

Hunter Academy: Revenge of the Weakest

Chapter 8: Chapter 2.1 - Beginning

As my consciousness merged with Astron's, the boundaries between us blurred, and I became one with his being. It was a surreal experience, like opening my eyes for the first time but seeing the world through his perspective while still being able to feel his agony and his emotions.

And then, I opened my eyes.

The darkness that had enveloped me for so long dispersed,

"Ah...." I tried to open my mouth reflexively to speak. But, at that moment, a heavy metallic taste entered my mouth.

It was a familiar taste, followed by aching.... All around my body.

"Kurgh-!" I groaned from the pain I was feeling; my whole body was overwhelmed. However, rather than making me uncomfortable, I felt like I was alive once again, thanks to the pain assaulting me.

"It has been so long....." I muttered, even if it caused my whole body to be filled with pain.

I don't know why or who did this to me. Who was the one that trapped me? Who was the one that suddenly brought me out of my life? I didn't know anything about them.

But I was alive. I was able to feel the sensation of my body once again.... That was enough.

"HAHAHA!" I couldn't help but laugh crazily.... Since nothing I had experienced could be said to be normal. "Kurgh-" Followed by another groan, as I felt my whole body sore once again.

However, that wasn't all there to it.... The anger in my heart was increasing as the feelings of Astron returned.

No, it wasn't merely about his emotions; I remembered everything now. It was no longer about Astron or me.... We have now become one, our purpose merging....

"So, my entire existence was nothing more than being an expendable extra, destined to die... all to glorify a stupid protagonist..." The realization hit me like a thunderbolt, but instead of fueling anger, it sparked an unyielding resolve within my core.

"Bullshit. I refuse to accept this," I declared. "I am here to exact my vengeance; that is it.

The pain that ravaged my body became an instrument of my unwavering determination. Muttering like that, I raised my body, in the midst of the pain I was feeling, but I ignored it.

"This pain.... It is nothing like how she must have felt at that time...." With that short mumble, I started looking around, only to see I was in an isolated place.

"This is where they always targeted me." Remembering the events of the last month, I thought. "The backgrounds of academy...."

Of course, as one of the most prestigious Hunter academies in the human union, Arcadia Academy occupied quite a vast land.

Therefore, it wasn't that hard to find a place where people were isolated.

Looking at the sky, I saw it was already close to evening as the sun was slowly setting down. 'It is around 4 pm.' I mused, seeing the position of the sun.

'I need to tend my wounds first....' With that thought, I dragged my body to my dorm....

As I reached my room, I immediately threw myself into the bath.

Arcadia Hunter Academy.

It was a place to nurture those who had the potential to become hunters, meaning Awakened People.

'Status Window.' I mumbled inside my head, trying to open my stats.

It was the most important perk of being an Awakened human since that would mean you were able to access the Status window and awaken your powers.

And it was a global rule that one's status window was only visible to themselves.

Soon following my command, a panel appeared right before my eyes.

?Name: Astron Natusalune

?Occupation: Weapon Master (level 1)

?Talent Limit: 4

?Attributes:

Variable Attributes:

- Strength: 1.2 --> 1.2

- Dexterity: 1.5 --> 1.8

- Constitution: 1.2 --> 1.2

- Agility: 1.8 --> 1.8

- Intuition: 1.5 --> 1.8

- Magical Power: 0 --> 1.2

- Mana Capacity: 0 --> 1.5

?Traits:

- Perceptive Insight (Unique)(Unchanging)

- ????

?Arts:

- Basic Dagger Style (Common Grade) - %12

- Basic Nonarmed Combat Style (Common Grade) - %29

?Skills:

- Dash (Common Grade)

- Keen Eye (Uncommon Grade)

?Body Imprints:

To simply explain the status window, the attributes are where one's parameters for related subjects can be seen.

'This is why I was always weak....' I mumbled to myself. 'Just look at these stats:'

Considering an average adult's stats would be 1.5, the stats I was seeing was something very disappointing. That was because of the talent shown on the status page.

'Because Astron's talent limit is 4, he can only reach stats of 4 in his lifetime.'

That was the setting of the game, which was the most important. The thing that determined one's rank was this setting since that would mean your future position. 'What a bullshit. 4, this is way too low.'

As it could be seen, stats meant whatever they meant. Strength stat was the strength output of your body; dexterity was the smoothness that your body was able to respond to the commands your brain gave, while the constitution meant the physical capacity of your body.

Intuition meant the strength of your senses and the way you were able to grasp the things happening around you, and the magical power and mana capacity was evident.

The mana capacity and magical power stats did have a question mark beside them which always plagued Astron's mind before. In the beginning, when he was awakened differently from others, he was not able to use any mana at all.

Why was it zero? Why couldn't he use mana before? That was the question he was asking himself. But he never found the answer.

But I know it. I know the reason.

'It was sealed.' I thought, looking at the stats. Because, in the game, only when your stats were sealed could you see a question mark.

'But, why?' That was the question that needed to be asked. Looking at everything, I couldn't put up any thought to myself... Why is it now active? Why can I use mana now?

Those questions wandered in my head, and the answer soon came to me.

'Because of me. His soul was incomplete.' The moment the realization hit me like that, I felt like the reason I was dragged here was more apparent. 'Because I never meant to be on Earth in the first place.'

'That also explains why I was randomly dragged here. Something must have triggered it. His sister's....My sister's death....' As those thoughts lingered around my head, my attention was drawn to the occupation part.

'This was not here before.'

The occupation means the field of talent you have in terms of stats.

For instance, if you have a talent for spears, your occupation will be 'spearman,' and if it is swords, then it will be 'swordsman.'

That was also the case for Astron in the beginning. His occupation was 'Daggerist,' so he trained hard for his dagger skills, trying his best to get stronger. Because if you don't have an occupation at the weapon, that means you wouldn't be able to grasp future insights by raising the level of your occupation.

'But it seems with my soul merging with him, my talents are also merged with him.' I thought. The occupation of 'Weapon Master' was one of the rarest occupations in the world; thus, my having that meant my talent shone in every type of weapon.

'Maybe that was what he would normally have if his soul were not incomplete. 'That might also be true, but I had no way of knowing that from now on.'

Finishing looking at my stats, underneath was the section on talents.

Traits were basically a type of innate talent one did have. It could be analytical computation, mana perception, mana usage, or anything. But not everyone has one of those, and awakening them is pretty hard and is very important for successful hunters. Especially it was very hard for the newly awakened ones, for instance, students of the academy.

That was also the case for Astron.

'Perceptive Insight.' This was not here before. I thought, looking for the description.

Perceptive Insight:

The Perceptive Insight trait grants the individual a heightened ability to observe and comprehend their surroundings with exceptional clarity and depth. Those possessing this trait possess an acute sense of perception, allowing them to notice subtle details, patterns, and hidden aspects that often go unnoticed by others. This talent encompasses both keen observation skills and a deep understanding of the information gathered.

The moment I looked into this, I realized why this was here. 'That whole time I spent while observing the outside.... trapped. At least it didn't go to waste.'

Seeing the grade of the trait, I felt at least relieved. 'Unique Grade.'

Grades indicate the level of rarity for traits, skills, and arts that one possesses. The order of rarity is as follows:

Common < Uncommon < Rare < Unique < Epic < Legendary

However, there was something else that caught my attention. A lingering sense of mystery that demanded further exploration. 'Those question marks. I have yet to awaken my second trait.' I thought, thinking about what the reason could be, but was not able to come to a conclusion, thus saving it for a later time.

Aside from the trait part, there was a tab related to Arts. In the game, they were shown as the techniques of combat one had mastered in their lives.

For instance, the technique Astron was trying to learn was the basic Dagger Skills given to any awakened. That was expected since he was simply an orphan that didn't have anybody to rely on now.

Then there were skills.

Skills meant the type of fixed patterns one could use by activating, and then it would consume mana. They were hard to get, and most normal hunters would have four or three at most.

Astron was the same, as he only had one simple skill.

Skill: Dash

Rarity: Uncommon

Description: A versatile and dynamic skill that allows the user to move with exceptional speed and agility, surpassing normal physical limits. It enables swift bursts of movement, granting the user a significant advantage in both offensive and defensive situations.

Output: 2x of normal speed

A simple skill that allowed him to move at a fast speed. Pretty common skill for a hunter, which most would have at the beginning.

However, thanks to my merging with him, there was one more skill in this part.

Skill: Keen Eye

Rarity: Uncommon

Description: An uncommon-grade skill that enhances the user's visual perception, granting them the ability to see with exceptional clarity and an extended range. By channeling mana, the user can increase their visual range, allowing them to perceive distant objects or details that would be otherwise difficult to discern.

Output: Depending on the mana supplied for the skill

Looking at this new skill, it was pretty evident that it was also parallel to my trait. 'That means it is essentially my soul's skill.' I thought.

Then, the last thing we had on the status page was the body imprints. It was one of the hardest things that one would be able to get at the beginning. Since the body imprints meant a special type of physique that one would have, acquiring it was a lot harder.

Just like that, I finished studying the status window and got out of the bath....

-----A/N-----

This chapter mostly contained a lot of info dumps, I know, but it was essential to explain how things worked.

Now, we can finally start the story.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

Chapter 9: Chapter 2.2 - Beginning

"How fragile..." I murmured, my gaze fixed on the silhouette reflected in the mirror. Having emerged from the bath and tended to my superficial wounds, I now had the serene mind to take a moment to assess my current state.

Standing before the mirror, I couldn't help but scrutinize my own appearance. The reflection revealed a body adorned with countless scars; I couldn't help but notice how pale my skin looked, which reminded me of all the tough times I'd been through.

In a way, that was how my face and skin looked like from the beginning of my life. Both my sister and I had pale skin, different from our counterparts, and adding my weak body to the equation, I would be alone most of the time, thus resulting in my solace.

As a third-rate villain that sold his soul to demons for his vengeance, my face was not shown in the game frequently. The player would be able to see my face if they paid attention to the side-quests related to my bullying, but even then, Astron's face was still covered most of the time.

However, now, I remembered why I had become the target of relentless bullying—the very reason my face was kept hidden. In this world, where beauty was often coveted and revered, possessing such features could prove to be a double-edged sword.

Without the strength to defend it, what was once considered a blessing could easily transform into a curse.

It was a cruel irony to be blessed with external beauty while lacking the power to protect oneself. I had learned this lesson firsthand, enduring the torment inflicted upon me due to my appearance.

My outward allure had made me a target, subjecting me to the whims of those who sought to exploit or destroy what they could not possess. In a way, this was how humans tended to work. If you can't have something, don't let others have it as well.

Isn't this the basic thought process behind the sin of envy? The very reason why beautiful girls in the classrooms would be ostracized by their peers? In a place where humans were cruel, wasn't that the biggest reason why one was the target of the sin of lust?

Didn't the women walking on the street have to be vigilant about the movements of the men following them for that very reason? Because they didn't possess the strength to protect themselves from such beasts....

As my long, flowing waves of black hair cascaded around my face, reminiscent of the night sky, I traced my fingers along the smooth strands while those thoughts filled my head.

To explain my looks, the body of Astron Natusalune possessed an otherworldly beauty, with pale silver skin shimmering softly like moonlight. His hair, as black as the night sky, fell in long, covering his face with an emo look. That was the style he had made for himself, though I wouldn't prefer it, for now, this shape of long-duration hair was very hard to change.

The violet irises, deep and enigmatic, looked ethereal with a cosmic aura.

Though of average height, my lean and agile physique told tales of years spent in rigorous training, but even that was not enough to mask the vibe of a weak body from itself.

After assessing my body, I left the bathroom, reaching for the desk that was given to me.

As the theme of the game was the hunter theme, the time of the game was naturally modern times. Seeing the tablet in front of me was proof of that.

Because Arcadia Hunter Academy was a high-quality and funded institution, they would supply the students with the necessary equipment to learn, and this tablet and the watch on my wrist were one of those.

Though because I was one of the lowest ranking students, that was all there to it for me. But that was enough for now.

'Let's see my rankings first.' I thought, opening the tablet in front of me. There on the screen, I could see my face and the student information of mine.

Name: Astron Natusalune

Age: 15

Department: Hunter Department (First Year)

Class: HA213

School Rank: 2450/2450

Profession: Daggerist

Looking at the panel in front of me, I nodded my head. It was just as in my memories.

'But, 2450/2450, huh? To think I would be ranked last....' I thought. In a way, that was one of the characteristics of Astron, being the weakest.

'This must be the reason why they had the courage to target me....' With that thought, I stood up. 'But that doesn't mean I will accept everything that happened to me just because I want to avenge my sister.'

Reflecting on my memories as Astron and my observations, one fundamental flaw stood out—I had been unable to control my emotions. Emotions are always an integral part of life, adding vibrancy and depth to our existence. However, they could either imbue our lives with radiant hues or plunge them into darkness. It was the very essence of our human experience.

Especially the emotion of guilt.... The very reason why Astron of the past had never stood against the bullies was because, inside his heart, he was blaming himself for his sister's death. Therefore, he thought it was normal for him to feel the pain that those inflicted upon him since he was guilty.

But this line of thinking was flawed. Even if Astron bore responsibility for our sister's death, it was not the bullies' place to pass judgment or inflict punishment. That task belonged solely to my sister, who had the right to determine my fate.

As the one that was filled with feelings of vengeance, one can't afford to waste time with such stupid things. 'While her blood is still on the ground, how dare I drown in the feeling of guilt? How can I let myself be stepped upon?'

'I will no longer allow such things to happen.' I thought, raising my fist. The scars on my arms were visible, making me remember the cut that was inflicted upon me just the last week. 'Next time, you will pay.'

With my fist clenched, I sat on the bed, starting to form a plan in my mind while getting rid of that flawed mentality.

Taking a seat on the bed, I began formulating a plan, casting aside the flawed mentality that had plagued me. "Now, what should I do?" I pondered.

"First and foremost, I need to address this talent limitation," I realized. The fact that my talent cap was set at four hindered my progress and growth. However, the concept of talent limits was not as straightforward as it seemed.

The term talent limit did not imply that all attributes were restricted to the same rank. Instead, it represented an average value across all attributes. For example, a mage might have a mana capacity talent limit of 7, even if their overall talent limit was 5. This meant that their talent limit for other stats would be lower.

The function of talent limits followed a logarithmic plot. Initially, one's talent cap did not have a significant impact when competing with others. But as one approached their talent limit, the difference between their peers and themselves would become more apparent.

However, the fact that my body stats had stopped improving meant one thing—I had already reached my talent limit for those attributes, even at such an early stage. This also indicated that my mana and magic power stats had higher talent limits.

"Just because this is an initial trait doesn't mean it can't be improved," I mused. Fortunately, being one of the top RPG games in the industry, the game offered options to enhance one's talent. Several methods were there for achieving this.

One such item perfectly suited my situation—the "Infinity Apple." This epic fruit had the power to lift one's talent limit, essentially rendering their talent cap nonexistent. However, such a potent item was not available from the start, as it wouldn't be too effective at the beginning, and it was prone to abuse.

It would appear at the very later stages of the game, inside one of the high-ranking dungeons at a time when the player would already achieve quite high ranks at their stats.

Thus, that option was not viable currently. 'It is not like that is too important either.'

"But there is another item that could be just what I need," I realized, skimming through the contents of the game. My thoughts landed on a special easter egg, a hidden treasure that held the potential to bolster my physical prowess.

'Vitalium Essence'

An extraordinary extract derived from the essence of an ancient tree. Legend had it that consuming this rare substance could unlock the hidden potential within one's body, pushing its limits to new heights.

'Though, obtaining it wouldn't be easy.' I mused, but that wouldn't matter anyway.

With that thought, my mind began to devise a plan, mapping out the steps required to obtain this coveted treasure...

-----A/N-----

Hope you liked the chapter.

Now, some action is on the way.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

Chapter 10: Chapter 2.3 - Beginning

When it came to such things, the first thing one needed to do was to leave the Academy, but at the same time, one also needed to be prepared.

'Nothing in this world is free.' I thought to myself while preparing myself for the night.

Since today was Friday, I was free to do whatever I wanted.

Grabbing the dagger I had used in the academy and preparing my bag, I left my room. The sun had already set, as the roads of the academy were empty.

Now, to speak about where the academy has located, we need to look at the history of this world.

As most of you know, the setting of Hunter Theme was a pretty popular novel theme. Suddenly gates appeared all around the world, mana and otherworldly invaded our world, etc.

The game followed the same setting.

Five hundred years ago, on the day of Nexus Convergence, the barriers blocking the dimensions from merging were lifted, resulting in the spatial connections forming between different dimensions.

It was on that day the fate of the planet of Elysiuma changed. Mana was introduced to the world, and following that, Elves, Orcs, Demi-humans, and Humans from other worlds invaded our world.

At first, humanity was weak, as our world had not contained any type of mana at all. Thus they were easily pushed back by the strong invaders. The humans from other worlds were not friendly either, as they had their own religion and race.

However, what is the best thing we humans are at?

It is adaptation and evolving.

As the days passed, in times of crisis, humanity advanced at a rapid pace. The technology was developed, the mana entered our genes, and most importantly, we got control of the part of our planet back.

Well, that was until demons started invading our world in the last hundred years. With the appearance of the demons, all the races of the world had a common enemy.

A race that destroyed the worlds of other races was now after the world of Elysium. That was the basic setting of the game.

And the term Hunter meant one simple thing. It symbolizes the awakened people that would stand their guard against monsters, demons, and other races. In the beginning, they were called adventurers or heroes, but as time went on, rather than becoming people that saved others, they became people that looked for their own profit.

Therefore, the name hunter was found more eligible by the hunter association.

In any case, on the first day of mana's appearance, Nexus Convergence, humanity fell into crisis. Thus, they had formed a once simple alliance.

An alliance founded by the legendary Hero, Valerion, thus getting the name of Valerion Federation, with Arcadia City being the capital of the Federation and the capital of the strongest state.

And the Arcadia Hunter Academy was the academy that belonged to such a city. In the midst of the human federation, Arcadia Hunter Academy was one of the most prestigious Hunter academies in the human alliance.

It occupied quite a huge amount of land in the midst of the city, which would be enough to call a whole district.

It contained training facilities, artificial dungeons, infinite dungeons for resources, research institutes, and many others.

Therefore, it took me quite a long time to reach the academy gates. Because it was evening, not many people would leave the academy, and since everyone here was basically superhuman, the academy encouraged them to run.

Though that wasn't the case for me, since my body was pretty weak and my stamina was low, I didn't have any strength to spare for running.

As I reached the gates of the Arcadia Hunter Academy, the gatekeeper, a stern-looking man with a badge bearing the academy's emblem, approached me. "Identity." And asked.

"Here." After showing him my identity, I waited for his response.

Scanning it, the gatekeeper nodded his head. "As you know, you must ensure your return to the academy within a reasonable timeframe. Stay vigilant and be cautious of the dangers that may lie outside." With the same stern face, he spoke.

"Yes."

Just like that, I left the academy grounds, heading towards the train station that would take me to the place where I needed to be.

Since the academy was in the midst of the city, the train station was pretty close to the entrance. Thus it didn't take me too long to get there.

Of course, there are teleportation gates in this world, but considering my balance, that was not pretty economical for now since I had only 1000 Valer at my disposal. And the train service was free for all of the students in the academy.

Valer is the currency of the human union, and I hope I don't need to tell where the name came from.

Reaching the train station, I showed the officer that was waiting at his desk my school identity.

"Ho... You are the students of Arcadia Academy, huh? You may proceed, young hunter. Safe travels." With a respectful bow, he made way for me as I walked towards the train station that would take me to my destination, Griphis City. You could see the respect shown to the students of the Academy since that meant they were hunters and superhumans in other people's eyes.

Sitting on the train, most of the seats were empty, both because it was pretty late at night and my destination was not a famous place.

Griphis City was one of the cities that didn't have much to offer. It was not a borderline city. Thus it was not filled with military forces; it was not a metropolis or academic city filled with people.

It was just a normal city. So, the seats were mostly empty, which I am rather grateful for since I don't like being in crowded places.

"The train will start moving in five seconds." As the sound of a beautiful but robotic voice entered my ears, I started recounting the things I needed to do while waiting....

As the train arrived at Griphis City, I stepped off onto the platform.

Griphis City, though not a prominent city, had its own unique charm. It had a modest skyline, with buildings of varying heights lining the streets. The cityscape was adorned with small parks, quaint cafes, and local shops.

The atmosphere felt calm and peaceful, with a hint of simplicity. People moved about their daily lives, going about their business with a sense of contentment.

It was a place where time seemed to move at a relaxed pace, offering a respite from the hustle and bustle of larger cities. Even though it was pretty late at night, the city was still buzzing with life.

But none of that mattered to me as I made my way toward my route.

The Vitalium Essence was located in the midst of the forest belonging to Griphis City.

Since it was an easter egg, it wasn't something that required combat to grab. However, acquiring it would be very hard for any type of person in this world.

Unlike many coveted treasures, it did not require combat or physical prowess to obtain. Instead, its difficulty lay in a series of intricate illusions that guarded its location.

The Vitalium Essence is the essence of a very special evolved tree that had a special characteristic. It can release substances into the air, which would make people see illusions when they get closer to the tree, resulting in them not being able to reach the tree at all, no matter how strong or fast they are.

However, of course, as a person who knew this beforehand, I was actually prepared for this case. First, grabbing a simple potion to enhance the senses of my body, I gulped it in one go.

/FLINCH/

Making me flinch from the moment I gulped the potion since the wind blowing made me feel cold.

However, that was a necessary process since the next thing I was going to do was pretty dangerous.

Taking a deep breath, I bound a blindfold tightly around my eyes. By eliminating my reliance on sight, I aimed to nullify the effects of the illusions that would deceive me.

'With this, we can start now.' I thought to myself, feeling the fabric touching my eyes. It was slightly uncomfortable, thanks to my enhanced senses, but I ignored it and went on.

/HOWL/ / HOWL/

With the blindfold tightly secured around my eyes, I relied on my heightened senses to navigate the treacherous forest.

Every step sent vibrations through the ground, providing valuable feedback on the terrain beneath me.

I could feel the texture of the soil beneath my boots, discerning between soft earth and the occasional protrusion of a tree root. It was a delicate dance as I adjusted my stride to maintain balance and stability.

As I ventured deeper into the forest, the air carried an array of scents that painted a vivid picture of my surroundings.

The aroma of damp earth mingled with the sweet fragrance of blooming flowers while the crisp scent of pine needles whispered of the nearby coniferous trees. These olfactory cues served as markers, helping me chart a course through the labyrinth of illusions.

/RUSTLE/ /RUSTLE/ /WHISTLE/

In the absence of sight, my hearing sharpened to detect even the slightest sound.

The gentle rustling of leaves overhead guided me through the dense foliage, providing hints of the wind's direction. I listened intently, attuned to any irregularities in the natural rhythm, alert for potential dangers or disturbances. 'I am pretty close.' I thought.

My knowledge from the game proved invaluable during this sensory ordeal. I recalled snippets of information gathered from fellow players and hidden in the depths of my memory; in a way, even on Earth, I was someone that liked to pay attention to the little details.

However, my memory of hearing was still lacking behind my optical memory. Thus, I still had a hard time getting there.

As I persevered through the illusions, my steps guided by instinct and knowledge, a faint smell entered my nose. An incredibly disgusting smell it was.

'Just as the description.' I thought. In the game, whenever you came closer to the tree, your character would respond, saying how foul this stench was.

And then, as if emerging from a dream, I stood before a tree.

Its branches stretched toward the heavens, adorned with delicate leaves that glowed with an ethereal luminescence. The air around the tree seemed to hum with an ancient power, filling me with a sense of awe and reverence.

It was the tree that housed the Vitalium Essence since I was finally able to see the shimmering aura inside the tree.

With a steady hand, I reached out, feeling the rough texture of the bark beneath my fingertips as the essence flew through my body, filling it with energy.....

-----A/N-----

At first, I was going to make this chapter filled with action, but for an easter egg, I thought that would be a bit cliché. Hope you liked this chapter.

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