

Eternal Cultivation of Alchemy #Chapter 1: Eternal Cultivation - Read Eternal Cultivation of Alchemy Chapter 1: Eternal Cultivation

Chapter 1: Eternal Cultivation

A young man walked out of a train in Oakleaf city. 'Woah!' he looked at the surrounding train station and was surprised at how glossy and expensive-looking it was. His black hair, fair skin, and child-like face made him look so very naive and simpleminded.

He followed some signs to get out of the train station and finally saw the Oakleaf city in its full glory. He stopped in his tracks amazed at how big the buildings were, how many vehicles there were on the road, and just how well dressed everyone looked.

"So, which way is the Oakleaf University?" He wondered as he took out his cheap-looking phone and started looking up the map.

After learning the directions, he started walking. He had a suitcase with him that he dragged along the city. Throughout the city, he would see giant billboards and posters promoting a single thing, making him wonder just what was Eternal Cultivation?.

"Hmm... is that a new movie? Looks good. Maybe I will get to see what a big city's cinema looks like. " His countryside village also had cinemas, but the screen was small, so he usually preferred watching the movies on his family computer.

He finally reached the university and asked a few people to find his way to dormitory A. He walked up to a register table and got his key for his room.

His room was numbered 205, so he walked into an elevator and got up. As he came out of the elevator, he got a phone call. He looked at the caller and realized his mom was calling him. He accepted the call.

"Alex? Where are you? Did you reach the university?" a worried voice came from the other side of the phone.

"Yes, mother. I am currently in the dormitory, look for my new room." Alex replied.

"Oh good, good. Here, your father wants to talk to you."

"Hey son, how are you doing? Was the train ride okay? You didn't find it discomfoting, right?" His father asked him in a worried voice.

"No, father. It was fine. In fact, it was amazing. I never knew trains went that fast." Alex said.

"Haha," his father laughed from the other side of the phone, "That's what you get when you live your entire life on a farm. We shouldn't have home-schooled you either. Fortunately, you will be getting new experiences now."

"It's okay father. The school was in the town. It would've been hard for you to take me there regularly on a 2-hour ride." Alex said.

"Alright. Remember what I told you okay. Don't be friends with bad people. There are a lot of different people in the big cities. Learn to figure out which people are good and which are not. You should be old enough to know what to do and what not to do. Oh yeah, and just because you are 18 and you can, don't go to those stupid clubs, I hear they are just a waste of money."

Alex smiled a little and replied, "I understand, father. Oh, I'm in front of my room now. I will call you guys later, bye. "

"Alright, I will end the call then. Oh, right! Call Hannah and let her know you have arrived." "Bye," his father and mother said at the same time and ended the call.

Alex walked up to Room 205 and opened the door using his key. When he opened the room, he was surprised.

He didn't expect his room to already have people staying in it. Inside were 3 young men. 2 of them were up and talking, while one was seemingly sleeping. The room had 2 bunk beds and 4 closets. Aside from that, Alex couldn't see anything there.

"Hello, are you guys staying in this room as well?" he asked as he walked in.

"Yes, Are you our new roommate?" one of the people asked.

"Ah, yes," Alex said as he showed the key numbered 205. "Hello, my name is Alex Benton." He said as he walked in.

"Oh, hi. My name is Eric and this is Matt" Eric said introducing himself and the other person.

"Hi," Matt greeted as well.

"You just arrived right? So, I assume you haven't eaten anything yet. It's nearly 3 pm. Why don't you freshen up and we can go get some afternoon lunch in the cafeteria."

Alex nodded and changed to a normal shirt and pants. He went to the bathroom attached to the room and cleaned himself. By the time he got out, the third man was already up.

"I'm sure you can do it next time. Just buy a pill if you can't."

"I know, but those cost money. And I'm not really playing to make money."

"Then you just gotta hope you breakthrough next time."

The man finally saw Alex. "Hey, you the new guy? Hi, I am Logan. What's up?"

"Hello, my name is Alex," he replied too. Afterward, all of them went to the cafeteria to get some food. The 3 started talking about the same thing they were talking about in the room and it made Alex confused. He didn't know the context.

"What are you guys talking about exactly?" he asked.

"Eternal Cultivation," Matt replied.

"Oh, the new movie? I saw posters of it on the streets." Alex said with a face of understanding.

Matt, Eric, and Logan looked at him with a look of confusion. Logan then said, "it's not a movie. It's the best VR game in existence. Don't you know about it?" he asked.

"A VR game? I didn't know about that. I only heard about the name today." Alex said.

"It's already been out for a month and is already the most played game of all time. How come you've never heard of it?" Matt was surprised.

"Oh, that's probably because they don't have any billboards and posters near the farm. And I don't really get to be on the internet since I have to help my father with the work." Alex said.

"Well, you can play now. You really must experience it." Eric said.

"Is that so? but I don't have a VR helmet or money to buy one." Alex said.
magic

"Don't worry about that, Eric here had got an old one, you can use that," Matt said.

"If that is so, then I will try it."

Alex and the 3 walked back to the room and Eric handed him the old helmet that he was keeping in the closet. Now that he looked at it, 3 of the 4 beds all had VR helmets in them.

"They must've been playing before I came," Alex mumbled a little.

"Just plug it in the socket there and you can start playing. Be sure to log out before 7 or you will miss dinner." Saying that Matt and the rest got into their beds and put on their helmets. After that, they went asleep.

Soon a light started shining from inside the helmet and he finally heard something.

Chapter 2: Tutorial

A voice sounded in Alex's head. He slowly opened his eyes to look at the white nothingness in front of him.

'Where am I? Is this the game?' he thought.

A customization menu appeared in front of him. He looked at the different options possible and got easily overwhelmed. He saw a Randomize button at the top and clicked it without hesitation.

It created a new character with long, silky black hair, a lean body, and blue eyes. "This doesn't look bad," he said to himself.

He clicked OK.

He didn't want to set Alex as his username, but also couldn't think of one. So he simply chose the Randomize option once more.

'Doesn't sound bad,' he thought as he pressed OK.

Suddenly, everything turned white.

Alex found himself surrounded by trees on all sides. Everything so vivid and real and colorful.

"Is this really a game?" he thought.

He looked down on himself and saw that he was wearing a simple robe and pants similar to what his character looked like.

"So, this is what a VR game looks like, huh." He was amazed at the surrounding. His senses all told him that it was real. That he was in a real place.

"What do I do now?" he wondered and started looking around. There wasn't a map or a health bar that told him it was even a game.

Not long after, he found a small pouch tied to his sash. He tried to pick and see what it was when suddenly, a holographic panel appeared in front of him.

The panel had a bunch of boxes in it, with only 2 boxes being filled up. "What is this?" he wondered as he touched the first box.

[Tutorial]

[This game mostly works through voice commands. Say 'Settings' or 'Status' to open up settings or your info. Your first job is to make time and HP bar visible for your HUD from the settings. Say 'Settings']

"Settings"

A new screen appeared once more that had a bunch of little settings in it. He didn't know what most of them did as they were turned Off, but he quickly found 2 settings related to HP Bar and TIME. He turned both of them ON.

Suddenly on the top left of his vision, a green bar appeared representing his current HP amount. On the top right, a bunch of numbers appeared representing the current time.

It seemed the time in the game matched the real-life time.

[Tutorial]

[Congratulations on using the settings. You can later change the different settings as you see fit. Now, to check your info say 'Status']

"Status"

Another blue screen appeared in front of him. This time it had a bunch of information about him.

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Mortal (1 Qi : 100%)

Body: Sun God's Divine Yang Body

Talent: God

Spiritual Roots: 5 Elements Yin-Yang roots

Cultivation Method: None

Qi: 0

]

"Oh, is this my info?" Alex looked at the status with curiosity in his eyes. He didn't understand what most of it meant though.

The tutorial screen popped up again.

[Tutorial]

[Congratulations on opening your status. Here is an explanation of what each of these means.

Cultivation is your current cultivation realm and level. It shows you how much Qi you have to invest to increase cultivation, and what your chances of breaking through are.

Body: is your potential in cultivation. It determines how far you can cultivate. Special bodies also give other benefits.

Talent is your talent in cultivations. It determines how fast you can cultivate.

Spiritual Roots: Spiritual Roots represent your spiritual affinity towards the element. You can learn and use elements you have an affinity to more freely than the rest.

Cultivation Method: is the technique you use to cultivate. It teaches you how to gather Qi and use the Qi to increase your cultivation.

Qi: is your source of energy. The more Qi you have, the stronger you can become. The speed at which you gather Qi can depend on your location, your cultivation method, and your talent.]

Alex was truly overwhelmed now. He couldn't understand half of what was happening right now. He had decided to play this game because his new friends had told him it was the best out right now. So, why were there this many explanations?

Once he read it all, he clicked on 'next'. A new set of texts popped up from the tutorial panel.

[Tutorial]

[you can use the following commands.

Logout: to logout

Cultivation methods: to see all the cultivation methods you have learned.

Pills: to see the list of pills you have.

Techniques: check the different techniques you have.

Inventory: to see your inventory. (shows items from all of your different spatial bags or rings)

Finally, congratulations on completing the tutorial. You can now open the chest in your inventory to obtain a random technique, weapon, pill, and cultivation method.]

He closed the Tutorial by clicking the 'X' on the top. He tried saying all the commands, except log out, to see if they worked. As expected, all the commands worked.

Every single panel those commands brought up was empty, except for the inventory.

"Alright then, let's see what the chest gives me. Hopefully, it's something good." Alex clicked on the chest and a notification popped up.

He clicked 'Open'.

"Weapons" he decided to check weapons first.

The weapons panel now had a new addition to it. From the icon, it looked like a sword. Alex clicked on it and the option to equip or description popped up. He chose description.

[Steel Sword

Grade: Mortal

]

There were no more descriptions than that.

"What's the mortal grade? Is that good or bad? Also, is there no attack bonus or anything? How is this a game if the item has no stats on it?" Nothing of what Alex had learned from the little video games he played on his home computer helped him at all right now.

He then checked the pill.

[Qi providing pill: 10%

Gives you 10 Qi]

"This is not bad. Didn't my status say I need 1 Qi to level up?" Alex was quite happy to find this pill.

"How do I use the pill though? Is there a button to use it?" Alex looked into the options that popped up but didn't realize what to do.

"Since this is a pill, like a medicine. Do I just eat it?" he wondered.

"Whatever, here it goes."

POP magic

He put the pill into his mouth. As soon as it entered his mouth as if the pill melted, it slid down his throat before he even noticed.

"Oh. I was right". He quickly opened his status page to check the change now. He had indeed gotten 10 Qi now.

Now that he had enough Qi, he had a new [Breakthrough] option in his Cultivation.

"Ah, there it is. So I can become a cultivator now? Is that what it is?" Alex wondered as he pressed the [Breakthrough] button.

"Oh! I need a Cultivation Method eh. Let's check my Cultivation method then." Alex opened his Cultivation method page and saw the book icon in the panel.

The Cultivation method had a separation in the panel that divided the panel into 2 sections. 'Learned' and 'Ready to Learn'. The book was in the 'Ready to Learn' section.

He clicked it and two options popped up. 'Learn' and 'Description'. He clicked on the description.

[Starry Sky Qi Absorption Method:

Grade: Heaven

Absorb 20 Qi every minute. Amount doubles during the night]

"Woah. 20 Qi every minute? That's crazy," Alex thought. "Wait? Does that mean the pill I ate wasn't actually good.?" he was starting to regret even eating that pill now.

"Do I learn It now?" he thought. He quickly went back to the same panel and clicked learn.

"Nice. Now I can breakthrough right?" Alex quickly set the new method as his cultivation method. After that, he clicked [Breakthrough]

Chapter 3:City

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Skin Tempering 1st Realm (500 Qi: 100%)

Body: Sun God's Divine Yang Body

Talent: God

Spiritual Roots: 5 elements Yin-Yang roots

Cultivation Method: Starry Sky Qi Absorption Method

Qi: 9

]

"Huh, I need 500 Qi now? That's ..." Alex quickly did some calculations in his head, "25 minutes. That's a lot."

"Do I have to use that technique for 25 minutes just to level up once? Isn't that a really bad system? What about later on? Will the time increase again?" he wondered.

"Hmm... I should find some pills to give me more Qi. However, at this rate, I will need 50 of those previous pills just to level up once. That should be harder than just using the ability for 25 minutes.

"Whatever, I will just look around for now. This looks so darn realistic. Maybe I should get rid of the health bar, for now, to let me see more."

Alex walked around the jungle looking at the greenery. He quickly found a small path and took it. Coincidentally, within 5 minutes, he was out of the jungle, looking at a big perimeter of wall, blocking off an entire city in front of him.

He looked to the side of the wall to see a gate with people and carriages lined up near it. There were guards waiting near the gates taking something from the newcomers before letting them in.

'Do I need money?' he wondered. Just then, someone else walked out from the forest. It was a man wearing a yellow robe with green in the linings.

He saw Alex looking around blankly and especially, noticed his plain robes. So he asked, "hello brother, are you new around here?"

"Yes, I just arrived here today, and don't know what to do to get inside," Alex replied.

The man heard that and softly asked, "Are you a player?"

"Yes," Alex said excitedly. 'So he was a player all along huh.'

"Well, just cultivate for an hour or 2. After that, once you breakthrough, you can go hunt some weak monsters in the jungle, and sell their bodies to one of the merchants that always run through here."

"That should get you about 5 or so silver coins, enough to enter the city." The man said.

"Cultivate? What's that?" Alex questioned.

The man looked at him weirdly. "You learned your cultivation method right?" Alex nodded.

"Then, just sit around and meditate. Your cultivation method will kick in on its own," said the man. After that, he bid farewell and left the place.

"Hmm... since I already broke through, I should just go and kill some animal." He walked back to the forest he had just come from. However, it didn't take long for him to find an animal.

The creature he met had a name floating on top of it.

"Woah, it's a level higher than me. Can I even fight it?" the fox was definitely stronger than him. Alex was worried and wondered if he should change his targets.

"I'm only level 1, so there should be a protection mechanic in the game that doesn't let me die, right?" Alex decided to fight the fox.

He quickly opened his weapons panel and equipped his sword. The sword was about 2 meters long in length and was very precious looking.

He tried to go forward, undetected by the fox, but that was all a dream. There were way too many things in the jungle that made noises when one walked.

The fox immediately lunged at him the moment it saw him. Alex tried to swing his sword at the fox, and ended up hitting it right in the face.

The fox whimpered and backed off. An angry look appeared on its face as it started growling. It once more jumped at him.

This time instead of using the sword as a sword, Alex swung it down hard like he was back home chopping woods with an Axe.

"Core? What is that?" he wondered. He took it out from his inventory and looked at it. It was a small reddish-brown sphere that felt a little coarse to the touch.

"Is this like that pill I ate earlier?" he wondered. It looked like it, so he assumed it was. So, without any hesitation, he put the core in his mouth and swallowed it.

"Oh wow, so it was a pill. Maybe I should go find some more of those foxes."

He was already near the city, so he decided not to. Instead, he decided to breakthrough.

He opened his status and as expected, a [Breakthrough] button had appeared in his cultivation line.

He clicked the button.

He was now a level higher. He looked at his status again and realized the [Breakthrough] button was still there. So, he pressed it once more.

He opened his status page once more.

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Skin Tempering 3rd Realm (1500 Qi: 100%)

Body: Sun God's Divine Yang Body

Talent: God

Spiritual Roots: 5 elements Yin-Yang roots

Cultivation Method: Starry Sky Qi Absorption Method

Qi: 509 magic

]

Alex picked up the fox's corpse and walked out of the forest. Along the way, he realized he could put the corpse inside his inventory. And so he did.

He found his way to one of the merchants waiting in line. He read the name, 'Victorious Snow Merchant Group'.

The merchant there traded his corpse for 10 silvers. Alex took it and went to the gate. The gatekeeper asked him for an identification or 2 silvers to enter the city.

Alex didn't have anything that could identify him, so he simply paid the fee and entered.

He tried to log out after entering the city, but the game told him that he wasn't in a very safe place to log out.

Only after renting a room in a tavern did the game tell him that it was safe to log out.

Chapter 4:Alchemy

Alex opened his eyes and slowly felt the helmet as he pulled it off. He had logged out a little early because he didn't know what to do in the game any longer and decided to leave.

He tried to stand up quickly and hit his head. "Ow," he looked at what he had just hit and said in realization, "Oh, that's right. I'm not in my room." This made him feel a little sad and started to miss home.

Seeing that the others were still in the game as it was still quite a bit away from the 7 pm they said they would log out at, he decided to call his parents and tell them he had settled.

"Did you message your cousin?" his father asked from the other side.

"Oh, I forgot. I will message her right now," said Alex. After ending the call with his parents, he sent his cousin a simple message.

Soon, his three roommates logged out as well, and they went to the cafeteria to have dinner.

"So, how did you like the game?" Matt asked from the side curiously.

"It was good. I mean, I didn't like that you have to meditate around for forever just to level up, but the realistic senses make up for it more than enough."

"Oh, that? You will get used to it," Logan said from the side. "Everyone complains about the slow leveling at first. But you will soon find why that is at an appropriate speed."

Eric chimed in from the side saying, "Deva corp did earn over 2 billion dollars just in the first month of release of Eternal Cultivation. That should tell you how good that game is."

Matt said, "You will soon get used to it. Although I think it's better if you drop your ideas of this being a game. This is another world that Deva Corp has made for us to live in. They do say, You don't play Eternal Cultivation, you live it."

That statement struck Alex in a way he hadn't expected it to. 'So I should just stop caring leveling up and just enjoy the world, huh. Guess I can do that.'

Together they went back to their room. Alex was about to go to the bathroom when he saw every one of them putting their helmets back on.

"You guys are going to play again?" he asked.

Matt laughed and said, "We play every moment of waking and sleeping hour. It's just that fun."

"Sleeping hours? Do you guys play instead of sleeping? Isn't that bad for your health?"

Logan said from his bed, " No, we sleep. But the VR helmet makes it so that we can play even when asleep. You should try it today."

Eric added, "You should play it too. Maybe you can earn enough money to buy your own headset."

"Earn money? How?" Alex questioned. 'They must be joking with me right?' he thought.

"Oh, you can earn money by converting in-game currencies to dollars. We make some good bucks, enough for our monthly pocket change" said Logan. "Alright, we are logging in, you should go too, Alex." All 3 of them logged in afterward.

"Me? Earn money with the game?" that concept was quite funny to him. A kid who barely played any video games could never earn money from it.

He quickly freshened up and went back to his bed. He saw that his phone had a notification and checked it.

His cousin, Hannah, had replied. He put down his phone and put on the helmet. Before he knew it, he was back in the game.

He opened his eyes in the room in the tavern. As soon as he did, he heard the rumbling of his stomach. magic

"I can get hungry as well?"

Thankfully, he was already at a tavern, so he walked down to the ground floor and ordered himself a bowl of stew. It cost him one Silver, but he didn't care for the money right now.

He listened to the conversations of different people in the tavern and came to a piece of information that interested him. Hong Wu sect was holding an entrance exam tomorrow.

During dinner, the 3 guys have told him that he should find a sect as fast as possible. 'If they are really taking a test, then I should try in it as well.' He thought.

He walked to the people who were talking about this and asked, "Hello, can you tell me where this examination is taking place exactly?"

"I would suggest you don't bother, brother. Hong Wu Sect is an alchemy sect, so they are very hard to get into. But, if you still want to know, it will take place at around 8 am in the Hong Wu Sect."

'Alchemy?' he was confused as he had never heard that term before. 'I should check what it is tomorrow morning.'

He went back to his room after eating the food and thought, "It's already so late at night. So, I probably shouldn't go out, right? Why don't I take this chance to cultivate instead."

He sat cross-legged in the bed and started to meditate. Slowly, he started getting drowsy, and before he knew it, he had lost consciousness and entered a trance-like state.

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Alex suddenly woke up. He didn't realize when he had fallen asleep in the game, but by the time he was awake, it was already 6 AM in the morning.

"Where am I?" he got confused for a second before he realized that he was still in the game. "But, I fell asleep, how am I still in the game?" he was confused. After he stopped thinking about it, he logged out.

Chapter 5:Entrance Exam

Alex came out of the game and realized his body was not tired at all. In fact, he felt very well-rested. 'So sleeping in the game does in fact work.' He was very surprised.

He washed up and waited for the guys to log out. During the time, he decided to check up on what exactly alchemy was. According to the Internet, Alchemy in Eternal Cultivation was the process of making pills.

"Hmm... Along with artifacts, Pills are one of the most expensive items in the game, Eternal Cultivation." He read what the information outlet was telling him. He closed his phone as his roommates started waking up and went to have some breakfast.

After breakfast, he wanted to go back into the game, so he did. He looked at the time and realized he only had 45 minutes to make it to the Hong Wu Sect.

He hurriedly went down to the tavern and asked the keeper for directions. The keeper's directions were simple. Hong Wu sect to the North and Tiger Sect to the south of Scarlet City. When Alex asked him what the Tiger sect was, he found out that it was a place where normal cultivators went to join.

"So there are 2 sects in this Scarlet City, huh. I still like the idea of joining the Alchemy sect, rather than the other normal one." He said to himself.

Quickly he made his way north, asking for direction to the Hong Wu sect along the way. When he finally reached the Hong Wu sect, he was surprised.

Alex was now outside of a gate. Beyond the gate, he could see a tall mountain with many houses on it. The mountain was the sect ground on the Hong Wu sect.

Time was running out, so he quickly registered himself at the gate and was directed to a large tent inside the gate. Alex looked at his piece of paper that was the registration slip. It simply had a number 174, along with his name Yu Ming and age 18.

He had almost reflexively said Alex but caught himself in the last second. He walked into the large tent and sat in an open spot on the ground, among the many other people who were all sitting in a symmetrical fashion.

Very soon, an important-looking man, in his late 20s walked inside the tent. He was wearing a green robe with silver linings. Soon after he entered, a few dozens of younger-looking men and women walked in.

"Everyone listen up," the man said as he stood upon a podium of sorts. " I am your examiner, and I will be taking your test here. " The man gestured to the side.

The group of men and women who had entered walked around the place and handed each of them a storage bag and a slip of paper.

"You have one hour to name all the 100 ingredients inside. If you can name more than 50, you pass. Makes sure the talisman you answer in also has your registration number and name." Saying that the man left the tent. The other people, however, stood there, watching the different examinees taking their exams.

Alex tried to take out each of the ingredients to see what it was called, but each time to took it out, it only said [?????????]. The game wasn't helping at all.

"They did say the exam was hard," he sighed as he stopped thinking about the exam and instead started looking at his settings through the different things. He wasted another 15 minutes in that.

Suddenly, he remembered something. 'Isn't my inventory supposed to show everything I have? What if I look at the ingredients using the inventory and not from the outside?'

"Inventory," he said in a low voice. A blue panel popped up in front of him that indeed had over a hundred items. He randomly picked one to see if it was named, but it was still called ??????.

'Sigh,' he was about to close the inventory when he noticed something. At the very first box of the inventory, there was an icon for a book.

"A cultivation method?" he wondered. He tried to click on the description but accidentally clicked on learn.

"Huh, Alchemy?" he was stunned.

"Cultivation Method," he said and the list of cultivation methods popped up. There was only one. 'But it was a book?' he was confused.

'Ah right, didn't the treasure give me a technique as well. I completely forgot about that. Is this a technique?'

He opened the techniques panel, and there in the learned section, he could see a book icon. He clicked on it and opened the description.

[Alchemy God's Manual: Level 1 magic

Grade: Mortal (Growth)

Unlocked: You have knowledge of all alchemy material.

Unlocked: Can learn any alchemy recipe instantly.

Unlocked: +50% chance to produce an extra pill during alchemy.

Level 2 required to unlock more

]

"Growth? What is that supposed to mean? This technique can level up?" he wondered, but he didn't care about that for the moment. The thing that attracted his attention was the first thing that was unlocked,

'Unlocked: You have knowledge of all alchemy material.'

"Does that mean...?" he started to have a sliver of hope and anticipation brew up deep within him. He took out an inventory and saw its name.

[Bluethorn Leaf]

"Yes," he shouted softly.

[Horn Root Grass]

[Aquatic Berry]

It was working. He picked up the paper to start writing down the names. There was no pen, but he realized he could write in it what he wanted just by thinking about it.

As he started writing down the name, a weird-looking pattern started to appear on the piece of paper. It took him a few minutes to name all the materials in the bag.

At 9 o'clock exactly, the man returned to the tent and shouted, "Time Over, Everyone put your answers in the bag and pass them to your seniors."

After handing the bag, Alex walked out. He heard that they could come by tomorrow at 8 to see their results.

Alex took his time walking back to the tavern and logged out when he reached his room. It had taken him an hour to return, so by the time he logged out, it was nearly 10 am.

Just as he got up from his bed, he heard Logan shouting, "Yes. I did it. I broke through to True realm."

"Did you use any pills?" Eric asked.

"Nah. Those cost too much. The alchemists take about 50 dollars for even the lowest ones. I'm not wasting my money on that unless it's extremely necessary."

Alex didn't get in on the celebration. Instead, he looked at his phone that had a new notification on it. It was a message from his cousin.

Chapter 6: Breakthroughs

It was 1 PM during the day. The sun was past the zenith, and there were no clouds visible in the sky.

Alex arrived at the university's east gate. He looked around and quickly found Hannah standing in the shade, and walked up to her.

Hannah was wearing a yellow sundress with a white hat on. She was about 170 cm tall and had a lean body. She took off her sunglasses when she saw Alex walking towards her.

"Alex? Oh my god, look at you... you have grown up so much. How long has it been since I saw you last? 2 years? 3?" Hannah was astounded to see him so tall.

"Hello, sister. I believe it's been 2 and a half years since you guys last visited us. How are you?" Alex replied with a greeting.

"Oh, look at you being so formal. If you have to ask, I am perfectly fine. How are you? How are aunt and uncle?" She started inquiring about Alex's family's well-being.

"I am good, sister. Father and mother are fine as well." He replied.

"Come, let's go to a cafe or something. It's too hot out here." Hannah said as she brought Alex to a nearby cafe.

Alex was astonished to see all the cool little things the city had. He was amazed to see how many people there were constantly on the street, even during the hot day. The many cars and vehicles, some he had never seen before. The tall buildings that made you nearly break your neck just to see the top of it.

Alex felt very overwhelmed by everything. After they reached the cafe, Hannah entered it, and Alex followed behind her.

'Woah,' feeling the hot air from the outside immediately shift to the cold air from the air conditioning in the cafe, nearly made him vocalize his amazement.

He had rarely been to places with air conditioning, never one this fancy. Most of the places he visited back home had fans instead of air conditioning.

Hannah walked up to an empty table and said, "Sit here, I will bring us some food, what do you want to eat?"

Alex didn't know what to say. " I don't know what's good. Maybe some burgers would be fine?"

"Okay," she left for a bit and came back with 2 sets of burgers and drinks. They started eating.

"So, you are staying in a dorm, right? Made some friends yet?" she asked.

" Yeah. I have 3 roommates. They are friendly." Alex replied

"Good. Good."

Alex and Hannah talked for quite a while. Alex learned a few things about Hannah. It seemed she was currently in her third, and last year of college. She was renting a place a few blocks away from the university, where she and 2 other friends of hers lived together.

After finishing their food. They stayed there and talked for a bit. After catching up, at around 3 PM they both said their goodbyes and left.

In a few short minutes, Alex made his way back to the dorm. He was about to enter the room when he heard someone call his name.

"Hey Alex, where have you been?" Logan asked.

From the looks of it, Logan, Matt, and Eric were just returning from the cafeteria.

"I went to meet with my cousin. She studies in the university as well." He said.

"Oh. Cool. You had your meal? If not, you should probably go to the cafeteria before they close." Matt said.

"I already ate outside. Oh right, can I keep the VR helmet for a bit longer?"

Matt looked at him and laughed, "You got hooked as well, didn't you? Hahaha. Eternal Cultivation does that. Go ahead, keep it as long as you like." Eric was very generous about the VR Helmet.

They all went into their rooms, put on their helmet, and went back to the game.

Alex opened his eyes back in the tavern room. He slowly stood up. He looked around the room, and thought, 'Hmm... the sun is still up, should I just go fight some monsters and level up?'

The level system in this game was a little weird, it had names, instead of numbers one could remember.

"What level am I at again?"

He then opened his Status to check. What he saw shocked him.

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Skin Tempering 3rd Realm (1500 Qi : 100%) [Breakthrough]

Body: Sun God's Divine Yang Body

Talent: God

Spiritual Roots: 5 elements Yin-Yang roots

Cultivation Method: Starry Sky Qi Absorption Method

Qi: 131709

]

'What? How do I have so much Qi?' he couldn't understand. ' If I remember correctly, I had around 500 after eating the pill from the fox's body. So how come I have so many now? I don't remember eating any more pills or even cultivating at a-wait, did I actually cultivate last night when I fell asleep?'

Millions of thoughts were going through his mind. He didn't understand how he gained so many Qi. He did vaguely remember starting to cultivate last night, but he had fallen asleep immediately.

'Maybe I did cultivate during my sleep. They did say you can play the game while sleeping. Maybe I did just that.' He thought. magic

'Either way, since I have so much Qi, why don't I level up?' Alex decided to press the [Breakthrough] button.

He lost 1500 Qi. The next level-up requirement was now at 2500 Qi. He pressed the [Breakthrough] button again.

And again.

And again, and again.

'Oh. A new name.' Alex stopped breaking through when he reached 'Muscle Tempering: 1st Realm'. He looked at his status and realized he had used up 23,000 Qi, and the next requirement for a breakthrough was 10,000 Qi.

He still had enough Qi left, so he pressed [Breakthrough] once more.

"Oh," Alex realized something when he looked at his status once more. It looked like the requirement for each realm in this level was increasing by 5000 Qi. The next requirement was 15000 Qi.

'Wow, the requirement went up by a lot,' he thought

He broke through once more.

He once again checked and found the requirement for the 4th level to be 2000. He still had half of his original Qi left, so he proceeded to click [Breakthrough] multiple times once more.

He couldn't break through anymore after that.

'Woah,' Alex got a weird feeling from his body. It didn't feel like his body anymore. The skin was smooth and shiny, and he could see the muscle definitions inside his body, even though he vividly remember not having as much muscle before.

He also felt unusually hungry. 'Do I have to eat in-game as well?' he thought. Thankfully, he was staying in a tavern, so he could go down to eat anytime he wanted.

For now, He checked his status once more.

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Muscle Tempering 6th Realm (35000 Qi: 100%)

Body: Sun God's Divine Yang Body

Talent: God

Spiritual Roots: 5 elements Yin-Yang roots

Cultivation Method: Starry Sky Qi Absorption Method

Qi: 8709

]

'Wow, that's nice,' he thought. He didn't really understand how good or bad, having the 6th realm of Muscle Tempering was, but he assumed it had to be good.

He believed he was essentially around level 15 in the game. But, he couldn't tell how much further he had to level up since he had no idea about the higher levels.

He decided to put those thoughts to the back of his mind and went downstairs to have a meal. He got a good meal for a silver and ate it with enjoyment.

After he finished eating, he got out of the tavern. 'Man, if the game requires me to eat, and food costs 1 silver every time, I am going to go broke in no time.'

'I should probably go hunt those monsters more.' He thought. He walked to the city gates and saw the guards there checking the people going in and out.

He walked up to one of the guards and asked if he needed to pay another 2 silver for leaving the city for a few hours. Unfortunately, he did.

'Oh, well. I can pay them after I earn from the monsters I will kill.' He thought and went towards the forest.

Chapter 7: Forest Hunting

Alex walked out of the eastern gate of the Scarlet city and soon realized that he had come to the wrong place accidentally.

It was an evening last time when he had entered the city and had gone straight to a tavern to look for lodging to log out, and not bothered to remember any of the interior landscape of the city.

Now that he had randomly come out of the eastern gate, he realized that he had actually entered the city through the western gate. But that shouldn't matter to him that much.

'Whatever. I just need to hunt some monster that's all,' he thought. The east side of the city was also covered in forests, the same as the west side, so he should have no problem in finding the monsters.

He walked into the forest and started looking for any signs of a monster. Suddenly, he saw something.

It wasn't a monster, but a small tree. For some reason, the tree was nothing special. It was easily overlooked in this large forest, but he couldn't do so. Something about this tree called to him.

So, he did what his heart told him to and slowly walked towards the tree. The tree itself was about Alex's height, making it look like a little growing tree. But it already had big leaves and was sprouting a little fruit.

Alex saw a name appear on top of the tree when he came close to it.

[Dwarf Berry Tree

Bears the 'Dwarf Berry']

"The dwarf berry?" Alex looked at the only fruit sprouting in the tree. He reached his hands forward and touched the berry.

[Dwarf Berry]

He didn't get any more information than that. This felt the same as when he touched all those materials in the entrance exam for the Hong Wu sect.

'Is this an alchemy material? Is that why I know the fruit's name?' he thought. He believed his conjecture to be correct. So, he plucked the fruit and kept it in his inventory.

He couldn't tell how good this material was, or if it even made anything useful, but he still decided to keep it.

He found a few more alchemy materials along the way. So he picked whatever he could and kept it in his inventory. After walking a bit longer, he finally found a monster.

It was a deer with blood-red fur on it. It had dark black eyes and sharp thorn-like antlers on it. Alex got a little frightened when he saw it. Then he looked closely to check what level it was at.

[Carmines Coated Deer: Skin Tempering 6th realm]

The deer was 4 levels higher than the fox he fought in the western forest. But, that didn't matter to him anymore. After all, he was 16 levels higher than when he fought the fox.

He quickly brought up his weapons panels and equipped his sword. The steel sword gleamed brightly in the scattering sunlight in the forest.

The deer saw him, and turned towards him, preparing to charge. Alex got his weapon ready.

The deer suddenly started running towards him, directing its antlers towards him. This monster was much faster than the one he had fought yesterday.

But, for some surreal reason, it didn't feel like the monster was very fast. In fact, he almost thought the deer was running in slow motion.

Alex realized at that moment all of his senses were amplified. He could hear the trees and leaves in the forest rustle in the wind. He could smell the different plants and even the ground in the forest.

He could feel the subtle change in air pressure and temperature that he couldn't normally be able to tell. He could see the colors in the forest much more vividly than he could just a minute before.

Similarly, his sense of time was amplified as well. The deer that was charging intensely, felt so very slow for him.

He slowly raised his sword. It was only slow for him. In reality, this action was very fast.

As soon as the deer reached him, he swung the sword down.

Swish

The deer's left half split, and fell away from its right half. It was cut precisely through the middle in one hit. Alex was used to seeing farm animals butchered so he didn't get disgusted seeing the innards of this monster.

'I don't get the pill I got from the fox yesterday?' he thought. He was looking forward to getting the pill that gave him 2000 Qi yesterday.

He proceeded to open his inventory and check the antlers. He brought them out but didn't see their names pop up.

'Is this not an alchemy material?' he thought. That must've been why there was no name to it. He put it back into his inventory and kept the deer corpse with him as well.

After there was nothing left to do, he started to wonder, 'what happened to me during that fight? Is it because I'm a cultivator now?'

Along the way, he found few more alchemy materials and some other monsters. He managed to kill every single one he fought in one strike.

None of the monsters he fought were above the Skin tempering realm, and whenever he got into combat, he started to get into this bizarre experience where all of his 6 senses amplified. So, he easily killed those monsters.

Sun was starting to go down, and the moon was coming up. It was time for him to leave the forest, and return back to his lodging. But on his way, he saw something. In a small ground that looked like a natural flower field, there was an unusual flower, growing amid a bunch of other normal flowers.

He only thought the flower was unusual because he felt something unusual about the flower. 'Is that an alchemy material? Is that why I can tell it's different from the other flowers?' he thought.

He decided to pick it up, so he went closer. Suddenly, he heard something moving along the ground. He immediately turned to look behind him, but there was nothing there.

He slowly looked to his left and started scanning the land with his eyes. But, aside from plants and trees, he could see nothing else in the forest.

Rustle. Rustle.

The sound was still there. He looked towards the ground and saw a small brown snake slithering among the fallen leaves. He immediately jerked back.

Having worked on a farm did not mean he was no longer afraid of snakes. A game was no exception. Especially one as realistic as this.

But, he couldn't back away. There was something about that flower that made him think it was too important to skip out on. So, he readied his sword.

The slithering snake finally showed itself fully and was now looking straight at him. Alex looked at the name floating on the snake and frowned. The name itself wasn't the problem, it was the cultivation.

[Earth Snake: Muscle Tempering 3rd Realm]

It was only 3 levels lower than him. He didn't know how much difference each level made, so he started to get worried. Still, the flower was way too captivating for him.

So, he took a deep breath and focused. Suddenly, he felt the time slow down once more. All of his senses worked in overdrive.

The snake however didn't seem to be slowed down. It slithered towards him at nearly regular speed. 'Is the snake too close to my level, so it's just as fast as me?' he thought.

He swung the sword down once more, but the snake easily slid out of his attack path.

The snake jumped at him, baring its two fangs, but he too was pretty fast and easily dodged it.

Once more he tried to attack the snake, but once more it dodged him. The snake was just way too fast on the ground. He couldn't hope of touching it as long as it was slithering in the ground. magic

'Hmm... if it is impossible to catch this snake while it's slithering, then what about when it's not on the ground,' he thought. He felt like he had come up with a perfect plan.

He once more attacked the snake in order to aggravate it to attack himself. The snake did as expected, and lunged at him once it got to a close enough range.

Alex immediately sidestepped and swung his sword at the mid-air snake. It couldn't dodge while jumping, so it took the sword right to its neck.

Thud.

The snake hit the ground with a large thud, scattering a lot of trees and dust. But, Alex felt unsatisfied. He hit the snake with a sword, but there was resistance on his swing, unlike the other times.

Rustle. Rustle.

The snake slithered out of the place where it was sent to, with only a small wound on its neck. It would seem that Muscle Tempering realm monsters weren't that easy to deal with.

Chapter 8:Outer Sect Disciple

The snake started to change its attack pattern once it got hit. Instead of lurching at Alex, it started going for his legs.

Alex didn't know exactly how strong a Muscle Tempering 3rd realm monster could be, so he was apprehensive about going on the offensive and risk getting hurt.

Alex also didn't know if it hurt inside the game, the same way it did outside. They had told him the developers wanted to make the game realistic, so pain might have been added to add realism to the game.

He kept trying to hit the snake, but the snake was just too agile. It constantly weaved and dodged his attack while simultaneously going on the offensive from time to time.

After a while, the snake targeted his neck and attacked him once more. Similar to last time, he dodged the attack and hit the snake once more.

Thud

The snake only got a minor cut once again. Alex started to get worried. 'I don't have any abilities. I should have waited until I got my class or whatever equivalent this game has before coming here.' He thought.

The snake was getting cautious now. It wasn't attacking any chance it got any more but was rather waiting for the perfect moment.

Alex decided to do something. He didn't care he if died. This was a game, so he probably would just respawn somewhere.

Thinking that Alex unequipped his sword. He had never learned to use a sword, so doing it now was just not the right choice. Instead, he would fight with his hands.

Seeing Alex keep away his sword, the snake must've thought it was its opportunity, and lunged at Alex. Seeing it jump at him, Alex immediately caught the snake with both his hands, around its neck and started choking it.

The snake started to fidget around now that its head was immovable. It wrapped its body around his hands trying to squeeze him, but it didn't work.

He was after all 3 realms higher than him. Alex put his hand to the ground and started stomping on the snake's head. After a few vigorous stomps, he got a notification.

'Finally' he thought. He took out his sword once more and looked at it. "This is kind of a bad sword huh. Guess I'm not very lucky." He put the sword back.

He took the snake's corpse and put it into his inventory as well. He then looked towards the flower.

If it wasn't for the feeling he got, he would be completely incapable of telling apart the flower from its surrounding ones. It had 5 petals, was yellow in color, and completely ordinary.

He got closer to the flower and touched it. A name popped on top of it.

[Spirit Cleansing Lily]

'Woah,' he slowly plucked the flower from the plant and took a closer look at it. 'This must be a very good alchemy material for me to get this fantastic of a feeling.'

He quickly kept the item in his inventory. His inventory was getting full, and he would have to do something about it soon.

He looked at the time, and it was half-past 6. He ran his way back to the city. He didn't bother selling any of the animals today and kept it for tomorrow.

After he reached the tavern room, he logged out.

Alex got out of his bed and waited. In a few minutes, all 3 of his roommates woke up too, and together they went and had dinner.

After returning from dinner, the rest of the 3 went back to the game. Alex however didn't. Tomorrow was the first day of university, and he wasn't used to playing overnight.

So, he called his parents, talked for a bit, went onto the internet for a bit, and then went to sleep.

He woke up around 7 AM. Logan and Matt were already awake, so they waited for Eric, and went to get breakfast.

After returning he looked at the time. It was about 7:20 AM. He remembered the person in the game asking him to return tomorrow to check his result.

'Should I go play the game right now? The orientation starts at 11.' He turned to look at the other 3, but they were already in the game.

'Whatever,' he said as he entered the game as well.

He logged in to the tavern and quickly left the room. Within 15 minutes he was at the gate of Hong Wu Sect.

He had arrived a bit early and had to wait around 10 minutes for the results to be posted. There were many other youths hoping to get a chance. They were practically begging to get into the sect.

After the result got posted, there was a massive crowd around it. Alex weaved his way into the crowd to see the results.

The results were very simple. They were simply numbers on the list. The numbers were the same numbers everyone had on their registration slip.

He didn't remember his number so he took out his registration slip to look at it. After seeing his number, he started looking for number 174 on the result sheet.

The numbers were written in ascending order, so it was very easy to find the numbers. Very soon, Alex found his.

He looked around and saw a few people walking up to a person, and showing them their registration slip. He too walked up to them and asked, " Hello, I have passed the test, what should I do now?"

The men asked for his registration slip, and after confirming his number, they sent him to a group of other youths who had just passed.

After an hour and a half or so, around 27 people were gathered in the group. These were all the people who had passed the test.

The man who took their test yesterday walked up to them and introduced himself. magic

"My name is Lang Shun. You can call me elder Lang."

"Greetings elder Lang." Everyone greeted. Alex hastily greeted too.

"Since you have all passed the test, you are now a disciple of the Hong Wu Sect. Though you are still an outer sect disciple, if you do well in alchemy, you will be promoted to the inner sect. And who knows, you may even end up being a core disciple."

Elder Lang continued, " In Hong Wu Sect, your cultivation matters not. Only your talent, knowledge, and passion will get you forward here. You may have true Qi, but if you can't form a mortal grade pill, you will forever stay as an outer sect disciple."

He then turned around and went forward. "Follow me," he said after going a bit ahead.

They soon followed the elder to a residential area in the mountains. Alex wondered if these were the homes he could see from the gate.

The elder then assigned a single-room cottage to each of the 27 disciples. There were thousands of these small cottages on the mountain range, so they had no problem assigning one to each.

The elder then took out 27 different small pouches, and in a single wave handed it to every single one. He then proceeded to explain.

"These bags have 2 sets of sect outfit, 1 handbook that has all the rules and regulations of the school, a map of the sect grounds including the places you are forbidden to go to, and an alchemy introduction book to get you started on the theory of alchemy. Read them when you have time."

Alex was startled to hear his name. Still, he raised his hands and said, "I am called Yu Ming."

"Show me your registration card." The elder asked.

Alex took out his registration card and handed it over to the elder. After confirming he was in fact 'Yu Ming', the elder took out a weird-looking metal coin.

"Everyone else but him, leave, and go to your cottage." He said sternly. After everyone left, he looked at Alex and handed the metal coin he was holding.

"This is a library token, your reward for the test results. Take this to the library, and you can borrow 1 Earth grade or lower book for free. Do well." The elder then left.

Alex looked at the metal coin, and was confused, "Earth Grade or lower? " He didn't know what that meant. He walked to his cottage and closed the door.

He opened the bag he had just got and was stunned. He was about to open everything inside when he realized, he had completely forgotten about something.

It was nearly 10 AM now, and he had to leave. It was the first day of the University after all.

He put everything back into the storage bag, including the library token. Once everything was gone, he logged out.

Chapter 9: Cultivation Mechanics

Alex logged out of the game and went to eat his lunch at 10 am with his other 3 friends. After lunch, all of them started to get dressed for the Orientation.

Today was the unofficial first day of University where they would be welcomed, and get to choose their subjects and class schedule.

After getting ready, all 4 of them went to the University. Since they lived in the dorm, it was a 5-minute walk at best. They just had to leave the dorm, and walk a few minutes away to the main building.

They were quickly shown their way to the main hall where the orientation was going to take place.

They sat around and waited, as the main program started to take place.

The dean of the university got on to the stage and started giving a speech about how important university studies are, how good Oakleaf University is, and how they have a legacy to uphold.

Alex wanted to focus on the speech but quickly lost focus. A few more people came onto the stage to speak about some more things.

2 hours went by before Alex even noticed it. A clean-shaven man in his late 20s got onto the stage and said,

"The Orientation program is now over. An email has been sent to your address with your username and password, for the university website."

"You can either use the website to select your courses and schedule, or you can go to the reception to do it. Good luck, I look forward to teaching you all."

The man walked out. Alex opened his phone and checked his email. There really was a new mail from the university. He quickly used the given credentials to log in to the school website.

He chose 3 business and economics courses, and 2 technology-related courses, one of them being a VR-focused course. He was looking forward to them.

He managed to get an easy schedule. From Monday to Thursday, he had classes from 11 am to 3 pm. There would be 3 classes every day, each an hour-long, with a 20 minutes break between each class.

There was one problem he quickly realized, however. Given that he had taken 2 technology courses, he would sooner or later need a computer.

He might also require a VR Helmet, but he had one for now so he didn't care about it.

"Do I need to ask my parents for money?" he started to regret taking the technology classes. His parents had sent him to university only because they were free. But they hadn't thought about the extra needs he might have had.

'Oh! What about making money from the game? If making pills really is the best way to make money in the game, then I should learn more about it.' He thought.

"Alex, you done?" Matt asked from the side.

"Huh, oh yeah, I'm done. Are we leaving?" he asked. magic

"Yeah. Let's go to the cafeteria. By the way, what classes did you choose?" Matt asked.

Alex opened his phone and showed him the schedule.

"Woah, you got lucky. I think I might have to cut down on my games from now on. The schedules are so erratic for me." Matt sighed

"Me too. I have classes at 7 on Fridays. University is going to somehow make me hate Fridays, isn't it?" Logan said from the side.

"Well, sucks to be you guys, cause mine is pretty good," Eric said from the side. His schedule seemed somewhat similar to Alex's.

They went to the cafeteria to have their afternoon lunch and quickly returned to their room.

As if doing anything else would be sacrilegious, the 3 friends jumped onto their beds the moment they got to their room and started playing their games.

Alex changed his clothes to something freer and sat on his bed. He wanted to immediately go into the game as well. But, he couldn't.

Previously, he was just fascinated by the game and wanted to play it casually. Afterward, when he learned about pills earning a lot of money he wanted to play the game because he wanted the money.

But now, things were different. He could no longer 'want' the money. He needed it. So, he could no longer stay ignorant about the games.

The game and the game developers made almost no effort to teach the players about the game except for the bare-bones stuff so that the players could experience things on their own.

However, the players weren't as inconsiderate and openly posted stuff about what they learned or found. In fact, there was an entire forum about it.

There were a few pinned forum posts, but the very first one caught Alex's eyes. It simply had 2 words in the title, 'Don't Die.'

Curious he opened the post and learned shocking stuff, if you died in the game, your character would be deleted, and you would have to start all over again. Some comments said this might have been to give the players a 'reincarnation' feeling.

The next thing he learned was about cultivation. The cultivation was the level equivalent of these games. From what the players had learned, the cultivation realms were divided into 3 parts.

The self tempering realm, or also commonly known as the common Qi realm. The second was the True Qi realm, where one's common Qi elevated to become True Qi. The third one, being mostly hearsay, was the saint realm.

The true Qi realm had 5 realms each with 9 levels as well. They were True Disciple, True Master, True Lord, True King, and True Emperor.

The players did not know the saint realm as of yet. The highest known cultivation among the players was True Master 5th realm. Of Course, many were hiding their cultivation, playing in secret.

Chapter 10: More Learning

The next thing on the list was the grading system. The post gave general information about the different grades the cultivators used in 'Eternal Cultivation'.

There were 4 grades known to the public as of yet. They were Mortal, Earth, Heaven, and Immortal. Mortal was the lowest of the grades, and Immortal was the highest.

These grading systems applied to different items, formations, artifacts, pills, cultivation methods, techniques, and even a cultivator's talent itself.

"Huh? Talent too? But my talent is of 'God' grade. Is the existence of a God grade not known to the public yet?"

He looked through the comments but saw nothing about a God grade. There were however some comments that said they knew a higher grade existed, just that they didn't know the name of it.

"That must be the god grade. It can't be I am the only person with a God grade, right? There must be other people who have it. They must be keeping quiet about it for some reason." magic

Alex decided to not reveal anything about it either.

Alex remembered there not being a grade for the pill, but he might have been wrong about that. No one in the comment was contradicting the poster, so he was probably mistaken.

The last thing he decided to look at was about the alchemy itself. The game didn't allow recordings, so most of what was written here were hearsay.

They said alchemy was similar to cooking. You took a pot, lit the fire underneath, and put all your ingredients at a specific time. You took care of the temperature, and timing and a pill would be formed at the end.

Of course, it wasn't that simple. You also needed to know alchemy techniques as well to properly mix together all the Qi and energies in the ingredients so as to not burn them, or in worse cases, explode them.

Once you were successfully done, a pill would be formed.

Alex decided to check what pills usually sold for, but found the information unhelpful at the moment since he didn't know what any of the pills were or did.

"Guess I will check after I learn a bit more in-game."

After checking a few more things in the forum, he logged in to the game.

Alex opened his eyes in his small cottage. It was nearly 4 pm, so he sat down and decided to look at the different items he got from elder Lang.

There were 6 new items in the inventory now. The first 2 items were clothes. He decided to change into the sect's outfit.

He was now wearing a light green robe with bronze linings along the sides. He then looked at the other 4 items. One of those items was the token for the library.

The other 3 looked like a rectangular piece of paper, not unlike the one he wrote his answers in during the entrance test.

The system seemed to call it a talisman. He took one of the talismans out and decided to read it. The talisman had the same unreadable squiggly lines that had appeared on the talisman he wrote his answers in.

Just as last time, a panel popped up in front of him with all the information in the talisman. It seemed he had taken out the map of the Hong Wu Sect.

Hong Wu Sect had 6 mountains under it. Of the 6, the one closest to the gate was the outer disciple mountain.

The adjacent mountains to the outer disciple mountain were the Inner disciple mountain on the left, and the core disciple mountain on the right.

Opposite to Outer Disciple mountain was the mountain where the sect leader lived. The sect leader's mountain was surrounded by two other mountains that were named the alchemy gardens.

At the center of all the 6 mountains was the valley, which was the main grounds of the sect. This was where the sect disciples went to learn, train, make pills, buy pills, etc. The elder also lived in the valley.

"Wow, do I have to walk so much all the time? Going up and down the mountains would take a lot of time."

He was worried about how much time he would waste just walking around the sect.

He put back the map talisman and took out another talisman. This was the rulebook for the sect.

There were 4 rules for the outer sect disciples.

The outer sect disciples were not allowed to visit the inner sect and core disciples mountains without strict permission from the Elders. If they were found wandering in any of the other mountains, they would be punished accordingly.

The outer sect disciples were not allowed to go into the forbidden alchemy gardens and the sect leader's mountain. If they were found anywhere close, they would be immediately expelled.

The outer sect disciples had to earn at least 20 contribution points a week from the sect. Anything less, and they would be expelled.

Finally, the outer sect disciples were only allowed to perform alchemy at night time, when the inner sect disciples and core disciples would not be hindered.

"Wait, so I can't perform alchemy during the day at all?" he was surprised. He wanted to earn money through making pills, but if he could only do it at night time, when would he sleep?

"Oh wait, they did say you sleep outside while you play the game at night. Maybe this won't be a problem at all."

He was worried for a moment before sighing with relief. Another thing that confused him was the mention of 'contribution points'.

"What are contribution points? If I go by the name, they must be points I get by contribution to the sect. But what could an outer sect disciple do that counts as a contribution? I hope I won't have to sweep and pick up garbage."

There were a few other things in the handbooks that mentioned how everything in the sect cost contribution points, and that one would even go hungry without them.

He decided he would learn about it once he went to the sect valley.

