

Domain 201

Chapter 201

For some reason, when Ryan headed to the last part of the dungeon, he found the boss patiently waiting for him. It was another reptilian who seemed as powerful as Eci, but the creature didn't seem like it wanted to fight. The monster only glared at Ryan as if he had done something unforgivable.

"It was you who did all this?" The boss asked. "You humans indeed are worse than the dirt beneath our feet. Our master gave you gifts, forgave your actions, and even offered you power. However, you not only refused but even got in the way of her plans."

"Sorry, I don't think I would feel comfortable joining the side of the monsters which decimated this city," Ryan shrugged.

"You didn't the same to us?" The boss asked.

"I guess so, but you guys invaded this planet and took advantage of the chaos caused by dragons," Ryan said.

"Such pathetic words... how come you reached this level of power without understanding your new reality?" The boss asked again. "This is a total war, only those who make most of the situation can survive until the very end."

"I think I am doing pretty well considering that," Ryan said.

"... My master knows about you now," The boss glared at Ryan. "Her children will hunt you down until the moment of your death, and don't you think that death will be the end for you."

"Woah, so scary," Ryan faked, his body trembling. "Now die."

Ryan nocked one of his special arrows, but it looked like that wasn't even necessary. The boss knew that it couldn't face Ryan, who defeated by himself an entire army of reptilians. That was kind of disappointing, but it wasn't like he didn't see that before.

You obtained 25.000 coins.

"Echidna's children will hunt me... so she is a woman," Ryan rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Still, I can't remember where I heard that name..."

In the end, Ryan didn't have any other option aside from research it. He certainly wasn't going to use the purple crystal to go to another world when he doesn't have a single pleasant memory of the times. He did that. In any case, it was time to receive the real rewards for his hard work.

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: Champion, Sniper, and War Mage.

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.

Although those were some classes he never saw before, Ryan didn't have to waste time thinking about which one to choose. The answer was obvious.

Congratulations! You have become a Level one Sniper!

You obtained the following skills: Hawkeye, Deadly Aim, and Force.

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

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Hawkeye.

Effect: it passively increases the range of your attacks by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Deadly Aim.

Effect: It consumes mana to grant you a critical hit no matter what if a target is in your field of vision.

Cost: 100 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Force.

Effect: It grants you the power to change the trajectory of your projectiles.

Cost: 20 mana per second.

You obtained 01 status point.

“Interesting skills... Hawkeye and Deadly Aim will certainly work well together.”

Although each level's bonus up in that class seemed nice, Ryan couldn't help but wonder if looking for new classes was really the best option. He had so many skills that he barely used, after all. If he had single-mindedly focused on leveling up Power Shot, perhaps he would have the firepower to shut beings like Lilith and Baal. Then again, without those classes, his attributes wouldn't have grown all that much.

“Whatever, let's head back while still is dark... hopefully, I will be able to carry my loot and sell to Mark. Considering the intelligence of dragons, they will probably stay away from dungeons since even they can have a hard time against thousands of monsters.”

In the end, Ryan created a large cart using the ores he obtained and some Earth Manipulation. It wasn't perfect, and it made a lot of noise, but it was enough to carry all the loot he obtained, and those which would pull the cart were the giant bees. Unfortunately, strength wasn't their forte, so Ryan had to summon several others. It was a pity the T-rexes died. ρ??(???)???

When Ryan returned, he let out a long sigh because Mark was in a meeting with most survivors' leaders. The only ones who weren't present were Ryan and Alissa since one liked to work alone and the other had her own followers.

"It looks like you guys stopped due to the dungeon break that is about to happen," Ryan said. "Well, I will return when you finish things with them."

"... I believe you should stay and hear this," Mark said.

Mark's tone was kind of off. Even Hugo was showing a conflicted expression, and that was weird. As for the others, they also had an expression of disbelief on their faces. It looked like they learned or heard about something very complicated. Ryan was quite interested in knowing if what they knew was weirder than the fact that he was invited to join the monsters' side.

"I am listening," Ryan said. "but please be quick. I have things to do as well."

"When I was looking for all the dungeons in the country, I found several things," Mark said. "One of them is that half of Mexico has been destroyed due to a single species of monster, and something similar is happening in the north, in our border with Canada. For the time being, both species stopped their advance on Mexico and Canada, and now they are focusing their sights on our country."

"And?" Ryan asked.

"Yeah, that was bound to happen... the problem is the species of monsters," Mark covered his face with both hands and then sighed. "They are called Chupacabra and Fenrir."

Class: Hunter Lv 43 (+ 02 UP / Elementalist Lv 43 (+ 03 UP)/ Monk Lv 16 (-)

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

Rank: 611th

Health: 345/430 (2.00 /s)

Mana: 609/775 (2.00 /s)

Stamina: 444/560 (2.00 /s)

Strength: 10 (+75) (+60)

Dexterity: 750 (+535) (+27)

Speed: 70 (+212) (+28)

Intelligence: 60 (+259) (+3)

Endurance: 07 (+76) (+100)

Control: 06 (+249) (+10)

Mentality: 07 (+16) (+30)

Luck: 65 (+9)

Recovery: 450 (+561) (+200)

Willpower: 09 (+16)

Coins: 545.000

Status: 00

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills Power of Money Lv 17 (+ 04 UP), Hawkeye Lv 01,

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 43 (+ 02 UP), Concentration Lv 43 (+ 02 UP), Archery Lv 43 (+ 02 UP), Accuracy Lv 43 (+ 02 UP),

Spells: Heal Lv 30 (+ 04 UP), Active Spiritual Recovery Lv 35 (+ 05 UP), Tame Lv 41 (+ 19 UP), Protect Lv 11 (+ 10 UP), Fire Prison Lv 01, Ice Chains Lv 01, Quagmire Lv 01, Water Transformation Lv 01, Deadly Aim Lv 01, Force Lv 01,

Support Skills: Sleep Resistance Lv 19 (+ 03 UP), Nocturnal Eyes Lv 18 (+ 05 UP), Poison Resistance Lv 15 (+ 09 UP), Master's Support Lv 15 (+ 05 UP),

Classes:

Combat: Sage Lv 40 (+ 05 UP), Beastmaster Lv 19 (+ 03 UP), Archer Lv 32 (+ 02 UP), Mercenary Lv 17 (+ 02 UP), Corsair Lv 09, Summoner Lv 15 (+ 10 UP), Combat Archer Lv 10 (+ 03 UP), Rogue Lv 03 (+ 02 UP), Sorcerer Lv 09 (+ 08 UP), Sniper Lv 01,

Non-Combatant:

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“Chupacabra?” Ryan frowned.

"I know what you are thinking," Mark sighed again.

"I am sure," Ryan said.

Still, now that he thought about it, Fenrir was a giant wolf from Nordic mythology... demons were also part of mythology. Although it isn't that old, anything related to Chupacabra is also mythology. That couldn't be a coincidence... Echidna was also part of Greek mythology.

"That is not everything," Hugo added. "Even dragons are having a hard time dealing with those creatures. Maybe it is because of them that the dragons are spending much time hunting survivors like us."

"How come?" Ryan frowned. "I can understand they are having a hard time against a small army of Fenrir, but not against creatures like Chupacabra. According to the legends, they only attack goats and some other animals, right?"

"We don't know the details since they mostly fight at night," Hugo shook his head. "But we do know that is what happens considering the corpses left off every time they clash."

Those were some bad news, but Ryan was pretty sure that it wasn't something everyone should feel so depressed about it. After all, they were well-hidden in a military base. The chances of the monsters finding them were quite low.

"Is that all?" Ryan asked.

"No... we noticed that humans are entering the Fenrir's dungeon," Mark's face darkened. "And they aren't going as prisoners, and they certainly weren't going to fight."

"I see... I guess they received an invitation as well," Ryan nodded to himself.

"Invitation?" Daniel asked.

“... While I was clearing a few dungeons in Nashville, a group of monsters invited me to join their side,” Ryan replied after a few seconds since it wasn’t time to get annoyed at Daniel. “Someone called Echidna promised me the power to join her side.”

“Echidna? The mother of monsters?” Tristan got up and then asked in shock.

“Do you know about her?” Ryan asked.

“A little bit... I know that she gave birth to many monsters of Greek mythology,” Tristan replied. “Cerberus, Orthus, Sphinx, Chimera, Scylla... according to mythology, she is a creature that has the upper body of a woman and the lower of a snake.”

“So, she is like medusa?” Ryan frowned.

“No... I am pretty sure she was supposed to be more humanoid than medusa, and she can’t petrify those who look at her,” Tristan explained.

Things were getting out of hand really quick. Still, that would explain why Alissa decided to change her modus operandi. If she knew that dragons were having a hard time, then she couldn’t underestimate those foes. Regardless, based on what Ryan knew, Fenrir was just a giant wolf. It wasn’t supposed to be that smart. So, someone else was the real dungeon master, but who? Ryan’s memory was quite fuzzy, but apparently, in the Ragnarök, Loki used Fenrir to kill Odin or hurt him... or something.

“Well, anyway, is the map with the location of all dungeons completed?” Ryan asked.

“Yes, once this meeting is over, I will show you the details,” Mark nodded.

“Okay,” Ryan said and then left the meeting room.

Although some serious problems appeared in the South and North, Ryan didn’t get anxious. As long as a being is made of flesh and bones, that being could be killed, even if the thing belongs to some mythology. Even if his arrows were useless, Ryan could kill such creatures with Power of Money. It wouldn’t be cheap, but it was possible. Still, he knew he wouldn’t feel satisfied in winning like that, even

if the other side has the numerical advantage. Ryan wanted to win and survive using the things he learned from his father. To do that, Ryan could only do one thing: keep hunting monsters and strengthening himself.

“I am already doing that, so I guess I need to focus on some countermeasures to prevent the worst-case-scenario: my death.”

Ryan had an amazing firing power, but he wasn't much more resilient than most humans, not even with his new equipment. So, he needed to improve his stealth and movement skills. Keep himself hidden while he moves at his top speed wasn't something Ryan could do. However, there were other things he could do in order to keep his presence hidden. The first thing was to use Earth Manipulation and always attack the enemies at night and from above. That worked well against the reptilians. However, Ryan couldn't just wait for the sunset to hunt monsters, and sometimes, the moon might reveal his position.

The second thing Ryan could do... was to use Flash. Although that skill was useful, the cost of mana was too high. So, Ryan completely ignored it until now since he also could use some tricks to fool his enemy. However, the number of sapient beings that he had been facing was increasing, and cheap tactics won't work against them more than once.

Weirdly enough, the only place which came to his mind to train was the warehouse... Ryan had become a person who couldn't care less about having a room to himself. Although that was weird, that was also the person who he had become in order to survive in this crazy world where Chupacabras exist.

In order to train that skill as efficiently as possible, Ryan will have to go to an area where some dungeon breaks happened and then use the same tactic he used the night before: make his summoned monsters recover his mana by fighting. Or at least go to a weak area where he can finish off the creatures with a single Flame Arrow.

“It would be great if I could recover my mana while I am not where my monsters are fighting... but things aren't that convenient.”

Eventually, the meeting ended, and Mark appeared, but in the end, everyone followed him since they more or less had to plan their actions based on what Ryan might or might do. Although that was a pain in the ass, Ryan managed to hold back his sigh.

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Ryan actually wanted a map in paper form for him, but somehow, Mark was convinced that carrying such a detailed map around wasn't a good idea. So, all the information he had in the base had been digitalized. He talked as if the monsters ate all the hackers in the world...

"We found around fifty species of monsters in our country, but that doesn't mean we have to deal with fifty dungeons," Mark explained. "As you already know, some dungeons spawn the same monsters."

"Yeah," Ryan nodded.

"As for the precise number of dungeons, based on the dungeons already cleared and the places where we can find a vast concentration of monsters... we conclude that we have 204 dungeons in our country at this moment," Mark explained.

"At this moment?" Ryan frowned. "What do you mean by that?"

"Yes, because we saw seven new dungeons appearing over the last week," Mark answered. "Although they didn't spawn a new species of monsters and they start to spawn level one monsters, we are worried about them."

Ryan nodded... it made sense that new dungeons could appear since other sapient beings were controlling them. Still, considering their goals, even though they were still unknown, it seemed like a bad idea to create dungeons when other creatures already dominated some areas, and most humans have died.

"If you don't mind, I would you to tell me the jobs you could have obtained on the dungeons you cleared," Mark said.

"I guess that is fine..." Ryan said since the chances of them learning every single class he chose were close to none.

“Mmm... those Summoner and Beastmaster class seem pretty interesting,” John said, visibly interested. “They would be very useful on the hands of those who don’t want to join the front lines.”

“Indeed,” Mark nodded. “Ryan, the survivors you brought the other day mentioned that you used monsters to train them. Can you tell us your thoughts about these classes?”

“... They are useful, but you need a lot of mana to use them properly,” Ryan said. “One of the skills of the summoner class needs five hundred points of mana to be used. As for the Beastmaster class, you need to beat the monster before making them join your side.”

“That is a lot of mana,” Lilian said. “Most non-combatants survivors don’t focus on a single attribute like that. I suppose if they want to obtain those classes, they will have to increase their mana by meditating for a few months.”

“On the good side, the coins the monsters earn go directly to you,” Ryan added. “If you have confidence in your monsters’ strength, you can do like me and use them to seal some dungeons.”

“That seems interesting,” Danie said. “By the way, you seem a lot calmer today, Ryan. Did something happen?”

“Come to think of it, I didn’t fuck you today, did I?” Ryan asked.

“I don’t remember you ever saying that,” Daniel smiled and then stopped when he saw a vein throbbing on Ryan’s forehead.

“Back to the topic,” Mark said. “We also should monitor the level of strength of the monsters and the date the dungeon is likely to break. Some of us can use Appraisal, but I guess you saw most dungeons of this entire group. Can I ask you to write the attributes of the monsters you see on a piece of paper?”

“That will cost you,” Ryan said.

“Fair enough,” Mark nodded. “How about one thousand coins for each type of monster you gather their data and more one thousand for each upgrade in their status that you consider noteworthy?”

“That will do,” Ryan nodded.

In the end, Ryan will have to make use of low-level dungeons to level skills like Flash, so he actually won't lose anything by doing that. Besides, if the base survivors obtain some item and decide to sell, Ryan might hit the jackpot since it would be natural to sell anything below the price of the dungeon shops.

“So, which direction are you going to follow?” Mark asked. “We managed to find some survivors in the last few days, but honestly, I don't think we will achieve much success in the future in these conditions and after the second dungeon breaks. So, it is finally time to focus on strengthening ourselves.”

Mark was pretty bold. Even though the population will increase, he wanted to make sure he won't send the survivors to areas where Ryan and probably Alissa is going to go. That made sense, but it was quite risky.

“Mmm... the Fenrir bosses are between Toronto and Montreal, right?” Ryan asked. “It is pretty close to New York... considering that there are routes to reach the ocean even from there, maybe I can find the megalodons as well. I guess I am going to check things there. I can't let those monsters eat all the dragon hearts.”

Although Ryan's reasoning seemed pretty selfish, no one could complain since going there was also risky. Truth to be told, they were expecting that Alissa would go to that area at some point to ease their worries, but telling her what to do was anything but easy.

“On your way, you will find Salamanders, skeletons, and earthworms,” Mark said. “The path will be hard since we didn't explore anything in that direction yet, so the number of monsters will be high. Once you cross the border, you will find the Dire Wolves. Those are the monsters that the Fenrir's dungeons spawn.”

Dire wolf... that was a terrifying name. Still, Ryan wasn't that worried about it because he will have plenty of time to train the skills that he needed. Besides, that part of the continent was pretty cold this time of the year, so it was the perfect chance for Ryan to make good use of his Icebound.

“Should I pack some thick clothes for the cold, or should I just level up that skill? I guess I won’t pack anything. I will need to discipline myself in those harsh conditions. Otherwise, I won’t win against the monsters when they have the advantage of the terrain.”

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Before Ryan could finish his preparations for his next job, Alissa and her followers suddenly appeared. It wasn’t like Ryan thought they would never meet by accident in that giant base. Still, it looked like she came to talk with him.

“It looks like you finally met one of them,” Alissa crossed her arms and then said. “What did happen?”

“You already know,” Ryan replied.

“They invited you to join their side while offering items and power, but you still refused?” Alissa said, visibly impressed. “You are obstinate. I will give you that.”

“I guess you didn’t learn much about me, huh.” Ryan Shrugged. “I want power, but I won’t sell my soul to the enemy to obtain that. Those bastards killed every single person who survived the dragons’ attack and then claimed Nashville for themselves. There was no way in hell I would join them after that.”

“I guess that sounds like you,” Alissa said and then sighed. “Anyway, if you want to fight those kinds of enemies alone, be my guest, but don’t get in the way if we bump into each other on the battlefield. We aren’t working together anymore, so I don’t want to share even a single piece of the loot, much less the dragon hearts.”

“That will depend if you and your lackeys will do a decent job,” Ryan said and then turned around and left.

Ryan’s words enraged her followers, but they weren’t stupid enough to do anything or even complain while Alissa is nearby. Although they don’t work together anymore, Ryan was probably the only human Alissa respects.

“I guess she is planning to head to that area eventually... as soon as her soldiers are strong enough to deal with the Dire Wolves.”

Alissa changed for the good since she was considering things like that. Although that was none of his business, Ryan felt a little bothered by it. Everyone seemed to be changing. Meanwhile... he still was doing the same things. Always trying to be alone and do things by himself.

“Damn that fucking demon... next time I see her, I won’t rest until I explode her body thousands of times.”

Ryan blamed the demon for the doubts on his head. Still, deep down, he knew that things weren’t that simple. Several weeks ago, he realized something like that when he saw Zoe and her father. Avoiding Mia and Daniel was one thing, but why run away from all human contact? Certainly, he could survive and start a new life with someone... The problem was that after Mia, will never be able to trust someone completely.

“Forget about it and focus on the mission...”

After Ryan memorized the routes, he will have to follow and the dungeons’ positions, he left the base. It took a while, but eventually, Ryan got rid of those useless thoughts and then began to think of the enemies he was going to face. Salamanders probably won’t cause many problems to Ryan; the problem was the earthworms and skeletons.

Bleed was one of the best skills Ryan had, but that one wouldn’t be useful against skeletons. As for the earthworms, the fact that they always had the chance to deal with the first strike was troublesome.

“My strength isn’t that high, but against the skeletons, I should focus on using my hammer. Considering that leveling up Flash is one of my main goals right now, using only that skills while fighting those creatures and salamanders seems like the best option.”






Skeletons can’t feel pain, so unless Ryan smashes them to pieces and kill them, they might become a pain in the ass in a prolonged fight. Now that Ryan thought about it, using Flash against the earthworms to prevent their surprise attack also seems like a good option. The problem was that Ryan probably wouldn’t have enough power to finish them off before they escape.

In the end, Ryan hurried to find the first salamanders after heading East at his top speed before sunset. He had grown quite fond of fighting at night and surprising his foes, so Ryan decided to use that again for a while, at least.

Salamander Lv 40

Health: 600/600

Mana: 1.200/1.200

Stamina: 700/700     

Strength: 250

Dexterity: 300

Speed: 250

Intelligence: 350

Endurance: 150

Control: 300

Mentality: 300

Luck: 40

Recovery: 400

Willpower: 150

Coins: —

Status:

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Roar Lv 20

Passive Physical Skills: Iron Skin Lv1 25

Spells: Flamethrower Lv 35

Support Skills: Fire Resistance Lv 40

“Level forty... as expected, no one cleared the dungeon of this area, and thanks to this, those creatures reached this level. Well, the Paralyzing Spear still should be enough to deal with them.”

Ryan grabbed his spear and casually walked toward the first group of monsters. Although surprised attacks were one of the things he liked to do, he couldn't do that while preserving his mana or without throwing his weapons. When the first creature opened its mouth to use Flamethrower, Ryan used Flash and appeared on the monster's back. With a single swing of his weapon on the monster's neck, Ryan beheaded it.

You obtained 36 coins.

“Come to think of it... I can use Backstab since it only consumes stamina.”

It was the perfect moment also to use that skill. Also, as expected, when the next salamander tried to bite him, Ryan reappeared behind the monster's and pierced the creature's neck quite easily until his weapon reached the other side. It wasn't like Ryan hadn't used melee weapons to kill his enemies before, but only this time, he felt a disturbing feeling inside his heart.

"I don't have time to worry about this kind of thing... this is war."

After steeling his resolve, Ryan repeated the same actions over and over again and, in the end, the monsters didn't even have the chance to scratch him. Maybe Ryan couldn't stop having doubts outside the fights, but when he was fighting, he could make those thoughts go away, at least for a while.

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Since Ryan went on a straight line toward the salamanders' dungeon, he advanced quite fast, even though he always stopped when he could see a new monster on any direction. While that was good and all, Ryan couldn't help but wonder why he didn't find a single elder salamander until now. Logically speaking, considering that no one cleared the dungeon, they should have no real reason to stay stationed there when the number of bosses was probably over one hundred.

"I guess that is also fine... it only means that I will have the chance to kill all of them."

After moving for a full day, Ryan found the salamanders' dungeon in the middle of a small town called Binghamton. Considering the number of salamanders, it was kind of surprising that dragons didn't notice them. Most likely, the town now had more salamanders than it had inhabitants before.

"Maybe it is high time to make good use of Hawkeye. The dragons didn't destroy completely the town, neither did the salamanders. So, there are some buildings in which I can use as a vantage point to snipe them. Still, should I do it right now?"

Although the town was relatively small, it had plenty of buildings in which some survivors could hide. Things had become really difficult after hiding for two months, but that doesn't mean the chances of him finding some people weren't zero. In the end, Ryan decided not to wait, he was planning to take a look at New York D.C. before heading North. So, he had no idea for how long he would stay there.

“Well, before anything, just to be safe, let’s summon some Giant Bees.”

Ryan spent a few hours summoning those monsters and then made them spread around the city in order to kill the salamanders that are leaving the town. That will give him some extra mana recovery. Ryan also used that time to count the number of enemies because sniping all the bosses wouldn’t solve anything. As expected, the number of Elder Salamanders was 105 and the ordinary salamanders was over five thousand. The number was quite low, but considering that even monsters need to eat to survive, it would be insane to keep a number larger than that when they can’t hunt humans or other monsters.

Regardless, Ryan decided to put his plan in place after sunset. At night, it would be harder to find him, even if he fires several times from the same position. Although unlike the reptilians, the salamanders didn’t create campfires to illuminate the area, occasionally, some of them used their Flamethrower to illuminate the place. That even showed Ryan something unexpected, he could see the shadows of their silhouettes in the distance thanks to his Nocturnal Eyes, but Ryan didn’t notice that half of them were sleeping.

“I guess it is weird that I didn’t see that happening until now... even monsters need to sleep as well. In any case, I didn’t see that until now because I always put my enemies on high alert.”

It would be nice if Ryan could take half of the bosses just like that while they were sleeping, but even if he could, doing so without alerting other enemies was probably impossible... without relying on Power of Money. That skill saved Ryan’s ass many times in the last few days, but he also didn’t want to spend his coins like that. $\rho \int (x) dx$

In the end, Ryan attacked the monsters using his ordinary bone arrows. First, he concentrated his Power Shot for three seconds to kill a single boss, but then, after the third shot, Ryan learned that just two seconds of charge was enough.

You obtained 2.250 coins.

You obtained 2.250 coins.

You obtained 2.250 coins.

Little by little, the salamanders began to wake up. However, only after twenty or so of the bosses died that they finally noticed that Ryan was hiding at some point at East of their localization. It was all thanks to the fact that Ryan focused on killing the bosses that were close to the ones that died first. In any case, things wouldn't get easier that quickly. At least half of the bosses and of the ordinary salamanders began to run toward Ryan's location. Facing them directly was out of the question.

“Half, huh...”

The twin swords Ryan got from the reptilians would really come in handy right now... if the skill they granted him weren't fire-based. In any case, Ryan kept firing for a few more seconds while the monsters were approaching and he managed to kill more than ten bosses before those creatures finally saw him standing at the top of a semi-destroyed radio tower. The salamanders used their Flamethrower to melt the structure, but Ryan didn't fall because he had a block of earth underneath him. The monsters tried to attack him, but their Flamethrower had a limited range, so the best they could do was to make him sweat a little.

While the monsters were trying to reach him, Ryan made his giant bees attack the army from the sides and at the same time, he used Arrow Shower to slay several of the ordinary salamanders. For a skill like that, Ryan couldn't ask for a better target than a conglomerated of monsters like that one.

“Hehe, this isn't half bad...”

Thanks to his summoned monsters, even though his Arrow Shower couldn't kill monsters fast enough, Ryan still was recovering enough mana to keep the skill active. While his coins were pilling up and his skills were leveling up, Ryan knew it was only a matter of time before things go south.

Just as he had imagined, something unexpected happened. The bosses gave up on trying to hit him with Flamethrower. Instead of that, they began to spit replicas of Fireballs. Fortunately, they weren't good at that, but eventually, the magic projectiles began to look like Fire Spears and that type of projectile... the salamanders could control quite well... Ryan couldn't help but sweat cold when he watched the monsters learning a skill like that in a matter of seconds.

Using Wind Manipulation, Ryan controlled his shield and made it block the Fire Spears. Although he had enough mana to do that, his mana bar began to decrease since the impact of the attacks forced him to use more energy.

“Not good...” Ryan muttered.

It looked like Ryan underestimated the salamanders since, in the past, he didn’t have a hard time dealing with them. To make matters worse, his giant bees were starting to die at a worrisome pace.

Ryan clicked his tongue... it was time to stop being so greedy. He put his bow away and grabbed his wand. While his summoned monsters were still alive, Ryan had to kill at least the bosses that left the base. With a shield in his left hand and the wand on the right, Ryan fired Thunder Arrows at the bosses. Fortunately, they lost two seconds paralyzed every time they got hit while they recovered from the electric damage. However, Ryan was using too much mana.

In the end, Ryan bit his wand and then canceled Incomplete Reptilian Transformation, only to activate it again in his head. Without wasting any more time, Ryan used Thunder Arrows again, and their power and effects increased quite a bit.

“I guess this will do...”

The salamanders tried to block the projectiles with their flames, but since Thunder Arrows got more condensed energy, they never accomplished that. One by one, the bosses began to fall down, still, when only ten of them were left. Ryan noticed that his giant bees had fallen...

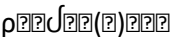
It was all or nothing now. Ryan jumped from his earth platform and equipped his Paralyzing Spear. When the monsters attacked him, he used Flash to escape the flames and land on one of the bosses’ back. Ryan wanted to use Tame on five of those, but he didn’t have the luxury to do so in that kind of situation. After activating all the buffs that increased his strength, Ryan used Backstab and killed another Elder Salamander.

You obtained 2.250 coins.

Congratulations! The skill Flash has leveled up.

Flash Lv 14 → Lv 15

Effect: It grants you the power to move instantly to a place in your field of vision. The distance will be the level of the skill in meters.

Cost: 50 mana. 

You obtained 01 status point.

The very moment the salamanders realized that their companion was long gone, all of them aimed their Flamethrowers at Ryan, but in the end, they only burned to a crisp the fallen monster. Ryan was already on the back of another creature and ready to strike, and when he did it, he had another idea.

“HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!” Ryan roared.

Ryan got caught off-guard when his skill consumed more mana than it should have, but then he quickly understood what had happened. His Scream stunned all the bosses and even some ordinary salamanders. In that single second, Ryan beheaded two other bosses. Things were proceeding well, but then Ryan began to feel the ground trembling and the sound of something approaching... he didn't even have to look at it to understand that the second wave of monsters was coming to finish the job of the first. It was regrettable, but Ryan decided to retreat. After using Flash to appear several meters above the ground, Ryan used Wind Manipulation to create a wind sphere, and then he hit himself with it... it was the only thing he could do that wouldn't make much noise. In the end, the monsters never realized in which direction Ryan escape, and Ryan only had to break a few ribs for that.

“Why I always rush ahead in a hurry and cause these kinds of situations? I can't take lightly the monsters of a dungeon that broke two times, even if they are monsters that I already defeated before.”

Thinking that only sapient beings were only those who could cause Ryan problems was a mistake. In any case, at least this time, he learned several things and decreased the power of the monsters' army.

“I can’t exactly save time and my coins at the same time... if I want to rush ahead, sacrifices had to be made. Either I pay with my life for making this kind of mistake eventually, or I pay the price with coins.”

Instead of trying again, Ryan spends the night summoning Giant Bees and making them spread around town to hunt the salamanders. Their strength was more or less the same level, but the salamanders had the advantage due to their elemental attacks. Still, Ryan solved that problem easily by making his monsters move in groups of three. After all, until now, he didn’t the monsters moving in groups, not the salamanders at least.

When morning came, Ryan decided to change his tactics a little bit. In the previous night’s battle, the bosses caused quite a lot of problems, but the ordinary salamanders didn’t. So, Ryan decided to snipe them again. However, instead of being greedy, Ryan would take things slowly. Sniping one Elder Salamander and then changing his locations before the monsters could tell him where he was. That worked pretty well for a while, but then eventually, the bosses took refuge inside the dungeon.

“For monsters who don’t have the level of intellect as humans, they sure can be annoying...”

Regardless, it was only a matter of time before Ryan finishes his business in that down and kills all the salamanders. Even if the bosses stay hidden inside the dungeon, things will proceed favorably once Ryan’s giant bees kill all of the ordinary salamanders. After all, while Ryan couldn’t hit the enemies from very far away in confined spaces, the monsters also don’t have much room to dodge his arrows.

To make sure that the monsters weren’t plotting anything, Ryan attacked the salamanders around the dungeon with his bow and by using the Giant Bees several times. However, the bosses never left the dungeon. They certainly were plotting something fishy... Ryan couldn’t leave them along because of that, so his workload increased.

Chapter 207

Ryan had originally planned to attack on the next night. However, he decided to be cautious of the bosses’ behavior. So, he delayed the attack for the next night. Thanks to it, he managed to slay all the ordinary salamanders and even build an army of two thousand Giant Bees. For some reason, Ryan felt like being even more cautious and delay his plans for another night. However, the giant bees were so noisy that they were driving Ryan crazy.

After approaching slowly, the dungeon, Ryan confirmed that nothing really worthwhile was dropped. Still, he decided to test a certain theory: will the items disappear if they aren't touching the ground? There was only one way to know. Ryan used Earth Manipulation and hid his items inside a fake rock. The items were right above a table made of earth as well.

"Well, now... let's start by sending five hundred giant bees to inside the dungeon first," Ryan said.

After he gave the order, the bees obeyed Ryan's orders. At first, nothing happened, so Ryan felt safe to approach and check the dungeon shop. He had enough coins to buy another tome that could teach him another elemental transformation, but Ryan refrained from doing so before he clears the dungeon.

Suddenly, things got very noisy inside the dungeon, and then Ryan felt the presence of his bees disappearing in the blink of an eye. He could easily imagine what had happened: the salamanders hid in the last part of the dungeon, and then they bombarded the monsters when they showed themselves with magic attacks.

"I guess they are more aware of my skills to disappear and attack without revealing my position immediately. Anyway, I didn't receive a single coin, so those five hundred bees died without offering any resistance against fifty-five Elder Salamanders... This is a bit worrisome."

Despite that, Ryan had some ideas on how to solve the situation. It was too risky to rely on Flash, given that in a confined space, the fire burns oxygen. Ryan may not pass out since the dungeon isn't actually closed from the outside world, but even so, things might get messy. However, since the bees didn't spend much time inside the dungeon, it was clear that the layout was simple so that Ryan could use something else... he could use: Force.

Ryan decided to test the skill before anything, and he couldn't help but frown when he activated it. As if it was a movie inside his head, Ryan saw the arrow that he fired moving at high speeds toward the sky. After three seconds, the arrow lost its power and then began to fall.

"That is quite fast... probably thanks to my dexterity. Can I actually change the direction of something that fast and hit the monsters inside the dungeon?"

At the very least, Ryan was sure that his arrows were flying at five hundred meters per second. Regardless, after other tests, Ryan confirmed that he could slow down the arrow, but that wasn't something he wanted. After all, the projectiles will lose a lot of firepower if he does that.

After thinking for a while, Ryan decided to check the dungeon's layout and then memorize the course his arrow had to follow. By doing that, his job will become easier. That being said, he was quite sure all the monsters will try to trample on him the very moment he is inside the dungeon. In the end, his best option was to keep using Force, level up the skill, and memorize the layout of the dungeon by following the arrow with his eyes.

Again, it took a while, but eventually, Ryan got the hang of it... after hitting the dungeon walls several times and make it tremble. However, considering that the monsters never left in those moments, it was only obvious that they decided to die inside the dungeon. To make sure and avoid any surprise, Ryan filled his backpack with mana and stamina potions, and then he started the clean-up.

When Ryan fired his arrows, and the first one reached the last part of the dungeon, the monsters tried to burn it with their Flamethrower, but the projectile flew straight into an Elder Salamander's head before the flames could hit it. The monster didn't die since controlling an arrow strengthened by Power Shot wasn't something the current Ryan could do, but the arrow lost one eye, and after one second, another arrow finished off the creature.

After Ryan killed three bosses in a matter of seconds, the monsters decided to use Flamethrower all the time in order to destroy the projectiles. As expected, so many skills almost destroyed the arrows, but when Ryan noticed that, he enchanted them with Lesser Water Enchantment and the arrows became a little more durable. Seven other elder salamanders had to die before the monsters finally noticed that it was useless. They were going to die, even inside their dungeon. In a hurry, the monsters decided to try one suicidal attack. However, when Ryan heard their footsteps, he only smiled.

"That was the wrong choice..." Ryan smirked.

When the salamanders left the dungeon, Ryan welcomed them with a Power Shot. His projectile not only pierced the head of six monsters, but the shock also made the bodies fly backward and hit the other salamanders. Eventually, the bosses recovered from the surprise, but something else was waiting for them... 1.500 giant bees. Ryan helped them, but in the end... it wasn't necessary. The corpses of the salamanders could be barely recognized after the fight.

“I went too far... now I won't be able to tame a single one, Elder Salamander, and these ones were probably stronger than the other that has been killing demons for several weeks. Come to think of it... I should have killed Bolvath before the dungeon break. Now probably dozens of demons are ruling over Houston.”

Ryan sighed... he wasn't the only survivor in the country, but Alissa was focusing on her own business, and the others weren't up for the task to clear dungeons periodically. In the end, Ryan felt that his job would never end...

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Chapter 209

Ryan's luck wasn't that good, it seemed. His options were: to wait for twenty-one hours with those who worshipped Alissa or just skip the dungeon and come back to the class the other day. In the end, Ryan decided to skip the dungeon since he won't be able to fight. Strangely enough, Alissa's henchmen became strong enough to defeat the bosses without suffering a single scratch.

“Well, at least now I don’t have to worry about that the third simultaneous dungeon break will destroy our country completely.”

Maybe Mark wasn’t aware of it, but he eventually will if he uses the satellite. Regardless since his salamander wasn’t used to the snow, Ryan had to slow down a little bit. Unfortunately, things only worse the more he approached New York. The snow began to get quite tall.

“Might as well train my magic while I am here.”

It wasn’t perfect due to the skill level, but Water Manipulation granted Ryan the power to move the snow of his path. He also used Flame Arrow and the salamander’s Flamethrower.

According to the map Mark had, the skeletons’ dungeon was a few kilometers north of the city. While some other dungeons were in the South. The city was quite in a dire situation since it was so close to the ocean, and even from very far away, Ryan could see dragons flying above it.

“I guess I will have to make another stop here...”






Although Ryan’s backpack was filled with potions, he decided to be cautious. Before anything, he created a hideout underground since he wouldn’t be able to kill all the dragons without stopping to take a break. Not only his firing power wasn’t quite there, but his bow could only endure so much energy at a time.

“I wonder why they are flying above the city when the megalodons must be pretty close... maybe is because their numbers are low? Anyway, I can think about this later.”

Ryan have been waiting to kill some dragons for a few days, so there was no way he would miss that chance. In order to prevent failure, he will go all out and not be stingy with potions or anything else. While Ryan was preparing, he had another idea, so he made sure to leave his salamander behind and then created an earth tower to fire the first shot. Five minutes later, Ryan was already charging his Power Shot while at the same time was controlling his potions with Wind Manipulation and pouring them over him to recover his mana. Much faster than before, the bow’s durability began to decrease, and Ryan decided to use that as a sign that it was enough. He had to charge only for a full minute, but he was confident in his power.

When Ryan fired the arrow, the shockwave caused by it almost sent him flying backward. He only stopped because a statue behind him prevented it. Still, Ryan almost missed the time to use Force. Within three seconds, the arrow covered the distance between Ryan and the red dragon that he had chosen as a target, but the beast somehow managed to feel the danger to its life and move his body to evade the blow. However, half of the monster's head explodes since Ryan adjusted his arrow's movement in the blink of an eye.

You obtained 45.000 coins.

Congratulations! You have reached the rank of the 600 strongest humans! Keep clearing dungeons and defeating monsters to raise your rank, and you might receive some nice rewards!     

Current Rank: 588th

You obtained Stamina Restoration Tome.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Stamina Restoration.

Effect: Recovers one point of stamina per second.

Cost: 01 mana per second.

You obtained 01 status point.

After enduring so much crap in the last few weeks, Ryan felt incredible by killing in one shot a dragon. He succeeded in doing that, now he just needed to do so without relying on potions, and he would receive a massive boost in morale. Regardless, Ryan left the watchtower and then hid underground.

As fast as possible, he began to repair his bow, but the very moment he succeeded in doing that, he heard the sound of the dragon's wings flapping nearby. Judging by the sound alone, Ryan could hear three dragons. That was odd... he saw five flying above Long Island.

Before continuing his attacks, Ryan decided to check things with his own eyes. Thanks to Earth Manipulation and Water Transformation, he managed to leave his hideout without making anything suspicious appear on the ground. In any case, he confirmed that three dragons were nearby, two red and one light blue. The monsters were flying around the small tower Ryan had created and the statue he had made to fool the monsters.

“The other disappeared... which is odd. Shall I wait here and see how things will play out?” Ryan rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

As long as Ryan is careful, even if he attacks, as long as he doesn't clearly show himself, the monsters will never notice that he was underground. Still, just to be safe, Ryan decided to use another thing to distract the monsters around. After increasing the underground path's size, Ryan summoned several Giant Bees and made them appear behind the monsters. The creatures turned around, surprised thanks to those creatures' sudden arrival, and with that, they exposed their backs to Ryan.

Ryan smirked. A chance like that was rare to come by, and there was no way he would lose it. Without a hint of hesitation, Ryan pulled the string and began to charge his Power Shot. Although his giant bees had lasted only for a couple of seconds, they had bought just enough time. A weird brown cloud was coming from the West, making a lot of noise, and that had already grabbed the attention of the dragons. Those were the other Giant bees that Ryan didn't leave behind.

When those three dragons prepared themselves for the fight, Ryan attacked another red dragon and killed the monster in a single strike. After that, Ryan equipped his Paralyzing Spear.

Chapter 210

Ryan's surprise attack made the concentration of the two remaining dragons to wane. In the end, things proceeded just like Ryan wanted. One dragon headed toward his direction, and the other flew to attack the giant bees. The red dragon would probably make Ryan fight more fiercely, but the light-blue one flew toward him, and before anything, it opened its mouth and fired several Ice Spears toward him.

Ryan disappeared and then reappeared on the dragon's back. However, when he tried to pierce the monster's head with his spear, a thick ice layer suddenly appeared to protect the monster. Although Ryan was surprised, he reacted fast enough to grab his twin swords. A few slashes made the creature tremble and also melt the ice. Before the monster could try to shake Ryan off, he pierced the Paralyzing Spear on the monster's neck with both hands.

“GYYYYYYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

The scream surprised Ryan since it seemed quite feminine for a dragon. Still, a female or a male dragon were both Ryan’s targets. The gender of a monster doesn’t matter. With all his might, Ryan grabbed his hammer and then hit his spear. Blood gushed from the wound and drenched Ryan’s body. Despite the disgusting feeling, Ryan achieved his goal as the dragon lost control over its body and began to fall.

Ryan stopped his attacks to check his surroundings and confirmed that the remaining dragon still was trying to get rid of the giant bees, and the other one hadn’t appeared yet. When Ryan resumed his attack, he saw the deep hatred inside the blue dragon’s eyes. The creature was as good as dead, and yet, the dragon didn’t beg for its life. Ryan couldn’t respect that much willpower, but only that. With his twin fire swords, Ryan attacked the neck of the monster many times. In the end, defenseless and paralyzed, the light-blue dragon didn’t survive even for another minute.

You obtained 45.000 coins.

Ryan saw some items dropping on the ground, but he decided to finish that fight once and for all before picking them up. As expected, even though the last dragon received some wounds here and there, the bastard annihilated the giant bees with its breath attack.





Since his Paralyzing Spear pierced the dragon’s head quite deeply, Ryan lost some time pulling it back, and when he did it, the last group of bees had been burned to crisp. Ryan sighed since he had to work hard for a full day to summon them, but in the end, he made the dragon pay dearly for it. Ryan used Flash and pierced the weapon in one of the monster’s eyes. However, much to his surprise, the creature wasn’t paralyzed by the weapon’s effect. The dragon tried to crush Ryan, and he had to leave his spear behind. Before continuing the fight, the dragon pulled the weapon and threw it away in the distance.

“You motherfucker...” Ryan muttered in anger.

The dragon not only gained some distance over Ryan but also made sure to use one of its hands to protect its remaining eye. Ryan moved around to confirm something and noticed that while the creature had closed its remaining eye with a hand, it could still feel his presence.

Using his hammer probably wasn't a good idea since the monster apparently had some high-level elemental resistances. So, Ryan decided to retreat and then equip his bow. When he nocked one of his special arrows, the dragon noticed that something was off and then opened its mouth to breathe fire. However, the only thing the monster managed to burn was the snow.

The dragon felt Ryan's presence above its head, but it was already too late. Ryan didn't use Power Shot, but the arrow pierced the monster's skull quite a bit. The pain paralyzed the dragon for a few moments, and that only helped Ryan. Without a hint of hesitation, he fired the other four arrows and made them hit the butt of the first one. The arrow pierced the dragon's head with each hit, and in the end, it reached the monster's brain.

You obtained 45.000 coins.    

The monster didn't drop a single item, but Ryan was more than satisfied with four dragon hearts.

“Let's see what the other one dropped...”

Surprisingly, it was magic items. A pair of blue gauntlets. Those seemed pretty cool since there were two blue gems on the top of the weapons.

Frozen Gauntlets

Effect: It decreases the speed and mentality of foes for three seconds when you attack them with these weapons. The effect can stack. Strength + 40, Endurance + 30.

Those were some nice gauntlets. It was a pity Ryan wasn't the type to fight by punching things, but they certainly will come in handy. If anything, he can always trade them if it comes down to it, Lilian or Luke, as long as they have a nice tome.

Time was of the essence, so Ryan used all the skills he could to grab the dragon hearts as fast as possible. Although the only dragon was missing, there was no telling if the little beast didn't leave to call others. After all, not even dragons could kill other dragons in one shot... possible.

Your strength increased by 20 points.

Your endurance increased by 20 points.

Your intelligence increased by 20 points.

“No luck this time, huh... Well, I guess I should be satisfied that I decreased the population of dragons by four. Anyway, it is time to recover the last dragon heart and my spear.”

Hopefully, the spear would be easy to find since the dragon only focused on making Ryan unable to use the weapon during the fight, not to make him lose the weapon forever. It was getting dark, so maybe approaching at night would be better. However, considering the damage of his special arrows caused, Ryan felt confident in taking the last dragon without a surprise attack. He still had some potions, after all.

Regardless, Long Island was completely devastated. As expected, just like the dragons destroyed all the escape routes on Shreveport, all the bridges have been completely destroyed. Thanks to the snow, the smell of death wasn't so strong, but the piles of rubble showed Ryan how much the place had suffered.

Fortunately, Ryan didn't find any sign of monsters, probably due to those five dragons, but he also didn't find any sign of the last one. On the other hand, he found the body of the first dragon he killed quite fast. However, the monster had been attacked after it had died. The creature's chest had been ravaged by something and that very something also stole the dragon heart that belonged to Ryan.

Chapter 211

“What happened here... it looks like... a dragon attacked this fallen dragon to eat the dragon's heart. Ryan frowned.”

That was rather disturbing, but then Ryan recalled Orgar's words, some dragons become like that... their thirst for power is so big that they attack their own kin. In any case, that was weird, only the last dragon could have done that, but it wouldn't explain the other dragons would stay close to such a dangerous ally.

Instead of worrying about an enemy that had flown instead of fighting him, Ryan decided to look for his spear. Unfortunately, Search only worked on living beings, so Ryan had to look for his weapon the hard way. On the other hand, Ryan knew the spear's trajectory, so he won't have to waste too much time looking. He was already on the right path.

To avoid surprises, Ryan activated Radar, but he didn't find anything. Not even a single living presence could be found, heard, or felt on Long Island. That was very disheartening. Although it would be troublesome to Ryan if he finds some survivors since he had other business, it would be better than just confirming that there was not a single survivor left.

After a while, Ryan finally found his spear... hanging in a semi-destroyed harbor and about to fall on the ocean. One didn't have to be a genius to know that was one hell of a scary coincidence. Regardless, Ryan wouldn't approach the ocean knowing what was waiting for him there, so he used Wind Manipulation to obtain control over his spear and pull it back to him. However, the very moment he used his magic, a gigantic creature jumped out from the ocean and moved toward him.

"You have got to be kidding me!" Ryan said.

Ryan was fifty meters away from the ocean, but a fucking megalodon still jumped to cross that distance and attack him. While he was feeling a shiver like no other, he used all his might to pull back the spear as fast as possible, and then he used Flash when the weapon was back in his hand.

Somehow, Ryan escaped, but if he had been a blink of an eye late... Regardless, the megalodon ended up kissing the snow, and the ground and the impact made the entire area tremble. When the creature recovered, it began to move like a fish out of water and toward the ocean.

"As if I would let you!" Ryan used Incomplete Reptilian Transformation and then threw his spear.

The Paralyzing Spear hit the monster's head, but it didn't pierce that deeply. However, the megalodon began to get electrocuted, and Ryan made sure to hold his weapon by using Wind Manipulation and make the monster suffer just like that.

Megalodon – Lv 75

Health: 45.000/45.000

Mana: 30.000/30.000

Stamina: 20.000/20.000

Strength: 700

Dexterity: 750

Speed: 1000

Intelligence: 500

Endurance: 1000

Control: 300

Mentality: 1000

Luck: 200

Recovery: 3000

Willpower: 500

Coins: —

Status: —

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Bite Lv 100

Passive Physical Skills: Swim Lv 150

Spells: Water Creation Lv 100, Water Manipulation Lv 120

Support Skills: Water Resistance Lv 150, Cold Resistance Lv 100

“The heck... those are some weird statuses,” Ryan frowned.

Although Ryan didn't lose his focus and electric attacks were supposed to be the megalodon's weakness, the monster somehow managed to muster the strength to return to the ocean in a single sault. Noticing what was about to happen, Ryan retrieved his spear.

Ryan sighed in relief and then got the hell out of there since it was clear he couldn't defeat such a monster. Maybe they were weak against physical attacks, but Ryan will have a hard time dealing that kind of damage in a monster that spends most of his time in the ocean, and as far as magic was concerned, he wasn't strong enough. $\rho??\int??(?)???$

“I guess I can't become a master of all in just two months...”

Ryan left Long Island full of doubts. Although he could one-shot kill dragons as long as he has enough time to prepare, killing megalodons seemed impossible following the same strategy. After all, they won't expose themselves outside of water for more than a few seconds. In a sense, those creatures were much troublesome than dragons. That wasn't on his plans yet, but if one day Ryan decides to check things on other continents, those monsters will be a pain in the ass since they can jump pretty high.

“It is almost as if this whole situation wants to make humans hole on the grounds in fear... megalodons in the ocean, dragons in the sky... this is a sick joke.”

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Cold Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the damage caused by all ice-type attacks and the effects of cold environments by one point per level, even when they don't damage you directly.

You obtained 01 status point.

Although his salamander was using its Flamethrower to heat things whenever possible, Ryan finally obtained that skill. Now he finally realized the salamander already obtained the skill, and it was already at level five... maybe his mentality prevented him from suffering the effects of cold until now. Still, now that he was heading north, things were starting to get chilly for him.

“Might as well take a break here and let the salamander level up the skill slowly instead of risking freezing the monster.”

Ryan didn't know for how long he will have to work in order to clear the skeletons' dungeon, so he might as well rest while he can before he enters their territory. In the end, Ryan created a small house of earth and then covered everything with snow. Every single creature will see that and think it was only a rock covered in snow from a distance. Ryan avoided even creating a chimney not to give his location to any creature, even though things got really cold at night... cold and uncomfortable since he didn't even have a sleeping bag. Ryan sighed before falling asleep... now more than ever, he wanted an item to store useful things in a magical dimension. He deserved at least the comfort of pleasant sleep.

Class: Hunter Lv 44 (+ 01 UP / Elementalist Lv 44 (+ 01 UP)/ Monk Lv 16 (-)

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

Rank: 545th

Health: 465/465 (2. 26 /s)

Mana: 839/839 (2. 26 /s)

Stamina: 629/629(2.26 /s)

Strength: 30 (+101) (+60)

Dexterity: 800 (+619) (+27)

Speed: 70 (+255) (+28)

Intelligence: 80 (+288) (+3)

Endurance: 27 (+99) (+100)

Control: 06 (+275) (+10)

Mentality: 07 (+16) (+30)

Luck: 74 (+9)

Recovery: 520 (+639) (+200)

Willpower: 09 (+16)

Coins: 1.230.442

Status: 00

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 42 (+ 04 UP), Herculean Strength Lv 16 (+ 04 UP), Arrow Shower Lv 35 (+ 05 UP), Backstab Lv 09 (+ 08 UP), Hawkeye Lv 03 (+ 02 UP),

Passive Physical Skills: Precision Lv 38 (+ 03 UP), Swordsmanship Lv 32 (+ 04 UP), Art of Sniping Lv 43 (+ 03 UP), Shield Mastery Lv 26 (+ 06 UP), Master Lv 01, Learn Lv 01,

Spells: Analysis Lv 09 (+ 04 UP), Strong Arms Lv 18 (+ 03 UP), Active Spiritual Recovery Lv 38 (+ 03 UP), Tame Lv 48 (+ 7 UP), Call Lv 48 (+ 03 UP), Force Lv 10 (+ 09 UP), Memory Lv 01, Stamina Restoration Lv 01,

Support Skills: Sleep Resistance Lv 21 (+ 02 UP), Master's Support Lv 20 (+ 05 UP), Ice Bound Lv 03 (+ 02 UP), Wand Mastery Lv 09 (+ 03 UP), Cold Resistance Lv 01,

Classes:

Combat: Sage Lv 42 (+ 02 UP), Beastmaster Lv 23 (+ 04 UP), Archer Lv 33 (+ 01 UP), Mercenary Lv 19 (+ 02 UP), Corsair Lv 09, Summoner Lv 20 (+ 05 UP), Combat Archer Lv 12 (+ 02 UP),

Non-Combatant: Blacksmith Lv 20, Trickster Lv 08, Bard Lv 03, Navigator Lv 04, Disciple Lv 01,

Chapter 212

When Ryan woke up, Cold Resistance had reached level five, and the salamander also had progressed even more since the monster was weaker against ice. However, Ryan also noticed that the max health, mana, and stamina of the monster had decreased for some reason. After a while, he finally saw that his monster had grown thin.

"This might be a problem... I should have let the salamander eat the dragons while it could. To make matters worse, skeletons can't be eaten."

Ryan had no idea what type of boss he would find near the skeletons' dungeon, but he was pretty sure that anything related to skeletons wouldn't be tasty or nutritious. Moreover, probably only slimes could

fight without having to eat. Golems maybe could do that too, but Ryan could summon or tame them right at the moment.

“I will leave my future problems for the future me...”

Since the poor salamander was already suffering enough as it is, Ryan decided to walk instead of mounting his pet. In any case, soon they had to stop because they found some new friends. It was kind of surprising that those didn't approach the hideout Ryan used for the night.

Skeleton Archer – Lv 55

Health: 700/700

Mana: 1.200/1.200

Stamina: 500/500

Strength: 150

Dexterity: 750

Speed: 150

Intelligence: 250

Endurance: 50

Control: 400

Mentality: 350

Luck: 500

Recovery: 300

Willpower: 350

Coins: —

Status: —

Skill List $\rho \int ()$

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 50

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 50, Art of Sniping Lv 50,

Spells: Flame Arrow Lv 50, Frozen Arrow Lv 50,

Support Skills: Nocturnal Eyes Lv 50

Ryan couldn't help but frown when he saw three skeletons in the distance walking in his direction. Although Mark mentioned skeletons, he never said they used weapons. Regardless, the only difference from what Ryan had imagined is that those guys had a bow and quiver.

“Level 55 is higher than the other monsters of other dungeons... that is unexpected given that they probably didn't have to fight all that much.”

It was the first time Ryan saw an opponent who could use the same skills. Probably thanks to those, skeletons had some advantage against certain species of monsters. Regardless, just as he had planned,

Ryan grabbed his hammer and decided to hide in the snow to surprise the creatures. Flash had leveled up quite a bit, but Ryan wasn't satisfied with its range yet, and he wanted to make the skeletons help him with that.

It didn't take long for the monsters to get close enough. Maybe it was due to the fact that they were undead and didn't have any instincts. They didn't notice Ryan hidden inside the snow, alongside his salamander that never stopped trembling. As if they were machines, the monsters prepared the weapons in perfect synchrony and tried to attack Ryan. By using all his might, he completely smashed one of them.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Bash.

Effect: Increases your strength by ten points for your next melee attack.

Cost: 02 Stamina.

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan welcomed the notification, but before he could celebrate, the other two skeletons were already aiming their bows toward his head. Ryan used Flash and reappeared behind another one, and this time he made sure to use the creature as a wall to prevent the other's attack. After activating Bash, Ryan smashed the second skeleton and reached on time to block the arrow of the last one. However, even though he blocked it, the attack still pushed him backward a few meters.

“Just like me... a lot of firepower, but absolutely close to none physical defenses.”

In the end, Ryan was forced to use Flash again since the skeletons were that fast to nock their arrows. Regardless, Ryan won without suffering damage, and that was what he always looked for in the fights.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

After dying, the skeleton's body became dust. As expected, the salamander won't even be able to munch on their bones. Not that Ryan expected that would be enough to feed the beast... Regardless, a couple of seconds after they resumed the walking, Ryan saw another group of skeletons. They also had bows, but they weren't coming toward his direction. They were a few hundred of meters West from his current position.

“Given that two months have passed, I thought they would have dominated all the area around New York, but it seems that they only started their plans of conquest recently... Why? Is it because of the Dire Wolves?”

Ryan wasn't quite sure of the details, but in his head, dire wolves were creatures that inhabited cold lands. Given that they now returned with magic powers, possibly, he concluded that the cause of the snow in a certain area of the region was due to them. He knew things were about to get colder while heading North, but things were way colder than he expected, and he couldn't find any other explanation for it aside from them.

In any case, even if they were to blame, Ryan had to deal with them later. First of all, he had to clear the skeletons' army and dungeon. Surprising long-ranged fighters wasn't something easy, even more so when the distance between was quite large. So, Ryan decided to change his strategy a little bit. He ran toward the monsters, and when the creatures noticed him, he threw his Paralyzing Spear and the twin long-swords. The skeletons dodged the attack with ease, but they lost sight of Ryan for a brief moment. They only saw him again when he fell from the sky and smashed one of the skeletons with his hammer. After that, things happened the same way as before, and the monsters didn't have time to do anything. The fact that the skeletons could be fast and precise like machines that was their strength but also a weakness because that only meant their adaptability was terrible. Maybe Ryan could use that in his favor...

Chapter 213

Although it was a necessity, after a while, Ryan kind of got tired of using Flash. Due to the fact that the skill consumed a lot of mana and the number of encounters was increasing, he could only fight using melee weapons. Still, things were proceeding too slow for Ryan's tastes.

“I am never satisfied...” Ryan sighed.

Some sacrifices had to be made to achieve certain things, Ryan realized that. Still, he couldn't help but always move in a hurry and feel satisfied when the progress didn't satisfy him. In the end, Ryan decided to sacrifice some coins to gain time. Instead of killing every single skeleton he found, he just killed those that blocked his way. Fortunately, by doing so, he had just enough mana to use Flash whenever was possible during the fights.

In any case, before sunset, Ryan and his salamander finally found the skeletons' dungeon. It was right in the middle of a place called Chestertown. It seemed like a small town before, but Ryan couldn't be sure because snow covered everything.

"What the heck is going on with the climate? Just by walking for a few hundreds of kilometers, the snow became so deep and thick..."

Ryan barely missed it since they soon left, but he saw some skeletons and dire wolves fighting in the distance. No... the dire wolves were getting their ass kicked since their numbers were small, and the skeletons could use Flame Arrows. In any case, Dire wolves were larger than Ryan imagined. They were at least five feet tall and ten or twelve long. A thick white fur covered their bodies, and their eyes were red like blood.

"Maybe it is because of them the skeletons didn't head South until now... wait, what is that?"

The skeleton army had dozens of thousands, but their numbers weren't what surprised Ryan, but the fact that even the ordinary skeletons were divided into many groups. Some of them even had armor, shield, and swords. While others had magic wands, could fly, and were wearing robes.

Skeleton Knight – Lv 55

Health: 1.500/1.500

Mana: 300/300

Stamina: 700/700

Strength: 750

Dexterity: 250

Speed: 250

Intelligence: 250

Endurance: 750

Control: 200

Mentality: 750

Luck: 200

Recovery: 500

Willpower: 750

Coins: —

Status: —

Skill List





Offensive Physical Skills: Bash Lv 50

Passive Physical Skills: Swordsmanship Lv 50, Shield Mastery Lv 50,

Spells: Mana Shield Lv 50, Bronze Skin Lv 50,

Support Skills: Cold Resistance Lv 50, Fire Resistance Lv 50

Skeleton Wizard – Lv 55

Health: 500/500    

Mana: 1.500/1.500

Stamina: 300/300

Strength: 200

Dexterity: 700

Speed: 150

Intelligence: 750

Endurance: 300

Control: 400

Mentality: 750

Luck: 200

Recovery: 400

Willpower: 750

Coins: —

Status: —

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills:

Passive Physical Skills: Alert Lv 50,

Spells: Flame Arrow Lv 50, Frozen Arrow Lv 50, Thunder Arrow Lv 50, Fly Lv 50

Support Skills: Fire Resistance Lv 50, Cold Resistance Lv 50, Shock Resistance Lv 50

It was weird that a single dungeon could spawn three types of monsters... they weren't three types exactly, but they had three types of builds, and that was already crazy enough. To make matters worse, the army of skeletons was well-organized. First of all, the skeletons knights formed a massive defensive line around the dungeon. Based on Ryan's estimations, for every four skeletons, two of them were skeletons knights.

Right behind the skeletons knights, Ryan saw several groups formed only by skeleton mages. Although they could fly, they probably never leave that position in the middle of a fight because their attacks weren't as long as the archers. In any case, spells like them can hit just fine any enemy in that position. They just had to adjust their aim a little bit.

Deep on the backline, Ryan found the archers. Although their numbers were larger than the wizards, they couldn't be compared to the knights. Probably due to the nature of their long-ranged attacks, they

were the only monsters Ryan saw on the way to the dungeon. They were weak physically, but in groups of three, they could get rid of most enemies.

“This will take a while...”

Even if Ryan uses his summons or slowly snipes the enemies from a distance, he couldn't tell what might happen since he didn't find the bosses. Most likely, all of them were sapient beings. Only such creatures could make brain-dead monsters follow that kind of formation, after all.

Regardless, Ryan's old tactics won't work now. Bleed doesn't work on skeletons, so summoning the giant bees was out of the question. Attacking at night from above also wouldn't work since they have wizards and archers. Ryan wasn't that patient, but it looked like the only thing he could do was to slowly decrease the size of enemies' army with short but concentrated attacks.

“I suppose it can't be helped... I want to be a one-man army, but I am not one yet. So, in this kind of situation, I have to be patient and do what I can.”

Fortunately, Ryan would be able to use surprise attacks as much as he wanted. The snow was high, and he could hide inside of it with ease. Not only that, he could hide his trails and sign of his actions by using Water Manipulation and Water Transformation. After all, just like he could transform the water of the atmosphere into ice, he could transform all the cold of the region into the snow as well.

First of all, Ryan decided to hide his salamander a few kilometers away from the dungeon since the creature wasn't as quiet as Ryan. Meanwhile, Ryan also checked his skill list and wondered which skills could come in handy. Magic Trap seemed like one of them. However, since it was at a low-level, it wasn't strong enough to kill a single skeleton, not even the ones which had low health.

Ryan waited for a while until things get really dark in that region. Since it was snowing, the visibility was quite low, so the conditions were perfect for Ryan. Moving inside the snow, Ryan approached the dungeon until he found a point where the skeletons and he were basically on the same level. Nothing was blocking his path, and with a single shot, as long as his arrow has enough energy, Ryan knew that he could destroy several skeletons. Finding those conditions is going to be hard, but at the moment, that was the only thing Ryan could do.

Ryan began to charge his Power Shot, and then he had an amazing idea... then, he smirked since that would help him a lot. After charging Power Shot until his mana and stamina almost got empty, Ryan fired. However, at the last moment, he used Force to change the trajectory of the projectile.

Chapter 214

Ryan's arrow made a lot of snow fly, but before the skeletons could notice that, and the entire squad got wiped out by his attack. Surprisingly enough, Ryan saw the moment the skeletons raised their shields to block his arrow... even though he charged his arrow for fifteen seconds...

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

...

Ryan covered the hole in the snow his arrow created, and then he waited for the monsters to head toward a point several meters to his left side, but the creatures never did. That was odd. If the skeletons managed to react to his projectile, they were supposed to know that the arrow came from such a direction.

"I wanted to mislead them, but... it won't be easy, huh."





Something smells fishy... Lately, Ryan had that kind of feeling many times. The behavior of the monsters was changing quite a lot. Maybe Ryan should wait until sunrise, and then he will attack when the dire wolves appear. Certainly, the attention of the skeletons will be divided, and his job will become easier. However, Ryan being Ryan, he didn't want to win by relying on other factors.

"Let's see... this shot just killed for skeletons, and I can fire one of those every five minutes. So, I can kill around seven hundred skeletons per hour. Not bad, I guess. The question is: will the skeletons let that happen and don't try anything?" Ryan rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

There was only one way to find out. However, Ryan didn't want to find out without having a countermeasure or two. After thinking for a while, he had an idea. It wouldn't be that efficient, but at least it would make the bastard who was controlling the skeletons hold his horses if something happens.

Ryan moved dozens of meters from the position of his first shot, and then he prepared another one. He repeated the same actions, so the result had been the same. However, soon after, a group of skeletons got wiped out. Two groups on the sides began to move toward the direction the arrow came from. Those groups had eighty knights and forty skeletons and wizards in each group. Without mana and stamina, Ryan wouldn't be able to fight them. However, the skeletons stopped when they began to get hit by something coming from the underground. One after the other, the skeletons knights suffered damage and got sent flying upward. That alone halted both groups' charge.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.    

You obtained 40 coins.

...

Congratulations! The skill Magic Trap has leveled up.

Magic Trap Lv 1 → Lv 8

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 07 status points.

“They moved almost instantly... as expected. They were expecting the second attack to confirm my position. My guess is that once the same thing happens, they will be more cautious, but the same trick won't work twice, even more so if the bosses are the ones controlling them.”

That was kind of troublesome; still, it could work well as training for Ryan. He wasn't strong yet to overpower every single opponent that gets in his way, so Ryan needed to become more adaptable to unexpected situations. He had to make most of the situations, after all.

A direct powerful attack was too obvious, so Ryan decided to attack the backline and see they respond to it. Luckily enough, snow began to fall even more intense at that moment, so when Ryan used Arrow Shower, the skeletons didn't notice from where Ryan was attacking. That being said, the archers and wizards responded to his attack by using their own projectiles to block the attack. In the end, only five skeletons were defeated before Ryan's mana got empty.

“How annoying... let's see how they will respond to this.”

Using Water Transformation, Ryan began to concentrate the snow that was about to fall around him over his hand until it turned into ice. Little by little, the sphere grew in size, and when Ryan used around eighty percent of his mana, a sphere of ten meters of the radius was floating above him. Still, instead of firing at the skeletons, Ryan shot it upward. Only after a couple of seconds, the sphere fell above one squad of skeletons. However, once again, the knights reacted fast enough to save half of the squad.

That was getting old really quick, but Ryan decided to test one more thing before observing how the skeletons would react if he repeats his previous attacks. Ryan grabbed his twin long swords and then took a deep breath. He had to approach a little more to use that attack. It was unfortunate, but the range of Fire Storm was one hundred meters. That was probably the range the skeleton wizards had, but for someone quite Ryan... it was quite never-wracking to get that close of his foes. Regardless, while crunching underneath the snow, the skeletons never saw him.

By swing, both swords at the same time, Ryan cast Fire Storm, and two tornadoes of flames appeared right inside the skeleton's formation. The monsters tried to protect themselves with their shields, but they couldn't endure the power of such flames. It was a level fifty spell, after all. Although Ryan only managed to keep the attack active for eight seconds, it had been more than enough to wipe three whole squads.

Before he could get carried away even further, Ryan decided to retreat. However, at the same time, the skeletons began to march in all directions. They apparently gave up on trying to find Ryan based on the direction his attacks come from, and they decided to destroy everything in the area. For starters, but skeleton wizards began to melt all the snow.

Chapter 215

Ryan was a hot-blooded idiot, he knew that, but he wasn't a complete imbecile. Once he recognized what the skeletons were planning to do, he began to move away from the dungeon while he still was hiding underneath the snow.

"There is no mistake, they are being controlled... even if monsters might use Telekinesis, there is no way that they can have this much synchrony relying on such skill alone. Most likely, the bosses are in synchrony controlling them."

That would also explain that decision-making speed. Ryan didn't even kill one thousand of them, and the creatures had already decided to retort to big moves. Regardless, Ryan retreats to a hill where he hid his salamander, and from there, he saw the monsters marching around the dungeon and melting every single bit of snow. Not even ten dragons could have melted such a large area so fast, so it became even more evident that Ryan couldn't underestimate them.

After a few hours, the skeletons finally resumed their positions around the dungeon. Regardless, their job was done, and even though it was snowing quite strong, the snow wouldn't pile enough to grant Ryan a decent hideout.

"I am starting to think that I should have become a warrior instead of archer... perhaps in this kind of situation, I would be able to rush ahead and slay those fuckers without worrying about dying in five seconds."

Ryan also forgot about that the tome to summon golems... maybe it will come in handy right now, but his pride won't let retreat that much against monsters. Besides, there was no telling how much mana he will need to summon a single golem.

"Whatever... screw it."

In the end, Ryan decided to give up on relying on strategy. He decided to do the only thing he was good at... kill monsters from very far away. On that hill, Ryan was more or less three kilometers away from the dungeon. Even though his dexterity reached some crazy levels, it was only obvious that Ryan couldn't hit anything from so far away. However, he didn't have to because the monsters were conglomerated in a single spot. All he had to do was to aim in the right direction.

"There is also the problem of firepower... my bone arrows won't reach so far away unless I use Power Shot."

Although that seemed a bit troublesome, it was fine since Ryan will have to spend some time aiming. Focusing on accuracy instead of speed was only obvious in that kind of situation. Besides, with Force at his disposal, perhaps Ryan could even hit from even further away.

Without wasting any more time, Ryan equipped his bow and prepared an arrow. As he was pulling the string, his aim improved several times until it felt like he had reappeared one kilometer away from the skeletons. That wasn't enough to hit the skeletons, but considering that his sight didn't change after five seconds, Ryan fired anyway.

As expected, the arrow flew in a straight line toward the skeletons, but after enduring so much resistance from the wind, the trajectory changed slightly downward. Ryan used Force in the last moment and then managed to correct it a little, and then the arrow hit the legs of some Skeleton knights.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

... p??(??(??)???)

"Ten, huh... as expected, it lost a lot of power while it was flying."

The good side of that was that Ryan recovered more mana than he used thanks to Active Spiritual Recovery. The downside was that he couldn't recover his stamina that fast. It was finally time to make use of Stamina Restoration.

While Ryan was using that spell, he confirmed that the skeletons didn't change their position. That was excellent, but that advantage will only last for a few more hours. Once the sun starts to rise, Ryan will have to think of other ways to deal with those freaks.

Congratulations! The skill Stamina Restoration has leveled up.

Stamina Restoration Lv 1 → Lv 2

Effect: Recovers one 1.1 points of stamina per second.

Cost: 01 mana per second.

You obtained 01 status point.

“It looks like this skill works in the same manner as Heal... it will take a while to become really efficient, but I have time. I can wait.”

Ryan repeated that hundreds of times overnight. Sometimes the skeletons left their position and looked for him, but they never left the area one kilometer around the dungeon. Although they had thousands on their side, the squads would get too far away from each other if they just walk in a straight line. On the other hand, they couldn't just select a good part of their troops and go together in a single direction because that leaves the dungeon unprotected. Whoever was controlling the skeletons, they didn't know how many enemies were waiting for an ambush, after all.

After working hard for several hours non-stop, Ryan managed to kill around five thousand skeletons. However, when the sun began to rise, he was beat... so exhausted that he was using his salamander to rest his back.

“Well, I just have to repeat this more than five times...”

Ryan said that as if it was going to be a pain, but that wasn't the case. Thanks to his handwork and all those difficulties, he was learning new strategies and new ways to use his skills. Even though those won't make the numbers inside his status and skill list more impressive, they will contribute to his future. That was also another kind of important strength.

However, it looked like things wouldn't proceed that favorably. Ryan heard in the distance the sound of massive wings flapping... a dragon was approaching. Ryan picked his bow and special arrows, but then he relaxed when he saw that dragon slowly flying toward him. Alissa had appeared... much to Ryan's displeasure.

"It looks like you are having a hard time here. Maybe we super estimated you a little." Alissa suddenly appeared and said, much to Ryan's annoyance.

Chapter 216

"What do you want?" Ryan asked.

"Nothing, I just came to check on you since I saw the trails you left behind," Alissa replied after landing and returning to her human form. "Although I gave you several days of advantage, you still are here, huh."

"I don't think that is the case," Ryan said. "Maybe you are lonely because your lackeys aren't around to offer you praise."

"Don't talk as if they are members of some weird cult," Alissa said.

"It looks like their behavior has been giving you some problems. As expected, the bosses are probably sapient beings who are controlling the skeletons from inside the dungeon."

As much as it was annoying to have his mind being read, at least it saved Ryan from explaining. Although if he had the chance, he would rather avoid explaining anything. Regardless, soon after Alissa appeared, some new guests appeared as well. The dire wolves came in packs to play with the skeletons, but they

didn't bring enough numbers to become a threat to the skeletons as expected. The knights focusing on blocking their path, and the archers and wizards attacked them from a safe position.

Dire Wolf- Lv 60

Health: 1.700/1.700

Mana: 500/500

Stamina: 800/800

Strength: 700

Dexterity: 450

Speed: 450

Intelligence: 250

Endurance: 350

Control: 100

Mentality: 350

Luck: 100

Recovery: 400

Willpower: 350

Coins: —

Status: — ρ??∪??(?)???

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Dash Lv 70

Passive Physical Skills: Iron Skin Lv 40, Rage Lv 40,

Spells: Ice Arrow Lv 50, Howl Lv 50,

Support Skills: Cold Resistance Lv 100, Pain Resistance Lv 50

“I give up on trying to understand what is going on... their levels are even higher than the skeletons. That doesn't make any sense...”

“Now that is surprising,” Alissa frowned. “How come those creatures can come all this way when their bosses are facing dragons in the North?”

That was one of the many things Ryan wanted to know. Regardless, he had more pressing matters at the moment with the skeletons. Although Ryan wanted some peace of mind to think about what he should do during the day, Alissa wasn't leaving. As expected, even though she wasn't uncomfortable talking with Orgar, she still misses other humans' presence. Maybe now that she was training some humans, she had become less cold.

“I am going to give you a hand since I am interested in the identity of the bosses,” Alissa declared. “Although I don't plan on going for other planets anytime soon, but having a good idea what I might find on the other side of this dungeon might give me some insight for the future.”

“I don’t need your help,” Ryan said. “Besides, you can always learn about this later once I clear this area. Even though you say that you don’t read my mind, you can always ask Orgar.”

“Don’t flatter yourself,” Alissa said. “I don’t have any reason to ask Orgar about the things of what you think, and he certainly doesn’t talk about the thoughts of other humans.”

“That might be true, but I would bet that you can gain some intel by facing the Fenrirs up north,” Ryan said. “That is a pretty famous beast, after all. Even if it can’t speak, you probably can find something by reading the monsters’ memories.”

“We can argue about this all day, but I won’t change my mind,” Alissa said.

Ryan sighed... in the end, Alissa’s help would solve the problem of time. However, Ryan’s pride was getting in the way as usual. In the end, he decided not to argue. Dungeons have to be cleared as fast as possible, even more so when there are two hundred of them in the country. Considering that Ryan had to work three days to clear a dungeon that broke three times and spawned salamanders, things might get really messy if a third dungeon break happens in some places that spawn things like golems, skeletons, or even demons.

“It looks like you already gave up,” Alissa said. “So, what should we do?”

“Why are you asking me?” Ryan frowned.

“Did you get used to receiving orders?” Alissa asked. “Before, I could give the calls since I was in command, at least you considered that, but now things are different.”

She had a point, even though it was weird for Alissa to say that. Still, Ryan didn’t have much experience strategizing while working with others. He would never say it out loud, but things weren’t so bad before when he worked with Alissa. She would give the orders and how things would proceed, and everything he had to worry about was to fire as many arrows as possible.

“... Let’s just surprise the skeletons and whoever is controlling them instead of using any fancy strategy,” Ryan said. “I will draw their attention and make some of them approach this place. Meanwhile, you will stay hidden, but then you attack with everything you got when they show up. Don’t show your draconic form, though. We can’t let them understand your power so quickly.”

“I guess that is fine. My crossbows can’t reach them from this distance,” Alissa said while furrowing her eyebrows and looking at the dungeon. “I will need to buy some more powerful ones, I guess.”

As expected, even Alissa had to deal with the limitations of some equipment. Although her crossbows probably could destroy the skeletons in a single shot, such a thing wouldn’t happen that frequently. Since the creatures were being controlled, eventually, they would fall back to the dungeon where their numbers would be protected, and the fight would get more complicated.

Regardless, Ryan took out all the potions from his backpack because he would need to go all out in order to make as many skeletons as possible head toward them and because he didn’t want to let Alissa monopolize all those sweet, sweet coins for herself. Hopefully, after clearing the dungeon, Ryan will be able to buy some even more impressive tomes, or at the very least, he will be able to buy two elemental transformation tomes.

Chapter 217

In the end, Ryan wouldn’t need much mana for the fight, thanks to Active Spiritual Recovery. So, he put the stamina potions nearby for them to be used faster. Thanks to the sunlight, Ryan’s first shot managed to destroy half of a squad. However, he didn’t stop there. He attacked several others before they could pinpoint his location. In the end, half of the entire skeletons’ army marched toward him. Seeing that moving towards him like that, Ryan couldn’t help but feel shivers. However, he didn’t miss what happened before. The skeletons that stayed behind took position behind the first wave of enemies. If the first wave takes their time eliminating the foes, it was clear that the second wave would come to finish the job.

“Crap... I won’t have time to repair my bow.”

With every single shot, the bone bow lost ten points of durability. It couldn’t be helped since Ryan was pouring all his mana and stamina in every single shot, but that was also troublesome. In the end, Ryan decided to forget about that and use something else when the time comes.

Before the bow's string finally broke, Ryan managed to slow down the skeleton's army for a few seconds, but eventually, they were upon him. Ryan dropped his bow and then equipped his twin long swords.

"Burn now, your motherfuckers, for making me waste so much time here," Ryan said, and then he used Fire Storm.

It was a pity to use so much mana in a skill he couldn't level up, but in the end, Ryan felt satisfied with the coins and the fact that he was destroying the skeletons' formation. His attack slowed down the skeletons even more, but just a little bit. At the end, when the archers and wizards began to attack, Alissa finally showed herself and opened her mouth.

A massive wave of flames spread around the area like wildfire. It was kind of surprising that Alissa could produce so many flames with her mouth. Ryan even had a hard time looking at her attack since it felt like it indeed there was a sea of flames in front of him.

Although the skeletons were caught off-guard, as expected, their formation helped them quite a bit. Most of the skeleton knights were decimated, but the archers and wizards managed to escape relatively unscathed. As much as Ryan wanted to block their path, his bow was broken, and Fire Storm had a limited range. To make most of the situation, Ryan helped Alissa decimate the skeleton knights.

When the flames dissipated, Ryan confirmed that the skeletons' army lost one-third of their forces just like that. Surprisingly enough, Alissa wasn't pale after using so much mana. Still, she decided to recharge her batteries just to make sure since the skeletons returned to the dungeon but didn't enter.

"They will show themselves now, don't lower your guard."

Although Orgar said that Ryan didn't see anyone leaving the dungeon, most likely, they will only show themselves once Alissa and Ryan approach or attack again. Although Alissa could attack from the same distance as Ryan, she couldn't because she didn't have the right weapons. Using spells seemed like the best second option, but from so far away, the effectiveness of magic attacks will decrease greatly... in the end, the best option was to get indeed closer.

"I used all my potions, so I guess we will have to accept their challenge," Ryan said.

“I can always focus on support and recover your mana and stamina,” Alissa said. “That way, we can keep decreasing their numbers safely from here.” ρ??(???)

“While that is true, I would like to avoid this kind of strategy,” Ryan said and then began to collect the loot. “There is no telling what might happen once they understand that they are going to lose. In the worst-case scenario, the bosses might spread the skeletons around, and when we enter the dungeon, we will be surrounded.”

Alissa recognized that possibility and decided not to pursue that strategy any further. Besides, even though she offered that idea, she wanted to finish things as fast as possible. Her soldiers obtained a certain of strength where only six of them can guard most dungeons. However, she only left them alone for the time being in such places in order for them to obtain some level of independence. They weren't at the level she wanted, and for them to reach that level, they can't stay guarding dungeons forever.

“Let's go with my plan this time,” Alissa said. “I attack, and you give me some support. However, to do that, I will need those gauntlets of yours.”

“Why?” Ryan frowned.

“Their effect is interesting, and I feel like punching things today,” Alissa replied. “If I focus on using only stamina, I should be able to fight for quite a while. Thus, we won't get caught off-guard if the bosses suddenly appear.”

Rather than that, it was evident that the bosses will show up when someone gets that closer to their dungeon. In any case, Ryan decided to lend his gauntlets to Alissa, even though it was weird that she didn't have some items like that.

“Hehe, now we are talking,” Alissa smiled confidently while hitting the gauntlets against each other and making some 'cracking' sounds.

“Hey...” Ryan frowned and then said.

“Relax, I can repair them as well,” Alissa said.

While they approached the dungeon, Alissa spent the whole time shadow-boxing. Although she was fast and precise, her punches were way too obvious, and her variety sucked. That being said, those would probably be enough against most mob monsters.

“Here is what we are going to do: I will punch them and try to defeat as many as possible,” Alissa declared. “However, I will probably miss many of them since I will focus on quantity over quality. Your job will be to finish them off. That way, you will be able to fight for quite a while without worrying about mana.”

Alissa’s plan was simple but efficient to the point where Ryan couldn’t help but frown. She was really changing and becoming more aware of other people’s weaknesses and strengths. The question was: for how long will that strategy work against twenty thousand skeletons? Alissa was fast, but there was a limit to everything. That being said, Ryan could easily imagine the skeletons trying to hit him and only managing to damage their allies. Maybe she was aiming for that. Regardless, Ryan’s job wasn’t to worry about that. It was to kill the leftovers. Although that sounded pathetic, Ryan decided to put his pride aside in order to finish the job as fast as possible.

Chapter 218

It was obvious, but Alissa and Ryan couldn’t just walk in a straight line toward the skeletons’ army. So, at some point, Alissa cast the invisibility spell on them. Although their footprints could be found in the snow, the skeletons never noticed their approach. Things got even better when a new pack of dire wolves suddenly appeared in the north and started to cause havoc.

“Now...” Alissa and then she jumped.

The spell will stay active until Ryan and Alissa cause damage, so Ryan didn’t get caught off-guard. However, he sighed when Alissa fell on the middle of the squad and made the entire area tremble with a single punch. She eliminated the entire squad and also broke the formation of several others who were nearby. Surprisingly enough, some skeletons even froze on the spot.

“I didn’t think my gauntlets could have such a large area of effect...”

Ryan fired Earth Bullets and completely shattered the skeletons, which froze on the spot. Meanwhile, Alissa turned to the side and then began to sweep the skeleton knights as if they had the leaves' resistance. Although Alissa killed most of them, Ryan wasn't fast enough to kill those who got frozen.

"Ah... screw it."

Ryan used Power of Money on those who were almost dead and increased his pace. However, things didn't improve all that much since some archers and wizards recognized his presence and level of danger. Ryan equipped his shield to block their attacks, and he prevented the damage. However, at the same time, his attacking speed decreased.

"It can't be helped... let's leave the leftovers for later. Although even Alissa recognizes how troublesome the skeletons knights can be, I won't do much while those freaks are focusing on me."

Ryan equipped one of his longswords and then used Fire Storm. Even though his targets had low health, it took a while for him to decimate all of them, and when he did it, other archers and wizards decided to focus on him.

"I guess we can't ignore them," Alissa said after suddenly appearing. "I wanted to prevent them from assuming a troublesome formation, but..."

While Alissa was talking, some shadows left the dungeon. However, Ryan and Alissa could lose their focus, their concentration wane when they saw those weird figures. The bosses were using black robes that covered their entire body. Although Ryan couldn't see a face inside their hoods, a single word came to his mind: reappear. However, that was strange. They didn't have the famous reaper's scythe...

Instead of attacking Alissa and Ryan, the cloaked monsters began to fly in a circle around the dungeon. After a few seconds, they increased their altitude and began to spread the circle. They were plotting something...

"Retreat, I will deal with them," Alissa declared. $\rho \int (x) dx$

As usual, Alissa was reckless. Ryan tried to use Appraisal, but for some reason, the skill didn't work. That was odd... he couldn't feel that much difference in power between them. Regardless, before Ryan could

retreat or Alissa could transform into a dragon. Those creatures cast a massive shadow over the entire area. In the blink of an eye, everything became pitch black. To make matters worse, Ryan couldn't feel, hear or see anything, even though he had Nocturnal Eyes.

Suddenly, Ryan felt his arm burning. He didn't know what had happened, but the tingling pain made him think that something scratched him. Suddenly, something began to shine in the distance, something big. However, Ryan couldn't identify what that was... weirdly enough. He couldn't even close his eyes.

“This is an anti-life field, a spell that nullifies your physical senses. You can't rely on your body alone here; you need to use your spirit.”

“anti-life field? What kind of bullshit is that?”

That was some complicated explanation. Anti-life field? What kind of crazy spell was that? Maybe a dragon could do things without a body, but Ryan was someone who only relied on his sense until now to do every single thing. There was no way he would be able to pull that off.

Once again, Ryan felt another part of his arm burning. He was getting damaged by something. That was weird... how come he felt that when the spell cast by those weird monsters was supposed to nullify senses? Now that Ryan thought about it, it was also weird that he could think.

“Use your mind! Dumbass! I can hear your thoughts, so that means that your spirit still is working. The fact that you can feel the damage also proves that. So, if your spirit is working, you can use mana! Just hang in there for a bit, and I will solve this mess.”

Ryan didn't understand Orgar's words again, but it felt like the spirit alone was the only thing one had to have in order to use magic. After thinking for a while, Ryan recalled that Orgar also mentions his ability to think... those were the keys. Although Ryan couldn't control his hands, he managed to activate Heal, and then the pain began to lessen. However, now and then, Ryan felt like he was being attacked by something weird.

Suddenly, the light began to expand, and then eventually, the darkness began to shatter like glass. When Ryan opened his eyes again, he saw the skeleton army running over him and toward Alissa's direction.

“Those fuckers... did they seriously think to kill me by stepping over me? Ryan bit his lips in annoyance.”

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Darkness Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the damage caused by all Dark-type attacks by one point.

You obtained 01 status point.

The cloaked figures were flying over Alissa, so it was evident that they think that Ryan was only a small bug. That simple thought enraged Ryan so much that he bits his lips, and he didn't stop even though his mouth started to bleed quite a bit.

“I will show you... I will show you all that you deserve for looking down on me, your fuckers. Prepare to die like the low-lives that you are.”

Chapter 219

Ryan's weapons had been spread around when the skeletons' army had knocked him over. However, they were close by, and he didn't even have to pick them. Ryan used Wind Manipulation and obtained full control over all of them. At the same time, he had the idea to make them spin as fast as possible before sending them toward the skeletons.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

...

“How do you like that, huh?” Ryan shouted when his hammer broke into pieces, several skeleton archers.

Although he was enraged, Ryan’s control over his spells didn’t decrease. If anything, he got better now that he lost all hesitation. Still, he was in the middle of the skeletons’ army, and those creatures finally got aware of his presence. However, those who pointed their weapons at him didn’t have enough time to counterattack. Ryan’s spinning weapons flying around him quickly stopped the monsters and cleared the area around Ryan. Since many skeletons were around him, only those who have a clear vision could attack Ryan. However, he never gave them the chance to do so. Things were going to change once the circle around Ryan increased in size, but he didn’t let that happen. Ryan dashed toward his left side, where the skeletons came from. In the blink of an eye, he left the range of the monsters he left behind.

Congratulations! The skill Spearmanship has leveled up.

Swordsmanship Lv 20 → Lv 21

Effect: Increases damage when using spears and lances by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Swordsmanship has leveled up.

Swordsmanship Lv 33 → Lv 34

Effect: Increases damage when using spears and lances by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan’s skills were leveling up like crazy, and at the same time, he wasn’t running out of mana since his attacks with those weapons became like an area of effect attacks and decimated several of them at the same time. However, Ryan was forced to stop his rampage.

“Look out. Some of them are coming for you.” Alissa warned.

Although he had completely forgotten about Alissa and Orgar, Ryan reacted on time to see some of those cloaked figures moving toward him. It was only obvious that Alissa wouldn't be able to hold back more than one hundred bosses. Regardless, Ryan was the type who would rather avoid facing several bosses without keeping his distance, but at that moment, he was too enraged to care about it.

The bosses seemed like creatures from the beyond. Even though they were so close to Ryan, he still couldn't see their expressions. It looked as if their bodies were made of shadows... However, despite that, Ryan saw those creatures' hesitation when they slowed down and saw Ryan's mouth bleeding.

“What's wrong? Do you want to dance, too?” Ryan asked.

The five bosses pointed their hands toward Ryan, and he grunted when suddenly, his body got heavier. Gravity magic... that was unexpected, but they weren't the only ones who liked to surprise others. Ryan used Flash to escape the effects of their spell, but that didn't work. However, in the end, that worked well for Ryan since he reappeared above one of the monsters with his Paralyzing Spear on hand. With all his might and added with the power of gravity, Ryan pierced one of the bosses and pushed down the creature until both of them hit the soil.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Gravity Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the damage caused by all gravity-type attacks by one point.

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan felt his bones cracking when he landed, but he withstood the pain at the same time since he could feel that the monster was even more in pain. Surprisingly enough, the other bosses didn't cancel their spells, even though their ally was about to die, thanks to it. Instead of that, they changed the direction of their spells. One second later, Ryan's limbs were forcefully being pointed in different directions. As if that wasn't enough, the pulling force was becoming unbearable... those fuckers wanted to dismember him.

“Thanks for the demonstration,” Ryan smirked.

Ryan used Plagiarism, and without hesitation, he used the same spell to knock down the bosses. The creatures fell on the ground, and even though they suffered some damage, they soon felt some relief since the spell was canceled... Ryan had used all his mana to stop them. However, the relief disappeared soon after. Ryan impaled the monsters with his magic weapons and didn't let them go until all of them died.

You obtained 15.000 coins.

You obtained 15.000 coins.

You obtained 15.000 coins.

...

“That was refreshing...” Ryan said.

Somehow, Ryan managed to defeat the bosses, but the battle wasn't over yet. Now his mana was almost empty, and the ordinary skeletons already surrounded him. Rage's effects were also starting to disappear, so things were bound to get messy at that rate.

“Attack while you can, your freaks,” Ryan said and then grabbed his long swords. “This will be your last chance.”

Ryan dashed toward the monsters in order to make them hesitate to wound their allies. However, this time, the monsters didn't do that. They began to bombard their allies with arrows and spells while aiming at Ryan. Most of them missed, but some of them hit Ryan and made his head cool down even more.

“Why are they attacking each other now? Is it because some of those bosses died?”

Ryan took a peek at the sky and saw Alissa fighting against many of the monsters, but their numbers had decreased quite a lot. Their focus was solely on Alissa now. Thanks to it, the skeletons were doing crazy things. Without any other choice, Ryan began to open his path by using brute strength alone. It was all that he could do in order to recover his mana, but even so, as expected, he wasn't physically strong enough to kill the monsters by using weapons such as swords. So, he had to rely on the Power of Money to finish them off.

Chapter 220

It took a while since Ryan had to use Heal several times, but eventually, he recovered his mana and magic weapons. It was time for the counter-attack... Without any hesitation, Ryan made his weapons spin again, and like tornadoes, they claimed the lives of the skeletons.

Every second weapon would destroy one of them, so Ryan could recover two hundred mana points per second. Considering that he had to use around 150 mana points to use his weapons like that, things were proceeding well. However, Ryan couldn't move a lot while keeping that concentration level, so he was forced to use his shield to block the skeletons' attacks. He also used Wind Manipulation to control the shield, and thanks to it, now he was spending more mana than he recovered.

"Now what..."

For some reason, Ryan's mind was working really well that day. Soon he had an idea, and he decided to put it into practice since it looked promising. However, before anything, he had to get away from the skeletons. With all his might and by using his shield to protect his back, Ryan used Dash and some skills that could boost his speed to gain some distance over the monsters. After a while, he turned around and then saw several fireballs, ice arrows, and ordinary arrows flying toward him. Although that was the first time he tried to pull that off, Ryan succeeded in blocking the ordinary arrows with his shield, and then he obtained control over the Fireballs by using Fire Manipulation. After that, he used them to melt the ice arrows.

"All that training is finally paying off... Still, I should save the fire spells for later. Let's also stop using Wind Manipulation... a single block of the earth should be enough to stop the arrows and ice spells."

Since they were doing what they wanted, the skeletons never managed to scratch Ryan. They were brain-dead creatures, after all. Regardless, before his mana could get empty again, Ryan mixed all the fireballs to create a single one and then sent them back to the skeletons. In the blink of an eye, dozens of them exploded, and Ryan's mana was full again.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

You obtained 40 coins.

...

Things could have become even easier if Ryan could manipulate ice, but he couldn't stop the Ice Arrows even though he had Water Manipulation and Water Transformation. Regardless, the number of skeletons was decreasing at a steady pace... Still, as usual, things wouldn't go that smoothly forever.

"Alissa needs your help."

"I don't need anyone's help."

"Now you sound just like him."

Ryan suddenly heard their voices through Telepathy and then looked at the sky and saw Alissa slowly losing altitude. She wasn't attacking anymore, even though only thirty or bosses were alive.

"What is going on there?" Ryan frowned.

"Those creatures are weird; it is almost as if... they are sacrificing themselves to measure Alissa's strength. They didn't do anything aside from using Gravity to slow her down and make her spend more energy."

"So, she is tired because her body is heavier?" Ryan asked.

“I am not heavy!” Alissa protested. ρ??(???)???

“What a time to try to be feminine...” Ryan shrugged. “Are you guys idiots? If gravity is a problem with that size, just fight on your human form. Those creatures are weak against negative effects, so my gauntlets will come in handy.”

Alissa and Orgar didn’t say anything. As expected, they didn’t even consider solving the problem like that... that is what you gain for having muscles for brains. Not even Ryan, who always wanted to overpower his opponents with his arrows, was that dumb.

When Alissa returned to her human form, she used all her mana to decrease the effects of the enemies’ gravity spells and to fly. Although she wasn’t as fast as she could be, fighting like that was much easier than fighting in her draconic form, and just like Ryan mentioned, the bosses froze and sometimes even died after a single punch.

It was a pity that Ryan wouldn’t obtain the loot of the bosses, but in the end, he resumed his task of eliminating the skeletons. Somehow, when the sun started to set, Ryan and Alissa were the only ones left to tell the tale about what happened. Occasionally, some skeletons would leave the dungeon, but they never lasted long enough.

Although Ryan’s sweat was starting to bother him since the cold was turning into ice, he still didn’t get up from the snow. He was exhausted and wanted to stay like that for a while. That was very unlikely of him, but he didn’t want to pick even the battle’s loot.

“We really work well together, huh,” Alissa said. “How many days did you expect to clear this dungeon alone? Seven? Ten?”

Ryan didn’t answer that, but he acknowledged the fact that he couldn’t clear the dungeon in less than seven days. Still, thanks to Alissa’s cooperation, he did that in a single day. Although he was thankful for it, saying that out loud would be too out of character for Ryan.

“I wonder...” Ryan said and then got up while he cleaned the snow on his body.

“Come on, admit it,” Alissa said.

Ryan sighed. That insistence was annoying, and he wasn't very patient with insistent people, but even before Ryan could think of a harsh answer, he heard Orgar's voice.

"Don't forget our agreement."

"Did you say something, Orgar?" Alissa frowned. "You did use Telekinesis, right? Why didn't I hear anything? Did you talk with Ryan? About what?"

"It was men's talk. A lady such as yourself shouldn't concern with such trivial matters."

"Not fair!" Alissa said.

Ryan sighed again. That was a pain, but in the end, a promise was a promise. Thanks to what he learned from Orgar, he obtained a great deal of strength... it was time to do his part of the deal again.

"Just a little bit, I guess," Ryan said.

"Just a little bit?" Alissa frowned. "How shy and stingy can a single person be? Well, I guess that is still progressing for someone like you."

Ryan took a deep breath to calm his nerves. In the end, he managed to keep his composure. He forgot about it, but human society was made of people who had to compromise in all kinds of things. Although that society had been destroyed, humans still had to compromise now and then. He sacrificed a few minutes of a headache to do in a single day a job that would take him a week... so it was fine.