

## Hunter 108

### Chapter 108: King

The King of the Forest lifted its ivory hand and pointed one of its sharp claw-like fingers at him. Jake's sense of danger exploded as he dodged to the side. Where he had stood only a moment earlier exploded as if a colossal hammer had just struck. The blast didn't hit him directly but was still enough to blast him away as he was pelted with rock and dust.

He barely managed to stabilize himself, as the King suddenly was within his sphere - right in front of him. He tried dodging backward, but it was too late. In a movement faster than he could in any way dodge, the creature lifted its finger once more and simply poked his shoulder. Imbedding its claw to its root.

Jake felt the pain as it entered him and then exited out his back as he tumbled backward. The King simply looked down at him, blood pouring out of the hole in the human's shoulder.

"Where did all the fight go?"

The creature appeared to slide forward as it lifted its foot, kicking the hunter as he was already lying down. Jake flew tens of meters away, hitting the volcano's inner wall more than sixty meters away.

"Show me. Show me the power of the one who has dared to come before me."

Jake didn't respond as he was still reeling from the kick. His ribs hurt like hell after only one half-arsed attack, and his health had dropped by far more than he found reasonable. But he didn't give up; he refused to.

He quickly jumped up as he activated Badger Jump to get some height. He took out his bow and an arrow as he fired a Splitting Arrow towards the figure below in an attempt t-

“Weak.”

The arrows were blasted away midair, as Jake too was hit by a wave of force sending him into the wall once more, this time far harder than before. Coughing out a mouthful of blood, he tried to put the bow back in his inventory but failed as it flew away from him, straight into the claws of the King.

Lifting the bow and observing it for a bit with the emotionless glowing eyes, the King tossed the bow up into the air.

“An archer without his bow.”

The creature then lifted its palm and fired a wave of force at the weapon. It was blasted off out of the hole at the top of the volcano-like mountain, to who-knows-where.

“How shameful.”

The hunter who had just lost his bow had at this point just fallen down unto the hard stone once more, as he tried to stand up. His entire body was aching from the blast, and he felt like he had just been hit by a truck.

It was looking bad. Really bad.

The King of the Forest lifted its hand once more in Jake's direction, as the human felt like a hand grabbed him. Unable to resist, he was pulled towards the creature - right into its open claw that closed around his neck.

Jake had both his eyes open wide as his danger sense kept telling him to just fucking run. Something it had done from the very first attack.

Claws closed around his neck, and he felt them slightly penetrate his skin. He stared directly into the two wisps of lights that were in its eyes as it regarded the human. Even without a face, Jake could easily feel the disdain, arrogance, and... playfulness in its eyes.

"I could kill you here and now. But the 'fight' is not over yet, now is it? But you appear to have lost your weapon, little archer..."

It lifted its palm and pointed it towards the side of the volcano. Power gathered for but a moment before a blast was released, shearing off the entire side of the mountain. A blast that would have ripped Jake apart if it had ever hit him... making it clear exactly how unserious the King was.

"...here, let me help you go find it."

With that, it tossed Jake into the air just like it had done with the bow. And just like his weapon, it blasted him with a wave of force, sending him flying.

This time, he managed to use the Scales of the Malefic Viper just before the blast hit him, lessening the damage significantly as he also crossed his arms to block. He was still sent flying, though, as he found himself hundreds of meters up in the air above the tutorial zone's inner area.

However, he didn't have time to enjoy the view as gravity swiftly took charge, forcing him downwards once more. He fell towards one of the valleys as he braced himself for impact. Luckily, terminal velocity was still in effect, and his highly enhanced body made the fall damage only hurt like hell.

Hitting the ground, he created a small crater. The scales still covering parts of his body helped reduce the pain and damage to almost nothing. It was nothing to feel happy about, however. His health was down to less than half, and to make it even worse, when he tried to block the blow earlier, he felt the bones in both his arms crack.

He quickly took out a health potion and drank it as he restored quite a lot of the lost HP. His wounds also visibly healed, and he felt his full range of movement return. Now the question was what to do.

Relying on Advanced Stealth, he tried to hide as he fled from where he had landed. A direct confrontation with that monster that was the King of the Forest was out of the question. He needed a plan if he wanted even a sliver of a chance. But it was really, REALLY looking bad.

His bow was gone, and even if he had it, he was unsure of how much damage his Infused Powershot could do even if he managed to land one undetected. Maybe he could make something with his alchemy...

He needed to find somewhere and hide. If worst came to worst, then the tutorial panel still showed the countdown for the end of the tutorial. He only needed to survive for a few days, and he would get out. The timer was still there, so if he could only make it till then...

As he was running, his thoughts were suddenly interrupted as he got a powerful premonition of danger. He quickly hid behind a tree as he tried to make himself as small as possible. Advanced Stealth was working overtime to keep him hidden.

He saw the creature descend from above, its bony feet digging into the soft soil in his sphere. It was still twenty meters away from him, as Jake did all he could not to be found.

It started walking forward, as its voice sounded out in his mind once more.

"I know you are here. Why hide from the inevitable? Have you finally given up all hope? Seen the futility in your actions?" Jake heard its voice echo out, as he felt the childish playfulness and contempt.

"Or are you just yet another beast fearing the predator that hunts it. A defenseless prey waiting to be devoured by the strong."

Jake closed his eyes as he heard the voice. The King was able to speak in his mind despite being unaware of where he was. At least he believed it to be like that.

Jake was pissed at the King's words but wasn't stupid enough to let himself be provoked like that... but it did give him an idea. Suppressing his nervousness and fear, he opened his eyes once more as he stepped out from behind the tree. It was time for him to make a move... to grasp some kind of momentum.

“Oh, the little one appears.”

Jake didn't answer but simply charged. He thought he saw what he could only interpret as a smirk in the eyes of the creature, but he didn't mind. In fact, he welcomed it. If it wanted him dead, he would die... the fact that his Moment of the Primal Hunter hadn't triggered yet was proof of that.

Taking out a weapon, it wasn't his usual shortsword or dagger, but merely a regular dagger. One, he swung down towards the King of the Forest.

He was met with a barrier that stopped the dagger less than a centimeter from the creature's chest.

“What are you hoping to accomplish with this?” it taunted him as Jake once more ignored it.

He let go of the dagger that was stuck in the barrier, and the King simply flicked it to the side. However, Jake wasn't done as he took out yet another weapon and attacked, this time a random axe from when he did a sweep of items in the valleys.

It crashed down and met the invisible barrier again, with the King of the Forest, this time just sending Jake tumbling back with a shockwave. In the process, he lost the axe's grip, after which the King caught it out of the air with his telekinesis and flicked it away into the shrubbery.

Jake once more got up, as he summoned yet another weapon to attack – a random sword this time. The same thing repeated, with Jake being tossed away and the weapon disposed of. He could feel the enjoyment in the eyes of his foe, as he clearly had a lot of fun by playing around with Jake.

Yet he kept attacking. Greatsword, axe, dagger, Jake used every single weapon except for his Venomfang and the rare items he had. All of which were now thrown all over the tutorial like discarded garbage. Yet he continued.

He threw a bottle of poison at the King, his face full of fear. He heard the creature's chuckle in his mind as it merely allowed it to hit its barrier, the bottle shattering, and the liquid harmlessly slid down said barrier.

He threw a few more bottles, his look of fear and despair increasing with every bottle. Finally, he took out one of the more notable items he had gotten during his sweep.

[Seed of Entangling Roots (Uncommon)] – A seed filled with the dense power of life and nature. Infuse mana and throw it to the ground for roots to sprout and entangle your chosen foe. The seed is consumed upon use.

This one, too, was thrown and once more met with disdain. It hit the ground just in front of the King of the Forest as tens of roots swiftly sprouted forth. They entangled up the creature entirely, hiding its willow form.

“What a fun toy.”

A circular sphere of distorted air flew out from the King's body, the roots shredded in the process, not a single root left unbroken. Yet it had confirmed something to the hunter.

Jake's look of despair deepened further as he started shaking. He took out several more items and threw them at the King. Chairs, books, bottles, pieces of armor, just random things from his spatial storage. As he did, the King started laughing loudly.

"How pathetic."

Jake's only response was to throw another bottle, followed by a piece of wood, a metal gauntlet, and then finally a particular small item mixing in between the junk.

The King of the Forest was enjoying himself immensely as he kept laughing. The items hit his barrier, as he swatted away the larger ones. He didn't notice, or perhaps didn't care, about the small black marble that shattered when it hit the barrier, and then...

...darkness descended.

A twister of pure dark mana sprung forth from the marble, all of it drilling its way into the body of the King. Jake could feel the resentment and bloodlust in the air, and for the first time, he heard something not pompous out of the creature.

"WHAT IS THIS?"



Jake had completely dispelled his faux look of despair and fear as he chuckled internally. Hope you enjoy the final gift of the Nest Watcher. Of course, the small bead had been the item the third Beast Lord had handed him.

[Dark Bead of the Nest Watcher (Epic)] – A bead made of condensed dark mana. The last hope of the Nest Watcher to get revenge on the King of the Forest. Can be thrown at foes to inflict them with a powerful Curse of Darkness upon shattering. The curse will severely limit perception and drain energy until dispelled. All of the resentment of the nest will be unleashed if used on the King of the Forest.

The otherwise impenetrable barrier that defended the King was now being corroded by dark mana, as more and more of it made its way into his body. Despite Jake being so close, all of it completely ignored him, focusing solely on the King.

But Jake was far from done. Summoning yet another item from his spatial storage, he charged towards the creature that was flailing around, screaming. Without a doubt, one the King would have recognized as the tusk of the Horde Leader.

While the King couldn't react appropriately, he could still respond. His arm raised as he aimed a palm towards the hunter charging at him, releasing a blast of energy.

The attack was heavily telegraphed, allowing Jake to dodge to the side before it even came. A sagacious decision as this blast wasn't one of the casual ones the King had fired earlier.

Soil and rocks were torn up from the ground as the wave was fired out. It flew for around twenty meters before encountering its first tree, which resulted in an explosion of splinters. The wave continued unabated as it created a long path of destruction across the tutorial zone's entire inner area.

The King didn't have time to fire another attack as Jake reached it. He tried to dodge but failed as Jake pushed the tusk forward. It met a hastily erected barrier, one it pierced straight through, the feeble means of defense cracking like a broken mirror.

Jake had aimed for where he hoped the heart would be, but instead, hit what he assumed was its stomach. The bark covering the creatures' body offered little resistance as the tusk penetrated straight through and out the King's back. He wanted to quickly pull it out and attack again, but the King was done playing.

"ENOUGH!"

Jake opened his eyes wide as his danger sense exploded with warnings. He hastily covered the entire front of his body in scales as a shockwave hit him.

As if a bomb had exploded, he was launched back hundreds of meters, all the way to the other end of the valley, where he was only stopped by being embedded in a wall of rock. Again.

The destruction wrought by the wrath of the King was readily apparent. A vast crater had appeared; hundreds of trees now lay prone all over the valley, snapped in two by the blast.

He looked around for the King and soon saw him once more. Floating in the middle of the crater a few meters off the ground. The King didn't look very happy.

The eyes that only moments earlier were shining with bright light were far dimmer now. The curses of the Nest Watcher and Horde Leader was now burning and chewing at him from within. The aura the King gave off was weaker for sure.

Its body was clearly damaged. Black spots covered the bark-like skin, but the most significant wound was, of course, the one left by the tusk. A huge hole that Jake could look straight through marked the middle of his body, and from it dripped... blood.

So the damn thing can bleed, he thought, as he sneered, oddly proud of himself for doing any damage to the damn monster. Of course, he would do far more than just make it bleed.

The King was floating there as the creature levitated a bloody tusk up beside him. The dark wisps of light that were its eyes appeared to regard it for a moment before it lifted it up further, and with yet another blast of force, fired it far off in the distance. The tusk had lost its golden luster, and now golden veins instead extended from the wound inflicted upon the King. They pulsed with power as they appeared to work together with the dark mana to weaken the mighty creature.

The voice of the King, now clearly far angrier, echoed in his mind once more.

“Detestable whelp. You and every one of those pathetic beasts. Even now, they dare strike at me. I tire of this game. I planned for you to live a bit longer, to learn what it truly means to stand before a king. No longer. This farce is done. And now...”

Several fallen trees were lifted up in the air, as their trunks were sheared off into giant, tens of meters long spears.

“...now you die.”