

## Hunter 214

### Chapter 214: Enjoyment

There was going to be more monkey business going on.

Once more, the Prima was fighting in a way that just didn't make any logical sense. It took far more damage than Jake with every exchange; in fact, it was even worse for the Prima now that it had changed back to its golden form. It relied on magic and ranged combat, which was a-okay with Jake.

Its magic was something he was getting very used to, even if it did spice it up sometimes. At times, random areas around him would suddenly increase in weight, only making half of his body heavier, while at other times, the monkey threw a small stone that probably weighed a few tons post-weight-amplification.

The waves of force were something he easily dodged to by now, as he had learned most of the Prima's tells, and yet despite it all, he still couldn't help frowning. A few injuries here and there against a foe of equal or slightly greater strength was expected, so Jake did take quite a few blows, while the monkey looked to not give a damn about taking several poisoned arrows just to return a blow that did far less damage.

Can it do that transformation again? Jake asked himself, genuinely unsure. He believed it shouldn't be able to based on how the golden version of the monkey was still a bit wounded after it transformed back, and the silver version had been left close to death.

Besides that, the silver symbol on its forehead currently wasn't glowing. It was still there and gave off an odd gray color, even with a bit of black mixed in. Jake even thought for a second it was due to toxins as it looked almost deathly, but Sense of the Malefic Viper didn't give off any response.

However... he was sure the symbol meant something. Maybe it truly was just a sign to show the silver version was out of commission? But why did the monkey then fight as it did? Had it given up or something? Decided to try and take him down with it? It was doubtful... because it looked to be in pretty high spirits, and even if it did try for mutual destruction, clearly, the monkey would fall first as things were going.

Did it not know I drank the health potion and now believes my health points to be lower than they actually are?

So many thoughts, just searching for an explanation, went through his head as he kept fighting and exchanging blows. Jake dodged under a blast as he fired off one of three arcane bolts floating above him, making a hole in the monkey's barrier as the arcane mana tore it apart. He followed up with a quick arrow, penetrating the monkey's stomach, sending even more blood flying.

The Prima retaliated by pointing all its five tails forward and released a massive wave of force that expanded in a giant cone in front of it. In a display that must have consumed ridiculous amounts of mana, it managed to make Jake lose his footing for a second, allowing the monkey to land a quick blast of force, sending him flying back.

He felt a few ribs be pushed in, but nothing was broken. It did worsen his wounds a bit, but currently, Jake was fine with not moving too fast. While he was confident the monkey had more tricks up its sleeves, Jake also had a trick. Or, well, a potion cooldown.

Perhaps the monkey noticed he was just dragging the fight out, too, as it finally decided to use its final card and changed up the fight. It kind of had to do something as it was dying of poison pretty damn rapidly. It released a few gigantic blasts, likely running itself out of mana, and it was only when it looked barely able to fight that it made its move.

Jake was unsure what it would do... until he saw it raise its hand towards its forehead once more.

You got to be fucking kidding me.

The moment it touched the mark, the Prima disappeared, just like all the times before.

He just took out his bow and began charging an Arcane Powershot, hoping to give it a good opening blow when it appeared again. Which it did a few seconds later.

Jake instantly fired his arrow before even seeing the figure fully appear. The Arcane Powershot tore through the air towards the Prima, the monkey unable to possibly respond to-

Jake instantly fired his arrow before even seeing the figure fully appear. The Arcane Powershot tore through the air towards the Prima, but the monkey was already dodging before it was fully visible.

Well fuck, Jake thought as he just felt something he had experienced before... the concept of time. Even if time had somehow been reversed, or perhaps the timeline changed, he still remembered all of it. It wasn't due to any bloodline-shenanigans; the monkey just wasn't good enough at the concept to truly control time. He quickly used Identify on the monkey as he now truly inspected its changed form.

[Penta-Lighttail Monkey Prima – lvl 134]

Its level was unchanged, but its form was not. Before, it had been hunched over, while now it stood with a straight back. It had even grown nearly half a meter to be as big as Jake. Its fur was now dull and gray with several scars all over its body, including one across its forehead. The symbol there was gone, destroyed by whatever had caused the scar. Even more surprising was its back... where five tails usually were, there was now only one with four stumps surrounding it.

The Prima looked older. Far older. Like it had gone from a young, arrogant master to an old veteran. Its demeanor had followed suit as it stood there silently observing him. Yet there was still a trace of impatience, not born of stupidity or inexperience, but from an inherent time pressure... It's a limited transformation, he instantly concluded.

That was all he had time to think about before the monkey made its move, or well, had already made its move. It was before Jake the same moment he reacted, doing some more time-magic bullshit, allowing it to move extremely fast if Jake had to guess.

It swung not with its tail but its clawed hand. The hands that the monkey could barely use competently before now soared towards Jake's throat like an eagle's talons, forcing him to bend back and dodge as he kicked the monkey in the abdomen.

With grace, it dodged back as he did so, sliding across the ground before swiftly attacking again. Jake had his scimitar and dagger out now and blocked the first swipe with ease. He had expected to cut a bit into the bare arm of the beast but found its fur as hard as metal, no doubt caused by a skill of some sort.

Jake moved forward as he compared his strength with the beast's. He found himself be slightly pushed back at it retaliated, proving he was inferior in pure stats. Its speed slightly above his too. In a purely physical melee fight, it was a difficult foe to face... but Jake wasn't a pure physical melee fighter.

He dodged back as he swiftly began condensing two arcane bolts floating above him. The monkey hesitated for a second if it should attack, allowing Jake to summon his bow. The moment he did so, the beast knew it had to attack as it didn't wish to face the hunter in a ranged battle.

It only managed to take a single step before it froze up for a second and only became able to move just as an arrow struck its chest, finally delivering a good dose of poison.

Or at least that is what Jake first experienced happening before suddenly the monkey became able to move a fraction of a second earlier than expected and dodged the arrow by the narrowest of margins. With Jake momentarily stumped by his own immense annoyance, he barely managed to block its next claw-attack but found that this one was different.

Like it had hit him with a fucking sledgehammer, he felt his arm buckle and the claw sink into his chest before sending him flying back into a tree. It was only after being sent flying he noticed the faint white energy surrounding the hand as Jake nearly slapped himself.

How the fuck could I forget the weight magic...

Just because it now did time-bullshit didn't mean it had lost its other school of magic.

Jake did hurt a bit from the blow and had five small holes in his chest from the fingers of the monkey... but honestly, that wasn't a big deal. His entire body was already a mess from the drawn-out fight, and he was in many ways at a disadvantage.

Yet... in an almost ironic twist of fate: time was on his side. The monkey could only remain in its current form in a limited amount of time, and Jake had his "trick" coming up.

The monkey knew it had limited time as it continued its assault, Jake being purely on the defensive. He blocked with his blade at every turn, his scales already summoned all over his body to lessen the damage a bit more. Throughout it all, he could feel the monkey building something up deep within itself. Like something was slowly being conjured and prepared.

It gave Jake a small sense of dread as he knew that the monkey before him was no longer as dumb as before. It had a plan to finish him off before its transformation ran out. A plan Jake naturally would prefer to do without.

Their clash continued as they exchanged blows. They were far more even than one would expect, and Jake's many levels from committing monkey genocide came in tight. His agility allowed him to keep up, and even if his strength was subpar, he could make up for it with his magic.

The Prima seemed pressured yet sure of itself. It dodged his blows with grace and counterattacked only when opportune, never overextending. A few clashes did end with both taking a heavy hit, but yet just as Jake felt that happen, it just became a feeling of Deja vu. Another obvious weakness of that time magic trick – it worked on both parties. It truly was like it turned back time.

Finally, the two clashed, and Jake stabbed the monkey in the chest with his scimitar as he believed it had fucked up and finally overextended a step too far. He was proven wrong as suddenly the monkey flew backward, as he noticed its tail embedded in the ground behind it, acting as a rope to drag it back.

At the same time, it chopped down on Jake's wrist with both its hands, making him momentarily lose all strength in it, allowing the monkey to effectively disarm him.

Well...

The monkey ripped the sword out of its own chest and tossed it into the air before catching it with its tail.

...this is annoying.

With a swing of the tail, Jake was forced to dodge his own damn scimitar. While he was fully aware the blade wasn't actually "active" in the hands of the monkey, that didn't mean it wouldn't hurt to be hit by what was now practically just a metal rod.

Fuck me, Jake thought as he got smacked in the side, the blow barely hurting but still throwing him off balance. The tail's power in its older veteran form was weaker than both its golden and silver form, but it made for that in pure upper-body strength and experience.

On the backfoot, Jake did what he could to avoid taking too much damage as he tried to get some range between him and his foe. Without his best weapon, it was far too dangerous to fight the Prima in a straight battle.

He leaped back as he used One Step Mile the moment he landed, teleporting away as he swiftly summoned his bow and turned in the air to fire a shot towards the monkey. It responded by punching the air and sending a wave of force out that broke all three exploding arrows mid-air, far too close to Jake for comfort.

The resulting explosion sent the human flying back as he finally became aware. It was time for the big turnaround. And just in time, as he saw that the Prima was just about ready to do whatever the fuck it was planning.

With great vigor, he took out the small bottle and chugged it down as if his life depended on it – because it likely did.

Instantly the warm liquid spread in his body as it rapidly healed. His sore arms began to feel more flexible, his aching bones regenerated and became tough and resilient once more. All of it happened within seconds as the potion did its job, and for the first time, Jake saw the Prima look truly surprised after its transformation.

It was also the first time he saw it show anger and annoyance as it activated what it had prepared.

Jake felt it before he saw it. An odd sense of pressure overtook the entire area as the symbol covered by the scar lit up on the Prima's forehead. Its light was intense enough to shine through the scar tissue and be fully visible.

The symbol's color was at first gray until it split, and one side turned golden and the other silver. This energy spread down the upper body of the Prima as Jake saw the symbol itself split in two directions and also begin moving. He saw it glide across its skin of the monkey due to it shining until finally, both symbols found their home on the back of the Prima's hands.

And then... then it attacked.



One hand first punched as it released a massive wave of force towards Jake. At the same time, it took a step forward and practically teleported to him as it swung the other in an overhead punch.

The shockwave hit exactly at the same time as the punch, as if it had somehow been delayed. Jake raised both his arms to block the hit and the blast simultaneously, even summoning a barrier of arcane mana as quickly as he could.

BOOM!

Scales and blood flew out everywhere as the punch landed, and Jake felt both his arms hurt like hell as he was pretty sure his left one was broken. The arm with the silver symbol on it was like the pinnacle of a melee weapon, while the golden one was now a master of releasing its magic.

Jake was sent flying back, but he had managed to get a bit of a counterattack in at the final moment.

The Prima stumbled back in a loud screech as it was now covered in a liquid that it had been the cause of releasing: blood. More accurately, blood infused with Blood of the Malefic Viper.

It had even gotten it in its eyes as it looked furious at the human, its eyes red and burning with rage. Jake just slowly stood up from the tree he had hit, cracked the bone back in place on his left arm as he looked back at the Prima.

Their eyes met as both moved.

Jake jumped as he dodged a blast of force that blew a huge hole in the tree he was just at – a bow already in hand as he fired an arrow at the Prima. It reacted by swatting it away with his own scimitar, making Jake grumble a bit as he just fired another shot.

The Prima only had its current form due to a temporary powerup. Now, it had used another powerup that also felt very temporary. By all accounts, Jake should just try to open up space, buy some time, and play it safe. It would be the smartest thing to do.

So, of course, Jake charged a fast Arcane Powershot as he took a step at the same moment, appearing straight before the surprised Prima that had expected him to make the smarter choice. Even more surprised when it was punched in the face.

Because the thing is... there was something Jake valued far more than being efficient and smart in a fight: