

The divine ability which Bai Xiaochun had named the Human Controlling Grand Magic turned into a sort of game for the beasts. They would often find themselves mysteriously floating up into the air, only to fall down moments later.

Occasionally, they would even stand up on two legs. The beasts weren't frightened by what was happening, and actually found it rather amusing. It even reached the point where some of the smaller beasts would run up to Bai Xiaochun as soon as they saw him, hoping to have some fun playing the new game. Some of the larger beasts like the flying tigers would sometimes see Bai Xiaochun waving his finger at them and muttering to himself. Soon, he would sigh and walk away looking depressed. Such beasts were confused about what exactly Bai Xiaochun was doing. A month later, he decided to temporarily abandon his work with the Human Controlling Grand Magic. "I can definitely get this magic to work," he thought. "When it does, it will shake heaven and earth. However, I need to take things slow. Once I get a bit stronger, I can cultivate it to perfection!" He didn't really want to give up, but after a month without the slightest bit of progress, he had to admit that it was time to move on. He was about to start cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom again when he suddenly thought of the spirit wings he possessed. "When the old granny gave me the Protomagnetic Pearl and these spirit wings, she said something about Arcane Gravitational Repulsion...." Eyes shining, he pulled the wings out to examine them. After a few days of study, he realized that he was yet again dealing with something that would have to wait until the future. At long last, he buried his ambitions and started cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom. Time passed, and before long Bai Xiaochun had been on the north bank for two years. As for the Beastbirth Seed, it had already grown into a three-meter-tall Beastbirth Flower, although it hadn't bloomed yet. According to Bai Xiaochun's calculations, it wouldn't be too long before the flower opened up. As for his Waterswamp Kingdom, he cultivated it constantly, and it grew more and more impressive. Whenever he unleashed it, rumbling sounds could be heard, and a strange power appeared that didn't come from the world around him. By this point, he had spent time observing all of the more than nine hundred animals in the Beast Conservatory. He knew them like the back of his own hand, and yet, his life essence spirit still hadn't taken shape. "Don't tell me my observations have been insufficient? I should probably go observe some even more powerful beasts." He thought about the matter for some time, and finally, looked over in the direction of the Ancient Beast Chasm. After a moment of hesitation, he decided that going there was too dangerous. With that, his eyes began to shine, and he turned to look at the four mountain peaks of the north bank. "Each of the four mountain peaks has a spirit beast guardian!" On the summit of each of the mountain peaks was an extremely powerful beast assigned to protect that mountain. Although none of them could compare to the Heavenhorn ink dragon, they were all extraordinary in their own way. Every few days, they would appear in the open, either flying in the sky, or roaring at the tops of their lungs to shake the entire area. When that happened, large numbers of disciples would look on in awe and envy. In his time on the north bank, Bai Xiaochun had noticed this phenomenon. That was especially true of the seven-colored phoenix from Irispetal Peak, which left a particularly profound impression on him. After making up his mind, he hurried out of the Beast Conservatory. Eventually, was on the path leading past the trial platform. It wasn't the first time he had laid eyes on the huge beast statue beneath it. Every time he did so, he got a very strange feeling, which was the same thing that happened to many other disciples who studied the statue. His observations of it in the past had brought him no gains, so eventually, he paid it no attention. As he was walking by it this time, he happened to glance over for a moment before turning to fix his gaze on Irispetal Peak. Even as he prepared to hurry along in that direction, his heart seized, as if something dangerous were about to occur. The Protomagnetic Wings appeared behind him, and

he sped forward several dozen meters. Even as he moved, a black blur sped past the spot he had just been standing in, and a terrifying clashing sound rang out, like that of two rows of sharp teeth making contact. The shocking volume of the sound caused the surroundings to shake; it would be difficult to imagine the level of power behind it, or the hatred that could cause teeth to snap shut in such a fashion. The black blur turned out to be a huge black dog, roughly three meters tall. It was like a young bull, albeit somewhat emaciated, with scraggly fur that made it look like a wild dog. It was currently staring at Bai Xiaochun with a ferocious expression on its face. Saliva dripped off of its sharp fangs, and its eyes glowed red, as if with insanity. Bai Xiaochun was so shocked that sweat popped out on his forehead. However, as soon as he laid eyes on the big black dog, he recognized it. "Hey, aren't you Beihan Lie's Nightstalker Beast? You--" Before he could finish speaking, the black dog shivered and then ran off into the distance. Apparently, if it didn't strike true on the first blow, it would retreat at all costs. Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback. Of course, he wasn't alone in the area. There were other north bank disciples around, and they recognized the dog immediately. Gasps could be heard, and soon people were discussing the matter amongst themselves. "That was Elder Brother Beihan's Nightstalker Beast. What a poor little dog. Elder Brother Beihan refuses to take care of it now, and nobody else dares to approach it. Even the elders feel bad about it..." "Yeah, that's right. Ever since that one day, the Nightstalker Beast can occasionally be seen lurking around the north bank. Once I saw it standing on a hill, looking up into the night. It seemed sad." "What a pity. Apparently it was trying to ambush Bai Xiaochun..." Bai Xiaochun blinked. After hearing some of the things people were saying, he felt bad. Looking off into the direction the dog had fled, he resolved to look into the issue of why it wanted to ambush him. "What else could I have done in that situation?" he thought, sighing. "I told Beihan Lie he should concede. I even told him that even I fear my own attacks." Sighing again, he turned and headed toward Irispetal Peak. As a Prestige disciple, he had almost unlimited access to various locations in the sect, even on the north bank. After cautiously climbing up to the summit of Irispetal Peak, he neared the cave at the top, but didn't enter. Instead, he settled cross-legged onto a nearby boulder, then waited quietly. The wait lasted for three days. Finally, a sharp cry rang out into the dawn sky, piercing through the clouds as a seven-colored light began to shine out from within the cave. Then, a seven-colored phoenix flew out, stretching its wings wide as it soared elegantly up into the air. When the sunlight hit its body, the seven-colored reflections it cast were dazzling. Bai Xiaochun was shaken as he realized the terrifying level of power that was contained within the phoenix. Even with his amazing Undying Silver Skin, he was far from a match for the thing. As he watched, he committed the image of the phoenix to memory, branding it on his heart. He observed it for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, whereupon the phoenix circled back around into its cave, completely ignoring him in the process. Taking a deep breath, he closed his eyes and mentally recalled the image of the seven-colored phoenix, then continued to wait. Another five days passed, and at dawn, the phoenix reappeared. Time passed. Bai Xiaochun stayed on Irispetal Peak for several months to observe the phoenix, only occasionally returning to the Beast Conservatory to handle various affairs before hurrying back. The disciples of Irispetal Peak soon learned of the matter, and were a bit confused. Most people didn't pay much attention to it, but there were some Inner Sect disciples who began to speculate about what he was doing. Another month passed, and Bai Xiaochun felt that his observation of the phoenix was complete. Next, he headed toward Sunset Peak. The spirit beast guardian of Sunset Peak was a black, three-eyed raven. It was fully six meters long, surrounded by swirling blackness that distorted the air. It didn't come out very often; Bai Xiaochun only saw it twice in an entire month. Whenever it flew out, lightning would crackle in the area. The raven always appeared in the darkness of night, never during the light of day. Because of that, Bai Xiaochun got used to remaining focused during the night. Three months passed, and he saw the raven five times. Every time it appeared, he would pay close attention, and would devote himself fully to observation. Gradually, he felt as if his life essence spirit were showing signs of appearing. The spirit beast guardian of Archway Peak was not a flying creature, but rather, an enormous lizard. It moved slowly, but radiated incredible energy. It was much easier for Bai Xiaochun to observe; whenever it emerged from its cave, it would perch on the highest boulder at the top of Archway Peak, where it would gaze off into the distance. Bai Xiaochun spent several months there, and was able to observe it in much more detail than the seven-colored phoenix and the three-eyed raven. The spirit beast guardian of Ghostfang Peak was quite strange. It almost wasn't even

appropriate to call it a spirit beast. It was a mountain ghost. It looked like an amalgamation of countless other beasts, formed together like a mountain. After gaining consciousness, it called itself a mountain ghost. It was humanoid in shape, with long black fur and human-like eyes which were located below its wolf-like maw. It also had two curling horns at the top of its head. Its lower torso was scaled like a snake, and it had a tiger's head on its chest. Stretching out behind it was a long tail. It carried a ghastly bone trident in its hand wherever it went, and every time it came out into the open, clouds formed up above in the sky, covering both the sun and the moon. In the darkness which resulted, its eyes would glow with mysterious light. The mere sight of it left Bai Xiaochun trembling in fear. He could sense that the thing was aware of his existence, but that it was so far above him that it didn't deign to even notice him. Whenever it appeared on the summit of the mountain, it would throw its head back and let out a soundless howl. That howl would cause countless stones on Ghostfang Peak to tremble, and they would only go still when the mountain ghost returned to its cave. Time flowed by, and Bai Xiaochun went back and forth between the mountains to carry out his observations. Gradually, it felt more and more like his life essence spirit was forming. However, he was getting the increasing sense that he had reached some barrier that had yet to be broken through. The disciples of the north bank gradually realized that he was observing the spirit beast guardians. Most didn't understand why, but Xu Song, Beihan Lie, and a few other Inner Sect disciples were fairly certain what was going on, and it caused their hearts to pound. "He's cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom!" Quite a few Inner Sect disciples came to that conclusion. After all, cultivating the Waterswamp Kingdom involved long-term observation of numerous beasts. "The Waterswamp Kingdom is a secret magic on the same level as Ghosts Haunt the Night... However, the results differ for every person who cultivates it. Some can unleash incredible power, others are very weak." "The fact that Bai Xiaochun is observing those beasts implies that his life essence spirit hasn't been born yet..." "I wonder what his life essence spirit will be like..." Discussions raged among the Inner Sect disciples, and Bai Xiaochun continued his observations. The process lasted for a year. During that time, others besides the Inner Sect disciples came to pay close attention to what was happening. The peak lords of the four mountains, the sect leader, and even Li Qinghou were all secretly observing Bai Xiaochun's progress with the Waterswamp Kingdom. All of them were surprised. Generally speaking, observing beasts in the Beast Conservatory should have been enough to form the life essence spirit of the Waterswamp Kingdom. But it didn't seem enough for Bai Xiaochun. He went on to observe the spirit beast guardians of the four mountain peaks. And yet... that wasn't enough either. "Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit seems very difficult to form!" "Life essence spirits vary from person to person. They form based on the hidden world which exists inside each person, and create a mysterious and unfathomable illusory spirit..." "What will Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit be..."? Everyone watched as Bai Xiaochun concluded his observations of the four spirit beast guardians. With that, he trudged through the north bank, thinking about how he had nothing left to observe. He had the strong feeling that he was only a step away from breaking through the barrier and giving birth to the Waterswamp Kingdom life essence spirit. However, that one step seemed infinitely vast. Bai Xiaochun was confused, and unsure of what to do next. As he walked along through the north bank, he headed past the trial platform, and subconsciously looked over at the statue beneath the platform. He had walked past this location many times, and every time he did, he had the feeling that there was something strange about the statue. This time, he stopped in place and looked over. Then, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes shone with incredulity.