

**Big Fatty Zhang was already starting to get nervous. However, after hearing Bai Xiaochun's suggestions, he realized that it made sense, and nodded in agreement.**

Clearing his throat, he tried to pretend that he wasn't nervous at all. "Of course. As my Master said, I shouldn't be there to see whether the enhancement succeeds or not. Ninth Junior Brother, hurry inside and try out the spirit test." Bai Xiaochun turned and hurried inside. Frowning, he looked down at the flying sword. Worried about Big Fatty Zhang getting disappointed, he didn't attempt any test, but instead, performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the turtle-wok to appear. "Ai. Eldest Brother has been under too much pressure from the very beginning. He's finally got some confidence back, so I can't let him leave disappointed. I wonder if using the turtle-wok will make the enhancement of this flying sword a success." Muttering to himself, he started a one-colored flame and then threw the untested flying sword into the wok. Silver light glittered brightly, after which he put the turtle-wok away. Gritting his teeth, he poured some of his spiritual energy into the sword, whereupon the silver light condensed into a single silver design. "It worked!" he thought, although he wasn't sure whether it was because of what Big Fatty Zhang had done, or whether it was because of his own work. He quickly pushed the door open and rushed out. "Eldest Brother! It worked. It worked! You're so awesome, Eldest Brother!" Big Fatty Zhang had been standing there nervously in the courtyard, wondering what the result would be. As soon as he saw Bai Xiaochun, a tremor ran through him. Then he saw the silver design on the flying sword. Slapping his thigh, he threw his head back and laughed loudly. "Well, how did it turn out? It's just like I said. I didn't control the power last time. Back on Violet Cauldron Peak, I successfully enhanced three weapons already. Even my Master couldn't help but praise my talent. And here I did it again, Ninth Junior Brother!" Big Fatty Zhang excitedly grabbed the sword from Bai Xiaochun to look at it. Bai Xiaochun stood off to the side, looking admiringly at Big Fatty Zhang. Seeing Big Fatty Zhang look so excited, he sighed in contentment. "Alright, your Elder Brother is in a good mood now. I'm going to enhance it once more. This sword is going to have a twofold spirit enhancement!" Bai Xiaochun had the feeling that such an attempt wasn't a very good idea. If he recalled correctly, there were a lot of sect rules and taboos regarding spirit enhancement. "Eldest Brother, why don't we try that some other time...." "No, it's fine!" Big Fatty Zhang said decisively. Holding the sword in hand, he began to concentrate and build up energy. This second attempt at spirit enhancement was clearly much more difficult, and he had to use all of the ores he possessed. He began to tremble, and even consumed some medicinal pills before finally managing to draw upon enough of the energy of heaven and earth to begin the process. When he poured the energy into the sword, dazzling silver light shone out, after which Big Fatty Zhang sat down heavily onto the ground, panting. However, his eyes shone with excitement as he handed the sword to Bai Xiaochun. "Go ahead and test it!" Bai Xiaochun frowned as he took the sword. However, before he could test it, Big Fatty Zhang reached out and grabbed his hand. "Don't test it here," he said solemnly. "Remember, Ninth Junior Brother, the most important part of the spirit testing process is the feeling you have. When the moment feels right, it's like having the assistance of the gods. Since you succeeded in your room last time, that's where you should test it this time!" Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times at how much Big Fatty Zhang seemed to know about spirit enhancement. Nodding, he trotted back to his room thoughtfully. "Eldest Brother might actually be really good at spirit enhancement. It's hard to say. Just now, he seemed to have succeeded, even without any help from my turtle-wok." Having reached this point in his train of thought, he decided not to put the flying sword into the turtle-wok. Instead, he simply poured some spiritual power directly into the sword. In the blink of an eye, silver light flashed. But then, it rapidly dimmed. Cracking sounds rang out, and the sword was reduced to useless slag. Even as Bai Xiaochun frowned anxiously, he could hear Big Fatty Zhang talking outside. "Ninth Junior Brother, I just

saw some silver light. What happened. Did it succeed?" "Um... I didn't test it yet," Bai Xiaochun replied quickly. "Let me do it now...." Big Fatty Zhang stood there quietly outside, bitter nervousness written across his face. He was no idiot, and was quite certain that he'd seen silver light shining out of the window of Bai Xiaochun's log cabin moments before. Sighing, he assumed that Bai Xiaochun simply didn't want to admit that it had been a failure. Taking a deep breath, he called out, "I know that you performed the test, Ninth Junior Brother. It's fine. I'll... I'll just take my leave now." Upon arriving, Big Fatty Zhang had been bursting with excitement, but the blow he had just received left him sinking into despondency. He was aware that he had acted rashly. According to his Master, spirit enhancement was a very mysterious magical technique, and to achieve a perfect success rate with it was impossible. Furthermore, in the cultivation world, there was a strange phenomenon. Apparently... people who succeeded once would find it easier to succeed in the future, whereas people who failed would have the opposite experience. It sounded strange, but the truth was that it came down to the power of will. It was a mysterious thing, and the more confidence one possessed, the more likely one was to succeed. When it came to the world of spirit enhancement, there were two main techniques that could be cultivated. One was the orthodox method, in which the spirit enhancer was responsible for only the initial spirit enhancement. He would not personally perform the spirit test. Instead, the object would be given to the owner, who would perform the spirit test out of the spirit enhancer's presence. That way, success or failure wouldn't affect the mental state of the spirit enhancer. Without having been corrupted by the sight of the result, the spirit enhancer would be able to forget about the matter, and maintain a calm heart. However, there was another, more extreme method that was cultivated. It was called the Will-Spirit Grand Magic. It focused on the profound and mysterious power of will. In that method, the spirit enhancer would take great care to watch the outcome of the spirit enhancement. That way, the more successes they experienced, the more shocking their spirit enhancement abilities would become. It was an extreme method, and failure could have a very extreme negative impact on the spirit enhancer, even to the point of ruining their talents altogether. Even still, quite a few people attempted to use that method. Even Big Fatty Zhang's Master Xu Meixiang had to admit that if someone cultivated such an extreme method of spirit enhancement, they could achieve heaven-defying results. Their power of will, and their self-confidence, would achieve monumentally spectacular results. The Spirit Stream Sect's sect-protecting treasure, the Heavenhorn Sword, which had received a tenfold spirit enhancement, had been produced by just such an eccentric spirit enhancer, thousands of years in the past. Big Fatty Zhang smiled bitterly. He well understood that on Violet Cauldron Peak, the orthodox method of cultivation was preferred. By allowing himself to be overcome by excitement, he had made a huge mistake. The calmness in his heart had been disturbed, and it would take quite some time to recover. Bai Xiaochun could see Big Fatty Zhang's dejected posture through the window. Unwilling to allow him to be so disappointed, he gritted his teeth and produced an identical flying sword from within his bag of holding. Then he pulled out the turtle-wok and quickly performed a twofold spirit enhancement. By that point, the bitter Big Fatty Zhang had placed his hand onto the gate of the courtyard and was about to leave. All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun's elated voice rang out. "Eldest Brother, it worked!!!" The door of the log cabin slammed open as Bai Xiaochun rushed out, overjoyed, holding a flying sword with two silver designs visible on its surface. "Really?!" A tremor ran through Big Fatty Zhang as he spun to look at the flying sword. Then he began to shake, a look of both excitement and disbelief growing in his eyes. "Hahaha! I really am a Chosen among spirit enhancers. A twofold spirit enhancement! I can't believe it! I succeeded!!!" He wrapped Bai Xiaochun up into a bear hug, tears of joy streaming down his face. The truth was that his latent talent was only average; if it weren't for the deep connections between his family and his Master, he would never have been admitted into the Spirit Stream Sect. It was only because of the precious materials back in the Ovens that he'd been able to cultivate to the great circle of the third level of Qi Condensation. After joining the Outer Sect, he had no such precious materials, and thus found cultivation to be very difficult. He could only watch as Third Fatty Hei and Bai Xiaochun both surpassed him, and although he was happy for them, he was very disappointed in himself. Now that he turned out to be talented in spirit enhancement, the joy he felt was unimaginable. He suddenly felt useful. Filled with excitement, he threw his head back and laughed loudly, feeling the confidence wash through him. As it did, a strange power seemed to build up... which was none other than the intangible power of will. Spirit enhancement was an extreme path to follow; the

more you succeeded, the more confidence you had. The stronger your power of will, the more you would succeed! Perhaps the mere belief that success was possible would help one to climb the steps of success, and breed that most mysterious power of will. Big Fatty Zhang left excitedly, holding his head proudly. Bai Xiaochun watched him go, then stood there in his courtyard wondering if he'd done the right thing. In the end, he decided that as long as Big Fatty Zhang was happy, then he couldn't be in the wrong. A few days after Big Fatty Zhang left, Bai Xiaochun got some new information from Xu Baocai. Apparently, the reason why fewer people could be seen on Fragrant Cloud Peak was that all of the disciples from the sixth level of Qi Condensation and higher had gone into secluded meditation, hoping to break through to the eighth level in preparation for the Chosen battles, which happened only once every thirty years! The joint north and south bank Chosen battles were only about three months away, and would be the focus of attention of the entire Spirit Stream Sect. Throughout the Eastwood Continent, the cultivator clans and other small sects would also be paying close attention to the results. During the Chosen battles, Outer Sect Chosen from both the north and south banks would fight each other in an attempt to claim the top ten spots. All of the top male and female disciples would rise up like dragons and phoenixes, hoping to be promoted into the Inner Sect. Whether in terms of personal fame or the approval of the sect, disciples who ascended to the Inner Sect in this fashion were viewed completely differently than other disciples. Every thirty years, the top ten Chosen of the generation would always move on to greater glory. They were the outstanding talents, famous and revered far and near. Even other sects with status similar to the Spirit Stream Sect would acknowledge them. Anyone who could be ranked in the top ten in the Chosen battles would also receive handsome compensation from the sect. Word had it that the prize in merit points reached into the tens of thousands, not to mention the other precious materials that would be given out. Furthermore, there was also the chance to enter the sect's arcane pocket realm. Everyone was moved by the possibilities at hand. Beyond all that, the best of the best would have the chance to pursue a spot in the legendary Legacy Echelon. One requirement was to be in the top ten of the Chosen battles, which was in turn another motivating factor to all disciples. Before the Chosen battles, of course, were the qualifying rounds. Both the north and south banks would have their own qualifying rounds, during which they would select the ten best disciples to move on to the final Chosen battles. The cultivation base requirement was set at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. Only disciples of that level could participate. There were two main requirements to enter the Inner Sect: first, to be in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and second, to pass a trial by fire. Normally speaking, there were a variety of trials by fire which could be attempted to get into the Inner Sect. However, the Chosen battles which occurred every thirty years were the most difficult of them all, and also the most watched in all the sect! Of the numerous Outer Sect disciples who made the attempt, most would not be promoted. Only those who made it into the top hundred in the qualifying round would get into the Inner Sect. As for the top ten, they qualified to participate in the Chosen battles for the entire Spirit Stream Sect. Shangguan Tianyou, Lu Tianlei, and Zhou Xinqi were all people who wanted to get into the south bank's top ten, and then fight with the Chosen from the north bank. If they could become Inner Sect disciples in such a way, then they would have a shot at eventually reaching the Legacy Echelon.