

**A day later, when the first spirit stone was completely used up, Feng Yan put the windskiff away, and the three of them stood atop a mountain peak under the evening sky, watching the sun slowly set over the horizon. Soon, darkness blanketed the lands.**

At the foot of the mountain, the dense jungle echoed with the roars of animals and wild beasts. The air was very humid. "After we get past this jungle, we can rest," Feng Yan said coolly. "What do you two think?" He looked at Du Lingfei and Bai Xiaochun. "It's dark," Bai Xiaochun pointed out. "That jungle might have some dangerous wild beasts in it; why don't we just fly over it with the windskiff?" "Take a break on your own, if you want," Du Lingfei said with a cold snort. "It's just some trees." Not concealing her disdain for Bai Xiaochun's fear of death, she flashed into motion, heading directly toward the jungle. A glimmer of scorn stirred deep in Feng Yan's eyes, but he smiled nonetheless and then shot down the mountain. Bai Xiaochun frowned as he watched the two of them leaving. Finally he sighed, and followed them down the mountain toward the jungle, more vigilant than ever. The humidity increased when they entered the jungle, and there were even some spots which were marshes or bogs. Animals appeared occasionally, but these were three Qi Condensation cultivators. They didn't slow down at all as they proceeded along, gradually forging their way deeper and deeper into the jungle. Time passed. Eventually, the night deepened. By the time the moon rose, they were already about halfway to the other side. So far they hadn't encountered any fierce beasts. The trip had gone very smoothly. Bai Xiaochun was in the rear position, and even the slightest sound or movement would cause him to leap in fright. Du Lingfei's scorn grew stronger. "Watch out!" Bai Xiaochun suddenly blurted, stopping in place with a very uneasy expression on his face. Du Lingfei laughed coldly, and was just about to say something sarcastic when all of a sudden, a wild wind blasted toward them, along with an acrid odor. Du Lingfei's face flickered, and she looked out into the jungle to see countless eyes staring back. They were bright red, and in almost the exact same instant that she saw them, the sound of flapping wings could be heard. Numerous bats appeared, each one about the size of a hand, flying in their direction. "Two-headed bats!" exclaimed Feng Yan. "Their venom dries up the blood and seals the throat! Split up and meet at the mountain peak on the other side of the jungle." Face flickering, Feng Yan burst into motion, heading off at top speed. Du Lingfei's pupils constricted, and she waved her hand in front of her, throwing out a paper talisman. As it burned, a blue light spread out, covering her with a shield and also increasing her speed. She picked another direction and sped off. Looking over her shoulder as she left, she was shocked to find that Bai Xiaochun had long since disappeared. Bai Xiaochun had begun fleeing as soon as the wind kicked up. Of course, Bai Xiaochun was very careful and perceptive, and was extremely attuned to danger. Even as he fled, the bats approached, causing a droning sound to fill the air. They quickly split up into three groups, which began to pursue the three disciples. A cold smile appeared on Feng Yan's face as he sped through the jungle, and he quickly put away the stick of incense that he had just been holding. That stick of incense was what had attracted the bats, and was also why he had chosen to pass through this jungle on the way to their mission. He had sensed that this would be a likely location to contain two-headed bats. "The weakest of them are at the third level of Qi Condensation. Bai Xiaochun, don't blame me that someone wants you dead." Laughing coldly, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a wooden stick. After blowing a breath of air onto the stick, it ignited with black flames that caused the bats to let out piercing shrieks. Apparently, they hated those flames, and thus instantly dispersed. Feng Yan smiled and then continued onward, feeling much more at ease. As for Bai Xiaochun, he was speeding along through the jungle being pursued by numerous

bats. However, the bats couldn't match his speed, and before long, there was quite a distance between the two of them. Occasionally, a beam of sword light would flash out, and a bat would scream and fall out of the air. Bai Xiaochun ran along, and after enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, he looked over his shoulder and frowned. "It sure was strange for all those bats to suddenly show up," he thought. He walked back a bit and found one of the bats he had killed with a flying sword, and after examining it closely, his eyes gleamed. "These aren't ordinary two-headed bats, they're violetvein bats! They're just as venomous, but they're different from common two-headed bats in that their fangs are the main ingredient for the tier-2 spirit medicine Bloodburning Incense! "Back in the sect, you can sell fangs like this for fifty merit points apiece." Bai Xiaochun was immediately delighted. Not very many people would recognize that these bats were actually listed in the fifth volume of spirit creatures. Feeling very excited, he began to collect the corpses of the bats. It didn't take long before he had ten bats, from which he began to extract the fangs. "These bats aren't that strong after all..." he said, chuckling. Soon, a shield sprang up around him, and he began to search through the jungle. Before long, an entire group of violetvein bats was flying toward him. He quickly performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, sending a flying sword bursting out toward the bats. Its speed was incredible, and before they could even get close to him, miserable shrieks filled the air, and numerous bats began to fall to the ground. The few that made it past the sword slammed into his shield and were sent spinning away. Bai Xiaochun collected the dead bats. Realizing that he was actually in no danger, he felt more at ease than ever. Puffing his chest out proudly, he continued to search through the jungle. It was in that fashion that he made his way along, collecting more and more fangs.... Four hours later, Feng Yan made his way out of the jungle to the appointed meeting spot on the mountain peak. There, he sat down cross-legged, a slight smile on his face as he waited. Another two hours passed, and Du Lingfei shot out from the trees, looking very bedraggled. As she sped up the mountain, she looked back anxiously at the dark jungle. Eventually, she reached Feng Yan, and realized that Bai Xiaochun was nowhere to be seen. "Bai Xiaochun hasn't come out yet?" she asked. Feng Yan sighed and shook his head. "I wish Junior Brother Bai all the best. Unfortunately, two-headed bats are most active at night. If we go back in looking for him, we would be in a lot of danger." In order to make things look even more realistic, he didn't rest, but instead craned his neck anxiously toward the jungle, as if he were waiting for Bai Xiaochun to appear. Du Lingfei maintained her silence. Although she hated Bai Xiaochun, she didn't hate him so much that she wished him dead. After all, they were fellow members of the same sect. Finally, she sat down cross-legged and looked down at the jungle, sighing. Time passed, and soon it was almost dawn. After waiting through the entire night without seeing Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei was getting a very uneasy feeling. Feng Yan rose to his feet. After having stayed up the entire night, his eyes were bloodshot as he looked dejectedly toward the jungle. "If he hasn't appeared by now, I'm afraid it means that Bai Xiaochun... has met with disaster. It's all my fault. If I hadn't suggested to go through the jungle, Junior Brother Bai wouldn't have... ai." "Elder Brother Feng, don't blame yourself," Du Lingfei said. "Who would ever have thought that there would be two-headed bats in this place? Maybe Bai Xiaochun isn't dead yet. Besides, if he is dead, then as fellow disciples, we should go retrieve his corpse!" She was unsure of exactly what sort of emotions she was experiencing, which was a very strange sensation. Although Bai Xiaochun annoyed her, she somehow felt disturbed. After all, there was no deep grudge between the two of them. Feng Yan sighed and nodded seriously. "You're right, Junior Sister Du. No matter what has happened, we can't give up on him." With that, the two of them prepared to head back down the mountain to begin the search. However, it was only a moment later that they caught sight of Bai Xiaochun strolling out from within the trees, yawning. As soon as he was out of the jungle itself, he stretched lazily. Du Lingfei's eyes went wide, and Feng Yan almost couldn't believe what he was seeing as Bai Xiaochun casually began to walk up the mountain path. He almost looked like he had just woken up from a good night's sleep. He seemed excited and energetic, as opposed to Feng Yan and Du Lingfei, who were weary from a night without rest. Soon, Bai Xiaochun was at the top of the mountain. When he caught sight of Feng Yan and Du Lingfei, he hurried over and called out, "Good morning! Elder Brother Feng, Elder Sister Du, that jungle is way too scary! I almost lost my little life." Bai Xiaochun truly had rested well that night. After clearing the entire jungle of bats, not only had he profited handsomely, he'd found the bats' cave, where he had experienced wonderful night of sleep. An unsightly expression could be seen on Du Lingfei's face as she glared at Bai

Xiaochun. Snorting coldly, she thought back to the complicated feelings she had felt, and suddenly felt even more annoyed with Bai Xiaochun. A cold glitter passed through Feng Yan's eyes, although his expression was one of joy. "Junior Brother Bai! I'm so glad to see you safe. We worried about you the entire night." Bai Xiaochun chuckled, and although his expression seemed normal, deep within his eyes, a cold gleam flickered. Soon, the three of them were on their way again, seated in the ship. Considering what had just happened, Bai Xiaochun suggested that they fly on the ship at night and proceed along on foot during the day. In rare fashion, Du Lingfei agreed, and as for Feng Yan, after a moment of thought, he nodded. Thus, they proceeded along down the Heavenspan River as they headed through the Lower Reaches. A month passed. This was the farthest Bai Xiaochun had ever traveled in his entire life. He saw numerous mountains and jungles, places where there was no sign of human habitation at all, and everything was like a huge wilderness. At one point in their travels, the ground began to quake, and Bai Xiaochun looked off into the distant mountains to see something completely astonishing. It was an enormous giant covered in thick fur, which caused the ground to shudder with each step it took. The sight of the giant caused Bai Xiaochun to gasp. One night when they were flying along, lightning crashed off in the distance, and Bai Xiaochun saw... an enormous bird that was just as large as Fragrant Cloud Peak. As it whistled along through the air, countless bolts of lightning danced across its body. The mere sight of such a creature flying along in the middle of the night was completely astonishing. The most memorable thing Bai Xiaochun saw was during the daytime when he caught sight of a beast on the south bank of the river. It had four stumpy legs, and a head as huge as a mountain. Suddenly, a huge 30,000-meter golden crocodile burst out from within the Heavenspan River and gobbled up the first creature. As the crocodile sank back down into the water, it cast a cold glance at Bai Xiaochun and the others. That single glance caused their minds to reel, and blood to ooze out of the corners of their mouths. Splitting pain tore at their eyes, and it took a long moment for them to recover. Bai Xiaochun shivered and then muttered, "Terrifying. The outside is so terrifying!"