

Hunter 125

Chapter 125: Pylon of Civilization

You have claimed a Pylon of Civilization.

By controlling the Pylon, you have claimed ownership over the surrounding area. Your aura seeps into the area itself, marking it as your own. While within your own domain, all mana regeneration is significantly increased. Protect it; expand it, reclaim the planet that was once yours. May you lead your domain and your world through the new age it has entered.

Bonuses for all citizens within your domain:

Increases all experience earned while within the domain by a minor amount for all non-combat related activities.

Congratulations! For being the first human to claim a Pylon of Civilization, your nobility title has been upgraded to: [Nobility: Earl]. May you lead your world to glory.

Jake read the messages and very quickly understood why the Viper had wanted him to claim it. He felt his mana drain into the crystal as if it was a piece of equipment. He instantly felt a connection with it. At the same time, the Pylon began giving out a slightly different aura.

It was like when the mole tried to claim it. Only it wasn't allowed to do it properly. It was rightfully Jake's, and he was happy he had gotten here rather quickly as it would suck to lose out on rewards because of his own tardiness. While he still had 72 hours to claim it before other creatures could, there was a chance someone else could claim a Pylon elsewhere before him.

Looking at the rewards he gained for being first, he nodded in satisfaction. While he couldn't exactly feel the increased mana regeneration as his mana pool was pretty much full, it would, without a doubt, be nice while grinding alchemy.

The experience gain was even better. As with most other system-related things, it didn't give Jake an indicator for how much it increased it. Only the word 'minor.' For all he knew, it could be 10% or 0,00001%. Though either way, it was a welcome bonus. That it only worked on non-combat related activities didn't bother him either. Unless it counted alchemy as combat-related. It shouldn't, right?

One part he didn't like was the whole 'ruler of your domain' vibe. All he wanted was a nice place to settle down for a while. He still had no intentions whatsoever to found some great city. Also... this was a goddamn forest.

Looking on further, he saw that his Nobility title had indeed been updated.

Titled earned: [Nobility: Earl].

[Nobility: Earl] – A Lord that was the first to claim a Pylon of Civilization on Earth, becoming an Earl. Allows you to control a Pylon of Civilization. Grants access to certain events and opportunities exclusive to nobles. Opens many new paths to power.

It was another thing he didn't really care that much for currently. Though, in some ways, it was pretty cool to call himself an Earl. It was also an interesting observation that it adopted the British nobility system. Or maybe it was just the translation.

However, he was relatively sure that he had skipped a few nobility ranks by being the first to make a city – hopefully, something that would prove an advantage in due time. The part about granting access to certain events and opportunities was also noteworthy. But once more, time would prove if these things were beneficial or not.

The last part about new paths was something he had seen many other times already. Never had he seen it be so immediate, however, as he looked at his next message.

Profession Change Available

Principal City Lord of Earth – The very first human to found a city on Earth. Now on a path to create a haven for the survivors in the new world. A home to defend. City Lord is a profession focused on managing and guiding a city to glory. Grants skills related to management, economics, leadership, and control, as well as paths to protect your new dominion. However, be warned that should the city fall, you will not escape unscathed. Stat bonuses per level: +18 free points.

WARNING: Skills pertaining to the Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper profession may be lost or changed upon becoming a Principal City Lord of Earth

How about no, Jake thought. Everything about it just made him nope right the fuck out. Sometimes the system really misfired, offering stuff he would never for the life of him even consider.

He was also pretty damn sure this wasn't something the Malefic Viper had advertised.

Chances are that if he somehow suffered a mental episode and changed profession, he would lose all skills with 'of the Malefic Viper' in them, as well as generally everything to do with alchemy. Which is to say every goddamn skill he had gained so far.

Four ancient skills, one epic, and many rare skills and below would be lost. So unless this new profession threw Jake a stack of legendary or whatever was above legendary skills, it would be a massive downgrade.

Even the stats were lower, if actually pretty good. It was a bit interesting that it just gave free points. And it even gave quite a lot of free points. He could totally see why someone focused on combat would take this profession to keep increasing their more combat-related stats.

Currently, Jake was a bit spread wide with his stats. He was surprisingly durable for being an archer, and his high wisdom was also out of the ordinary. Nevertheless, he always found uses for the stats. Perception had been a bit of a downer for a long time, but his new Gaze of the Apex Hunter had changed that drastically.

So, yeah. Jake gave a polite 'no thanks' to the system for the wonderful opportunity to change profession and closed down all his system menus.

And then he just stood there for a while.

...

This was as far as he had planned for now. He had gained control of the area and could feel the mana slowly spread out from the Pylon. Looking around, he didn't see much of interest or a nice place to

settle down. Besides, the stench of blood and the many corpses made the entire clearing quite unsanitary.

Looking at the crystal that was even larger than himself, he thought for a bit before he wrapped his arms around it. It resisted at first, completely immovable, but with a bit of mana injected, it was just deactivated.

The mana in the area stopped spreading as Pylon stopped working. He could feel through his connection with it that he had turned it off. With it no longer spreading his mana, he also felt the atmospheric mana return to normal.

As for the crystal itself, it was actually relatively light. Scratch that, it just straight up didn't weigh anything. It was like lifting a balloon. It wasn't just his stats either; the thing just didn't actually have any weight at all.

Yet he knew that only he could move it. And that, when activated, it was borderline immovable.

His next goal was to find a nice place to settle down and chill with his new cauldrons. Despite the Pylon not weighing anything, it was still quite unhandy, but with it not weighing anything, he could just wrap a few strings of mana around it and move it around with that. He did try and fail to put it into his spatial storage.

Walking through the forest, the several meters tall Pylon floated leisurely behind him. Not a single beast got in his way but instead scurried out the way whenever they saw him, which was quite nice, actually, as he didn't feel like fighting with a crystal Pylon in tow and all.

He didn't know exactly what he was looking for. It was like when he was out shopping for an apartment. He always had that kind of 'I'll know it when I see it' mentality, despite him being fully aware that he still did have quite a few base requirements.

For the apartment, he wanted thick walls and good noise-isolation. He liked bright rooms and good natural lighting, and of course, having good internet available was also a must.

Now, however, his requirements were a bit different. First of all, he wanted a source of water. Not because he really needed to drink much anymore, but because of alchemy. He could purify water and use it to craft things, so of course, he wanted to do that.

A cave within a short distance would also be preferable. Of the ingredients Jake used, mushrooms and moss were at the top of the list. He didn't know if some had already appeared on Earth, but if not, he would have to grow them. Space for a small garden would also be nice.

If he had to be honest, he didn't feel like he was that picky - water, cave, and open space. It shouldn't be that hard.

Yet, he ended up wandering around for quite a few hours, with his version of 'wandering' being slightly faster than a car on a country road. But in the end, he found it.

It was in a valley. Very noticeable from a long distance, but the geography was nearly perfect. Within the valley was a vast pond, tens of meters across, caused by a waterfall falling down from the cliffs above. The valley had only a single real entrance, which was really lovely too. Of course, you could just enter it from the cliffs above, but it still felt like it provided some cover.

The best part of it all, however, was the caves. Yes, caves, with an 's.' Two of them, with their entrances less than a kilometer apart. Jake hadn't explored either much, but they both went downwards, and he couldn't see any end in sight. Maybe they even connected.

It also got even better when he entered one - his Sense of the Malefic Viper on full display. He got several responses from within, which meant that there had to be useful alchemical ingredients within.

He couldn't be happier as he found a place to plop the crystal down. He did think of placing it in one of the caves, or maybe even living in a cave, but decided against it. He wanted to keep the crystal close, and he would prefer to live under the sun than in a cave. Besides, the valley was still filled with trees, offering some cover.

Ultimately, he didn't want to leave the Pylon out in the open. He didn't know if others could steal it or mess with it somehow. He wasn't afraid of the thing breaking as it appeared damn near unbreakable, but he was worried that someone could wrest control of it away.

Taking out his Omnitool, the fifth item he bought as a tutorial reward, he used it for the first time. In its basic form, it was just a small ball of liquid... something, but when he injected mana and willed a shovel, it transformed into one. A big one. The head of the thing larger than a snowplow.

With it in hand, he began digging a large hole. His powerful stats on full display as he performed feats that would put large excavators to shame. It didn't take him long to make a five-meter deep hole, just wide enough for the crystal to enter.

Lowering it down, he saw that there was still a bit over two meters up to ground level, which should be good enough.

Through his string of mana, he willed the Pylon to activate once more. So it did, as it hummed to life and began hovering slightly off the ground inside the hole. Far from enough to lift it out, however. Perfect.

He tried once more to move the Pylon, pulling on and pushing it, but he couldn't even move it an inch. Once more, perfect. He had been afraid that maybe water would corrode the ground and make it flow away or something, but that didn't appear to be a danger at all.

Filling up the hole once more, he nodded in satisfaction. While it wasn't the best attempt at hiding it, it sure as hell was better than just leaving it out in the open. He also planned on generally settling down where it was buried, making it even easier to protect it.

Of course, now he had another problem... what to do?

He could build shelter... but it felt like a waste of time. Under the canopy of the trees, he found enough cover. Not like the cold or warmth bothered him either.

First things first, though, he thought as he quickly took off his now filthy clothes. Putting them in his spatial storage, he walked to the shore of the pond, stark-naked. With a deep breath, he took a step forward as he dropped straight down into the water.

The pond was four or five meters deep in most places. For the first time in a long time, Jake enjoyed just drifting about in the water without any time pressure on him. There was no tutorial timer, no limited time within a time-dilated chamber. No immediate goal he had to chase as fast as possible.

A few hours passed like that. Jake was just floating there and enjoying the sensation. He saw a few small eels in his sphere but didn't bother them, and they didn't bother him either.

Jake knew he needed direction. A new goal. If not, he would just drift into the abyss that was his own mind or just laze about indefinitely. His overall goal was still to grow stronger. To see exactly how far he could go in this new system. See all that it had to offer him. To one day even leave Earth and explore the rest of the multiverse.

To one day stand at the pinnacle. To see sights unimaginable, experience different cultures, and meet countless new foes and friends. To fight a goddamn dragon.

So he began to formulate a plan. His first goal was complete now that he had a base of operations. It was an optimal place to practice his alchemy - more experience, higher mana regeneration, and many possible sources of ingredients nearby.

His Alchemist of the Malefic Viper was currently at level 63, and his Ambitious Hunter at 83. His first goal would be to at least narrow that gap considerably. At least get the level 70 skill in alchemy.

He knew that he would have to go out and forage for ingredients and other things of value, so a few class levels were inevitable. From what the Viper said, Jake also knew that simply practicing skills in a class would grant small amounts of experience, which he also planned to do, as his Advanced Archery was more than due for an upgrade. He had felt he was close even before fighting the Great White Stag, and it was high time to get it done.

He got out of the pond with a somewhat vague plan and began putting on some clothes after giving them a good wash. Once more, he had forgotten to take off the mask, finding it a bit eerie how he didn't even notice that he had it on normally. Almost as weird as how the hell it stuck to his head without anything visibly fastening it.

After getting fully dressed, he sat down, legs crossed, and took out his Altmar Cauldron of Supreme Simplicity. He still had a lot of ingredients left from the challenge dungeon. They wouldn't last that long if he went hard grinding, but they would last a while.

Placing his hands on the cauldron, he activated his Alchemical Flame as he filled the cauldron with water. He immersed himself in the complicated methodologies, runes, and patterns required for just making a few simple common-rarity mana potions with a slight smile.

He would never forget the Trial of Myriad Poisons. More accurately, the barrel he was in during it - the intricacy of those runes, the overwhelming complexity of all that was behind making such a concoction. He didn't understand jack shit. It was proof of how much he had yet to learn.

And learn he would.

With those thoughts, he began his first brewing in quite a while.