

Three days later at dawn....

Bai Xiaochun was not in a very good mood. The more he thought about war breaking out between the two sects, the worse he felt. On top of that, he now realized that the only reason he was going along on the diplomatic mission was because of his own stellar performance to the grand elder. Were it not for that, he could have taken advantage of her absence to sneak into her immortal's cave and search for the relic of eternal indestructibility. However, after reminding himself about how strictly guarded it was, he shook his head. Inwardly, he was scowling miserably, but to everyone who looked at him, he simply looked cold and sinister. After leaving his immortal's cave, he went down to the bottom of Middle Peak, where a few cultivators were already gathered. There were a dozen or so there, many of whose faces went grim as soon as they laid eyes on him. A few had no reaction, though. Master God-Diviner was one of the cultivators in the group. As soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, his expression flickered. Suddenly seeming to remember something, his eyes turned icy, and he gave a disdainful snort. Before, he had been scared of Bai Xiaochun, but considering the Dao oath he had made to Young Lady Xuemei, making him one of her subordinates, his fear had been significantly reduced. "Everybody is backed by someone powerful," he thought, chuckling coldly. "Let's see you try to cause trouble for me now!" Bai Xiaochun wasn't paying attention to the various looks given him by the other cultivators. He chose a spot near the back of the group to sit down cross-legged. There had been a couple others sitting in the area, but as soon as he arrived, they respectfully made room. Nightcrypt's name had already spread near and far. Before much time passed, more beams of light appeared. There were people in all levels of the Foundation Establishment stage, and after enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Grand Elder Song Junwan appeared, escorted by two bloodstreak elders. Everyone rose to their feet and clasped hands in greeting. However, it was to the shock of everyone present that the previously smoking hot Grand Elder Song Junwan was wearing different clothing than usual. She no longer seemed overtly sexy, but rather, somewhat conservative. Of course, her fundamental good looks hadn't changed, and in fact, her new style made her seem, not less beautiful, but more so. All of the cultivators present were surprised, and many of them looked at her with wide eyes. Song Junwan smiled faintly, her eyes glistening. Many people were dazzled, and as for Bai Xiaochun, his heart began to beat faster. Song Junwan looked over the group, and when her gaze came to rest on Bai Xiaochun for a moment, her eyes suddenly widened into an angry glare. "Another tricky move!" he thought, even more nervous than before. He immediately upped his level of vigilance. He was coming to find that Song Junwan was really hard to figure out. Three days before, she had been smiling like a flower, but now she was glaring at him. Even before he could begin to analyze the situation, Song Junwan's voice echoed out for all to hear. "All of you will be accompanying the patriarch on a diplomatic mission to the Spirit Stream Sect. Be on your best behavior, and don't lose face for the Blood Stream Sect!" She was no longer smiling, and her serious tone provoked nods of response among the crowd. It was at about this time that a blood cloud appeared near Ancestor Peak. Thunderous rumbling sounds could be heard as the cloud rapidly grew to 300 meters in size. Then it began to float down in their direction. Standing atop the cloud was an old man wearing a violet robe. He had a tall crown on his head, and despite his age, stood ramrod straight. He seemed threatening without being angry, and had a shocking aura that filled everyone with a sensation of madness and profundity. "The Song Clan patriarch!" Bai Xiaochun thought, a tremor running through him. He immediately bowed his head. The old man seemed completely impossible to judge, as though a single strand of divine will from him could cause unending torment. The other cultivators in the area were also shocked, and clasped hands respectfully. "Greetings, Patriarch!" "Everyone has assembled, I see," the Song Clan patriarch said. "Very well. It's about time to leave for the Spirit Stream Sect!" As his voice echoed out from the cloud, he looked down at the group. That simple gaze caused everyone to feel as if winter were raging inside their bodies, as intense coldness seeped into the depths of their hearts. Bai Xiaochun was a bit shocked. Including this old man, he had now seen two patriarchs of the Blood Stream Sect, the first one being Patriarch Limitless. Of the two of them, Bai Xiaochun was of the opinion that Patriarch Limitless was not quite as

frightening as the Song Clan patriarch. "Oh, that's right," he thought. "Patriarch Limitless just recently became a patriarch. He's not as strong, and is also younger than the Song Clan patriarch. This guy is an old hand; his cultivation base must be terrifyingly powerful. He's probably lived for years and years." Suddenly, he gasped as he realized that his body had been grabbed by some invisible force, and was now flying through the air. Up he went, and in the blink of an eye, was on top of the blood cloud. To his surprise, although the surface of the cloud was fluffy, it was resilient. Looking down, he could see all of the Blood Stream Sect below him. A moment later, the blood cloud shot off into the distance. Soon, the ground was speeding along down below. From what Bai Xiaochun could tell, even if he went all out, he couldn't even go a third as fast as this. "So, this is a patriarch...." he thought, swallowing hard. Looking around, he saw all of the other Middle Peak cultivators around him, including Master God-Diviner. None of them seemed to be taking things in stride as well as Bai Xiaochun; their faces were ashen, and they were clearly shocked. Only Song Junwan and the two bloodstreak elders seemed calm. Sitting cross-legged at the very front, surrounded by a spinning vortex, was the shocking and enigmatic Song Clan patriarch. He was close enough now that they could see his flowing white hair and wrinkled face. There were even some brown age-spots on his face. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Bai Xiaochun became accustomed to the speed, and examined his surroundings more closely. There was a defensive spell formation set up that protected the surface of the cloud, ensuring that only a bit of a breeze lifted his hair, and nothing more. For some reason, he felt a very mysterious excitement at the idea of being able to go back to the Spirit Stream Sect as Nightcrypt. He suddenly started thinking about everyone he knew. "I wonder if I'll see Big Fatty Zhang," he thought. "Will he recognize me? Heh heh. And what about Hou Xiaomei? What if I went and called her Little Sis as Nightcrypt? And there's Zhou Xinqi, Xu Baocai, and Ghostfang...." The more he thought about everyone, the more he smiled. Even as he reveled in his excitement, a cold snort broke his train of thought, and he looked over to see Master God-Diviner sitting not too far away, a disdainful and cold expression on his face. "What are you looking at, Master Snortlaugh?!" Bai Xiaochun said coldly. As soon as the words left his mouth, everyone's ears perked up. They had been feeling a lot of pressure because of the patriarch and the grand elder, and hadn't dared to do anything other than sit quietly. Now that they saw something going on between Nightcrypt and Master God-Diviner, they instantly started to get excited. That was especially true considering the sarcastic words Bai Xiaochun had just uttered. Many of them gaped in shock, temporarily unsure of how to react to hearing the words 'Master Snortlaugh'. "What did you just say!?" Master God-Diviner snapped, rage burning in his heart as he glowered at Bai Xiaochun. "You don't like that name?" Bai Xiaochun replied coolly, his expression indifferent. "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you liked to snort. You've already snorted a bunch of times at me so far. If you snort one more time, I'm going to call you Master Snortsnort." Of course, his words were just bait. Master God-Diviner ground his teeth, and as for the other cultivators, some of them actually started laughing out loud. A moment later, Master God-Diviner chuckled coldly. "You.... Hmph! So what if you have some sword qi? You and your clowning around make it impossible for anyone else to practice cultivation. You piece of garbage! It's only a matter of time before you get killed by Young Lady Xuemei!" Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up proudly. "You claim you have skill in divining things, you charlatan? You're nothing but a scam artist! Divining my ass! Let me tell you what. Nightcrypt knows everything about the starry sky and the Yellow Springs! With one glance, I can figure out everything there is to know! With one flick of my sleeve, I could turn Master Snortsnort into dust!" With a patriarch present, no one would dare to start fighting. Bai Xiaochun loved it when talking was allowed but fighting was not, and in such situations, feared no one. As soon as the biting words left his mouth, eyes went wide among the onlookers. Only now did they understand how gifted Bai Xiaochun was with the tongue, although they couldn't help but look down on his bragging. As for Master God-Diviner, everyone could see that, despite his rage, he was no match for Bai Xiaochun in a war of words. "How shameless of you! Hmph!" Gritting his teeth, Master God-Diviner snorted coldly, but before he could say anything else, he was interrupted by Bai Xiaochun. "See! You snorted again, didn't you, Master Snortsnort!? Listen, we need to talk this through. Stop with the snorting, okay? If you're snorting all the time at the Spirit Stream Sect, people might think you're a pig transformed into human shape. That would be a big loss of face!" He sighed. "You!!!" Master God-Diviner wasn't sure why, but every time he ran into this person, his rage burned almost beyond control. The fact that he was tongue-tied in front of so many people got him so mad that he leapt to his

feet. Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed coldly, and he waved his right index finger, already starting to converge blood qi. When Master God-Diviner saw that, his heart seized with shock; he had only stood up, he never imagined that his opponent would attack just because of that. It was in that instant Grand Elder Song Junwan's cold gaze flashed over toward them. "Enough!" she said coolly. "Master God-Diviner, sit down over there! Nightcrypt, you sit next to me!" Taking advantage of the moment, Master God-Diviner sat down. He was just about to snort coldly when he thought back to Bai Xiaochun's words from just now, and held back. Inwardly, his hatred grew. Everyone else sat straight and tall, inwardly envious of Bai Xiaochun. Not only did he get to sit next to the grand elder, that got him closer to the patriarch. As of this point, all of them realized that they should try to seize opportunities more often in the future. "Grand Elder, I'm fine right here!" Bai Xiaochun said, shrinking back a bit. "Why don't I just--" Before he could finish, Song Junwan stared at him icily and interrupted, "Get over here!"