

Hunter 97

Chapter 97: Spring cleaning = Loot 3.0

Jake practically flew through the terrain as he ran across the valley, scanning it with his sphere wherever he went. He didn't really encounter any enemies on the way, something he very much appreciated.

William had done an outstanding job of clearing out a lot of beasts in the inner area. Not that it particularly mattered as all the beasts he came across avoided him like the plague - all except for a single buffalo that had chosen to stand up to him, which netted it a quick Infused Powershot to the face.

He was currently scanning the valleys for those sweet lockboxes. It was clean-up time.

His rationale was that he still required a few critical pieces of loot, and if he were stronger, he would be able to clear the final dungeon more easily. Likely even take some more risks to do it faster, or compromise on how he liked to fight.

The Malefic Viper had told him about equipment, and he had done the math on how much more he could get. As he could have a maximum of 20% in any given stat, but only 15% of his total stats could be from gear, he saw that he had ample space to grow.

Currently, he had a total of 353 stats from equipment. It felt like a lot, but the total amount he could get was 603, meaning he was only a little over half of what he could at maximum have. A quick calculation of his stats showed how much he could get in each:

Strength: 18/71

Agility: 60/90

Endurance: 45/67

Vitality: 75/94

Toughness: 50/68

Wisdom: 35/101

Intelligence: 45/45

Perception: 20/202

Willpower: 5/64

Total: 353/603

The only stat he had maxed out on was intelligence, and it appeared that it had been maxed out the moment he got his gloves. The ring he had taken off the Ice Witch what felt like ages ago together with the gloves did indeed provide precisely 45.

None of the other stats were capped at all. Where Jake really wanted to find some equipment was to get some more strength and agility. He felt like those two would have the most immediate value. Not that he would complain about getting some more perception either...

His perception was already at a ridiculous level, having reached over 1000 with all his titles and his bloodline. 1033 to be exact. Yet he had kept investing all his free points into it as it just seemed efficient. He had to admit that he was starting to feel the lack of value in it, besides the raw number just going up.

While it did increase his reaction speed and his senses, his body could no longer keep up. For a while, it had been like that, actually. His agility and strength were simply not able to follow the commands he issued it.

Having gotten the Mark of the Ambitious Hunter was quite fortunate. The damage increase it was meant to provide was likely meant to be far less than what his version of the Mark provided. But as it scaled with perception, Jake's increased the damage done by quite a bit, especially coupled with his primary damage source being through poisons.

Still, he likely should have considered investing some more points in the two physical stats, but it wasn't like they were at a terrible level. And he often made up for his lack of raw power in stats through his Infused Powershot and newly gained Dark Descending Fang.

Of course, he also got the bonus from Big Game Hunter, an often forgotten skill that raised his strength and agility against higher-leveled foes, meaning it was pretty much always active during fights. The bonus wasn't that big, but it did help him to close the gap somewhat.

So, if he had so much available space to improve just by being a bit lucky and finding some lovely baubles, he wasn't going to ignore it. Getting only 100 stats more would be the same as several levels. If he got lucky, he could even find some more unique items and, if he got really lucky, a bow.

Besides, it was calming to run through the valleys with his speed as he scanned it - the wind blowing through his hair, the feeling of freedom and ease of movement as he jumped forward, sometimes tens of meters in a single long leap.

He spent nearly three hours doing this, going through most of the valleys in the inner area that he hadn't been to earlier. He had pushed himself both physically and mentally with his sphere, and it felt great when he looked at the pile of loot he had gathered.

First, he sorted all the useless stuff. He had a bunch of gear clearly suitable for heavier classes, such as breastplates, greaves, steel gauntlets, two-handed axes and swords, a shield, and so on and so forth.

He had collected more than 50 things in total, of which only five held any value or were interesting enough to note. The first of which was an upgrade token.

[Tutorial equipment upgrade token (Uncommon)] – Upgrade any common rarity starting item from the tutorial to uncommon rarity.

This one was pretty self-evident, and he had been very tempted to use it on his bow right away the moment he found it but had held off in case he actually found a better bow.

The second item was something he found interesting but had no intention of ever using.

[Hatchet of Halfdan the Brave (Rare)] – A hatchet infused with Records of a fallen warrior Halfdan. With his axe in hand, he fought for his family and fell for his home. The axe is made of simple wood with an iron head. Grants the wielder a small part of the once-great man's bravery. Enchantments: Grants the skill: [Halfdan's Bravery (Rare)]

Requirements: Lvl 50+ in any humanoid race.

This one was interesting because it came with actual history and, of course, because of its rarity. Jake had wanted to try to use it to see what the skill was but found himself unable to bind it. It was weird because he didn't feel like it was related to mana-affinities. It was just like the weapon... didn't like him or something. Quite rude, actually.

The third piece of loot was one he would actually use, an upgrade to an item he already had.

[Ring of the Ruby-eye Tiger (Uncommon)] – A ring created by embedding the crystalized eye of a Ruby-eye Tiger into a band. The Records of the tiger powers the enchant, granting some of the beast's might to its user. Enchantments: +30 Strength, +20 Agility, +20 Perception.

Requirements: Lvl 40+ in any humanoid Race

This ring would replace his Ring of Brilliance, which would lose Jake 10 intelligence, 10 wisdom, and 5 willpower, but it would be more than a worthy trade-off. He also found it interesting to compare it to the other ring he already had:

[Ring of the Jade-eye Tiger (Uncommon)] – A ring created by embedding the crystalized eye of a Jade-eye Tiger into a band. The Records of the tiger powers the enchant, granting some of the beast's might to its user. Enchantments: +20 Perception, +15 Agility, +15 Strength.

Requirements: Lvl 30 in any humanoid Race

Apparently, tigers with special eyes were popular to make rings from. Or maybe the system had just selected that archetype for some reason. Nevertheless, it was just the kind of ring he had wanted. He did get two other rings too, but neither of those were of any interest to him.

Jake had also discovered through this that he could only have two rings on for some reason. Well, he could technically have as many on as he could fit on his fingers, but he would only get the benefits of two of them. Whenever he tried to bind the third ring, it wouldn't work before he 'let go' of one of the two he already had.

The weird ability that all rings carried that made them not get in the way by making them effectively intangible also only worked on two rings at once. It was weird that he had to put his rings on before the gloves, but he could neither feel nor see he had a ring on upon putting the gloves on. System-fuckery to the rescue, Jake laughed a bit internally.

The fourth item of interest he had found was one of those special items he had hoped to find, one that could hopefully prove useful against the King or perhaps the final Beast Lord:

[Seed of Entangling Roots (Uncommon)] – A seed filled with the dense power of life and nature. Infuse with mana and throw it to the ground for roots to sprout and entangle your chosen foe. Seed is consumed upon use.

It could temporarily incapacitate, something he could see a myriad of advantages with. At first, he had feared he would be unable to use it due to lack of affinity, but luckily it had responded positively to his mana. He also had one more idea to maybe make it a bit... interesting.

If he used his alchemy skills to infuse some poison into it through Touch of the Malefic Viper and then used Cultivate Poison to make it fester and work its way through the item, he could perhaps make it do a bit more than just entangle foes. But he wasn't sure if he would ever find time to try that out.

As for the final item of value he found... it was a weapon rumored and foretold of for ages, one he had only dreamed of yet never truly imagined he would get - a new bow.

[Windsoar Bow (Rare)] – A bow made from a tree inhabited by wind elementals. The string made from the sinew of the beast that dared destroy their home. Now restored to a form made for hunting down the beasts hated by the young elementals. The elementals' spirit and mana have left their mark upon the wood, making it light and flexible. The remnant will of the spirits within blesses any arrow fired.
Enchantments: Windsoar

Requirements: Lvl 50+ in any humanoid race.

He was very, VERY pleased when he found the bow, but he did have one sneaking fear in the back of his mind. Could he use it? He still remembered the nature affinity-blade and the light-affinity staff that had both been unusable. Heck, even the axe he had just found didn't like him.

This bow was clearly of the wind-affinity or something like that. Heck, it clearly had both a mana-affinity and a history attached to it. Jake knew he had dark-affinity, but did he also have wind?

With more than a little internal fear, he had grabbed the bow in his hand and injected mana into it after sending a little prayer the way of his friendly neighborhood god.

And praise the Viper, for he felt the mana slip into the bow with no resistance and instantly felt the connection with it - a major success, to say the least. It had also inadvertently confirmed that he had the wind-affinity as well as dark-affinity.

Feeling the bow out in his hand, he got used to the weight as he noted how light it was. Unnaturally so, as it felt practically weightless. Luckily it didn't affect the bow itself as he nocked an arrow and pulled the string.

As with his old bow, the pull strength was magically altered somehow, making him struggle to pull the string, but not overly much.

Firing an arrow, he instantly felt one big difference from his old bow, however. While the arrow's power had only increased by a little, he could feel the changes around said arrow.

As it flew through the air, it was as if the wind gave way to it. Like it gently moved out of the way and pushed it forward towards its target.

Upon striking the tree he had aimed at the arrow went straight through and out the other side. If he had to estimate, then he would say his standard shot was around 10-15% stronger with the new bow. It wasn't as much as a melee weapon provided, but it did have one more significant advantage.

Currently, his largest limiter on Infused Powershot had been his bow. He knew that if he pushed more mana into it than he currently did at his maximum power, it would explode just like his first bow had done during his fight with the Alpha Badger.

But with this new bow, he could push it further. His own body still limited him, but the bow wouldn't be the bottleneck for now.

Infused Powershot had been his bread and butter for quite a while. He had nothing that could come even close to a fully charged Infused Powershot. The power behind it was quite honestly ridiculous. Powershot before he had upgraded it was already great, and Infused Powershot simply made it better in every single way. He truly felt like he had lucked out in getting the upgrade. It had been what catapulted him to his current strength, without a doubt. Of course, he knew it was only possible because of his adamant body.

Jake smiled to himself as he put all of the loot into his spatial storage. Most of the items he couldn't use were thrown in one of the corners, while another corner held leather gear and even another common-rarity bow he had found.

The pile in that corner had the name of 'backup' stuff. It was for if any of his current equipment broke or was lost. Better safe than sorry after all.

His last piece of business before heading off to the dungeon was to spend his uncommon upgrade token. As he had found a bow, he no longer needed to upgrade the old one. His only other two pieces to upgrade was a dagger or his cloak.

Even if he upgraded the dagger, he wouldn't use it. Upgraded, it would still not come close to Venomfang in power, and his Shortsword of Icy Winds would very likely also still be better. Besides, he had kind of begun getting used to fighting with a dagger and a shortsword.

Daggers sucked at blocking while a shortsword was quite a bit better. It also gave some more much-needed reach to his blows. It was still a shortsword, but it was far longer than a dagger.

So, he was left with only one thing to upgrade - his cloak. The cloak he had hated for a long time due to its uselessness and frailty. Now, however, it would finally be able to become useful again. He took out his old cloak and identified it, noting the absolute lie that said it was strong against slashing attacks.

[Archer's Cloak (Common)] – A cloak handed out for the tutorial, now upgraded with a token. Made of resilient cloth that is resistant to slashing attacks. Enchantments: Self-Repair.

Requirements: Tutorial Attendee. Archer Class

Use Upgrade token on [Archer's Cloak (Common)] Y/N?

He used the token on the cloak and saw it get enveloped by light, just like it had been when it went from unranked to common-rarity.

Soon the new cloak appeared, looking just the same as before - brown and rather unassuming. But when he Identified it, it became clear it wasn't as simple anymore.

[Archer's Cloak (Uncommon)] – A cloak handed out for the tutorial, now upgraded with a token. Made of resilient cloth that is resistant to slashing attacks. The cloth automatically helps the wearer meld into his surroundings when supplied with mana. Enchantments: Self-Repair.

Requirements: Tutorial Attendee. Archer Class

An extra effect had been added. Jake didn't waste any time picking it up and injecting mana into it. After binding it to him, he put it on and tried supplying it with some mana. The entire cloak soon turned different colors, looking like camouflage. He even vaguely felt that other signs of his presence were suppressed, such as his mana signature, aura, and likely even emitted heat.

But more importantly, upon bringing a common-rarity dagger down on it, he felt the resistance on his blade, making him unable to tear it in a single slash.

Finally, the cloak had graduated from uselessness.

With the cloak on, he felt all geared out and well covered from head to toe.

He had spent a bit over 3 hours collecting items, and it had given him an increase of 50 stats, a new cloak, and a new bow, along with some other exciting collectibles.

All in all, time well spent - time he should easily make up for in the dungeon with the final Beast Lord. Checking the time, he started sprinting onward.

[Tutorial Panel]

Duration: 5 days & 20:04:32