

Hunter 231

Chapter 231: Man Cave(s)

"We'll need to build it deeper. There is no way the ceiling of the cellar can take that kind of toxic exposure. Even if we put some serious enchants on the floorboards, they will eventually lose effect as they are slowly corroded, and the stronger you get, the faster we will need to keep reapplying the enchants," Hank explained as he shook his head.

"How deep do you reckon?" Jake asked. "It would be best if we can still keep the lab within the area affected by the Pylon to function as a ward to keep people out if they for some reason try to dig in."

"Oh, that should be easy enough. We just need to put in some good layers between the lab and the rest of the lodge. I would be able to put in some wooden layers that can absorb a lot of the poison and other toxic energies released, but you will have to switch them out or extract the poison from them again occasionally. That, or you could just sell them. They may change into actual items," Hank answered.

"That would be fine; I just don't want my entire valley to turn into a wasteland from my own experiments," Jake responded.

"Great. Anyway, we will dig down to create a second floor to the cellar below the first one. I intend to leave at least five meters between the two floors with the wooden layers placed there. You will still need some magical warding on top of that, I reckon. I am sure Miranda can hook you up with someone, or maybe ask that bird friend of yours," Hank said as he did a rough sketch of his plans on a piece of paper.

Jake just looked on, nodding. Making it be that low also allowed them to make the whole lab a lot bigger and... wait.

"Say, could we link it up somehow with the cavern leading to the dungeon? The barrier by the Pylon should help isolate the lodge still and keep any energies from flowing that way, and it would mean easy access for me when I make a garden down there," Jake asked, liking his own idea quite a lot.

"That is a lot of digging, and we would need to place the lab a lot lower, most likely... how far down are you comfortable with it being? I would assume the lower it is, the more future proof it will also be, but everything will add to how long it will take to get done. We are talking meters in the triple digits," Hank said after scratching his beard and thinking for a while.

"I am fine with any depth; it doesn't matter much when you can walk on air and make your own staircase at any time, anywhere. Or, you know, just fly. It is more if you think you can do it, and of course, have the time to. I know you're a busy man," Jake smiled.

He really didn't wanna put too much on the father of two. Hank had been in charge of most of the construction in Haven, and the man had barely stopped working ever since Jake met him. Yet he actually looked a bit younger now and full of spirit, even if he still had that vibe of a grizzled old lumberjack.

Jake had heard he was getting close to his profession-evolution. He was actually a bit surprised the man hadn't gotten it yet with how much he worked, but then again, he still wasn't sure exactly what determined why some leveled so much faster than others. In retrospect, his class actually leveled pretty fast. At lightning speed compared to his profession. 15 levels in a week was kind of insane, even if he had spent nearly every hour of every day fighting monkeys at higher levels than himself.

"Alright. I'll have to bring in quite the crew to get it done properly. Do you want proper ventilation down there too? I know you probably don't need it; it's more of a comfort thing," Hank asked.

"Nah, no need. I already have a plan myself for the future. One that includes really sealing in the flavor," Jake smiled mischievously.

"Sounds like we're making a real man cave here," Hank chuckled. "Do you want us to get started right away?"

"Not today, tomorrow at the earliest," Jake answered.

"When I said right away, I didn't mean here and now... at the earliest we can begin tomorrow afternoon, we need to finish the current project first. Miranda's orders. The whole town is really coming together," Hank answered, a big proud smile on his lips.

"How's Mark and Louise doing?" Jake asked curiously. He hadn't seen the man's kids around much lately, so he was a bit curious.

"Didn't think you'd care," Hank answered honestly, surprised at the question. "Both of them are currently staying and working at the Fort. While we agreed to keep Haven itself small, the same can't be said for the Fort. Sure, it technically counts as Haven, but the flat plains around the Fort are just perfect for building on. More people already live there than in the entirety of Haven. At least twenty thousand last I heard with more coming... ah, I'm sure you already heard this from Miranda."

Hank scratched his beard again, Jake smiling as he found the builder's embarrassment as he answered. "Yeah, she already gave me the update. I didn't know those kids went there, though."

"Kids," Hank scoffed. "You're barely older than them, are you?"

"Teenagers then," Jake corrected.

"Still incorrect. Mark turned 20 last month; Louise is 22," Hank answered, shaking his head as he chuckled.

"Alright, fully functional adults, geez," Jake finally relented. "Also... back on topic... won't it more end up being an alchemy cave than an alchemy cellar?"

"Yeah. A man cave," Hank answered. Jake was unable to tell if he was serious or just fucking with him.

The two spent a bit more time discussing the details, and Jake got more and more hooked on the idea of making a deep cave beneath the lodge to use as his alchemy lab. Possibly an entire network of sorts. It would also allow them to make a long vertical tunnel leading down to it, and they would be able to seal that off properly.

After Hank left, Jake did exactly as he had said he would avoid and continued making a few more uncommon-rarity Potent Necrotic Poison. While he most certainly knew it would fuck up the spot he used a bit more, he felt like as long as he didn't overdo it, it would fix itself in time.

If not, it wasn't like he couldn't get someone with nature magic or something like that to come by and work on it.

The reason why he was a bit impatient was that he wanted the poison ready for the dungeon. He also made a few batches of fungicide as he guessed he had a high chance of running into mushrooms or other types of fungi down there based on the Indigo Mushroom.

After crafting, he only had one more thing to take care of before heading into the dungeon.

Jake stepped through the plains, each step taking him over a hundred meters forward. His travel speed with One Step Mile was quite frankly insane at this point, and just the short way to the Fort made him increase the range of each step just a little as he got more used to the skill.

He couldn't wait for the day the skill would actually allow him to pass a mile in one step.

The reasons he was going to the Fort were twofold. Firstly was to have a talk with Arnold, the weird guy who liked to make drones and stuff like that, as well as the timed injectors Jake had used for the Indigo Mushroom. Apparently, the guy needed help from Jake with something, plus he wanted to show off some cool stuff Jake would potentially want.

On the way out of the forest towards the Fort, he noted that the Pylon's area of influence had grown even more. The city of Haven was now technically over 100 kilometers in radius, though it was a bit oval, and the area was directed towards the Fort.

It was a bit insane to imagine that the Fort could eventually come under the influence despite the long distance between the two. Then again, distances seemed to matter far less now, especially when you could travel hundreds of kilometers in less time than his commute to work was before the system. When Miranda reached D-grade, he reckoned it would expand to encompass the Fort.

Anyway, the second thing Jake went there for was because the blacksmiths were there, and Jake needed a second weapon for the dungeon. With Venomfang broken and his Shortsword of Icy Winds subpar, to say the least, he wanted to check out if they had something decent. He didn't even need it to be that good, just at least something he could transmute to improve a bit, though he hoped for a weapon he could just use.

During this 1 month alchemy period, Jake had made time to do one task he knew he would have to at one point. It had hurt him to do... but his old bow needed some change. The old one was fine, but after reaching D-grade, it just didn't cut it.

[Windsoar Bow (Rare)] – A bow made from a tree inhabited by wind elementals. The string is made from the sinew of the beast that dared destroy their home. Now restored to a form made for hunting down the beasts hated by the young elementals. The elementals' spirit and mana have left their mark upon the wood, making it light and flexible. The remnant will of the spirits within blesses any arrow fired.

Enchantments: Windsoar

Requirements: Lvl 50+ in any humanoid race.

Jake had liked the Windsoar enchant a lot. It removed wind resistance and even made the normal arrows fly a bit faster. It even made them a bit more stealthy. He had noticed that after he began using his Arcane Arrows, the enchant's effect had lessened, and by now, he doubted he could even use a fully charged Powershot without the bow breaking or suffering irreparable damage.

So, he had transmuted it with a focus on one thing: stability. He just wanted it to be as tough and durable as possible to support his firepower.

[Windsorrow Bow (Rare)] – A bow made from a tree inhabited by wind elementals, now corrupted beyond recognition by powerful arcane energies. The string is made of the sinew of beasts long

forgotten. The blessing of the spirits once laid upon this bow has been devoured and transformed by the arcane energies - their final wishes and will made into nothing more than nourishment. All that they were now serves only one purpose: to make the bow as immutable as possible so that it may remain unchanged or be destroyed in its attempt to do so. Enchantments: Arcane Immutability

Requirements: Lvl 75+ in any humanoid race. Quasi-Soulbound

Now, Jake had a lot to say about the description, mainly about how it really painted him as a bad guy. Seriously, all he had done was to transmute it a bit, and now it made him feel like he had just snuffed out the final legacy of a family of wind elementals.

Anywho, new bow in the bag. It looked the same as before for the most part but did have some subtle pink-purple lines running through it. It was also damn durable now and was overall a better weapon. No wind enchant, though. It was just a tough bow.

When he made it to the Fort, the guards only panicked a little until one of them recognized him and poked his partner in the side, and gave him that look you give to your coworker telling them to just shut the fuck up and act like nothing was wrong.

Jake quickly made his way towards the workshops and was quite impressed by how much the place had changed.

So many houses now filled the plains surrounding the Fort, forcing Jake to take flight and fly over them to reach the inner area where he knew Arnold was. The big room where Jake had first seen him was now exclusively Arnold's to use, and those he invited in there. The man had really set himself apart and was still making new inventions all the time.

Also, while the other crafters had been pushed out, that didn't mean they complained. A huge complex had been constructed immediately around the Fort, and Jake saw that the courtyard that used to be filled with tents was now a bustling market.

He even spotted a few large booths by traders who proudly advertised they were from Sanctdomo. They had some interesting and unique stuff, but nothing Jake cared about. Instead, he went straight for the center fort.

There, he once more encountered two guards at the entrance. They both jumped a bit when he landed a few meters in front of the door, his large black dragon wings perhaps looking a bit unsettling. Luckily, one of the guards was once more an old soldier of the Fort and just made a salute and opened the door. Jake felt a bit weird about that, as he had never been in the military or anything like that. You only salute others in the military, right?

Inside the building itself, he could either go to the left or right or straight ahead. To the left was Arnold's workshop, but the first thing he did was to go straight ahead to look at something else equally interesting: the teleportation circle being built.

Jake walked into a large circular room that had clearly been remodeled. It now had a dome-shaped ceiling with lots of small magic scripts on it, and in the middle was a large magic circle more than 6 meters across.

While in the room, Jake felt the space-affinity from everywhere, and the atmospheric mana was nearly entirely space mana. It actually felt a bit weird to be in the room.

No one was there currently, and Jake could see things were still halfway done. Neil came by often and worked on it when not out with his party. It had actually been active for a time and had a corresponding magic circle back in Haven they used to transport goods, but Neil had moved that outside and begun remodeling the one in here. What they wanted right now was to possibly transport living things.

He had to admit, it all looked very impressive, even if he didn't really understand it. Leaving the room once more, he finally went towards his real target and turned into the hallway towards Arnold's workshop. Even now, he could hear the sounds of what sounded like a welder from in there.

Arnold didn't even notice Jake when he entered, as the man was too busy working. Jake saw him working on what looked like a 4-legged robot hound of some sort. That was at least the only name he could immediately get on.

Besides that, he saw so many other constructs strewn about - different kinds of gun-like weapons, what looked like pieces of armor, a lot of small orbs and balls of sorts, and generally just a huge bunch of small electrical devices. Jake could see he wasn't the only one who would have a real man cave. Or man fort.

In the room, there was one thing more than anything, and that was drones. Jake saw so damn many of them, and clearly... they saw him too.

Five of them took to the air the moment he entered and moved to protect Arnold, it seemed. The only thing it really did was make the man aware of Jake's presence as he turned around.

"Ah, you're here. I need you to help make bombs."

Jake was pretty sure he just got placed on some kind of watch list.