

## **Bai Xiaochun trudged back to his immortal's cave, where he sat stewing in melancholy.**

Finally, he sighed. "It's not a good thing for someone to be too outstanding. I'm the perfect example. The sect leadership was so worried about how outstanding I am that they exempted me from doing missions for ten years, but will still send me merit points every month." He sat there, reveling a bit in being able to worry about things like this, and wondering what he was supposed to do considering that he was so outstanding.... "Ah well, I guess it doesn't matter. Since I can't go out on missions, I might as well concoct medicine. After all, the reason I was doing the missions in the first place was to get merit points." With such thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun resigned himself to sacrificing his own benefit for the betterment of the sect, and walked over to his medicine concocting workstation. "I need to master all of the concocting methods for tier-3 spirit medicines!" With that, his expression turned somber. Time passed. Half a year. Other than his routine cultivation, he spent all of his time concocting medicine. When he lacked ingredients, he cashed in merit points. As time went on, he grew more frenzied, apparently unwilling to slow down until he had mastered everything to do with tier-3 spirit medicines. Because he wasn't out doing missions, the sect slowly returned to normal. Many people sighed in relief, especially Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong, who was finally able to feel at ease inwardly. By now, he was sure that exempting Bai Xiaochun from mission duty had been the right thing to do. He wasn't the only one. Li Qinghou, as well as the other south bank peak lords and elders, all felt much more at ease. In fact, at one of the regular south bank council meetings, the Foundation Establishment cultivators happened to bring up the matter. "Bai Xiaochun has been focused on concocting medicine lately. The sect has really calmed down." "Medicine concocting is a good thing. Have him keep practicing. It's the safest option, anyway. With him focused on that, he won't be causing problems for people outside." The entire group was all smiles; the past half year of peace and quiet left them all sighing happily. And yet, just days after their meeting, a massive explosion echoed out on Fragrant Cloud Peak. It came from the direction of Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, and caused everything in the area to tremble violently. Numerous Inner Sect disciples were badly startled, and the Outer Sect disciples were left trembling in fear. "What just happened?!?" "Heavens! Could the Spirit Stream Sect be under attack?!?" As everyone devolved into a commotion, Bai Xiaochun lurched out of his medicine concocting workstation, coughing, face tinged with ash, nose running and tears streaming down his face. He quickly washed off in the hot spring, and then frowned. "Why did it explode?" he thought. The pill furnaces provided to Inner Sect disciples were all standard issue, exactly the same as the ones in the Medicine Concocting Pavilion. Generally speaking, even if the spirit medicine was concocted incorrectly, they wouldn't just explode. And yet, that was exactly what had just happened. It had even activated the cave's defensive spell formations. After pondering the matter at length, he couldn't come up with an explanation. Sighing, he went back to cultivating the Dragon Mammoth Sea-Forming Scripture for a few days. By this point, his cultivation was only a sliver away from a breakthrough. However, he wasn't in any hurry. After finishing his cultivation, he consumed some spirit medicine to replenish his vital energy, then set to work on the Undying Live Forever Technique. The silver light which rose up from his skin was now so dark that it bordered on golden. That afternoon, Bai Xiaochun went on to the next task at hand. Standing there in his immortal's cave, he slowly lifted his hands up into the air as he practiced the Waterswamp Kingdom mnemonic. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, he opened his eyes and let out a powerful shout. An intense energy exploded out from inside him, causing everything around him to suddenly change. A field of water vapor appeared, which lasted for only a single breath of time before vanishing. Bai Xiaochun sagged in place, wiping the sweat from his brow. Despite practicing the Waterswamp Kingdom every day since he'd acquired it, that was all that he could accomplish. "I need to keep working harder!" he thought. After resting for a moment, he ended his daily cultivation routine and once again pondered the problem of the exploding pill furnace. During the past half a year of practice, he had succeeded with a few tier-3 spirit medicines, but for the most part, his attempts had ended in failure. He sat there in frustration for some time before finally coming up with a

theory. "Maybe after the medicinal strength intensified to a certain point, it became unstable, which caused the explosion?" Immediately afterward, he hurried out and exchanged some merit points for another pill furnace, then went back to concocting. Gradually, word spread that the explosion earlier had come from Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave. Strange expressions appeared on the faces of the disciples. Although they weren't sure exactly what had caused the explosion, at least they now knew Bai Xiaochun was the cause. Then.... A few days later, Bai Xiaochun was there in his medicine concocting workstation, completely and utterly focused on controlling the spirit medicine inside the pill furnace. Unfortunately, tier-3 spirit medicines were extremely difficult to work with. Most other people, with enough experience and luck, would succeed three times out of ten and consider it a high rate of success. But Bai Xiaochun wanted things to be perfect. He wouldn't rest until he'd solved each and every problem. Because he wanted even the tiniest details to be perfect, it meant he had to test all those details multiple times before finally resolving every issue. This time, his eyes went wide as he realized that he was losing control of the spirit medicine. Then the pill furnace began to issue cracking sounds. Bai Xiaochun gasped, and two wings suddenly appeared behind him as he bolted out of the medicine concocting workshop. Moments after he emerged, a huge explosion shook the immortal's cave. Fragrant Cloud Peak was once again thrown into an uproar for some time before everyone managed to calm down. Three days later, Bai Xiaochun ran screaming out of his medicine concocting workstation, and a third shocking explosion ripped through the air. After seven days, he emerged yet again, flustered, fleeing at top speed as a fourth deafening explosion nearly destroyed his medicine concocting workstation. Fragrant Cloud Peak was in utter chaos, and countless disciples' eyes were completely bloodshot. After inquiries were made, people learned that Bai Xiaochun was concocting medicine. However, no one could figure out exactly why such huge explosions would be occurring. "I asked the Spirit Medicine Pharmacy, and they said that he recently purchased eight pill furnaces!" "That sound must be an exploding pill furnace. Just what is Bai Xiaochun concocting? Dammit! Isn't he worried about blowing himself up!?" Anger was building, and yet the explosions... weren't over. They continued. Over the course of the following month, seven explosions rocked Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave, each one more intense than the last. The final explosion actually caused all of Fragrant Cloud Peak to tremble, and Bai Xiaochun's entire immortal's cave was nearly destroyed. As Bai Xiaochun fled outside, trembling in fear, the Outer and Inner Sect disciples of Fragrant Cloud Peak were driven to near madness. During the past month, none of them had been able to safely focus on practicing cultivation. Constantly being startled by the explosions had left them jumpy with fear. Now, they were thoroughly distracted, their eyes bloodshot as they struggled to control their anger. Apparently, even sound-muffling spell formations couldn't stop the sound of the explosions. The disciples' rage grew, and even the elders were shocked and could hardly believe what Bai Xiaochun was doing. "What is Bai Xiaochun concocting to cause the pill furnaces to explode like that? What... what medicine is he working on?!" Things didn't end. Over the next month, the frequency of the explosions increased. More than a dozen occurred, almost every other day. Eventually, the Fragrant Cloud Peak disciples couldn't take it any longer, and stormed to Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave en masse to vent their fury. Feeling very wronged, Bai Xiaochun hurried out to offer an explanation. When he saw a mob of over a thousand disciples, his face paled a bit, and eventually he resorted to slapping his chest and guaranteeing that there would be no more explosions. Only then did the crowd begin to calm down. After seeing everyone off, Bai Xiaochun went back into his immortal's cave, scowling the entire time. Looking over his mostly-destroyed medicine concocting workstation, he sighed, pulled out another pill furnace, and looked at it blankly. A few days later, he slapped his thigh, and his eyes began to shine. "Right! It's definitely because I didn't pre-heat the pill furnace properly!" Excited, he started concocting again.... Three days later, in the middle of the night, everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak... heard a massive explosion. One Inner Sect disciple was so badly frightened that he almost fainted. Hair in complete disarray, he screamed, "Bai Xiaochun!! I don't care if you're Chosen, I'm going to beat you black and blue!" He wasn't the only one. Soon, all of the Inner Sect disciples had emerged from their immortal's caves, even the exhausted Zhou Xinqi. Bai Xiaochun hurried out, smiling apologetically as he guaranteed that it wouldn't happen again. The gathered disciples calmed down a bit in response. They couldn't find any fault with his attitude, and as such, had no other recourse. If he had been even a bit defiant, they definitely would have given him a good thrashing. But at the moment... they could only

grit their teeth and accept his promise. Exhausted, Bai Xiaochun returned to his immortal's cave, wishing to cry but finding no tears. He was coming to find that it was a difficult thing to pursue his dreams. "I'm not the kind of person who gives up!" he thought. Gritting his teeth, he produced another pill furnace, which he studied for half a month straight. Finally, after analyzing all aspects of the situation, he was sure that he had identified the problem. "Earthflame. It's definitely the earthflame!" Eyes bloodshot, he once again began to concoct.... Five days later at dawn, an explosion could be heard that was so loud it startled Li Qinghou, and could even be heard on Violet Cauldron Peak and Green Crest Peak. The Inner Sect disciples who lived near Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave were dumbstruck, especially Zhou Xinqi. All of them felt like they were going crazy. Elder Zhou's birds let out high-pitched shrieks, and were so frightened that their feathers fell out. The spirit tail chickens were trembling and frothing at the mouth, and numerous Inner Sect disciples struggled to remain conscious.... All of the spell formations in Bai Xiaochun's cave activated as the earthflame erupted, and even Fragrant Cloud Peak's grand spell formation was affected. When Bai Xiaochun crawled out of the rubble, he was pitch black, and yet clearly excited. He was now sure that he had finally found the source of the problem. "It wasn't the earthflame, it was the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression! They cause an unforeseeable variable. Tier-3 spirit medicines... must be concocted with mutual augmentation and suppression in mind!" Everyone on Fragrant Cloud Peak, from the elders to the Outer Sect disciples, rushed over toward Bai Xiaochun's cave, enraged, rocks in hand to pelt him if necessary. When faced with such a furious mob, Bai Xiaochun vigorously slapped his chest. "I guarantee--" However, before he could finish, the crowd began to hurl their rocks. After all, fighting with magic against a fellow sect member was prohibited, but throwing rocks wasn't.... "Guarantee your ass!" Countless rocks closed in, fueled by burning rage.