

Spirit Luo Ring - Chapter 01-03

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Chap 1

As night arrived, an intoxicating aroma spread through the open air as the hot summer breeze brushed past the purple blossom. In a large backyard within Water Jade City, there is a little courtyard, where small tapping sounds can be heard. “pa! pa! pa!”

The sounds were sometimes rapid and sometimes slow. Within the yard, a 14-year-old teenager is standing in front of a wood stake and passionately hitting it, causing the sound. Sweat began to bead up on his forehead as he persisted in this exercise. The small stake withstood the continuous strikes of the youth without breaking.

He has a stubborn look on his adolescent face, and his shining eyes glimmer with a spark of perseverance. His face was handsome but ruddy, as he panted from the strenuous exercise. Draped across his back was a wrinkled blue robe wet with sweat.

Time began to pass, but the juvenile was oblivious as the moon climbed above the trees. As he continued to strike the wooden stake, the juvenile’s palms were bright red and his brow began to wrinkle.

‘pa’ ‘pa’

The teenager’s movements seemed mechanical as, again and again his fist hit the sturdy stump.

Suddenly his ears perked up as the sound of footsteps echoed through the courtyard. The juvenile ceased his actions and listened carefully. Sure enough, someone seemed to be getting closer and closer.

A man appeared at the entrance of the courtyard. When the teenager saw this, his face lit up. Typically, the juvenile had no visitors in his courtyard, except this man.

The visitor is a middle-aged man who is wearing a black sweatshirt. When he sees the teenager, a rare smile appeared on his face.

“It is so late Xia Yan, why are you still practicing?”, the man asked in a gentle

voice.

Xia Yan is the name of the adolescent who was hitting the stake. The middle-aged man is named Xia Changhe, Xia Yan's Third Grandfather, Xia Yan's father's third uncle, and one of the nine elders of the Xia Family. After Xia Yan's father died, Xia Yan grew up under his mother's care. However, when Xia Yan was eight, his mother also died leaving him alone. Ever since then, it was his third grandfather, Xia Changhe who treated him best.

Without his third grandfather, Xia Yan would already have been kicked out of the Xia Family and left to fend for himself on the street. Now he can stay in the Xia Family, though only in the small courtyard. Despite this, Xia Yan never complained about his situation. Xia Yan's third grandfather is the only reason the Xia family still takes care of Xia Yan.

After seeing Xia Changhe, Xia Yan's spirits lifted, and he ran to his grandfather. In a firm voice he declared, "Third Grandfather, I have to open up all my meridians and become a true martial artist, just like my father!"

When Xia Changhe heard this, he could not help but sigh, as the smile on his face grew wider. Xia Yan was born with a frail body so on the path of martial arts, he would not achieve much. Despite this, Xia Yan never gave up and continued to practice martial arts.

In the past ten years, although Xia Yan strengthened his body, there were no improvements in other areas. For example, although there were a hundred and eight meridians in Xia Yan's body, even now, not a single one had been opened. This phenomenon was almost impossible in such a large family, but it still occurred in Xia Yan's body.

(TL Note: I guess in this case, the meridians are like the profound entrances from ATG)

Xia Changhe muttered something to himself, then looked Xia Yan straight in the eyes with a smile and said, "Xia Yan, at the Council of Elders meeting tomorrow, the Grand Elder has just promised to assist me. With his help, there is a possibility that your mother's soul will be admitted into the Xia Family's Ancestral Temple.

When Xia Yan heard this, he leapt up in excitement and embraced Xia

Changhe, exclaiming: “Third grandpa, did Great Grandpa really promise you?” He laughed then continued, “my mother’s soul, can it really be admitted into the Ancestral Temple?”

Xia Yan’s eyes lit up, the excitement in his heart simply could not be expressed through words. He wanted to proclaim to the world this wondrous news.

It has already been six years since Xia Yan’s mother died, but her soul was never revenued in the Ancestral Temple. This has become a thorn in the heart of Xia Yan.

After Xia Yan was born, before he was one year old, his father’s body was brought back from the Dark Forest. From then on, Xia Yan’s mother was often cursed at and mocked by others. Everyone thought that it was Xia Yan’s mother’s arrival that caused his father to die in the Dark Forest. However, his mother never defended herself or cursed back, enduring through all mockery. However, only in front of Xia Yan did her frosty face reveal a warm smile..

The reason for this was because Xia Yan’s mother was not from the Imperial Dragon Continent but from the Dark Continent. Ten years ago, Xia Yan’s father entered the Dark Forest and brought back Xia Yan’s mother when he returned. It is known that denizens of the Imperial Dragon Continent always viewed people from the Dark Continent as the enemy. When Xia Yan’s father brought back a woman from the Dark Continent, the family’s negative reaction was expected. However, Xia Yan’s father did not care about what his family thought and amidst the opposition, his parents decided to get married, followed soon after with the birth of Xia Yan.

After Xia Yan was born, the rumors gradually died down, but less than a year after his birth, Xia Yan’s father made another trip to the Dark Forest, never to return alive.

Since then, he and his mother never lived a good day, with everyone giving them a cold face. Furthermore, some members of the family even went as far as suggesting the execution of Xia Yan’s mother. Fortunately, Xia Yan’s third grandpa, Xia Changhe, decided to protect Xia Yan and his mother, which was the only reason Xia Yan’s mother was able to stay within the Xia Family. However,

her treatment within the Xia Family was worse than that of the lowest servant.

After Xia Yan's mother died, her soul was not allowed to enter the Xia Family's Ancestral Temple.

“Xia Yan, when you grow up, you must become a man of indomitable spirit, just like your father...”

(TL Note: There is an idiom used here, 顶天立地 literally means to “support both heaven and earth”, which directly translates into indomitable spirit. This means that he must become unyielding and inherit his father's pride.)

“Xia Yan, in this life, your mother has only two wishes. The first is that you can live a good and fulfilling life... The second is that after I die I can be reunited with your father in death...”

At his mother's deathbed hearing these words, Xia Yan could not control his tears.

Every time Xia Yan recalled the words his mother said at her death bed, he could not help but ball up his fists as his chest shook. His father's soul resided in the Ancestral Temple, but his mother's soul was forbidden from entering the Temple. Xia Yan's desire was to be able to put his mother's soul in the Ancestral Temple so that she could be with his father.

Xia Changhe added, “By the way, Xia Yan, although the Grand Elder has promised his assistance during the next meeting of the Council of Elders, this does not guarantee anything. It is still up to the Council to decide.” Seeing Xia Yan's jubilant mood, Xia Changhe sighed in his heart. For six years now, Xia Changhe has been trying to convince the Council to let Xia Yan's mother's soul into the temple. Today, it was only because the Grand Elder was promised huge benefits, that he yielded and promised to speak for Xia Changhe at the next meeting.

The Grand Elder, Xia Lai, held tremendous status within the Xia Family, as he was a whole generation older than Xia Changhe and even the Patriarch. So if Xia Lai decided to help at the next Council meeting, that would make things a lot easier.

Looking at Xia Yan, Xia Changhe could not help but recall Xia Yan's father,

Xia Dongsheng. Xia Dongsheng was once the most outstanding disciple in the Xia Family's younger generation. When he was only eighteen, he fully opened all one hundred and eight meridians in his body achieving full body cleansing. If not for that accident ten years ago, he would have already be a master in the Xiantian realm if not the Spirit realm.

What a pity

Originally, Xia Dongsheng was also the most popular candidate for the next Patriarch. If Xia Dongsheng had not died, Xia Yan's status would be dramatically different.

Alas, life is full of unforeseeable circumstances!

"Third Grandpa, I will work hard in my cultivation, I will not disappoint you!", Xia Yan declared.

Xia Changhe shook his head and replied: "Xia Yan, there is a small chance that you will be able to break through. And true, breaking through will allow you to stand out among your peers, but look at me, my cultivation is only Tempered Body Stage!"

This was not the first time, that Xia Changhe tried to dissuade Xia Yan from practicing martial arts, but Xia Yan always resisted. Among the nine elders of the Xia Family, only three were not martial practitioners and Xia Changhe was among the three.

Because he knew that his third grandfather was saying this with good intentions, Xia Yan did not get angry.

This time, Xia Yan silently pondered for a while and realized that his third grandfather's advice was reasonable.

"Third Grandpa, my mother wanted me to practice martial arts and become a cultivator as strong as father."

Hearing Xia Yan's words, Xia Changhe fell silent. He knew that Xia Yan was stubborn and would perhaps never change his mind.

He patted Xia Yan on the shoulders and kindly gazed at Xia Yan saying, "Practice then, I believe that you will succeed Xia Yan!"

Xia Yan nodded his head, his eyes glowing with self confidence. His black eyes twinkled like the stars in the sky, bright and shining. In his heart, he hears a voice calling him, telling him to never give up. Everytime he thought of his mother in the dead of night, his entire body filled with strength.

The next morning, after eating two sesame cakes, he sat down in the middle of his shabby room and began to practice writing. Although he already decided to practice martial arts, he would still dedicate himself to reading and writing.

(TL Note: The sesame cakes referenced in the preceding paragraph is a type of breakfast food called 烧饼. Shao Bing is a type of baked, unleavened, layered flatbread bread in Chinese cuisine. It can be eaten stuffed or plain.)

Just as Xia Yan wrote down his eighty-seventh character on rice paper, he heard deafening footsteps from within the yard. Xia Yan looked up and saw the maidservant of the Patriarch, Xiao Cui.

Chap 2

Xiao Cui entered the yard and looked around, seeing Xia Yan in the room. Her eyes perked up as she walked in. Xiao Cui was wearing a purple cotton skirt above a pair of soft pink shoes covering her small pale feet, looking very charming for a seventeen year old. However, she stared at Xia Yan with a haughty expression, as if Xia Yan was not even as worthy as a dog.

“Xia Yan, the Patriarch wants you in the conference hall immediately!” Xia Yan ignored her and continued to slowly make strokes on the rice paper with a brush. Xiao Cui glanced at Xia Yan before shouting his name in a brusque tone. It was apparent that she did not respect him as the young master.

But Xia Yan did not care for a moment of arrogance from a servant is nothing compared to living in this forgotten corner of the Xia house for fourteen years.

“Thanks for the reminder”, Xia Yan casually replied, but he wondered to himself why the Patriarch wanted him in the conference hall. Even the pampered children of the Xia family could not freely enter such an important place.

Xiao Cui slammed her hands down on the table, startling Xia Yan as he was deep in contemplation.

Xiao Cui scoffed and in a cynical tone said, “Xia Yan, the Patriarch has summoned you to the conference hall and you dare not go immediately? Do you expect the Patriarch to wait for you?”.

Xiao Cui’s tone was one of a master lecturing her servant. Even though Xia Yan was not well liked, he was still a direct descendant of the Xia Family. It was not a servant’s place to order him around. Seeing Xiao Cui’s insufferably arrogant behavior, Xia Yan stared coldly at her.

Xiao Cui began to have guilty thoughts and her fingers trembled slightly under Xia Yan’s stare. Aware of her poor temper, she immediately returned the stare with a solemn look, muttering, “Hmph, you consider yourself a master? What master lives in a straw hut without a single servant? Looking at your sickly

countenance reminds me of that nasty woman.”

The nasty woman Xiao Cui was referring to was Xia Yan’s mother. Under the protection of Xia Dongsheng in the Xia family for eight years, Xia Yan’s mother was naturally known by the Patriarch and by extension, Xiao Cui .

Xia Yan’s face suddenly blackened with anger and his eyes shined with a powerful light as he suppressed his fury and said through clenched teeth, “Hmph, my body may be weak, but killing you would not be difficult. Xiao Cui, you would know that it is no big deal even if I kill you. In a large household like our Xia family, losing a few servants would not even warrant an investigation!”

Xiao Cui became flustered and stepped backward, seeing the white teeth revealed by Xia Yan’s sneer. Her chest heaved up and down as she looked at Xia Yan in confusion. Xia Yan’s words had deeply unsettled and frightened her. Fearing Xia Yan really would kill her, she did not feel safe even after backing away. With a face frozen in terror, she retreated from the room.

Xia Yan’s face was too frightening just now.

Standing outside the door, Xiao Cui’s mouth moved a few times, wanting to say something sarcastic, but looking at Xia Yan with her eyes flashing, she could not say what she wanted. Without a sound, she turned around and quickly left Xia Yan’s courtyard.

After Xiao Cui left, Xia Yan hurriedly put away his books, brushed off the white robe he was wearing, and quickly headed towards the conference hall.

“The Patriarch has summoned me to the conference hall, is this because of the matter about my mother’s soul?” Xia Yan’s face shone with excitement, walking and thinking at the same time.

The Xia family mansion was very large and walking from the backyard to the front yard took Xia Yan the same amount of time it would take to boil a cup of tea. Reaching the entrance of the conference hall, Xia Yan saw two uncles guarding the door. Taking a moment to steady his heart, he approached them.

“Uncles, the Patriarch has summoned me to the conference hall to see him!”, Xia Yan respectfully said.

The gatekeeper elder cast a look at Xia Yan and with a wooden face said,

“The Patriarch and the elders are inside. When you go in, do not speak nonsense. If you offend the Patriarch, you will be cast out of the family.”

Xia Yan quickly said, “Honorable uncles, rest assured, I will not speak nonsense.”

Creak! The red door was slowly opened and Xia Yan fearfully stepped in for this was his first time in the Conference Hall. The Conference hall was very grand and even though the room did not have a lot of decoration, the room gave off a heavy pressure. In the center of the room at the head of a long table was the family patriarch, Xiafei Long and the nine elders of the Xia Family.

Xia Yan’s third grandfather, Xia Changhe, sat among them, his facial expression indiscernible.

The patriarch and the Grand Elder, as well as several other elders, gazed solemnly at Xia Yan, their eyes revealing traces of unhappiness. Seeing this, Xia Yan’s heart thumped. Would they still not let his mother into the Ancestral Temple to reunite with his father?

“Xia Yan, your mother’s soul cannot be placed into the Ancestral Temple. Your mother is not a citizen of the Imperial Dragon continent, therefore she has no right to become a member of the Xia Family,” the Patriarch declared in a commanding voice, as his sharp eyes swept past Xia Yan. Xia Yan felt a feeling of oppression, making him unable to resist, even feeling the urge to bow down.

Xia Yan’s frail body trembled a little under the pressure, but he suddenly lifted his head and with a fearless look in his eyes, gazed at the ten most powerful people in the Xia family.

“My mother is my father’s wife, so why can she not enter the temple? The third elder once said, ‘my mother married my father, so she is a member of the Xia family!’ Grand Elder, my third grandpa told me that you also think my mother’s soul should enter the temple, right?” Xia Yan looked at his third grandfather, Xia Changhe and the grand elder, Xia Lai.

“How brazen!”, the Grand Elder exclaimed as his face changed colors, his eyes staring daggers at Xia Yan. He angrily slammed his hands on the table and pointed at Xia Yan.

“Xia Yan, no more of this nonsense.” The third elder, Xia Changhe, also frowned and looked at Xia Yan, a hint of frustration on his face. He had tried, but could do nothing.

“Third Grandpa, my mother was not a bad person!” When Xia Yan saw Xia Changhe acting this way, his heart turned ice cold. “Third grandpa you understand my mother, you know she is really not a bad person! Before she died she told me that her last wish was to be reunited with my father after her death. My mother lived within the Xia family for nine years and she never did anything to harm anyone!

“Patriarch! I beg you, please let my mother into the ancestral temple!” Xia Yan with bloodshot eyes pleaded with a hoarse voice full of hope and sincerity. In order to let his mother into the Ancestral Temple he was willing to do anything.

Xia Yan had already waited for six years and in these six years, his greatest desire was to make his mother’s wish a reality. But in the Xia family, he was powerless, as even servants dared to scowl at him.

As Xia Feilong stared at Xia Yan, in his heart he thought that this boy really does have an indomitable will, but he was the son of that evil woman. That evil woman was from the Dark continent and out of the nine elders in the family, only three elders agreed to let her into the Ancestral Shrine.

Chap 3

Xia Feilong's eyes swept over the face of the Grand Elder Xia Lai, who seemed to be particularly hostile to Xia Yan. Despite being an elder holding an exalted position within the Xia family including being patriarch, he is still restricted in many places. As the Grand Elder fervently opposed Xia Yan's mother's soul entering the shrine, there was nothing he could do.

"Xia Yan, you don't have to say so much, the elders here and myself are all helpless in this matter. Even if we allow your mother's soul into the Ancestral shrine, the family will not agree." Xia Feilong stated with no hints of pity to the poor kid.

Xia Changhe's face was ashen and he furiously glared at Xia Lai before saying, "I think that this is something that we should let the whole family vote on. If the majority agrees then..."

Before Xia Changhe even finished his sentence, Xia Lai roared at Xia Yan, "This is something I strongly oppose. That evil woman was from the Dark Continent, which is the mortal enemy of our Imperial Dragon Continent. Hmph, she will never become a member of our Xia family. Heh heh, however, if you really want her soul to enter the Ancestral temple, there is a way."

"What way?", Xia Yan said. His face was completely pale, his heart was at the bottom of the abyss before he heard Xia Lai's words. At the mention of a way, he was pleasantly surprised and fixed his gaze on Xia Lai.

Xia Lai shot Xia Yan a glance and smiled evilly saying, "Unless you can become our Water Jade City's Archbishop! If that really happens, there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Our Xia family will have to obey the Archbishop's Orders!"

(TL note: Templar in the synopsis has been changed to Archbishop)

"Pfttt~", the other elders suppressed their laughter, their eyes wide open, then shook their heads and sighed.

Become the Archbishop? That was only possible for a master in the spirit realm. Not just any master either, but only the strongest master could challenge

the Archbishop of the Holy Temple and succeed, taking the title.

The Holy Temple was the highest authority within the province and within the Holy temple there is one Archbishop beside twelve bishops. The Xia family's Patriarch, Xia Feilong, was among the twelve bishops of Water Jade City's Holy Temple. In addition, the Water Jade City's Holy Temple's twelve bishops included the other two Patriarchs of the three big families in Water Jade City. Three others were prestigious elders within Water Jade City, and the last six were the most outstanding practitioners selected from the tens of towns that Water Jade City administered.

Of course, the three bishops positions that the three patriarchs occupied were the three most powerful positions within the Holy Temple besides the Archbishop. The Xia family's pride rested in their position as a bishop.

"The Archbishop?" Xia Yan absentmindedly repeated those words. The Archbishop of the Holy Temple was an unattainable existence. Even the Patriarch, Xia Feilong, was scared for a moment even to think of becoming the Archbishop.

"Hehe, Xia Yan, if you can accomplish this, I will agree to let that evil woman's soul into the Ancestral Temple!" Seeing Xia Yan's face paling, Xia Lai felt satisfied and started laughing in front of the Patriarch and all the elders.

His attitude towards Xia Yan, in fact, drew the silence of the other elders and Patriarch. However, even Xia Feilong would not dare to blame the Grand Elder for acting inappropriately.

After a brief moment of silence, Xia Yan eyes suddenly sharpened and he stared firmly at Xia Lai, articulating clearly, "Okay, wait for me! I, Xia Yan, will not make you wait too long. Archbishop, that position will be mine!"

Xia Yan's said this with his back perfectly straight.

Having said those profound words clearly, Xia Yan turned around and exited the chamber. He did not immediately return to the small courtyard within the Xia family's backyard, but instead he headed towards the Xia family's Martial Skills Hall.

"I want to enter the Violet Leaf School to cultivate!"

“I must enter the Violet Leaf School to cultivate!”

“Only if I can become a strong practitioner, can I then challenge the Archbishop and become the Archbishop!” Xia Yan walked swiftly but every step was heavy with these thoughts.

Xia Yan at this moment had only one goal in mind!

Xia Yan had never gone to the Xia Family Martial Skills Hall in the past because he was not welcome there. But now, he had to try, despite the Xia family’s recommendation being necessary to enter the Violet Leaf school and gain better cultivation and learning opportunities.

Xia Yan’s face was ashen, as cold as ice in the harsh winter, revealing nothing.

After Xia Yan left the conference hall, the third elder Xia Changhe sighed, contemplating Xia Yan’s bitter life. If his achievements in cultivating were as high as his father then his status would not be so low in the Family. What a shame, what a shame...

Xia Changhe shook his head....

When Xia Lai saw Xia Yan’s thin and wiry body exit the chamber, a cold look flashed through his face as he sneered and coldly laughed, “A useless bastard dares to brag. Hmph, as the evil woman’s son, he must have evil schemes. In my opinion, he should be cast out of our Xia family!”

Hearing his words, the other elders and the Patriarch said nothing. Xia Lai’s nerves trembled a bit looking at the other elders, and he said nothing more about the subject. He knew that if he really wanted to expel Xia Yan, the third elder would definitely be opposed, not even accounting for the other elders.

At the entrance of the Martial Skills Hall, looking at the large letters spelling “Martial Skills Hall” on the large gate, Xia Yan thrust out his chest and tightly squeezed his fists. His eyes were bright with determination.

Suddenly a person came out of the Martial Skills Hall. Only outstanding family members had the right to enter the Martial Skills Hall to cultivate. Within the Martial Skills Hall, an elder of the family personally instructed those of the younger generation in cultivation. Also, some of the elders would even teach some martial skills. These martial skills were unique non-mainstream within the

Xia family.

In the Imperial Dragon Continent, martial skills classified as either mainstream or non-mainstream techniques. Mainstream techniques were divided into levels according to the power of the skill: Divine, Heaven, and Human. However, even the lowest mainstream technique, a Humanly skill was very difficult to obtain. In a household like the Xia family, they had very little Human martial skills, not to mention Divine and Sky martial skills.

In most of these martial arts, there is a focus on the entry of the Heart, which is used to help open the meridians of practitioners.

Xia Yan saw the shadow of a figure, the person coming out of the Martial Skills hall. Her body was slim, adorned with a black dress. This person was the Patriarch's daughter, Xia Zixin. Before his mother died, Xia Yan used to play with her all the time. However after his mother's death, as Xia Yan and Xia Zixin grew up, Xia Zixin came to see Xia Yan less and less. After Xia Yan turned ten, he rarely saw Xia Zixin.

Xia Yan knew that Xia Zixin had already distanced herself from him, but he did not blame her in his heart. However, sometimes he thought of her and would laugh in self-ridicule. Seeing the pretty Xia Zixin appear, Xia Yan was a little surprised. As his heart was still bitter from the Conference hall, he did not take the initiative to greet her

Seeing Xia Yan, Xia Zixin's bright red lips moved up and down a few times, her face revealing a sense of disappointment, but she ultimately remained silent. Xia Yan thought he heard a small sigh, then Xia Zixin walked past him like a fragrant wind and dissipated.

Next