

Bai Xiaochun gaped in shock at the commotion. Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo, apparently completely oblivious to the pain caused by Elder Zhou tossing them aside, rushed back toward the bamboo and knelt down to examine it.

Elder Zhou began to study the stalks of bamboo one by one, his expression that of shock and elation. Everyone's crazed reaction left Bai Xiaochun somewhat alarmed. In his mind, these people were acting like lunatics. It was just bamboo, after all, right? Besides, he had originally planned to grow it to a total of thirty meters before turning it in. Bai Xiaochun took a few steps back and then tried to get the Elder's attention. "Elder...." he cried loudly. "Wonderful! Amazing!" Elder Zhou said, laughing as he began to caress each and every inch of the bamboo. Apparently, he hadn't even heard Bai Xiaochun speaking. "Spiritwinter bamboo like this is extremely rare. Only by growing it to fifteen meters can it achieve such a deep green color. In fact, at this point, it's not a medicinal plant, but rather, the primary ingredient to forge spirit bamboo swords. It can even be used to cast certain unique magical techniques! "Listen up everyone. Take a deep breath." Looking very excited, Elder Zhou closed his eyes and breathed in deeply through his nose. "Can you smell that fragrance? It smells like flesh and bone, right? That's the unique aroma that appears after this type of bamboo reaches fifteen meters!" Chen Zi'ang and Zhao Yiduo earnestly followed suit. The other disciples in the area also pressed forward to do the same. Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. He had noticed that same aroma as he was carrying the bamboo down the path. However, he was pretty sure that... it was actually the aroma of chicken bones. After all, he had buried several hundred spirit tail chicken skeletons in the spirit field where he had grown the spiritwinter bamboo. Furthermore... those bones had all been stripped clean of their meat by none other than him. By now, Bai Xiaochun was thoroughly convinced that these people were crazy. "Elder...." he cried out again. However, it was at this point that a violent tremor ran through Elder Zhou; flames of rage sprang up in his eyes, and his expression twisted with rage. "Dammit! What the hell happened here? Someone actually bit a chunk out? Spiritwinter bamboo is extremely bitter and can't be eaten raw! What bastard actually bit a chunk out and ruined the quality!?" Elder Zhou seemed to be filled with grief; to him, it was like discovering a perfect piece of beautiful jade, only to find one part that had been destroyed by pests. His head suddenly whipped up to look at Bai Xiaochun. "It wasn't me!" Bai Xiaochun blurted, backing up nervously. He suddenly thought back to the first time he had been struck by incredible hunger. In his desperation at not having anything to eat, he had taken a bite out of one of the stalks of bamboo. How could he ever have imagined this would be the terrifying scene that would result when he went to hand in the mission, or how that single bite would affect these lunatics? When the surrounding disciples heard what Elder Zhou said, they peered over toward the last of the spiritwinter bamboo stalks, and sure enough, there was a big bite mark clearly visible. Elder Zhou stared at the damaged portion of the bamboo, then let out a long sigh. After all, he was a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and was obsessed with the Dao of medicines. However, this bamboo that Bai Xiaochun had brought was so shocking, and so different from anything Elder Zhou had ever seen before, that he had lost his composure just now. Finally, he took a deep look at Bai Xiaochun, then flicked his sleeve. "This bamboo is extreme super-grade... no, wait, supreme-grade. Yes, list it as supreme-grade. The reward is 10,000 merit points!" The audience gasped in response. The usual reward for plant-growing missions was usually about 10 merit points. At the most, one might be able to get 100. But in this case, the reward was 10,000! Off to the side, the assistant gaped in shock. For years and years, it had always been a rarity to have a spirit plant listed as supreme-grade. In fact, this was the first one in hundreds of years. Bai Xiaochun was very excited, and immediately walked over to the assistant and handed over his identity medallion. The assistant hesitated for a moment, then looked over at Elder Zhou, who was

still studying the bamboo, then gritted his teeth and gave the merit points to Bai Xiaochun. Having acquired his merit points, Bai Xiaochun quickly turned to leave, determined to never come back and deal with these lunatics ever again. However, before he could leave, Elder Zhou suddenly called out. "Hey, what's your name?" "Bai Xiaochun," was the immediate response. "I'm Bai Xiaochun, and my uncle is Li Qinghou!" Before coming here, he had been completely unaware that the bamboo would cause such a scene, and he was actually a bit worried about that, which was why he pulled out Li Qinghou's name, as sort of a threat. "Hmph." Elder Zhou seemed to be irritated that Bai Xiaochun would resort to dropping Li Qinghou's name. "You might think you're pretty clever, but the Spirit Stream Sect is one of the great sects, with a long history. There are always disciples who come along with their secrets and their unique good fortune. I won't lower myself to the level of asking for the specifics of how you grew this bamboo, but next time you grow something similar, you make sure to bring it all to me. I'll make sure you get a nice reward of merit points!" Finally, he waved his hand to dismiss Bai Xiaochun, then went back to studying the bamboo. It was at this point that, because of the matter with the bamboo, the entire mission-handover event concluded. Bai Xiaochun clutched his identity medallion firmly in hand as he hurried away from the Missions Office and then headed directly toward Fragrant Cloud Peak's Spirit Medicine Pharmacy, which was where disciples could acquire spirit medicines. It was also where disciples could hand over spirit medicines that they had crafted, and thus earn merit points. Bai Xiaochun sped over at top speed, then hurried around the Spirit Medicine Pharmacy trying to choose what to buy. Eventually he decided to purchase a bottle of medicinal pills suitable for the fifth level of Qi Condensation. These medicinal pills were by no means cheap. Bai Xiaochun had originally assumed that 10,000 merit points was a lot, but unexpectedly, the spirit medicines were actually very expensive. "Greengod Spiritgathering Pills," he murmured, looking at the medicinal pill bottle he held in his hand. Inside were three medicinal pills, which had cost him fully 4,000 merit points. However, these were pills that ordinary Qi Condensation disciples would usually not have access to. They were quite extraordinary; not only was their medicinal strength greater than that of ordinary spirit medicine, they could provide purer spiritual energy. Bai Xiaochun wasn't convinced that merely stepping into the fifth level of Qi Condensation would be enough, so he planned to break through all the way to the great circle of the fifth level. He had thought about aiming for the sixth level of Qi Condensation to avoid having to fight in the competition, but if he did that, he could well imagine how Li Qinghou would come up with some other method of punishing him. As for the rest of his merit points, he didn't let them go to waste. He traded them for some disposable defensive talismans. With those hidden in his robe, he felt much safer. Unfortunately, he didn't have enough merit points to go through with his plan of heading to the Treasure Pavilion to acquire a weapon or two suitable for the Qi Condensation stage. Instead, he headed back toward his residence. Once back in the courtyard, he sat down cross-legged in his log cabin, then pulled the medicinal pills out and studied them closely. "I still have three months to go. It's time for some secluded meditation!" Gritting his teeth, he looked around to make sure no one was watching, then performed an incantation gesture and pointed out. Instantly, the turtle-wok flew out, along with a bunch of spirit tails, which he used to start a three-colored flame. One tail feather wasn't enough to satisfy the turtle-wok. He had to feed in ten before the three designs on the wok lit up brightly. Then, he took a deep breath and put the three medicinal pills inside to perform a threefold spirit enhancement. After the process was completed, the Greengod Spiritgathering Pills in his hand had three silver designs covering their surfaces. Finally, he placed one of them in his mouth. The medicinal pill dissolved, and spiritual energy began to course through him explosively. Bai Xiaochun instantly began to utilize the breathing techniques and postures of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art, using them to manage the flow of the spiritual energy. A few days later, rumbling sounds filled Bai Xiaochun's log cabin, and numerous dust particles blasted out in a shock wave. Moments later, Bai Xiaochun's laughter could be heard ringing out. "Fifth level of Qi Condensation!" he said, panting, eyes shining brightly. After eating so many spirit tail chickens recently, his cultivation base had already reached the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation. By eating that one medicinal pill, he was able to easily break through into the fifth level. More filth was expelled out from inside of him, but not as much as before. After washing up, he didn't immediately take out another medicinal pill, but rather, took time to stabilize his cultivation base. After five days passed, he took out the second of his threefold spirit enhanced Greengod Spiritgathering Pills, and consumed it. As the spiritual energy coursed through

him, the river that was his spirit meridian grew larger, and flowed faster, causing his cultivation base to climb higher at a rapid rate. After stabilizing himself for a few more days, he consumed the third Greengod Spiritgathering Pill, and his cultivation base shot up to the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation. By this point, everything about him seemed different than before. His skin was fairer, and there was something unique about his energy. Bai Xiaochun was quite happy, but also realized that, normally speaking, it would be impossible to use only three medicinal pills to break through from the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation all the way to the great circle of the fifth level, and then be only a hair away from reaching the sixth level. As far as he could tell, the only reason he was able to do so was the turtle-wok and its spirit enhancement ability. The more Bai Xiaochun practiced cultivation, the more obvious it was to him how helpful the turtle-wok was. That in turn caused him to become even more curious about its origins. Although it looked like a turtle shell, the more he studied it, the more it seemed that it wasn't. In recent days, he had looked more into the matter of spirit enhancement, and had learned that Violet Cauldron Peak was known for their spirit enhancement abilities. In fact, if you paid enough merit points, you could even acquire the services of the Elders there to perform spirit enhancements. Word had it that the peak lord of Violet Cauldron Peak was a grand master when it came to spirit enhancements. Running his fingers along the designs that covered the turtle-wok, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered. Finally, he shook his head. There were too many things he didn't understand, and it wouldn't do any good to waste time thinking about them. Reaching his hand out, he caused the green jade pendant and his wooden sword to appear. These were the only magical devices he owned at the moment. Gritting his teeth, he produced some more spirit tails as he prepared to perform threefold spirit enhancements on them. "I wonder what the wooden sword and jade pendant will look like after I do the threefold spirit enhancement." The wave of a hand caused the three designs on the turtle-wok to light up. When he sent the jade pendant flying inside, silver light shone, and rumbling sounds like that of thunder could be heard. Thankfully, they didn't echo out very far, so nobody heard them. When the silver light faded away, the green jade pendant had three silver designs on it, which flickered brightly for a moment before fading away. However, Bai Xiaochun could sense that the jade pendant's aura was now as different from before as the Heavens were from the Earth. In fact, it was even possible to see glowing violet specks within the green of the jade pendant. Even the shape of the pendant had changed; instead of being oval, it had now been flattened into a circular shape. Bai Xiaochun poured some spiritual energy into it, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as a green shield sprang up around him, fully a meter thick and completely astonishing to behold.