

Hunter 17

Chapter 17: Loot

Jake considered taking a quick trip to clean off all the blood but decided against it. Chances are, he was going to get dirty again from all the fighting one way or another. He instead picked up his bow, which he had dropped during the fight with the horde of badgers.

He started looking for more prey to hunt. While walking, he also conjured more arrows in order to fill his quiver. He had no idea what he would do if he did not have this magical quiver. He imagined having to make every single arrow manually and shivered at the thought.

While walking, he got an idea that could perhaps help alleviate his issues locating prey. To find something to hunt and get a good view of his surroundings, he found the biggest tree he could. The thing easily exceeded 80 meters and towered over the nearby trees.

The climb itself was surprisingly easy. The stats had made Jake's grip strength strong enough that he could grab the small imperfections in the rough bark and easily climb. It took him a couple of minutes as he finally got above the tree-line of the surrounding trees and activated his Archer's Eye.

His vision turned sharper, and he looked around him. He could see the spot where they had initially entered the tutorial, and in the distance, he still saw the vast wall. His suspicions that this whole place was a sphere was only fortified as his now even more improved vision allowed him to see details he couldn't before.

The curvature of the wall in the distance was slight but noticeable. It was bending for sure. Jake could not see the base or top of the wall properly, but if his guess of the spherical design were correct, they would naturally extend to the sky.

After looking a bit more around, he saw something glinting in a tree a couple of hundreds of meters away from him. It was slightly above his eye-level and was in another of the super-tall trees, one even more massive than the one he was currently sitting in. He was nearly 70 meters up at this point, and this glinting object was perhaps 100 meters up.

Despite his Archer's Eye's effectiveness, he could not see what it was, only increasing his curiosity. He decided to climb down the tree and head towards the even taller tree with the shiny object. Who doesn't like shiny things, right?

On the way, he encountered a small group of deer, all level 7, which he easily killed. Once again, not getting a level. The only thing he got out of it was a bit of TP and even more blood on him that he couldn't be bothered washing off.

He quickly reached the tree, and once more, started climbing. It went easy enough like before, as he got further and further up. He kept looking at the bark as he rose, searching for what had been reflecting the light.

Finally, he spotted what seemed like a hole in the tree trunk above him. When he got up there, he saw that the opening was more than big enough for him to climb into. The tree was, after all, massive, having a diameter above five meters. When he got into the hole, he finally spotted what had returned the light.

A shining box of either bronze or brass with pretty decorations of jewels was sitting on a small wooden platform. The hole was far from big enough for Jake to stand in, but he could still crawl. Before he crawled to the box, he focused on his Sphere of Perception and looked for any potential traps.

You may call him overly paranoid, but Jake found it rather suspicious for jewel-boxes to be found in giant trees. And yet his suspicions were unfounded as he saw nothing indicating a trap or any foul play. It was just a perfectly normal jeweled box in a perfectly normal tree-hole. He was unable to see what was inside the box even with his sphere, and quickly found the reason as he used Identify on it:

[Magical Jeweled Lockbox (Uncommon)] – A system-created magical lockbox enchanted with the ability to block off all types of attempts to peek inside before opening.

He nearly got the sense that the part about blocking out peepers was directly aimed at him. Sorry for having an omnipresent perception-ability, I guess?

The box was able to block him out and was apparently created by the system. It was also the first uncommon-rarity item he had encountered since entering the tutorial. It was the highest level of rarity he had seen thus far everywhere; everything else was at most common-rarity. Well, that was ignoring his bloodline ability and the translation skill, which did not have any rarity-ranking besides just being unique.

His suspicions of the box were lessened, but he was still a bit unsure if it was safe to open. Then again, unless the system was just being a complete dick, he saw no reason for an all-powerful entity to leave a killer-box in a tutorial. Though it could be a mimic? Everyone loves mimics, right? I hope it isn't a mimic.

While the tutorial had not been benevolent in any way, it did seem to have a sense of fairness. Such as beasts not hunting at night, water being plentiful, and the beasts being edible. The beasts were also all relatively passive, only really attacking if you attack them first.

Having decided to risk it, he crawled to the box and found it had no lock, despite it being called a lockbox. Only a small mechanism that you could turn for it to open. He opened the box, once more cautious as to what was found inside.

And what he found inside was a pair of leather bracers. They seemed to be made from very high-quality leather, and he quickly identified them.

[Leather Bracers of the Novice Rogue (Uncommon)] – A pair of bracers made of fine leather, originally designed for new initiates in the Order of Umbra. Enchantments: Self-Repair. +5 agility, +3 strength. Increases the effectiveness of all stealth skills, further amplified while remaining hidden in the shadows.

Requirements: Lvl 5+ in any class or humanoid race. Stealth-based skill.

Well, if that isn't something, Jake thought happily reading through the item description. While he had no idea what the Order of Umbra was or whatever, the bonus to the stats and his stealth was more than welcome. Also, the fact that they could apparently self-repair was pretty damn cool.

But the mere fact that such equipment existed hidden in this forest was a huge discovery. So far, Jake had not been looking for things like the lockbox with his sphere of perception, that while passively active at all times, did not really make him notice anything that was not moving unless he was looking for it purposefully.

He could have moved past several of such lockboxes already. Or perhaps not. None of the other humans he had encountered so far had any equipment not provided during the introduction, so such lockboxes were likely not just lying around.

Jake picked up the bracers from the lockbox, and as soon as he had them in his hands, the box slowly sank into the wooden platform. He could see that the box was not actually merging into the tree with his sphere; it was just... disappearing. When the final part of the box sank into the wood, all traces of the container having ever existed vanished with it. Very similar to what had happened with the giant pillar at the beginning of the tutorial.

He put on the bracers, finding it relatively easy. The leather was strong, far more robust than any other material he had seen with that kind of flexibility. He could likely even block swords and daggers with them, as their cutting resistance seemed extraordinary.

After fully equipping them, he didn't actually feel any different. He tried fiddling with them a bit, making sure they were strapped correctly and all. As he was beginning to wonder if they were broken or that he didn't meet the requirements to equip them, he got the idea to inject mana into the braces as he had done with his quiver.

The response came instantly. Jake felt his mana flow into the bracers completely unimpeded and immediately felt a warm rush through his body, similar to when he leveled up. He felt the strength and especially the agility as 5 extra stats were not a minor matter at this stage. It was more stats total than a level in his class.

Taking out his dagger, he tried cutting the bracers, finding little leeway. What he did find, however, was the small mark he made on the bracers quickly disappear in only a couple of seconds. That repair function sure seemed handy, as he had absolutely no experience in maintaining any of his gear.

This could also be seen as his daggers had dulled slightly compared to the beginning, but they remained sharp enough to kill beasts. He had a feeling they would soon start to become dull, though.

Finding nothing else interesting in the tree, he climbed down after scouting a bit around, taking advantage of his tall vantage point. Besides the vista being quite beautiful, he also spotted a group of animals that he did not immediately recognize when he was halfway down the tree and decided to make them his next target.

He could have spent some more time experimenting with how exactly the equipment worked with the system, but he was far more interested in testing its effects in combat. He could do stuff like that later. Right now, he was looking for a fight.

After a brief stroll that was faster than his pre-tutorial top sprinting speed, he arrived at the hill where he had seen the beasts. These were... different. They looked like hairless rodents or rats or something. Molerats perhaps? Either way, they were as ugly as sin.

Their frightening appearance was only made worse by their size. The beasts were big. Not dog-size big, but pony-size big. Despite them being on four legs, they were nearly at Jake's eye-height. Inspecting them, he was not very surprised.

[??? – lvl 10]

[??? – lvl 10]

There were only two of them, but both were level 10. The same level as the big boar. But he was different than he was then. He had leveled plenty, and he even had the new bracers that increased his offensive power significantly.

These rats had weak defenses on his initial assessment, which made him confident in facing them. Even if he could not kill both, killing one and then escaping would also be worth it.

But more so than any logical justifications, he just wanted to fight them. A hunt had to not be utterly unbalanced to be interesting after all.

He decided to get a bit more tactical as he climbed a nearby tree. The two rats were both situated on a hill, just idling about. He could attack them on the hill, but if he decided to run, they would chase him in a downward slope, which seemed like a bad idea for several reasons.

Instead, he would bombard them from a tree and force them to come to him.

After finding a suitable tree, he climbed it and got in position. Chances are they could climb trees, so he decided a spot where he could also conveniently shoot down the trunk in case they followed up after him.

He nocked an arrow and drew his bow. He lined up his shot and waited for the one closest to him to stop moving. Finding his chance, he released the arrow and saw it fly true, hitting the rat in the side of its head, penetrating all the way into the brain as he had hit its ear-canal. He was quite proud of that one.

The beast squealed in a noise far louder than anything he had ever heard before. It was loud enough to make his ears ring, as he missed his second arrow due to feeling slightly dizzy. The molerat-thing he hit in the brain earlier somehow started rushing toward him with its friend but was unable to properly run, as it kept stumbling and making spasms. It ended up falling over itself as it started just scratching at the ground.

However, Jake had little time to think as the uninjured mole rat still got closer, leaving its squirming friend behind. He managed to get his dizziness under control as he shot another arrow, hitting the now formerly undamaged beast in its back.

The mole only hissed a bit as it reached the tree, yanked its claws into the wood, and started climbing in small jumps. Jake turned his bow towards it and had a clear shot down the trunk. As the beast was climbing head-first, he managed to hit it in the side of its head.

What followed was another loud squeal; this one, however far closer to him. The pain was unbelievable as he lost all hearing, and he felt blood drip out of his ears. All his senses were completely thrown off, and he nearly stumbled and fell down from the tree.

He managed to steady himself, however, as his danger-sense kicked in. The beast was just about to bite his leg off, as he managed to barely grab a branch above him, lifting his legs. The beast was about to bite him once more as he swung back and kicked it square in its ugly mug.

The rat made another squeal as it lost its grip on the tree and fell down. Jake was somehow thankful that his eardrums had already ruptured as he was unable to hear this squeal. He could still feel the vibrations in the air from it, though, showing just how ridiculous it was.

The beast landed pretty hard on the ground, and the far-too-large rats' problems only got worse as an arrow once more struck it. It tried to get back up and climb the tree again, but Jake kept firing arrows at it every time it tried, making it fall back down, time and time again.

After a bit, the beast ran out of strength and collapsed. It was still making small movements but appeared unable to get back up.

He then turned his attention towards the rat he had first shot. He had not yet gotten any kill notifications, so he knew it was still alive.

What he saw was the beast clawing at the ground around it, still trying to make it to him. It walked like it was blackout-drunk. Jake guessed he had managed to hit the beast's brain in a pretty important place, yet not somewhere important enough to kill it. He felt a tinge of pity as he fired more arrows at it.

After he had shot a couple, he got a notification from the other one that had finally bled out beneath him. Less than half a minute later, the other one also died.

You have slain [Molerat Screecher – lvl 10] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 500 TP earned

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'DING!' class: [Archer] has reached level 9 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point

He breathed out a sigh of relief as he finally got the level. The name of the rats was not surprising and also had more flair than the lower leveled ones. 500 TP was also not the 512 he would have expected if the double-TP-every-level-hypothesis held true, which meant that sadly there would be no level 30 beasts giving millions of TP a kill.

He was now convinced that something happened at level 10 to make the beasts significantly stronger. The huge boar and these rats had been far stronger than level 9 beasts. Their stats at least were higher by quite a considerable margin.

Jake sat down on the ground to relax for now, as he allowed his ears time to heal. He at least hoped they would recover. His health points had barely been dented, so drinking a healing potion would be pointless. After only a couple of relaxing minutes, he heard something pop, and sound once again returned to his world.

He smiled at the wonders of vitality as he climbed down from the tree. There was no time to waste sitting around doing nothing. Time is of the essence and all that. After all, there were more beasts to hunt, and from his recent discovery, also loot to be found.