

Domain 161

Chapter 161

You obtained 25.000 coins.

Congratulations! The skill Power Shot has leveled up.

Power Shot Lv 30 → Lv 35

Effect: Increases the dexterity temporarily by two points per second.

Cost: 17,5 Stamina per second

You obtained 01 status point.

Surprisingly enough, before Ryan could sit down to meditate and recover some of his mana to dig a hole and hide, he received that notification. Somehow, he managed to kill the black dragon with a single attack. Still, Ryan didn't get carried away because he knew something was off... the dragons did something to hide their presence, and that something probably weakened them. That also would explain the wave of mana dispersing that he felt... Regardless, the enemies were dragons that could kill him just with their weight. So, he couldn't relax yet.

Suddenly, in the distance, Ryan began to hear the sound of explosions. The dragons decided to burn the entire area since the number of trees was too high... Ryan didn't expect that. Still, as long as he digs deep, their Fire Breath won't reach him. In the blink of an eye, the entire area was burned by the dragons. However, when the flames finally reached Ryan, he was already deep underground.

"Shit... I can't see a thing here, and the smoke will suffocate me if I don't do something."

Unfortunately, the only thing Ryan could really do in that situation was to wait and recover his mana and stamina and then repeat the same process: kill one dragon while its focus is in somewhere else.

Congratulations! The skill Fear Resistance has leveled up.

Fear Resistance Lv 4 → Lv 5

Effect: Decreases the effect of magic attacks that may cause fear by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

“Hey, are you kidding me? Why this message appeared at such time?”

Although Ryan was trying to keep his nerves in check, there was no sense in denying that he was feeling fear amidst all that tension. It was only natural given that he picked a fight with ten dragons. Still, he refused to accept that. ρ??∪??(?)???

Now and then, the ground around Ryan trembled while the dragons walked around and used their Fire Breath. Also, now and then, he was forced to close his only source of light and oxygen in that hole to stop the smoke. Somewhere inside his heart, Ryan hoped that the dragons would give up on him and just fly to somewhere else, but they never did. They wanted to avenge their comrade no matter what.

It felt like an eternity, but eventually, Ryan recovered his mana and stamina. It was time to choose another damn dragon to put down. The problem was: how to attack them when the monsters surrounded him? In the end, Ryan had an idea... before attacking again, he moved to where the fallen dragon was. It was a risky plan since he wouldn't have to move near the surface. However, at the very least, Ryan knew that the monsters wouldn't guard the corpse. They had no reason to do so, and thus he would be able to surprise them. With some luck, he may find even a decent item.

Since Ryan had to move just the right amount of earth to preserve his mana, it took a while, but he eventually reached his destination, and as expected, the dragons were near it. Ryan even put his head outside the hole to look for the drop since the nearest dragon was three hundred meters away from him. In the end, he didn't find an item but a tome.

Sting Tome

Effect: It grants you the power to decrease the enemy's endurance by one point per level.

Cost: 20 mana

It was a useful skill with a lot of potentials. However, at level one, it wouldn't help Ryan all that much. Regardless, he learned the skill anyway and prepared to recover his mana. After a few minutes of rest, Ryan was ready to attack, and this time, he chose the thinnest of the dragons. One that had green scales all over its body... Ryan could tell that the monster was good at attacking from a distance, but their endurance wasn't that high.

“Good, I can do this... I can analyze my foes' strength with my eyes alone. That needs some training, but this should be fine for now.”

Ryan couldn't move that much while he concentrates his Power Shot since his accuracy would drop considerably. So, he had to concentrate and hid as much as possible his bloodlust. He had no idea how to do that exactly, but for starters. Ryan decided to just charge the attack without properly aim at his target. When he felt that his energy was about to get empty again, Ryan adjusted his aim toward the green dragon. As expected, the beast's sharp instincts made it notice Ryan's presence as soon he aimed. However, Ryan fired and hit the monster's head before the creature could do anything... that gigantic size could also be a weakness.

You obtained 25.000 coins.

Congratulations! The skill Power Shot has leveled up.

Power Shot Lv 35 → Lv 38

Effect: Increases the dexterity temporarily by two points per second.

Cost: 19 Stamina per second

You obtained 01 status point.

The powerful impact exploded half of the dragon's head, killing the beast. Fortunately, Ryan's assumptions were correct, but it will be harder to choose another target since they didn't look much different from each other. Regardless, Ryan's attack also made the dragon's body move to the side considerably. So, the monsters never had the chance to notice that Ryan attacked so near the corpse of the first fallen dragon. They had good instincts, but since they were blinded by rage, they couldn't feel Ryan's presence that easily. Or perhaps Ryan's presence was being overwhelmed by the massive presence of the dragons nearby, that was a question only the future would be able to make Ryan find an answer. In any case, the fight was finally nearing its end...

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"Two down, eight to go..."

Ryan reached his first goal much sooner than he had expected. Now he could die feeling good about himself, right? The past him thought that, but now he wanted more. He wanted to survive as well. It was only natural since it would be a waste to die now. Regardless, he was hiding underground again, but Ryan could feel a lot of tremors after he killed the second dragon. Those beasts weren't idiots. They knew Ryan was hiding underground. Fortunately, it didn't look like any of those dragons seemed good at earth magic. Otherwise, they would have found him.

"Just in case, I guess I should hide in a hole below the corpses."

Although he wanted to check if the second dragon dropped something, Ryan couldn't risk it in that situation. Now more than ever, the dragons knew that they couldn't underestimate Ryan, so they had to be cautious. Hopefully, if they are as smart and cautious as Ryan thought they were, they will give up after another dragon dies. Besides, they had another problem...

"Just moving the earth to open a path won't be enough... I have to make a clear escape route underground. However, to do that, I will have to get rid of some of this earth, and the only way to do it is by putting to the surface... such a complicated life."

Ryan began to work as fast as he could. Although he focused on magic to dig, he also used his spear to help a little bit. At that point in time, he would use all he could get. Just in case something happens, Ryan decided to keep his mana at a decent level. After all, it would be troublesome if the dragons find him and he has no mana. In the end, what Ryan didn't want to happen, happened. Suddenly, he felt the

whole area moving upward... the dragons found him, and they were using their magic to make an enormous chunk of earth levitate. Just crushing Ryan would be easy since he was inside of that, but that was a mercy they didn't want to grant him.

"Screw it," Ryan bit his lips and nocked a bone arrow. "I won't go down without a fight!" ρ??∪??(??)???

Ryan jumped and left the hole he was in. At the same time, he saw three dragons around him... which was weird. There were eight dragons left. Still, that didn't matter. The very moment the beasts entered his field of vision, Ryan attacked.

There was no time to use Power Shot, so Ryan used Rapid Shot while aiming at the monsters' eyes. Even their eyelids had scales, so even though Ryan damaged the monsters a little bit before they could do anything, he didn't achieve his goal of blinding them. A few moments later, Ryan began to fall again, and this time, he felt shivers when he saw the monsters opening their mouths toward him. He was going to be burned to a crisp... However, in the end, their Fire Breath didn't burn anything. Suddenly, a red dragon felt something piercing the back of their neck, and the other two dragons saw Ryan right there. Although he used all his mana, Ryan avoided their attack and managed to land on the back of a red dragon.

"Too bad for you, but right now, red is my least favorite color!" Ryan said and then pierced the monster's neck with his sword as well.

Thanks to his Incomplete Reptilian Transformation, Ryan had a pretty decent strength. So, his sword and spear pierced the dragon's neck quite deeply. He didn't have much mana left to keep the skill active, but as long as he touches both weapons now and then, their effects would occur. The flame sword was causing much damage since the main element of that monster was fire, but the spear, on the other hand, was making the dragon tremble quite a bit. As if that wasn't enough, Ryan also was using Bleed's effect. So, the red dragon was losing two hundred points of health per second!

Even the dragons showed baffled expressions at the audacity of that human. Still, eventually, they recovered from the surprise and tried to attack Ryan. However, the red dragon didn't want to get hurt more than he already was. So, he moved away from the others in order to escape their breath attack. Ryan smirked when he saw that... even though they have been working together to trail Alissa, they certainly weren't allies at that moment. However, with their telepathy or something, the dragons reached an agreement not to use their breath attack. Since the red dragon couldn't hit Ryan with its arms, the monster just showed its back to the other dragons in order for them to get rid of Ryan.

“Shit...”

There was no other way. Ryan will have to grab his weapons again and then try to blind the dragons up-close. Still, he could only attack one at a time, and in the meantime, the other two will be free to attack him. However, to Ryan’s surprise, the creatures stopped midway just when he grabbed his weapons and was about to pull them out. At the same time, the monsters looked toward the north. Ryan eventually understood what had happened.

Using his Flame Sword as a platform for his feet, Ryan jumped toward the head of the red dragon. The creature got caught off-guard, and when it tried to do something, it was already late. Ryan attacked and destroyed one of the dragon’s eyes with his spear. Not even the scale of the eyelid stopped him.

“

HHHHHHHHHHUUUUUUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHH
HHHHHH!”

The monster screamed from the depths of its soul, but Ryan didn’t let that faze him. Even though his ears were ringing, Ryan used all his mana that he had left to summon his Incomplete Reptilian Transformation for a single second, and then he punched the remaining eye of the dragon. The scales pierced his hand, but the pain didn’t stop Ryan as well. Eventually, he surpassed the monster’s defense and destroyed its other eye.

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Ryan turned around to try to blind the other dragons as well. However, the monsters also turned around and began to fly in the opposite direction... they had no sense of responsibility toward their wounded ally. Still, that wasn’t something Ryan had to worry about. Now that he was on the face of the dragon, the creature finally could attack him, but before that could happen, Ryan jumped off from there and landed on the ground. The monster hit its own face and ended up making the Paralyzing Spear pierce even more.

At that point in time, the monster had completely lost its reason and didn’t even notice Alissa approaching in her dragon form. Just as Ryan thought, it was her presence that made the dragons run away. Those three thought they could take Ryan down before she appears, but the others weren’t so dumb and left earlier.

“Phew, it looks like I arrived on time,” Alissa said. “Incredible, you still are in one piece... well, almost. Anyway, you owe me another one, huh, Ryan? I guess you are going to work with me for more than six months.”

“Keep dreaming,” Ryan said. “Why don’t you ask Orgar what happened? “

“He attacked the dragons because we were going to be attacked by behind once they discover about the secret base.”

“Eh?” Alissa said, astonished. “Ryan did that? To think that he would go that for us.”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself,” Ryan said. “You already know why I did this.”

“For Arthur, huh,” Alissa said. “You sure are nice to him. Anyway, I guess you ended up paying your debt, and we don’t have to work together anymore.”

“Is that supposed to be a joke?” Ryan frowned.

He didn’t want to say it out loud, so Ryan stayed quiet about it. However, Ryan was fully aware that he didn’t have any chance of defeating the ten dragons alone. He defeated three somehow, but in the end, if Alissa hadn’t noticed everything and come to his aid, Ryan would probably be digested in the stomach of a dragon at that moment.

“I see...” Alissa said. “Well, shall I finish this guy here?”

“I can do this myself,” Ryan said.

The third dragon wasn’t wounded enough to be considered half-dead. However, since the Paralyzing Spear pierced deeply on the monster’s head, its effect prevented the monster from controlling its body. In such a situation, Ryan just had to use Wind Manipulation now and then to touch the spear, and then the monster would suffer damage. As expected, after three minutes, the dragon died.

You obtained 25.000 coins.

Ryan sighed in relief when the monster died. That battle had been the longest of Ryan's battles so far... it lasted over an hour, after all. Fortunately, it had been worth the hassle. Not only Ryan received a lot of coins, but he also received a tome and two other items. Those were the drops of the last two dragons he killed.

Magic Amulet of the Toughness

Effect: Increases the user's Endurance by thirty points

Durability: 20/20

Seismic Hammer 

Effect: It gives you a chance to stun your foes for one second every five seconds. Strength + 40, Endurance + 30.

Durability: 80/80

Congratulations! You have reached the rank of the 700 strongest humans! Keep clearing dungeons and defeating monsters to raise your rank, and you might receive some nice rewards!

Current Rank: 688th

You obtained Sprinter's Boots.

Sprinter's Boots.

Effect: It automatically activates Haste Lv 20 on the user.

Durability: 30/30

Those were some nice rewards, but since Ryan was greedy, he couldn't help but complain a little in his head... he wanted a new bow. It has been a while since he changed his main weapon, after all. Regardless, all those items would be beneficial, but now that Ryan thought about it, the fighting style that he wanted to develop had a serious flaw... he couldn't have several weapons and use them as throwable objects unless he obtains a skill or item that lets him store them in a storage dimension. Just carrying around the sword and the spear was troublesome enough, and now, with a hammer that was large as himself, Ryan's speed would decrease considerably.

"It looks like the more I complain, the more problems appear... I should stay quiet then."

"Hey, Orgar, are you sure of that?" Alissa asked while frowning. "You don't mind?"

"Yes, if he had lost, he would be in the dragons' stomach. That is the kind of world you live in right now. The winner can do whatever they want with the losers, do as you see fit."

Ryan had no idea what those two were talking about, but he decided not to get involved since he had enough problems. Still, Alissa told Ryan what she was planning to do.

"Don't you think we should take the dragons' corpses with us?" Alissa asked. "I don't feel like eating them, but your friends might like the meat. Also, the bones and scales of dragons can make a lot of weapons."

So that was what they were talking about... It wasn't like Ryan thought of doing that before. However, it was impossible for several reasons. First, carrying a monster with that size was nearly impossible. Second, humans didn't have the skills to use the part of monsters to do anything yet. Maybe they could develop those skills, but it would take a while... Maybe Ryan could try to do something with them by using Auto-Production, but he would stop in the middle of nowhere just to do that.

"It is fine. We don't have time to waste," Ryan said. "Just go and join the others. They are waiting for you, right?"

“I don’t need to carry them,” Alissa said. “I can just put all of them inside my dimension, which I use to store the things I want.”

Ryan hadn’t forgotten about that, but he didn’t think Alissa would be able to put three forty meters long dragons in there... her powers were really fearsome.

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After considering that proposal for a while, Ryan decided to accept it. In the end, he would need to make many items as he wants to face all the monsters, and it would be a pain to rely only on drops. He had some skills to make items, so it was a good chance to level some classes as well.

“You can keep one of the bodies to yourself as a payment,” Ryan said. “The other two will be mine.”

“I don’t really need a corpse...” Alissa frowned.

“Then give them to someone who wants. If you give it to the colonel, you will win his favor, and the chances of him causing problems later will decrease,” Ryan said. “At the same time, he will probably give a good treatment for Arthur.”

“I guess that is a good idea,” Alissa said. “I want to see his face when I mention that.”

Alissa just pointed her right hand to the corpses for a second, and then they disappeared... maybe it was time for Ryan to save some coins in order to buy the tome that would grant him such convenient power. It would be expensive as hell, but the benefits would be worth the hassle. For one, Ryan would be able to surprise his enemies since his weapons wouldn’t be in clear view.

“Let’s get going,” Alissa said.

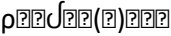
“You can go ahead,” Ryan said. “I will catch up in no time.”

In the end, Alissa didn't insist on it. Ryan wouldn't obtain any coins along the way, but he would be able to keep training his stealth skills since he rarely used them nowadays, thanks to Alissa's presence. In the end, Ryan reached the secret base after three hours. Considering that Alissa crossed the same distance in one hour, Ryan was pretty satisfied with his speed. Still, the difference in size was also an important factor, and Ryan also had to worry about his stamina.

"It looks like you are all right," Colonel Mark said, a bit surprised. "When Alissa said that she suddenly felt the presence of several dragons behind us, we imagined that you would face some problems. I didn't imagine that you the responsibility for saving us."

"I didn't save anyone. I only got rid of some insects that were blocking my path," Ryan said. "Rather than that, did your men learn something while you were away?"

"Insects... Actually, no." Colonel Mark shook his head. "They used the satellites to confirm our positions, and they didn't do anything aside from that."

"Is that so... in any case, I think I did more than a few favors to you in the last few days," Ryan said. "So, I will be hoping that you will give me some privileged information now and then." 

"Certainly," Colonel Mark said.

As usual, Hugo was with Mark, and he kept glaring at Ryan since he didn't like his attitude or words toward his father. Regardless, he was ignored through and through since Ryan eventually left them alone and then searched for Alissa. While everyone was unpacking their things, Alissa played with Arthur on the 'park' of the secret base. They were where on the choppers and some other aircraft could be found.

"Did you already choose our next destination?" Ryan asked.

"Not yet," Alissa replied.

"What are you waiting for?" Ryan frowned. "You can decide right now."

“Mmm... it is already late. We can depart tomorrow morning,” Alissa said after thinking for a while. “Maybe we should wait a little longer in order to give the general some time to collect information about other dungeons.”

Ryan sighed and took a deep breath to calm down... Alissa wanted to slack off and stay with Arthur for another whole day. Although she was partially correct since it was midafternoon, people like them don't have to wait for daylight to do anything. Regardless, instead of complaining, Ryan decided to sleep a little. It was better to do that while Alissa is unreliable on the guard duty, and Ryan didn't feel like trusting Orgar.

“The dragons are on the warehouse. The General said that you could leave and go as you see fit,” Alissa said while Ryan left the place.

A warehouse... it was the perfect place that Ryan could use to be left alone. No one would want to stay close to some decaying corpses. Regardless, Ryan also had to work fast since he didn't know for how long those corpses could exist. After taking a quick nap, Ryan was determined to separate those two dragons' bones and scales.

It took a while, but Ryan eventually found the warehouse Alissa mentioned, and unfortunately, some people were already there working to dismantle the corpse that Alissa gave to Mark. They frowned when they saw Ryan, but only that.

“Go on, don't mind me,” Ryan said and then headed behind to one of the two dragons.

Based on his experience, the corpses would disappear at some point after midnight. So, if he sleeps for a few hours, it should be fine. All that Ryan had to do was to cut the limbs and the heads of the dragons, and they probably won't disappear. He already confirmed that when he moved around with Alissa.

“If I remember well, the monsters that are killed after midnight, don't disappear on the same night, but they disappear on the next night if their corpses are almost intact... this needs to be researched, but maybe, the corpses won't disappear if they are damaged every day.”

Ryan couldn't test that theory since he couldn't risk losing such precious materials. Regardless, after sleeping for a few hours, Ryan began to split apart the dragons' parts with his sword and spear. Fortunately, now that they were dead, their elemental resistances were meaningless. So, Ryan managed

to cut them down with some ease. The only problems were that he got pretty dirty with their blood and their warehouse also looked like a torture room after he finished his job and Ryan himself looked like a butcher.

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In the end, Ryan had to work through the entire night to clean his mess since he didn't feel like asking for help. In any case, he succeeded in his task of separating bones and scales from the rest of the body. After seeing how he looked like, Ryan sighed.

"I need some new clothes..." Ryan muttered after he finished his job. "Even though I can manipulate water, I can only do so much cleaning with it. I barely can withstand the smell of blood in my clothes now. This smell might cause some problems in the future, like making me more detectable by monsters... Let's hope that I won't get some weird disease as well."

It was a pain, but that kind of thing had to be considered even while monsters are overrunning the world. Regardless, Ryan didn't need protection, and Indianapolis was more or less safe from monsters thanks to him and Alissa, so he left the base to look for some clothes before Alissa wakes up.

"Something easy to clean and move should be fine. Still, I can't neglect some aspects like the durability of some clothes and the adherence of shoes and gloves... let's just pick whatever fits me."

Truth be told, Ryan could find the best clothes for him in the secret base. A military uniform would fit his needs perfectly since he looked for comfort and utility instead of fashion when he bought clothes in the past. In the end, Ryan 'robbed' some stores of the city but only picked some jeans, sneakers, dark-blue t-shirts, and brown coats. Just enough to complete a set of ten identical clothes.

"Now I will be able to change my clothes pretty frequently and not worry about that. I look like a maniac covered in blood. Just like a maniac without any fashion sense."

After packing his things and guarding them in a hard-to-find place, Ryan returned to the base and found Colonel Mark returning from the warehouse... that was one of the downsides of staying in a place with a lot of people... many would know what he did or is doing.

“Any news?” Ryan asked.

“Yes, I was just looking for you,” Colonel Mark nodded. “Alissa told me that you two want to clear as many dungeons as possible, but she also said that she is focusing on dungeons where you two can find sapient creatures. I believe you can find in Washington one of those creatures.”

“Washington D.C.?” Ryan frowned. “That sounds a bit suspicious... what are you plotting Mark?”

“I can’t deny that,” Colonel Mark nodded once again. “While we intend to help you two, we also need to try to find as many survivors as possible and hopefully find the leaders of this country as well. Maybe we can find what you are looking for in other places, but those are the first results.”

Ryan didn’t like that... as expected, Mark wouldn’t change overnight. Even though Ryan and Alissa just helped him increase his forces by one hundred strong men and women, he still wanted to use them to some extent. It couldn’t be helped since he couldn’t just forcefully make the newcomers work with his men to check things on Washington. Still, Ryan didn’t have to accept that just because he could understand him.

“How many dungeons are in that area?” Ryan asked. “And what is that type of monster you think is sapient? Before you get carried away, you should be more careful. I am very patient since I only kill those who point their weapons at me, but if the dragon inside Alissa thinks that you are trying to use her... well, you can imagine what will happen. Dying will be the least of your worries.”

“I am fully aware of it. In any case, my conscience is clear,” Mark said. “As for the monsters, we discovered four types: Giant Ants, some Red Bats, Treants, and what seems to be some female demons. Some of my men called them Succubus. I did some research since I never heard of that term before. I am shocked that such creatures can exist. Hopefully, the creatures of the myths and the demons won’t have many similarities aside from their names.”

“Succubus? Are those the intelligence species you mentioned?” Ryan frowned.

“Yes, we noticed that some of them were bringing survivors alive to the dungeons, and until now, we didn’t find any of those survivors returning,” Mark nodded. “I guess it is safe to assume that they are the intelligent species you two are looking for.”

Only Alissa wanted to find them. Still, Ryan would be lying by saying that he wasn't curious about those other sapient beings were plotting. Regardless, it was probably safe to assume that Succubus was a species of demons... so, the chances of finding someone related to the six demonic generals was quite high in the dungeon and near Washington were pretty high. While that was bad or true, Ryan didn't know, knowing how hot-blooded Alissa was, they probably weren't good news.

While Ryan was thinking about that, Hugo and Daniel appeared. Maybe it was because it was still early, but Hugo didn't seem that annoyed this time. Despite the fact that both of them were unnerving idiots, but they were having a good influence on each other.

"A new outfit, Ryan?" Daniel said.

"Shut up," Ryan said.

"Harsh as usual..." Daniel shrugged. "Sorry to bother you with this, but you should talk with your friend. She has been troubling Mia quite a lot these last few days."

"That is none of my business," Ryan said. "I have real problems to deal with right now, so scram."

Hugo showed his displeased expression again. Meanwhile, Mark frowned... Although Ryan didn't mention Daniel a single time, Daniel and his father talked many things about him. Practically all of them were good things. So, they couldn't understand why Ryan was so... unpleasant, to say the least. After some time, it became obvious to them that they had some history.

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As if things weren't troublesome enough with Hugo and Daniel, Alissa appeared carrying Arthur, who was crying, Mia also approached, and she looked exhausted for some reason. Ryan didn't even have to ask to know what was going on.

"Don't look at me like that. I am not in the wrong here," Alissa said.

"I didn't say anything... yet," Ryan said. "Regardless, if you said that, then it means you did something you feel guilty about."

"Not really..." Alissa looked away, trying to keep her composure.

Alissa was really easy to read like a child. Maybe due to her lack of life experience, she was acting like that. Still, Ryan had no intention of spoiling her or taking any side on the matter. He would always stay neutral and say the plain and cruel truth.

"You may think that you can do whatever you want because you have the backing of a dragon, and you may be right. This world now is dominated by stupidly powerful creatures," Ryan said. "However, you also need to know that for every action, there is a reaction. Sometimes, the reaction is weak, and you can ignore it. Sometimes you can't... you know, I really don't mind in letting Arthur on your care."

"Really?" Alissa asked with a large smile on her face.

"Yes, all you have to do is to promise me that you will abandon your current goal," Ryan said. "If you can't do that, then forget it. You can help on raising Arthur, but you are not his guardian. He is not your toy either or an object you may use for your relaxation. So, don't get carried away, Alissa. Don't cause trouble to him."

The around got a bit chilly quite suddenly. Ryan didn't hold back his words, after all. However, what caused that wasn't Alissa's anger or anything. It was the fear inside Daniel, Mia, Mark, and Hugo. They didn't have the nerves to say such a thing to someone so powerful, and that was probably why it would take a long while for them to reach Ryan's level and someday fight against the dragons instead of just running away from them.

"That isn't fair, you know," Alissa said. "I just wanted..."

"I don't care about your wishes or intentions," Ryan said. "I can only see the results and I act based on them. Don't complain about what is fair and what isn't. I can't blame you for choosing your path, but since you decided to help Orgar no matter what, you lost some chances. One of them was to find Arthur and his mother at the right moment. Anyway, his mother entrusted his life to me, but I am not... someone appropriate to look after him. Neither are you. After all, you don't care if humans live or die,

right? Arthur is the sole exception, and I can understand since I am the same. The question is: do you understand that?"

After much effort, Alissa managed to calm Arthur down, but she passed him to Mia's arms in the end. Ryan's words were harsh, but they had a lot of truth in them. Neither of them was fit to look after a newborn baby since they were very egocentric.

"Sorry," Alissa said.

"... It is okay," Mia forced a smile. "I can understand you more or less, and you don't need to feel so bad about it. We can look after Arthur together... you just need to be a bit less selfish."

Ryan clicked his tongue. He tried to make Alissa understand something serious, and here was Mia spoiling her. Still, that wouldn't change anything. If that incident happens again, Ryan just had to remind Alissa of it. Despite everything, she had a conscience, and at least for now, she wasn't self-centered enough to ignore the obvious and just act to fulfill her own desires. Still, Ryan knew that she might become like that one day with all that power she gets, so he had to be careful.

"Colonel Mark found a place where we might find some clues to reach your goal," Ryan said. "The problem is, I think the enemy may be related to Baal."

"Demons again?" Alissa sighed.

"So, you two really faced a demon called Baal, the one from the myths," Mark said. "I am too old for this... What the hell is going on with this planet?"

Apparently, Daniel and others told him about their fight with one of the demon army generals. The question was: did Alissa tell them that they got their ass kicked? Somehow, Ryan was pretty sure that she didn't mention that. The power of the demon was much more fearsome than anyone could imagine and Alissa liked quite a bit the amount of respect and fear she could impose just by making others know that she had the power of a dragon. They seemed invincible, after all.

“Well, let’s see what we will find there,” Alissa said. “I don’t think I am ready to face another enemy of that level, but given that you will probably get furious by spending another day here, we can’t wait for the General to find other places to check.”

“You couldn’t be more wrong about that,” Ryan said. “My sole objective here is to pay my debt as soon as possible. Everything else is mostly inconsequential and meaningless.”

“Yes, yes, whatever you say,” Alissa shrugged. “Give me more details about the things that you discovered. Orgar seems quite mad, so you shouldn’t hide anything. Sometimes, even I can’t stop him, you know.”

In the end, it didn’t look like Mark was planning anything shady. At least Ryan concluded that since Orgar didn’t make his sinister aura more apparent. After hearing the details, Alissa decided to at least help feed Arthur with the breakfast before leaving for Washington. After all, not even her knew when they would return or if they would return if they try to mess with another creature like Baal. With that in mind, Ryan decided just to wait patiently.

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“While we are away, try to focus on finding as many dungeons as possible and registering their exact coordinates somewhere,” Ryan said to Colonel Mark. “It will be easy to monitor and notice any changes later if you do this.”

“Do you think the situation can become even worse?” Mark asked.

“If you act with that in mind, nothing will surprise you in the future,” Ryan replied. “I don’t know if the dungeons can change or if the situation can become worse. All I know is that with each dungeon break, the monsters’ level increases, and those sapient beings that we are looking for are operating with that in mind. It would be insane to think that they are stupid enough to send their minions to their deaths without reason.”

Mark nodded since that seemed logical. Regardless, even though he was a military high-ranked officer, Mark didn’t want to believe that things could become even worse. He was already too old for that kind of job, after all.

After saying that, Ryan left Indianapolis alongside Alissa and headed toward Washington. The trip would last for a few hours, so Ryan made sure to pack some things in order to make the trip less boring and more worthwhile, like mana potions to train his elemental manipulations.

“Orgar, do you think dealing with those Succubus will be difficult?” Alissa asked.

“It will be difficult for him since he is a male, their magic can affect females as well to a certain extent, but you have the resistances to deal with.”

“How exactly do you know that?” Ryan asked. “Didn’t you lose your memories?”

“While that is true, certain things are common sense. For example, I didn’t forget how to use most of my powers. Therefore, it is only natural that I wouldn’t forget certain things about other monsters.”

Although those words were quite convincing, Ryan didn’t want to believe that things would be that convenient. Then again, he never lost his memories, so Ryan wasn’t exactly a specialist on the subject.

“So, they are more powerful against men,” Alissa frowned. “The general also mentioned that they capture some of them. What for?”

“I am not sure if humans’ seed can help them reproduce, but if anything, their essence can make the succubus stronger. All males’ essence can make them stronger.”

Now that was a weird topic... Ryan was fine in fighting monsters that just treated him like lunch, he couldn’t feel the same way when a new species appeared, and they tended to treat males like their plaything. A plaything that could make them stronger... Regardless, Ryan was a sniper, more or less. So, he didn’t have to worry about that.

“What a disgusting bunch of monsters...” Alissa said, visibly disgusted. “Still, some men would love to be treated like that. So, shall we rescue all of them?”

“I thought your mission was to find clues as to why Orgar has amnesia,” Ryan said. “Why would you care if the survivors we might find will dislike your actions. You can ignore them just as usual.”

“That was my plan from the very beginning,” Alissa nodded. “However, the General is expecting us to find the people who are above him in the chain of command. He was sure that if we clear the dungeons, the people in the area will contact us. All in all, he wants someone to receive orders from. He can’t bear the responsibility of his current position.”






Ryan sighed... the old man was troublesome in many ways. Why doesn’t he just take things into his hands and try to solve things in the best way possible? It was probably because he was too much of a patriot. Everything he does or thinks is for the country. While Ryan could admire that, he wasn’t naïve enough to put his future in the hands of others. While he was pretty sure he could look after himself in most situations, Mark had to worry about others, many others... and he couldn’t see himself as someone appropriate for that task when the world is in such a state.

“Still... why would you care about what he wants?” Ryan frowned.

“It is just like you said before... he will treat Arthur well if I help him now and then,” Alissa said.

Although Alissa sounded confident, Ryan felt her hesitation a little. She probably had something else in mind. Alissa wasn’t someone who would help others without reason. As far as she was concerned, the body of the dragon she gave to Mark was an excellent gift, more than enough to gain his trust. Even if that wasn’t enough for that, she had plenty of more direct ways to gain his favor. Regardless, Ryan decided just to wait and see for the time being.

After a while, those two finally arrived at their destination. However, unlike in the other places, things were a bit weird in Washington. While three monster species were living more or less in peace in Indianapolis before, in Washington, the succubus was putting the other monsters to run away. When they had the chance to kill the other species, they didn’t hesitate.

Succubus – Lv 45     

Health: 400/400

Mana: 1.200/1.200

Stamina: 600/600

Strength: 200 (+50)

Dexterity: 300 (+100)

Speed: 250 (+50)

Intelligence: 500 (+100)

Endurance: 200 (+50)

Control: 450 (+150)

Mentality: 500 (+150)

Luck: 300

Recovery: 400 (+150)

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Steel Claws Lv 50

Passive Physical Skills: Seducing Touch Lv 70

Spells: Charm Lv 60, Illusory Adaptation Lv 90

Support Skills: Pain Resistance Lv 150

“Level 45... this isn't good. It looks like what Orgar said is true... or maybe by killing other monsters, those creatures can level up as well.”

Succubus were demons that had red skin. Like the other demons, they had a pair of horns in their foreheads, but their wings were more wasp-like than bat-like. That being said, their main feature was the fact that all of them didn't have any clothes... they were completely naked. Although that would probably contribute to their cause, the Succubus wasn't that pretty. At least that was Ryan's opinion by seeing them from far away. Maybe their skills helped them in that regard.

In any case, the population of Succubus was so high that Ryan was pretty sure it would take a week or two for them to exterminate all of them. That would work well as training. The problem was Alissa... will she endure work that much non-stop? However, much to Ryan's surprise, it looked like she was planning to make that mission last for quite a while...

“Let's clear the other dungeons first,” Alissa said. “After that, our job will become easier.”

Chapter 168

When Ryan and Alissa found the first dungeon of the area, they didn't know if they should feel thankful or not for the existence of the Succubus. They thought the monsters had run away from the area due to the succubus, but that wasn't the case. They were building their strength and using the area around the dungeon as a base. At least that was the case with the treants since there was a massive and incredibly dense forest around the dungeon. Still, the chances of the Giants Ants and Red Bats doing the same was pretty high.

“What is the plan?” Ryan asked.

“Burning all of them would be easy, but then you wouldn't receive any coin, and the other monsters would probably come to check things here,” Alissa said. “So, our only option is to take them down one by one.”

Ryan was glad that Alissa was using her head for a change, but he also frowned since her consideration was pretty annoying. True, he wanted the coins, but he wouldn't complain if she decided to monopolize

the rewards. For the good or the worse, he was more working for her than with her. Regardless, Ryan used Appraisal to check a few things.

Treant – Lv 35

Health: 1.500/1.500

Mana: 500/500

Stamina: 300/300

Strength: 200 (+40)

Dexterity: 300 (+30)

Speed: 50

Intelligence: 200 (+50)

Endurance: 700 (+250)

Control: 450 (+10)

Mentality: 700 (+250)

Luck: 300

Recovery: 600 (+500)

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Sharp Leaves Lv 30

Passive Physical Skills: Passive Recovery Lv 50

Spells: Earth Spear Lv 50

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 100, Water Resistance Lv 100 $\rho_{\text{??}} \int_{\text{??}} (\text{?})_{\text{??}} \text{??}$

Treants were troublesome like golems. In fact, they were even more annoying since they didn't have any obvious weak spots, and their recovery was quite high. In any case, that was only a problem for Ryan. Alissa, with her crossbows, could make the monster explode with just a single blow. Fortunately, making noise was fine since the other dungeons were very far away from their current position.

“Let's see... Bleed won't work in them since they don't have blood,” Ryan rubbed his chin while considering his possibilities. “I can't use fire for obvious reasons, and they have high resistance against earth and water... wind isn't a good option against opponents that have high endurance. The number of enemies is too high, so Power Shot is no good... in that case...”

It wasn't the same thing as relying on raw power. Still, Ryan used Rapid Shot to attack the treants one after the other. Surprisingly, by using the skill a single time, he could fire three additional magic arrows and cause just enough damage to make the monsters fall dead.

You obtained 60 coins.

“Although I managed to save my stamina, I used more mana than I could recover thanks to Active Spiritual Recovery. Still, I can't think of any other way to kill these monsters as fast as possible without alerting the other species.”

Ryan also had a high recovery, but since just to attack, he needed to use Incomplete Reptilian Transformation, his consumption of mana was incredibly high as well. Regardless, he didn't let that

bother him. Although he could fight dragons, it was insane to compete against one in a fair and square competition.

While Ryan was trying to think of new ways to increase his efficiency in hunting the treants, he noticed that Alissa missed a lot of her shots. However, that wasn't really a problem since her bolts were bound to hit one or two treants behind her real targets. It was annoying because the monsters were slowly moving in their direction and because it looked like she wasn't fighting for real.

"Say, Ryan..." Alissa hesitated.

"Focus on the task in front of you," Ryan said. "Good grief..."

"Isn't that fine?" Alissa asked. "Those monsters will never reach us, and besides, you will be able to obtain a lot more coins if I don't focus all that much."

"That is a pretty interesting way to see the things," Ryan frowned. "I can't care less about it since they are monsters, but this is a war. Are you seriously fighting in a war with such an attitude? That is a lot of arrogance."

"My war is against those who have the information I want, not with those weaklings," Alissa declared.

"That sure sounds the words of someone who has the power of the dragons," Ryan said. "Let's hope that won't come back to torment you in the future."

"Anyway, what are you planning to do after we find the information we want?" Alissa asked.

"That is none of your business," Ryan replied.

"Everyone I met until now has a goal... you are the sole exception," Alissa said. "You fight because you have nothing else to do. You do your best to make sure Arthur isn't in danger, but only because you feel responsible for him, not because you actually want to protect him."

“So what?” Ryan asked.

“What I am trying to say is... you kind of look like those monsters,” Alissa said. “They don’t have a goal, and they only act based on their instincts.”

Ryan frowned when he heard that. To be compared with the monster was unpleasant, to say the least, but Ryan was calm enough to realize that Alissa wasn’t completely wrong about it. He indeed wasn’t much different from monsters... just like them. When he sees a foe, he attacks without thinking. Ryan said to himself many times that he was fighting for his home planet, but was that really the case? If that were true, he would ally himself with others to make sure that they wouldn’t lose the fight. Yet, he had no intentions of doing that...

“I guess you are right?” Ryan asked. “What is your point? Please, don’t use this chance to say something cheesy.”

“I am just worried about you...” Alissa said. “I learned something recently, and I fear that if you continue like this, you won’t live for long.”

Chapter 169

Alissa’s words puzzled Ryan. She learned something new... when? He had no idea when that happened and why she kept it a secret. After thinking for a while, Ryan realized that she did that because she wanted to use it as a bargain. Regardless, Ryan wouldn’t fall for her or Orgar’s tricks.

“That is rich coming from you,” Ryan laughed. “I am not much better, but I at least recognize that as a fault. However, do you recognize that the fact that you don’t care if others live or die is one of your shortcomings? Don’t waste time worrying about me. Your mental health is as much if not worse than mine.”

“I am serious, Ryan,” Alissa raised her voice. “Although you say that, I just confirmed that the human race is doomed. If you keep acting like you usually do, you will die. Instead of being so stubborn and prideful, you should join us for good. If you do that, we will help you grow stronger much faster than you think.”

“Of course, you will,” Ryan said. “It is not like you wouldn’t gain anything by helping me, right? Regardless, not all the power and the money of the universe can buy my freedom. I would rather die doing whatever I want than being the slave of someone else.”

“I never you said you would become a slave; you will become our ally!” Alissa shouted. “I always treated you like one.”

“Spare me of that crap,” Ryan said. “If that were the case, you wouldn’t have hidden the fact that you read my mind for who knows how long, and you wouldn’t be hiding another piece of information. A wise man once wrote in a book: “People work together when it suits them. They’re loyal when it suits them.” Now more than never, this is a fact. So, don’t try to convince me by using your cheap sentimentalism. You never saw me as an ally, or like a friend. You saw in me someone who could be useful. If I hadn’t killed the red dragon that day, you wouldn’t have helped me.”

To Ryan’s words, Alissa didn’t say anything. Much to his surprise, Orgar didn’t react in any way. Usually, after saying such things to Alissa, he would get pretty mad. What Ryan didn’t know was the fact that Orgar was the one who convinced Alissa to watch the fight to the very end because only someone that much powerful would be able to help them. That being said, it doesn’t change the fact that Alissa recognized the fact and obeyed. Ryan’s words were harsh, but they weren’t exactly false facts.

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As much as it was annoying, it was scary the fact that Ryan could read Alissa’s mind so well even though he didn’t have the skill to do so. Her plan of scaring him with a new piece of information backfired splendidly. Since she never met her real family, Alissa couldn’t help but think of those two as the family she never had. Orgar was the father that spoiled her most of the time, and Ryan was the harsh older brother that cared so much about her that he never held back his words. At least that was the image Alissa had of Ryan. Someone once said that you could only be harsh and fight with those they loved, but Ryan was even harsher with those he hated...

In any case, while they were busy arguing, one of the treants finally got close enough to see them and fire Earth Spear. Alissa’s mind wasn’t focused, and she didn’t notice the attack. On the other hand, Ryan noticed, but blocking or attacking such magic projectile didn’t seem like a good idea. In the end, Ryan stopped the projectile with Earth Manipulation, but before he could completely stop the spear, the tip pierced his left hand quite deeply. Not only that, half of his mana was consumed.

“Crap... I really need to improve this.”

After that discussion, those two killed the treants in silence. As expected, once Alissa shut up, her hunting speed increased considerably to the point where a massive mountain of dead trees began to form a few hundred meters ahead of them and block their vision of the dungeon. The other monsters had to walk around the pile of corpses, and thanks to that and their speed, they became even easier targets.

The battle against the treants had been pretty anticlimactic, even though it lasted for a full day and night. Although they were troublesome opponents, their compatibility with Ryan and Alissa was that bad. Still... something was off. Considering the number of monsters, the dungeon should have spawned in a full month, and the number that also should have appeared thanks to the dungeon breaks, the number of corpses was relatively small. Ryan killed around 2.500 treants while Alissa killed ten times more. So, something really smelled fishy.

Alissa and Ryan still had to face the boss inside the dungeon and the ones guarding the place, but Alissa declared that they would rest before proceeding. Surprisingly enough, she didn't ask for Ryan's opinion on the matter, even though they still had a lot of daylight left. While Ryan was separating the loot, he suddenly heard...

"We need to talk about Alissa."

"I'd rather not to talk behind anyone's back," Ryan said. "Usually, you report most of the things I think to her, right? So, why are you so secretive all of a sudden?"

"Because this is a delicate subject. As you already know, Alissa isn't an ordinary human in many ways, but most of this is due to her lack of life experience. So, things may get out of hand if she hears me talking about her like this. Regardless, I am here to warn you about several things. One of them is that Alissa really cares about you since you are the only human who she met this far who doesn't fear her for her powers. Another one is that you may really die you are not careful around her."

Chapter 170

That sounded like a threat, but a pretty weak one since Ryan knew that Orgar could emit a dreadful aura powerful enough to paralyze most humans. That wasn't a threat... it was a warning.

"I will not give details as the circumstances as to why I decided to help her. Still, I can talk about other things. For example, when I left my body and gave my powers to Alissa, I accepted my inevitable death. One person can have two personalities inside of her, but one person can't have two spirits in a single body. Eventually, since I am not the true owner of this body, my powers and spirit will become completely absorbed by Alissa. She will become a powerful half-dragon. A human who has the same potential you have, but the raw power dragons are born with."

"Why are you telling me all of this?" Ryan asked.

"Because Alissa is immature and fusing two minds isn't something that happens without some issues. Although once that happens, Alissa won't change completely, in overall, her choices will become harsher and savage."

"So, she will inherit your behavior," Ryan said.

"The dragons' behavior. We are proud creatures with unrivaled strength, so she will inherit most of those traits to a certain extent. Another trait that dragons excel in comparison to other species are our hatred. When we find an opponent that messes with us, we hunt them down until the opponent is annihilated. However, in some cases, a few dragons aren't strong enough for that. So, their hatred grows stronger to compensate for their lack of power. Their grudges feed their soul until they become a real source of power... and that is how a cursed dragon is born."

"Cursed dragon?" Ryan frowned.

"A cursed dragon is one of the strongest species of dragons... if you think that dragons are all monsters, you will freeze in fear when you find one cursed dragon. They are vicious creatures that can be described as natural disasters. Wherever they go, they destroy everything. To obtain even more power, they even ate other dragons."

"And?" Ryan asked.

"While I can't say that Alissa has some grudges thanks to you, she has been developing some dark feelings inside her. You only spoke the truth of her ways, but you forced her to face her own shortcomings too directly, and now she is feeling inadequate in some aspects. She can't accept that since she already thinks that she already suffered enough for a lifetime... if you keep pushing her too far,

eventually, those dark feelings will grow stronger, and once my mind completely disappears inside her, there is a small chance that she will become a cursed dragon and you... you will be the main focus of her hatred.”

That was quite a fascinating theory. It didn't look like Orgar was lying. Still, Ryan couldn't bring himself to care all that much about the subject. As if he could change his ways to for the sake of convenience. If Alissa were to become a cursed dragon, that would happen with or without his influence. Besides, it wasn't him who wanted to work with her. It was the other way around.

“I will keep that in mind,” Ryan said and then turned around to resume his job.

“You really are a troublesome human... let's make a deal. If you promise not to be too harsh with Alissa in the future, I will tell you an interesting piece of information.”

“If it about what Alissa mentioned, I am not interested,” Ryan said. “I will eventually discover what she was talking about.”

“No, it is about something else. She would know that I opened my mouth to talk about it if I tell you about it. What I am going to tell you is something that even she doesn't know. Just by knowing that, you will gain a huge deal of power, and every time you defeat a dragon, you will grow much stronger.”

That sounded way too convenient... Still, Ryan was interested in it. He had decided that he wouldn't change his ways for the sake of convenience, but Ryan also decided that he wouldn't choose his path to gain power. In the end, Ryan made his choice since it was also tiring, to be honest, and harsh all the time with Alissa.

“All right, if the formation is worth of it, I promise that I won't be so harsh with Alissa in the future,” Ryan declared.

“Eat dragon hearts. Whenever you do, your status will increase by twenty points.”

“All of my status?” Ryan asked in shock.

“No... only a single one.”

“Can I at least choose which status will increase?” Ryan asked.

“No, it will vary from dragon to dragon. For example, if you kill a dragon and the highest attribute of that dragon was endurance, their dragon heart will increase your endurance.”

“That seems annoying...” Ryan frowned.

“Not satisfied yet? You can also obtain dragon hearts from T-rexes and earth dragons. They are a weak variation of us, the real dragons. Their hearts will also increase your attributes on a weaker scale.”

“I guess that is fine...” Ryan sighed. “Although I think it is weird that T-rexes are considered dragons.”

The only real thing that dragons and dinosaurs had in common was the fact that they looked like oversized lizards. Regardless, Ryan learned some interesting things with that conversation. To think that humans and monsters could become one like that... it wasn't that surprising. After all, Ryan himself had the blood of three different types of monsters inside him.

Another interesting fact was that Ryan couldn't understand why Orgar would lead to such lengths to help a single strange human. Ryan didn't like that analogy, but Orgar sacrificing himself to give Alissa a chance to live was like a human giving their life to save an ant. It was different from Ryan, who risked himself and decided to fight ten dragons for Arthur's sake. They were both humans, after all. Still, he decided not to pry about that subject. The last thing that Ryan needed in his life was sentimentalism.

Chapter 171

Sitting around a round table, one could see John with his arms crossed waiting for the other survivors, Daniel with his face buried on the table, and Mia holding Arthur in her arms. Now and then, one would be able to hear Daniel sighing, and that was starting to get on the nerves of his father.

“Sorry for the wait,” Tristan said while entering the room alongside Natalia.

“No worries, we just got here,” Daniel said.

“You look a bit down, Daniel,” Tristan said. “Are you having a hard time popping on your new home? I can understand that.”

“The hell are you talking about in a place like this?” Natalia asked and then kicked her little brother’s left leg.

“Hahaha, it wasn’t that, Tristan,” Daniel forced a smile. “It is about Ryan... more than one has already passed since all this started, and he still treating me like the dirt underneath his shoes.”

“Well...” Tristan hesitated since he had no idea what to say.

“He acts like that because you are too nice all the time,” Anna said while entering the room alongside Cole and Carter. “You aren’t a high school girl. Stop spoiling him.”

“I am not particularly nice. I just talk to him the way I used to,” Daniel said. “I just hoped that by doing so, things would become a little like they were in the past... I guess I was wrong.”

“You can’t give up now, Daniel,” Cole said. “You three are probably the only like Ryan has to the life he once had. Without that, he will become just another battle-hardened survivor. Although with the world in this state, everyone needs to toughen up a little, we can’t let ourselves become cold-blood machines.”

Daniel knew that Cole was right. Still, that was easier said than done. While he and Mia were one of the two that were two important pieces to Ryan’s past, they were two pieces that caused a lot of pain to him. Enduring his harsh words were the things he had to endure, they were his punishment, but Daniel was getting tired of being treated like that by the person he always considered his brother.

After a while, Angela, Holland, Hugo, and Mark entered the room. Finally, the meeting that Mark had planned could start. Although he wanted to make Alissa and Ryan join them, he knew that those two were too much of a loose cannon for them to accept such things as strategic meetings and whatnot.

“Thank you for coming,” Mark said. “I already talked with all of you about the things I plan to do alongside all of you, but I believe we should talk about this in more detail now.”

“Rescuing survivors is our number one priority, right?” John asked. “What will be our other goals?”

“Strengthening our forces and adapting to the nature of this new world,” Mark replied. “In that regard, I believe all of you are ahead of the soldiers we have in this base. We are trying to make them obtain their classes as fast as possible, but... given our numbers and the limitations of a fight against the bosses, this will take a while. So, the gap between you and us will only increase over time. With that in mind, I would ask all of you to choose a few of the people on our side and train them as much as possible.”

“While I think that such a first step is necessary, shouldn’t we think of gathering other resources as well?” Cole asked. “If we keep finding survivors, we will eventually run out of them, and with the world in such state, it will be hard to produce food or even get enough clean water.”

“This base has an excellent system to obtain clean water, just enough for twenty thousand people daily, so that isn’t a problem,” Mark said. “As for resources like food, I believe that from now on, we will have to adapt to this environment. People have super strength and magic powers, so that will help us in that regard.”

“I see... it makes sense,” Tristan nodded. “A single person with enough mana can do just well the work of a heavy machine used for agriculture. Still, to reach that level, it will take a few weeks, maybe months.”

“Indianapolis is under our control, and not all of the places where we can obtain food have been destroyed, so that isn’t a problem,” Natalia added. “Before such a thing can become a problem, the survivors will be ready to use their skills for that.”

“Won’t that be a waste?” Holland asked. “While I recognize that we can’t fight with an empty stomach, it would be more convenient to use all of our forces to wipe out the monsters.”

“How do you plan to make them reach all parts of our country that are dominated by monsters? Are you stupid?” Angela asked. “The only thing we can do is to bring more survivors to our side slowly, and then when we are strong enough, take our country back from the dragons.”

“That is our ultimate plan,” Mark said. “However, we must be aware that we can’t do that. At least not without taking some serious risks. I heard that Ryan and Alissa could take a few dragons on their own, but their circumstances are a bit different from others. While Alissa somehow gained the favor of a dragon, Ryan almost died several times to obtain his current strength. With the world in such a state, we can’t take any risks. Also, honestly speaking, I think it will be best for all of us if we increase our strength equally. It is regrettable, but with power, humans can become arrogant. Those two didn’t reach the other extreme, but the fact that they are uncooperative is also a problem.”

Daniel didn’t like to hear that, but since it was a fact, he couldn’t just say that Mark was wrong. As for Mia, she just looked at Arthur, wondering if just focusing on their strength as a group would be the real solution to their many problems.

Chapter 172

Congratulations! You have cleared the dungeon and obtained its treasure! As a reward for your achievement, you can obtain one of the three following classes: Barbarian, Bard, and Mystic.

Please be aware that clearing this dungeon again won’t give you the chance to unlock the other remaining classes. If you want to obtain them, you will have to search for those in other dungeons.

After clearing the first dungeon, that was the reward Alissa and Ryan obtained. Although it wasn’t so bad, the classes didn’t look that amazing either. Ryan expected a lot more since he didn’t gain a single tome after killing so many treants. Alissa gained some, but she just stored them inside her dimensional storage. Ryan had no idea what she was planning to do with those.

“I can’t rely on some skills to increase my luck; I need to actually spend some free points if I want to obtain decent gear and tomes. Anyway, given that I have been a bit unlucky as of late, I can’t risk taking some possibly useful classes. Let’s go with what will help me for certain.”

Congratulations! You have become a Level one Bard!

You obtained the following skills: Lullaby, War Drum, and Scream.

Your dexterity and stamina will increase by two points. Your speed, health, mana, and control will increase by one point whenever you level up your class.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Lullaby.

Effect: When active, this skill can put your foes to sleep. The closer you are to your target, the more effective the skill will be and possibly will negate the effects of Sleep Resistance.

Range: skill level x 10

Cost: 10 mana per second

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: War Drum.

Effect: Summon two magic drums in order to buff your allies' strength for sixty seconds. The bonus of strength will be equal to the level of the skill multiplied by five.

Range: skill level x 10

Cost: 40 mana $\sqrt{2} \cdot (2)^{2.2}$

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Scream.

Effect: It causes damage at one specific target over time, and when the foe is close enough, the scream will stun them for two seconds.

Range: skill level x 10

Cost: 10 mana per second

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan hoped that the skills would be different from that, but he was completely wrong in the end. Fortunately, he was so disappointed that he couldn't even bring himself to sigh. The fact that Ryan was tone-deaf was completely unrelated to the matter. He was disappointed because none of those skills would help him with his furtive attacks. Maybe Lullaby could help him with that, but it will take a long while for the skill to reach his effective range of attack, and most likely, it will never reach that range because Ryan's dexterity was increasing his range every single day.

"Let's go," Alissa said. "I want to finish this job as fast as possible."

Alissa was angry. Although that wasn't unexpected, usually, Orgar would help her with that. Regardless, Ryan decided to prepare for the fight against the succubus leader since, with Alissa in that state, things go wrong at any minute. Still, there was only so much he could do with his backpack filled with those low-quality mana potions. Ryan needed a magic item that could give him a magic space to store his items, but knowing his luck, he wouldn't get that anytime soon. So, he needed another option.

Before leaving the dungeon, Ryan checked one more time the loot he had obtained and sighed, knowing they will probably disappear in a few hours. It was a pity, but it couldn't be helped.

Ryan thought he had seen things pretty well from a distance, but the destruction that he could see now while he was walking was far worse. Although the city wasn't nuked for obvious reasons, the dragons made sure to knock down every single slightly tall building. As if they knew that was one of the most, if not the most important, city of the country, they even burned the rubble until it becomes like magma. Considering that the dragons went that far, it was quite surprising that the few survivors in the area didn't try to risk their lives while trying to escape the city. That being said, the very moment they saw an opportunity, they left their hideouts. Ryan didn't know how they noticed that someone had dealt with the treants, but as soon as Ryan and Alissa began to walk toward the next dungeon, they saw some

survivors heading in their direction. However, they stopped when they saw the one-handed man who looked like someone who didn't have many friends and a weird woman who had silver hair and eyes.

"... Are you the two who killed the treants?" A certain short-haired blond woman asked after hesitating a little bit.

"No," Ryan replied. "The people you are looking for just left the city."

"What are you talking about?" Alissa frowned. "Did you forget that the General wanted us to find the survivors?"

"When did you become his most loyal subject?" Ryan asked.

It was a bit cruel on Ryan's part, but those people were too suspicious as well. How the heck did they know about that, and why they appeared at such a convenient time? Ryan wouldn't of helping some survivors here and there, but he would rather avoid the suspicious ones. In any case, even though their timing was too suspicious, the woman and those survivors didn't look like people who would backstab him on the first opportunity. Their bodies were covered with dust and ashes, their clothes were ragged, and judging by their physiques, it looked like they didn't have a decent meal in weeks.

"Who are the people who mentioned us to you guys?" Alissa asked. "Don't even try to lie. I can read minds, and I know that someone contacted your group via radio."

Chapter 173

That explained a lot of things... although the city had been devastated by dragons and the other monsters were doing whatever they wanted in the streets, some individuals still could monitor things to a certain extent. One didn't have to be a genius to understand that someone close to the government was doing that. Only the government had the resources to do with the world in such a state.

"... I don't know, really." The blond woman said nervously. "They just contacted us a few times and warned us not to move. Then, a few minutes ago, they said that it was fine to leave because help has finally arrived. However, if I had to make a bet..."

“The white house, huh,” Alissa said. “That would explain a lot. Still, why they didn’t tell you guys to ask for help?”

“The answer is simple, whoever told them about you two, decided to use them and check if you were an enemy or an ally.”

Again, that made a lot of sense... Ryan didn’t want to believe that the government had fallen so low to do that kind of thing. Then again, Ryan wouldn’t be surprised if that had happened. He was betrayed by the woman he loved, so why not the country’s leaders couldn’t do the same?

“You guys can come with us if you don’t slow us down,” Alissa said. “However, we will only fight, food, water, clothes, whatever you need, you will have to find yourselves.”

The blond woman and her companions didn’t seem too keen on following Ryan and Alissa. By the look of things, they have been waiting for some knights in shining golden armor to rescue them with smiles on their faces. Still, all of them decided to follow the strangers since they had no idea if the situation was worse outside the city. Besides, now and then, they could hear the sounds of dragons flying over the city.

Despite her words, Alissa made sure to watch her pace. Still, that probably hasn’t been necessary since, after a while, they found the new monsters they were going to fight: The Giant Ants. The survivors shrieked in fear when they those monsters that had the size of a large dog approaching. The ants not only have some sharp blades in the place of their arms, but their fangs also looked like some sharp scissors. However, they relaxed when Alissa killed the monsters in a single instant with her crossbows.

“How weird...”

Alissa’s behavior changed quite a bit, to the point where Ryan wondered if she was trying to make fun of him since her behavior seemed strangely familiar to Ryan. He wanted to be as efficient as possible while hunting, but now that he saw things from another perspective, it looked like that was the fighting style of people who wanted to look cool.

Giant Ant – Lv 35

Health: 350 /350

Mana: 500/500

Stamina: 700/700

Strength: 240 (+40)

Dexterity: 400 (+80)

Speed: 500 (+150)

Intelligence: 200 (+50)

Endurance: 250 (+50)

Control: 250 (+100)

Mentality: 250 (+50)

Luck: 150

Recovery: 250 (+80)

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Steel Claws Lv 30

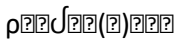
Passive Physical Skills: Dash Lv 50

Spells: Earth Manipulation Lv 100

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 100

You obtained 30 coins.

You obtained 30 coins.

You obtained 30 coins. 

...

The giant ants were weak but fast. Still, their speed wasn't their sole weapon. Ryan and the others learned after they killed several of the monsters, and then another group digs on the ground as if their claws were a hot knife and the ground was butter.

"It is all right," Alissa declared. "They won't approach while they feel my presence."

Now all doubts inside Ryan's head disappeared. Alissa really was acting out of character for some reason... in any case, the ants didn't approach them as expected, but Ryan didn't drop his guard.

"You can snipe them from here," Alissa said. "I will train these guys for a while."

While those were some good news, Ryan couldn't help but show disbelief at Alissa's words, to the point where he began to wonder if she ate something weird or if she hit her head somewhere. For Alissa of all persons to do that was really weird... Still, Ryan didn't feel like asking about her intentions.

"The General was planning to train the survivors with the help of your friends, so I will give him a hand and make him owe me more than a few favors," Alissa said.

The survivors frowned when Alissa looked at them, and they flinched when she took magic weapons out of nowhere. However, they relaxed again when Alissa started to give them magic items and even tomes completely for free. It looked like Orgar wasn't joking around when he complained that Ryan was too harsh with her... in any case, Ryan could only hope that she wasn't planning to do anything suspicious. Otherwise, Ryan will have to get involved with something messy. Hopefully, she wasn't planning to make them her 'allies' like Ryan. Still, for the first time, Ryan had no idea what she was plotting.

Class: Hunter Lv 37 / Elementalist Lv 34/ Monk Lv 16 (-)

Race: Night Demon /Reptilian/ Ice Fox (-)

Rank: 669th

Health: 317/317 (1.54/s)

Mana: 533/533 (1.54/s)

Stamina: 405/405 (1.54/s)

Strength: 10 (+56) (+60)

Dexterity: 600 (+323) (+27)

Speed: 50 (+145) (+28)

Intelligence: 09 (+159) (+3)

Endurance: 07 (+56) (+69)

Control: 06 (+188) (+10)

Mentality: 07 (+11)

Luck: 50 (+9)

Recovery: 337 (+391) (+200)

Willpower: 09 (+11)

Coins: 459.600

Status: 00

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Rapid Shot Lv 32 (+ 08 UP), Sting Lv 05 (+ 04 UP),

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 37 (+ 04 UP), Concentration Lv 37 (+ 04 UP), Archery Lv 37 (+ 04 UP), Accuracy Lv 37 (+ 04 UP),

Spells: Mana Transfusion Lv 30 (+ 04 UP), Appraisal Lv 25 (+ 03 UP), Active Spiritual Recovery Lv 28 (+ 04 UP), Lullaby Lv 01, War Drum Lv 01, Scream Lv 01,

Support Skills: Sleep Resistance Lv 13 (+ 02 UP),

Classes:

Combat: Sage Lv 30, Beastmaster Lv 11, Archer Lv 24, Mercenary Lv 09, Corsair Lv 07, Summoner Lv 03,

Non-Combatant: Blacksmith Lv 14, Trickster Lv 06, Bard Lv 01,

Chapter 174

Ryan thought that Alissa would eventually get bored of training others. However, much to his surprise, she kept training the survivors for two days straight, only stopping to eat and sleep. Moreover, when the survivors' mana and stamina were completely empty, she would restore them with magic.

After a while, Ryan decided to forget about them. Whatever Alissa was planning, hopefully, it wouldn't be his business. Besides, Ryan had many things to do aside from killing the giant ants. Organizing the loot and also cutting off their fangs and arms were also something he had to do.

"I don't know those parts are made hard like metal, but if I can use this..."

At first, Ryan planned to trade those materials with someone else, but after noticing that the giant ants' population was mostly hidden underground, he decided to use those parts to craft some things. Since Ryan was a long-ranged fighter who more or less was specialized in defeating the enemies before they could get too close, crafting defensive gear was a waster of time. Besides, he needed to be quick on his feet since his defensive attributes were pathetically low. So, he used all his mana to craft projectiles with the giant ants' parts in his free time. Surprisingly, he received some good and bad news.

Kunai

Effect: Speed + 05

Durability: 05/05

"So, I actually can forge items that can increase my status... that is good. Still, the durability is so low? Is it because my skill sucks, or is it due to the materials?"

After some tests, Ryan discovered that both of the explanations were correct. The more Craft leveled up, the more the equipment durability increased, even the effects improved as well. However, after

reforging the same weapon over and over again, Ryan noticed that the materials began to lose their durability. Probably because they were somehow parts of a creature, and even though they didn't look like it, they were an organic matter.

On the other hand, the projectiles Ryan made with the iron ores he usually received now, and they were pretty sturdy and could be reforged many times more. Although Ryan couldn't make arrows as powerful as the bone arrows yet, that was good training for his skill and because in one day, he possibly will be able to produce projectiles that could last longer.

Without much difficulty, Ryan also sniped the bosses guarding the dungeon, and he finally received a decent reward for his hard work. It wasn't much impressive, but Ryan received a tome that would help him with his current fighting style and possibly, will also be useful in the future.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Mana Arrow.

Effect: Summon and fire a Mana Arrow without having to use a bow. The damage caused will be equal to your dexterity plus your intelligence. $\rho_{\text{Dex}} \cup \sqrt{\rho_{\text{Int}}(\rho_{\text{Dex}})}$

Cost: 05 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

“An offensive spell that doesn't an elemental attribute... I guess this is good and bad at the same time. Good because I won't have to worry about the elemental resistances of the enemies, but it also bad because I won't be able to use it to exploit the enemies' weaknesses unless they have the low mentality.”

In any case, the spell will help Ryan save some mana... at least against the small fries. Regardless, before clearing the dungeon for good, Alissa decided to stop and rest. It was already dark when Ryan defeated all the creatures around the dungeon, after all. While Ryan on guard duty, the blond woman suddenly approached him around midnight.

“We didn't introduce ourselves, did we?” The blond woman asked. “My name is Claire. What is yours?”

“... Ryan,” Ryan replied after a long sigh. “You should rest while you can. I don’t know what Alissa is planning, but her training probably has some goal in mind that involves all of you.”

“That is what I wanted to talk about,” Claire said. “Even though you two are working together, you two barely talk with each other... while I am thankful for her help, I am also quite afraid of what she is planning to do with us. I mean... because she looks human, but at the same time, she feels like something else.”

“You can relax. She isn’t that unreasonable,” Ryan said. “Her circumstances are a bit complicated, and I don’t want to talk about it. All what I can say is that she won’t do anything unreasonable while I am around.”

Claire frowned when she heard that. Although Ryan was reliable with a bow, anyone could tell that the difference in power between him and Alissa was obvious. What they didn’t know was the fact that Alissa had a good reason not to become his enemy. Besides, she had no real reason to cause deaths on the humans’ side, and she wasn’t a cold blood killer.

“Just stick around with her, and I am sure you won’t lose anything,” Ryan said. “Besides, you already obtained a strength that most people would only obtain after training hard for weeks, thanks to her. So, all that you can do right now is to wait and repay the favor.”

She knew about that, but that didn’t change the fact that Claire was uneasy. It would be weird if she weren’t given the state of the world and the city’s current situation. In any case, it looked like her worries weren’t only related to Alissa’s weirdness.

“You two came here with a goal, right?” Claire asked. “Are you two government agents? Although I don’t think that is the case, I should ask.”

“No, we are not,” Ryan replied. “However, we are working with some people that are high-ranked officials in the army.”

“... What is the government doing outside Washington? Are they even doing something?” Claire asked. “I can’t believe they abandoned the capital without reason.”

It was a pity to crush the hopes of someone who tried so hard to survive for several weeks with the city in that state. However, Ryan wasn't a liar, and he certainly wouldn't give false hopes to anyone. So, he told Claire the undeniable truth: unless the citizens do something themselves, the country was pretty much done for.

Chapter 175

Claire had a hard time believing in what Ryan said, but when he mentioned the nukes being used to destroy several cities and their inhabitants just to take down the dragons, she accepted everything else. Considering the aircraft vehicles, Ryan saw in the secret base. It was pretty much obvious that all the military leaders decided to conserve their strength since they knew a few of them would be useless against dragons. What they didn't know was that things would only get worse since dragons and all other creatures were leveling up and becoming stronger. The only real option left to humans was to fight with their lives on the line.

"Don't feel so bad about it," Ryan said. "Humans can grow stronger pretty fast now, and since Alissa is training you, if you work harder, someday, you will be able to take down a dragon or two."

Claire could only force a small smile since those words seemed like a joke. Come to think of it, Ryan couldn't understand why he was trying to comfort a stranger. It was better to throw the hard truth on their faces and let the shock do the rest of the job. Maybe he was becoming softer now that Alissa wasn't bothering him like before anymore.

Regardless, after sunrise, the first thing everyone did was to enter the dungeon alongside Ryan and Alissa. Although those two had explained how things would happen inside the dungeon, the survivors were pretty anxious about entering the nest of the monsters that have been tormenting them for several weeks. However, things proceeded quite smoothly since Alissa hurried to smash the boss with a single strike.

"I guess these people need to obtain some classes but are this fine? They didn't do much to clear this place... Still, I guess for surviving this far without help. They more or less deserve this."

Congratulations! You have cleared the dungeon and obtained its treasure! As a reward for your achievement, you can obtain one of the three following classes: Berserker, Combat Archer, and Sage.

Please be aware that clearing this dungeon again won't give you the chance to unlock the other remaining classes. If you want to obtain them, you will have to search for those in other dungeons.

"Two new classes, not bad, I guess. Still, I think I will need to clear the dungeons that spawn some pretty strong monster to obtain the classes that will grant me the ability to store items on another dimension or to use Telekinesis. That may be impossible for me right now, but with this, I can take a step further to that goal."

Congratulations! You have become a Level one Combat Archer!

You obtained the following skills: Leg Shot, Perfect Aim, Magic Trap.

Your dexterity and stamina will increase by four points, your speed, health, mana, and control will increase by two points whenever you level up your class.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Leg Shot.

Effect: When active, this skill can decrease your targets' speed by one point per level and per hit. This effect lasts for five seconds.

Cost: 10 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Perfect Aim. $\rho_{\text{target}} \sqrt{v_{\text{target}}(v_{\text{target}} - v_{\text{player}})}$

Effect: It grants you the power to select a target and hit them no matter what as long as your speed exceeds the target.

Cost: 20 mana per second.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Magic Trap.

Effect: It creates a magic trap hidden underground. When your target passes above it, the trap is activated, causing magic damage equal to your intelligence. When the enemy's mentality is lower than your intelligence, the target will also be snared for two seconds.

Cost: 30 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

“Considering the name of this class, I didn't expect to learn four spells... Still, their effects will be useful.”

Not to mention the bonus points Ryan would receive by each level up. Those tier two classes were that amazing, and Ryan thought that even other classes granted even more status points. Still, he couldn't bring himself to feel excited about it because, based on the things he knew, monsters more or less still could become stronger faster than humans.

“What classes should we choose?” Claire asked after watching her friends and understanding that they also had the same question in their minds.

“Pick whatever class you want,” Alissa replied. “I can't choose the way you will fight from now on. You can't rely on others to make such choices for you.”

That was good. Alissa was training those people with something in mind, but at least she didn't want to become their tyrant leader or anything like that... apparently. In any case, while they were busy, Ryan decided to check the dungeon shop. As expected, he didn't find the skills he was looking for even though he almost had sixty hundred thousand coins.”

“I might as well train Mana Arrow a little bit...”

Another good aspect of the Mana Arrow was that the projectile was almost invisible and didn't make any sound while it was flying. So, it could become a decent weapon for Ryan's stealth skills. Regardless, much sooner than he had expected, Ryan was interrupted... not by the survivors inside the dungeon and a new group coming from Washington.

"Excuse me... Are you the help that the people on the radio mentioned?" A thin, black-haired man asked.

"... Well, that will depend," Ryan replied. "Are you guys willing to obey the orders of a woman who is too hard to understand right now?"

The new group of survivors got pretty uneasy thanks to Ryan's strange words, but then they eventually learned the meaning behind them when Alissa appeared and said that she would train as well. At that point in time, it became pretty obvious that Alissa decided to change. She wasn't just trying to help Orgar without thinking too much about things, now she had some sort of goal, and she was working towards it. The problem was: what was her goal?

Chapter 176

Until now, Alissa and Ryan have been avoiding the areas in which they saw the Succubus wandering around. How were they doing that, considering that they definitely were the strongest species of monster in the area? That was simple, Ryan and Alissa decided to clear the area on the east side of Washington since, in that direction, they only would find the ocean. The succubus didn't feel any need to head toward there. However, things would change now since the Red Bats dungeon was pretty close to the succubus dungeon, and even though their goal was to fight and capture some humans, occasionally, the succubus and bats would fight.

"For the next two days, I will train you guys pretty hard," Alissa declared to all the survivors. "After that, your job will be to assist this guy in eliminating all the succubus inside this city."

Alissa stopped referring to Ryan as Ryan, and now she called him 'this guy. She finally got tired of hearing that Ryan didn't consider her a friend or ally. Still, that much was expected, considering that she had somewhat a lot of pride in who she was. Regardless, the survivors didn't like what they heard, but no one protested. Besides, after seeing the status they obtained after leveling up their classes a few times, they also began to understand that fighting wasn't the only option. Still, it was also possible to

fight without dying. They reached a point where they thought that only insane people would try to face the monsters... However, two days later, things had already changed, and Ryan couldn't help but frown while looking at it.

"Ma'am, we are ready to launch an offensive against the succubus," Victor said while saluting Alissa.

Victor was the skinny man Ryan talked about when he left the giant ants' dungeon. His attitude changed completely, and now he was acting like Hugo. Perhaps he was even worse than him since his eyes shined whenever he talked with Alissa. The other survivors weren't much different. They looked far worse than fanboys and fangirls when they get close to their idols. Even Claire, who was quite afraid of Alissa two days ago, now had become another one of Alissa's loyal subjects.

"Not yet," Alissa said. "First, we will clear the giant bats' dungeon and then obtain our new classes. Only after that, we will proceed."

Although they only had one class each, the survivors were stronger than Ryan when he cleared the Sahuagins' dungeon. Alissa's presents and training helped them a lot, but Ryan couldn't help but feel annoyed by it. As if that wasn't enough, she even restored their energy several times a day to increase their pace.

"Well, whatever... if she is planning to use to find the answers that she wants, that is excellent for me as well."

Thanks to Ryan's hard work, the group managed to stay away from the succubus' radar. He focused on sniping the giant bats, and neither species noticed that there was a third party nearby. The only problem with that strategy was the fact that Ryan did things very slowly, so more or less half of the giant bats were still alive.

"This will be a decent warm-up for the real battle," Alissa said while facing the two thousand red bats that were blocking her path toward the dungeon. "However, I won't fight. I will just offer my support. You guys go and deal with it."

"Yes, Ma'am!" Claire said.

“You will stay behind and watch as well,” Alissa said while looking at Ryan.

“No way,” Ryan said. “I am helping you, but I am not your lackey.”

“That is true, but I let you fight alone the way you like for the last few days, right?” Alissa smiled. “Now, things will be on my way.”

Although that was annoying, Ryan couldn’t protest. He obtained a lot by fighting alone, and since he hated unfairness, he had to let Alissa do what he wanted now. She compromised before, and now it was his turn.

It seemed pretty unreasonably to make thirty or so survivors fight against two thousand monsters, even more, when they had so little battle experience. None of them seemed fazed by Alissa’s orders. Maybe they were getting carried away with the power they obtained, or maybe they just had that much trust in Alissa.

When the monsters entered their field of vision, the survivors didn’t hesitate and launched their assault. Although some of them had long-ranged attacks, all of them charged at the same time. They were probably trying to conserve their mana... in any case, the red bats began to get slaughtered pretty fast, but before the battle could last for more than five minutes, the survivors were already exhausted. Without mana and stamina, no one could do anything, and so the red bats began to bit them and recover their own vitality.

Red Bat – Lv 36

Health: 400 /400 

Mana: 600/600

Stamina: 700/700

Strength: 230 (+30)

Dexterity: 450 (+50)

Speed: 300 (+250)

Intelligence: 200 (+50)

Endurance: 250 (+50)

Control: 250 (+50)

Mentality: 350 (+150)

Luck: 150

Recovery: 350 (+100)

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Drain Bite Lv 50

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 50

Spells: Fly Lv 80

Support Skills: Wind Resistance Lv 50, Water Resistance Lv 50,

Alissa stepped forward to give her support, but no one expected that she would recover everyone's mana and stamina and then step back again. As expected, Alissa wasn't quite sane. At least that was what Ryan thought. Her idea of training and warm-up was even more spartan than Ryan's.

“Fight, fight and keep fighting,” Alissa said. “The world isn’t peaceful anymore. If you want to have back your hometown, then kill all those beasts with your bare hands! Or do you want to keep hiding in fear of those monsters like before? Do you want to have such pathetic life again? Answer me!”

After hearing Alissa’s speech, the survivors began to fight even more fiercely than before. Although the monsters had the advantage in numbers, the survivors who stopped caring about their wounds and exhaustion began to sweep the floor with them.

Chapter 177

Ryan wasn’t planning to build an army of humans, but he could learn a thing or two from Alissa, it seems. Those thirty survivors who a few days ago were about to die of starvation completely wiped out the red bats in less than one hour... they even defeated the fifty or so bosses that were nearby. When they noticed that they had won, the survivors shouted to the skies to celebrate their victory. Since they were covered in blood and monster’s flesh, they looked like lunatics.

“An army of humans... is Alissa planning to build her own army? Why? She said that she doesn’t care if humans live or die, so this doesn’t make any sense.”

Before Ryan could find a proper explanation for that, he heard the sound of something approaching... after a few seconds, dozens of succubus appeared and began to move toward the survivors.

“I knew things wouldn’t be so easy...” Ryan sighed.

However, before anyone could do anything, Alissa used her powers and make a wave of earth appear out of nowhere and completely smashed that group of monsters. Although she seemed pretty crazy, Alissa was smart enough to know that the survivors wouldn’t be able to fight the succubus close by. It was too risky.

“Good job,” Alissa said after approaching the survivors. “You guys recovered a part of your hometown. You can feel proud about yourselves.”

It was even weirder to see those madmen and women smiling so cheerfully in that kind of situation. Regardless, it was time to defeat the last boss of the red bats' dungeon and then receive their new classes... but then that scene repeated itself again. However, this time, several groups of survivors approached them at the same time.

"Where in the hell those people were hiding? I can't imagine that every single of them had a bunker beneath their homes..."

Although those guys would be a fine addition to Alissa's army, she didn't seem very pleased by seeing them. Alissa stood in front of the group with her arms crossed and with her chin quite raised.

"What do you want?" Alissa asked. "Don't tell me that you want to join the others. If that were the case, you wouldn't have watched us for several days."

The survivors gulped when they heard that. It looked like Alissa gained more than just raw power from Orgar... maybe it was because he was too focused on his task ahead, but Ryan never noticed them and that was worrisome. He needed new tracking skills, if he doesn't get them, he will become an easy target for ambushes.

"Sorry, we were scared, and..." A middle-aged woman stepped forward and spoke.

"Spare me of your excuses," Alissa interrupted. "Just say what you want. Be quick about it, I don't have much patience with cowards." $\rho\text{??}\int\text{??}(\text{?})\text{??}$

"We are tired of waiting for the government to rescue us..." The woman said. "We want to fight and regain our freedom."

"You can do that somewhere else," Alissa said. "You won't have my help with it."

In the end, even the other survivors agreed with Alissa. Noticing that this new group had just watched everything and waited for them to do most of the job, they didn't feel even a shred of pity toward them because they imagined the first group would die in that battle. Although they got hurt pretty badly, no one died.

Now the atmosphere got a bit weird thanks to Alissa. The new group didn't want to risk leaving Washington, or at least the areas that were free of monsters now. However, Alissa didn't leave any room for discussion on that matter and once their business is over, most likely, the group that trained with Alissa will force the others to leave.

"I guess I will have to intervene..."

Ryan couldn't care less about those who didn't have the will to fight, but in the end, he couldn't just let those people go away knowing that they will die. Besides, it would be a good idea to make Mark owe him a few more favors by letting those people join his side. They made a mistake and decided to run instead of fight and now they couldn't fight anymore since the monsters' strength increased. However, if they try to compensate by showing their guts... maybe there was hope for them.

"She isn't going to help you," Ryan said. "So, what are you guys going to do?"

"... We don't know," The middle-aged woman hesitated to wonder if that answer wouldn't make things even more complicated.

"Then think harder and faster," Ryan raised his voice. "You guys don't have the luxury to take your time anymore. Make your decision and move on."

The survivors whispered among themselves and although that annoyed Ryan, he decided to at least give them that much. Thinking fast was important, but thinking too little wasn't good either. Regardless, after everything they experienced, the survivors knew that looking for guns wouldn't help them. Most monsters could endure the damage caused by several bullets and guns fails all the time. So, their only options were to rely on someone stronger, which Alissa just said no, or develop the few skills they had and learn new ones before Alissa and the others clear the remaining dungeons.

"We will... use our remaining time to get stronger here," The woman said.

"Yeah, you should do that," Ryan said. "Show me that you aren't all talk."

Alissa didn't seem very pleased when Ryan turned around and entered the dungeon. It was hard to know if she was reading his thoughts again or if she didn't like the idea that he gave a second chance to

those people. Ryan could understand that since he didn't give a second chance to Alissa, Mia, and Daniel. That was unfair, but at the same time, the things in the balance were different. Those people didn't want to die while those three wanted to be close to Ryan. In any case, if she couldn't understand that by herself, explaining would be a waste of time.

Chapter 178

Congratulations! You have cleared the dungeon and obtained its treasure! As a reward for your achievement, you can obtain one of the three following classes: Brawler, Rogue, and Disciple.

Please be aware that clearing this dungeon again won't give you the chance to unlock the other remaining classes. If you want to obtain them, you will have to search for those in other dungeons.

"Again, huh... Three new classes, Brawler, aren't for me. Although the name is suspicious, Rogue will give me the bonus points that I want... Still, Disciple seems interesting."

After clearing the dungeon, Ryan received those options. Based on his experience, the dungeon level wasn't that high, so each class's bonus would be like the tier one classes. Thanks to that, Ryan felt like gambling and choosing the Disciple class. After all, most magic classes gave him some points in recovery, and he will always welcome those. Still, in the end, Ryan chose the Rogue class.

Congratulations! You have become a Level one Rogue!

You obtained the following skills: Intimidation, Plagiarism, Backstab.

Your dexterity and stamina will increase by two points. Your speed, health, mana, and control will increase by one point whenever you level up your class.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Intimidation.

Effect: Decreases the strength and endurance of your foes by two points per level for thirty seconds.

Cost: 10 stamina

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Plagiarism.

Effect: It grants you the power to use the last skill used by your foe. The level of the skill will be equal to the Plagiarism's level. If you try to use any other skills, the skill will be canceled.

Cost: 100 mana.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Backstab.

Effect: It grants you the chance to cause critical damage when the opponent is unaware of your presence and applying the status 'shock.' This skill only works with melee weapons.

Cost: 10 stamina

You obtained 01 status point.

"Mmm... this isn't so bad."

Although that was true, Ryan felt like he could have received an even better surprise by choosing the Disciple class. Regardless, what was done was done, and there was no point in wondering about such things.

While Alissa and the others were choosing their new classes, Ryan left the dungeon and then headed toward the Treant's dungeon. Ryan had forgotten about it, but he just recalled that he still could tame two other monsters. He didn't know when they would complete their job there, so it was better to hurry

up and tame those two monsters and train them. The plan was to make one of them guard the treants' dungeon and the succubus' dungeon, but with the world in such a state, planning that far ahead was most of the time completely useless.

Treant

Health: 1.500/1.500

Mana: 500/500

Stamina: 300/300

Strength: 200 (+40)

Dexterity: 300 (+30)

Speed: 50

Intelligence: 200 (+50)

Endurance: 700 (+250)

Control: 450 (+10)

Mentality: 700 (+250)

Luck: 300

Recovery: 600 (+500)

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Sharp Leaves Lv 30

Passive Physical Skills: Passive Recovery Lv 50

Spells: Earth Spear Lv 50

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 100, Water Resistance Lv 100

His new tamed monster wasn't much stronger than the average treat. In fact, it had exactly the same level of strength. Since the monster was slow and had little mana and stamina, Ryan couldn't think of many ways of training the beast to be able to defeat other treats.

"Can't be helped, for the time being, you will guard the Red Bats dungeon," Ryan said. "Your affinity against is just right since you don't have blood."

Ryan will have to think of another way to 'seal' the treats' dungeon since they were the most troublesome species before the demons. Still, that was a problem for later. He returned where he left the last group of survivors only to find them punching each other pretty hard... it was quite the sight to see middle-aged women punching each other like that.

"I guess after one month, it is only natural that they can endure that much. Besides, they know what recovery can do."

It seemed like Ryan could give them a hand since he could use elemental attacks, but first, he had to check things with Alissa and the others. If they plan to kill some succubus, he will have to go with them. However, when Ryan found them, they were raising their camp.

"We still have some daylight," Ryan said. "So, why are we going to stop here?"

“They lost too much blood,” Alissa said. “They will need a good night’s rest and some food to recover before the real showdown.”

That had been a good call. Although Alissa said that she doesn’t care, she was smart enough to become a good leader, and now she wasn’t rushing ahead using Arthur as an excuse. Still, her goals were unclear, so Ryan couldn’t drop his guard. As much as he didn’t want to admit it, he influenced Alissa to change, and if he does something unexpected, he will be partially at fault.

“I will return before sunset to stay on the guard duty,” Ryan said and then returned to where the second group of survivors was.

That hadn’t been the first time Ryan had shown up, so the survivors didn’t pay much attention to him, but they changed their minds when they saw Ryan controlling two spheres around him, one of water and another one of earth.

“I will give you guys a hand,” Ryan declared.

“... Are you sure of that?” The middle-aged woman asked. “Your previous decision probably already caused some discord within your group.”

“Why do you care about other people’s problems?” Ryan asked. “Which is more important, my problems or your life? Besides, I am working with her to repay a favor. A thing like animosity doesn’t matter. Now, stop wasting time and prepare yourselves... this is going to hurt more in you than in me.”

Chapter 179

Since Ryan didn’t have all the time in the world and the two groups of survivors won’t mix well, he didn’t hold back in training the second group’s elemental resistances. Time was of the essence, after all. Still, when night came, the survivors had become resistant enough to endure the attacks of Ryan’s slimes. So, he left some of them behind in order to make them help the survivors for quite a while.

Although a good part of Washington had been recovered from the monsters’ hands, Ryan didn’t slack off on the guard duty. His tracking skills needed some work, but he compensated in what he lacked with his concentration and with a good viewpoint of the area. Basically, Ryan created a forty meters town

watchtower with his Earth Manipulation and stood at the top of it watching the area. From that place, he could see the succubus' dungeon and their movement, as well as he could watch both camps.

"We need to talk."

"What now..." Ryan sighed.

The guard duty was quite boring, but Ryan liked these peaceful moments. Those were the only moments where he couldn't feel annoyed by thinking about anything after all. The worst that could happen was a wave of melancholy that would make him feel a bit depressed, but it looked like he wouldn't have that right now. In any case, Orgar sure was talking a lot with him, and it was weird since he only did so when Alissa was sleeping. Besides, a secret in the middle of the night made Ryan think that he was up to no good for some reason.

"Alissa began to change... while I do think that is a positive change for her considering her previous world view, I am not sure you are going to like this change."

"I couldn't care less about it," Ryan said. "As long as she doesn't cause problems for others, it doesn't really matter how she will change."

"You may be right, but still, I feel like I should warn you about other things. I thought that Alissa would eventually talk with you about it, but it looks like she got tired of the way you treated her."

"How come despite that, you feel like giving me other warnings?" Ryan asked. "Aren't you on her side?"

"I am. However, while dragons act most of the time based purely on their instincts, that doesn't mean they can't act based out of curiosity."

"In other words..." Ryan frowned.

"I want to see how well you and other humans will perform with your world facing its current problems. After reading the mind of the demons and those dragons, we discovered that your planet is suffering changes that other species didn't experiment."

“Are you sure you should talk to me about it?” Ryan asked. “What will happen if Alissa decides to read my mind?”

“She won’t. She completely lost her interest in you. That being said, she is smart enough to figure out some things just by seeing some of your actions, so I can’t give you many details. Regardless, I don’t know for how long I, the dragon Orgar, will continue to exist as a single being. Still, I want to see how ordinary humans such as yourselves will deal with those situations through Alissa’s eyes.”

That kind of talk was really talking. Ryan liked things to be as clear and concise as possible, but Orgar couldn’t tell much since he knew that Ryan wasn’t dumb enough just to stay out of Alissa’s radar.

“I don’t want to risk angering Alissa. Unlike you, I cherish our relationship. So, I can only tell you that Alissa recognized that she couldn’t survive in this new world on her own. That is why she is getting allies and training them.”

That made sense. Still, to think that she would reach that kind of realization without making Ryan notice that she was conflicted about something... in any case, since Orgar didn’t try to stop her, it looked like he also recognized that with his powers alone, they wouldn’t survive.

“Just what the hell they learned thanks to those dragons?”

Ryan was curious, but as expected, he couldn’t read minds, and he wouldn’t ask directly to Alissa what she learned. The only thing Ryan could do was to keep increasing his powers... but would that be enough? He didn’t know if one day he would become as powerful as Alissa, and she already accepted that her powers weren’t enough for the possibly bleak future.

Ryan spent the night trying to imagine how things could get worse, but he couldn’t imagine anything worse than dragons and demons. Regardless, he was determined not to change his ways, so if his power alone wasn’t enough to grant Ryan the chance to survive in that new world, then he could only die. Someone once said that there is strength in numbers, Alissa recognized that strength and wanted that for her, but Ryan didn’t want that kind of strength.

Congratulations! The skill Summon Slime has leveled up.

Summon Slime Lv 11 → Lv 12

Effect: It grants you the power to summon a slime.

Cost: 250 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

“I guess this kind of strength in numbers is fine...”

Ryan didn't have to worry about betrayal from monsters summoned by him. They had no reason to do so, after all. So, he decided to bet on that. With their resistance against water and earth being pretty strong, Ryan summoned two slimes and made them attack the treant that was guarding the red bats' dungeon with Water Blades and Earth Arrows. After a while, the slimes leveled up again.

“As expected, it is better to make them fight against more powerful creatures.”

Ryan had no idea about what would happen in the future, but unlike Alissa, he wouldn't build an army of humans to increase his own strength. He would become a one-man army. That would be hard and probably was impractical and insane. However, those were just small details for Ryan.

Chapter 180

“We will exterminate all the succubus now,” Alissa declared after breakfast. “This time, I will join the fight for real in order to prevent losses on our side.”

Alissa didn't say that Ryan shouldn't help, but she also didn't say that she needed his help. Things became quite complicated between them, but weirdly enough, Alissa couldn't bring herself to say that Ryan didn't have to help her any longer. Still, Ryan was fine with the things going that way. He would feel annoyed if he doesn't pay his debt, after all.

Without wasting any more time, the operation to exterminate the succubus started. As much as Ryan wanted to snipe them all, that would take a long time. So, he had to focus on speed and by firing his arrows at a pretty close distance. Thanks to that, he began to feel the effects of the succubus magic.

“The heck is this...” Ryan frowned when he felt his sense getting all messed up.

When a succubus group was fifty meters away from him, Ryan’s vision began to get blurred. Aiming was nearly impossible in that state, but such effect only lasted for a few moments. However, those creatures had more surprises in hand... when Ryan’s eyesight returned to normal, the succubus changed. Suddenly, they looked human, and their body looked far more appealing than before. That was weird, but Ryan’s heart began to beat faster, but suddenly he felt annoyed when he saw that some of them looked a lot like Mia.

“I shouldn’t expect any less from monsters...”

Before Ryan could do anything, their appearances changed, and those effects disappeared the very moment the succubus got killed by Alissa. She had to work fast because some of her ‘soldiers’ also began to act weird. As if that wasn’t bad enough, Ryan noticed that the succubus also made of their allies look like enemies. He had to be careful. Otherwise, he might kill some of the survivors by accident.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Charm Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the effect of spells and abilities that might charm you by one percent.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Illusion Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the effect of spells and abilities that might confuse you by one percent.

You obtained 01 status point.

“If fifty meters their range... I have to keep that distance from them.”

Ryan had to move a lot in order to achieve that, but eventually, he found a better way to counter the succubus magic: attack first and cause them pain. While they scream in agony, the monsters were unable to use their magic and control the humans. A good Flame Arrow on their faces was more than enough for that.

“I see...” Alissa nodded in satisfaction when she realized that. “In the end, it looks like they still will have decent training.”

Instead of Flame Arrows, Alissa used Fire Bullets. Still, her projectiles were powerful enough to destroy the limbs of the monsters. So, the difficulty of the battle decreased more than she wanted. In any case, the noise caused by the start of the fights attracted all the monsters in the area, so things got a little bit more balanced.

“If the ordinary succubus can be this troublesome... what about the bosses near the dungeon? Come to think of it, the previous boss of that demons’ dungeon was smart like a human... what will happen when a dungeon breaks happen, and several of those creatures appear?”

Those were only some of several troublesome questions that were bothering Ryan’s mind. Although their chances of losing with Alissa on their side was pretty low, Ryan still wanted to think of a way to solve the situation by himself. He managed to snipe Bolvath and kill it with a single arrow before, but he had to concentrate a Power Shot for a full minute. Maybe he could do that and defeat a boss with a single strike without emptying all of his mana and stamina, but Ryan was fully aware that he wouldn’t be able to do that more than two or three times.

“So much to become a one-man army...”

Ryan still had a long way ahead of him, and in order to shorten his path toward his goal, he could only do a single thing: fight as much as possible. Regardless, even though the survivors were much weaker than the succubus, the fight proceeded quite well for several hours, but then the succubus began to appear from all sides.

“What is this?” Alissa asked, confused.

“Maybe the bosses noticed that something is happening, and they decided to call back the succubus that had left the city and headed toward other areas.”

That seemed like a plausible explanation... but to think that those creatures could control their minions to that point was beyond troublesome. In any case, there was no point in complaining or wondering if that was true or not. Ryan only focused on attacking the monsters before they could use their troublesome skills.

Alissa also stopped holding back in order to make her soldiers gain as much battle experience as possible. She pulled her crossbows and then began to massacre the succubus before they could get surrounded.

Although none of the survivors had died yet, their exhaustion was reaching the limit. Alissa could help them recover their energy, but then she will have to stop attacking the monsters... it was only a matter of time before the balance of the battle breaks. Without any other choice, Ryan decided to use Call and make his treant join the battle, but before that happens, he heard some footsteps coming from behind... when he turned around, Ryan saw the survivors who were training with his slimes approaching, picking the weapons that were dropped by the monsters and then joining the fight.

“Well... I didn't expect that.”

Ryan told them to show their guts by training as hard as possible, but it looked like they decided to do that by fighting as well. Even though with their strength, not even five humans could take down a single succubus.

“Ah... I can use that.”

Ryan used War Drum, and the sound caused by his spell increased the strength of all his allies in the area. Things got a lot easier after that, not because of the bonus in the spell's strength, but because the spell leveled up several times by affecting many people.