

## Chapter 6: Lunatic

This was a place to receive guests and to discuss official matters. The set up was simple and dignified; the room had a few chairs with flower carvings and tables flanking on both sides.

The disciples led them to their seats and brought up 2 cups of tea. Wu Xingxue helped himself and took a sip - there was a faint peach fragrance to it.

Several disciples had been cleaning the hall. Seeing that the visitors were here, they greeted them.

There was a long altar at the centre of Tinghua Hall. On the altar sat a jade statue of a deity. The disciples who were cleaning burned some incense, then left.

This deity statue was the same as the giant statue in Chunfan City. The only difference being that the statue in the city was carved out of stone but this one was carved out of hibiscus jade.

“Who’s this?” Wu Xingxue asked softly while holding his tea.

“Hua Xin<sup>1</sup>.” Xiao Fuxuan replied.

It was only then did Wu Xingxue notice that his name was written on the painting behind the statue.

“Are the drawings and the jade statue of the same person? It looks a little too different”, he whispered quietly again.

“...” Xiao Fuxuan shot him a stare from above, perhaps wishing that he’d shut up.

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<sup>1</sup> 花信 - This term refer to the news of the flowers blooming, or girls when they come of age. There’s something known as the “12 hua xin winds”. (There is another similar version with 24 winds). It refers to the winds that blow before a particular flowering season. There are flowers that correspond to a particular time period (ie. Peach Blossoms = third month, the Hibiscus = 10th month). This was important in the ancient times as farmers used it to plan their crops. (T/N: I thought this might be the reason why there are 12 Divine Altars LOL but please take this wild speculation with a pinch of salt) ([1](#))

However, seeing that he was truly interested, Xiao Fuxuan added, “The painting’s more like it.”

The Celestial in the portrait was handsome and had a warm and gentle disposition. He seemed as though he was smiling with his gentle upturning eyes. With one hand stroking a white deer, and the other holding a lantern, he seemed like a celestial that would protect others. This was a stark contrast with Xiao Fuxuan’s temperament, who was in charge of punishment.

Next to his name “Hua Xin” was his celestial name “Mingwu<sup>2</sup>.”

There were numerous cultivational schools in this bleak and chaotic world, not to mention the smaller ones. The more reputable schools had ancestors who ascended. Hua Xin was the reason for the Hua Family’s lofty status in the Chunfan City.

“Do you know him?” Wu Xingxue asked.

“I do,” Xiao Fuxuan replied mildly. “The leader of the Twelve Immortals of the Divine Altar.”

*The leader of the Twelve Immortals of the Divine Altar....*

*The leader of the Twelve Immortals...*

This sounded very familiar to Wu Xingxue. Suddenly, he recalled what Ning Huaishan had said in his numerous praises - Wu Xingxue had also murdered the Twelve Immortals of the Divine Altar.

“...”

Wu Xingxue choked on his tea on the spot.

The Hua Family’s head, Hua Zhaoting arrived that very instant.

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<sup>2</sup> 明无 - This itself isn’t a known term, but it’s worth noting that the reverse, 无明 refers to the Buddhism concept of [Avidyā](#), or otherwise known as “ignorance/misconceptions”.

He seemed to have run into something and appeared to be worried as he crossed through the corridor with big strides. Behind him were two flustered disciples; they held a box made from *nanmu*<sup>3</sup> and were trying to persuade him.

“I said it’s fine. It’s a small cut, there’s no need for medication. Why would that small fool know any better, it’s expected that he would be reckless. I’ve said so many times not to pick a bone with him. Actually it’s Chi Yao and the others who should be punished at the Xuan Altar and reflect upon their ways!”

Hua Zhaoting entered the Tinghua Hall after he had finished his scolding. His expression had already changed as he said, “My apologies for the wait.”

It was apparent that he was from the same family as the Celestial Mingwu Hua Xin. Although they didn’t look alike, they had the same gentle and warm aura when they smiled.

He didn’t have the airs of a family head of a major cultivation family, or even seemed like a member of a cultivation clan. Hua Zhaoting lacked the out-of-this-world aloofness; his actions were closer to a refined businessman.

“I’ve heard the Young Master Cheng just entered the city this morning and passed through the Swirling path in the Limitless Sea.” Hua Zhaoting asked with a smile.

Wu Xingxue, “...”

*What Young Master?*

He realised soon enough. When they first entered Swallow Port, Ning Huaishan had a near slip of the tongue when he was with the two sword carrying disciples and had changed “Chengzhu” to “Young Master...Cheng.”

The two disciples were from the Hua Family. Looks like they had given a report and explained their situation clearly.

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<sup>3</sup> 金丝木 - This is wood made specifically from [Phoebe Zhennan species](#). It has a shiny surface and sometimes it’s possible to see fine gold threads. Historically, it’s used for the construction of temples and palaces. (1)

Fine then ...

*If I'm going to be Young Master Cheng, then so be it. Wu Xingxue thought. Saves me the trouble of making things up on the spot.*

But what was going to be the death of him was that Ning Huaishan also said Xiao Fuxuan was a puppet.

So that was why Hua Zhaoting only spoke to him. It was because he didn't treat the other man as a living thing.

Wu Xingxue had wanted to play the part of a "mute". Xiao Fuxuan would handle anything that needed to be asked or said. Anyway, it's not like he knew anything about this place.

*Awesome, looks like I can't pull that off.*

Ning Huaishan really was a fucking gem.

He was cursing in his heart but kept his expression steady. He answered Hua Zhaoting's questions unhurriedly, "Yes, the sea was really frightening last night. We weren't expecting it. It has been a rather untimely trip."

"When I entered the port this morning, I heard the Canglang Northern Territory had really collapsed. I'm really scared now that I think back about it." Wu Xingxue patted his own knee and added, "To be honest, right now, my legs are soft and they shake whenever I exert too much."

Xiao Fuxuan, "..."

Hua Zhaoting nodded, "It's dangerous indeed. So I was very surprised when I heard we have guests from the sea. We had elders and disciples from our clan who were there last night and they were in a sorry state when they returned. I can only imagine."

“If I had known, I definitely wouldn’t pick this time to trouble you.” Wu Xingxue said.

Hua Zhaoting waved his hand, “This isn’t any trouble, please don’t ever say that Young Master Cheng. The Hua Family practises the teachings of the Celestial Mingwu and guards the Peach Blossom Island. We’re supposed to keep the peace and alleviate the worries of the people regardless of time and place.

He paused before continuing, “I’ve heard from my disciples that Young Master Cheng is looking for Mr Yi Wusheng?”

“Yes”, Wu Xingxue nodded.

“Mr Yi Wusheng has had great success when it comes to the art of soul dream<sup>4</sup> and he’s widely known for this. Many come to our doorsteps for this reason. But ... I’m not sure if Young Master Cheng knows, but if you want Mr Yi Wusheng<sup>5</sup> to save someone, he needs to see them. You need to bring them here.”

“Brought it,” Wu Xingxue pointed to himself, “It’s me.”

Hua Zhaoting was stumped.

He couldn’t help but scrutinise Wu Xingxue, “But you certainly don’t look like one.”

The reason why most came in search of Yi Wusheng was because there was some damage to their soul - some were partially devoured by demons but escaped narrowly. Others were afflicted by demonic arts. And there were a few who couldn’t cultivate and so they had qigong deviated<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> 魂梦 - In the past, patient believed that the mind could leave the body and still exist. This commonly refers to people having thoughts in the day, and dreams at night. The soul would then be able to fulfil what they cannot accomplish in reality in their dreams. (1)

<sup>5</sup> 医 - Yi (医) is commonly associated with doctors though in this case it’s a surname.

<sup>6</sup> 走火入魔 (zǒu huǒ rù mó) - This is a common idiom that can be used differently, depending on the context. In a wuxia/xianxia context, when one is practising martial arts, it was believed that the practitioner would experience some effects. Some were acceptable, but at other times they would have negative side effects. It was believed that if the side effect lasted for a short time, and if the practitioner managed to make the correct adjustments, it would not be harmful. But should they persist, it would cause psychological and severe behavioural abnormalities. This concept is also called [qigong deviation](#)

These patients were either demented or insane.

It was rare to see one like Wu Xingxue who could still speak like a human.

Hua Zhaoting asked, “So what happened?”

“I think my living soul<sup>7</sup> has possessed someone’s body, and the original owner has been kicked out. I wish to ask Mr Yi Wusheng if there’s any way to send me back.” Wu Xingxue said.

*Duoshe*<sup>8</sup> was common to the Celestials. So was exchanging lives, and summoning gods and ghosts. However, Wu Xingxue was neither of the three.

Hua Zhaoting asked question after question. Seeing that Wu Xingxue was open and honest, he said, “I know that Mr Yi Wusheng has just reached the end of his seclusion and will be back tomorrow. So, Young Master Cheng, please take a rest in Peach Blossom Island just for today.”

It meant there was a way if they were willing to keep him as a guest. There was hope that he could return.

Wu Xingxue used the opportunity when Hua Zhaoting was talking to his disciples, and when he drank the tea, he tilted his head towards Xiao Fuxuan and smiled. *Thank you Shangxian*<sup>9</sup>, he mouthed.

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or zou huo ru mo. In Buddhism, it could mean that a practitioner deviated off the upright path and practised the demonic path, or had been possessed by demons. In the context of this novel, it could be a possible mixture of both meanings. And for those who are interested in linguistics, in a modern context, this idiom is also used to describe someone who has become too obsessed and has lost their mind.

(1)(2)(3)

<sup>7</sup> 生魂 - This is a specific term referring to a soul from a living person. (1)

<sup>8</sup> 夺舍 - This refers to the practice of transferring a soul to another dead body to continue living. It’s likely based off the concept of [Phowa](#), one of the [Six Dharmas of Naropa](#), a Tibetan Buddhism tantric practice, by which the practitioner would transfer their consciousness into another body to continue cultivating. (1)

<sup>9</sup> Translator’s note: Just to clarify, we will be leaving Shangxian in pinyin when it comes to speech, but translating it as Celestial otherwise. This is because it’s tied to the title of the book, which we’ll be explaining eventually.

Xiao Fuxuan was still holding his sword and pretending to be a puppet. The man's gaze swept past Wu Xingxue's lips as he mouthed the words.

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They were placed at the western wing of the Peach Blossom Island.

The disciples in charge of welcoming guests said, "There are many cultivational disciples in the Hua Family. They have homework before daybreak on a daily basis. We're concerned if the sound of swords would interrupt their rest, so we've put them at the farthest point away from the Disciple Hall."

The Library Pavilion and the Qingxin Hall<sup>10</sup> was nearby.

The former was Zhao Huating personal library and the disciples didn't use it. The latter was Mr Yi Wusheng's place of residence; there were only a few disciples there who were in charge of cleaning and serving medications.

The place was clean as a whole, but an accident was about to take place -

A few disciples had been trying to clean the guest room when suddenly someone barged in screaming, knocking over a chair and a bucket of water in his frenzy.

"Ah - "

"Ah Yao! You can't run in here -"

"I told you to keep an eye on him, why is running towards the guest room! He went out today and injured the Clan Leader."

"Sigh, when you look at it, he hasn't stopped in the past 2 days. His sword energy is flying wildly, and he's strong! Clan leader also forbids us from being too harsh on him. But I can't hold him down if we're too soft on him!"

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<sup>10</sup> 清心 - This is a traditional chinese medicine concept, and it means to cleanse the heart or the womb of heat. (1)

It wasn't a good idea for Wu Xingxue to intervene, so he helped a stumbling young disciple then stood aside with Xiao Fuxuan.

The crazed person was dishevelled. It was impossible to tell how old he was, and he couldn't speak. He could only shout in a hoarse voice.

Raising his hand, he tried to grab Wu Xingxue but Xiao Fuxuan deflected it easily, removing most of his strength in the process. Following which, he was dragged away by the other disciples in a flurry.

"Young Master Cheng has had a fright." The disciples in charge of guests said apologetically as he cleaned up the mess.

"Who is he?"

"He was a disciple of Mr Yi Wusheng and was in charge of serving medications, one of the most gifted too. After that, something provoked him and he became like this. It's been years."

"Mr Yi Wusheng's disciple?" Wu Xingxue asked.

"Yeah", the disciple said before hurriedly explaining. "Oh, no no no, Mr Yi is highly skilled in soul dreams. Please don't get the wrong impression. It's not that Mr Yi couldn't save him, it's that this disciple's madness was too special."

That disciple seemed to think that just deeming it "special" wasn't persuasive enough, and he deliberated before adding one more line, "That's because the one that injured him was the Archdemon Wu Xingxue."

"Who?"

"Wu Xingxue," the disciple lowered his voice and repeated.

Wu Xingxue fell silently suddenly.

He subconsciously turned around and looked at Xiao Fuxuan, only to find that the latter's gaze was already on him.

“Ah Yao really hasn’t had a good life,”. The disciple started to ramble. Who knows how many times he has repeated Ah Yao’s story to visiting guests.

He said in the past, Ah Yao was Yi Wusheng’s most favoured disciple. He used to be constantly by Yi Wusheng’s side, especially when they were refining pills and would spend days in the Qingxin Hall.

Peach Blossom Island had a guest that year and he asked Yi Wusheng to help them with some matters. He looked the part of a handsome nobleman. Nobody could find any fault with him from the head of the clan, to the disciples in charge of cleaning. On the contrary, everyone loved him.

Yi Wusheng was trying to refine medication at that point of time and couldn’t spare any time, so they let this visitor stay on the island for half a month.

As a result, that half a month cost the lives of his father, brother, wife and daughter.

That day, Ah Yao ran frantically into the hall, stumbling, crying and shouting. He was drenched in blood and his body was engulfed in a demonic aura.

At that time, Yi Wusheng and Hua Zhaoting had been discussing business matters and were shocked. When they followed him back to Qingxin Hall, they saw Yi Wusheng's brother, Yi Wuqi was lying in a pool of blood. Only his skin was left but a smile was still plastered on his face.

It seemed that he had been sucked dry by a demon.

Back then, the people of Peach Blossom Island gathered around and Hua Zhaoting immediately ordered his people to investigate. In the end, it might have been a better idea not to look into it; they soon discovered that there was a problem with Yi Wusheng’s wife, who was his little sister, father and his daughter, and a few disciples in charge of cleaning who had been serving in the guests room ...

Their heads were hollow when you tapped on them; it was just like hitting a wooden fish<sup>11</sup>. When one tapped their stomach, a hollow sound was emitted, like the echoing of a drum.

They were a hollow shell made of skin and had already been sucked dry before this.

It happened during the time when the guest had been around.

When they caught hold of Ah Yao and tried to ask him what was going on, they realised he had been placed under a forbidden spell that even Yi Wusheng couldn't break. So he remained in a crazed state and couldn't say anything clearly.

As a last resort, Hua Zhaoting invited the Feng Family from the Meng Capital<sup>12</sup> to help.

The Feng Family had a secret technique; they knew the art of spirit reflections. It allowed them to see the last moments of a person who was unhinged or deceased.

So, with the Feng Family's assistance, they witnessed the scene that Ah Yao couldn't say.

They saw that the elegant and noble guest had now returned to his original experience. Standing in Qingxin Hall, he was squeezing Yi Wuqi's throat with one hand and clutched Yi Wuqi's own sword loosely in his other.

Blood trickled down the hilt of the sword, pooling into a puddle on the ground.

He turned his head and looked out of the door, his nose reflecting the icy cold midnight. Then, as though he realised that someone was standing outside the door, he suddenly smiled; the tail end of his eyes curved up slightly in an arc.

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<sup>11</sup> 木鱼 - The [wooden fish](#) is a musical instrument used by Buddhist and Taoist. They're often used in rituals involving recitations of Buddhist text to maintain the rhythm during chanting. Here's a detailed [video](#) explaining its use.

<sup>12</sup> 梦都 - Literally translated as the Capital of Dreams

The man then let go of the empty shell of a human, flung aside the sword and grabbed a clean cloth from the table and started to wipe his hands. Then in a blink of an eye, he arrived in front of Ah Yao and hit him on his head in a manner that was neither heavy nor light.

And he left just like the way he came, circling as he did so before disappearing into the Limitless Sea.

Everyone knows that Wu Xingxue himself doesn't carry a sword. He's very lazy and doesn't like to hold additional things in his hands, so he'll never carry one.

He always uses someone else's sword to commit murder.