

Hunter 283

Chapter 283: Treasure Hunt? "Let's Go!"

Man, people can get so tense sometimes, Jake thought as all the people looked his way. Most of them even had their weapons drawn! Even Neil and his party looked on the edge, and only Sultan and Arnold were rather unaffected by the entire situation. Well, Arnold did look up from his tablet, frowned briefly, and just looked back down.

Miranda threw him a glance he couldn't quite read, but he did get the faint feeling that he should maybe tone it down a little. He did so, and as if timed, Miranda spoke: "Lord Thayne, thank you for finding time to be here."

Jake didn't answer but just nodded her way as he stopped infusing his presence with mana. That took the pressure off of them, but all of those independents were still looking at him with fright. And honestly? He was okay with that. He scanned them all and found that not a single one of them was above 115. Not a single one of them was a threat. What did this also mean?

This meant the baby bird on his shoulder likely was the second strongest person in the room – and she knew it.

Sylphie was happy if a bit annoyed. She had worked sooo hard, and even when she was done working and wanted to go and spend time with Uncle, she couldn't as he needed to play with his smelly pot. He had made her wait behind, and only now could they have fun together. Though she did think it was a bit boring being around so many weak humans. They weren't even proper humans as none of them had shiny eyes like humans were supposed to. Or maybe they weren't supposed to? The lady human who looked to be in charge didn't have shiny eyes, and Uncle seemed to know her well.

The same was true for the guy who gave Uncle his new string-shooty-stick. Though he was a bad guy who was sometimes a good guy because he had tasty treats. Sylphie still didn't like him, and Uncle didn't either, so that made her not liking him right.

As for all the other humans? She either didn't care or looked down at them as they were all super weak. She felt like all of them were weaker than mom and dad and compared to Uncle? Sylphie was pretty sure they were some worse kind of human than Uncle for sure. Like she was a super bird compared to all the stupid birds, Uncle was a super human compared to all the stupid humans? That made sense to Sylphie.

This is why she stood tall on Uncle's shoulder and threw judging glances at all the weak humans. They all looked back, scared of her and Uncle, which only made sense. They should be. Because super birds were better than stupid humans, and she would make sure they knew their place!

Well, at least Sylphie seems to be having fun, Jake thought as he sat, debating with himself if he could take a nap without being noticed. Sylphie had moved from his shoulder to the top of his head, throwing piercing gazes towards anyone who dared look their way.

Meanwhile, Miranda ignored his presence as he just sat off to the side with his arms crossed. He would say he looked menacing, but the bird on his head kinda ruined that look. Or did it? From what he saw in his sphere, people still barely dared to look his way, and those who did clearly didn't look like they thought he was being funny.

Miranda spoke about the Treasure Hunt and did give out some good info. She informed them about general knowledge of other humans who would enter, general descriptors of those she was aware of that people should avoid, and overall the purpose of this meeting seemed to be making sure everyone knew each other at least somewhat.

Valhal, the undead, the Holy Church, the Court of Shadows, and a bunch of other smaller factions were mentioned and described as well as the powerful people associated with the factions. She also mentioned a few wildcards with little to no information on them. That included a lot of people Jake didn't really care about... except for two names.

The first one was Eron. Jake remembered him as the one other guy with a bloodline at the World Congress and a man Jake had deemed "not worth fighting," as it felt meaningless. That didn't mean he was stronger than Jake, just that an eventual battle wouldn't lead to anything productive.

As for the second name?

William.

Jake wasn't even going to think about that guy. He had no desire to seek out the little psycho and would rather have someone else handle him. But again, if the guy did come to make trouble for Jake and his friends, he would happily end him for good the second time around.

The entire meeting continued for a little while longer until Miranda finished up and moved to the next important topic. Miranda looked Jake's way, and he nodded as he got up, moving all eyes to him.

He walked to the center of the room and waved his hand as a wooden table appeared. Another few waves and potions upon potions were stacked on top of it. Mana, stamina, and health potions in the hundreds.

Jake enjoyed seeing all the independent's eyes go wide as they saw the display. There was something very satisfying about seeing others awed at your handiwork, no doubt about it.

All of this was naturally a part of the plan Miranda had made. The good old carrot and the stick. Jake would come in, make it resoundingly clear he was the one in charge and suppress them with pure power, and then afterward show that he was far more than just a big stick. The purpose of the first part was to build fear and the other respect.

"Lord Thayne has prepared some potions for the Treasure Hunt; please take a maximum of five health potions and a mix of four stamina and mana potions. Not to worry, this is a gift sponsored by the city and Lord Thayne himself," Miranda declared to the hall, surprising quite a few of them.

Jake just stood back, thinking about how a table full of colorful potions looked quite awesome. A sentiment shared by everyone else, especially one rather skinny guy who walked up and identified one of the potions.

"This... this gives more than 8.000 mana!?" the man exclaimed loudly.

Jake was about to defend himself that he hadn't practiced making potions much in recent times so that they weren't top quality was only to be expected. Sadly, or perhaps luckily, a woman spoke up first.

"What!? Are you serious? How can it give that much!?" she said as she ran over and picked one up. This led to a bit of a scramble as most of the forty D-grades hurried over to the table. None dared to actually take any potions quite yet until finally a person looked pensively over at Jake and, seeing him not react, put it in a small pouch.

This led to people picking out potions, everyone taking five health and mainly mana potions from the looks of it. Everything seemed to be going well, but of course, there had to be an asshole. There always had to be an asshole.

The expected happened as a single person swiped his hand, and nearly forty potions disappeared. The man turned around before any of the other people could react, but he didn't even have time to take a step before his entire body froze up.

Jake sighed under his breath as he took a step forward and grasped the man by the neck before he could move again. He squeezed a bit as his fingers sank into flesh, and blood began running down into his collar.

"Really, this is what you're willing to die for? A few batches of potions?" Jake asked, disappointed. A level 103 human had risked his life for something so insignificant...

The entire room was frozen as everything played out in less than a second, from when the man grabbed the potions to being helplessly held by his neck. The man being held wasn't the first to answer, but instead, it was Miranda.

"Please, I believe this is just a huge misunderstanding, is it not?" she said with a smile as she walked closer. Jake knew she was addressing the man, likely not wanting the moron to just die there and then. He could understand why. It would be bad vibes and would ruin the nice carpet he was standing on.

"I... I..." the man tried to stutter out but was unable to as Jake may have squeezed a bit too hard. Miranda threw him a glance, and he let go as the man fell to his knees, still shaking. Jake did consider giving him a little poke with Touch of the Malefic Viper but decided against it. Again, wouldn't wanna ruin the carpet.

Miranda walked up to them and pointed at the man as she sent out a small green beam into his shoulder. "Now, please return what you took and stay around till we're done to discuss your conduct moving forward. Ah, and don't try to run; I have placed a little mark on you, okay?"

"Same," Jake said, his one word seemingly having more impact than Miranda's very unveiled threat as the man shook a bit at it.

Luckily the rest of the meeting and distribution went through without any hiccups. Miranda made a few closing remarks and otherwise allowed people to figure stuff out themselves. They all seemed thankful, and a few even sent remarks Jake's way in gratitude. He didn't really see handing out a few potions as that big of a deal, but fair enough.

Afterward, people began leaving, and only those originally from Haven stayed behind at the request of Miranda, partly at the request of Jake. The little thief was told to stay within Haven and be a nice boy until Miranda came by and dealt with him later. Jake would just let her handle that one.

Once everyone was gone, Jake handed Miranda a bunch of vitality-elixirs to hand out to those who wanted them. He also handed a few extra potions to those who were actually from the city to make sure they had enough. Jake planned on crafting a few more in the last few hours anyway.

He left with Sylphie not long after as they headed back to his lodge. Now, Jake also had many elixirs of the agility-variety that he had not given out, even if they would no doubt be useful for people like Levi and Eleanor. As for why?

Because what else would Sylphie drink?

Casper sat on top of the castle wall, staring down at the courtyard where Priscilla was riling up all the D-grade Risen and humans alike. It was filled to the brim, and he reckoned there were around a thousand. Quite good, considering the undead faction wasn't the largest.

He grasped the locket at his chest and spoke. "Are you ready, Lyra?"

"Naturally. Let's show them the strongest duo of Earth!" she answered in high spirits.

Casper made a rare smile as he looked into the horizon. "That we will."

Matteo played his piano as he tried to get in the right mental state before the Treasure Hunt. Nadia was working on making some specialized sniper bullets in the background, and a few other elite assassins were also present in the room as they made their final preparations or discussed the Hunt in whispering voices as to not disturb the man playing.

The only notable absentee was their leader, Caleb Thayne, and for a good reason too. His type of training wasn't one where others could be present. Matteo still remembered the last time he had come by. The chamber was hidden far beneath their main headquarters, behind wards and physical barriers alike.

It was a chamber set up for only the Judge to use. A magic circle of incredible power made the entire room one of soul-shattering pressure. Matteo had been knocked unconscious only after a minute in there. It was a room meant to amplify and direct the pressure of the dark heavens above. Nobody had lasted in there for more than a minute. Nobody, except for Caleb.

He hadn't left for a week.

Carmen pulled out a bottle of water and poured it over her head to get some of the blood out of her hair. It normally didn't bother her that much, but it had begun sticking together a bit too much, getting annoying. As for the rest of her body? She could deal with that being blood-covered, and the Self-Repair enchantments would take care of that minor annoyance soon enough.

She hadn't bothered to return to her city in preparation for this Treasure Hunt. She didn't need to, as the message would allow her to join anyway. In her mind, there was no reason to enter together with them anyway. Her city was now already managed by Sven and his men, and she didn't have to do jack shit. So she just spent all her time fighting as that was all she was good for.

When her leg stopped itching from being healed, she walked over to where the corpse of a huge lizard had been just moments ago. It had evaporated the moment it died, something she hadn't encountered before. She saw that in its place were two small things. A Beastcore and some weird small golden metal thing.

She picked it up and inspected it before just throwing it in her spatial storage.

What the fuck does the "Seat" in "Seat of the Exalted Prima" even mean anyway? she asked herself as she headed off to kill some more shit before it was Treasure Hunt time.

"The teams have been prepared and instructed according to your commands, Augur," the man said as he bowed.

"Good, you may leave," Jacob said as the priest left the room. The parties for the Treasure Hunt had been pre-established according to what he and others believed would lead to the best results. He himself would move with Bertram and his party, using his abilities as an Augur to seek out treasures as fast as possible with as high accuracy as they could.

From all their deliberations, staying together as one big group would be inadvisable, which was why they focused on smaller teams and parties, ranging from single individuals with high personal abilities in stealth to a large group of around 200 D-grades led by someone with a commander-like profession.

Everything was laid out for the Holy Church to the faction coming out on top, as they without a doubt entered with the most people, and hopefully the most power. Jacob only saw two people on Earth able to truly challenge them, but he had hope regarding those two...

Jacob didn't need his Augur skills to know the Treasure Hunt would be a confrontation between Jake and the Sword Saint. Hopefully, one that would take the pressure off the Holy Church as those two outliers would distract each other.

The old man opened his eyes as a blue sheen flashed for a moment. He watched the counter for the Treasure Hunt as it slowly ticked down.

Miyamoto smiled. "May this lead to a season of prosperity."

Jake sat with Sylphie as they both stared out onto the pond, as the timer finally reached 0.

You have been invited to the Treasure Hunt. The Treasure Hunt will be an event focused on the acquisition of treasures through a variety of challenges. This is a combat and challenge-solving event,

and death is an ever-present factor, so be warned. Exiting the Treasure Hunt early at the loss of obtained rewards will be an option. Do you wish to enter now?

Time to decide: 9:59

"You got it too?" Jake asked to make sure. The hawk gave him a nod, and he snickered as he spoke.

"Then let's fucking go!"