



*Fandi Arayón*

20 years later...

The sun is slowly raising itself from the horizon, red as blood, slowly given life to the people in the town of Shinobe and in the nearby forest area. The birds are enjoying themselves in the forest and all seem at peace, but suddenly a man yells loudly indistinctly and scares away the nearby birds. Chun-Yi Chang is kneeling in the long grass with closed eyes, listening to the wind when the man yells once more, this time more clearly. "Fighters prepare yourself" and Chun-Yi Chang opens his eyes and looks over his men, who still kneel with closed eyes like statues unawaked by the yelling. Chun-Yi Chang stands up and hammers his sword against his shield, awaking his men who one by one open their eyes and joins him standing. He watches them in silence and even they are trying their best to look though and fearless, their eyes tell another story. Chun-Yi Chang bends down and picks up a small cup of hot tea, still steaming in the cold spring morning air. "My men" he starts with a deep powerful voice which already turns a bit of light in some of his men's eyes. "We cannot let evil enter our land without doing our best to keep it away, so if this fight is my last, I would like to say it has been an honour to train and fight with you against evil." He continues powerful to make sure no one knows how much fear he has inside. Some soldiers yell in rage while others stay silenced, listening for every word. "Before I go fighting our enemy alone, in the circle of light, not far away from here I want you all to raise your cup for our beloved emperor Yi-Chen Wang who has rule this country thought peace for so long and continue to do so after today" More men yelled as they raised up their cup and the stream form the tea, made a small cloud around the men. "May the dragon's guide my blade and help me defend this great country, for peace and glory" Chun-Yi Chang yelled so loud that the nearby birds flew away scared before he drank a small gulp and threw the cup with the tea on the ground in honour of the dead. His cup had not hit the ground before all the men had done the same and returned his yelling "for peace and glory" and no one had fear in their eyes anymore. He bowed to their answer and placed his sword in the ground while whispering, "Help me, return to my family, dear dragons of power" Then he stood up again and pulled the sword from the ground and walked against the circle of light with his men yelling loudly behind him. As they reached the circle of light, it was already full of noise, as many of the enemy soldiers were already there. The screaming and yelling from the other men, almost took the breath away from Chun-Yi Chang but as he looked around on his men, the fear had already returned in their eyes and he knew he had to do something or winning the fight would not be enough. "Where is your leader?" Chun-Yi Chang yelled loudly while raising his sword high into the sky to capture the sunlight and blind a few of the other soldiers which awoke his men once again and they was suddenly full of force once again even the enemy almost out numbered them five to one. He looked around for the leader but caught the eye of three young kids on horses who could only be the

leaders as they were like watching a mirror of the leader. “Where is your leader?” Chun-Yi Chang yelled loudly again and the men on the other side spilt into two and between them a man started walking and he really did everything Chun-Yi Chang had just done to rally his men so he could only be his opponent. The sunlight hit the circle of light just as the man entered which made Chun-Yi Chang feel the fear inside him grow as in the way of rally his men up to the fight he had forgotten the old tales which foretold that if you entered the circle of light as the sunlight hit the circle you would win the fight against any opponent. The thought mixed with the confusion he had about why an army leader of an enormous army would even fight him instead of just burning it all down like they had been ants, good thing he had already sent out the message about the army so the next ones could defend the palace. He stopped thinking as he could feel his face change from a powerful leader to a weak leader and he knew no matter what he did he had to keep looking strong, no matter how dark things looked. “I, Chun-Yi Chang, is ready for the fight against your lord as we agree less than 24 hours ago” he yelled against the other leader who had said nothing at all and his men yelled to make the words sound has more forced than they had. A laughter came from the opponent before replying ice cold “I am ready to fight you too” and Chun-Yi Chang was about to yell back that the man was a chicken to keep his name a secret but could feel inside he knew the voice but he could not place it. They watched each other directly in the eyes while holding their hands on the swords. For a moment all became silence except for birds singing in the surrounding trees, but suddenly they pulled their sword and the first clank filled the air and the two group of men around started making yelling again “Nice to meet you again, your sword has not changed since last time” The opponent said as he danced around in the circle. “You do not know me, and when this is over you will only know my name and how great a fighter I am” Chun-Yi Chang yelled back, trying to block him out as he preferred to fight in silence. “Your eyes tell me everything I need to know about you and our relationship” The opponent continued before he stopped his dance like moves and attack Chun-Yi Chang with such speed that Chun-Yi Chang could only defend it but instead of continuing the attack the man just danced back and they were back at they started. “Be quiet and I will kill you quickly” Chun-Yi Chang yelled and attacked, but the man was too fast and blocked it like it was child’s play and yelled back “You could not kill me last time” which almost froze Chun-Yi Chang from continue his attacks but he managed to finished them before return to his start position. Another attack quickly followed and Chun-Yi Chang blocked it in the last second but the attack was stronger than the one before so when the swords finally stopped moving he could feel the edge of his own sword against his neck, and as he pushed it away, a red line stayed behind. He looked at his opponent and tried to hide his fear by yelling “I don’t care of who you are and your mind games so lets fight” before launching his own attacks. At first it did not seem like the

Chang was far from done with his attacks and started put more power behind the attacks and suddenly to the surprise of everyone, he broke through the seemingly impenetrable defence and his sword hit the shoulder and even that blood appeared the opponent did not care at all. "Bravo, bravo... I am impressed" the man said taunting while he removed the left of his sleeve, revealing a blood mess underneath. The surrounding men yelled even louder than before and the sky followed by blocking out the red sun with some big black clouds and the mix of taunt and yelling made Chun-Yi Chang attack again, but fear rushed over him as the strike failed and flew far off his opponent and before he could return to defend himself he felt a pain on his left hip as the other man had attacked him. Chun-Yi Chang started cursing of himself because even that his opponent had been quiet about his knowledge about them, he had still controlled Chun-Yi Chang's mind and worse now injured him too. "I have to block him out" he yelled of himself as he closed his mind for a second to try clean his mind and focus, but instead of giving him new fighter will, it gave the other man chances and only a quick movement spared him from more cuts and injuries, leaving him even more annoyed on himself. "You are not getting away from here alive" the opponent said, but the quick movement had given just the right amount of air to Chun-Yi Chang's brain that he attacked back right away and the man had to force himself back to avoid the strike but Chun-Yi Chang continued as he stretched out and managed to force a strike to the face of his opponent who only stopped it by holding his free hand in front of the sword. The attack made the surrounding people silence in surprise as they all including Chun-Yi Chang expected the man to yell of pain as the blood started dripping from the hand, but Chun-Yi Chang's face turned almost white when he heard the laughter coming from the man instead. Suddenly a lightning ran across the sky and thunder quickly followed loudly which made the laughter even more evil than it was before. "Seems like the dragons want us to fight doing the rain like last time we meet" a laughing voice said and Chun-Yi Chang's could feel chills down his spine turned into ice as the pieces had finally connected in his head. Chun-Yi Chang stood speechless but even E-Bo Wang knew what he was thinking "Yes, the last time we meet, you were a young man already important to my dear weakling of a brother" – "Keep the trash talking to yourself or I will bring your tongue to emperor Jiang Chen's as a birthday present" Chun-Yi Chang broke in, not speechless anymore. "Oh, you are still speaking, I thought you had lost it" E-Bo Wang continue while his voice still did not show any signs of pain from his hand. "Well, we cannot have that you interrupt me again so soldiers, bring me my gifts for the young man" and two soldiers disappeared from the circle and a bad feeling played with Chun-Yi Chang's mind so instead of waiting he attack E-Bo Wang who had been so pleased with himself that he had turned away from the fight but just as Chun-Yi Chang's sword was about to hit, he turned around and blocked the attack. "You have been training quiet a lot since last time but still no match for me" E-Bo Wang but instead of attack himself, he pushed Chun-Yi Chang away as the rain bit by

bit fell the sky. The two soldiers reappeared in the circle and E-Bo Wang turned against them and yelled "Great timing guys, give Chun-Yi Chang his presents from me" barely the words had left his mouth, two bodies flew through the air and landed in front of Chun-Yi Chang who could feel his breath turn to ice as he feared it was Fei-Fan Chang and Mu-Yan Lin. "You promised" Chun-Yi Chang yelled before he ran over to the bodies and picked them up. His face turned lifeless as he took them up but quickly gained life when he noticed it was not his family but just the two men he had sent out before the fight to warn emperor Yi-Chen Wang about the attack. A new laughter started from E-Bo Wang, who already knew who Chun-Yi Chang thought the bodies had been. "I gave you my word, so I am not as evil, you want to make me but those two men gave their lives for you so you betrayed that trust and now would you mind keep quiet while I enjoy taking your life in this lovely weather" E-Bo Wang said as the rain fell even more heavy than before. Chun-Yi Chang could feel a mix of rage and doubt grow inside him which fought for a while before fire appeared in his eyes as the rage won and he yelled loudly, making sure that not a single nearby soul missed his words. "E-Bo Wang, the emperor's older brother and a traitor of the kingdom, I will make you pay for every crime you have done this life and will do in the next" all the men including E-Bo Wang looked at Chun-Yi Chang speechless and before anyone could move a muscle, he dropped the bodies down in the already muddy ground and launched an attack and only an even faster movement from E-Bo Wang left him alive, still blood fell to the ground faster than the rain drops. Everybody was silent as everybody knew the fight had now entered the stage where no matter what happened, only one man would leave the circle as there was no way back now. The rain fell even more heavy, like the breath of E-Bo Wang who had expected the bodies would have handed him the fight but had given energy to Chun-Yi Chang instead. The rain drops got bigger and bigger while the ground had slowly turned more brownish than green during the fight, but the two fighters did not care at all as all they wanted now was the other one dead. "Thanks for the introduction, shall we continue our brief fight or have you lost the spirit" Chun-Yi Chang finally said as he could feel the cold trying to take control over him in the rain. E-Bo Wang turned his face against Chun-Yi Chang and a bloody cut above his left eye revealed where Chun-Yi Chang had hit him, but the words from his mouth were not mistaken at all "Oh, I am far from finished with you and I won't stop until you are in two pieces" he said almost taunting and attacked before the taunt could do his work, giving Chun-Yi Chang every chance to block the attack, but the strike was powerful and made Chun-Yi Chang sink down in the muddy ground. Chun-Yi Chang tried to get up from the muddy ground but it was too late, E-Bo Wang attacked again and this time it was Chun-Yi Chang blood on the muddy ground but the rain was so strong now it almost disappeared instantly and the only proof of the strike was the scream of pain from Chun-Yi Chang. Chun-Yi Chang got free before E-Bo Wang could strike again, and the power of the strike surprised E-Bo Wang so much that the sword flew out of his hands and

landed a few steps away from the other side of the circle. "Throw me the sword" E-Bo Wang yelled and his voice had fear in it. A soldier moved out in the muddy ground but before he could reach the sword, a younger voice yelled "Leave the sword alone, it is my father's fight, not yours" The soldier looked at E-Bo Wang and at the owner of the voice before he took another step almost reaching the sword. "If you touch that sword, you are death" the childish voice continued, and the soldier stopped his movements against the sword and turned away to join the circle once more. In the meantime had E-Bo Wang reached for the sword himself and yelled out to the young one "Be happy, you are a child of mine or you would have been death this instant" Chun-Yi Chang mind was full of thoughts about the child as it reminded him of his own, young girl but instead of letting it control his fight, he used the chance to strike again but the muddy ground made it impossible to attack silence and E-Bo Wang blocked the attack like it was nothing and attacked himself while yelling "I have not forgotten about you even if you dare to attack me without honour" and in the next he revenged the cut over the eye by giving Chun-Yi Chang one too and the fight was back in the hands of E-Bo Wang. Chun-Yi Chang took a deep breath before continuing the fight and started whispering to himself "I, E-Bo Wang, served the great emperor Yi-Chen Wang in life and the dragons when I die, so please dear dragons protect my family, especially my daughter, if I am going to die today" E-Bo Wang could not hear the exact words coming from Chun-Yi Chang mouth but he knew what they was about and started laughing and said "So you have gotten your own little family too since our meeting, lucky for you, I will send them to join you once I am done with you and your town" the words made Chun-Yi Chang stop praying and look directly at E-Bo Wang and with a dry serious voice replied "You have to get past me first" and before the last word had left his mouth, he attacked and the power from the attack broke the sword of E-Bo Wang's who face turned from joy into a face of fear. "What, how? Stop, wait?" his voice rambled as Chun-Yi Chang continued his attack and only some quick movement with the broke sword, made him survive the attack. The rain continued to make the ground more muddy, and a few lightnings crossed the sky with no thunder to follow. "Give me a sword" E-Bo Wang started yelling out, but not a single soldier in the ring moved as they had all heard the command from the child and no one would go against the command even if the command came from their leader. "please give me a sword" E-Bo Wang said with sadness in his voices but when that helped neither he suddenly turned angry and yelled "Stupid men" and just as Chun-Yi Chang was about to strike him down and turned around with a smaller sword in hand and quickly defended himself with it. "I knew you were cheating" Chun-Yi Chang replied, cared by the upper hand in the fight. Blood appeared all over E-Bo Wang's body, who now had a hard time defending himself. Suddenly a lightning ran over the sky and hit a nearby tree, making a branch fell heavily to the ground between the two men. E-Bo Wang seemed saved as the branch had landed right next to Chun-Yi Chang and had force out the sword out of his hand, but Chun-Yi Chang had

not much trouble removing the branch to get the sword again. Chun-Yi Chang stood for a while thinking as E-Bo Wang scared from the lightning strike and after the following thunder he looked up and yelled “Throw your knife out to the men and you can have a real sword back”. E-Bo Wang could not believe his ears as Chun-Yi Chang was having the upper hand and could kill him almost however he pleased. “How can I know you will not trick me?” E-Bo Wang replied as he finally found the strength in his body. Chun-Yi Chang did not reply to him and instead he just knelt in the muddy ground with his sword in front of him and E-Bo Wang knew he had not much time to waste and quickly ran out to the man who did not want to throw the now broken sword before and took his sword. As E-Bo Wang returned to the centre of the circle of light, Chun-Yi Chang stood up once more like it had been a friendly fight all along. “Why did you do that, you know you could just have killed me and ended this fight once and for all” E-Bo Wang said almost in silence and Chun-Yi Chang looked directly at him and replied with a firm voice “Because I have honour while you have none, now use the sword so we can get this fight finished” They started dancing again like nothing had happened in the entire fight except that their hampered movements by the injuries they had gotten so far. Chun-Yi Chang attacked E-Bo Wang at full speed but just as his sword was about to hit Chun-Yi Chang a pain started growing from his back and blocked every move he tried to do. The next he felt was the cold muddy ground against his face and laughter from E-Bo Wang drowned the sound of rain. “What happened?” Chun-Yi Chang said while he turned around. No answer appeared at first and instead the air got filled by screams instead of rain drops and he knew what had happened. E-Bo Wang had tricked him and set up a trap in case he ever got close to winning the fight. “I love nothing more than people dying, screaming of pain” E-Bo Wang said and appeared in front of Chun-Yi Chang before continuing, “I am not done with you, so please stay here and enjoy the music” and the screams grew in strength both of pain and in despair of what to do next. Chun-Yi Chang did not think long and spit out some blood against E-Bo Wang and hit him right in the face who promptly penetrated Chun-Yi Chang’s hand with his sword. “Arhhhhh” Chun-Yi Chang yelled before E-Bo Wang could say anything and the screaming from the other men was already so noisy that he could only sense the mouth movements. “I am going to make you suffer once more like you did back in the day” E-Bo Wang continued as he jumped away to kill the remaining soldiers of Chun-Yi Chang’s army. “I have failed my men, I have failed my Lord, I have failed my family” he tried whispering as the blood continued to fill his mouth while his free hand tried to figure out what happened to him. Soon he reached the center of the pain and felt the metal which had caused it all. The metal piece was too small to be a sword or knife and the wood that followed ended up in a pair of feathers, telling him it was an arrow and it had not gone as deep as the unbearable pain had tried to tell him. He spit out the blood from his mouth and took a deep breath before pulling the arrow out. A scream followed, but his movements returned and were ready to fight once more. The

rain halted instantly and a small beam of light peaked through the clouds before it continued raining once again. Chun-Yi Chang looked around and he knew what he had to do or at least try to, he removed the sword penetrating the hand like it was nothing and stand up, a nearby soldier had notice his movements but had been too slow to reach the screen and do something about it as in the next the sword was between his eyes. The pain was unbearable, but he had to continue if he had to do anything before it was too late so a mouth full of blood he yelled “E-Bo Wang, I am not done with you” and E-Bo Wang quickly appeared in the mess of people who all was fighting. “Are you not death yet?” E-Bo Wang said, almost laughing of joy as their fight was not over. E-Bo Wang held up his sword and attacked without warning but as the sword almost reach Chun-Yi Chang, his stopped his movement and the same cold feeling that had hit Chun-Yi Chang entered his body and before Chun-Yi Chang could attack himself, another arrow flew thought the air, making both men kneel in front of each other. “I am not done yet” E-Bo Wang yelled to the sky as blood filled his mouth and more whizzing sounds followed as arrows penetrated his body and he feel death to the ground. Chun-Yi Chang felt saved for a moment, but the savior was not the one he expected, as the archer was none other than the young man who had demanded the fight continued without giving his father a sword. “Why...” Chun-Yi Chang said before he felt a sword penetrating him from his back and his head got pulled back to reveal a young woman “Silence, you just need to focus on dying but let me assure you, we could not have done it with you” a sweet voice said and Chun-Yi Chang closed his eyes while the voice continued commanded “Close your eyes for good now and pray we won’t find your family in the town and oh before you go, please send our regards to our father as he was too weak to lead like our grandfather predicted” Chun-Yi Chang fell to the ground but did not get to feel the cold from the mud and the blood from his and E-Bo Wang body had given some color to the brown ground while rain fell heavy.

In the meantime, in the town Shinobe not from the edge of the forest and the circle of light was Fei-Fan Chang finishing her breakfast and already preparing to leave the house. She was in a good mood as today was the day her father would return together with the other men from the town after three months of training. Her mother Mu-Yan Lin had told her the training camp was a few kilometres away from the town but that woman could not seat foot there as they could be spies or make the men lose focus on their training and it had been like that since her father had taken control of the army. Chun-Yi Chang found it a bit dull not to see her father for so long but at least she knew her father missed her too as when she was younger he had often arrived at the house crying and the last years they had even agreed to meet up on the hill of dragons outside the town to make the distance even shorter. People told stories about that the dragons were having meetings there every time they had been sitting foot on the island, which was why the hill had gotten its name. Her father

Chun-Yi Chang had even decided that they should honor the place by placing a sculpture for each of the dragons. Fei-Fan Chang finished her breakfast before she tiptoed past her mother's room and into her father's small armoury, which was almost empty as her father had brought his armor and sword to the training camp, but he had always left the family sword. "The sword of heavens" as her father had called it when he present it to her, when he given her permission to train with it as long she did her best to keep it a secret for her mother as she was not fond of Fei-Fan Chang running around with a sword in her hand instead of become a real woman. She watched her face in the clear metal of the sword for a moment before she tiptoed back out of the armoury and past her mother's bedroom once more and out of the door. She crossed the yard with some quick steps, doing her best to avoid the eunuchs, who already were up and preparing for the day. Out on the streets the town was already full of life so Fei-Fan Chang could relax more than before as it would hard to notice her between the other people. She followed the street east with the sun right in her face and out of the gate that was the only opening in the surrounding wall, and soon she was out of the hill. "I will show father I will be worthy of using the sword of heavens as my sword when my father comes home" Fei-Fan Chang said to herself as she swung it around lie her father had showed her as one of the last things before he had traveled with the other men. The sword was singing as her movements when faster and faster while her excitement of her father's return grew inside it. The sounds made nearby birds fly close to her and land in the tree before joining the singing as they watched her moments. Back home the house was full of loud screams as the house was on the edge as miss Mu-Yan Lin had fainted in the middle of the yard and now the eunuchs were running looking for water and other things to care of her. The gate to the yard opened and at first the eunuch became even more wild as they feared it was Chun-Yi Chang who had returned home but as the head eunuch appeared in the opening instead and back from the morning trip in the town, they relaxed a bit but still acting like headless chicken's. The head eunuch tried to figure out what was going on in the chicken yard when his eyes caught the sight of miss Chun-Yi Chang who laid still in the middle in the yard with the craziness going on with no one taking care of her. He put down the groceries and took some big steps into the mess to check on her. "Are you awake, miss Mu-Yan Lin" he said as he tried to take her pulse and took a deep breath when he felt her life signs. He stood up from the ground and without warning yelled loud and clear "eunuchs, stop your tasks immediately" and the noise of running feet quiet down before stopping completely between of him and the gate behind him. He looked at them with a mix of furious and doubt before he yelled out the first command "You take care of the food I have brought home" he yelled loud while pointed at the first one, "You make some jasmin tea for miss Mu-Yan Lin now" he continued yelling as the first one ran away. "You take care of miss Mu-Yan Lin's bed while you four transport her to bed without dropping her or I will drop something on you" His eyes told how important it was and he took a few small steps

away to make room for the eunuchs to care her when Mu-Yan Lin suddenly opened her eyes and yelled “Mu-Yan Lin” before closing them again like they had been closed all the time. The eunuchs, who were about to carry her, looked questioning on the head eunuch like they worried they had something wrong and the head eunuch did not need many minutes to think before he yelled loudly “Well, what are you waiting for... get her to bed this instant” and the eunuchs pulled her up gentle and walked against the house and her room inside. A eunuch appeared in the door just as they were about to enter and he blocked for a moment before he ran over to the head eunuch who watched over that everyone was doing his commands. “What brings you back so soon?” Head eunuch yelled without thinking much about anything else than his mistress. “I... I...” the man started stemming which made had eunuch lose his patient “What... speak up so we can get miss Mu-Yan Lin better fast” and as the words left his mouth, the man continued like they were the same man. “I cannot find Fei-Fan Chang, she is not in her room or any other places in the house, I hope not that she is the one who made miss Mu-Yan Lin faint.” The man said and the head eunuch good feel the cold run down his back before it quickly turned warm again as he remembered that the agreement between Fei-Fan Chang and Chun-Yi Chang. A smiled appeared on his face he replied calmly “Take care of miss Mu-Yan Lin, I will bring Fei-Fan Chang home” the calm voice confused the eunuch who did not know what to do next so he continued “Do not worry I know exactly where she is and I am sure she is not the reason” before he turned around and started walking against the gate again. Inside the room were Mu-Yan Lin suddenly opening her eyes once more but instead of yelling Chun-Yi Chang like before her voice was low, almost whispering “Fei-Fan Chang” before going dark once more. The head eunuch followed the same route as Fei-Fan Chang out of the town, trying to hide his face of fear of what had happened as he did not want to make the normal folks suspect anything even he knew that the yelling might had alarmed a few around the house, but the change from a beautiful morning sun to a windy cloudy weather had left more focused on that and soon he were out on the hill were Fei-Fan Chang was training with the sword of heavens as expected. The birds in the tree flew away when they watch him arrive with his big steps and with no introduction or anything he just said calmly yet commanding he said “You have to return home, this instant” but Fei-Fan Chang did not lose focus on her sword training and swung it around like no one was there because she was waiting for her father to return and meet her there just as they had promised each other. The head eunuch looked around to be sure they were alone, as he did not want to the common people to know what had happened in the yard before he tried again with a bit stronger voice “You have to return home now, I demand it” and this time Fei-Fan Chang reacted by looking directly at him while the sword flew through the air once more. “No” she replied with a firm voice as she knew he had no command over her unless her mother had allowed him and the way he was acting, it did not seem like it. The head eunuch looked a bit at her training while he thought about how to bring

her home before he looked around for common people once more and decided that the only way of getting her to come home was to let her know why he had found her and was commanding with her even he knew the rules. “Your mother...” he started gentle before Fei-Fan Chang broke in and replied, “I am not going back home because of some terrible weather when I have agreed to meet my father here” and pointed at some dark clouds that had appeared on the sky and slowly the rain was falling gently, making them both wet. Fei-Fan Chang continued her training like it was her against the entire world as now the rain started fall even harder and heavy and the head eunuch decided that now was the time to use force so he yelled against the wind “Your mother has...” and again Fei-Fan Chang broke in and answered “I do not care, understand that or I will tell my father when he comes home” which made the eunuch just look at her before he complete his sentence and continued “fainted and I am here because she calls for you and not because of some rain” he closed his eyes as the last words left his mouth and he could feel the rage grow inside him as he finally finished but his rage disappeared when his ears picked up that Fei-Fan Chang had stopped swinging the sword. He opened his eyes and was about to apologise for his rage and that he told did not reveal the problem sooner when a sound filled his ear. The rain had covered the sound, making the sound hidden between the raindrops falling and splashing out on the ground, but there was no doubt about what it was, and in the next an arrow penetrated the ground between him and Fei-Fan Chang who stood like a rock in the wind. The head eunuch and Fei-Fan Chang eyes meet for a second before another arrow hit the ground and this time it was closer to Fei-Fan Chang so the first arrow was not a mistake and in the rain and they heard a female voice yelling of joy. “The men have returned home” and both sets of eyes followed the noise and watched a woman full of joy when an arrow penetrated her left arm and the joy became screams of pain and fear. Fei-Fan Chang looked at the eunuch who returned to them and yelled, “We have to leave now, my lady” but Fei-Fan Chang instead of moving, she got tears in her eyes and almost whispered in the rain “Help... help me...” and the eunuch knew what had happened and ran over to her and took a hard grip around her as she was a small doll and the sword in the free hand. The rain fell even more heavy, made the ground muddy and slippy and a lightning ran over the sky revealing arrows in the air and they started falling around them like the rain drops already did. Suddenly a scream broke the silence in the rain, and Fei-Fan Chang believed an arrow had hit the eunuch as he almost fell over with her. But as her eyes looked down his back, no arrow was in sight before a new scream revealed it was the woman from before who now had two arrows in her bloody chest. The sight of blood made Fei-Fan Chang scream too, and her movements made her twist herself out of the grip from the eunuch, and she landed on the muddy ground with a big splash. “Calm down, my lady” the eunuch tried to say, but in the next an arrow penetrated the left leg of Fei-Fan Chang, making her scream even louder. The eunuch looked around and noticed they were closed to the gate to the town. But Fei-Fan

Chang's screaming and twisting of pain made it impossible to get inside without doing nothing to the leg first. "Calm down, my lady" he repeated before noticing a piece of wood on the ground and place it the mouth of Fei-Fan Chang, making her stop for a moment in surprise. "Calm down, we are almost home and I am sorry for hurting you, my lady" the eunuch said and before Fei-Fan Chang could say anything he broke the arrow and pulled out the remains. Arrows started landing around them and the eunuch knew he had to be fast, so he quickly used some of his closing to stop the bleeding when other people appeared from inside the town who had come because of the screams from Fei-Fan Chang. "Help me, get to her home" the eunuch said as he knew they had to act fast as he no longer had the strength to act like all was good. The pain from the wound had made Fei-Fan Chang close her eyes and for a moment she was back on the hill and having a great time with her father and mother in the sun. She smiled as everything was alright but suddenly her father's voice had changed from the happy one to a serious one "Don't give up, my angel" it repeatedly repeated and before she could do anything, she suddenly was back in the rain and the pain was growing inside her. "My father is death" She said with an ice cold voice against the head eunuch who was more focused on getting her back to the house than listen to her now. The sound of rain got louder and louder as the women carrying her ran through the town to get to her house as quickly as possible. Fei-Fan Chang could hear scream close by too but no one stopped or seemed to care about everything else than get her home. "My father is death" she repeated and felt tears in her eyes join the raindrops, even when many tears had already fallen from the pain in her leg. A big bang silenced the rain for a moment and Fei-Fan Chang feared thought for a moment that it was only thunder, but flames appeared in the background behind the women carrying her. "Faster" the head eunuch yelled loudly but his male voice was not the only one in the air now but instead of moving faster a woman fell to the ground taking Fei-Fan Chang with her in the muddy ground. The splash made Fei-Fan Chang both deaf and silenced, but her will and remembrance of her father made her opened her eyes quickly before attempting to stand up even as she knew the pain would grow. Fei-Fan Chang looked around on the mess and the smoke already coming from some of the houses before a lightning crossed the sky leaved her focused on her sword laying on the muddy ground before she with horror noticed an arrow seating in the back of the head eunuch. She tried to raise him up but the pain from her leg and her thoughts of not following him when he told her to come, made it impossible for her to get him up and instead an almost silence voice replied "Go... Leave me... Go now, my lady" Fei-Fan Chang could feel the tears grow inside her and she tried again but instead of helping himself to get up, she could feel he resisted her attempts. "Leave me... my lady, get... home safely" as the eunuch pushed her away at last time. Her tears ran faster as she started moving against the gate of her house while the pain of leaving him and the leg hammering of pain when the air was once more filled with screams and as she looked back two strangers were

standing in front of the laying eunuch and before she could figure out if the men were good or bad, they had pulled forward a sword and cut off his head making the ground even more red. She turned back to the gate and started hammering while screaming “Let me in” and in the next another eunuch opened the gate and pulled her inside the yard without knowing about her injury. Fei-Fan Chang screamed loudly of pain and the eunuch almost dropped her in fear when he noticed the blood. “Was... that me? My lady” he said with his head low while a now wide awoken and confused Chun-Yi Chang appeared behind him. “No...” Fei-Fan Chang said, while trying to control her tears and screams of pain before her mother could react. The eunuch stood up quickly before he afterwards tried to help up Fei-Fan Chang, whose injury was keep her in pain. “What happened my child?” Mu-Yan Lin asked as she looked at Fei-Fan Chang from the injuries in the leg to the family sword in her hands. Fei-Fan Chang wanted to keep quiet and tell the story on the same time when a scream outside the gate made up her mind and decide to make the story short. “I left home with the sword to go to the hill outside town, where I would show father how good I have become since he left” She blurted with an almost silence voice in an attempt to keep her mother from getting angry but as she looked up at her mother not the expected words came out “Yes, my child, I know” leaving both the eunuch and Fei-Fan Chang surprised. Her next line confused Fei-Fan Chang even more “have you been awake since you left your bed?” Fei-Fan Chang nodded while tears appeared on her mother’s face. “What is wrong, mother? Did I do something wrong?” Fei-Fan Chang asked as she watched the tears joined forces with the raindrops. “No, my child you did not... but... your father is death” Chun-Yi Chang said coldly and Fei-Fan Chang could feel the pain grow inside her heart as she knew it was true, she had felt it since the head eunuch had fallen and told her to leave him, maybe longer as the fear of the arrows had ruined her emotions. Fei-Fan Chang looked at her mother as her tears joined the raindrops too and for a moment her mother was about to say something but the heavy rain and a sudden hammering made her change her sentence before she even started it and yelled, “We are not afraid of you” and as soldiers outside started yell some indistinguishable words, she turned around and started to walk to the stables. The eunuch looked at Fei-Fan Chang, who shook her head before yelling loudly, “My father is the general... and... .. He will come and beat you all” even that her broke voice would reveal the lie between the words. More sounds came from the outside and the hammering continued, and even Mu-Yan Lin stopped her walking for a while. Mu-Yan Lin turned around and looked at her child and replied, “we have to warn the emperor about the attack so we stop the war before it gets out of hand” Fei-Fan Chang wanted to answer her mother but the pain in her leg stopped her as the eunuch walked forwards against the stables too. Fei-Fan Chang used the sword to keep standing as the pain grew as they walked on and soon they were inside the stable and Mu-Yan Lin yelled “Eunuchs, leaves us and block the gate for as long as you can” and without thinking the eunuch holding Fei-Fan Chang let

go and ran out the stables while Fei-Fan Chang fell to the ground. “Arhhh” Fei-Fan Chang screamed of pain and the nearby horse joined with its neigh and Mu-Yan Lin ran over to Fei-Fan Chang and with an almost silence voice said “I am sorry my child” as she gave Fei-Fan Chang a bandage on the leg trying to stop the bleeding. Fei-Fan Chang wanted to reply but tears in her eyes ran again and this time there was no rain to hide them and they ran fast. As Mu-Yan Lin finished giving Fei-Fan Chang bandages on, she returned to the horse and placed a saddle on its back, which she filled with some food and water that an eunuch came running with. “I... I... don’t... want to leave you” Fei-Fan Chang said as she watched as her mother continued to prepare the horse by taking the sword of heavens away from her and place it on the horse too. A moment of silence followed, and only the sound of rain falling against the roof of the stables while Mu-Yan Lin helped Fei-Fan Chang standing up so she could walk against the horse and soon Fei-Fan Chang was on the horse. “I know, and you are not leaving me, my child” Fei-Fan Chang said, but her voice told it was a lie as it broke the silence. Fei-Fan Chang did not know what to think, say or do but managed to open her mouth and replied, “Get on, mother... please” but Mu-Yan Lin just shook her head in silence while the noise from soldiers grew even higher almost removing the sound of rain. Mu-Yan Lin moved her hands away from Fei-Fan Chang and the horse and moved them against her neck to take off her medallion. “Here, this is our family dragon, it will protect you from harm and help you in case you ever need a friend or grant you access to places you would not get inside without” Mu-Yan Lin said as she removed it and placed it around Fei-Fan Chang neck. Fei-Fan Chang wanted to resist her mother’s wises but knew it would be pointless as Mu-Yan Lin continued “No horse is strong enough to take me with you to the emperor’s place where you most go to save as many people as possible” Fei-Fan Chang wanted to reply when an eunuch entered the stable and Fei-Fan Chang knew the words before he even said them “The soldiers are almost thought the gate so if you have a plan to leave, Now Is the Time, my lady” and Fei-Fan Chang wanted to take her mother’s hand but instead of reaching it, her mother removed it and made it flew thought the air to hit the horse in the back. Fei-Fan Chang and the horse flew out of the stable while Mu-Yan Lin stood back for a second before she broke down in pain of sending her child away and before Fei-Fan Chang could get in control of the horse, they were already out on the streets. “Let me back in, Let me save my mother” Fei-Fan Chang managed to yell as she got control of the horse but the gate was closed and she could hear the eunuchs scream to each other as they blocking the gate from the inside. Fei-Fan Chang tried to reach the gate to knock on it but a female scream from the inside which only could be from her mother stopped her movements while the rain made everything seem like tears. “I am not leaving you, mother” Fei-Fan Chang yelled loudly trying to make the eunuchs open the gate, but a strange laughter from behind her made her freeze once more before she reached the gate. The smoke from the nearby house and the heavy rain made it hard to count, but Fei-Fan Chang counted

at least five soldiers on horses, all watching her and laughing loudly, revealing all their dirty minds. Fei-Fan Chang force the horse to turn away from the soldiers, but she knew inside they were blocking the road out of the town unless she would get the chance to get to the western gate in time. In a sudden movement, she forced the horse to ride fast and even as she did not look back she could hear that the soldiers were already following her and they were right in her tail. The pain from her injured leg started growing as it was hammering against the horse and out of the eye edge Fei-Fan Chang watched as her mother's bandage became more and more red, but that was the least of her troubles as the town was already full of enemy soldiers and female screams were filling the air. She went down one road, up another in attempts to escape when she finally watched, got eyes on the western gate. It was burning so for a moment she felt trapped and without chance, but a sudden gust of wind revealed that it was open and there was hope for her. Suddenly a female rider appeared next to her and yelled something which made her followers ride even faster. The female pulled forward a sword and was about to attack when the street got smaller, making Fei-Fan Chang get in front, but the danger was far from over as now the gate was closing too. Fei-Fan Chang whispered, "Please, please, let me get out of here" to the horse and speeded up once more and by pure luck, she exited the gate just as it closed behind her, leaving her followers behind her. Fei-Fan Chang took a deep breath, but an arrow flew past her and as she looked back, the gate was already open again and the soldiers who had followed her so far, has started the pursuit of her once more while the day became evening making it everything dark but Fei-Fan Chang knew the area and the way to the palace better than the soldiers except they still were four against her alone. Suddenly a new arrow flew through the air and Fei-Fan Chang almost froze when she noticed it but she keep going and knew she had to find somewhere safe soon or the arrows would hit the horse or her somewhere worse than the leg like last time. Her mind worked as crazy to think of a place to escape the soldiers when her eyes got sight on a forest and she knew that if she could reach it, then they could not use the arrows but just as she were about to speed up once more, a laughter appeared behind her and only a quick movement prevented her from being pulled off the horse. Her movement surprised the soldier and tried to grab her once more but again, she moved quickly and pulled out the sword of heavens from the horse sheath and without a nerve in her body she cut the throat. The blood on the sword did not change her feelings about what she had just done and the soldier sad on his horse in silence as it all had happened so fast before he fell off the horse, which continued without him. Fei-Fan Chang could feel the blood on the sword made her feel the fear grow inside her but before it got too bad, the blood disappeared from the blade too with the help of the rain and wind. Fei-Fan Chang placed the sword back in its sheath as she could see the remaining soldiers were still far away from her and she had to focus on getting away rather than an unfair fight. The soldiers had not lost their focus of capturing her and another arrow flew through the air past Fei-Fan Chang, but the

adrenaline inside her prevented the body from freezing once more and instead she laughed loudly. Another arrow flew through the air and this time it was closer and Fei-Fan Chang could feel it playing her air as she focused on getting the horse to speed up even more so they could reach the forest alive. The trees were getting closer and darker as it became later and later, Fei-Fan Chang looked behind to check if the soldiers were still following her and now there was only two left giving her a short warning of what happened next. “Arhhh” she screamed as a soldier got his hand in her hair and pulled her hard. “Let me go” she yelled next while trying to get free from the soldier while she tried control the horse as they got closer to the forest. Fei-Fan Chang twist and turns to get free from the grasp when suddenly she moved against her sword and pulls in from the sheaths which fall under the horses. Fei-Fan Chang tries to attack the soldier with the sword, but the horses and the pulling of hair make it hard for her to reach him. Suddenly she gets an idea and in the next she cuts off her hair, free herself from the grasp of the soldier and almost hurts him in the progress. The soldiers look surprised at his hand full of hair and before he can try again he is already tasting blood as in the next has Fei-Fan Chang already killed him with the sword with closed eye, leaving now three soldiers left. A smile appeared on Fei-Fan Chang as she turns around to continue her riding, but in the next a branch hit her and the horse hard. A scream of pain is stopping the sound of rain for a movement and Fei-Fan Chang tries to keep her eyes up but the pain makes it impossible as the world around her starts flicking and the muddy ground makes it feel like she is drowning. A chilly feeling runs down Fei-Fan Chang’s back as she senses the horses with soldiers coming closer and closer, but a tiny bit of hope appears as she between the flicking of her eyes notices the sword close to her. She tries clawing against it when a voice destroys her hope. “You won’t need this” a dry voice says, and she knows it is one of the soldiers, who has appeared and she watches as the sword flews away and out of reach while the other soldier pulls her way. “Let... Me... Go...” she tried to say fearlessly, but her body is shaking in the cold weather as the soldier starts tearing her clothes in pieces. “A beautiful medallion, you have there... I better take that” a soldier replied, but Fei-Fan Chang manages to kick it out of his hands and making it land near the sword. The soldier slapped her with a wet, hard hand while not caring at all about what Fei-Fan Chang was trying to say at all. Suddenly a lot of birds started making sounds and the soldier who had tried to destroy her clothes by ripping them in pieces dropped her back into the mud. “Who is there?” The soldiers yelled in mouth of each other, trying not to seem scared by the birds. No answer follows so Fei-Fan Chang tried to reach her sword once again as she notices that the other soldier has moved the sword closer towards her even as she was pulled away but as she does not get far before a pair of soldier hands grasp her. “Let... me go” Fei-Fan Chang says with more force while trying to lose the cold and she jumps against the sword and reaches it. The jumped surprise the soldiers and as she stands up naked in the rain and points the sword against them but before she has a chance to attack them

she falls to the ground like the rain as the pain and injuries makes it impossible for her. “So it was you who made the little trick with the birds” a soldier says laughing while he walks against to Fei-Fan Chang. Fei-Fan Chang could feel the energy run out with the blood and she closed her eyes while her mind was full of thoughts about failing the town, her family and everybody else but even all that sadness, made a small smile appeared at her cold face, at least she were going to meet them soon. Suddenly a splash not far from her filled the air and a dry old voice yelled “Who owns this medallion” The soldiers turned again the noise and yelled “None of your business, old man” but the voice repeated “Who owns this medallion?” and Fei-Fan Chang knew she had to use her last energy. “Mi... Mine” She managed to say from the muddy ground. She could feel the soldiers release her from their gasps and by the sound of the muddy ground walked away from her and the horse. “We said it was none of your business, old foul” The old man looked at Fei-Fan Chang, who did her best to open her eyes to see the man. “Let me ask a last time, who owns this medallion” he said while looking directly at Fei-Fan Chang. Fei-Fan Chang feel a tiny bit of energy jump thought her body, and she raised her body from the muddy ground and yelled with the last of her voice “It is my family medallion” before returning to the muddy ground with a big splash and she felt everything around her lose its meaning while turning noiseless and dark before the rain stopped giving her any feeling.