

Chapter 34

Shadows Of The Sabres And The Swords

There was a large box on the carriage. Iron Blossom laughed.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why are you laughing?"

Iron Blossom giggled: "I'm just happy for finding a good husband like him."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Don't count your chicks before they hatch."

Iron Blossom said: "I thought this is a funny sight."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What is so funny?"

Iron Blossom said softly: "The famous hero Wang Yuluo is driving a carriage."

Yang Zijiang said: "He just trying to make up for his mistakes."

Iron Blossom said: "Mistakes?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, he couldn't even keep his eyes on Tang Yue and even let him escape. I should have chopped off his other arm too."

Wang Yuluo and the carriage came closer and when Wang Yuluo saw Yu Peiyu he turned pale, but immediately smiled friendly: "It is such a pleasant surprise to find you here, young master Yu."

Iron Blossom smiled sweetly: "Do you just remember young master Yu, don't you remember me anymore?"

Wang Yuluo exclaimed with anger: "The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies?!?"

Iron Blossom smiled: "Oh! You still remember me."

Wang Yuluo looked at his missing arm and smiled evilly: "How can I forget your gratitude, Miss?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Not Miss. But Madame."

Wang Yuluo looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Madame Yu."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Not Madame Yu, but Madame Yang."

Wang Yuluo was surprised but soon composed himself and said with a big smile: "Young master Yang, you forgot to invite me over for the ceremony. Congratulations!"

Wang Yuluo now entered the house, Yang Zijiang said: "We just finished the wedding banquet, there is still a plate of ribs which is untouched. If you don't find this a bit too simple, you can consider that a sort of banquet itself."

Yang Zijiang took out a bowl and a pair of chopsticks for Wang Yuluo, if Iron Blossom took out the bowl and chopsticks, Wang Yuluo would have been very suspicious. But he was quite surprised and happy to see that Yang Zijiang was attending him personally, he thanked him respectfully several times.

Wang Yuluo said: "It is a pity that there is only this plate of ribs left, but I still thank young master Yang for your generosity."

Zhu Lei'Er was afraid he would not eat but strange enough Wang Yuluo started to eat without a hint of suspicion.

Wang Yuluo was normally a cunning man and facing such a strange situation he should even be more careful. But he really trusted Yang Zijiang, this must mean that Yang Zijiang was very close to Yu Fanghe and Yu Fanghe must have ordered Wang Yuluo and others to listen to Yang Zijiang's orders, instructions.

Yu Fanghe was a very intelligent man and knew how to use people, there must be a reason why he trusted Yang Zijiang that much. But the actions of Yang Zijiang were too strange and unpredictable. He is now even poisoning Wang Yuluo, why is he doing that?

What is his relationship to Yu Fanghe?

Yang Zijiang asked: "Have you brought the box?"

Wang Yuluo said: "Young master Yang, I will not dare to make any mistakes."

He drank a cup of wine and continued: "As instructed I went to see young master Hai, young master Hai ordered me to deliver the box to you. I did not even open the box to see."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Did young master Hai ask you to deliver any message?"

Wang Yuluo said: "Young master Hai said he discovered some suspicious people, he is going to investigate this matter. He won't be able to meet up with you for a few days."

Yang Zijiang was thinking for a moment before saying: "I'm very pleased about this. If you have any final wishes please tell me, I will take care of it for you."

Wang Yuluo turned pale and stuttered: "I... final wish... wishes..."

Yang Zijiang said casually: "You've taken a poison of the Palace of Enchantment, do you think you can continue to live?"

Wang Yuluo dropped his chopsticks and stood up and said: "Young... young master Yang, are... are you joking?"

Yang Zijiang looked earnestly and said coldly: "Who is joking with you?"

Wang Yuluo was trembling, he was looking awfully pale and kicked the table upside down, he shouted: "The chancellor has put so much trust in you! How dare you... you...!"

He suddenly stopped talking and turned around struck his palm towards Zhu Lei'Er.

He knew he was no match for Yang Zijiang, that is why he attacked Zhu Lei'Er with everything he had in him. He knew he was going to die anyway, but he wanted at least one of these people to accompany him while he died.

The entire time he was looking at Yang Zijiang, nobody suspected he would attack Zhu Lei'Er. This attack of his was both lethal and vicious.

Zhu Lei'Er had little combat experience and was completely taken by surprise, it was too late for her to avoid this blow.

Yu Peiyu had already stepped between her and Wang Yuluo and used his own palm to accept the stance of Wang Yuluo.

When the two exchanged palms, they could hear a *pats* and Wang Yuluo flew back and landed on the floor with his back. However before he actually fell to the floor, the poison had already kicked in and he was dead when he landed they all saw that his face had turned silver.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Brother Yu, I thought you were quite tired from the events of these past days. It amazes me that you even have such powerful internal energy in your exhausted state, I must evaluate your martial arts again."

Iron Blossom smiled: "Don't underestimate young master Yu, he has extraordinary strength unmatched in the realm."

Zhu Lei'Er had now composed herself again and asked: "What did he deliver anyway?"

She wanted to ask this question for some time now.

Yang Zijiang laughed: "If I stop you again, you will start a fight with me I think..."

He opened the box and Zhu Lei'Er took a look and called out: "What?"

The person in the chest was no other than Ji Lingfeng. Even Yu Peiyu was surprised to see her in this state.

She was unconscious and tied up with ropes, the normal ever so high and mighty Ji Lingfeng was defeated and tied up and put in a box.

Yang Zijiang asked: "Do you know her?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "Yes, I do."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "We're supposed to meet each other at Tang Manor, I was wondering why she did not show up. I never thought she would be captured by you."

Yu Peiyu said: "With her martial arts and intelligence, Wang Yuluo is certainly not a match for her. Who was it... "

Yang Zijiang interrupted: "Did you not hear him say that a certain young master Hai instructed him to deliver this chest to me?"

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "Young master Hai? Do you mean Hai Dongqing?"

Yang Zijiang was a bit surprised and asked: "You know Hai Dongqing?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Of course I know him, but I'm surprised you know him too."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I knew him when I was just one years old."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "One years old? That means that you're... "

Yang Zijiang said: "He is my elder martial arts brother."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit stunned in the beginning but after a moment she smiled: "No wonder both of you are so strange. Both of you crawled out of the same... " She didn't finish her sentence.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I have seen the martial arts of brother Hai before, Miss Ji is not his match. But what kinds of grudges do you have with Miss Ji?"

Yang Zijiang said: "No grudges, only we have orders from Yu Fanghe to bring her back to Murder Manor."

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "Hai Dongqing is also working for Yu Fanghe?"

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Both of us crawled out of the same nest, so our objectives are pretty much the same."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Since both of you are so loyal to Yu Fanghe, why did you kill Wang Yuluo?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Because of me."

Suddenly he yelled: "Who is there?" His face changed.

The door was barged open and everyone felt a powerful wind blowing inside, Zhu Lei'Er saw a figure and thought who this person was with such incredible speed.

Zhu Lei'Er now saw who it was and smiled: "Speak of the devil..."

But she did not finish her sentence because she saw that Hai Dongqing's robe was drenched with blood. And he looked awfully pale.

Yang Zijiang did not speak, he immediately tore open Hai Dongqing's robe to inspect and tend to his wounds. There were about 17, 18 wounds on his body, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er knew what Hai Dongqing was capable of and were shocked to see him in this state.

Yang Zijiang was also shocked and asked: "Who were responsible for this?"

He was certain that a group of people ambushed Hai Dongqing, because no man alone can injure Hai Dongqing like this.

Hai Dongqing gritted his teeth and said: "It..."

At this point he fainted, his wounds were very severe and his amazing tenacity was the only factor that prevented him from fainting a long time ago.

But now that he was in care of his friends he was completely exhausted and passed out.

Iron Blossom put Hai Dongqing in a chair and looked after his wounds, Yang Zijiang angrily said: "I will pursue these people to the corners of the world if I have to."

A voice from outside said: "Not necessary. The one you seek is already here."

The voice sounded sharp and cold, it made one feel most uncomfortable when you heard it.

A man appeared in front of the door, he looked quite handsome but somehow he had a very eerie, cold aura around him. Like his voice it made one very uncomfortable, he wore a black robe and had a red girdle with a moon curved sabre.

Yang Zijiang was shocked but soon composed himself and asked: "Were you responsible?"

That man smiled indifferently: "Yes, your martial arts brother was wounded by *Shade*²⁷."

²⁷ Shade as in ghosts, ghouls, etc.

Yang Zijiang asked: "Shade? Are you Shade?"

That man laughed: "Yes."

Yang Zijiang said: "Excellent, tell your comrades to come out too!"

Shade laughed: "Shades do not need help when they kill."

Yang Zijiang exclaimed with surprise: "You alone were responsible for this?"

Shade smiled: "Only one Shade is enough."

Everyone was shocked because they knew that Hai Dongqing had superb martial arts, at this moment Zhu Lei'Er noticed that Yang Zijiang could stay very calm too in dangerous situations. He asked: "Who ordered you?"

Shade smiled: "Shade acted on nobody's orders."

Yang Zijiang asked: "What unsolved issues did you have with him?"

Shade smiled again: "Shade does not have any issues with him."

He did not use the word "I" but "Shade."

Yang Zijiang shouted: "Who are you?"

Shade recited: "The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe."

This was the first line of the classical text *Thousand-character Classic*, but when Yang Zijiang heard that his entire face turned pale. Why did that mere sentence have so much impact on him.

Shade smiled: "Shade let him escape, because he hoped to he would lead Shade to you. Because you are Shade's next target."

Nobody saw when or how he drew his sabre but they could see that he was slashing towards Yang Zijiang's throat. A most powerful and swift move.

Iron Blossom shrieked, during the shriek there was a **clang** sound. Even as quick, Yang Zijiang drew a short sword and blocked Shade's sabre.

Both did not move and had already exchanged ten odd stances in a few moments, but nobody could hear the clattering sound of weapons. In the eyes of laymen it seemed that both men were just displaying their stances individually. But Yu Peiyu knew how dangerous this battle really was.

The two of them really fought at close range, Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why aren't they moving to avoid the opponent's blows?"

Yu Peiyu kept his eyes on the battle and explained: “Because both of them are extremely fast, if Shade hacks Yang Zijiang has already counter-attacked, as result Shade has to change stance to protect himself. He chooses the attack as the best form of defense, so Yang Zijiang’s initial stance has to be broken off to protect himself again. However Yang Zijiang’s also chooses the same tactic as Shade using the attack as the best form of defense. All the stances, techniques they have used are extremely lethal but cannot harm each other yet.”

Zhu Lei’Er said with shock: “So if Yang Zijiang is just a bit slower, he will be hacked with one stroke.”

Yu Peiyu looked at Hai Dongqing and sighed: “I fear that there will be more than one strokes.

Zhu Lei’Er was really anxious when she realized the danger Shade forms and sighed: “Where does this madman come from?”

Yu Peiyu sighed too: “Now I know that the realm of martial arts is truly a big place, filled with mysterious unknown experts.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Although this Yang Zijiang’s motives are questionable, he did save us. We really should aid him.”

Yu Peiyu said: “Do you want to join him in this battle?”

Zhu Lei’Er whispered: “We can sneak up on that Shade and attack him in the back, he won’t suspect a thing.”

Yu Peiyu did not reply, he picked up a pair of chopsticks and slowly walked behind Shade. He was now several metres away from Shade and threw out the chopsticks using the commonly known *Hand arrow’s technique*.

A sharp **Cling** sound could be heard, around this time both Shade and Yang Zijiang were standing on a different spot and the pair of chopsticks was stuck into a wall. The chopsticks broke into seven pieces, Zhu Lei’Er had no idea how it was sliced into seven pieces and what method was used to ward off the chopsticks.

Yu Peiyu walked back to Zhu Lei’Er and asked: “And?”

Zhu Lei’Er was too surprised to speak.

Looking at Yang Zijiang and Shade, Yang Zijiang looked very anxious and earnest now. But Shade was still smiling, he kept the same smile from the moment he arrived... it looked like if the smile was carved onto his face, never changing no matter what circumstance.

Yu Peiyu knew that if the battle continued, Yang Zijiang will lose. When it came to martial arts both were equal to each other, but as the fight will progress Yang Zijiang will soon feel frustrated and worried.

No matter how calm he is, he knows what the consequences will be when he loses. His martial arts brother is severely injured and his wife is absolutely no match for this Shade.

Shade, on the other hand is just a walking corpse with no thoughts to trouble him. Nothing can affect his condition, because of that Hai Dongqing probably lost to him.

Suddenly Yang Zijiang sighed and leapt away, he knew that he could not defeat Shade like this and hoped to use a different method.

But Shade followed him and both exchanged another seven, eight stances mid-air. And when they landed they stood again just about 2 metres apart from each other again.

No matter how Yang Zijiang changed his stances, Shade could adapt immediately to his variations and changes.

Yang Zijiang began to sweat, actually he broke out in a cold sweat. He was not the only one, Zhu Lei'Er was too breaking out in a cold sweat and Iron Blossom was trembling with fear.

Yu Peiyu now stepped out of the house, Zhu Lei'Er knew he was not the type of person to walk out alone and leave everything behind. But she could not guess what he was up to now. Although it was awesome and interesting fight, but in Zhu Lei'Er's heart Yu Peiyu was even more awesome and interesting. Even if the fight was ten times more interesting and awesome, she would still only have eyes for Yu Peiyu.

He was back in a blink of an eye carrying a tree, six months ago he used a pillar in Murder Manor to defeat 20 odd Kunlun and Diancang experts. After observing Shade's techniques he remembered something, clumsiness over ingenuity. So he pulled out a tree from outside and came in again, Zhu Lei'Er knew he had immense strength but seeing in his exhausted condition still pulling out trees was new even to her. She looked at Yu Peiyu with awe, Yu Peiyu broke all the branches just leaving behind the trunk. He roared now and used the trunk to sweep through the house.

Shade had already heard the sweeping sound and twirled his sabre behind his back to hack away the object that was coming towards him. He used the same technique to ward off the chopsticks, but this was not a pair of chopsticks but an entire tree trunk. Shade had powerful internal energy but he could not use a sabre to

hack a tree trunk into two. His sabre was stuck into the trunk and Yang Zijiang quickly took advantage of this and stabbed Shade about 17, 18 times too.

Shade was still smiling and said: "Good! Good! But remember that Shade never dies, nobody can kill Shade..."

He pulled out his sabre and stabbed himself in his heart, the sabre pierced through his body.

Shade smiled: "Do not run! Shade will come any moment now to extract revenge."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed with relief: "Not only did he have eerie martial arts, the entire person was eerie."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "I think only ten odd people in Wulin can handle ten of his lethal, eerie techniques."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But you killed him. So only ten odd people in Wulin can handle ten stances from you."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Thank you."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Your swordsmanship is very good, but without Yu Peiyu's help you would be dead now."

Yang Zijiang was not angry and said: "Very true."

He turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled: "Brother Yu, you keep surprising me. The first time we met I thought you were just a good-looking young fellow with no special talents, but the second time I had a better impression of you. However I was still not impressed by you, but now this is the third time I saw you in action and everytime you seem to raise in my esteem with two points. I do keep wondering how high your martial arts, I really have no clue as how to estimate you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Brother Yang, you're too kind but even I would not last ten stances with this Shade."

Yang Zijiang said: "Maybe you're right. Perhaps your martial arts at this point are not very superb, however within three years you will not be inferior to me anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Since when did you become so friendly?"

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "I'm not being friendly, I'm just telling the truth. I don't need to flatter to brother Yu. What level of martial arts one achieve is really predestined, no matter how diligent one is sometimes they will not reach the ultimate level. The same goes for chess, painting, etc. it really depends on your own talent,

otherwise you can practise till you drop dead but still reach only beginnings; only capable of learning the form but not the essence. That is why in all these hundreds of years only a few great masters are produced for instance Wu Daozi²⁸, Wang Xizhi²⁹.”

He paused for a minute before adding: “However if you do not train properly, all the talent in the world won’t do you any good.”

Zhu Lei’Er laughed: “Why are you that talkative at this moment, are you afraid of Shade coming back for you?”

Yang Zijiang smiled: “I wasn’t afraid of him when he was alive and I certainly don’t fear him when he is dead.”

Everyone was laughing now and glanced at the corpse of Shade, but to their surprise the body was gone, their laughter was gone now. The body of Shade began to rot and in an instant all that was left was a pool of blood and pus.

Yu Peiyu remembered that day when he saw that fake Xie Tianbi’s body washed away by the rain. His body melted away in the same way, Yu Peiyu was shocked and happy.

That fake Xie Tianbi was a lackey of Yu Fanghe and this Shade too. Because both bodies were dissolved by the same type of poison and it seemed that Shade’s poison was also concealed in a hollow tooth. He was afraid that when he died people would find out more about his identity.

But both Shade and Yang Zijiang were working for Yu Fanghe, why would Shade want to kill Yang Zijiang. Could it be that Yu Fanghe knew that Yang Zijiang had betrayed him?

No matter whether it is Yang Zijiang or Shade both seemed to have superior martial arts to Yu Fanghe, why did they not take over his position in this secret organisation? Why would they follow his commands like this?

Yu Peiyu’s heart was filled with questions, but he did not show it. He also was thinking about Yang Zijiang’s mysterious actions. Suddenly he asked casually to Yang Zijiang: “What does [The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe] mean? I know it is the first line of the Thousand-character Classic, but I think brother Yang knows why he recited that part.”

Yang Zijiang was silent for a moment and said: “This is an extremely difficult and great matter...”

²⁸ Wu Daozi: a famous painter in the Tang Dynasty, till even now his paintings are widely respected and admired.

²⁹ Wang Xizhi: famous calligrapher, 303 A.D. - 361 AD. His calligraphy is said be unmatched everyone even now still admires his characters.

A voice interrupted him: "Shade will never die, nobody can kill Shade. Shade is here to extract revenge."

Before everyone knew what was going on, a figure appeared at the door again.

A man with a mysterious smile on his face, he wore a black robe too with a red girdle with a black sabre stuck in it. He looked identical to the other Shade and when they looked down the body of the dead Shade was gone. Could it be that Shade can never die? He has come back to avenge himself...

Even men with great courage like Yu Peiyu and Yang Zijiang shivered when they saw this man, Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom shrieked with fear.

Yang Zijiang did not speak and attacked immediately he aimed for his throat. He was afraid to make the same mistake as earlier, he stepped forward with three paces and attacked Shade from the left.

He used a stance with tremendous variations and hoped to gain the upperhand.

However this Shade seemed to have anticipated his attack and slashed into Yang Zijiang's direction three times with his sabre. Shade seemed to know how and what the stances of Yang Zijiang are.

Yang Zijiang had no choice but to abort his attack and block the sabre, Shade seemed again to anticipate that move and chopped towards Yang Zijiang's elbow. Yang Zijiang quickly changed stance to block that stance after four stances he could with difficulty divert Shade's attack but he could not move forward or backward. He did not want to repeat the tactics like earlier with the first Shade, but now he had no choice but to fight like earlier.

No matter what kinds of changes he brought into his stances, they were all in vain. Because Shade always blocked his attacks before he could utilize them.

Shade was gaining the upperhand now and this Shade had figured out Yang Zijiang's techniques. It is comparable to two people playing go, and one of the players already knew which move the other would make.

Shade smiled: "You know you can never escape from the Shade, give up and you will die swift and painless."

Yang Zijiang stayed quiet, but he knew he was fighting a losing battle.

Shade smiled: "You must be surprised why Shade knows your martial arts so well, that is because Shade has already fought you before."

Yang Zijiang was really scared now, he was never that scared before in his life. Was this Shade really the same Shade he fought before, did he come back to take

revenge now? He began to believe that Shade can never die and will always come back.

Shade said: “Die now! Shade can promise you, you will die very swiftly and painless.”

His voice had also a hypnotic effect on Yang Zijiang too now.

If Yang Zijiang was a disciple of Shaolin, Wudang it is not strange that Shade could see through his stances. Shaolin and Wudang have existed for many generations and their skills have been around for decades in Wulin now. Every stance, technique was performed with a certain flair, although every generation or so one, two experts from these schools could “glue” all the stances together not revealing any flaws.

But it is not surprising that most people recognize the skills of the great orthodox schools, that is why most experts of these schools do not place emphasis on their stances but rather on internal energy cultivation. And rely on internal strength to defeat their adversaries. But the martial arts of Yang Zijiang were very mysterious and could be said that no one in Wulin knew who his teacher was.

But how is possible that Shade knew the style of Yang Zijiang. He was beginning to lose faith in this fight. Although Zhu Lei’Er and Iron Blossom did not understand the style of Yang Zijiang, but they could see that he was losing and his life was in danger.

They were surprised why Yu Peiyu did not step in yet to help.

They heard Yu Peiyu shouting: “He doesn’t know your martial arts, he examined your style from Hai Dongqing.”

Zhu Lei’Er was a bit stunned but immediately understood what he meant, Yang Zijiang regained his confidence now.

He said loudly: “Of course! Of course!”

He casually stabbed out with his sword towards the stomach of the Shade.

There was nothing special to this stance, but it did force Shade in a defensive position.

Yang Zijiang attacked with another three stances and Shade back away with one step, there was nothing special about these three attacks. Zhu Lei’Er pondered long and suddenly smiled sweetly: “I understand now... ” But then she frowned again: “No, I’m wrong I do not understand.” And shook her head again.

Iron Blossom asked: “What do you not understand?”

Zhu Lei'Er did not reply, he picked up the sabre of the dead Shade and hacked casually towards this Shade.

Yu Peiyu just slowly hacked towards the shoulder of Shade, even if Yu Peiyu was able to hit him Shade would not be severely injured. Furthermore Shade does not have to avoid such a slow and seemingly worthless attack. But when the blade almost reached his shoulder it was too late to avoid. Yu's attack was very slow everyone could easily avoid it, but when Shade actually wanted to avoid it Yu Peiyu twirled the sabre around.

The sabre sort of turned into a iron wheel, Yu Peiyu twirled the sabre so fast now that it turned a spinning wheel. To the laymen such a technique is of no use. But how could Shade not pay attention to a whirling blade that close to him. Zhu Lei'Er had no idea what Yu Peiyu was doing, but at this point she understood the beauty of Yu Peiyu's move. That round twirl was not a stance and had no flaws in it even if Shade wanted to break this stance he would not know how.

This attack was not a stance, but it did have a sabre. If there is a sabre Shade must avoid that is the sabre not the non-existing stance.

Shade smiled: "Excellent sabre! Excellent sabre!"

After saying this Yu Peiyu had already hacked him down. Because he did not know how to avoid Yu's attack, but even so he had to ward off Yang Zijiang's techniques first. But when he focussed his attention to ward off those stances, he will be hacked down by Yu Peiyu.

And if he turned around and paid attention to Yu, he will be pierced by Yang Zijiang.

Shade turned around to counter Yu Peiyu, but was already stabbed in the back by Yang Zijiang.

Shade fell down but kept smiling: "Good! Very good! Unfortunately Shade never dies and nobody can kill him..."

Yang Zijiang did not look at the body of this Shade but only kept his eyes on Yu Peiyu for some time, in the end he sighed: "It is said that the legendary general Li's blade techniques were unmatched throughout the analects of Wulin. Nobody could withstand his sabre, because every time he drew his sabre he became one with his weapon. People could only see his [stance] but not the essence and his sabre. In other words the stance is visual but the sabre is everywhere, that is why nobody could block his stances."

Yu Peiyu said: "I too have heard about the tales of the famous general Li, many seniors have told me about his tale."

Yang Zijiang smiled a bit: "Very much the same about you, your name was also be mentioned many times in the future."

Yu Peiyu said: "Me?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, you!"

He sounded a bit angry and annoyingly pointed at Yu Peiyu's blade and said: "Not because of your personality not because your handsome face, because you created a new unfounded style of using the sabre."

Yu Peiyu just smiled, not because he was praised but because he remembered the words of a wise man: "An arrogant man will always become slightly angry when he is forced to praise another man."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I have never studied how to use a sabre before."

Yang Zijiang smiled wryfully: "That is why you're so formidable! No techniques in the blade is much more sophisticated and superior to no blade but visible forms."

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly laughed: "Men always say that women are so talkative, but I think you're too talkative now at this moment. This is not the time to chit-chat about martial arts."

Yang Zijiang laughed too: "You're absolutely right, this is not the time to chit-chat."

Zhu Lei'Er said with a serious face: "Shade can never die and will come back instantly to extract revenge."

She could imitate the voice of Shade very good and when everyone thought about Shade nobody could laugh anymore.

Yang Zijiang wiped away his sweat and said: "Brother Yu, I know you have a lot queries at the moment. However I can tell you that I am not your enemy, I am your friend."

The reply of Yu Peiyu was very short and resolute: "I believe you!"

Yang Zijiang said with relief: "Very good! I hope you can help me."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What can I do for you?"

Yang Zijiang said: "There is a secret tunnel in this house, take the women and the wounded through that tunnel. Take those chests with you too."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How about you?"

Yang Zijiang said casually: "I can look after myself, I also don't need your concern and your help here."

Yu Peiyu said: "But you..."

Yang Zijiang said with an annoyed tone: "If I cannot defeat him I can at least run away. But with you here, I cannot even run away with a peaceful heart."

He helped Hai Dongqing up and said: "If you're still suspicious about us, ask my martial arts brother when he wakes up."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But you..."

Yang Zijiang frowned and said: "I'm leaving my wife in your care too, do you actually think I will never return."

The tunnel was rather stuffy and damp, the entrance of the tunnel was under the kitchen's furnace. Not even Iron Blossom knew of the existence of this tunnel.

It really smelled awful in the tunnel and after awhile Zhu Lei'Er could not stand the air anymore and said softly: "Great!?! Why did we listen to him in the first place. What are we doing in this rat hole anyway. Who knows what lies up ahead, a pit full of poisonous animals, traps. As the saying goes: [There is a way leading to heaven, but we deliberately opened the road to hell]."

Iron Blossom bit her lip and said: "Can't you trust anybody in your life?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "At least I know that I should not marry to anyone without knowing him properly."

Iron Blossom stared at Zhu Lei'Er, Zhu Lei'Er stared back. Both looked like two cats about to fight each other. After awhile Iron Blossom lowered her head and said softly: "I am not like you, I don't have anyone who loves and cares for me. If somebody just treats me nicely, I... I... am very happy."

Zhu Lei'Er did not know what to say and walked ahead with big paces, but soon she turned around and walked back to Iron Blossom and hugged her. She said: "Don't be angry with me, I was blurted out what was on my mind. I... I don't have a home too and nobody was there to teach me etiquette. I often say the wrong things to upset people."

Iron Blossom looked at her and smiled with difficulty: "Who says you always upset people. I think you're one of the most adorable and cute girls I have ever met."

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and smiled, she looked at Yu Peiyu and said softly: "I know why you married Yang Zijiang, you wanted to investigate Yang Zijiang and protect us from him."

Iron Blossom sighed: "That was my original plan, but afterwards I found out that he is not bad at all. Just a bit annoying at times..."

Yu Peiyu said with a smile: "I think that annoying side of his is just an act..."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why would he do something like that?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Some people have great ambitions and have to hide their desires from the world... They hope not to be noticed by some."

Suddenly they heard a loud **Boom** from above, Zhu Lei'Er said with fear in her voice: "Another Shade must have come."

Iron Blossom turned pale and began to tremble.

Yu Peiyu suddenly smiled: "Have you heard of the tale about the *Child Prodigy* exhausting the *Blood Shadow*?"

They were a bit surprised to hear Yu Peiyu asking them such a strange question, but Zhu Lei'Er always like to hear stories and this story would be told by Yu Peiyu. She smiled: "Blood Shadow, judging by his name he is probably not a good fellow."

Yu Peiyu nodded: "You're right. He was bloodthirsty killer and was hated by almost everyone in the realm. But nobody was able to kill him."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did he have very high martial arts?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "Yes, he had also a superb, unmatched level in art of levitation. Once he was surrounded by more than ten experts but in the end he still managed to escape them."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who is this Child Prodigy?"

Yu Peiyu said: "The Child Prodigy was just a little boy and new in the realm of martial arts. Nobody knew where he came from and actually nobody was really interested in it either. However one day he did a most amazing thing that caught the attention of everyone in Wulin."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What was it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "He hired a lot of people to write notices throughout the realm, he wanted to compete with Blood Shadow in the art of levitation. If Blood Shadow did not appear he would be coward."

Iron Blossom also listened attentively and asked: "Did Blood Shadow go?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Blood Shadow was a very arrogant man and looked down upon almost everyone. Within three days he looked up the Child Prodigy and said that whoever would reach the city of Wuhan would win. They started in Beijing and the finish would be in Wuhan, the distance was about 2500 kilometres. The loser would

fall into the victor's hands and the victor could do anything as he pleases with the loser."

Iron Blossom asked: "Why did Blood Shadow not kill the Child Prodigy at once, he was already an infamous butcher."

Yu Peiyu said: "Because he was so arrogant, he agreed to compete with the Child Prodigy. If he used another method to kill the Child Prodigy, he would become the laughing stock of Wulin."

Yu Peiyu added with a smile: "Besides Blood Shadow's level in this art was really high, not even the famous reverend Feilong³⁰ from Kunlun School could catch up with him. And he knew that the Child Prodigy was not even 15 years old yet, so he did not think he would have a high level in this art."

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and said: "If that is the case, didn't the Child Prodigy make a big mistake?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Everyone in Wulin thought the same, and feared for the life of the Child Prodigy. However the outcome was a big surprise to everyone."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "So the Child Prodigy won!"

Yu Peiyu said: "Both started in Beijing and during dusk Blood Shadow had reached Shijiazhuang."

Iron Blossom said with surprise: "He is really fast this Blood Shadow."

Yu Peiyu said: "He thought he had left the Child Prodigy far and far behind, and he found an inn and sat down and wanted to take dinner now. But suddenly he looked outside and saw the Child Prodigy passing by the inn and he did not look tired at all."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "This Child Prodigy is not to be trifled with."

Yu Peiyu continued: "Blood Shadow did not stop for dinner anymore and rushed out to give chase after travelling for many kilometres he finally stopped. He was getting a bit tired now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I would have passed already with fatigue."

Yu Peiyu said: "He noticed that up ahead was a road stall that sold tofu soup and other dishes. It smelt very nice and was hungry now, so he walked over to it."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "But when he reached that stall he saw the Child Prodigy passing by, right?"

³⁰ Flying Dragon

Yu Peiyu smiled: “You’re right, the Child Prodigy did not look tired at all. Blood Shadow did not rest and gave chase again.”

Iron Blossom asked: “Could he have been mistaken this Blood Shadow?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Blood Shadow was also a top expert in using secretive weaponry. It was even said he could see flies from a 500 metres away, a bit exaggerated in my opinion but still he had excellent eyesight.”

Zhu Lei’Er laughed: “He had a pair of thieving eyes.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “This Blood Shadow was really an amazing talented man, but nonetheless he was just another man and when he reached Wuhan he finally fell down from fatigue.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Did he not rest on his way to Wuhan?”