Debuff Master

Chapter 8

Siegfried exited the inn and went straight to a smithy to purchase a steel rod and a cheap heavy armor for his torso.

'I'll be at a disadvantage if I use a gauntlet since its range is too close, and the attack speed of a greatsword is too slow not to mention how expensive it can be. Let's pass on those two for now… Hmm… I don't really need a shield so I'll pass on that, too…'?

If he were going to a high-level dungeon, it would be a different story. Since he was going to a low-level dungeon, he didn't feel the need to use a shield.

'*A blunt weapon is the most suitable one for now,'?*he thought.

Siegfried chose to use a fast yet destructive weapon as his first weapon since he was planning on power leveling from now on. That was how he finished arming himself.

'*Next is to get a license…'?*he thought.

He left the smithy and went to the Mercenary Guild.

"Welcome, Traveler from another dimension," the guild receptionist greeted Siegfried before inspecting him from head to toe and adding, "I can see that you are a novice."

"Ah… well… something like that," Siegfried replied.

He did not feel the need to expose the fact that he was once a high-level player.

"Alright, what business do you have with our Mercenary Guild?" the guild receptionist asked.

"I wish to obtain a license," Siegfried replied.

A license was a requirement to register oneself as a mercenary to the Mercenary Guild, and this was going to allow them to obtain quests to help them sustain themselves in the game.

"As expected," the guild receptionist said while nodding, and then he added, "However, you will have to go through an exam to test your qualifications. We will still have to test if you are truly skillful, even if you are an immortal being."

"I am aware of that," Siegfried replied.

"Alright, things will be easier since you are aware of it. Then—" the guild receptionist said.

However, Siegfried cut him off and said, "I will go and hunt five Mutated Rabbits and ten Mutated Squirrels."

"Five Mutated Rabbits and ten Mutated Squirrels… you seem quite overconfident of your abilities," the guild receptionist responded.

"I will hunt three stags and a bison as well while I am at it," Siegfried added.

"You will hunt all of them at the same time?" the guild receptionist asked with a surprised look.

Siegfried decided to finish the chain of quests known as the 'Tutorial Quest Set' in a single hunt since he did not want to waste time going back and forth between the Mercenary Guild and the novice hunting ground.

The 'Tutorial Quest Set' was made up of the following chain of quests:

'Proof of Qualification' quest which was to hunt five Mutated Rabbits.

'Additional Proof of Qualification' quest which was to hunt ten Mutated Squirrels.

'Qualification Assessment' quest which was to hunt three Mutated Stags.

And the 'Final Qualification Assessment' required hunting a Mutated Bison.

Then, the guild receptionist grimaced and said, "You are asking for trouble, my friend."

"You might somehow manage against the Mutated Rabbits and the Mutated Squirrels, but the Mutated Stags and Mutated Bisons are not enemies you can overcome by simply having a few tricks up your sleeve—" the guild receptionist said.

However, Siegfried cut him off once again. "I will be on my way."

Siegfried did not even give the guild receptionist an inch to convince him otherwise as he forced his way into getting all four quests at the same time.

[Alert: You have accepted the quest: 'Proof of Qualification'!]

[Alert: You have accepted the quest: 'Additional Proof of Qualification'!]

[Alert: You have accepted the quest: 'Qualification Assessment'!]

[Alert: You have accepted the quest: 'Final Qualification Assessment'!]

He turned around after receiving the four quests and was about to leave when he suddenly stopped. He faced the receptionist again and asked, "*Oh,?*come to think of it… where is their habitat…?"

Siegfried still hadn't grasped much of the Biermann Territory's geography.

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Siegfried immediately hunted the mutated animals after receiving the map of the Biermann Territory from the guild receptionist.

Mutated creatures were highly dangerous monsters that were mutated by an unknown power. They were annoying creatures that appeared all over this world, Mirgald, three years ago. The mutated creatures were wild animals, so there were a lot of them, and they had been causing many deaths since they appeared because nobody knew where and when they would appear.

Thanks to that, the Mercenary Guilds of each kingdom always had quests related to hunting them down.

[Biermann Territory: Habitat of Mutated Creatures]

Siegfried used the warp gate installed in the Mercenary Guild to go to the habitat of the mutated creatures.

'*Let's start off with the rabbits first,'?*he thought.

He immediately went to the mountains looking to look for Mutated Rabbits.

The method of tracking down Mutated Rabbits was quite simple—their poop. A rabbit would instinctively pile their pea-sized poop at the foot of a tree.

'*There's a lot of poop, so there should be some of them around here,'?*he thought.

While he was looking around, a black figure suddenly jumped out from the bush on his right side.

"*Kyaahk!*"?

The creature screamed as it lunged toward him.

'*From the right!'?*

Siegfried immediately turned to the right.

Bam!

He smacked the creature with the steel rod in his hand.

"*Kwek!*"*?*The creature let out a shriek after getting hit by the steel rod.

The creature could no longer get up after a single hit from Siegfried's steel rod.

[You have successfully hunted a Mutated Rabbit!]

[Experience Points +30]

A message popped up in front of him.

"That surprised me…" Siegfried muttered as he looked at the dead Mutated Rabbit on the ground.

The mutated creatures' physical abilities were about thirty-percent higher compared to their normal counterparts. In addition, they were highly aggressive. That was why there had been multiple cases of novices betting bitten on their neck the moment they let their guards down.

Eeeuuaaaaaaaahk!

Just like the novice screaming in the distance...

"They should have been more careful…" Siegfried said while looking in the direction where the scream had come from.

He prayed for the novice being bitten to death by a Mutated Rabbit before he took a dagger out of his pocket.

He was going to use the dagger to skin the Mutated Rabbit since its hide fetched a fair amount due to its toughness and elasticity. And he also had to bring its hide as a trophy to prove his hunt to the Mercenary Guild.

Seuk… Seuk…

While skinning the Mutated Rabbit, Siegfried fell into deep thought.

'*Had my reaction speed ever been this fast…?*'

He also felt that his hearing had become more sensitive, and his body had become more reactive as well, as it moved as soon as he willed it to move.

*'That's that but… I never imagined that I would kill it in a single hit. Tsk… I wanted to test some of my skills…'?*Siegfried thought as he clicked his tongue.

It seemed that his stats had become too high for a Level 1 after undergoing the body enhancement, or rather, the tempering and quenching process.

[You have obtained 'Mutated Rabbit's Hide' (1/5)]

Siegfried stored the Mutated Rabbit's hide and immediately went to look for his next prey.

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Unfortunately, he still did not get the chance to use his skills.

One shot, one kill. Siegfried killed two Mutated Rabbits with a single swing of his steel rod, and the Mutated Rabbits and Mutated Squirrels all fell with a single swing of his blunt weapon.

[Alert: You have completed the quest: 'Proof of Qualification']

[Alert: You have completed the quest: 'Additional Proof of Qualification']

As a result, Siegfried managed to hunt the required number of Mutated Rabbits and Mutated Squirrels, but he never got the chance to use his skill.

"I should be able to use it against the stag… right…?" he muttered.

He was hoping he could test his skills out against the Mutated Stags. After all, a stag was a larger animal compared to a rabbit or a squirrel, so it was bound to be much tougher than them.

"Let's go look for a stag," he said as he descended the mountain and went to a forest where stags could have potentially made it their habitat.

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An hour later…

"Neigh… Neigh…!"?

Siegfried was standing face to face against a Mutated Stag that seemed to be enraged for some reason.

[Mutated Stag]

[A stag mutated by an unknown power.]

[HP: 500]

[Defense: 10]

[Magic Resistance: 10]

Siegfried checked the Mutated Stag's stats using the Rune of Insight at the back of his left hand.

'*Let's try hitting it with a normal attack,'?*he thought.

The battle started off with the Mutated Stag charging at Siegfried, and he easily avoided the charge while counter-attacking by smacking his steel rod on the stag's body.

[65 Physical Damage!]

Siegfried was currently Level 1 with an attack power of 25, and the steel rod he was using as a weapon had an attack power of 50. He was supposed to deal 75 damage to the stag, but it seemed the stag's 10 defense reduced the damage he dealt to 65.

'*Good, so it's tougher than the others just as I expected,'*

he thought while being satisfied at the Mutated Stag's toughness.

It was now time for him to finally try to use the Debuff Master's main attack skill, 'Smite.'

Baaam!

Siegfried smacked the Mutated Stag with Smite.

[162.5 Physical Damage!]

He dealt damage exactly two hundred and fifty percent of his 65 attack power, which was still reduced by the Mutated Stag's defense.

'*Let's try using debuffs this time,'?*he thought.

It was now time for him to display the main highlight of his class.

"*Neiiiiiigh!"?*The Mutated Stag let out a neigh as it charged at Siegfried once again.

Siegfried jumped to the side to avoid the stag's charge before immediately activating 'Circle of Mortality.'

[Circle of Mortality]

[A circular field that decreases the enemies' defense and magic resistance will appear around the user.]

[The circle's radius grows larger the higher the skill's level.]

[The skill's defense and magic resistance reduction increases the higher the skill's level.]

[The skill's cooldown decreases per level.]

[A circle may not be moved once summoned.]

[Level: 1]

[Effect: -10 Defense, -10 Magic Resistance]

[Mana Consumption: 50]

[Skill Duration: 60 seconds]

[Cooldown: 120 seconds]

A scarlet light surrounded Siegfried, and a circular field appeared underneath his feet the moment he cast Circle of Mortality.

'*Now let's try smacking it again…'?*

He swung his steel rod at the Mutated Stag.

[75 Physical Damage!]

He dealt 75 damage to the Mutated Stag after its defense dropped to zero.

Siegfried had just dealt a hundred percent of his damage to the enemy, and it was tantamount to dealing True Damage.

'*Let's try using Smite this time,'?*he thought as he waited for the skill's cooldown.

The enraged stag kept on charging at Siegfried, but he easily avoided all of its attacks.

[Smite Cooldown: 3 seconds]

[…2]

[…1]

[…0]

[Smite is ready to be cast!]

Siegfried used Smite when the skill cooldown timer reached zero.

[187.5 Physical Damage!]

He dealt 25 more damage compared to when he still hadn't applied the debuff, and it was a 15.3% increase in damage.

'*Alright, this looks good…'?*Siegfried nodded in satisfaction. '*This is more than enough for a Level 1 since I'm sure that the effectiveness of the skill will increase the higher my level.*'

It did not seem like much because he was still Level 1, but a fifteen percent increase in damage by reducing the enemy's defense was not something to scoff at since the defenses of both monsters and humans naturally increased the higher their level. And a fifteen percent increase in damage was a huge advantage in fights where a single variable could decide the outcome.

'*Ah… I want to level up faster…'?*

He wished to hurry up and experience the full potential of his class, the Debuff Master.

"*Neigh… Neigh…"?*The Mutated Stag's breathing became labored.

Puk…!

Siegfried swung his steel rod for the final time and finished the Mutated Stag off.

Thud…!

The Mutated Stag fell to the ground.

[You have successfully hunted a Mutated Stag!]

[Experience Points +80]

His experience filled up.

[You have leveled up!]

When he was informed of his level-up with a system message, a bright light shot out from the Rune of Insight at the back of his left hand and enveloped him.

"I should collect its hide and antlers first…" Siegfried muttered.

Leveling up was good and all, but collecting loot he could sell for money had a higher priority for Siegfried.