

Hunter 104

Chapter 104: Limit Break

Submerging his consciousness in meditation, he didn't enter the heightened state of focus like he had done last time. There was virtually no change from any other time he had used the skill, despite the recent upgrade.

This was honestly a relief to Jake. In the back of his mind, he did briefly have a fear that his usual relaxing meditation would now always result in him suddenly being incredibly focused. And while focusing is good, it doesn't exactly help the mind relax. The whole 'losing time'-thing wasn't very attractive either.

Satisfied that his meditation hadn't accidentally been made worse, he began going over the long list of notifications. The system was nice as always with them, organizing them into different batches the moment the thought even occurred to him.

The first of which was of the many kills he had gotten. 124 in total, to be exact. Looking them over, it indeed was an impressive sight.

You have slain [Steeltusk Boar – lvl 77] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 114000 TP earned

...

You have slain [Steeltusk Boar – lvl 88] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 136000 TP earned

From most powerful to the weakest was 11 levels. A higher level difference between beasts than any of the other enemies he had encountered in dungeons. One had to consider that this one only had two types, though. One of them being the boss

It also explained why some had been harder to kill than others. 11 levels were nothing to be scoffed at.

Overall their levels were high. He found it quite insane to think that most of these Steeltusk Boars were higher than the Den Mother. Going by strength, the Badger Den's boss was still stronger by a lot compared to all of them, but the feeling of amazement remained.

Of course, the high levels of the enemies had also corresponded to earning a nice batch of levels, boosted further by Mark of the Ambitious Hunter.

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 66 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

...

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 71 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 61 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

...

'DING!' Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 63 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

Feels like I am getting these windfalls more and more these days, he thought, thinking about how he only hours ago had also gotten a batch of levels in his profession.

Six levels in his class just like that. Three in his race too, which meant a total of 39 free points. He was about to place them all into agility but decided against it at the very last moment.

He still had new class skills to consider, after all.

Ambitious Hunter class skills available

Jake could feel his excitement as he opened the list of available skills. He was hoping for some really nice new things but was fast disappointed as he saw only two new entries - one of which was a common-rarity skill.

[Waterwalking (Common)] – A much-coveted technique for all those who are less than stellar in the art of swimming. Cover your feet in a layer of mana, allowing you to walk and run on water. Mana usage is negligible.

He didn't exactly know what he expected. Yeah, it was the ability to walk on water, something he himself had just discovered how to do.

Sure, the skill would likely allow him to far more easily maintain it, probably even be able to fight with it actively and use other skills. But he still felt like he could learn how to do all that without too much hassle. Heck, it had been hard to learn how to channel mana to conjure arrows while fighting, but he had figured that out.

Needless to say, he skipped the skill. He would rather pick something else he had been offered at an earlier level than that garbage.

As for the next skill... it was most certainly a lot more interesting.

[Limit Break (Rare)] – Sometimes, one needs to go above and beyond. Break your limits, temporarily increasing the effect of all stats at the cost of increased stamina consumption. Increase by up to 10% for double stamina consumption. Increase by up to 20% for quadruple stamina consumption, with the hunter afterward entering a state of weakness based on Limit Break duration and magnitude. Increasing by more than 20% will lead to severe consequences.

He had to read it over a few times, his smile only growing with every reread. It wasn't hard to determine that he had gotten this from his experimenting with increasing his stamina's internal flow - a method that had proven effective but highly flawed in nearly every aspect.

With a skill, however, it was different. It was controlled. Limit Break would allow him to do it 'right' and be boosted and corrected by the system itself. Were the effects of Limit Break something he could theoretically achieve himself? Possibly. But for once, he was more than happy to take the easy route.

It was just too good. 10% increase to the effect of all stats for only double stamina consumption was more than worth it. Jake could even go to 20% if he needed the extra boost. He believed that the feeling of weakness he had after his escape from the dungeon was the kind of weakness the skill talked about. Though hopefully to a far lesser degree if he didn't use the skill for long.

Another point of interest was the fact that it straight-up used percentages. It was extremely uncharacteristic of the system to throw out all the vagueness and just give Jake the numbers like that. The only other skill that used a number like that was Big Game Hunter, and even that was just to limit how far above his level the scaling would work.

It was a nice change of pace, and he hoped that more skills would do that in the future. A sentiment he very much doubted.

Doing a mental shrug, he reckoned not much more thought was required as he swiftly selected the skill.

He felt the knowledge enter his head, and he instantly knew how to use it. And use it he did. Activating the skill, he felt his internal energy speed up, and he felt his body become more powerful. He had only increased it by 10%, but it was truly noticeable.

It was like he had instantly gained a total of more than 450 stats, and the only cost was his stamina decreasing at a faster rate. He deactivated the skill and felt the energy cycle slow and return to normal as if nothing had ever happened.

There was no long time letting out excessive energy, no long windup or wind down for the skill. Both happened in moments, and it didn't leave Jake with a single ounce of weakness afterward. It honestly felt like a cheat of a skill.

Sadly he had to suspend his practice as his stamina was still far too low from the battle before. His arm and upper body were both starting to heal up, but he still couldn't really move around, so he reentered meditation.

Opening his eyes once more, he checked the time and noted that quite a few hours had passed. Checking the tutorial panel, he noted the time.

[Tutorial Panel]

Duration: 4 days & 5:21:52

Only 4 days and a bit of change left... I hope I make it, Jake thought, as he closed down the panel and instead opened his status page. At the same time, he also dumped all of his excess free points into endurance. Stamina had just gotten a whole lot more value.

Status

Name: Jake Thayne

Race: [Human (E) – lvl 63]

Class: [Ambitious Hunter – lvl 71]

Profession: [Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper – lvl 55]

Health Points (HP): 5258/5800

Mana Points (MP): 5617/5650

Stamina: 4024/4620

Stats

Strength: 429

Agility: 611

Endurance: 462

Vitality: 580

Toughness: 417

Wisdom: 565

Intelligence: 282

Perception: 1107

Willpower: 354

Free points: 0

Titles:

[Forerunner of the New World], [Bloodline Patriarch],[Holder of a Primordial's True Blessing],
[Dungeoneer IV], [Dungeon Pioneer IV], [Legendary Prodigy]

Class Skills: [Basic One-Handed Weapons (Inferior), [Advanced Stealth (Common)], [Advanced Archery (Common)], [Hunter's Sight (Uncommon)], [Basic Twin Fang Style (Uncommon)], [Basic Shadow Vault of Umbra (Uncommon)], [Splitting Arrow (Uncommon)] [Big Game Hunter (Rare)], [Infused Powershot

(Rare)], [Mark of the Ambitious Hunter (Rare)], [Descending Dark Fang (Rare)], [Limit Break (Rare)], [Moment of the Primal Hunter (Legendary)]

Profession Skills: [Herbology (Common)], [Brew Potion (Common)], [Concoct Poison (Common)], [Alchemist's Purification (Common)], [Alchemical Flame (Common)], [Toxicology (Uncommon)], [Cultivate Toxin (Uncommon)], [Malefic Viper's Poison (Rare)], [Palate of the Malefic Viper (Rare)], [Sense of the Malefic Viper (Rare)], [Blood of the Malefic Viper (Epic)], [Touch of the Malefic Viper (Epic)], [Scales of the Malefic Viper (Ancient)]

Blessing: [True Blessing of the Malefic Viper (Blessing - True)]

Race Skills:[Endless Tongues of the Myriad Races (Unique)], [Identify (Common)], [Thoughtful Meditation (Uncommon)], [Shroud of the Primordial (Divine)]

Bloodline:[Bloodline of the Primal Hunter (Bloodline Ability - Unique)]

Looking it over, he thought of all the unexpected gains he had gotten during this dungeon dive - levels in his profession and two skill upgrades, as well as a big load of levels in his class.

His stats hadn't grown that much since last he checked, but with a few free points invested, his agility had gotten above 600. As an archer, he found it fitting for it to be his second-highest stat. Vitality and wisdom both were very closely behind, though.

Closing his status, he checked himself over and moved his right arm a bit. It was still a bit numb, but it appeared to function quite well. A health potion should be enough to fix it right up. Feeling done going over things, he swam upwards once more.

His last Mark of the Ambitious Hunter had run out less than an hour ago, and the boar inflicted with it had still been in the other area.

Jake had thought about precisely the range limit, the maximum duration, and how both of them were far higher than he had anticipated. The mark did run out faster on stronger foes, but even on the powerful boar, it had lasted more than six hours.

Considering that it was so far above his level, he found that quite respectable.

Reaching the surface once more, he now, for the first time, truly saw the carnage he had caused. Corpses strewn all over, blood pooling in every little crevice of rocks, and he even noticed a lot of the water around the shore of the lake carried a tinge of red.

The palette of the valley had changed to a far more colorful one for sure. Their comrades had left more than a hundred corpses behind, and it was a gruesome sight.

Many of the corpses were mutilated beyond recognition. Much of the mutilation hadn't been done by Jake, but by the rampaging boars flinging earth spells all over the place. Not to say that the hunter wasn't also responsible for a lot of the damage. The missing heads were nearly all him.

Jake had learned long ago that a corpse wasn't as resilient as the living thing. If he had to guess, he would say it was because it lost the effect of the inner energy running through its body and any passive skills, making it stronger.

Whatever the case, it meant that the damage done by the other boars to their now-dead comrades was far more severe.

A weird thought entered his head as he glanced over the scene. Why didn't he care? Why didn't the sight result in even the slightest feeling of disgust or apprehension?

Only two months ago, he had been an office worker, and the most blood he had ever seen outside of television and the internet was when his brother got a really bad nosebleed that one time. However, now he could stare out into a valley filled with mutilated corpses and not bat an eye.

The thing is, though, the sight had never bothered him. Even from his first kill, he didn't think much of it.

Jake shook the thought out of his head. It was good that he was desensitized to such things as it would only be a hindrance. He had better things to do and was on a timer. He just knew it was important to be aware of it. Being desensitized to killing mindless beasts was good, but he didn't want to be someone who could kill humans thoughtlessly.

After a brief glance at the countdown till the end of the tutorial to remind himself of his limited time, he decided that he had time for one last round of alchemy. His stamina was still a bit low anyway, and he did need to do a bit of alchemy anyway.

One reason was that for every stat increase, his potions got better. Every time his skills used in the crafting process improved, his potions got better. And it had been far too long since he last made a batch.

His issue now was also that he had already consumed all the good stamina and health potions he had left. The ones remaining were some he had crafted a long time ago, and the best of them only restored around 500 health or stamina. The stamina ones being the worst, as he was far better at making health potions.

On the mana potions front, he was still good. Mainly because he hadn't used as many of them, Mana had never really been what limited him while fighting, and with his new Limit Break, he doubted it would become an issue compared to stamina.

And as he was only able to drink one potion an hour, be it stamina, health, or mana, he would have to drink whatever was most needed, which tended to be health potions during fights and stamina to quickly get back in shape after finishing one.

Sitting down, he took out his mixing bowl, as well as the ingredients. He was happy that his necklace allowed the ingredients to remain fresh, as he hadn't exactly been as industrious as he should when collecting the herbs he came across.

He would begin with a batch of health potions as he added the water and started the brewing. It had been a while since he last crafted, and it didn't take more than a few moments for him to notice how much easier it was than usual.

The flow of mana was as smooth as it could be, and he felt his control reach a new apex. He transformed the mana into vital energy according to the formula and felt the benefits of making dark-affinity mana show themselves in that process, much like how it had helped him the other way around in the sewer dungeon.

It was a welcome reprieve to return to doing some alchemy. However, from an observer's viewpoint, the sight of a single individual sitting serenely in a valley of corpses would come off as less than idyllic.

40 minutes later, he finished his first batch of health potions. Filling 8 bottles, he began cleaning his bowl to prepare his stamina potions.

This would be his last round of crafting before facing down the rest of the tutorial. Needless to say, only the best would be good enough.

He had a vague feeling that he would need it.