

## Hunter 155

### Chapter 155: One-sided

The Malefic Viper exited the shattering realm, appearing in the void. A giant sphere that looked to be made of glass with a perennial inferno within was crumbling behind him. Vilastromoz had a relaxed smile as he savored the sensation of letting out a bit of power for the first time in forever.

The Brimstone Hegemon was viewed as a powerful god from a multiversal point of view... but powerful wasn't enough to face the Primordial. So while he did feel some enjoyment... it wasn't enough. Luckily, it looked like it didn't have to be.

\*clap\* \*clap\* \*clap\*

Loud claps echoed out within a void that should be soundless as the clapping god made a mockery of the laws of reality.

"Wonderful display!"

Sitting in the middle of nowhere was a humanoid figure that one could easily mistake for a human at first glance.

"Yip of Yore," the Viper said as he looked towards the figure. The person looked vaguely human, but his limbs were slightly too long, and his features were a little... off.

“For a Primordial to know my name... I am honored,” the smiling god said without a trace of mockery. “You know, I came here to kill you to look cool in front of all the other gods as the first-ever Primordial Slayer...”

He stated his intention to kill the Viper with an honest expression before laughing out loud. “But man, fuck that. I heard you didn’t do shit for like a 100 times longer than I have even existed and that you were just some old has-been.”

“Oh, but I am,” Vilastromoz said with a toothy grin.

“Yeah, sure. Shit, I should have believed Valdemar...” Yip said, shaking his head. “Anyway, wanna fight?”

The Malefic Viper’s smiled as it turned to a large grin. “You know, I heard a lot about the madman known as Yip of Yore. But I don’t believe in madness without a method... why come?”

“Honestly, I just wanted to see what the hype was all about. Lots of crazy shit from the old generation floating around about you,” Yip said, still grinning himself.

“Disappointed?”

“No, quite the opposite. You know people compared me to you just because I did a bit of cleanup of this annoying Pantheon after becoming a god. Said we were both madmen, so I guess you know what you are talking about. Wait, are we the only reasonable ones?”

“No,” the Viper said. “We’re not.”

With those words, the void tore, but it wasn’t the Viper that made his move. Yip of Yore appeared before the Malefic Viper and threw a straight. A simple punch that even the most amateur boxer knew.

The Viper leaned slightly to the side, dodging the blow.

The void behind him parted in a crescent wave as the already crumbling sphere behind him exploded into minuscule fragments.

It was a simple attack, but one powerful enough to make space itself tremble. To part the void was an ability only allowed by the most powerful of gods. For most, merely being able to exist within it was enough.

These two gods, however, weren’t most.

Another punch was thrown, the Viper once more dodging as he smiled casually. Then a third punch and a fourth, all easily dodged or deflected. For two gods to fight like that was quite frankly ridiculous.

Their movements slow enough for even mortals to follow, their attacks unadorned and straightforward. Yet each hit brought with it destruction. The void around them was slowly torn apart before quickly regenerating itself.

After the fifth punch, Yip of Yore teleported away only a few meters, sitting down with his legs crossed once more.

"Lost again..." he murmured.

"How... peculiar," the Viper said as the void around him warped and bent. The realm of the Brimstone Hegemon that Yip of Yore had annihilated was now only a shattered sphere once more, and it looked like nothing had ever happened.

"A concept of legends and wonder, time, fate and karma interlinking to create a scenario that carries no causality or shapes reality unless you wish for it to... making all your antics those of 'Yore,'" the Malefic Viper said with a smile. "Fun tricks."

"What is life but a great story?" Yip of Yore smiled in return. "I just seek to create the greatest story of all."

"Ah, but does a great story not need to be grounded in reality?" the Primordial smiled. "So let's add some truth."

The smiling Yip suddenly stiffened as the entire right side of his body turned black and began rotting. It only continued for a few seconds before the god appeared to shimmer and returned to his undamaged form once more... but with what looked like a dark green scar of a handprint remaining on his shoulder.

"Anyway, it was a pleasure to meet you," the Viper said.

“Pleasure's all mine,” Yip answered back, still smiling despite the scar that was sizzling with power. “May our next battle be a bit more interesting... so how about we do it by proxy? Let them meet amongst the stars...”

Vilastromoz was about to leave but asked anyway. “If you think your Chosen can take down mine... you’re free to try. In fact, I am quite sure he would enjoy it very much.”

With those words, the Primordial disappeared from the void, with Yip leaving soon after.

The sphere that had once been the Brimstone Hegemon’s divine realm crumbling to nothingness alone in the endless void. A figure that had lived for more than 80 eras eradicated, and in but a few generations, his name forever forgotten, only remembered as yet another deity foolish enough to defy the Malefic Viper.

Jake took in a deep breath as he enjoyed the pleasant smell of a newly made batch of mana potions. It was a bit weird how the potions themselves didn’t taste of anything, and yet the vapor released from the cauldron could smell so damn good.

The entire thing only got better as his newest creation also earned him yet another level.

\*‘DING!’ Profession: [Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 71 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points\*

\*‘DING!’ Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 80 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points\*

Nine more for the big upgrade, he reminded himself. Nine more levels and he could pick a skill to either gain a buttload of willpower or strength, along with all the other powerful effects with the associated skill. Sadly, Hawkie was too impatient to allow him just to sit down and work.

The bird chirped at him to get moving already. It was only able to recover as quickly as it had because of his potions, but he didn't blame the thing. They had only gotten in a single hunting-session after returning, so he also felt a bit restless himself.

It had been a rather boring one that was just killing a few weaker Flare Crows and Cloud Elementals. Not enough to net either him or the hawk any levels, but he felt like he was close. Another quick hunt, and he should reach 90 and gain a new skill. One he was quite excited for as he hoped it would reflect his recent progress in magic.

Spreading his wings, he leaped off their small cloud platform, Hawkie in tow. Recently the bird barely commented on his flying skills, making him feel quite good about himself... he thought as he got another gust of wind in his side, adjusting him a bit.

Nevertheless, he had become quite the proficient flyer. Far from as good as the birds, but pretty good for a human that didn't have any wings less than two weeks ago. Not that he had anyone to compare himself to, he just had a feeling he wasn't completely lost when it came to being a wannabe dragon.

Their first target was to be another Cloud Elemental already in the middle of a fight with a bird nearly the size of itself. Which is to say, a big-ass bird. It looked a lot like a smaller version of the D-grade Thunder Roc, and using Identify confirmed that they were likely associated somehow.

[Lightning Roc - lvl 98]

With its enemy a single level lower than the roc. Cowardly bird.

[Cloud Elemental – lvl 97]

They had moved further inward than they usually did. Not by far, but over their days of hunting, they had begun moving further and further in, today just marking another new record. It was natural, as the levels and the density of prey got higher the further in they went. Not by much, but a bit.

It all had to do with the spawning of the Cloud Elementals. In the outer area, they could spawn as low as level 25, while here in the halfway point to the giant tree in the middle, it was hard to find any below 60. The frequency of those above 90, of course, being far higher also. You could still find ones above level 90 at the fringe; they were just rarer.

With more powerful cloud elementals came the equally as powerful predators that preyed upon them. Despite the variety of birds not being the greatest, this was still the first lightning roc they had encountered.

If he had to guess, it was because they preferred being closer to the trees. The big tree in the middle specifically. Or maybe they were just incredibly scarce. He didn't know, and quite frankly, the only thing he truly cared about was how good of a fight it could put up.

Its abilities didn't seem particularly effective against the Cloud Elemental as lightning did little to them. It was just a battle of attrition with the roc's mana slowly breaking apart the Cloud Elemental little by little. But from the blasts of pure electricity it released, he would say it was pretty powerful for its level.

He said, being only level 80 himself, yet not at all worried about facing down two monsters nearly at 100.

“I take the bird; you handle the elemental,” he said to Hawkie, getting a blink of approval in response.

Drawing an arrow, he coated it in his blood infused with Blood of the Malefic Viper. With all his levels and the upgrade to ancient-rarity, his blood was damn close to being - if not already - his most potent poison. He hadn't progressed at all in his concocting skills since the tutorial ended, as he had only focused on getting his potion brewing up to par.

A weakness, yes, but one he could shore up once he got an opportune time. Aka, later when he was not preparing to shoot down the Lightning Roc before him.

He nocked the arrow and drew back the string as the stamina and mana moved according to Infused Powershot. His entire body and bow were filling with energy. Hawkie waited at his side patiently as it prepared to head in the second the arrow was fired.

Pushing both his body and his bow to the limit, he activated Limit Break to 10% straight away to get a bit of extra power. It gave him another second of channel time before he was forced to release it in a mighty explosion of energy and scattered clouds.

His attack had gone unnoticed by the Lightning Roc and elemental both up to this moment. Partly because of the distance between them and partly because they were engaged in combat. Well, the elemental was dumb as a rock, so it wouldn't notice anything unless you were right below it.



The roc – and the arrow's target - noticed the approaching attack far too late to react. The arrow pierced its stomach and didn't stop there as it flew straight through. Feathers and blood were flying everywhere as it screeched out in pain.

But it didn't have time to wallow as it had to quickly try and adjust before the next arrow. One Jake was already channeling. Lightning crackled across its body as runes lit up on some of its feathers. Its speed immediately spiked as it disengaged from the Cloud Elemental and flew out into the open fields of clouds.

Jake didn't wait any longer as he released his second arrow. Weaker than the first, but still channeled to a point where it was hard to dodge even in the roc's accelerated state. It tried to avoid the arrow but was affected by Gaze of the Apex Hunter and failed the moment it did.

It had managed to barely move its wing in front of it, which resulted in it being pierced and more blood and feathers sent flying. Its only advantage was its massive size that made the damage appear to be far less. A barrel-sized hole looked like a normal arrow wound on a regular large bird.

Which is, of course, where the poison comes in. Insidiously it had already begun spreading through its veins, causing destruction. In its haste to avoid the second arrow, it hadn't noticed and failed to counteract it right away. Not that Jake had any intentions of letting it work on recuperating.

He attacked again with another arrow, once more making it freeze up right before it hit. The effect diminished significantly with consecutive uses, but it got the job done as its already damaged wing was hit once more.

The roc now had two choices: run and try and survive the poison or kill the one who had inflicted it. As a beast, it didn't properly understand that ending Jake wouldn't result in it being cured of the poison.

Though in this case, it was actually right as without him, the blood would stop being poisonous. If he had used a concocted poison, though, his life or death wouldn't matter.

Not that Jake had any intentions of dying. In fact, if he could keep up his current approach of just slowly ending the bird at several kilometers distance, he wouldn't complain. Sure, it was a bit boring, but he had already reconciled that getting a good fight from anything below D-tier was hard.

Hawkie and the Cloud Elemental were also now deeply embroiled in their bout. The hawk using its tried and tested tactic of slowly whittling the big elemental away with powerful blades of wind and the occasional explosion of wind to tear out large segments of its body before scattering the clouds with a powerful gust.

It was a long fight, but it was somewhat safe for Hawkie with its insane speed. One even Jake couldn't match even with his inflated stats. Its occasional speed-up from using wind magic to boost itself made it even faster still in short bursts. In other words, Hawkie was a nightmare to fight against for the slow Cloud Elemental.

Back with the roc, it had reached the conclusion that offense was the best defense. It supercharged itself once more as it made a beeline straight for Jake. Which was met with another arrow that it narrowly avoided getting through the eye as it instead tore up a good part of its neck.

He got off another shot before it reached him - the roc passing two kilometers in a respectable four seconds, pissing all over the sound barrier a few times over. It was fast, but Jake already knew it was fighting a losing battle. If it had truly wanted to live, it should have run.

Jake had an insane damage output from his arrows and poison, but his defenses were nothing to scoff at either. Scales covered his body as he leaped back. Lightning rolled over him as he dodged the charge of

the roc, and he felt his skin prickle beneath the scales. His cloak got flayed entirely, forcing him to quickly throw it into his spatial storage.

Back to having a cloak that gets destroyed first thing every fight, he internally complained as he drew the string and turned to shoot another arrow at the giant bird that had just passed him. It also failed to dodge as it took a Splitting Arrow to its rear side, resulting in a dozen small arrows sticking out of it.

It quickly turned as its beak opened, firing off a lightning bolt. Jake dodged the first one, but it soon released another two in short bursts. He knew they were coming from his danger sense, but he still failed to dodge the third as they were simply too fast.

In an explosion of electricity, he was shot back as his entire body smoked. Or more accurately, his clothes smoked, as the pristine black and dark green scales beneath managed to withstand the blow entirely. Once more making Jake happy for the powerful magic resistance they provided.

But while the lightning bolt itself hadn't done much damage, it had made him momentarily spasm and thus fail to release another arrow, buying the roc a moment to breathe. Which it did, quite literally, as it inhaled deeply.

Parts of the cloud island itself got inhaled as the beast took in more and more. Jake momentarily failed to attack as he wondered what it was doing. Something he soon found out.

Opening its beak once more, it released a stream of dark clouds with thunder crackling within - a new attack, but not one that Jake found particularly impressive. That was his initial reaction, at least. That is until several seconds passed, and it kept releasing dark clouds.

By now, it was entirely surrounded by the thunderclouds. The area a hundred meters around it were covered in dark clouds obscuring the giant roc's figure. At first, Jake thought it a new attack but soon noticed it was quite the opposite.

Within the cloud, the lightning kept hitting its body, but instead of leaving wounds, the electricity instead nurtured it.

It likely believed him unable to see it as it stopped exhaling. The cloud now nearly two hundred meters in diameter, completely covering it. The Lightning Roc also tried to reduce its size as much as possible as it landed on the cloud island.

Jake didn't have any intentions of letting it try and recuperate. He took out an arrow and began charging yet another Infused Powershot. It appeared that the beast had learned a little, though, as the thundercloud released lightning towards him in an attempt to interrupt his channeling.

Just before he was hit, he released a massive burst of mana, scattering the lightning completely. He had been forced to halt his charging but soon began once more. Another lightning strike was released towards him, but it was okay. He had channeled enough.

The arrow was released and flew straight for the stationary bird within the thundercloud. It was off to the side of it, smart enough to not linger in the obvious middle, but to Jake, it didn't matter. He could see it clear as day with his insane perception coupled with the extra bonus from his Gaze of the Apex Hunter. Not that it would matter anyway, as Mark of the Ambitious Hunter was also present. The bird had no escape.

Startled that the human was aware of where it was hiding, the Lightning Roc tried to dodge but failed as it froze up from the gaze of its soon-to-be killer looking upon it. This arrow was striking it straight in its head as it only managed to sway slightly right at the final moment.

It had managed to avoid getting an arrow through the eye, but it wasn't that much luckier. Its lower beak was hit as it completely shattered from the impact, sending blood and pieces of beak flying everywhere. Followed by a distorted screech of pain from the roc.

It tried to move once more, desperate to survive but was hit by another arrow soon after. It barely managed to exit its thundercloud as it was hit in its already damaged wing, sending it spiraling towards the cloud island below. The entire wing severed from another Infused Powershot.

Crashing down, it struggled for a few more moments. The thundercloud had already dispersed the moment the roc exited it, and it clearly had no gas left in its tank. A final arrow penetrating its skull ended its life. Jake felt the notification of the kill followed by the warm glow of a level-up. Which meant another skill. But that would have to wait till the fight was truly over.

Hawkie had made good progress with the Cloud Elemental, but there was a long way to go. Alone it would take the hawk close to an hour to kill a Cloud Elemental a few levels above its own if it did so in a safe manner. With Jake joining in, however, it was over fast.

Bolts of mana hit the elemental over and over again as it struggled with having yet another opponent. Jake had plenty of mana to spare and didn't hold back at all. Hawkie also found way more space to be offensive in its approach, making its own damage output increase. This all resulted in the elemental dispersing only a few minutes later.

Killing the Lightning Roc had taken Jake less than five minutes, so the entire battle in total had only been around fifteen minutes. While the two would typically go looking for their next prey, Jake motioned to return to the island. It was skill selection time.