

Moments ago, the Foundation Establishment cultivators of the three mountain peaks had been looking on, smiling with the realization that Elder Zhou was simply trying to frighten Bai Xiaochun. But then Bai Xiaochun suddenly fought back against the lightning, and their expressions flickered. Many were about to intervene, but then they realized that the lightning didn't harm him at all.

Strange gleams appeared in their eyes. "This kid is extraordinary!" "No wonder the Luo Chen Clan couldn't chase him down and kill him! He has some very unique abilities!" "This young scion of ours might just be on the same level as Shang Guan Tianyou. He's clearly surpassed Lu Tianlei and Zhou Xinqi already!" As they looked on, nodding inwardly, Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong stood atop Mount Dao Seed, watching the situation unfold with a strange look in his eyes. Even as Bai Xiaochun cried out at the top of his lungs, Zheng Yuandong was using divine sense to watch everything. He was shocked by what he saw Bai Xiaochun doing. Instead of immediately interfering, he waited, hoping to see Bai Xiaochun show off his full potential. Eventually, he began to nod with admiration. Finally, he flickered into motion, appearing directly in front of the madly-fleeing Bai Xiaochun. As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw Zheng Yuandong, he cried out, "Dear Elder Brother Sect Leader, Elder Zhou is trying to kill me! My poor little life is on the line!!" Even as the words left his mouth, he dove behind Zheng Yuandong to hide. Zheng Yuandong coughed dryly at Bai Xiaochun's woeful appearance. Smiling wryly, he looked up at the incoming Elder Zhou, who was glaring fiercely at Bai Xiaochun. A moment later, Elder Zhou came to a stop in front of him, where he clasped hands in greeting. These two men were wily old foxes, and as soon as their eyes met, they both knew what the other was thinking. Both of them were well aware that Bai Xiaochun's presence meant that the sect had another fearfully talented person in its ranks. That was something far more important than the trifling incident with the phoenix. If Li Qinghou were in the sect, things would have been easier to keep under control. But with him gone, no one in the sect could really control Bai Xiaochun. That was especially true considering his recent achievements, coupled with the fact that he was a Prestige disciple and the Junior Brother of the sect leader. Zheng Yuandong was fairly certain that if he tried to punish Bai Xiaochun, Bai Xiaochun would simply go to the portrait of his Master to weep and complain. "Sect Leader," said Elder Zhou, "please pay no heed to this affair and hand Bai Xiaochun over to me immediately!" With that, Elder Zhou glared at Bai Xiaochun, chuckling cruelly. Bai Xiaochun's scalp immediately went numb, and he began to explain, "Your bird--" As soon as Elder Zhou heard the word 'bird', his face began to turn green. Bai Xiaochun immediately bit his tongue and turned his pleading gaze to Zheng Yuandong. "Elder Brother," he said, "I've shed my own blood for the sect, I've performed great services...." Zheng Yuandong's face twitched, and he coughed dryly. "Elder Zhou," he said, "let's drop this matter. Xiaochun might be a bit naughty and mischievous, but he's a good person. How about this. If anything like this happens again in the future, I won't intervene at all, and you can handle the matter any way you see fit." Elder Zhou looked very torn, but eventually he nodded begrudgingly. Then he took his leave, casting one more glare at Bai Xiaochun as he did. Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and slowly rose to his feet. He looked a bit suspicious; he was an intelligent person, and the way things had turned out seemed very sudden. Something seemed off.... However, he wasn't completely sure of what it all meant, so he looked over at the sect leader. Zheng Yuandong looked back at him. "Those phoenixes were raised by Elder Zhou's former Daoist partner," he said coolly. "There was a battle once outside the sect in which that Daoist

partner died in the process of saving Elder Zhou's life. Elder Zhou himself barely survived. The pain of losing his Daoist partner harmed his mind, and he nearly went insane. "Most people think he's merely obsessed with plants and vegetation. What they don't know is that without that obsession, he wouldn't be able to suppress the insanity within. He uses that obsession to stave off the madness. "In the future, don't provoke him. If he really goes mad, I might not be able to save you in time." Hearing this, Bai Xiaochun's spine tingled in fear, and yet, he couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for Elder Zhou. Nodding vigorously, he said, "I really didn't give it the medicine. His thing... er, his bird really did steal it from me." Zheng Yuandong patted Bai Xiaochun's shoulder. "Karma exists everywhere. In this case, the Karma was sown by you, so there's no need to think too much about the details." With that, Zheng Yuandong turned and left. Bai Xiaochun sighed at how unlucky he was, and began to contemplate ways to avoid Elder Zhou in the future. Then he cautiously returned to Fragrant Cloud Peak, where he went into seclusion in his residence. As for the thieving bird, Bai Xiaochun decided that considering how he needed to avoid provoking Elder Zhou, it would be best to cast aside any thoughts of revenge. "True men don't fight with birds!" he told himself to make the decision easier to stomach. Sitting there in his log cabin, he produced several of the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills he had concocted. Thinking back to how Elder Zhou had attacked him during the chase, his eyes gleamed with envy. "Foundation Establishment cultivators are pretty incredible," he thought, sighing. "He almost made me cough up some blood. Thankfully I have my Undying Skin." With another glance at the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills, he looked around furtively to make sure he was alone, and then produced the turtle-wok to perform some spirit enhancements. Soon, all of the pills had received threefold enhancements, and contained faint silver designs on their surfaces. Bai Xiaochun sighed again. "If only I had some fuel to make four-colored flame." Based on some discreet inquiries he'd made earlier, he knew that the sect did have fuel to make four-colored flame. However, it wasn't very plentiful, and required an incredible amount of merit points to acquire. With the exception of certain unique medicines, or certain cultivation practices related to fire, it was rare to ever need four-colored flame. It was generally impossible to procure such fuel from the market at the bottom of the mountain; the only place it usually appeared was at auction, and even then, it wasn't commonly seen. "I'm running low on spirit tails too," he thought. After some more thought, he finally popped one of the Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills into his mouth and began to cultivate. Days passed. Bai Xiaochun practiced cultivation the entire time, occasionally consuming Violet Qi Spirit Ascension Pills as he did. His cultivation rapidly progressed until eventually, he ran out of pills. It happened late at night, when the clouds filled the sky obscuring the moon. Inside, rumbling could be heard, not within the cabin itself, but inside Bai Xiaochun's body. He began to shake as spiritual power built up inside of him, becoming a vast, dragon-like river that raged through all of his qi vessels. After completing a full cycle within him, his overall spiritual power expanded, surpassing his previous limit significantly. Filth oozed out from the pores all over his body, and an invigorating sense of buoyancy filled him. Enlivened, his eyes snapped open, and they shone like beacons in the dark of night. "The eighth level of Qi Condensation!" Laughing heartily, he rushed out of his courtyard to wash off. He had been in the Spirit Stream Sect for years now, and although he was a lot tougher, he hadn't grown much physically, which left him feeling a bit depressed. In terms of his overall appearance, he was still just as pure and fair, and just as skinny. "Now that I'm in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, my controlling arts should be much more powerful." He waved his finger at a nearby boulder, which subsequently flew up into the air. In accord with Bai Xiaochun's will, it sped up, then slowed down as he experimented with both Lightness-in-Heaviness and Heaviness-in-Lightness. "What I'm most interested in, however, is what I accidentally unleashed when fighting Chen Heng... the Human Controlling Grand Magic!" Eyes shining with a bright light, Bai Xiaochun experimented a bit more, but made little progress. After all, controlling inanimate objects and controlling people were two different things. Finally, he decided to abandon the idea for the time being. Later, back in his courtyard, he stood there contemplating the matter. "In the description of the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning art, it says that once you cultivate all the way to the eighth level, you can utilize a mid-grade version of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning." With that, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and waved his finger. Violet qi swirled about, and after two breaths of time passed, a large violet cauldron appeared in front of him. This time, it went much faster than before, at least twice as fast! Furthermore, it was larger than before, and it was much more corporeal. It was so clear that various magical symbols could be seen engraved

on the surface of the cauldron. From the terrifying pressure that radiated from the large cauldron, Bai Xiaochun could tell that it was anything but ordinary. "That pressure is far more powerful than before!" He quickly probed his cultivation base; when he used Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning in the past, it drew significantly on his spiritual power, and would require a lot of cultivation to recover from afterward. But now, he still retained about seventy percent of his internal spiritual energy. "I can use it three times in a row!" Elated, he dispersed the violet cauldron and pulled out the Golden Crow Sword. As the golden light spread, he stepped onto the golden crow, and then flew out of the sect. Soon he was in the jungle outside of the sect. Up above, the sky rumbled with thunder, as though a storm were brewing. Sensing the impending danger of the storm, Bai Xiaochun quickly stopped in place and performed an incantation gesture, once again summoning the violet cauldron. Waving his finger, he sent it smashing into a nearby boulder. A boom echoed out, and the ground trembled, startling countless birds and animals. A crater appeared, with crevices snaking out from it for thirty meters in all directions. "So powerful!!" he said with a gasp. After measuring himself up, he was sure that with his Undying Silver Skin and Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, if he had to fight Chen Heng again, it wouldn't take much effort on his part to wipe him out. "Or maybe not...." he thought after a bit of hesitation. After all, fighting Chen Heng would still be quite dangerous, and would be best avoided. He could still lose his poor little life. The best thing would be to fight only enemies in the seventh level of Qi Condensation. "With the snap of a finger, I, Bai Xiaochun, could easily turn anyone from the first to the seventh level of Qi Condensation into ash!" He flicked his sleeve proudly, but unfortunately, there was no nearby fence to stand on. He was forced to remain on the Golden Crow Sword, sticking his chin up, looking up at the clouds like a lonely hero. Finally, he turned the Golden Crow Sword around and headed back toward the sect. However, it was at this point that... countless lightning bolts formed overhead. Attracted by the Golden Crow Sword, they began to descend toward Bai Xiaochun like silver snakes.... Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and moments later, agonized screams could be heard amidst the crash of thunder.