

## Last System 449

### Chapter 449 Gutting The Game

"Extract the core?" Mia repeated after me with a surprise filling her voice. "And why is that?" she then asked, leaning her head over her shoulder while alternating her eyes between my face and the bleeding-out corpse of the beast she hunted.

"Because if you don't do so, the core will melt and spread throughout the entire corpse," I quickly replied, basing my answer on my own experiences.

It happened somewhere in the first few days of my life on a contract.

As I was fed up with the idea of leaving nearly the entirety of what we hunted back in the wild, I opted to bring an entire game along with me to the camp.

Back then, I was extremely happy, hardly capable to wait before cooking the game so that I could finally get a proper taste of my labor.

And yet, rather than feasting on the small beast that I hunted, I ended up throwing the entire pot worth of stew out when Lucius broke the news to me.

In theory, there was nothing wrong with consuming mana-rich matter. That's what most of the cultivators were doing when it came to herbs.

But there was a massive difference between a mana-rich, or rather, spiritual herb and a mana-rich meat.

Spiritual herbs would grow up while permeated in mana, evolving to a form that allowed them to properly store it.

On the other hand, just like one could guess from how people needed to cultivate in order to make use of mana, beasts weren't capable of freely storing this power in their bodies either.

Hence, the very presence of the core inside of them!

As such, once a beast would die, the core would soon begin to deteriorate, decaying away while releasing all the mana stored within into the now-dead body of its host.

And with no biological will to keep it from happening, the mana would then lead the meat to quickly start rotting away from the inside.

As it wasn't a process that heavily relied on bacteria and microorganisms, there were no usual signs of the meat going bad. Yet, as countless experiences of careless hunters showed, the moment one would ingest this kind of stealthy rotten meat, it was only a matter of time, a very short time, before they would pay for it with their health.

"I don't really understand, but if you say so, then I guess it's one more thing for me to remember," Mia said with a shrug of her shoulders. She then turned her eyes away from my face and back towards the corpse. "I think it fully bleeds out now," she pointed out how the blood stopped flowing from the wound on the corpse's throat.

"Well then," I muttered, getting back up and approaching the beast's body with a knife in my hand. "Now's the time for the least pleasant part of the hunt," I stated.

I then pinched at the monster's fur right by the small cut I made to extract the core. Then, I snuck my knife as shallowly below the beast's skin as I could before slowly separating the two.

It was either impossible or pretty damn unpleasant to eat the beast as it was. In order for its corpse to turn into a proper piece of meat, it had to be skinned first!

The task was relatively simple, even if it required a certain degree of agility in one's hand. And in just a few moments, all of the monster's skin ended up hanging from the area around its hooves and right around the monster's neck.

"I'm not saying it's wrong to eat the beast's head, but I personally dislike the idea," I commented as I then cut the monster's neck with a single swing of my knife before casting away the part that made me feel it was wrong to eat the beast.

'I know there are places in the world where eating dogs is normal, but I can't bring myself to eat something that even remotely looks or acts like a dog,' I thought, clenching the muscles on my throat and face to keep a straight face and not throw up.

It wasn't my first time to skin and generally butcher an animal. And yet, due to a relatively long time since I last did it, all those feelings that I managed to kill during my life as a contractor now returned with double the strength, threatening to incite a revolt in my stomach.

"Why didn't you cut the head right away, then?" Mia asked, sitting on a random stone she found nearby and watching every move of my hands. "Wouldn't it bleed out faster, then?"

"The reason is simple," I replied with a sigh. "That's how I learned to do it," I then explained. "If I were to guess..." I brought my hand up and tapped the side of my finger against my mouth. "It is so that it won't bleed out too quickly?" I suggested while making a face that showcased just how little faith I had in this answer.

"Either way," I then shook my head before cutting a sizeable piece of the fur that I separated from the monster's flesh. "Now, for the second to last step," I announced, making sure to narrate the process properly, "it's time to get rid of the innards."

I used the patch of fur I cut away to create a makeshift glove for my right hand by simply pressing one against the other. Then, with a single downward swing of my knife, I cut the small beast's belly open, before pushing the bloodied side of my makeshift glove inside.

Through the glove made out of the beast's skin, I grabbed at the content of the beast's stomach before pulling it all outside and dropping it down to the ground below my feet.

Most of the stuff inside came out nice and easy, but to fully remove the rest of it, I had no other choice but to reach out with my unprotected hand before cutting at the connecting tissue with my knife.

"And now, all that's left," I muttered as I took a step back before spatting away, "is to give it a proper wash."