

Hunter 26

Chapter 26: More skills!

Lying on the bed, Jake was proud of his progress for the day. He had mixed so many potions that he eventually had to just dump the mixtures in the sink. It was so incredibly wasteful, but he just didn't have anywhere else to put it.

While there were undoubtedly many bottles, it was far from unlimited. He was re-using the bottles after he drank the mana potions but said potion consumption had fallen to nearly nothing after Jake had gotten his *Palate of the Malefic Viper*.

It wasn't that he was entirely out of bottles; in fact, he had many left. He just knew that the potions he currently made wouldn't be things he wanted to save. He also didn't know where to store them. Pretty much every surface in the lab was filled with potions.

During the day, he had also eaten two new kinds of mushrooms too. One called [Reddot Stool], a small white mushroom with red spots on it, with the other identified as a [Brunneius Aqua Mushroom], a brown mushroom found growing from small puddles in the damp cave. Both were naturally inferior-rarity.

Overall his day had resulted in quite the progress.

'DING!' Profession: [Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 7 - Stat points allocated, +2 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (G)] has reached level 8 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point

'DING!' Profession: [Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 8 - Stat points allocated, +2 free points

'DING!' Profession: [Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 9 - Stat points allocated, +2 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (G)] has reached level 9 - Stat points allocated, +1 free points

The only significant difference was that he had decided to save the free points. The wisdom seemed to barely add anything to his mental capabilities at this point, and he was unsure if any other stat would help him in any way at the moment. He had considered willpower and endurance, hoping that it would allow him to stay awake longer and reduce the mental exhaustion.

But for now, he would save them. He was very close to level 10 in his alchemy class, at which point he would likely unlock another skill or some other benefit. So, he had decided to wait for the last level.

He had finished the book on elementary poisons, the two basic alchemy books, and had decided that he was ready to give concocting poisons a try the next day. He had eaten the shrooms and moss he needed as ingredients, and he had even found a book describing recipes.

Said recipes mentioned the Reddot Stool and Brunneius Aqua Mushroom, which was why he had decided to munch on those.

After getting up from his bed, he headed straight for the cave to collect a good batch of mushrooms and moss. And with that, he got to work. In retrospect, Jake wasn't sure it could even be considered work considering how easily it went.

Concocting poisons and brewing potions shared a lot of similarities. The mana injection and mixing were essentially the same, with only a few minor differences here and there. The most significant difference was the requirement to squash any elements of vitality within the ingredients while simultaneously amplifying the damaging properties.

When making health potions, the direct opposite of poison, you had to simply bring forth the already existing vital energies found within the herbs. That same vitality was found to a lesser degree in poisonous plants. They were living entities, too, after all.

This vitality would lower the effect of the poison, and sometimes even wholly ruin the concoctions. This made Jake consider the silver mushrooms he had that gave vitality when consumed. In one of the books, such cases were described, where the poison and vitality reacted together, empowering one another. This could then go in either direction, either becoming extremely toxic or overflowing with vitality.

Due to such ingredients' overpowering nature, new alchemists were generally recommended to stay the hell away from attempting to use them not to waste such precious natural treasures. Reading it did give him an idea for later, but that idea was for way later.

Currently, Jake was not mixing ingredients that were hard to use. He was mixing the Reddot Stool and Brunneius Aqua Mushroom and the green moss in the mixing bowl. Both components floating in the purified water.

Purified water was used for pretty much every kind of liquid poisons. It was wholly uncontaminated and was nothing more than filler. All it did was to dilute the mixture a bit, but that was about it.

The mixing itself went easy, as he had the methods described in the books memorized, and when he got to the more challenging parts of the mana-injection, he was almost dumbfounded by how easy it was.

By now, making mana potions was incredibly easy for him, and he barely had to focus when brewing them. But the ease and familiarity he currently felt were incomparable. It felt like he had worked with the ingredients thousands of times before. The moss and mushrooms felt like an extension of his own body, quickly absorbing his mana, doing what he wanted when he wanted.

The entire thing only took minutes before he was greeted by a collection of very welcome system messages.

You have successfully crafted [Weak Hemotoxic Poison (Inferior)] – A new kind of creation has been made. Bonus experience earned

'DING!' Profession: [Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 10 - Stat points allocated, +2 free point

He had not expected to get a level-up so fast again. Not that he was going to complain about it. Inspecting his new creation, he was thrilled with the result.

[Weak Hemotoxic Poison (Inferior)]

– Increases bleeding on inflicted entities and makes any injuries harder to heal. The poison must be introduced directly into the bloodstream to have any effect.

According to the books, the poison was a weak type of poison that disrupts the inflicted's usual bodily balance, thinning the blood, and increasing blood loss. It also, like the dagger he had, made healing the target harder. Overall it was not a very powerful type of poison. Still, considering his current strategy in battle where a lot of it revolved around kiting and slowly bleeding the opponent out, he didn't doubt its effectiveness.

He stored the poison in a rectangular bottle with a big bottleneck. While there were far less of this type of bottle than the regular potion bottles, there was still a cabinet containing a few hundred. This kind of bottle was designed to dip arrows, needles, and daggers into, to soak the weapon in the poison. Something he believed would become very relevant when he got out of this challenge dungeon.

The level also came with the expected notice of new skills.

Alchemist of the Malefic Viper profession skills available

He had five skills available. Looking at the five skills, he used the same approach as last time he got offered skills and went through them one by one.

[Transmute (Inferior)] – Transmutation is an ancient art used by alchemists since the beginning of time. Allows for the alchemist to attempt to transmute types of metal into ones of greater value. Must have suitable materials. Transmute does not require any additional tools or equipment, but the skill's effect can be amplified using certain catalysts. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Transmute based on wisdom.

This one was, without a doubt, nice. But totally not in Jake's lane at all currently. He was all about potions and poisons. It could prove useful down the line, but for now, it was not for him. Making gold from iron did seem awesome in the real world, but he doubted he the skill would have any use in curing

him of the poison in his system. Also, who would even care about gold if people could go around making it? Basic economics, yo.

Thus, he swiftly moved on.

[Graft Plant (Common)] – Sometimes, two plants are greater than the sum of their parts, and the perfect plant may be created, not found. Grants the ability to graft plants. Plants must be compatible. Must have suitable ingredients and equipment to facilitate the grafting of plants. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Graft Plant based on wisdom.

This one did seem very cool also, and he had read about the art of grafting plants in several of the alchemy books. Most plants could be found naturally in the world; what had surprised Jake, however, was that the system had not created the majority of them. Many plants found were initially created by alchemists grafting something into existence more suitable for their needs.

The system had over time then integrated these plants into ecosystems, naturally growing them around the multiverse. The author of the book was unsure about how the system did so, but its involvement was inarguable, as plants even seemed to spread to other universes.

This had inevitably led to many not knowing which plants were system-made and which ones were grafted by alchemists. Jake did not know how old the multiverse was. He knew that his universe, according to modern physics, was 13.4 billion years or so. He also remembered that the system said that his universe was the 93rd to be introduced to the system. The other universes being older was a fair bet in opinion.

But despite the exciting thoughts of time and grafting, Jake quite frankly had no use for it currently. It was described as a rather advanced type of alchemy in all the books, and something novices should avoid. The main reason for grafting, a lack of suitable ingredients, wasn't an issue with him having his

own garden and cave, both still nearly full despite his use over the last days. So unless he wanted to become a master-grafter, he wasn't going for it.

So, with that in mind, he moved on to the next skill.

[Alchemist's Purification (Common)] – Attempt to purify any alchemical ingredient. Purification can help remove unwanted properties from a component, making the finished mixture purer. Must have suitable ingredients. Must have suitable materials. Purification does not require any additional tools or equipment, but the skill's effect can be amplified using certain catalysts. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Alchemist's Purification based on wisdom.

Another handy skill. Jake assumed this was what had been done to the water he used in his alchemy, considering the name Purified Water. If grafting allowed you to create your desired plants, this one allowed you to attempt to transform the ones you already had into something more useful.

Jake had no idea what effect the skill would have on his current ingredients, however. He did not need to purify any water as there was plenty of it, and thus far, he hadn't run into any issues with unforeseen properties within the plants he used. He seriously doubted he could cleanse the vital energy out of a living thing.

Once more referring to the books, this skill was mentioned extensively as one essential to all alchemists. A lot of herbs found throughout the multiverse were borderline useless. That, or they were highly specific for only obscure recipes. Thus, purifying some of these ingredients could allow them to be used in more types of creations.

This one was most definitely a contender, but he was still unsure of its usefulness currently. He knew that he would have to pick it up at one point, but as the six skills offered at level 5 were still on his list, he could just get it later.

The next two skills were very similar, much like the Sense Herb and Sense Poison skills.

[Germinate Herb (Common)] – Germinate a herb, allowing it to grow faster and increase its quality. Germinate Herb enables the alchemist not to wait the many years usually required for the necessary herb to mature. Germinate herb does not require any additional tools or equipment, but the skill's effect can be amplified using certain catalysts. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Germinate Herb based on wisdom.

[Cultivate Toxin (Uncommon)] – Cultivate the desired toxic ingredient, allowing it to amplify its deadly toxins. On poisonous plants, this skill will also enable said plants to grow faster and increase their quality. Cultivate Toxin does not require any additional tools or equipment, but the skill's effect can be amplified using certain catalysts. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Cultivate Toxin based on wisdom.

These were also quite amazing and frequently mentioned skills in pretty much all the books he had read on alchemy - both essential skills of an alchemist who dreams of owning their own garden. The skills were especially interesting with their usefulness in leveling the profession.

Not all alchemists had the privilege of a fully stocked garden in a challenge dungeon when they first started out doing alchemy. Many started simply by tending gardens of senior alchemists. This was also how many achieved their profession to begin with. Some books even had the assumption that the reader had started out that way.

Of these, Germinate Herb was, without a doubt, the most mentioned. The use of potions throughout the multiverse was considered standard practice, and someone needed to grow the ingredients used. Jake also knew that many alchemists started with the Germinate Herb skill from the beginning.

Professions came in many forms and variants. One of the books on how to properly care for ingredients and tend the garden mentioned more than ten different types of the alchemist profession that could be unlocked from cultivating different sorts of herbs.

However, the most usual way of obtaining a profession was not through effort or hard work, but through being taught by someone already possessing said profession. But many senior alchemists still had their apprentices try and learn the craft themselves in the hope of them unlocking a more powerful variant from the beginning, or perhaps just one more specialized.

Jake's Alchemist of the Malefic Viper was one such variant. It was both more powerful and specialized in poisons compared to more traditional alchemists.

More powerful variants often offered better skills of higher rarity and gave more stats per level. The downside was that, while they could often learn pretty much all types of skills commonly available, it would usually be at a lower starting rarity and/or at higher levels.

This was also shown by Transmute, for example, being inferior-rarity, and the same with the Geology, Pill Consolidation, and Metallurgy skills at level 5.

Overall, however, there was a strong consensus that variant classes were just straight-up better. The stats alone made them far more valuable all on their own.

One aspect he still did not quite understand was the constant mention of something called Records. He had seen the same word used in his [Bloodline Patriarch] title and even in the bloodline description itself. More powerful variant classes, especially named ones like his, came with inherited Records. While he had yet to see any explanation of what exactly is meant by Records, from what he could deduce, having many Records was a good thing. Or maybe high-quality Records?

This made him wonder if Records was a hidden achievement system or something - another mystery he had to solve when he eventually got out of the dungeon.

Back to the skills, he didn't hesitate before picking the Cultivate Toxin skill.

***Gained Skill*:** [Cultivate Toxin (Uncommon)] – Cultivate the desired toxic ingredient, allowing it to amplify its deadly toxins. On poisonous plants, this skill will also enable said plants to grow faster and increase their quality. Cultivate Toxin does not require any additional tools or equipment, but the skill's effect can be amplified using certain catalysts. Adds a minor increase to the effectiveness of Cultivate Toxin based on wisdom.

He felt the slightly disorientating experience of having knowledge downloaded directly into his mind. The reason why he had chosen this skill was to himself quite obvious.

First of all, this was the only skill at uncommon-rarity. Secondly, it perfectly goes with the whole poison-themed profession. It was also perhaps the only skill Jake could immediately make use of during the challenge. He could use it to gain experience and spice up his day while trying and making more potent poison from his ingredients.

Happy with his new skill, he prepared himself to get working once more. He still had a lot of work ahead of him.