

**Hope! That was the word that flashed into the mind of the long-faced young man as soon as he heard Bai Xiaochun's words. But then he glanced at the mountains of meat sitting there behind him, grinning maliciously, and he hesitated.**

"You...." Bai Xiaochun stepped forward with an utterly charming smile, looking like the type of person who wouldn't harm a fly. He clasped the long-faced servant on the shoulder and said, "Congratulations on becoming an Outer Sect disciple, Elder Brother. You are the fish that leaped over the dragon gate. You will soar like a shooting star, your future limitless. However, your Junior Brother here worked really hard to run all the way to the finish line. Don't you think it would be appropriate to give a little compensation?" The servant's face darkened. If he didn't understand by now what was going on, then he didn't deserve to have lived for so many years. He looked at Bai Xiaochun, and then at Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei. Then his expression flickered as he rapidly considered the matter, trying to decide if it was worth it. It didn't take very long before the long-faced young man gritted his teeth and made his decision. If he lost this chance, it might seem like all he was losing was a month of time. However, who knew what other sort of powerful expert would appear during that month. Besides, who was to say whether or not the three people from the Ovens... might not show up again in the next trial by fire. Most important of all was that this young man was dead set on becoming an Outer Sect disciple, and now, hope had been set down right in front of him. Finally, he stamped his foot. "How much compensation do you want?" he asked through gritted teeth. Beaming, Bai Xiaochun quickly replied, "Not much, not much. Look, I prepared for several months to participate in this trial by fire. How about we agree to twenty spirit stones? That should be enough." When he heard the number mentioned, the long-faced young man's heart trembled. He flicked his sleeve, and was just about to refuse, when Bai Xiaochun once again spoke up. "Look, it's not that I'm being greedy. All three of us are together, you see, so you can't just think about me. My Eldest Brother and Third Elder Brother both starved themselves and lost a lot of weight for the sake of this trial by fire." In that respect, Bai Xiaochun wasn't lying at all. Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei had both lost quite a bit of fat on their way up the mountain. The long-faced servant eyed Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei, and inwardly began to let loose a torrent of curse words. Then, he started to bargain, and ended up agreeing on sixteen spirit stones. Heart twinging in pain, he finally tossed a bag over to Bai Xiaochun. "Alright?" he asked, his voice hoarse. "Wonderful," replied Bai Xiaochun cheerily. "Okay, Elder Brother, please wait off to the side for a moment. Once we have two more takers, we'll open the way to the exit gate." Bai Xiaochun tossed the spirit stones to Big Fatty Zhang. When the long-faced servant realized that they were going to wait for two more people to come, anticipation suddenly welled up in his heart. It was a situation of "if I get screwed, you better not have a smile on your face." By this point, the two Outer Sect disciples on the other side of the exit gate realized what was going on, and their eyes were wide with disbelief. "Wh-what are you people doing?" one of them shouted. "You're actually selling spots in the Outer Sect? What gall!" Big Fatty Zhang was elatedly counting the spirit stones when he heard the Outer Sect disciples. Looking irritated, he turned to glare at them. "What are you hollering for? It was tiring reaching this point, and now I don't feel like going any further. Don't tell me we're not allowed to let other fellow disciples continue on past us? If they want to give us some compensation for our efforts, what's so wrong with that, huh?" The two Outer Sect disciples weren't really sure how to respond to such a statement. It was at this point that seven or eight flushed faces could be seen hurrying up the path. The sound of their gasping pants rang out almost like thunder. In the lead position was a burly man of about thirty years of age. He was bare-chested, and looked very impressive as he strode up to the top of the mountain. Bai Xiaochun immediately stepped forward, eyes gleaming. "You're a bit late,

Elder Brother. However, I suddenly don't want to become an Outer Sect disciple. Would you like my spot?" The burly man stared in shock, then turned back to look at all the other servants coming up the mountain behind him. Then he snorted coldly and said, "You think you can extort money from me, you little brat? Beat it!" Roaring, the man waved his arm, causing the spirit pressure of the third level of Qi Condensation to surge out. Bai Xiaochun backed up a pace and shouted, "Eldest Brother!" Almost immediately, a mountain of flesh descended from above. The burly man's face fell as he looked up. Then, a huge boom rang out as the mountain of flesh smashed into him. The burly man let out a miserable shriek as Big Fatty Zhang proceeded to sit down on top of him. Although he struggled, it was impossible for him to free himself. In fact, if it weren't for the fact that he was so big and strong to begin with, the air would have been squeezed out of his lungs, and he would have fainted. When the seven or so servants coming up the mountain behind the burly man saw what was happening, their eyes went wide with shock. The two Outer Sect disciples also gasped. The burly man stuck under Big Fatty Zhang almost seemed to be deflating, and they couldn't help but feel a bit sorry for him. Eyes darting about, Bai Xiaochun leaned over and whispered, "Eldest Brother, we have an audience." Having known Bai Xiaochun for over a year now, Big Fatty Zhang understood exactly what he meant. Glaring down at the burly man, he clenched his massive hands into hammer-like fists and then began to beat him soundly. "How dare you try to freeloader off of Lord Fatty! What brazen gall! "It was really hard to climb all the way up here. We wanted to become Outer Sect disciples, but just happened to give up at the last minute. Of course we want some compensation! "Fudge, I can't believe you refused us!" After beating him for a bit, Big Fatty Zhang then jumped back up into the air and then slammed down onto the man. The burly man was shrieking miserably, and could barely breathe. Then Big Fatty Zhang prepared to jump up again, and the man suddenly held a bag out in a shaking hand. Face filled with terror, he blurted, "Here, take some compensation!" Big Fatty Zhang immediately helped the burly man to his feet. Face beaming, he took the bag, glanced inside, then helped the man dust off his clothes. "Hahaha. Why didn't you say so earlier, bro? Look, people are already lining up ahead of you. All we need is one more and we'll open the path." The burly man looked both humiliated and enraged, but didn't dare to say anything. He stalked over to stand next to the long-faced servant, feeling incredibly depressed. As for the long-faced servant, he already felt a little better, and couldn't help but feel that he was smarter than this burly fellow. "That was incredible, Eldest Brother!" Bai Xiaochun said, grinning from ear to ear. Then he looked over excitedly at the other servants who had been following the burly man, but were now standing there looking terrified. Big Fatty Zhang smiled proudly, then walked back to his place by the entrance, where he sat down again to block the way. The two Outer Sect disciples exchanged dismayed glances. Compared to what had just happened now, the way Bai Xiaochun and the others had extorted the long-faced servant almost seemed mild and gentle. "They're... they're actually robbing people!!" "This is robbery!" They were infuriated, but also a little bit jealous, and couldn't help but wish they had come up with a similar idea back when they had been participating in the trial by fire. Most conflicted of all were the seven servants who had been following close behind the burly man. As they watched Big Fatty Zhang crushing and beating the burly man, their eyes began to shine with a bright light. Previously, becoming an Outer Sect disciple had almost seemed like an impossibility. But now... they all of a sudden had hope. Looking around excitedly at all the people, Bai Xiaochun suddenly cried out in a high-pitched voice: "Ladies and gentlemen, there's one spot left. How about this, we'll give it to the highest bidder!" Immediately, the crowd of people realized what was happening, and the sound of their panting grew even louder. The looks in their eyes became even stranger, and their hearts filled with all sorts of wild possibilities. Almost immediately, people began crying out bids, making it seem almost like an auction. "I'll bid ten spirit stones!" "Eleven!" "That spot belongs to me. I'll bid fifteen spirit stones!" Bai Xiaochun, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei were instantly elated. When the two Outer Sect disciples heard what was going on, it was like pouring oil onto a fire. From their perspective, extortion was one thing, and robbery could potentially be overlooked. But to see the situation turning into an auction left their minds spinning. It was so outrageous that waves of shock seemed to batter their hearts. To them, the most villainous among the three wasn't Big Fatty Zhang, but rather, the seemingly charming and innocent Bai Xiaochun! "Outrageous! Shameless!" One of them finally gritted his teeth and spun around, eyes bloodshot with either jealousy or fury, he wasn't sure which, as he went to report the matter to the Honor Guard. Bai Xiaochun wasn't actually very pleased with the level

of bids being called out. His eyes turned up in thought for a moment, and then he cried out, "Ladies and gentlemen, we need to hurry things up. Otherwise, other servants are going to show up, and then who knows what lengths they'll go to in order to win!" In response to his words, the voice of a young woman suddenly called out from further back down the mountain. "I, Hou Xiaomei, bid thirty spirit stones! I come from one of the cultivator clans and have tons of money. Let's see who dares to try to steal my spot!" A pretty young girl huffed and puffed her way up the mountain. She had white skin and a slim frame, and looked quite young. When Big Fatty Zhang saw the pretty young girl, his eyes went wide. He was just about to say something, but stopped himself and looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Almost as soon as Hou Xiaomei's words left her mouth, the rest of the servants were thrown into a huge commotion, calling out increasingly high bids. In the end, she named a price that left the horse-faced youth and the burly man trembling in fear. In fact, they even felt like they had just gotten a huge deal. Hou Xiaomei strode out from the crowd, her ample chest leading the way. She looked back scornfully at everyone else, then joined the long-faced young man and the burly fellow, who called himself Lord Wolf. Together, they walked up to the final step and then exited the trial by fire. Behind them, Bai Xiaochun, Big Fatty Zhang and Third Fatty Hei clasped hands and bowed deeply. "Congratulations, Fellow Daoists. You are the fish who leaped over the dragon gate, you are galloping divine steeds!" The long-faced servant and the others stood there at the top of the mountain, somewhat in a daze. Although they were now Outer Sect disciples, for some reason, it wasn't as joyous of an occasion as they had imagined. Then they heard the words uttered by Bai Xiaochun and the others, and the long-faced young man and the burly servant exchanged rueful, bitter glances. Hou Xiaomei, on the other hand, seemed extremely excited. Her charming face was even a bit flushed. "I never thought that I, Hou Xiaomei, would ever encounter such luck," she thought proudly.