

Chapter 17

Comings and Goings

Silver Blossom asked: “Were those the secretive weaponry of the Thunderbolt Clan?”

Guo Pianxian nodded and said: “If those things exploded inside all of us would be dead right now.”

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: “Now you understand why my third uncle borrowed Miss Zhong's internal strength. She lost her 11 years worth of internal strength but my uncle saved your lives too.”

Although the windows were broken, Zhu Lei'Er closed the curtains she didn't want the people outside gawking at them.

The bedridden man put his hand under the blankets again, and he looked pale and weak now. If they didn't see it they wouldn't believe this man was capable of shooting invisible energy blasts with his fingers.

Yu Peiyu asked: “Sir, what kind of unsolved issues do you have with Yu Fanghe?”

The man replied: “He is not fit to be my adversary.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “But why does he want to kill you, sir?”

The man said: “How do you know that they aren't here for you?”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “Of all the places in the world why does Yu Fanghe had to play go in these little town and in this inn. I thought that was strange, but now I know he came here to deal with you, sir.”

The man closed his eyes and ignored him.

Yu Peiyu said: “Furthermore it is strange that you would choose this place to nurse your wounds. I do not know what is special about this place.”

The man still remained silent.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly said: "They are not here for third uncle, they are here to deal with me."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise: "You? But you're just a young girl?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Do you really think I'm very young? I'm a bit older than you think."

Yu Peiyu said: "Even if this Yu Fanghe is a monster, he is still the chancellor of Wulin. He wouldn't call up so many martial artists to deal with a young girl."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Some chancellor of Wulin. My third uncle and I don't even think he is worthy of our attention."

The chancellor of Wulin is a prestigious post, practically everyone in the realm of martial arts had to respect and acknowledge the status of Yu Fanghe. Could it be that this young girl had a even higher status than him?

All of a sudden Silver Blossom screamed: "They are gone. They have all left."

Guo Pianxian looked out too and said: "Yes, you're right. They're gone."

Zhu Lei'Er said casually: "They think my third uncle has regained his martial arts, they don't want to die here."

Yu Fanghe, Madame Hai Tang and other martial arts experts were afraid of this bedridden man. Who is this man anyway?

Guo Pianxian picked up Zhong Jing and said: "We should go too."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "You should go before it is too late."

Yu Peiyu said: "But if they come back..."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "My third uncle doesn't need your help. As for me... I don't care about being alive or dead anymore."

Zhong Jing said weakly: "But why did you steal my martial arts?"

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "You came begging to us, don't come crying to us the next time."

Zhong Jing started to cry again.

The bedridden man said: "Return their belongings."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Those are mine, why should I give them back."

The man said: "What use do we have for those things? If some people consider them a treasure let them keep it."

Zhu Lei'Er walked to a closet and took out a large parcel, she threw it in front of Silver Blossom. Silver Blossom saw it was her beloved treasure and quickly picked it up and walked downstairs.

Yu Peiyu kept thinking who are these people? What do they want in this small town? Why were Yu Fanghe and all those other people that afraid of this sickly old man?

The four of them walked out of the house, Silver Blossom was extremely happy. All the houses and shops had their doors shut tightly and no one was walking outside.

Suddenly Guo Pianxian blocked her way, she quickly held on to her parcel tightly and asked: "What do you want?"

Guo Pianxian sighed: "Women! I don't want your parcel."

Silver Blossom smiled: "What is it that you want?"

Guo Pianxian said coldly: "I just want to leave this place as soon as possible. I don't want to be carried away here."

Silver Blossom giggled: "I'm afraid your hands are full, but if you want to carry me I don't mind."

Guo Pianxian said coldly: "If you keep going this way all of us will be carried away. Like corpses."

Silver Blossom asked: "What do you mean? Can't we leave this place?"

Guo Pianxian said: "We can't leave this town at this moment."

Silver Blossom said: "I too know that Yu Fanghe and others are still around here, in fact they must have surrounded the town."

Guo Pianxian said: "You must think that they won't harm us because they are not planning to deal with us."

Silver Blossom said: "What do they gain by stopping us? Furthermore you two will certainly not leave me behind."

Guo Pianxian laughed.

Silver Blossom smiled too, Guo Pianxian said: "If you want to go, I won't stop you. Let me remind you, you won't go far with that big parcel."

Silver Blossom didn't walk anymore and looked disappointed.

Guo Pianxian said: "If you want to leave, you'll have to leave your parcel behind. But I know you treasure that parcel as much as your life."

Silver Blossom angrily said: "Now I know why the old goat returned the parcel to me. They don't want us to go."

Yu Peiyu said: "Now you know his intentions why don't you return the parcel to them."

She said: "He knows I won't part with my treasure. Furthermore without the treasure I won't bear to part with young master Yu and Mr. Guo."

Silver Blossom asked Guo Pianxian: "Shall we go back?"

Guo Pianxian answered: "We're lucky that all of us are still alive. Going back? You must be joking."

Guo Pianxian now would rather take his chances with Hong Lianhua than facing that sick old man and that strange young girl.

Silver Blossom said: "Now what? We can't leave this place but also we don't want to go back to that eerie house. Should we find another empty house here? I hope this time we won't find any strange sick old men or some strange young girl."

Guo Pianxian smiled: "This time I will find us a new hideout. A hideout no one will guess. We're going to the inn."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Very clever! They won't go back to the inn again and it must be the safest place in this entire town."

She looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Well young master Yu are going to join us?"

Guo Pianxian said: "I know he will join us."

Silver Blossom said: "How come?"

Guo Pianxian explained: "Yu Fanghe will come back sooner or later and we can watch two parties fight each other. We will only gain advantages. And brother Yu is full of questions at this moment, brother Yu wants to get to the bottom of this, right?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Also there is nowhere else I can go now."

When they entered the inn, the waiters and proprietor were gone, they must have been scared away.

Guo Pianxian went to the kitchen and saw that they were still things cooking on a fire.

Silver Blossom said: "A lot of people died in this inn, it is not surprising that the waiters, cooks and proprietor ran off." She put her parcel between the firewood and used hay to cover it up.

She took a bowl and filled it with congee, Guo Pianxian did the same and gave a bowl to Zhong Jing. He said: "Eat some."

Zhong Jing said: "I don't like congee."

She hit the bowl out of his hands and started to cry again, and wept: "I've lost all my martial arts, I'm no different from an invalid. You will leave me sooner or later I might as well die."

Guo Pianxian softly consoled her: "I don't need your martial arts to protect me, it doesn't matter that you lost your martial arts."

Suddenly they heard a noise, Guo Pianxian looked out of the kitchen window and saw two men cautiously walking towards the house of Zhu Lei'Er.

Guo Pianxian saw that both men had rather good martial arts, they were sent here to investigate and to spy on the sick old man and Zhu Lei'Er.

Guo Pianxian opened the kitchen door and smiled: "Why won't you come in?" He quickly went inside again.

The two men looked dazzled, Guo Pianxian wanted to lure them inside and question them about Yu Fanghe's motives.

But the two men didn't come in, normally seeing such a situation the two men would immediately come in and investigate but now...

Silver Blossom was also surprised and said: "That's strange. Are they afraid of us?"

Guo Pianxian said: "One of those men is a Diancang disciple. His name is Guo Chong, The Red Cherry Blossom And The Green Willow Sword, he is a rather famous Diancang expert... "

Silver Blossom smiled: "I think he's a just coward and what a long nickname?"

Guo Pianxian was also surprised and he leant forward to look outside and he saw that Zhu Lei'Er came down and was plucking flowers.

Both men looked at Zhu Lei'Er completely captivated by her, and forgot everything else.

Guo Pianxian was surprised, although Zhu Lei'Er was a beautiful young girl she was still very young. How could she mesmerize two 30, 40 year old men.

Suddenly Zhu Lei'Er got up and walked back to the house slowly, her movements were most graceful and elegant. She suddenly turned around and smiled in the direction of Guo Pianxian.

Guo Pianxian suddenly forgot her age, forgot everything else and wanted to go to her too.

Fortunately his internal power was quite powerful and couldn't regain himself, he saw that those two men already followed Zhu Lei'Er into the house.

Silver Blossom said softly: "She is good! She is a little enchantress she is able to seduce two men that easily. At her age I could only follow men."

She turned to Guo Pianxian and smiled: "Fortunately our Mr. Guo has good internal strength, otherwise you would be number three."

Guo Pianxian coldly said: "It isn't because I have good internal energy but because I have seen many types of women in my life."

Silver Blossom said: "What does she want with those men?" All of a sudden she understood and said: "Of course she is luring them to the old sick man, their internal energies are soon to be absorbed by him." Guo Pianxian nodded.

Silver Blossom laughed: "The poor fools!"

Guo Pianxian turned to Yu Peiyu and said: "That's why Yu Fanghe lead so many martial artists against them."

Yu Peiyu said with a wry smile: "She must have done this more than once."

Guo Pianxian said: "By the judge of it she must have done this numerous times."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Because of this incident Hong Lianhua had no choice but to comply to Yu Fanghe."

He doesn't know about the other martial arts experts but he does know that Hong Lianhua is very suspicious about this Yu Fanghe.

Guo Pianxian smiled: "It is hard to believe that an adolescent girl has such abilities, in my opinion Hong Lianhua may not be her match."

Silver Blossom laughed: "Anyhow I don't care how powerful she is, I still managed to slap her once."

She raised her hand and showed them how she hit her, suddenly she turned pale. It looked like she was slapped this time.

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were shocked to see her like this, Silver Blossom was looking at her hand and was trembling.

They looked at her hand too and were stunned. This normally beautiful white hand was now red and green and looked like a claw of a strange beast.

Yu Peiyu quickly asked: "How do you feel?"

Silver Blossom said frantically: "I can't feel my hand anymore, why didn't I noticed this before. When did my hand change?"

Guo Pianxian asked: "Can you still move your hand?"

Silver Blossom stuttered with fear: "I... I... believe so... but... but... "

Guo Pianxian picked up a rolling pin and used it to hit her hand, anyone who gets hit on the hand by a rolling pin will cry out. But Silver Blossom didn't feel a thing.

Guo Pianxian frowned: "Can you feel the pain?"

Silver Blossom said with fear: "No... no... there... is... no... pain... "

She sat down on the floor and started crying, Guo Pianxian picked up a butcher's knife and hacked at her poisoned hand. But there was no blood and her hand wasn't chopped off.

Her hand was as hard as a rock, she cried even harder.

Guo Pianxian smiled wryly: "My good Miss, that slap of yours has brought disaster on your head."

Silver Blossom cried: "But when I slapped her I didn't feel anything strange."

Guo Pianxian sighed: "That is the lethal part about it, the poison entered your body without notice. If you noticed it at that time there might be a way to save yourself."

Silver Blossom sobbed: "Is... is... it too la... late now?"

When it comes to poison her knowledge is a bit more profound than Guo Pianxian but she was in a frantic state and was hoping that it wasn't too late.

Guo Pianxian shook his head.

Silver Blossom begged: "I know you're an expert in using poison too, please help me!" She ran towards Guo Pianxian, Guo quickly avoided her and said: "Yes, it is true that I'm an expert in using poison. But even I don't know what poison this is... Good Miss, it is too late for you don't drag us along with you. Please don't touch us, I suggest you go and find a peaceful place and wait for death."

Silver Blossom sat down again and looked sad and disappointed. She was a broken woman, Yu Peiyu said: "Come with me!"

Silver Blossom said: "Where are you taking me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Although none of us can give you an antidote but the person who poisoned you must have an antidote."

Silver Blossom said softly to herself: "Yes... yes... I just slapped her, there are no animosities between us. She will save me." She was consoling herself.

Guo Pianxian said loudly: "Brother Yu, do you want to go back to them?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes."

Guo Pianxian said: "Those two are very mysterious and dangerous, we were lucky to escape from them once. This time you might not be so lucky."

Yu Peiyu smiled faintly: "If I had to die, I would have died at least ten times now."

Guo Pianxian frowned: "It is worth risking your life for a woman like her."

Yu Peiyu answered: "I would do the same thing for you, brother Guo."

Guo Pianxian shook his head: "I've never seen a man like him, I don't know whether he is..."

Suddenly Silver Blossom yelled loudly: "Hong Lianhua, Madame Hai Tang! Guo Pianxian is hiding in the inn. Come quickly, he is in the kitchen!"

Guo Pianxian cursed angrily: "The B-I-T-C-H-!"

He carried Zhong Jing and had no choice but to follow Yu Peiyu too, Zhong Jing sobbed: "Why are you still so concerned about me? I've lost my internal energy I have no martial arts anymore. Why are you still so caring towards me?"

Guo Pianxian said coldly: "If you would stop talking, I would be even nicer."

Yu Peiyu looked at Silver Blossom and shook his head, Silver Blossom noticed he was looking at her and smiled: "He gave up on me first, don't blame me."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I'm not blaming you, but I know that they are people on this world who are more dangerous and ruthless than you. You kill people because they have offended you in some way, but some..." He didn't finish his words and knocked on the door, a voice said: "The door isn't locked, you can come in."

Silver Blossom gritted her teeth and said: "They knew we would come back." She said it very softly but the people inside could still hear her and Zhu Lei'Er said: "I told you before we won't beg for your help, but some people will always come back crawling for help."

Silver Blossom thought she was standing behind the door but when she opened no one was there.

Zhu Lei'Er was upstairs and said: "Don't lock the door, someone might want to come in too."

Silver Blossom thought: The little witch has very good ears. This time she didn't dare to speak up her mind anymore.

She just followed Yu Peiyu upstairs, they saw that Zhu Lei'Er sat on a chair next to the bed. She ignored them, the two men earlier were kneeling in front of the bed and the bedridden man held on to their hands.

They were sweating and panting heavily and they looked very scared. They begged: "Please sir! Spare us!"

The man regained a bit of colour in his cheeks and the begging became softer and softer.

Zhu Lei'Er calmly said: "You should feel lucky that my third uncle is just borrowing your martial arts. He doesn't want your lives."

At this point the man released his grip and the two men fell down and almost fainted. Zhu Lei'Er took out her handkerchief and wiped the sweat from her uncle's face.

She asked: "How were their martial arts?"

The man shook his head and sighed: "Disappointing... disappointing... Why are there so many people in Wulin with lowly abilities nowadays?"

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and scolded the two men: "For crying out loud! Both of you are quite old why weren't you two a bit more diligent in learning martial arts? If you put a bit more effort in the past you wouldn't be as useless now."

Yu Peiyu was a bit bemused by this, she used these men so her uncle borrowed their internal strenght and now she is blaming them for being lazy in the past.

After Zhu Lei'Er scolded them she kicked them both out the window. Her legs moved very quickly and no one saw what stances she used. But they could hear that both men landed quite far away from the house.

Yu Peiyu did feel that those two men were not any good characters. If Zhu Lei'Er didn't know any martial arts she might have been... But seeing her kick those men away like this was a bit too much in his opinion.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Miss Zhu, please forgive me for being rude earlier."

Zhu Lei'Er coldly said: "It doesn't matter I grew up being slapped and bullied."

Silver Blossom could hear that she was still angry with herself so she knelt in front of the sick old man and begged: "Sir, please save my life. I, too am a poor orphan if you can save my life I will take care of you for the rest of my life."

She knew if the old man agreed to help her, Zhu Lei'Er must give her the antidote. And men usually cannot stand the tears of women.

The old man suddenly opened his eyes and asked: "Are you a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment?"

Both Silver Blossom and Yu Peiyu were shocked to hear this.

Silver Blossom asked: "Sir, how... "

She wanted to say "how do you know" because she did enter the Palace of Enchantment and did pay her respects to the portrait of the keeper. So she is a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment.

But she remembered that almost everyone in Wulin hated that woman so if she acknowledged that she was a disciple of the keeper, this old man would surely not help her.

The old man asked: "Well, are you or are you not?"

Silver Blossom said: "No, I'm not."

He looked at her for some time and sighed: "A pity, a pity."

Silver Blossom asked: "What is a pity?"

She was very afraid now and wondered what he was talking about.

After some time Zhu Lei'Er said: "After learning the skills of the Palace of Enchantment you're a disciple of that school. By denying it you have become a traitor to your own school, why should I help traitors?"

Silver Blossom was sweating and asked: "What are you talking about Miss Zhu?"

Zhu Lei'Er ignored her.

Silver Blossom looked at Zhu Lei'Er and looked at the sick old man.

Guo Pianxian who came up too sighed: "A pity."

Silver Blossom shouted: "What! What is a pity!"

Guo Pianxian said: "If you have said that you are a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment, Miss Zhu would have saved you."

Silver Blossom asked: "Why?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "Haven't you guessed who Miss Zhu really is?"

Silver Blossom asked: "Who... who is she?"

Guo Pianxian bowed in front of Zhu Lei'Er and said: "Miss Zhu is the daughter of the keeper, Lady Zhu Mei. Lady Zhu is the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment."

Yu Peiyu called out with surprise and Silver Blossom got up and quickly knelt down again and asked: "Miss Zhu is really the daughter of Lady Zhu?"

Zhu Lei'Er had no emotions on her face at the moment she was not an adolescent girl anymore now looked like a powerful woman.

Silver Blossom was feeling cold over her entire body but suddenly she yelled: "Impossible! Lady Zhu died 30, 40 years ago. She can't have a daughter that young."

Guo Pianxian sighed: "There are many secrets in the realm of martial arts."

Silver Blossom asked: "What do you know?"

Guo Pianxian said: "I just know a little bit, but I wouldn't dare to say it now."

The old man said: "Speak up if you know something."

Guo Pianxian said with respect: "As you command, sir."

Both Yu Peiyu and Silver Blossom were very much interested and curious now. They both listened with undivided attention.

Guo Pianxian began: "In the history of Wulin there are three big mysteries, one of them is the death of Lady Zhu, the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment."

The old man nodded: "True."

Guo Pianxian continued: "A lot of people were under the impression that Lady Zhu died 30 years ago and her palace was deserted. But some people said that she didn't die but just left to flee from her enemies."

Yu Peiyu said: "But I saw her body."

Guo Xiantian said: "According to some she didn't die and used one of her pupils to pose as her. Lady Zhu was very careful and no one knew of her whereabouts. But somehow news of her spread out and the first man who found out about her being alive was Lord Dongfang."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Lord Dongfang? Do you mean Dongfang Daming? Wasn't he the lord of the Sun And Moon Isle and the ruler of The Nocturne City? I've heard that his pair of Sun and Moon Wheels are unmatched in the entire Southern Sea regions."

Guo Pianxian smiled: "You can call out his name now, but 20 years ago if someone would openly call out his name that person would not live to see another day."

The sick old man asked sternly: "You have heard of Dongfang Daming too?"

He looked very impressive and majestic now even Yu Peiyu felt a bit afraid but he didn't show it. He answered: "My late father told me, that lord Dongfang was one of The Ten Great Martial Arts Masters of Wulin. Because he lived far away from the central plains the martial artists in the central plains often didn't know about his skills. But all the Ten Great Martial Arts Masters are superb experts, it is said that they are even better than the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools."

The old man asked: "Name a few of those ten masters?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I can't remember all of them I do remember lord Dongfang, the Celestial Nun of Fenglai Isle Yinghua Shi-Tai, in the northern provinces you have the Flying Hunchback, Yi Kun. There is also master Nu who retreated to Mount Qingcheng in Sichuan province, the Divine Dragon Swordsman and the Heavenly King Li who lived on the Celestial Wind Cliffs..."

Before Yu Peiyu could finish, the old man interrupted him: "Ten Greatest Martial Arts Masters?!? They are not fit to be called masters! Continue!"

Guo Pianxian said: "It was said that lord Dongfang and Lady Zhu were enemies, when he heard this news he gathered 19 of the lords of the 72 isles in the South Sea. He also invited Heavenly King Li and Granny Hu to help him."

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, Granny Hu! She was also one of those ten experts, although her martial arts wasn't as good as the rest. But she was a master in using poison."

Guo Pianxian said: "Lord Dongfang invited Granny Hu for the purpose of fighting..."

He didn't finish his sentence, he was about to say fight poison with poison. But when he saw the stern look on Zhu Lei'Er's face he quickly swallowed his final words.

Yu Peiyu asked: "All these people knew the whereabouts of Lady Zhu?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Yes, I think so."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Did they find her?"

Guo Pianxian said: "I'm afraid they did."

Yu Peiyu asked: "That must be some battle. What was the outcome?"

Guo Pianxian said: "No one knows."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Nobody?"

Guo Pianxian smiled wryly: "I'm afraid nobody in this world knows."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Why?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Dongfang Daming, Heavenly King Li, Granny Hu and others were very careful but they had a feast before their expedition at the Yueyang restaurant. However there were some other martial artists at that restaurant too and overheard a bit of their conversation. Although these people didn't spread the word openly but they did pay attention to this matter. They even send out some people to investigate and try to find out the outcome of this battle."

Yu Peiyu asked: "And?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Nothing."

Yu Peiyu looked very surprised.

Guo Pianxian continued: "Because Dongfang Daming, Granny Hu, Heavenly King Li and all those 19 island lords never came back. It was like they disappeared into thin air. Nobody could find them."

Yu Peiyu said: "Could it be that they were all killed by Lady... " He looked at Zhu Lei'Er and kept quiet.

Guo Pianxian said: "Although Lady Zhu was a daunting woman but everyone thought it was not possible for her to... " He looked at Zhu Lei'Er too and kept quiet.

The sick old man asked: "Do you want to know what really happened to those people?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "If you don't mind telling us, sir."

The old man said calmly: "Very well! I will tell you, Dongfang Daming, Heavenly King Li, Granny Hu and those 19 island lords were all killed by me." He calmly said that, like it was the most natural thing in this world.

But Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu believed him and were flabbergasted.

Although they had never seen the martial arts of Dongfang Daming, Granny Hu, Heavenly King Li and others but they knew that the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools were a bit afraid of these people. They said enough about their martial arts and all those 19 lords were said to be excellent martial artists and even one of them came to a draw with the leader of the Nanhai School, Yu Xuan.

It was unbelievable that this feeble, bedridden old man killed these 22 martial arts experts.

The old man continued: “The mother of Lei’Er didn’t flee from her enemies, but she had enough of the kind of life she lead. She fell in love with a man and together they decided to spend their lives in peace.”

Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu looked at the old man and thought: Could that man be you?

But of course they didn’t ask.

The old man asked: “Do you want to know who this man was?”

Guo Pianxian smiled: “If it is not convenient you don’t have to tell us, sir.”

The old man said: “He was the son of Dongfang Daming, his name was Dongfang Meiyu²¹.”

Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu both felt relieved and somehow also a bit disappointed. Zhu Lei’Er walked to the old man and put her head down on the old man’s body.

The old man continued: “This Dongfang Meiyu was a very handsome young man worthy of his name. But Zhu Mei fell in love with this young man who was only half her age. You should know that when a woman like Zhu Mei falls in love... (sigh*)...”

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian didn’t know what to say, Silver Blossom sighed: “That’s right.”

The old man continued: “This Dongfang Meiyu was very handsome but he was rotten on the inside. His personality was absolutely revolting.”

He was scolding the father of Zhu Lei’Er, but she just listened and it seemed that she too felt her father deserved to be scolded.

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were a bit surprised by this.

The old man said: “Zhu Mei became an exemplary wife to Dongfang Meiyu. She did everything a good wife should do, she forgot her past and fully dedicated herself into her new life.”

Yu Peiyu thought: If a man can find a woman like that he really has no regrets anymore.

Silver Blossom thought: I wonder whether I will change for the man I love... Why am I thinking of this? I am about to die anyway.

²¹ as in precious fine jade

Guo Pianxian thought: Zhu Mei grew tired of her previous life style and fully devoted herself to her new identity. But that Dongfang Meiyu is still young, he doesn't want to spend the rest of his life like that.

The three of them each had a different thought but didn't speak it out.

The old man said: "Zhu Mei was blindly in love but Dongfang Meiyu, who grew weary of such a boring life, hinted to Zhu Mei to return to the Palace of Enchantment."

Guo Pianxian smiled and Yu Peiyu shook his head.

Silver Blossom asked: "Did she return?"

The sick old man said: "Although she was quite old but because of the youth preserving skills she still looked like a beauty. Dongfang Meiyu couldn't bear to part with her yet..."

Silver Blossom thought: Although Zhu Mei had turned over a new leaf but her skills could still keep Dongfang Meiyu happy. I wonder whether I could match her later on. She looked at Yu Peiyu and saw him sighing.

The old man continued: "These youth preserving skills would lose effect when women become pregnant. Zhu Mei knew this of course but as she grew older her desire to become mother also grew. Besides they were childless for many years. In the end she got pregnant and gave birth to her." He pointed to Zhu Lei'Er who had tears in her eyes.

Silver Blossom asked: "After she gave birth did she degenerate?"

With the exception of Silver Blossom everyone was interested in the history of Zhu Mei. But she had only interest in the youth preserving methods of Zhu Mei.

The old man said: "Yes, within six months a matchless beauty became an old ugly woman."

Silver Blossom sighed and thought: I will never have children.

Yu Peiyu said: "But Dongfang Meiyu already grew weary of Lady Zhu, now he... now... he would..."

After he saw Zhu Lei'Er's expression he couldn't continue.

The old man continued: "Zhu Mei was an intelligent woman, one day when she looked into the mirror and saw that she was losing her hair. She knew she couldn't keep her heart anymore."

Silver Blossom thought: "If I were her I would kill Dongfang Meiyu, if I cannot have him no one can. Thinking of this she looked at Yu Peiyu and his scar and immediately lowered her head and didn't look up for some time.

The old man continued: "One night she held her baby in her arms and cried the entire night, the next morning she went to the room of Dongfang Meiyu and woke him."

Silver Blossom asked: "Weren't they... they sleeping in the same bed?"

The old man said: "Ever since she gave birth to Lei'Er Dongfang Meiyu lived in another room. His excuse was that Zhu Mei could take better care of their daughter. But in fact... (humph*)"

Guo Pianxian thought: You really can't blame him, if I were him I wouldn't like to sleep next to an old ugly woman either... He noticed that the cold eyes of the man were watching him, he quickly smiled: "What did Lady Zhu wake him up for?"

The old man sighed: "You will never guess what she did."

Everyone stayed quiet and wanted to find out what Zhu Mei did, the old man continued: "She woke him up and said goodbye to him."

Yu Peiyu, Silver Blossom and Guo Pianxian cried: "Goodbye."

The old man said: "Yes, she knew that with her looks now Dongfang Meiyu didn't love her anymore. She cried the entire night and thought everything over. She wanted to give Dongfang Meiyu back his freedom. She told him that she didn't want to become his burden anymore. She told him that he could find a nice pretty young woman and settle down with her, as for herself she will never see him again. She hoped that he would live happily ever after and take good care of their little daughter."

Although these words were conveyed by a man, but everyone could clearly see the sadness of Zhu Mei. And everyone sympathized with her.

Even Guo Pianxian thought: I never thought that Zhu Mei really loved Dongfang Meiyu that deeply. If a man can find a woman who loves him that much he could considerate himself very lucky.

Yu Peiyu asked: "Did Dongfang Meiyu really leave her?"

The old man said: "No, after he heard that he swore never to leave her. He will love her no matter what, he said he doesn't mind her appearances."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "It seems Dongfang Meiyu isn't that heartless after all."

The old man said: "You're right he isn't heartless, he simply never had a heart." He was looking furious and angry and was sweating now.

After a short break he continued: "Zhu Mei was touched by his words and believed him. Also she wasn't willing to leave him and their young daughter at the time."

Yu Peiyu asked carefully: "Did Dongfang Meiyu have an ulterior motive?"

The old man said: "She took really good care of Lei'Er and Dongfang Meiyu. She did everything she could possibly do to please him. After some years the father of Dongfang Meiyu and about 20 martial arts experts found them."

He took a small break again, everyone knew there was something else to the story.

The old man said: "Zhu Mei knew that she had made a lot of enemies in the past, that is why she moved to a safe and secretive place to live. But how could Dongfang Daming find her?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "That is very strange, could you tell us, sir?"

The old man said: "Even Zhu Mei was surprised but when she saw what Dongfang Meiyu did. It became clear to her."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What did he do?"

The old man angrily said: "When he saw his father and the others he quickly..." He smashed a small table next to his bed.

Silver Blossom, Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu guessed that Dongfang Meiyu was the one who told his father where they lived.

The man was panting heavily and was still very angry.

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Third uncle... please don't be angry anymore and spare your strength."

The old man continued angrily: "Nobody knows this secret, if I am to die now. At least I want some people to know your mother's grievances."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed loudly too.

The old man said: "That Dongfang Meiyu, he is a bastard! Because when Lei'Er turned two, Dongfang Meiyu secretly gave a lot of money to a merchant. He told the merchant to travel to The Nocturne City on the Sun and Moon Island.

He also told the merchant that his father would also give him a large amount of money when he received his letter. However it was years later that the letter arrived

in the hands of Dongfang Daming, because the location of the Sun and Moon Island was very secretive.”

Now they knew what happened and felt that Dongfang Meiyu was a revolting man. Everybody hated Dongfang Meiyu for this even Guo Pianxian felt that Dongfang Meiyu was too vicious.

Suddenly the old man turned to Guo Pianxian and said: “I know that you're not a very emotional man, tell me what would you do in such a situation?”

Guo Pianxian was stunned and stuttered: “Sir... sir... I... I...” He felt that the old man's eyes were looking through him and felt scared and answered: “I think I would just leave.”

The old man said: “See even the most vicious man would just leave. Dongfang Meiyu, that bastard! He knew that Zhu Mei's martial arts were very high and was very cunning. He was afraid she would turn against him, by that time he couldn't escape from her wrath.”

Yu Peiyu angrily said: “But Lady Zhu allowed him to leave. But why... why?”

The old man said: “Dongfang Meiyu thought Zhu Mei was just testing him, he didn't see that Zhu Mei really loved him. Also he wanted to be sure that she would never be able to harm him, he wanted her dead.”

Even Guo Pianxian sighed: “What a ruthless bastard!”

Yu Peiyu asked: “So Lady Zhu died at their hands?”

The old man said: “You forgot to ask me something?”

Yu Peiyu asked: “What did we forget?”

The old man said: “You forgot to ask me, how I would know all this.”

Everyone felt strange that he would know this entire story.

The old man said: “I am a lonesome wanderer, after a particular event in my life I grew weary of men. I thought there were no decent humans anymore in the world, whenever I saw a man I would want to kill him.”

Why would he tell them about his own personality but nobody dared to ask.

The old man said: “I knew I couldn't just kill all the men in the world, so I decided to leave the civilized world to escape from men. It was Spring that time I was in Fukien province and was at a harbor. I confiscated a large ship and scared away the passengers and the crew, I felt very happy and I had enough provisions to last for a very long time. I was enjoying the scenery when I saw a man floating in the sea he was severely wounded. I held tightly on to a log.”

Guo Pianxian thought: If that man could be saved, you wouldn't rescue him. But seeing he was about to die, you might as well save him because you have nothing else to do on the ship.

The old man continued: “Although I hate men and wasn't really to keen on saving him. But I did want to know who injured him? Were there pirates in the neighbourhood, if so I might as well kill them. At least I can peace my anger a bit.”