

Book 2: The Legend of Nightcrypt!

Chapter 184: How Is This Possible!?!? The Blood Stream Sect occupied the first branch among the four branches controlled by the Sky River Court. It was next to the Spirit Stream Sect, with the actual border between the two being the mountains that had been occupied by the Luo Chen Clan, which was colloquially known as the Luo Chen Mountains. After passing through the Luo Chen Mountains, one would be within the territory controlled by the Blood Stream Sect. Bai Xiaochun hurried along, sighing the whole way. It was with mixed feelings that he passed through the area. On the one hand, he couldn't stop thinking about the dangers he had faced all those years ago, but on the other hand, he also kept thinking about Du Lingfei. If it weren't for the incident with the Luo Chen Clan, he and Du Lingfei would never have gotten close. Du Lingfei would have continued to dislike him, much the way Zhou Xinqi still did. Likewise, Bai Xiaochun himself wouldn't have expressed himself to her the way he had. The betrayal of the Luo Chen Clan had changed everything. Sighing, he passed the exact spot in the mountains where the Luo Chen Clan had actually been located. By now, the place had mostly been swallowed up by the jungle, and there were almost no signs that the clan had even existed there to begin with. Some distance away was another clan that the Spirit Stream Sect had raised up to replace the Luo Chen Clan to guard the mountains. They had no idea that Bai Xiaochun was passing through the area. Of course, despite being a Foundation Establishment cultivator, there were still some beasts in the area that even Bai Xiaochun didn't dare to provoke. As he travelled along, he once again was able to witness the wonders of the larger world around him including some chaotic, primeval beasts. He also encountered some of the local cultivator clans, and came to understand why his Elder Brother the sect leader had called a meeting of the Foundation Establishment cultivators some months before. "The Profound Stream Sect and the Pill Stream Sect have gone to war...." As he looked off toward the distant location where the Profound and Pill Stream Sects were fighting, he recalled what Zheng Yuandong had told him about the war that had begun because of the Sky River Court. The war was certainly causing heaven and earth to shake violently. Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but wonder if hostilities would soon break out between the Blood Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect. Half a month later, he left the Luo Chen Mountains and arrived at the border of the Blood Continent. Taking a deep breath, he produced the mask from his bag of holding and slowly put it onto his face. The instant it made contact with his skin, it melted into him, and his face twisted and distorted as it transformed into the face of a stranger. He looked quite handsome, albeit cold and arrogant. With the mask on, he didn't look warm and friendly like he usually did, but rather, fierce and sinister. Prodding his face here and there, he confirmed that he truly had transformed, then took off his Spirit Stream Sect robes and produced some of Nightcrypt's clothes from his bag of holding. After donning them, he truly became Nightcrypt. Even the techniques he cultivated were hidden by the mask, as well as his cultivation base. He was really in early Foundation Establishment, but anyone who assessed him would place him at the great circle of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. He had completely and utterly assumed the identity of the original Nightcrypt. Taking a deep breath, he strode forward into Blood Stream Sect territory. Being in no hurry, he made his way slowly and cautiously through the Blood Continent. As he did, he chatted some more with the soul of imposter Nightcrypt, and learned a lot more about the Blood Stream Sect. For one thing, the law of the jungle truly prevailed; disciples were actually encouraged to fight amongst each other. It was the same outside of the sect, too. The entire Blood Continent was a violent and deadly place. For Bai Xiaochun to return to the Blood Stream Sect as Nightcrypt would be very simple. According to what imposter Nightcrypt told him, of the disciples of the sect who were teleported out of the Fallen Sword World to random locations on the Blood Continent, some would have returned directly to the sect, but others would have holed up to recover from their injuries before going back. After all, returning to the sect in an injured state would likely be more dangerous than just staying outside. When Bai Xiaochun heard that, even more fear rose up in his heart. The Blood Stream Sect seemed like a truly terrifying place. However, the enticement of the relic of eternal indestructibility, as well as the safety provided by the mask, ensured that he simply gritted his teeth and continued on with his plan. As

he traveled, he took in the sights on the Blood Continent. Everything was a reddish brown color, as though it had been stained with blood. Not even imposter Nightcrypt was sure why that was. Apparently, it had always looked like that. Even the plants were very aggressive in nature. Bai Xiaochun encountered quite a few such aggressive plants along the way. Some of them he simply destroyed, others he fled from. It took two months before he actually reached the Blood Stream Sect itself. Much like the Spirit Stream Sect, the Blood Stream Sect was located right on the Heavenspan River. Although imposter Nightcrypt had explained what the sect looked like, now that Bai Xiaochun could actually see it with his own eyes, his jaw dropped, and he even began to tremble. He was completely and utterly shaken. The Spirit Stream Sect's Mount Daoseed stretched across the entire river like a bridge, connecting the seven mountain peaks of the south and north banks. The Blood Stream Sect was very different. Shockingly, it took the shape of an enormous, blood-colored hand! The gargantuan blood hand stretched right up out of the Heavenspan River, palm down, as if it were clawing up toward the heavens. The size of it was difficult to describe with words; the five fingers of the hand were like enormous mountain peaks, each one of them roughly the same size as Mount Daoseed. As for the rugged thumb, it was surrounded by a blood mist that made it impossible to see clearly. It was impossible to say how long the hand had existed, its dusty, rubble-strewn surface battered by the winds. Close up, it was only possible to see the five enormous mountain peaks stretching up. However, from a distance, it was also possible to see that beneath the hand was a shocking, blood-colored arm! Bai Xiaochun's eyes were as wide as saucers. Anyone who saw a sight like this would likely come to the conclusion that some shocking giant existed within the Heavenspan River, a giant who, in the moments before its death, reached up begrudgingly to try to rip apart the heavens. And yet, even as it had done so, its arm solidified, and never moved again. As long as the hand remained, a towering mountain peak, then the will of that giant would remain. The mountain peaks were covered with blood-colored vegetation, as well as numerous buildings. Beams of light could be seen flying back and forth; clearly, the mountain peaks were home to countless individuals, whose murderous auras caused the sky above to darken. This was the home of the Blood Stream Sect! "The Blood Stream Sect!" Bai Xiaochun said, taking a deep breath. "So powerful!" Seeing it all with his own eyes only further impressed upon him the power and resources at the disposal of the Blood Stream Sect. "No wonder the Blood Stream Sect people are so brutal. Their sect is actually built on the arm of a corpse! In fact, imposter Nightcrypt even said that the Blood Stream Sect techniques are almost all derived from the arm itself!" Bai Xiaochun's mind reeled as he got closer to the enormous arm. As he neared, he could see that the mountain peaks even had waterfalls of blood streaming down from various locations. Closer examination revealed that the hand apparently absorbed water from the Heavenspan River, which then seeped out of various cracks and crevices within the arm. As it did, the golden water was transformed into a bright red color. That red liquid was also a fundamental element of the cultivation of the Blood Stream Sect. "Spirit blood!" Bai Xiaochun thought, his heart thumping. He immediately thought back to the first introduction imposter Nightcrypt had given him regarding the Blood Stream Sect. The Blood Stream Sect was structured in a way similar to the Spirit Stream Sect. However, there were also some fundamental differences. They had servants, Outer Sect disciples, and Inner Sect disciples. However, instead of legacy echelon cultivators, the Blood Stream Sect had blood masters. Generally speaking, the sect rankings were very strictly enforced. Servants weren't allowed onto the upper forearm; they lived on lower forearm, which was considered to be outside of the Blood Stream Sect itself. That was where the population was greatest, and the area was packed tightly with buildings that were organized in concentric rings. Only Outer Sect disciples could leave that area and step onto the upper forearm, and only Inner Sect disciples qualified to live on the back of the hand itself. With the exception of the thumb, the mountain peaks that were the fingers of the hand were divided into the lower finger and the upper finger. The lower finger was occupied by Foundation Establishment cultivators. Those in the Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment stage were called Dharma protectors, and those in the Earthstring Foundation Establishment stage were the elders. Only one person qualified to live on the upper finger, and that was the grand elder of that peak. Grand elders were the equivalent of the Spirit Stream Sect's peak lords. Of course, considering that there were fewer mountain peaks than in the Spirit Stream Sect, it was a position reserved for only the most extraordinary of individuals. After the upper finger was the fingertip. From the moment the Blood

Stream Sect had been founded in ancient times, each mountain peak had a blood master. That was the only person who qualified to occupy the finger tip. The blood masters were the focus of the entire sect, and were among the most powerful people in the entire sect, excluding certain people who resided on the thumb. They were as powerful as the sect leader, and qualified to give orders to the elders of the mountain peaks. All Blood Stream Sect disciples dreamed of becoming the blood master of a mountain peak. Each successive generation only had one blood master per mountain peak at any given time. The thumb was the only place with no blood master. The blood mist which surrounded it ensured that it was a restricted area. That was where the Blood Stream Sect's patriarchs and prime elders resided. Only people in the Gold Core stage could go there. When a blood master advanced to the Gold Core stage, he or she would become a blood ripper, and move to the enormous thumb. The blood rippers occupied a position higher than prime elders, with power second only to the patriarchs. The lowest position on the thumb was occupied by the sect leader, who was responsible for the general administration of the sect. As he got closer and closer to the Blood Stream Sect, Bai Xiaochun once again reviewed the information he knew. "Five mountain peaks. The thumb is called Ancestor Peak! The first finger is called Corpse Peak, the middle finger is Middle Peak, the ring finger was called Nameless Peak, and the smallest finger, the pinky finger, is called Lesser Marsh Peak! [1. A quick note about the names, because there is some minor word play involved. The word for corpse sounds similar to the word describing the index finger. Both are pronounced "shi." In Chinese, the ring finger is called the "nameless finger," so I chose to keep the Chinese version of that name for the mountain. The "Lesser Marsh" is an acupuncture point on the tip of the pinky finger. As far as the thumb and "Ancestor" goes, I don't think there is any wordplay, although the word 'ancestor' does sort of rhyme with the character for 'thumb'] "Corpse Peak is known for refining corpses, Middle Peak focuses on blood swords, Nameless Peak is famous for gargoyles, and Lesser Marsh Peak is devoted to devilblood body refinement!" Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but recall the Blood Stream Sect disciples he'd encountered in the Fallen Sword World. He had seen them control the vicious gargoyles. Xu Xiaoshan had worked with various corpses, and Song Que had fought him with a blood sword. He had even seen some of the devilblood body refinement of disciples who were obviously from Lesser Marsh Peak. As of this moment, the Blood Stream Sect had already left a deep impression on Bai Xiaochun's mind. However, what happened next left him completely and utterly shaken. As he neared the enormous hand, he stepped past a certain point, and his face flickered as his Undying Live Forever Technique suddenly stirred with intense desire. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun could sense that the enormous hand was somehow calling out to him! That summoning seemed unprecedentedly intimate! "How is this possible?!" he thought, his mind reeling. As of this moment, all of his hesitation and anxiety vanished, and an extremely familiar sensation filled his mind and heart.