

Hunter 105

Chapter 105: Falling rocks

Packing up, Jake looked over his potions one last time. A few dozen health potions, twenty-two stamina potions, and a good nine bottles of Necrotic Poison. Every single one of the potions and poison the most potent iterations he had ever made.

If he had more time, he would have attempted common-rarity health potions, but that was a big if. He didn't have time. He had four days left to clear the rest of this dungeon, and very likely one more dungeon, the one with the King of the Forest in it. In other words, he was really in a rush.

He had likely actually saved time by his little trick with the Crystalized Essence. A welcome surprise for sure, but he would take anything he could get. With his new Limit Break, he had confidence in being able to do it in time. But not if he dallied around.

His arm and supply of stamina potions were both in peak condition also. It had taken him a few hours to do this alchemy, and he had drunk some potions in between to get back in top shape. In other words, he was back in business.

At first, he had thought himself smart and tried using Limit Break while doing alchemy to get that sweet 10% boost to all stats. But... after only a minute began to feel restless like his body was begging for him to move.

After only a few more minutes, he began to feel spasms coming on, and he had to get up and actually move about. In the end, Limit Break was based on speeding up the flow of stamina... and when he did that, he needed some kind of outlet. Sure, he could maybe just pour a shitload more mana into the concoction or brew, but that would be kind of pointless as it would ruin the crafting process.

In conclusion... Limit Break didn't do anything for him when it came to alchemy.

Rushing forward, he started sprinting towards the gorge. He didn't fear the beasts charging the other way, as he was pretty sure he could now outrun them.

It didn't take him that long to run through it, and he found himself in the pillar-filled valley once more. Neither did it take him long to see his first prey.

The boars had once again proven their utter stupidity. Instead of staying together, they were all spread out in the valley. As if they had already forgotten the slaughter that happened only a few hours ago, they were just happily munching away at stone or even lying on the side relaxing.

Only the Horde Leader appeared a bit more aware, as it had erected walls of earth around itself. Jake called it more aware, but in reality, all it really did was block off its own sight of any of its mates while selfishly protecting itself.

Counting his targets, he saw only a total of 14 boars and the Horde Leader. His plan was pretty simple. Pick off the spread out boars one by one, and then finally take down the boss. Easy and simple.

In fact, it actually was simple. The scattered boars made it easy for Jake to take them out without attracting the others. At most, he would have to fight two at a time, which realistically would only be one considering the first would die or be incapacitated by his opening Infused Powershot.

The first boar went down unceremoniously as Jake attacked, and he even used his newly acquired skill.

Limit Breaking to 10%, he felt his stats increase, and his internal energy speed increased likewise. Not that it ultimately would have mattered as the oblivious boar had its head obliterated by an arrow.

The resulting explosion did grab the attention of three other beasts, who all ran towards their dead friend. Little did it matter as Jake had already taken off away from them, making his way towards another boar far away from the first.

Being far enough away, they didn't detect his light footsteps on the ground. To be extra safe, he had even coated his feet in a layer of mana like when he was walking on water. He didn't know if it helped or not, but he didn't see any loss in doing so.

Activating and deactivating his Limit Break was unbelievably easy. It took only a moment, and like a light switch, he could turn it on and off. It did take a bit of time to fully activate as the flow increased, but it was in the milliseconds.

He reckoned it was only for the 10% increase, but that in itself would be more than enough.

This continued as he dashed back and forth, picking off the beasts spread out as they were. He got to a boar, killed it swiftly, and then rushed to the other end of the valley where a new unsuspecting victim awaited.

The three gathered around the first boar he killed had even spread out once more after only a few minutes. Jake couldn't help but find their intelligence, or lack thereof, laughable.

Other beasts he had encountered in the dungeons tended to be smarter. Well, maybe the badgers were still pretty damn stupid in general, but the Alphas and the Den Mother had at least a semblance of intelligence and logic.

The smartest enemies he had encountered had to be the stags. While the two ratmen he had met had been rather smart, the Nest Watcher even capable of speech and using a weapon like a human, he still would place the Great White Stag above them.

It had deployed far more meticulously thought-out methods in its dungeon. It had baited Jake in with its attacks, used complicated magic, and made the entire damn dungeon into a huge ritualistic circle. And while Jake had broken the ritual, he didn't believe for a second it had been because he had outsmarted the stag.

Even the normal stags had been clever. They used tactics with the deer surrounding them, healing them from behind as they engaged in melee. It had made them by far the most annoying type of enemy to deal with.

These boars were at the entire other end of the spectrum. They were just straight-up dumb. Jake could attack them, and only a few minutes later, they would just go back to their daily business, having totally not made the connection between their headless friend and possible danger.

It was such an easily exploitable weakness; one Jake gladly took advantage of.

After only an hour, the final boar outside of the boss lay dead on the ground. Jake had gotten another level after the 6th beast, putting him at level 72. The four free points straight into endurance.

Sitting down once more, he entered meditation to get up to tip-top shape once more. Before doing so, he consumed a stamina potion to save time. He hadn't lost a single point of health during any of the 'fights'.

Three hours later, his eyes opened once more.

All three resources full, his bow ready, and his anticipation high. He felt the Horde Leader still hiding within its shell of stone. Jake didn't know how long it planned on staying within, and he had no intention of waiting to find out.

He looked around for a bit until he got an excellent idea. Running towards one of the pillars of stacked stones relatively close to the dome, he climbed it in a fluid motion. Getting to the top, he began weaving his threads of mana.

Making a web, he began spinning it around the topmost stones. Several times he made sure he wove the strings into a solid rope. Hundreds of rows later, and he was holding onto quite the solid one.

Jumping down from the pillar once more, he found himself standing at the bottom of it. Reaching into his spatial storage, he pulled out an item he hadn't looked at for a long time. The Greatsword of Nature that he had taken from the Aspiring Blade of Nature he had killed.

He knew he couldn't bind the blade to him due to incompatibility, but that didn't mean he couldn't make use of it. It was the closest thing he had to a pickaxe.

In an act that would undoubtedly have made the blade's former owner curse him, Jake began hacking away at the pillar. The stones were tough, far tougher than regular stone, but he could still get through it.

It was terrific in a kind of sad way how the boar still hadn't reacted to anything he was doing. The dome it was hiding within was only a mere 70 meters or so away from him, and it had to feel what he was doing. Yet it remained idle, allowing him to do as he pleased.

A good chopping later, and a lot of the bottom of the pillar was cleaved away. He had made a quite lovely alcove into the huge pillar if he said so himself. Moreover, he could feel the entire pillar being a bit... wobbly.

Smiling, he ran to the other side of the dome, directly away from the pillar, rope in tow. It didn't take a genius to figure out what he was planning on doing.

The pillar's top was still bound up tightly by his rope of mana, and the foundation of the pillar weakened. The entire pillar looked just about to fall over.

It would indeed be a shame if someone were to say, I don't know, 'accidentally' collapse it on top of the big piggie, he thought, his smile as big as the piggy he was about to turn into pork.

The plan was ready, and so was he. Nearly. He climbed up another pillar directly opposite of the one he had bound up and primed for collapse. It was never bad to have the high ground.

With the rope in hand, he looked down at the dome. Pulling on his rope of mana, the wobbly pillar already started ever so slowly tipping over.

Throwing the rope to the side, he took out his bow as he began channeling his Infused Powershot. Limit Breaking to 20% instantly, he felt his entire body filling up with energy as the air around him reverberated with power, and the stone beneath his feet cracking. His sight and arrow directly aimed at the dome below.

In what could only be described as catastrophic, the more than a hundred-meter tall pillar fell over. Thousands of tons fell upon the dome of stone that protected the Horde Leader - a dome that cracked like an eggshell when the pillar crashed into it.

SQUEAL

Jake heard the scream from the beast, and at the same time, with Hunter's Sight activated, he found his opening. An opening between the cracked stone, allowing his arrow to pierce through unobstructed.

Letting go of the bowstring, the topmost stone of the pillar he stood on exploded into dust as the explosions of might was directed down into it. As for the arrow, it flew straight through that tiny opening just as he intended.

A second explosion sounded out below as the arrow hit the Horde Leader. Not even a second had passed since the pillar collapsed upon it. The damage was disastrous for the boar.

But a boss does not fall so easily. Jake felt it through the stones below him before he saw it. The shaking.

The entire valley quaked as the Horde Leader made its move. The pillar he was standing on began toppling over, and it was far from the only one. The earthquake extended through the entire valley as nearly every single pillar began cracking and falling over.

Yet the Horde Leader was far from done.

All the rocks that covered its body were pushed away as it turned to dust. And finally, Jake could see the boss itself clearly.

Its entire back was covered in wounds, and from how it didn't put any weight on one of its legs, he guessed it was broken. The impact from the pillar had clearly not been kind to it.

More damaging was the massive hole in its stomach. It looked like a cannonball had smashed into it - a crater formed upon its body from the impact. Jake recognized a wound like that easily. Even with his more durable arrows from upgrading it to uncommon-rarity, it was clear that they were still far from infallible.

The arrow had disintegrated upon impact on its robust hide. Just like Jake's common-rarity arrows had. A testament to how powerful the boar's innate defense was and how powerful the arrow from his fully charged, full power Infused Powershot was.

Despite the lethal-looking wound, the beast looked far from downed. Its eyes red, and the single tusk that extended from its mouth was now glowing with energy.

Jake had to jump off the falling pillar, letting gravity do its work as it brought him to the ground. He scrambled to jump to somewhere without collapsing pillars as he attempted not to get smashed to pieces.

He wasn't particularly confident coming out unscathed if he were to be squashed beneath a hundred-ton boulder, even with enhanced stats.

Yet even while falling, he had time to release another two arrows. The boar's limited perception once again hurt it, as both arrows penetrated straight into the wound left by the Infused Powershot. The damage from the arrows alone was pretty low, but the same could not be said by what they were coated in.

The most potent Necrotic Poison that he had crafted that very day burned into its flesh, corroding it. The first arrow hadn't had time to properly inflict the poison as it broke apart, but these two arrows embedded themselves in its flesh, spreading it quickly.

Landing on the ground, Jake felt it instantly. Two red eyes were turning his way, locking onto him and burning with rage.

Mana swirled around the beast as Jake felt it make its move. Falling rocks all around the boar stopped in midair. Tens of boulders were suspended for a few moments before they once again began descending - this time directly towards Jake.

Like a meteor shower, they barreled towards him. Cursing, Jake was forced to leap backward as he tried to avoid the attack. Stone after stone impacting the ground where he had been only moments ago, creating craters and sending even more rocks flying through the air.

Taking shelter behind a huge boulder, he thought himself safe, as he felt the earth beneath him churn, as his danger sense warned him of the impending attack.

Shadow Vaulting to the side instantly, countless spikes of earth shot up where he had just stood. Landing on the ground after his vault, he was forced to repeat the same action as more spikes emerged.

Knowing that the boar used vibrating to locate him, he decided to go for a bit of distraction. Strands of mana flew out of him, picking up rocks within his sphere. He could easily lift his own bodyweight with mana alone, something he was putting to full use.

Lifting the rocks off the ground with his mana, he simply tossed them upwards. Not by much, but it was enough.

When the first rock hit the ground, it was swiftly impaled by spears of earth. The same for the second one and the third. The fourth was, however, spared as the boar seemed to pick up on the trickery. Or maybe it just couldn't keep up.

Jake kept using that tactic as he got into a position that would allow him to counterattack. He couldn't see the boar due to the endless amounts of dust being kicked up, but his mark made him fully aware of the still unmoving beast.

Throwing a few more rocks, he landed and stood unmoving as he began channeling another Infused Powershot. As the mana built up, the ground beneath him quaked from the power he was building up - a miscalculation on Jake's part.

He felt his danger sense warn him as he was forced to release the arrow. However, it was too late as several earth spears struck him on his lower body.

Blood was drawn as they managed to penetrate his pants. The ones that hit his feet didn't manage to even leave a mark on the boots, but that didn't mean they failed to do damage as the impact alone hurt like hell.

The arrow he had fired flew true, striking the boar, creating yet another significantly smaller wound. His aim had been slightly altered, landing just above one of its legs, making it buckle down from the arrow now sticking out of it.

Jake was also down on one knee as he lifted his gaze up from his injured legs. With a snort from the boars' snout, the air separating them cleared as a gust of wind came out.

For the first time, the two made eye-contact, neither showing the slightest inclination of surrender.