

## Hunter 280

### Chapter 280: Bow & Blade

Jake had wanted to get transmuting nearly right away after he regenerated his resources but found that the bow looked a bit... sluggish? It was no longer glowing, and the gems also looked completely inert. He came to realize he would need to give the poor bow a break before he began changing stuff. So he put it in his spatial storage and found that it could luckily still restore its mana within there.

He considered what to do, and with his proximity to the Fort, he decided to check there first to see if Arnold was done tinkering with his Nanoblade.

The trip there was swift as he used One Step Mile to cross the plains. Of course, it wasn't as fast as when he went to save the hawks, but it was still a nice casual speed faster than the fastest fighter jet of old Earth.

Once more, the Fort had expanded. He saw that more buildings had popped up in the brief time he was not there, but the biggest change had happened at the central Fort. The courtyard was no longer used as a big smithy but was instead nearly devoid of anything besides a few larger ongoing construction projects.

Jake frowned, wondering what they were up to, but reckoned he could just ask Arnold. He did see that all the blacksmiths who used to work there had gotten their own little district. Well, they would have had to move eventually anyway due to limited space.

He flew directly down and landed in the courtyard, inspecting the construction more closely. It looked like the beginnings of some kind of assembly line. Was Arnold planning on mass-producing stuff? That would be kind of insane.

Entering the citadel building itself, he already spotted Arnold in his lab. The man was hunched over a table as he looked through some kind of microscope onto a thin piece of some material that looked like glass. Jake entered the room without the man even noticing and snuck up behind him. He wondered why all the drones flying above didn't react despite clearly noticing him.

Jake leaned over Arnold's shoulder and looked down at the piece of glass. He focused and saw that many microscopic patterns were etched into it, almost looking like veins. Maybe ley-lines? All the lines were straight and very angular, looking very sci-fi. It was some insanely precise work, and each was so small even he had issues seeing it.

"That's some advanced stuff. Is that shard from the golem?" Jake finally asked after looking for a while.

A part of him had hoped for Arnold to get surprised, but the man just casually answered. "Yes, this particular piece is from beneath the third layer of the metal, functioning almost like a circuit board."

Well, he is no fun, Jake joked with himself but still answered. "Yeah, those vein-like things are damn small. As I said, very advanced. But I came to ask if--"

Arnold interrupted him as the man jerked back, looked at Jake with bloodshot eyes. "What veins!? Can you see them!?"

"Well, yeah?" Jake answered.

"How?" the man asked, looking genuinely confused.

“Because perception is the best stat. Duh,” Jake answered again, totally serious.

“I am aware of its importance, and I already possess over 1700 in it, I cannot see how that could be the-“

“Casual,” Jake answered, waving him off. “Who doesn’t have at least five of the big ones already?”  
‘Well, he was nearly at 6000 perception himself, actually, but no need to brag, right?

He was a bit surprised that the man had 1700 in perception, though. That was pretty good, honestly. Granted, Jake’s lowest stat was 2025 in strength, but he also knew he was a bit of a cheat, after all. Without percentage amplifiers or items, Jake only had 1190, and he even got quite a few points from his class. This meant Arnold had actually put points in perception or at least had perception-based gear, and his class and/or profession likely gave perception too. Well, his high level sure also contributed.

[Human – lvl 117]

“Can you... can you describe them?” Arnold asked after looking a bit confused. “I have been working on a microscope to allow me to view them better, but they simply don’t work as they should. The amplification distorts the patterns and interferes with the interpretation, and I need to use a vastly inferior version than before the system...”

Jake frowned for a bit but soon nodded. “Sure, but can you let me get a look-see down that microscope first?”

“Go ahead!” Arnold said, stepping back.

Jake took a look down the microscope, and... holy shit, it sucked. Like, sure, it amplified things a bit, but compared to him just squinting a bit, it was nothing. It was likely it blurred everything. Had the system nerfed observation tools?

“Do all microscopes suck like this?” Jake asked quite curtly.

“Yes, sadly. No amount of mirrors or any conventional concepts of making microscopes or even binoculars work properly anymore. I can make some tools that help a bit, but in many cases looking with your bare eyes provide the clearest image...” Arnold answered with resignation before quickly trying to get Jake back on track. “Now, please describe the patterns!”

“Fine,” Jake relented as he opened the palm of his hand and focused. His presence blanketed the laboratory, making Arnold take a step back, but the man didn’t show any other reaction than that. The reason Jake did this was that honestly... it was easier to show than to tell.

Strings sprung from his hand as he weaved an image. Jake took it as a learning opportunity to properly copy what he had seen. He even sent out a string to pick up the shard as he held it up before him with the hand he didn’t use to summon strings.

Arnold just stood silently, bedazzled by the display for a few moments before he quickly summoned what looked like a tablet and pointed it at the ongoing construction of mana strings. Jake felt that his mana was being scanned but naturally didn’t fight. He had nothing to lose by Arnold figuring all this stuff out and pushing him forward a bit.

Jake pretty much saw all this as investing in the future. Arnold seemed like a straightforward kind of dude, so Jake wasn't scared of him suddenly running off when some other large city came and offered him a big new lab and stuff like that. Besides, if he did, Jake would just have to travel a bit further to get his stuff and make sure to get his due. Arnold owed Jake, and he knew it.

It took around half an hour to finish weaving his tapestry and Arnold to properly record it all. By that time, Jake thought it was time to ask for what he came for.

"So, is the Nanoblade done?" he asked.

Arnold looked confused for a second before he remembered. "Right! It has been done for over a week; it should be just over here..."

He shuffled to one of the many shelves and took a large case down. Arnold began explaining as he carried it over. "Using some of my newest aluabsorbant composite materials, I have coated the blade with this to actually give it proper mana conductivity and make the blade more powerful in every way. I attempted to attune it to your unique form of mana, but it was not feasible. However, I did manage to heighten the mana conductivity of the blade further, and a rarity upgrade was achieved."

The man opened up the case on a table in front of Jake, showing the sword. It looked nearly exactly the same as before, except the blade now had a silver sheen to it. The handle also looked like it had a do-over, and overall, the entire blade looked damn sleek. Jake Identified it and was quite pleased.

[Aluabsorbant Nanoblade Sword (Rare)] – The blade is an ultrathin Nanoblade made out of Carbon Fiber, making it both incredibly durable and sharp, coated with a thin layer of unattuned Aluabsorbant. The blade itself can cut most materials effortlessly but has little to no effectiveness against magical wards or defenses. The coating on the blade allows it to have an incredibly high level of mana

conductivity and can handle most types of mana. The handle makes all mana infused into this weapon more potent. Enchantments: Extreme Conductivity. Intermediate Mana Amplification.

Requirements: lvl 110+ in any humanoid race

"Looking good," Jake said before asking. "Have you managed to apply any knowledge you gained from the golem?"

"... I am still trying to figure out exactly what kind of metal composite the exterior is made of and have begun preliminary examinations of the eyes of the golem and some of the more easily accessible components," Arnold answered. In other words, the dude had a long time to go before any tangible progress would happen.

"Well, in that case, do you have anything else to give me or something you need help with?" Jake asked. The last part was mainly to be polite.

"I do not believe I have any other items that would be of interest to you, but I have extracted 135 more shards so far and could use your help mapping out the--"

"Anyway, nice talking to you again. Gotta go!"

Jake ran like the wind. As he went for the roof, he saw Arnold stand back in his lab, not reacting for a few seconds. The madman eventually just shrugged and returned to tinkering with stuff.

Shaking his head, Jake took flight as he headed back towards Haven again. He landed just outside the Fort, used One Step Mile to cross the plains until he reached the forest, which he just flew over back to his valley.

Jake did a quick check of his underground lab that was still under construction. Hank was really going all-out and working on making it closer to an entire underground complex. Several large rooms had been added, and he really made use of the fact that he could build in nearly unlimited ways with how much space there was and the fact that magic was a thing.

He doubted it would even be ready for the Treasure Hunt, but it wasn't like he was actually in a rush. For now, he still focused on elixirs which he didn't need a secure lab to make, so he went back to his porch as always and took out his cauldron.

It was only while waiting for the bow to recharge before the transmutation, of course.

Jake took out the bow too and laid it on the ground as he began brewing. He felt like it recharged a bit faster while in the sun. Or maybe he was just imagining it. But, honestly, it could just be the Pylon making it so that it got recharged faster, and he wasn't curious enough to truly find out.

He ended up making six more perception-increasing elixirs, all of which he consumed right there and then, getting another +18 Perception because one could never have too much perception.

The reason he stopped crafting was that the bow was ready. He chugged down a mana potion as he got to work. A plan had already formed in his mind during all his practice, and it was actually straightforward.

Fire-affinity bad, arcane-affinity good. Ember Arrows bad, Arcane Hunter's Arrows good. His goal would be just to take everything that was fire-focused and make it arcane-focused. He even planned on specifically transmuting the arrow-part to work with his own skill. Jake had a very strong suspicion that Ember Arrows was a skill the creator had herself, and that was how she had added it.

Jake thought he could transmute that to his own Arcane Hunter's Arrows. Limiting it to only work with that one skill would take less energy, and as far as he could tell, the Scorched Plains attack was bound to the Ember Arrow skill.

He has also noticed something else interesting. The fire-affinity within the two gems wasn't exactly the same but had some faint differences. One fire burned more orange and one more yellow. He couldn't fully distinguish the difference, but he did notice one flame seemed more effective against magical constructs and the other physical entities.

Jake would replicate that duality by making one gem focus on the destructive aspect of his arcane-affinity and the other the stable variant. Coming together, they would form his 'true' affinity. Granted, he couldn't make one entirely or the other as the explosive variant would be so unstable it would go boom instantly, and the stable would be so non-reactive it was immovable, so he had to find a balance.

Laying his hands upon the bow, he didn't delay. He had placed his hands with one on each of the gems to inject mana directly into those. His mana snaked its way into it as he examined the entire bow's structure one final time. He affirmed his existing goal and began. His hands began glowing with Touch of the Malefic Viper as he poured his will into the bow, and without even thinking, he did something more.

His presence descended in a small area around him as he infused it with mana, pressing down on the bow. Ultimately, Touch of the Malefic Viper was about transmuting something by corrupting it in the way you willed, so Pride did make it slightly more effective. How much more effective he didn't know, but every little bit counted.



Jake pressed his mana into the bow and began feeling the changes. The flames fought back, but his arcane was superior at every step. The bow began glowing pink-purple as it changed, and the veins on the wood were now no longer glowing like embers.

When he got to the part that was the Ember Arrow skill, Jake found a bit more of a challenge. It fought and struggled as he attempted to forcibly change it. It was a losing battle for the bow, as Jake wasn't in a rush. No, he was not in a rush at all. He slowly withered it down as he enjoyed his high mana regeneration, boosted by the Pylon and his mask. Jake would play the long game to be safe.

An hour or so later, Jake consumed a mana potion as he kept going.

He repeated this for the next half a day as the bow underwent more changes. This was his hardest transmutation so far by quite a bit. At least on a technical level, it was. But he had come a long way. He constantly adapted, and whenever he had issues, he was instantly able to spot another opening or opportunity to exploit. His ability to see all the mana move at once was a massive advantage, courtesy of his insane perception and equally insane level of energy control.

The result was obvious from the start, and it was only a matter of time. Thirteen and a half hours after he began the transmutation, Jake got the notification of success.

He went straight for Identify, hoping everything had gone as he hoped.

[Bow of Scorched Arcane (Epic)] – A bow made from an unknown type of wood that has now undergone a transformation as dense, arcane energy permeates the bow's body. Even after its transformation, the brilliance of the bowyer is still evident. The bow's structure is resilient yet flexible, the string near-unbreakable for anyone below C-grade, and the two gemstones passively absorb and transform mana into that of arcane-affinity. One gem will primarily create stable, and the other unstable arcane mana. All Arcane Hunter's Arrows shot using this bow will be amplified by this arcane mana. The two

gemstones can be emptied out of energy to release a large burst of arcane mana in the form of a giant arrow that explodes on impact, scorching the plains below with the wrath of your arcana.

Enchantments: Arcane Hunter's Arrows Amplification. Arcane-Scorched Plains.

Requirements. Lvl 120+ in any humanoid race. Quasi-Soulbound

Jake just smiled as he chuckled a bit to himself. Everything was coming out nicely. He had even gotten a level.

\*'DING!' Profession: [Heretic-Chosen Alchemist of the Malefic Viper] has reached level 126 - Stat points allocated, +10 free points\*

Jake inspected the new bow. It had changed quite a bit in the looks department. The red lines were now all pulsing pink-purple, and the top gem was almost entirely pink and the other a dark purple. He could practically feel the arcane mana pulse out of it, and he was more than satisfied.

It was a good day. Two new weapons were acquired, both of them great. Now, all he had left was a grind to consume as many elixirs as possible in the stats he wanted before the Treasure Hunt, and he was golden. He also had the token to upgrade the boots, but he was still level 127 in his race, so he wanted to wait for at least one more level. Besides, it wasn't like anyone was in a rush to upgrade them.

With all of that in mind, Jake tossed his bow in his inventory and entered another alchemy trance as the Treasure Hunt grew ever-closer.