowing with lust.

Zhao Gang swallowed his saliva and said: "The best treasure I have seen. If anyone dares to say that this isn't a treasure I will poke out his eyes."

The White Snake Lord asked with surprise: "Are you really willing to give yourself to us?"

Silver Blossom said in a sweet voice: "Every woman has to get married some time, the only thing a woman wants is a true man."

She gently caressed her own body and said: "Look I am no longer a little girl."

Zhao Gang said: "Whoever dares to say that you're a young girl I will punch him back to his mother's womb."

Qin Biao sternly said: "What are your motives? A beautiful woman like you can easily find a dozen handsome men. What do you want to gain from us?"

Silver Blossom said in a very sincere tone: "Although none of you are handsome but all of you are true noble heroes. Only foolish girls are hoping for a charming handsome prince. But I love true men."

Zhao Gang stood up and said: "Well said! Those girly boys don't know the first thing about handling women. I can promise you that I will give you more pleasure than any of those girly boys can ever give you!"

Suddenly Silver Blossom sighed: "There is only one problem, there is only one of me."

Zhao Gang roared: "I don't have a woman yet, you're mine!"

Silver Blossom lowered her head and said: "Mr. Zhao is indeed a good choice. If I can have a husband like you I won't have any regrets, but..."

She then gave Qin Biao a sad look.

Qin Biao didn't let her finish and said: "Old Zhao, you're only the second brother. I can let you have all the other treasures but this treasure belongs to me. Because I'm the eldest and the leading brother of all of you."

Zhao Gang sneered: "You're the leader because I let you."

Qin Biao angrily said: "What! Do you question my authority?"

Zhao Gang said: "What if I am?"

Silver Blossom said: "Please don't fight over me. I feel very bad if anything happens to any of you."

The White Snake Lord said: "Miss is right. The best way to solve this problem is to let her pick her own husband."

The White Snake Lord thought he was going to get picked because he was the most handsome one in the group.

But in fact all the other three thought they were going to get chosen by this treasure.

Because if she didn't like me, why would she give me those meaningful looks.

So the other three beasts called out: "That's a good idea!"

Zhao Gang laughed: “Little Treasure! You’re Diao Chan and I am Lu Bu¹⁸, we’re made for each other.”

Silver Blossom bit her lip and glanced at the four men. Qin Biao said: “Tell us who you love, don’t be afraid.”

Zhao Gang said: “Pick me and I will make sure none of them will dare to lay a hand on you.”

All four of them were very confident that she fell in love with him. If a woman has such a powerful effect on men, this woman is not to be trifled with.

Mei Simang was flabbergasted, he never thought the sister of Jin Yanzi would be such a formidable young woman.

He smiled wryly and thought: It is a good thing that I am 68 years old. If not I will certainly jump down and...

¹⁸ Lu Bu and Diao Chan: A Famous love couple during the Three Kingdoms Period