

Eternal Cultivation of Alchemy #Chapter 11: Alchemists - Read Eternal Cultivation of Alchemy Chapter 11: Alchemists

Chapter 11: Alchemists

After learning about the different rules and information in the rules talisman, he put it back into his inventory. He then took out the last talisman in the inventory.

The first thing it taught was how alchemy is performed. It went in-depth into the action behind the alchemy than what he had found on the Internet.

Basically, Alchemy was about the synergies between the various ingredients as they are slowly converted into a pill in the cauldron. The better the harmony between the different synergies in the ingredients, the better the quality of the pill would be.

He also learned why he hadn't seen a grade in the pill he had got.

"So I was right, there are no grades, but just unofficial grades." He thought.

A pill's efficiency was based on how well the harmony in the pill was. Pills below 10% harmony between the ingredients were called a failure.

At 10% harmony, a pill would be considered a mortal grade pill. They would barely be a pill and were considered the worst of the worst. Alchemists who could only make Mortal grade pills were called Mortal Alchemists.

At 25% harmony, a pill would elevate to earth grade. Once you started forming earth-grade pills on a regular basis, you were called Earth Alchemist. You were considered a proper alchemist once you became an Earth Alchemist.

At 50% harmony, a pill would elevate to heaven grade. Any alchemists that made even 10 heaven-grade pills were considered Heavenly Alchemists. Heavenly Alchemists were revered by everyone and were very hard to come by.

At 75% harmony, a pill would be considered an Immortal grade pill. But that was just a myth. It was near to impossible to form an Immortal grade pill, so Immortal Alchemists were nonexistent as well.

There were also other classifications to pills as well. These classifications were based on which realm of cultivators could use the pill.

The different types of pills were common pills, True pills, and saint pills. Only self tempering realm cultivators could use Common pill. Similarly, only True realm users could use True pills, and Saint realm users could use Saint pills.

He did not learn about the pills for the other realms. One would need to be in the realm or have crossed it to form those pills. magic

A True realm alchemist could make True Pills, and they could also make Common pills, but they could not make Saint pills. Forming pills required one to infuse qi into the ingredients to create harmony between them, and without having that Qi, one couldn't possibly make the pills for that realm.

There was a few other information in the talisman, such as different names and images for different alchemy materials. But Alex didn't need those.

Once he was done learning everything he could from the talisman he put it back. He took out the final item in the inventory. The metal token.

"Guess I should go and get a book from the library, huh. It's free after all. Such a shame I can only take an earth-grade book."

Alex stood up and got out of his cottage. There were dozens of different disciples walking around with different shades of green robes. Most of them were wearing the same light green robe as him.

'This must be the robes that outer disciple wore.' He thought to himself. He wondered if the other people wearing the different shades of green were the inner disciples and core disciples.

He didn't ask. He took out the map once more from the inventory and checked the direction to the valley.

Even though most of the way was just a dirt path, the way was very smooth. And since it was mostly downhill, he had no problem reaching the sect valley without losing a single breath.

There was a special scent in the air that he couldn't put a finger on. It was a weird mixture of flowers and a medicine-like scent.

"Is this from all the alchemy that is being done he-... Woah"

He was shocked to see how many people there were in the sect valley. It was almost like a festival was currently going on in the valley. There were hundreds of green robe-wearing disciples walking around in the valley.

There were dozens of large buildings, some spanning more ground than his massive University. He was truly shocked to see the sects valley.

"If the valley alone is this big, then how big is the entire sect?" he wondered.

He looked at his map again and found the direction to the library. After a short walk among the crowd, he quickly reached the library.

The library was a massive tower that went up at least 10 floors. The library was circular in design and was very wide as well.

He walked into the tower but was quickly stopped by the elder who was in charge of the library. The elder wore a dark green robe with silver linings. He was short and bald but had a long white flowing beard.

"Give me your nameplate before entering." He asked. Alex was startled. 'What is a nameplate?' he wondered.

"Good afternoon Elder. I am a new disciple who only entered the sect today. I do not know what this nameplate is. I wasn't given something like that." He truthfully answered the elder.

"Hmm... you only entered today, yet you are coming to the library already? Go away, kid. Go get your nameplate from the Disciple hall first before doing anything else in the sect." The elder said in an indifferent manner.

"Thank you for the information, Elder," Alex thanked the elder and walked away. Soon more disciples arrived at the library, and the elder went back to doing his job.

Alex opened his map once again and searched for the Disciple Hall on it. Once he found it, he went there as fast as he could.

Chapter 12:Disciple Hall

Alex made his way to another large building in the valley. This was the Disciple hall.

When he reached the Disciple Hall, once again, he was simply shocked at the scope of it. This building only had 3 floors but took up an enormous area.

He walked towards the building but stopped. In front of the building was a massive block of black stone at least 10 meters tall and wide, and 2 meters thick.

He looked at the front side of the block, and there were many little carvings on it. It looked like they were a list of names. At the top, in big letters, it said 'Contribution Ranking'.

Below it was the list of names. At the First spot on the ranking was someone named Wan Li, at the Second spot was someone called Zhou Mei, at the Third spot was someone called Fan Ruogang, so on and so forth.

There were quite possibly more than thousands of names in the block of black rock.

"Hmm... does Contribution Ranking mean this is a ranking based on how many contribution points a disciple has gotten?" he wondered.

He was truly surprised at seeing the rankings of the students in the sect. However, that wasn't what surprised him the most. The most surprising thing in this piece of ranking was the constant update.

The big black rock seemed to have magical properties as the rankings on the rock constantly changed, even changing the carvings magically.

"I wonder how they made a stone change forms so constantly like that." The game was truly amazing he thought.

After looking at the rankings list for a bit, he walked into the gate to the disciple hall behind it. There were dozens of people walking in and out of the disciple hall.

He didn't know what he was to do here, so he walked up to an elder and asked, "Good afternoon elder. I am new to the sect and require a nameplate. Would you mind showing me the way?"

The elder was a woman in her 40s. She wore the same green robes with silver linings as the other elders did. She seemed to be on the way out of the disciple hall when Alex met her.

"New disciple?" she looked at Alex up and down for a bit and said, "go stand in that line and tell the disciple working in the room that you need one." She said and walked out.

"Thank you, elder." He said even as she left and was already quite a distance away.

He went to stand in one of the lines. He saw quite a few darker green-robed disciples walk up and down the stairs, but not a single light-green-robed disciple like him went there.

"The upper floors must be for the inner sect disciples and core disciples." He assumed.

Soon, it was his turn to enter. He walked in and saw a small room with only one desk. Behind the desk was a disciple with an interest looking medallion on his hand.

However, when Alex realized that the green on his robe was darker than his own, he was shocked.

'An inner sect disciple?' he didn't think an inner sect disciple would be doing what he would normally assume to be an elder's work.

"Your nameplate." The disciple said with an irritated voice. He was annoyed that Alex was just standing there doing nothing.

"Oh, I don't have one. I am a new disciple, and am here to get one." Alex said in haste.

"Hmm... new disciple? Why are you here so late? Most already came by in the morning, and took their nameplate." The disciple started to question.

Alex gave an embarrassed smile. He couldn't say that he had to log out because he needed to go to his actual school, instead of this one.

"Doesn't matter." The disciple said as he took out a rectangular metal plate with an interesting design on it. The disciple held his medallion with his left hand, and the metal plate with his right hand, and asked,

"What is your name?"

"Ale— Yu Ming" Alex nearly said his real name out loud. Thankfully the disciple didn't catch that.

"Yu Ming... okay." He brought the metal plate to his forehead and kept it there for a bit. After a while, he brought down the metal plate and handed it to Alex.

"See if anything is wrong." The disciple asked.

Alex tried to do what the disciple did, and tried to bring the metal plate to his forehead. But, before he could even do that, a panel appeared in front of him. magic

[Hong Wu Sect, Outer Sect Disciple 'Yu Ming'. Contribution: 0]

He looked at the information for a few seconds. 'Hmm... so I have no contribution points at the moment huh. Makes sense.' He then closed the panel and looked towards the inner sect disciple as he said,

"Yes. Everything is fine. The information in this is accurate."

"Alright." The disciple said as he brought his hand to a nearby drawer where there were many storage bags. He casually placed his hands on top of one and brought out 3 objects.

He handed all 3 of the object to Alex. Alex took the items and looked at them curiously. He focused on the pink pill, and a simple information panel popped up.

[Minor Healing Pill: 16%

Heals minor injuries within seconds.]

'Oh! It's a healing pill. 16% harmony so, it's a mortal grade pill huh.' Alex thought as he looked at the pill. He then focused on the white pill. Similar to the pink pill, a panel popped up.

[Qi Improvement Pill: 19%

Improves cultivation speed by 19% for 12 hours

]

'Hmm... 19% improvement of cultivation speed? Does that mean I gain 24 Qi every minute, instead of 20 Qi now?' he wondered.

Next, he looked at the white stone in his hand.

Chapter 13:Alchemy Achievements

The white stone was about 3cm by 2cm by 1cm in volume. It was a rectangular piece of stone that was very translucent. While the overall stone was white, if one looked carefully, it had a cloudy texture inside it.

Alex had never seen anything like this before. 'It can't also be a pill, can it?' he thought. He focused on the stone for a bit before a panel popped up. The panel only had three words on it.

[Common Spirit Stone]

'Common Spirit Stone? What is that?' he was even more confused now. He wanted to come back to the game fast, so he had only learned what he thought was necessary to him, and not bothered with the nitty-gritty stuff.

"What is this?" he asked as he picked up the common spirit stone.

"That's a spirit stone." The inner sect disciple said without missing a beat.

"What's a spirit stone. " Alex continued to ask.

"What? Have you never seen a spirit stone?" the disciple asked with a questioning look on his face.

"No. This is my first time hearing about one, let alone seeing it." Alex answered truthfully.

"Oh. This is a common spirit stone. The inside of it is full of Qi that you can absorb while cultivating to improve your cultivation. Or, you can also choose to use it as a currency as most of the cultivators only exchange stuff in spirit stones." The disciple was smiling while answering this. It seemed it was his first time meeting a cultivator that did not know what a spirit stone was.

"Go now. You are taking up the line. You can come back exactly a month from now to get another [Minor Healing Pill], [Qi Increasing Pill] and a spirit stone." The inner sect disciple ignored Alex and started calling the next person forward.

Alex silently put the 3 items into his inventory. He thanked the disciple and walked out of the room.

Now that he had a nameplate, he could go get a book from the library. So, he headed towards the library.

He was just walking out of the Disciple Hall when he noticed something. It was the big black rock that kept the rankings for all the disciples in the sect.

Even the back of it had a list of all the students in the ranking, ones that were constantly changing every second. The stone was still as magical as ever.

But there was something different about this ranking. For one, the ranking no longer said 'Contribution points' but instead said 'Alchemy Achievements'.

Alex quickly went to the front side of it to check if the ranking was still there, and it was. It seemed the rock showed two different rankings, and he had missed the backside because he was too hasty at going to the disciple hall.

He went back to check the names on the backside. Wan Li was still in the first place, Zhou Mei was still in second place, however, Fan Ruogang was not in third place but instead the fourth place.

The third place was instead occupied by someone named Song Zun. The name Song Zun was nowhere to be found in the contribution point's list's top 20 names.

This made Alex quite befuddled. The term 'Alchemy Achievements' was very vague for Alex to know what the rankings were based on.

"Guess I will learn it later, " he thought and decided to go to the library. As he was about to leave, a name caught his eye.

Yu Ming.

After a while, he left. He made his way back to the library where the elder was taking in the different disciple's nameplates while giving others back.

He walked up to the elder with a nameplate in his hand.

"Nameplate," the elder said absentmindedly. Alex handed him his new nameplate.

The elder instinctively took the nameplate and brought it up to his head, and frowned. He jolted out of his absentmindedness and looked at Alex.

"Hey boy. Why don't you have a single contribution point?" he asked.

"Elder, I am new to the sect. I joined today, so I haven't done anything to earn contribution points yet." Alex said nervously. Was this man going to turn him back? He was worried.

"If you don't have contribution points, then you can't enter boy. Everything in here costs contribution points to borrow. The better the book, the more it costs. Even the cheapest ones cost at least 100 points. " magic

"So go to the contribution hall and take some missions. Earn some points, and only then come back. Doing anything else will be a waste of your time." The man said as he handed Alex back his nameplate.

Alex didn't immediately take back his nameplate. Instead, he started saying,

"Elder, I might not have any contribution points at the moment. However ..." he opened his inventory and brought out the metal token, "I have this. I was told that I could pick any Earth grade or lower book for free from the Library."

"Hmm..." the elder squinted. "A silver library token?" the elder was surprised. He didn't even see a bronze token normally, but to think a silver token was here.

"How did you get this boy?" he asked Alex.

"Elder Lang gave this to me this morning." He replied truthfully.

"An outer sect disciple getting a silver library token huh. You must've done very well in the entrance exam then. " The elder mused. He then handed back the nameplate and the silver token and said,

"Alright, you can go in. Since you are an outer sect disciple, you can go anywhere up to the 5th floor. Pick whatever book you want in there. As long as the book is earth grade or lower, you can borrow it for a week for free."

Chapter 14: The Library

"Remember, you have 1 hour to look for whatever book you want. After 1 hour has passed, you will have to come out. If you stay in there for more than an

hour, you will be fined for 10 contribution points for every 10 extra minutes you spend in there."

The elder gave him the last warning before sending him in.

Alex went into the library and was immediately amazed. The number of books in there was simply astronomical. There were dozens upon dozens of shelves each holding at least a thousand books of their own.

Alex was surprised at how many different books there were inside the library. "Do people really read all of these?" he wondered. He looked at the first book on the nearest shelf to him.

It was called [Sleeping Mantis Scythe]. He read a bit to learn what it was about. The [Sleeping Mantis Scythe] was a mortal ranked fighting technique that was specifically made for scythe users.

The technique could only be used if one had a scythe. Alex was surprised to even find a fighting technique here. He had assumed that there would only be Alchemy-related techniques in Hong Wu Sect's library.

He returned the first book to where it was and checked the second book. The second book was also [Sleeping Mantis Scythe].

"Huh... what's going on?" he was taken aback a bit. He looked at the third book, and it was still the [Sleeping Mantis Scythe].

The fourth, the fifth, all the way up to the twelfth were all [Sleeping Mantis Scythe]. magic

Only on the thirteenth one did he find a new book called [Flickering Leopard]. This was a mortal-grade technique that could make a cultivator run as fast as a leopard could for small bursts of time.

There were once more 12 different [Flickering Leopard] books in the library. He finally understood why that was.

"I see. So they have a dozen copies of each book. They must've done it so that a student can borrow a book for a week, and the other student can also take the same book at the same time, and not worry about waiting for another week before getting a chance to borrow the said book."

He then went on to look at the rest of the books on the ground floor. All of the books on the ground floor were of mortal grade. So, he decided to skip them and went up to the first floor.

The first floor had some good techniques, but they were all still of mortal grade.

"Is there no techniques for alchemy here? Why are all the books related to fighting?" he wondered. He wanted to learn alchemy, but somehow he could only find battle techniques in the library.

Finally, on the second floor did he find his first alchemy technique. It was a mortal grade technique called the [Swirling Mists] technique. It focused on moving the ingredients inside the cauldron in a spiral manner before condensing them to form a pill.

The technique felt hard, and not so useful to Alex. It was nothing but a fancy method of forming pills, and not very helpful to the entire alchemy itself.

He left the technique where it was and walked around the 2nd floor looking for other different alchemy techniques. He found a few others, but most of them were either forming pills or increasing their efficiency at the last second. While they did look promising, they were all mortal-grade techniques, so Alex skipped on them.

Finally, walking up to the third floor, he saw his first earth-grade technique. Granted it was a battle technique, he was still happy to see an earth-grade technique after a literal slew of mortal-grade techniques.

He walked around the third floor and found a particularly weird technique. The technique was a mortal grade technique, but, it was neither a battle technique nor an alchemy-related technique. It was actually a formation-building technique.

He read it with particular interest. The formation was called [Qi Gathering Formation]. Its function was to gather Qi from spirit stones placed inside the formation to a single spot and make it many times faster for the cultivator to absorb the qi in them.

Alex liked the idea of having a formation technique, but he needed to get an alchemy technique first.

"I should earn a bunch of contribution points and come back to get these books," he said to himself. He searched around for other books.

He found another unusual book. This time it was an artifact refining technique. While artifacts did sell as well as pills in the outside world, Alex would still choose an alchemy book right now.

After getting an alchemy technique, and getting into an alchemy-focused sect, it would be a joke if he decided to learn artifact refining technique here.

He couldn't find any good techniques on the third floor, so he went up to the fourth floor. This was the last floor he was allowed to enter. If he didn't find any good techniques here as well, he would have to leave empty-handed.

His one-hour time was close to being up, so he hastily started looking for good alchemy techniques. Most if not all of the techniques on the fourth floor were of the earth grade, so he didn't have to worry about getting a low-grade technique.

He searched and searched, but couldn't find one he was satisfied with. Finally, he found one but it was a mortal grade technique. He was about to instinctively skip it, but he stopped.

It was a mortal-grade technique, but the reason why Alex was interested was simple. He read the techniques name,

" Flame Mastery Scripture. Grade Mortal. Growth." That was it. Similar to his amazing mortal grade [Alchemy God's Knowledge] technique, this was also a Growth type technique.

Chapter 15:Flame Mastery Scripture

[Flame Mastery Scripture

Grade: Mortal (Growth)

Freely control flames to your wishes.]

Alex read the panel that had popped up in front of him. The physical book itself only mentioned the technique being in Mortal grade. However, when he viewed it through the system, it actually mentioned a growth element along with the grade as well.

His technique hadn't grown past level 1 so he still didn't know what growth exactly did to the techniques, but if he were to go by how good [Alchemy God's Knowledge] was, [Flame Mastery Scripture] would also be a great technique.

An hour had passed since he had entered here. So, he took the [Flame Mastery Scripture] and left the fourth floor. He soon reached the entrance to the library.

He went to the elder and said, "Elder, I wish to take this with me." He brought the scripture forward and handed it to the elder.

The elder took the book and looked at it for a few seconds. He was surprised. He turned to look at Alex and asked, "Are you sure you want this? If you have run out of time, you can come back tomorrow to check for more."

He didn't think Alex would actually bring out a Mortal grade technique when he was free to choose any earth grade technique.

"It's an okay elder. I didn't run out of time. I chose to take it." Alex insisted on taking the book.

"Very well then. I guess this is not a bad book. It's at least one of the better ones in the Mortal grade. Especially since you can use it in both Alchemy and Battle." The Elder said.

'I knew it. So I in fact can use it for both.' He thought.

"Alright, give me your token, and nameplate." The elder said as he brought forth his hands.

Alex opened his inventory and took out both the token and nameplate. He then handed it to the elder.

The elder took the nameplate to his head and closed his eyes. Then he took out a talisman from somewhere and brought it to his forehead as well.

"Alright. You can go now. I have recorded your information for today. You can have the book for a week. A week from now you will have to return the book in perfect condition."

"If you fail to return the book in time, you will have to pay 50 contribution points for each additional day you don't return it. And if you somehow end up destroying the book, you will have to pay the book's worth in contribution points." The elder gave him a warning as he returned his nameplate. magic

"Thank you, Elder" Alex walked out of the library into the crowded streets of the sect valley.

"Hmm... Oh! It's nearly 7. Wow, have I already been in the game for 3 hours?" Alex didn't want to return to his cottage as it was quite far, and it was an uphill journey.

"What happens if I logout out of the streets?" he wanted to try it, but quickly dismissed the idea.

"No, I won't be able to explain to people how I disappear and appear so randomly. Let's just find an empty spot and log out." Alex walked to the side of a building, to a dark alley that wasn't populated.

He looked around to see if anyone was there, and once he saw no one was visible, he logged out.

Alex got out of his bed and waited for the others to log out as well. Once they all logged out, they went to have their dinner and returned.

As soon as they got back, they jumped onto their beds and logged into the game. Alex didn't hesitate to do so either.

Once he logged in he found himself in the same dark alley he had logged out of. He walked out of the alley in the main streets.

He opened his map and looked for something. He needed contribution points for everything in the sect, to begin with, so he had decided to earn some right now.

According to the elder in the library, you could earn contribution points by doing missions given out by the sect. So, he was now looking for the 'Contribution Hall' on the map.

He soon found it on the map. It was about 5 minutes walk away from where he was, so he started walking towards it.

The sky was dark now, and the star had come out. The moon was a bit above the horizon too. The sect valley had started glowing up in a yellowish tinge with all the different lanterns they had put out to light the streets, and buildings.

The night was just as beautiful as the day, perhaps even more so.

Although night had come, somehow, the disciples had grown in number in the streets compared to the day. Finally, Alex reached the Contribution Hall.

In front of him was a massive building with huge corridors, jam-packed with disciples. The contribution hall had 3 floors as well, separated for the outer sect, the inner sect, and the core disciples.

He walked into the massive corridors of the contribution hall and found multiple boards hung up on each side of the wall. Each with texts written on it.

Although the board looked like a normal wooden board, for some reason, this board also had the same magical property as the rankings rock in that it too had magically appearing and vanishing texts.

He started looking through the texts and started reading them.

[Help Sweep the sect valley - 5 points]

[Buy foods from the city - 3 points]

[Run errands for inner sect disciple Gu Zan - 7 points]

[Help make ...]

So on and so forth. There were thousands of menial tasks that one could do here to get some contribution points. Alex started to look through them all.

Chapter 16: Taking A Mission

The tasks in the contribution hall were mostly given out by either the sect, the inner sect disciples, or the core disciples. There was not a single task that gave more than 10 points in the whole board.

After looking at the different tasks, Alex found that there were only 2 tasks that truly interested him. The first one was to kill and bring back some monster

corpses, along with any other objects he found. The second one was to become an alchemist's aid.

The first one gave points depending on how strong the monster was. While the second one said to give hourly points.

He wanted to take them both. He looked around to see if there were anyone that he could ask to take the missions. But to his surprise, there was no one.

"Huh... how am I supposed to take the missions then?" he wondered. He looked around to see what the other disciples were doing. Most of them were just standing near the boards doing nothing.

After a while, they would leave, which confused Alex even more.

He stopped one of the disciples that were leaving, and asked them,

"Hello brother. Can you please tell me how I can take these missions?"

The disciple looked back, and asked in a confused manner, "is this your first time?"

"Yes, I only joined the sect today," Alex answered without hesitation.

"Oh. It's very easy. Take your nameplate and put it on one of those holders there. You can choose up to 3 missions to take at once." The disciple answered and left.

Alex looked towards the board once more, and this time saw multiple rectangular cutouts at the bottom of the board.

"Are those indentations for the nameplate?" he thought. He walked up to one of the open ones and put his nameplate in there. Suddenly, a panel appeared in front of him with all the different tasks available on the board.

For some reason, however, neither of the 2 tasks he wanted to take was on the task list. "What's going on?" he wondered.

He searched for a few more minutes, but he still couldn't find one. Confused he decided to ask someone again.

He stopped a female disciple who was just leaving and asked,

"Hello sister, can I ask you a question?"

The girl seemed to be an outer sect disciple but had an air of elegance to her. She didn't seem to be much older than him but seemed very mature for her age.

"What do you want to ask junior brother?" she asked.

"You see, I wanted to take those 2 missions, but I can't find them anywhere when I put my nameplate in the carvings. Can you tell me what's wrong?" he asked while pointing to the 2 missions he wanted to take.

"Hmm... " she turned to look at what the 2 missions he wanted to take were. When she finally saw the two tasks, she laughed a little.

"Of course, you won't find them, junior brother, they are permanent mission after all." She said as if the information she just gave was a matter of fact.

"Permanent?" he looked confused.

"What? Don't tell me you have never seen a permanent mission before?" she asked. It was her time to be surprised.

"I am new to the sect, so I don't know what that means, sister." He said.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Permanent missions just mean that anyone can earn points from them, and you don't have to take the missions here. They are usually the ones where the points are not set. For example, you can just go to the sect market, a few minutes away from here, and sell monster corpses directly. "

"You don't have to go through the hassle of taking the task and only then going to sell the corpses every time you want to sell them. Similarly, you can just go to the Alchemy Hall and tell them you want to be an alchemist's aid. "

"You only need to take the missions for specific ones where there would be a contradiction if 2 people were to do the same mission at the same time. I hope that helped junior brother. Now if you will excuse me, I have a mission to complete." She said as she left the contribution hall. magic

Alex stood there and looked at the board once more. "So I don't need to take these two missions huh. Then should I take something else?"

He started looking through the mission board once more. Finally, something caught his eyes.

[Find a dwarf berry for inner sect disciple Kong Yuhan: 8 contribution points]

"A dwarf berry? Isn't that what I got from the eastern forest?" he quickly opened his inventory to check. A Dwarf Berry was in fact in there.

"Alright then, I will take this mission." He put his nameplate back in the carvings of the mission board and quickly navigated through loads of missions to find this specific mission.

The nameplate shined a little to inform that the mission had been accepted. Alex looked back to the board and found the mission was no longer there.

He looked at his nameplate, something more seemed to have been added to it. He focused on the nameplate a bit, and a new set of information popped up.

[Hong Wu Sect

Outer Sect Disciple

Yu Ming

Contribution Points: 0

Go to the inner sect disciple mountain, and look for Kong Yuhan after you have completed the mission.

Reward: 8 contribution points

]

"The inner sect disciple mountain huh. Where is it again?" Alex opened his map to look for the direction to the inner sect disciples mountain.

The mountain was southwest from he was currently. He walked out of the contribution hall into the brilliantly lit road of the sect. He looked around in admiration at how good everything looked.

After making sure everything was set, he made his way to the inner sect disciple's mountain.

Chapter 17: Mission Complete

Alex walked slowly in the beautifully lit streets of the sect valley. Hundreds of other disciples were walking around doing their own things.

They had also taken missions from the contribution hall and were on their way to do different tasks. He realized, however, that there were a lot fewer inner sect disciples and core disciples around at night times.

"Is it because they only work during the day, and need to sleep at night?" he wondered. He felt bad for the outer sect disciples who weren't free enough to do what they wanted, whenever they wanted.

After remembering he was also an outer sect disciple, he just laughed and shook his head.

After a while, he had come to the entrance to the inner sect mountain.

"Do I just go in?" he wondered. The rulebook clearly mentioned that going to the inner sect mountain for the outer sect disciples was forbidden.

"How am I going to complete my mission then?" he got confused. He looked at the information about the nameplate, and it clearly mentioned going to the inner sect disciple's mountain and looking for Kong Yuhan.

"Whatever. If I get in trouble, I will just tell them I did what the mission told me to." He started walking inside.

"Hey you, stop." A voice came from the side. Hidden in the darkness near the entrance was a small cottage-like open building. A man walked out of the building and stood in front of him.

The man looked at his clothing and asked, "Aren't you an outer sect disciple? What are you doing here?"

Alex looked at the man carefully and realized he was wearing a green robe with silver linings along the side. 'An Elder!' he was surprised.

"Good evening, Elder. I came here to complete my mission." He told the elder honestly.

"Hmm... Mission? Let me check your nameplate." He asked for the nameplate. Alex swiftly handed the nameplate to the elder.

The elder brought the nameplate to his forehead and closed his eyes for a few seconds. Once he had verified that Alex had indeed come here with a mission, he took out a medallion from his inner robes.

Alex looked at the medallion curiously. It looked similar to the one the disciple in the disciple hall had, but yet somehow different. This medallion seemed to be made up of expensive material.

The elder brought the medallion to his forehead and closed his eyes once more.

After a few seconds, he opened his eyes and spoke, " Wait here, I have called Kong Yuhan. He will be here soon."

This surprised Alex. 'He called the disciple from here? Does that medallion function like a phone?' he wondered. A few minutes later Alex saw someone coming down.

The disciple who just came down was a man in his early 20s and was wearing the inner sect disciple's robes. He was at least a head taller than Alex and had better muscles as well. magic

His hair somehow seemed blue, even in the darkness. 'This must be Kong Yuhan' Alex thought.

"Disciple Yuhan greets elder Zhang. Why has elder Zhang summoned me?" he spoke in a very formal manner. Alex focused on the newcomer a bit more to see if his hair was really blue or not.

'Woah' he got surprised. Something unexpected popped up. Above Kong Yuhan's head, a set of words popped up.

[Organ Tempering 9th Realm]

'Wow, that's 2 entire realms ahead of me.' Alex was surprised. He then tried to see if it worked on the elder too. Something did pop up, but it just said [Mortal]

'Mortal?' that was impossible. He didn't believe anyone who was still a mortal could be part of the sect, let alone be an elder. 'Does that mean that he is so strong that I can't even tell what realm he is in?' that was the only logical answer for Alex.

"This outer sect disciple is here to complete the mission you had given to the contribution hall." The elder pointed towards Alex as he spoke to Kong Yuhan.

Kong Yuhan's eyes popped up a bit when he heard that. He looked at Alex with a sudden turn of his head. Inside his eyes, Alex could see a mixture of shock, excitement, and hope.

He practically ran as he came to stand in front of Alex, and asked with a shaky voice, "Ju-Junior Brother, Is- is it true that you found a dwarf berry?" he asked.

Alex didn't expect that an inner sect disciple would be this excited for something that grew in the forest nearby. He brought out the berry from his inventory and handed it to Kong Yuhan.

"Brother Kong, I hope this is what you were searching for. "

Kong Yuhan looked at the berry in his hand absentmindedly. Only after a while did he realize what he was holding.

"Oh, OH!, yes. This is exactly what I had been searching for." He said happily. " A 10-year-old Dwarf Berry." Kong Yuhan seemed to have not expected such an old berry.

He slowly started walking back towards his home.

"Disciple Kong." A stern voice came from the side that jolted Kong Yuhan out of his trance.

"Yes Elder?" he asked the elder.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" the elder said as he gestured towards the standing Alex.

Kong Yuhan looked back and immediately started apologizing. " I'm so sorry, junior disciple. I was so happy to get the berry, that I forgot my manner. Here, give me your nameplate, let me pay you for the berry."

Alex handed him his nameplate. Kong Yuhan took out his own nameplate and put them together, and pressed them to his head. After a while, he returned Alex's nameplate back to him.

Alex checked the nameplate.

[Hong Wu Sect, Outer Sect Disciple, Yu-Ming. Contribution Points: 10]

"Hmm... Brother Kong, there seem to be 2 more points than the reward in the mission." He said.

"That's intentional. I had put up that mission almost a month ago. I was stuck in a bottleneck forever and needed a 2-year-old berry. They were very hard to come by. However, you brought me one, that too a 10-year-old berry. Of course, I am going to give you a little extra."

Chapter 18:Flame Mastery Practice

Alex stood there stupefied looking at the 10 points in his nameplate. An outer sect disciple was required to earn at least 20 points every week. He had earned 10 in less than an hour.

"Good night elder." He said as he left the mountain back towards the sect valley. Along the way, he started to wonder.

"Do I go earn some more points? Or do I got to learn the flame controlling technique I got from the library?"

He was in a dilemma. "Hmm... I already have some contribution points, it might be more useful to have at least one technique before I go to aid any alchemists." magic

"Alright. That settles it then. I'm going to learn the flame controlling technique." He said and started walking back to his cottage in the outer sect disciple's mountain.

He soon reached his cottage and opened his door. To his surprise, there was light inside his cottage. "Did someone come in?" he wondered.

There was a lantern hanging in the middle of the empty room, illuminating his room with flickering light. There was no one inside.

'Who lit the lantern?' he thought.

He sat down on his small bed and took out the technique from his inventory. He looked at it once more.

[Flame Mastery Scripture]

As he focused on the book a little more, a panel popped up.

[Do you want to learn]

He instinctively brought up his hands to click the 'Learn' button, but stopped. 'Wait. What happens if I learn it? do I lose the book?'

Every cultivation method and technique he had learned up to this point had been from the inventory. And after learning them, the source had always disappeared.

He started to get worried. If he really did lose the book, he would have to pay a massive amount of fines to the sect in the form of contribution points. He didn't want that.

'Why don't I learn it like everyone else then?' he flipped the book open and started to read it.

The book seemed to be written in illegible alphabets, but for some reason, when he saw it, he understood what they meant. In fact, reading these illegible words was much faster in his opinion.

Within 15 minutes, he finished reading the whole book.

Alex looked at the intact book in his hand and sighed in relief. "Thank god that worked."

"Techniques," he said as a panel of learned techniques opened in front of him with 2 items in it. The first one was obviously the [Alchemy God's Knowledge]. The second one was the newly added [Flame Mastery Scripture].

He clicked on it and opened its description.

[Flame Mastery Scripture: Level 1

Grade: Mortal (Growth)

Level 1:

Unlocked: Can freely control existing fire and influence its temperature

Level 2 locked.

]

He had yet to learn how he could level up a skill. He looked at the description and realized he needed fire to control it in the first place. Thankfully, the fire was everywhere during the nighttime.

All the lanterns around the sect were lit with fire. Same for the lantern in his room. He stood up and slowly brought down the lantern from the very low ceiling.

He put it on the ground and took off the lantern's covering. Inside was a metal plate with a ball of fire floating on top of it.

"Wow. How does this work?" he wondered. There was a lot of magical stuff in the sect, and he was happy to see them.

"Okay. So how do I use the technique?" he wondered. He somehow hadn't thought of this point.

"Flame Mastery Scripture" he shouted hoping to get a reaction. Nothing happened. He looked at the technique list to see if there was a 'use' button. There wasn't.

He was now confused. How was he to use a technique then?

"Hmm... if the developers really went for as much realism in the game as possible, then there is no way using a technique should be so simple."

Not even fighting was simple in this game. To even fight a normal snake he had to...

"Wait. What happens if I go into that weird time slowed state."

He looked at the flame and started to focus. Suddenly, time started to slow down. The small ball of fire floating in the center looked ever so vibrant. It's light shining brighter than ever.

He could feel the increase in the temperature of his surrounding, and how the hot air was moving up. He could smell the minute particles in the air burning and leave an almost unnoticeable smell.

He ignored all of those senses and focused only on the fire. He looked at the fire and saw it the same way as he ever did.

But, for some reason now, he could feel the fire as well. It was almost like he could touch the fire, without actually touching it. He slowly brought forth his hand and stopped a few centimeters away from the fire.

As if he was born with the knowledge, he started moving a sort of energy in his body. "Is that my Qi?" he wondered. His Qi was all over the body in small amounts in every single vessel.

He instinctively started moving the Qi in a certain path. Within a few seconds, the Qi had gathered in one spot, his hands. He could see the space in front of his hands fluctuate, as tiny invisible Qi came out of them.

As the Qi touched the fire, he thought of turning the ball of fire into a candle flame-like oval shape. As if understanding his commands, the fire slowly started to change its form. It started twisting and turning until it finally came to a stop in the oval shape of a candle flame.

Chapter 19: More Practice

Alex looked at the oval flame and thought, "Did I do it?" suddenly, he lost his concentration, and the oval flame went back to being a ball of flames.

"Awww... I think that was it. Let's try once more." He tried to do it once more. He went back to the slowed time state and began to feel all the Qi inside his body.

He moved the Qi according to what the technique required until it appeared out of his palms. As the invisible Qi touched the flames, he had to just think of what he wanted to do with the flames and it would happen.

For now, he could only change the shape of the flames. That transformation too took about 5 seconds to complete. He slowly did it more and more, until he was able to change the shapes within 2 seconds.

Of course, the shapes he could create were rudimentary shapes, like Oval, or spherical, or spiral, and other simpler shapes. Making figures out of the fire was impossible for him to do right now.

After becoming a little more proficient in the shape-changing aspect of the technique, he moved on to the temperature aspect of it.

Once again, he focused and brought his Qi into his hands and sent it to the fire. However, instead of thinking of a new shape, he thought about increasing the temperature of the flame.

"The flame's highest temperature is 816 Celsius, while the lowest temperature is at 316 Celsius." He could somehow instinctively tell the temperature of the flames.

He was unsure if he got this ability from the [Alchemy God's Knowledge] or [Flame Mastery Scripture]. If he had to guess, he would guess the second one.

He thought of increasing the lowest temperature, and decreasing the highest temperature so that the temperature would be a constant 500 Celsius everywhere.

The minute color differences in the fire suddenly turned to a steady color with no changes. The fire also stopped fluctuating in temperature as it came to be a steady 500 C. magic

He could feel it. He had succeeded. He quickly focused back and didn't let his concentration waver. Slowly he started to change the temperature.

He made the temperature of the fire go down to 300 C. He succeeded at it. He then made the temperature go up to 900 C. He also succeeded in that.

He brought the temperature back to 500 C. Now, he tried to change the shape of the fire, while keeping the temperature constant.

He tried to turn the fire into a spiral shape but quickly lost his control over the temperature. As soon as he brought his concentration back on the temperature, he lost his control on the shape of the fire.

"Doing both at once is going to be really hard, isn't it?" he thought. He slowly started to train. Through multiple failures, he was finally successful at forming his first oval flame with 500 Celsius.

He practiced for an hour. He was getting the hang of the technique.

He practiced for another hour, he was getting better at the technique.

By the third hour, he could change both the shape and the temperature into whatever he desired within seconds. While he couldn't do a lot with the shape, he could still make a lot of geometrical figures without a problem.

He tried to control the fire once more. He tried to move his Qi to his hands but realized he couldn't anymore. He didn't have any Qi left.

"I should have know when I ran out of my Qi." He thought. Unlike his excess Qi, his normal amounts of Qi weren't shown by the system, and he had to know when he was full or low on it just by the feeling of it.

He put the cover on the lantern and hung the lantern back on the ceiling. He then sat on the bench to refill his qi. He slowly focused on his breathing, and before he knew it, he was asleep. He was once more unconsciously cultivating.

However, he didn't immediately start to collect Qi this time. He had to first fill his empty body before he could store the Qi for breakthroughs.

At exactly, 6:30 AM he woke up. He was still in the game, sitting on the bed.

"Did I fall asleep once more?" he wondered. "Did I cultivate without knowing once more?" He thought as he quickly opened his status to check.

[Player Name: Yu Ming

Cultivation: Muscle Tempering 6th Realm (35000 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: 72709

]

"The next breakthrough is at 40K Qi huh. That's quite a lot." Now that his Qi was back to full, he wanted to try the Flame mastery once more. But to his dismay, the lantern flame had gone out.

"Guess I will just leave then." He quickly logged out of the game.

He freshened up and went to have his breakfast with the rest of his roommates. Afterward, none of them went back to the game as it was the first day of university classes.

Alex went to the university at 11 after having his lunch. Nothing special happened to the entire class. The classes were mostly introduction-focused, and less about studying on the first day.

He found out that Matt and Eric shared at least one course with him each. All of the classes today were the economic and business courses, so he wasn't really excited about them.

After the classes ended at 3 PM, he went to the cafeteria to have his afternoon lunch and went back to his room. He changed his clothes back to his casual shirt and pants, and without missing a beat, jumped back into the game.

Chapter 20:Sect Market

Alex opened his eyes back in his cottage. He looked up at the ceiling, but as expected, the lantern was still out.

"I should find other sources of fire. Maybe I should just go buy some matches or whatever equivalent this game has for making fires."

He stood up and walked outside. He saw the same scene as yesterday. Dozens of disciples going on about their daily lives.

He didn't need to open his map this time, he knew how to get to the sect valley. After a few minutes of walking, he reached the sect valley.

He still wasn't used to seeing hundreds of disciples running about in what was basically a small-sized city. He had two things to do here today.

The first thing he needed to do was sell all those monsters he killed in the forest the other day. According to the female senior, he met yesterday, he had to sell the items in the sect market. magic

He opened the map to check where it was. He quickly located it next to the Disciple Hall on the map, so he walked towards there.

In just a few minutes, he was in front of the sect market. Looking at what was in front of him truly surprised him, as it was nowhere close to what he had been expecting.

He had been expecting a massive building just like all the other buildings he had been to. Except, the sect market was nothing like it.

In front of him was a long road that was at least 200 m long. And all over the side of the roads were disciples laying objects in front of them, trying to sell them.

There were 3 or 4 properly set stalls that Alex could tell were set up by the sect itself as the owner of those stalls had silver linings in their green robes. They were run by sect elders.

He walked up to one of the stalls. There were a few disciples in front of him waiting for their turn to buy or sell their stuff. Eventually, his turn arrived.

"Are you here to buy or sell?" the elder in the stall asked. The elder seemed quite old, at least in his late 40s. There were signs of wrinkles on his face, and his beard and hair had a lot of white streaks on them.

"I am here to sell, Elder," Alex replied respectfully.

"All right, give me what you have." The elder said as he prepared the table in front of him for the items.

"Umm, Elder, I am here to sell monster corpses, so this table won't be enough," Alex said seeing the little space on top of the table.

"Oh." The elder said as his eyes perked up a bit. He brought out a small storage bag and handed it to Alex. " Alright then, put them here."

Alex took the storage bag and opened his inventory. Aside from the alchemy materials, there were exactly 27 items related to his hunt in the eastern forest. 12 of those were corpses. 11 Skin tempering realm corpses, and 1 Muscle Tempering realm corpses.

He didn't know if the other materials were alchemy materials or not, so he decided to just sell them. The monster cores as well would give him too low Qi if he ate it like a pill, so he decided to sell it too.

He wanted to eat the earth snake's core, but the snake was only at Muscle Tempering 3rd Realms so he didn't bother to. Even if he got 2 realms worth of Qi, that was just a night of sleep for him.

All in all, he sold all 27 items. He put them all in the storage bag and returned them to the elder.

The elder took the bag and looked at it. Within seconds, his eyes went wide. Most of the disciples that came to sell monster corpses only had 2 or 3 at most.

Since the sect was alchemy-focused, the disciples usually didn't bother killing monsters and just bought the materials instead. However, this disciple had just brought back 12 corpses and was also selling their cores and materials.

"Are you sure you want to sell it all?" the elder asked. Most disciples tended to keep the cores and materials as they were important alchemy materials. The elder was surprised to see a disciple that was selling it all.

"Yes," Alex said without hesitation. He had no idea about the usefulness of the cores and materials, as he still believed alchemy only needed plants and herbs.

The elder looked at the items he had on him and started calculating. He spoke in a low voice, "Let's see. 11 points for 11 corpses, 5 points for 1 corpse, 14 points for the cores, 10 points for the other core, 14 points for the material, and 10 points for the venom."

"So, a total of... 78 points" the elder stopped mumbling.

"Give me your nameplate," he asked Alex.

Alex was ready with the nameplate, so he handed it to him. Unlike the other elders and disciples, he didn't bring the nameplate to his forehead, and instead just kept it in his hand.

"Alright, here you go. You have been credited 78 contribution points. Good job young man." The elder congratulated him and handed his nameplate back.

'Huh! 78 points? How?' he was dumbfounded. He looked at his nameplate, and he indeed had 88 total points now. 'Damn, so I can just sell monster corpses here, and I can get enough points to survive for the week, huh' he thought to himself.

He took his nameplate and left the stall. He was about to leave the sect market altogether when he noticed something at one of the street vendors.

Something had caught his eyes. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say, something had caught his ... feelings?