

**Within the illusory world, everything was crumbling and shattering. As the ancient beast's clawed hand ripped everything to shreds, even Bai Xiaochun's mind seemed to be affected.**

His consciousness began to shatter and disperse, and he looked around blankly. To see those claws ripping apart the heavens was completely and utterly shocking. Such power was unimaginable, and yet, he also desired to possess such power himself. He wanted to be able to rip apart heaven and earth. Now that the rubble was beginning to disperse, he suddenly wanted to do everything he could to absorb the power, to understand it, to make it his own. The more such thoughts filled him, the more his awareness of himself faded. This process went on for a short time until a tremor ran through him, and he realized that something odd was happening. He suddenly remembered that his purpose in coming to this place didn't have anything to do with becoming engrossed with the clawed hand. The thought grew more and more intense until it superseded the enticing power of the claws. The shattered remnants of his consciousness slowly stopped moving, and then began to move in reverse, returning to him and becoming whole once again. Within the illusion, the enormous beast once again appeared; however, this time, what moved was not its clawed hand, but its tail. It was like a whip, smashing the earth to pieces and destroying the heavens. A massive rumbling boom exploded out into the world. Bai Xiaochun's consciousness once again shattered, and he began to sink into blankness. In the outside world, he had been sitting there in a state of deep enlightenment for twenty-six days. Night fell, and the sun rose. The twenty-seventh day. Soon, it was night again. Among the countless north bank disciples who had gathered near Bai Xiaochun and the trial platform, faces flickered with shock, and eyes went wide. Everyone, including Beihan Lie, the Gongsun siblings, Xu Song, and the other Chosen of the Inner Sect were being crushed by waves of shock. After a long period of oppressive silence, countless disciples suddenly burst into a huge commotion. "He passed... twenty-seven days? He surpassed Eldest Brother Ghostfang!" "Heavens! How deeply will Bai Xiaochun sink into this enlightenment?!" "How long will he last? Thirty days? Thirty-five days? Or maybe even... forty days?!?" Everyone was completely and utterly shocked by the motionless and aura-less Bai Xiaochun. And yet, they had allowed themselves to be shocked a bit too early. Time continued to pass. Thirty days. Thirty-three days. Thirty-seven days.... By the time the fortieth day arrived, the north bank disciples were completely dumbstruck. They weren't the only ones. The four peaks lords were breathless. Each additional day spent in deep enlightenment was significant to the extreme. After all, a single day of deep enlightenment was like years spent in normal meditation. Ghostfang said nothing, but his eyes shone with a shocking light as he looked at Bai Xiaochun. He wanted to know... exactly what it was that Bai Xiaochun was seeing! "He must not have lost himself in the claw like me," he thought. "In that case, what came next?" Back in the illusory world, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness was trembling. He wasn't sure how long he had been lost within the tail of the ancient beast. However, as his consciousness began to dissipate, the same thought arose once again... the power of the tail was not what he had come here for. "That's not it!" he murmured quietly. In that moment, his consciousness ceased to disperse. Simultaneously, the ancient beast opened its mouth to reveal something far more terrifying than its claws or tail... razor sharp fangs! Row upon row of sharp teeth, emanating a murderous aura that made them seem capable of destroying anything and everything. It was as if a single bite from those teeth could cause the entire world to go dark and end in destruction. "No," Bai Xiaochun murmured. "This is not why I came here!" His voice echoed back and forth around him, growing louder and louder. "I came here to observe the ancient beast, for the purpose of... bringing life to my Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit! I don't want the claws or tail or teeth of this ancient beast. I want... the whole thing. I need to observe it in its entirety. I need to fix its image into my mind. That will form the basis of my Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit! Furthermore, the beast itself will not

become my life essence spirit, it will be absorbed as a mere portion of it! "That is why I came here. That... is my purpose!" By the end, Bai Xiaochun's voice was not a murmur, but a roar. The illusory world rumbled violently as Bai Xiaochun's consciousness tumbled back together from all parts of the world, then shot toward the enormous beast in a beam of light. It moved with incredible speed; in the blink of an eye, it closed in on the beast and then slammed into it. As the light spread out through the beast, Bai Xiaochun's mind shook, and he suddenly felt as if... he was becoming the enormous beast! During the process of the transformation, he came to understand everything about it. There could be no better observation method... than this. In fact, this was not even really observation, it was a merging. He was... becoming one with the beast. Bai Xiaochun's consciousness spread out through the entirety of the beast, understanding it, analyzing it, observing it... controlling it! From the flesh and blood, he moved on to the scales, the spikes, the claws, the teeth, the bones, even the heart.... Time meant nothing to him as his consciousness filled the beast, coming to a deep understanding of it. At a certain point, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness trembled as it completely filled the ancient creature, and he... became the beast. He threw his head back and roared, causing the entire world around him to tremble. Next, the beast distorted, and by some profound and unfathomable means, it rapidly changed shape, transforming into a black, three-eyed raven! The enormous black raven began to fly through the world at top speed, its eyes shining as though they belonged to Bai Xiaochun. In the blink of an eye, the raven rippled, transforming into a seven-colored phoenix. Then it became a huge lizard, and then the mountain ghost from Ghostfang Peak. Under the control of Bai Xiaochun's consciousness, the transformations continued. One after another, nearly a thousand beasts from the Beast Conservatory appeared. Flying tigers, pangolins, huge bears, spirit deer. All sorts of beasts flickered in and out, without end. Even the north bank disciples' beasts that Bai Xiaochun had secretly observed could be seen. Eventually, rumbling sounds echoed out as the beasts vanished, and Bai Xiaochun's consciousness became a swirling mist, which pulsed and writhed as though some terrifying spirit were being born inside. It was none other than Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit. It was impossible to see exactly what kind of spirit it was; not even Bai Xiaochun's consciousness could make it out. It was as if... its spirit body wasn't complete yet. Even incomplete, it emanated a terrifying energy. There was some enormous figure inside that mist, covered with terrifying bone spurs, radiating an indescribable pressure. The mist seethed and churned as it slowly condensed upon itself. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's consciousness was starting to unravel. Ten percent. Twenty percent. Thirty percent.... In the blink of an eye, it was fifty percent dispersed! As that happened, the illusory world trembled and shook. Unexpectedly, the life essence spirit inside of the mist began to show signs that it was also going to disperse. "Faster!" Bai Xiaochun's consciousness howled amidst the massive rumbling sounds. "Faster! My consciousness is dispersing. Life essence spirit... you must awaken!" And yet, it continued to disperse even more quickly. Sixty percent. Seventy percent. Eighty percent.... Ninety percent! Rifts spread out through the illusory world as it began to collapse. A massive wind sprang up, sweeping across everything, attempting to disperse the mist. However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun's last scraps of consciousness let out an urgent shout. RUMBLE! Even as the world crumbled into bits, within the dispersing mist, two red eyes... snapped open! The life essence spirit had awakened! \*\* In the outside world, Bai Xiaochun's deep enlightenment went past forty days. It continued on and on. Fifty days. Sixty days. Seventy days. Eighty days. Ninety days.... One hundred days! The number of days which had passed left the north bank disciples in complete terror. "A hundred days! More than three months! Bai Xiaochun... is still in deep enlightenment!!!" "He's not gonna die, is he...?" "This is shocking! I've never seen anything like this in my entire life!" The Outer Sect disciples were terrified, and the Inner Sect disciples were shaken. Beihan Lie and the other Chosen felt as if their minds were being struck by lightning. But things weren't over. 101 days. 120 days. 130 days. It was at that point, sometime in the afternoon, that Bai Xiaochun began to tremble. People immediately noticed. They rubbed their eyes, looked again, and when it was certain that Bai Xiaochun was shaking, people began to cry out in surprise. It was in that very moment that... Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes!