

Hunter 256

Chapter 256: Servant & Territory

Jake was confused, Felix excited, Chris super confused, and Villy was laughing hysterically in Jake's head.

It took Jake a moment to realize that Villy had seriously just blessed someone just to fuck with him as a setup for this joke. Along with the hug, the old snake god seemed to have one hell of a time. Too bad for Villy... two could play that game.

Felix looked expectantly at Chris, who looked nervously up at Jake for guidance. They had attracted quite a lot of attention as Felix seemed to be a bit of a local celebrity. Now that same shine was put on Chris, who everyone looked at. Only a few gave Jake a glance, which was actually quite nice.

Jake took charge and said: "Please, let us take this somewhere more private. His lordship does not wish to flaunt his position."

This earned him even more confused glances from Chris, but Jake just looked at him back, trying to convey the young man should play along with the joke.

It didn't work. The young man still looked panicky.

Felix shifted his attention to Jake and mumbled. "Yes... I understand. Please follow me!"

Putting a hand on Chris' shoulder, Jake led him to follow him and Felix into a side room. A large enchanted door separated the room from the rest of the temple, and upon entering, it was clear this was a workshop. Tools lined the walls, and two half-built statues stood in the center of the room. Enchantments also seemed to nicely isolate the room from the rest of the temple.

"Now! Please, I must know... I felt the aura... but... which Primordial blessed you? Was it Stormild? Wyrmgod? No... you're a builder... the Starseizing Titan? Rigoria? Please, I must know!" Felix said with fanatic fervor.

Yep, this guy is a loony, Jake thought. Had the dude been making too many statues and now found his mind broken by godly auras? Or was it something else?

"Before answering, please let us know why you desire this information?" Jake said, continuing to play his role of bodyguard or assistant or... well, he hadn't really decided on a set role. He was improvising.

"Yes... sorry I was just too excited. Allow me to introduce myself once more. I am Felix, a newly joined member of the Primordial Church and blessed by the Eternal Servant. Sculpting is my creed, and after being shown the magnificence of the Primordials, my life goal has been to depict one... naturally only with the approval of one blessed by them," Felix explained, clearly putting in the effort to stay calm.

"I... I think there is a misunderstanding," Chris said, as he had built up the courage to explain himself. "I just received my blessing a few minutes ago from Lord Thayne."

He pointed at Jake – that little snitch – forcing him to stop the play... and enter another role. Villy wouldn't get off cheap.

"You're... but I feel no aura? I should be able to... I have a skill to see, so..." Felix said while looking at Jake, unsure if Chris was telling the truth.

"Chris, you tell him," Jake said. Totally not because he wasn't sure how to explain the situation and make himself seem cool and mysterious meanwhile.

"Lord Thayne touched me and gave me a blessing related to the Malefic Viper... he was the one with it first," Chris explained. Granted, the kid didn't know much, but apparently, just the mention of the Malefic Viper was enough.

Felix looked to be flummoxed for a moment and didn't respond. He paused. Looked almost to be in a trance for several seconds.

Then... another aura appeared. Felix's eyes glowed a deep blue for a split second. One of his eyes returned to normal, but the other kept shining, and the aura remained... the aura of a god. Tears began pouring out of his eyes as he fell to his knees.

"This servant greets the Chosen of the Malefic One," he said. Or perhaps they said, would be more accurate. His voice echoed, first with that of Felix's and then with that of the god. His body appeared to be half-possessed...

On a side note, Chris was knocked out cold the moment the god's aura appeared.

Jake was, needless to say, surprised. By several things. First of all, could gods possess mortals like that? Secondly, whatever god did so clearly knew his identity right away... and third...

The aura of the god possessing Felix felt awfully similar to that of Villy – both in signature and power.

“Who are you?” Jake asked.

“Jake, give me some mana here,” he heard Villy’s voice say. Jake didn’t think much but poured out nearly ten thousand mana in a fraction of a second as a faint outline of a glowing green eye appeared. Turns out that’s all the physical manifestation Jake could possibly facilitate.

One thing that did remain in full force was his presence.

Felix – or the god possessing him – looked at Villy with wide eyes as he practically prostrated himself. “This Eternal Servant greets the Primordial.”

“I guess it’s been a while,” Villy said. His tone was odd, and Jake picked up on it right away. He sounded more formal... and annoyed? At least he didn’t appear to be in a joking mood. Had he not predicted this would happen? Jake assumed he had...

“Far too long, Malefic One. I have no words to explain my elation when I felt your return... the world has been incomplete for far too long,” the god in Felix said with an echoing voice. Jake didn’t really want to butt in, but...

Felix seemed to be breaking.

“Yo, better get the fuck out that guy’s body, or he’s gonna die,” Jake said in a scolding tone.

“Ah, it’s is of no concern; it is merely another vessel... I shall bring another to-“

“I wasn’t asking,” Jake said, staring into the eyes of the possessed Felix. He felt the god stare back at him with a hint of surprise. Jake felt like he looked into an infinity ocean of light, and he saw twelve figures upon mighty thrones for a fraction of a second. The vision appeared as fast it had come, and the possessed man smiled.

“Truly worthy of being the Malefic One’s Chosen. I shall oblige,” he said, his smile widening. Felix’s lips cracked due to the smile as blood begin leaking out. Blood also began pouring out his eyes, ears, nose, and his skin cracked several places.

“It shames me our meeting was cut short... please never hesitate to call upon me, oh Malefic One.”

With those words, the aura faded, and the eye stopped glowing. Well, it didn’t really stop glowing as much as it disappeared as there now just was an empty eye socket where it had been. Felix was on the brink of death, and Jake didn’t hesitate to go forward and make him drink a healing potion.

All of these weird events left Jake in a room with two unconscious people and a floating green eye belonging to Villy.

“So... who the fuck was that?” Jake asked.

"The Eternal Servant... I honestly don't wanna say much about him. He is what happens when fanaticism is taken to such an extreme it resulted in godhood. He is from the second era, born in the first universe, and he is a bit... much. Yeah, just thinking about him is annoying. Man, I hoped to fuck with you by having a fanatic from his "church" meet you, but now it just got weird," Villy said through the weird floating eye.

"So, what is this Primordial Church?"

"A fucked up fan club of all the Primordials led by the biggest fanboy of the multiverse. I am not joking. Seriously, the guy exemplifies why the word fan comes from fanatic. He is bat-shit insane, and anyone who joins his church is pretty damn crazy too. Well, they can be normal most of the time, but confront them with anything Primordial-related, and they go mental," Villy said. Jake was sure there were a lot of stories for him to hear in the future.

"Sounds like a lot. Will the dude cause issues for me?" Jake asked. "Also, what the hell was he doing with this Felix fellow? He nearly died."

"Besides possibly getting a meltdown due to the paradox of you being both a heretic and a Chosen, I doubt he will ever be an issue for you. He may be an annoyance. As for that mortal human... he is just a mortal human. Another instrument for the Servant to do his work. Why would a god care about the death of a single E-grade follower? To him, a single nanosecond more in the presence of a Primordial is worth more than that guy's life," Villy explained curtly.

"Okay, dude is fucked up for real. Is that kind of divine possession normal?"

“No, not at all. The one being possessed has to accept it, and as you saw, it isn’t exactly healthy for the one being possessed. This guy must have a skill related to the Eternal Servant to do it, which is why I hadn’t seen this shitty situation coming. But you can meet people who can do it, and some possessions or partial possessions also have combat effects. You don’t even need to do it with a god, just someone quite a bit more powerful than you. Often it isn’t even an individual possessing the person but a Record Fragment. It’s just integrating a part of a superior being’s Records for a short period to empower yourself. If you had taken a class to become my Champion, you would have 100% gotten one like that. They’re basically just another form of temporary boosting skills with all the associated after-effects,” Villy told him.

Jake nodded along, not at all unhappy he didn’t have some weird possession skill. He didn’t like the thought of being possessed at all. Why Felix was fine with it, he didn’t get either, but the dude did seem a bit broken.

“Thanks for the info, mate. I guess I’ll see you around? Also, you majorly fucked up, eh? Don’t worry; I’ll make sure to get you an absolutely wonderful statue that will truly show off your awesomeness,” Jake deviously smiled as he saw the floating eye about to run out of mana.

“See, this is why you got that damn heretic part of your profession,”

Villy laughed as the eye slowly faded away. Not mad at all, but just bemused. Jake himself just chuckled. He wasn’t going to do something overly obscene... but he would have some fun with it.

Now, there was just one minor issue.

The room had changed from two unconscious people plus Jake and floating-green-eye-Villy to Jake alone with two unconscious men.

Jake sat down in meditation as he began weaving some mana strings into the shape of a statue to pass the time and wait for them to wake up as he muttered to himself: “Now, how much can I get away with...”

While Jake was fucking around and being childish with the Malefic Viper, the rest of the world progressed towards the Treasure Hunt. But it wasn't all smooth sailing. A month after the World Congress, around the time Jake entered the dungeon, the barriers went down.

Barriers sealing in the many D-grades bound to the unclaimed Pylons of the world. Variants and groups of D-grades were freed, and many of these were not as docile as the usual beasts. They weren't all natives of the 93rd universe, far from it. Some of them were even sapient like the King of the Forest with their own ideals and goals.

Even more so, when the barriers disappeared, the Pylons spawned. Spawned, ready for the taking. But... not only humans could claim them. The only reason no monster had claimed one yet was due to one always spawning after a human or a group of humans killed the guardian. The only exception to this was Jake's, which beasts had tried to claim, but they could not due to Jake's quest.

Now, nothing held them back, and all across the globe, monster nobles appeared. They claimed territories affected by the Pylons and made them their own, dominated other beasts or creatures in the area, and they themselves experienced massive growth as the Pylon sped up their progress.

This led to some of them being greedy. To want to claim more Pylons and grow more powerful. Other monsters were displaced as they lost the bout to claim a Pylon and went looking for another. The vast majority ended up in conflicts with other monsters. One must remember that humans were all concentrated in a small area, while the rest of the planet still existed, dominated by other creatures. These creatures now fought as they also struggled for dominion – just as humans did in their own smaller area.

But, of course, some found their way to human settlements. Packs of D-grade beasts that sought opportunities, solitary powerful D-grades that were ousted, or entire armies led by a powerful leader. All of these were now something humanity had to contend with on top of the usual native beasts of Earth.

Naturally, the beasts of Earth also had to contend with these newly released invaders. In fact, many Pylons were claimed by natives as they dominated the territories of these Pylon monsters and claimed them as their own. Many didn't due to them already living in areas suitable for their growth, but some monsters would always wander.

Humanity faced this new threat head-on. Many cities were prepared and had defenses in place, at least one D-grade around to defend the city, or powerful parties or formations to at least hold back any invaders.

The more powerful cities didn't have any major issues. The Court of Shadows, Undead, Holy Church, Noboru Clan, Valhal, and many others handled these invaders easily. All of these factions had multiple D-grades in their ranks by now, and just the size and power of their permanent defenses were enough to deter any opportunistic invader.

No, those that truly suffered were the smaller settlements. Those who had a Pylon but no major fighting force attached. Sure, all had to slay a strong D-grade to get the Pylon, but the killer of the D-grade hadn't always stayed around. Or at least they couldn't be around all the time. The moment the strongest fighter left, the city would fall, and many of the invaders weren't stupid monsters but intelligent beings. They waited, they plotted, and they seized the moment when opportune. This inadvertently led to even more growth for both parties involved, as many humans were forced into leveling their otherwise neglected class.

Gods were also involved. Humans were not the only ones who could be blessed. Some gods even began to place bets on beasts or monsters, blessing them and giving them guidance with the hope that they could take over the planet. These deities were not silly enough to think they could kill all the humans...

simply make them run away from the planet in due time, or have their blessed one leave themselves if it got too dangerous.

It was a new paradigm that resulted in far more beasts or monsters attacking cities as they were displaced. No city went unnoticed by these monsters. Some, they chose to steer clear of, however.

Those too big, like Sanctdomo, Saya, or Skyggen, were natural places to avoid. Others had powerful defenders. All of them were avoided after long consideration and scouting from the monsters – especially the sapient ones.

All but one.

During the time Jake was in the dungeon, and Haven lay undefended, some monsters did come by.

A gargoyle looked down from far above towards the forest below. Its red gem-like eyes stared down for a long time. It stood on a large horizontal tower that floated through magical means – nearly ten kilometers long and five hundred meters wide.

The gargoyle was the leader - a powerful monster that saw few equals in this new world. Yet, it had been pushed away from its Pylon and was forced to flee by a powerful native beast. The inner parts of the forest were not somewhere it could safely exist. So, it had taken its army and tower with it as it retreated, looking for a new opportunity. It had fled from deep within the forest... and the closest Pylon was in the outskirts. It had felt it due to its magical sensitivity.

It led an army of over a thousand gargoyles. Several D-grades among them, and as the leader, it was already a mid-tier D-grade at level 131. Its royal guards were all D-grades above 120. The city should be

easy to claim, as all the readings indicated they had every advantage. No D-grades either, according to their devices. It should be easy...

But...

“This place... is not ours to claim,” the leader said as it commanded the tower to turn, and their journey continued as they went to seek out another Pylon.

It was not the first monster to come across Haven. It would not be the last either. But so far, none had dared enter. Sapient or instinctual. Smart or dumb. They all felt it – they all knew – that one does not simply walk into the territory of a powerful entity.

Much less the territory of the Primal Hunter.