

## Hunter 138

### Chapter 138: Viewing Party

Archery had for many years been a vital part of Jake's life. It was his escape from work, stress, and intrusive thoughts before the system. After the system, it had been the tool that allowed him to fight and survive, especially in the beginning.

So not getting the skill upgraded to anything higher than common-rarity after so long had been a real thorn in his side - an annoyance every time he opened his status menu. It was only made worse by his intuition telling him he was oh-so-close to the upgrade all the damn time. He just needed that one final push - a final round of truly contemplating his bowmanship.

The thing that pushed the skill further turned out to not be a life and death battle, but instead an awkward struggle in mid-air as he tried to figure out how the hell to hit the damn birds flying all around him.

[Advanced Archery (Common)] --> [Expert Archery (Uncommon)]

It came the moment he hit his first bird. He felt an odd sense of pride that he quite honestly shouldn't have, considering he had fired over a dozen arrows already.

Meanwhile, his bird-buddy had ripped apart more than twenty of the attacking flock while still somehow finding time to send him condescending glances. Blades of wind revolved around the hawk at all times, cutting into anything that came even close.

On the other hand, Jake spent more time being badgered by the birds that kept pecking and slapping him with their wings in fly-by's. After the first few only managed to harm themselves as they chipped their beaks on his scales, they stopped attacking him in melee and instead fired blasts of mana at him.

Not that those blasts did any damage either. It only served to annoy Jake further as he tried to stabilize himself mid-air while at the same time trying to nock yet another arrow. Failing miserably as he could barely stop himself from falling to the ground.

But the experience had still somehow pushed his archery skill to the next level. Perhaps it was the ridiculous level of focus he was forced to apply, as he had to not only focus on his archery and hitting a flying enemy but also controlling his own wings meanwhile.

He didn't feel much difference from the upgrade. Likely due to his lack of ability to focus on the simple act of drawing a string and firing an arrow in his current predicament. In the end, he had enough as he opened his eyes wide at the flock of birds.

Gaze of the Apex Hunter

His eyes shone an intense yellow sheen as the flock of birds all just... stopped. Stopped and fell to the ground one by one. Bloody tears ran down his cheeks as he was forced to shut them, but it had done the job.

\*You have slain [Starling Flock Bird – lvl 14] – Experience earned.

\*You have slain [Starling Flock Bird – lvl 18] – Experience earned.

...

\*You have slain [Starling Flock Bird – lvl 34] – Experience earned.

Nearly all of them died instantly. Only a few survived due to their higher level but found themselves frozen and quickly cut apart by the hawk's blades of wind.

The entire sky now basked in eerie silence as Jake spoke. "Villy, are you having a viewing party or what? I got used to your staring, but please don't invite friends over, or I'll have to charge you for it. It's distracting as hell."

Inside the Order of the Malefic Viper, in the most prestigious of chambers where only the Malefic Viper could enter. Just a few moments before Jake began considering charging for a media license.

A man lay with his arms behind his head, staring at the ceiling. Three women, barely covered by the thin sheets on the bed, lay around him, trying sheepishly to entice him into another round. Each of them with beautiful long green hair, emerald eyes, and bodies that anyone would call photoshopped if they saw a picture.

The man was not human either but covered in a thin layer of scales, with long black hair and dark green eyes that pierced the soul. The Malefic Viper hadn't had a round of nightly activity for eras, and from the ladies' reactions, he hadn't lost his touch quite yet - his non-deadly kind of touch.

"You said that you met one of our descendants not long ago?" one of the women asked as she twirled her finger on his chest. The scales didn't bother her in the slightest, quite the opposite, in fact.

"Yeah, Viridia. Current Hall Master of the only Hall left, so the leader of the mortal part of the Order," he answered.

"So, whose is she?" one of the other women asked.

"She can't be mine; I have never been with anyone but my lord," the third one stated proudly.

"Oh, what about that gallant guy we met back in Elwood? You spent a few millennia in his little treehouse, if I recall?" the first woman smiled as she retorted.

"That was so long ago! And the kids I had then weren't any good, to begin with," she argued back.

"Ladies, please," the Viper interrupted. "It doesn't matter now, does it? Besides, she is quite the fine young lass, so there is nothing to be embarrassed about."

"She could be mine then," the third one said, making a complete 180. Earning only a sigh from her two sisters.

The three women were known as the Ladies of the Verdant Lagoon. The Viper had first met them when they were only C-tier, and they had joined his Order. It was another time, during the third era, back when his Order was known and feared throughout the multiverse.

As sisters, they all had immense talent and soared through the ranks. Shortly before attaining B-tier, he took all three of them as his women, and they had quite the passionate time together. Thinking about it... he hadn't been with them since he met her during the 4th era.

Needless to say, all three of them eventually attained godhood. It was quite rare for a family to all ascend like that, but the sisters had always shared a special bond. They fought together, had skills that were dependent on each other, and even their Records had been tied together. Even Eversmile found their situation interesting enough to study at one point.

They had forsaken everything that was individuality. Even their names were given up to bring them closer; the three of them now simply known as the First Sister of the Verdant Lagoon and so on.

"Does this mean that you plan to call on all the Hidden Ones?" the first sister asked after a bit of silence.

"Most have walked their own paths by now. I never bound them in any way, and they have no obligation to the Order any longer," the Viper answered with a sigh as he recalled the past.

"While I cannot speak for all others, my lord, I can say that us sisters were more than elated when we heard of your return. Even more so when you reached out. You forbade us from coming to you, but I believe that most, if not all, would be more than happy to return to your side," she answered.

"I know," he said, sighing. "But it is not time yet anyway."

"Just know that we are all eager to serve once more," she reiterated, as they let silence reclaim the room for a while.

The Viper was staring at the ceiling again, his gaze piercing the void into the planet known as Earth - his favorite pastime these days. However, he tried not to overdo it. Besides, there were many other characters in the multiverse he enjoyed observing.

As gods experienced with clairvoyance and farseeing, the sisters were aware of their lord's actions. That he was peering at Earth. As to who he was mainly observing, it was an easy guess. They found it peculiar and unusual for a god, much less a Primordial, to care so much about mortal affairs.

"What makes that mortal human so special?" the second sister asked, finally unable to hold herself back.

"His name is Jake," the Viper answered. "He is a... friend."

"A friend?" she asked before she began laughing. "What a novel concept. It sounds like an interesting game."

Turning to her, the Viper stared into her eyes, not a hint of jest in them. "I am serious."

"But... why?" the third sister asked, she too unable to hold her tongue. "To invest so much of your time and efforts into a mortal that could fall at any moment is just... wasteful."

Sighing, the Viper turned to all the sisters, asking. "Tell me, what am I to you?"

"My lord." "A supreme existence." "The one above all in my heart."

The answers came simultaneously, only the last one standing out a bit. Yet, they all had one thing in common.

"And there you have it. To you three, I stand above you. I am your superior."

"Is that not only natural?" the first sister asked, a bit confused.

"It is," the Viper agreed. That is how the multiverse works, after all. Power was what dictated everything. Respect was automatically earned simply by being powerful. It wasn't just a norm born out of habits or a social structure that had been adopted. It was natural law.

A superior being suppressed those below them without even trying. One had to consciously hold back their aura, not to make those of lower rank feel an innate compulsion to submit. Even if someone could resist the compulsion, they would still be instilled with a sense of inferiority.

As a Primordial, the Viper was positioned at the apex of the multiverse. The beings he didn't naturally suppress in the multiverse were few and far between. For him to find someone he both didn't suppress and got along with was even harder, considering his eccentric personality.

Yet a mortal had waltzed into his realm, not given a shit about his aura or the natural suppression he should feel. Instead, the human looked upon him like he was an absolute idiot when he, a mighty god, had tried to show off. It was a novel experience. He had even dared to give advice to a god. An F-grade was talking to a god as an equal... it was unheard of.

It wasn't just a matter of pride or personality that allowed one to stand unfazed before a god as a mortal - much less F-grade before Primordial. The Viper knew it had to be the peculiar bloodline Jake possessed that allowed him to do so.

Of course, the Viper wouldn't have bothered as much if it was indeed just the bloodline making him stand out. Jake wasn't the first mortal he had met with the power to stand tall before gods. But he was the first to act like he was just meeting some random person on the subway.

That he also turned out to possess monstrous potential was what sealed the deal for him. While the disparity between the two was nearly as wide as it could feasibly be in the multiverse, it didn't discourage the Viper at all.

"I still don't get it," the second sister said, bringing the Viper's mind back to reality.

"And you don't have to. Just know that Jake sees me as an equal, and I see him in turn as an equal," he said. He knew it was useless to try and explain it. It was a concept that didn't make any sense to natives of the multiverse after all. Maybe something only those who had grown up in a world without levels and skills could understand.



Immortality was a long time, and to a god, the life of a mortal, even an S-grade mortal, seemed infinitely short. Perhaps it was a way to protect themselves... but barely any gods had any serious relationships with anyone that weren't gods. Sometimes it was done with an S-grade near the peak if the god believed they would ascend... but even that was rare.

The sisters tried asking a bit more, but in the end, gave up. Partly because they didn't get it at all, and partly because they feared angering the Primordial by being too pesky. For him to share a bed with them was already a massive victory in their minds, and they didn't want to spoil the mood.

But the third sister did give one last try after a while. "Can we see this mortal? I am very interested to know more."

"Eh, sure," The Malefic Viper said. He materialized a screen in the air showing what he looked at earlier.

A human with wings flew through the air with a bird that sometimes flew up and pecked him on his forehead. They appeared to be fighting some larger birds. None of the sisters cared much for the scuffle between E-grades but still watched intently to try and comprehend what made the mortal so extraordinary.

The fight ended rather quickly, the larger birds clearly being outmatched. The only interesting thing being the snickering of the Viper at the human's quite frankly horrendous flying skills. He full-on laughed when even the bird accosted him.

It was boring to watch what was happening to the three female gods until the fight was truly done as he finished off a flock of smaller birds with some soul-attack skill. And the human did something they didn't expect. He looked straight up - straight into the void where the Viper and three of them peered through and directly into their eyes.

“Villy, are you having a viewing party or what? I got used to your staring, but please don’t invite friends over, or I’ll have to charge you for it. It’s distracting as hell,” the mortal spoke into thin air before rubbing off the blood that was coming out of his eyes. The four gods lying on the bed were the only ones to hear him except for the bird that appeared to only lower its opinion of him due to his apparent insanity.

Jake’s casual rebuttal made the three sisters open their eyes wide. Now full of even more questions than before.

“How did he detect us?”

“How dare he speak the Malefic One’s name like that?”

“Those eyes...”

The Viper could only smile, feeling a weird sense of satisfaction at the three dumbstruck gods. Felt good not to be the only one surprised by Jake’s nonsensical abilities.

“Well, there you have it,” he said, dispersing the screen once more. “As to how he knows I am watching... heck if I know. He just does, and I find it only adds to the enjoyment.”

He chose to categorically ignore the comments on etiquette and whatnot. He didn’t care. He also knew that any punishment short of death would be meaningless as she was a bit of a masochist if he had to say so himself. Not that he found the trait detrimental in bed.

But he had one more thing to add. “Oh, by the way, don’t mention anything about him to anyone, alright?”

The words were formed as a request, but the sisters were fully aware it wasn’t.