

Hunter 183

Chapter 183: Important Jobs

Jake felt an itch on his right side that he just couldn't scratch. The kind that felt like it was just below the skin. It woke him up as he tried to rub it anyway. But... his arm didn't move. He finally opened his eyes but found the sight in his right one blurry.

Oh... yeah... Jake thought as he remembered what had happened. A quarter of a second. No, even less than that. That was the difference between Jake perfectly avoiding the attack... and losing half his body. He moved his left hand and summoned a healing potion.

He rolled onto his back and drank the potion down, finally getting a good look at himself through his sphere.

The entire right side of his body was gone. In fact... if the human heart weren't slightly to the left, his heart would have been sheared away. He hadn't been as lucky when it came to his head, however. While his head had regenerated already, his hair hadn't, making him aware of how extensive the damage was.

A large part of his head had been gone... a good part of his brain too. Needless to say, if it had happened before the system, Jake would have died instantly. He could perfectly remember what had happened after he was hit, even if he couldn't recognize the thoughts he had at the time. He had just moved on instinct to run and had managed to tumble away.

The mask had helped a lot... resulting in only parts of his head being fried. The mana had still entered where his eye-holes were and had clearly exploded through that tiny hole in a cone, taking out a large part of his head. He had a completely bald spot at the back of his skull, several centimeters across... showing the energy had burned straight through his skull. The mask itself was undamaged, besides looking a bit burnt. Nothing a quick rinse couldn't fix.

As he lay there, his arm and leg still hadn't regenerated, as clearly his vitality prioritized getting organs and other more vital things fixed first. The health potion he had just consumed helped speed up the process drastically, but it was still taking its time.

Jake knew that to heal an injury like this would require more than his full health pool. Without his potions or a healer, it would take weeks for him to return to his peak condition. But with potions, he should be up and about within the day...

"I fucked up," he spoke out loud as he stared up at the ceiling of the cave.

It was the second time he found himself lying there, his body broken. The second time he had faced the damn mushroom and gotten his ass handed to him. Was the damn mushroom really his bane? Also, what the hell happened back there?

The last time he came, he handled it pretty well, and he even had thoughts of just killing it... but it had been hiding so much power. Those blue vines were just so damn strong it was insane. Was it perhaps the actual body of the fungus?

As a Mycorrhiza, it mainly lived inside other plants, using them to fuel itself. Did this mean it had an entire body hidden deep beneath, just like all those vines? And why hadn't it used the vines, to begin with? Did it perhaps take too much energy?

Next time... I will come prepared... and I'll take it down, Jake thought, as he closed his eyes, replaying the fight.

The fungicide had worked quite well, and he could feel it doing damage... but what had worked even better was his Gaze of the Apex Hunter. He had theorized that it should be pretty weak to it, and that had been confirmed today.

He could freeze it even longer than the Thunder Roc by quite a bit, and even when he came last, the Gaze worked wonders too. To him, that indicated its soul wasn't very resilient... which boded well for the poison he was planning on concocting.

Looking at his resources, he was actually quite fine in that department. Well, besides health points. His stamina and mana were both looking healthy, so he didn't really need to meditate. Instead, he summoned the book he was currently reading from his spatial storage and began reading.

An hour later, the human lying in the middle of a damp cavern with a book consumed another potion before he resumed reading. The more he read on fungi, the more confident he became in using a poison that partially attacked the soul. In fact, fungi or plant-based lifeforms tended to have relatively weaker souls as theirs are awakened and typically not something they are born with.

The hours passed as Jake slowly felt his entire right side regenerate. The vision on his right eye was back to normal again too, and his hair was growing out at a near-visible pace.

With enough strength to get up, he managed to shakily stand on his feet. He once more gave himself a good look-over and even checked his status menu. Nothing had changed, but he had expected it to. He had assumed he would have lost a few stats because during it all... he had lost one of his boots.

His Boots of the Wandering Alchemist was the only piece of equipment he had that didn't either sink into his body and thus couldn't be destroyed or had the overpowered self-repair enchant. Yet... he hadn't lost the stats provided by it even when one was gone.

Jake tried to feel a bit for his mana and noticed something in the direction of the biodome. He walked over there, and after going only a bit, he saw the carnage left by the mana-blast.

The entire hallway from the biodome to the first bend had been utterly annihilated, with nothing living remaining. The walls were still faintly sizzling with energy even after such a long time, and the wall where the blast had impacted was now just a large hole, creating a small cave inside the cavern.

It was from within that newly-created cave he felt the boot. Jake walked in there and saw nothing but sizzling dirt and two things lying on the ground.

One of them was a boot that didn't look any different from the day he got it... except for the half-destroyed bloody foot still within it. Jake didn't hesitate to pick it up and rip his own foot out before taking out a barrel of water as he quickly cleaned it. He even used Alchemists Purification a few times before he put it back on.

Is this old boot indestructible or what? Should I make a shield out of it? Jake thought as he couldn't help but double-check its description to see if he had missed anything.

[Boots of the Wandering Alchemist (Rare)] – Boots once offered to an alchemist before setting out on a journey to experience the world outside. Despite being made of simple leather, the Records of the alchemist has left a deep mark on this item, allowing it to transcend many ranks. Enchantments: +20 Endurance, +15 Agility. Reduces stamina expenditure from all movement-related skills by a small amount. Increases sensitivity towards earthbound plants.

Requirements: Lvl 25+ in any humanoid race.

He couldn't spot anything he missed... so his only conclusion was that the alchemist that once owned these boots was awesome. He would need to see if he could find a way to improve them at some point...

Moving on, he went to the other thing lying on the ground... one he recognized instantly. It was the blue vine that had reinforced the exit barrier to the biodome. It had apparently been caught up in the blast. Maybe on purpose or because Jake had frozen the entire plant with Gaze shortly before firing... he didn't know, and after using Identify on it, he was just happy he got it.

[Indigo Fungus Mycorrhiza Lifevine (Rare)] – The Lifevine of an Indigo Fungus Mycorrhiza. The Lifevine is a part of the main body of the fungus. Contains intense amounts of vital-energy and is incredibly resilient. Can be used in a myriad of alchemical creations.

The blue vine was nearly four meters long and a few centimeters thick. Jake could feel the intense energy still contained within as he smiled, putting it in his inventory. A better sample than I could hope for.

He threw one last glance towards the biodome as he gave the damn mushroom within the finger. He had promised not to badmouth mushrooms... but he could still hate them internally - and outwardly, just without saying anything.

Within ten minutes, he was back at the valley, not a single person noticing him on his way back. It would ruin his whole mysterious owner-look a bit if he walked through the settlement in tattered clothes.

When he entered the valley, he saw the family of hawks and smiled. The tiny bird also noticed him.

“Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!”

She ran towards him, taking small leaps along the way. Jake squatted down as he allowed her to run onto his arm as she headed straight for the top of his head. He just chuckled as Sylphie sat down on top of him while he brought a finger up to rub the little girl.

The mother and father hawk just looked on happily as Jake waved at them in greeting. They threw him a glance, and he nodded as they took off. He knew their plan already, as he had seen Hawkie reach level 99 just the day before. They were trying to get him to D-grade like his wife, and Jake was more than supportive.

So, he entered the lodge, continuing his job as an alchemist, but more importantly, the vital role of baby-hawk-sitter.

“I can ask, but do not expect a meeting any time soon, if ever,” Miranda said with a steadfast voice to the man in front of her.

“We insist on setting up a formal meeting with this owner to discuss the future of this settlement. We have many points of improvement and offers that we belie-“

“I said I would ask. Now stop pestering me,” Miranda said, annoyed, shooing away the man.

He scoffed as he turned around and left the rather large building that was the mayoral office. Or the City Lord's office. They hadn't really settled on any official name, but most knew what people were talking about no matter the term used.

Miranda leaned back in her chair as the annoying man finally left.

He represented a group of newish settlers. They had come only a few days ago with a group of around 400, led to Haven by their leader, who was also a Lord. He had decided to find a Pylon after the notification about ten being claimed appeared and had found his way to here.

When he learned that Miranda was just a mayor and not the actual owner, he had insisted on meeting Jake, but she had refused him every time. The man had then had the gall to try and go to the valley on his own, but she heard reports of him running away when he saw the D-grade hawk.

If he was just another opportunity-seeker, she could handle it, but the man was more than that. He was a damn fanatic.

His name was Kenneth Copefield, and he fancied himself a preacher. His 400 followers weren't just travel-companions but truly did follow him as a spiritual leader. He had apparently been blessed by a god or something, and Miranda was more than a little skeptical.

Kenneth's level was high, though. He was level 62 and followed a religion Miranda found a bit suspect. It didn't sound like he was after ritual sacrifices or the like but just looking for more people to pray to the god. The god was related to metal and stone from what she could tell... at least he was very adamant about constructing a temple made up entirely of expensive ores and stones.

And that was actually the root of their issues... she didn't allow him to construct a giant temple to some god that was most likely imaginary. To use religion as a way of leading people wasn't anything new, but the way he went about it was weird. He gave her bad vibes.

I will have to ask Jake tomorrow during the weekly visit; maybe he has some insight into this...

She didn't like relying on him, but she honestly was unsure how to handle all of this. Phillip hadn't been of any help with this particular case as he was far too busy handling the integration of the residents of the fort.

There were especially issues with those mind-controlled and taken hostage by the Minotaur Mindchief. All of them were scarred in different ways, and especially their view of Jake varied. Some saw him as a savior, while others blamed him for how he saved them.

From what she could tell, the Minotaur had tried to use them as hostages to make him surrender, and he hadn't cared but just attacked, making some of them kill each other. While it wasn't the best way to handle it... Miranda felt like she couldn't blame him either. She wasn't there, and could they really ask him to risk his own hide to help strangers?

It sounded a bit callous... but she had learned to be less soft in recent times. People were shitty, and compared to old office-politics, this new world was a lot rougher. Heck, she heard from Phillip that there had already been two assassination attempts on him during the fort's early days. Luckily no one had dared try and kill her... yet. It was likely because they feared the owner. Killing her would give them nothing if they couldn't convince the owner to let them become the new leader.

I really need to get my damn class evolved at least...

she thought as she shook her head. Her profession was getting high, and while the next evolution was still a fair bit away, it was now within sight. To have a level 23 class with that was just sad.

She just couldn't find the time these days. It was partially her own fault due to them sending out a few parties to scout the area for other settlements or travelers to recruit, filling up her plate with a constant influx of new issues.

But the recruitment-effort had paid off.

City Overview

City name: Haven

Population: 4647

City Owner: Jake Thayne

City Lord: Miranda Wells

City Tier: Earl

The city had most certainly expanded a lot, and the City Overview was now far more filled out. After Jake had introduced himself, it filled out the City Owner spot, and of course, the city had now been named, so that left all areas filled out.

Every so often, the population number increased, and she was pretty sure it didn't actually just show every person in the area, but only those whom the system recognized actually to belong to the city. That Kenneth guy and his group of fanatics weren't counted as an example, and she reckoned they were close to 5500 people within the Pylon's area.

Another menu that was no longer hollow was the quest panel... after she had gotten the skill to make quests and even the ability to allow others to create them, the panel had really taken off.

Quest Panel:

Current City Quests: 14

Current Open Quests: 34

Current Contracted Quests: N/A

Current Compulsory Quests: N/A

Granted, the two last ones were still empty, but it wasn't like those actually did anything. As for the quests they had made, the City Quests were quite simple. When she chose to view it closer in her menu, it showed her all of them... and they were honestly quite dull.

[Construction Effort: Housing (East)], [Construction Effort: Housing (West)], [Construction Effort: Housing (South)], [Construction Project: Storage]...

Yeah, all just construction, she thought with a bit of a laugh. All of them were about building stuff or collecting materials to build stuff.

As for the Open Quests... those were quests created by citizens. They were quests anyone could take and were closer to commissions than anything else. The owner's quest was within that batch too. Most of them revolved around getting things crafted or collecting crafting materials. She was honestly just happy it was used.

Right next to the building she worked and lived in was a quest office of sorts. It was a building she had directed Hank on how to build, and with her skills, she had 'chosen' the building to serve the function. She then had Christen craft a metal slate that would open up a quest-creation window when you placed your hand on it and had that placed within.

The quests themselves could be found on message boards around the small city, all linked to the questing office. It worked a bit like the slate, where you could see the quest window by just looking at it. It was pretty functional and convenient, actually. Miranda still had many ideas and things to improve, and she looked forward to every new development. Though she could do without the religious fanatics and people constantly trying to one-up her in the political game during meetings with the city council...

Well, I can handle them, she thought confidently. There was just one final job she had to finish for today, an absolutely essential one - one that could impact her future as City Lord and in concert the fate

of Haven in its entirety. A choice concerning the meeting she could have with the city owner the next day, one of utmost importance:

What to bring for dinner?