

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples, especially the ones who had been eliminated from the competition early on, glared at Bai Xiaochun angrily. Many people even began to shout out.

"Shameless! You're completely shameless, Bai Xiaochun!" "Winning that way doesn't count and we all know it!!" "Disqualify him!" Everyone joined together in their rage, causing Bai Xiaochun to instantly grow jumpy with fear. He also realized that showing off his Lightness-in-Heaviness ability wouldn't abate the crowd's fury, and in fact, could potentially lead to worse consequences, and cause them to call him even more shameless.... Instead, he turned to look at Elder Sun. "Elder Sun, I got 1st place, right? Could you go ahead and announce it?" Elder Sun smiled wryly in response. As for Li Qinghou, he sighed; how could he ever have imagined that requiring Bai Xiaochun join the competition would result in him taking 1st place? Elder Sun shook his head and chuckled. "Uh... well I guess I might as well. Bai Xiaochun has taken 1st place in the competition!" In response, everyone stared furiously at Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun was of the opinion that he was actually pretty powerful, but considering how many people there were... his heart began to prickle with fear. Just when he was about step out of the arena and leave this dangerous location, Du Lingfei, with the help of some bystanders, regained consciousness and sat back up. Panting, she glared angrily at Bai Xiaochun, gritted her teeth, and then cried, "Bai Xiaochun, I refuse to admit defeat! "You might have taken 1st place, but that's only because I let you have it. And that doesn't change how much I hate you. Do you dare to have another fight!?" Bai Xiaochun gave a sarcastic chuckle and kept walking. In his mind, he would be crazy to fight with this deranged woman again. Besides, what would happen if she passed out again? "I won't fight you with magic," she continued. "Besides, as Outer Sect disciples, we're both apprentice apothecaries of Fragrant Cloud Peak. Why don't we compete in skill with plants and vegetation?!" Du Lingfei glared at Bai Xiaochun the entire time, and when she spoke, her words were spoken slowly and decisively. "If you win, you can keep that Pinewood Sword of mine. But if you don't agree, then you'll regret it!" Bai Xiaochun stopped walking. Having heard skill with plants and vegetation mentioned, he couldn't help but turn his head to look back at Du Lingfei. Seeing that Bai Xiaochun had stopped and was apparently hesitating, she resisted the impulse to unleash a savage attack, and quickly continued, "Bai Xiaochun, if you can defeat me in terms of skill with plants and vegetation, then you can even have this Cloudsoaring Incense!" With that, she produced a stick of bluish-purple incense. As soon as the incense appeared, it began to pulse with spiritual energy, and the surrounding Outer Sect disciples' eyes instantly gleamed with envy. "A tier-1 spirit medicine! Cloudsoaring Incense... it's a really remarkable tier-1 spirit medicine. Definitely very expensive, and useful for anyone under the seventh level of Qi Condensation!" "Du Lingfei must have spent a lot of merit points on that in preparation for breaking out of the fifth level of Qi Condensation...." "Elder Sister Du's skill with plants and vegetation got her into the top 20 of the first three stone steles outside the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion. Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to lose!" Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized the Cloudsoaring Incense, which he had read about when studying the introduction to cloudsoaring grass in the third volume of plants and vegetation. He was instantly moved, and that was even before he heard everyone mention that Du Lingfei was only in the top 20 on the stone steles, after which his eyes gleamed. Taking a few steps back, he stammered, "Y-you're... you're really in the top 20 on the stone steles of plants and vegetation?" He actually just wanted to confirm that what he had overheard just now was true. "Are you going to compete or not!?" Du Lingfei said through gritted teeth. "But I've only studied the first three volumes...." he said hesitantly. "That's what I'm talking about! Compete with me in the first three volumes! Come on, I dare you!" Du Lingfei was so angry she felt like she was about to explode. "Fine... I'll compete!" he said. "Happy?" Although he looked as though he wanted to cry, inwardly, his heart was blooming with flowers of joy. He couldn't help but think that this girl really was a bit dim-witted. As soon

as the crowd heard Bai Xiaochun's words, they began to boo and heckle him. Du Lingfei took a deep breath, sucking in quite a bit of spiritual energy, which stabilized her a bit. Glaring angrily at Bai Xiaochun, she stalked forward to Elder Sun, then clasped hands and bowed. "Elder, Disciple Du Lingfei requests that you bear official witness to a battle of plants and vegetation between myself and Bai Xiaochun." Elder Sun's opinion of Du Lingfei was increasing by the moment. He stroked his beard for a moment before smiling and saying, "Very well. I shall bear witness. However, since we are speaking of skill with plants and vegetation, perhaps it would be better for the peak lord to decide the nature of the challenges." He looked over at Li Qinghou. Li Qinghou looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun for a moment, then nodded. The surrounding disciples were now quite excited, as was Du Lingfei, who turned to Li Qinghou, clasped hands and bowed. Bai Xiaochun was also very pleased that he wouldn't have to engage in any dangerous fighting to make a name for himself. He stood there, no longer looking like he was about to cry, but rather, chin stuck up, looking arrogantly out at the crowd in the same way a Chosen would. Du Lingfei snorted coldly. At this point, Li Qinghou glanced at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, then began to speak, his voice cool, "The Dao of plants and vegetation is unpredictable. Although we will limit things to the first three volumes, those volumes contain numerous variables. Today I will present you with two challenges. We shall see which of the two of you can secure victory." With that, he tapped his bag of holding and produced two seeds. "These two flower seeds can be catalyzed with spiritual energy. The level of your skill with plants and vegetation will determine how many spirit flowers bloom. This is how we will decide the winner of the first round." Li Qinghou waved his hand, sending the two seeds flying to Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei respectively. Du Lingfei caught the seed without any hesitation. At the same time, Li Qinghou sent a medicinal pill flying her way, which she also caught, a look of shock appearing on her face. "Take that pill to restore your cultivation base," Li Qinghou said calmly. Du Lingfei's face lit up. After expressing her thanks, she consumed the pill. After a few breaths of time passed, she trembled, and her eyes began to shine brightly; her cultivation base had been completely restored. Bai Xiaochun wasn't very happy with that, but he didn't dare to say anything. Instead, he looked down at the spirit seed lying in his palm, and began to study it closely. "Don't recognize it?" Du Lingfei said, sneering. "Well I can tell you that it's a bluespirit thistle seed." With that, she completely ignored Bai Xiaochun, closing her eyes and circulating her spiritual energy, which she then poured into the seed in her hand. Almost immediately, an emerald green sprout climbed up from the seed. It grew rapidly until it was about one-third of a meter tall. Then, it bloomed with a blue spirit flower, and began to grow even taller. Bai Xiaochun looked over at what was happening, and then turned his attention back to the seed, which he continued to study thoughtfully. Li Qinghou was watching Bai Xiaochun the whole time, and soon, a virtually undetectable flicker of surprise could be seen deep in his eyes. While Bai Xiaochun stood there thinking, all of the surrounding Outer Sect disciples were watching Du Lingfei. The plant in her hand was two thirds of a meter tall, and already had a second flower. By the time Bai Xiaochun sent some spiritual energy into the seed, Du Lingfei's spirit plant had already sprouted with three flowers. Bai Xiaochun didn't maintain a steady flow of spiritual energy, but rather, sent it into the seed in fits and bursts. In fact, when the seed sprouted, he even blew the first few sprouts away with a breath of air. After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, Du Lingfei's face was ashen, and she was gritting her teeth. With her final bit of energy, she caused a sixth blue flower to sprout, after which she breathed a sigh of relief. Placing the plant down next to her, she clasped hands and bowed to Li Qinghou. Li Qinghou nodded. "Six spirit flowers, all of them superior-grade. Nice job." Feeling very pleased with herself, Du Lingfei looked over at Bai Xiaochun. When she saw that his spirit plant wasn't even one third of a meter tall yet, her sneer widened. The surrounding outer Sect disciples were getting very excited. "Elder Sister Du definitely deserves her reputation. That bluespirit thistle bloomed with six flowers. That's incredible! Bai Xiaochun hasn't even caused one flower to bloom. He's completely good for nothing." "A competition of plant catalysis first involves studying the seed, and then using unique catalysis methods to cause it to grow. In that regard, Elder Sister Du is really at the head of the pack." In the middle of all the conversations, Bai Xiaochun's spirit plant gradually reached a height of one third of a meter. Next, a somewhat shrivelled blue flower appeared. Compared to Du Lingfei's flowers, it looked rather malnourished, and even elicited some laughs from the crowd. But then, all of a sudden, a second blue flower appeared on the short plant. Next was a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh.... In the space of a few breaths,

Bai Xiaochun's spirit plant bloomed with nine flowers!! This instantly led to widespread shock and disbelief. Du Lingfei was staring at what to her was a completely unimaginable scene. "Bluespirit thistle blooms with one flower every third meter. How could this plant have nine flowers when it's only a third of a meter tall!" However, things weren't over yet. Even as the nine small blue flowers appeared, Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and then suddenly exhaled sharply. That one breath contained spiritual energy which settled onto the nine flowers and, in the blink of an eye, caused them to begin to shiver and change colors. No longer were they blue, but rather, indigo! Indigo starts out as blue, but its color is deeper and more profound! [1] As soon as people realized what was happening, their eyes went wide with astonishment. "That's... that's not a bluespirit thistle!!" "Indigospirit thistle! It's indigospirit thistle, the seed of which is very difficult to distinguish from that of the bluespirit thistle! In fact, if you use the catalysis method for bluespirit thistle in indigospirit thistle, you'll actually produce a bluespirit thistle, except you'll have wasted the seed!" Everyone was shocked, and were starting at Bai Xiaochun in disbelief. Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, then placed the indigospirit thistle off to the side. Chuckling sarcastically, he clasped his hands behind his back and looked at Du Lingfei. His skill with plants and vegetation had already reached an indescribable level. After studying the seed for a while, he had noticed the differences, and was easily able to tell what type of seed it was. Du Lingfei's face flickered; to her, it felt as if someone had just slapped her across the face. She staggered backward a few steps, looking first at her bluespirit thistle and then at Bai Xiaochun's indigospirit thistle. Suddenly, her face flushed with heat. Earlier, she had berated Bai Xiaochun for his lack of knowledge, but then, moments later, he had proven definitively that she had wasted the seed. "This Bai Xiaochun is definitely extremely lucky," she thought, grinding her teeth. "I assumed it was a bluespirit thistle, and he guessed that it was an indigospirit thistle. Well, that was just a lucky chance on his part, not him actually identifying the seed!" "Bai Xiaochun takes the first round," Li Qinghou said coolly. "That truly was the seed of an indigospirit thistle, not a bluespirit thistle. They look similar, but some of the veins grow differently. Without studying it down to the finest detail, it's easy to confuse them." Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he waved his hand again, causing a spirit plant to appear. It was very unique, with four colors, and nine leaves of different shapes. It also had two flowers on it, one black and one white. The flowers almost seemed in sentient, as they were constantly struggling with each other, as if they wanted to suppress each other. Although the plant seemed like one single plant, if you looked closely you would see the signs that it had been grafted together. "The first round was dedicated to catalysis. As for the second round, it will focus on identification. This particular spirit plant has been grafted together from numerous other plants. Whichever of you can correctly guess the greatest number of graft materials... will be the winner." Li Qinghou sent the grafted plant floating out in front of him, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Considering he had brought Bai Xiaochun into the sect, he was very curious to see what other surprising things he could do. Du Lingfei gritted her teeth. In her mind, she had just been careless moments ago. Now, she was unprecedentedly focused. Taking out a jade slip, she walked up to the spirit plant. Bai Xiaochun's eyes gleamed with interest as he also stepped forward and began to examine the plant, occasionally making notations in a jade slip. A moment later, Du Lingfei stepped back, rubbing the bridge of her nose. Then she looked over at Bai Xiaochun with a grim expression on her face. She had identified eight types of plants. The others were types she didn't recognize. However, Bai Xiaochun wasn't finished. His eyes were glowing even more brightly as he buzzed around the plant in circles. Occasionally he even cried out in surprise, as if he had just noticed something very interesting. "Wow, you can do that!?" "Well this... this is very interesting!" The crowd looked on silently. None of them believed that Bai Xiaochun could identify any of the plants, and in fact, most of them were convinced that the reason he had catalyzed the indigospirit thistle was simply luck. "Faker!" Du Lingfei thought. "Yeah, you just keep on pretending!" Inwardly, she was starting to feel uneasy, and her hatred for Bai Xiaochun only continued to grow. Enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and Bai Xiaochun was still going. He really was completely absorbed in what he was doing, and had even forgotten that he was in a competition. Seeing a grafted plant like this had seemingly opened up a huge door in his mind regarding skill with plants and vegetation. All of a sudden, he realized that the tens of thousands of medicinal plants he was familiar with were not just useful on their own, but could actually be mixed together. Eventually, he backed up reluctantly, eyes shining with fascination and admiration. Li Qinghou and Elder Sun exchanged a glance, and then Li

Qinghou said, "Very well. The time has come to reveal which spirit plants you've identified. Du Lingfei, you go first." Du Lingfei gritted her teeth, then pulled out her jade slip and began to speak. "I saw eight types of plants, including waterheaven rhubarb, coldsole root, earthdragon fruit, dawnfog lichen...." She continued on until she reached the final medicinal plant. "Sealwort flower!" With that, Du Lingfei looked over at Bai Xiaochun, certain that he would never be able to surpass her. Of course, although eight didn't seem like a lot, it was an incredibly difficult task to identify the various elements of a perfectly grafted medicinal plant like this. Eight was actually quite a bit. "Hmph. If Bai Xiaochun is shameless enough to say the same eight plants," she said coldly, "then we can consult the jade slips as proof!" Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, looked around, then flicked his sleeve and pulled out the jade slip that held his notes. "Let's forget the eight plants that Elder Sister Du mentioned. Other than those, I saw a total of 67 types of medicinal plants. Unfortunately, there were 31 that I couldn't identify. That means that in the end, I identified 36." His words instantly sent the surrounding disciples into an uproar. "36? How is that possible!" "7 or 8 should be the limit. How could he possibly have identified dozens?!" Du Lingfei glared coldly at Bai Xiaochun. She simply didn't believe his words, and assumed that he was going to just randomly guess the types of plants. "Junior Brother Bai," she said sarcastically, "why don't you just say there were 30,000 types of plants? That would cover everything in the third volume of plants and vegetation, so at least you would be certain of guessing a few right." 1. 1. This is a common Chinese expression to express how something that comes after/from something else, is superior