

## Hunter 206

### Chapter 206: A Real Shitfest

The figure leaped from atop the tree as it flew several hundred meters through the air, landing on another crown before swiftly taking off once more. A few beasts below considered attacking, but once they felt the difference in grade and power, they swiftly changed their minds.

It was far over three hundred kilometers from Haven, and the density of trees was only increasing, as well as many of the beasts now reaching around level 80. It was a bit deeper in than where Mystie and Hawkie had placed their nest back before they relocated to the city.

The figure was naturally Jake, who had decided to ditch the wings and do some tree-hopping instead. Would flying be faster? Most definitely, but making massive leaps from tree to tree just felt awesome.

One Step Mile wasn't that useable due to the sheer density of trees making it hard to travel in a straight line on the ground. The trunks could be many meters in radius and reach hundreds of meters into the air, reminding him a bit of the outer area of the tutorial.

Thinking about it, perhaps the tutorial forest was inspired by the true forest here on the reformed planet, or was it the other way around? Maybe a bit of both? Either way, it wasn't the first time he had noted the familiarity. It was quite certain this wasn't the same thing, though...

Because sadly, no lockboxes.

Jake would really like some new gear soon. His whole getup was beginning to feel a bit dated, even if it had only been a few months. The only great gear he really had were his necklace, mask, new scimitar, and surprisingly enough, boots.

Were those boots the ones with the lowest required level and still only rare-rarity? Sure, but they were also still the toughest damn things he had besides his mask, which he still hadn't managed to put even a slight scratch on.

He doubted he would find anything within this forest, but one can always be hopeful. Even if he couldn't find a lockbox, maybe he could find some good materials to use in the future.

One might wonder why Jake didn't use his newly upgraded Touch of the Malefic Viper to transmute his current gear, and the reason for that was quite simple... because he was 90% sure it would end up making the majority of his gear worse than it currently was.

Jake's version had to rely on the existing enchants, and as his many tests had shown, using Touch would ruin what was already placed on the gear. A lot of his gear had stat-giving effects, and Jake honestly had no idea how to replicate that. The only thing he would do was turn those stats into possibly making the armor poison people touching it or maybe use his arcane-affinity to make the armor a lot more durable. Oh, or he could make it self-destruct by transmuting it with a shitload of the destructive part of his arcane mana.

Quite honestly, he would prefer just to have stats over that.

The only item he was considering actually transmuting was his Windsoar Bow. It wasn't because he didn't want or like the enchant on it; in fact, he found its ability to remove wind resistance and even turn the wind into an assisting force as damn good. No, the issue was that he feared it would break if he didn't.

Arcane Powershot was not a gentle skill, far from it. While he charged the attack, the bow and his body would both be put under considerable strain, and the bow would be forced to absorb obscene amounts of energy and have the highly destructive mana also coat its exterior.

He could handle his body breaking a bit; that would heal by itself, but he couldn't handle his weapon suddenly exploding in the middle of a fight. He still vividly remembered how the first Infused Powershot he ever used absolutely destroyed the tutorial starting bow.

Without a new bow or transmuting his current one, he feared that could happen in not that long. For now, it was fine as the bow still held up, but as time went on, it would surely become an issue. Not just because he gained levels or more stats, but also just because he would get better at using the skill and pour more mana into it.

Actually... can it handle a full-throttle Arcane Powershot with Limit Break active at 20% as it is? he suddenly wondered, remembering that he had never used Arcane Powershot while using his Limit Break... yeah, I really don't know.

The wisest decision would likely be for Jake to stop now and just transmute the damn bow already, but he really didn't want to. His entire body felt restless, and he really needed a fight. He had yet to truly battle anything after reaching D-grade, after all. No, the fight with Mystie and Hawkie didn't count; that was just a bit of sparring.

Also... he needed to test out his Scimitar of Cursed Hunger, too, didn't he? It would be a shame if he just one-shot most opponents.

His travel continued for a bit longer as he noticed barely any beasts below 80 in the area. A few of them saw him and ran away, but some of them acted a bit more suspiciously as they began following him. They were these monkey-like creatures with an extremely long tail that they used to swing from tree to tree. They were also surprisingly small for beasts at their level, being only about the size of a chimpanzee.

[Lighttail Monkey – lvl 83]

They were called “Lighttail” but from what Jake could detect the “light” in their names didn’t refer to light magic but was more related to their low weight. He noticed how even the small branches they used to swing from didn’t even budge and how they appeared to float a bit through the air with every swing. It was like they weighed nearly nothing at times.

I wonder why they follow me, Jake thought a bit cheekily as he smiled. He didn’t feel any danger from them, but only a strong sense of curiosity. There were more than a dozen on his tail now, with a few more joining every minute.

He also noted how they were the only type of beasts in the area of a decent level. Honestly... it couldn’t be more obvious that this was their territory even if they put up glowing neon signs.

Well, their constant screeching as they followed him also made him believe they weren’t happy with him being there. It was a little rude, actually, and woe would he be if security showed up with a few D-grades.

A few more minutes passed, and with every moment passing, more monkeys followed him, and Jake felt the entire atmosphere of the area change. It reminded Jake a bit of the mana released by his Pylon, but it was clearly different... actually... wasn’t it a bit closer to the energy released by the giant lightning tree? Not as in it being lightning-affinity, but by how it was powerful and yet “neutral”.

This energy is likely part of the reason why the beasts were able to evolve as they did... the very environment is nurturing them at all times.

Jake even saw a few trees around with budding fruits. None were ripe yet, and he suspected the monkeys ate them as soon as they were, but he believed every one of those fruits on the trees were considered low-level natural treasures.

Ten minutes later, he felt the first aura lock onto him. A few seconds later, a second and a third joined the first one. A small smile crept onto his lips as he felt that all three of them were D-grades. Finally... he had reached the inner area of the territory of these monkeys.

And one had to remember... he was still in the outer parts of the forest as a whole.

He saw the three of them the same moment they laid their eyes on him. They all looked a lot like their E-grade brethren, but they were slightly larger and had two additional tails instead of only one.

[Tri-Lighttail Monkey – lvl 102]

[Tri-Lighttail Monkey – lvl 103]

[Tri-Lighttail Monkey – lvl 105]

A bit disappointing with their levels, he thought as he saw the many E-grade monkeys surround him in his sphere, hiding in all the trees surrounding the one he was standing on. He was standing on a branch nearly 100 meters in the air, with the three D-grades only a few hundred meters in front of him, just staring him down.

Just as Jake considered if he had to open the show himself, another presence arrived. One quite a lot stronger than the other three... but far from enough to make Jake feel threatened.

[Tri-Lighttail Monkey Crusher – lvl 112]

This one was quite a bit bigger than the three others, but not much was different from that. It was likely just a more powerful variant of the other three. It had “crusher” in its name too, which was kinda cool, but it also gave away what their powerset was all about.

Weight magic? Gravity? Something like that.

Jake was excited as he summoned his wings and prepared to fight. The moment the two wings appeared, the monkeys saw it as a sign of aggression and attacked. Well, they had planned on attacking all along based on how they had clearly surrounded him; he had just sped up their decision-making a bit.

With his sphere, he saw the regular E-grade Lighttail Monkeys begin condensing some kind of substance in their hands that they promptly threw after Jake. He had a bad feeling instantly when he noticed the nature of their projectile and didn't hesitate to dodge.

The substance smashed into the tree and made a dent in the supremely robust bark, showing that clearly some magic had been used on it. It was more condensed, heavier, and more robust than it should naturally be... because Jake saw exactly what the monkey had thrown.

Did you just throw literal shit after me?

That's right, the monkeys above level 80 used their own shit as their chosen weapon... making Jake's next move completely and utterly justified.

A bow appeared in his hand in a swift motion as he turned and fired an arcane arrow. The monkey in his crosshairs didn't even have time to adequately react before its head was blown off by the exploding arrow, sending monkey parts flying everywhere.

\*You have slain [

Lighttail Monkey – lvl 81]\*

Jake saw the notification that instantly appeared and on the lack of any experience earned. Seems like my theory of only earning experience from higher-leveled or at least equal-leveled opponents is true, he thought, as he dodged a pile of poo and retaliated by firing a Splitting Arrow.

The singular arrow appeared to split for a second, but soon the copies lost their shapes. Jake frowned as only the original arrow found its goal and exploded. Dodging a few more shit-slugs, he fired one of the non-exploding arrows with Splitting Arrow, and while it appeared for a bit longer than the shot before, it soon fizzled away too.

Splitting Arrow does not work with my Arcane Hunter's Arrows... he thought, both perplexed and annoyed. The fact that he had to consider how to make the damn skill work while dodging an avalanche of literal shit didn't help either.

He kept trying to use Splitting Arrow and figuring out what was wrong as he fought the E-grade monkeys. The D-grades still hung back for now, but Jake could see they were getting impatient at their lower-ranking brethren's inability to hit their target.

Finally, one of the D-grades moved. Its three tails moved as it sent a wave of mana towards him, and Jake instantly felt like his entire body become heavier as he allowed it to hit him. It was enough to stump him for a fraction of a second and cause a bit of the damn feces to hit his cloak. Thank Villy it only hit the cloak.

The impact from the shit wasn't an issue, but he instantly noticed that something was off. It was way too damn heavy. Just the small part that hit him weighed down on him, and while it was far from enough to affect him, he suddenly understood the strategy of these monkeys.

They would pelt their target with shit, covering them in the substance that would only serve to weigh one down... and then the D-grades would move in and enhance the target's weight even more, amplifying the effect and effectively crippling the target.

It was actually a pretty sound strategy that Jake could see work well on many beasts, especially larger ones. It also allowed the entire tribe to fight together, and the D-ranks didn't have to risk their lives that often. Of course, the whole strategy did have a few weaknesses. Okay, a lot of weaknesses.



Now, while he did find out that the damn stuff was very adhesive and even resisted his mana when he tried to push it off, it wasn't impossible. He could also just toss the cloak away if it really became an issue. Or, you know, just summon mana shields or something.

On top of that, there was also the far simpler solution of just not being hit at all or fighting them with ranged attacks or a mix of both like Jake was doing. The strategy also wouldn't be that effective against larger groups of enemies.

Seeing their initial tactic didn't work, the three other D-grades also joined the fray. One of the three regular Tri-Lighttails kept sending the weird weight-magic against Jake while the other two whipped their tails his way. He wondered what they were up to until he felt the air bend.

BOOM!

Two massive blasts of force were sent after him, exploding the branch he had just been standing on. One of the two that had just fired the blast after him then retreated back as it began using some kind of magic on the big boy: the Crusher.

They fought like a team, making it quite clear this group of monkeys had battled together before. Sadly... they stood before a foe far above their own level of strength.

Jake bent backward as a massive tail swipe from the Crusher passed over him and obliterated a tree to his side. Another tail quickly came down like a scorpion stinger as the hunter stepped on the air and retreated a bit with a flap of his wings.

First that one.

He used the space he had opened up to fire a quick Arcane Powershot towards the Tri-Lighttail Monkey that was slowing him down. It tried to dodge at the last moment but found itself frozen by a glance from Jake and was hit square in the chest.

The arrow didn't explode but pierced through it, leaving a large hole and sending it flying more than a hundred meters through the forest, ping-ponging between trees on the way. It wasn't dead, but it was out of commission for now.