

Hunter 297

Chapter 297: Treasure Hunt: Pure Ones

Jake wasn't the only one staring at what lied beyond the gate. Reika seemed a bit surprised too, and the many others who had attempted the puzzle also seemed highly interested in figuring out the big prize for solving it was.

Yet, he doubted many of them noticed the uniqueness of the room. Jake felt an odd aura in the room, different from anything he had encountered prior, yet also slightly familiar. He sensed curses within. Not just one but many. Yet even these curses felt different. They somehow felt less insidious, like they didn't carry any hatred towards him. Usually, curses seemed to just want to destroy anyone and everything, lashing out at whoever came into contact with it.. but not these ones.

He walked inside with Reika, none of the observers daring to follow.

"It's an armory of some kind... but these items," Reika said as she frowned and inspected a common-rarity sword that looked to be made of silver. Jake also threw it a look, and the conclusion was obvious.

"These are anti-vampire weapons."

He identified a random one placed on a racket.

[Sword of the Pure Ones (Common)] – A shortsword made of an unknown metal created by the Pure Ones, enlightened inhabitants of the Yalsten world who had not turned vampire and were hunted down and made into food as the hunger of the vampires grew. The enchantment placed on the sword is

specifically made to hunt down vampires and will deal extra damage. All attacks against vampiric foes will deal extra damage to their vital energy.

Requirements: lvl 100+ in any humanoid race.

“Quite the lore,” Jake noted after he read over the item.

Reika looked his way as she asked. “Just to make sure there is no disparity in information, what have you learned of this world so far? To my knowledge, it was inhabited by some humanoid race that eventually chose to become vampires, and some catastrophe happened, and their civilization devolved and fractured, especially after the dimension became isolated.”

Jake proceeded to give the information he had gained from the projection and also came to learn that the other factions had found a lot of similar things. Small crystals with recordings on them located in the plains, written messages or even projections in the abandoned houses in the Mistless Plains, and of course also information from other towers. However, Jake also came to learn that the information didn’t precisely match up everywhere.

The projection had told Jake some people either didn’t choose to or weren’t judged worthy of being vampires... but the existence of this room and some information Reika had learned made him believe it wasn’t quite that simple. No, there was an entirely other faction in this world who opposed the vampires, known as the Pure Ones. People who refused to become vampires and opposed the establishment.

How they hadn’t just been slaughtered by the Kings or something like that he wasn’t sure about. Maybe they were deemed a necessary evil? Good fighting practice? Or perhaps they did co-exist until shit hit the fan down the line and the vampires began hunting down anything they could.

Or maybe, just maybe, this entire world was just fake as fuck, and set up as a scenario by the system for the Treasure Hunt, and everything was just background lore to make it all more interesting. Either way, it didn't matter. What mattered was that they had just found an entire armory of anti-vampire weapons.

"There are hundreds of weapons here," Reika noted as she checked the weapon-lined walls. The armory was cross-shaped, with a long hallway at the start and a path to each side. Weapons lined the walls, including swords, spears, knives, crossbows and bolts, scimitars, glaive-like weapons, and overall just a lot of stabby things. Interestingly enough, no blunt weapons, making Jake think blunt damage probably wasn't very good against vampires. He would have to try hitting one with the Pillar next time.

"That there is," Jake agreed before adding on. "But let's get to the good stuff."

He could see that she also wanted to check out the central room, where a large cube of non-transparent glass was placed that gave off an aura making it obvious valuables were within. The glass had a magical opening where it seemed to almost be made of water. In fact, the entire cube seemed more like a mix between a magical barrier and a physical one.

"I'll head inside first," Jake said as they stood in front of it. He decided to be the first to enter in case it was a trap. He was confident he could escape due to his danger sense if things went south, or probably just tank the damage.

Upon entering, he finally discovered where all that curse energy came from... it had been leaking from that cube. Jake saw a total of five items within. Four weapons, all surrounding a central pedestal with a floating... wooden... stake.

Is the system actually fucking with us?

Jake motioned for Reika to enter after him, and when she did, she also saw the wooden stake and stopped up.

“Isn’t that a wooden stake?” she asked pensively.

“Sure is,” he answered in a deadpan tone.

“Made by vampire hunters.”

“Yep.”

“I... why... is the system messing with us or what?” she asked in exasperation, mimicking Jake’s own thoughts.

“It appears to be completely serious,” Jake answered back with a smirk as he identified the stake.

[Stake of the Pure Ones (Unique)] – A cursed wooden stake created by the Pure Ones, enlightened inhabitants of the Yalsten world who had not turned vampire and were hunted down and made into food as the hunger of the vampires grew. The stake gives off an aura that hides the wielder from a Count of Blood, and it will deal substantial damage if impaled into any vampire. The curse will inhibit the regeneration of the impaled vampire. Only works on Counts and below. Holding this item will contribute significantly to your final reward.

Requirement: N/A

It was indeed a real item with very real effects. In addition... it was a damn quest item, 100%. The item also made something else clear... Jake had really done this entire Treasure Hunt in the wrong order. Likely the plan was to first collect information, get to know of the vampires and the Pure Ones, discover this armory and get a Mark of Blood, and then go for the Count.

Jake had identified the stake as similar to the quest items during the tutorial he had used to fight the King of the Forest, though those back then were far stronger. In retrospect, it was actually quite insane. That shadow bead and the tusk both held curses and energies more powerful than even this stake...

"This wooden stake appears to be the primary reward of this puzzle, and considering you were the primary contributor to solving it, I believe you should take it," Reika said.

"Oh?" Jake exclaimed, a bit surprised. He was sure she would have wanted it. There was just one thing. "Nah, I don't want it."

"Excuse me? What? Why not?" she asked with a perplexed expression.

"Why would I? The purpose of it is clearly to weaken a Count of Blood to fight them more easily. Why would I ever do that?" Jake just answered with a shrug.

“I...” she looked at him for a moment before she just paused and nodded. “Thank you then. I believe it only fair then that you take the rest of the weapons here.”

“Sure thing,” Jake agreed. They could figure out what to do with the rest of the armory later, but clearly, this room was where the good shit was at.

Jake looked at one of the four weapons – a spear – and identified it.

[Spear of the Pure Ones (Rare)] – A long metal spear with a wooden spearhead created by the Pure Ones, enlightened inhabitants of the Yalsten world who had not turned vampire and were hunted down and made into food as the hunger of the vampires grew. The enchantment placed on the spear is specifically made to hunt down vampires and will deal extra damage to their vitality and injects them with a unique type of venom specifically concocted to kill vampires. Enchantments: Venom of the Pure Ones.

Requirements: lvl 110+ in any humanoid race

Yep, it was a potent vampire hunting weapon that even had venom that worked especially well against vampires. The other three weapons were a sword, a halberd, and a dagger. All of them rare-rarity, and all of them with the same venom enchantment.

Jake tossed them all in his inventory as Reika put the stake in hers. As they moved out of the room, Jake took out the dagger again and casually stabbed it into his shoulder, not even stopping his walk.

“What the hell!?” Reika yelled as Jake made sure not to drip any blood on the floor.

“What? Just getting a taste of this venom,” Jake shrugged. Part of it was to fuck with her, but the main reason was to actually get a feeling of the toxin and analyze it with Palate of the Malefic Viper. He didn’t plan on replicating it, but just having experienced it would allow him to maybe use some of the concepts of the venom with Touch of the Malefic Viper.

“... How does that even work?” Reika asked, her voice a mix of resignation and genuine curiosity.

“I have a skill that allows me to learn about anything alchemy-related I consume and absorb. That includes poison that has inflicted me. Very handy to have, but it does have its downsides... such as being forced to eat copious amounts of mushrooms,” Jake answered, bringing back some bad memories.

“Is that seriously a skill?”

“Yep, a great one. Anyway, let’s move down the next corridor,” Jake said as he walked towards one of the wings of the armory. Reika followed him silently as she seemed deep in thought. She looked internally conflicted between staying cordial and being incredibly curious.

Entering the left wing of the armory, they found a smithy and a bookshelf filled with books. Jake swiftly pulled one of the books off the shelf and checked it out. He saw it was recipes and blueprints for making anti-vampire weapons.

Reika also went over and pulled a book off the shelf and quickly scanned through a few pages.

“This stuff seems great for the Treasure Hunt itself, but I’m unsure about its usefulness outside. Unless the Noboru clan has some vampire problem, I don’t know about?” Jake commented on the books, not very interested in them himself.

His puzzle partner just threw him a glance. “This Treasure Hunt is my first time encountering one.”

“Damn, and here I was hoping Earth secretly had hidden vampires trying to meld in with humanity,” he joked as he skimmed a few more of the books. They were truly all about smithing, and there weren’t even any mentions of the venom.

“Pretty sure we would have found any Earth vampires already as they would surely be glinting under sunlight.”

Jake stopped up as he looked at Reika, and she looked back at him, clearly a bit embarrassed. Did she just make a joke?

He smiled as he nodded and went along. “Yeah, but I doubt they would even be an issue, as they would all be too busy stalking teenage girls and spending all their time creepily watching them sleep.”

“Or battle werewolves who have the magical abilities to somehow preserve their pants when exiting their transformations,” Reika doubled down with a smile.

“System-fuckery for sure,” Jake nodded, faking seriousness. During all this time, both were skimming over all the books in the smithy, and eventually, they had to return to actually doing work. “Anyway, do you have any interest in the things within this smithy? There doesn’t seem to be any materials to use,

but considering there are still nearly one and a half weeks left of the Treasure Hunt, I could see some smiths who would have time to make something useful.”

“I do believe the Noboru clan would have interest in this smithy, yes. Are you certain Haven doesn’t want to acquire it?” she responded, also back in professional mode.

“No idea, really, but we barely entered with any people, so as long as you guys are fine with letting in one or two people from Haven, it should be fine. It would be a bit of a dickmove to just claim the entire smithy for the potential that someone may want to come here,” Jake just shrugged.

“Thanks,” she said with a smile. “Let’s check out the other wing?”

“Sure.”

They quickly went over to the other wing, and on the way, he saw that people were still gathered outside the gate. None had dared take a step inside but kept their distance. It was a bit weird, and he couldn’t help but ask Reika as they walked.

“Does your clan want all of those common-rarity weapons? I just considered if we should maybe just hand them to the people who tried to open the gate,” he asked.

Jake himself didn’t need them, and he didn’t really think they would contribute much to any kind of final reward. He would rather just hand them over to the people who had spent a good while trying to solve the puzzle to make sure they at least got something out of it. Also, he was pretty certain most of them could use them to fight the vampires. From what he had seen, while many had okay gear, all of the weapons in this armory were D-grade anti-vampire weapons. So they were bound to be useful.

“Hm, while the clan could use them, I believe that handing out the common-rarity ones and keeping the uncommon-rarity and above weapons shouldn’t lead to any issues,” Reika agreed after thinking for a second.

“Great, let’s tell them when we’re done. Let’s check out the alchemy lab ahead first.”

Yeah, he had taken a sneak-peek with his sphere, earning a surprised look from Reika, but she didn’t say anything. They quickly got to the right wing of the armory and opened the door, leading into an alchemy lab, just as Jake had said.

It quickly became clear this was where the venom used on the weapons had been made, and here too was a bookshelf on alchemical anti-vampire creations. Jake and Reika split the books, Jake taking all of those related to poison – which was the majority – and Reika taking those related to creating anti-vampire materials and catalysts. Such as some way of transmuting wood to make it better against vampires. It was a fair split, in Jake’s opinion.

Reika told Jake that everything else was his as she had been given the smithy, and Jake gladly stole everything in the entire lab. All the tables, a few common and uncommon-rarity cauldrons that still worked, a slew of other tools, and even the bookshelf the books had been on. While he was looting, Reika went and took all the uncommon-rarity weapons from outside, also splitting those fifty-fifty with him. When Jake was done in the alchemy lab, the room was bare, and Reika looked at him weirdly.

“Do you really need all of it?”

“Would it not be a better question to ask, how I could know I wouldn’t need all of it? Why would one not claim all one can in the event it becomes useful down the line?” Jake countered, making a throwback to their first interaction. She was just jealous that most of the things in the smithy couldn’t be easily moved but were built into the room.

She looked at him, a bit embarrassed as her ears turned red, but swiftly changed the subject. “We’re done here, right? Let’s get out of here and tell those waiting outside they can take the weapons they want.”

Jake resisted the urge to shake his head and just nodded in approval instead. He had to admit, all of this was a nice intermission between vampire hunting. Because he would go hunting soon again... and the stake earlier had also revealed one other thing that Reika didn’t seem to have taken notice of.

The stake said it worked on Counts of Blood and below.

That meant there had to be vampires higher in the food chain than the Counts still present in the Treasure Hunt.