

Hunter 219

Chapter 219: World Congress: Reunion

After the first half an hour, four people found themselves within one of the closed-off platforms that belonged to a city. It was at the table belonging to Haven with the sound-proofing barrier active. Even sight into the area was disrupted, making anything less than a Sphere of Perception unable to pierce inside. One could still see out, but not in.

In there was a reunion of sorts. Bertram and Jacob sat together with Casper and Jake, making it quite the unlikely group. Them entering the barrier had already grabbed plenty of attention.

Undead and the Augur of the Holy Church meeting together with the first man to claim a Pylon? Very suspicious, and undoubtedly many theories were already being conjured up. Theories instantly debunked if anyone actually managed to peer inside...

"I think the use of Credits will become far more normal with time, especially as we open up to the wider multiverse. The merchants naturally also push it as their skills incentivize and use it, and from what I have gathered, using Credits is also beneficial to their progression," Jacob said, as they discussed the use of Credits over usual bartering.

"A digital currency that is universally accepted and endorsed by the system will also more easily be adopted by people. It is also far safer than anything of the old world, as I have yet to hear of any way of stealing Credits from someone without their knowledge. Except, of course, good old blackmail or extortion or stuff like that," Casper chimed in, his entirely black eyes having a glint to them.

Jake just chuckled a bit inwardly as he sat back and enjoyed the conversation. Casper had worked in the R&D department before and had always been a bit of a geek, one of the big reasons he and Jake had gotten along so well.

Casper had been passionate about digital currencies, especially cryptocurrencies and how they were the way of the future... and he kinda got it right, didn't he? Credits were kind of a digital currency, though Jake would more call it a magic currency. Or a system-fuckery currency?

"From what I have gathered, the establishments of banks and such is only a matter of time. They appear to be quite common across the multiverse, and it is quite understandable to want to ensure your assets away from yourself. Losing all Credits upon death and leaving nothing to your family or comrades is a harrowing thought," Jacob said, shaking his head.

"Considering how Credits can be bound to a city, I am sure there are other skills or methods to create organizations independent of a single individual that can store funds, effectively acting as banks as you said," Casper agreed.

"... Wild thought, is the Holy Church on the stock market?" Jake butted in with a very stupid question.

"I am pretty sure stocks aren't really a thing," Jacob chuckled in response. "At least not in the way we know them. There likely are methods to invest in organizations and get a return, but I doubt it will be through a stock market or anything like that."

"Well, I would invest in Haven if it was me, Mr. Progenitor," Casper joked with a snicker before he turned a bit more serious. "By the way, I never got to thank you... so thanks for killing that fucker William. He had it coming even if it does suck that he ended up being revived in the end."

"No problem, dude was a fucking lunatic," Jake said, shaking his head at the appearance of a few bad memories as he looked at Jacob questionably. "Any news on what the psycho is up to? I reckon the Holy Church has quite the information network, and you are an Augur and all that."

"No information that I can confirm pertains to him... but from what I can tell from the most credible cases, he seems almost... normal? Altruistic even. At least I have heard no rumors of a metal manipulating psychopath committing mass murder, and it isn't like our planet is lacking people like that," Jacob said as he looked up towards the ceiling of the hall with a sad gaze.

"Oh yeah, on that note, are you guys gonna try to do some large magic ritual and turn the entire planet into a land of death?" Jake asked Casper. He was happy to know that at least William wasn't running around being a dirtbag openly, but that didn't mean he wanted to offer the guy any more attention than he deserved.

"Nah, at least I haven't heard of any plans of that. We do have things set up so people can turn into Risen and become undead if they want to, though, and the areas we control are being affected with a bit more death-affinity than anywhere else. Already had quite a few converts, mainly family or friends of Risen or those that just want a longer lifespan, even if that isn't that relevant yet. Being dead does come with some other perks and drawbacks, but honestly, it is mostly just cosmetic. I barely feel the difference myself," Casper shrugged.

"Good to know. Both that you aren't planning on any mass-purge of the living races and that you seem to be fine with technically being dead and all that," Jake said. They had kind of danced around the elephant in the room of Casper kinda being dead.

"I should ask you the same. The Order of the Malefic Viper isn't exactly known as being part of the good guys," his undead pal asked.

"Gonna be honest, I wouldn't really know. I haven't joined it as far as I can tell. I will go visit in the future, but no plans of any planetary sacrificial rituals currently."

“No one mentioned planetary sacrificial rituals...” Casper said with a mix of joking and just a tinge of suspicion.

“And no one is going to make one,” Jake agreed, giving a joking smile.

“Not that it matters; our Sacred Purification Ritual will wipe out all you heathens before any of that can come to pass,” Jacob said with a grand gesture.

Bertram looked at Jacob with a mix of confusion and doubt before catching on, and with a big smile, declared: “The unholy ones will never see it coming.”

The four men looked at each other with stupid smiles as they joked out things that, to any outsider, did seem like serious topics.

Jake also knew that they maybe would be put on opposing sides due to their affiliations in the future, especially Jacob and Casper. Jake himself had no intentions of picking any sides as he honestly hated politics, but if either came to threaten what was his, he would protect it.

But that day wasn't today. They continued to talk about minor things, Casper talking about how he was learning about dungeons and even making his own, Jacob primarily complaining about the difficulties of dealing with ass-lickers and managing a city, and Jake talking about the dangers of shit-flinging monkeys.

“On a more serious note, what are your thoughts on the election of a World Leader? That is what this intermission is made to discuss, after all, and the vote begins in... oh, four minutes,” Jacob suddenly changed the subject, reminding them all what they were actually supposed to discuss.

“We are going to abstain; no way anyone would vote for us anyway. I doubt anyone is going ‘oh yeah, let’s vote for the undead!’ during the very first Congress, if ever,” Casper said, his tone making it clear he truly didn’t care about the subject.

“Dunno, man, I am just going to listen what the City Lord says; it ain’t my job,” Jake said dismissively.

“The Holy Church will abstain too, and,” Jacob said, shaking his head at Jake, “I find it amazing that the highest tiered noble of Earth appears to be the least interested noble of Earth.”

“I don’t care either?” Casper said, feigning offense.

“Yeah, sounds annoying as hell,” Jake agreed. “Anyway, get out of my system-box-thing; people are waiting.”

Miranda had been standing with Lillian and Neil outside the barrier for a minute or so now. She and the others were looking troubled if they should enter or not, seeing as how the leader of Sanctdomo and a high-ranking member of the undead faction were within. None of them could see inside either, so they were likely afraid of interrupting.

“Harsh,” Casper laughed as he got up. “Good to see you again; you should come by some time. I promise not to eat your brains.”

“Likewise. The good to see you again part. You are welcome to visit Sanctdomo if you wish, but do be a bit discreet not to cause a ruckus,” Jacob said with a nod as he also stood up.

“I say you should cause a ruckus; it would make things more interesting,” Bertram added, mirroring Jacob’s nod. “Keep doing what you’re doing. Clearly, it’s working out for you.”

“No one knows what the future may bring,” Jake said as he saw them out. “I promise not to purposefully fuck things up too much.”

“We only got 80 seconds left,” Lillian reminded Miranda, who was already tapping her feet.

“I know, I know, but we can’t just barge in,” she said, despite really wanting just to barge in. Luckily, she wouldn’t have to.

Three figures walked out of the barrier, the first two being the Augur and his bodyguard. The Risen left in the direction of his own city, practically rushing there.

The Augur stopped just as he walked out and greeted her. “I apologize for the inconvenience, Ms. Miranda; I was just catching up with an old friend.”

He spoke loud enough for everyone around to hear, which was pretty much everyone who tried due to senses improving and all that. Miranda knew it was on purpose. With a simple sentence, he made it

clear that he was related and on friendly terms with the Progenitor and didn't hold any antagonistic relationship with the only Earl of the planet, despite being competing forces on paper.

While Sanctdomo was large, people also knew their one D-grade in this meeting wasn't a fighter, so the move also helped inadvertently plant a seed of doubt about their true power. Especially if Jake was willing to move to their defense and take their side in a conflict.

"It's of no consequence; I hope you had a pleasant time," Miranda said with a courteous tone.

No way she would complain if the largest city on Earth showed good intentions towards their small Haven.

"I did," Jacob said as he walked by, as he added a few more words that only she could hear. "Do take care of Jake, I know he can be a handful, but he is good at what he does."

Miranda felt the magic deployed as he spoke, making her shudder inwardly. It was just a simple skill to obscure his words, but the amount of pure power packed into it was intense, showing that while the Augur looked harmless, he was far from it. While he couldn't beat anyone in a fight of fists, he could crush nearly anyone in a bout of words.

She nodded at him in understanding as she entered the barrier with Neil and Lillian, who both read the mood and stayed silent throughout the exchange.

However, inwardly Miranda was fuming by those words because they reminded her of the last hour of her life and the infuriating comments she got from half the groups.

The notion that women were treated as “lesser” in many cultures was something she was used to and was something she had experienced plenty of times throughout her professional life. After the system, it seemed to be a bit less from what she could tell, though there were still issues.

During the initial meeting, her level and position were enough for most to recognize her at the City Lord of Haven, but what made her furious was why

people thought she was the City Lord. After Jake had taken off to talk to his brother, the first of her meetings was with the trade manager of Sanctdomo, and that had set a precedent for the bullshit that was to come.

For some fucking reason, everyone thought she had her position because she was the mistress of Jake. No one dared say it to her directly, but the implied words and motions were so damn obvious it was nauseating. They talked to her as if she was the wife of the household that was Haven, and couldn't truly make any decisions, at least not any of the important ones.

Granted, she could, in retrospect, see how some of these rumors came to exist. She had spent entire nights at Jake's lodge, but that was all for work... okay, sometimes it was more leisure, but nothing untoward had ever happened.

Anyway, this meant that she had to spend the beginning of every negotiation making clear that she wasn't just some figurehead put in place because she was sleeping with the “true” lord of the city, but that she could make nearly all decisions independently. Sure, Jake was technically the true leader of the city, but considering how she was the one in charge, she was still the de-facto leader.

This is why the Augurs comment pissed her off, even if he didn't mean anything bad by it. She walked through the barrier with a sour mood and saw at least part of her grief sitting there on one of the chairs, staring up unto the ceiling.

His mask was gone, and from the looks of it, he hadn't worn it during the meeting with the Augur and the Undead.

He turned to her as she entered and smiled. "Sorry about that; time ran away from us. Anyway, quick thoughts on voting?"

Miranda instantly felt her anger towards him reduce to nothing... yeah, the thoughts of those idiots aren't his fault. Jake was in the department of people who seemed to honestly not care about such things. At least he killed Abby as mercilessly as anyone else, despite being a woman. A champion of equality right there.

"My focus has been on creating relations, and quite honestly, this one hour is far from enough to adequately identify anyone qualified as World Leader, so I believe most if not all will skip or just vote for themselves," she said, just as the system popped up before them.

Please place your vote for World Leader of Earth. You have 5 votes and can distribute them as you desire or choose to abstain with any or all of your votes. Voting time is set to 5 minutes.

Votes remaining: 5/5

Time remaining: 4:59

“So, we skip? From what I can tell, Jacob and Casper plan on doing the same,” Jake asked while also informing her of two names she didn’t know.

“Can you place some titles or at least races on those names?” Miranda asked, not mincing words. She had learned that just being straightforward worked best with her boss long ago.

“Oh yeah. Jacob is the priesty-guy, and the big guy with him is Bertram, his butler of sorts. Rich person stuff. The Risen is Casper, another former co-worker. We used to hang out quite a bit before the system. He did some weird ritual to turn himself into an undead during our tutorial to help his girlfriend, who is now a ghost,” Jake explained.

Miranda wanted to hit him over the head due to the utter insanity he was spewing. These were the kinds of moments she forgot the constant reminders from the Sisters of the Verdant Lagoon to remain super courteous.

“You will have to give me a quick summary of your relations to the major factions you apparently have personal relations with. You know, such as the Judge of the Court of Shadows being your brother. A prominent figure of the undead faction, your old pal. And the Augur, your old boss. The Sword Saint wouldn’t happen to be your grandpa? Or do you have an ex-girlfriend or former roommate among the other city leaders?” she asked, her tone of voice just a tiny little bit soaked in annoyance.

She just really hoped that the rest of the World Congress wouldn’t be filled with as many surprises... but hey, on a positive note, her annoyance at Jake failing to inform her about vital information had completely overshadowed and made her forget about all the other annoying stuff.