

**Notes:**

- These extras are set after the ending of 2ha, and contains spoilers for the ending, including the fates of multiple major characters. References are also made to events that have occurred beyond @rynnamonrolls' translation.
- Please see the beginning of each chapter for any applicable content warnings.
- This translator doesn't live in Mainland China; so if I missed an important reference/made an egregious translation error, please let me know so I can update the doc.
- Chapters 331-342 are in a separate document:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HGwUPxM\\_gGGdAsOoXzAr0ivDLa6XpQnJVqvAVhoAdpQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HGwUPxM_gGGdAsOoXzAr0ivDLa6XpQnJVqvAVhoAdpQ/edit?usp=sharing)

Translation by @ineluctablem on Twitter/danteriordan on tumblr. Please don't repost!

## Ch. 322 Xue Meng's Mystery Matron Blind Date 1

Manor Head Ma of Taobao Manor<sup>1</sup> has recently developed a popular tool for cultivation--the relief scroll.

There are eight shining golden words on the user guide:

With this holy tool, marriage is no concern.

Xue Meng was practicing his sword on SiSheng Peak's practice field when he first heard of this scroll. He wiped Longcheng clean with a white handkerchief, then turned his head irritably towards the disciple of Taobao Manor who recommended it to him, "What is this bullshit? Why did the Manor Head recommend this kind of junk to me?"<sup>2</sup>

"Well, this... our Manor Head Ma said that Sect Leader Xue, who works hard day and night, must not have any leisure time to go out and meet female cultivators. These past two years he has received a lot of advice from your Shizun Chu-zongshi, and our crafting has gotten better and better. He wants to thank SiSheng Peak with a gift...so this relief scroll was made for Sect Leader Xue.

Xue Meng was furious, and with a flash of light from Longcheng, he split the white handkerchief in two: "Made for me? How ridiculous. Do I really look like I'm in need of women?"

Taobao Manor's disciple very very carefully looked at Sect Leader Xue, who was in the prime of his life and had such a dignified bearing, sized him up, swallowed, and cautiously said, "If you need men, we could also find you a man, as long as fate allows..."

In need...in need of men?

Xue Meng was so angry that his face turned blue. He sheathed his sword and stood in the cool breeze of the practice field, and called angrily, "Men!"

"Sect Leader, here!"

Xue Meng's handsome brows stood upright, and he snapped, "Send our guest out!"

"Yes sir!"

Xue Meng wasn't wrong to send this guest away. Manor Head Ma is a great businessman, of course he can't just be out to set couples up. It's true that Manor Head Ma developed this "relief scroll" and

---

<sup>1</sup> Literally “桃苞山庄”, or Peach Bud Manor. A pun on the Taobao shopping site.

<sup>2</sup> Manor Head Ma is here referred to as “接客马” (Jieke Ma), likely a pun on Jack Ma (杰克·马, Jieke Ma), the CEO of Alibaba, which owns Taobao.

that it can match up cultivator couples. But to say that Manor Head Ma developed this especially for Sect Leader Xue, that would be a huge lie.

He pulled in Xue Meng for a very simple, single reason——

To attract female cultivators.

After the Heavenly Rift, the structure of the cultivation realm had completely overturned, and SiSheng Peak became one of the leading factions in the country. The rankings in the "God-Knows-What Rankings" had likewise been reshuffled, and Xue Meng unsurprisingly rose greatly in the ranks, becoming many girls' dream lover.

As a businessman involved in a wide range of fields, Manor Head Ma is bound to pay close attention to the best-selling "God-Knows-What Rankings". So, on a dark, windy night, Manor Head Ma happily picked at his feet while eating melon, and turned through the latest rankings, clicking his tongue.

"Hero ranking number one, Chu Wanning. Current status: living in seclusion."

"Hero ranking number two, Mo Weiyu. Current status: ditto."

Spitting out a stream of watermelon seeds, Manor Head Ma and his trusted underling sobbed, "Ahh, if only these two people were single, then we could drag them in too. Who knows how many young lady cultivators we could attract to go mad over the 'relief scroll' then, such a pity."

After that, he showed the portrait of Chu Wanning painted in the pamphlet to his underling: "Take a look, I didn't think so before, but the more I look, the more I can appreciate him. This Chu-zongshi, such an immortal spirit, and so handsome and elegant. Alas..." The more he thought about it, the more dissatisfied he was. Finally, he bluntly said, "Why don't we discuss it with Mo-zongshi, flatter him a bit, and ask him to get his Shizun to help us procure some girls?"

"Sect Leader," said his subordinate coyly, "Asking Chu-zongshi to procure for us, Aren't you scared of Mo-zongshi's split persona?"

"....." The cute Manor Head Ma rubbed his neck and felt a little cold. "You're right. Let's move on."

After pondering over a cup of gongfu tea, Manor Head Ma has a new target: "What do you think about dragging Mei Hanxue in?"

The subordinate once again said coyly, "Sect Leader, what our scroll sells are lifelong matches, but if Immortal Mei comes in, it'll become all about one-night stands. We shouldn't do it, we are decent, upstanding businessmen."

"What are you thinking about? I'm talking about the older one."

"Aren't you worried that the younger one would pretend to be the older one? He's done that plenty of times before."

"... That's true."

He pondered another cup of gongfu tea.

"Then why not Jiang Xi? He's good-looking, he can bring in lots of resources, and he's quite shrewd.

"But he's a shady dealer," continued his subordinate. "Sect Leader, you are decent and kind. You'd better not do business with people like him. Be careful not to lose everything. And with his temper, if he found out that you wanted to use him as bait to attract female cultivators to buy relief scrolls, I'm afraid he'll turn you into a human pig and throw you into Guyueye's pigsty so female pigs could spend their youthful days with you.

Manor Head Ma laughed and stroked his subordinate's head: "Little brother, I like your honest and outspoken manner."

Turning back and forth several times, Manor Head Ma finally said, "I suppose... we should still get Xue Meng. Although he has no position on the Wealth Ranking, and also no position on the Height Ranking, at least he's pretty high on the Looks Ranking. Furthermore, he's a new sect leader, and he's about the age when he should be considering marriage...let's give it a try? Send someone to talk to him.

Hence, Taobao Manor's disciple would say the nonsense phrase, "Quietly ask the Sect Leader if he is in need of men".

Xue Meng, Sect Leader Xue, was furious.

His lungs were going to explode - does he look like he is in need of a man? If anyone was in need of anything here, it'd be a man who was in need of him - ptui! No, that's also wrong to say that men lack him! He was so mad he was out of his mind!

Since Xue Meng succeeded as sect leader, his temper had become somewhat restrained, and it was rare for SiSheng Peak's people to see him so angry. So Elder Xuanji asked with great concern, "Lord, what's wrong? Is something worrying you?"

Xue Meng gritted his teeth and said, "I don't understand. There are so many people in this world who lack cultivation partners. Why did that one named Ma think of me?"

Elder Xuanji was exceptionally clever, and immediately understood that he was afraid of having his sensitive points hurt, so said in a rush, "Zunzhu is a sect leader. After all, you're someone the people will focus on, it's only normal that you'd be the center of attention. Don't take it to heart."

Xue Meng said angrily, "Then why doesn't he pay attention to Jiang Xi?"

"... Sect Leader Jiang's face is as before, but after all, his age is up there. Actually, when he was young, there also weren't just a few people who thought of him.

Xue Meng listened, and for some reason became even more depressed. He thought of his mother, and his heart ached. He also couldn't help but think of a young Jiang Yechen--fickle, untrusting, cold-blooded, and arrogant--and thought: how much did he cause his mother to grieve?

But he didn't want to make the secret between him and Jiang Xi clear to others, so he just cursed a few times and changed the subject: "Why doesn't the one named Ma care about Mei Hanxue then?"

Elder Xuanji smiled with unspoken meaning: "Lord, you know how Mei-xianzhang<sup>3</sup> is. If he wants to settle down, I'm afraid he could cause another rain of blood in the upper and lower cultivation realm.

"....."

"Then then then, then--"

He "then"-d for a while, but couldn't think of a third person who could be pushed forward. Previously when Xue Zhenyong urged him to start a family, he could use Chu Wanning and Mo Ran as shields. But if they were to be mentioned now, it would only make him feel more desolate and gloomy, as if he was all alone in the world.

Xue Meng's breath sat in his chest like a big stone, and he could hardly move it.

He was so angry he began to have a headache, and finally he simply said:

"That's not true! Whether this Sect Leader marries, and when it might happen, what concern is it of others? There's nothing to worry about! I'm leaving!"

Having learned from his Shizun how to stop a conversation, he haughtily brushed his sleeves and left.

Xue Meng sincerely hopes that Manor Head Ma's creation will make him go bankrupt.

---

<sup>3</sup> 仙长, meaning head/elder immortal

However, contrary to his wishes, and despite the lack of his help, within a few months the "relief scroll" became popular throughout the land.

Xue Meng was indignant: "What is this world coming to? Are people nowadays so idle?"

"You can't say that." Elder Xuanji is very fair. "The previous two months were leading up to New Year's. Lord, you know that during this festival, the elders in the family will use every possible method to encourage their heirs to marry. Manor Head Ma's relief scroll has resolved many Jianghu youth's desperate situations, it isn't strange that it's sold out."

"....."

"Also, I've heard that the scroll is very intricately made, so that even if you weren't looking for a partner, you can simply treat it as a fascinating novelty.

"For example?"

"I can't say." Xuanji gently said, "But Elder Tanlang was bored and bought one to amuse himself. He said he thought it was boring, but ten times I went to his room to find him, and nine times he was pondering that scroll.

Xue Meng was amazed: "Doesn't Elder Tanlang have no interest in remarrying?"

"En. He has no intention of remarrying." Xuanji smiled faintly. "He just has the temper of a child and likes to play with new things, so he spends his leisure time with that scroll."

"....."

Tanlang is like a child?

Xue Meng was silent. Xuanji and Tanlang became elders of SiSheng Peak at approximately the same time. Typically, Tanlang always speaks eccentrically, isn't very close to other people, and is completely incompatible with Chu Wanning. Xuanji is the only one who can not only talk to Chu Wanning, but also amuse Tanlang to the point of laughter.

Xuanji is probably the only one who can compare the sneering Tanlang to a child with such calmness and composure.

Elder Xuanji laughed and said, "Lord, if you are curious, why don't you buy one and try it?"

"... Ahem." Xue Meng cleared his throat and said arrogantly, "I'm the leader of a great sect, why would I be curious about such a lousy thing? I won't try it!"

However, the next night.

SiSheng Peak's Danxin Hall is ablaze with lights, but both sandalwood gates are closed.

Sect Leader Xue said that tonight he would seal off his cultivation, and sent all the high-ranking disciples in charge of serving him to guard the gate. The only exception would be if Elder Yuheng visited from Nanping Mountain; otherwise, he was not to be disturbed even if the sky collapsed.

The disciples all highly admired the hard working Sect Leader Xue. Moved by Sect Leader Xue's diligent efforts to govern, they each expressed their dedication to protecting him with all their heart, and that they would definitely make no mistakes.

None of them knew that Sect Leader Xue was at that moment sitting on the renovated high seat of Danxin Hall, looking at the jade scroll he held in his hand with the utmost earnesty. There are two impressively large words on the scroll:

Relief Scroll.

Yes, that's right. It's Manor Head Ma's best seller.

It just arrived today.

And for the sake of protecting the Lord's face, Xue Meng had obtained it using the name of Elder Xuanji.

The young Sect Leader Xue held the relief scroll and scanned it curiously. This tool was made from a particular jade that had been filled with abundant spiritual energy, and can autonomously manifest a faint golden script. In terms of appearance alone, it's very well done.

Xue Meng began to follow the instructions on the case and silently read the spell of unsealing, and tried to use this mystic tool that was so popular throughout the land——

"The extinguished upstairs light accompanies dawn frost, the single sleeping person awakes in a joyous bed. Thinking of the night's passions, the ends of the earth aren't so far.

After this dismal and wretched line of poetry, a few new lines appeared on the Jade Slip:

"Spring returns to the earth, even swallows are paired, Xianzhang, are you still alone in the empty room?"

Xue Meng: "....."

Jade Slip: "Please give Taobao Manor your trust, but also give yourself a chance. Put aside the embarrassment of meeting the matchmaker, close the distance between the upper and lower cultivation realms. This relief scroll will allow you to no longer envy the courtship of others, and allow you to find true love in the vast seas of people."

Xue Meng again: "....."

Jade Slip: "Xianzhang, before using the scroll, please name yourself."

What?

He needs to name himself?

Xue Meng was an honest man, so he picked it up and answered earnestly, "My surname is Xue, I'm called Xue Meng."

The Jade Slip did not respond.

Xue Meng went on to add earnestly, "You can also call me Xue Ziming."

The Jade Slip reacted this time, and a line of golden words appeared on it.—

Manor Head Ma would like to gently remind you, when using the scroll, please employ a nickname. Such as "Jieke Ma" and "Dongqiang Liu". This instrument is refined by Taobao Manor of the West Lake. We must regretfully decline any names such as "Guyueye <sup>\*\*\*4</sup>"; we hope you understand.

Xue Meng looked at this, wrinkled his brows, and frowned, muttering, "That Jiang Xi, is he stealing that one named Ma's business again?"

Whispers aside, any animosity with Guyueye doesn't have much to do with him. Xue Meng saw the orange cat left behind by his mother spread out on the carpet, licking its paws. He suddenly thought up a name for himself and said to the Jade Slip, "My name is Veggie Bun then." After that, he patted the head of the big orange cat and said, "Sorry, I'm borrowing your name for a bit."

The orange cat turned his face indifferently and continued to lick his back hair.

Xue Meng vaguely felt that the beast's eyes were full of contempt, and seemed to imply something about him. After careful consideration, he had a sudden realization - his mother's cat was called Veggie Bun, something all of SiSheng Peak knew. If he used this name, wouldn't it be easy to be recognized by someone he knew? It really wasn't appropriate.

---

<sup>4</sup> Lit. 某某某, or so-and-so



Xue Meng sighed and stroked the big orange cat: "Smart Veggie Bun, truly you've thought this through."

"Meow..."

So Sect Leader Xue thought about it again. Finally, he gazed upon the potted plants planted by his mother in the hall before her death, and at the scrolls of waterways that his father had hanged on the walls. Finally, he gave himself a name that wasn't in the least original——

"My name is Wang Xiaoxue."<sup>5</sup>

The inability for anyone from SiSheng Peak to name things, as it turns out, had been inherited, from Xue Zhenyong's nickname for Shi Mei "Xue Ya"<sup>6</sup>, to the two peaks "Aaaaahhhh" and "Waaaahhhh", to Mo Ran's spiritual weapon "Jiangu", and finally to Xue Meng's present nickname "Wang Xiaoxue".

No one has the right to laugh at anyone else.

Originally, the nickname Wang Xiaoxue was unpleasant enough, but then the Jade Slip had a wonderful misunderstanding. After receiving Xue Meng's nickname, a few new lines of gold characters appeared.

Ok, Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun.<sup>7</sup>

Xue Meng: "....."

Xue Meng: "???"

Xue Meng: "That's a woman's name! I said my name is Wang Xiaoxue! My mother's surname Wang, my dad Xue Zhenyong's Xue!"

The Jade Slip continued to display golden words: "The rename spell is being adjusted; great apologies to Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, but name changes are temporarily unavailable."

Xue Meng was getting a little angry: "It's clear that you misheard, why can't you change it?"

Jade Slip: "Xianjun, please don't be angry. If you have to change your name, I can pass on a message to Manor Head Ma, and ask him to modify it for you.

... There's no way he wants to contact Manor Head Ma!!

---

<sup>5</sup> 王小薛; 王 like Madame Wang, 薛 like his family name Xue

<sup>6</sup> 薛丫; Xue like the family name, 丫 meaning girl

<sup>7</sup> 王小雪; 雪 meaning snow, or like the Xue in Mei Hanxue >\_>

He could just imagine Manor Head Ma snickering and coming over to tease him --- Is Sect Leader Xue not so shut off anymore<sup>8</sup>? Has Sect Leader Xue accepted reality? Is Sect Leader Xue short of men or short of women today?

... what a nightmare.

Xue Meng had to say, "Okay, okay, you say Wang Xiaoxue, then we'll go with Wang Xiaoxue. You really are lousy, it's like you're hearing impaired."

The Jade Slip isn't angry, and said mildly, same as before: "Good Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, in order to have a better understanding of your character, please cooperate with the relief scroll's instructions, and answer the following questions. After this, the scroll will present to you the talented, intelligent, beautiful person best matched to you. We wish you luck and success on a quick connection, and a successful match.

Xue Meng isn't very interested in quickly finding an opportune match, but he is rather curious about the greater cultivation realm, and who in that world the relief scroll thinks could catch his eye.

Thereupon he said swiftly: "Ask away."

"First question: have you ever been hurt by love?"

Xue Meng touched his chin and answered, "No."

"Second question: have you ever been in love with someone?"

"No."

"Third question: have you ever secretly admired someone?"

"No."

"Fourth question: have you ever been confessed to?"

"No."

The Jade Slip did not ask any more questions. It hesitated for a moment, but then a new line of words appeared: "Xianzhang, please don't use the same incantation repeatedly to take liberties with this scroll."

---

<sup>8</sup> The literal term here used is 不自闭 which means "not autistic" which...I chose not to use in this context

"Who's repeating incantations?!" Xue Meng was immediately upset. "If I said no I just meant no, are you telling me I have to make something out of nothing now?"

The Jade Slip quickly said, "Sorry, I was wrong. Fifth question: what is your age this year?"

Xue Meng was reluctant to report his age. He muttered vaguely, "twenty-something."

"All right. Twenty-something year old Wang Xiaoxue-xianzhang, in the past two decades of your life, you have never been in a romantic relationship, never secretly admired anyone, never been confessed to, and never been hurt by love.

"Yes."

Jade Slip: "Good Wang Xiaoxue-xianzhang. I want to ask you a sixth question, but before I do, I want to know whether you prefer a straightforward person, or someone who beats around the bush.

Xue Meng raised his eyebrows and said, "Nonsense, of course I like straightforward people. Who likes to beat around the bush?"

"All right." The Jade Slip then asked very frankly, "Sixth question: are you ugly?"

Xue Meng: "....."

After the long silence, the high-ranking disciples outside Danxin Hall heard the sound of the Sect Leader smashing things angrily and the big orange cat's horrified meowing.

It has to be said that Taobao Manor's refinement techniques have progressed greatly over the years. The relief scroll stood strong and undamaged under Xue Meng's smashing, and it tenaciously produced glittering golden words trying to persuade Sect Leader Xue to answer the remaining questions. Finally, the scroll manifested twenty mystical playing cards, and one by one they floated into Xue Meng's hands.

No, they're not really playing cards, they just look like them. They don't have any pips; rather, in a very illusory and hazy manner, they depicted twenty cultivators.

"Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, who is not ugly but has been single for 20 years, congratulations! According to my divination, the soul who matches you best in the world is hidden in these twenty cards, waiting for your discovery."

Honestly, Xue Meng does not believe in this nefarious business.

He felt that during that time with the gourd he only saw his own face, so there must be no one in the world who could catch his eye. But he couldn't help his deepest curiosity, so he still couldn't wait to see the twenty cards.

Sect Leader Xue named himself "Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun", and naturally no one else on the cards would boldly use their real name. The first card Xue Meng saw was for a cultivator named Ruo Ying.

The relief scroll described them as follows:

Ruo Ying-xianzhang, dresses in misty silks, shines like a pearl, has a quiet fragrance, is still and relaxed.

This person is of sublime social position, is from a wealthy family, is good at handling bad accounts, is an expert at housekeeping, is clean-living and honest, but lives simply. Although there are often people who flatter them, Ruo Ying-xianzhang's heart is aloof, and will ignore all temptations as if they were nothing. This person is a high mountain flower that everyone desires, but cannot pluck.

Hobbies: Cultivating flowers and plants, caring for the sick.

Without looking at anything else, just seeing this shocked Xue Meng.

This person appears to be a cold beauty capable of causing the downfall of cities, but also someone who doesn't get contaminated by any surrounding filth, is self-sufficient, doesn't depend on a man, is a sensible housekeeper, kind-hearted... and their most important hobby is like his mother Madame Wang!

How rare this is!

As a good son well-versed in the Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars, who worshipped his mother like a god, Xue Meng believed from an early age that if a girl had a temperament like Madame Wang, she would never err after marrying into a family. Just look at his mother and see how well she cared for her husband and son.

It has to be said that Xue Meng feels his heart quicken just a bit.

But he still had some doubts. First, he doubted that if there was such a rare creature in the cultivation realm, then how could he never have heard of them?

Second, is a bit of somewhat eccentric intuition.

He pinched the card filled with golden text and read it again. Ah, how strange, why is it that when reading it more, he feels like he seems to have met someone similar somewhere?

... Who is it?

### **Ch. 323 Xue Meng's Mystery Matron Blind Date 2**

Xue Meng originally just wanted to learn a bit more about this popular relief scroll, and didn't intend to use it in depth. He had even less intention of following the scroll's recommendation and actually meeting a cultivator it suggested on those cards.

There were probably quite a few people with this same mindset. Manor Head Ma felt this was no good; spiritual tools should be used after all, and if they were just played with, not used, they'd soon be thrown into a corner to gather dust.

So a few days later, the Jade Slip burst out with a huge announcement:

"For the next three months, all those who actively seek cultivation partners through the relief Jade Slip will be added to the Taobao Manor VIP list. After three months, no matter whether you find a partner or not, Manor Head Ma will choose a name from this list, and offer to them Taobao Manor's most incomparably grand gift box. We sincerely look forward to your participation."

The day the Jade Slip made this announcement, the upper and lower cultivation realms exploded.

Almost everyone was talking about this matter.

"Taobao Manor's most incomparably grand gift box! Have you seen its contents?"

Passerby A was a money-grubbing miser: "I saw! One hundred and eighty high-grade magic documents, one thousand pieces of high-grade refining stones, one hundred Taobao Manor discount iron vouchers, ten top-grade magic smelting drawings of Taobao Manor. Great! Truly an exemplary model of a righteous businessman, the greatest merchant of the cultivation realm!"

Passerby C is neither a miser nor a lapdog; his thoughts are the most pure: "Ah, you're all a bunch of commoners, take a look at me... I've got no interest in these jewels, techniques, or diagrams. But I did hear that in the box there are 500 pieces of original and rare erotic art and stories...Heh heh heh, I hear these have never been publicly distributed, so if I get my hands on them, I'll be set for the rest of my life! "

The crowd all glared at him: "What a good-for-nothing!"

But one must admit, Manor Head Ma's treasure chest accurately jabs at the weaknesses of almost all the cultivators in the world, whether wealth, sex, or knowledge... these are all points of extreme temptation.

And Manor Head Ma said that it wasn't necessary to successfully find a partner; as long as someone actively used the relief scroll, even if they were still single after three months, they could also participate in the drawing, same as everyone else.

Since then, due to the reduction in restrictions and increase in enticements, countless cultivators who used to just play around casually out of curiosity all planned to genuinely and vigorously use their scrolls, all for this gift box.

Among the most pitiful of these is the poor and low-ambitioned leader of Sisheng Peak, the arrogant Xue Meng, Xue Ziming.

Xue Meng rummaged through the twenty playing cards again.

He had already read through the introductions of the recommended cultivators once, and thought that they were all decent, but the first one, "Ruo Ying" made a strong first impression, so he thought that she was the best.

The relief scroll's so-called "active use," is to meet the other party in person.

And the way to meet in person is very particular. Manor Head Ma wants to let people look for their "soul companion", so he thought physical appearance should matter least. So how to prevent people judging each other by their looks?

The solution was quite natural.

When two people meet, they need to wear a special Taobao Manor sachet, which will make the wearer's voice and appearance change in the other person's senses. Thus, when they meet, both will know that the other's appearance is false, and they will take more care to understand their counterpart's inner self.

It is not until the sachet is removed that the illusion will disappear and the real appearance of the other person will be seen.

It has to be said that Manor Head Ma truly loves money, and really has taken a lot of trouble.

In order to find soul companions for the lone wolves of the upper and lower cultivation realms, how much did he rack his brains and leave no stone unturned!

Xue Meng made an appointment to meet with Ruo Ying-xianzi.

His motivations weren't pure, he didn't hold any hope of actually finding a lifelong partner, and he went for the sake of Taobao Manor's gift box, but Sect Leader Xue is still Sect Leader Xue after all.

When he was young, he could casually trade insults with girls out in the open streets, but when he became a Sect Leader, he had to show some elegance and appropriate bearing.

In Xuan Ji's often repeated advice, "Sect Leader, your words and deportment not only represent yourself, but also represent SiSheng Peak."

So in order to not lose face for SiSheng Peak, Xue Meng diligently prepared for his date.

To tell the truth, it was the first time in his life that he had a date with a female cultivator all alone, and it would be lying to say that he wasn't nervous. Sect Leader Xue seems very indifferent and calm, when in fact, there are still some weaknesses in his heart. The day before his appointment, he laid in bed, holding Ruo Ying-xianzi's card, flipping it over and looking over it countless times, muddling over the phrase "of noble status, with a home filled with magnificent jewels".

This is a rich woman.

But that didn't matter. Xue Meng secretly gave himself a pep talk; even though he didn't rank on the list of the wealthy on the "God-Knows-What Rankings", he was still a man who owned several mountain peaks, so how could some nobody little girl be wealthier than him? How high could her position be, higher than his?

He couldn't make a decision.

Wait, yes, that's it. When they meet tomorrow, he must take her to the most luxurious venue, eat the most sumptuous meal, and get her envy, really let her know who's the hottest guy in the lower cultivation realm!

Sect Leader Xue embraced this wrongheaded dream of being wealthier than his date, and imagined that Ruo Ying-guniang<sup>9</sup> would cast envious eyes on him, and say to him with incomparable awe, "Wang Xiaoxue-gege, how rich you are!" He couldn't help but reveal a sweet, contented smile, hugged his Longcheng, and fell asleep in his big bed in a daze..

The next day, Xue Meng got up early. As agreed, he wore Taobao Manor's special sachet and went to Yangzhou City to meet this female cultivator.

Before leaving, he specifically asked Xuanji what was the best tea house in Yangzhou, and also in passing asked how expensive it was. Although it was very painful for him, he felt he could bear it to save face for SiSheng Peak. In short, he couldn't make a fool of himself in front of this rich lady!

When he used the relief scroll to transmit the words "Xihua Pavilion" to his date, Xue Meng had a very smug expression on his face.

---

<sup>9</sup> 姑娘; miss/maiden

The most luxurious teahouse in Yangzhou City! Just see if you can handle it!

Xue Meng could almost imagine her waking up in her chambers and, seeing the meeting spot appear on the scroll, lightly parting her vermilion lips, her bright eyes widening in astonishment, and murmuring softly, "Ah, he truly is a noble and generous young master..."

While his imagination was flying, the relief scroll in his hand lit up.

Ruo Ying: OK.

... OK?

That...that's it?

Xue Meng was so angry he almost fell head-first off Longcheng. No! if you don't express any joy and surprise, that's fine, but why didn't you at least say thank you? What family are you from, this is absolutely improper!!

Seething with rage, he sat on his sword and flew over the Yangtze River. The relief scroll lit up again. This Ruo Ying girl once again sent a message: Xihua Pavilion is very busy today. If you don't mind, why don't we go somewhere else. I'll treat.

Xue Meng's displeasure eased slightly.

... Alright, so this girl is pretty polite. First date with a man, she'd prefer to take the lead. The single "OK" was probably because she wasn't good at expressing herself, just like his Shizun.

Thinking of Chu Wanning, Xue Meng sat up a bit straighter and thought, yes, a gentleman should be more generous. Besides, the other party was a girl. Even if she wasn't very polite, he should be more patient.

So he replied on the relief scroll, "I said it was my invitation, no need to change that."

After five minutes, she replied again with one word.

"OK."

Xue Meng: "....."

The first time he threw a tantrum, the second time he remained calm. Xue Meng wasn't so angry this time. He sat on Longcheng, swaying his legs, breaking through the clouds, and flew all the way from the misty clouds to the waterways south of the Yangtze River.



He will arrive at Yangzhou City soon.

Before it was time for his meeting with Ruo Ying, Xue Meng walked through the bustling and noisy streets, and looked around leisurely. Yangzhou City was under the jurisdiction of Guyueye. The people flowed through like water, the flowers were like brocade, and it all seemed like a great show of happiness and prosperity. This was coupled with old men giving pedicures on the sides of the road and flower-selling aunties lazily hawking their wares with accents like his mother's. Hearing this made him feel quite pleasant, and his bearing relaxed.

He bought a sweet candy from the candy stall, and ate as he strolled. When it was almost time, he went straight to Xihua Pavilion on the edge of West Lake.

At first glance, there are a lot of people.

Almost every guest was equipped with Taobao Manor's sachet. It seemed that there were quite a few cultivators actively participating in Manor Head Ma's grand event, and everyone wanted to show off beyond their means by crowding into the most expensive place in the city.

Xue Meng, quite speechless, looked around the lively lobby, and said to the waiter approaching him, "I have a reservation for a second floor room. My surname is Xue... \*cough\* Wang. The surname is Wang."

After a pause, he added a line with some embarrassment: "Wang Xiaoxue."

The waiter at this time was probably numb to this flock of matchmaking cultivators. He didn't even blink about such a foolish name. Wang Xiaoxue didn't even compare; names like Zhao Dagen<sup>10</sup>, Du Jiyan<sup>11</sup> and so on, he's heard them all. So he calmly and indifferently led Xue Meng upstairs.

"The Wind Room. As you requested, it's got a window view."

Xue Meng looked at it. Good man! Southern people really are elegant; this was supposed to be a private room, but was actually just divided by a thin bamboo curtain. The bamboo curtain was fine, with exquisite workmanship. Beyond it you could see impressions of potted plants on the other side. Elegant, definitely, but also misleading. If you raised your voice a bit everyone around you could hear.

But he's here, so what can he do?

Xue Meng sat down, and it just so happened that Ruo Ying-xianzi had messaged him through the relief scroll:

---

<sup>10</sup> 赵大根; essentially, Zhao "big root" >\_>

<sup>11</sup> 杜鸡眼; Du Callous

"Just now sent off a business client. I just left, so I'll be a bit late."

"....."

Xue Meng stared at these lines multiple times and thought he had met a master.

This is too much. The woman's showing off her wealth even before she's appeared! Instead of showing off jewels or jewelry, she's showing off having important business clients to see her early in the morning, so you knew that for her time is money.

What a busy woman boss! What a stark contrast to himself, who spent the morning idling around and eating tanghulu.

Xue Meng bitterly a cup of tea brewed the waiter brewed for him.

This is a ferocious woman, Xue Meng thought, I'll let this round go. When she comes, he must give her a show of strength, and let her know.—

He, Xue Ziming, was inexhaustible!

### **Ch. 324 Xue Meng's Mystery Matron Blind Date 3**

Xue Meng waited until he almost couldn't stand it anymore, and finally heard the waiter from outside the room: "For the Wind Room, please come this way."

At long last, the woman was here.

Xue Meng shook off his annoyance and sat up straight. Learning from his father, he adopted a steady attitude, and lifted his eyes to gaze outside.

He only heard a set of unhurried footsteps that, neither too fast nor too slow, walked towards him. An indistinct figure passed through the bamboo curtains, which were partly rolled aside. The first thing that came into sight was a silver water pipe engraved with a one-legged dragon pattern.<sup>12</sup> Attached to the pipe was a blue silk sack embroidered with pollia flowers.<sup>13</sup> The hand lighting the pipe was

---

<sup>12</sup> The pattern is that of the 夔龙纹 "kui long wen", which appears frequently as a popular decorative motif. See [here](#) for examples.

<sup>13</sup> Pollia japonica, known in Chinese as 杜若 "du ruo". A medicinal plant used for treating snake bites, bug bites, and back pain. The character 若 is the same one used in "Ruo Ying"

exceedingly elegant and slender, with a sensuous wrist that had upon it a delicate cinnabar-colored mole.

Xue Meng vaguely felt as if he had seen such a hand somewhere, but with his blurred vision, he couldn't properly recall. As he was puzzling this over, the other person entered the room.

On the relief scroll, it was declared: when wearing the blind date sachet, the sachet will wrap an illusion around your body. The way you look in the eyes of others will be a mix of your own original appearance, plus the likes and fancies of those others.

To clarify, Ruo Ying definitely didn't actually look like this. Since Xue Meng felt that she should look a certain way, her face when she appeared would lean towards that appearance. However, there would remain some shadow of her true self.

Therefore, since Xue Meng thought that Ruo Ying should look something like his mother, the person who came out from behind the bamboo curtain really did look somewhat like Madame Wang.

Her skin was very white; she looked very dignified and gentle, and between her knit eyebrows she exuded a slight aura of sickliness.

Xue Meng suddenly stood up as if he had been smashed by a boulder. It was no wonder he was so moved; anyone who has someone resembling their beloved deceased mother appear before him, even if he knew the appearance was false, couldn't help but have mixed feelings.

He opened his mouth, and the word "mother" almost came out. Fortunately, the waiter just then followed Ruo Ying into the room, which suddenly snapped Xue Meng's mind back to the present. Xue Meng's tongue rolled up, and he carelessly changed "mother" into "you".<sup>14</sup>

"You....."

"You are Wang Xiaoxue?" Ruo Ying spoke; her voice was like cold clear water. Although this voice was also distorted by illusion, it wasn't the least bit like Madame Wang's.

"Y-yes."

Ruo Ying sized him up with her glass-colored apricot eyes.

For a split second, Xue Meng had a very strange feeling. He felt that this Ruo Ying's gaze held an innate fussiness and coldness, even a tiny bit of impatience.

---

<sup>14</sup> This wordplay works much better in Chinese; Xue Meng was going to say 娘 "niang" but changed it to 你 "ni"

"I don't have a very good memory, and I forget names easily." Ruo Ying said. "Let's make this simple. Can I call you Wang-xianzhang?"

Even though she said it like a question, there was no uncertainty in her tone at all.

There was even some arbitrariness there.

Xue Meng began to whisper to himself, how could he feel that this kind of person was like his mother?

But whispers aside, Sect Leader Xue was still a sect leader. Under the careful guidance of Xuanji, Xue Ziming's current ability to deal with people couldn't be compared to his past. So he brought forth the demeanor of a sect leader, cleared his throat and said, "That's fine. It's nice to meet you, Ruo—"

He wanted to call her Ruo-guniang, but Manor Head Ma was quite an ingenious man. In order to help people find their soul companions without interference, he added various spells to the sachets. Aside from creating an illusory appearance, for the other party, the sachets also forbid the wearer from asking their date's age, height, weight... even gender.

So before the word "guniang" even left Xue Meng's mouth, he was stopped by the sachet's silencing spell.

Old Manor Head Ma seemed to be waving his arms and shouting—age, height, weight, looks—and gender, none of these are the key to finding love!

Will all cultivators please pay more attention to the soul beneath the skin!

Xue Meng, however, was at this time not aware of Manor Head Ma's painstaking design. He thought Taobao Manor's product had probably once again malfunctioned, so he knit his brows and corrected himself: "Ruo-xianzhang".

"En." Ruo Ying accepted it with ease, and with the attitude of some big shot sat opposite Xue Meng.

Xue Meng: "....."

No way, this sister, shouldn't you be making some proper salutations and give some kind of thanks?

Matron Ruo glanced at him indifferently and nodded. "You can sit, no need to stand up."

Xue Meng: "...???"

What kind of tone is this?

If this had happened before, Xue Meng probably would have already jumped up and started loudly arguing, but now Xue Meng resisted.

He was already the most attractive youth in the lower cultivation realm, a master possessing several mountain peaks, and a mature man who glorified SiSheng Peak on behalf of his father.

That's right, he shouldn't get mad at girls.

So Xue Meng sat down in front of Ruo Ying. He straightened his posture, extended his fingers, and pushed Xihua Pavilion's refreshments menu towards the other person: "What would you like to drink?"

Ruo Ying didn't seem interested in any tea or pastries, and said, "Get what you'd like."

After that, he leaned back in the one-legged dragon patterned sandalwood chair, and added some dried grasses into the water pipe.

Xue Meng: "... Do you smoke hemp? Tobacco?"

"A special recipe." Ruo Ying's eyelids were lowered, and not inclined to look up. "It won't affect you."

"Hold on, you're so young—"

"Who told you I was young?"

Xue Meng stared. "How old are you?"

Ruo Ying leaned against the window, ignited a flame at her fingertips, lit the water pipe, took an indifferent puff, and slowly said the following:

"What's that got to do with you?"

"....."

"Also." Ruo Ying lifted her refined chin and pointed at the brocade sack hanging around Xue Meng's waist. "That Ma set up a pile of restrictions. I can't answer your question until I get rid of this sachet."

"Why don't we just relax? I'm just here to see you, not to actually find some kind of cultivation partner."

Xue Meng was shocked. Fuck, how did this woman steal his lines?!

If neither of the people having a blind date have any genuine intention of continuing, it's especially important to seize the first opportunity to say this, since the one that lags behind would then be the one to lose face.

Xue Meng currently felt like he very much had no face.

He not only felt that he has no face, but also feels that the other party must have some exceptional level of experience with blind dates — otherwise how could she know so soon to strike first and gain the upper hand?!

She must have been dragged off to meet a thousand potential matches by a matchmaker, and been rejected a thousand and one times for being too ferocious.

This must be so!

Xue Meng's handsome face was slightly green, and he ground his teeth: "You thought I was here for a blind date? I... I'll tell you the truth! My family circumstances are very good, and if I just wave my hands the line of people knocking at my doorway would stretch from Yangzhou to Sichuan!

Ruo Ying looked at him indifferently.

When Xue Meng spoke he felt like an emperor.

After he spoke, the eyes of the other party barely paid him any mind.

Suddenly, he felt like an idiot.

And the gentle, mild tone of Ruo Ying's following statement increasingly reinforced his feelings of being an idiot.

Ruo Ying took another puff of her water pipe, slightly tilted her head, and said to the waiter, whose face said he'd seen this all before, "Bring the Jade Terrace Plum Blossom set. For this Xianzhang.

Xue Meng's eyes bugged out. "Didn't you say I can order?!"

"I'm a regular customer here," Matron Ruo Ying said with great presence. "The Jade Terrace Plum Blossom set is quite sweet. It's most suitable for you unsophisticated young folk."

Xue Meng got even more angry.

He was so mad that when the tea arrived, he didn't want to move at all. The tea was clear and cold, the pastries were sparkling. They looked exceptionally attractive, but he wasn't tempted one bit.

Ruo Ying: You're not eating?

Xue Meng, in a rage: "I like to waste my money, what's it to you!"

When Ruo Ying heard him speak like this, she squinted her apricot eyes and sketched some faint lines in the pipe smoke. "Is Wang-xianzhang from West Lake Taobao Manor?"

"No."

"A wealthy merchant from Linyi?"

"Also no."

"A disciple of Yangzhou Guyueye?"

"Guyueye? What's so great about them," Xue Meng said lightly, "Forget their disciples, hehe, even if their sect leader Jiang Xi were to lose money to present a gift to me, I wouldn't take it!"

For an unknown reason, Ruo Ying, after hearing this, slightly raised her eyebrows.

Xue Meng: "What's with that expression? Don't believe me?"

Ruo Ying sneered and did not reply, but continued to smoke her water pipe. After a while, she suddenly said, "Since you're so wonderful, why don't you order some more? I haven't had breakfast yet."

Although Xue Meng currently found her very unpleasant, he has no intention to refuse, since she said she wanted to eat. He picked up the menu and asked, "What do you want?"

"Eighteen exquisite delights. I order this every time I come."

Xue Meng said indifferently, "Okay, just order - cough cough!"

Glancing at the price listed on the menu, his eyes almost popped out!

"Every time you come—this is what you get?!"

Ruo Ying said apathetically, "And add a pot of top-grade Jincheng Chunlu tea."

Xue Meng felt blood coagulating in his chest. At this moment, even a gentle pat from a kitten would lead to him violently coughing blood.

If it weren't for the fact that he arranged this date himself, he would have wondered if Ruo Ying wasn't just some tea-selling little sister from Xihua Pavilion in disguise! She just wanted to play Xian Ren Tiao with him!!!<sup>15</sup>

After the meal, Sect Leader Xue's heart dripped blood and his purse was half empty. When the two exited Xihua Pavilion, Xue Meng's footsteps were drifting.

"Are you unwell?"

Faced with Ruo Ying's slightly concerned inquiry, the face-saving Sect leader Xue forced his spirits up: "Unwell? No no no, I'm not unwell, I'm very well."

"If one is sick, one should not treat it as taboo and avoid the doctor."

Xue Meng stared. "You're the one who's sick!" I'm perfectly fine!"

"Really?" Ruo Ying's voice seemed to have been soaked in Chinese herbal medicine, and her words were suffused with a clean, medicinal fragrance. He said quietly, "Your lower disk is hollow, your waist and knees are limp and aching, and you have heat in the five centers."<sup>16</sup> Her almond eyes swept across Xue Meng's whole body, giving Xue Meng the illusion that he had been cut open from skin to bone, "Your distinguished self has a kidney deficiency."<sup>17</sup>

Xue Meng was so angry that he shouted, "Shut up you quack!!!"

The quack added detachedly, "Also, your liver fire is blazing."<sup>18</sup>

Xue Meng: "....."

It seemed that his previous fancies were totally wrong. Women who followed the path of medicine were not necessarily like his mother, who made those around her feel enveloped in a spring breeze.<sup>19</sup> There are also these disgraces who make people feel like they're sitting on pins and needles!

---

<sup>15</sup> 仙人跳, "immortal jump", literally describes a pit that even immortals couldn't jump out of. It generally refers to a type of scam where a woman approaches a man offering sexual services. If he accepts, another man, claiming to be either her husband or the police, will suddenly appear and demand compensation to not start a scene.

<sup>16</sup> In Traditional Chinese Medicine, heat in the five centers is a Yin deficiency that manifests as heat on the Yin surfaces of the body, such as the palms, bottom of the feet, and the chest.

<sup>17</sup> Meatbun doesn't specify here whether this is a kidney Yin or a kidney Yang deficiency. A Yin deficiency is marked by hearing problems, a dry mouth and throat, spontaneous sweating, constipation, and seminal emissions. A Yang deficiency is marked by aversion to cold, spiritual fatigue, difficulty in urination/incontinence, and declining libido or impotence in severe cases. Actually, both could apply to Xue Meng, maybe that's why she didn't specify which?

<sup>18</sup> Liver fire in TCM is associated with anger, and is caused by difficulty in managing stress.

<sup>19</sup> This is an idiom, 如沐春风, which signifies someone who is noble and knowledgeable, a teacher who can pass on their knowledge in an exceedingly pleasant and enlightening manner.



But the thing that caused Xue Meng to crumble is one of the Jade Slip's rules: according to its requirements, when two people meet, they must stay together at least six hours, or the date will not count towards his active use.

Well alright, he's here now, and the money has been spent. If this still doesn't count, then he's really lost out.

For the sake of not having a total loss, Xue Meng decided to endure. He must endure!

Also, this woman had apparently been indifferent towards him since the very beginning, which greatly gnawed at Xue Meng's ego. Thus, Xue Meng made a secret decision in his heart:

Not only do I have to endure, but within the next five hours I'll also establish my persona as some mysterious big shot! Yeah, like someone who can treat pearls and gold like nothing, that kind of guy!

He must make this wealthy matron, who looks down upon him with dog eyes, regret endlessly. At the very least, he must leave impress upon her a strong sense of failure.

But he's already brought her to Yangzhou's most lavish Xihua Pavilion, and she didn't have any super emotional reaction, so where else could he go that might intimidate her?

When he thought about it, he suddenly remembered an exquisite place—

Sect Leader Xue, whose morale was boosted by his current sense of injustice, raised his head like a millionaire and said profoundly, "We strangers came together by chance, so I will not allow Ruo-xianzhang to disturb herself over my health. In any case, we still have quite a bit of time left in the day, so we shouldn't just stand around foolishly. Why don't I take you to a nice place and broaden your horizons?"

Ruo Ying was silent for a moment, then asked, "Where are you taking me?"

Xue Meng eventually led her to Changye Market.

This was a structure with deep eaves, and numerous roof ridges that kissed along its three wooden stories. It stood near Yangzhou Port and was well-known by all the residents of Yangzhou as a market for stolen goods. It was rumored that most of the things that could not be seen in public in the cultivation realm all eventually flowed into this sumptuous building, and the reason the guild behind this black market could arrogantly defy the Jianghu was in large part due to the support of Guyueye.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> As seen in many many wuxia and xianxia novels, the Jianghu is the world of martial artists and cultivators that exists outside the normal boundaries of society.

When Xue Meng was young, he once wanted to go south for some fun. Madame Wang deliberately called him over, took his hand, and warned and implored him a thousand times. She first went through a pile of trivial nonsense, but at last gave a final warning, "Meng-er, the Changye Market in Yangzhou City isn't a good place. To say nothing of prices, the things they sell are...there are some..."

She seemed to be too embarrassed to speak, and her white cheeks reddened slightly. At last she coughed softly and said, "Anyway, you don't have much money. If you go in, you'll come out completely broke. So when you see Changye Market, you have to avoid it, understand?"

Xue Meng was a good son who obeyed his mother, and he was of such incomparable pureness that he couldn't hear the implications behind his mother's words. He could only ask curiously, "Is the Changye Market a place where only idiots with too much money go?"

Xue Zhengyong, who was nearby, laughed heartily and said to his already weak son, "Aiyah, not exactly. Your mother always treats you as a baby and is too embarrassed to tell you things. But as your father, I'm different, some things ahh—" Before he could finish, Madame Wang elbowed him.

"Cough cough!" Xue Zhengyong covered his struck chest and hastily changed the subject. "There are some things you really shouldn't know!"

Xue Meng looked at them confused, but his parents only smiled at him, embarrassed. This foolish boy, couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on; fortunately just then Shi Mei asked him to go with him to the other side of the mountain to collect medicine for Shizun. So he just left, bewildered. But from that day on, Xue Meng remembered. When he saw "Changye Market" he should avoid it, because it was expensive, and he'd just burn his money away, and the only people who'd hang around there were stupidly wealthy.

Today, in order to retrieve his dignity, but also because he felt that as a Sect Leader he should broaden Ruo Ying's horizons, he led her to this vast, imposing gold and red building. Along the way, Ruo Ying repeatedly asked him if he really only wanted to go to Changye Market. In order not to show his ignorance, Xue Meng just waved his hand and haughtily raised his chin, just like a peacock spreading its tail.

"You are a frequent client of Xihua Pavilion, and I'm a VIP at Changye Market. So, I'll take you there."

Ruo Ying's expression was rather inscrutable.

Just then, Xue Meng found himself in front of a senior manager of Changye Market, and, looking as if he'd been struck by five bolts of lightning, he was red from his ankles to his hair—

"Wha- what VIP pendant? My mother didn't say anything about that, she said I could go in whenever!"

The old manager looked at him through the seam of his eyelids. "Has it been over ten years since your mother has come to Yangzhou? Changye Market's rules have changed; only the masters and

mistresses with jade VIP pendants are welcome to do business here. If you don't have one, then please go back.

"I, I, I —" Xue Meng wanted to find a piece of tofu he could use to clobber himself to death. He already boasted that he had free entry; wasn't he just punching his own face here?

After knocking around for a while, he stubbornly proclaimed, "Ah! I have a bad memory! I just remembered! Here's what happened!"

The old manager tucked his hands in his sleeves. This old turtle had reviewed innumerable people, and Xue Meng was too pure and naive. He chuckled and waited for what shoddy explanation Xue Meng would give.

"I, I, I left in such a hurry today that I forgot the pendant at home!"

"Aiyoh, that's truly unfortunate. Then I'll ask you two to please leave for today."

Xue Meng looked at the old turtle, who looked down on him with dog eyes, and once again felt embarrassed and wronged and at his wits' end, so he overlooked the hand coming out from beside him.

A slender wrist like the finest porcelain, around which was wrapped a jade and gold-beaded pendant. The warm glow of white jade against that arm made the delicate cinnabar mole particularly stand out.

"I brought mine."

When the old manager saw the pendant, he suddenly shook. The wrinkles on his old face almost disappeared from his astonishment, terror, and need to flatter: "A hea-heavenly VIP pendent?!"

"Why haven't you opened the door yet," Ruo Ying said coldly.

"Y-yes, yes of course!"

The thick, heavy sandalwood-carved doors immediately opened, and the old manager first bowed then made his obeisance, kowtow-ing almost as if he were making amends to a great-aunt. Ruo Ying brushed her wide silver and blue sleeves, and looked back at Xue Meng, who was as dumb as a wooden chicken.

Then, with a touch of mockery, she said, "Wang-xianzhang's experience is so great. Won't you lead the way?"

Xue Meng: "....."

### Ch. 325 Xue Meng's Mystery Matron Blind Date 4

Content warning:...idk how to warn for this properly but there are spirit dildoes in this chapter so please proceed accordingly.

Before entering the main gates of Changye Market, Xue Meng braced himself: "You want me to lead the way, I'll lead the way!"

When he got in, he became a bit overwhelmed.

What sort of trashy place is this Changye Market!? Isn't this kind of thing harmful to society? Look at those maidservants! What are they wearing! Why are some of them dressed up as Nine-Tailed Fox demons? Legs, chest, waist, they're just letting everything hang out, how could he bear to look at them!!!! The elder in charge of Yangzhou is Jiang Yechen, right? That fraud! How could he allow this kind of immoral venue to arrogantly operate in the middle of the city!!!

Ruo Ying seemed to notice his embarrassment, and smiled faintly. "If Wang-xianchang is not used to this environment, then we can go somewhere else. Don't force yourself."

"Who, who said I was forcing myself? Ha-haven't you heard of the 'Unintelligible List'?"

"I have some idea."

Xue Meng's dead duck mouth said: "W-well, I, I rank No. 1 on their list of most accomplished cultivators!"

"...Isn't that Mei Hanxue."

"That's me keeping a low profile for other people's sake, I asked someone to remove my name from the list!"

"You can do that?" Ruo Ying sneered, "How much did it cost?"

"What's that go to do with you?"

Xue Meng rolled his eyes and walked forward with a swagger, even though his ears were red.

Changye Market had three stories altogether, but Xue Meng found that he could sum up the entire place in one condensed sentence: weirdly-dressed shithheads selling weird shit.

No need to discuss those pretty women shopkeepers who might as well have their butts hanging out; he could turn off his senses, so as long as he didn't pay too much attention to them they weren't that provocative. More importantly, he couldn't make heads or tails of anything these stalls were selling. He couldn't even understand the cries of these black market vendors hawking their wares.

Xue Meng could understand the individual words, but together—

“The Haitang Essence Collected Edition! Nine dragons one phoenix, double dragon penetration! Now in full lush detail, don't miss this opportunity, these volumes are signed by the authors Han Mei and Di Sheng Kuang Cao!”

"Dagen-jun, Dagen-jun, *luobo* cultivated into *jing*!<sup>21</sup> The Dagen-jun of our shop have condensed a unique solitary magic, allowing them to transform into the size of any cultivator on the "Size List of the Great Heroes of the Cultivation World". Do you want to feel the same stimulation as Master Chu? Do you want to experience the twins of Kunlun taking you on a shared flight? You only need one Dagen-jun, it's an extraordinary experience, sure to be eternally memorable!"

Just listen to that! What is this bullshit?

But in spite of the chaos in his heart, his face was still perfectly calm. It was especially calm as Xue Meng stole a glance at Ruo Ying, and found that she was smirking at the sight of him. Xue Meng got even angrier, and marched to the stall with the unscrupulous air of a frequent customer.

"Give me ten of those *luobo* *jing*."

Shopkeeper: "....."

Ruo Ying: "....."

"Xue Meng stared with his apricot eyes and said, "What? Why are you looking at me?" He rubbed his nose. "Is there something on my face?"

The shopkeeper choked for a long time before he cordially said: "Honored guest, our family's Dagen-jun are all refined in accordance with the "Great Heroes List". Once the seal is released, the effect is quite vigorous, and very similar to the original heroes. If you are not like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty, I suggest you buy only one."<sup>22</sup>

Xue Meng had no idea what he just said. He looked down at the seemingly white, tender and plump radishes nestled in brocade boxes. He had no clue what the Dagen-jun would become after they were unsealed, and less than no clue what the hell the "Size List of the Great Heroes of the cultivation realm" or "like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty" meant.

"It would have been a sign of good character to humbly ask for clarification at this point.

---

<sup>21</sup> So this...is a horrible pun, and the reason why I'm leaving 萝卜精 "luobo *jing*" untranslated. 萝卜 "luobo" means "radish", like a daikon. The character "精" can mean any one of the following: spirit/demon, essence/extract, or semen. Xue Meng, bless his heart, gets confused which 精 this vendor is selling.

<sup>22</sup> 三十如狼四十如虎, "like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty," is a saying used in reference to a woman's sexual appetite, which is said to grow substantially as she enters her thirties and forties.

Unfortunately, Xue Meng didn't.

Xue Meng thought that men who thought independently were the most capable. So he thought independently for a while, and had a small epiphany—these Dagen-jun are probably like thousand-year-old ginseng—once unsealed, they'll have a vigorous effect on a person, exactly like ancient ginseng would. And cultivators in their thirties and forties often encounter roadblocks to their cultivation, which are like tigers and wolves, and these will require ginseng tonics to treat. But these Dagen-jun are highly potent, so an ordinary person would only need to eat one of them to unblock their meridians.

Everything made sense now!

Xue Meng applauded himself loudly in his heart and said haughtily to the shopkeeper: "How could one be enough for my consumption?"

"Shopkeeper: "... Two's not impossible, but you really don't need more than three. I'm a black market merchant, not a profiteer, and I want to make things clear for you."

Xue Meng said impatiently: "You really...! I meant what I said!"

"S-sir, you're asking for too many." The shopkeeper wiped the sweat off his forehead. "Your body wouldn't be able to handle it."

"Hmph." Xue Meng said, "You act as if I haven't had these before. Forget two, twenty are only enough to last me two or three days."

This time the shopkeeper was completely silent.

He looked at Xue Meng's pale lips with awe, then his eyes moved down all the way down to Xue Meng's...

"What are you looking at?" Xue Meng was alert, glaring at him angrily. "Business is business, don't look where you shouldn't!"

The shopkeeper quickly removed his eyes from Xue Meng's lower body and coughed: "This honored guest has been endowed with great gifts, thi- this one pays his respects. Then, I'll pack you ten *luobojing*—do you want ones the size of Mo-zongshi?"

?

What does he mean by the size of Mo-zongshi?

What does that dog Mo Ran have to do with anything?

Xue Meng pondered for a while, then figured it out with his extraordinary understanding.

Does he mean that the scale of spiritual endurance is the same as that of Mo Ran? That he can't accept; if you're talking about the spiritual endurance of current great heroes, then he's not much worse than Mo Ran.

"No," he said at once, calmly. I want the size of Sect Leader Xue.

The shopkeeper was stunned: "Honored guest, you're joking. Where's Sect Leader Xue on the top ten list?"

"Xue Meng was even more stunned than he was, and even more angry than he was stunned—

"No Xue Ziming?!"

"The shop owner was utterly baffled: "??? Why Xue Ziming??"

"Xue Meng's veins started popping out: "Why not Xue Ziming!!!!"

The two yelled past each other like a chicken talking to a duck for a very long time until they were both hoarse. Neither noticed that Ruo Ying, who had been standing by and watching them, suddenly frowned, and kept frowning more deeply as they went on.

Her glasslike eyes looked back and forth at Xue Meng several times. Suddenly she came forward and grabbed Xue Meng's arm.

Xue Meng turned his head: "What are you grabbing my arm for, you know there shouldn't be direct contact between men and women!"

"... Do you know what these *luobojing* are used for?"

"No shit! It's like ginseng, you use them restore spiritual energy!"

Ruo Ying: "....."

Shopkeeper: "....."

"Ruo Ying turned around and said to the shopkeeper: "I'm unsealing one of your monsters; you can bill two taels of silver to the account of Guyueye." As she spoke, she raised her hand and pointed to the sky. The sealing talisman on a brocade box was released with a bang.

What appeared to be an ordinary *luobojing* suddenly sent out a brilliant light, and before the eyes of the staring crowds, turned into a length of... vivid and lifelike... clearly detailed... delicate and exquisite... incredibly humongous...

Jade. Penis.

Oh look, it could even move by itself.

Xue Meng stiffened and his face instantly turned green.

"He pointed at the shopkeeper angrily and almost bit his tongue: "You, you, you, you scumbag!"

The shopkeeper was shocked and aggrieved: "You were the one who wanted to buy it! And you said one wasn't enough for you..."

"AAAAHHH!" Xue Meng could no longer recall what he had said. His green face suddenly turned red again, then flashed between red and green a few times. Covering his face, he suddenly wanted to run away, but then he hit a solid body.

He had run into Ruo Ying, who was blocking his path.

But why did it feel...not like a woman at all???

Ruo Ying looked at him coldly. "Xue Meng?"

Xue Meng was shocked: "How did you know? Who are you?!"

Ruo Ying said nothing else, grabbed his collar and dragged him out of Changye Market. Xue Meng yelled and tried to resist, but it was like pushing back against a mountain.

When they got outside, and she had found an isolated pavilion by the river, only then did Ruo Ying let go of him, brushed her sleeves, and turned to face him.

Xue Meng felt like he'd almost been strangled to death. He held his neck and repeatedly coughed: "You dog! You, you, cough - who the hell are you?!"

Ruo Ying raised her hand, and her fingertips flashed blue. Before Xue Meng could see clearly, the Taobao Manor illusion sachets around their waists were neatly shredded to pieces.

Xue Meng looked up in shock and almost hit his head on the pavilion pillar.

"It's you?!!"



After the illusion disappeared, the man standing in front of him was tall and handsome. He wore magnificent silver-blue robes that fell to the floor, with luxurious peacock silk thread embroidery that delicately trace out Guyueye's phoenix totem. But no matter how sumptuous and grand his clothes, they couldn't compare to this man's own presence. He had a refined eyebrow and a straight nose, an elegant mouth, and a pair of apricot eyes that seemed to be filled with an unceasing misty rain. This man had been born with a sense of arrogant pride.

"Jiang Yechen?!!!!"

Who else could this Ruo Ying-xianjun be, but the sect leader of Guyueye, the richest man in the cultivation realm, Jiang Xi?

Matron Jiang... no, Jiang Yechen, stopped Xue Meng's words in one sentence: "You are such a disappointment."

"???"

If Xue Meng hadn't been choked until he was light-headed, he really would have killed him with one blow. This person's face was so delicate, how could he say such shameless things without even blinking?

"Wow, what a great sect leader you are, thoughtlessly wandering about, idling in this kind of place, who knows what you'll do next?"

At this point, he shook himself back to full awareness. Xue Meng coughed some more, put down the hand that was rubbing his neck, and stared at Jiang Xi. "And why are you scolding me? What gives you the right to do that?"

Jiang Yechen said angrily: "You're still young, shouldn't you be meeting female cultivators from good families in decent proper settings? But no, here you are listening to that shark Ma Fangzhi's poisonous words, and you actually bought that promiscuous relief scroll! You're a disgrace!"

Xue Meng replied, also angrily: "Why don't you say anything about yourself? Look how old you are, and you even...with my mother...Why aren't you managing your Guyueye like you're supposed to, and running out to mess with the younger generation with that pretty face of yours! Didn't you think that your date might be younger than your son? Not that I'm saying I'm your son, I'm just saying, you're the real disgrace!"

Jiang Xi got even angrier. He whipped his sleeves around and fumed between gritted teeth: "I wasn't doing this to go on a date."

"Then why did you do it? Oh, I see, researching the tools of your rival Manor Head Ma, right? You said he was a shark, well, why don't you look at your own Guyueye? Absolutely shameless!"

"I'm shameless but you're not?" A big strong man, nicknaming himself Xiaoxue like a girl, haven't you lost face?"

"I can't lose any more face than you have!"

"You impudent—"

"You bullshitter!"

"Xue Ziming!"

"Jiang Ruoying!"

An old couple driving an ox cart slowly passed by them. The wife asked, "Husband, what's the young couple in that pavilion arguing about?"

"Wife, your eyes are going bad, those two are brothers."

"Eh? Isn't that one in the silver and blue robes a girl?"

"No, it's a man, his face is delicate, but you can see he's a lot taller than his brother."

Xue Meng: "....."

Jiang Xi: "....."

Xue Meng stamped his feet: "Look how old you are! And you're still out all day and night trying to take advantage of other people!"

Jiang Xi said indifferently: "Our medical sect has always been like this. If you don't like it, you can join Guyueye yourself."

Xue Meng was so angry he screamed: "Aagh! I don't want to see you anymore! That old woman said you were a woman and she was right! I named myself Wang Xiaoxue because the relief scroll made a mistake, you naming yourself Ruo Ying was you pretending to be a woman!"

"I picked Ruo Ying because—"

"Because what?"

Because when the pollia flowers flourish, I'm happy.<sup>23</sup>

But knowing that Wang Chuqing's favorite flower is this flower, Jiang Xi was afraid that saying anything would just increase the misunderstandings, so he kept his lips shut.<sup>24</sup>

"Ahah! So you were just pretending, admit it already!"

Jiang Xi suddenly raised his hand towards Xue Meng's face, as if to teach him a proper lesson on how he should talk to his elders. But as his hand came near Xue Meng's mouth, he suddenly felt that arguing with this idiot by the river was truly beneath him, so he aggressively put his hand down. At this time, the unwell feeling deep in his chest rose up again. Jiang Xi turned his head, covered his mouth with his sleeve, and coughed repeatedly.

Xue Meng thought at first that he was choking and felt some happiness at Jiang Xi's pain, but when he saw that the coughing grew more and more serious, such that even Jiang Xi's apricot eyes began to dim and tear up, he became nervous: "Hey, hey... what's wrong with you?"

Jiang Xi coughed violently; his eyes had turned red. He raised his water pipe with his fingertips, trembling slightly, and took a few puffs.

Xue Meng was startled: "Why are you smoking when you're coughing like that?"

Jiang Xi ignored him. After a few more drags, the symptoms lessened. He gasped for a bit, and slowly straightened up. Walking outside the pavilion, he looked out silently at the running water and said after a long while, "Get lost. Go back to SiSheng Peak."

"Your wounds from the war..."

"There's no illness in the world that I, Jiang Yechen, can't treat. I have no use for your concern."

The small thread of softness that Xue Meng had with great difficulty developed towards Jiang Xi had been forcefully cut. He stood there for a while, neither hard nor soft, desperately trying to control his face from revealing too much.

Jiang Xi took a few drags on his water pipe, looked up, and exhaled gradually: "Anyway, you're not a child anymore, it's time you find a decent person and start a family. But don't put your energies into this vulgar dating nonsense. Find a wife you know inside out. Her character, family, skills, and looks; you should know all those clearly." He paused, then frowned again. "This isn't the kind of thing that Ma Fangzhi's relief scroll can do for you."

---

<sup>23</sup> The "ruo" in du ruo/pollia and Ruo Ying are the same character.

<sup>24</sup> Wang Chuqing is the given name of Madame Wang, Xue Meng's mother.

"Xue Meng stared: "Jiang Yechen, what are you saying? What's with this love talk nonsense? I can understand other people pushing me to get married, but you...did you take some wrong medicine?"

Jiang Yechen coolly turned to half face Xue Meng. "It's true that love talk is nonsense, but it's nonsense for me."

"....."

"It's not the same for you. For you, not carrying on your family line is nonsense. You should get married."

Xue Meng was very glad that his father is Xue Zhengyong, not Jiang Yechen. He has never met anyone more hypocritical than Jiang Yechen; he dares to excuse himself from one rule after another, but when it comes to Xue Meng, suddenly he'll force him down to get married?

Jiang Yechen is truly a dog!

When Xue Meng returned to SiSheng Peak, he furiously stuck a giant fork through the card with the words "Ruo Ying" on it, and tore it to pieces.

If Jiang Xi doesn't let him play, then he'll definitely play!

There's no way he'll let the gift box of good businessman Manor Head Ma fall into the hands of bad businessman Jiang Xi!

"With this in mind, Xue Meng's felt flames rise in his heart, and once again spread out the cards and began to look at the remaining mysterious people.

This time he knew better, and understood that the relief scroll might recommend a man to him. He resolved to carefully do his own screening. This time, at the very least, he'll pick a woman close to his own age!

He, Xue Ziming, will never admit defeat!

After careful study, Xue Ziming, who refused to admit defeat, turned over a second card, which was for someone nicknamed "Leng Gong".<sup>25</sup>

Although the relief scroll mixed men and women, surely someone who'd entered the cold palace can't be a man? This must be a sad lonely girl.

---

<sup>25</sup> “冷宫”; meaning cold palace. The cold palace, as typically portrayed in fiction, is the remote part of an imperial palace to which a concubine who has fallen out of favor would be exiled.

The card described this Leng Gong-guniang as follows:

Leng Gong. Peevish temperament, direct with people, not well versed in common sense, a hidden gem.

Because she had long ago been abandoned in the cold night, and spent over ten years alone guarding an empty bed, Leng Gong-xianzhang holds a level of mistrust and paranoia regarding love distinct from the rest of the world. This was to the point that she suffered from some level of madness, which made it easy for her to fall into negativity and self-doubt. Perhaps only the most tolerant and gentle cultivation partner can heal the scars in her heart and ignite her inner blazing love.<sup>26</sup>

Likes: Intense things.

One can't help but say that Xue Meng is actually a very kind-hearted child. Normal people should run far away from this kind of date, but Xue Meng chose her.

The reason for this is that Xue Meng, besides believing that she was a woman, felt that when he read between the lines on the card, there was someone pitiful there.

Guarding an empty bed, mistrust and paranoia, madness, and scars on her heart.

Look, what a miserable girl!! How shameful and cold-blooded is that fickle lover who once abandoned her! It's like a second Jiang Xi! A scum of the cultivation realm!

Xue Meng thought in any case that this wouldn't be a real date. The girl's condition was so bad that no one would choose her, and then her heart would be hurt even more and she would get entangled even more in paranoia and denial. What a sad story this would be.

This girl also liked "intense things" and seemed very aggressive towards others. He wondered if she would hurt herself if she reached a point of severe emotional pain.

The more Xue Meng thought about it, the more he felt he could not stand aside. A lesson Xue Zhengyong taught him many years ago seemed to ring in his ears once again:

"Pity mankind, with all its suffering. If you have enough strength, use all that strength to help."<sup>27</sup>

So Xue Meng, who had the same sense of justice and compassion as his father, made a grand decision - OK, he's going to gift this Leng Gong-guniang a warm flame!

---

<sup>26</sup> Please note that in the original Chinese, the gender of Leng Gong is never specified.

<sup>27</sup> The first part of this quote, "Pity mankind, with all its suffering," is a line from Jin Yong's novel Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre.

His mind made up, Xue Meng immediately messaged Leng Gong-guniang through the relief scroll, requesting a meeting in three days time wearing illusion sachets in Wuchang Town in Sichuan.

### **Ch. 326 Xue Meng's Wayward Young Lady Blind Date 1**

The day for the meeting with Leng Gong-xianzi soon came.

This time Xue Meng went to the appointment with warm-hearted zeal, aiming to make a new friend and steer this wayward young lady straight, so he didn't go in with a competitive spirit.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the way he arranged this date, naturally, was also in contrast to Ruo.... Bah! This was completely different from meeting with that cheating lying son of a bitch Jiang Xi.

Wuchang Town was within Xue Meng's own territory, so he had a very clear idea of where to get the tastiest dishes, the best wine, and the nicest snacks.

Xue Meng chose a family-run restaurant that he himself often frequented. This shop's small dishes and hotpot were excellent, but it was a bit out of the way, and not easy to find. He was about to send another message to Lenggong to tell her the exact location, when he heard a slightly raspy, alluring female voice coming in from the street: "Hello? Shopkeeper, I'm looking for Wang Xiaoxue."

"Wang Xiaoxue?"

"Yes, a customer," the female voice said impatiently.

Before the shopkeeper could answer again, Xue Meng opened the half-rolled curtain and looked out.——

Standing beside a beech cabinet was a tall female cultivator around 27 or 28 year old, with long inky hair, eyes so black they flashed purple, fine eyelashes so long they curled up like smoke, and extremely beautiful features. She wore black and gold cultivation robes with a cinched waist that truly showed how slender her waist was and how long her legs were. She had a profuse aura that exuded an abundance of wildness and tension.

This appearance was the illusion sachet's interpretation of Leng Gong's original appearance and original sound, so her voice and appearance have both been readjusted. But one could tell that her original appearance was quite tall, and that she was an outstanding beauty.

Xue Meng beckoned to her. Leng Gong glanced at him. She boldly swaggered over, and looked at him through her eyelashes. "Are you the one who asked me out?"

---

<sup>28</sup> The word used to describe Xue Meng's date is "少妇", which more precisely means a young married woman.

"Yeah, it was me."

"Excellent. You have a good eye."

She sat down opposite Xue Meng with great force, crossed her legs, clasped her hands, and assumed a posture that could only be described as domineering.

Xue Meng thought that she would be plaintive and mournful, and come to this date holding a deep grudge. To see someone so firm and resolute; that was unexpected. But in all honesty, Xue Meng wasn't very good at dealing with crying women, so seeing that Leng Gong still held her head high even through her emotional pain increased Xue Meng's positive feelings and admiration towards her a bit more.

But Xue Meng was also someone who was bad at giving compliments. From birth to now, the number of people he'd complimented could be counted on three fingers: his father, his mother, and his shizun. So he stifled his words for quite a long time before he stiffly choked out a sentence: "You...you're really hard huh."

"....." As soon as Leng Gong sat down, she had crossed her arms and looked out the window. When she heard this her purple and black pupils whirled around peacefully, staring at Xue Meng like an eagle staring at a rabbit.

After a while, she said: "So, even you can tell?"

Xue Meng thought to himself: You've been thrown to the side, and yet you still walk with such majesty and authority. Only fools could overlook such a resolute spirit.

So he nodded.

Leng Gong tapped her tall nose, and smiled with a bit of arrogance and coldness: "Of course. You're all like this, you're here either for *this*, or you're here for status and money."

As she said this, she leaned back in her chair, stretched her arms back, and lifted her chin slightly. "Why don't you order."

Her words carried with them the feeling that she was looking disdainfully down at the breadth of the world from the heavens. Those simple words came from the tip of her tongue, but when she spat them out it felt like an imperial decree. Xue Meng felt a great sense of oppression as well as discomfort.

He stared at her.

"Why are you looking at me?" Leng Gong's gaze was cold, but also held a degree of enticement. She spread her legs, raised a cold white finger and impatiently pulled at her tight lapel. "Looking for a fuck?"

Xue Meng was shocked!

"Wh-, whaaaaat?"

This wayward young lady Leng Gong, without skipping a beat or a flicker of change in her expression, made a second mental attack on the properly-raised Xue Meng: "I asked why you were looking at me like that. You wanna fuck?"

Xue Meng suffocated just a little bit.

His face turned white, then red, then red, then white again, then he suddenly raised his head: "You you you—you're absolutely shameless!— you you, you—give me some respect here!"

Leng Gong raised an eyebrow slightly, pursed her thin moist lips, and smiled slightly while faint dimples appeared on her cheeks. Her fingers casually drummed on the table: "Isn't that what you came to me for? Relief scroll: sleep with a lord, relieve a thousand sorrows."

"You're speaking nonsense!" Xue Meng was almost about to jump up. Under normal circumstances, if someone had talked to Sect Leader Xue like this, he would have already taken out Longcheng and started dueling them to the death. But Xue Meng knew that Leng Gong had suffered tragic emotional wounds and that her mind was quite fragile. With a heart resolved to save this wayward young lady, Xue Meng didn't draw his sword.

But he was still so angry that his nose almost went askew. "How can you talk like that? I, I had no such thoughts when I chose you!"

"Oh? Really?"

Leng Gong seemed a little more interested than she had been before. She finally put down her long legs and sat up straight. "Excellent. Great minds think alike. To tell you the truth, I've actually recently stopped washing my coins in a golden basin, so even if you wanted me to fuck you, I wouldn't do it."<sup>29</sup>

Xue Meng covered his ears, and didn't even realize that Leng Gong's newly invented phrase got around the Relief Scroll's restrictions such that she could talk freely while actually exposing her gender: "Aahhhhh!! Can you stop saying such gross things!?"

---

<sup>29</sup> So. The way I understand the phrase "washing coins in a golden basin" or "金盆洗吊" is that it's a malapropism of the phrase "金盆洗屌" which literally translates to "washing your penis in a golden basin" and refers to...some kind of ceremony to increase your sexual prowess? I honestly don't know for sure.



"Wow, that bewildered innocent confused look of yours really looks like someone I know." Leng Gong continued: "Okay. Since you do have good taste, if you don't want me to keep talking, that's fine. But you have to do me a favor."

Xue Meng raised his head. Because the woman was so scary, he couldn't help but be a little nervous: "What favor?"

Leng Gong said: "Be my lover."

"....." Xue Meng almost flipped the table. "Didn't you come here for a blind date?!"

Why are you in such a rush? I didn't even finish yet." Leng Gong rolled her eyes. "Pretend. I want you to pretend to be my lover."

"... Why?"

Leng Gong's eyes suddenly held an ominous gleam. She slammed her hands on the table, leaned forward and whispered: "Because I want to piss someone off."

"Who?"

"My real lover."

Xue Meng: "....."

Oh. So it turned out that this person had been abandoned and left alone to guard an empty bed for so many years, and had become so mentally twisted and negative and depressed and prejudiced and insane that—she actually still wanted to remain hopelessly entangled with that cultivation realm Chen Shimei?<sup>30</sup>

So she hadn't kicked that fickle man to the curb, but instead continued to rant about him and is trying to drag him back, and even took great pains to find someone to disguise as his rival to anger him. This Leng Gong-guniang really isn't mentally well, is she?

"No good?"

"....."

"To tell you the truth, I've met quite a few people these days. Either they won't go along with my plans, and they actually want this pretend thing to be real, or they just refuse to help me, and run away after they hear me out."

---

<sup>30</sup> Chen Shimei is a character from Chinese Opera and a byword in China for a heartless and unfaithful man.

"....."

"If you won't do it, then forget it. No need to talk any more, I'll try something else."

What something else? Would she turn to self harm?

Xue Meng had a headache.

He kneaded his temples, waved his hand, and opened the menu: "Okay okay, like my father said, saving a life is better than building a seven-level pagoda.<sup>31</sup> I'll help you, is that enough?"

Leng Gong's eyes lit up: "You're serious?"

"A gentleman can't go back on his word. If I deceive you, then I'm a dog. If you're happy, and don't take things too hard, then that's good." Xue Meng sighed. "Why don't we talk more over food? You should take a look first. What would you like?"

Leng Gong raised her hand: "No need to order."

Just as Xue Meng was wondering if she planned to go hungry, he saw that she raised her hand and snapped her fingers with a clear "pa" sound.

"Shopkeeper, bring all the most expensive dishes you have to this ven—*cough*, to me!"

This time not only Xue Meng's nose was askew, but his entire face was askew.

Where did this bandit come from? What an uncivilized ill-mannered bumpkin!

Xue Meng cried out: "You! Don't you know how shameful it is to waste food?"

"That's exactly what my sweetie always says." Leng Gong squinted. "But I'm not happy, so I want to be wasteful today, and you can't say anything. Otherwise, I'll buy everything in this whole place, I'll wipe them out."

Xue Meng was terrified by this cold rich woman: "... Are you from Taobao Manor?"

"No."

"... A rich merchant from Linyi?"

---

<sup>31</sup> A seven-level pagoda or stupa is the highest grade of pagoda in Buddhism.

"Also no."

"... Ya-, Yangzhou Guyueye?"

Leng Gong sneered: "What's Guyueye worth?" "They're not worthy enough to carry my shoes."

Xue Meng: "....." "Why are these words so familiar?"

The hot dishes and hotpot didn't come quickly, but the side dishes didn't take so long. Xue Meng took a look at the white porcelain dish of shredded cold tripe with peppers, and suddenly realized: "You're from the Lin'an area, so you don't eat spicy food right?"

"Who says I don't eat it?" Leng Gong said, "I love spicy food."

After saying that she grabbed her chopsticks and, without changing her expression, stuffed food into her mouth.

"So good! It's been a long time since I've had something so good."

"If you like it, why don't you eat more?" asked Xue Meng.

Leng Gong said simply: "Because my lover can't handle it."

"Ah? So if he can't handle it, then he won't let you enjoy it either?"

"That's not it." Leng Gong rubbed her chin, and for some reason her eyes got misty. "Actually, sometimes the more he can't handle it, the happier I am. I really like the way he gets when he can't take it anymore, especially since he's normally so aloof and self-restrained, but I always get him to lose it in the end. And when he loses his mind, he'll start moaning and wrapping himself around me with want, and then I..."

Xue Meng didn't understand. But Leng Gong's face looked very happy.

During her speech Leng Gong suddenly realized how distracted she was, and snapped back from her gentle reveries. Clearing her throat, she said, "Anyway, it really was because of him that I haven't touched spicy food for a while."

This sentence he could understand.

Spice enthusiast Xue Meng became very indignant: "Outrageous! Bring us a Mandarin duck pot!"<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> A Mandarin duck pot is a type of hotpot pot with a divider, so you can have spicy soup on one side and mild soup on the other.

"No, it's not that he wouldn't let me eat, it's that I wouldn't let me eat."

Xue Meng stared: "Why wouldn't you let yourself eat?"

Leng Gong wanted to explain, but she seemed to feel that she couldn't explain it succinctly, so she pursed her mouth in embarrassment and said unhappily: "Because I'm sick. I'm unreasonable."

So here was the negative thinking and self-doubt the relief scroll mentioned.

"Forget it. I don't want to talk about it." Leng Gong said, "Let's talk about how you can pretend to be my fake lover, so I can piss off my real one."

"I could do it..." Xue Meng said, "But what's your goal in getting him mad?"

Leng Gong snorted, her face tyrannical, and said while grinding her teeth: "Because he lost the brocade bag I gave him!"

Xue Meng thought to himself, hasn't he been snubbing you for many years now? Shouldn't you be used to things like him losing your brocade bag...

But before he could say anything, Leng Gong added, "It was a present I gave him for the Qixi festival!"

You know, compared to leaving you in an empty bed, that's not actually that serious...

Leng Gong kept talking, and her complexion got more and more off, and her tone became more and more fierce: "When have I ever given something like that to someone else? He wasn't happy with gold and gems, and there wasn't any novelty giving him arms manuals, so I went to the trouble of hand making a brocade bag for him. Who knew that he'd be so careless, he didn't treasure it one little bit!"

Wow... That did seem a bit unreasonable.

When Leng Gong said this, she pursed her lips, looking angry and embarrassed, as well as some other difficult to explain emotion. After a while, just when Xue Meng thought she had finished complaining, Leng Gong suddenly slapped the table angrily and said, "I can forgive him for losing what I gave him, but fucking wearing the one someone else gave him on his person? What the fuck does that mean, is he deliberately trying to piss me off?!"

Xue Meng was stunned for a moment, and then immediately stared: "He accepted someone else's brocade bag? Did, did he fall in love with someone else?"

Leng Gong was furious: "Why do you think I'm so mad at him? I need to remind him how many people admire this ven...*cough*, admire me in this world. If he doesn't cherish me, there are other people who will. I don't care about him at all. If he won't come asking for me back, then I'll completely disappear from this world, and let him get on with that sanctimonious slut!"<sup>33</sup>

### Ch. 327 Xue Meng's Wayward Young Lady Blind Date 2

Content warning: Leng Gong takes a very cavalier attitude towards the issue of consent when discussing "her" previous sex life.

Xue Meng: "!!!"

"Hearing these words, Xue Meng, who held the same sense of justice as his Shizun, felt an immediate intense sense of shock and anger. A spring of poetry surged in his mind like a flood: beginning with chaos and ending with abandonment, throwing away one's family; a red apricot tree leaning over a garden wall, saying three in the morning and four in the evening, eating in the East and sleeping in the West, on and on..."This is an absolute disgrace!" he said furiously.<sup>34</sup>

Then he mulled over what Leng Gong had just said in rage, that she would "completely disappear from this world." His heart pounded, and he realized that this girl indeed had a fierce tendency towards self-harm.

"He must stop her from hurting herself! With righteous indignation, Xue Meng said: ""Please rest assured, what I can't stand the most are those who serve Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening, who change like water and bend like willows. Leave it to me, I'll support you and make him so angry he'll spit up three liters of blood, that'll make him regret what he did!" After a pause, he said seriously, still furious: "However, if you know yourself and know your enemy, you'll come out unscathed through a hundred battles. You should clarify your story to me, and let me get a measure of what happened."<sup>35</sup>

Leng Gong wrinkled her brows: "Our story is too hard to explain. It'll take me a long time to make everything clear."

---

<sup>33</sup> I was just rereading this and I realized that TXJ is probably not the type of person who'd know the word "sanctimonious"...but I like the alliteration, so this line stays as it is!

<sup>34</sup> Xue Meng here is letting out a stream of poetic lines and idioms related to being a cheating liar. A red apricot tree leaning over a garden wall, "红杏出墙" means a wife having an illicit lover. Saying three in the morning and four in the evening, "朝三暮四" means to change something already decided.

<sup>35</sup> More idioms...to serve Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening, "朝秦暮楚" means to be quick to switch sides. Someone who changes like water and bends like willows, "水性杨花" describes a fickle person, particularly a woman. Know yourself and know your enemy "知己知彼" and coming out unscathed through a hundred battles "百战不殆" are both from Sun Tzu's The Art of War.

"... Oh. Then why don't I ask questions, and you can answer." Faced with such a pitiful woman, Xue Meng experienced a rare bit of consideration: "If there's something you can't say, we can skip it. How does that sound?"

Leng Gong thought about it and nodded, "Yes. That should work."

At this moment, their hotpot and stir-fries came one after the other.

As they ate and talked, Xue Meng said: "Why don't you talk about that cultivation partner of yours first. How long have you known each other? How did you meet?"

Leng Gong used her chopsticks to pick up a tender, crisp piece of sauteed garlic shoot, ate a few bites, put down her chopsticks, then lifted her gaze towards Xue Meng.

"The things that happened between us are honestly rather shocking, so I'll first ask you if you're afraid to hear it."

Xue Meng said: "Nothing could be more shocking than what I've experienced in my own life. You can go ahead."

He didn't think that Leng Gong would turn out to be a gossip; she suddenly leaned towards him with great interest and said, "Oh? Really? What happened to you?"

Xue Meng: "... Do you want me to help you get him mad or not?"

Leng Gong retracted her curiosity and coughed: "Okay, let's just talk about me then."

Then she opened her mouth.

Her first sentence is indeed appalling.

My lover, he used to be my Shizun.

"....." Xue Meng suddenly remembered a certain unpleasant experience. He raised his teacup and silently took a sip, trying to suppress his alarm.

The second sentence is even more appalling.

"We bowed to heaven and earth and got married a very long time ago."

The hand that Xue Meng used to hold his teacup was shaking, but he could still hold his ground. Until the third sentence comes out——

"We had sex every day, and started even before we got married. Then after we were married we became even more excessively wanton, and freely did it day and night."

Xue Meng spat out his tea: "*Cough cough!*"

The relief scroll said that Leng Gong-xianzi was "direct", but Xue Meng didn't think that a girl could be *this* direct!

Nevertheless, Leng Gong kept going as if she couldn't stop until she shocked people<sup>36</sup>: "He's not very good in bed, so I'm the only one who doesn't avoid him. And since I'm very good in bed, he's gradually getting a taste for bodily pleasure. So even though his mouth says no, he still does it with me fiercely three or four times a night, sometimes even seven or eight times. On the bed, in the courtyard, in the reception pavilion, in the hot spring, we've done it in all those..."

"Stop!" Xue Meng finally recovered from his cough, his ears smoking. Cleaning off the water he'd coughed up while blushing, he said: "You don't have to describe those details so clearly. All I really needed to know was that your marital life was harmonious."

"Right. Our marital life was very harmonious, and every night we did it three or four, sometimes even seven or eight times. A normal person couldn't manage it, but I could, and we did it on the bed, in the courtyard, in the reception pavilion, in the hot spring, we've done it in all those..."

Xue Meng: "....."

"Fuck!" Leng Gong suddenly got angry and slammed the table, rattling the cups. "If we hadn't been able to get pregnant, we'd probably already be having kids, so why did he still go for that fucker?" Xue Meng was startled. So it turned out that this cold girl couldn't have a baby, and so her place got taken up by some hag.

Speaking of which, his mother also couldn't have a second child, but Xue Zhengyong didn't neglect her even a little bit, and they supported each other through a lifetime. There were too few men like his father in the world, which was why so many sect leaders bred resentments, and a lifetime of miscommunication.

Xue Meng became angry and couldn't bear it any longer, so he asked: "Did you try to nurse your body and seek medical advice? Guyueye's Jiang Yechen isn't worth much as a person, but his medical skills are decent. You could—"

"Hmph, don't you think I asked him about it? Other people thought it was impossible, but my fate is up to me, and not the heavens, and especially not other people. I wanted a baby with him, whether he could have one or not. So I went to Jiang Yechen to discuss how we could do it, but that little beauty

---

<sup>36</sup> Leng Gong's speech is described using the line "语不惊人死不休", which is from Du Fu's poem "The water on the river gained momentum like the sea, so I gave a short account" or "江上值水如海势聊短述". It can more precisely be translated as "If my words do not startle, then I won't give up until I die."

Jiang was horribly stubborn and said that it was bad for the body and refused to give it to me, like he knows right from wrong!"

Xue Meng: "....."

Jiang Xi not knowing right from wrong is true, but since when was he beautiful??? How did you connect the words "little beauty Jiang" to him??

But aside from this beauty talk, why did this story sound so familiar...

Xue Meng thought about it and couldn't remember, so he stopped thinking about it and urged, "Jiang Yechen, the dog thief, has always been fickle and indecent. He doesn't care about human suffering, he's just a black merchant. Don't try to bargain with him. What happened later? What about the person who came between you and your Shizun? Your Shizun and you... well. Since your thing was harmonious, then he should have loved you, so how could he fall in love with someone else?"

Leng Gong had been okay until he mentioned this, but once it had been mentioned, she gnashed her teeth in anger: "That's because that person took advantage of my absence, seized the opportunity, and freely stole into my empty spot!"

Xue Meng cried out, eyes wide: "So when you were guarding your empty bed, they started living together?"

Leng Gong ground her teeth: "That's right."

How miserable! All he can see is the smile of the new love, while the old love weeps unheard!<sup>37</sup>

Xue Meng was so angry that he slammed the table and leapt up: "He isn't even second to Jiang Yechen, he's entirely on par with him!"

Leng Gong was curious again; she tilted her head and drummed her long fingers unconsciously on the table: "How come you seem to understand Jiang Yechen so well? How do you know him?"

"....." Xue Meng sat down with a dry mouth and poured himself a cup of tea. "I'm his father."

Leng Gong: "???"

Xue Meng: "Aiyah, I just said that because I was angry. I don't actually have any relationship with Jiang Yechen, I was just using him as an example. Everyone knows he's the scum of the cultivation realm and a scourge to female cultivators." After that, he let out a vicious "bah".

---

<sup>37</sup> This is another reference to a poem by Du Fu, titled "佳人" or "beautiful woman"



Leng Gong opened her purple and black eyes widely: "Really? How come I've heard that he detests male-female relationships? If a line of women go to him to deliver love letters, then a line of women will return with prescriptions for all kinds of conditions. And they'll be written very honestly too, telling them directly they suffer from things like 'adult acne' or 'obese limbs'. Is this the kind of man to play around with women?"

Xue Meng opened his mouth and found that he was left speechless, so he could only close his mouth: "... No. I'm just saying that he's a profiteer and morally unscrupulous."

"You're not wrong there."

Xue Meng felt that he couldn't continue on with this topic any more; his anger towards Jiang Xi was always difficult to quell once he started. If he went on, he might inadvertently reveal something. So he said: "Let's talk about your Shizun then. Since you can't bear to part with him, why didn't you chase after him?"

"I can't bear to part with him?" Leng Gong sniffed. "What a joke, I don't cherish him at all."

"....."

After a while, looking sideways at Xue Meng, she reluctantly asked: "Sigh. How could you tell that I couldn't bear to let him go?"

"... It's because I know someone." Xue Meng's expression was vague, seeming to show embarrassment and irritation and helplessness, all tangled together at length. With a parched throat, he continued: "His symptoms, to be honest, are quite similar to yours."

"Oh really? What's the matter with him?"

"When he was weak, he avoided his Shizun every day. He hated how cold he was, and hated how he would deliberately make things difficult for him. He also said that he didn't cherish him, didn't care about him, and didn't like him even one bit."

Leng Gong listened with relish, and began munching on peanuts: "Then what? What happened after that?"

Xue Meng crossed his arms in front of his chest and rolled his eyes: "What else could have happened? He ended up regretting it."

"....."

"He screamed and cried and rolled around begging for his return, going through hell and high water, flattering and fawning and committing all kinds of crimes." Xue Meng said, "So I advise you, always behave around people as if you'll meet again in the future, and don't say such definitive things."

Leng Gong didn't care. She leaned back, raised her chin and sneered, "I'm not the type to cry and beg for someone to come back. If I didn't want him to go, there were plenty of other ways to keep him."

Xue Meng saw that she didn't understand, so even though he knew she wouldn't be able to handle it, he stabbed her where it hurt: "So did you keep him?"

Leng Gong's smug smile froze.

Another stab: "Didn't you still get dumped?"

Leng Gong's frozen smile slowly disappeared.

Yet another stab: "After he dumped you, didn't he take advantage of your absence to get together with someone else?"

Leng Gong's disappeared smile gradually turned to anger.

Xue Meng said: "Look, if you sat down and talked it out with him earlier, and weren't too stubborn to humble yourself, he might not have left."

Leng Gong seemed to have been touched, and her rage immediately fizzled out. Despite how tense she was, a thread of hidden pain flashed in her eyes.

After a while, she said, "...When he left, it was because I forced him to."

"....."

"But I didn't really want him to go. I've always... I've always..."

She paused so she wouldn't overdo it; her eyes were a little red.

Xue Meng suddenly felt a little nervous. Aya, was she going to cry? He was already so old, but he never knew how to comfort women!

He was still worried, but found that they were just groundless fears. After this bout of red eyes, Leng Gong started being fierce again, and said roughly: "If he wants to go, fine. What's so great about him? Does he think I can't live without him?"

Xue Meng: "....."

"I don't want to talk about this anymore, it just makes me upset." Leng Gong poured a cup of tea for herself, drank it dry in one gulp, and then said: "Come! Let's talk more about that sanctimonious slut."

"Fuck." On mentioning this person, Leng Gong seemed like she was collecting more than ten years of resentment. She became so angry she slapped her hand down, pointed her finger like she wanted to say something, but seemed to lack the bitter poetry that could be used to properly vent her anger. So she breathed out ferociously: "...I just don't understand, on what level are they better than me?"

Xue Meng: "...In what ways does your Shizun think this person's better than you?"

Leng Gong said angrily, "Him? If he dares to think that slut's better than me, I'll make him really suffer in bed!"

Xue Meng felt a little tired, and he kneaded his temples: "Then explain. If it was an outsider, like me, where would I think this person was better than you?"

Leng Gong reluctantly began to think about it.

After thinking for a long time, she said gloomily: "They're worse than me in every way."

"....."

Neither of us were born well. But that person didn't strive for progress and spent their days idly, while I stood on my own feet to create the world I wanted. After sleeping with Shizun for the night, I could coax him to happiness by giving him ten tons of gold to smash as he pleased. That person and Shizun do it seven times a night, and when they're done, they'd only take Shizun to a fifty-coins-a-table roadside stand. Damn it! It's infuriating. Tell me, how can their face be so thick-skinned?

"....." But for this young lady to say this kind of thing, your face isn't thin either.

Leng Gong didn't notice Xue Meng's embarrassment at all. She confidently said: "I have good prospects, I'm rich, I can support him. When I was with Shizun, he lived in a magnificent home and wore magnificent clothes. I spared no expense for food or clothes and I always gave him the best of everything."

Xue Meng hesitated and said with some difficulty, "So your Shizun was living off a woman?"

"Don't make it sound so shameful." Leng Gong said, annoyed. "I'd be happy to buy things that couldn't be bought with a thousand gold, as long as he liked it. But ever since he's been with that person, he's lived in a shabby hut, dressed in ordinary clothes, had to grow his own food, had to make

everything himself—it's enough to raise your hair on end. Tell me, in what way could that person compare with me?"

Xue Meng has seen many people who wouldn't leave each other through life or death, through good times and bad. Listening to her, he simply said, "Ah... that's not necessarily the case. Maybe your Shizun didn't want to be supported by you. Let me give you an example: let's say you have a father who's a really good person, and has raised you for many years and has been very good to you, but he isn't the richest. Would you like him?"

"Yes," Leng Gong said without thinking.

"Then let's say you have another father..."

"Why are you always talking about fathers?" Leng Gong couldn't make heads or tails about Xue Meng's lack of other examples. "Are there problems with you and your father?"

Xue Meng's eyes bugged out, "I, I I was just using it as an easy example!" Regardless, he continued: "You have another father, and he's not as good of a person as your original father, and he didn't even know that you existed, plus he neglected your mother. But, he's incredibly rich. Would you like him?"

Leng Gong was enraged: "No, I'd boil him alive!"

Xue Meng: ".....That's...not necessary. I'm just saying. You think money can make him happy, when maybe all he wants is for the two of you to read together, or something..."

Leng Gong thought about it. The more she thought about it, the uglier her expression got. Although she was as imposing as before, in her eyes was a sense of grievance.

At long last she said, stiffly: "... I don't really know how to read, and I'm uncultured. I single-mindedly studied for ten years, but I still couldn't compare to someone who just read while wandering around for five. All I have is money and physical strength. If he doesn't like it, what can I do?"

Xue Meng suddenly felt she was very much like a wolf dog who had been abandoned by her master and left in the rain, who felt so aggrieved that she wanted to die, but still needed to sit straight and upright and pretend that he didn't care.

Xue Meng sighed: "Let's move on. Why don't you talk about something else?"

Leng Gong said, obstinately: "There are other ways that I'm better than that person."

"... For example?"

"They're not as pale as me."

Towards Xue Meng's suspicious eyes, Leng Gong said moodily: "What? I meant before. I'm not as pale now as I used to be. The reasons are very complicated, I won't explain them to you."

"Ah." Xue Meng said, "I don't want to hear them either. What else?"

"They're not as good looking as I am. They have ugly taste in clothes."

"They're not as straightforward as I am. They've got a lot of twisty schemes."

They're not as high up as I am."

Xue Meng didn't know why, but when Leng Gong said the last sentence it seemed like she accidentally revealed something she meant to hide.

There was no point in continuing with this topic; probably the ultimate result would only be to figure out how many sentences Leng Gong could think of beginning with "they're not as". Also, Xue Meng has realized this Leng Gong was lacking when it came to self-reflection—if you asked about others' merits, she couldn't answer, and if you asked about her own shortcomings, she couldn't answer either.

So he had to use a different approach.

Xue Meng suddenly had a bright idea and said to Leng Gong: "You know, the way you're talking makes things a bit unclear. Why don't we play a game?"

"Oh? What game?"

From now on, pretend I'm your Shizun, and I'm asking you for something. Why don't you take your reaction, compare it to how that person who's stolen your place would react, and explain them to me?"

Leng Gong: "... You look pretty young, and yet you know how to play this kind of game."

After considering for a moment, she said: "Okay, but I need to make one thing clear. Don't get jealous of how my great talent emerged quickly, and develop some weird romantic feelings, and use this chance to pretend to be my Shizun to take advantage of me. I won't sleep with you."

Xue Meng was startled, and exploded: "I'm fucking helping you here! What stupid fantasy is that! Who wants to take advantage of you?! Take back those vulgar words! From now on I forbid you from saying anything about sleeping!!!"

Leng Gong raised one eyebrow and crossed her arms. "...Ah."

Xue Meng was pulling his hair out: "Also, it's 'great talent emerges slowly,' not 'quickly'! Don't randomly use messed-up idioms!<sup>38</sup>

"Huh?" Leng Gong's expression was stubborn. "Really? This kind of thing... if you don't get settled when you're young, can you even become great when it's later?"

Xue Meng: "??? I understood not a single word of what you just said. Forget it. I know you're not well read, that's fine. Let's not talk about this anymore and get started."

He cleared his throat. "I'll start asking questions now."

Leng Gong's interest piqued, and she sat up straight.

"Bring it on."

### **Ch. 328 Xue Meng's Wayward Young Lady Blind Date 3**

*Translator's note: So in Chinese, the words 他, referring to someone male in the third person, and 她, referring to someone female in the third person, are pronounced exactly the same. This leads to a misunderstanding in this chapter that works in Chinese, but not really in English. So I've chosen to have Taxian-jun refer to his other self as "they," and have Xue Meng misunderstand it as "she," because he still thinks TXJ is a woman referring to her love rival.*

And so they began.

The two immediately got into the proper positions and pulled themselves apart.

Xue Meng said: "Listen well. Right now I am your Shizun. You are still you. In front of us there are only spicy stir fries and spicy hot pots. We can't order anything else. What will you do?"

Leng Gong said concisely: "Smash this place."

"...."

"I'll smash things until they're willing to make us some non-spicy dishes."

"...."

---

<sup>38</sup> The idiom in question is "大器晚成" which literally means "it takes a long time to make great devices." Leng Gong misconstrued it as "大器早成" which means the opposite.

Having decided to begin roleplaying, she glanced at Xue Meng and said: "You're pretending to be Shizun right now, aren't you?"

Xue Meng: "... Yes."

"Good. What would you like to eat?"

The person who didn't like spicy food who Xue Meng knew best was Chu Wanning, so he casually chose some dishes that were to Chu Wanning's taste: "I want lion's head meatballs with crabmeat, sweet and sour fish, green vegetables with tofu, and lotus pastries."

Leng Gong stared when she heard this: "Why is your taste..."

Xue Meng: "What's wrong?"

"... Nothing much." Leng Gong said, "You sit here. I'll go down."

Xue Meng said in a rush: "No smashing the shop!"

"You never change do you, always begging for me to be lenient." Leng Gong narrowed her eyes theatrically. "Fine, I won't smash anything, I'll just go find the cook."

"What are you going to do with the cook?"

"I'll give him two choices," Leng Gong said solemnly: "Make the dish I want with no peppers in it..."

"And what's the alternative?"

"He'll put peppers in, I'll cut his head off."

Xue Meng's mouth twitched: "....."

This person is quite the poet.

The poet Leng Gong said efficiently: "I'm going."

When Xue Meng saw that she was really going down, he got so mad he felt dizzy: "This is just a play! What are you doing? Ok, ok, stop acting as yourself. What about your homewrecker; if it were her, what would she do?" After he finished, he hastily raised his hand and added, "And if she'd also smash the restaurant or take someone's head, you don't have to act that out!"

"What restaurant could they smash?" Leng Gong rolled her eyes. "They treasure their good reputation like a bird treasures its feathers. Wait a second, I'll show you."

In the blink of an eye, Leng Gong changed her face. If she didn't perform in the Pear Garden, it would have been a great loss to ticket-holders.<sup>39</sup>

In a split second, even her aura changed. Her outward wildness and swagger was held back in her bones; although she was still the same person, she now seemed extremely calm, reserved, tolerant and considerate.

She looked at Xue Meng softly. When she opened her mouth, her low, gently husky voice raised goose bumps along Xue Meng's back: "Shizun..."

"..." Xue Meng was caught off guard by such style. He stiffened, then quickly shouted, "Stop! Stop, stop! Let me warm up first, I, I...I need to get used to it!"

Leng Gong laughed, dimples appearing on her cheeks, and crooned, "Isn't it sickening? I told you they weren't direct. They were clearly thinking about eating meat, but first they have to make all these excuses for it, nowhere near as straightforward as I am. You should take your sweet time warming up, it's going to get worse soon enough."

Xue Meng: "..."

Slowly, Xue Meng suddenly had a question: "Wait a minute, that sanctimonious gold-digger, how come she calls your lover Shizun too?"

"Shouldn't they?"

"Is she also a disciple of your Shizun?"

"Yes."

Xue Meng went blank for a moment, suddenly bowed his head and began to count on his fingers. He mumbled as he counted: "One, two, three, no, this can't be counted as two people..."

Leng Gong looked at him, baffled. After a while, she couldn't help asking: "What are you doing?"

Xue Meng shook his head. "It's difficult for me to say but, I was wondering if I want to accept any disciples in the future. It feels a bit dangerous, especially when I'm so good looking..."

After that, he sighed again: "Well, I mean, your competition, the way she fawned over your Shizun was really too much. If someone talked like that towards me, I'd probably lose my appetite."

---

<sup>39</sup> The Pear Garden is the first known royal acting and musical academy in China, founded in the Tang Dynasty.



Leng Gong clapped for him: "Well said!"

Xue Meng asked curiously, "What do you usually call him? Do you also call him Shizun? Because when you say 'Shizun' you don't have that simpering tone."

Leng Gong waved her hand: "We normally don't call him the same thing."

"Then what do you call him?"

"I use his name directly."

"So you're doing things more normally."

"Or I call him Baobei."

"... I take back what I just said." Xue Meng had a headache and supported his head on his hands: "Okay okay, let's go on, you keep acting. I, your Shizun, have a headache now."

Leng Gong blinked and fell into character very quickly. Looking at him supporting his head, she immediately asked tenderly: "Are you tired?"

Xue Meng: "..."

"How did you get sick so quickly? Maybe you caught a chill..."

Xue Meng: "... No I'm angry."

"Ah." Leng Gong widened her eyes slightly, her voice as softly yielding as before: "Did I do something wrong to make you unhappy?"

Xue Meng's face turned green, but soon enough he couldn't hold it in any longer. "Ah!," he shouted, "No! No good! Stop stop stop!"

The star of Pear Garden, Miss Leng Gong, seemed to have become addicted to this act and couldn't break character. Adoringly, she said: "I'm sorry I'm so stupid. Even when I want to please Shizun, in the end I always make him unhappy. Shizun... please look at me, don't turn away."

Xue Meng's eyes rolled to the back of his head, and he looked like he was going to die from disgust.

At this moment, he suddenly felt a sense of respect for Mei Hanxue. Thinking about it, he was currently only dealing with one young lady, and he had exhausted all his patience, having to use eighteen types of martial arts to deal with her. Right now he even had to see if he had any theatrical

skills—was it because Mei Hanxue had such talents, that he could play around carelessly with all those flowers for so many years?

If they switched places, he'd have gray hair in a month's time!

The young lady stubbornly kept up her passionate performance: "Is Shizun unhappy because he can't get used to the food here? It's ok. If that's the reason, then I'll go downstairs and find the cook now."

Xue Meng was like a dying carp that had been beaten into life. He grabbed her and said, "Hey, hey, hey! Didn't you agree not to smash the store? I'm telling you now, I won't allow you to do evil deeds in Wuchang Town!"

"Oh?" Leng Gong minutely widened her beautiful eyes, and smiled: "What are you talking about? The head cook here just isn't good at making non-spicy food. How could I embarrass him? I've brought some silver, and I'm going down to give the cook a few ingots and ask him to lend me the kitchen. I'll personally make the dishes you want for you."

Her voice was agreeable, and then it slowed down, as soft as the rippling water: "I remembered. Shizun wants xiaolongbao with crabmeat, sweet and sour fish, green vegetables with tofu, and lotus pastries."<sup>40</sup>

"The crabmeat needs to be broken down with roe, the sweet and sour fish needs Zhenjiang vinegar to be fragrant, the green vegetables with tofu need the most tender seasonal vegetables, and the lotus pastries should have rose-flavored red bean paste to be exquisite. But maybe the restaurant doesn't have these ingredients, so I might go to the market later to check. It might take a little more time."

As Leng Gong said this, she raised her hand to gently stroke Xue Meng's head—although she only stroked air, and didn't actually make contact: "Don't get mad, why don't I also make Shizun a bowl of lotus paste tangyuan?"<sup>41</sup> Wait for me, I'll be back as soon as possible."

Xue Meng was getting goosebumps and hadn't yet opened his mouth to answer her, when suddenly, the room's bamboo lattice door was flung open with a crash.

He turned his head, and couldn't yet see the face of the newcomer, when a vine whip flowing with oppressive golden light rushed forward like electricity. It crossed his head in an instant and directly whipped Leng Gong's hand!

With a "pa!" sound, sparks exploded!

---

<sup>40</sup> Xue Meng said lion's head meatballs earlier, not xiaolongbao, and he doesn't correct this statement, so maybe this is a continuity error?

<sup>41</sup> Tangyuan are round dumplings made of glutinous rice, usually stuffed with a sweet filling.

Leng Gong muffled her cry of pain; she prepared to retaliate, but then saw that willow vine and was startled: "You—?"

Xue Meng also turned pale with fright, and cried out involuntarily: "How could it be... Tian, Tian Wen?!"

The next moment, a cold-faced man walked into the room. He had sword-like brows and phoenix eyes, a straight nose and thin lips, black hair tied in a ponytail, and was draped in clothes of raw white silk, flowing with silver light. He floated like an immortal, but his manner was as fierce as thunder. Who could it be but Tian Wen's master, Chu Wanning?

Because Xue Meng wore Manor Head Ma's phantom sachet, Chu Wanning didn't recognize him, but only scanned him worriedly before turning his eyes back to "Leng Gong". At that moment, the Beidou Immortal's features were icy cold, and his elegant face was filled with impatience. Upon opening his mouth, even more sparks flew in all directions.

"Mo Weiyu, how long are you planning on making trouble?"

Xue Meng turned his head and gaped: "Mo- mo- mo-.....you're Mo- mo-..."

Taxian-jun impatiently interrupted him: "Mo mo mo yourself; do you have a stutter?" I'm not Mo-zongshi. Don't fucking scream at me."

What's the difference??!!

Xue Meng felt like the sky was covered in black clouds, roiling with wind and thunder. And when he recalled the conversation he had with "Leng Gong" before, he felt like a thunderbolt had struck down from the sky, splitting him into bewildered pieces, from the top of his head to his scorched insides...

God! What did they say to each other!!

He said that Chu Wanning had a human face but a beastly heart, and that he was the Chen Shimei of the cultivation realm! He said that Chu Wanning was a heartless fickle contemptible shames person like Jiang Xi!!

He, he he even compassionately listened to Mo Weiyu like a caring big brother, heard him describe in great detail all those things he didn't want to know about his activities on Wushan, something bed reception pavilion hot spring he'd done it everywhere aaaahhhhhhhh someone please save him and give him a memory-wiping pill! Even if Jiang Xi was the one to give it to him he'd swallow it without blinking!!

Taxian-jun had been struck by Tian Wen, but Chu Wanning's intent was only to interrupt him carelessly fooling around with a "young maiden"; he controlled his strength and the strike wasn't heavy, only scraping a bit of skin—

However, the audacity of shameless people has no end. The barely-injured Taxian-jun stiffly squeezed out some blood from his wound, and deliberately show the spot where he bled to Chu Wanning. And with unending depths of eroticism, he exaggeratedly lifted his hand up close to his lips, extended the tip of his tongue, and licked it with menacing implications: "Very good, Chu Wanning. You truly are presumptuous to ignore the proper order of this world."

Chu Wanning: "..."

"Today, you made this venerable one bleed, something this venerable one will remember deep in his heart. You'll suffer for this, you'll..."

Chu Wanning held Tian Wen in his palm, and once again it hissed as sparks flew everywhere. He narrowed his eyes: "Are you finished yet? Do I need to do this a second time?"

Taxianjun raged, agitated: "Chu Wanning! Don't rely on this venerable one to indulge you anymore, I've spoiled you rotten! If you dare to use Tian Wen a second time, this venerable one will— will—"

His phoenix eyes narrowing dangerously, Chu Wanning let out an "oh" sound, and said portentiously: "You'll do what?"

Ta Xianjun slapped the table: "This venerable one will give you two to hold in three years!"<sup>42</sup>

"....."

This dreadful dialogue made Xue Meng helplessly wish that he could just die already.

Why is it that long ago when his cousin was always talking about how he wanted to torment his Shizun, Xuemeng was a bystander, and now after so long, when his cousin is still spouting similar nonsense, he's still a bystander? God! He just doesn't want to listen to this kind of talk, is that too much?

Chu Wanning had overestimated Taxian-jun's integrity and the thickness of his face after all. His face suddenly turned green, and he glanced over at Xue Meng, at a loss. Then he angrily said in a low voice: "... You are absolutely shameless beyond belief! Return with me immediately!"

---

<sup>42</sup> This phrase "two to hold in three years" or "三年抱俩" basically means to have two babies one right after another, within three years.

"Return? Hmm. Why should this venerable one return? Taxian-jun said frostily: "Everything under the sky belongs to this venerable one, so what's inappropriate about coming out in disguise to visit some lucky beauty?"<sup>43</sup>

As he spoke, he hauled Xue Meng over, patted him on the shoulder, and said to Chu Wanning, "Come. I'd like to introduce you to my new flame, they're known as...cough...known as, um..."

He wanted to make up some title like "Linjiang-xianzi" or "Yu Mian Jiao Niang".<sup>44</sup> This was something he was actually capable of, if he just referenced the books that he had gnawed through in boredom during his years spent alone. The problem was, ever since he went to Nanping Mountain to live in seclusion, Taxian-jun's days had become rather lively.

He no longer needed to live alone, cold and distressed, in Wushan Palace, nor did he need to pass the lonely hours through solitary reading and martial arts practice. His mindset was good, and he could do many things. This directly influenced Taxian-jun's approach regarding his education, which fell from profound but unpopular works to the common and popular.<sup>45</sup> When he was guarding Wushan Palace he read *The Book of Changes* and *The Book of Songs*;<sup>46</sup> he never wanted to see those again. After all, Chu Wanning had returned. If he wanted to see that person write, "Is my heart not stone, that it can't be turned" with his own hands again and again, he could do that.<sup>47</sup> It was no longer necessary to use those thick books to fish for the fragmented reflections of the beloved deceased, nor was it necessary to hunt down particular phrases that Chu Wanning had himself spoken in the past, in order to feel a momentary fierce joy and sorrow.

This contented Taxian-jun was willing to fall from grace again. This year, aside from the "Unintelligible List", the only book he read was the "Haitang Romance: Stories of Love" ten volume collected edition.

So he racked his brains and searched his guts. Finally he slapped the table, seized Xue Meng, and majestically spread out his harms to introduce him: "This person is the peerless rascal - Long Ao Tian."<sup>48</sup>

Chu Wanning: "....."

---

<sup>43</sup> He's referring to the practice of wei fu "微服", which is when a high-ranking official goes out in disguise to observe daily life among the populace.

<sup>44</sup> 玉面娇娘 roughly translates to "Jade-faced lovable maiden". The reason why this footnote is here is because that translation sounds atrocious in English; it works better (though it's still cloying) in Chinese, I swear.

<sup>45</sup> Meatbun uses the idiom Yangchun white snow or "阳春白雪" to describe the profound but unpopular works Taxian-jun used to read. In past parts of the narrative, Chu Wanning was also described as 阳春白雪.

<sup>46</sup> The Book of Changes is another term for the I Ching, an ancient divination text and the oldest of the Five Chinese classics. The Book of Songs is the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, and also counts among the Five Classics.

<sup>47</sup> This is a line of poetry from the Book of Songs, from a poem describing the author's patriotism and self-discipline, and of the lofty ambitions he can't fulfill due to the oppression of crowds.

<sup>48</sup> Long "隆" meaning grand, An "傲" meaning arrogant, Tian "天" like the heavens.

Xue Meng's face turned green for a moment, even brighter than his Shizun's. He said angrily, "Bah! Peerless your grandpa! You, you're a hooligan whose dog mouth can't produce ivory! I, I I'm not...". He was so furious with his verbal attacks that he couldn't get them out clearly; so if he couldn't use his words, he might as well take direct action. He wanted to release the phantom sachet directly. Who would imagine that when he left that morning, he'd come out short-handed, and end up tying himself into a dead knot!

Taxian-jun still didn't know who he really was, and believed he was still willing to help him piss Chu Wanning off. So he stepped on Xue Meng's foot and whispered in his ear, trying to bribe him with money: "Let's coordinate a bit; that fickle man who lost my embroidered bag. After we're through with him, I'll send you a big red envelope, it'll have at least a hundred gold leaves in it."

Xue Meng was so mad he screamed, and directly cast a curse to break apart that phantom sachet.

Back in his original form, he pulled out Longcheng, kicked over a chair, brandished his sword and rushed toward Taxianjun, bellowing angrily:

Mo Weiyu! You're not a person! You are a dog!!! Who are you calling some peerless something rascal? Who are you calling Long Ao Tian?!! You dare to anger Shizun!! Don't you dare hide!! Today I, I, I'll take your dog life!!!!!"

#### **Ch. 329 Xue Meng's Wayward Young Lady Blind Date 4**

It has been said by some esteemed members of the Jianghu that the most miserable profession in the world is not a funeral director, nor a beggar, but an innkeeper.

Throughout the ages, masters of all kinds seem to have a special love for inns. They carry on clandestine love affairs in inns, fight and brawl in inns, confront their love rivals in inns... and then there are people like Taxian-jun and Sect Leader Xue, who are clearly dealing with private family issues and could go two steps to have their battles at SiSheng Peak. But they have their particular stubbornness, and refused to do so, and thus, unable to wait, they had their bird-pecks-dog dog-bites-bird fight in the inn.

The innkeeper, an old lady, was quite cross about this.

She leaned on a cane, tottering towards them, and for some reason unnecessarily announced herself like so: "I, Shi Longxia, am an old lady."

The three people couldn't understand this pronouncement, and looked at each other in dismay.

Finally, Taxian-jun waved his hand, and said pompously: "I, Mo Weiyu, am Emperor."

He pointed to Chu Wanning: "He, Chu Wanning, is a Xianzun."

He then pointed to Xue Meng: "He... forget it, he's not important."

Xue Meng: "???"

Taxianjun said: "I ask, are you afraid?"

The elderly Shi Longxian wasn't afraid of violence, and was bold enough to fight against dark, evil forces. She held her cane and scanned the mess, and threw resonant words to the floor: "None of you have any sense of morals!!!"

Xue Meng's face turned red.

Chu Wanning's face also turned an ugly color.

Taxian-jun crossed his arms, disapprovingly, not willing to accept this: "Hey, old lady, can't you be more tactful? Don't you know the heroic deeds of this venerable one? Of everything that lies under the heavens, if this venerable one had not exerted his godly might to stop the flood that would have extinguished this world, your pathetic little inn would have been dashed into splinters and fragments of brick. What's smashing a few tables and rooms compared to that?"

Chu Wanning said sternly: "Mo Weiyu!"

Taxian-jun coughed: "If, if worst comes to worst, this venerable one will compensate you for the damages, just say how much you want! One or two hundred taels of silver should be enough, correct?"

Innkeeper Shi Longxia was not motivated by money, and continued to rub her cheek and glare at them, spitting mad. She forcefully repeated her previous words: "None of you have any sense of morals!!!"

"Hey, you—"

Xue Meng pushed Taxian-jun aside and walked forward a few steps, embarrassed. He said to the innkeeper, "Elderly one, I'm truly sorry. My temper is too awful, I temporarily lost control and destroyed so many of your chairs and tables and rooms, and I also stabbed several holes in your roof. I sincerely apologize, and will compensate you for the damages appropriately. Do you think this is satisfactory?"

After this, he looked back at Chu Wanning: "Shizun, do you think this is satisfactory?"

Chu Wanning had not spoken yet. The little old lady thumped the floor with her cane again and once again said furiously: "Morals—"

"We have no sense of morals." Taxian-jun interrupted, rolled his eyes and said impatiently: "*Sigh*, come on, old lady, what exactly do you want? We're providing compensation and we've apologized, and you're still going 'no morals no morals'. Besides, if you wouldn't give face to a monk, wouldn't you at least give face to the Buddha? You say that this venerable one has no morals, this venerable one won't complain, you say that Xue Meng also has no morals, this venerable one won't argue. But will you go so far as to not know who *he* is?"

As he said this, he dragged Chu Wanning over.

"Are you blind?"

Chu Wanning brushed his sleeves, wanting to free himself from Taxian-jun's grasp. He scowled with his sword-like eyebrows and said angrily, "Get lost."

"This venerable one won't get lost." Not only did Taxian-jun not release his hand, but also crooned lowly, forcibly pulling him in until they were stuck together. He reached out and pinched Chu Wanning's chin, licked his lips, and said in a low voice: "You're acting like a spoiled child."

Xue Meng: "..."

Chu Wanning: "... Do you want to die?!"

The old lady didn't seem to buy the story of this savior Xianjun, and continued to thump the floor with her cane, muttering: "Truly no sense of morals!"

Everyone looked at each other. This time, even Chu Wanning didn't know how they should talk to her.

As these three brilliant famed cultivators were stuck in a dark corner of the second floor of an inn, trapped with no way to escape by the words of a white-haired wrinkly old lady too weak to truss a chicken, there suddenly came the creaking sound of footsteps coming in from the stairs. A half-grown little girl ran upstairs, hugged the arm of the innkeeper, turned her head and stated clearly: "I'm sorry I'm sorry! My grandma can't hear or see clearly, so she doesn't really know what's going on around her. She doesn't recognize you or know who you are."

Xue Meng let out an "ahh," and said: "No wonder, so that's why..."

Taxian-jun was also shocked. He coughed uncomfortably and said in a low voice: "Then why didn't she tell us earlier..."

"Huh?" The little girl blinked, confused. "No, every time grandma talks to someone, she'll tell them from the beginning."



"What'll she tell them?"

"I am a deaf and blind old lady."

Chu Wanning: "..."

Xue Meng: "..."

Taxian-jun: "Who thought she was called Shi Longxia just now?"<sup>49</sup>

Xue Meng said angrily: "Wasn't it you, you dog?"

Since they had smashed the old lady's shop, and couldn't find a carpenter to come repair it, and it was getting dusky outside and looked like it might rain at any moment, the three of them decided to stay for the innkeeper's sake and make the necessary emergency repairs to the building before it started to storm.

Of the three, one is a master of machine armor, one has been used to hard living since childhood, and one Xue Meng used to frequently help Xue Zhengyong. Together they busied themselves, easily fixing the chairs, tables, roof, and anything else.

When the last broken beam was repaired, torrential rain began to pour down with a crashing sound, and all of Wuchang Town was enclosed in a misty haze. The old woman's little granddaughter saw that the rain was too heavy, so she told them they might as well stay for a bit, and wait until the next day when the rain has stopped to return.

In actuality, as far as Chu Wanning's party went, it wouldn't have been difficult to open a portal to return to the mountains. But in the end it was still a bit of a hassle, and it had been a very long time since the three of them could set aside their normal duties to spend some time together.

Rain cannot trap people, only the heart can trap people.

Chu Wanning looked at Xue Meng looking anxiously back at him, sighed, and said to the little shopkeeper: "We'll just have to trouble you then."

"It's no trouble at all!" The little girl knew exactly who was in front of her. She blushed with joy, and went off hopping and skipping to prepare dinner and their rooms.

The atmosphere of this meal was very delicate.

---

<sup>49</sup> The phrase "am deaf and blind" is "是聋瞎," pronounced Shi Long Xia. Meatbun...why do you keep doing this.

What Mo Ran had said before was right. Nowadays the three of them, master and disciples, aren't fit to stay under one roof at all. Although Xue Meng desperately missed them, and desperately wanted them to go back to the days when they were as inseparable as light and shadow, a broken window screen can't be whole again, and gluing it back together would only be an act of self deception. It's impossible for them to pretend that nothing has happened, and relate to each other as before.

Can Xue Meng pretend not to know what their relationship is? Of course he can't.

Therefore, although he has been trying to chat with Chu Wanning, he felt something strange. It was like when he had been informed that when they were all at Taobao Manor and Chu Wanning had faced him directly, that behind a curtain he was actually being possessed by Mo Ran. Although this matter is long past, and that strong sense of his world falling apart had also passed, when he sits next to them, when he's sitting right next to them, he can't help but think back on this incident, and then he can't help but imagine...

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran...

His Shizun and his cousin...

!!!!

He truly wanted to know if back then Chu Wanning had been bullied too badly to resist. After all, Mo Ran was too unreasonable. But he dared not ask, and he dared not speak, so he only glanced at Chu Wanning, wanting but unable to say something—

"Shizun..."

"Yes?"

"...Please have some more meat."

"Shizun..."

"Yes?"

"...Please have some more meat."

"Shizun..."

"....."

"...Please have even more meat."

"It is said that the fighting spirit aroused by the first roll of drums becomes depleted by the second and exhausted by the third. Xue Meng felt a bit tired.

But when Taxian-jun saw Sect Leader Xue cozying up to the Beidou Immortal, he uncharacteristically didn't stop them. Instead, as if he didn't care, he gnawed at a bone and smiled grimly."

The three of them ate at one table in silence, until Chu Wanning couldn't bear the strange atmosphere any longer, got up and said: "I'm going back to my room."

Taxian-jun: "Okay, I won't see you off."

Chu Wanning's face was gloomy, and he walked off brushing away his sleeves.

Seeing this, Xue Meng couldn't hold it in any longer, and threw down his chopsticks with a "pa" sound: "Mo Ran!"

Taxianjun gnawed his bone and said lazily: "What is it, still looking for a fuck?"

"You—" He gritted his teeth: "You have no idea what's good for you!!"

"How'd this venerable one offend you again? Peerless Daozhang?"

"... Wha-?"

"Peerless Rascal Daozhang."

Xue Meng almost jumped up and strangled Taxian-jun. Like a flying bird and a jumping dog they fought until they were both out of breath. They stared at each other, separated by a table. Xue Meng slammed the table: "Tell me! Why did you betray Shizun!"

"Hey, come on. Xue Meng, you can't actually be that serious with your bootlicker act. Before the appearance spell was broken, you said he was unfair to this venerable one, that he was the Chen Shimei of the cultivation realm, on par with Jiang Xi. You said all that yourself."

"That's because you took everything out of context!" Xue Meng argued angrily: "What was all that about leaving you alone at home, when clearly at that point he had already...already..."

He had already transformed into floating ash and smoke on the wind, for their sake and for the sake of the mortal world.

Even if their misunderstandings was corrected, and the entire story and all its details became known, this part of their past is, for Xue Meng and Taxian-jun, a most delicate wound that neither of them could dare to touch.

Taxian-jun stared at him: "Don't say it."

"I wasn't going to."

After mutually staring at each other for a bit, Xue Meng said: "Anyway, I'll never believe that Shizun would treat people unfaithfully. The person you're talking about who dug into your corner must have been someone you made up!"

"This venerable one didn't make that up!"

"Then who is it?"

"It's that hypocrite Mo-zongshi!"

"You..." Xue Meng's voice suddenly seized up, and he lost his ability to think. After freezing for a long time, he finally came to his senses. He slammed both hands on the table, stood up, and shouted furiously: "You're insane!"

"We've been fighting all this time, and I wasted so much time helping you, and it turns out I've been listening to you beat yourself up this entire time! You've been eating your own vinegar, you sicko! You you you...you deserve to go to Guyueye for treatment!! Should I make an appointment with Jiang Xi for you? I can save you money by giving my name!!!"

"Oh?" Taxianjun was a man who was particularly keen when it came to certain matters. He shrewdly lifted his head and, detouring past all obstacles to strike directly at that blind spot, said: ""Hold on. Why can I save money by giving your name?""

"I—"

Taxianjun narrowed his eyes. "Since when did you have such a good relationship with Jiang Yechen?"

"I, I..."

Xue Meng "I"ed for a while, but couldn't "I" up an answer.

If we were to say that there are things Taxian-jun, who has lived for two lifetimes, still didn't know, the only thing was probably the secret of Xue Meng's birth. The fact that Jiang Xi was Xue Meng's father had been Madame Wang's well-kept secret. After the deaths of Madame Wang and Xue Zhengyong, only this father and son pair knew; without exception, no outsiders had any clue.

Taxian-jun naturally couldn't figure out the real relationship between Xue Meng and Jiang Xi. He watched Xue Meng's little face turn from white to red, from red to green, until finally he looked like he

was suffering greatly from trying to restrain himself from speaking. Suddenly, a flash of light went off in his mind, and he instantly gained holy wisdom of what was going on.

— Ah! Could it be....

So it's like that!!

Taxian-jun himself liked an older, frigid man like Chu Wanning, and had pushed himself onto him, so he felt that other men must also have similar tastes. So instantly his thoughts turned crooked, and he looked at Xue Meng with an entirely new level of respect. While he looked he felt deeply moved; who could have known...

"No need to speak." Taxian-jun suddenly lost all his anger. He got up and filled up a cup of wine in the manner of a hero facing a fellow hero. Admiringly, he raised the cup and drained it in one gulp. Then he turned over the empty cup and praised: "Xue Meng ah, a scholar who has been away three days that, um... *cough*, I have an entirely new level of respect for you! You really did it! This venerable one congratulates you!"<sup>50</sup>

Xue Meng: "???"

It has to be said that Xue Meng hadn't interacted much with Mo Ran's Taxian-jun personality. He's used to dealing with his upright cousin Mo-zongshi, and so he didn't realize a very important point: when speaking to Taxian-jun, the phrase "did it" oftentimes won't have the connotation that normal people would think of.

Xue Meng had in a haze been poured one cup of wine after another, and hadn't realized what Taxian-jun's "Brother, you really did it," was actually praising, nor what his "Congratulations!" was congratulating.

He could only vaguely hear Taxian-jun cooing up to him and asking: "Hey, what did you think of it? Was it good? Could you handle it?"

Xue Meng thought he was talking about wine and muttered: "How could I, it was way too much... I can't really take..."

He was dizzy and growing more and more nauseous; Mo Ran that dog actually poured Shao Daozi down his throat.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> The idiom that TXJ at first tries to use is "士别三日，刮目相看" or "A scholar who has been away three days must be looked at with new eyes." It's a line from Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and means that someone who has made rapid improvements in a short time should be evaluated differently.

<sup>51</sup> Shao Daozi is the name of an ancient form of baijiu, a very, very strong liquor. It literally feels like fire going down I Do Not Recommend It.

This won't do, he's going to complain to Shizun...

He staggered towards Chu Wanning's room, but was stopped by Taxian-jun. Xue Meng's eyes stared blankly, wondering why Taxian-jun was suddenly so animated. He said vaguely: "Wha-, what are you doing?"

Taxian-jun grabbed Xue Meng and raised his eyebrows: "One gets to know the self through wine, and a thousand cups is too few; it's so hard for us to get a chance to chat, so what are you embarrassed about? You know, with your personality, this venerable one has long thought that no girl would be able to stand you. For you to finally understand this isn't an easy thing; listen to gege—"

Xue Meng could hardly stand up, and his face turned green: "Let go, I....I want..."

Taxian-jun didn't care at all what he wanted.

He only felt that it was a rare thing for Xue Meng to understand things like this. This didi was finally learning from him, and realizing that bedding a more senior cultivator was this world's greatest pleasure.<sup>52</sup>

First gege will pamper Yuheng of the Night Sky Chu-xianzun.

Then didi will seize the Night-Fragrant Pollia Jiang Yechen.

How wonderful!

After he returned home, he wanted to hang the grand records of their brotherly heroic exploits around the necks of booksellers, and demand that they print ten million copies to distribute throughout the cultivation realm.

With this, he could become rich again!

So Taxian-jun joyously said: "This venerable one has done quite a lot of study in this field. Since you are this venerable one's didi, it's possible to lend you a hand with the difficult points..."

"Let go...I wanna...."

"This venerable one knows you want to, but your physical strength is not as good as this venerable one's, so you can't take on too much. The key point is in your skills. Naturally, the skills of this venerable one are exceptionally—"

"Huurkk-!!!" A violent sound of retching interrupted Taxian-jun's incessant self-promotion.

---

<sup>52</sup> FYI didi is younger brother; just putting this here since the word tends to appear far less frequently than gege in novels.

Xue Meng, Xue Ziming, after having vomited on the face of the beautiful dashixiong Mei Hanxue, had now vomited on the handsome face of the butterfly boned beauty banquet emperor of the world, and did so wildly with no reservations.

"....."

Taxian-jun's face suddenly turned black.

"Xue Meng! How dare you throw up on this venerable one's clothes! This venerable one had to go down the mountain and help chop firewood for an entire day to earn enough spending money to buy this. Fuck!"

In response, Xue Meng's eyes rolled up, and once again making a spectacular mess: "Bluurgrghhhhh —!"

### **Ch. 330 Xue Meng's Wayward Young Lady Blind Date 5**

Taxian-jun felt that he had never been so wronged before in his life. Not even going down the mountain to help people plant crops and chop firewood and slaughter pigs and babysit could compare.

After all, the work he did off the mountain to earn his secret pocket money was in disguise, and besides, he only did it under the alias of "Gou-zongshi".<sup>53</sup>

It was unclear whether using this nickname made him happy or anxious. In actuality, the villagers all had good things to say about his "Gou-zongshi" role; they praised "Gou-zongshi" as strong and valiant: if you paid him he'd work, and when he's done he'd leave without complaints. He was quite an excellent day laborer.

The only thing was, this person liked to brag, and would frequently spout things like, "this reminds me of when I possessed a thousand servants," or "this reminds me of when I had countless treasures," and so on.

And when his temper got fired up, he would always threaten to chop off people's heads, and when comforting a child would also threaten to cut off that child's head. As a result, when his boss said that his wages would be deducted, he could only force an unnatural smile and bounce the child that he had scared into tears.

---

<sup>53</sup> Gou "苟" means careless/negligent. Coincidentally, it's pronounced exactly the same as the character for dog, "狗".

Between gritted teeth, he would comfort the child, saying: "Rocking, rocking, rocking down to Naihe bridge, Granny Meng will call me a good baby."<sup>54</sup>

When the child burst into laughter and the boss turned away, no longer paying attention, he ground his teeth and whispered: "Just you wait! When Chu Wanning isn't looking, this venerable one will take off with all the property you fiendish villagers own! Bah!"

But this time was different. This time he had no disguise, nor did he have an alias.

Xue Meng had vomited all over the robes of the Magnificent Emperor Taxian-jun; he could only throw them away. Now, wearing a plain unadorned inner robe, he looked like a destitute, dejected laborer.

Even worse, he still had to mop up the floors. Who let everyone else fall asleep, and leave him the only one still awake?

Taxian-jun, with a disgusted face, carried Xue Meng back to his guest room, threw him on the bed, then carelessly threw a quilt over him.

"You damn drunkard!"

He raised his hand and with a "pa!" sound slapped Xue Meng. In response, he got Xue Meng's groans and whines. Taxian-jun stood for a moment, felt this all to be exceptionally pointless, then went out.

But instead of returning to his room, he asked the shopkeeper to buy a few pots of wine, and went to the stairway of the inn, where he sat by himself to drown his sorrows.

While he drank, he looked furtively at Chu Wanning's room.

He deliberately made a lot of noise, exaggerating all his movements and sounds, in hopes that Chu Wanning would give some sort of response.

Unfortunately they'd been busy working most of the day, and the one who finally responded to him was a random inn guest, who poked his head out to shout: "Are you crazy?!"

Taxian-jun viciously looked up: "Do you want to die?"

The random inn guest never would have thought that the one outside was Emperor Taxian-jun. He startled, and with an "eep!" sound crawled back into his room.

---

<sup>54</sup> This appears to be a variation on a popular nursery rhyme, a version of which you can listen to here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAoUZcj-NSc>



Taxian-jun rolled his eyes and muttered, "If this venerable one hadn't been in a good temper, you'd already be missing your head! You fiend!"

He continued to drink, and the more he drank, the more wronged he felt.

When he finished drinking, he glanced hatefully at the guest room at the end of the hall—the lights had already gone out, and Chu Wanning hadn't come to comfort him, or even seem to care whether he returned or not. He actually went straight to bed!

Taxian-jun ground his teeth. If he were Mo-zongshi, Chu Wanning would long have since come to keep him company and support him with kind, sweet, comforting words.

He was so angry that he gulped down yet another pot.

Xue Meng said that he was no different from Mo-zongshi, Chu Wanning said that he was the same person as Mo-zongshi, and Mo-zongshi himself said that they were no different, just different stages of one person.

They're all wrong!

Taxian-jun's paranoia and his petty twisted ways of thinking were different! Just look at Chu Wanning's attitude towards him! Why did he lose the brocade bag he gifted him, and only keep the rag made by that hypocrite?

They tricked him into being uncivilized! They tricked him into studying less! Everyone in the world has betrayed him!

Even Chu Wanning didn't care about him at all! Yes, he came to Wuchang Town to look for him, but he didn't have a single kind word for him, and didn't even apologize for losing his Qixi gift. Taxian-jun had searched through multiple books to find his favorite phrases to embroider on that brocade bag, no one else could have gotten such a gift, even if they wanted it!

Chu Wanning has no idea what's good for him!

Drinking even more, he became a bit confused, hugging the wooden railings of the stairwell to steady himself, the words "this venerable one is not happy" written all over his face.

In his daze, he seemed to hear a door opening somewhere, then approaching footsteps that stopped where his body was.

Taxian-jun raised his head, and in the misty candlelight, he saw that pure, beautiful face that he had wrongly hated for half a lifetime, foolishly pined after for ten years, and had thirsted after across two worlds.

He stared for a bit, then muttered "Chu Wanning..." to the new arrival.

Just saying this name out loud made the pit of his stomach feel moist. Whether controlled by the Eight Sufferings Everlasting Hatred Flower or not, his heart from beginning to end has always had the strongest, most desperate desires for Chu Wanning. His heart seems to be steeped in longing, but aside from longing, there was an excess of grievance, warmth, hurt, and fondness. Did he not love him? From the bottom of his heart, his feelings towards Chu Wanning had never been less than those of his other self.

But what could he do? He has been a puppet for the last ten years of his previous life, and then a walking corpse. The Eight Sufferings Everlasting Hatred Flower had carved a hole in his flesh. He was like a wicked dragon who has been trapped in darkness for too long. and had gotten used to loneliness as a companion, tyranny as his footsoldiers. When the sunlight of the mortal world once again unreservedly embraced him, he was terrified.

The dragon that he was could only howl like a demon and display his claws, riddled with scars yet still sharp. In this way this venerable one could show off his disdain at associating with you.

In actuality, he knew inside how much he envied the "him" that could relive his life in another world.

Even if you arranged the facts in front of him one by one, even if everyone told him, " Mo-zongshi is you, you two are the same being," he wouldn't be able to acknowledge it. He'd cover his head and refuse the entire world.

He'd say: no, this venerable one is different from that person.

In actuality, he knew that he was lying. After all, how many times had he dreamt of it when he was at Wushan Palace: dreamt that he had gone back to the beginning, that the world was ablaze, that *he* was beside him. But every time he woke up, all that vanished.

He laid in his too-large bed, curtains flying around him. He hated having to wake up, hated Duke Zhou for not returning those nice dreams to him, and hated Zhuang Sheng for not allowing his butterfly to become his reality.<sup>55</sup>

So every time he shouted, "this venerable one is not Mo-zongshi!" he wondered who might come to comfort him. He wanted to grab a few thousand palace maids, and have them yell out 810 times a day, "You are Mo-zongshi, you and him are one and the same." Then he would be at peace.

---

<sup>55</sup> Duke Zhou is a Zhou Dynasty nobleman who became known as the "God of Dreams." Zhuang Sheng, otherwise known as Zhuangzi, was a Daoist philosopher who famously authored the "Butterfly Dream," wherein he dreamed he was a butterfly, and upon waking up, didn't know if he was a man who dreamt of a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was a man.

"Why did you drink so much?"

Chu Wanning entered his field of vision, brows knitted, and tried to help him up, but was himself pulled down by an outstretched hand.

"Mo Ran, what's gotten into....Oh..."

He embraced Chu Wanning with enormous strength, and caring for nothing else, enveloped him in a fierce, deep kiss. But when that kiss became more and more fervent, he seemed to have thought of something and, as if deliberately imitating someone, suddenly gentled.

"This venerable one can do it too..." While Chu Wanning was entwined in the fragrance of wine and his melancholy kiss, Taxian-jun murmured vaguely: "It's not hard."

Chu Wanning didn't know what he was talking about, but stiffened. The hallway was too open; there was no cover to speak of, and he was afraid that someone would come out and chance upon this scene. He tried to struggle free, but Taxian-jun pressed him against the wooden railings and kissed him even deeper. Based on Taxian-jun's typical way of doing things, it wasn't out of the question for them to start unabashedly doing things right there on the stairwell.

But as Chu Wanning resisted more and more, Taxian-jun suddenly uncharacteristically ended the kiss. His black and purple eyes drooped slightly, fixated on Chu Wanning's moist lips. He moved closer, wanting to continue. After a while, like a loyal dog begging to be fed by his master, he kissed him again.

Chu Wanning: "..."

Taxian-jun kissed him three more times, then stopped. Although his eyes were moist, he restrained himself, and held Chu Wanning in his close embrace.

He sighed heavily: "Tell me, is this venerable one dreaming again..."

This man was always uncontrollably aggressive, and rarely sniffled like this into Chu Wanning's shoulder. Chu Wanning was startled, but then gained some understanding.

In this world, no matter which one of Mo Ran's soul threads it was, no matter which fragment, he would always know him best.

Chu Wanning raised his hand, caressed his back, and petted him as he had done when he was a teenager. He said: "It's not a dream. Let's go back to our room."

Taxian-jun was drowsy and stubborn, muttering, "I'm not sleeping. I'm not going back."

Chu Wanning said helplessly: "... What are you fussing about now?"

Taxian-jun wasn't happy, so Taxian-jun made a fuss, groaning and whining, as if he still felt terribly wronged: "You already put out the lights, and you still didn't come find this venerable one, you're trying to make this venerable one mad on purpose..."

This person was the emperor of the previous world, but when he was drunk and rubbing against his neck, Chu Wanning had an sudden thought, that Taxian-jun was like a beautiful concubine, jealous and clamoring for his favor.

Chu Wanning felt silent at this momentary image; finally, he said: "Didn't I learn this from you? It's you who said you had to put out the lights, so that those who wouldn't dare to come in could take advantage of the darkness and sneak in. I was saving face for you."

"...? Nonsense. Who wanted you to save face for me?" Half asleep and half awake and still mad, he continued: "this venerable one has destroyed the heavens and extinguished the earth, what things could this venerable one dare not..."

The voice slowly faded.

"Chu Wanning..."

"Yes?"

"Wanning..."

"....."

In the end, the voice became gentle, not much different from when he was young and naive:  
"Shizun..."

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment. He raised his hand and stroked his hair.

"Yes."

"When I wake up tomorrow, will you still be here?"

Chu Wanning closes his eyes, and repeated a phrase he had often repeated in these two years of seclusion: "Go to sleep, I'll be here the entire time."

With this, Taxian-jun felt content. After a while, there was a sound of even breathing. The drunk emperor was finally at peace, and finally slept soundly. Chu Wanning supported him carefully and returned to their room. Lying in bed, that man's face was upright, with no hint of wicked tendencies.

He looked no different from the youth he took as a student all those years ago, who would raise his umbrella to save earthworms.

The parasitic flower had withered, and the nightmare would never come again.

Just -

"Then why did you lose this venerable one's brocade bag?" In his sleep, Taxian-jun suddenly kicked the quilt and shouted.

"This venerable one will go on a blind date! this venerable one wants to win... win... Taobao Manor's Gift Box... 500 volumes...." of rare erotic art.

Fortunately, the second half of the sentence was in vague mutterings, and Chu Wanning didn't hear.

But even though Chu Wanning didn't know that the ultimate goal of his blind date was to get erotic storybooks, when he was faced with this man who was asleep and yet could make petty complaints in his dreams, he still had to facepalm, and endure endless headaches.

Even if you beat him to death, he wouldn't tell Xue Meng that he had lost Mo Ran's brocade bag because Taxian-jun had shamelessly embroidered on it a selection from some erotic story's "Eighteen Caresses".

Compared with Mo-zongshi's dignified embroidery of verses wishing for peace and contentment, who would prefer to wear eighteen caresses...

He would also never tell Mo Ran, not even if you beat him to death, that he had not actually lost that brocade bag that exemplified Taxian-jun's temperament so well. It was actually locked in a wooden box that only he could open.

It was there with everything else that he had ever gifted to him.

-

The next day, Xue Meng got up early.

Being under the same roof as Chu Wanning was a rare thing, so he decided to go out and buy some of his Shizun's favorite breakfast items as a sign of his respect. But when he went downstairs, he found that a table near the inn's window was already covered with a sumptuous breakfast, and that Mo Ran was laying out bowls and chopsticks.

As soon as he looked up and saw him come down, Mo Ran laughed: "Up so early?"

"....."

Although he had long since known that Mo Ran changed consciousness every three days, it was still strange to experience it directly. Xue Meng remained still for a while. He stood there for a long time before he grunted an affirmative.

"I made a fool of myself yesterday. Sometimes I'm just like that."

Xue Meng scratched his head, and said uncomfortably: "Forget it, it's not like it's the first time I've had reason to laugh at you." He went to look over the table, and couldn't help but ask: "Did you borrow the kitchen from the shopkeeper?"

"Yes." Mo-zongshi looked at him with a laugh and put a plate of golden, crispy pan-fried pork buns in front of him. "There's still congee boiling on the stove. It's almost ready. Would you do me a favor and help me make three bowls?"

"Ah." Xue Meng answered, and went into the small kitchen with Mo Ran.

When he lifted the pot lid, the steam from the congee emitted a strong fragrance, and the congee itself was full of shrimp and sliced fish. Mo Ran nimbly filled three bowls, and Xue Meng helped to find condiments.

He placed halved soft-boiled eggs right on the steaming congee, then sprinkled on white sesame seeds, chopped tender scallions, golden crisp fritters, and a few drops of sesame oil, until the final result was fragrant and beautiful.

Xue Meng was curious, and couldn't help asking: "Ta...ah, the you from yesterday. Can he make this too?"

"Yes, and no worse than I can now." Mo Ran said: "It's just that he likes to get angry and throw tantrums. Actually a lot of these recipes are ones he thought up when he was in control, but he never made them, and just left them for me to prepare."

Xue Meng said "ah," made a few muttering sounds, then asked: "Why did Shizun lose his brocade bag and keep yours?"

The hand that Mo Ran was using to slice eggs stilled; he turned to Xue Meng with a smile and said: "We're one person, and this is an embarrassing matter. So I can't tell you."

Xue Meng stared at him: "Haven't you embarrassed yourself plenty of times in front of me? So you're all discreet now; why didn't you feel embarrassed when you called me that Peerless something yesterday? Speaking of which, our accounts aren't settled yet—"

Mo-zongshi truly was a man who did what he pleased. He immediately changed his tune and said: "Ah, then we should count as two people. You can settle with Taxian-jun when he comes back, be good now."

Xue Meng: "???"

"That's right." When the last bowl of seafood congee was ready, Mo Ran seemed to suddenly think of something and said to Xue Meng with great seriousness, "I still have something else to tell you."

Xue Meng was shocked by his sudden solemnity and felt inexplicable pressure : "S-, say it then."

Mo Ran said: "Actually, I don't know what you were thinking, or what happened between you two, that suddenly... well, in any case, it's your private business, and I'm not in a position to ask. But I thought about it, and as your gege, since I now know about this matter, I should give you some advice.

Xue Meng: "Ah?"

""Xue Meng, you're still young, and you're free to experiment with your feelings, but his age, experience and status are all higher than yours, so it'll be hard for you two to get along. You have a strong temper, so remember to be more restrained, and to be tolerant. I'll keep your secret, and if you have anything you're confused about, you can come to Nanping Mountain to see me while Shizun is away.""

"

Mo Ran patted him on the shoulder: "Never learn from me and go on a blind date to piss him off."

"...Do you have no shame saying that?" Xue Meng, paused, then repeatedly shook his head: "No, hold on, what are you talking about?"

Mo Ran warmly and indulgently looked towards him in the manner of an older brother: "It's alright, gege has experience and understands your difficulties. In fact, whether it's Shizun or Jiang-zunzhu, they're both highly positioned, isolated people who value their dignity. You're still young, so when you argue, you should admit your mistakes first. A harmonious, talented family leads to prosperity.

Xue Meng immediately turned deathly white: "How, how did you know that? How did you find out? Me and him... we're...we're not!"

Mo Ran said: "I could tell from yesterday, that's why I'm congratulating you now."

Xue Meng was shocked: "Is it that obvious?"

Mo Ran laughed and patted him again: "It's...not that bad. But you could stand to be little more restrained."

Xue Meng collapsed.

Xue Meng thought he had restrained himself well enough. How could Mo Ran see so quickly that he and Jiang Xi were father and son??!

Fortunately, as he swiftly flew out of the kitchen, he didn't hear Mo Ran shaking his head and sighing: "Strange. What happened these past two years? How could Xue Meng and Jiang Ye start to have feelings for each other... Didn't he used to always like girls? Sigh, I could break my head and still never understand..."

Even as Xue Meng bid his farewells to Mo Ran and Chu Wanning, he didn't know that in Mo Ran's eyes he had undergone a tremendous change, and that Mo Ran now thought that they were of the same type.

When they parted, Xue Meng grabbed on to Mo Ran, and warned him anxiously: "You can't tell anyone about Jiang Yechen and me!"

You can't tell anyone that I'm the son of that dog thief!

Mo Ran sincerely raised his hand and swore: "I will keep your secret."

I'm not going to tell anybody that you've picked up Sect Leader Jiang.

The two brothers reached a tacit understanding, and under Chu Wanning's perplexed gaze, they bumped fists. Then Gege took Chu Wanning back to Nanping Mountain, while Didi stepped out into the puddled streets, suffused with the clear rays of the morning sun, and returned to the misty, cloud-covered Sisheng Peak.

----

Chapter 331-onwards:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HGwUPxM\\_gGGdAsOoXzAr0ivDLa6XpQnJVqvAVhoAdpQ/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HGwUPxM_gGGdAsOoXzAr0ivDLa6XpQnJVqvAVhoAdpQ/edit?usp=sharing)