

**Even as Zhou Xinqi reeled in shock, another blast of wind swept over her, and Elder Zhou appeared. As he passed, he looked over and smiled, and she nodded in return.**

Despite the faint smile on his face, when he spoke, the voice of a fiendish monster echoed out from his mouth. "I've changed my mind again, Bai Xiaochun. After I catch you, I'm going to starve you for a month, then put you in with a flock of phoenixes and a horde of wild beasts!" Zhou Xinqi's eyes went wide, and at the same time, a miserable scream could be heard coming from Bai Xiaochun. "Help me, Uncle Li! Save me, dear Elder Brother Sect Leader! I don't want to starve! I don't want to get locked up with phoenixes and wild beasts...." Bai Xiaochun was trembling in fear as he conjured mental images of the scenes described by Elder Zhou. Screaming, he shot forward with incredible speed, transforming into nothing more than a shadow. Up ahead, Lu Tianlei sped along in lightning form. Although the early stages of the path had been easy for him, things had slowly grown more and more difficult. The area he currently faced was filled with razor-sharp wind blades, and if he proceeded too quickly, it would cause them to fly toward him. He had summoned a puppet moments before, and sent it ahead as a test, but because it moved too quickly, it was instantly slashed to pieces by the wind blades. Because of that, Lu Tianlei knew that he had no other option than to slow down. Only after finding the proper equilibrium would he be able to continue moving forward. Shangguan Tianyou was so far ahead he wasn't even visible. Given his consummate level of talent, he had been able to transform into emptiness and then pass through the area effortlessly. The wind blades didn't so much as touch him. Lu Tianlei, who had previously believed himself to be on an equal level with Shangguan Tianyou, was left with hatred seething in his heart. "So what if you possess void magic?" Lu Tianlei thought. "What's so amazing about that? Just wait till I get past this area... I'll definitely catch up and take first place!" By this point, Lu Tianlei didn't even think of Zhou Xinqi as being worthy of note. The only thing he cared about was overtaking Shangguan Tianyou and winning first place. Taking a deep breath, he stepped out into the wind blade zone and prepared to pick up speed. But then, a blast of wind could be heard behind him. The deafening sound caused all of the flying wind blades to tremble. When Lu Tianlei saw that, he smiled in delight. "Hah! It's definitely Zhou Xinqi. What a moron. If she enters this area going that fast, all the wind blades will head in her direction. I should take advantage of that moment to charge forward!" Looking back, he saw someone skinny racing toward him as fast as lightning. As soon as the person entered the area with the wind blades, he was already a third of the way through, placing him only about 3,000 meters away from Lu Tianlei. Because of his incredible speed, it only took the blink of an eye for countless wind blades to swirl together into an enormous cyclone. At first, he gasped, shocked by Bai Xiaochun's speed. But then, he began to chuckle inwardly. "It's not Zhou Xinqi? Well, it doesn't matter. He's moving way too fast. Is he looking to get killed?! When practicing cultivation, one should rely on one's wits!" Laughing, Lu Tianlei watched as the wind blades grouped together. At the same time, he gathered the lightning which surrounded him, preparing to make a break for the exit. Before he could pick up any speed, the screaming Bai Xiaochun continued onward without slowing down at all. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he actually picked up speed. There were so many wind blades it was impossible to tell how many there were. And yet, when they slammed into Bai Xiaochun, silver light flashed, and to Lu Tianlei's shock, they all shattered. Countless wind blades fell to pieces, and by the time they reformed, Bai Xiaochun had flown past Lu Tianlei. Of course, the wind blades wouldn't let him by so easily, and began to race to catch up. Lu Tianlei's jaw dropped and his eyes went wide. Then, his scalp went numb and his mind began to spin. "Impossible!!!" he said in a hoarse voice. Before the countless wind blades could catch up to Bai Xiaochun... he was gone. The wind blades shuddered to a stop angrily, then slowly turned toward Lu Tianlei.... Heart pounding, Lu Tianlei immediately slowed down. However, having been completely frustrated by Bai Xiaochun, the wind

blades didn't hesitate for a moment to pounce on him. "No... NO!!" Moments later, miserable shrieks began to ring out. As he ran on up ahead, Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised to hear the bloodcurdling screams behind him. However, there was no time for him to look back. Elder Zhou seemed to be right behind him, bellowing in rage, leaving Bai Xiaochun with no choice but to charge onward, jaw clenched, expression pained. Thankfully, Elder Zhou was able to rescue Lu Tianlei from the countless swirling wind blades. If he had come a moment later, Lu Tianlei, whose clothing was now ripped to shreds, would most likely have been left with no other choice than to forfeit. Eyes bloodshot, Lu Tianlei finally realized who Bai Xiaochun was. Voice filled with rage, he bellowed, "Bai Xiaochun!!" Unaware that he had unwittingly caused yet another person to hate him, Bai Xiaochun moved on at top speed, passing through numerous empty areas. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he caught sight of the end of the bridge up ahead. "I'm finally near the end!" he thought excitedly. What he didn't notice was that there was someone else near the end, trodding forward one step at a time. Shangguan Tianyou was panting. Most of the path had been very easy for him, with the difficulty rising only at the very end. "I can't believe this place suppresses spiritual power and also has such crushing pressure!" A brutal gleam appeared in his eyes as he proceeded forward. The spiritual power in the area was locked down tight, and there was also huge pressure. He felt like there was a mountain resting on his shoulders, and even more shocking was that with every step he took, it felt like an entire additional mountain was added. Although there were only a total of a hundred steps to take, the difficulty was intense, and he was left trembling physically. He was already quickly approaching his limit. The closer he got to the end, the greater the pressure grew, and the more mountains he felt building up on him. Eventually, he reached the point where he had only ten more steps to take. However, those ten steps seemed almost insurmountable. Shangguan Tianyou took a deep breath, and determination flickered in his eyes. "The first place spot in the qualifying round belongs to me. I'm going to get into the Chosen battles, and I'm going to take first place there, too! After I get into the Inner Sect, then my future will be in the Spirit Stream Sect's Legacy Echelon!" Gritting his teeth, he was just about to take another step when he sensed something behind him, and turned to see Bai Xiaochun. "It's him...." There were few people on the south bank who didn't know Bai Xiaochun. Although Shangguan Tianyou had never met him personally, he had attended his funeral and seen his portrait. The fact that Bai Xiaochun was directly behind him was somewhat of a surprise; he had assumed it would be Lu Tianlei. "It seems I thought a bit too much of Lu Tianlei. What a useless fool." Looking away, Shangguan Tianyou completely ignored Bai Xiaochun. As far as he was concerned, he was on a completely different level than Bai Xiaochun. Lifting his foot and stepping forward, he heard creaking sounds emanating from his bones. However, even as he took that single step, Bai Xiaochun also took a step forward. When he felt nothing, he took a second step, and then a third and a fourth.... Soon he had taken fifty steps, whereupon he stopped and looked up into the air. "What's going on? Why do I feel heavier?" It was at this point that Shangguan Tianyou trembled and put his foot down, having completed one single step. Having taken over ninety steps, he felt like he was on the verge of collapse. He was out of breath, but his expression was one of satisfaction. Then he looked back and saw Bai Xiaochun standing there, having taken fifty steps. His eyes went wide. "How... how is he moving so fast!?" Looking shocked, he quickly gritted his teeth. "He must be a body refinement cultivator. That will help him move more quickly at the beginning. But toward the end, things will get more difficult for him. He--" Before Shangguan Tianyou could finish his train of thought, a tremor ran through him, and he looked on in shock as Bai Xiaochun suddenly began to run. "Run... he's... he's running?" Shangguan Tianyou watched wide-eyed as Bai Xiaochun trotted up to him. "Hey, why are you going so slow?" Bai Xiaochun asked. Looking over his shoulder, he saw no sign of Elder Zhou, and finally breathed a sigh of relief. "You... don't feel like there are mountains on your back?" Shangguan Tianyou asked without even thinking about it, his eyelids twitching. "Mountains?" Bai Xiaochun jumped up and down a few times. "Eee? Hm, yeah a few, but I can hardly feel them." Shangguan Tianyou gasped in disbelief. Bai Xiaochun continued to jump up and down a few times, but then suddenly, he saw Elder Zhou off in the distance. With a shriek, he suddenly shot forward through the final nine steps, taking him off of the bridge.... Then his speed increased dramatically, and he was gone from sight. When that happened, Elder Zhou finally slowed down and then began to chuckle wryly. "Bai Xiaochun... actually took first place?" Simultaneously, back on the balcony, Zheng Yuandong, Li Qinghou, and everyone else shot to their feet, strange expressions

on their faces. The elders almost couldn't believe their eyes. Although they had been prepared for a surprising outcome when they saw Bai Xiaochun overtake Zhou Xinqi and Lu Tianlei, the ease with which Bai Xiaochun passed the final section was flabbergasting. "He... took first?" Li Qinghou murmured. A moment later, a huge uproar could be heard coming from the disciples who had gathered to watch the qualifying round. "Bai Xiaochun... passed up Zhou Xinqi, Lu Tianlei and Shangguan Tianyou! He took first!" "Heavens! Bai Xiaochun actually took first!" "The only reason he took first was because of Elder Zhou. Anyone would have fled for their life with him chasing them!" Shangguan Tianyou's face was pale white, and his mind was spinning. His vision began to go dark, as though lightning were crashing in his mind. He could only watch as Bai Xiaochun simply walked off of the bridge ahead of him. He began to tremble violently. "Bai Xiaochun!!" Shangguan Tianyou's eyes were completely bloodshot. His pride, his self-respect, everything about him had just been trampled by Bai Xiaochun. Worst of all was how Bai Xiaochun had actually asked him why he was going so slow. All of the blood in his body began to rush toward his head, and the sword qi inside of him boiled on the verge of exploding. Eyes crimson, he threw caution to the wind and lurched forward nine steps, after which he coughed up a mouthful of blood. "Bai Xiaochun, I, Shangguan Tianyou, did not lose this day. I... refuse to admit defeat. In the Chosen battles, I'll make sure you realize well and good that among the Outer Sect disciples... nobody can beat me!" Grinding his teeth, he looked off in the direction Bai Xiaochun had disappeared in, eyes bursting with the desire to do battle.