CULTIVATION IS CREATION

System Update:

Chapter 5: Economics of Cultivation

Here's the thing they don't tell you about cultivation in all those ancient texts and flowery manuals: it's expensive. Really expensive. Sure, you can technically cultivate with nothing but your own spiritual energy and determination, but that's like trying to build a house with just your bare hands. Theoretically possible, practically stupid.
"Attention, Outer Disciples!" Senior Sister Liu's voice cut through the morning mist. "Today we will discuss the sect's contribution point system and resource allocation procedures."
Finally. After two weeks of basic training, we were getting to what Wei Lin called "the real foundation of cultivation."

Resource Management Interface unlocked

New features available:

- Resource tracking
- Efficiency calculations
- Exchange rate optimization

Azure materialized in my inner world, now a cozy 3.5 cubic meters of space with basic energy circulation paths. "This should help you keep track of everything, Master!"

"Today you begin earning your keep," Senior Sister Liu continued. "Every outer disciple is expected to contribute to the sect while pursuing their cultivation. Tasks range from herb gathering and formation maintenance to assisting with sect security and running errands for inner disciples."

She gestured, and several disciples began distributing jade tablets similar to our identification tokens.

"These will track your contribution points. Think carefully about how you earn and spend them. They are the lifeblood of your cultivation journey."

New Interface: Contribution Point Management

Current Balance: 0

Available Tasks:

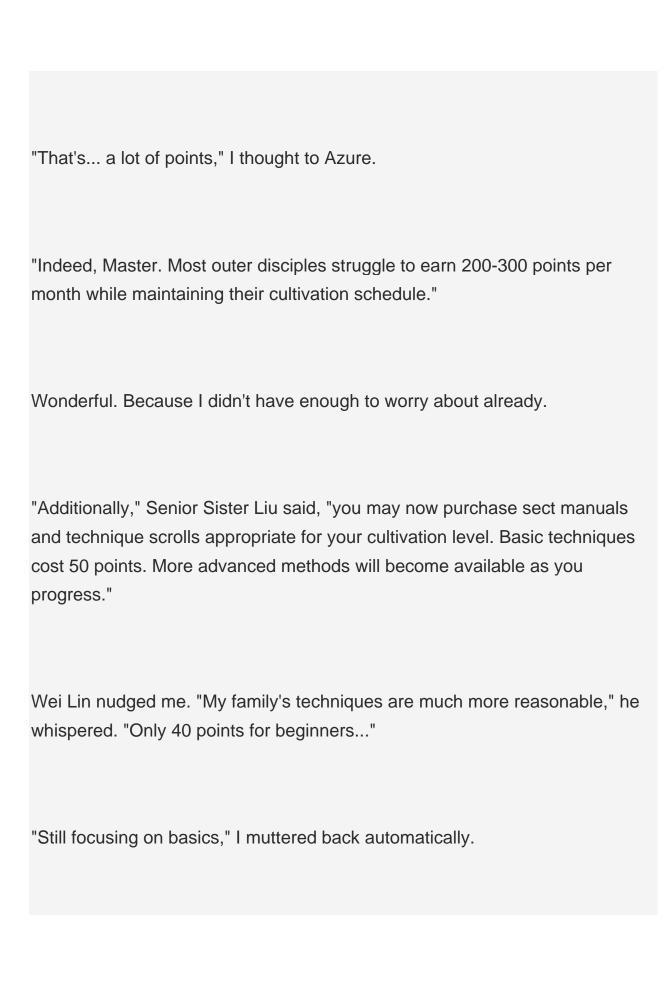
- Herb Gathering (1-5 points per hour depending on rarity)
- Formation Maintenance (3 points per hour)
- Messenger Duties (2 points per task)
- Combat Practice Assistant (5 points per session)

I examined my tablet as Senior Sister Liu explained the various ways to earn and spend points. The system's interface was helpfully organizing everything into neat categories with efficiency ratings.

"The most basic spiritual resources available to outer disciples are priced as follows," Senior Sister Liu continued. "Spirit Stones: 10 points each. Basic cultivation pills: 30 points. Spiritual herbs: varying prices based on grade and rarity. Access to special training areas: 20 points per hour."

Resource Analysis: Recommended initial focus:

- Spirit Stones (essential for inner world development)
- Basic Energy Condensation Pills (optimize cultivation speed)
- Estimated points needed for optimal monthly progress: 500



After the explanation, we were given the afternoon to explore the various task options and begin earning points. I found myself in one of the sect's herb gardens, armed with a basic guide to spiritual plants and a small gathering basket.

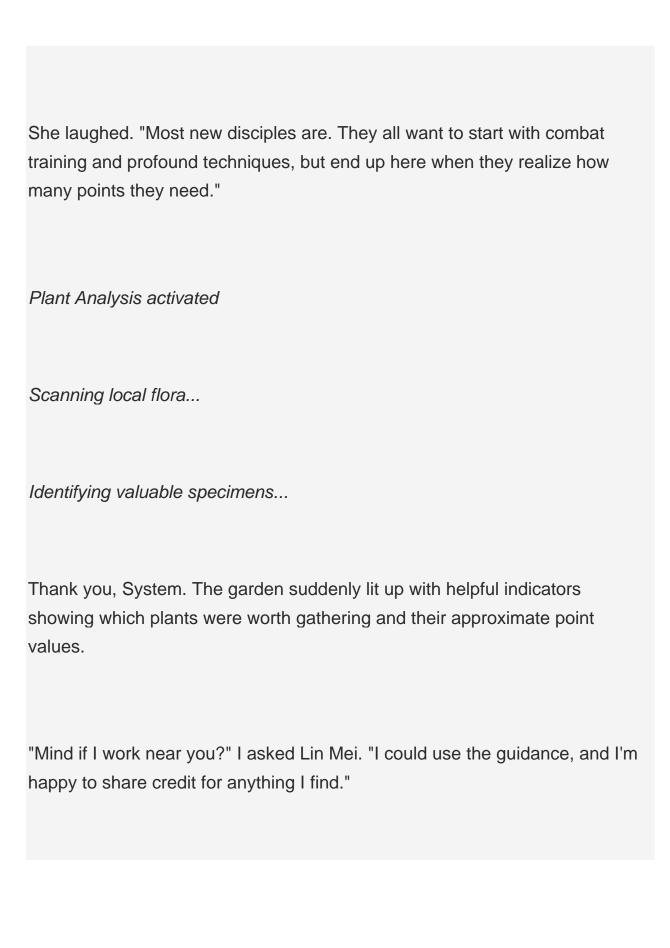
"That's not Purple Heart Grass," an amused voice said as I reached for what I thought was my first contribution point opportunity.

I looked up to find a girl about my age watching me with poorly concealed mirth. Her outer disciple robes were stained with dirt and plant matter, suggesting she spent a lot of time in the gardens.

"It's... not?"

"That's common heart weed. Similar appearance, completely useless for cultivation. Purple Heart Grass has a faint spiritual glow and three-pointed leaves." She pointed to a nearby plant that, indeed, had a subtle purple luminescence. "I'm Lin Mei. Herb Garden Section Two supervisor."

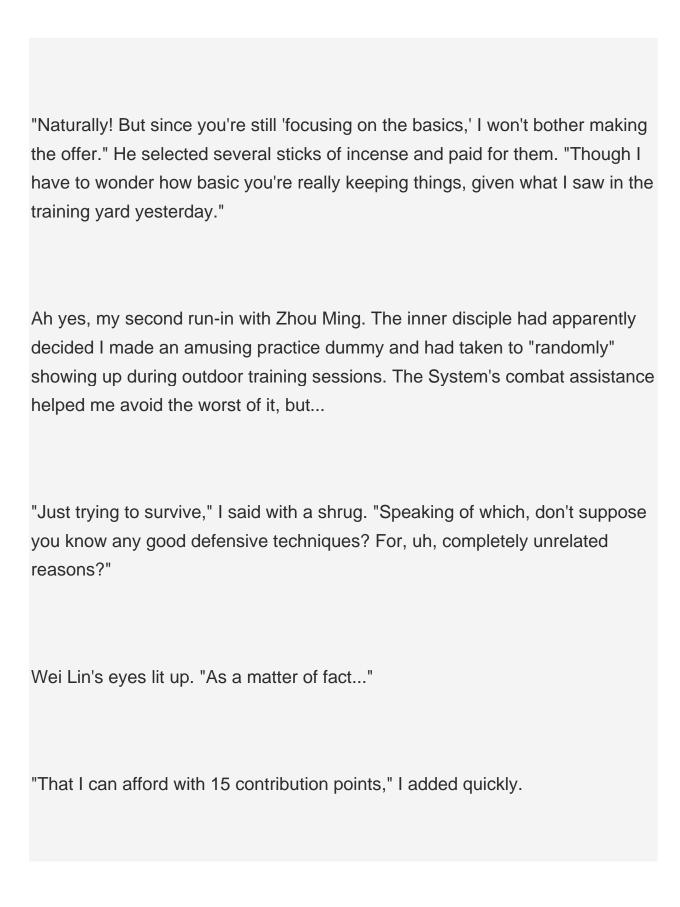
"Ke Yin," I introduced myself. "Complete novice at herb gathering, as you've noticed."

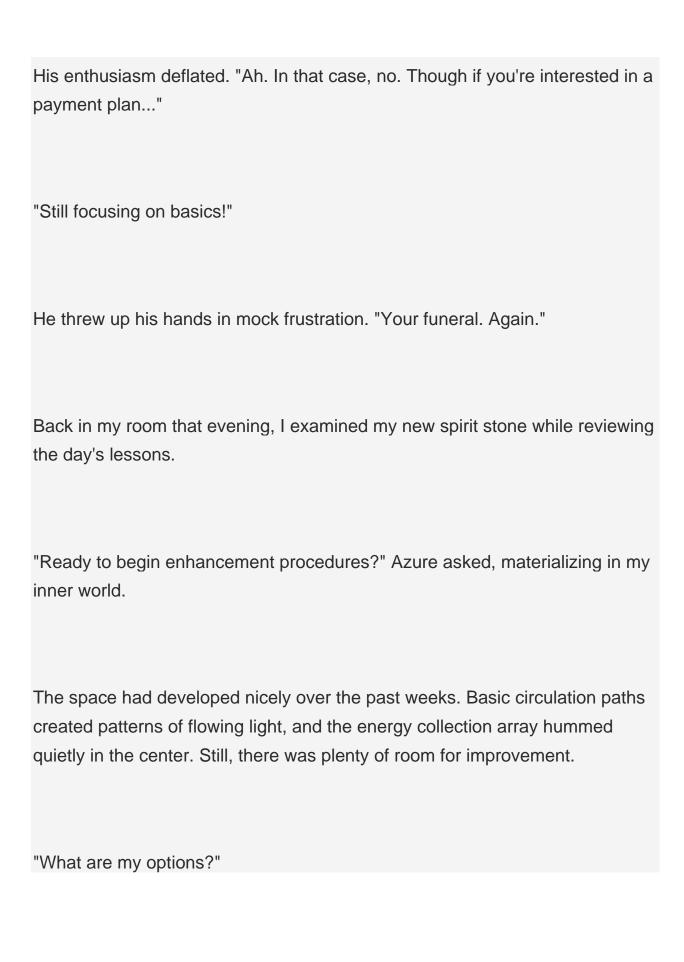


"Smooth," she said, grinning. "But sure. Always nice to have comp doesn't spend the whole time complaining about manual labor beir true cultivators."	•
We fell into a comfortable rhythm, with Lin Mei pointing out valuable explaining their properties while I used the System's highlighting to didn't miss any. By sunset, I had earned 25 contribution points and more about spiritual herbology than I had in two weeks of classes.	ensure I
"Not bad for a first day," Lin Mei said as we turned in our gathering have good eyes for detail."	s. "You
Credit assistance from automated plant detection system	
"Thanks," I said, ignoring Azure's honest commentary. "Think I couthis a regular thing?"	ıld make
"Supervisor's hours are fixed - same time every afternoon. Don't be waved and headed off toward the outer disciples' dining hall.	e late!" She

Social Link Established: Lin Mei
Relationship Level: Friendly Acquaintance
Potential Benefits: Improved herb gathering efficiency, reliable point income
"I don't need relationship stats for everyone I meet," I thought at Azure.
"The System analyzes all potentially significant connections," he replied primly. "Social capital is an important resource in sect politics."
Speaking of resources, I had another stop to make before dinner. The sect's supply hall was a massive building near the central plaza, its shelves stocked with everything a cultivator might need - assuming they had the points to pay for it.
"One Spirit Stone," I told the stern-faced elder managing the basic supplies section, handing over my jade tablet.

He waved his hand over it, deducting 10 points, and handed me a crystal about the size of my thumb. It pulsed with pure spiritual energy. The author's tale has been misappropriated; report any instances of this story on Amazon. Item Acquired: Low-Grade Spirit Stone Quality: 35/100 Energy Content: 1000 units Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement "Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	
on Amazon. Item Acquired: Low-Grade Spirit Stone Quality: 35/100 Energy Content: 1000 units Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement "Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	
Quality: 35/100 Energy Content: 1000 units Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement "Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	
Energy Content: 1000 units Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement "Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	Item Acquired: Low-Grade Spirit Stone
Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement "Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	Quality: 35/100
"Stand there gawking all day and you'll never afford the good stuff," a familiar voice commented.	Energy Content: 1000 units
voice commented.	Recommended Use: Inner World Enhancement
guess - your family sells better spirit stones at a discount?"	I turned to find Wei Lin examining a display of meditation incense. "Let me guess - your family sells better spirit stones at a discount?"





"Expanding your inner world would be the best thing to do right now," Azure advised. "A larger inner world means more room for future developments and

faster spiritual energy absorption."

Made sense. "Let's do it."

Azure guided me through the process of breaking down the spirit stone and incorporating its energy into my inner world's structure. It was like watching a magical construction project - glowing lines of force extended from the central array, pushing against the void and gradually expanding the available space.

Enhancement in ProgressSpace Expansion Foundation forming...

Current Status: 27%

Estimated completion time: 3 hours

A knock at my door interrupted the process. I opened my eyes to find Lin Mei holding a small basket.

"Thought you might want these," she said, showing me a collection of minor spiritual herbs. "Leftovers from today's gathering. Not worth many points, but good for practice if you're working on spiritual sensitivity."

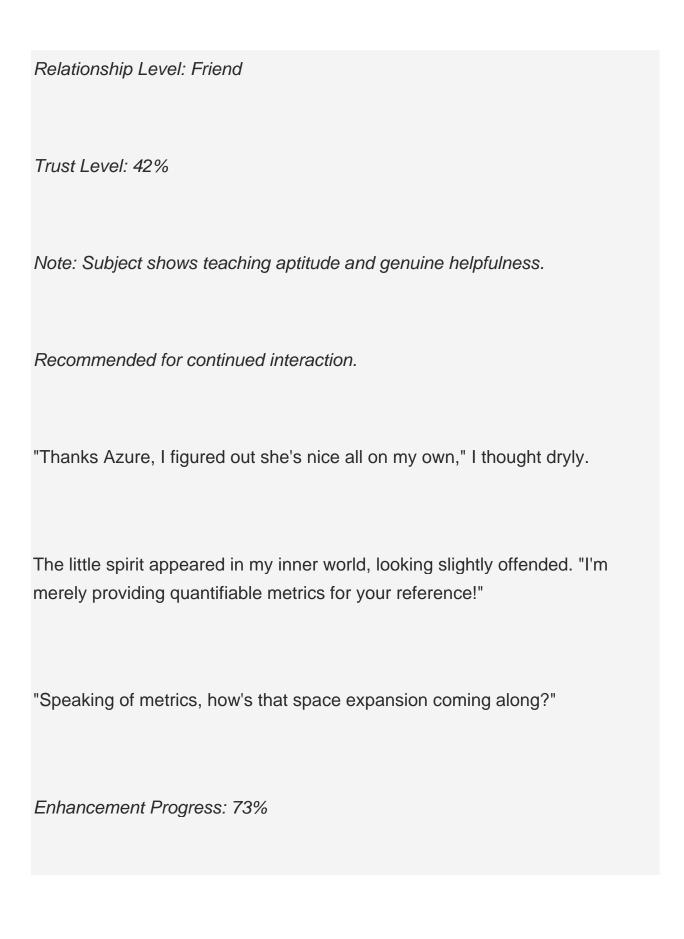
"Thanks! That's really helpful." I invited her in, noting how Azure immediately began analyzing the herbs' properties.

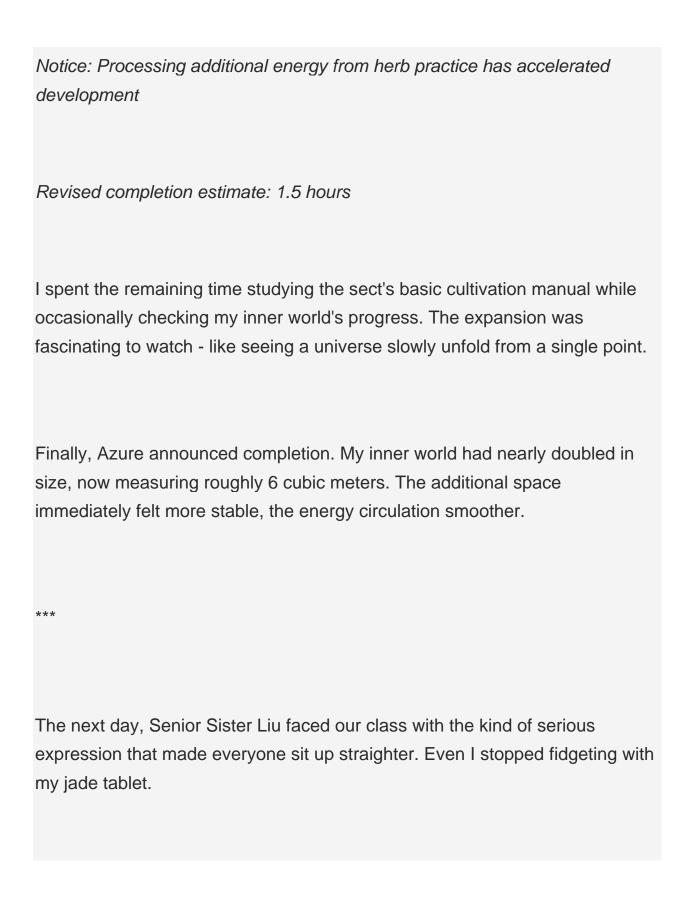
Spiritual Herb Analysis:

- Minor Spirit Grass (Energy content: 5 units)
- Dawn Lotus Leaf (Energy content: 8 units)
- Cloudmist Flower (Energy content: 12 units)

"Most new disciples focus too much on spirit stones," Lin Mei said, arranging the herbs on my desk. "They ignore these lesser materials because the energy content is low. But using them helps develop better control and efficiency."

She demonstrated by holding a piece of Spirit Grass and slowly drawing out its energy, making the blade glow faintly. New Technique Observed: Fine Energy Extraction Efficiency Rating: 87% Learning opportunity detected "Could you show me that again?" I asked, genuinely interested even without the System's prompting. We spent the next hour practicing with the herbs, Lin Mei correcting my technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend. Social Link: Lin Mei	
Efficiency Rating: 87% Learning opportunity detected "Could you show me that again?" I asked, genuinely interested even without the System's prompting. We spent the next hour practicing with the herbs, Lin Mei correcting my technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend.	
"Could you show me that again?" I asked, genuinely interested even without the System's prompting. We spent the next hour practicing with the herbs, Lin Mei correcting my technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend.	New Technique Observed: Fine Energy Extraction
"Could you show me that again?" I asked, genuinely interested even without the System's prompting. We spent the next hour practicing with the herbs, Lin Mei correcting my technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend.	Efficiency Rating: 87%
the System's prompting. We spent the next hour practicing with the herbs, Lin Mei correcting my technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend.	Learning opportunity detected
technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be another friend.	
Social Link: Lin Mei	technique while I secretly relied on the System's analysis to optimize my energy extraction. By the time she left, I had gained what seemed to be
	Social Link: Lin Mei





"Today," she said, her voice carrying across the meditation hall, "we begin the true foundation of your cultivation journey - forming your Seed of Creation."
I caught Wei Lin's eye across the room, and he gave me a small nod. We'd heard about this - the moment when cultivators first touch their inner world. Honestly, I was both excited and nervous.
System Notice: Inner World Creation Protocol Initiated Beginning Seed Formation
"Close your eyes," Senior Sister Liu instructed. "Find your spiritual core. Feel the energy gathering, forming the first spark of your personal domain."
I closed my eyes and tried to focus, though my mind kept wandering to all the stories I'd heard about inner worlds. Some cultivators created vast oceans, others endless mountains. One famous elder supposedly had an entire galaxy in his.
Then I felt it.

It was like discovering a new sense. In my mind's eye, I saw a tiny point of light, barely larger than a grain of rice, pulsing with a gentle blue glow. Azure appeared beside me in this strange mental space.

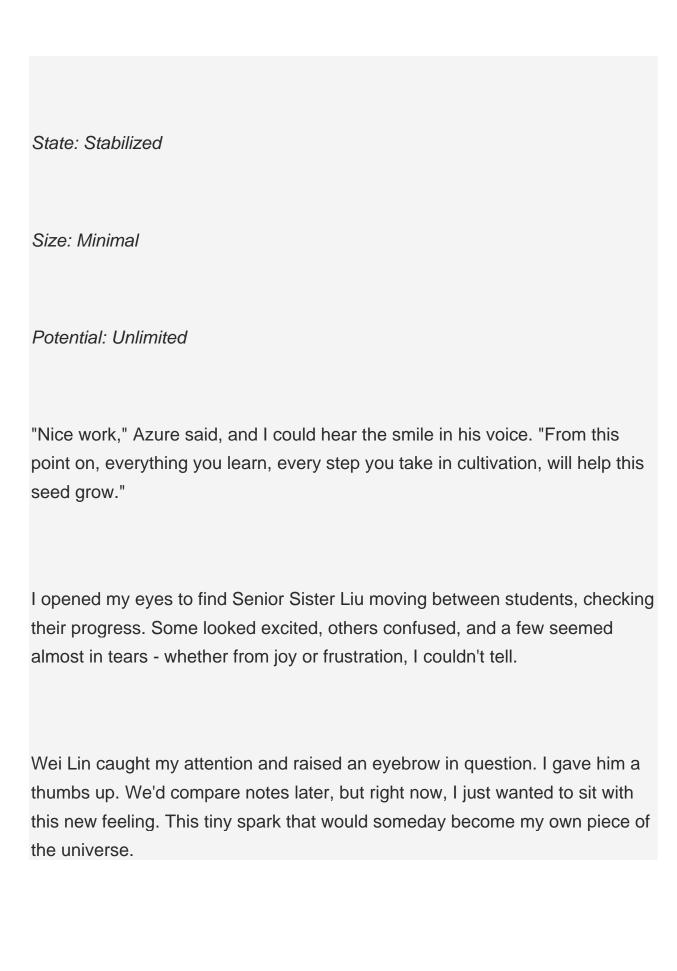
"That's your Seed of Creation," he explained quietly. "It's responding to your energy."

I watched, fascinated, as small motes of light began orbiting the seed. Each circle they made seemed to make the glow stronger, more stable. It was like watching a miniature solar system being born.

"Your Inner World will reflect your path," Senior Sister Liu's voice drifted through my consciousness. "It grows with you, becomes an expression of your understanding of the universe."

As I focused on the seed, the blue light steadied into something warm and constant. It felt... right, somehow. Like finding something I didn't know I was missing.

Seed of Creation Status



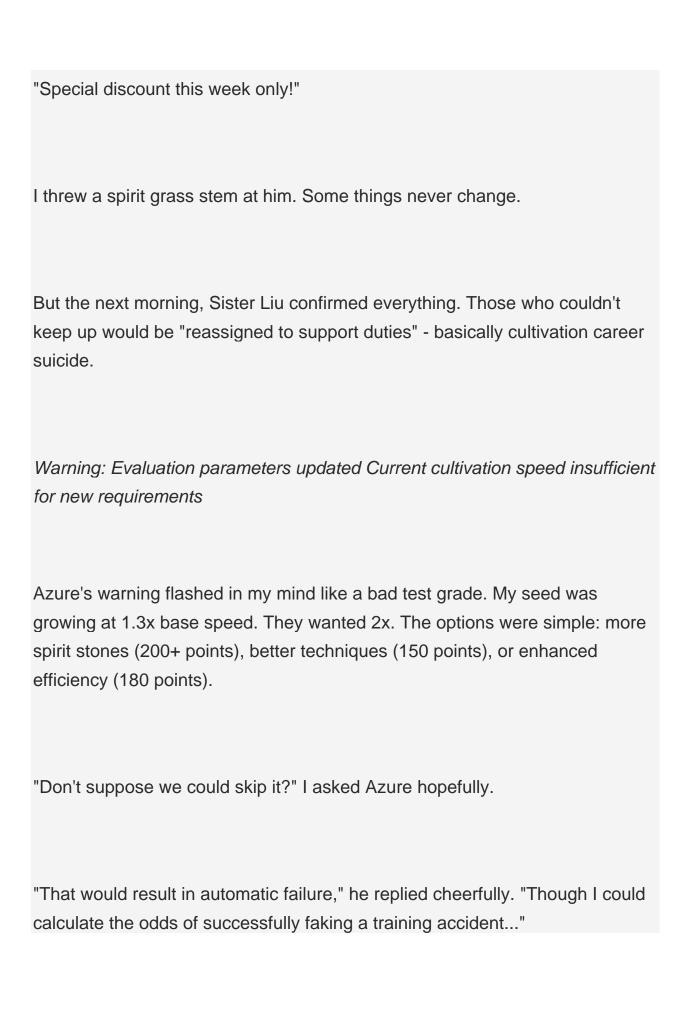
Though I couldn't help wondering how long it would take to grow it into something impressive. Maybe Azure had some spreadsheets for that.

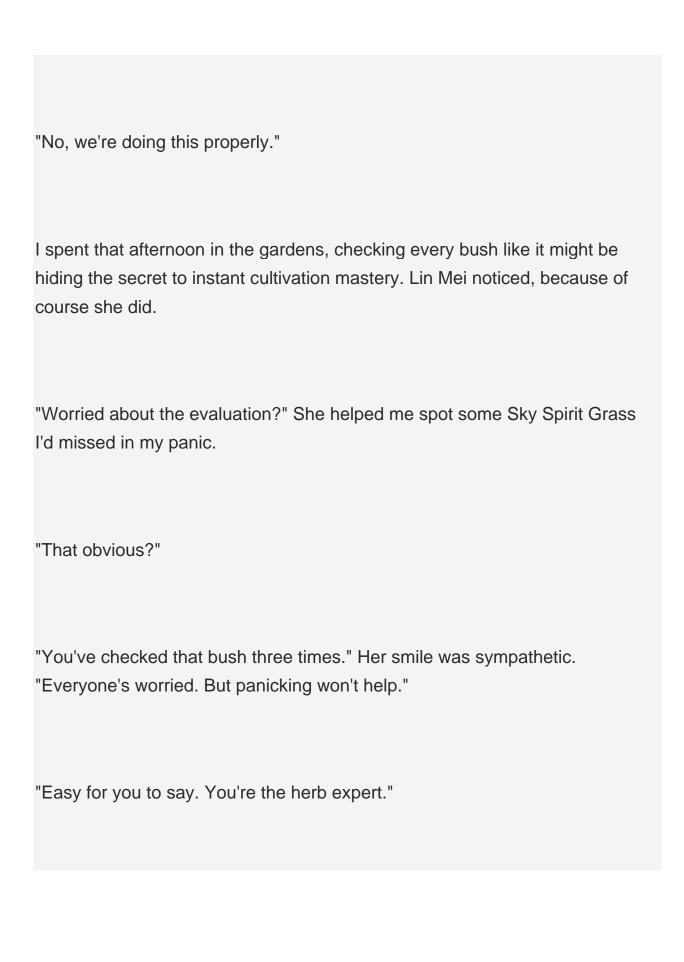
Ever since discovering my Seed of Creation, my days fell into a pattern more predictable than cafeteria lunch rotations. Mornings were dedicated to cultivation - honestly just me staring at my tiny blue seed-universe and trying to coax it into doing something impressive. Azure kept insisting that watching it wouldn't make it grow faster, but hey, a guy can hope.

"Your Inner World development is progressing at expected parameters," he'd say, while I swear that seed just sat there, twinkling smugly at me.

Afternoons meant herb gathering with Lin Mei, who somehow made identifying plants actually interesting. It beat combat practice, where Senior Brother Zhou seemed to think my face made an excellent target for "training exercises."

Then Wei Lin burst into my room one evening, practically vibrating with excitement. "Dragon's Heart Pills!" he announced, like he was selling the latest gaming console. "Thirty percent boost to cultivation speed! Practically giving them away at seventy points each!"
I didn't even look up from where I was failing to expand my cosmic seed. "Stil focusing on basics."
"You and your basics," he groaned, claiming my spare meditation cushion. "The monthly evaluation's coming up, and word is they're raising the standards. Inner disciples want to thin the herd."
That got my attention faster than Azure's efficiency reports ever did. "Raising them how?"
"Too many outer disciples, not enough resources." He studied his nails with fake casualness. "Of course, those with proper preparation"
"Let me guess - your family offers evaluation preparation services?"





She rolled her eyes. "Yeah, because I spent months learning these plants

instead of chasing flashy techniques. Slow and steady wins the race."

Sometimes the best answers are the boring ones. "Hey Lin Mei," I said slowly,

"what do you know about using herbs to enhance cultivation?"

Her eyes lit up like I'd finally asked the right question. The next few hours

changed everything I thought I knew about resource management. Turns out

those "useless" minor herbs, combined properly, could work almost as well as

the expensive stuff.

New Cultivation Method Unlocked: Herbal Energy Integration

Efficiency Rating: 89%

Cost Reduction: 65%

Maybe my little seed didn't need premium fuel to grow after all. It just needed

the right gardener.