

Hunter 201

Chapter 201: A Brave New World

Jake landed back in his valley with the two slightly listless hawks. The fight had been entirely one-sided, and they knew it. Sure, the two of them hadn't gone all out, far from it, but it was obvious... neither had Jake.

He had only used class skills from start to end, not even summoning his wings during the fight. He didn't use any poisons or anything alchemy-related at all, limiting himself significantly. Heck, he hadn't even used Limit Break at the safe 10%. From start to end, their little bout had a foregone conclusion – it was a fight he could have won even at E-grade, albeit with much difficulty, and he would not have come out of it unscathed.

“Cheer up, you two, while I won today, haven't you already laid the groundwork to beat me up in the future?” Jake said, nodding towards Sylphie as she was float-flying through the air, practicing her weird wind magic.

Jake saw her fly over a few trees, and the following gentle green wind passed through the tree crowns. A moment later, the entire crown was cut into thousands of pieces, making Sylphie cheerfully cry out. Jake just smiled at the small hawk, happy for her and her ability to unleash a wind attack that could kill most humans in the city.

He said his goodbyes to the two hawks as he entered his lodge, more than happy with his newfound strength. But he wasn't done yet.

Yawning, he went back to the good old porch and took out his Altmar Cauldron of Supreme Simplicity. For some reason, Jake didn't feel as much in a rush with his profession-evolution as he had with his class and race. That is until he remembered a certain dungeon hidden in a cave not far away.

Jake decided to craft mana potions mainly because he wanted to experiment a bit with his mana practice. He wanted to feel how much easier mana was to manipulate after he had evolved more in-depth because, during the fight earlier, all his energy manipulation felt easier than ever.

He theorized it had something to do with the qualitative improvements affecting his body and Jake's energy and thus, in tandem affecting his ability to control the energy. It could also just be an effect of the stat-increases and stats working better now, but who knows? All he knew was that he was better than ever at manipulating mana.

Going through the motions, he crafted the mana potion while focusing heavily on the process. He felt how much easier it was to nudge and move the energy as he wanted it to. When he added the ingredients, he instantly attacked them with his mana and once more felt the difference.

Without even noticing it, small traces of his arcane-affinity had snuck in and tore apart the ingredients, releasing the mana far faster and more efficiently. Thinking on it further, Jake realized how this really shouldn't come as a surprise to him.

He had discovered his arcane-affinity through alchemy, and the first time he had used it for real had to be during the Trial of Myriad Poisons when he thought back to when this change in his mana first occurred. The arcane mana was simply born from Jake's intent to tear apart and absorb the ingredients during the trial faster, though it had changed a bit by now, also focusing a lot more on also being stable.

Not long after, Jake was done crafting a batch of mana potions, and he was honestly surprised at how fast it had gone. Even more impressive was the amount and the potency of the mixture.

[Mana Potion (Common)] – Restores 8547 mana when consumed.

Jake knew that the amount restored by mana potions wouldn't grow as fast as one's mana pool, so to make one restoring over half of his own pre-mask-boost mana was incredibly impressive. Needless to say, these were his best mana potions yet, and it was also the batch with the most in he had ever made.

A single batch could vary widely. If it was a new creation, it was customary only to get 1-3 actual bottles worth, but Jake had just managed to pump out a massive 11 in a single craft. It was a testament to how efficient he had been and how little of the ingredients' energy had been lost during the process.

Damn, I am good, he praised himself as he, with a big toothy smile, dove right into mass-producing mana potions. They weren't even for himself; he just wanted to mass-produce because he could. At the same time, it allowed him to better experience his newfound ability to manipulate mana, and he was already looking for a way to improve it even further.

The day quickly went by, Jake a bit impatiently waiting for the level to finally come. Halfway through his second day of grinding, he finally got a notification, and just as he was getting excited, he saw it wasn't the one he had hoped for... but maybe it was a bit important anyway?

Announcement to all Nobles: 100 Pylons of Civilization have now been claimed. In 7 days, the World Congress will begin, and anyone in possession or ruling over a Pylon of Civilization can attend, so make haste to claim one.

Quest received: A Brave New World

As the wheels of time turn and humanity has begun reclaiming civilization, clashes and disputes are unavoidable, but so are diplomacy and forming alliances. The World Congress will allow you to pursue

both, as the political arena of Earth forms, and together you shall forge the future and establish the foundation of the civilization you wish to form. As an Earl and the first claimant of a Pylon on your planet, you will undoubtedly have a substantial influence on this future – may you bear this responsibility and privilege with pride.

Objective: Be within close proximity to your Pylon of Civilization and accept to join the first World Congress in: 6 days & 23:59:59. You can bring along 2 other representatives.

Reward: Participation and voting power in the World Congress

Jake read the notification over, saw the quest being received, nodded to himself, and closed all those menus. Gonna talk to Miranda when she comes by; she should be here within the hour.

Which proved true, as Jake only managed to finish one more batch before she came. She wasn't alone either but had brought along Lillian and even Phillip. Jake saw them coming easily with his sphere long before they even laid eyes on the lodge.

Jake Identified them one by one as they walked in, starting with Lillian.

[Human - 53]

She had gained quite a few levels, and Jake assumed most were in her profession. Either way, good on her. She had only barely reached E-grade when they met, and he doubted she had done much combat at all either, so it was impressive.

[Human – lvl 64]

Next was Phillip. When Jake met him a few months ago, he had been 59, and now he had only grown to 64. Jake didn't know why this was, but he assumed it had to do with him not really fighting in this period but had instead laid back and relaxed. He wasn't even leading people that much anymore, now just being another council member.

And last but not least was Miranda.

[Human - 81]

Of everyone in the city, Miranda was the one who had gained the most levels by far. Jake had heard that Neil was above 70 too, but he doubted anyone except Miranda and himself were above 80 – not counting birds.

He knew her profession had already reached level 99, but she had chosen to postpone her evolution. By the advice of her Patron gods, she wanted to gain the perfect evolution title. Quick math showed that her class was still only in the sixties, so she still had quite a few levels to go.

Unlike Jake, the citizens of his city mainly leveled by using the forest. Like when Jake traveled inwards to see where Mystie originally lived, Jake had already encountered many high-level beasts, and he knew that deep within the forest, even a myriad of D-grades could be found.

Walking out of the lodge, Jake gave a quick nod to the two hawks chilling up in the nest, with Sylphie already comfortable sitting on his shoulder. Mystie and Hawkie acknowledged him and had also noticed the approaching humans. They didn't appear to want to deal with it as they both took flight and headed up towards the cloud continent above.

After getting their asses handed to them, they had spent quite a lot more time leveling and practicing their magic. It wasn't going to help them with Jake only getting stronger too, but he totally understood their desire to grow anyway. Besides, it would be embarrassing if they were weaker than their own daughter within a year of her birth, and as things were looking right now, Sylphie would officially be approaching D-grade at that time.

With the two hawks gone, Jake turned his eyes towards the three approaching humans who saw him the moment they also entered his line of sight. Contrary to expectations, they all abruptly stopped, Phillip's eyes going wide, Miranda looking pleased, and Lillian with an unfazed expression, but he did see a tiny frown form on her brows.

Oh yeah...

Jake thought. I guess this is the first time meeting any of them since my evolution.

The three E-grade humans looked at him for a bit before Miranda finally spoke up.

"Congratulations on achieving D-grade."

The difference in grades was something everyone could detect instinctively. You didn't need to use Identify or bloodline-level instincts; it was entirely natural and even worked cross-species. This is to say, they all felt that he was a grade above them and the innate suppression that came with that.

"Thanks," Jake said, motioning for the three of them to follow him into the lodge. Phillip felt a bit nervous, it being his first time here, but he was an experienced man and quickly got himself under control and followed the scary masked D-grade inside.

Lillian didn't hesitate to go to a small tea kitchen Jake never used and began preparing something to drink. Miranda had insisted on putting it in months ago during one of their weekly meals to keep a few things stocked up within the lodge, so she didn't have to bring everything every time.

When they were finally all sitting comfortably around the table, Jake was the first to speak, Miranda clearly waiting for him to open the conversation.

"Thoughts on the World Congress?"

"I believe it will be a good chance to form relations with the other forces on Earth," Miranda said, clearly prepared as she waved her hand as she summoned a simple green map in the air with mana, with not only Haven marked on it but also a few other points of interest such as the Fort or a city called Sanctdomo.

"The closest major city to us is Sanctdomo ruled by the Holy Church and in concert the Holy Pantheon. They already have a population in the seven digits and are growing at a startling speed. They are led much like a theocracy with a council of sorts. The official City Lord and de-facto leader being an enigmatic person known as the Augur of Hope," Miranda kept explaining.

Damn, Jacob's popping off, Jake thought, giving his old boss a mental thumbs up. Thinking about it, I never told Miranda about him... I should do that when Phillip is not here.

“So far, they have been one of our primary trading partners, but even if they are the closest Pylon, the distance is still vast. It takes at least a few days of travel to get there, even for someone fast. Besides that, many smaller settlements are scattered around the area, with populations ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand.

“All of this is to say we have only actually made direct contact with a single Pylon-based city besides our own. This Congress will allow us to get a feel for other forces and get a better comprehension of where we stand in this new world. It will also open up many new trading partners. As for the issue of travel, I believe Phillip has some good news in that department,” Miranda finally finished off, Jake just sitting there silently listening while drinking his tea. His mind was equally occupied with the conversation and how the teacup just phased through his mask when he drank. It was the same with potions, and he wondered how the hell he hadn’t questioned it earlier. System-fuckery for sure.

“I have been traveling back and forth to the Fort a lot these days, and the place has become quite the hub for many smiths,” Phillip said. “To avoid too much smoke and open fires in the forest, we decided that having the Fort be a large dedicated smithing operation was wise. However, we ran into the issue of transporting goods the distance between there and Haven. This is where Neil comes in.

“That young man is quite something and has been working on getting a functional teleportation circle up for the last month, and as of last night, he got it working. It can only teleport goods, but it is damn efficient and only requires mana to be maintained. With it, we can easily send materials from our mine to the Fort and the finished products back here within the same day,” he explained, looking very pleased with how things were going.

Jake nodded, agreeing wholeheartedly. Space mages were excellent for that kind of thing, and Jake was even beginning to suspect the system had kind of helped a bit in having more space mages around. There were other trials and such in other tutorials focusing on space magic from what he had heard, and even that Kalloc guy who had given his Legacy to Neil had only been B-grade. Based on what the Viper said, investing in a tutorial was expensive as hell, so how could a B-grade get his entirely own tutorial? Jake theorized that the system had given a discount as it wanted more space mages in new universes.

As for the thing about the mine... well, that was what had been found in the big cave that didn't contain a huge murder-mushroom-turned-dungeon-entrance. As to what kinds of metals it contained and such things? Jake didn't know and didn't care. There were no herbs there, and he wasn't a smith, so he just left it up to people who knew more about stuff like that.

The rest of the meeting was just discussing a few basic city things, with the decision to have another meeting closer to the actual World Congress starting. Throughout it all, none dared comment on the bird that had eventually climbed from Jake's shoulder to sit on his head, being slightly too large for it not to look incredibly silly – if having a bird sleeping on your head could ever not be silly.

When they left, Jake handed Miranda over a hundred overpowered mana potions to sell in the city's stores or just to use for herself to level faster. Once they were finally gone, Jake jumped right back into doing what was most important: getting that profession's evolution.