

Last System 116

Chapter 116 - Joint Hunt

"Slowly, slowly," the pathfinder continued to utter instructions in a half-voice, making sure not to alert our prey.

It was still pretty far away, but its senses were far sharper than humans'.

Step by step, we inched closer towards the monster. Just like during a normal hunt, we had to take a long detour to approach it from the leeward side.

To be fair, the only difference between hunting a normal animal and a monster was the fact that instead of aiming for a single shot to kill it, we just wanted to get the surprise advantage.

"I will go first; you watch for its dodges," the pathfinder instructed, finally whipping out two spears and passing one of them to me.

We were still roughly a hundred meters away from our target.

This time, it was a pretty normal beast, appearing like a deer with way thicker legs than the one I knew from the earth.

On its own, it didn't have any redeeming fighting features that would make it a challenging target. But from what my guide told me, it wasn't any reason to treat it lightly.

Because contrary to the magic beasts that relied on their powerful psychique to ward off for themselves, this one could actually use cultivation techniques.

"URA!" the pathfinder shouted, jumping out of his hideout and rushing at the monster.

The monster's head instantly turned towards the man. Instead of retreating the second, it heard a noise; it was more interested in facing the danger.

'I didn't expect that,' I thought grimly, once again realizing just how misleading the similarities to what I knew from earth could be.

A normal deer would run at a breakneck speed the moment a danger would appear. This deer-like monster had too much pride to do the same.

By the time the pathfinder closed half of the distance in two leaps, a huge ring had appeared underneath the monster's hooves.

The moment that formation sank into the ground, the vegetation around the pathfinder came to life.

The vines hanging from the trees angled to the side, attempting to block his path. The roots of the trees shot upwards, turning into spikes capable of easily nailing down a human. Even the forest's bedding suddenly grew up, turning into a quagmire capable of trapping even massive beasts.

The pathfinder didn't mind any of that. He cut through the vines that reached for him, crushed the wooden spikes with the back of his spear, and avoided the trap of the forest's floor by leaping from tree to tree.

I moved forward, circling around the path my guide took. I flanked the place from the side in which the beast's body was directed at, ready to pounce the moment it would start retreating.

And then, the pathfinder struck his spear down at the monster.

The distance that still separated him from its target was twice, if not thrice, the length of his weapon. Yet, the second he pushed his blade forward, a glint of aura appeared all over his spear, suddenly elongating its reach by just enough to graze the monster's back.

Another circle appeared between the monster's long horns, only to flourish and explode in less than a second.

"REEE," an extremely annoying sound blasted through the air, forcing the pathfinder to get on the defensive for a moment.

My ears started to bleed. With my lower cultivation, I couldn't ward off the entire potential of the sound attack. Still, I continued to circle around the area affected by the restraining spell of the monster.

"DIE!" the pathfinder shouted again, executing another thrust of his spear.

He jumped and bounced off a tree, avoiding a wave of spikes that came flying towards him. He then extended his leading arm to the back, only to snap it forward and rapidly bring his spear down at the enemy below him.

This time, it wasn't just the man's aura that reached its back but the very blade of his weapon.

A weird, guttural yet high-pitched noise assaulted my bleeding ears just as the monster jumped ahead, trying to avoid the attack.

'That's what I waited for,' I thought, sliding half a meter forward as I took my position.

Instead of using the rapid strikes that I started my spearmanship adventure with, I replicated the pathfinder's attack. The one difference was, I was static when executing it.

My attack landed right on the side of the passing monster. The force of the attack pushed it to the side, causing it to lose the stability of its run. It crashed into a nearby tree in the next moment, momentarily losing the ability to escape.

My spear broke into pieces. It was a crude weapon, a throwaway gift rented to me for practice. As such, it was no wonder that it would crack when used against a monster of the same cultivation stage as I was.

"Great job!" the pathfinder shouted over, jumping ahead and driving his spear into the back of the monster's skull, pushing it deeply into its brain.

With such an injury, no amount of cultivation could help it. Even though monsters of any given level were far more resilient than humans on the matching stage, a metal blade turning one's brain into a stirred mess was lethal no matter the cultivation.

"Is it over?" I asked, only now realizing that both my legs and hands were trembling. My body still wasn't used to the forces that would come at play when executing this powerful, one-handed thrust.

"Yeah," the pathfinder nodded his head, pulling his spear out of the monster's corpse. He then redirected the spear's blade towards the side of its torso before making a clean, deep cut in it.

"It should be somewhere..." he whispered to himself, "here!" he exclaimed, pulling his hand out of the monster's gut, a small, crystal bead locked between his fingers.

"Does that mean..." I asked in a trembling voice, paying no mind to my light injuries.

My ears hurt like hell after the sonic attack from before, but the joy in my heart easily managed to overshadow the unpleasant feeling.

"Yeah," the pathfinder smiled, hiding the bead into his storage ring only to pull out a small yet glistening handsaw. "I will use its materials to make you a proper spear," he said with a smile, kneeling down to cut the monster's marvelous horns out.

It's been only three days since I started learning the spear, but my progress was already visible.

While the pathfinder most likely believed that he found a crude gem in terms of talent, I knew better than him.

In reality, this rapid progress of mine was a result of not only my system but also my over diligent work culture.

Ever since I learned how to use the basic attack, it became a mantra of sorts whenever I stepped into the amplification array.

Used to physical activity as the medium to guide my energy around, I hit two birds with one stone by practicing my spearmanship skills while actively cultivating.

What I discovered, though, was that contrary to other jobs, the spearmanship that appeared on my system worked slightly differently.

To start it off, it was called a novice spearmanship. What's more, it had a limit of ten levels, each of which required ten more practice runs for me to raise it.

Right now, I was on the eight-level out of the total of ten of the novice spearmanship, with forty more practices left before advancing to the ninth one. Yet, despite how simply raising the level of my spearmanship sounded, it actually turned out to be quite a challenge.

Because instead of a simple hit against a void opponent, I had to execute the stab perfectly for the system to count it as progress.

In other words, out of thousands if not tens of thousands of stabs that I performed over the last three days, only four hundred and thirty-six of them turned out to be good enough.

"Right, one question," I suddenly asked when I saw the pathfinder finishing up with the quick process of gathering the resources.

The sounds of the battle would surely attract more predators wishing to check the situation. So if we wanted to avoid a disaster, we had to run away soon.

"What's up?" the pathfinder asked, stashing both of the monster's horns away before reaching out back to its guts. "You won't get the core if that's what you want," he quickly added.

It was unnecessary and uncalled for. This was our agreement, and I didn't intend to attempt to change it now.

"That's not it," I shook my head before looking up to avoid the gore scenes of the man gutting the poor monster. "If this place is filled with mana and the barrier borderlands were not.... Why are we fighting monsters here when you did your utmost to avoid any fight back there?"