

Hunter 22

Chapter 22: Alchemy!

Jake entered the cave, looking around at all the different fungi and moss, deciding to Identify the infamous blue mushrooms first. When he did it before, he just got back a message saying [Mushroom], so he kind of expected more. Which it expectedly did.

[Bluebright Mushroom (Common)] – A poisonous blue mushroom that emits blue light. While it is not poisonous to touch, the juices found within are highly toxic. Often used for lighting due to it only requiring mana to sustain itself.

Knowing the name of the blue menace did not alleviate his distaste for the evil fungus. It was good to see that they were only poisonous if squeezed or eaten, though. His next target was another type of mushroom, this one rather plain-looking.

[Flytrap Mushroom (Inferior)] – A carnivorous and poisonous mushroom that eats insects to accelerate its growth.

This one was a lower rarity, but still poisonous. Jake looked a bit more around, finding quite a few different kinds of mushrooms, nearly all of them inferior-rarity.

Shifting his focus to the green moss growing everywhere on the walls, he used Identify once more.

[Green Moss (inferior)] – A widespread kind of moss, found in places with little or no sunlight and adequate mana saturation. A typical ingredient in potions and poisons alike.

So, jack-of-all-trades moss. Jake then noticed that a patch of moss was darker than the rest, so he also identified that.

[Aged Green Moss (Common)] - A widespread kind of moss, found in places with little or no sunlight and adequate mana saturation. A typical ingredient in potions and poisons alike. This moss has been thoroughly soaked in mana over time.

Common-rarity moss. Did this mean that age was a factor when it comes to the rarity of plants?

Finding nothing more of particular interest in the cave, he exited to the garden. The first thing he did here was to identify the grass. Once more, noticing some off-colored patches spread throughout.

[Evergreen Grass (Inferior)] – A widespread herb found throughout the multiverse in any place with adequate nature-affinity mana. While the grass only offers minor restorative effects, it is a great catalyst when mixed with other herbs.

[Aged Evergreen Grass (Common)] A widespread herb found throughout the multiverse in any place with adequate nature-affinity mana. While the grass only offers minor restorative effects, it is a great catalyst when mixed with other herbs. This grass has aged and absorbed more mana than most Evergreen Grass.

It was the same concept as the moss in the cave. Recalling some of the knowledge given by the system, he knew that the moss was often used when concocting poisons, while the grass was used when making potions.

Many flowers were also spread throughout the garden, the most abundant kind being four lavender types: a blue one, a red one, and a green one. In between the small patches of these flowers were rainbow-colored lavenders, all of which looked very fantasy-like. Once more, Jake identified all the plants.

[Blue Lavender (Inferior)] – A very abundant herb found nearly everywhere with any kind of mana. Mana is stored in the small flowers growing on the stalk, with the stem itself containing the useful juices. Known as the main ingredient of mana potions.

[Red Lavender (Inferior)] – A very abundant herb found nearly everywhere with any kind of mana. Mana is stored in the small flowers growing on the stalk, with the stem itself containing the useful juices. Known as the main ingredient of health potions.

[Green Lavender (Inferior)] – A very abundant herb found nearly everywhere with any kind of mana. Mana is stored in the small flowers growing on the stalk, with the stem itself containing the useful juices. Known as the main ingredient of stamina potions.

[Rainbow Lavender (Common)] - A relatively abundant herb found nearly everywhere with any kind of mana, usually surrounded by its lesser variants. Mana is stored in the small flowers growing on the stalk, with the stem itself containing the useful juices. Known as the main ingredient of rejuvenation potions.

These flowers straight-up informed him that they were the main ingredients in potions. And he had a very, very, strong feeling that he would come to craft a lot of potions.

More flowers were present in the garden, some of them not even returning anything when he identified them and others being only inferior-rarity. Lastly, he went to the small pond and surprisingly successfully identified the water.

[Purified Water] – Pure water, free of any kind of contamination. Great for mixing potions and poisons alike.

And with that, he had everything he needed to start making stuff. At least he assumed he had. The only way to find out was to test it out. What could possibly go wrong, mixing a bunch of unknown substances in an old temple left by a cult worshipping a possibly-long-dead snake?

Jake began picking up plants, but only the inferior-rarity ones, as he assumed they would be the easiest to experiment with. Opening his satchel to put in some of the lavender flowers, he spotted the 10 silver mushrooms he had picked up during his very first challenge in this dungeon.

He had to admit that he had kind of forgotten those. Without any expectations, he decided to identify one of them and was taken aback by the result.

[Argentum Vitae Mushroom (Rare)] – A silver mushroom only grown in places with extremely high mana density. The mushroom has a solid exterior, that if broken, reveals the actual mushroom within. This type of mushroom's juices usually are highly poisonous, but this mushroom has evolved to bring life instead. +1 vitality upon consumption.

He took a deep breath after reading the description. These were 10 free points to vitality, 11 factoring in his Bloodline Patriarch title giving a 10% bonus.

He was just about to eat one when he stopped himself. These mushrooms were still raw. What if he could get more than a single vitality per mushroom.

There was also that whole thing with a poison in his body that would flare up and kill him in a month. He would not find it unfitting for these mushrooms to somehow be needed not to die. Thus he decided to leave them be for now and instead continued collecting more ingredients.

Leaving the garden through the cave, he also collected a stack of mushrooms, heading straight for the laboratory.

He went through the lab once more, this time being able to open the cabinets and interact with all the equipment. The cabinets were all filled with small glass bottles, and the water in the barrels was the same pure water found in the small pond.

Jake had initially planned on starting to make something right away but quickly hit his first roadblock. He had no idea how to. He had been given some incredibly basic knowledge, but nothing that would allow him actually to make something. In fact, the few fragments of knowledge he did have only served to inform him that he didn't know enough.

Each plant had requirements for how to handle them properly - each potion or poison their own recipe. None of this was given to him for free, which led him to the other room covered in barriers before.

In the library/office he had first arrived in, he could now touch all of the many bookshelves. Oh, and on a side note, the door that he had initially entered through was gone, so going back to the prior challenge rooms wasn't an option.

Not that he had any intentions of leaving. Walking up to one of the bookshelves, he took a random book out, and the first thing he noticed was that it was clearly written in English.

Which was quite impressive considering that he was multilingual, and yet it had chosen English. What if I wanted it to be... oh now it is. Before his eyes, the entire text had now changed language. He couldn't help but try it again and found it to switch back and forth with only a thought.

Jake found it quite humorous to experiment with, but sadly he couldn't play around forever. So he began actually to read what was written.

The first book seemed to be some kind of history book, detailing the history of alchemy. While it was interesting and very enlightening, it wasn't what he was looking for. He quickly discarded it and started reading the covers of some of the different books. Going from top to bottom on the bookshelf. He quickly located the first one he wanted - a book detailing the creation of inferior-rarity health potions.

After looking a bit more, he ended up having six books stacked on the desk. Alchemy for Novices: Volume 1. Alchemy for Novices: Volume 2. An Introduction to Potions: The Health Potion. He also had books of the same series for mana and stamina potions and the last book, Poisons: The Elementary.

The three potions books were pretty short and had a plethora of pictures and diagrams of different herbs, most of them recognizable to him. The Alchemy for Novices were massive tomes and contained many diagrams and step-by-step guides too, but most of it was just a buttload of text.

The most comprehensive book was the one on poisons, and the one he had decided to save for last.

Checking the timer, he had spent around a few hours since he had gotten his profession. Having no time to waste, he started reading the first volume on novice alchemy.

The first thing he noticed was how fast it went. He was already an experienced reader, having finished university and being used to reading a lot. But this was at an entirely different level. It took him only an hour to go through the first hundred pages. And that's with the pens and papers placed on the desk being used avidly in making bookmarks and taking down notes.

The whole thing brought Jake back to his university days. The only thing he really lacked was some hot tea and some good music.

The content of the book was exactly as the cover said. It introduced alchemy. It had small parts on transmutation and pill-making, and even some details reminding Jake of more modern chemical theories. Still, the main content was detailing the process of making potions using herbs.

It went into how to process the herbs, the tools often used when doing so, what type of water was suitable for different kinds of potions, how to properly store and prepare the herbs, etc. The knowledge on concocting poisons was somewhat limited, and pretty much only focused on how to avoid introducing poison into your creations.

After another couple of hours of reading later, he wanted to give it a shot. Was he ready? Probably not, but he felt like at least trying. Jake got up and stretched before walking towards the laboratory. He had left his satchel back in the lab, as he saw no reason to carry it around.

He had learned a lot from his reading, one of those things being how stupid it was just to pluck a bunch of herbs and throw them together in a big bundle in the satchel. At least he had not been dumb enough to also throw moss and fungi in.

After a bit of salvaging, most of the herbs were still useful. Jake had brought along with him some of the books and his notes. Without further ado, he started meticulously following them on how to create potions.

Grinding the grass into a paste, mixing it with water, injecting mana into a small enchanted burner to boil the purified water. Rather than university, where it had been all reading and numbers, this felt more like chemistry. Far more practical.

Potions for health and mana were not made one by one. Not the lower-rarity ones at least. You usually made batches that could vary quite a bit based on how well you did. The mix could quickly become too weak or too strong, resulting in adverse effects, the system recognizing them as failed creations.

Mana also played a massive role in alchemy. The bowl where you mix the batch in required mana to be injected into, thus entering through it. The same held true for the mortar and pestle, the pestle itself being enchanted to accept mana being channeled through it.

All the equipment used to craft was enchanted with practical things. Self-Repair was found on practically everything, and Jake had already found out from his cloak and bracers that Self-Repair also came with a self-cleaning functionality.

His first batch was an attempt to make mana potions, the least complex of the three types. It turned into a not quite blue mixture that smelled terribly. Luckily the lab also came with a sink that had a faucet, and all that one would expect. Sadly, the water coming out was not classified as purified, so he had to keep getting water from the pond.

A lot of information was found within the different books; most interestingly was a section on stats. It even helped explain the effects of them, more so than Jake had been able to deduce himself so far. It has to be mentioned that the information was heavily limited, almost like the system had censored some things.

As for stats that were good for alchemy, wisdom was mentioned as the overall most important. It increases total mana and the ability to retain knowledge of recipes and such. The fact that both poisons and potions' effectiveness was increased by wisdom also played a considerable part without a doubt. The second-most important was willpower as it increased mana regeneration, something that was new knowledge to Jake.

Willpower also helped with focusing while doing alchemy, though the book mentioned that no amount of stats could make up for the lack of personal perseverance. It clearly looked like the book should have more info than that, but a considerable part had been cut out.

While this was a mystery for sure, there was one that irked him even more. Why did his profession increase vitality by 2 and toughness by 1 too? However, that was a mystery quickly solved as he briefly skimmed the small section on stats in the book on poisons.

Concocting poisons, compared to nearly every other aspect of alchemy, was no safe practice. The fumes alone could kill most, and just being close to poison daily came with many dangers. On top of that, those dabbling in poison also sometimes used their own bodies to test their newest concoctions, the occasional alchemist even going so far as to cultivate toxins within their own body.

Therefore, the book said that one should not dabble in poison before one had sufficient vitality and serviceable toughness. The book also mentioned that most alchemy professions did not increase vitality or toughness, so investing free points in those stats was recommended if one wished to pursue concocting poisons as a specialty - a recommendation Jake could quite easily ignore as he got plenty.

After emptying the mixing bowl and cleaning it, he tried mixing another batch of mana potions. He used the entire blue lavender flower, grounding up the stalk and flower, mixing it with the evergreen grass.

Going through the motions once more, it ended in another failure. Injecting mana was not as simple as just channeling it like it was with the quiver; instead, one had to do it carefully. The injection part was where the difference between a skilled alchemist and a novice was found.

He had to somehow control the mana he injected into it. Guide the entire process with his mana. Luckily it didn't require much to make the most basic mana potions, but it was still a challenge. The books had detailed how to do it, but a lot of it was still touch-and-go.

After making another four failed batches, he still had sufficient mana but was out of ingredients. After another roundtrip to the garden, he had enough for another crafting-session.

He continued trying, making batch after batch, as he wrote down notes on why he failed and what to improve. Slowly he felt the improvements. His last attempt turned out to closely resemble a mana potion but wasn't quite there yet. By that point, he had been at it for nearly 12 hours and was exhausted both mentally and physically. His stamina was still high, but he could barely focus.

Going to the room with the bed, he quickly took a look in the closet and dresser, finding clothes in both. They looked rather simple, but it was good to have something to change into. His old clothes beneath his cloak were well and truly battered by now, and if he had to be honest, smelled a bit.

But quite frankly, Jake was too tired to further think of it as he collapsed on the bed and fell asleep.

Waking up, he felt wholly rejuvenated but panicked slightly as he checked the timer. He let out a sigh of relief as he had only slept for a bit over five hours. His stamina was topped off, while his mana was at 70% - more than enough for another good round of alchemy.

Feeling refreshed and sharp, he went to the laboratory once more after a quick shower and clothes change. He briefly skimmed over his notes and got to work. The part where he had to prepare the ingredients he had down to a T. His timing of adding ingredients to the mix was also adequate.

No, the final hurdle was the mana-injection. It wouldn't be an understatement to say that it was 90% of the process. One had plenty of leeway making mana potions when it came to temperature control, so once everything was in the mix and one had to combine ingredients into an actual potion, it was just pure mana control.

And now, with a clear head, Jake felt sharper than ever. He knew what to do and how to do it. He just had to execute. The mana poured gently into the mixture as he controlled it with the help of the intricate runes inscribed on the mixing bowl. One had very much to go by feel, and this time Jake felt like all was as it should be.

A short while later, a refreshing smell permeated the laboratory as he turned off the fire. A beautiful blue mixture in his bowl. He knew he had succeeded and the system message shortly after only confirmed it as he smiled to himself.

*You have successfully crafted [Mana Potion (Inferior)] – A new kind of creation has been made. Bonus experience earned *

'DING!' Profession: [Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 1 - Stat points allocated, +2 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (G)] has reached level 5 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point