

## Hunter 60

### Chapter 60: Idiots

A few hours earlier, while it was still early in the morning, the base was in full motion. The smiths worked overtime, the tailors doing the last work, and all the warriors readied their weapons and prepared themselves to make sure all their resources were fully replenished.

The order given was to march towards the now deceased Hayden's base only minutes from now. They had all expected the command to come sooner or later, but it nevertheless came a bit earlier than most would have predicted.

As for Richard himself, he was currently in the large cabin functioning as the headquarter of his base. With him were Caroline and three other influential members of his team. Notably absent from the regular group of leaders was Jacob, who had yet to soften up after the whole Jake debacle.

Richard didn't sweat it much. They still had more than three weeks remaining, and despite his anger, Jacob had always done his job. Not happily, but he did it. His sense of responsibility seemingly trumping his anger.

Looking around at the other leaders in the camp, he was quite satisfied with himself. He had chosen to have a leader from each starting class present as if to represent their faction. Caroline naturally was the representative of the smallest group, the healers. Warriors had been bundled into one, Richard taking charge of all of them, while the three others were an archer in the Scout, a caster who had recently been replaced by William, and Joanna representing the craftsmen and craftswomen.

His desire to conquer the base of Hayden was still being questioned even now. Especially by the middle-aged woman who saw it all as utterly unnecessary bloodshed.

Richard believed that the light-caster, and former second-in-command, of the enemy faction's remnants still wanted to fight. The caster likely thought that Richard wouldn't risk storming their somewhat fortified base, even with their advantage in numbers. It was illogical and unnecessary, just like the craftswoman said.

He would agree, if not for small detail.

Tutorial Quest: A Leader is born

Objective: Become the sole leader of at least 90% of the other humans during the tutorial.

Current progress: 57%

Eliminate other leaders: 1/1

The quest had been obtained on the second day of the tutorial. Before he had even properly established his camp. He had been surprised at the notification, but at the same time excited.

There is no way such a quest wouldn't reward something worthwhile. Of course, the only obstacle in his way had been Hayden. A man who, as the quest objective showed, also had the same quest as himself. Or at least the man had also been recognized by the system as a faction leader.

His aim was naturally not a measly 90%. He wanted to complete the quest with a 100% completion rate. The quest clearly said "at least 90%" which indicated rewards for having more. A bonus he would gladly claim.

All he needed now was to wipe out what remained of Hayden's goons and then hunt down that troublesome archer Jake, along with any other stragglers. Striking down any dissidents within his own faction shouldn't prove much of an issue, either.

Looking about, he saw all of the people as his skill made him aware of their loyalty. Many of the recent defects from Hayden's camp weren't considered loyal quite yet, but that was kind of expected.

Richard was also annoyed to see that William, that moron, was no longer considered loyal. He was joining their assault, however, so all was good. He would make use of the teenager to wipe out his enemies and then put him down.

Having concluded their meeting, and William confirmed his tactic, the five people exited the cabin as everyone except the craftswoman went towards the gate.

"Listen up, people!" he yelled as he made his way to the middle of the camp and stopped. "Hayden is dead, but his people remain, and I fear they thirst for revenge. We have given them the chance to step down, but they refused! Tell me, are we going to let them truly start another war again!?"

"NO!" he heard several yells from the group - his own planted people, along with a few others.

"Exactly!" he continued. "We should crush them before they gather themselves and attack! Show them that we aren't afraid!"

Cheers sounded out as he smiled to himself in satisfaction. It was only a stupid act, but it had always worked to build morale and cohesion.

More and more people came to the middle of the base, as the nearly 200 people stood in front of him. Some of them weren't combatants but had simply come to send off their friends, but most were there to join him in his conquest.

Seeing a figure in the front, the warrior smiled to himself - a young man with blonde hair and piercing blue eyes.

"William, I am happy to see you join us," he said as he smiled at the teenager.

He didn't fear William. Not in the slightest. The young man had shown himself to be deceitful and powerful. But he hadn't shown himself to be foolhardy or overly stupid; he should know that Richard would only bring him benefits. He couldn't imagine the caster turning on him any time soon. Purely from a pragmatic standpoint, then Richard was extremely favored in the coming battle, and for William to try something would be stupid.

"Will the Smith join us also?" Richard asked as he looked around.

"Sorry, partner, he isn't a fan of stuff like this," William answered, as he cheerfully laughed. "You know the old man cares more about smithing than anything else in this world."

“A shame, his hammer would have been more than welcome,” Richard said regretfully. The Smith would have been a great asset, but then again, perhaps it was good to leave him behind. He was another of the unloyal subjects that Richard would turn or eliminate in time.

“But we have you here, so be sure to show us what you are made of, my friend” Richard laughed as he patted the young man on his shoulder. Feeling metal below the robe surprised Richard a bit, but he didn’t think more of it. He was a caster focusing on metal, after all.

William kept up his fake cheerful smile while he inwardly sneered - sneered, and seethed in rage. Who the fuck does he think he is to call me a friend? That was only for Herrmann to do!

Suppressing his emotions, something he never believed he would ever have to do, he followed the rest of the merry band as they made their way towards Hayden’s old camp. William learned on the way that the light caster's name was Desmond. A soldier who was working under Hayden, who had exemplified himself during the tutorial.

A lot of defectors were more than happy with sharing every little tidbit of information they could. While no one knew it for a fact, chances were that some of these people were the ones behind the atrocities committed against their factions.

With that in mind, Richard believed they did this to get the other leaders as fast as possible in the good graces of himself, which was also why practically all of them had joined this attack. Besides, it gave him an excellent excuse to throw them all in the front.

William didn’t care either. What faction you belonged to was irrelevant. Today would be a slaughter, with William happily taking on the role of the butcher. And he wasn’t picky on what to put on his chopping board.

Less than an hour later, they finally stood within eyeshot of the wall erected by Hayden and his comrades. Walking closer, they stopped only 20 meters or so from the gate, as they heard yelling and confusion from behind the wall. They hadn't exactly been subtle in their approach.

"DESMOND YOU COWARD, GET THE FUCK OUT HERE!" Richard yelled as the sound boomed out. The volume far above what a human could ever do before the system.

No response came from the base, but a few people were peeking over the wall in shock and horror. After only ten seconds or so, Richards slim patience was spent as he opened his mouth once more.

"If you aren't coming out," he said as he walked towards the wooden gate, "then I am coming in!"

Raising his tower-shield, he pushed it forward as a shockwave shot out of the shield, easily smashing the fragile wooden gate off its hinges.

What met him was a beam of light, followed by a string of other spells as they bombarded Richard along with the other warriors to his sides.

"SHIELDS UP!" he yelled as they all raised their shields. Blue barriers appeared and enlarged in front of their shields, making an impenetrable wall, easily blocking all the spells and arrows.

"ADVANCE!" the warrior yelled next, as they all started marching forward in formation.

The people on the other side struggled as they slowly backed off and kept firing spells to no avail.

A few spells were thrown the other way, but the other side kept retreating as they clearly focused on defense rather than offense.

Richard was a bit confused at the response. It seemed chaotic and sporadic... yet planned. But he didn't worry much as he spotted the unique robe of Desmond among the retreating people. The caster was also clearly firing light beams here and there, though he seemed to be doing a rather half-arsed job as the spells were on the weaker side.

The advance was slow but steady, as Richard happily let the other side waste their mana. The shields currently deployed by him and the other heavy warriors were skills they had all learned at level 20. The shield barely consumed any stamina to keep active once deployed.

Everything was going far better as expected, though Richard was surprised at the lack of people. There were perhaps 40 people in front of him, even though Desmond should have more than a hundred. Did that many people desert or flee into the forest? Or...

Before his thoughts could go further, he heard an explosion from behind, followed by screams of pain and panic.

Shit, Richard thought, as he turned back. What the fuck is happening?

What Richard didn't know was that the man he was currently suppressing wasn't Desmond.

Desmond wasn't stupid or reckless. Hayden had never been the brain of their operation, especially not after his son died. He had been overly emotional and spontaneous, which was why Desmond had taken charge of most of their planning and management.

Which was also why he had more easily united the remaining survivors of their camp. Far more quickly than Richard predicted.

From behind the attacking force, the forest shimmered as dozens of people were revealed. Ironically, Richard had been struck by the same trap he had used against Jake.

Simultaneously, the plants that Richard had thought to be deserters turned towards the weaker casters as they charged towards them.

Sandwiched between the two forces, and with Richard having pushed together with a group of other warriors and elites, the mediocre fighters started a desperate struggle as they were beset on all sides.

While he had surely underestimated the enemy, Richard wasn't a total slouch, however, as he quickly remobilized his men as they charged backward once more to face the so-called 'deserters'.

Chaotic fighting ensued as the groups started clashing and mixing. Richard had issues trying to make it back towards Desmond as he had a mix of allies and enemies between the two of them, all fighting desperately.



It had to be said that the majority of the survivors were barely fillers, people who had barely managed to get their first class evolution, with even a few not having them at all. Most only had the basic evolutions, not offering them much power at all.

This meant that the truly powerful individuals who had gotten more powerful classes easily distinguished themselves.

A caster with a stone staff fired spike after spike into the masses, killing Richard's men one by one. However, he soon met his end as a glowing red arrow fired with a Powershot blew off his head, shattering the mana barrier he had hastily erected.

The one who had fired it, the Scout, didn't exactly have an easy time either, as he was cleaved in two by a two-handed blade as it descended from a warrior surrounded by weird energy giving off a deadly feeling. A warrior who soon found himself at the other end of a barrage of spells, tearing him to pieces.

Individual strength distinguished you, and naturally also made you an obvious target.

But not every such standout fell. The genuinely extraordinary, despite the many attacks coming their way, managed to prevail. Richard simply shrugged off most attacks or blocked them as he confidently rushed towards his enemies. Desmond also quickly blocked ranged attacks with a barrier of light or dodged away with an ability akin to Jake's Shadow Vault.

Caroline easily defended herself as several transparent barriers revolved around her. Other standouts were also around, such as a former light-warrior, who was now drifting around among the casters, cutting them down one by one.

Not everyone had an incredibly high vitality and toughness like Jake or powerful defensive techniques such as Richard and Caroline. Most were also used to fighting in tight-knit teams, using coordination and planning to take down beasts and other enemies.

This fight, however, was not one of planning or deliberation. It was a senseless slaughter, where cohesion and teamwork lost all meaning. The number of former allies felled by their friends was not just one or two, as big spells were flung out among the crowd.

The deaths piled up as the stench of blood permeated the otherwise peaceful-looking forest. The number of survivors dropped each second, as the weaker survivors quickly got thinned out by the more powerful. Casters were naturally the most vulnerable as they were the class with the lowest defensive capabilities.

Archers did a bit better due to their high agility as many of them fled to the outer area of the battlefield, taking up a position to shoot from there.

Healers were few and far between, but those around did manage to attain the closest thing to teamwork. With warriors on all sides, Caroline, as an example, easily kept herself and the surrounding warriors safe. Even finding time to assist Richard and some others here and there.

Warriors were the ones that shined the most in this mess. The melee brawl was their natural element; as they slashed and smashed with their weapons at anything they determined an enemy.

All the resentment that had been suppressed by framing Jake was now back with a vengeance. The anger and brutality revived with more force than ever before. Barely anyone had liked 'playing nice,' and now they could finally let loose.

Soon less than fifty people remained as the fighting slowed down. On one side stood Richard and more than 30 others, all but a few covered in blood and gore from the brutal slaughter.

On the other side stood a pale-looking Desmond, with a rapier-wielding warrior at his side. The warrior didn't look too good either, as apparent wounds were present all over his body.

Not that Richard and the dozen or so fighters at his side got off scot-free. But they had an advantage the other side didn't. Only a single healer remained, likely in the entire tutorial: Caroline. The passive aura given to all healers and her powerful skills from her class above level 40 replenished their side.

"Give up, Desmond, and you may still live," Richard said, as he smiled viciously. The results were clear, and he was the victor.

Briefly looking at the number of survivors, his grin only got bigger.

Total Survivors Remaining: 108/1200

He knew that everyone who wasn't here had to be back in his base based on a quick headcount.

"Just end it quickly," the caster said as he made a sad smile, looking somewhere or at someone behind Richard.

“With pleasure,” Richard said as he walked forward, preparing to stab in the man.

Instead, he was met with an explosion of light as the ground shook. When the light died down, all that remained was the light mage's body, along with several of his dead comrades surrounding him.

And of course, Richard, who stood with a transparent barrier in front of him, with Caroline right behind, her hand raised as she channeled the spell.

“Fucking idiot,” Richard chuckled as he walked towards the now even more injured warrior who had dropped his rapier.

“I agree,” a voice said as the barrier in front of Richard shattered. Turning back in shock, he saw Caroline with her eyes wide as a spear impaled her heart from behind. To make it worse, everything around the wound started slowly turning into metal as her body looked like it rusted.

“WILLIAM WHAT THE FUCK!?” Richard yelled. Metal that looked like steel or perhaps silver covered the young man's entire body except for his face as he stood there. His goofy smile gone, and a level of hatred in his gaze Richard didn't know he could even display.

Instead of answering, William simply repeated Richard's own sentiment: “You are indeed all fucking idiots.”