

## Hunter 178

### Chapter 178: Names

"I do feel a bit bad for the man, but you should have seen the expression of defeat on his face when the Mystsong Hawk made its move," Miranda laughed as she swirled her wine.

"D-grades do tend to get a bit more flashy," Jake agreed, chuckling along. "But I tend to find that scale and power don't always correspond. The Thunder Roc could make giant lightning attacks, but they barely hurt. Well, hurt a little, but one would think a massive thundercloud did more damage."

"Are all D-grades you met birds? Oh wait, you mentioned a mushroom," she said, grabbing one of the small finger foods from the platter on the table.

Jake also took one of the small skewers with grilled meat on, quite pleased with the food too. Food didn't have any right to taste this good, but damn, was it heavenly. Or maybe his tastebuds were just starved from not eating properly for so long. Who knows, and who cares? The food was fantastic.

What's more, he could even feel it help regenerate his stamina and health as he ate it. Miranda had mentioned it was made by someone with a cooking profession, so that did make sense. Jake even considered hunting some beasts to give to the cook... but apparently, they had plenty already. It did help that they had just murdered a few thousand giant cows.

"I also killed this huge Storm Elemental," Jake answered. "Most recently was something called a Minotaur Mindchief, the source of all the bovines attacking the fort."

Miranda looked surprised as she muttered, "You did say you dealt with the source... I should have guessed it was a D-grade..."

"You would have known by the time Phillip's men got the survivors left in the barn," Jake said. He had mentioned that a few people were stranded there before they left, and he had sent a few people there to check things out - Neil and his party going with them for protection.

"I guess," she said, sighing. "I hope that little girl will be okay..."

"Staying at the fort, for now, seems like it would be best... I don't think it will help to make her run around all the time. After she has had time to get a bit of stability, she can come here. Hopefully, we can get someone with magic or skills to help her... if that's even possible," Jake said, also sighing.

It was hard being confronted with an issue you could do nothing about. The Minotaur Mindchief had scarred many people, and he was sure the majority of the survivors from the barn would also have issues. The Minotaur had been sapient but was also the most monstrous monster Jake had yet to encounter. Without a doubt... it too had been broken.

"Children, in general, have it hard... but their ability to adapt is also admirable," Miranda said with a melancholic smile. "I am not even sure what we can do for them... what kind of schooling would they need? I heard that they tend to get their classes and professions around puberty, but does that mean children will have to be set in their future that young?"

"Yeah... I don't think I even knew what I wanted to be before my third year of uni..." Jake said, shaking his head. "But I don't think the first class or professions matters that much, yet I do agree those who know what they want and stick with one path will likely have the advantage."

"Well, I am sure we will figure it out," Miranda said, trying to lighten the mood. "We are all learning still, and with time I am sure we can make something great. It isn't like you or I have to figure it out anyway; I am sure someone out there can come out with way better ideas than us."

The two of them had been talking about things for the last hour or so. Miranda had brought a platter from the chef who had also made food for the meeting between the city leaders and a bottle of wine from before the system.

Initially, it was just to quickly go over what they had discussed during the meeting, but it turned out to be just Jake and Miranda eating and drinking while talking about random things. Nothing of importance – at least not to Jake – was discussed at the meeting, but he liked to be informed anyway.

Miranda had decided on a council-like leadership structure. She would be the head of the council and have the final decision, with Jake, of course, having the final-final decision. Actually, rather than a council, it was more accurate to say that she had some advisers or people she delegated work and responsibilities to. With the city expanding by a few thousand, they would need to have a more official structure.

With Jake not caring much about other things, there naturally wasn't a reason to discuss it. Except it turned into Jake telling a bit of what he had been up to and Miranda talking about how the systems she had gained access to as a City Lord worked.

Jake was especially interested in the questing system. It sounded cool. Miranda could create quests for the city's citizens, including rewards and penalties and all of the things a quest usually had. She would have to provide the rewards and give out the penalties upon failure, but the quests served as contracts of sorts. Well, the contract could be nullified if both parties agreed not to deal out the punishment or give the reward, in which case it could be ignored - a bit like when Miranda had initiated the process to take over the Pylon.

This quest system would initially be used as a way of organizing labor more than anything else. Give out quests to help with building the city, gather materials, or whatever else. It was quite the versatile system, and Miranda even said they could construct items or buildings to help manage things so she wouldn't have to give out quests and administer everything herself. People with administration or manager-like professions could use these items or buildings to then help level themselves.

It was pleasant just to sit down and talk to someone like a normal person. Sure, he spoke to the two hawks a bit here and there but having someone who could answer was a big plus.

Thinking about it... Miranda and possibly Lillian were the only humans he felt like he could really talk to. Sure, there were some things to consider, like relative power dynamics with him being their boss and everything, coupled with him being far stronger, but that didn't really bother Jake much. He was best buddies with a god with the power to make their planet go 'poof,' and the god in question also happened to be the god that had blessed him. Now that was the mother of all skewed power dynamics.

If it bothered Miranda, she was good at hiding it. She seemed equally excited about talking about the city-system and its many features as Jake did talking about the many hunts he was on.

He had talked about his adventures to the cloud continent, his friendship with Hawkie and Mystie, and besides a small comment on how the names sucked, she had just silently listened with a relaxed smile.

They also laughed a bit when she said she had just gained a level by drinking wine and eating tasty food.

"Well, doesn't it make sense to be like a politician when you are literally a City Lord? Just relaxing and doing nothing with the power just rolling in," Jake joked. She just laughed along, adding:

"You know, maybe lying and deceiving the public gives more experience than being good at my job. I can already see myself jumping a few levels from receiving a massive bribe," Miranda laughed before turning a bit more serious. "But one thing was brought up at the meeting."

"What is it?" Jake asked, mirroring her shift in attitude.

"A name," she said. "It may seem minor, but just referring to it as 'the city' or 'the forest' is a bit tedious. The empty slot on my interface is also a sore sight. Which also brings me to another thing..."

She steeled herself as she took a deep breath, her face slightly red as she asked. "I... don't believe I ever got your name... of course, if you meant to keep it a secret, I understand and won't ask aga-"

"Jake Thayne," he answered, shaking his head. "We seriously never exchanged names? I thought we did..."

"Well, we did now," Miranda said with a big smile on her face. "I mean no offense... but Jake is also a remarkably normal name for one so abnormal as you."

"I guess, never really thought about it," Jake shrugged.

"With that out of the way... we need a name for the city too. Your acceptance is required for the name to stick with the system, so I thought I should ask you for ideas first. But after hearing about Hawkie and Mystie, I am beginning to reconsider... we are not naming it Townie," Miranda said, barely able to hold back a laugh. Jake didn't find it that funny, but he had to agree that Townie was terrible...

"The council did have a few suggestions," she finally added on.

"Aight, let's hear it," Jake said, leaning back with his glass of wine and a large skewer with grilled beef on it.

Miranda took out a few papers, each with a list on it that had way too many entries.

"Did you all just brainstorm and wrote down everything?" he couldn't help but ask.

"Even better, we invited everyone to come with ideas. Let's begin!" Miranda said, way more excited than she should be.

"Alright, I am just gonna spitball some, and you give me your thoughts," she began as an agonizing session of names began.

"Newland propositioned from one of the newer citizens."

"Pretty sure the forest isn't new."

"Newfoundland."

"That is the same thing..."

"New Hope."

"Alright, remove anything with the word 'new' in it; it's just too corny and boring," Jake finally said, after he saw she clearly had way more.

Which she indeed did, as she put away two entire pages of name ideas... all with an even worse naming sense than Jake. At least according to himself.

"Alright then. Oh, this next one is from Mark. He propositioned naming it Sanctuary."

"I think the kid has played too many action RPGs. Even if he hasn't, the name makes us sound like some kind of religious hideaway," Jake immediately shot it down.

"Mark actually had quite a few ideas," Miranda said, turning the page so Jake could see it.

"Man, he played way too many games... and I am pretty sure those are all copyrighted," Jake said, after only briefly scanning the list. "Also, no to all of them."

"Seeing as you don't like the religious imagery, I take it Genesis, Miracle, and the Blessed Forest is out of the question?" Miranda asked a bit teasingly, knowing full well those all sucked.

"I am going to name it Jakeville if this keeps up..." he said, teasing her back.

"A part of me believes you would actually dare do that," she chuckled, "and while it would be absolutely hilarious, I doubt it will be wise in the long run."

After that, they just put the papers down on the table and began going over them, crossing out names they both didn't like. A lot of them were just the same names as pre-system cities, Jake not liking any of them. Miranda didn't either.

They both felt like it would ground people too much in the world before the system. They had to realize things had changed and that they weren't going to rebuild what was: they would create something entirely new - a place for everyone to strive and be safe in this new world.

They did their editing with a hard hand until they were left with only three.

"Greenwood sounds fine, but..." Miranda began before her voice slowly died off, with Jake just staring down at them. None of them felt right...

"The purpose of this place is to give people a place to live in safety, but also one to improve themselves..." Jake muttered before turning to Miranda. "How about we just call it Haven?"



"Haven..." she muttered. "It's simple and easy to remember... the name carries meaning... I think it fits," she said, nodding. "I also think it goes well with the environment... we are in a forest, after all. The name helps communicate that."

"Well, I like it at least," Jake said, shrugging.

"I like it too," Miranda smiled, as she did some good old system-magic, and a few seconds later, Jake got a notification.

Do you want to name your city: Haven?

Y/N

Jake instantly agreed as the prompt disappeared... and that was that. There was no great fanfare or anything like that - just Miranda confirming that her city management menu now said that the city was named Haven. Apparently, it had also been updated to display his name as the owner. But she said it had begun doing that just after she learned his name, so the two weren't really related.

"Cheers, and may Haven have a bright future ahead of it," she said, raising her wineglass.

"Cheers."

The two kept talking for a bit, mainly joking about some of the sillier names before she headed off. She still had work to do, and so did Jake. On her way out, she gave a small bow towards the nest with two birds eyeing her menacingly until she was out of sight.

Jake stood outside, seeing her off too. When she was gone, he turned around and sat down at the table. There was still a bit of wine remaining, so he emptied it into his glass. Sitting there, he swirled the liquid as he opened his status menu for the first time in quite a while.

Status

Name: Jake Thayne

Race: [Human (E) – lvl 86]

Class: [Ambitious Hunter – lvl 99]

Profession: [Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper – lvl 73]

Health Points (HP): 11290/11290

Mana Points (MP): 13421/13450

Stamina: 9171/9400

Stats

Strength: 695

Agility: 1118

Endurance: 940

Vitality: 1129

Toughness: 731

Wisdom: 1076

Intelligence: 559

Perception: 2125

Willpower: 667

Free points: 0

Titles:[Forerunner of the New World], [Bloodline Patriarch], [Holder of a Primordial's True Blessing], [Dungeoneer V], [Dungeon Pioneer V], [Legendary Prodigy],[Prodigious Slayer of the Mighty], [Kingslayer], [Nobility: Earl], [Progenitor of the 93rd Universe]

Class Skills: [Basic One-Handed Weapons (Inferior)], [Advanced Stealth (Common)], [Basic Twin Fang Style (Uncommon)], [Basic Shadow Vault of Umbra (Uncommon)], [Splitting Arrow (Uncommon)], [Hunter's Tracking (Uncommon)], [Big Game Hunter (Rare)], [Infused Powershot (Rare)], [Mark of the Ambitious Hunter (Rare)], [Archery of Vast Horizons (Rare)] [Descending Dark Fang (Rare)], [Limit Break (Rare)], [Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter (Epic)], [One Step Mile (Ancient)], [Moment of the Primal Hunter (Legendary)], [Gaze of the Apex Hunter (Legendary)]

Profession Skills: [Herbology (Common)], [Brew Potion (Common)], [Concoct Poison (Common)], [Alchemist's Purification (Common)], [Alchemical Flame (Common)], [Toxicology (Uncommon)], [Cultivate Toxin (Uncommon)], [Malefic Viper's Poison (Rare)], [Sense of the Malefic Viper (Epic)], [Touch of the Malefic Viper (Epic)], [Scales of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)], [Palate of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)], [Blood of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)], [Sagacity of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)], [Wings of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)]

Blessing: [True Blessing of the Malefic Viper (Blessing - True)]

Race Skills: [Endless Tongues of the Myriad Races (Unique)], [Identify (Common)], [Thoughtful Meditation (Uncommon)], [Shroud of the Primordial (Divine)]

Bloodline:[Bloodline of the Primal Hunter (Bloodline Ability - Unique)]

While it hadn't gotten that much longer since last he checked, he had gained quite a few stats. He had kept just throwing all his free points into perception, not really caring if it was the optimal thing or not to do at this point. It felt right to do it, so he did it.

Well, it did help that his regular archery now also benefitted from perception. In fact, he was beginning to get quite a few skills using the stat. And in the coming days, there would be many more stat points coming.

After emptying the glass, he walked out into the veranda and sat legs crossed in front of the pond. A cauldron appeared between his legs a few seconds after as he took a deep breath.

It was time to grind some alchemy.