

Hunter 213

Chapter 213: Monkey Business

The arrow slowly emerged from his palm as he focused on the monkey in the distance. He had a feeling that it knew he was there, just not where exactly he was hiding. It was just sitting on top of its temple, inviting him to attack - something Jake would gladly do and even open with his most decisive blow possible.

On a side note, Jake had tried to use Arrow of the Ambitious Hunter with his new Splitting Arrow, and it still didn't work. He couldn't split an arrow fired with Arcane PowerShot either. Then again... it would be pretty silly if he could effectively triple the power of a powerful epic-rarity skill with a rare skill. No, copying the Arcane Hunter's Arrows didn't really feel like he copied an entire "skill".

With the arrow fully summoned, Jake was careful as he took aim at the monkey. He was far away - several kilometers - and its back was turned, yet he felt like he knew. He couldn't help but use Identify to once more confirm it was indeed the Prima.

[Penta-Lighttail Monkey Prima – lvl 134]

Yep, that's the one...

His instincts also made it clear it was the real one... that it wasn't some mental magic trick or an illusion or anything like that. It genuinely was just sitting there, waiting for him to strike. Was it stupid, overconfident, or did it have a plan in mind? Perhaps all three? Jake didn't know.

But he was sure as hell about to find out.

He didn't hesitate to activate Limit Break to 10% as he charged his Arcane Powershot. He released the string just as he felt the Windsoar Bow no longer able to endure it anymore, and with an explosion of arcane mana and stamina, the giant arrow flew forth.

Just before he let go of the string, the Prima sitting atop the building turned around and looked his way. Jake instantly froze it, and just as he did, he noticed how he had frozen it mid-smile.

CRASH!

The two upper floors of the ancient temple collapsed in an accelerated manner as if the entire building and Prima had suddenly gotten dozens of times heavier - that damn smile still on the monkey's face when the arrow passed over its head and harmlessly into a tree on the other side of the temple grounds.

You little shit.

Able to move again, the monkey didn't jump or do anything in particular; it just slowly stood up on top of the ruined upper parts of the temple and stared at Jake, who still stood far away on a tree branch. Their eyes met for a moment, and Jake felt the provocation and confidence in the gaze of the Prima – a sentiment he returned in kind.

Neither of them felt like they could lose.

Jake quickly drew a pre-poisoned arrow from his quiver and began charging another Arcane Powershot. In response, the monkey pointed one of its five tails in his direction - a move he had seen the other D-grades make many times before but never at this range.

The immediate surroundings of the tail distorted for a second, and Jake was forced to jump. A massive shockwave hit the tree below him as he fired his arrow while in mid-air.

His Powershot was intercepted by another wave of force, but clearly, one attack was superior to the other. The wave of force was broken as a sonic boom sounded out midway through the arrow's flight caused by a small explosion from the clash. The Prima was forced to dodge the powerful arcane shot with a frown and an angry screech, still being scratched even then.

It responded by three of its tails firing off blasts of force, and Jake happily dodged all of them as he returned an arrow for every tree that had a large part of its bark blown off. It was a ranged battle with several kilometers between the fighters – Jake coming out on top initially, as the monkey took a few minor injuries. Unluckily, Jake didn't manage to land much of his poison quite yet. It was still infected, though.

This whole exchange clearly didn't sit well with the monkey that had clearly had its pride hurt. It screeched angrily once more as its golden hair began standing up, and it flew towards Jake. Not jumping or floating or whatever, but true flight.

Weight and force magic combined? Jake thought as the monkey soared towards him, even faster than Hawkie. It was a speed that would have stumped him before, but Jake had a trick up his sleeve... called having thrown all his free points into agility.

He reacted by summoning his wings of poison and death as he fired another arrow after the charging monkey. It didn't even attempt to dodge as the exploding arcane arrow split in three, and arcane energy appeared to consume the Prima in a raging flood of destruction as they clashed.

For a second, at least, before the figure exited the explosion, not a scratch on it. But Jake saw the reason right away. It had a rippling sphere around it that appeared to have perfectly blocked the attack and kept the destructive energy out.

A powerful barrier... but... compared to the King...

Their levels were similar. Both were clearly not average beasts. Every single D-grade Jake met, he compared to the King... he just couldn't help it. Especially not after the mask on his head now hinted about some ominous return.

And when he compared any creature to the King, he just found them... lacking. Perhaps it was due to a part of him inherently overestimating the King as he, for all intents and purposes, was the only foe Jake fought that he felt like he didn't truly "beat".

The Prima is not to be underestimated, however.

That barrier was strong, and its speed impressive. He managed to fire one more quickly charged Powershot before it arrived, and he had a stable version of his arrows for that blow. The shot managed to pierce the barrier but missed the monkey itself as it was deflected slightly by the barrier.

As he had no intentions of entering a melee brawl right away, Jake swiftly took a step as he teleported down from the tree he was standing on. The monkey was clearly even better than himself at flying, and

if it could increase his weight like its brethren, then mid-air fighting wasn't advised. He could totally see himself be forced down and smashed into the forest below.

The monkey didn't hesitate to follow after as it descended like a meteor straight towards him. It looked like it intended to just crush him outright with the sphere around it. Jake wasn't sure exactly how a direct clash with the monkey would go, and he really didn't see any reason to find out.

Just before the monkey hit the ground, he took another step away, arcane bolts spinning to life, floating where he had just stepped away from.

BOOM!

Once more, the forest shook as the ground exploded with even more arcane mana, followed by a quick Arcane Powershot straight towards where Mark of the Ambitious Hunter told him the monkey was.

If the screech of pain didn't tell him he had hit, the new response from Sense of the Malefic Viper sure did. Hemotoxin successfully delivered.

With a swipe of one of its tails, the Prima dispelled the cloud of dust and soil, making Jake see that it had an arrow sticking out of its shoulder. It looked more annoyed than angry as it ripped it out, stared a bit at the poison, and then tossed it aside. It stood in a weird pose, with one hand on the wound and another over its forehead, just looking at Jake.

"Can't talk, can you?" he asked the beast as it looked to have calmed down a bit after being infected by the poison. At least Jake thought so for a moment until he felt its real intent. Fucker was just buying time.

It saw that he noticed and smiled at him, removing its hand from its forehead as he saw the silvery motif that was hidden by the monkey's hand glow. The motif didn't at all fit the rest of the monkey's golden hide... and neither did its effects, as just a moment later...

The Prima disappeared.

Not invisibility either, as his Sphere of Perception made him know it truly was gone... even the Mark was gone, and so was any response from Sense of the Malefic Viper. Jake was stumped... had it decided to flee?

He stood confused for a bit, wondering what the hell to do... as he dodged to the side, narrowly avoiding a whip-like tail that would have taken his head off.

Where the monkey had disappeared from, a new figure had appeared. It looked a lot like the Prima before, but its hide was white, almost silvery, and its tails looked more like those of a Dervishes than a regular Lighttail Monkey.

But... Jake's Identify and instincts made him aware. It was the same beast.

[Penta-Lighttail Monkey Prima – lvl 134]

Jake was confused, as this figure was completely unharmed. All the small wounds earlier were gone, no poison in its system, and even his Mark was no longer there... some kind of double-body skill? Or is it just its long-lost brother?

Ultimately, it didn't matter... what mattered more was that this new figure was quite different, not just in appearance, but style.

Dervishes were tough with their three tails constantly attacking... unsurprisingly, five was a lot worse.

Jake dodged and weaved, blocking with his Scimitar and Venomfang all the time, yet still getting hit here and there. The wings on his back were pumping out poison, making the Prima now target those. It moved in closer as it momentarily stunned Jake by suddenly making it like a mountain was pressing down on his shoulders. He used both weapons to protect his vitals, but this allowed the monkey to go for its true targets.

Like two snakes clamping down, two tails moved and stabbed through the fleshy parts of the wings, and with Jake now being unable to move them and distracted, two other tails swept down and severed both wings entirely, making Jake hiss in pain.

Yet he couldn't be outdone as he took the four tails being busy as a chance to attack. He pushed himself forward and found that while the beast was faster than him, he won out on pure strength. He stabbed Venomfang into the arm used to block his blow, had his Scimitar blocked by the fifth tail, which left just his final weapon: his teeth.

The monkey looked surprised as it raised its other arm to attack, and Jake happily chomped down. His canines were already coated in a highly potent toxin. Yes, while Jake had said he really didn't think he would ever use that part of Fangs of the Malefic Viper... the opportunity was just too good, and his instinctive way of fighting didn't really take into account any potential embarrassment after the fact.

BOOM!

Jake was instantly impacted by a massive wave of force that aimed to send him flying back, but he had predicted it as he also released a wave of disruptive mana from his pores, resulting in both him and the monkey just exploding mana into the other's face.

Their whole stalemate was disrupted as the hunter was forced to let go with his mouth as two tails came down to smash his skull, but at the same time, it also allowed him to sweep up with his scimitar and land a long cut across the chest of the monkey as he took a step back – poisoning the Prima even more while draining a bit of health.

The Prima attacked back, and they proceeded to brawl a little in melee, Jake taking the occasional wound but landing two in return. His opponent tried many different techniques, all variations of what other monkeys had used on him before. This allowed Jake to predict many attacks, and it eventually allowed him to dodge under an attack, and with a swipe, cut off one of the monkey's tails in a moment where the Prima failed to strengthen it with mana.

However, he wasn't done as he swiftly took a small step forward and teleported back, summoning his bow. He quickly nocked an arrow, drew the string, and loosed the arrow for the beast that was already preparing to dodge to the side but found itself frozen by Gaze yet again.

Another arrow penetrated the monkey's stomach as it was sent flying back, blood flowing from several wounds on its body and the poison spreading throughout. It was far less durable in its silvery form, and Jake happily took advantage of that fact.

He didn't let it relax as he kept attacking, as the Prima acted nearly suicidal. It stormed him, slashing with its four remaining tails, clawing with its hands, and even tried to bite him a few times. It released a constant pressure increasing his weight, and every slap of the tail felt like he was hit by a sledgehammer. Clearly, it held nothing back.

Jake felt like the entire situation was off, but he couldn't exactly just stop fighting. However, he did try to minimize his own wounds and just buy time as he suspected not everything was as it seemed. Besides, the Prima was growing weaker by the second as the poison spread in its body – the injection from his bite doing a hell of a lot.

In a final clash, Jake took a nasty stab from a tail to his shoulder, but in return, he severed the entire right arm of the Prima and sent it flying back with a kick. It coughed up blood when it smashed into a tree and looked to be on the brink of death, yet Jake still felt like something was off.

A sense of wrongness only amplified when the monkey looked listlessly up at him, with a huge grin on its face as it laughed. It raised its one remaining arm to the golden symbol on its forehead as it disappeared.

"Oh fuck me, this is bullshit," Jake said as he already knew what would happen. He took out a health potion and chugged it down as he prepared for round 3.

A second later, the monkey reappeared with its golden fur back in near-pristine condition. At least Jake felt a faint trace of poison from it still – the hemotoxin he had inflicted before it switched to its silver form before.

At least it doesn't just fully heal itself when it does that bullshit... Jake bitterly thought as he cracked his neck and stared down the Prima that just looked tauntingly back at him.

But what can you do... Jake had no intention to back down as he teleported back, drew his bow, and continued the fight. He just hoped there wasn't going to be any more monkey business going on.