

Chapter 10: Rebirth (复生)

T/N: The original character of the “earthworms” is 地 (Earth) 龙 (Dragon). While the term does refer to earthworm, it could very well be referring to an “earth dragon” given that this is a xuanhuan novel. It’s not clear which creature is Mu suli referring to at this stage so I’ve left it as an earthworm for now. I’ll be inserting a new footnote to reflect this.

Xiao Fuxuan’s gaze seemed to shrink.

He seemed to want to call out for Wu Xingxue, but didn’t say anything as Ah Yao was present.

The person standing next to the red pillar looked at him, seemingly confused, “?”

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Wu Xingxue asked.

Xiao Fuxuan raised his chin, pointed to blood all over the floor, then at Ah Yao the lunatic, before saying, “What’s going on here?”

“You’re asking me?” Wu Xingxue let his eyes fall. He looked at Yi Wusheng and fell silent.

Wu Xingxue was still energetic back then when they were taking the demons on a tour around Peach Blossom Island. Currently, he stood beside a puddle of blood. His voice was lowered, and pale skin contrasted against the sight making him seem somewhat sickly.

Seeing his expression, Xiao Fuxuan frowned slightly, blinked and looked away.

He suddenly didn’t want to probe any further.

Without waiting for Wu Xingxue to reply, Xiao Fuxuan said quietly, “Forget it.”

Xiao Fuxuan flourished his unsheathed sword, hitting the back of Ah Yao’s hand in a manner that was not too light or heavy.

Ah Yao pulled his hand back violently, the sword still dripping with blood fell to the floor with a clang, rolling away as it did so. The silver tassel on its hilt and the hibiscus jade pendant were soaked with blood, the words “Wu Sheng” in the middle of the jade pendant contrasted against the crimson lines streaking down the sword.

Ah Yao regarded the jade pendant and fell to the ground in apparent exhaustion.

Xiao Fuxuan lifted up the hem of his robe and half-knelt in front of Yi Wusheng. Using his finger, he pressed against the other man’s forehead. Just as Xiao Fuxuan was about to probe the man’s spirit, he saw the person standing beside the red pillar move.

The lamp shone on that man, casting a grey shadow. That same shadow moved from the red pillar towards Xiao Fuxuan and stopped beside him. Then it became a ball.

Xiao Fuxuan paused, and glanced at it.

He saw Wu Xingxue was crouching beside him obediently. Wu Xingxue first observed Ah Yao, who was reduced to a soft limp and dazed heap, then he tilted his head and said softly, "Xiao Fuxuan, do you think there's something wrong with the little lunatic?"

Xiao Fuxuan, "..."

What do you think? Isn't it obvious?

Xiao Fuxuan had a complicated expression.

But he didn't say anything and continued to watch Wu Xingxue, waiting for him to speak.

As a result, the other party also eyed him and waited for a reply. Seeing that Xiao Fuxuan wasn't going to give one, he continued in a satisfied manner, almost 'obediently' so.

"..."

Xiao Fuxuan remained unmoved.

A few moments had passed when Xiao Fuxuan decided that he should make the first move, "So what happened when I went off to find Yi Wuqi?"

Wu Xingxue pondered for a moment, "Initially, he laid prone on the floor. Then he roused all of a sudden, jumped up while drawing Yi Wusheng's sword and ran over."

Xiao Fuxuan, "..."

Wu Xingxue said, "Then it was really strange, but that lunatic killed Yi Wusheng with a single thrust with his sword."

Yi Wusheng's body only had a single wound from a sword and it ran squarely right through his chest; it was deft and swift. The strike appeared to have put an end to everything and Yi Wusheng wasn't moving anymore.

Wu Xingxue, "Have you seen a lunatic?"

Xiao Fuxuan, "... I have."

Wu Xingxue nodded, "That's good. Then you must know, a lunatic is really strong when he's riled up. But his hands aren't stable and trembles the more agitated he becomes. But this lunatic doesn't even quiver at all and his face is expressionless. I think..."

He watched Ah Yao, almost as though he was lost in the silence. Then he drew his gaze back and eyed Xiao Fuxuan again, "It's likely someone's using him."

"..."

"So, who do you think's using him?"

"..."

Xiao Fuxuan looked back at him; the latter had gone still.

After a long while, Xiao Fuxuan laughed coldly, "I don't know. Maybe I did."

After saying it, he stopped staring at Wu Xingxue. The other man also seemed to be caught off guard by his reply and stopped talking.

Some time had passed before he heard Wu Xingxue mutter, "Oh."

Yeah that's right, he still dared to "*Oh*."

With a deadpan expression, Xiao Fuxuan continued to tap on Yi Wusheng's forehead. As expected, it was hollow, just like the countless people who died before. Only that beneath the empty sound was a faint sigh.

Xiao Fuxuan froze. Immediately, he grabbed Yi Wusheng's left hand, pressing his thumb onto the other man's wrist.

The next instance, there was a slight bulge underneath Yi Wusheng's skin. It rushed forward like a snake in the water, passed through his arms, neck and continued travelling upwards.

Yi Wusheng's vacant stare suddenly came together. Immediately, his eyeballs started to swirl, shimmering slightly under the candle light.

It was as though... he was alive again!

"Xiao Fuxuan," Wu Xingxue uttered abruptly, even forgetting that an outsider like Ah Yao was nearby. He had been looking downwards but he looked up now, staring unblinkingly at Yi Wusheng, then unwavering at Xiao Fuxuan.

Xiao Fuxuan could see in the faint light, and without turning away, he replied, "Hmm."

His hands didn't stop moving. Just when Yi Wusheng was about to speak, he grasped two long pieces of black cloth out of thin air, sealing his mouth and nose.

"What's he doing?" Wu Xingxue asked.

"The strike back then destroyed the demonic energy within his body. What's left in his mouth is the remnants of his soul, after he had been devoured." Xiao Fuxuan said.

The dead cannot be resurrected. As for the living, whereby demons had attached themselves to consume them; it could only be said that death was their only release.

However, legends have always said Celestials had a way. If one borrowed a Celestial's energy, they could preserve whatever was left of their soul. As long as that energy didn't bleed out, they could continue for just a bit more.

Although this method did exist, not many used it.

Because once someone ascended and became a Celestial, they couldn't intervene in mortal affairs.

Celestials had their own rules; they had to obey the Divine Altar's Heavenly Path, be it to punish or to reward, life or death, to save or not to save. Or else, one might manage this but not that, or they might manage something else tomorrow but miss out something else. The earthly realm would be in a complete mess.

Yi Wusheng himself was in turmoil.

He had been set free from the demon's grasp, and no longer had that strange smile. In the warm light, he even appeared gentle. It was a far cry from his previous messed up appearance.

Frowning, Yi Wusheng tried to speak, but the black cloth was wrapped tightly around his lips and mouth.

"Ugh, ugh", he shouted at Wu Xingxue twice.

He reached up and tried to pull the cloth aside but Wu Xingxue slapped his hand away.

After knocking the other man's hand aside, Wu Xingxue turned towards Xiao Fuxuan, "So we can't take this cloth down?"

Xiao Fuxuan, "..."

Then Wu Xingxue turned towards Yi Wusheng, "You'll die if you touch it."

Yi Wusheng gave off another muffled cry twice. He put his hand down although it was terribly uncomfortable.

Wu Xingxue asked suddenly, "So, is he alive now?"

Xiao Fuxuan shook his head.

It really wasn't, it was just a fragment of his soul. Although it was held in place by Celestial energy, it was hard to say how long it could last. Xiao Fuxuan hadn't used this method much, and there weren't many records of it.

"He's not?" Wu Xingxue replied quizzically again.

Xiao Fuxuan fell silent, "Just barely."

"Oh." Wu Xingxue nodded.

With that, his sickly energy seemed to be gone again.

When Yi Wusheng crawled up from the floor, Wu Xingxue stared at his wrist. His hand hung loosely from his side and his thumb started to twitch unconsciously.

With a flick of his robe, Wu Xingxue straightened himself.

He was about to check on the Hua Family's movement when he heard Xiao Fuxuan's low voice, "Wanna learn?"

Stunned, Wu Xingxue whirled around. "What?"

Xiao Fuxuan's eyes swept across Yi Wusheng before going back to Wu Xingxue's hand.

It was only then did realisation hit him, "You mean the way you saved people just then?"

Wu Xingxue went silent for a minute before he laughed, "I don't have a single ounce of celestial powers on me. There's nothing special about me; I can't learn it. You... are you making fun of me?"

"Nope."

"Plus," Wu Xingxue continued. "I read the *huaben* that said - "

Again with the huaben...

Xiao Fuxuan stiffened, waiting to hear what he was about to say next, but Wu Xingxue stopped talking.

“Said what?”

“Said...”

Wu Xingxue looked at Yi Wusheng and Ah Yao, his fingers curled up.

Xiao Fuxuan, “...”

He lowered his head and came closer.

Wu Xingxue said softly, “In the *huaben*, the Celestials and mortals are different. Celestials cannot interfere even if mortals live or die. You saved Yi Wusheng with your breath, and now you want to teach me, a mere mortal, some Celestial magic. Isn’t this considered ... a violation of Heaven’s rules?”

When he had finished talking, he laughed, then raised his eyes and looked at Xiao Fuxuan.

Xiao Fuxuan was tall; his facial features were slender and sharp. So when he bent over, his facial lines seemed even more taunt and distinct. As he spoke, the lines moved ever so slightly.

Xiao Fuxuan’s expression remained calm and hummed in acknowledgement.

There was a slight pause before Xiao Fuxuan added, “Not quite. *Xiandu* is gone. I can’t be considered to be some Tianxiu Immortal.”

He looked at Wu Xingxue, “Only my heavenly consciousness has entered this shell. And didn’t you make me a puppet?”

Wu Xingxue’s eyes moved.

“How could a puppet break the rules of the Divine Altar?”

After he had finished, Xiao Fuxuan grabbed a golden glowing paper out of mid air and passed it to Yi Wusheng, “I need to ask you a few questions. I’ll be able to listen if you hold this paper and answer me.”

Yi Wusheng froze for a moment but he took the paper anyway.

The first question he wanted to ask flowed out, “Why did you save me?”

“I still have something to trouble you,” Xiao Fuxuan said.

Pointing his finger at Wu Xingxue, he continued, “Can you still carry out soul dreaming in this state?”

Yi Wusheng nodded.

Xiao Fuxuan, “It’s a little late, but please look at his condition. “

Then he turned towards Wu Xingxue, “He’s at soul dreaming. Perhaps you don’t understand it now, but you’ll understand when he raises his fingers to examine you. And you’ll know where you’re from and where you should go next.”

Wu Xingxue, “...”

Yi Wusheng, “I’ll... I’ll definitely try my best.”

Wu Xingxue, “...”

His expression seemed to harden over momentarily, but it passed over quickly.

Xiao Fuxuan eyed him, then pushed the door open before speaking to Yi Wusheng, “There’s something else that’s even more pressing and this is for your family members. Please explain the events that happened, for example the ongoing rumours back then.”

Who would have expected that Yi Wusheng looked out towards the courtyard that was filled with people and said, “the Clan Leader’s here. I can’t.”