

Hunter 143

Chapter 143: City Lord

Meditating on the small island of clouds sat Jake with the hawk lying beside him, wings out to its side. It hadn't even bothered to perch itself on the crystal tree behind them, too exhausted to care about its dignity.

Jake had used Identify on it on their way to their little island and seen that their struggles had paid off for the bird. It had gained yet another level in only one fight.

[Galesong Hawk – lvl 92]

He, too, had gotten plenty of gains. Not counting the sheer satisfaction he earned from the first excellent fight after exiting the tutorial, of course. By looking through the notifications, he had also managed to land himself another level.

You have slain [Flare Crow – lvl 92] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

You have slain [Flare Crow – lvl 95] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

You have slain [Flare Crow – lvl 94] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

You have slain [Cloud Elemental – lvl 99] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 86 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 78 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

The level was unexpected as he had just gotten one in the fight before it. Then again, he was still quite a few levels lower than the ones he fought. Even if his experience was lessened due to fighting with the hawk and the damage the crows had already done to the elemental before they interfered.

He also had to remember his Mark of the Ambitious Hunter, increasing his experience when fighting enemies above his own level. As always, he used the skill almost instinctually on any target he faced. He felt a bit bad to admit it, but upon meeting Hawkie for the first time, he had marked it.

Closing the menus, he chose to focus on recovery for now. The flames were extinguished with the death of the crows, but his body was still a mess. He'd lost more health than he had thought, and his stamina and mana reserves were also severely drained.

After waiting a while longer, he opened his eyes and drank a healing potion. He also placed a healing, stamina, and mana potion by his side for Hawkie to take. He wasn't afraid of it drinking all three at once as even beasts innately knew not to.

Meditating once more, he felt the hawk open its eyes a few minutes in and take the healing potion, as it had also clearly lost quite a few health points during the fight.

The brief respite continued for a few hours as he downed a few more potions, and Hawkie finished off all three of its brews meanwhile. Both back in near top form, he turned to the hawk with a questioning gaze.

“Ready to go again?”

It looked at him for a moment before shaking its head. Jake was confused but saw its look turn towards the ground far below them. That is when he remembered the hawk’s tendency to leave every day for a few hours.

What it did, he could only speculate on. He wanted to follow, but every time it had denied him. And he wasn’t curious enough to ruin their partnership to discover its secret.

Today too, it motioned for him not to follow. He just nodded in acknowledgment and said:

“I will remain here then. I assume you can find me again?”

To which he got a brief nod and an annoyed gust of wind, questioning how he dared question its sense of direction.

Jake just laughed it off as he saw the hawk jump off the cloud and soar downwards. As it disappeared from sight, he too got up and summoned his wings. Hunting with the hawk was safer and more manageable, but it wasn’t good to become reliant on others. Besides, he felt like experimenting with his newfound magical abilities some more.

And the innocent Cloud Elementals were perfect just for that. An adolescent part of him also immensely enjoyed the fact that each of them turned into a small orb of condensed cloud-mana when they died. It felt like he was getting loot from his hunts. Loot that was useless to him currently, but which he was sure to find a use for at some point.

Even if he didn't, it was fun to collect things. Hawkie seemed to like them too, so he could just give them to his feathered friend. He still had many random things in his spatial storage that he didn't have any use for. Two different kinds of water with a magical affinity, just to mention some things he questioned himself for collecting more than a few times. So chances are the orbs would just be thrown in a corner and forgotten.

Touching down on the continent of clouds, he quickly located his target and began charging up three bolts. The poor Cloud Elemental didn't even know what hit it as it suffered the assault of the three bolts. Followed by another three. And then three more.

Miranda sat staring into empty air, looking lost to any outsider. In reality, she was reading a system panel that was part of her profession as Principal City Lord. Before the profession, the system had been minimal with giving out any kind of information on anything, but it usually gave something.

Knowledge related to a skill would be given upon getting it. This profession, however, was different. The knowledge it came with directly was minimal, and instead, it opened up an entirely new part of the system to her.

A lot of information viewable only by her as the city lord, related to a city's functions. Several panels that she had specific new skills related to. Other panels she felt were there but currently inaccessible for her. Likely because she lacked the required skill.

Mark joined her the day before to talk over the new city-system, the young man showing much vigor, to begin with. However, that vigor quickly deteriorated when he came to understand precisely how limited her power as a city lord was.

He had believed she could create things like she was in a real-time strategy game. The reality, however, was far more disappointing. While she could give specific properties to buildings and areas, she couldn't create anything per-se.

A city required citizens. It needed others to create the city. If not, what would be the meaning of having builder professions?

There was a lot of hidden information in the many panels of information, however - conclusions she could reach from the pure conjecture of what was written.

First of all, merchant-type professions existed. Despite the many individuals she met during the tutorial, she had never heard of that before. Then again, trading and bartering wasn't exactly a practice she saw anyone engage in. It was viewed as shameful to try and take advantage of others in their time of need.

She also came to understand more of another part of the system. Credits or System Credits being one such thing. A currency used by the system, given to everyone in the tutorial, with excess tutorial points remaining after buying rewards from the tutorial store.

And as she couldn't see how anyone could buy something for their exact number of points, everyone had to have at least some credits. The thing is... the credits were indeed just a currency. They weren't like tutorial points and couldn't be used to buy stuff from the system. And if they could, she wasn't aware of how to get access to such a store.

As an economics major, however, she understood the importance of a strong currency. Paper money had long moved away from being bound to the value of gold and was before the system more digital than ever. As some economists have said, the faith in money is the most prominent religion on Earth. The dollar or euro only having value because people believed it did.

With the presumed collapse of every single country and government, so had that illusion of money collapsed. Paper money now worth nothing more than the paper it was printed on. All the money people had in stocks or bank accounts, gone for good with all electronics and nearly all objects related to technology removed by the system.

So for the system to provide a currency was a godsend for any kind of trading. It was a guarantor far more reliable than any entity before the system. An omnipotent system that she couldn't see simply disappearing from this new world.

It should also simplify trading quite a lot. And with the money being a part of the system itself, it couldn't as easily be stolen. There was no bank account to hack or financial system to exploit. However, she was sure that someone in the multiverse had still found ways to exploit it.

The masked man - whom she had still forgotten to ask the name of - told her of how insignificant Earth was in the vast multiverse. How they were just fledglings before a world larger than they could possibly comprehend at their current level

For someone or something to find a way to exploit the system's currency was a given. But a part of her made her want not to try for fear of retaliation from the system itself. She still wasn't quite sure if it held any kind of ego or not, especially after meeting the humanoid entity in the introduction and tutorial store.

Shaking her head, she returned her attention to the menu before her. It was describing the possibility of taxation in a city. Several types of taxation, none of which she had unlocked the ability to deploy yet. Not that she had any intention of doing so.

Though the thought was a bit funny. To tax a 'city' consisting of one in-progress lodge, a bunch of trees, and two chairs. Oh, and a waterfall and pond that she naturally would have to charge a special tax to gain access to!

Honestly, there was just too much to take in. So far, Miranda felt like she barely scratched the surface and hadn't really used any of her new skills quite yet. Only to try and better shape the area affected by the Pylon of Civilization and to read information.

She had come to realize that these Pylons were the cornerstones of the new settlements on Earth. Possibly their entire universe. They allowed access to so many systems, and there was even a whole 'diplomacy' tab that was still grayed out in her menu.

She had already long ago gone through the current menus she could see, and most of them were barebones so far. The first was the City Overview:

City Overview

City name: N/A

Population: 4

City Owner: [?]

City Lord: Miranda Wells

City Tier: Earl

Not much to see now, is there? she thought. The city didn't even have a name yet. The population only showed 4 as, for some reason, the system didn't count the masked man. She knew he was the owner, but even the system didn't display his name there.

It was rather useless so far, but she was sure it would expand. However, the part about City Tier was at least a bit informative. From the owner, she received the title of Nobility: Viscount. So her guess was that his current title had to be Nobility: Earl. Not that she had any idea if that was good or not, or what it even meant.

Next was a map of the city. It was rather bare, too, just showing the area affected by the Pylon. It was a handful of kilometers in each direction from the Pylon, 200 meters up, and a hundred meters down. All of these only rough estimates, though.

After that was a panel, she was really looking forward to exploring in the future.

Quest Panel:

Current City Quests: N/A

Current Open Quests: N/A

Current Contracted Quests: N/A

Current Compulsory Quests: N/A

It was a system to design quests. One Miranda sadly didn't have the required skill to interact with yet. The current menu only displayed current quests, and there was, of course, none as she was the one meant to create them. There were still far more unknowns regarding the system than there was solid knowledge, but she was looking forward to the possibilities, nonetheless.

After that came several more panels, all of them useless currently. Some were about giving people official positions, assigning land, voting, military, creating districts, defensive measures, etc. It was just a colossal bundle thrown at her at once.

'DING!' Profession: [Principal City Lord of Earth] has reached level 46 - +18 free points

The notification startled her out of her thoughts. It was already the fifth one gained since getting the profession only a few days ago. Meaning she had obtained nearly two a day. She wasn't sure why she got them, but she wasn't one to argue with a good thing either.

She just wanted to reach 50 as soon as possible and gain a skill - hopefully, one to make quests. She had a feeling that could benefit both herself as well as the others. It would also help to legitimize her position to any new potential citizens.

Of course, for that, she would need citizens to begin with, which in itself was quite a struggle considering how their 'city' was located far into a forest surrounded by beasts. Her and Hank's family finding it was a miracle in itself and more up to her intuition skill than anything else.

Taking out a small notebook that she got from the masked man, she looked over her written plans for what to do if other humans came. She was a meticulous person by nature and preferred having plans in place beforehand.

Several scenarios were described based on the size of the group of survivors as well as their strength. She was fully aware that if there were too many or if they were too strong, they would have to bluff or deceive them somehow. At least long enough for the City Owner to return.

Speaking of which... nobody knew where the hell he left to. Hank had asked him to give them space to work, and somehow, he interpreted that as a request to disappear entirely. A complete failure in communication, to say the least. She just hoped he was here if other humans came. She had a feeling they would need him.

Hank said that it would take around a week to make the lodge, so she sincerely hoped he understood that as a request to return in a week. She had a lot of questions for him. One being his name.

As she scribbled down, her gaze wandered to another part of the system. One she could only see due to her proximity to the Pylon.

Initiate the process to claim ownership of Pylon of Civilization?

Requirements to claim ownership: Slay the current City Owner OR be uncontested in your claim for at least 30 days while maintaining the support of at least 51% of the total population.

Warning: City Owner will be warned upon initiation of the process.

She stared at it for a few seconds before dismissing it once more. Trying to hide the menu away entirely. Her intuition skill was screaming at her that should she accept it, things wouldn't go well. It was good that they were building the owner's house on top of the Pylon if others could start the process too, though Hank and the others had yet to say anything.

Sighing, she returned to her notebook as she began scribbling down notes. She held a meeting with Louise later that day to help her draw up plans for at least the semblance of a city layout. Doing so was putting the cart before the horse for sure, but she had a feeling they wouldn't be a 5-man city for much longer.

Well, more a wish than a feeling. Miranda missed other people a lot and had always been the very social type, so she looked forward to anyone coming. She just hoped they were nice.