

Hunter 185

Chapter 185: Progress For Everyone!

Miranda returned to the office building as if nothing had happened. In reality, only a few moments had passed, but to her, it had been several hours while she had been whisked away into the realm of three gods.

She sat in her chair in a daze, trying to comprehend everything. A few days ago, she saw Kenneth as a fanatic for believing in some new god that she believed to be make-believe. Now, she had just come from a meeting with three freaking gods. From what she gathered from Jake, gods weren't that special but just people who reached a really high level... but those women didn't feel like people anymore. Not at all.

They were utterly terrifying. Miranda felt like she couldn't do anything but agree to everything they said, no matter how nice they seemed. It was like talking with a gun constantly pressed to her skull, and no matter how much the person holding the gun insisted it wasn't loaded and they weren't going to shoot... it still felt like she had a fucking gun pressed against her skull.

She now wholly understood why Kenneth had been so reverent towards that Tera-something god he had met and been blessed by. If those three women had told her to do something... she wasn't sure she would dare say no.

Now, if that was just everything, she could deal with it. Fine, gods are now a thing, and they can bless people and have agents in the new world. That was manageable. But that wasn't everything... because apparently her boss... Jake Thayne... was somehow also recognized as a superior by those absolutely terrifying gods. At least when it came to status.

Their Lord recognized Jake as an equal, which meant she had just endured hours of three gods trying to convince her to call them "senior sisters" as apparently, they were now colleagues of sorts. Miranda

honestly felt like her entire worldview had been turned upside down, and she seriously needed to go have a meeting with Jake... but for now...

Just... just roll with it, Miranda...

It wasn't like she hadn't gotten extreme gains from the madness she had just gone through. It was actually insane how much she had gained for doing practically nothing - another reason why following gods suddenly made a lot more sense in her head.

The first gain was a blessing she had pretty much been coerced into accepting... but then again, it wasn't like she held any regrets, especially not when she saw the benefits.

[Divine Blessing of the Ladies of the Verdant Lagoon (Blessing – Divine)] – You have been recognized as one of the most valuable followers of the Ladies of the Verdant Lagoon. To become an essential follower of the trio of Godqueens, a true honor for any mortal. Through a strong karmic bond, you have tapped into their mysterious powers. +10% Willpower, +10% Wisdom. Grants access to many new paths. Only one blessing can be held at a time.

This was the first percentage stat gain Miranda had ever seen, and it was to some of her most valuable stats. As a caster, she naturally used a lot of mana, so more of it was always welcome. Willpower also made some of her existing mental skills stronger, which would help her do her job as a City Lord more efficiently.

But with the blessing also came a title.

[Holder of a Godqueen's Divine Blessing] - Obtain the Divine blessing of a Godqueen. Godqueens and Kings sit in the higher echelons of power in the multiverse and can find few equals. To have their Divine blessing is a gift much sought after but rarely gained. Grants the skill: [Dreams of the Verdant Lagoon (Legendary)]. +5 all stats, +5% to all stats.

Miranda didn't have any titles besides the Forerunner one that everyone got, so this one was also massive. It, too, gave stats and even more than the blessing itself. There were many terminologies she didn't understand, and she had no idea what a Godqueen was... but it was just one of a myriad of questions she still had.

Something the new skill she had gained would likely help with. It was a bit silly how this was her first Legendary skill, and she got it so easily and coincidentally.

[Dreams of the Verdant Lagoon (Legendary)] – Through your dreams, you enter the coven. When you close your eyes, your soul seeks towards the Verdant Lagoon, home of the Ladies that created it. Allows the caster to travel to the Verdant Lagoon while sleeping or meditating. Increased resistance to time dilation effects while in the Verdant Lagoon. A part of your soul shall forever remain within the Lagoon, allowing you solace even if you are stripped of your mortal coil.

The skill was also just weird. Miranda had read it a few times already, and her conclusion of what it did was the same every time: a skill that allows her to keep working even while asleep or meditating. As for that whole part about her soul... well, all that did was confirm that the soul was now a real thing. She had a lot of questions.

The last thing she gained was, of course, her evolution. The thing she was working on before this entire thing began. She had done it within the realm of those three gods and had been offered five options. The first three sucked, the fourth was okay and related to her profession... while the last one was entirely new.

Neophyte Verdant Witch – Magic is a tool you use to fulfill your wishes, and by treading the path of the Verdant Witch, you shall realize all your desires. Verdant magic is a school of magic deeply rooted in mysticism and borrows from the ancient powers found within the Verdant Lagoon. The Verdant Witch is a spellcaster focusing on magic rituals and intricate spells but is far from untalented in more conventional magic. This class is relatively fragile but with highly diverse magics and tools to come out on top, so preparation is the key to victory. Stat Bonuses per level: +4 Wis, +4 Will, +3 Int, +2 Vit, +1 Per, +3 Free Points

She picked it and instantly gained a few new skills. One of them rare-rarity even. She knew Hank had only gained an uncommon-rarity skill from his class evolution, so she personally thought it was quite good. She had also just gained a legendary skill through the title... but if she had to be honest, she wasn't clear exactly on how good that was. The skill was a bit weird, while the one she had just gained was a skill to create rituals.

All in all... Miranda had to admit that the last few hours had been very productive. She was also acutely aware that everything that had happened had nothing to do with herself. She wasn't delusional... she knew everything was because of her relation to Jake. The gods seemed to only care about the fact that she was his

City Lord.

She felt like the pressure on her to do well and make Jake happy had just increased manifold within a day... but she also felt oddly satisfied and was looking forward to the future. She had for the longest time thought their little city a confined corner of their planet... but today, she had that understanding upturned.

They weren't some small fringe faction but a genuinely influential force on Earth. Jake Thayne wasn't just some above-average human but likely the strongest human on their planet. And she was the City Lord he had entrusted to lead that faction formally.

With great gusto, she got back to work with even more energy than before – the extra stats also helping there.

The weeks passed by as Jake grinded alchemy, and the small hawk slowly grew. The little bugger was growing quite slowly and barely got a level every few days, making Jake a bit worried. She didn't really eat much, but Jake did find that she enjoyed eating things with mana in it. Mainly meat. Luckily, Jake had quite a lot of it from some of the Herd Leaders he looted after the battle at the fort.

Hawkie and the Mystsong Hawk had been gone for nearly three weeks. Jake had gained only two more levels in his profession over these weeks, bringing him to 84. It was slower than usual, but that was kind of expected.

He was mainly experimenting and not crafting much. Jake was refining his technique and planning for the fungicide he would create to take down the Indigo Fungus Mycorrhiza. He had to adequately prepare as he didn't have enough ingredients just to play around.

Besides that, he had kept up with his usual mana-control training, and he especially had one place where he had made rapid progress.

"Move," Jake spoke to the small marble on the table. He felt a bit of mana be consumed as he did so, and the tiny marble rolled forward and fell off the table. Sweat was pouring down his face after only making something so small happen... yet he smiled triumphantly.

What he had just used was technically recognized as a Word of Power. Words of Power were when you infused your voice with your willpower and imposed your will upon the world through speech. Which is to say... he had ordered the inanimate marble to move, and it had followed his command.

Pride of the Malefic Viper made imposing his will upon the world easier and amplified Words of Power. This means there was a double-up on the effect when using Words of Power. When he finally began to learn about Words of Power, he realized why they fit with Pride of the Malefic Viper...

What is more arrogant and prideful than believing your commands can shape the world itself? That your spoken word is a law of nature that must be followed by anything ordered? It was truly insane to think about the possibilities...

Jake so far had only managed to move the small marble a bit, but he was swiftly trying to make more discoveries. Using Words of Power used mana, but it also took a lot of concentration and mental strength. It also required one to have confidence in the words spoken and honestly believe it would work.

Words of Power weren't really something done at his level; Jake had quickly learned. It was something most often seen by powerhouses, often only at C-grade or possible late D-grade. For Jake to be able to do anything while at E-grade was a testament to the power of the Pride of the Malefic Viper skill.

Willpower was a stat Jake had indeed underestimated. It was so much more than just one that increased mana regeneration and helping with mental defenses and other things related to mental magic. Willpower was, as the name implied: power through will.

With enough willpower, Jake would be able to do nearly everything simply by willing it to happen. It was to make your imagination into reality and shape the world as you intend for it to be. At the pinnacle... gods could order the universe itself.

While the use of Words of Power and his willpower as a whole seemed to be so far away, it wasn't like it wasn't also used at low levels. Chanting, incantations, and speaking the name of a skill or spell were all parts of some of these skills and spells. Either it was a requirement, or it simply made them stronger.

The Minotaur Mindchief had spoken out the Echoing Dream skill... even thinking back to the tutorial, that Hayden guy had spoken out "Trail of Embers" when he used his ultimate move. Jake didn't have any such skills, but that was just because he wasn't a caster, he reckoned.

Chanting and incantations were apparently pretty standard among mages. Especially in group spells or large rituals, chanting could help unify and shape the mana by everyone focusing on the same thing. It was a way of using Words of Power that the system helped very actively with. Jake's use of making a marble move was a lot rougher than using it with a skill or spell.

For now... using his willpower more actively in combat was a pipedream, and it was more for small fun tricks right now. But in the future, he could see its usefulness. But that was okay. Jake had never aimed for immediate gains and was fine with doing work that would only pay off down the line. He wanted to go all the way, after all.

He was a bit ambitious and prideful like that.

On the subject of improving his Touch of the Malefic Viper, not much had happened.

Miranda had brought by a few crafted weapons, but it wasn't many. They were all inferior-rarity, but apparently, even those weapons were in-demand for the citizens. There was also the issue of the crafters mainly making things for the construction-effort, and Jake had explicitly said that he didn't want to impact the city negatively with his request.

As for Miranda herself... she was a bit different. Jake thought they were getting along better, but she had turned more subservient than ever before. He knew she had gained a blessing from some weird group of triplet witches that worked for the Viper, but that was about it. She had gained a nice class and some titles too, so maybe she just felt thankful? He did miss her snappy comments when he said something weird, though.

At least she didn't seem to have become fanatical like that Kenneth guy. She had also begun spending some time actually leveling, going out with Neil and his party once in a while. So that was good. He wasn't sure about everything going on with her, and he didn't need to. What he did know, however, was that she kept doing her job as well as ever and kept bringing him food for their meeting once a week. Even if the meetings themselves were getting a bit boring and overly formal.

On the 23rd day since Mystie and Hawkie had last returned, Jake found himself outside playing with the little birdie. It was still covered in soft down and had only grown a little bit. Actually, it just looked a lot fatter now...

Well, it had begun getting a bit of color. A few nascent feathers were starting to grow out, and they all had pretty greenish-brown colors. Sylphie hadn't changed how she acted much, still primarily spending her days sleeping on Jake's head, eating, and running around, causing problems.

It sure didn't help that the baby bird could now do a bit of wind magic. She could make the wind blow a bit, and she found it especially fun to turn Jake's pages when he was reading. To counteract this, Jake had learned to set up some simple mana barriers around himself and the book.

Currently, they were outside playing by Jake practicing mana control on a small feather while Sylphie tried to catch it, using all her newly-discovered wind magic and just by jumping after it. It was good practice for both of them.

Jake kept playing for a while, smiling at the small hawk as she finally caught the feather. Sylphie stood victoriously with it in its beak for a bit before running towards Jake and landing on his head with a mighty leap. She placed the feather down into his hair, making sure to tuck it in so it wouldn't fall out.

He didn't wonder why she didn't want to play anymore, as he had already felt it. He noticed Sylphie was now looking up towards the sky as she flapped her small wings excitedly, having felt the approaching two presences too.

Jake looked up and, with his gaze, pierced high up where he saw two approaching figures. One of them was a blue hawk that Jake, of course, recognized as Mystie right away.

The other one Jake didn't recognize by look but by the signature of its aura - an aura far more potent than before. The hawk was no longer brown and relatively normal-looking but now had gray streaks resembling lightning bolts running through him, and all his feathers had turned slightly darker. Even from down on the ground, he could see the energy running within those patterns. Jake smiled as he made eye-contact with Hawkie. You finally evolved, eh?

[Stormsong Hawk – lvl ???]