

At dusk on the following day, Bai Xiaochun and the others were still speeding along. Occasionally, they would make attempts to use their transmission jade slips, but never succeeded in making contact with the sect.

Thankfully, they had plenty of medicinal pills. The seven Luo Chen Clan cultivators Bai Xiaochun had killed had all had bags of holding. Although the resources inside weren't at quite the same level as what was available in the Spirit Stream Sect, at a time like this, it was more than sufficient. With medicinal pills to bolster them, Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei were in high spirits. With their injuries under control, they managed to continue on through the entire night. Bai Xiaochun trembled in fear the entire time. The slightest breeze or rustling leaf would cause sweat to break out on his forehead. His heart felt tight, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. He was also still sore from the fighting, which often left him gritting his teeth from the pain. It wasn't that the pain was unendurable. Actually, it didn't measure up at all to the pain he had felt while cultivating the Undying Live Forever Technique. What bothered him was the actual sight of the blood and wounds, and the fear that they might worsen and eventually become life-threatening. He couldn't help but grimace in anxiety at the thought of it. Back before all of this had started, Du Lingfei would definitely have mocked him for that, and thought less of him than before. But now, everything was different, and a warm look could be seen in her eyes as she continuously comforted him. "It's okay. Don't be scared, Junior Brother Bai. This wound looks bad, but it's not life-threatening. Don't move, I'll put some more medicinal ointment on it...." Seeing Bai Xiaochun wince in pain despite the critical danger they were in caused Du Lingfei to secretly smile. Within that smile were numerous undefinable emotions. She knew how much Bai Xiaochun feared death, and it was that knowledge that left her so moved and shaken that he had returned. In fact, she even felt as if there were a superlative bravery lurking somewhere inside of him. That bravery could give birth to a figure with veins of steel, which was something she would never be able to forget. With Du Lingfei constantly comforting him, Bai Xiaochun started to feel more and more pleased with himself, and was starting to get the feeling that taking such a deadly risk had definitely been the right thing to do. After all, it had resulted in the beautiful Du Lingfei treating him so warmly all of a sudden. When Hou Yunfei saw what was happening, he looked on with smiling eyes. Considering that they were all fleeing for their lives together, it was only natural that warm feelings would develop between all of them, and that they would become closer. "Junior Brother Bai, Junior Sister Du," he said, his tone serious, "if we can make it back to the sect alive, then I'll remember this kindness you've shown me, for the rest of my life!" "If we can make it back...?" A look of longing appeared in Du Lingfei's eyes, but she quickly sighed and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Pain rose up in her heart as she realized that the chances of the three of them getting back alive... were miniscule. Bai Xiaochun sank further into silence. Time passed. Two days went by, during which the three of them continued along with almost no rest. Repeated attempts to use their jade slips all ended in failure. Hou Yunfei's injuries were becoming more serious, as were Du Lingfei's, whose face was becoming more and more ashen. Gradually, even their mental faculties were degrading. Hou Yunfei sighed, turned to Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei and said, "It's too bad we can't just hide somewhere and weather the storm, but we really need to get word back to the sect. Of course, if my calculations are correct, the Luo Chen Clan's ceremony will be ending soon, and once that happens.... their Foundation Establishment expert will be coming after us. No matter how we try to hide from him, we would be killed beyond the shadow of a doubt." It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun's face suddenly flickered. Grabbing Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, he leaped into a nearby ditch and squatted down. Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei both had very serious expressions on their faces, and they immediately ceased any chatter. Before much time had passed, a beam of light appeared in the air up

above, which was actually a blood mist. Within the mist was a Luo Chen Clan member in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, who was looking around carefully in all directions. However, because Bai Xiaochun had led the group into hiding, they weren't noticed, and the Luo Chen Clan member proceeded along into the distance. Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding as he watched the cultivator disappearing. His eyes were completely bloodshot, and he almost wanted to jump out and attack the man. However, he couldn't do that unless he was certain that he could kill him. Otherwise, other members of the Luo Chen Clan might show up. "They've caught up...." said Du Lingfei, sighing. She looked over at Bai Xiaochun and hesitated, as if there were something she wanted to say to him. However, before she could, he grabbed her hand and started running again. The three of them said nothing as they proceeded along. They felt as if everything were weighing down on them, crushing down onto their hearts. The shadow of death loomed over them larger than ever, threatening to consume them completely. "There's still hope!" Hou Yunfei suddenly said. "Although the patriarch of the Luo Chen Clan is a Foundation Establishment cultivator, far beyond us in terms of cultivation, his spell formation has to have limits. One of the patriarchs of my Hou Clan is also a Foundation Establishment cultivator, and I was once lucky enough to see a security spell formation that he set up. It could cover a distance of 5,000 kilometers, and required sealing certain spell nodes ahead of time." Du Lingfei's eyes gleamed as she responded, "Elder Brother Hou, do you mean that even though the spell formation was set up ahead of time by the Luo Chen Clan Patriarch, even if it exceeds 5,000 kilometers, it won't be by much?!" "Exactly!" Hou Yunfei declared. "Therefore, the further away we get from the Luo Chen Clan, the greater the chances that our jade slips will work. If we can just get word back to the sect, they'll definitely send someone to save us!" "5,000 kilometers," Bai Xiaochun muttered, gritting his teeth. "At our current speed, that will take eight or nine more days to reach the border...." As they proceeded along, they were forced to hide on numerous occasions when Luo Chen Clan members neared. However, each time, Bai Xiaochun's uncanny ability to sense danger kept them safe. Considering how on guard he was, and the fact that he was pulling Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei along with him as they fled, Bai Xiaochun was getting more and more exhausted, his face more and more ashen. Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei's injuries continued to worsen, and as a result, their speed suffered. It eventually reached the point where Bai Xiaochun was virtually carrying both of them. Bai Xiaochun was more cautious than ever as he led them along for three days straight. Three days of running and hiding left Bai Xiaochun more and more drained. His face was gaunt as he led the group into a valley. However, after taking only a few steps inside, his face flickered, and he pulled Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei off to the side, where they hid behind a boulder. Unfortunately, they were a bit too slow, and moments later they could hear the sound of someone whistling through the air toward them. A beam of white light descended from midair, slamming down into the rock they were hiding behind, completely shattering it. Hou Yunfei coughed up a mouthful of blood, and Du Lingfei couldn't prevent blood from oozing out of the corners of her mouth. A cold snort rang out through the air. "So, this is where you've been hiding!" A Luo Chen Clan cultivator appeared, standing on a blood mist. He was in the seventh level of Qi Condensation, and held a mirror in his left hand. As soon as he saw them, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a jade slip. Just when he was about to transmit some information, Hou Yunfei cried out, "Don't let him make contact!" The ashen-faced Du Lingfei was just about to unleash a flying sword when Bai Xiaochun, who had been slowly backing up, gritted his teeth and stopped in place. Eyes bloodshot, knees quivering, he focused his qi and blood, and then the ground beneath his feet shattered as he launched himself into the air, turning into a beam of light. Even as the Luo Chen Clan cultivator was about to transmit the information, Bai Xiaochun burst toward him with incredible speed. The cultivator's face fell, and he fell back, unable to successfully make contact. Performing an incantation gesture, he swung the mirror with his left hand, causing a beam of light to shoot toward Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered with a ferocious light; instead of dodging, he allowed the white light to slam into him. His charge carried him forward toward the shocked Luo Chen Clan cultivator, whereupon he reached out with his right hand, touching his thumb and index finger together. A black light shot out and latched onto the cultivator's throat. Throat Crushing Grasp! A cracking sound rang out, and the cultivator's eyes went wide. Blood oozed out of his mouth, and he toppled over dead, the message to his fellow clan members unsent. Blood was also oozing out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he collected up the enemy's bag of holding, then walked back over to Du Lingfei. There, he trembled and almost fell to the ground, but gritted his teeth and

managed to stay on his feet. "Let's go!" he said, pulling Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei along. "Let go of me!" Hou Yunfei said. "You two go. Without me, you'll be a bit faster." His gaze was one of determination as he looked at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei. Du Lingfei looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly said something she had been contemplating saying for the past few days. "Junior Brother Bai, why don't you go alone...?" "Shut up!" Bai Xiaochun yelled. "I'm scared of dying, but I'm risking my life. There's no way you two are going to make that sacrifice mean nothing! Come, let's go! Together!" Not giving them any chance to speak further, he pulled the two of them along. Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei didn't say anything further, but they were more moved than ever. Bai Xiaochun was extremely cautious as he led them forward, constantly changing directions, and being careful to avoid the Luo Chen Clan cultivators when they got close. Three more days passed. It was evening, and the occasional bolt of lightning danced across the sky. Black clouds were forming, and rain began to fall, great bead-sized drops that caused splashing sounds to fill the air. It started to get very cold, causing Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei to shiver; their faces were only getting more ashen. Nervousness clutched at Bai Xiaochun's heart. Knowing that the other two wouldn't be able to survive in such bitter cold, he found a cave in a mountain, where he started a fire. After sealing the entrance of the cave to make sure the light of the fire didn't seep out, he sat down cross-legged across from Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei. The fire hissed and popped, and let off enough heat to gradually dispel the cold. A bit of color gradually returned to the faces of Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei, although they still looked very pale. The three of them sat silently in the cave, watching the fire, and stewing in anxiety. Finally, Bai Xiaochun chuckled and broke the silence, "In three more days, we should be able to pass that 5,000 kilometer mark. Hahaha! Just wait until we get back to the sect. This is definitely going to count as a big meritorious service. I wonder what reward we'll get?" Du Lingfei looked at him, her gaze soft. Hou Yunfei was about to laugh, but as soon as he opened his mouth, he coughed up some blood, and his face paled as he swayed on the verge of collapse. After all the days of running, they had long since run out of medicinal pills. Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet and was just about to go over and examine Hou Yunfei, when suddenly his face flickered. He waved his sleeve out to protect his two friends as the stone he had rolled into place to block the firelight suddenly exploded!