

The gaunt young man's wooden sword pulsed with a strange energy, streaking through the air in a prismatic beam, directly toward Bai Xiaochun. However, before it could even get close, a pinging sound rang out from the exterior of Bai Xiaochun's thick meter-and-a-half shield as the wooden sword bounced off of it.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun's protective shields flickered, his eyes glittered, and he breathed a sigh of relief. Clearing his throat, he actually just sat down cross-legged. The audience exchanged confused glances. They weren't really sure what to say in response to Bai Xiaochun and his extreme level of defense. They had seen people who focused on defense before, but... had never seen anyone who shielded himself this much. As for his opponent, the young man's face first flushed, then went pale. Gritting his teeth, he roared, sending his flying sword shooting toward the glowing shields, ratcheting up in power even as it shot through the air. A pinging sound rang out as the flying sword flew in again and again, but each time, it was sent spinning away. Finally, the pale-faced young man's spiritual energy was more than half depleted, and a look of despair appeared on his face. He had been fighting in duels for years, but this was the first time he had encountered an opponent who hid like a turtle in a shell. However, he wasn't willing to give in yet. He had joined the competition with the express purpose of taking 3rd place. Staring at Bai Xiaochun with bloodshot eyes, he furiously roared, "Get out from behind that shield!" Bai Xiaochun wasn't scared at all by this young man, so he didn't have any reservations about staying behind the shield and shouting, "If you're good enough, why don't you come on inside!" Strange expressions appeared on the faces of everyone in the audience as they looked at Bai Xiaochun, not sure whether to laugh or cry. The gaunt young man was so angry that blue veins popped out on his forehead as he clenched his jaw. Finally, he bit his tongue and spit out a mouthful of blood. When it landed on his wooden sword, the entire thing turned the color of blood. Discussion immediately broke out in the audience. "Blood Spirit Magic!" "For him to use that magical technique shows that he really has been driven to madness!" The blood-colored wooden sword moved even faster than before, and emitted double the pressure. Blood-colored light spread out in all directions as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun. A boom rang out as the wooden sword pierced a full three inches into the shield. Rumbling could be heard as it tried to pierce further, but failed. In fact, because too much force was being exerted, cracks began to spread out over the sword. A moment later, a pop could be heard as the entire wooden sword... shattered into pieces, which slowly floated down to the ground. The gaunt young man's eyes went wide, and blood sprayed out of his mouth. His spiritual energy was vastly depleted, his magical item destroyed, and he was so furious he simply passed out. As Li Qinghou watched the scene playing out, his face grew increasingly unsightly. Chuckling wryly, Elder Sun stepped forward, signalled for people to come carry the gaunt young man away, and then declared Bai Xiaochun the winner. "Ah, he let me win!" Bai Xiaochun said as the shield light around him faded away. Looking very solemn, he puffed his chest out and clasped his hands behind his back, looking every bit like a Chosen. As for the gaunt young man, as he was being carried off, he apparently heard Bai Xiaochun's words, regained consciousness, coughed up another mouthful of blood, and then passed out again. Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun turned to Elder Sun and clasped hands. Then he flicked his sleeve and walked out of the arena. The Outer Sect disciples who had come to watch the competition took everything in fairly well. At most, they had strange looks on their faces. As for the contestants, they were looking at Bai Xiaochun with very unsightly expressions. That was especially true of the people who had already

won their respective matches. When they compared the gaunt young man's current condition with Bai Xiaochun, they couldn't help but feel the need to be on guard. The competition continued, and soon the rest of the matches were completed. Of the original twenty participants, half had been eliminated to produce the current top 10. That included Du Lingfei, Chen Zi'ang, and Bai Xiaochun, who stood there, chin stuck up, looking around at his fellow top 10 competitors. Inwardly, he was saying, "All I have to do is win one more match and then I'll have succeeded!" Seeing hope right there in front of him, he felt quite excited. Elder Sun looked over the ten contestants, his gaze lingering on Bai Xiaochun for a moment before saying, "The top 5 will now be selected. Would the ten of you please step forward to select your marbles." This time, Bai Xiaochun scrambled to be first in line, and pulled out a marble with the number two written on it. Afterward, he immediately turned to study his fellow competitors. It didn't take long for everyone to draw a marble, after which Elder Sun announced that the first two fighters were to begin their match. Bai Xiaochun was joined by a burly, muscular man who, upon seeing who he was fighting, began to laugh loudly. "Other people might fear your defenses, but I don't care at all about them. I'm also adept with defense, so let's just wait and see which of us two can hold out for longer!" Laughing, the man slapped his bag of holding to produce a small buckler. After imbuing it with some spiritual energy, the buckler grew larger and began to emit a yellow glow which completely surrounded the man. The man wasn't done yet, though. Roaring, his flesh and muscles expanded, and he even grew a few inches taller. The entire scene was quite shocking. "I can't believe it's Body Forging Magic!" "That buckler looks familiar. Don't tell me it's a Dawnlight Buckler! That thing costs 9,000 merit points!" Everyone was shocked, and as for Bai Xiaochun, his brow was furrowed. When Elder Sun saw what was happening, he nodded his head slightly, eyes shining with a look of praise. Turning to Li Qinghou, he said, "This kid is Li Shan, fifth level of Qi Condensation. He'll be a difficult opponent, as he was born with godly power, plus cultivates the Body Forging Magic. Not only is he incredibly strong, he also excels in defense." Li Qinghou nodded slightly, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun was studying the burly man's transformed body, and the shield he had. He recognized the shield from his visit to the Treasure Pavilion, and although he wasn't sure exactly how many merit points it cost, his frown deepened. Everyone watching the competition seemed very interested to find out what was going to happen, especially the other disciples in the competition, who were clearly pleased to gloat in the misfortune of others. "That fair-skinned disciple sure got unlucky." "Well, he got super lucky before, that's all. Now that he's facing a powerful opponent like this, he'll naturally get beaten back into place." As the audience discussed the developments, the burly man smiled viciously and then began to stride rapidly toward Bai Xiaochun. "There's nothing you can do. I beat the last disciple I fought without even drawing a weapon. My fist is the most powerful magical technique I have!" The man sped up, causing a wind to blast out. As he closed in, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered and he suddenly waved his finger, causing his little wooden sword to fly out from his bag of holding. Without the slightest pause, it shot out in front of Bai Xiaochun toward the burly man. As it slashed toward him, sword qi built up for dozens of meters around the sword, causing rumbling sounds to echo out. The burly man's face fell, and his scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. His eyes widened as an intense sensation of crisis washed through him. Without the slightest hesitation, he fell into retreat. Roaring, he waved both hands, sending his buckler out to block the sword. A boom rang out as the wooden sword and the little buckler slammed into each other. However, the buckler didn't do anything to even slow down the wooden sword. It was blasted apart, and the wooden sword continued on toward the burly man. The man's face was filled with shock; even if he were capable of dodging faster, it would do no good. The flying sword was on him in the blink of an eye, causing an icy wind to buffet his face. "I concede!" he shouted without hesitation, his voice rising by a few octaves as he fell to the ground. A buzzing sound could be heard as the wooden sword stopped just in front of the man's forehead, then turned and flew back into Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding. Bai Xiaochun blinked, also somewhat shocked by the wooden sword. Before, he had only practiced with it, and had no idea it was so powerful. And that was before he even began to utilize Lightness-in-Heaviness. After looking up in thought for a moment, he stuck his chin up, clasped his hands behind his back, and looked coolly at the burly man. The man's face was pale white, and yet he still didn't seem to want to back down. Crawling to his feet, he glared at Bai Xiaochun and said, "Using the power of magical items doesn't count as winning! I don't accept this as being a defeat!" With that, the man turned and stalked out of the arena. Elder Sun looked over at Bai Xiaochun, also

astonished by the power of the wooden sword. However, he didn't say anything other to announce that Bai Xiaochun was the victor. "Hahaha," Bai Xiaochun laughed to himself. "In the next battle I'll just instantly concede. I became a cultivator to live forever, right? All this killing and fighting is too barbaric. That's not how Bai Xiaochun does things." Bai Xiaochun left the arena, feeling wonderful at having complied with Li Qinghou's requirement to get into the top 5. Li Qinghou's eyes had also come to rest on Bai Xiaochun. Although everyone else had been focused on how incredible the flying sword was, Li Qinghou hadn't been paying attention to that at all. He had been watching the skill and ease with which Bai Xiaochun controlled the flying sword. Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had won another match, the crowd began to sigh emotionally. "Ah, this guy must be rich, that's why he has such an incredible wooden sword. Hmph. If he had any other weapon he definitely couldn't have won!" "Magical devices have nothing to do with your cultivation. First he used those amulets, then that sword. What a waste! He's definitely going to go broke eventually." The grumblings didn't last for long though. The next battle soon got underway. Du Lingfei was fighting an opponent with an extraordinary cultivation base. It was a fierce fight, but Du Lingfei didn't use her banner. Instead, she utilized a flying sword. They fought back and forth in dazzling fashion until suddenly, Du Lingfei's flying sword shot forward with incredible speed to appear directly in front of her opponent. Such speed vastly surpassed that which ordinary disciples could control, sending the audience into an uproar when people realized what they were seeing. "I can't believe it's Lightness-in-Heaviness!!" "Du Lingfei has actually reached enlightenment of that stage...." "It's Lightness-in-Heaviness!" Deep within Elder Sun's eyes, the glitter of approval could be seen as he looked at Du Lingfei. Li Qinghou also nodded. Chen Zi'ang was shocked, and most everyone else who had made it into the top 10 had similar reactions. As for her opponent, he chuckled bitterly and clasped hands to concede. Du Lingfei stood there in the arena, looking around proudly. Clapping hands toward Li Qinghou and Elder Sun, she left the arena. The crowd was still in an uproar. However, Bai Xiaochun was left standing there, blinking. "That level of speed counts as Lightness-in-Heaviness?" he thought, astonished. As Du Lingfei proudly left the arena, slight drops of sweat could be seen running down her face. Despite being in the great circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, fighting two successive battles was quite a drain on her spiritual energy. That was especially true of the battle just now, in which her opponent had possessed unusual battle prowess. In the end, she had been forced to unleash her magic of Lightness-in-Heaviness, which was an even bigger drain on her spiritual energy. That was how she had secured victory. Her goal was 1st place, and she knew that subsequent opponents would only be more powerful. Because this particular sect competition wasn't very strictly organized, she wouldn't have much time to rest before the next fight. Therefore, she immediately pulled out a medicinal pill, which she consumed, then closed her eyes and began to take advantage of the time to recover. The top 5 now consisted of Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, as well as Chen Zi'ang. In the end, there were two other young men, both of whom had profound cultivation bases in the fifth level of Qi Condensation. Currently, everyone was in the process of rotating their cultivation bases, taking advantage of every opportunity to replenish some spiritual energy. Only Bai Xiaochun didn't seem to have spent any spiritual energy at all. In fact, he even stood off to the side yawning. When everyone else who had been eliminated from the competition saw that, it left them with the urge to beat him. Now that he had fulfilled Li Qinghou's demand to get into the top 5, he didn't care at all about the rest of the competition. Trying to suppress his boredom, he looked over at the other four top 5 competitors, especially Du Lingfei, musing that if the speed she had just unleashed counted as Lightness-in-Heaviness, then he was surely far, far beyond that. "It's too bad she has such an extremely murderous aura. Why would a good girl like that be so into fighting and killing? Don't tell me that all girls who practice Immortal cultivation are weirdos like this? Zhou Xinqi is super proud, and Hou Xiaomei is way too moody." Bai Xiaochun shook his head. He was just about to look away from Du Lingfei when she seemed to sense that he was looking at her. Her eyes suddenly snapped open to stare at him coldly. As far as Du Lingfei was concerned, Bai Xiaochun wasn't even worth thinking about. After watching his first two battles, she was of the opinion that he had pulled off lucky wins, which caused the derision in her heart to grow stronger. "Well well, you dare to stare at me, do you?!" Bai Xiaochun immediately ceased any motion of looking away. Instead, his eyes went wide as he glared right back at Du Lingfei. Staring contests didn't have anything to do with fighting and bloodshed, so from a young age, he had met few people who could overcome him. Du Lingfei frowned. As for the admirers who clustered behind her, they were very

irritated, and cast ferocious glares in his direction. However, seeing so many eyes staring at him, and considering that quite a few of them were extremely fierce, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. He only had two eyes, so how could he possibly match up? "Well, they have numbers on their side, and besides, true men don't fight with girls." With a harrumph, he looked away. About that time, Elder Sun's voice rang out across the arena. "Very good, all of you. This competition has gone very well so far. And now, we will continue to narrow down the competitors. Would the five of you please step forward and select a marble. One of those marbles is a free pass into the top 3." Smiling, Elder Sun produced the bag again. This time, Chen Zi'ang was first. After pulling out the marble, he frowned; his marble had the number four written on it. Du Lingfei was next, who got the number two marble. The other two Outer Sect disciple got numbers one and three respectively. Bai Xiaochun didn't even need to draw a marble; the remaining marble was the free pass. Bai Xiaochun's eyes lit up, and he chuckled. He took his place outside of the fighting arena, arms folded, feeling completely relaxed as he prepared to watch Du Lingfei and all the others. He hadn't even planned to continue on with the competition, but now he didn't have to do anything and he was already in the top 3. "Luck is a big part of strength!" he thought, feeling quite pleased with himself. That very luck caused quite a few audience members to stare at him with even stranger expressions on their faces. Most of them really couldn't bear to accept the situation, especially the other disciples who had been eliminated, whose hearts were filled with jealousy and envy. "This guy is totally shameless. Alright, fine, he used a magical item to get into the top five, but then he actually got a free pass into the top three!" "How despicable. In fact, there's never been someone as despicable as this to ever show up in the competitions."