

HELL DIFFICULTY TUTORIAL

Chapter 9

I decide to ignore stat points for now as I want to test their effects a bit more so I pull the dagger out of the goblin's eyes.

Damon and Sophie seem to be shaken, but their wounds aren't that serious.

Damon is naturally athletic and strong, with long limbs, meaning his reach is pretty big. Sophie seems to be well-versed in martial arts, but even so, this creature, around a meter and a half tall, managed to hurt them in a 2v1 fight. (*meter and half - 150cm - 4' 11*)

"Motherfucker..." Damon kicks the corpse of the goblin.

For me, it just seems like a way of hiding his fear. I can even see his shaking hands and hear a slight tremble in his voice.

"Can you carry its corpse?" When I ask, he looks at me like I'm crazy.

"There might be more of them, and we don't want them to find their friend's corpses," I add before he says anything.

He just nods solemnly after a short pause.

"Sophie." When I call her name, she looks up.

Oh.

I like the look in her eyes.

"I will carry the other one, and you can help Hadwin," she says.

She catches on pretty fast.

"Carry only the corpses; I or Hadwin will take care of the rest." I pause. "Don't bring them too close to other passengers for now," I add.

She nods.

I go deeper into the forest. The dagger is once again in my hand. It's made out of some kind of obsidian-like stone, but it's surprisingly sharp and hard.

Hadwin is looking at the corpse of the goblin, and I step next to him.

"Damon and Sophie will bring the other two away. I will take this one. Can you take care of their weapons?"

"I will. I can also try to cover up some of our and their tracks."

"Sounds good."

To be honest, I partially expected something like that from Hadwin, but I wasn't so sure. I scan the man in front of me once again.

Let's be a bit more careful with him.

The way he starts looking around and taking care of tracks that he can cover looks experienced to me, but I don't know anything about it, so he could be making it worse.

I keep a watch while he does so, and when he is done with our closest surroundings, I kneel to lift up the goblin and put him over my shoulders.

Unintentionally, I let out a surprised noise as the goblin is much heavier than I expected him to be. Probably around 90 kg. (190 lb)

God damn green asshole.

For someone at this height, it's a lot and he isn't even that bulky. But I guess we can't use human standards here.

Hadwin picks up the goblin's weapon and our stuff. My loyal pipe is there as well.

When we reach the spot where the fight started, Hadwin starts covering tracks or digging out ants or whatever he does. He is an expert here, not me.

Both goblins are gone, and in the end, Hadwin also grabs their weapons from the ground and watches our backs as I lead the way. The pistol is in his hand. The weapons and our stuff are under his other hand or inside his backpack.

We move quickly and quietly without a word, and once in a while, Hadwin does something that I guess is covering the tracks of our two companions and ours.

After around 15 minutes of walking, we reach the clearing.

I notice that I am not as tired as I should be after carrying such weight.

Sure, I lifted heavier weights before, but carrying it through the forest?

It's either adrenaline or, and I guess the more probable option, the effect of putting three stat points into the constitution.

We find Damon and Sophie lying on the ground, breathing heavily and covered in sweat, while their baggage is a few meters away from them with other passengers surrounding the dead goblins.

Once again, I realize how much better state I'm in as I throw the green creature on the ground.

Damon has an angry look on his face as he turns to me. I don't say anything, just look back at him.

"Fuck off," he breathes out and turns towards Hadwin.

"What the hell was that? What are these green little fuckers?"

"Goblins."

"No shit. I asked..."

Before he can continue, the older man interrupts him. "I don't know, Damon. As you know, I've been here as long as you have." There is a slight frown on his face. "What I know is that we should be thankful that we are still alive. These... creatures are far stronger than they should be."

"And much heavier," Sophie says quietly, and there is a questioning look on Hadwin's face. "The one I carried must have weighed around 50 kilos, and it's the smallest and slimmest one." (50kg - 110 lb)

"Fucking hell, mine is for sure over 100 kilos," Damon adds. (100kg - 220 lb)

From the corner of my vision, I see Sophie rolling her eyes.

Hadwin slowly walks towards my goblin and tries to lift him. Surprise appears on his face, but with a groan, he lifts him up.

"For sure close to 100," he puts him back on the ground.

Everyone falls silent.

"We should dissect them," I say after a while.

Their gaze instantly turns back to me.

...

Uhm? Why are you looking at me like that?

Chapter 10

I had hoped that Hadwin would suggest it first, but I can see that he is holding back a little bit, still not fully realizing the situation we are in. Still not prepared to do everything it takes for his survival.

When they look at me with shocked looks in their eyes, I just shrug my shoulders. I notice that only Hadwin looks somewhat relieved.

"You don't have to be there."

"I will help you," he says. "But we should do it far away from the clearing."

I stop to think about it for a second.

Doing it here doesn't sound like a good idea. We don't know if blood won't lure more monsters to us, and I don't know how the other passengers will react to it.

Well, I am sure that they will get used to it fairly soon.

"We have to get rid of them anyway. So let's just throw them out, and while doing so I will quickly check a few things."

"There is no fucking way I am going to carry that green little shit again," I hear Damon say, but everyone ignores him.

"Are you sure it's worth it?" Hadwin is still worried. "We will be taking a big risk."

While in deep thought I look at the dead goblin. The words over his head are gone. Knowing that the text disappears when a monster dies helps.

The goblin is around 150 cm (4'11) tall with a short torso but long legs and hands. Even though his limbs are slim, I remember their weight. It was also illogically strong, unfitting its figure.

I lean over him and poke him with the tip of my finger.

His skin feels thick, somewhat firmer than mine.

I pinch him, and I once again notice the firmness of his skin.

Could it be his thicker skin adding to its weight?

The green creature is wearing some sort of primitive leather clothes covering parts where reproductive organs on humans would be. There are also light blue markings all over its body. When I glance at the other two goblins, I notice that they have similar markings. I try to rub them, but nothing stays on my finger. When I spit a little bit on it and try again, the result is the same.

Tattoo? Some kind of group, clan, or village marking?

I pause for a second, done thinking over things

Okay, no dissecting, let's just test a few things.

I pull out the knife I took from him and point the tip at its chest. I am careful to do it close to its clothes so blood can soak into it. I push onto it, and it's harder than it should be, but I am not too surprised. I don't push too deep, but I try the same thing on other parts of its body, but it's the same.

The monster's skin is surprisingly strong and thick.

I put my knife away and grab its hand. Before I continue, I look behind me. Hadwin, Sophie, and Damon have looks on their faces that are hard to describe.

I also notice the bus driver pushing people towards the bus, away from the three dead goblins and us four. I guess he saw me poking the goblin with a knife as I also see disgust on his face.

To be honest, I am surprised by myself as well. Never in my life did I think I would do something like this, but I am surprisingly calm and clear-minded.

I will have to give it some thought a bit later.

"You don't have to be here," I say.

Damon curses, but all of them stay.

I try punching it a few times, and the response I'm getting is much more resistant than hitting a human body. I am also unable to break his ribs after repeatedly hitting his chest with my fist and full strength.

I continue examining the goblin.

Its nose is smaller than humans, even if we leave out proportions.

Maybe it doesn't have a good sense of smell?

That would be good as I am worried that they will sniff out their companions.

Its ears are also small, but what worries me are its big eyes.

They are almost twice as big as mine. I just hope they don't see twice as good. During the night, it would be bad news.

The creature also has pretty long nails; they are sharp, and if everything else fails they can be used as weapons.

The creature's teeth are extremely sharp. I'd be concerned about the risk of infection from a potential bite.

I don't find any pockets in its clothes, so other than weapons, this goblin didn't carry anything.

I can't be sure if that's the norm for them or if they move around like this.

I tell the results of my examination to others and stand up.

Sure, I wanted to do more testing, but I decided against it.

Where are its heart and other vital organs located? What makes it so strong? Can it use mana, and if so, how does it affect its physiology? Is it particularly vulnerable to fire? What are its weak points? And where is its skin thinnest?

Most of them would create quite a mess.

Maybe next time.

After stretching a little bit, I focus and put two stat points into the constitution and one into mana.

At the moment, I'm not sure if changes in investing stat points show up instantly or gradually. I'm more inclined to the second option, so investing them sooner sounds like a good idea.

As for why the constitution and mana.

My survivability is most important at the moment. I believe that constitution increases my endurance, vitality, and affects my regeneration.

At the moment, I don't have access to food, so a stronger body sounds like a good idea.

I just hope it doesn't mean increased consumption of calories to keep me going.

It probably does.

I am sure it does.

We can't have things too easy, can we?

I don't need much strength as I can use weapons and attack weak points.

Unfortunately, I'm not in a situation where I can test my stat points as I need to find water, food, shelter, and fight against these monsters.

One point in mana is a risk and I justify it as something that potentially can make me stronger.

But I can't lie to myself. It's simple curiosity, and I am willing to risk a little bit to satisfy it.

Ever since I felt it for the first time, I keep trying to manually use it with no success so far.

I was only able to use Focus and mana during fights. It happened subconsciously. When we found the goblins, I was able to control it a little bit.

I can't wait to test it out a bit more, but unfortunately, I have other priorities at the moment.

"I have a place in mind where we can get rid of them," Hadwin says. "I noticed it when we were scouting. It's a deep hole near a few big rocks, probably caused by a landslide. We can just throw them down there. It should be around 15 minutes there and back," he then looks at the goblin, "Maybe 20."