

# **The Flower Guarding Bells**



**Life and Death, Love and Hatred, Affection and Feud,  
Benevolence and Vendetta.**

**In the eyes of the people in the Pugilistic Fraternity, these are like sharp blades; their differences separated only by a very thin line.**

**Chapter One  
Between Life and Death**

The night sky was devoid of clouds. Amidst the fog stood a demure, alluring and extremely beautiful young maiden. One hand held her flowing hair and the other hand her soft outer garment. Yet without slowing her pace, she continued on.

Along the treacherous mountain trails, there appeared several people. The young maiden raised her eyebrows and gave a faint laugh, a laugh that seem to warm the frosty air but filled with poisonous intentions; it was hard to believe that such a laugh would come from this demure beautiful maiden.

As the laughter traveled, those walking on the mountain trails sprang forward. In a blink of the eye, they were already in front of the young woman. The extremely beautiful young woman looked knowingly with her eyes and coldly said, "Come with me!" As she turned her slim body and moved several yards, never once looking back. She leapt several times, and soon she was on top the Southern Peak!

There were five people following her. One of them was a big man in black carrying a sheathed sword that was laughing and saying to an older woman in the group. "What an arrogant little girl. I'm afraid she is three times more obnoxious than you when you were younger!"

The older woman gave a gentle laugh, replying. "Really?"

The big man in black kept laughing and said. "Truly! Whoever marries her, will surely feel more tortured than me, Long Fei!"

The laughter stirred the Four Corners of the mountains. It was filled with love as the older woman leaned against his chest, his laughter and hers becoming unison.

The lad behind them suddenly gave a shout. "Mentor Master has arrived." Their laughter ceased. Behind them was an old man dressed in cotton garments with a cloth over his head and walking in broad strides.

Each one of the old man's steps was a yard apart, and his garments seemed to flutter and float as he moved. Behind him were two men who seemed to be carrying something on their backs although no one could see carefully what the

objects were.

The old man asked, "Where is it?"

Another man answered, "Gone up already!"

The old man said sternly. "Follow!" as he took big steps towards the peak. The winds revealed a sword scabbard underneath his cloak.

The older woman said with melancholy, "Today, Father..." Her lips moved halfway, the sentence she was trying to complete was unable to continue.

A thin young man turned back and looked at a young man and a young maiden, pausing awhile before sighing. "Fourth Sister and Fifth Brother, you should remain at the mountain slope. After he finished speaking, he sprang up to join Long Fei and his lady.

The young man and woman both exchanged glances. For a long time, none spoke.

Southern Peak was Mt. Huashan summit. The beautiful young maiden appeared and said in a low voice. "You have come." There were four other women behind her.

Below the summit, a voice was heard. "This ten-year promise Long Bushi has not forgotten. Why is the Lady not here to welcome an old friend?" His voice was not high pitched yet when every word was traversed up, it was heard very clearly in the ears.

The extremely beautiful young maiden gave a cold smirk in response.

The old man asked. "Is this the Huashan summit? Are you Danfeng's (Phoenix) follower?"

The extremely beautiful young maiden coldly replied "That's right!"

The old man said solemnly. "Where is Danfeng Ye Qiubai?"

The extremely beautiful maiden looked thoughtfully at the old man, sizing him up, and replied, "You are 'Immortal Divine Dragon', Long Bushi?"

The old man looked stunned. Suddenly, he burst into laughter and in a clear voice said, "Marvelous, marvelous! Never did I expect someone in the Pugilistic Fraternity to address me by my title to my face!"

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled sarcastically and glanced at the sky. "Marvelous, marvelous! Never did I expect someone to use my Mentor Mistress' title to my face."

The old man turned to the older woman who was with him and, pointing to the beautiful young maiden and her four followers, asked, "This is Ye Qiubai's disciple?"

Four pairs of eyes sparkled and flickered over his body, and the green gowned women said in unison together, "That's right!"

Long Bushi turned back in anger and said, "Your Mentor Mistress and I had

an agreement ten years ago to meet here. Why has she not arrived? Why has she sent you here to be rude to your elders!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden coldly replied, “Even if there is an emergency, my Mentor Mistress will still be unable to honor it!”

Long Bushi asked angrily, “How come?”

She replied, “Three months ago, my Mentor Mistress passed away. Before she died, she had ordered me to come in her stead. However, she said nothing about you being any elder of mine!” Her speech was slow and soft, the tone icy cold but with no hint of resentment. It did not seem at all likely that she was delivering her Mentor Mistress’ last will and testament.

Long Bushi was stunned and shook with uncontrollable rage.

The rest of the group was silent as well.

Only Long Fei step forwards and asked in a low tone, “Father, what is it?”

Long Bushi was stunned momentarily. He sighed, “Ye Qiubai is dead!” His eyes looked up to the heavens, and then he began a stroll down the mountain.

From the coldness in the extremely beautiful young woman’s eyes, there appeared suddenly a strange glow. She gave a sarcastic smile and said, “A pity, a pity. To think that the legendary number one warrior of our Pugilist Fraternity, the Immortal Divine Dragon, is just an ordinary man.”

Long Bushi was frozen on the spot while Long Fei angrily demanded, “What did you say?”

The extremely beautiful young maiden replied just as coldly as before, “What I say is not your business. What conspires here, you have no say whatsoever.”

Long Fei’s eyes were filled with turbulence at her reproach. Then, Long Bushi turned around and demanded, “What did you say?”

The extremely beautiful young maiden replied, “Ten years ago, my Mentor Mistress and you made a life and death agreement. What did it entail?”

Long Bushi’s eyes became withdrawn, and he said gravely, “The winner shall dominate the Pugilist Fraternity; the loser...” he paused with a sigh, “Ye Qiubai has already passed away. Long Bushi now dominates the Pugilistic Fraternity...”

The attractive beauty coldly interrupted, “Although my Mentor Mistress may have become a saint, I’m afraid you may will not dominate the Pugilistic Fraternity for long!”

Long Bushi gravely replied, “Are you thinking of exchanging blows with me?”

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled coldly, “Although I have this desire, I suspect you do not wish to fight me. Am I correct?”

Long Bushi replied, "Indeed!"

The extremely beautiful young maiden asked, "For decades, my Mentor Mistress and you have been fighting. How many times were there altogether?"

Long Bushi said, "Many times. Hard to determine how many times I won."

The extremely beautiful young maiden asked, "Did you beat her by more than one stroke?"

Long Bushi replied, "However, I have never lost before."

The extremely beautiful young maiden said, "Victory is yet undetermined, but you are already thinking you've dominated the Pugilist Fraternity. Does such fortuity exist in this world?"

Long Bushi was taken aback. "Ye Qiubai has passed away. You expect me to fight the dead?"

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled coldly, "My Mentor Mistress may have died, but she had left behind a swordplay. If you cannot defeat this swordplay, I suggest that you commit suicide on this Huashan summit. Furthermore, all protégés from Zhijiao Manor shall henceforth be forbidden to partake in the Pugilistic Fraternity."

Long Fei suddenly laughed, "What if my father wins? What happens then?"

The extremely young woman did not even glance at him out of the corners of her eyes, much less a look at him. It was as though his words never reached her ears.

Long Fei roared with laughter, "If my father loses, he has to commit suicide, but if he wins, don't tell me you are going to ask that Danfeng Ye Qiubai die once again? Moreover, you know that my father will not fight with just anyone that does not have seniority. Ye Qiubai may have left behind a swordplay, but what use is it?"

Unexpectedly, Long Bushi intoned, "Silence!" He walked up to the extremely beautiful young maiden and asked, "In the past ten years, she created a new swordplay?"

The extremely beautiful young maiden replied, "Indeed!"

His eyes glowing, Long Bushi gave a sigh, "Since this is an extraordinary swordplay yet no extraordinary internal force that enables anyone to use it, how could it possibly defeat me?" He was greatly depressed by the matter and seemed forlorn.

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled coldly, "What if there was someone with a similar internal force as you who knew the swordplay that my Mistress Mentor left behind? Would it not be the same as fighting my Mentor Mistress?"

Long Bushi looked even more forlorn, "Sixteen years ago, all the best

fighters in the Pugilistic Fraternity, except your Mentor Mistress and me, perished on Mt. Huangshan. In this whole wide world, were I to find someone with the same internal force, I would have to wait another three to five years, even ten!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden said, “Although a refined swordplay can replace a lack of internal force, internal force does not have the flexibility of a swordplay, wouldn’t you agree?”

Long Bushi said, “Naturally, you are not wrong!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden continued, “The strokes of a swordplay can advance and be used like a shield. A strong internal force can never replace the ingenuity involved. Do you agree?”

Long Bushi said, “Indeed!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden continued to explain, “But swordplay and internal force are interdependent. Lack one aspect and the person will never become a top pugilist fighter. Although this reasoning is very obvious, ever since the Huangshan meeting, there has been no one in the Pugilistic Fraternity who can contest with “the Phoenix and Dragon”. This is because out of the ranks of the new pugilist fighters, even if one had the fortune to recover a once-lost set of martial skills, no one has the necessary internal force to match “the Phoenix and Dragon”. Do you agree?”

Long Bushi said. “Indeed.”

The extremely beautiful young maiden asked, “Ten years ago, were the internal forces of my Mentor Mistress and your own evenly matched?”

Long Bushi replied, “There were differences, but only in theory; it did not matter!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden asked, “These past ten years, my Mentor Mistress never for one moment forgot about this life and death agreement and trained hard everyday.”

Long Bushi sighed, “As did I!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden said, “So judging from these circumstances, ten years ago, both of your internal forces were almost even. Ten years later, will there be any difference?”

Long Bushi said, “Unless during these ten years, she obtained a miraculous herb that could aid the growth of internal force, she could not have beat me.”

Suddenly he sighed and turned his head, “Fei, do you know that the growth rate of one’s internal force is like a sparrow building its nest? It must be slow and cannot be forced. Taking shortcuts, greedy for faster growth can only strengthen it temporarily and is not stable. It is not recommended because internal power requires up to one hundred years to cultivate. Miraculous herbs that can aid in the growth of internal force are also almost impossible to find. Strangely, so many

people in the Pugilist World actually believe in them; this has led to many tragedies!”

Long Fei nodded in agreement.

The extremely beautiful young maiden said, “Therefore, you are saying the internal powers of my Mentor Mistress and yourself cannot be disputed and that what is contestable is the flexibility and changes in strokes, correct?”

Long Bushi said, “When top fighters are fighting, timing, terrain, the human factor are also important factors!”

The extremely beautiful young maiden asked, “If my Mentor Mistress really created an invincible swordplay, will it be able to defeat you?”

Long Bushi replied, “There is no unbreakable martial arts in this world. If your Mentor Mistress’ swordplay has such power and I’m unable to find a weakness, if such a thing exists that I’m unable to counter, then you win.”

The extremely beautiful young maiden said, “My Mentor Mistress and you have a life and death agreement, and there is as yet no victor. But although my Mentor Mistress passed away, she died with regrets.”

Long Bushi said regretfully, “Do I not feel regret over this matter as well?”

The extremely beautiful young maiden looked at the sky and said, “Before she died, my Mentor Mistress warned me that during these past ten years, you may have also created a form of martial arts to defeat her.”

Long Bushi looked at the sky and laughed, “Ye Qiubai is indeed my bosom friend.” However, his laughter betrayed signs of sadness.

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled coldly, “However, you don’t have to worry about the skills that you created having no chance to show off their martial prowess. Before my Mentor Mistress passed away, she came up with a solution to determine the winner between the two of you.”

Long Bushi laughter suddenly ceased and his eyes shone, but the extremely beautiful young maiden took no notice and said, “If you would allow me to seal off three acupoints, the ‘Que Peng’ at the back of your head, the ‘Shen Cang’ on your back, and the ‘Yang Guan’ of your lower back, so that your energies cannot flow through these two main energy meridians and thus not eliminating your internal force but diminishing it to seventy percent capability, then my internal force will match yours. I could then use my Mentor Mistress’ swordplay against you, and the fight would seem not different from you fighting my Mentor Mistress directly.”

She went through all the trouble to state this point. Her intentions became very clear, and Long Bushi could not help but feel a chill. The extremely beautiful young maiden sighed, “This method is what my Mentor Mistress devised before she passed away. If you do not agree, I can do nothing.”

Long Fei face became wrinkled, and he said solemnly, “This matter sounds

like a play-acting. It is certainly impossible. I can't believe you actually voiced it."

Standing far away was Long Fei's wife, who suddenly dashed towards them and gave a cold laugh, "So that means, if I use my father's martial art skills to fight with you, it would be the same?"

The extremely beautiful young maiden smiled coldly and turned her head away. Suddenly, she sighed as she looked to the heavens, "Mentor Mistress, oh my Mentor Mistress, I have already said that he would not agree, but you did not believe. It seems that you are wrong." She walked to the shade of a tree toward her followers and said coldly, "Let us go, then. Let Zhijiao Manor dominate the Pugilistic Fraternity, what does it matter?"

Long Bushi thundered, "Hold on!"

The extremely beautiful young maiden laughed coldly, "If you are not willing to keep a promise to the dead, I will not blame you. Just let it seem that no such agreement was made ten years ago between my Mentor Mistress and you."

Long Bushi roared with laughter at the heavens and said exuberantly. "For decades, I have experienced many near-death experiences but always came back fighting. I have never feared death. Furthermore, I have never backed off from any promise. Although Ye Qiubai is now dead, the agreement remains sacred. Since she has left behind a stratagem to continue our fight, how can I disappoint her?"

Long Fei and his wife were shocked, "Father..." They exclaimed together.

Long Bushi gave another roar and raised his hand to remove the lining from his face. The extremely beautiful maiden's eyes widened, her heart shaken. She could see his face was scarred. She shivered unconsciously.

Long Bushi laughed and said solemnly, "I have undergone countless fights big or small, ever victorious. Many years ago, I encountered many opponents of superior martial arts caliber that I still managed to wound with my sword. This is because my heart harbored no guilty conscience or fear. If I had even once broken my word to another, I will not have this heart and would have died a hundred times already!"

"Forty years ago," he muttered, "Emei Sect's number one fighter 'Heartless Sword' Gu Xiaotian fashioned this scarred face with a stroke, 'Heaven Startling Hues'." Even as he felt the scar, he could still feel the piercing sword blade that tore open his flesh; he could still feel the sensation of pain.

He suddenly laughed loudly and then gave a long sigh as he said aloud to the heavens, "Gu Xiaotian, alas Gu Xiaotian, even though I cannot defend myself against your 'Heaven Startling Hues', you cannot escape from my sword either..."

His mind flashed back to his glorious past as he muttered again, "Five Tigers Crushing Through, Returning Dance of the Gentle Wind, Demonic Divine Hook. This one blade, one sword, one hook; he recalled his many scars and the memories



of his youth, when he traveled with his sword across the realm, crossing Bashan, visiting Pengmen and Shaolin, facing terrible blade wounds, swords that pierced so deep his soul stirred, narrowly escaping death and against all odds, surviving. Many times he thwarted certain defeat. The nickname “Immortal Divine Dragon” derived from his numerous fights thirty years ago. Thinking back, he gave a sudden smile.

His hand moved down below his long beard to his chin as he felt another scar. That was inflicted by Tianshan (Mt.Heaven) Triple Divine Sword. This sword wound was the smallest yet the most life-threatening.

“ ‘Ninth Wing Flying Eagle’ Di Mengping, he was indeed a rarity that I have seldom saw in my entire life...”

His hand touched another scar, but this sword scar appeared to be curved and uneven and did not appear to have been inflicted by a single sword but three swords combined as one.

He gave a broad smile. “This is from the renown Triple Flower Swordplay, the ‘one sword piercing three flowers, regardless if you are Immortal or Spirit’ that is so famous across the realm. But the triple flower swordsman nevertheless could not escape my sword!”

He showed more scars. There was one on his left eye, from such an amazingly swift sword stroke that it seemed he was slashed from top to bottom. This scar was the result of the swift and powerful Kunhe Swordplay. It happened during a snowfall, amidst the misty fog atop the Kunlun summit. He shook to the core as he recalled that frightening episode. Each of his memories shook him badly, but still he survived!

There was also Wudang Equilibrium Swordplay and their Ninth Palace Divine Swordplay, and he pointed to three other scars beneath his clothing.

“Wudang swordsmen, their hearts are more or less kindly: they only attack the body and not the face. Therefore, I did not kill them,” he muttered, “but who would expect that the three elders of the Pugilist Fraternity, who were benevolent and soft-hearted, would also perish at Huangshan!”

Long Bushi gave a long sigh. The Huangshan gathering that caused so many of the Pugilistic Fraternity best fighters to sacrifice themselves as they fought each other did not cause him much bodily injury. Why was that?

“It is because I had already had experience with all the known and unknown martial arts of the Martial Fraternity. In this world, there are no more martial arts that can hurt me!”

He looked at the clouds on the distant peaks, and his heart gave way to an unspeakable sense of loneliness. No more victory to be gained, this was sad. No more defeats to be experienced, why sigh? The memories of old were like a

fleeting cloud that fluttered past the mountain, gently fluttering through his heart. Just like the cloud would not stay enveloped on top of the mountain, his memories would also not remain forever in his heart ...

The extremely beautiful maiden looked coldly yet piercingly at him. It was hard to know whether it was a look of expectance, a look of respect, or just a normal look.

Suddenly, the Immortal Dragon Long Bushi tore off his outer garments and laughed.

Long Fei's eyes contracted, "Father, what are you doing?"

Long Bushi laughed exuberantly, "If I do not test Ye Qiubai's swordplay, she will not die in peace, and I will regret it the rest of my life."

The extremely beautiful maiden smiled.

Long Fei insisted, "Father, this matter is not fair..."

Long Bushi stop laughing. "What do you know?" He laughed again. "During my lifetime, my nickname has been 'Immortal'. If I may die under the sword of another, it is a joyous thing."

Long Fei moved back three steps as he watched his father remove his clothing and toss it three yards away.

The extremely beautiful maiden said coldly, "Que Peng, Shen Cang, Yang Guan..."

Long Bushi turned and coldly instructed Long Fei, "Fei Zi, do you still remember He Zui Jin hand accupoint skill?"

Long Fei shuddered and replied, "I...I remember."

Long Bushi said, "You will use the He Zui Jin accupoint skill to seal my Que Peng, Shen Cang and Yang Guan accupoints."

Long Fei begged, "Father...Father..."

Long Bushi furrowed his brow and bellowed, "Quickly!"

Long Fei was momentarily stunned but clenched his jaws, and with a broad stride, positioned himself behind his father. He exhibited the He Zui Jin stance and prepared to seal his father's Que Peng accupoint.

His wife gave a moan, turning her head away. But soon she turned back again, only to see Long Fei still hesitating, his hands shaking. He still could not bear to do it.

Long Bushi turned around and shouted, "Useless...thing!" His voice softened as he uttered "thing".

Long Fei gave a long sigh and said, "Father, I've been thinking: this matter does not seem right..."

Before he could finish, a thin young man came from behind.

Long Fei said, "Fifth Brother, what are you doing here?"

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