

## The Primal 9

### Chapter 9: Blood

Jake felt good. Incredibly good, in fact. The sensations that come from facing down certain death and coming out on top was wonderful. He didn't notice the weird look Jacob was giving him as he just enjoyed how he felt. He didn't take notice that the other people in his group had made their way over either, though some of them quickly turned right back around when they saw the scene.

Among the new arrivals, Caroline looked at Jake with a mix of concern and fear.

"Are you hurt? There is so much blood..." she asked in a quiet voice. She felt slightly sick, looking at the frightening image of Jake standing beside a man full of arrows, the blood gleaming as it reflected the moonlight.

"I'm good. None of it is mine," Jake answered casually with a light smile. He was hoping to finish up any potential conversations so he could move on to more important things. He had gotten several system notifications that he was more than eager to get to.

"Oh... okay," she answered tentatively.

Caroline didn't seem inclined to ask any more questions, while Jacob looked like he had something to say, but he chose not to. Jake gladly took the opportunity to extricate himself when no one else spoke up.

"I'm gonna go sit down and check my status messages. There are no more enemies as far as I can tell, so relax everyone," Jake said, considering if he should tell them they could go back to sleep. He decided not to, as he had serious doubts anyone felt like sleeping right now. He sure as hell didn't, his spirit way too high.

Jake walked to the bonfire that was still burning bright as ever, sat down on the same log he had used as a lookout earlier in the night, and finally opened his notifications window to a slew of messages.

\*You have slain [Human (G) -lvl 3 / Warrior (Medium) - lvl 7] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 478 TP earned\*

\*You have slain [Human (G) -lvl 2 / Warrior (Heavy) - lvl 5] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 340 TP earned\*

\*You have slain [Human (G) -lvl 2 / Archer - lvl 4] – Bonus experience earned for killing an enemy above your level. 294 TP earned\*

\*'DING!' Class: [Archer] has reached level 4 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point\*

\*'DING!' Race: [Human (G)] has reached level 2 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point\*

\*'DING!' Class: [Archer] has reached level 5 - Stat points allocated, +1 free point\*

He had won, not because of his stats, but purely due to how he fought. They were amateurs, Jake even doubting they used all their skills during the fight. Besides the medium warrior using that glowing sword, he didn't notice anything else... then again, they were all low level, and it wasn't like skills actually had any real visual prompt from what he had seen so far. In fact, he should instead maybe be surprised that the guy had a skill to make his sword glow like that, to begin with.

Looking at his gains from the fight, the stats and levels were nice, but the real gains came in the next few notifications. Though they were a bit different from any earlier ones.

\*Bloodline Detected\*

Processing...

...

Bloodline analyzed.

\*Bloodline Awakened\*: [Bloodline of the Primal Hunter (Bloodline Ability - Unique)] – Dormant power lies in the very essence of your being. A unique, innate ability awakened in the bloodline of the newly

initiated human, Jake Thayne. Enhances innate instincts. Enhances the ability to perceive your surroundings. Enhances perception of danger. +5% to perception.

A new skill had been unlocked, or was it an ability? He was clueless as to what the whole bloodline business was about. His family background was nothing extraordinary, as average as one can be, and yet he apparently possessed an innate ability tied to it.

Not that he was going to complain just because he was a bit confused. The effects of the ability were, in Jake's honest opinion, awesome. It also explained why he had these weird senses that none of the others seemed to have. More amazing was that the description even included his name. That was kind of cool in its own right... right?

What he gathered from his own experiences, along with the description of the ability, was that it had four effects. The first one was the enhancement of instincts. Without a doubt, this was the explanation behind his performance in combat and the at times supernatural reaction time he possessed. His ability to react was way beyond what his stats should allow him, and the reason why he at times felt like his body couldn't keep up with what he wanted it to do.

The second part of the ability was the one to perceive his surroundings. The 360 degrees perception he had experienced during the fight made him act as if he had eyes in his back. He could not explain at all how it worked; he just 'knew' where everything was.

Even now, it was still active. He 'felt' the bonfire's flickering flames and every particle of smoke that entered the air. He 'knew' of the log beneath him, how it had a small part of it inside that was hollow, and every single blade of grass around it. His understanding improved whenever he focused on it, but it was passively making him aware of roughly everything around himself, especially any movements.

It was all vague, however, and the range seemed only to be a few meters. He could not sense the others, as they were still at the corpses 10 or so meters away. He estimated the range to be perhaps five or six meters. Too low for scouting, but invaluable in combat.

Third on the list was the perception of danger. That part was rather self-explanatory, honestly. It was the prickling sensation he felt whenever something dangerous was heading his way, the feeling in his gut that something dangerous was lurking ahead.

That part alone was great, but what made this part of the ability incredibly strong was the synergy with the two other effects. His perception of the area around him allowed him to perceive the nature of the danger, and his enhanced instincts allowed him to make a split-second reaction.

The fourth and final part was a 5% stat bonus to perception. While certainly valuable, he saw it as rather inconsequential compared to the other effects. He didn't doubt it would prove more beneficial as he got more stats, and the bonus started adding up, though.

The entire skill seemed far stronger than anything else. Archer's Eye was also a perception-based skill, but compared to his Bloodline of the Primal Hunter, it was borderline useless for anything other than scouting.

Even with the ability itself being so awesome, it didn't come alone, bringing even more benefits.

**\*Title Earned\*:** [Bloodline Patriarch] – Unlock a unique bloodline ability. The power found in the origin of your Records are yours, and yours alone to wield and pass down throughout the multiverse. May your bloodline prevail. +15 Vitality, +10% to Vitality.

This one was... massive. In a few different ways.

The description of the title was quite something in itself. Especially compared to his only other title, which was just a matter-of-fact statement that he was now part of the multiverse and new to it. This one instead talked about something called Records. Whatever the hell that was.

Even the name of the title felt quite a bit more impactful. Bloodline Patriarch. It was indicating that he was the forefather of the bloodline and that it was his alone. Did this mean that the rest of his family didn't possess it too? Was he just the first one to unlock it? The thought of his family was even still alive briefly entered his mind, but he suppressed the thought. Now wasn't the time to get sentimental.

The description and stats granted by the title indicated the system's desire for him to survive and thereby allow the bloodline to live on... and oh boy the stats. A massive +15 vitality instantly making it his highest stat, only made better by another +10% straight on top.

Looking at his stats, they had gone through quite a development from the level-ups, ability, and title.

## Status

Name: Jake Thayne

Race: [Human (G) – lvl 2]

Class: [Archer – lvl 5]

Profession: N/A

Health Points (HP): 302/310

Mana Points (MP): 123/130

Stamina: 144/170

## Stats

Strength: 18

Agility: 19

Endurance: 17

Vitality: 31

Toughness: 12

Wisdom: 13

Intelligence: 13

Perception: 28

Willpower: 11

Free points: 3

His stats had seen a massive growth, which made him smile widely. He did frown a bit, however, as he began to question his vitality being at 31. According to his quick math, he should have 29 vitality before the +10%, having been at 13 the last time he checked. After that, he had gotten +1 point from his race leveling up and +15 from the title. With +10%, he should be at 31.9... and yet it only showed 31 and not 32. Did it only show whole numbers rounded down?

Jake had 3 free points, so instead of thinking further on it, he simply allocated a single point and saw it instantly jump from 31 to 33. So, only whole numbers rounded down. Got it, he thought, nodding internally.

As for his last two points, he decided to do another experiment. His stamina was at 144/170, being higher than his maximum was when he woke up earlier in the night. What Jake wanted to know was how increasing the maximum of a resource affected the current amount available.

He allocated a free point to endurance, leaving him with one left for later. He saw his stamina jump to 154/180, adding a static 10 points to both maximum and current. Does this mean you could potentially have infinite stamina with enough repeated level-ups? Jake wondered though he did admit the scenario of that happening was quite far-fetched.

For the last free point, he was unsure how to distribute it, so he just let it be for now. The last subject on his lengthy list of system messages was the result of reaching level 5 in his Archer class:

\*Archer class skill available\*

Jake mentally acknowledged that he wanted to browse class skills, and a big list appeared before him. To his surprise, a huge number of weapon skills showed up in front of him. [Basic Two-Handed Weapons (Inferior)], [Basic Shield Technique (Inferior)], [Basic Unarmed (Inferior)], [Basic Throwing Weapons (Inferior)], and so on and so forth.

The only ones he did not seem to have were the magic-related ones. Quite honestly, Jake was not interested in any of them whatsoever. He was more than happy with his already once-upgraded [Advanced Archery (Common)], and he still had the [Basic One-Handed Weapons (Inferior)], in case things got dicey and he was forced into melee as he had in the last fight. This left him with only three options available at the bottom.

[Basic Trapping (Inferior)] – The Archer is not limited to direct combat but can also use his tactical prowess to emerge victorious. Unlocks proficiency using basic traps and knowledge of how to construct them. Adds a minuscule bonus to stat effects on traps based on the nature of said trap.

[Basic Stealth (Inferior)] – The deadliest predator is the one not seen coming. Unlocks basic proficiency in the arts of stealth, allowing you to remain undetected more easily and blend into the environment. Adds a minuscule bonus to the effect of agility and perception when successfully remaining undetected.

[Basic Tracking (Inferior)] – The first objective of any hunt is to find your prey. Unlocks basic proficiency in tracking entities you are familiar with. Must be identifiable tracks available. Adds a minuscule bonus to the effect of perception when tracking.

All of them were just more basic proficiency skills. Thinking back to the two melee ambushers earlier, both were over level 5 in their classes. He would not at all be surprised if they both had the basic stealth skill, considering how close he got to them, while they managed to remain hidden. Though the first warrior had a glowing weapon, so he must have gotten a skill to do that. Yeah, that made Jake a bit jealous. Good riddance, that lucky guy was dead.

He saw value in all of them, but he did not see himself setting up a large number of traps, especially not with his bloodline ability. He very much wanted the tracking skill, and he did consider taking it to track down where the three attackers came from.

But ultimately, he decided on [Basic Stealth (Inferior)]. He could imagine the synergy with his bloodline ability, allowing him to attack his foes before they would ever get a chance to strike back. The fact that it also scaled with both agility and perception only made it all the better.

The fight had made him realize how little he had accomplished since he got into the tutorial. They were all higher level than him, with the medium warrior being level 7 in his class, more than twice what he had been. He had already decided that he would need to go hunting.

He picked the skill and felt the same feeling as when he got his class the first time. This time far weaker, though. It gave him something he wasn't quite sure if he could call 'knowledge', but he still instinctively understood it. Maybe it was due to his bloodline ability, but he doubted it. Either way, he now knew how to sneak a bit better than before. It was small, subtle things, and far from a complete guide on becoming a master thief.

Closing all the menus, he felt very satisfied with himself. Perhaps a bit sad that getting a new skill was so anti-climactic. No ability to shoot laser beams or to shoot down the eight suns with eight arrows was gained.

Jake finally got up from the log and stretched his back. The smell of iron instantly reminding him that he was still covered in blood. Or more accurately, his cloak and face were covered. He took off his cloak, seeing that his shirt and pants underneath were spared from the torrent of blood. Quickly he sprinted down to the small river nearby, cleansed his face, and sprinted back up to the camp once more, the entire trip taking less than a minute.

As he felt refreshed, he also began to feel oddly naked. He immediately realized that he had no weapons on him whatsoever. His knife had been disarmed, and his bow had been hacked into. He saw that the others were still over at the corpses, and Jake started walking over. He first got to the dead archer and picked up the bow he had dropped, seeing it identical to his old one. The only difference being that this one was undamaged.

While picking up the bow, he couldn't help looking at the dead archer, arrows still sticking out of him, though the blood had long stopped seeping out. The man's eyes were still wide open, showing visible horror. Jake looked at him as he stopped. He looked over at the other corpses, the man with a sword still stuck in his skull, and the other lying in a pool of his own blood.

At the same time, he saw the looks everyone gave him. It wasn't the same look of the blame for causing Joanna's injuries like before. It was one of fear. That is when it struck him, far later than it should have.



The attackers were humans. He had just murdered three human beings.