

## Hunter 257

### Chapter 257: Will of the Chosen

Hm, should I go for human-form Villy looking silly? Nah, that would be boring. Small snake eating a mushroom? That could be funny. Oh, what if I added a plaque below saying 'danger noodle'? Yeah, that could totally be funny, Jake thought as he considered his options while waiting for the two men to wake up.

His hands were weaving different figures of stable arcane mana as he tried out a few shapes he thought could be funny.

After fifteen minutes, Chris woke up. Felix was still out, as it seemed like being possessed by that god had done a number on him. Without the healing potion, he would have 100% died. Again, that Eternal Servant guy was a major asshole.

"What happened?" Chris asked as he woke up. He didn't even try to stand up right away but stayed on the ground as he rubbed his head.

"Felix got possessed by a god, and the aura knocked you out. I heard that can happen, so no reason to feel bad about it," Jake explained.

"Oh..." Chris answered. He sighed as he sat up and stared at the floor as he muttered: "Why do I keep being mentally assaulted and knocked out all the time today?"

"Sorry, that's on me," Jake apologized. "On a positive note, that should be the last time. I hope it is, at least."

Chris nodded. He looked at Felix also lying on the ground and saw the bloodstains from the possession earlier. The missing eye was still being regenerated, but it wasn't exactly visible. "What happened to him!? Is he dead!?" Chris yelled as he got up in a jiffy and backed away from Felix.

On a second look, he did look like a corpse. His entire body was bloody from his cracked skin, blood had flown from every opening, and he didn't look healthy at all. If one looked a bit closer, one could see that no actual injuries besides the still healing eye were present, but Chris hadn't done that.

"I told you, divine possession. Apparently not the healthiest of things to engage in. Don't worry, Felix should be fine. Physically at least. I think he's already a bit out there mentally," Jake patiently explained. Not like he had anything better to do, and Chris was a nice guy who just seemed to accept all the fucked up shit he told him without question. Quite refreshing.

"I hope he's okay," Chris said, clearly worried about the sculptor.

"He'll wake up eventually. Anyway, while we wait, do you know where Hank is these days?" Jake asked. He had been meaning to ask for a while, but things kinda happened.

"Hank and Louise went to the Fort. They're always super busy there, and he needed to help them out and handle some issues. There are a lot of new settlers because of the increasing presence of beasts, and people feel unsafe due to the lack of a physical barrier between the outer parts of the Fort and the surrounding plains," Chris explained, sounding more confident than before.

I guess it helps to talk about things you actually know about, Jake chuckled internally. "Has there been any major issues with beasts?"

The Minotaur Mindchief was still on his mind, and Jake wondered if something similar had happened. Anton and Neil were there, both D-grades, so they should be able to hold enemies off. Neil, at least, should be able to put up lots of resistance. Jake didn't know if Anton could really fight, but he had a feeling the man wasn't defenseless.

"Not as much as elsewhere. I heard a lot of the smaller settlements are struggling, but the attackers only hit the places with Pylons. Apparently, Neil is in communication with some other space mages, and they let us know. I'm not sure about the details, though..." Chris said, looking apologetic.

"I'll just have Miranda fill me in; we're meeting tomorrow anyway," Jake waved it off.

The two kept talking for a while, and Jake came to learn a lot about the young man. He looked a bit meek and nice, but he was also headstrong and determined. Jake learned even more information he frankly didn't need or want to about Donald and Abby, and it only helped confirm how absolutely shitty people they were.

Chris had stayed with them with the goal of one day getting his revenge for what they did to his sister. He had outwardly looked loyal, but when he talked, Jake saw the pure hatred in his voice, coupled with the elation when he spoke of that one time he got one of the people loyal to Donald killed.

He was a scheming man who didn't even flinch when he mentioned stealthily throwing a dagger at someone's calf as he tried to dodge a charging beast. Jake liked him more and more as they talked. However, there were some things that made Jake uncomfortable.

Chris had been prepared to die. He had already written his life off, so when Jake had ended up 'saving' him, Chris had decided that he would gladly use his life to repay that favor. It wasn't normal at all, but the man had clearly been fucked up mentally by what he had gone through and had a weird mindset now... no matter how normal he could seem most of the time. Jake was beginning to think Villy hadn't just blessed him as a joke. Chris was loyal to Jake to an unhealthy level.

"What do you want to accomplish, Chris?" Jake finally asked.

"Um, why do you ask? What do you mean?" the young man asked. He looked genuinely confused by the question.

"You just got a blessing from a god, you don't seem incompetent, and you are still only in the middle parts of E-grade. You're gonna live a long-ass time, and that lifespan will only increase as you level up. While you're still in your early days, you can change what you wanna do still. What you want to be. So, what do you see yourself doing in a decade? A century?" Jake asked. It was something he had been meaning to ask, because besides "repaying Jake," Chris didn't really seem to have any other real goals. He just trudged along and worked as a builder. Well, he did have a massive crush on Louise. Did that count as a goal?

"I'm not sure what you mean?" Chris asked, his confusion growing. "I'll just keep working, I guess. Do my best. I think I'm pretty good at my job and-"

"Yeah, that's what you could keep doing, but what do you want to do? Seriously, nothing's holding you back. Do whatever you want to, and as long as you don't piss off people you shouldn't piss off; no one that matters will judge you for it. So I ask again, what do you want to do?" Jake reiterated. He himself had thought a lot about it. He knew exactly what he wanted to do and the way to reach that goal. Even if it was as simple as fuck plan, it was a plan nevertheless.

"I..." Chris said, staring down onto the floor. He was silent for several seconds as he looked deep in thought until he looked back up at Jake with a serious look. "I don't know?"

In retrospect, maybe it was a bit much to expect the young guy to figure out his entire path of life on the spot like that. Jake should have known better. Of course, that kind of thing is only okay to do with teenage students choosing higher education.

"Well, I guess your first goal should be to figure that out. Also, if you're worried about the whole god and blessing thing... the creed of the god that blessed you is to pursue freedom above all else. Be your own man and have your own goals. You don't owe me anything. I helped you because Donald and Abby were pieces of shit and invaded my territory. That you also got helped too was just a happy little accident," Jake curtly said. He didn't wanna mince words with Chris. He had potential, but his mindset was just not something Jake could agree with.

He wasn't comfortable with the young guy being so reverent towards him. Chris was already awkward enough before Jake inadvertently helped him get a blessing from a god that the title description made clear was very powerful. Now he was even worse. Jake didn't want that; he wanted Chris to be his own man. If he then decided to still be on team Jake? At least that would be his own decision, not made due to some odd sense of debt.

Chris didn't answer but just sat there in thought. Jake kept playing with his mana strings, making small funny-looking miniature statues of Villy as they waited.

Silence overtook the room for a few minutes until a groan was heard from Felix. The resident sculptor looked to be in immense pain as he struggled to sit up. His one eye was still regenerating, and his body was a mess. Jake wouldn't blame him if the guy asked them to lea-

"Oh, where are my man-" halfway through the sentence, he got a coughing fit, spitting out a glob of blood, before continuing: "-ners... I apologize for the unsightly appearance."

"Relax. You nearly died by being possessed by your Patron," Jake said, shaking his head.

"I know! A meager sacrifice to learn I am in the presence of a Primordial's Chosen! Please, let me know of any way I can be useful! I shall do my utmost in creating a sculpture to the best of my abilities! Even if it isn't able to display even a fraction of a Primordial's magnificence, I must do it! I beg of you!" Felix managed to get out between spitting blood, coughing, and generally looking paler and paler.

"Just focus on healing for now; we can discuss the sculpture later," Jake said. But he had made a mistake. For between his hands was a miniature sculpture. One Felix saw.

"What could that be you are conjuring?" he asked as he looked at Jake's mana sculpture intensely.

"Eh, just playing around with sculpture ideas, nothing you shou-"

Jake didn't get further than that before Felix prostrated himself on the ground, as he proclaimed loudly. "The depiction of a Primordial!? I'm so sorry for my arrogance and disrespect! To not be kneeling... I... I swear I will depict it just as shown! Have no doubts; it shall be as perfect as my meager skill allows! I shall-"

Felix didn't get further before he let out a big cough, spat out a large amount of blood, and passed out again.

Jake and Chris just looked down at the sculptor who had managed to knock himself out again.

"Is he dead?" Chris asked after a few seconds as it became clear Felix wasn't getting back up any time soon.

"No."

"That's good."

"Yeah."

They stayed there for a few minutes more before Jake just shook his head, took a health potion out of his inventory, and put it down in front of Felix. "Let's just leave. We can come back another day."

"That's probably for the best," Chris agreed, undoubtedly wanting to leave himself already. "Is it okay if we split up here? I have to finish some work at the eastern side of town before Hank gets back."

"As I said, do what you want to. You don't need to tell me everything you do; I don't own you. So yeah, see you around. I'm gonna head to the Fort myself," Jake said with a wave.

Jake began walking out of the room as his cloak shimmering and the light around him appeared to refract as his body disappeared. Expert Stealth activated, and coupled with his cloak, he became nearly entirely invisible and even unnoticeable to magical means.

Chris looked after him in awe, making Jake feel at least a tiny bit awesome. His new cloak was not shit, that's for sure. Because Chris wasn't looking at him, but only his direction even when Jake was only ten meters away.

The young man exited after Jake and walked off, drawing quite a bit of attention that Jake thankfully avoided. Chris looked to be deep in thought as he began walking away from the temple. Jake's words had clearly had an impact.

Jake saw all this through his sphere as he himself stood atop the temple. Everything inside had returned to normal. It had been a nice visit to town, and Jake had seen and learned a lot about it. Having Miranda tell him about how everything was developing and experiencing it yourself was entirely different.

Summoning his wings, Jake took to the air as he began flying out of the forest and towards the Fort. Once he made it to the outskirts of the forest, he landed and began using One Step Mile to travel even faster. It wouldn't take him long to reach there at all.

Guess I'll go talk to Arnold first. It has nothing to do with me not knowing where Hank is specifically.

Felix woke up inside the temple. A splitting headache dominated his senses, but a feeling of elation quickly overtook that.



The first thing he saw was the potion on the ground. Felix instantly knew who it was from, as he picked it up and cradled it. The generosity of the Chosen... a gift... he would make sure to save it. The thought of drinking it didn't even occur to him for a second.

The sculptor had been lost only a few months ago. He had no purpose. Death and flames scared him beyond anything until the Eternal Servant had offered him another path. One where pain and hurt were but a matter of perspective. Where purpose was found not through personal accomplishments but by recognition of a higher power – the Primordials.

It was their job, not just to do what the Primordial's wanted, but what they needed. To carry out not only their words, but also understand what was left unsaid and do what would be best for them. This was why Felix understood. The Chosen had not needed to tell him. He had seen the statue the Chosen desired, and he would sculpt it - the form scorched on his mind.

While it was true the sculpture itself made him confused, who was he to try and truly understand the magnificence of a Primordial? Who but the Chosen who had met the Malefic Viper in person could display it so accurately? Who was he to question it? He was just a simple sculptor.

Felix walked over, and with a wave of his hand, the two sculptures under construction shattered and turned to dust. Even in their half-made forms, it would be unsightly for other statues to be in the presence of a Primordial's while under construction.

Yet, he didn't begin working right away. Instead, he sat down and meditated. He wanted to get started immediately, but the Chosen had ordered him to recover first. The Chosen said they would talk later, but he didn't need to waste the Chosen's time more than necessary.

He swore to himself. He would not leave that room until the sculpture was perfect – and just as the Chosen had shown him.

