

Hunter 220

Chapter 220: World Congress: A Quick Vote

Jake didn't know why, but he got a faint feeling that he maybe should have told Miranda that a good third of the first ten Pylons were claimed by family or old friends. Perhaps it was her very sarcastic tone... nah, it can't be that.

Alright, I did kind of drop the ball on that one, Jake had to admit, as he scratched the back of his head a bit embarrassed. It was a bit of a dickmove not to inform her beforehand, but in Jake's defense, he didn't know that Casper would be a big shot in the undead faction or that his brother would attend the World Congress. He really should have mentioned Jacob, though.

Either way...

"Yeah, sorry about that. But no, I don't know any other people than them here, though I did half expect one other guy to attend here today. Luckily he hasn't. His attendance would make it hard to follow the no-fighting rule," Jake apologized. The person that he had kind of expected to attend was, of course, William.

Jake hadn't really thought about the metal-caster at all since the tutorial ended before today, but in retrospect, he had to wonder why he wasn't present. He was blessed by Eversmile, after all.

"Just... don't spring any more surprises," Miranda sighed before switching the subject. "While you were meeting old friends, we managed to make contact with quite a few other factions, mainly to gather information and to try and understand the state of the planet. Haven has yet to enter any official alliances yet, but there are a few good prospects... but I wanted to get your thoughts first."

“Do what you think is best, Miranda. Make as many alliances as you want, and if you make a few enemies along the way, just let me know. Ah, but don’t go around making people mad on purpose; that could get a bit annoying to deal with...” Jake answered but quickly backpedaled as the mental image of a dozen small factions descending on Haven emerged. He would hate having to waste time on getting them to fuck off...

“I have no plans on making enemies for no good reasons, geez,” Miranda said, with a small laugh, clearly finding the notion preposterous.

“Just saying,” Jake clarified.

“Needlessly,” Miranda interjected.

“Importantly,” Jake countered.

“Wastefully,” Miranda shot back.

“Clarifyingly,” Jake double-clarified.

“Neil and I managed to talk to the trade manager of Sanctdomo and begun early talks of establishing a trade network using spatial formations. Something the Holy Church is already working on themselves to connect their own cities,” Lillian came in, totally ruining the critical discussion with actually helpful information.

“Guys... shouldn’t we vote?” Neil also asked, clearly feeling a bit out of place.

Jake turned to the space mage in confusion. “You haven’t already? Weren’t we just going to abstain?”

“I hadn’t voted either,” Lillian said, Miranda also shaking her head as she said: “Me neither... but yeah, we skip this one.”

A minute later, the notification popped up before all of them:

The election of World Leader has now concluded!

Results: No individual obtained at least 60% of the total votes. No World Leader will be elected during this World Congress. Note that a World Leader must be elected within the first 3 World Congresses.

Jake read the message and tried to see if he could see a breakdown of votes but couldn’t find any way to do that.

“Miranda, can you see who voted for what?” he asked, hoping maybe she could somehow.

“No, I can only see what it says,” she shook her head in response, also clearly wanting to see a breakdown.

“Well, that sucks. Then again, it isn’t like the system is known for being overly transparent when it comes to details... imagine if you could get a breakdown after getting a skill upgrade telling you exactly what you di-“

Sadly he didn’t get any longer than that before he was interrupted by a new system message.

The second vote of the World Congress will relate to accelerating the growth of the planet and its inhabitants.

A system store with limited wares will be offered for a period to assist the enlightened races of Earth. This store will both buy and sell wares, with any sold item then becoming available to other cities through the store at a price set by the seller. All items can also be sold directly to the store with compensation determined by the system store.

To determine what wares the store will offer, a vote will be held.

The store can only be used by the City Lord and individuals designated by the City Lord. The stores will use Credits as their currency and will, in addition to items being sold by other cities, contain three types of crafting materials depending on what receives the most votes. Votes may be distributed as the noble desires between any number of options.

The voting options are as follows:

1.Herbs

2.Ores & Metals

3.Gems & Crystals

4.Mixed Monster Leather, Hides & Bones

5.Mixed Monster Body Parts, Meat & Innards

6.Wood

7.Stone

8.Chemicals

9.Fruit, Grain & other Foodstuffs

10.Cloth, Thread, and other Textiles.

The stores will only be available for a limited time. All unsold items will be returned to the seller once the period expires. The Pylon can be accessed from anywhere within the city's borders, and materials will appear at the buyer's location.

Voting will begin in: 2:59:59

Jake stood there for a bit as he took it all in, Miranda, Neil, and Lillian doing the same. A system store... Jake had expected such a thing to not really appear as the Viper had made it clear that the tutorial store wasn't something he should expect as a regular occurrence.

Then again, this one was quite a bit different from a store that offered legendary skills and pretty much whatever the heart desired as long as you had enough points. This store was just a store for materials to help craft stuff... and as Jake read over the options, he already knew what he wanted.

"Herbs for sure," he declared. It was a no-brainer. Jake was starting to get low on many herbs, so wouldn't it be awesome if he could just buy them? He had so many Credits, after all. Maybe he could even get a small garden started... or stock up so much he wouldn't need one.

"That does seem like the clear choice for us," Miranda nodded. "As we don't plan on particularly expanding, we aren't in dire need of building materials. Besides, we are in a massive forest, so it isn't like we need wood, and as we only really build using wood, so the Stone isn't needed. Everything is basically a luxury to us and to help grow the professions of our inhabitants."

"Which means we want the herbs," Jake fully concurred.

"I believe we have a task ahead of ourselves then," Lillian added. "I doubt many others will vote for Herbs. Most larger factions are at the moment focusing on expanding their populations, so I am 90% sure either Stone, Wood, or both will be voted for en-masse."

"Yeah, and I also think many will want ores and metals. There seems to be a perpetual lack of proper materials for the blacksmiths, and it is also a barrier of entry to making the teleportation circles. Personally, I would prefer Gems and Crystals, but I don't see that happening," Niel said.

"Anything is fine, as long as Herbs is one of them," Jake said. He really didn't care what else was picked. He doubted any leatherworker or blacksmith could make him any good equipment right now, even if he now did seriously need a second melee weapon after Venomfang took irreparable damage.

Before Jake could mourn over the loss of his long-time weapon some more, another person spoke up, someone not from the first ten, but a level 85 E-grade who was the lord or at least appeared to be the leader of a city. He was the highest leveled individual of his city, at least.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the young-looking man begun. "Would it not be wise to agree on what we will vote for before we split up once more so we can focus on creating connections rather than needlessly discussing this vote?"

"I agree," a neighboring City Lord said, clearly already on good terms with the first one who spoke. "If we determine what Earth needs most now, we can focus on other important topics during this intermission."

A few others voiced their opinions, none of them in the top 10. It was kind of a show of solidarity and was perhaps because they felt like they needed more time than the larger factions. The Holy Church had no issues forging alliances, but those who didn't have a single D-grade and had yet to make contact with

another city outside of the World Congress were quite strapped for some good diplomatic relations. If not, they risked being absorbed by larger forces quite swiftly.

Jake threw Miranda a look as she made everyone able to see inside their barrier by making it transparent. Jake had already summoned his mask. The barrier around each city's area had quite a few functions, and many were still locked off as people no doubt were discussing what to do within. He used the term "no doubt" because... well, he could see them in his sphere discussing - cheat-like bloodline for the win.

With some actual negotiation about to begin, Jake happily let Miranda take full charge as he just stood by her side, being the scary Progenitor he was.

"Haven's first priority will be Herbs," Miranda spoke loudly, instantly turning the attention of everyone in the hall to their platform.

What Miranda said wasn't an invitation to negotiate or a proposition: it was a declaration. She was informing them what Haven was planning on doing, nothing less and nothing more. But there was quite a bit to it.

Miranda knew that everyone else knew that Jake, the weird masked man, was on good terms with several of the larger factions in the top 10. He even had familial relations to the Court of Shadows, a faction that was quite honestly a bit of an unsettling presence for many. Who would have thought that a Court of assassins would unnerve people? Not to speak of the undead...

It played to Haven's advantage as many now had an opportunity before them... one that was instantly grasped by another of the lower-tiered City Lords.

“New Heartland will also support Haven’s selection of Herbs as one of the options,” the woman said, voicing her support of Haven. It was a good political move that Miranda had counted on as a few others also voiced their intent to vote for herbs.

Honestly, it was just a cheap way for them to curry favor with the one Earl of Earth. While many of them would likely prefer Wood or Stone, they didn’t need it as much as they needed strong allies. Also... there was three options total. They could still get what they truly wanted and make a great political move. A win-win, if you may.

The only thing was... she could clearly see Jake’s eye twitch at the many city names. Four of the seven contained the word “new”, making him twitch every time. Miranda also had to admit that the imagination of most lords certainly wasn’t the best. Not that Haven was the most original, but at least it wasn’t New Haven.

Finally, another of the top ten also spoke up, this one from the group that Jake had talked about as the “stone age cosplayers”.

“We have no objections to voting for Herbs, and we nominate Monster Leather, Hides, and Bones to be selected. Defensive equipment is one of the most important things at this stage, with the constant battle against beasts at our doorsteps, so a secure source of high-quality crafting materials will be incredibly beneficial. The bones can also be used for weapons, with leather having a use for many other professions too, making this option overall perhaps the most valuable package,” the overly tall D-grade leader of the city called Midtgaard said.

Miranda barely held back a scoff as she knew most of his reasoning was only half-truths at best... he just wanted leather and hides for his own city, as based on their equipment, they evidently had quite a few talented leatherworkers.

She wasn't the only one to call it out either.

"While I agree that there is much truth in your assessment, I don't think it is our best choice. Lack of building material leads to many lacking homes and cities being unable to properly help ensure the safety of their citizens. We believe it would be best to focus on constructing our cities before prioritizing personal equipment. Therefore I believe we should select both Wood and Stone. If only one, I think Stone would be best," a woman spoke.

She was one of the D-grades from the top 10 that hadn't drawn that much attention yet. Jake had told her she was exactly level 100, having clearly just evolved, but that still meant she was one of the stronger people present. Jake did mention that she felt weak, though, so Miranda doubted she had achieved the Perfect Evolution.

"Do you need tall walls if the warriors can stand firm and make no beast come near?" the man in fur countered, looking a bit annoyed that he wasn't instantly offered the same support that Miranda had gained.

"Your axe will not place a roof over anyone's head if you spend it slaying beasts and not chopping wood all day," the woman said, clearly also annoyed.

The discussion continued for a while, as others also bid in with their opinions, and it quickly became clear at least one of Wood or Stone would be chosen, but now the choice was which one...

Jake looked wholly uninterested, and quite frankly, Miranda didn't care much either. Haven was already a bit strapped for Credits, so it wasn't like they were going to buy a lot, and pretty much all resources chosen would benefit the citizens in some way.

Phillip would love ores and metals for the large smithy at the Fort, Haven had many wood-working professions, and a source of high-quality Stone was always welcome for construction. Again, the same held true for everything.

It quickly proved that the other cities didn't have the same opinion, however. Jacob, the Augur, didn't engage this time but had the trade manager do the talking as he advocated for both Stone and Wood, but surely Foodstuffs had to be another valuable option if they could only get one.

A few tried to question if Herbs was truly necessary, but Miranda found that other forces also supported it, not just to kiss ass. Herbs were generally harder to get by than most other resources, and most settlements had at least some alchemists. Even if they didn't, then many cooks or other types of artisans could still use herbs. This ignores that some herbs were also beneficial just to eat raw, functioning as suboptimal healing or mana potions mostly, but it was better than nothing.

In the end, the proposition to quickly decide what shops to get turned out not to be that quick.