

**As Ouyang Jie watched Li Qinghou leaving, his voice rang out to the surrounding disciples. “Split up and do everything you can to locate Bai Xiaochun. Whoever finds him will receive a reward of merit points from me personally. If you encounter any surviving Luochen Clan cultivators, kill them!”**

Two thousand cultivators spent an entire month searching the 5,000 kilometer area. They searched virtually every possible location, but no one ever found Bai Xiaochun. However, they did discover the corpses of the Luochen Clan cultivators he had killed. As corpses turned up one after another, the Inner Sect disciples grew more and more shocked. Virtually all of the Luochen Clan cultivators had been killed with a single blow. The Inner Sect disciples could scarcely imagine how an Outer Sect disciple in the sixth level of Qi Condensation could possibly have done something like that. Qian Dajin gasped over and over again, and suddenly realized it would actually be much better for him if Bai Xiaochun was dead. He himself was probably not a match for someone so violent and powerful. Li Qinghou's fury caused him to grow more nervous, and he even began to wail inwardly. "Dammit!" he thought. "Why didn't you tell me you had such connections? If you had, I would never have provoked you!" Eventually they found the corpses of the three disciples who were in the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and they could only imagine what that bitter, intense battle must have been like. It left them reeling. Soon everyone came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun... had most likely been killed in that nameless mountain range. That was a place rife with perilous beasts, and numerous other dangers that could kill a person and leave no corpse behind. Eventually, they captured the two Luochen Clan disciples that Chen Heng had dispatched after Hou Yunfei and Du Lingfei. When they learned that one of the people chasing Bai Xiaochun had been none other than the Luochen Clan's crown prince, who was in the ninth level of Qi Condensation, they all resigned themselves to the fact... that Bai Xiaochun really must be dead. After the month of searching ended, everyone returned to the sect. Hou Yunfei had been found relatively early on, seriously injured, but alive. With the full power of the sect focused on healing him, he ended up being just fine. Both he and Du Lingfei had performed significant meritorious service for the sect, but that left them with no feeling of excitement. Instead, they felt sadness, and couldn't stop thinking about the events which had occurred. Both of them wanted to go back to join the search efforts when they were underway, but their injuries were too serious. The only person who refused to give up on searching for Bai Xiaochun was Li Qinghou. He journeyed alone into the nameless mountain range, where he searched for two full months. Other than a few places that even he couldn't enter, he searched the length and breadth of the mountains. Strangely, even though it seemed clear that Bai Xiaochun had to be in these very mountains, he couldn't find a single trace of him. It was almost as if Bai Xiaochun were currently in some other world. During the process of the search, he ended up fighting quite a few powerful beasts, and was even injured by some of them. Two months later, it was with great bitterness that he stood in front of a certain tree with a blood-stained scrap of cloth stuck to it. "If I hadn't brought you to the sect..." Li Qinghou thought. When he closed his eyes, he recalled the image of Bai Xiaochun there on Mount Hood, looking scared to death of the lightning and thunder. He thought about how frightened he had looked at 10,000 Snakes Valley, about what had happened during the sect competition, and about how he had taken first place in all the stone steles. He sighed silently, seemingly growing older as he reached out and picked up the bloodstained cloth. He had already picked up seven or eight similar pieces of cloth just like this during his search. In the end, he left the jungle, transforming into a beam of light that shot off into the distance. Thus ended the rebellion of the Luochen Clan. The Spirit Stream Sect struck like lightning, completely wiping out the traitors. The

matter caused quite a stir in the Eastwood Lower Reaches of the Heavenspan River. In the cultivation world of the Eastwood Continent, which was one of the four great continents, countless cultivator clans and sects learned of the matter. As a result, the awe felt toward the Spirit Stream Sect grew, a sect that was one of the Four Great Sects in the Eastwood Lower Reaches. After an investigation by the Spirit Stream Sect, they found some clues as to why the Luo Chen Clan had turned traitor. The bloodline seal was one reason, but there was an even more profound motivation. After piecing together various clues, the vast ramifications left the Spirit Stream Sect shocked. If they hadn't stopped the matter when they did, the resulting chain reaction would have led to numerous other cultivator clans hearing about the matter and then following along in the rebellion. It would have been almost the same as a powerful enemy invading Spirit Stream Sect territory, and would have led to grave repercussions, potentially even the destabilization of the sect. The news about the deeds accomplished by Du Lingfei and Hou Yunfei quickly spread, as did the stories of Bai Xiaochun nobly sacrificing himself. The fact that he had refused to abandon his fellow disciples, and had even used himself as bait to lead the enemy away, left many people moved. The cultivation world was full of selfish people; individuals like Bai Xiaochun were not common. The loss of such a disciple left many people, even the Sect Leader and Elders, feeling very aggrieved. There were other implications that came along with the whole event. However, as more clues came to light, the Spirit Stream Sect only grew more silent. For some unknown reason, they eventually stopped investigating. However, all of the Foundation Establishment cultivators in the sect increased their level of vigilance to a point far beyond normal. Apparently... a storm was coming. The south and north banks together had seven peak lords. In addition to that were the sect leader and other elders. After much discussion and research, they came to a unanimous decision. Du Lingfei, Hou Yunfei, as well as the perished Feng Yan, had all performed meritorious service. As for Bai Xiaochun... he had accomplished a tremendous service beyond the ordinary! The final decision was explained by Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong. "A storm is coming. The most important thing... is to lift everyone's spirits. For ten thousand years, the morale of our sect has remained high. Considering the tremendous service Bai Xiaochun has performed, at the cost of his very life, we can only repay his kindness by having a grand funeral. Those who contribute to the sect shall never be forgotten." In the following days, although the Spirit Stream Sect didn't investigate any further into the reasons for the betrayal of the Luo Chen Clan, they took every opportunity to spread the story of how Bai Xiaochun had sacrificed himself for his fellow disciples, and how he had nobly fought for the sect. As the story was propagated, more and more disciples from the various mountain peaks on both the south and north banks learned of the name Bai Xiaochun, and what he had done to save his fellow disciples. Of course, the sect itself wasn't ambivalent to such a devoted and loyal disciple. Li Qinghou had eradicated an entire clan, and two thousand Inner Sect disciples had been mobilized. Sending such a powerful force to handle the situation was truly like killing a chicken with a battle-axe. Not only did all the disciples in the sect remember Bai Xiaochun's name, they were moved by how the sect reacted to the situation. Even though the sect had obviously reacted in such a way intentionally... that reaction was exactly what the disciples expected. For ten thousand years, that was the unchanging tradition of the Spirit Stream Sect. Touch one of our disciples, and you will die, no matter how far you run! When a Spirit Stream Sect disciple went outside of the sect, they were never alone: they were backed by the entire Spirit Stream Sect. The sect was like a shield, eternally there for their protection. Because of that, the disciples were devoted to their sect, and would expend any and all effort, even give up their lives, to defend it, their home. That was the mighty Spirit Stream Sect, which had started out ten thousand years ago as a tiny sect with only a few dozen people in it. In order to determine whether or not Bai Xiaochun was really dead, the Sect Leader asked for help from one of the sect's prime elders, who was adept at divining information from the heavens. Unfortunately, his divination magic did not reveal any hint that Bai Xiaochun was still alive in the world. The only thing he discovered was an aura of death, which seemed to prove that Bai Xiaochun... had died in battle, fighting for the sect. On a rainy morning a few days later, the mournful tolling of bells could be heard throughout the Spirit Stream Sect. Countless disciples wearing black robes emerged silently from their residences, expressions of grief on their faces as they gathered midway up Fragrant Cloud Peak. There, a gravestone had been erected, with a portrait of Bai Xiaochun on it, smiling happily. Big Fatty Zhang stood there in the crowd. He glanced at everyone around him, and then looked at the gravestone, and Bai Xiaochun's name. As the rain fell and soaked

his clothing, he wept, recalling all of his memories of the past. He thought about how they had eaten the various pilfered spirit treasures, about how they had laughed and joked together, about how they had sold spots in the Outer Sect, and about stealing chickens.... "Ninth Fatty...." Big Fatty Zhang murmured, looking very sad. His heart felt empty, and the pain made the entire world seem dark. The other fatties from the Ovens, Bai Xiaochun's Elder Brothers, were all filled with grief, and couldn't stop crying, including Third Fatty Hei. Xu Baocai, Chen Zi'ang, Zhao Yiduo and Elders Xu and Zhou, as well as everyone else Bai Xiaochun had come to know since joining the sect, all stood in the crowd, faces filled with grief. Zhou Xinqi came and stared silently at the gravestone. After hearing the story of what Bai Xiaochun had done, she couldn't help but think of how zealously he had searched for the chicken thief. Hou Yunfei came, propped up on the shoulder of Hou Xiaomei. He stood there, fists clenched, shaking in grief. "Junior Brother Bai...." A bitter smile twisted his face. After returning to the sect, he began spending his days drinking. He just couldn't forget that moment in which Bai Xiaochun had led all the enemies away, using himself as bait. More and more people showed up, until the middle section of Fragrant Cloud Peak was densely packed with countless disciples, all silently looking at the gravestone. At the front of the crowd was Du Lingfei. Her face was pale, and it was impossible to tell the difference between the tears that streaked down her cheeks, and the rainwater. She seemed to be in a daze, and while her face was as beautiful as it had always been, that beauty was now sad and poignant. "You could have stayed alive... but here I am, and you're gone...." Du Lingfei's days had been spent in sorrow and misery recently. She had lost weight, and often dreamed about that moment in which Bai Xiaochun had returned, unshakeable and determined. And then he had left, a scene which left her weeping and wracked with pain. As the mourning bells tolled, echoing about in all directions, beams of light shot toward the gravestone from all directions. Within them were the seven peak lords, all of the Spirit Stream Sect elders, and even the sect leader. They wore black robes, and as they gathered near the gravestone, their expressions were those of sorrow. As for Li Qinghou, bitterness and self-reproach filled his heart. A moment later, the sect leader began to speak, his voice calm and slow. "Bai Xiaochun was an Outer Sect disciple of Fragrant Cloud Peak in the Spirit Stream Sect. He was a blazing sun in the Dao of medicine, a Chosen among disciples. In his battle against the Luo Chen Clan, he killed numerous Luo Chen traitors, and sacrificed himself to save his fellow disciples. He was loyal to his sect, and gave his life in the most tremendous display of meritorious service. Disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect will remember his name for all eternity!" His voice was filled with grief, and as his voice echoed out, Du Lingfei's tears flowed even harder. Hou Yunfei, Big Fatty Zhang, and countless other people were all weeping. "On this day, I confer upon Bai Xiaochun the title of the Spirit Stream Sect Prestige disciple!" In response to the Sect Leader's words, countless disciples were shaken. To hear the term Prestige disciple left everyone moved. That position was a matchless honor within the Spirit Stream Sect, and there could only be one Prestige disciple within the sect within any generation. It was a position higher than the Inner Sect, and on equal standing with the Legacy Echelon. The status of Prestige disciple was given to the dead, whereas the Legacy Echelon was for the most powerful among the living. Throughout the ten-thousand-year history of the Spirit Stream Sect, there had only ever been nine disciples with such a title, each and every one of whom had been conferred with it after dying in battle for the sect. As of this moment, there were now ten such disciples in the history of the sect. Not a single person present felt the honor was inappropriate. Bai Xiaochun had earned it with his life. "From the time he joined the sect until he sacrificed his life," continued the sect leader, "Bai Xiaochun never had a Master. Having given his life for the sect, I refuse to allow him to wander alone in the underworld. Therefore, I shall represent my dead teacher, Daoist Master Spiritsieve, to accept Bai Xiaochun as his apprentice. Henceforth, he can continue to pursue the great Dao in the underworld." In response to the sect leader's words, Li Qinghou nodded, pain flickering in his eyes as he looked at the gravestone. "And now everyone... shall observe a moment of silence!" With that, the sect leader closed his eyes and bowed his head, as did all of the other disciples present. After a few breaths of time passed, the moment of silence ended. Du Lingfei couldn't hold her feelings in any longer, and began to wail. In the same moment that everyone was observing the moment of silence, back in the nameless mountain range, Bai Xiaochun slowly opened his eyes and sneezed.