

10,000 Medicines Pavilion was one of the most lively locations on Fragrant Cloud Peak. Virtually every day, crowds of Outer Sect disciples came and went. One reason was because of the ten stone steles, and the other reason was because of the 10,000 Medicines Pavilion itself, which was located in the middle of all those stone steles. That was where you could exchange merit points for medicinal plants and pill formulas.

Every so often there were also tests for promotion to journeyman apothecary, or occasions when the medicinal pills concocted by various disciples were bought back by the sect. For a variety of reasons, the area was almost always a boiling cauldron of voices. Because of the lively nature of the place, it had eventually become a place to talk about the latest news. Although it had started as an exchange of information about plants and vegetation, eventually, everything in the sect came to be talked about. Big things, small things, even random gossip was all passed among the various disciples. When Bai Xiaochun arrived, the place was packed. Some people were coming and going, but about thirty to fifty percent of the disciples were standing around talking. There were also disciples lined up to challenge the stone steles and earn a place on the name lists. Bai Xiaochun squeezed through the crowds for a while before finally nearing the second stone stele. Just when he was about to walk up to the stele itself, he happened to overhear three Outer Sect disciples up ahead talking about him. "Did you guys hear? Something really weird has been going on in the sect recently. Someone has been specifically stealing Peak Lord Li's spirit tail chickens! Supposedly, over a hundred have already gone missing." "What do you mean a hundred? I heard that it won't be long before Peak Lord Li doesn't have any chickens left at all. The disciples in charge of the Spirit Tail Chicken farm have put him on the most wanted list. They even said that when they catch him, they're going to chop him up and feed him to the chickens!" "Definitely weird. Why are all these prodigies showing up in Fragrant Cloud Peak all of a sudden? First there was the mysterious turtle, and now this mighty chicken bandit!" Bai Xiaochun subconsciously hunched his shoulders guiltily. After all, he'd done nothing more than steal a few chickens, right? Who would have known that it would cause such a stir? From the look of it, almost everybody knew. Furthermore, when he realized that the spirit tail chickens actually belonged to Li Qinghou, he got even more scared. "Gee, I didn't steal THAT many," he thought. He almost felt like he was being framed. Just as he was trying to think of a way to change public opinion about the matter of the mighty chicken bandit, he heard the sound of a commotion from behind him. "Hey girly, what's with the shoving? Are you late to be reincarnated or something?!" "So what if I'm shoving, huh? There's nothing special about you. If you're afraid of crowds, what'd you come here for anyway? You should feel lucky to get shoved by a girl like me." "You...." For some reason, the voice sounded familiar to Bai Xiaochun. He turned to see a fair, delicate young woman standing there, chest puffed up, hand on her hip as she arrogantly stared down a burly-looking fellow. "Hou Xiaomei?" Bai Xiaochun said, blinking. The young woman was indeed Hou Xiaomei, and when she heard his voice, she turned over and saw him, and the arrogance on her face quickly transformed into joy. "Big Bro Xiaochun, it's you!" she exclaimed, turning and hurrying in his direction. Before she even arrived, Bai Xiaochun felt her hot, pure aura brushing past his face. "Hey, chaste little sister," he replied, looking over the vivacious and charming Hou Xiaomei. [1. This exchange involves some wordplay that's impossible to translate

directly. Hou Xiaomei's name literally means "little sister," so it would be silly to call her "little sister little sister." Instead he literally calls her by his own name, although it comes across sounding kind of funny and/or flirtatious] Hou Xiaomei's face flushed a bit in response to Bai Xiaochun's words. "Oh, stop it, Big Bro Xiaochun!" she said sweetly. "You're such a tease, just call me Hou Xiaomei!" And just like that, the previously bristling young woman was suddenly beautiful and charming. Quite a few surrounding Outer Sect disciples' eyes began to gleam. As for the burly man she had just been arguing with, he suddenly had goosebumps as he realized what a moody and temperamental girl she was. "Big Bro Xiaochun," she gushed, "my big brother left the mountain and hasn't come back, and this is my first time here. Where do I go to get the second volume of plants and vegetation?" This really was her first time here. Before, her older brother had helped her handle everything, and now that she was on her own, she didn't know what to do. Luckily, she ran right into Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun smiled as he explained the process to her, going into minute detail. Hou Xiaomei nodded occasionally. By the time he finished explaining, she not only felt that he was a good person, she also felt that he was also extremely knowledgeable. After finishing, Bai Xiaochun looked at Hou Xiaomei to ensure that she had no further questions. Then he pointed over at the first stone stele, the one which tested the first volume of plants and vegetation, and calmly said, "See that stone stele? All the people who leave their mark at the top of the list are like Chosen in the sect. Any one of those people are the type who will shake the whole cultivation world in the future. "I won't go into all the names, just the second one on the list. See that magic bottle insignia? That represents one of the female Chosen here on Fragrant Cloud Peak, Zhou Xinqi!" "Zhou Xinqi!" exclaimed Hou Xiaomei, her eyes shining as she looked over at the magic bottle insignia. "So, that magic bottle stands for the Peak Lord's apprentice, the one with the plants and vegetation spirit meridian, Elder Sister Zhou, who's destined to join the Inner Sect!" From the way Hou Xiaomei talked about Zhou Xinqi, it was obvious that she held her in immense esteem. Hearing Bai Xiaochun's explanation about the magic bottle symbol seemed to get her even more excited. Bai Xiaochun continued to explain matters placidly for a bit longer, until he noticed that Hou Xiaomei seemed to be completely fixated on the magic bottle, and wasn't paying attention at all to the turtle which had obviously surpassed it. He felt a bit irritated; after all, hadn't the whole point of his explanation been to get her to notice the turtle? "Ahem, well, Zhou Xinqi is definitely amazing, that's why she was able to get to second place on the first stone stele of plants and vegetation!" He made sure to especially emphasize the words 'second place.' Hou Xiaomei gaped for a moment, then frowned. "Second place? Who does that turtle above Elder Sister Zhou represent? It looks so ugly." Hearing this, Bai Xiaochun felt much happier. In his mind, he really did need to educate Hou Xiaomei a little bit more. Putting on a very solemn demeanor, he began to speak in a very earnest tone. "You're wrong there, Xiaomei. Did you know that the cool-looking turtle actually represents the most mysterious, admirable and transcendent disciple in the entire sect? "There are many legends about this person. Whenever he appears, he causes a huge uproar in the sect, and is the center of all attention. Countless disciples follow his every move, envy him and even cheer out loud for him." "Really?" Hou Xiaomei was a simple and pure girl, and the things Bai Xiaochun was saying caused her to stare in skeptical shock. "You should know that two months ago, this disciple made a big splash when he destroyed Zhou Xinqi's hopes of having the first place spot on all nine stone steles! "You should know that in his debut appearance, he took the first place spot in the first stone stele. He did it as easily as flipping over his hand. "You should know that Zhou Xinqi personally witnessed it happen. For the following seven days, she neither slept nor rested. She challenged the stone stele over and over again, but even after she did everything she could, she was still in second place, and was forced to concede defeat. "You should know that I, Bai Xiaochun... ahem" Bai Xiaochun was getting very excited, and in the end, he wanted to reveal himself as the mighty Lord Turtle, but held back at the last moment. The ideal time to reveal his identity was in front of a big crowd. To do so in front of just a single young girl was too much of a waste. "That's all true?" Hou Xiaomei asked, eyes shining as brightly as glittering stars on a moonless night. She was now staring at the little turtle, her flushed face the picture of adoration. "Of course it's true," Bai Xiaochun replied, sighing inwardly. In his mind, he had just done a very good thing, which was helping straighten the course of a child who had strayed off onto the wrong path. Feeling quite a sense of accomplishment, he swished his sleeve and ignored Hou Xiaomei's adoration as he headed toward the second stone stele. He elbowed his way through the crowd, then

waited for a bit until he was next in line. He had to wait a while for one of the log cabins to empty up, after which he strode into the door and disappeared. The log cabin looked the same inside as the last one he had been in. After drawing a turtle, his vision swam, and rumbling sounds filled his ears. When he could see again, he was once again in that familiar empty space. No cold voice spoke out this time; instead, the fragmented plants and vegetation immediately appeared in front of him. Since Bai Xiaochun had been prepared for this, his eyes shone and his hands sped to work. In the blink of an eye, one spirit plant after another was pieced together. Time passed. When the incense stick's worth of time was up, there were less than 5,000 plants left, which was significantly better than the record he had set when he had first been tested for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Unfortunately, time was up. Bai Xiaochun's vision swam, and when he could see clearly, he was back in the log cabin. Despite having come up slightly short, he was still completely confident in the results. Quickly snatching up the third volume of plants and vegetation, he turned and walked out of the door of the log cabin, heart pounding in anticipation. Outside, he could see countless Outer Sect disciples, many of whom were looking up at the name list. Bai Xiaochun's currently felt very heroic. "This time I'm going to shake the entire sect! I'm going to make sure that everyone knows Bai Xiaochun is the famous Lord Turtle!" He could envision what it would be like to be the object of adoration of tens of thousands of disciples, and could already see the look of shock on Hou Xiaomei's face. When he thought about that, Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from laughing loudly. Then he lifted his hand grandly, and was just about to shout out at the top of his lungs that he was the mighty Lord Turtle, when... All of a sudden, a voice rang out from among the Outer Sect disciples lined up for the trial by fire. "Do you think the little turtle who stole Elder Sister Zhou's limelight will dare to make an appearance?" "I doubt it. Elder Sister Zhou's fans are crazy. I heard that they've been searching the entire south bank for the little turtle. They even spread word that as soon as they find him, they'll skin him alive..." "I heard that too. There are even some Inner Sect disciples who've joined in on the search." Bai Xiaochun's hand hung in the air as he listened to what the people were saying. Suddenly, his heart began to tremble. When he heard that there were Inner Sect disciples looking for him too, his forehead began to drip with sweat, and he quickly scratched his head, and then dropped his hand as if nothing at all had happened. Enraged, he wormed his way through the crowd, an anxious, bereaved expression on his face. "This is ridiculous. They're pushing things too far. All I did was take first place, right? And now the Inner Sect disciples are involved? Was it worth it?" This time, his expression was real, and not the least bit pretend. Almost as soon as he worked his way into the crowd, someone noticed that the name list on the second stone stele had changed, and immediately, a huge uproar ensued.