

Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and looked away to try to find Xu Xiaoshan.

He was actually the easiest to identify. He was extremely handsome, and had a very proud expression. He seemed to be the type of person whose chin was perpetually stuck up into the air, as if there were not a person in the world who was worthy to look him in the eyes. His silkpants personality couldn't be more obvious. There were even two beautiful female disciples who attended to him. One of them was currently massaging his shoulders, and another was peeling fruit which she then placed in his mouth. Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but feel a little bit envious. Around this time, Bai Xiaochun noticed that a lot of the Blood Stream Sect disciples were doing the same thing that Song Que had done; they were staring at him with cold gazes. Unlike the skepticism of the Pill Stream Sect or the arrogance of the Profound Stream Sect, the looks given by the Blood Stream Sect were fear-inspiring and filled with killing intent. Bai Xiaochun felt his mouth and throat going dry. There seemed to be something odd about the gazes of the Blood Stream Sect disciples, and Bai Xiaochun continued to grow more and more curious about what the other disciples' jade slips said about him. The cultivator leading the Blood Stream Sect was an old man in a long red robe with crimson hair. His face was white, and he had a bit of a hunchback. His eyes were sinister to the extreme, and as he glanced over the crowd present, he licked his lips. Shockingly, his tongue was not the tongue of an ordinary person. It was forked like a snake's, and caused all the disciples who saw it to shiver in fear. Ouyang Jie and the two cultivators named Hai and Lin ceased their chatting and looked over at the Blood Stream Sect. When they saw the snake-tongued old man, Hai and Lin gasped. As for Ouyang Jie, his expression turned very serious. "Master Snakescale," Ouyang Jie said in a somewhat unfriendly tone of voice. "The Blood Stream Sect is late." The snake-tongued old man blinked, then forced an insincere smile onto his face. Eyes glittering with murder, he looked at Ouyang Jie and said, "Heh heh. I'm not late. You people just got here early." Apparently the gazes of both men contained some vision-related divine ability, which caused an odd, soundless rumbling to build up between the two of them. A moment later it shattered, and Ouyang Jie let out a grunt. Face a bit pale, he swished his sleeve and walked back to stand in front of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples. As for the snake-tongued old man, his eyes glittered, and his qi and blood surged within him. He also fell back a few paces, and when he looked up, his eyes shone with a strange light. "Ouyang, you old codger, after all these years, you've made quite an improvement with your cultivation base. Well, there will be time for reminiscing later. Now that the Blood Stream Sect has arrived, let's open the Fallen Sword Abyss. It's time for the trial by fire!" With that, he waved his hand, causing a fragment of jade to appear that seemed to have come from a pendant. The fragment instantly flew out and hovered in the air between the forces from the four sects. Hai and Lin exchanged a glance, and then produced similar jade pendant fragments. Ouyang Jie did the same. Instantly, the four fragments flew together and formed a whole jade pendant. Glittering light filled the air, and moments later, the glowing shield sealing the area around the giant sword began to open up. From the look of things, after enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, it would be possible to enter the area. All of the Qi Condensation disciples were paying close attention to the goings-on. Even as Bai Xiaochun studied the situation, Ouyang Jie's voice was transmitted into the ears of the Spirit Stream Sect disciples. "There are more than forty entrances to the world of the sword. Each one can accommodate no more than ten people. The first battle you will fight will be to enter the sword itself. Ambushes on the inside have been known to occur, so do your best to stick together! "Remember what I told you before. If you meet disciples from other sects, don't be soft-hearted! To protect yourself, kill them if you can. Collect the earthstring energy into your Dao bottles and form the earthstring capture crystal as quickly as possible. Then begin to summon the surrounding earthstring energy from the rest of the Fallen Sword World!" Even as Ouyang Jie gave his final explanations to the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, the Foundation Establishment cultivators from the other three sects were doing the same thing. Ouyang Jie waved his right hand, and a hundred little blue bottles flew out into the hands of the disciples. "These are your Dao bottles!" By this time, rumbling sounds were echoing out as the shield

preventing access to the crevices in the ground opened fully, leaving a gap of roughly nine meters through which the disciples could enter. By entering that gap, it was possible to go into the underground passages and into the depths of abyss, where one could find entrances leading into the world of the sword itself. "This whole area is under the control of the Four Great Sects. That, coupled with the oversight of the sects' patriarchs, means that no Foundation Establishment cultivators will be able to enter the world of the sword. Remember, you cannot stay inside for very long. The Holy Land will only remain opened for three months. After that time period expires, whether or not you have succeeded, you will have to leave. I will pull you out from the outside if I have to. "Another thing. Although nothing extreme will happen that is outside of the purvey of expectation, for generations now, the patriarchs of the Four Great Sects have maintained four teleportation formations to evacuate you in case any emergency occurs. Based on the types of techniques you cultivate, the formations will identify you and teleport you back to the sect, or at least to the same continent. "Of course, no amount of fighting and killing between disciples will trigger the teleportation formations! Finally, whether or not you succeed in reaching Earthstring Foundation Establishment, I truly hope that all of you... make it back alive!" As he looked out over the disciples, Ouyang Jie's usual cold demeanor softened a bit, and his expression even looked a bit encouraging. That was especially true when he looked at Bai Xiaochun and Ghostfang. When he looked at them, his eyes glowed with keen anticipation. Seeing that the entrance was now open, the Blood Stream Sect immediately began to fly in that direction. Among the Spirit Stream Sect disciples, Ghostfang was the first to leap into action, followed by Shangguan Tianyou and the other Chosen. Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, and then rapidly produced eight leather coats from his bag of holding. As he flew along, he also pulled out a big black wok, which he put on his back. Eyes shining with determination, he gritted his teeth and flew through the entrance. Of course, he didn't go alone; he made sure to follow along at the back of the group of Spirit Stream Sect disciples. Soon, the disciples of the Four Great Sects had vanished into the crevices. Ouyang Jie, the snake-tongued old man, and the cultivators named Hai and Lin all exchanged glances, and then sat down cross-legged around the entrance, looking around vigilantly as they stood guard. There were many crevices leading underground, some large, some small, and the Spirit Stream Sect disciples didn't all stick together. Ghostfang, Beihan Lie, Gongsun Wan'er, and some of the other Chosen chose to go alone. The rest of the disciples split up into two groups, one made up of north bank disciples, and the other made up of south bank disciples. The forces from the Pill Stream Sect and the Profound Stream Sect acted similarly. However, the disciples from the Blood Stream Sect didn't seem to have much trust amongst themselves, and either acted alone, or split up into groups of two or three. Bai Xiaochun looked around cautiously as he followed the south bank disciples into the depths. As soon as he was underground, he could sense the pulsing coldness rising up from below. It seemed to want to pierce into his body, to freeze his qi and blood. However, he was wearing too much clothing, making it impossible for the cold to reach him.... The further down they got, the colder it became. Thankfully, they weren't very far from the surface. Combined with the level of their cultivation bases, they weren't in any harm. Soon, the south bank disciples noticed that Bai Xiaochun was in the very back, and strange expressions appeared on their faces. However, those expression quickly transformed into smiles of joy. After all, with Bai Xiaochun there, they felt a lot safer. Although they were all in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, and very proud of that fact, they knew that Bai Xiaochun was far more powerful than them in every way. Soon, they began to make room for him, stepping off to the side and clasping hands in greeting. "Greetings Sect Uncle Bai!" "It's the just and righteous Sect Uncle Bai! He's not like Shangguan Tianyou and those others who went off on their own. He's sticking with us!" "Now that's what the south bank Chosen should be like! Sect Uncle Bai, it's me, Zhou Youdao! Do you still remember me? You really got me good in that acid rain incident...." Bai Xiaochun looked at the group parting way to let him up to the front, and was initially shocked. Actually, he had hoped to find a bit of safety by remaining in the back of the crowd. But after hearing how everyone was talking to him, he blinked and then cleared his throat. Sticking his chin up, he assumed the posture of someone of the Senior generation. "Hahaha! None of you have a thing to worry about. With an important person like myself here, no one will dare to cause any problems for you!" Delighted, the other disciples clustered around Bai Xiaochun, especially Zhou Youdao from Violet Cauldron Peak, who was all smiles. Hou Yunfei ended up next to Bai Xiaochun. Considering his current getup, the fact that he was acting like

someone from the Senior generation left Hou Yunfei chuckling. However, he couldn't forget everything that had occurred with the Luo Chen Clan. "Good luck, Xiaochun," he said quietly. "You're definitely going to reach Earthstring Foundation Establishment!" "I hope so too," Bai Xiaochun replied. Looking around to make sure no one was listening, he leaned over with a scowl and said, "Hey, do you think the other disciples did this on purpose...? I originally wanted to stay in the back. How come I ended up in the front all of a sudden?" A strange expression appeared on Hou Yunfei's face, and he coughed lightly. For some reason, he felt that whenever Bai Xiaochun was around, no matter how solemn or dangerous the situation was, it would somehow become bizarre and amusing.... "Ah well, I can let it go." Bai Xiaochun continued. "After all, I'm a Prestige disciple, and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. Back on the south bank, I did drag these disciples into some bad situations with my pill concocting, so for now, I'll just cut them some slack!" Sticking his chest out and looking very much the hero, he proceeded along as quickly as his cautious and nervous heart would let him. Elsewhere in the subterranean crevices, disciples from the other sects went along alone, or in groups of between three to five. Any of them who saw the larger group of a few dozen would immediately avoid it. Even those who considered themselves to be superior would look at them coldly and then move on as quickly as possible. Soon, the group caught sight of the body of the sword, and one of the gaps that led inside. However, there were already two beams of light shooting toward the gap. Bai Xiaochun immediately decided to move on, but before he could, the surrounding Spirit Stream Sect disciples excitedly began to perform incantation gestures. In the blink of an eye, numerous magical techniques were bearing down on the two disciples from the other sects. Both of them were from the Blood Stream Sect, and as soon as they saw the incoming magical techniques, their faces flickered, and they tried to dodge out of the way. Unfortunately, they weren't quite quick enough, and were sent tumbling backward, blood spraying out of their mouths. Then they fled, glaring hatefully at the Spirit Stream Sect the whole time. Bai Xiaochun was pleasantly surprised that they'd managed to secure one of the gaps by means of superior numbers. Of course, considering his status, he simply cleared his throat and let the other disciples enter the gap ahead of him.