

Hunter 259

Chapter 259: Taking Advantage of Mistakes

It had been a while since the last time he used Touch of the Malefic Viper on an item to transmute it. The last item he had transformed was his bow. Actually, that one could have gone better. Sure, the bow got better overall, but the change from Windsoar Bow to Windsorrow Bow made him feel a bit like a baddie.

Before he began the process, he took out the notes Arnold had made on the gloves and read them over. It was a meticulous list of how they had been crafted. What items had been used, what methods were applied, and which people had been involved.

Jake skimmed it mainly for fun but had to stop as he saw the sheer amount of ingredients that went into them. Three different types of spider silk, a couple of uncommon or rare-rarity metals turned to dust and sprinkled in, crystals containing mana, and even a Beastcore from a D-grade beast.

And that was just for the gloves themselves before Arnold really went ham.

After that, Arnold had infused it with some filtered version of Jake's arcane mana. To store it, he had made use of an epic-rarity... oh shit, it was a Crystalized Essence? An unattuned version? Jake had encountered a Crystalized Essence once before during the Valley of Tusk's dungeon. It had been the cause of all the Soilwater in that pool, and that one back then had only been rare-rarity.

How exactly a big crystal had been merged with those small and thin gloves, Jake didn't get, but somehow it had.

Jake couldn't help but think that shit had really been wasted. He didn't understand how they could only be rare-rarity with so many great materials in them. Natural treasure even. Who the hell would waste a Crystalized Essence on a pair of gloves?

But... was it really all that bad? Because when Jake inspected the gloves and bound them to him, he felt the energy within them. So much untapped potential for him to exploit. So much fuel to burn and transform and bend to his will.

The last time he had met a Crystalized Essence, it had resulted in his Touch of the Malefic Viper upgrading to epic-rarity. The first time he encountered massive success with his transmutation, he upgraded Touch to ancient-rarity.

What was more fitting than then using both those experiences to possibly make his best transmutation ever?

He knew the Crystalized Essence was key. It was a powerful natural treasure with the ability to absorb and transform energy. To use one on some gloves was a waste, hence why the effects were wasted. Jake reckoned Arnold had gotten the deal of a lifetime on the Essence, yet he also understood why the man had been so unwilling to part with it.

It hadn't been cheap to make. However, chances are the man could still salvage them and make them useful down the line, so giving them to Jake like this was a risk. Well, in the end, the machinist still won out as the Altmar Census Golem was quite the find.

Jake sat down in the room he had found, and with the assumption that no one would come to bother him, he entered meditation and went to work. Thoughtful Meditation activated its effects, making him even more focused than before as he dove in headfirst without any more preparations.

He felt the gloves in his hands. They felt thin and frail to his touch, but when he dove his mind into the connection he had to them, he felt something entirely different. A directionless space of energy was within, a metaphysical crystal floating in the middle. At least that's how he interpreted it.

It needed direction. Stability.

Arnold had just infused the space with arcane mana and attempted to make the crystal serve as its guide to make it stable. Yet, he couldn't. He had tried to make the Crystalized Essence into that of the arcane-affinity, possibly to get a source of arcane energy himself to craft orbs without needing Jake or to keep the spheres fully charged.

The man's approach had been logical, and even if Jake was a bit annoyed the guy hadn't told him the truth of why he had made the gloves, he still understood why he had done it. He was even a bit flattered. The man had tried to find a way to replicate Jake's arcane-affinity, but ultimately Arnold had failed.

Because there was a crucial flaw in his equation. He couldn't just think of Jake's affinity like the fire-affinity or water-affinity or even more advanced ones like space or time. All of those were natural. Jake's wasn't. The only natural occurrence of Jake's arcane-affinity was Jake. He himself was a core component, and without his will, his arcana couldn't exist.

So when Jake entered the gloves and provided them his arcane energy, they almost hummed in satisfaction. Touch of the Malefic Viper dug in with his arcane-affinity as Jake took control of all the energy. His will and power became the maestro of the directionless orchestra of energy as it all began moving to his will.

The gloves began glowing in his hands as they crackled with energy. Purple veins coursed throughout them. These didn't disappear as it looked like the gloves had torn, yet thin strings still held them together. They pulsed with energy, but Jake didn't let up. They could still take far more.

Time kept ticking on as Jake kept up the work. One would think it should be difficult, but it was actually surprisingly smooth. The groundwork had all been laid, the ingredients supplied, and all preparations carefully made. All it took was for Jake to do the legwork and give the entire thing direction. Time-consuming, yes, but not particularly hard. Naturally, he still had to focus throughout it all, but that had never been an issue for Jake.

The process still ended up taking him nearly thirteen hours. He had to chug down three mana potions during the process and a single stamina potion. Jake was tired and sweating, but the result wasn't anything to complain about as he read the notifications.

You have successfully transmuted [Gloves of Quintessential Arcane Manifestation (Epic)] – A new kind of creation has been made. Bonus experience earned

' DING!' Profession: [Heretic-Chosen Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 108 - Stat points allocated, +10 free points

Jake smiled to himself. Epic-rarity. It was as expected, but he was still happy about it. With the materials put into the gloves, them only being rare was a travesty. One he had thankfully corrected as he identified the new and improved gloves.

[Gloves of Quintessential Arcane Manifestation (Epic)] – Gloves made from a powerful synthetic cloth. These gloves are incredibly thin, nearly unnoticeable, and are incredibly resilient against all attacks. Will become immensely more durable if infused with arcane energy. The Crystalized Essence has been fully integrated. All constructs using your arcane-affinity and your hands will last longer and be more potent.

The gloves can store a large amount of arcane energy that can be released immediately. Channeling unattuned energy into these gloves will grant it your arcane-affinity. Enchantments: +125 Intelligence, +75 Wisdom, +50 Willpower. Quintessential Arcane Manifestation.

Requirements: lvl 115+ humanoid race. Quasi-Soulbound

Never before had Jake been so happy that someone else had majorly fucked up when crafting an item. Arnold had tried to make the item Jake just had. But as always, it had the issue of being Quasi-Soulbound, making it useless to anyone but Jake himself.

Jake naturally put them on and took the old ones off. That made him lose 35 intellect and the mana blast ability. The 35 intelligence were replaced with 125, so still a gain of 90, plus of course, the 75 wisdom and 50 willpower. As for the mana blast? Jake could do that shit easily himself by now. The gloves made it easier and a bit more effective, sure, but he doubted these new ones wouldn't also do that.

Feeling the influx of stats was always nice, and he couldn't hold himself back from instantly experimenting with the Quintessential Arcane Manifestation part of the gloves. First, Jake summoned an arcane bolt to float above him. He felt it was exactly the same as before, besides the increased potency from his increased stats.

Next, he held out his hand and conjuring a mana bolt in it by channeling mana through the gloves. This time, he felt it coalesce a bit faster than before, and upon closer inspection, it even felt a bit more potent and stable. It was just a small amount, but it was there.

After that, Jake got up and summoned an Explosive Arcane Arrow. To his disappointment, he felt that it was the same as before, with the gloves doing nothing. He frowned and tried again. It still failed. He used his hands to do it, and he believed it had to work.

He knew the issue already. He didn't channel the mana through his gloves at all, not allowing their effect to work. Jake kept trying a few more times but kept failing. He found that the issue was in how the arrow instantly appeared. He couldn't hold onto anything and channel it. The automatic parts of the skill overtrumped his own control, and if he had to channel it through the gloves, it would make summoning arrows slower...

Yet, he refused to give up but kept trying. The gloves said it would be all constructs, so what was he missing? Closing his eyes, he considered what he was doing wrong as he held out his hand and summoned arrow after arrow. That is when he got an idea.

Jake drew his bow. Not to shoot anything, but to make it feel right. He moved his hand as if he drew an arrow from the quiver. He imagined feeling the arrow be drawn as he pinched it with his fingers. The skill responded, and one appeared... with the bonus effectiveness from the gloves now working. It just worked the first time he tried this.

He shook his head, not fully comprehending what the issue had been... was it because he didn't summon it in his hand before as an outgrowth of his hand? It all felt so arbitrary, and quite frankly, Jake didn't want to waste time on it.

Instead, he kept experimenting with the gloves and tried to get a good estimate of the effectiveness of the enchantment. He concluded the increased effectiveness was small but noticeable. A few percentage points in the low single digits increase, perhaps. It didn't seem like a lot, but for someone like Jake, every bit counted.

He also tried to channel stamina through the gloves as it said it would transform any energy into arcane energy. Unfortunately, that one didn't work as he hoped. In the process, he also experimented with channeling mana into the gloves to make them more durable. This was clearly from the stability-focused part of his arcane-affinity, and the effect was more than noteworthy.

The gloves became so tough he couldn't even cut them with his Scimitar as long as he kept supplying a stable source of mana. Jake was already imagining dozens of ways this could become useful in the future.

This experimentation went on for hours until Jake was thrown out of his focused state of mind and back to the real world. He had been so engrossed in his practice session he hadn't noticed the people walking down the hall outside towards the meeting room he was in. He recognized Hank with four other men he didn't know.

Jake semi-panicked for the moment. Not just because of his presence there, but because of what he had done to the room. He had chosen the room because it was isolated - It sealed in things, including sound and energy.

Now, Jake spending nearly an entire day inside the room hadn't left any real physical signs... but the atmosphere of the entire room was soaked in his arcane-affinity. It was overwhelming. He considered for a moment if he should just leave but decided against it. Instead, he would get his meeting with Hank out of the way.

Miranda had told him long ago to try and keep up the mysterious defender of the city persona. This could be an opportunity to look imposing in front of some of the new leaders of the Fort. He assumed they were new leaders because Jake didn't know any of them, and he remembered all of the leaders back when Phillip was the top dog around.

Jake sat down in the chair at the end of the table as he waited for Hank and the others to arrive. He did his best to act like the oppressive atmosphere was entirely on purpose and not because he had been flooding the room with arcane mana the majority of a day while practicing.

It only took a few seconds before the door opened.

“I was saying that switching t-”

The man in the front abruptly stopped the moment he set foot in the room. His eyes went wide, and his legs began shaking. With fright, he looked at Jake, who sat in his cloak and mask at the end of the table. Jake just hoped he hadn’t scared the man too much.

Jake had definitely scared the poor guy way too much. Hank felt the aura the same time as his companions. The sheer presence of the room. He had felt something similar, if not as intense, when he entered a room Neil or Miranda had an ongoing ritual in and, because of that, managed to stay relatively calm. The four others didn’t.

The first one shook and took a step back. One of the braver souls pointed at Jake as he stammered: “Who... wha... are you?” he said, not even able to form a complete sentence. The two last men just stood frozen as they stared at the ominous-looking cloaked figure at the end of the table. The owner was sure good at looking scary; he had to hand him that. Hank only thanked the heavens he hadn’t also decided to summon his wings.

“Lord Thayne,” Hank spoke, bowing slightly, aware that he had to be as cordial as possible in front of others. To keep Jake mysterious and feared was beneficial to everyone. One would think the revelation of who the owner was would make him seem less mysterious... but his brother turned out to be the leader of the Court of Shadows. And that was the only available information people knew. Hadn’t exactly hurt Jake’s image.

“That’s...?” one of the men beside him muttered but didn’t get any further.

“Hank. I came by to ask about updates on the project.” Jake stated, doing a damn good job at being oppressing. If Hank didn’t know that Jake could be odd and easygoing, he wasn’t sure he would have managed to stay confident.

“Yes, I planned on coming by for a meeting when I return to Haven. There are things I need to consult you on,” Hank said, still keeping it as professional as he could. He didn’t want to discuss details with others around... and talking to Jake like this was just weird. It was way more relaxed when it was just him around. Maybe Louise or Miranda present too was fine.

“Good. Keep up the good work,” Jake said as he got up and began walking out of the room. “All of you.”

He said the last words as he passed them, and as he was only a few steps down the hall, he teleported to the end where the air around him shimmered, and he disappeared.

Hank looked after him, nodding internally. He had sure come off as mysterious and powerful. He did a quick take of the men with him. Yep, the four of them were scared shitless.

Looking into the room they had planned on using, he muttered:

“I guess we’ll need to find another meeting room.”

