

Hunter 179

Chapter 179: Baby Hawk

The wheel of time spun as the days passed one by one.

Beasts fought, humans struggled to survive and expand their settlements, and a good deal of them battled to claim the many Pylons still scattered across the planet. Every Pylon was far apart, often separated by thousands if not tens of thousands of kilometers.

Jacob had taken fourteen days walking with his entourage to the Pylon second-closest to where he had arrived back on Earth. Granted, he hadn't rushed, but it was still a vast distance.

Day nine of Jake entering his alchemy-frenzy, he was interrupted as he got a notification that wasn't about a successful craft or a new level gained.

Announcement to all Nobles: 10 Pylons of Civilization have now been claimed. Once 100 Pylons are claimed, the World Congress will automatically form.

Jake stared at it for a few seconds before shrugging and turning back to his cauldron. Miranda unsurprisingly came in later that day. They talked a bit, but as it was more of a forewarning than anything else, they didn't take any particular actions besides discussing it a bit.

Everyone with any nobility title had seen the message, Phillip and Miquel included, as well as one other person Jake didn't know.

Phillip already knew about Pylons and apparently knew they had one, but to the other two, it was news. They knew nothing more about Pylons than that their lord title allowed them to control one.

Miranda shared the fact that they had a Pylon with all of them, making it official, and with Jake's approval, they also stopped being all secretive about it. Of course, no one knew where the actual Pylon was, though it wasn't far-fetched that many suspected it was in Jake's valley.

To everyone's big surprise, no one wanted to try and scout out the valley even if they suspected he kept some good stuff there. Maybe it had something to do with the overly protective D-grade Mystsong Hawk sitting in a nest inside. It had already placed quite a few defensive and detection spells around the place.

The egg still looked like it could hatch any day, and he was looking forward to it.

Jake had just gotten done with a round of crafting some inferior-rarity poison that he was practicing with. Neither of them were very useful, but they were still new creations and a stepping stone on his path to slaying a certain giant mushroom.

[Weak Herbicide (inferior)] – A weak poison created to kill plant life and similar lifeforms. Breaks apart the physical body and membranes that hold the plant together, making it wither.

[Weak Fungicide (Inferior)] – A weak poison created to kill fungi and similar lifeforms. This type of poison is made to spread through any physical connection of the fungi, quickly infecting large parts of it. Deals low damage but is hard to cleanse.

Both of them kind of sucked compared to just splashing a shitload of blood on stuff, but they did help him learn quite a lot. He wanted to make a potent poison, or fungicide, to kill the damn mushroom lurking below, and for that, he needed to start from the bottom.

A poison that worked against plants and fungi was fundamentally different from regular human or beast-killing poison. Plants and fungi were rarely ever vitality-based lifeforms but instead lived off a type of life-affinity mana. So poison, such as Necrotic Poison and - in an even more extreme case - the Hemotoxin had barely any effect. They still did a bit of damage just because they were infused with harmful mana, but the result was absolutely minuscule.

The method behind crafting was a lot different from other types of poison he had made so far, and it was an exciting challenge to throw himself headfirst into.

It was eighteen days since he began his grinding, and he was already working on making his first common-rarity mushroom-killing poison. His speed was without a doubt impressive, and he had also gained another level that day, bringing him to 78.

'DING!' Profession: [Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 78 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

It wasn't even a level every three days, and while that did seem slow compared to his prior speed, it was actually quite fast. At least Miranda said so after comparing him to many others. Well, Miranda leveled super fast, but hers had also slowed down a lot, and she had begun focusing a bit on her class also.

On that eighteenth day, he felt a shift from the area outside his lodge. He barely had time to notice it before he heard the cries of Hawkie and Mystie, as they both made half-panicked sounds, jumping around their nest.

Jake tossed the book he was reading to the side and rushed outside, already fully aware of what was happening. He faintly felt another aura had begun appearing and was growing in presence by the second.

The egg was finally hatching.

Running up to the nest, he joined the birds at the nest, acting just as anxious and panicked as them. He couldn't help but wonder if he was supposed to do anything as he saw a small crack appear on the egg. Mystie, the majestic D-grade hawk that seemed to always be in control, was a mess at that moment, jumping back and forth.

In an attempt to calm down, he closely inspected what was happening within the egg with his sphere, where he saw a small figure with fluffy down slowly poke itself out of the egg from the inside. It ate the shell as it hatched, consuming the many potent energies within it.

All three of them were anxious but still waited patiently for the little one. It struggled to break out and eat the shell from within, slowly pecking at it. Jake had to admit... it looked a bit creepy, but damn, was it a cute little bugger.

Soon, it made a mighty peck and finally got its head out of the shell.

"Chirp! Chirp!"

It instantly began making – what in Jake’s eyes – was the cutest chirps as all three of them moved closer to watch the little thing. It looked back at them with its big beady eyes as it just continued making its small chirping noises as it struggled to break free.

Jake nearly wanted to help it, but seeing as its parents didn’t, he wouldn’t interfere either. He did, however, use Identify on it to see what kind of bird it was. He had kind of expected it to be called Galemyst Hawk or maybe Mystgale Hawk – mainly because he lacked imagination. But its race was a bit different than he expected.

[Sylphian Eyas – lvl 0]

Jake remembered that eyas was the name for a baby hawk, so he reckoned it would evolve as it grew to become a Sylphian Hawk. As for Sylphian, he assumed it had something to do with Sylphs, which he recalled were spirits of wind or something. I’ll ask Villy at some point, Jake thought. No reason to bother the god with random questions all the time. He didn’t want to be that

friend who keeps pestering others with constant inane questions when bored.

If it was a powerful variant, could it naturally grow to D-grade, and how long would that take? How wou-

“Chirp!”

Screw all that, Jake thought, as he just extended his finger towards the bird.

It looked up at him for a brief moment before its small beak tried to close around it. It failed miserably and just began pecking at his hand harmlessly. He couldn't help but chuckle as the small bird gave up and returned to eating its shell.

The human and parent birds just patiently watched the little thing eat the rest of its shell. When it was done, it finally got up on its two thin legs and took a few small steps forward, promptly falling on its butt.

"Burp!"

It let out a burping sound as it tried to stand up again. The Mystsong Hawk walked a bit closer and helped it stand by gently nudging with its beak. The baby hawk managed to stand up proudly again, walked a single step more this time before falling down headfirst.

Hawkie caught it mid-fall with its talons, the small bird trying to stabilize itself. This time it didn't walk around but just stood there, looking around at the three of them. It blinked with its big eyes as if it wanted to memorize all of them.

Ever since coming to the nest, Jake had been a bit worried. He feared that he was intruding on something. He wasn't really related to the bird besides helping a bit with that magic ritual to strengthen it and being friends with Hawkie.

But Hawkie and Mystie had both looked happy, almost elated when Jake was showing so much interest. He felt them warmly look on when the small hawklet tried to bite his finger. So clearly, they approved. Which begged the question... was he the godfather or something to that extent?

Jake couldn't help but remember Caleb and Maja when he thought about that... she had to have given birth by now... which made him an uncle. He knew his family lived because Villy told him, but he also felt like they still lived. It was just a faint intuition when he thought of them. He was looking forward to their eventual reunion.

While he could technically just up and leave now, using One Step Mile into the horizon... he knew that wouldn't be a wise choice. For now, it was best to focus on his own strength and make it so that when he met his family again, he could actually help protect them.

Hawkie nudged him from the side at this time, pulling Jake out of his thoughts. He saw that the bird looked at him confused and also saw Mystie staring with confusion.

"Sorry, I just recalled some memories," he said, smiling at the two, as he extended his finger towards the small bird again. "It has nothing to do with you, mini-Hawkie."

Mystie gave him an annoyed screech, practically punching Jake with its wing.

"Oh, a mini-Mystie?" he said, chuckling. "So you're a little girl, eh..."

Mystie still looked at him disapprovingly – likely due to the bad nickname – but didn't correct him.

Around fifteen minutes had passed since the little chick was all the way out its shell, and it was already waltzing around the nest quite comfortably. It was quite a contrast to pre-system newborn birds that were borderline immobile for quite the period after birth.

He couldn't help but use Identify on it again and was a bit surprised.

[Sylphian Eyas – lvl 1]

Jake knew beasts could grow in level with other ways than combat already, but it was the speed that surprised him. Hawkie had also gained a level while protecting the nest and doing nothing else, proving it even worked at higher levels, but clearly, it was far slower for him. Hawkie had gained levels way, way faster while hunting up in the sky with him before.

But this little birdie was super fast! Not just in levels, it was even jumping around in the nest now. It looked full of energy as it leaped nearly ten centimeters with every jump. It looked like it was becoming comfortable with not being in an egg quite fast. Even if it did fall flat on its face a few times, quickly getting back up with an angry squeak.

Jake got nothing productive done for the rest of that day. He had his first prolonged period of just pure relaxation. It wasn't done to regenerate resources or to work on mana manipulation. He was just relaxing with the two newly baked parent-birds and the little chick.

Only a few hours after hatching, it left its nest, and it began exploring the valley, Jake and its parents in tow. They went to the pond where it angrily chirped at the water but ran away scared when one of the low-level eels within swam up towards the surface.

It fought a valiant battle with the stairs up to Jake's lodge, trying to jump each step but failing with its tiny body. Jake couldn't help but place his foot down and make an extra small step for the bird to use. It happily used that as it made its way into his lodge, where it ran around just looking at things, randomly pecking the wall or floor at times.

Hawkie took off and returned with some small pieces of meat that it chewed up and fed to the small bird throughout the day. Jake found this very unsanitary and was already preparing to find an alchemy recipe to feed it instead. That, or just make some kind of soup in his very expensive cauldron.

The day ended up with Jake sitting on his lodge's steps, the two hawks at his side. The small chick had gotten tired and had found a mobile nest: Jake's hair. This is why he hadn't moved at all for the last hour but just sat there completely still, trying not to wake up the chick.

Today had been... good. It was relaxing, and Jake felt like his head was clearer than usual.

Feeling the small bird on top of his head and the two happy parents to his side filled him with warmth. It was just nice. He was looking forward to the small bird growing up and becoming a big hawk, just like its parents. And he would do what he could to help it achieve that.

He very carefully got up, keeping his head as still as possible. He could easily control his body perfectly, and he was pretty sure he could walk with a mountain of books on his head if he needed to, making all those stereotypical British etiquette teachers proud. Or allow any baby birds on his head to remain undisturbed.

Jake walked to the bookshelves as he used mana to pull out book after book to look for one to help with making some kind of nutrient for the bird. The way he did it, however, was quite a bit more advanced than usual.

With the practice of flying people around and air walking, as well as reflecting further on Mystie's mana-control, Jake had improved even more. The strings he extended were entirely invisible, and he didn't need them to do anything but touch an object for him to manipulate it in its entirety.

That meant he could stand perfectly still as books floated all around him, opening and flipping through pages, done purely with mana manipulation. If he gained another skill selection at this time, he was quite sure he could get a better version of telekinesis than what he saw before.

He couldn't stop focusing on constantly improving his ability to manipulate mana, as he still had a few objectives to get done before reaching level 99 in his profession. He needed to make poison and kill the mushroom below, and hopefully, he could do it entirely by using his alchemy skills.

Jake also needed to improve his Touch of the Malefic Viper and Sense of the Malefic Viper to ancient-rarity. He wanted all nine of the stat-giving skills before reaching D-grade to see if that would lead to anything. Even if it didn't, the benefits of upgrading the skills would make it worth it.

Pride of the Malefic Viper and Fangs of the Malefic Viper would be gained simply through leveling up, so he just needed those two upgraded... the issue was that he wasn't sure how to.

Sense of the Malefic Viper would likely be the easiest, as he felt like it synergized so well with Sagacity and his extremely high perception. The upgrade to epic-rarity had been exceedingly easy, and while he doubted he could do it that easily again, he had a feeling it wouldn't be that hard.

As for Touch of the Malefic Viper... Jake had no idea where even to start. The upgrade to epic-rarity came when he semi-fused the skill with affinities and allowed him to have the effect of the poison mimick an affinity... but that upgrade was gained through an epiphany of sorts.

It was quite a few things to get done, and he was su-

“Chirp! Chirp!”

His train of thought was interrupted as the little hawk on his head woke up and greeted the world with its small chirps.

Jake just smiled as he extended a finger up and rubbed the soft down of the little bugger. But before all that... let's find a delicious recipe for Sylphie.