

## Hunter 226

### Chapter 226: World Congress: Final Talks

The vote for the System Event came and went, all the different factions once more back on their respective platforms. There were a few last-moment speeches, but everyone knew that people had already decided by now what they wanted or made other commitments.

In the end, the vote for the System Event quietly came to an end, as Jake just hoped that things would indeed go as he planned. Treasure Hunt let's gooo!

The vote for System Event has concluded!

With 63% of the total votes, the chosen System Event is the Treasure Hunt.

The Event will begin in 3 months (90 days), and all eligible participants will be invited at that time.

Jake read it over and did a mini-cheer inside. 63% of the total votes was damn nice. Some people had just been stubborn, and he was also fairly confident that some had just abstained. In retrospect, they likely didn't need one or two of the factions they made deals with, but hey, better safe than sorry.

All in all: Treasure Hunt get!

With the final vote of the World Congress done, the last message popped up.

The final vote has concluded. The First World Congress will end in: 1:29:59

One and a half hours to go around and talk to people. Jake felt like it was a bit much, but Neil was already gone by the time Jake had time to consider what he wanted to do. As he hadn't really thought about there being much time remaining after the vote, he had already said his farewells to Caleb, Casper, and Jacob, making it super awkward if he waltzed back now to keep chatting.

Just as Jake considered what to do, someone approached him. She was from one of the lower-ranked cities, and Jake hadn't seen her around at all, really.

She was pretty small with long black hair. Her level was only 51, which made Jake wonder why she was even here. It was entirely possible she was the lowest-leveled person present.

"Excuse me, you are Jake, right?" she asked him. "My name is Kim Eunseo; I would like to ask if you have time to talk a bit privately?"

Jake frowned a bit beneath the mask. The woman looked to be in her mid-thirties and wore an outfit that was not at all fit for adventuring. It looked far closer to business-casual, actually. More importantly, though... she knew his name.

While he hadn't kept it a secret during the World Congress, it hadn't been publicized either. She didn't strike him as some Priscilla-type gold digger either, so Jake was honestly a bit confused about what she wanted.

"Do we know each other?" he asked. He couldn't remember her, but maybe they had met? They might have met pre-system, and he just couldn't remember.

"No, this is our first meeting. I would explain more, but I think it's better to do it in a more private setting. It's related to a mutual acquaintance of ours," the woman calling herself Kim Eunseo said.

"Fine," Jake answered. Hmm, maybe she was related to some god the Viper knew? Maybe even a member of the Order of the Malefic Viper? Or was it related to a mortal friend? It would have to be one not present here, wouldn't it?

No one was on Haven's platform as everyone had already left, Miranda and Lillian busy trying to do some more political stuff he didn't care about, and Neil busy with his space stuff.

They got on the platform, and Jake invited her to take a seat.

"So, who is this mutual acquaintance of ours?"

"From what I know, there aren't any positive relations between you, but I would like to ask you some questions related to him anyway and what transpired between you two anyway," Kim Eunseo said. "He has not been able or willing to do so himself."

"Who?" Jake asked... but deep down, he felt a bit of anger churn up as a name sprung to mind.

"William."

Carmen leaned back as she tossed the small orb she normally used for dodge-training up and down as she just waited for it all to end. She had tried to go out and help with things, but honestly, she felt like she had just embarrassed herself. But she had tried. She really had. She had gone with Sven or the City Lord she had appointed and tried to play nice, but she just felt sick to her stomach while doing it. The fake smiles, the empty promises... everything just sucked.

She hated being there and thoroughly regretted coming. She felt so out of place it was like going to one of her old family gatherings. It was even similar in that she was just brought along to show off. In case, because she had reached D-grade and not because she was the daughter of her father, so that was at least marginally better. Anyone else could have made a quick alliance with Sven as that was truly all she had done, so she didn't really have any reason to be there.

Sven looked like a meathead, but he wasn't stupid at all. Carmen had never considered herself a moron, but she sure as hell wasn't smart. She had sucked in school, and the only thing she had ever been good at was boxing. Meanwhile, she felt like so many of the other people present weren't just strong fighters but were even damn smart in their own right.

Spending the last few years in prison had stunted her quite a bit, and she felt like she would never truly fit in with all these "elites". This was the last World Congress she had any intentions of participating in...

The only bright spot was that things had turned out fine as she liked the idea of a Treasure Hunt, and ores and metals were quite useful for her profession. It did also help that most didn't dare approach her as she didn't look particularly interested in talking with anyone, and her D-grade strength also served as a natural deterrent.

In comparison, the tutorial had been so easy. Even after Carmen returned to Earth, it was easy. She could just spend all her time fighting and doing something she actually felt good at and not be the incompetent piece of shit she currently felt like.

As she sat there, a person approached. Carmen really didn't want to talk to anyone, but she nearly felt forced not to turn them away when she saw who it was. She didn't want to fuck things up more than she already had by turning away the City Lord of Haven.

Why the fuck didn't I turn on the barrier, she bemoaned as the woman walked up and stood right below the platform.

"Would it be alright if I joined you?" the City Lord asked. Carmen was pretty sure she was called Miranda, and she looked to be around 30, if even that. Older than herself, that's for sure, but with the system, things get a bit hard to tell.

"Alright," Carmen answered, a bit unsure of what the hell she was supposed to say.

Miranda walked up and took a seat beside Carmen. A few seconds passed before Miranda asked: "Can you make it a bit more private?"

"Alright..." Carmen answered, feeling dumb for not having done it already.

The moment the barrier hummed into effect and the platform was hidden from outside view, Miranda let out a huge sigh as she slumped back in the chair.

"I am fucking exhausted," she blurted out. "Days like these are what lead to an early retirement due to stress, I tell you."

Carmen was taken aback, not sure how to respond to the woman. I was like she flipped like a coin. Her welcoming and friendly demeanor were utterly gone as she now just looked... normal.

"Yeah, today sucks," Carmen agreed. She could handle normal.

"I wouldn't say suck as much as being a bit tedious and annoyingly hard work. Everyone wants something if they feel like every term isn't 100% to their advantage, and even then, most of the time, they only think they're superior because they're idiots," Miranda complained.

"What makes you any different?" Carmen asked, feeling a bit more comfortable. Her own hate and annoyance of fake morons overtaking her self-doubt.

"Oh, nothing really. I am sure I am equally exhausting to deal with. It's our job to try and take a mile when given an inch. That's why I was appointed City Lord. Well, that, and because the one who claimed the Pylon seriously didn't want to do the job, I just like telling myself it was due to how competent I was and not because I got lucky," she answered honestly.

Carmen looked at the woman a bit, unsure what she wanted. Why had she come here? She battled a bit internally but decided just to ask... she appeared to have been honest so far.

"Why did you want to talk to me?" Carmen asked, honestly not sure if she should expect a genuine answer or not.

Carmen wasn't stupid enough to think it was because the woman was just nice and friendly. She had seen her negotiate. Miranda always wanted something; she always did things because she thought it would benefit her or her city... because that was her job. And while Carmen respected that, she didn't have to respect the underhanded ways people went about things.

"Because you're the highest-ranked member of a faction related to a Primordial on Earth," Miranda answered with a small shrug. "A lot of people seem to think you work for Sven due to the difference in nobility rank and such, but I happen to have a more reliable source of information than most."

"So you do want something from me," Carmen shot back, a bit disappointed. She should have known... that damn blessing would only cause issues in the long run. She had only said yes to it for the stats and the skill, not because she actually wanted to go around playing priest, or worse, politician.

"Sure, I want to form a good relationship, so if we ever have a disagreement, it doesn't instantly result in a fight to the death. I don't see someone so highly regarded by Gudrun as being weak in any way, and based on the Progenitor's assessment, you are one of the strongest here by a good margin," Miranda explained.

"Sounds like you want an awfully lot of nothing," Carmen answered, sharpening her gaze.

How the hell did she know who had blessed her? Was she also blessed by some god? Well, it made sense; Gudrun had said that many of the powerful people on Earth would be blessed and had even warned her about the Progenitor being blessed by some giant snake god.

Was this Miranda also blessed by that snake?

"I didn't come wanting anything today; I just hope to lay the foundation for the future," Miranda smiled.  
"I like to at least introduce myself to the important people of Earth."

Carmen scoffed. Right...

"Should stop wasting your time then and go talk to Sven," she shook her head.

"Don't underestimate yourself... how much do you know about Gudrun and Valhal in general?" Miranda asked.

It was a bit... embarrassing, but Carmen honestly didn't know much. She had only ever met Gudrun, and she had seemed nice enough. Gudrun felt very motherly and kept making comments that Carmen was just like her husband in many ways, and she had taught Carmen some stuff, but not much related to Valhal itself. Just some general stuff. Much of that Carmen had found out herself, but to be fair, the information had been scarce.

"Not as much as you, it seems," Carmen once again scoffed, but inwardly she did want to know. She hated how everyone seemed to know more than her about everything. Sven was far more knowledgeable regarding everything Valhal-related, and Carmen was too damn proud and embarrassed to admit that in front of him



"Valhal is a weird place, mainly created due to the admiration many felt towards the Primordial Valdemar. Eventually, it turned into a powerful organization with a vast number of experts, both among mortals and gods alike... but things never really got started before she came," Miranda began.

"There was no rhyme or reason behind blessings given, no attempt to bring together those who technically belonged to Valhal, and nothing but a loose code of honor uniting them. Valdemar had no desire to fix any of this because, quite frankly, he never cared for any of it. He had his brothers in arms and rarely thought of anyone not in his immediate surroundings.

"Gudrun was one of those comrades in arms he got during the second era, a powerful god in her own right, but also one with ambition and guile. She also managed to do something no other warrior done before: she conquered the heart of Valdemar. They became bonded, and now she is effectively his wife and has been ever since... and in actuality, she is the true leader of Valhal. On paper and in spirit, it was still, and always will be Valdemar simply due to his utterly insane amount of power, but what he had in brawns, Gudrun had in brains.

"And if there is one thing I am 100% confident Gudrun is good at, it's recognizing talent. So don't put yourself down... if there is anyone great warriors of the multiverse wish to be recognized by, it's her."

Carmen looked a bit oddly at Miranda, not sure what to say. Gudrun hadn't talked much about herself... not at all... and if Carmen reminded her of her husband...

"So when she said I am like her husband, she called me simple-minded..." Carmen said, self-deprecatingly.

"Valdemar isn't known for being simple-minded. He is known for his strength. He didn't need anything but his axe to sit where he is today, and what he couldn't do himself, he had the foresight to find qualified people to handle for him. His innate charisma and drive were enough to attract them. He is a

genius, no way about it. Knowing that Gudrun compared you to him... It only makes me happier I came to meet you today," Miranda answered smilingly.

Once more, Carmen was unsure what to say. Miranda didn't look like she had anything more to add either, but she just sat there in silence with her. She looked like she actually enjoyed the quiet break away from all the discussions... Carmen could relate to that.

Like that, the minutes just ticked by until the timer finally was about to expire. Miranda got up and stretched, cracking her neck and even doing a small yawn.

"Gotta head back now. Nice meeting you."

"Same," Carmen answered without even thinking.

Miranda just smiled in return as she left.

She seems nice enough, Carmen thought as she saw her walk out.

Miranda made her way back towards Haven's platform as there were only a few minutes left, and she wanted to check in with everyone just before it all ended. While walking over, she saw a woman exit the barrier, making her frown.

A frown that only deepened when she actually made her way inside and saw that it had just been her and Jake. She hadn't seen Jake around at all... did that mean he had just spent nearly one and a half hours with that woman? Moreover... he had a weird look on his face.

He was both frowning and looking puzzled, as if deep in thought. Miranda couldn't help but ask:

"Who was that?"

"A psychiatrist," Jake answered, shaking his head. "One whose patient I've already killed once during the tutorial, and among other things, she asked me not to kill on sight on our next meeting."

"Sounds like there is a story there I haven't heard," Miranda said, smiling. He had talked a lot about fights in the tutorial, sure. He had mentioned how some psycho had killed most of the survivors and then... wait. Was it him?

"Will you do as she asked?" she asked.

"Maybe... if what she said is true... maybe. She wanted to learn about him more than anything... what had happened between us," Jake said, looking a bit conflicted before turning to her, still looking puzzled. "Apparently, I gave him some kind of PTSD?"

Shortly after that, Lillian returned and barely had time to throw them both a nod before the final message of the World Congress came. Neil never came back but stayed discussing teleportation with other space mages till the very last second.

The First World Congress has concluded. The Second World Congress will commence in 1 year (365 days)