

Strongest 91

Chapter 91: Owen's Stamina Training

"Gwaaak!"

William rolled on the ground in pain after failing to dodge Owen's attack.

"Does it hurt?" Owen asked while twirling the wooden staff in his hand. "Unfortunately, I don't plan on healing any of your injuries."

William gritted his teeth as he propped himself up off the ground. He then grabbed his own wooden staff, that was lying a few meters away from him, before facing the old man who had a smug look on his face.

The red-headed boy couldn't believe that someone as old as Owen was an expert in close combat. He thought that the Life Magus was only a support type and had underestimated him greatly.

"What's wrong?" Owen asked while stifling a yawn. "Is that it?"

William roared as he charged forward. He used the movement technique of the Disciple of Thunder, "Heavenly Phantasm", to get behind Owen before using the "Lightning God War Art" that he had learned.

"Flashy, but no substance," Owen said as he casually did a backhand strike that sent William flying backwards. "Learning new professions sure is nice. But, without any proper foundation, it is nothing but a skill used for entertainment."

William spat blood on the ground as he stood up with shaky legs. He channeled all his strength into his foot and charged forward once again.

When he was only a few meters away from Owen, he immediately stopped and looked behind the Old Man's back.

"Hello , Mrs. Sarah!" William greeted with a smile.

Hearing his wife's name, Owen turned around to look behind his back. William used this opportunity to sneak attack the old man. However, what greeted him was Owen's wooden staff striking the top of his head, sending him face first into the ground.

"Mmm, nice try." Owen grinned. "But you know, that only works on stupid people. Do you think I'm stupid?"

William held his head with teary eyes as he endured the searing pain. Owen watched him with a smirk as he lit his pipe and started smoking. He did it in a very carefree manner which made the pain William was feeling intensify.

"You see, Little Will, during group battles the first people to get targeted are, usually, the support classes," Owen explained. "Most of the time they succeed in doing so because these professions are not proficient in protecting themselves. They rely on others to protect them."

Owen puffed his pipe a few more times before continuing his explanation. "In battle, the first person you have to subjugate is the support of the party. As long as they are around, you will have a hard time beating their group. Sometimes, the most scary opponents are not monsters, but humans. When fighting against humans, you shouldn't show mercy."

Owen finished his explanation and returned the pipe to his storage ring.

"Cure Moderate Wounds," Owen chanted and a ray of light enveloped William.

The pain he was feeling disappeared and the wounds and bruises on his body were also healed. The only problem was his clothes. They still remained tattered due to Owen's powerful blows.

"Now, do you understand that just 'learning' a few skills without understanding them on a deeper level is just clowning around? If you want to become an entertainer then it's fine to stay the way you are.

"But, your old man begged me to help you. I don't want him to complain and tell me that I'm doing a half-as*ed job in teaching you the basics. Here, wear this."

Owen casually threw two bracelets at William.

The young boy caught the two bracelets and gave them a better look using his appraisal skill.

High-Grade Training Bracelets

-- Forged by the Blacksmith Barbatos, this bracelet was made for the purpose of training.

-- this accessory is made from the scales of the Golden-Scaled Crocodile.

-- Once worn, the bracelet will increase its weight by 40 kg (88 lbs). If the user is able to get accustomed to its weight, it will further increase its weight by multiples of ten. The limit of the weight increase is up to 200 kg (440 lbs).

-- The bracelet also has an additional special function. If the user were to chant the words "Activate Protection" the bracelets will transform into arm bracers. If the user wants to cancel the special function they just have to say "Deactivate".

'This reminds me of Dragonbone Z,' William thought as he slid the two bracelets onto his wrists.

Immediately, the effects of the bracelet activated and increased its weight according to William's current strength level.

Due to William's strength stat, the bracelet adjusted their weight and stopped at 50 kg. The boy immediately felt its effects and tried to move his arms up and down. Although he could move them, it was not as easy as when he was not wearing the bracelets.

William then made a startling discovery. It was not only his arms that felt heavy, but his feet felt heavy as well.

According to his estimate, his overall movement had decreased by 60%. It was like having a permanent dumbbell attached to your arms and heels.

"For now, we will not focus on fighting," Owen stated. "We will focus on building your foundation. Let's start with your stamina first. Listen well, Little Will. It is important for a man to build up his stamina. If you don't have enough stamina then you will not be able to satisfy your lover. Trust me. Even at my age, I can still do eight rounds of love-making without a problem!"

The corner of William's lips twitched after hearing Owen's shameless bragging. He somehow felt sorry for Sarah, Owen's wife, for having such a lewd old man as her husband.

"The easiest way to build your stamina is by running and swimming. We will alternate between the two depending on my mood. For now, run ten laps around Lont. You may start now."

William took a few deep breaths before he started to run. A minute later, his running decreased drastically and turned into a light jog. After another minute passed, he no longer jogged and resorted to brisk walking.

Two minutes later, he was just walking very slowly while panting heavily.

'I need to endure,' William thought as he moved his body, one foot at a time. 'The next time I see that Kingsley boy, I'll swat him like a fly.'

William was the type that held grudges on those who had wronged him. Although he didn't say anything about the arrogant Magic Swordsman's actions, he was still itching to give him a good beating.

'Just you wait.' William clenched his fist. 'When I go to meet Rebecca seven years from now, I'll make sure to return the favor tenfold.'

James and Mordred watched William from the hill overlooking Lont. They could feel the boy's unyielding spirit, which made them very happy. It was James who asked Barbatos to forge the bracelets a week after he returned from the battle at the Windkeep Citadel.

He had a feeling that a time would come when William would ask him for help with his training. When William lost to the Kingsley boy in their 'friendly duel', James knew that the time was at hand.

William had explained that he wouldn't be able to use Magic for five years and James thought that this was the perfect opportunity to help his grandson build up his foundations. In the past, he didn't insist on doing so because William was being trained in Dark Magic by Celine.

"William, why are you so slow?" An eight-year-old girl walked beside the huffing and puffing William with a curious gaze. "Are you hurt somewhere?"

"N-No. I-Im F-Fine," William replied with ragged breaths.

The children were so amused with William's slow walking that they thought he was playing a game. Soon, a crowd of children, less than twelve year old, were walking beside William at a very slow pace.

William could only smile helplessly at the kids who reminded him of the little brothers and sisters he had left back on Earth.

'I wonder how they are doing?' William thought. 'Belle, does she still think of me?'

William sighed as he put these thoughts at the back of his mind. He needed to focus his attention on his training. And so the boy walked, and walked, and walked, while the children of Lont laughed beside him.

"It seems that he's doing fine, Mistress," Oliver said from his perch. "William is not as fragile as you think he is."

"Of course he's not fragile," Celine replied. "Make sure to watch over him from time to time."

"As you wish, Mistress." Oliver nodded his head.

Both of them knew that without his Magic Power, William would have to rely on his physical abilities in order to overcome the dangers that he would face over the next five years of his life.

This was why Celine wanted Oliver to raise William's resistances to Poisons, Curses, and Dark Magic. Although Dark Magic was banned in the Southern Continent. That didn't mean that the Dark Mages had holed themselves up underground.

Many still walked among the populace and used their magic in subtle ways. She hoped that her one and only disciple would become strong. Not only for his sake, but for hers as well.

Chapter 92: Inside the Silent Forest [Part 1]

"Two hundred thirty two... two hundred thirty three," Theo said as he counted. "two hundred thirty four."

William gritted his teeth as he finished another push up. Theo was sitting on his back as the sun slowly rose from the East. It had been two months since William had started his training under Owen's tutelage and the desired changes in his body were starting to take place.

The red-headed boy looked at the rising sun for a brief moment before he resumed his morning training.

"Two hundred fifty." Theo grinned. "Morning quota reached. Good job, Will."

"Theo, is it just me or have you become heavier as of late?" William asked as his friend slid off from his back.

"It's just you," Theo replied as he stretched his arms and waist. "Now, go. Don't keep Owen waiting."

William shook his head helplessly as he waved his friend goodbye.

"Mama, Let's go."

"Meeeee!"

Ella, who was lying not far away from William, stood up and ran beside him. The two of them sprinted towards the Ourobro that was guarding the main gate of Lont.

Currently, the bracers on his wrists weighed 70 kg (154 lbs) each, but that didn't stop William from running to his destination at full speed. Owen had taught him a lot over the past two months and that included some breathing exercises that helped him preserve his strength.

When he neared the Ourobro, he found Owen drinking a cup of coffee as he sat waiting for William.

"Done with your routine?" Owen asked.

"Yes," William replied as he sat opposite him.

The young boy then piled up some sausages and eggs onto his plate and started to eat his breakfast. Owen continued to drink his coffee as he stared towards the East. "It has only been two months, but you've managed to get used to the training bracers on your wrists."

William listened to Owen's words and felt proud of his accomplishments. It had not been easy. Everyday he felt as if he was carrying a full-grown bull on his shoulders. Owen had seen his progress and was quite satisfied with his performance.

"Since you have already passed the basic requirements of a fighter, it is time for you to take your training to the next stage," Owen stated as he placed the empty coffee cup on top of the table. "After you finish your breakfast, go to the center of the Silent Forest. Your next instructor is waiting for you there."

"Um?" William raised his head to look at Owen. "You're not the one that is going to train me?"

Owen smirked. "I don't have a lot of free time to train a brat like you. Your grandpa only asked me to help build your stamina and prepare your body for the training that was to come."

William frowned, but he still nodded his head. "Who is going to be my new instructor?"

"Someone who is stricter than me," Owen replied. "He's a man of few words, but his skill is the real deal. You better be careful, William. That person doesn't know the meaning of holding back."

William nodded his head. "Thank you, Owen, for everything."

"You can thank me by getting stronger," Owen smiled. "I am getting old. It's time for the new generation to step up and carry our burdens."

"What kind of burdens?" William asked in curiosity.

"The burden of satisfying the beautiful young ladies of course." Owen looked at William as if he was looking at someone stupid. "Why did you think I trained you to raise your stamina? It would be embarrassing if you are one of those quick shots who can't even hold it in for five seconds."

William spat out milk he was drinking and started coughing. The red-headed boy completely forgot that Owen was someone who liked to boast about his prowess in love-making. He felt bitter at the thought that the old man only trained him in order to not become a quickshot.

"It was just a joke," Owen chuckled. "But, I was not joking about your next instructor. Be careful, William. You might just accidentally die if you don't pay attention to your surroundings."

William wiped his mouth with a handkerchief before standing up from his chair. "I'm off. Once again, thank you for everything."

William bowed to show his respect for the Life Magus who had trained him for two months. Although it was short, Owen did a good job in strengthening his body through rigorous training.

"Go." Owen shooed him away with a hand. "Don't keep him waiting. Also, Ella, stay here. You're not allowed to accompany William."

"Meeeeeh?"

"You should also start your training. Don't you want to protect William?"

"Meeeeeh!"

"Good." Owen stood up. "Follow me."

Ella nuzzled William, and the latter gave her a brief hug before the two of them parted ways. There was no need to exchange any words between the two of them. Both of them wanted to become strong, and this was the perfect opportunity to do that.

The Silent Forest was located two miles away from the South of Lont. Like the name suggested, the forest was eerily silent. You could not hear the sound of birds, beasts, or even insects from within this forest. It was a forest devoid of living things with the exception of plants and trees.

William had been here once in the past when James took him to look for special herbs. Although this forest had no living animals and insects within, it was rich in flora and was a good place to look for rare herbs that grew in the wild.

Owen had told him that his instructor was waiting for him at the center of the forest, so William thought that he just needed to head to the clearing that the locals of Lont refer to as "Hoia".

Along the way, the only sound that William heard was his own footsteps. For some reason, it unnerved him.

Then it happened...

The whistling of wind whispered in William's ears. A few seconds later he felt a searing pain hit his back. He staggered forward and almost dropped to the ground when another whistling sound reached his ears.

William didn't know what was happening, but his body moved on reflex and dodged to the side. It was at that moment when he saw an arrow passing mere inches from his left shoulder. The arrow hit the tree trunk before bouncing off a few meters away from him.

One quick glance and William recognized it as a blunt arrow usually used for hunting small game like rabbits and squirrels.

Before William could even understand what was happening, more whistling sounds echoed through the forest.

The red-headed boy immediately hid behind a tree as several blunt arrows harmlessly bounced off its bark.

"Who are you?!" William roared. "Why are you attacking me?! Are you my new instructor?"

William perked his ears to listen to a reply, however, none came. Instead, he heard another whistle, but this time, it sounded different.

The shepherd didn't dare to move from his hiding place because he thought that he was safe as long as he stayed in place.

What happened next proved him wrong.

A loud clap was heard as the tree that William used as a shield exploded before his eyes. A shockwave formed and it sent the young boy slamming into another tree without knowing what happened.

William felt his entire body aching, but his instinct screamed at him to run. He immediately activated his movement technique, Heavenly Phantasm, that he learned from the Disciple of Thunder.

The shepherd planned to leave the forest in order to escape from whoever it was that was attacking him. However, the attacker, hidden in the shadows, didn't allow him to have his way.

Several explosions that almost tore William in half prevented him from realizing his goal. Left with no other choice, William changed directions and ran towards the center of the forest where his "instructor" would be waiting for him.

On that day, the Silence of the Forest was broken as William ran for his life. Whenever he heard any kind of sound--be it a whistle or a subtle hiss--he would immediately zigzag between the trees in an attempt to use them as shields.

As William drew closer to his destination, the more intense his feeling of dread became. It was as if he was still inside the Trial of Courage and he was fighting against the Cyclops on his own. Only this time, without his powers.

The young boy didn't understand why he was feeling this way. He clearly knew that his opponent was a human and yet, it felt as if he was facing off against a Millennial Beast that specialized in long range attacks.

Usually, it only took two hours on foot to reach the center of the forest. However, several hours had passed, and yet, William had still not reached his destination. More like, he had lost his sense of direction because of the consecutive attacks that forced him to evade repeatedly.

Without knowing which way was which, William was forced into a battle of attrition against his unknown assailant. However, in this battle, the shepherd was on the losing side.

Due to his current situation, he was forced to use his physical abilities to their limits. He ran, he jumped, he dodged, he rolled, he did everything in his power to prevent himself from getting hit by the arrows that seemed to have a life on their own.

Finally, everything became dark as the sun set in the West. William was very exhausted, and hungry. The sound of his stomach growling echoed in the forest. He didn't have any time to take a break to eat anything. The only thing he managed to do was to drink some water from the water flask inside his storage ring.

In order to avoid getting hit, William had focused all his concentration on his sense of hearing, and didn't care of anything else aside from evading the merciless attacks that came from various directions.

Before he knew it, he collapsed on the ground panting. His body had finally reached its limit. He tried to prop himself off the ground, but his body refused to move. It was then when William heard the familiar sound of the whistling wind and then... darkness descended upon him as he lost consciousness.

Chapter 93: Inside the Silent Forest [Part 2]

When William opened his eyes, he found himself in the same place where he lost consciousness. The only difference was that there was a leather sack bag a meter away from his face.

The young boy gingerly moved his aching body as he forced himself to a sitting position. When he opened the leather sack, he found a water flask, beef jerky, and a small bottle of recovery potion.

William wolfed down the beef jerky with a vengeance. He was starving and he ate the jerky as if it was the most delicious thing in the world. When he was done eating, he drank half the water from the flask.

The young boy allowed himself to relax for a few minutes before drinking the recovery potion to ease the pain in his body.

'I'd better find a place to stay for the night,' William thought as he scanned his surroundings. It was not hard to find a place to rest, but the boy was worried that his "unknown enemy" would attack him during the night.

The red-headed boy shuddered at that possibility. William was not stupid. When he saw the leather sack, he knew that the one who attacked him was the one responsible for the next stage of his training.

'If it was the me from two months ago, I might have not lasted ten minutes,' William mused as he searched for a good place to pass the night. He finally understood how important stamina was during a fight of attrition.

'Owen's training was to increase my stamina,' William pondered. 'Then what is the purpose of this training?'

William thought long and hard, but the only reason he could think of was that he was being trained to enhance his senses in order to react to dangerous situations.

William had only taken ten steps from where he lay when something hit his head and made him lose consciousness once again.

A man wearing ranger's clothing stepped out from the darkness and picked up the leather sack that William had dropped. He gave the unconscious boy a side-long glance before walking away with an indifferent expression.

'Sht!' William cursed internally.

It was the second day since he had entered the forest and his situation had not improved. In fact, it even became worse. He had just finished drinking water after waking up and a barely audible hisses pierced the stillness of the Silent Forest.

Several arrows flew from different directions and they were all aimed at him! William activated his movement speed and dodged left, right, and center, but the arrows kept on hounding him. This time, the arrows were literally hounding him like homing missiles.

No matter how he dodged, they kept on coming back!

'Fck!' William cursed for the umpteenth time as he summoned his staff to help deflect the arrows.

His Parry Skill activated and deflected some of them, but he was pushed back every time he did it. The arrows were surprisingly sturdy and seemed to be made from a very hard metal. If he was not gripping his staff tightly, it might have already flown out of his grasp.

Another day of cat and mouse ensued and it only eased up when the sun was at its peak. William almost collapsed from exhaustion due to lack of food and water. It seemed that the cat had left the mouse to allow it to get something to eat and drink.

William gritted his teeth as he climbed a tree to pick some fruits from its branches.

'If the Second Master can see me right now, he might start calling me a monkey,' William thought as he snagged a few fruits to serve as his lunch.'

Somewhere in Celine's house...

Oliver sneezed while seated on his perch.

"That little monkey William must be thinking of me," Oliver muttered. "I hope he's suffering right now."

The Parrot Monkey closed his eyes and returned to his nap. Celine had already been notified by Owen that William was undertaking intense survival training in the Silent Forest. Oliver was quite tempted to join the fun, but Celine forbade him.

He could only grudgingly obey his Mistress' order while praying that William's suffering would intensify with each passing day.

A month passed, and a ragged wild boy, who was covered in dirt from head to toe, jumped along the branches of the trees in order to escape the hunter that had been harassing him all this time.

Aside from the constant harassment, William was also suffering from the constant ringing sounds in his ears. These sounds would often haunt him when the deafening silence descends after his attacker stops his assault.

Before, he thought that Owen's training had been harsh, but it couldn't compare to what he was experiencing right now. Aside from eating twice a day, and getting forcefully knocked out at night, his day revolved around trying to escape whoever was bullying him.

There were times when he had enough and instead of running away he charged in the direction where the arrows were coming from. However, each time he did it, he was unable to find his assailant.

There were even days when he just wanted to call it quits and just allowed himself to get hit by the arrows, but that didn't help him either. The blunt arrows were coated by a very powerful drug that caused excruciating pain. The pain was so intense that he felt like dying.

After experiencing it once, William didn't allow himself to get hit even once and just focused on running away.

Another whistling sound reached his ears, but this time, William didn't panic. He stepped to the side and allowed the arrow to pass harmlessly in front of him. More arrows flew in his direction, but William calmly dealt with them all. Those he could dodge, he dodged. Those he couldn't, he deflected them with his wooden staff.

In that one month of hell, William's sensory perception had reached a high level. His Sixth Sense, that warned him of danger, had also been heightened to an incredible extent. Sometimes, his hidden assailant would fire arrows that emitted no sound.

That is when William's Sixth Sense would kick in and tell him that a hidden danger was approaching.

When the sun was about to set, William successfully deflected a silent arrow that was aimed at his head. After that, no more arrows flew in his direction. Instead a loud thump was heard on the ground three meters away from him.

The steel arrow that was stuck on the ground was a real arrow and not a blunt one. On its shaft, a piece of paper was tied. William didn't pick the arrow right away, instead, he let his senses scan the surroundings to make sure that this was not another ploy from his hidden adversary.

After making sure that there was no danger in his surroundings, William picked up the arrow and took out the written letter. After reading its contents, William sighed and sat beside a tree to rest.

Soon, a loud snoring sound echoed inside the forest. William slept deeply without a care in the world.

A thousand meters away from the sleeping boy's location, a man stood on top of a tree branch. He was none other than Trent, the Sentinel of Lont.

He was in charge of William's Perception Training.

The Silent Forest was not a simple forest. It was the most appropriate place to train someone's perception. People thought that absolute silence didn't have a sound, but they were dead wrong in their assumption.

When you were in a place that is totally deprived of sound, you experience an ear deafening silence. Your ears would start to hurt because you would experience "Phantom Noises". Ringing sounds that wouldn't go away and would haunt your every waking second.

In William's former world, these sounds were associated with tinnitus.

Just like William's stamina training, the Perception Training also trained a person's willpower.

Trent took his leave because his mission was over. It was now time for William to begin his Martial Arts Training under another one of the experts of Lont.

Dwayne, the monk that held the profession Drunken Executioner, sipped his alcohol from a small wooden bowl. He had seen Trent's arrow flare rise above the canopy of the Silent Forest and knew that William's basic training was over.

The monk sighed in satisfaction after emptying the wooden bowl filled with alcohol.

"So, it's finally my turn," Dwayne said with a sinister smile. "It has been a while since I taught someone Martial Arts. I hope that the Commander's grandson is better than the last student I taught."

Dwayne could still remember that so-called genius that was raised by the monks of his order.

In just a single session, the boy had been crippled and all the elder monks almost went mad in anger. Because of this, Dwayne was excommunicated from the temple and was not allowed to step onto another Holy Ground ever again.

Dwayne didn't get mad at the treatment he received. He even felt liberated because he was sick and tired of being a goody two shoes. He roamed the land doing anything he pleased. Sometimes he would wipe out bandit groups along the way, sometimes he would become the bandit and terrorize the innocent souls who were unlucky enough to cross his path.

That was how he got his nickname, the "Drunken Executioner" because he would always be seen carrying a jug of alcohol with him when he committed these nefarious acts.

He only stopped his rampage because he had encountered James who was guarding the merchant group that he had chosen to attack.

With just a single slap from the old man, Dwayne and his short-lived tyranny came to a complete stop. James was supposed to bring him back to the authorities, but changed his mind halfway there.

Since then, Dwayne had become James' loyal subordinate and followed him like a tail. He was someone who respected the strong, and James was by far the strongest person that he had met in his life.

"Well, since you are Commander's grandson, I guess you will not break that easily," Dwayne muttered as he stared at the alcohol-filled bowl in his hands.

The monk's eyes narrowed as he stared at the Silent Forest in the distance. He had always wondered what it felt like to have a disciple. Dwayne knew that William was already Celine's disciple, so he had already given up taking him in as his own.

However, he was still itching to impart his knowledge to his Commander's grandson. He had a feeling that William was going to accomplish something big in the future, and he wanted to be part of that future.

Chapter 94: Dwayne's Martial Arts Training [Part 1]

William wandered around the Silent Forest in the dead of night. For him, there was not much difference between night and day since he had Dark Vision. His older cousin, Matthew, had taught him how to find the cardinal directions using the stars as a guide. His plan? To go to the center of the forest where he would meet his next instructor.

In time, he arrived at the lake at the center of the forest. The young boy took off his tattered clothes and jumped into the water to clean off the grime that had accumulated on his body.

The Phantom Noises kept ringing on his ears as the deafening silence held him in its embrace. After a month of staying in the forest, William had gotten used to the unbearable silence. However, as a Half-Elf, his sense of hearing was sharper compared to others.

His current condition sometimes made him feel dizzy and nauseous. When he was being hunted by Trent, William had needed a few days to get used to the discomfort. The silence also made him feel unbalanced. It was as if he couldn't move his body properly.

Taking into account the ever increasing weight of the bracelets, William felt that he was always in a state of unbalance.

The young boy sighed as he looked at the stars as he floated on the lake's surface.

'The stars are really different from the ones I saw back on Earth,' William thought. 'Still, this world is beautiful.'

William looked at the two moons that hung in the heavens. The bigger of the two, Ainar, had a bluish color. The other one, Artem, had a light-purple color. According to Matthew, a great war between the Gods of Hestia had ensued when the world was still young.

The battle was so intense that many Gods had fallen, including the Sun God Liane. When the Sun God died, the light of the world vanished and Hestia was enveloped in perpetual darkness.

It was then that the Gods realized their folly. After a truce, the war finally ended. But, the damage was already done.

Years passed and humanity's extinction was at hand. In an attempt to stave off the extinction of mankind, the twin Goddesses, Ainar, and Artem, sacrificed themselves in order to end the Dark Era of mankind.

The two beautiful moons bathed the world with its soft light and with it, the humans gained the power to fight back. A few years later, the new God of the Sun, Felix, was born. His light pierced the darkness of the night and illuminated the land with his radiance.

These three Gods watched over mankind. One during the day, two during the night. That was how the Dark Era ended, and humanity flourished once again.

William sighed as he remembered the Gods that had given him their blessing. Gavin, Issei, Lily, and David.

As if waiting for that cue, he received a notification from the system.

< Ding! >

< Congratulations! Host has received a 90% discount coupon! >

< This coupon will give you a 90% discount on any item from the God Shop! >

< Ding! >

< Special Quest Acquired! >

< Special Quest: Birth of a Warrior [1] >

-- This is a Chain Quest. The next Quest will appear after the host clears the quest's condition.

< Complete the Basic Training for one Job Class >

< Reward: 1000 God Points >

'Special Quest?' William frowned. It took him a few minutes to remember that he had indeed gained this new function after meeting the Gods and clearing the Trial of Courage.

William opened the God Shop and saw countless items for sale. It was very similar to an online shopping site where you could order anything and have it delivered straight to your doorstep with a click of a button.

For a brief moment, the ringing in his ears disappeared followed by a sense of excitement. He spent the night browsing the God Shop in search of items that would prove useful for his journey through this new world of Hestia.

Dwayne arrived at the clearing and saw a sleeping William beside the lake. The boy had drool spilling from the corner of his lips, which made the monk chuckle. He walked towards the unsuspecting boy, and was about to kick him to the lake when William's eyes fluttered open.

The red-headed boy rolled to the side and immediately propped himself from the ground. He then summoned his wooden staff and took on a defensive position.

Dwayne nodded his head in appreciation as he gazed at the boy who was looking at him with vigilance. "Trent's training wasn't wasted on you."

The monk eyed William and gauged his current strength. 'His stamina is at the silver rank, and his perception awareness is at least in the initial stages of the Gold Rank. Not bad for a ten-year-old.'

Dwayne took a step forward, and William jumped back. The shepherd looked at the monk vigilantly and prepared himself to run away at the first sign of danger.

"Relax, I'm not here to hurt you," Dwayne raised both of his hands in surrender. 'At least not yet.'

William still didn't lower his guard. He recognized Wayne. He was one of his Grandpa's trusted men, but he wasn't close to him. The young boy's instinct was telling him that this person was very dangerous.

"Let me formally introduce myself. The name is Dwayne," Dwayne said with a smile. "I am here to teach you the basics of Martial Arts. I hope the two of us get along."

"William," William replied hoarsely. "I look forward to your teaching."

Dwayne nodded his head. "Now, for our first lesson, put away that stick in your hand. You won't be needing it. What I will be teaching you is unarmed combat. That means that you don't need any weapons. I will train your body to become a weapon."

William reluctantly returned the staff to his storage ring, but he didn't lower his guard. He had become a bit paranoid due to the relentless attacks he'd suffered for an entire month.

"Ok, since we've finished our introductions, you will start calling me Master from now on," Dwayne stated.

"But, I already have a Master."

"Then you can call me Second Master."

"... I already have a Second Master," William replied in an awkward manner. Oliver, the Parrot Monkey had told him to call him Second Master during their training, and the Half-Elf had already gotten used to calling Oliver that.

Dwayne waved his hand as if it was not a big deal. "Then just call me Third Master. What I am about to teach you is the secret arts of my Sect. I mean, the secret art of my Ex-Sect."

Despite Dwayne having been excommunicated from the sect, he had already mastered everything he needed to learn while he was at the Monk Temple.

William frowned, but still nodded his head. Oliver had already explained to him that there were times when a single disciple had several masters. This was not uncommon in Hestia. Also, Celine knew that William would only be restricted if she prevented him from studying from the Master's in Lont.

With the ability to learn any kind of Profession, it was inevitable that William would have several Masters in order to guide him along the right path.

"William greets Third Master," William placed his hand over his chest and bowed.

"Good!" Dwayne laughed as he approached the boy. "Don't worry. I'll make sure that you won't regret calling me your Master."

And so, William's Monk Training started.

Dwayne had jokingly told him that he should shave his head according to custom. However, William adamantly rejected this idea. He really liked his hair and didn't want to be bald like Dwayne.

"Okay, I want to assess your current level in martial combat," Dwayne stood ten meters away from William. "Come at me and don't hold back."

William roared and charged at Dwayne using his movement technique. He circled around the monk and used his speed to his advantage. True to his word, the monk stood completely still and waited for William to initiate his attack.

Seeing that the monk had no openings, William decided to take a chance and attacked the side of his body with a roundhouse kick. Surprisingly, Dwayne didn't block nor dodge his attack. His attack landed squarely on the monk's waist.

Dwayne glanced at William and frowned. "Um, is that your strongest attack?"

"Yes," William replied. He looked at the monk to gauge whether or not he was just enduring the pain in his body. Although William wasn't that strong, his kick was strong enough to send a goblin skidding across the ground a few meters.

"Hah~ this won't do," Dwayne scratched his bald head. "You're too weak. Your attack is inefficient and there are so many wasted movements. This won't do. I need to really teach you the basics."

William felt that he was a failure after seeing the monk's disappointed face. What he didn't know was that this was the strategy that Dwayne had cooked up in order for William to take him seriously.

"Don't worry. By the time I'm done with your training, you won't even recognize yourself," Dwayne assured him. "Now, let's begin. First I will show you how to throw a proper punch. I will demonstrate it first. Make sure to watch me closely."

William narrowed his eyes and focused all of his attention on Dwayne's posture. Seeing that the boy was observing his movement, the monk unleashed a simple punch.

The monk's punch was slow enough for William to observe. He could tell that his new Master had limited himself in order to teach him the proper form of a punch.

Suddenly a loud explosion reverberated from the center of the lake. The water exploded and William was drenched by the drizzle it created.

"Now, it's your turn," Dwayne grinned. "The first thing we will need to train is your flexibility."

"Flexibility?" William asked in confusion. "Not punching?"

William was dumbfounded by his new Master's way of teaching. After showing him such an awesome punch, the red-headed boy was itching to practice punching like him. What he didn't know was that this was another scheme that Dwayne had cooked up in order for William to get invested in Monk Training.

"Why should we train with punching when you punch like a little girl?" Dwayne looked at him as if he was stupid. "Let's start first with the basics. Flexibility and balance training. We can move to punching after you master the drills I will be giving you."

Chapter 95: Dwayne's Martial Arts Training [Part 2]

William gritted his teeth as he stood on two wooden poles in the horse stance position while supporting a log in his hands. He had been in this position for five hours, and sweat was oozing out of his body.

At first, he thought that this training was going to be easy, but facts showed that it was harder than he thought it would be.

Dwayne was seated not far away from him drinking alcohol out of a wooden bowl. A spear protruded on the ground and was aimed at William's "little brother". The moment he broke his stance, or lowered his body, Little William was going to get pierced by the spear and the red-headed boy had no intention of becoming a eunuch.

Because of this, he gritted his teeth and focused his concentration on his balance. With each day that passed, the weight of the log increased. Tears streamed down William's face as he endured each day of his training. He still wanted to have a girlfriend, so losing Little William here was not an option!

After three weeks, Dwayne thought that it was about time to move to the next phase of his training.

The red-headed boy thought that his torture was over, but another round took its place. The monk ordered William to crawl twenty laps around the lake while he sat on his back. After yet another week, Dwayne changed his training routine again. This time he was told to do splits.

William thought that he would just be doing splits on the ground, but Dwayne said that what he was thinking was for girls. The monk dragged William to the familiar wooden poles and asked him to do a split using the poles as support.

"T-Third Master, c-can you remove the spear?" Cold sweat dripped from William's forehead as Dwayne placed the spear under his little brother. "Must we do it like this?"

"It's fine," Dwayne assured him. "Don't worry. If your little brother gets stabbed, I will take you and run to Lont to have Owen take a look. Everything will be fine... probably."

'%\$%#&\$!' William cursed the bald monk internally. If Little William was injured and was unable to recover, he was prepared to fight Dwayne to his dying breath.

Two months of training passed and William felt his body became more flexible with each passing day. Today, he was told to do ten laps around the lake while doing back flips. After he finished doing the flips, Dwayne told him to do 1 lap doing head flips.

William looked at his Master with the "Are you kidding me?" and the latter gave him the "Do I look like I'm kidding you?" stare.

Dwayne asked him to do it with his palms pressed together while crouching. William had never thought that there would be a day in his life where he would literally use his head to travel.

The monk chuckled as he watched his new disciple do head flips while leaning against a tree.

More days passed as William suffered incredible torture under the hands of the Monk.

Four months after he accepted Dwayne as his Master, William found himself staring at a steel barrel that was usually used to store wine.

His Third Master explained that the steel barrel was an artifact that could produce ice-cold water. William thought that his Master was going to ask him to go inside the tub to do some endurance training, but Dwayne's next order made him look at the barrel seriously.

"I want you to punch the water ten thousand times," Dwayne ordered. "You will not eat, drink, or sleep until you finish your quota. You can start now."

William felt a bit more confident with this training because it was just throwing a punch. However, it didn't take him long to realize that Dwayne would never ask him to do anything simple.

As he continued to punch the ice cold water, he could feel his hands going numb. Half a day later, he could no longer feel his hands, but a searing pain was starting to replace the numbness.

When William finished his quota, Dwayne observed his hands with an indifferent expression. The next day, the same training took place, this continued for four consecutive days before Dwayne changed the training routine once again.

Instead of punching water, William was asked to punch the ground ten thousand times.

William punched, and punched, and punched, until he could punch no more.

Just like the boy expected, the day ended with him having bloody hands. He didn't complain even though he could tell that some of his fingers had broken.

"Mmm, I thought you'd quit half way," Dwayne said as he looked at his temporary disciple's bloody hands. He then took out a red potion from his storage ring and sprinkled half of it on William's hands. "Drink the rest then eat dinner. We will resume your training tomorrow."

This training continued for a week before the monk took William out of the forest. The monk and the boy headed to the nearest mountain in Lont, the locals called this place Woodlow Mountain.

The rocky mountains were filled with giant boulders. The two walked casually until they came upon a boulder that was over five meters tall.

Just like William expected, Dwayne asked him to punch the boulder. This time, he didn't give him a quota. Instead, the monk told him to punch the boulder until sunset.

William obeyed and punched the boulder using the monk strikes that Dwayne had imparted to him when he started his punching training.

< Gained Exp: 5 >

< Gained Exp: 5 >

< Gained Exp: 5 >

< Gained Exp: 5 >

The reason why William endured punching the ground, and punching the boulder was because he realized that he could gain experience points while doing these training exercises if he used the appropriate Job Class for it.

The one who gave him this advice was the system, and William became more motivated with each punch he delivered. He no longer cared if he bled, or broke his bones, because he knew that Dwayne wouldn't allow him to become crippled.

Besides, his fists were now stronger compared to when he started his training. William was sure that he would gain a lot of experience points before they passed their breaking point.

The first few experience points he gained were all allocated to the skill Unarmed Mastery.

< Unarmed Mastery 10 / 10 >

-- You are skilled at fighting while unarmed.

-- Adds +20 Enhancement Bonus to Strength

-- Increase Unarmed damage by 20%

Of course, as William gained more experience points, his list of passive abilities for the monk class also increased.

< Stunning Fist 10 / 10 >

-- Adds +10 Enhancement Bonus to Dexterity

-- Each unarmed strike has a 5% chance to stun your opponent.

< Crane Stance Mastery 5 / 5 >

-- While using this style you gain +10 Enhancement Bonus on Vitality.

-- You mimic the stance of a crane. Holding your arms in an imitation of a crane's wings and using flowing, defensive motions that are perfect for counter-attacking your enemy.

-- Allows you to move fluidly within three square meters from where you stood.

< Deflect Range Attacks 5 / 5 >

-- Gives you a 30% chance to deflect projectile attacks aimed at you.

-- The chances of deflection lowers by 1% for each projectile aimed at you.

< Diamond Fist >

(Needs 10 Skill Points to unlock)

-- Makes your fists as hard as diamonds when doing Unarmed Strike.

< Overwhelming Strike >

(Needs 5 Skill Points to unlock)

-- Once a day you can deliver one full-powered unarmed strike that contains all of your strength.

-- Damage dealt is equivalent to your Strength Stat multiplied by 20.

Even though it was painful, William endured and kept on pummeling the boulder as if his life depended on it. He was using the Crane Stance in order to allow his body to adapt to the fighting style.

Just like the System said, warriors grew strong through repetition. With every perfect punch he delivered, William's technique was slowly being refined. Even Dwayne, who was observing from a distance, couldn't believe that William managed to get this far only after a few months of training.

Chapter 96: Dwayne's Martial Arts Training [Part 3]

'I knew I was a good instructor!' Dwayne praised himself. 'That so-called genius brat from the temple only became crippled because he was not good enough. This brat is the real deal!'

Dwayne felt very smug because of how much William had improved since he began his Martial Arts training. He was even very tempted to negotiate with Celine to have William be an official disciple to both of them.

'I'll ask her when we return to Lont,' Dwayne mused. 'I can't wait to take this brat to the Temple and let him faceoff against those so-called wannabee prodigies. My fists are itching just thinking about it.'

After William has completed his punching training, the monk then taught him his very own kicking techniques. The red-headed boy's determination to learn Martial Arts was pushing him to take each of Dwayne's lessons seriously.

Dwayne was in such a good mood that after William mastered his kicking techniques, he also taught him some sneaky palm strikes that were highly effective in close combat.

After finishing William's basic training, he taught him the Monkey Staff Martial Style as a freebie.

This technique looked like one was clowning around and only trying to provide a means of entertainment. However, when put to the test, it allowed William to do stunts with his wooden staff that could deal serious injury to his enemies when they least expected it.

"Hah!" With a shout, William used a side kick in order to break Dwayne's balance. However, the latter simply used his foot to neutralize the boy's attack.

Pressing both of his palms on the ground, William unleashed a flurry of kicks that forced Dwayne to back off.

When William completed his training regimen, Dwayne decided that the boy was now ready for actual combat. Using several artifacts to lower his rank and physical prowess, Dwayne sparred with William to develop his disciple's battle sense.

Right now, Dwayne's physical strength was in the initial stages of the Silver Rank. Ironically, William's combat prowess was already in the initial stages of the Gold Rank. Although William was a realm higher than Dwayne in their duel, the boy lacked Dwayne's battle experience to get the upper hand.

With a simple palm strike, Dwayne sent William flying a few meters from where he stood. He didn't do any follow up attacks and waited for the boy to recover his bearings.

"The Crane Style is a defensive style, not an offensive one," Dwayne reminded. "Although it can be used offensively, when dealing with a foe stronger than you, it would be best to stick to what the style is capable of."

"Yes, Third Master," William replied as he executed the Crane Stance. "I will remember your teachings."

Dwayne smiled and took the role of the aggressor. The two once again collided in a flurry of punches, kicks, and palm strikes. William got pushed back again and again, but he would always stand up each time he fell.

As days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months, William's battle style had finally taken form. Dwayne felt proud because the young boy had surpassed his expectations. It made him realize that having a disciple wasn't such a bad idea.

The only problem was, there were not many children who were as capable as William.

'I hope Celine will agree to my request,' Dwayne sighed. 'Maybe I can bribe her with artifacts or treasures. I really want William to become my official disciple. It's not unheard of for a disciple to have two, or even several, masters.'

While Dwayne was deep in his thoughts, William was currently doing a lap around the lake using handstands. If Oliver were to see him, he would definitely tease the young boy and call him a monkey.

A year passed as William studied under Dwayne's tutelage. The monk was very satisfied with his temporary disciple's performance. If not for the fact that the boy needed to do other kinds of training, he would have insisted that he stay with him in order to learn higher forms of Martial Arts.

Right now, William's battle prowess in unarmed combat was Gold Ranked. What Dwayne didn't know was that in that one-year of intensive training, William had reached the max level of his Monk Job Class.

William managed to achieve this feat through pain and suffering. Even during his rest period, he would continue to punch boulders. If there were no boulders to punch, he would punch the ground.

Sadly, he was not able to ascend the Monk Job Class to the next level because there was a requirement. William needed to visit a Monk Temple and offer a prayer to the Gods before this Job Class could be upgraded.

Dwayne didn't skimp on William's combat training and the two sparred almost every day after William had mastered his fighting style to a passable grade. Because of the constant one-sided beating he received from Dwayne, the red-headed boy's battle sense had improved by leaps and bounds.

Owen had helped him to increase his stamina.

Trent had taught him to enhance his perception.

And Dwayne taught him Martial Arts which combined everything that he had learned in a fighting style that suited him.

"Although you have only been my disciple for a short period of time, I'm very proud of you," Dwayne said with a smile as he patted William's shoulder. "Our lessons end here. It's time for you to go to the next part of your training."

"Thank you, Third Master," William replied and gave Dwayne a deep bow of gratitude. He, too, felt reluctant to stop his training with the Bald Monk because he could feel that he still had a lot to learn.

Even so, he knew that this was the curse of the Jack of All Trades. He could never focus on one class alone if he wished to increase his repertoire.

"Let's go back to Lont," Dwayne grinned. "Your next instructor said that you can have two days off before you start your archery training."

William returned his Master's grin as he nodded his head in acknowledgement. The boy looked in the direction of Lont with anticipation. He was looking forward to the next set of training that was waiting for him.

Chapter 97: Hitting The Target [Part 1]

"Call me, Big Brother," William said slowly. "B-i-g B-r-o-t-h-e-r."

"Call me Grandpa," James coaxed. "G-r-a-n-d-p-a"

Instead of an answer, what the young boy and the old man heard was the gurgle of a baby.

"Did you hear that, Gramps?" William asked with a smug expression. "Eve called me Brother."

"No, you numbskull," James refuted. "Clearly, she said Grandpa."

"It's Brother."

"Grandpa."

"Alright, don't fight," Anna said in exasperation. "You're going to scare Eve if the two of you continue this argument."

Anna was cradling a baby girl in her arms as she admonished William and James. She had given birth while William was doing his training, and this was the first time the young boy was seeing his cousin.

William was very good at handling babies because this was one of his duties at the orphanage. Seeing his cousin's adorable blue eyes looking up at him, the young boy felt that his heart was melting.

"Aunt, can I hold Eve?" William pleaded. "I promise I'll be careful."

"Do you know how to hold a baby?" Anna inquired.

"Yes."

"Okay. it is good that she gets to know her cousin as early as possible."

When Anna passed Eve to William, the little girl's face scrunched up like it was about to cry. Fortunately, the red-headed boy had already anticipated this scenario and lightly rocked the baby in his arms while humming a tune.

Eve looked up at her older cousin and started making gurgling sounds. William wasn't able to stop himself from kissing the baby on her forehead. He then lightly swayed from side to side as he continued humming a tune.

Soon, Eve was fast asleep in William's embrace which surprised Anna and James.

"I didn't know that you were so good at handling babies," Anna said with a smile.

William only returned the smile as he handed Eve back to his Aunt. He couldn't possibly tell her that he had a lifetime's worth of experience when it comes to handling babies and little children.

"I'll come back again to play with you after I finish my training, Eve." William kissed the baby's cheek before bidding his Grandpa and Aunt goodbye.

Today was the day where he would meet his next instructor and he was told to go to the valley where the goats usually went to graze.

When he arrived at his destination, a familiar scene appeared in front of his eyes. Hundreds of sheep and goats grazed within the pasture as the Shepherds watched over them. His gaze automatically sought out his herd, but he didn't see any of them.

They were not around in their usual place, and William couldn't find them anywhere.

"Are you looking for your herd?" John approached him with a smile.

"Yes," William answered. "Uncle John, where are they?"

"They are undergoing training right now." John smirked. "So, are you ready to go?"

William nodded his head in understanding. "I look forward to our lessons, Uncle John."

"Me, too." John chuckled as he patted William's shoulder. He then looked up in the sky where a Hawk could be seen circling around them. "Blitz, let's go."

A sharp screech pierced the air as the Hawk grew in size and flew towards the ground.

"Hang on tight," John said as he grabbed William's waist and jumped into the air.

They landed perfectly on the Hawk's back. William had never ridden a flying beast before and it made him feel slightly anxious. Seeing his reaction, John didn't say anything and simply supported the young boy's body as the Hawk flapped its powerful wings to fly high into the sky.

"Do you know what your next lesson is?" John asked in a teasing tone.

"No," William answered nervously. "Does it have something to do with flying?"

"Well, not exactly. It's more about 'falling'." John grinned.

William's body shuddered and he immediately clung to John's body like a leech that was unwilling to let go.

John laughed as he patted the boy's head. "I was just joking. It was just a joke."

"Uncle, please don't make those kinds of jokes," William pleaded.

John nodded and didn't say anything else along their journey. The two traveled for an hour before Blitz landed in a place that William had never visited before. The place somehow reminded him of the Silent Forest, but there was one big difference.

This place was teeming with life and the roars of various beasts could be heard from within the forest.

"Uncle John, where are we?" William asked. The vast expanse of forest was making him uneasy. Due to his perception training, he could tell that the forest in front of them was a very dangerous place to be.

"This is the outer perimeter of the Strathmore Forest," John answered. "It is the entrance to one of the Forbidden Lands in the Southern Continent."

"Strathmore Forest? Wait! Don't tell me this place is..." William looked at John in shock. He might not have come to this place, but he had heard many stories about it.

Strathmore Forest, the Forbidden Land that was located in the Southern Continent, and was said to house one of the handful of Calamity Class Beasts in the entire world. This Beast that had lived for Thousands of years had already stepped into the ranks of DemiGods. It was none other than the home of the Nightmare Behemoth, Qiong Qi.

(A/N: Read it as Ki Yong Ki.)

"Relax, we are only at the outside perimeter," John stated. "The Strathmore Forest extends for hundreds of miles and the Big Boss is located at the farthest end. He wouldn't be so bored as to find trouble with two little ants like us. Besides, only those below the age of twenty can enter the Forbidden Lands."

"Uncle John, I'm only eleven years old."

"I know."

"... Can I go home now?"

"Of course not," John firmly gripped William's shoulder. "Don't worry, we won't be going to the depths of the forest. We'll just play at the outer perimeter. Aren't you excited?"

"Yaaaay. I'm so excited." William said in a sarcastic tone.

John chuckled and took out a small bow and a quiver filled with arrows from his storage ring and handed it to William.

"Have you used a bow before?" John asked.

"No," William replied.

"The reason why I brought you here is to teach you archery," John explained. "Bear in mind that we will not leave here until I am satisfied with your performance. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes." William nodded his head. To be honest, he had always wanted to learn archery. When he was still back on Earth, he would often go near the Archery Club to peek at Belle's archery practice.

Not only was she the number one beauty in the academy, she was also a very talented archer that had won many awards and gold medals from competitions all over the country. William had often thought of joining the archery club in order to be close to her, but his ailment prevented him from doing so.

The image of the black haired beauty made William grip the bow in his hand tightly. Although he wasn't able to learn archery on Earth, it was not too late to learn it on Hestia.

"I like your eyes," John praised as he looked at William's light-green eyes that were burning with determination. "In order to learn archery, you must first learn how to hold the bow.

John demonstrated the proper bow stance using his own bow and showed William the step by step process on how to aim and fire an arrow.

William immediately asked the system to change his subclass to Archer. He had a feeling that he could gain experience points for his Archer Class the way he did for his Monk Class as he continued his training.

A month after John and William arrived at the outskirts of the Strathmore Forest...

Thunk!

The sound of an arrow hitting its target echoed in the distance.

The wooden arrow hit the mark that John had painted on a tree that served as William's target practice.

William had a smug expression on his face as he looked at John in anticipation. "How is it?"

"Disappointing," John replied as he gave the arrow a side-long glance. "Your shooting is a textbook example of how to hit a target."

"Uncle, what's wrong with that?" William was perplexed. "Isn't the objective to hit the target?"

"Indeed. However, you are not using your own ability to hit the target," John frowned. "I don't know how you're doing it, but this is not the right way to learn archery. It's like you're using some kind of cheat and it will not be beneficial for your growth in the long run."

William averted his gaze because he was feeling guilty. John was right, he was using the passive abilities that he had learned while learning how to shoot arrows.

< I agree with John. Using your passive skills will not be beneficial to you in the long run. >

William sighed as he opened his Archer Skill tree to look at the three skills that he had learned during his one month of archery training.

< Precision Aiming 10 / 10 >

-- When you focus your concentration on aiming, your attack becomes very accurate.

-- Adds +10 Enhancement Bonus to Dexterity

< Improved Concentration 1 / 10 >

-- Greatly enhances your concentration when aiming at your targets

-- Adds +2 Enhancement Bonus to Dexterity

< Long Distance Aiming 5 / 5 >

-- Allows you to focus your aim at great distances.

-- Increase range of sight by 250 meters.

-- Requirements: Bow or Crossbow weapons.

After thinking long and hard, William asked the system if he could help him with the current situation.

< Host the solution is really simple. >

'Oh? I'm listening.'

< All we need to do is disable the abilities of the Archer Class. You can still gain experience points as you continue your training, but you will be unable to use the skills under the Archer Skill Tree. >

'Perfect! Let's do that!'

< Understood. >

< Disabling Archer Skill Tree >

< Disabling Successful >

'System, disable the abilities of the Shepherd Job Class as well.'

< Understood. >

< Disabling Shepherd Job Class Successful >

William could feel significant changes in his body due to the loss of the passive skills that increased his stats.

The young boy nocked an arrow on his bow and aimed at the marked target in the distance. This time, he could barely see the target using his normal vision.

When William released the arrow, John noticed significant changes in its trajectory. He was an expert Hunter and the young boy's latest attempt made his eyes widen in surprise. Just like he expected, the arrow landed way off its designated target..

You could even say that it didn't even make it through its target because it landed fifty meters away from the tree.

However, instead of nagging at William, John happily patted the boy's shoulder and gave him a thumbs up.

"Good! Now, take another shot. Remember, practice makes perfect!" John said as he urged William to take another shot.

The boy complied and shot another arrow. Just like his previous attempt, the arrow still fell short from his target. Even so, William had a smile on his face.

Somehow, he felt that with every failed attempt he made, he was getting closer to standing on equal ground with the young lady who had made his heart skip a beat.

Chapter 98: Hitting The Target [Part 2]

William rolled on the ground as he evaded a wind blade directed in his direction. After regaining his balance, he immediately summoned his bow and took aim. The young boy fired three consecutive arrows in rapid succession towards his target.

The bird of prey who had shot at William with a wind blade, evaded his attack with swift aerial maneuvers that made William click his tongue in frustration. Three months had passed since he started his training with John, and his proficiency with the bow had reached the peak of the Silver Rank.

The surprising part about all of this was that William wasn't relying on any Job Classes. Instead, he had used everything he had learned from his previous instructors and put it into play.

Owen's Stamina Training allowed him to hold his ground in a battle of attrition.

Trent's Perception training allowed him to read the trajectory of the opponent's attacks so that he could evade them.

Dwayne's flexibility training gave William an edge on performing difficult stunts for both attack and evasion as he firmly held the bow in his hand.

A shrill cry reverberated in the sky as Blitz warned him of another incoming danger. Another bird of prey flew from the outskirts of the forest in an attempt to rend William with its claws. It seemed that it was the partner of the other one he was engaging in combat, and the two beasts decided to work together to subdue the boy that they intended to eat for lunch

< Green Scaled Archaeopteryx >

-- Birds of Prey

-- Threat Level: D (High)

-- Cannot be added to the herd

-- A voracious hunter in the forest, this bird of prey is well-known for its viciousness when hunting for food.

-- Able to use Wind Magic up to the First Circle

"Blitz!" William shouted and the hawk dove from the sky to answer his call.

The young boy jumped on the hawk's back and gave the two birds of prey a side-long glance. If it was only a one-on-one battle, William was confident that he could beat it. However, since its backup had arrived, the young boy decided to retreat.

He was not a fool. With his job classes sealed, fighting two Class D Beasts was suicide. With a flap of its mighty wings, the Hawk left the outskirts of the forest and landed near a small camp where its Master, John, was waiting for them.

"How did it go?" John asked.

William shook his head. John had tasked him to look for suitable prey inside the forest for lunch, but he hadn't seen any beast that was easy to deal with so he decided to circle around the outskirts in the hope to find an opponent he could take down.

After an hour of searching, he finally found a horned rabbit digging into the ground. He was about to go for the kill when he was interrupted by the Green Scaled Archaeopteryx.

Naturally, the horned rabbit was alerted and immediately ran away. William, on the other hand, engaged the bird of prey because he felt that he could beat it. Unfortunately, the Archaeopteryx was one tough cookie. The two battled for a quarter of an hour before its partner came to its aid, leaving William no choice but to retreat.

"I guess we'll be having boiled potatoes for lunch." John grinned as he took out four potatoes from his storage ring.

William sighed because it was their third day of eating boiled potatoes in a row. Blitz left them in order to hunt for his own lunch. He was the type of bird that didn't like to share his spoils with other people.

"What's wrong?" John asked as he stared at the depressed boy that was sighing beside him.

"I finally understand how hard it is to hit a moving target," William replied as he gazed at the pot of potatoes over the fire. "It is much easier to hit them when they are standing still."

"If someone were to shoot you with a bow, would you keep still?" John inquired.

"Of course not," William answered. "I don't want to die."

"Correct." John nodded his head. "Naturally, the beasts you are fighting against don't want to die either. However, that's just how the world works. It is either you are the hunter or the prey. These two roles could interchange at any point in time. One minute you are the hunter, the next second you are the hunted."

William knew that John was telling him the truth. It was the same when they fought the Hobgoblin Shaman for the first time. They were the hunters, but they kicked a steel plate. In the end, the tables were turned and the Hobgoblin Shaman almost wiped out their entire party.

"Then, how do you hit moving targets?" William inquired. He was hoping that John could give him some advice.

"Predict where they will move next," John replied. "This is why I asked you to hunt for our food. You need to use your perception and predict your target's next moves. That way, you will be able to land a hit on them."

"Predict..." William frowned. The movements of the Green-Scaled Archaeopteryx were too erratic for him to predict.

What William didn't know was that aside from archery, John's role was to teach him to read his enemy's body language. All Martial Artists were proficient in this field, but Hunters were the ones who paid extra attention to their targets.

Hitting your enemy from a distance is no easy feat. It required strong concentration and perception in order to land a hit on your target's body.

John's Profession was an Aerial Cavalier. He was a hunter that specialized in shooting his targets from the air while riding his mount, Blitz.

The thing that he was proficient in was hunting moving targets. This was why he was able to hold the Strathmore Horned Wolf at bay until James and the others arrived as his backup.

Another month passed and William had gotten used to hunting on the outskirts of the Strathmore Forest. Thanks to John's advice, he was able to hit his target 6 out of 10 tries. Although the hit rate was just barely passable, it was a great improvement in William's archery skills.

He had just killed a Wild Boar when he heard the cries of birds in the forest. William's sixth sense warned him that danger was approaching. The young boy didn't even think twice and ran towards the exit for the forest.

Although he felt regret for needing to leave the wild boar behind, his life was more important.

He had just traveled a mere twenty meters when a Black-Winged Panther lunged at him from the side. William had already jumped to his left, but the panther's claws still managed to land a scratch on his chest.

Fortunately, it wasn't too deep, but it still dyed William's clothes with his blood. William looked at his assailant with dread as his appraisal skill identified the creature in front of him.

< Shadow Fang >

-- Winged Black Panther

-- Threat Level: C (Mid)

-- Cannot be added to the herd

-- A panther that liked to stalk its prey from behind before delivering a fatal strike.

-- Beautiful, yet ferocious, this Beast is a difficult adversary on land and in the sky.

'System unlock my Job Classes now!' William ordered. He knew that now was not the time to withhold his strength because he was fighting against an opponent that was stronger than his Mama Ella in her War Ibex Form.

William wouldn't take his chances against such an opponent.

< Unsealing Job Classes >

< Seal has been lifted >

< Host's Abilities has been successfully unlocked! >

William felt his body getting lighter and stronger after his abilities were unsealed.

'System, switch my Sub-Class to Monk.'

William stored his bow inside his storage ring and ran away in haste, he zigzagged through the trees using his movement speed, Heavenly Phantasm.

The Shadow Fang looked at him in disdain as it jumped from branch to branch in pursuit of its prey.

When the panther was about to jump to the tree near William, the boy kicked the tree bark with all his might splitting the tree in two. The sudden change caught the Panther by surprise as it flapped its wings to adjust its landing.

William chose that opportunity to charge towards the Shadow Fang and deliver the most powerful trump card in his Monk Arsenal which was the "Overwhelming Strike".

< Overwhelming Strike >

-- Once a day you can deliver one full-powered unarmed strike that contains all of your strength.

-- Damage dealt is equivalent to your Strength Stat multiplied by 20.

-- Knockback Effect

A powerful clap resounded in the forest as William's fist connected with the panther's leg. The panther roared in pain as it was knocked away by William's full powered strike. Its front leg was bent at an unnatural angle which proved that the boy had successfully crippled his attacker.

However, the battle was not over yet. The panther flapped its wings and several feathers flew in William's direction. The wings of the Shadow Fang were as hard as steel and it could use their feathers as range weapons when dealing with its enemy.

William bent his body in an unnatural angle to evade the feathers, which was only possible because of his flexibility.

After dodging the attack, William ran away because this was his only opportunity to do it. He hoped that the Winged Panther would call it quits and leave him alone.

Sadly, no one heard his prayers as a vengeful roar echoed through the forest. Even though its front leg was crippled, the Shadow Fang could still move its body by flying in the air.

When William exited the forest, the Shadow Fang was already above him and was prepared to take his life.

It was then when a loud shriek pierced the sky and Blitz collided with the Winged Panther with its talons poised to strike.

The Shadow Fang was forced to abandon its plan to bite William's head off from his body and turned to clash with the hawk who dared to get in its way.

The Panther and the Hawk engaged in a fight in close combat as they clawed, pecked, swiped, and bit each other in the air. William could only watch the spectacle unfold as the two Beasts fought tooth and nail against each other.

"Stop playing around, Blitz," John said as he appeared beside William. "Don't play with your food."

Blitz cried out reluctantly as it looked at the Panther with a sneer. The Shadow Fang felt that something was wrong, but it still continued to attack the Hawk in front of it.

The Hawk's body grew in size until he was as big as two buses combined. He lashed out his sharp talons against his enemy and left deep gashes on the panther's chest. The Shadow Fang knew that it was in trouble and decided to run away. But, Blitz didn't give it a chance to do that.

The Hawk's talons tore the wings off of the panther's body. The Shadow Fang roared in pain as it crashed to the ground head first.

Blitz was about to deal the finishing blow when a whistling sound tore through the air. An arrow flew towards the Panther's open jaw and pierced through its head. Seeing that its enemy died before its eyes, the Hawk gave William the "Dafuk are you doing Bro?" stare. Clearly, Blitz didn't like its prey getting "Kill Stealed" by someone else.

William, on the other hand, had a smug look on his face as he landed the killing blow to the Beast who almost took his life earlier.

< Gained Exp: 10,000 >

"Uncle John, so this is what it's like to predict your enemy's movements," William said with a smug expression. "Everything went according to my plan."

The corner of John's lips twitched as he looked at the shameless boy beside him.

'Just which part of what happened was part of your plan?!'

This was what Blitz and John wanted to ask the smug-faced boy who was looking at the Panther's corpse with greedy eyes. For a brief moment his gaze reminded them of what James looked like when he was about to rob a bandit's camp of their treasures.

Chapter 99: Long Time No See, Master

William was hunting as usual when two Green Scaled Archaeopteryx attacked him from his left and right side. When their sneak attack missed the two birds of prey circled around the boy using their erratic movements with the intention of confusing him.

The red-headed boy calmly nocked an arrow on his bow and pulled the string as far as he could. He didn't even bother to look at the Archaeopteryx that was about to peck him from behind. Instead, he stepped aside and bent his body in an angle that allowed the beast to pass harmlessly by the right side of his body.

It was then when William released the string and the arrow embedded itself on the Archaeopteryx back. The beast cried out in pain, but it didn't last long because another arrow had embedded itself in its head causing it to fall on the ground, dead.

This time, the boy wasn't using a normal arrow. It was a steel arrow forged from the steel wings of the Winged Panther.

The bow in his hand was also different from the one he used in the past. It was a special bow that Barbatos had made for him while he was busy training his archery skills. The difference between his old weapon and his new one was like comparing a flintlock with an automatic shotgun.

The penetrating power of both ammunition and weapons were miles apart.

The other Archaeopteryx shrieked in anger when it saw that its partner had died. It flapped its wings in a flurry as it shot several wind blades in the boy's direction. William calmly dodged these attacks as he nocked another arrow on his bow.

The boy pulled the string of the bow and grinned evilly. "This is payback for the time the two of you bullied me."

The moment William released the string, the fate of the Archaeopteryx was sealed. The arrow flew straight and true, piercing the beast's head and ending its life. The bird of prey became an easy target because it had lost all reason and attacked the red-headed boy directly due to anger.

"Looks like we're having roasted birds tonight," William muttered as he pressed two fingers over his lips and whistled.

A shrill screech answered back and Blitz scooped the two corpses off the ground. The Hawk circled one more time and William jumped on its back. Both boy and hawk left the forest and returned to their encampment where John was waiting for them.

"Just seven months and you managed to reach the initial stages of the Gold Rank for archers," John said as he propped his chin with his fingers. "I'm really a good teacher."

"Yes. You are a good teacher, Uncle John." William nodded his head in agreement.

"Oh? This is a surprise. I thought you're going to say that it's not that I am a good teacher, but that you are just a genius."

"No." William shook his head. "I'm not a genius. I'm just handsome. Get your facts straight, Uncle John."

"You and your narcissism," John covered his face with his hand. "Still, your training ended shorter than my initial estimate. Is it due to you being a Half-Elf? I've heard that they were natural archers, but seeing is believing."

"That's a possibility," William agreed.

It also surprised him how easy it was for him to learn how to use the bow in such a short period of time. It was as if he was born to hold a bow.

'Maybe it is due to my Elven Ancestry,' William thought as he added chopped wood to their campfire.

"In any case, we are going to return to Lont tomorrow." John yawned. "Time for you to meet your next instructor."

William smiled and nodded his head. It was at that moment when a familiar notification sound was heard inside his mind.

< Ding! >

< Special Quest "Birth of a Warrior [2] Completed! >

< Reward: 1,000 God Points >

< Ding! >

< Chain Quest Activated >

< Special Quest: Birth of a Warrior [3] >

< Complete the Basic Training for one Job Class >

< Reward: 2,000 God Points >

'Um? 2,000 God Points?' William blinked. 'It increased? Well, I'm not going to complain. The more the merrier.'

The young boy sighed as he looked at the 2,000 God Points that he had earned after finishing his Monk and Archer training.

The items in the God Shop were too expensive and William couldn't buy anything of value. He already asked the system for a recommendation and the latter showed him a weapon that made him gulp in anticipation. However, it was priced at 50,000 God Points.

With the 90% coupon that he had received earlier, he would need 3,000 more God Points in order to purchase it from the shop. William was now more pumped than ever to gather enough God Points to buy the weapon that the system had recommended to him.

"Uncle, I don't want any suspense. Just tell me who the next instructor is going to be," William pleaded.

"Don't worry, it is someone you know very well," John replied with a grin. "Even if you ask me a hundred times, I'm not going to spill the beans. It will be best if you just wait and see who your next instructor is going to be."

"Fine." William backed down and just focused on cooking their dinner. No matter who his next instructor would be, he was confident that he would be able to handle anything that was thrown at him.

At least that's what he thought at the time.

William lightly coughed as he looked at the beautiful lady in front of him. He and John had just arrived in Lont when Ceine appeared in front of him with a smile.

"Long time no see, Master." William gave a dazzling smile that was enough for old women to give him something good to eat.

"Indeed," Celine replied with a sweet smile. "It had been two years since we last saw each other."

"Um, is there anything you need from me, Master?"

"I came here to pick you up."

"Pick me up?" William blinked his eyes in confusion. Suddenly a dreadful realization appeared inside his mind. "M-Master, don't tell me..."

"Mmm, the next stage of your training will commence," Celine lightly caressed the head of her one and only disciple. "Let's go, William."

The beautiful lady didn't even wait for William's reply as she dragged the boy away. John could only wave at the pitiful little shepherd who seemed to have given up all resistance, and allowed Celine to take him back to her residence.

'I knew that the reward of 2,000 God Points was too good to be true,' William thought as he obediently followed his Master, Celine, back to her home.

The young boy's body shivered as he entered the house that he hadn't visited for more than two years. Everything seemed to be the same. Even Oliver, the Parrot Monkey, was seated on his usual perch and was staring at William as if he had found an interesting new toy that he could play with.

Chapter 100: M-Master, It's My First Time

"Little Will, I missed you terribly," Celine caressed the side of William's face. "I also missed your cooking. Can you prepare something good to eat for dinner?"

"Of course, Master," William replied. Celine's soft hand lingered on his face for a few more seconds before she patted the boy's head.

"I'm looking forward to dinner," Celine winked. "Do your best, Little Will."

Celine left it at that and went towards the stairs.

William watched her go until she was no longer in sight before hurrying towards the Parrot Monkey who was looking at him with a smirk.

"Second Master, Master is scaring me," William said. "Is she planning something sinister for me?"

"How could that be?" Oliver replied in an exaggerated manner. "You know that the mistress cares for you very much. How can she probably do something sinister to you?"

'Being poisoned, cursed, and tortured everyday is not considered sinister?' William wanted to spit on the Parrot Monkey's face, but he needed allies right now.

When Celine acted like a spoiled, rich, young lady, it meant that she was planning to do something that was enough to give William a fright.

"Second Master, just spill the beans," William pleaded. "Is the Master upset? Is she angry at me? Should I look for a gift to make her happy?"

"Well, regardless of what Mistress is feeling, giving her a gift is only right and proper since you are her disciple," Oliver answered. "As for whether she is upset or angry at you, I don't think that is the case. Make sure to do your best in cooking dinner. Perhaps, the Mistress will be so pleased that she will not do anything tonight."

"Okay." William nodded. "It has been a while since I used my culinary skills. I'm going to get Master addicted to my cooking."

"You do that." Oliver nodded his head. "Also, prepare an extra portion for me."

"Leave it to me, Second Master."

"I'll look forward to your performance."

That night, the three had a sumptuous dinner. William did his best and Celine and Oliver were quite satisfied with the dishes that he had prepared for them.

Celine asked William about his training and the boy replied honestly to her every question.

"Dwayne must really like you if he asked you to call him your Third Master," Celine said as she eyed William. "You know, although that bald monk is an alcoholic, he is someone that is very hard to please."

"It's all thanks to you, Master," William replied with a smile. "I was able to perform well because of the discipline and mindset that you imparted in my training."

"Mmm, as expected of my one and only disciple." Celine replied. "You speak the truth."

Celine stood up from the table and walked towards the stairs. The young boy thought that he had managed to dodge the bullet, but Celine paused and turned to look back at him.

"William, after you finish cleaning up and washing the dishes, take a bath," Celine ordered. "Make sure to scrub yourself properly then come to my room afterwards."

The beautiful lady gave William a wink before climbing up the stairs. The red-headed boy looked at the beautiful lady's retreating figure with a dazed expression.

'S-She wants me to take a bath and go to her room later?' William's heart started to beat faster. 'Is this one of those special events where the protagonist is able to climb the stairs of adulthood thanks to their Master? Is this what Cu Chulainn experienced when he made Scathach his Master?'

(A/N: Cu Chullain is a Great Hero and a Legendary figure in Irish Literature. The same can be said to his teacher Scathach who was known as a Legendary Martial Arts Teacher who lives in the Fortress of Shadows.)

William's mind wandered as he completely forgot that he was currently only twelve years old. Although his mind was that of a teenager, his body was still that of a child.

Oliver, who was watching the boy, smirked in understanding. He already knew that William's mental age didn't match his physical age, so he was quite amused by the young boy's reaction.

"You better hurry up kid." Oliver decided to fan the flames. "Make sure to clean yourself properly. Don't keep the Mistress waiting."

"Yes! I will clean myself properly!" William hurriedly wiped the table and went to wash the dishes. His current state of mind was in chaos because he was too caught up in his fantasies.

William bathed himself using cold water from the well in order to calm his wildly beating heart.

After making sure that he had scrubbed every nook and cranny of his body, he washed it one more time before drying himself with a bath towel.

He then wore the cleanest night shirt that he could find from his storage room and combed his hair properly. Of course, he didn't forget to brush his teeth, not once, but thrice!

An hour later, he was finally standing in front of his Master's door. William took deep breaths before knocking on it to announce his presence.

"Come in." A soft and silky voice came from inside the room.

When William opened the door, he saw Celine lying on the bed wearing a black one-piece night dress. The young boy gulped as he walked inside the room, closing the door behind him. Afterward, he stood there in a daze, not knowing what to do.

"What are you standing there for?" Celine asked in a teasing tone. The beautiful lady patted the side of her bed in invitation. "Come here."

"Yes, Master," William replied as he stiffly walked towards the bed with mechanical movements.

William sat on the bed with his back turned towards Celine. His face was already beet-red from the stimulation.

"Don't be afraid," Celine said as she slowly guided William to lie on the bed. "It will hurt at first, but then you will get used to it."

"M-Master, it's my first time," William stuttered. "Please, be gentle."

Celine chuckled. Her laugh was like the peeling of bells which made William's heart tremble.

"I can't promise that I will be gentle," Celine stated as she held the side of William's face with her soft and delicate hands. "But I can promise you one thing. This will be a night you will not forget in your lifetime."

Celine bent her head until her forehead came very close to William's. A flowery fragrance assaulted the boy's senses, and it made his already flushed face a shade redder.

"William, do you trust me?" Celine asked.

Her lips were merely two inch away from his.

"Not really," William replied. "But this time, I'll choose to trust you, Master."

"Very well, now close your eyes," Celine said softly. She chose to ignore William's earlier reply. "Just relax and let me take the lead. Surrender yourself to the feeling until both of us become one."

"Y-Yes. I will surrender myself to Master and let her take the lead."

"Good boy."

William closed his eyes and relaxed his body. However, he still puckered his lips and waited for Celine's next move.

The beautiful lady saw his expression and almost laughed out loud. She just calmly placed two slender fingers to block the boy's lips as she pressed her forehead against his.

"Synchronization," Celine muttered.

William felt his body shudder as he lost consciousness. However, at the very last second, before his senses faded, he felt something soft and warm touch his lips. This was the last thing William remembered before his world was suddenly engulfed in darkness.