

Hunter 55

Chapter 55: Ambitious Hunter

Jake breathed out a sigh of relief when he saw the last option.

Ambitious Hunter – The Ambitious Hunter is always seeking out true challenges and the most powerful of prey. To you, the hunt is not only about the question of gaining power or death, but to enjoy the journey itself. It is not something that can be taught but is a part of who you are. A class focused on ranged combat, mainly using bow and arrow, coupled with light options for melee such as short-swords and daggers. The class is fast and flexible, focusing on agility over strength. The Ambitious Hunter's path to power may be more complicated than many others due to their endless thirst for worthy enemies, but power is inevitable if one survives. Stat bonuses per level: +5 Per, +4 Agi, +3 End, +2 Str, +4 Free points

From the description... it wasn't incredibly awesome. But the name alone stood out to him more than anything in any of the others. Hunter. The word seemed to resonate with him. Unsurprising, considering his bloodline was called "of the Primal Hunter".

He also felt like the description, well... described him. Described his goals. He hadn't seen himself as an incredibly ambitious person for many years, not after his archery incident. His plans were simply to... exist. Of course, he enjoyed himself in his free time, but it wasn't like becoming a financial consultant was his dream.

But now he felt driven. He had a goal, had ambition, and was more than willing to hunt for it.

Closely reading the description, there seemed to be little difference between it and the regular archer class, besides the number of stats and types of skills it would likely offer. But the essence of the class and its purpose seemed to be very much the same.

The stats had the same total as Bowman of Decay. 18 stats in total per level. Which is still less than his Prodigious Alchemist of the Malefic Viper. Which showed that the class wasn't that special or that he had really lucked out with his profession. One had to remember that professions tended to give fewer stats than classes, after all.

Jake remembered the Viper's words of staying true to himself... and while maybe the Bowman of Decay was more powerful here and now, this class was far more 'him' than anything offered beforehand.

It likely wouldn't make him that much stronger immediately, but he was still satisfied as he unhesitantly accepted the class and felt the familiar warm flow of information entering his mind along with the pleasant sound of the level-up.

Congratulation, you have successfully evolved your Class

'DING!' Class: [Ambitious Hunter] has reached level 25 - Stat points allocated, +4 free points

'DING!' Race: [Human (E)] has reached level 35 - Stat points allocated, +5 free points

What followed was naturally the skills, the first one being an upgrade to his Archer's Eye, a skill he had since the tutorial's very beginning.

Skill Transformation: [Archer's Eye (Common)] Has been upgraded to [Hunter's Sight (Uncommon)]

[Hunter's Sight (Uncommon)] - The hunter's eyes are trained to track down and kill their prey. Allows the ambitious hunter to spot prey more easily as well as their weaknesses. Passively gives a small increase to the effect of perception on visual organs.

The skill was a straight-up upgrade, and he even felt a slight increase to his eye-sight if he tried looking intensely at his surroundings. The change was very minor, however. Overall it didn't change much besides the "easier to spot weaknesses"-part that was new. He would have to test that in combat.

The last skill was where the real juice was at.

[Big Game Hunter (Rare)] – A true hunter seeks not the easy prey but a true challenge. Having hunted bigger and stronger prey than most, the Ambitious Hunter has become more accustomed to facing higher-level enemies. Increases the user's resistance to auras and gives a small increase to strength and agility while facing enemies above your highest level class or race. The bonus is based on the disparity between the level of your prey and you. Limit of 1.25x your level or 50 levels, whichever is highest. May your hunt be fruitful, and your ambitions reached.

The skill seemed extremely good, especially for what he was planning. The limiter on the bonus was a bit annoying, though, as his race was currently at 35 and his class only at 25, making him lose 10 levels worth of bonuses.

It would take him until he reached level 44 or so in his class for it to be the highest one. And that was assuming he didn't level his profession at all, which he sure as hell planned on.

Ultimately, none of it mattered much to him currently. His body was still healing, and he was getting closer and closer to being in fighting-condition. Soon, he should be able to drink another health potion and with that, it would be time to hunt.

The hunt was made slightly more difficult by a minor issue, however. He had lost both of his melee weapons in the brawl earlier, and he currently only had a few unranked daggers in his spatial storage. He felt quite sad about losing the bone dagger, mostly. It had served him well and synergized well with his fighting style, so he would have to rely on his bow for now. At least he had enough targets to hunt, though.

In the inner area, there were beasts everywhere, and high-level beasts at that. Wandering sources of experience, just waiting to be claimed.

He would have to hurry before the other survivors made their way in here. First, he needed to get as much experience as possible, and second, he wasn't looking for another fight right now considering his near-death experience.

His only hope was that the conflict between the two factions would buy him enough time to reach a more comfortable level of power.

Looking at the tutorial screen, he noted the number of survivors still going down slowly.

Tutorial Panel

Duration: 24 days & 18:25:23

Total Survivors Remaining: 341/1200

25 days left, Jake thought to himself. 25 days to hunt down everything worth killing in here.

“Jacob, please just talk to me for god's sake,” she said as she ran after the man who quite clearly ignored her on purpose. “I did what I thought was the best for everyone! None of us knew if he did it or not, and I just didn’t wanna risk it.”

Snapping back, Jacob turned to her. “How many times do I have to tell you that I fucking knew. But you would rather kill an innocent man. You know the truth too, and yet you lied and used me!”

“I already told you I am sorry!” Caroline said, genuinely distressed. “Just tell me what you want me to do?”

“I want you to leave me alone for a while. I need to think,” Jacob answered as he kept walking away, leaving Caroline behind with a desolate look on her face.

Nothing had gone as Caroline planned when it came to Jacob. Jake had been allowed to talk for way too long and made it pretty damn clear that he hadn’t been the culprit they were seeking.

On top of that, they even failed to kill him. How he had managed to survive all those attacks was still a wonder to Caroline. Everything in that fight had been way too surprising.

The beginning had gone as planned, and they had even managed to chain him down with a string of control skills. That should have been that, but somehow, he had managed to cause an explosion of mana to come out of his body, which fucked up everything.

That explosion had given Caroline quite the impression. The raw amount of mana used in it was insane. What was even more insane was it being Jake who caused it. He was an archer, for god's sake. Where the hell had he gained so much wisdom? Based on that explosion alone, he might have even more mana than herself despite her being a healer.

The evasion-skill was also just pure bullshit, in her opinion. The speed of it was quite intense, combined with his speed making him far faster than pretty much anyone else in the entire tutorial.

But what was even more surprising was how he disappeared as he ran away. The Scout had been chasing the near-dead man but failed to return with anything. He had lost him close to the giant dome or barrier.

The Scout had tried to enter but had failed like all the others when he had tried, making it improbable that Jake entered there. And even if he somehow did go in there, no one knew what awaited on the other side.

After Jake escaped, she had tried to smooth things over with Jacob, but her first attempt had backfired hard when she tried to play innocent, acting like she didn't know the plan. Jacob wasn't stupid and saw through it quickly.

In retrospect, it was quite stupid to act ignorant, considering how she had fought and clearly coordinated with the others. Her small attempt to backpedal a little and claim that she had been fooled and had only aimed to capture her former colleague hadn't gone over well either.

All of it had resulted in Jacob ignoring her and even moved into Bertram's cabin for now. It was a small one the man had built for himself with his profession and was way worse than her and Jacob's current one.

She still believed everything could be smoothed over. Their relationship wasn't going to break because of one person coming between them. They were going to come out stronger on the other side and closer than ever.

It wasn't like everything was all bad either. Sure, Jake got away, but they managed to take out Hayden. The troublesome former colleague of hers had managed to poison him before he escaped leaving the man in quite the precarious situation when he found himself surrounded by Caroline, Richard, and many other strong fighters from their faction.

He had fought back but had fallen quite easily. Poisoned and in a weakened state after using that ridiculously powerful spear attack of his, he was stabbed from behind by Richard. They had even managed to take out a few of the men Hayden had brought along.

They did fail in killing Hayden's second in command, a powerful light mage and the one who had managed to turn them all invisible for the ambush, but they were satisfied nevertheless.

The war was back in full swing once more, but this time it was different. Hayden was dead, and the leadership structure of the other base was in disarray. They even had quite a few people switch sides since the fight.

Richard was preparing an assault to end the other faction once and for all, giving him full control of the only camp left in the tutorial. The attack would be sooner rather than later, not giving the other side enough time to reorganize, but just enough time for those who wanted to defect to do so.

Caroline cheered herself up a little as she made her way back to the other crafters. They didn't like what had happened but didn't protest much either. Most of them didn't exactly speak up either but stayed out of it as they had chosen to focus on their professions, mainly from a desire to avoid the violence otherwise permeating this tutorial.

On her way over to the other tailors, she saw the Smith doing his work. One of the few strong fighters who had refused to participate in the fight because he wanted to focus on crafting. With him was another one who hadn't attended. William.

The kid had come back only a few hours ago from who knows where, and after complaining a bit about missing the fight, had started doing some smithing. He seemed to still be a bit mad about not getting payback on Jake, but otherwise, he seemed calm enough.

However, if you asked William, he wouldn't describe himself as only "a bit mad". He was fuming. How unlucky had he been? By mere hours he had missed the fight. To make it worse, they had even failed in killing him, which meant that he was still out there.

William was also aware by now that he didn't need to wear his mask much anymore. Jacob had given him dirty looks, clearly showing he knew, and of course, his new partner Richard knew. He had already asked William to join him in the assault on the enemy base, one he would happily join.

In only a few hours, their assault would begin. The entire tutorial would be involved if one didn't count Jake.

The two factions had done an excellent job of gathering everyone up. The whole “with us or against us” mentality had done wonders to force any lone survivors or smaller groups into choosing a side or getting caught in the crossfire. Only a real freak like Jake could survive that.

As he did his work at the forge, the Smith approached him.

“How are you doing, kid?” he asked while stroking his beard, making William wonder how the hell it hadn’t been burned off yet.

“Fine, just a bit annoyed they didn’t get that Jake guy is all,” William answered as he put on his fake smile.

With a nod, the man smiled back. “Come with me over to my lodgings for a bit. I have something to talk to you about.”

William, a bit taken aback, subconsciously nodded his head. This was weird. But William didn’t fear anything happening as he was more than confident in defending himself.

As they walked, William couldn’t hold himself back from asking. “So... what is this about?”

“Just a discussion on the future,” the man rather dismissively said. “We should talk in private.”

Growing even more suspicious, William nevertheless followed. He was pretty sure the Smith had some inklings as to his true nature... but if he did, why would he ask him to meet in private?

Was this perhaps too risky? Should he just try and quietly have the man exit the base with him and dispose of him quietly somewhere?

No, that would only make him appear more suspicious. Richard wouldn't like that. He couldn't do anything stupid like that. Not yet.

Entering the cabin with the bearded man, William closed the door behind him as he asked. "So?"

"Patience," the Smith said as he took out a small disc of metal from beneath his clothes. "Wouldn't want anyone listening in now, would we?"

As he said that, a blue glow was emitted from the disc as William instantly jumped back and got ready to fight. However, nothing else happened as the light spread to the cabin's walls as it left a faint blue sheen upon them.

As William looked around, the walls, floor, and roof were also now covered in what seemed like blue film.

"No need to panic; it is just a sound isolation barrier," The man said as he took a seat on one of the chairs. "This way, not a single word or wisp of mana gets out."

“How did you do that?” William asked as he narrowed his eyes, still ready to strike at any time.

“A skill granted by my profession allows me to make small accessories like that. Didn’t manage to make this one until yesterday,” the Smith said with a small laugh.

“Back to my original question. What do you want to say? And why do you need this barrier to say it?” William asked.

“Oh, this barrier is as much for me as it is for you,” he laughed again. “We both have secrets we don’t want others to know.”

William, now thoroughly convinced that this man was on to him, prepared to strike just as he started talking again.

“And the reason I asked to talk to you is because of a mutual acquaintance of ours,” he said, as his smile broadened.

Richard? No... Jake? Doesn’t fit either, William thought before just asking. “Oh, and who is this mysterious person then?”

“Not a person,” the Smith answered, “a god.”