

Debuff Master

Chapter 9

Siegfried received ten bonus stat points after leveling up.

“Let’s prioritize strength for now...”

Investing the bonus stat points into strength was the obvious decision since strength would increase his physical attack power, which was the main weapon of the Debuff Master.

He opened the ‘Growth’ menu and clicked on the ‘Stat Growth’ tab.

[Siegfried]

[Level: 2]

[Class: Debuff Master]

[Attack Power: 75]

[Ability Power: 20]

[HP: 200/200] +

[Mana: 223/300] +

[Stamina: 143/150] +

[Strength: 25] +

[Agility: 25] +

[Intellect: 20] +

[Defense: 40] +

[Magic Resistance: 30] +

[Tenacity: 30] +

[Remaining Points: 10]

Siegfried decided to invest all ten points into strength without any hesitation, and he pressed the '+' sign beside 'Strength' one time.

[You have increased Strength by 1 point.]

[Your Attack Power has increased by 2.5.]

He noticed something off.

"Why did it increase by 2.5...?" he said while tilting his head in confusion.

He could not understand why his Attack Power went up by 2.5.

"Isn't it supposed to increase by 2.2?" he wondered.

He had gained much more attack power than he was supposed to after increasing his strength by a single point.

"Is it a bug?" he grumbled before tapping on the '+' sign again and investing another point into 'Strength'.

[You have increased Strength by 1 point.]

[Your Attack Power has increased by 2.5.]

It went up by 2.5 instead of 2.2 once again.

"Let's try putting more..." he muttered as he tapped on the '+' sign eight times and invested his remaining eight points into 'Strength'.

[You have increased Strength by 8 points.]

[Your Attack Power has increased by 20.]

It increased by the same increment once again as each point he added increased his Attack Power by 2.5.

"What's going on...?" he wondered.

While he was trying to figure out what was going on, he suddenly remembered something.

"I will fix you from head to toe, and I will forcefully raise your potential to the limit."

"I-Is that right?"

“That’s right. Since you managed to get through this trial, you will become at least twenty percent stronger than others.”

He remembered a conversation he had with Deus about fixing his body and raising his potential. Now, Siegfried was certain that the abnormal stat increase he was experiencing was because of the hellish training he went through under Deus.

“So, this is the fruit of my suffering... it’s very sweet indeed...” he muttered as he recalled the one hundred tempering and quenching he had to go through, “I’m glad I endured through all of that...”

He was very emotional at this moment. However, It was understandable since his efforts had always betrayed him time and time again. A person would be satisfied if they put in a hundred percent of their effort to receive just eighty percent results out of it, but that hadn’t been the case for Siegfried. He worked his butt off every single time and put in a hundred and twenty percent, but not even once did his efforts gave him more than fifty percent in return.

He had no luck, no talent, no money, and even his efforts always betrayed him by giving him less than what he had expected even if he had lowered his expectations.

However, that was no longer the case. After all, the efforts he would put in would now yield him the same degree of results.

No, rather, his efforts would now yield him a return much higher than his expectations.

The famous rankers with hidden classes would receive 2.2 Attack Power for every point increase in their Strength based on what Siegfried was aware of, and a normal class user would receive 2 Attack Power for every point of Strength.

But his class, Debuff Master, was giving him much more Attack Power than what any other known hidden classes would give, and this was something that Siegfried could have never imagined even in his wildest dreams.

Thanks to that, Siegfried’s Attack Power had increased by 25, and his previously 75 Attack Power had increased to 100 as well.

“I will never forget what you have done for me, Master. Please accept my bow,” Siegfried said as he bowed in the direction of Mount Kunlun.

Siegfried bowed as sincerely as he possibly could toward his master, who gave him this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity before saying, “Your disciple will do his best to attain invincibility so that I will not tarnish your name. Then, I will crush the descendants of those who you have failed to win against.”

He vowed to achieve the goal his master had failed to achieve, as that was the only way he could ever repay his master's kindness.

Siegfried opened the 'Skill Growth' tab after distributing his bonus stat points.

[Remaining Skill Points: 3.2]

He gained 3.2 skill points after leveling up.

"Oh, I gained more skill points as well," he said after checking his status page.

BNW gave players 3 skill points every time they leveled up, and this was the same regardless of whether the player had a hidden class or a normal class. However, Siegfried was getting 3.2 skill points instead of 3; it was much just like with his stat points.

0.2 might seem like a small number, but there was a saying that little drops of water would make a mighty ocean, and this small number would bring a huge impact if it accumulated. The 0.2 extra skill points he was getting per level would give him 1 extra skill point every 5 levels, and this would accumulate and give him a level's worth of 3 skill points for every 15 levels.

This meant that he would have 480 skill points at level 150 when everyone else would only have 450 skill points at the same level. He would have 30 extra skill points, equivalent to gaining 10 levels.

This small number would snowball into something pretty clear when taking into account the fact that a user would have to invest an astronomical sum of money just to gain one skill point upon reaching a high level.

The butterfly effect—it was a theory that said that a small thing could result in large differences later on.

'*Thank you, Master,*' Siegfried thought. He could not help but be thankful to his master once more for maximizing his potential.

He used his skill points to raise the level of his skills.

[You have invested 1 skill point into Smite.]

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[The skill level of Smite has risen.]

[Damage has increased by 10%.]

[Cooldown for all weapons has decreased by 0.2 seconds.]

The result was definitely satisfactory.

The skill was only raised by one level, but its damage and cooldown greatly improved.

'Next...?'

Siegfried proceeded to invest a skill point into Circle of Mortality.

[Circle of Mortality]

[Level: 2]

[Effect: -20 Defense, -20 Magic Resistance]

[Mana Consumption: 55]

[Skill Radius: 5.2m]

[Skill duration: 60 seconds]

[Cooldown: 119 seconds]

The enemy defense and magic resistance shred increased by 10, the radius increased by 0.2 meters, and the cooldown decreased by 1 second.

'Next up is Circle of Weakness...?'

He increased the skill level of the skill he hadn't even used just yet.

[Circle of Weakness]

[Level: 2]

[Effect: - 5 HP per Second]

[Mana Consumption: 105]

[Skill Radius: 5.2m]

[Skill duration: 60 seconds]

[Cooldown: 119 seconds]

Similar to the Circle of Morality, the radius increased while the cooldown time decreased. The damage per second also increased along with the mana consumption.

'It feels like I'm going to be putting circles down all over the place,' he thought.

Siegfried was starting to get a hang of how to utilize his skills as the Debuff Master:

1. Reduce the enemy's defense and magic resistance with Circle of Mortality.
2. Reduce the enemy's HP bit by bit with Circle of Weakness.
3. Beat the enemy to death with Smite and normal attacks.

To sum up the combat style of the Debuff Master, he had to set up his territory on the battlefield and beat his enemies to death on top of it.

'So, it's going to be all about location, location, and location... I have to fight on top of the circle no matter what, and I can't let my enemies leave the circle,' he thought as he finally understood how to use his class.

The location of the circles was absolutely important because his class—the Debuff Master—was highly dependent on them.

'The Debuff Master is a class that makes my enemies fight me where I want them to fight me. That is the key point of my combat style, so I have to carefully decide when to use my skills,' he thought as he decided to pay attention on how he would use his skills from now on.

It was admirable of him to come up with such a conclusion, as any player aiming for the top had to have a decent understanding of the character they were playing.

Siegfried looked for a Mutated Stag as soon as he was done distributing his stat points and skill points.

Bam!

He smacked a stag on the head with his steel rod while it was standing on top of the Circle of Mortality.

[393.9 Physical Damage!]

A surprising number popped up on the damage counter. The damage was amplified by two hundred and sixty percent thanks to Smite, and it was further enhanced by a hundred and fifty percent because he struck the stag's head, which was a critical spot.

On top of that, the stag was standing on his circle which reduced its defense from 10 to -10.

“Even though you say that it was a critical hit... does it even make sense to deal four hundred damage in one hit...?” Siegfried muttered. He could not believe the destructiveness of his Level 2 character, and he couldn't help but doubt what he had seen.

Fortunately, neither his imagination nor his eyes were playing tricks on him.

It was evidenced by the fact that the Mutated Stag got stunned after getting hit by Smite.

Puk!

Siegfried swung his steel rod one more time and finished the Mutated Stag off.

“Strong... I'm really strong...!” Siegfried exclaimed. He was in awe of the Debuff Master's power.

A mere Level 2 character could deal damage close to 400.

How many classes out there could do the same? No, rather, the fact that he possessed a class while he was still Level 2 was already strange, to begin with.

Most of the players would remain without a class until they reached Level 15, which was when they would finally get to choose their class.

‘Debuffing my enemy is the key to victory. Smite can only display its true value when my enemy is debuffed, and the fact that its percentage increase is high does not matter unless I get to hit them while they're standing in the circle. Choosing where to place the circle is key...’ Siegfried thought as he took his dagger out of his pocket.

He continued to remind himself again and again of the importance of circle placement.

Seuk... Seuk...

He had to collect his loot before anything else. After all, the Mutated Stag's hide and antlers were an excellent source of income for him.

Chapter 10

After killing the second Mutated Stag, Siegfried immediately hunted the third one down to complete the quest.

[Alert: You have completed the Quest: ‘Qualification Assessment’!]

“A Mutated Bison...” Siegfried muttered as he checked his last remaining quest.

Mutated Bisons were incomparably stronger than rabbits, squirrels, and stags. This was a given since a bison was a strong animal with a large body that even apex predators find it burdensome to hunt it. And the fact that unknown energy had mutated the animal made it more imposing and exhausting to hunt.

“Let’s not get cocky. We have to be careful,” Siegfried told himself before he went out to hunt a Mutated Bison.

The place Siegfried went to after leaving the forest was a plain with plants of all colors and sizes growing on them. There was a saying that one had to enter the tiger’s den to hunt the tiger, and that was precisely why he came to the plains to hunt a Mutated Bison.

“I wonder where those bisons are...” he muttered while scanning the vast plains.

It did not take long for him to find a Mutated Bison in the distance.

“Found you,” he said.

He immediately activated his Rune of Insight and scanned the details of the large animal covered in thick black fur.

[Mutated Bison]

[A bison mutated by unknown energy.]

[HP: 1,300]

[Defense: 25]

[Magic Resistance: 25]

Mutated Bisons possessed stats much higher than Mutated Stags.

“Great” Siegfried said with a smile on his face.

The Mutated Bison seemed to have felt Siegfried staring at it, and that could be why it turned toward him and snorted aggressively.

“*Puff...! Puff...!*” the Mutated Bison snorted while lowering its stance before suddenly darting toward Siegfried.

'It's coming. I'm dead if I get hit by that charge. I'll have to avoid it and counter-attack,' he thought as he braced himself.

It didn't matter whether he was the Debuff Master or whatnot; he would end up getting forcibly logged out if the Mutated Bison managed to slam into him.

'Three... two... one... to the right!'?

Siegfried immediately evaded to his right.

Whoosh!

The Mutated Bison narrowly missed Siegfried.

'It's my turn,' he thought as he immediately cast Circle of Mortality and reduced the Mutated Bison's defense. Then, he tightly gripped his steel rod and swung it as hard as he could against the bison's body while using Smite.

[307.5 Physical Damage!]

He dealt a decent amount of damage because his attack became a critical hit.

No, rather, a Level 2 character dealing 300 damage against a Mutated Bison could no longer be considered decent since even a Level 10 character needed at least 5 minutes to hunt a Mutated Bison.

'Let's keep attacking with basic attacks until Smite cools down,' he thought as he attacked the bison while evading its attacks at the same time.

Pak! Pak! Pukeok! Pak!

Siegfried continuously attacked the Mutated Bison.

After a minute, Smite went off cooldown, and he immediately slammed his steel rod into the bison's head.

[307.5 Physical Damage!]

As expected, it was another critical hit. The Mutated Bison only had 305 HP left.

Puk! Pak! Pukeok! Puk!

Siegfried unleashed a chain of four basic attacks against the stunned Mutated Bison.

Thud!

The Mutated Bison collapsed to the ground.

[You have successfully hunted a Mutated Bison!]

[Experience Points +200]

[Alert: You have completed the Quest: 'Final Qualification Assessment'!]

A message informing him of clearing the chain of quests from the Mercenary Guild appeared in front of him.

"Easy peasy... It took me less than three minutes to hunt a Mutated Bison, even though I'm just Level 2," Siegfried said with an arrogant smile on his face.

This was only possible thanks to the high percentage damage of Smite and the defense reduction from Circle of Mortality.

"Let's go back to town and get my license..." he muttered.

Of course, he did not forget to butcher the Mutated Bison and collect his loot.

However, while he was diligently skinning the bison, a person's scream could be heard in the distance.

"Kyaaaaaaaaah!"

The scream was not the only thing he heard.

Rumble rumble... Rumble rumble...?

The ground started shaking as the sound of hooves got louder and louder.

'What the hell?'

He turned in the direction where the scream had come from.

"Ah..." he muttered before his face crumpled. "Why the hell are you bringing a herd of bison over to me...?" he muttered weakly.

It was because a random woman was running in his direction while being chased by twenty Mutated Bisons.

One thing anyone should be careful of while hunting Mutated Bisons was their herd. A bison was an animal that lived in a herd of at least ten to twenty, and this meant that one could end up stumbling upon a herd of bisons full of Mutated Bisons. When that happened, one could potentially attract the attention of the entire herd of Mutated Bisons.

That was why the golden rule when hunting Mutated Bisons was to hunt the stragglers that had strayed away from their herd, which was what Siegfried had done a while ago.

However, what if someone ignored that golden rule and aggroes an entire herd of Mutated Bisons?

Then, that would be no different from opening the doors of hell since a low-level player would have to deal with possibly more than a dozen Mutated Bisons at the same time.

A novice who had ended up aggroing a herd of Mutated Bisons would always end up with the same fate—being skewered by their sharp horns and trampled in a stampede.

Just like what was happening right now...

“Help me! *Kyaaaaaah!*”?the woman screamed at Siegfried.

[Antoinette]

[Level: 9]

[Class: No Class]

Antoinette, who was a Level 9 No Class novice, had accidentally aggroed an entire Mutated Bison herd while hunting for one. As such, she ended up being chased by all members of the herd.

She squeezed every single ounce of her strength to run from the angry horde of bison.

“H-Hey! Please help me! Please! *Kyaaaaaah!*”?she screamed.

Unfortunately, Siegfried could tell that she was intentionally running straight toward him.

“Ah... what the hell...” Siegfried muttered with a hint of annoyance at the woman.

He would have probably found her to be bothersome anyway if she walked up to him and tried to talk to him, but the fact that she was bringing a herd of Mutated Bison along made it even more annoying.

“Is she trying to drag me down with her or what?” Siegfried grumbled.

The chance of beating this herd of Mutated Bisons was absolute zero. Even though he had obtained the hidden class, Debuff Master, it was still impossible to do so, as he was just Level 2.

“I guess I have no choice...” he muttered as he made his mind up.

Tak!

Siegfried kicked off the ground and started running away. This was the sensible thing to do when facing the charge of a Mutated Bison herd.

A strange caravan was created.

“...” Siegfried was quietly running at the forefront.

“*Kyaaahk! Kyaaaahhk! Kyaaaaaaaaahk!*”?Antoinette screamed while running right behind him.

Rumble rumble... Rumble rumble... Rumble...?

A herd of Mutated Bison was still chasing her.

“Hurry up and do something!” Antoinette shouted at Siegfried.

However, Siegfried maintained his silence and chose to ignore her.

“Hey! You! Come on!” she screamed at him in an effort to draw his attention.

‘I’ll be at a disadvantage fighting here. I will be trampled to death for sure,’?Siegfried thought.

He was trying to come up with a way to get out of this predicament rather than just running away for his life.

‘Can I really not handle them? I think I’ll gain at least two levels if I were to wipe that herd out,’?he thought while greedily glancing at the herd of bison.

The ability to turn a predicament into an opportunity...

He suddenly remembered his master’s words...

“Fights will never be always in your favor. In fact, you will find that most fights will have odds stacked against you. What you have to do by then is quite simple... Just try to come up with a way to turn the tables and make the fight unfavorable to your enemies instead of trying to make it favorable for you. It doesn't matter what kind of solution you come up with as long as you can have even a slight advantage over them. Then, start turning things in your favor one by one, and you will eventually emerge victorious without realizing it.”

Deus had basically told him to do whatever was necessary to turn the tables.

*‘They have the upper hand when it comes to numbers, but I'm certain that I'll win in a one-on-one battle. The only problem is if they gang up on me... Is there really no way for me to fight them one by one...?’*Siegfried pondered while analyzing the situation.

*‘This place is too wide and vast. I will have to find somewhere narrower if I were to fight them. I should win as long as I can make the terrain more advantageous for me,’*he thought while looking around.

Siegfried was looking for a place to fight the members of the herd one by one. He had to render their strength, which was their numbers, useless if he wanted to win.

*‘Is there really no place nearby that I can use to fight them one by one...?’*he thought while anxiously looking around.

*‘Over there!’*he inwardly exclaimed the moment he found a suitable spot.

There was a steep hill in a distance not that far from him. The steep hill was similar to a ravine with walls on both sides of it. The hill was only five meters wide, but it should be more than enough to block the majority of the Mutated Bisons.

‘That's where I'll face those bastards...’?

Siegfried immediately made a sharp turn toward the hills.

“Hey! W-Wait for me!” Antoinette shouted and chased after Siegfried.