

Domain 31

Chapter 31

Ryan always thought an apocalypse of monsters would be like hell on earth. First, monsters would swarm every single area that had humans, but that didn't happen. Aside from dragons, most monsters had to appear by using dungeons. After that, the dead would come back as zombies and make the survivors cower in fear... However, that didn't happen. Only small groups of monsters could be found in areas that weren't densely populated, and there are no zombies... Thanks to it, Ryan didn't find a single monster in half an hour.

"Carrying more arrows will be a pain, so I should stop here," Ryan said while he was still following that group of humans one hundred meters away from them.

Suddenly, the group stopped, and they finally lowered their postures to hide in the tall grass. Thanks to it, Ryan managed to see four hundred meters away from there the goblins' camp. Behind the camp, Ryan also could see a hill and even a cave... it was the goblins' dungeon.

"Oh, boy... when did my eyes get this good?" Ryan frowned.

In any case, the goblins' camp seemed pretty well made, considering that they only appeared ten hours ago. It wasn't complete, but the camp had fences, and all of them were doing something... being as cooking, repairing, or creating new weapons. That being said, the only problem Ryan could see in that camp was the high number of goblins. He could at least see two hundreds of them... attacking them one at a time wouldn't be possible. So, Ryan would have to find another way to reach the dungeon. However, he needed to be fast because the number of goblins was increasing.

Regardless, Ryan didn't have any other option but do it. His strategy would be simple. He would spread several arrows around the camp and in the tall grass. Ryan couldn't let himself being discovered, so he would have to change his position several times. Ryan also couldn't carry hundreds of arrows, so putting them in strategic points was necessary.

"Given that they are creating a base, I doubt that many of them will hunt and leave the camp unprotected," Ryan concluded. "Still, I have to accept the risks of facing them... I need to enter that dungeon, and I can't ignore the fact that they are hunting humans."

Ryan didn't want to work or find a group to join for the time being because it would take a while for most humans to understand that that from that day onward, they would have to fight for their lives. That being said, even if he wasn't in a group, it was necessary to help others. Every single life was important, and given that humans could grow stronger really fast, every single person had a lot of potential. Letting people die would be the same as ignoring the potential that they had.

Considering that the group of humans followed the same path the goblins used previously, Ryan couldn't position his arrows near there. Ryan decided to position his arrows in the opposite direction, but it looked like he wouldn't have time for that. That group of humans began to argue, to the point where Ryan could even hear them.

"Those idiots... they will reveal their position at this rate," Ryan bit his lips.

Ryan's worries turned real. He confirmed that when a group of goblins left the camp and head in a straight line toward those people. Their weapons were ready to be used, so it was only obvious that they had been noticed. Ryan could count thirty goblins. Meanwhile, that group only had six people. Despite that, they didn't back down.

"Are those guys for real?" Ryan frowned.

Maybe it was because they had firearms, but they certainly were brave or perhaps stupid. The two guys armed with swords dashed toward the goblins, so Ryan began to wonder how they expected to get some support from the people on the backline when they were near the enemies. Those two were quite tall and physically well-built. Still, only that wasn't enough to make them able to last against the goblins for more than a few seconds. However, Ryan changed his mind when he saw one of them cutting the heads of two goblins with a single swing of his sword.

"... They aren't half bad," Ryan smiled, visibly impressed.

Ryan changed his plan; it would be better to offer support for those guys since they were pretty fast and strong. Their sword swings were a bit clumsy, but at the very least, they compensated for that with their guts. Still, Ryan would have to move a little in order to avoid hitting them by mistake. They were fast, so they could get in the way of his arrows, after all.

Ryan would have to create more arrows if the battle escalate, so he had to conserve his mana. He also would have to be fast, so instead of focusing on headshots, Ryan would focus on wounding and slowing down the goblins. ρ??(??)???

At the same time, the backline began to use their firearms in order to prevent the two warriors from getting surrounded. Ryan began to fire his arrows. Those two frowned when they saw the goblins getting hit by arrows coming from an unexpected direction, but they soon understood that they weren't the targets. So, they recovered from the surprise and finished the goblins that got hit by them.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

Congratulations! The skill Archery has leveled up.

Archery Lv 4 → Lv 5

Effect: Increases damage when using bows by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Concentration has leveled up.

Concentration Lv 4 → Lv 5

Effect: Increases passively dexterity by one point per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Eagle Eyes has leveled up.

Effect: Increases the range of long-range weapons by one percent per level.

Eagle Eyes Lv 4 → Lv 5

You obtained 01 status point.

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Ryan's stock of arrows was quickly decreasing, but the notifications motivated him to keep shooting more and more. Despite the rain of arrows, the number of goblins wasn't decreasing because another and an even bigger group of goblins was about to join the battle.

Congratulations! Your class, Hunter, has leveled up.

Hunter Lv 2 → Lv 3

Dexterity + 2, Stamina + 2, Health + 1, Mana + 1, Speed + 1, Control +1.

Ryan was obtaining status points like crazy, despite the fact that the goblins looked pretty weak and frail. He was just one hundred meters away from them, and he could see them clearly this time. They were skinny and were only 1,30 meters tall, their weapons were mostly rustic short swords and short spears, so it was only obvious that they were that weak. It was quite weird that they were supposed to be four times more dangerous than slimes, considering that they couldn't use magic.

Still, after killing ninety or so goblins with the help of those humans, Ryan's arrows ended. In the end, he would be forced to retreat. However, it would be a waste to let those humans die. They were strong and had guts... the human race needed people like them.

“Retreat!” Ryan shouted. “I’m out of arrows!”

It didn’t take long for the sound of bullets disappeared as well. The group also had run out of bullets... one of the two warriors insisted on fighting for some reason, but the other forced him to retreat. The goblins weren’t faster than Ryan, but they could be equally as fast as that group. So, Ryan shot two Flame Arrows and made the grass between the humans and goblins burn... forcing the goblins to stop.

Class: Hunter Lv 03 /-/-

Race: -/-/-

Rank: —

Health: 12/13 (0, 0250)

Mana: 06/16 (0, 0250)

Stamina: 18/20 (0, 0250)

Strength: 07

Dexterity: 30 (+9)

Speed: 21 (+3)

Intelligence: 06

Endurance: 07 $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2}}$

Control: 06 (+3)

Mentality: 07

Luck: 06

Recovery: 12 (+3)

Willpower: 09

Coins: 239

Status: 05

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 05, Throw Lv 01, Dash Lv 01, Rapid Shot Lv 01,

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 05, Concentration Lv 05, Archery Lv 05, Accuracy Lv 04, Stealth Lv 03, Pain Resistance Lv 01, Perception Lv 02, Rage Lv 02, Precision Lv 02, Swordsmanship Lv 01, Alert Lv 02, Cook Lv 01, Stalk Lv 01,

Spells: Analysis Lv 01, Lurk Lv 01, Mana Transfusion Lv 01, Meditation Lv 02, Flame Arrow Lv 03,

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 01, Fear Resistance Lv 02, Fire Resistance Lv 01, Heat Resistance Lv 03,

“Oh, boy... I obtained a lot of coins,” Ryan said, surprised.

Fighting in groups against a swarm of enemies wasn't so bad. In fact, it was much easier to fight by relying on good warriors on the frontline. Maybe Ryan had found a good group that he could join, they were a bit naïve since they followed the goblins that manner, but no one is perfect.

“Well, now... what should I do?” Ryan rubbed his chin after he made sure that he lost the goblins.

Ryan decided not to join Cole's group because they were police officers, and they had the duty of protecting others. Ryan didn't want to do that. At least he didn't want to make that his goal. Still, there was so much he could do alone. He couldn't use his game knowledge in every single situation, but it was pretty obvious that, like in games, most dungeons weren't supposed to be cleared alone. Ryan maybe could clear the goblins' dungeon if he has a few days to prepare, but it would be better to clear the dungeon as soon as possible and get his next class.

That group of humans could help him in that regard. However, as usual, Ryan couldn't help but worry about the demerits of joining a group like that. One of them was hot-headed to the point of not retreating when facing an army of goblins, and the others were stupid enough to follow him. Although that kind of action was close to madness, it also could be seen as bravery by the hot-blooded guy and loyalty in part of others.

“Well, at the very least, I should talk with them for a while,” Ryan concluded. “Now that I think about it... attacking and not looking for the loot was like a big mistake. Well, there will be more chances to do that.”

While Ryan was walking toward the direction those survivors headed, he also checked his status. Although he could create fifteen arrows every ten minutes, he didn't remember killing a single goblin with just one arrow. The fact that he was focusing on slowing them down affected that, but it didn't change the fact that it was time to change his weapon. Or perhaps find better arrows. Still, the bow he received from his father wasn't a magic weapon, so it was only obvious that at some point, Ryan would have to put it away and just keep it as a memento. It was annoying to do that, but it was a painful truth.

“Wait a minute... maybe there is a way to improve weapons magically,” Ryan said, and then his eyes began to shine since he was full of expectation. “If dragons can appear out of nowhere, then I certainly can improve my bow with magic.”

Ryan's mind worked in weird ways, but soon he forgot about that when he finally saw that group of survivors resting near the high road. It looked like they had imagined that Ryan would approach them.

However, soon Ryan regretted that choice. It didn't take long before he could recognize two of those survivors. Ryan wanted to turn around and leave that place, but his stomach began to turn around and Ryan lost the strength in his legs. Much to everyone's surprise, he fell on his knees and then throw up... The hot-blooded guy was Daniel, and one of the survivors armed with a firearm was Mia.

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When Ryan raised his face, he saw Mia and Daniel running toward him. Daniel reached first and then tried to help Ryan, but he stopped when a Flame Arrow suddenly appeared and hit the ground near his right leg.

"If you touch me, I will make sure to hit your face with that next time," Ryan said while he was cleaning his mouth.

Daniel gulped, he didn't see Ryan in a few days, but he couldn't help but feel shivers while looking at his eyes. He was obviously weakened thanks to the surprise, but he still scared the crap out of him. Even though he was much taller and physically stronger.

Ryan directed his anger toward only Daniel, but even so, Mia decided not to approach him carelessly. She was fully aware that the current Ryan was unstable, so she hid half of her body behind Daniel. He was fully aware that she didn't have the intention to make him even angrier, but just knowing didn't help Ryan calm down in any way. Mia was a bit of an airhead. In the past, Ryan thought that that trait of her was endearing, but now he could only see that as a pain in the ass.

"Is this shorty the guy you mentioned?" The other guy armed with a sword said. "He certainly is skilled and learned a few tricks, but I can't imagine a guy who gets this nervous in front of his friends can help us."

Ryan was about to leave without looking back, but that comment gets on his nerves, and his effort to try to calm down vanished. He was kind of short, indeed. He was just 1,7 meters tall if compared to the 1,95 meters tall Daniel and the other guy who was even taller. He was really short.

"Oh, yeah... I'm short. It must be nice to be so tall," Ryan smirked. "Even if I miss your head, there is plenty of places where my arrows can hit."

“What did you say?” The other warrior asked after a vein began to bulge in his forehead.

The other warrior was almost two meters tall, and he had a shaved head, but his eyes were green. Added that with his bulging muscles, he really looked like a cool basketball player. Daniel and that guy had many similarities, they probably knew each other, but Ryan couldn't care less about that. He was too pissed to think straight... the other three were looking at Ryan as if he was a madman, but he couldn't care less. Still, looking at the other three only made Ryan feel many dark emotions... jealousy, anger, sadness. He didn't want to waste time and energy, feeling those things thanks to that kind of people. So, he just got up, turned around, and began to move away.

“Ryan... I heard about your parents,” Daniel said. “I'm sor-.”

“Don't finish that sentence,” Ryan stopped and then said. “Unless you want them to be your last words.”

“... My father got captured by the goblins, Ryan,” Daniel hesitated a little bit. “I need to rescue, Ryan. Please, help us.”

“He is dead... I saw them dragging his body, and he didn't move an inch,” Ryan said after he resumed his walk. “Forget about him.”

“That isn't true,” Daniel said. “Unlike most monsters, goblins don't eat humans. We confirmed that they keep them alive to train their skills. Although goblins can't talk, they are smart enough to understand that they can train their skills like that. Keeping humans locked is a move convenient for them.”

That was some interesting pieces of information, but only that wasn't enough to make Ryan stop. He interacted with Daniel's father for a while, and he was a good man, but only that wouldn't make Ryan join forces with Daniel. Ryan would rather do it alone, even if it were very risky.

“We will attack the goblin's camp in one hour again,” Daniel shouted. “I'm counting on you, Ryan!”

“Asshole... I would rather eat horse shit than help you,” Ryan muttered, annoyed.

It was around 04:00 PM, so Ryan could understand why Daniel needed to rest for a while before trying to rescue his father again. It would be too troublesome to wait for the next day since the number of goblins would duplicate. They couldn't attack at night either, since it would be too dangerous... in the end, their only option was to attack as soon as possible before the goblins can consolidate their base and strength.

After walking for a few minutes, Ryan finally managed to calm down. In the end, he couldn't help but feel a bit scared of his past actions... he just threatened the life of the man who had been his best friend for over ten years. He indeed did something unforgivable, but he didn't deserve to die for it.

"... In the end, I'm as much hot-headed as that asshole," Ryan said after a long sigh. "I can't let anger control me; I have to keep my head cool at all times."

It was easier said than done, but Ryan had to keep trying whenever possible. Regardless, without wasting time, Ryan began to create his arrows. He wouldn't wait for Daniel, but he would rescue his father because he was also a good friend of his late father.

Congratulations! The skill Mana Transfusion has leveled up.

Mana Transfusion Lv 1 → Lv 2

Effect: Transfer one point of mana per second to objects.

Cost: 01 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

"Even if I increase my recovery and mana, I won't have enough arrows to kill three hundred goblins by myself in less than one hour," Ryan muttered. "Still... that asshole will probably join the battle once I begin the commotion, so I won't need three hundred arrows."

Ryan wasn't that confident that a single arrow on the heads would be enough to kill the goblins. Still, he allocated the status points he had into mana and recovery. He couldn't afford to run away again, so he would have to kill as many goblins as possible.

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Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Sleep Resistance.

Effect: Decreases the effectiveness of tiredness and spells that might induce you to sleep by one point per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan felt a little better after learning that skill, but he was still exhausted. It wouldn't be weird if, at some point, his body gives up completely, and he falls asleep during the next battle. Not only that, but Ryan also had to worry about his goals. His first goal was to free Daniel's father, and the second was to enter the goblins' dungeon. However, how would he kill the goblins so exhausted?

"I will leave my future problems, for the future me..." Ryan said and then shook his head.

Since he wouldn't have time to pick the arrows one after the other from his quiver, nor did the quiver had enough space for one hundred arrows. Ryan aligned them in a straight line near the goblins' camp. While shooting, he would be exposed, but as long as he fires them fast enough, he wouldn't be surrounded... possibly.

"I guess this uncertainty is the price I have to pay for not cooperating with Daniel," Ryan said and then massaged his eyebrows. "I wonder what mother would have done in this situation... she liked both of them quite a lot, so I can imagine her forgiving Daniel and Mia and even forcing me to find reasons to make me do the same."

That kind of thought was dangerous before a battle, so Ryan shook his head and then prepared himself. He was one hundred meters away from the goblins' camp, and the only thing he could do to attract them was to use Flame Arrow and burn their fences. Unfortunately, he couldn't exaggerate, or he might burn the prisoners as well.

Fifty minutes after talking with Daniel, Ryan took a deep breath, and when his focus reached the peak, he fired Flame Arrow. As expected, his arrow flew in a straight line and hit the fence. A few seconds later, the whole fence was on fire. Ryan didn't know if it was thanks to his power or if the material they used was really that flammable. Either way that worked well for Ryan.

Some goblins appeared and then tried to extinguish the flames with some buckets of water, but they got hit by wooden arrows and then were forced to stop. It was kind of surprising that Ryan could hit enemies from so far away, but since they were close to each other, Ryan was only tried to draw their attention; he didn't get impressed.

You obtained four coins.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Art of Sniping.

Effect: Increases the chance of hitting targets over long distances when they are not aware of your presence by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

"A skill like Arrow Shower would really come in hand at times like this, but I can't get ahead of myself," Ryan said while he was quickly picking the arrows and shooting them.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

Much to his surprise, one of every two shots were killing a goblin. Still, Ryan had to keep concentrated because the goblins finally noticed his presence and were heading toward him. He didn't know if that was their max speed, but they could run ten meters per second. Things would be complicated if he doesn't kill at least one per second, but Ryan could always burn the entire area if the worse comes to the worst.

However, it looked like Ryan wouldn't have to worry about that. In the distance, he saw Daniel's group approaching. Since they were noisy, the goblins quickly noticed them and were forced to split their forces into attacking Ryan and Daniel's group. Ryan didn't know why, but only twenty goblins headed toward him while thirty headed toward Daniel's group. He only noticed why when he saw that the flames were burning half of the fences of the camp. Goblins were trying everything they could to stop it.

???(?)???

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

Ryan suddenly received those notifications when he was nocking an arrow. His last attack didn't kill a goblin, so he received those coins because the fire he started killed two others.

"It is only obvious, but I guess all humanoid monsters are weak against fire," Ryan said.

Ryan didn't know why he was so calm, considering that ten mad goblins were running toward him, but his lack of worry only increased when his arrow hit the head of a goblin and killed the beast. It was probably because those monsters were dumb enough to run at him in a straight line, and thanks to it, he couldn't imagine himself missing the targets. Still, that happened two times... and when four goblins were twenty meters away from him, he was forced to use Flame Arrow and burn the grass in front of them.

Goblins grunted in pain when the grass began to burn in front of them, automatically burning their bodies. Of course, they didn't burn to death in just a few seconds, but Ryan bought enough time to fire four arrows and hit their heads while they were rolling on the ground.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

Congratulations! The skill Accuracy has leveled up.

Concentration Lv 4 → Lv 5

Effect: Increases the chance of dealing a critical hit by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Flame Arrow has leveled up.

Flame Arrow Lv 3 → Lv 4

Effect: Summon and fire a Flame Arrow without having to use a bow. The damage caused will be (dexterity plus your intelligence) x 20%.

Cost: 05 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

“... I just hope that the prisoners managed to escape in the middle of the confusion,” Ryan said while he was watching the fences of the camp falling and burning.

It looked like Ryan had gone a bit too far, so he could only pray that he didn't cause any death among the prisoners.

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As expected, Daniel's group managed to defeat the goblins before Ryan killed those who tried to attack him. Even before the second group could be sent to deal with the invaders(humans), they were already entering the camp.

"... Figures, those idiots can't use their heads not even a bit," Ryan clicked his tongue while he was picking his arrows.

It couldn't be helped since Daniel was worried about his father and Ryan's attack doomed the entire camp, so he also hurried to the camp in order to finish the goblins there.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

Even without fighting, Ryan was still receiving coins. It was useful to know that he could indirectly obtain coins like that, but Ryan would avoid causing too much destruction if he could. Flying monsters might appear at any minute since the camp was about to become a massive bonfire, after all.

"Son of a bitches..." Ryan clicked his tongue.

Since the village was blocking his field of vision, Ryan didn't notice, but many goblins were retreating to the dungeon. For the good or worse, they were relatively smart monsters, so they knew very well the battles they couldn't win. Given that there was a goblin boss at the end of the dungeon, it was only natural that they would head there. Regardless, that was a problem for later. Ryan had to finish off the ones who didn't escape yet.

Once he crossed the burning gates of the camp, Ryan saw Daniel, Mia, and the other four protecting a group of six wounded survivors. They seemed pretty beaten down, so they couldn't help. Still, it wasn't necessary... the goblins that tried to approach them got split in two by Daniel and the other guy.

"... They can deal with that, so I can focus on doing my own things," Ryan said and then begun his hunt.

Around one hundred fifty goblins managed to escape to the dungeon, but the village's remaining died. Ryan didn't know why he felt so worried a few hours ago. Despite their aggressiveness, goblins were pretty dumb. Perhaps their numbers and the fact that they could scare the crap out of anyone since they were ugly was the cause of their danger level.

Regardless, Ryan managed to kill thirty of them just by burning the fences, and he killed thirty others. Although he obtained a lot of coins, his skills didn't level up all that much since he used some tricks.

Class: Hunter Lv 03 /-/-

Race: -/-/-

Rank: —

Health: 13/13 (0, 0350)

Mana: 06/19 (0, 0350)

Stamina: 18/20 (0, 0350)

Strength: 07

Dexterity: 30 (+11)

Speed: 21 (+3)

Intelligence: 06

Endurance: 07

Control: 06 (+3) ρ??∪??(?)???

Mentality: 07

Luck: 06

Recovery: 18 (+3)

Willpower: 09

Coins: 579

Status: 04

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 05, Throw Lv 01, Dash Lv 01, Rapid Shot Lv 01,

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 05, Concentration Lv 05, Archery Lv 05, Accuracy Lv 04, Stealth Lv 03, Pain Resistance Lv 01, Perception Lv 02, Rage Lv 02, Precision Lv 02, Swordsmanship Lv 01, Alert Lv 02, Cook Lv 01, Stalk Lv 01, Art of Sniping Lv 01,

Spells: Analysis Lv 01, Lurk Lv 01, Mana Transfusion Lv 02, Meditation Lv 02, Flame Arrow Lv 04,

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 01, Fear Resistance Lv 02, Fire Resistance Lv 01, Heat Resistance Lv 03, Sleep Resistance Lv 01,

“I suppose it can’t be helped...” Ryan said and then sighed.

Fortunately, the weapons the goblins used survived the fire, and some of them even dropped some items. So, Ryan collected the loot and organized it in the center of the village while Daniel and Mia were looking after the wounded prisoners.

Old Ring of the Hunter

Effect: Increases the user's dexterity by three points.

Durability: 09/20

Rustic Gloves

Effect: Increases the user's dexterity by four points.

Durability: 09/20

“One hundred fifty goblins died, but I didn't find the same number of pieces of equipment...” Ryan frowned. “I guess some of the goblins didn't have a single item with them. In any case, even though I probably won't use it, I should take a rustic knife and a rustic spear in order to learn Knife Master and Spearmanship.”

It was a bit weird, if not suspicious, that the goblins didn't have a single armor or even shield, but Ryan decided not to think too much about it. He obtained two items that increased his dexterity, so he obtained a lot more than he had expected. As for the rest of the items, he decided to leave them behind since he couldn't carry everything or sell it at the dungeon shop. However, after he turned around, Ryan saw Daniel and Mia approaching alongside the other survivors. He had a really hard time, not clicking his tongue in front of Daniel's father. He was a man in the middle of his fifties, so one could easily see the signs of the age. Some white hair, wrinkles... However, one could also see someone who trained his body for decades. Ryan could easily imagine him taking down a few goblins with his bare hands before he got knocked down by them.

“You are... Ryan, right?” Daniel's father asked. “Boy, I barely recognized you.”

“... Long time no see, Mr. John Smith,” Ryan said.

“You changed... I heard what happened to your parents, so I guess it is only obvious,” John said, a bit surprised while looking at Ryan. “Did something happen? I still think that you changed a bit too much... before you looked like a very happy and funny young man, but now... you make me recall your father when he suddenly returned after a few days of a difficult hunt. Come to think of it... Daniel mentioned that you and Mia were engaged, but you two, now are... I guess I shouldn’t pry.”

“Yeah... you shouldn’t,” Ryan said and then massaged his eyebrows to control his anger. “Anyway... I wish you good luck, from now-” Ryan said but then was forced to stop when a flash suddenly appeared east of there.

Everyone noticed the flash and then looked in that direction, trying to see what happened, but they found nothing. However, after a few minutes... even from very far away, they could see a mushroom cloud been formed... a nuke just had been used.

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Ryan felt his body growing cold when he understood what had happened. In that direction, even though it was very far away, there was a big city... he had been there a few days prior. Thanks to it, Ryan didn’t want to believe in what just had happened, but it was evident... Dallas had been nuked.

Although he didn’t have a single memory aside from his parent’s funeral from that city, it still was important to him because of that, but... Dallas was no more, and his parent’s tombstones had been destroyed alongside everything. Everyone, even Ryan’s mouth, stayed wide open for several minutes. They only stopped when a powerful blast of wind passed by them and almost made them fly.

“This much power from such a distance...” John said, bit his lips in frustration. “A hydrogen bomb...”

“Are you serious, father?” Daniel asked, his face was pale as a ghost.

“Yes... It is the only explanation,” John replied. “Our city got attacked by a few dragons, but it looked like so many dragons appeared in Dallas that someone decided to destroy the entire city to get rid of them.”

“But the people there...” Daniel said.

“I know... I can't believe in this either,” Smith clenched in his fist while thinking about the number of people that had been sacrificed to kill the monsters.

All normal means of communication stopped working, so only powerful, and influential people could have decided to use a weapon like that on American soil. Washington probably had been attacked by even more dragons, so he couldn't believe that the president had issued such an order. Still, he couldn't discard that chance, just like he couldn't discard that someone could have hacked the nation's whole defense system and used one of those weapons. Either way, knowing who push the button wouldn't make things different. None of the people there would be able to find or question who took the decision.

Congratulations! The skill Rage has leveled up.

Rage Lv 2 → Lv 4

Effect: Sacrifices temporarily four percent of your mana, intelligence, control, mentality, and willpower to increase your health, stamina, strength, endurance, and speed temporarily by the same amount.

You obtained 02 status points.

Ryan was also aware of it, but still knowing that wasn't enough to make him control his anger. Without wasting time, Ryan headed toward the dungeon. Everyone frowned when they understood what he was about to do, but then again, they didn't try to stop him.

“Ryan, what shall we do with the items we obtained?” Daniel asked. “Are you sure you don't want anything else? We all know that you deserve at least half of the spoils.”

“You can eat the weapons if you want,” Ryan replied without turning around. “Or you can give them to people more capable of stopping when you try to do something stupid again. Your tracking skills suck, so you should work together with more people for them to cover your back. I manage to follow your group for half an hour without even trying to erase my presence.”

For a while, John, Daniel, Mia, and everyone else watched Ryan entering the dungeon without a hint of hesitation. First, he stopped at the entrance to buy something, but then quickly disappeared into the darkness. As if she had been holding her breath the entire time, Mia took a deep breath and lowered her head before letting some tears flow. ρ??∪??(?)???

“He really does look like his father,” John said. “Paul was intense like that before he got married. I don’t know what you two did to him but, you should... wait, don’t tell me...”

John opened his eyes widely when he connected all the dots, he couldn’t question Mia since he didn’t know her all that much and she just fought to rescue him, but he glared at his son without thinking twice. Without much of choice, Daniel avoided his father’s gaze... he was a full-fledged man, but he didn’t have a single explanation he could give him.

“You idiot... how could you do something like that?” John asked while he was trying to control his anger. “If the world weren’t in this case situation, I would have punched you right here and right now, and you would be forced to eat porridge for the rest of your life.”

John wasn’t all talk, so Daniel could easily imagine that happening. However, they weren’t in a situation that they could afford to wound each other. Monsters had appeared all over the world, and they barely escaped the dragon’s rampage. Weirdly enough, they escaped because they had heard of Ryan’s parents’ death and were looking for him since he didn’t answer their calls.

“Let’s return...” John said, and then sighed. “We have to finish our camp before night comes.”

“What about Ryan?” Daniel asked.

“Does he look like someone who needs to be helped?” John asked.

“But...” Daniel insisted.

“Use your head once a while...” John said. “He wants to be left alone for a while since many things happened so fast. In any case, he looks exhausted, and I don’t intend to leave the son of a friend alone with the world in this state.”

“Does that mean...” Daniel said, surprised.

“Yes... apparently Ryan was looking for this place when he found you,” John explained. “I don’t know when he learned to use magic, but it looks like we can learn one or two things from him. So, I think we should bring our things to this place.”

“I guess we really do need information,” Daniel said. “Also, an archer like Ryan would be a fine addition to our team.”

“Good luck convincing him of joining this group,” John frowned. “Maybe in the past, he was a kid who would forgive you, but not anymore. He lost everything he cared about, and now he found something to fill the emptiness inside him.”

“And that is...” Daniel said.

“Power... I can see in his eyes someone who is trying to find the power to live in this new world,” John said. “Anyway, thanks for rescuing me... you stupid son of mine.”

Chapter 37

Even though they hurried, Daniel and his group didn’t manage to return to the area where the goblins’ dungeon was before sunset. Fortunately, John had a lot of experience while moving at night without using a single light source. Despite the fact that there was no moon that night, he led his son and ten other survivors back to the area.

They thought they would be attacked several times by monsters, but not a single creature appeared, probably because it was too dark for them, or it was because that territory belonged to the goblins. In any case, they were confident that they could survive the attack of most monsters now that they had some weapons that strangely made them feel more powerful.

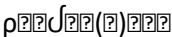
It was around midnight when Daniel left one of the sleeping tents. Since they couldn’t create a campfire because that would reveal their position, he was covered from head to toe with a single blanket.

Although he was exhausted, he couldn't sleep knowing that Ryan was inside the cave fighting alone... the same was happening to Mia, who was looking at the dungeon's entrance, hoping to see a sign of Ryan leaving the place.

"He is alive, don't worry," Daniel sat beside Mia and then whispered. "If that weren't the case, goblins would be leaving the dungeon at this very moment."

"I know..." Mia said while he was hugging her knees. "I was just thinking about how he looked at us early. I could never have imagined that Ryan could feel and show so much hate toward someone. He looked at us as if..."

"As if he was serious about exploding my head with a magic arrow," Daniel forced a smile. "Well, you always knew that he was an intense guy... but he never showed that many times because it was easier for him to just smile at about every single thing. In any case, you can solve things with him. You just have to explain it."

"I wonder..." Mia showed a self-deprecating smile. "I lost my mother and got depressed. I tried to drink away my sorrows, and then... we ended doing something that cannot be undone. Meanwhile, Ryan lost both of his parents at the same time and then saw us and what he did? Nothing. He just decided to take some time alone." 

Daniel lost his mother when he was just ten years old, so he could understand how Mia felt when her mother died of a heart attack. She never met her father, so he tried to help her, but then ended up drinking too much, and then they slept together and did the deed. Mia didn't even tell Ryan what happened because he just had graduated from college and found a good job. He was happy, and she didn't want to end his happiness. Her intentions were good, but she messed up along the way.

"After this incident, I understood that I'm not a good person," Mia said. "After thinking for a while, I concluded that he wouldn't understand me because he had both of his parents and had a normal family... it was just an excuse, of course, but it was my own stupid way to react to it. Ryan never did a single thing that made me angry or sad. If anything, I can only remember him being understanding and supportive even when I faced small problems... I took that for granted and became spoiled, and because of it, we are in this situation while the world is ending..."

"Still... you should talk to him," Daniel said. "There is no explanation for what I did, but perhaps you can at least make him stop hating you. Ryan is a good guy. We know that."

“... I will try, but I don't think he will hear someone who can't look at him in the eye,” Mia said.

“Then, just look at him in the eye,” Daniel said. “That is a problem easy to solve.”

“I'm not you, Daniel,” Mia said. “Maybe you can live with the image of Ryan's eyes full of hatred, but I can't.”

“... That isn't easy for me either, you know,” Daniel said after sighing, “But as I said, there is no explanation that I can give him, but you can. Regardless, he probably won't stay in this place for long. So, you have to make up your mind as soon as you can. Anyway, it would be best if you slept for a while. Tomorrow is an early day, and father will want to explore that dungeon the very moment Ryan appears. Although you are improving, you still need to increase your accuracy... now that I think about it, Ryan taught you how to use a bow, right? Maybe we should buy a bow like the one Ryan has.”

“The one he is using belonged to his father,” Mia said. “The other is too weak and probably won't be of any use on my hands. I'm still inexperienced... a crossbow would be a better option, but I think it will be more expensive. Regardless, even if I try, I don't think that I will be able to fall asleep.”

Daniel sighed when he heard that. He also wouldn't be able to sleep in that situation., so he decided to keep Mia company. Time passed slowly since nothing happened after several hours. Still, both of them managed to keep themselves focused because now and then, they would hear the squeak of a pterodactyl crossing the skies. It was weird for them to obtain a skill without doing anything, but thanks to the location, darkness, and their lack of movement, they fooled all monsters that passed nearby and learned the skill Stealth.

In the end, they had to stay awake until sunrise to see any sign of movement coming from the dungeon. Both Daniel and Mia knew that his father had trained Ryan to be a hunter, but they still couldn't believe that he could spend the night in a monsters' nest. Regardless, they opened their eyes widely when they saw a monstrous figure covered in blood and dirt from head to toe, leaving the dungeon.

When Ryan entered the dungeon, the first thing he did was to check the cheapest crossbow he could buy. As expected, it was a wooden crossbow that didn't have many details, but at the very least, it was more powerful than the bow his father gave to him.

Wooden Crossbow

Effect: Consumes two points of mana to create a wooden dart. Dexterity + 5

Durability: 35/35

Price: 200 coins

Without thinking too much about it, Ryan bought the crossbow. Although the mana consumption would be larger than the wooden bow, it wasn't a problem big problem considering that the crossbow could auto-reload by consuming his mana. In the end, Ryan just has to aim.

"Just in case, I will use the status points I just earned," Ryan opened his status screen.

Since his recovery had become bigger than his mana and stamina, Ryan decided to put some points into them to equal things and then used the remaining points to increase his dexterity. It would be like spending energy, doing nothing recovery energy every ten minutes while his body was unable to keep all the energy.

Class: Hunter Lv 03 /-/-

Race: -/-/-

Rank: —

Health: 13/13 (0, 035)

Mana: 21/21 (0, 035)

Stamina: 21/21 (0, 035)

Strength: 07

Dexterity: 32 (+11) (+12)

Speed: 21 (+3)

Intelligence: 06

Endurance: 07

Control: 06 (+3)

Mentality: 07

Luck: 06

Recovery: 18 (+3)

Willpower: 09

Coins: 379 ρ???

Status: 00

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 05, Throw Lv 01, Dash Lv 01, Rapid Shot Lv 01,

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 05, Concentration Lv 05, Archery Lv 05, Accuracy Lv 04, Stealth Lv 03, Pain Resistance Lv 01, Perception Lv 02, Rage Lv 03, Precision Lv 02, Swordsmanship Lv 01, Alert Lv 02, Cook Lv 01, Stalk Lv 01, Art of Sniping Lv 01,

Spells: Analysis Lv 01, Lurk Lv 01, Mana Transfusion Lv 02, Meditation Lv 02, Flame Arrow Lv 04,

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 01, Fear Resistance Lv 02, Fire Resistance Lv 01, Heat Resistance Lv 03, Sleep Resistance Lv 01,

“This should be enough... now I just have to see if Power Shot can be used with crossbows as well,” Ryan muttered.

Since Ryan was in a hurry, he decided to make the test against the goblins, thanks to recent events. If they had a functional brain, John, Daniel, and Mia would understand that using a dungeon to become strong wasn't an option. It was a necessity. So, the likelihood of them deciding to create a camp near the dungeon was high.

Ryan was fully aware that he would end up exploding one of his veins if he sees Daniel and Mia on a daily basis again. Although he never got so much angry before, he could feel that his anger was making his blood put a lot of pressure on his brain. So, it was in his best interest to clear that dungeon as fast as possible.

“That big slime was more than a few times stronger than the ordinary ones,” Ryan muttered. “Even if goblins can't use magic, I can't underestimate the boss of this dungeon. I don't know why, but their danger level is higher for a reason...”

Regardless, that dungeon was a bit different from the slimes' dungeon. Conveniently enough, Ryan could see some crystals illuminating some parts of it. Those were crystals that he found in the dungeon shop, so it was safe to assume that the goblins bought them. The other differences were the fact that he could feel that the path was slowly moving downward, and the dungeon had many intersections.

“Find the end of this dungeon will be a pain...” Ryan clicked his tongue. “Well, at the very least, that does mean that I can find the goblins in several places instead of just one.”

Even though Ryan was in a hurry, he was fully aware that he would have to grind for a while before challenging the dungeon’s boss. Usually, it would be a pain to do that as well, which was even truer considering how tired Ryan was. Still, since leveling up and see his status growing was also exciting, it wasn’t much of a problem for Ryan to stay awake and fight during the whole night.

Congratulations! The skill Sleep Resistance has leveled up.

Sleep Resistance Lv 1 → Lv 2

Effect: Decreases the effectiveness of tiredness and spells that might induce you to sleep by one point per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

After finding the first intersection that split the path ahead in three, Ryan chose the one on the left side. Although he could see some small signs of the goblins’ footsteps on the ground, and most of them choose the path of the middle, he decided to follow that path for the last since he needed to see how powerful and useful that crossbow was before using it against the goblins’ main force.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Tracking.

Effect: Increases the chances of finding signs left by monsters on your surroundings by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

“... Thanks, father,” Ryan said after laughing meekly for a few seconds.

If it weren't for so many things his father taught him, Ryan knew that he wouldn't have survived the battles of that day. Even after his death, he was still helping Ryan in unexpected ways. He had learned a lot of passive skills, and since they didn't consume mana or stamina, Ryan didn't have to worry about running out of gas. Not only that, he still could level them up with relative ease.

Regardless, Ryan couldn't let himself lose focus in enemy territory. It has been a while since the goblins left the dungeon, so it was clear that they were building their numbers in order to build their camp again. Fortunately, Ryan soon found the dead-end of that path and a group of goblins resting there. Ryan changed his opinion of them... only a bunch of stupid monsters would sleep soon after the battle and, in a place, where the enemies could invade. Without wasting time, Ryan shot the wooden darts on their heads.

Chapter 39

Crossbows were a bit louder than bows. Even so, since they only made a sound for a fraction of a second, Ryan killed nine of the ten goblins without waking up any of them.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Ryan had a hard time convincing himself that he just obtained forty coins without doing anything crazy. However, given his light-headedness, he actually had to pay the price. His mana was almost empty.

"Crossbows are convenient, but everything has a price..." Ryan muttered while he was preparing to kill the last goblin.

After concentrating for a second, Ryan felt his stamina being drained. Power Shot could actually be used with that kind of weapon, it was surprising, but Ryan wouldn't complain since it was convenient for him.

In any case, after firing the tenth dark, Ryan regretted it a little. His attack destroyed the goblin's head, and that wasn't a good sight for him... even though Ryan had killed dozens of animals while hunting before, he trained to do so in order to avoid making them feel unnecessary pain and make the hunt needlessly bloody.

"I need to train Power Shot, but I guess I will do it by using the wooden bow," Ryan muttered while he looked for drops.

Goblins and all the other monsters were the enemies of the human race, at least for the time being. They were at war, so there was no point in feeling depressed over the enemy's death. However, Ryan was a hunter, not a soldier. So, even though he obtained the power to fight monsters, it would take a while for him to get used to causing overkills.

In any case, that group of goblins didn't drop anything. However, they had three rustic knives, so Ryan stored them in his backpack. After that, he began to meditate in order to restore his mana. Even if he had a powerful weapon, without mana and stamina, Ryan was essentially useless against monsters, after all.

Congratulations! The skill Meditation has leveled up.

Meditation Lv 2 → Lv 3

Effect: Restores three points of mana per minute.

You obtained 01 status point.

"I wonder if there is a way to restore stamina faster like this..." Ryan rubbed his chin. "It is not like sleeping can become a skill... right?"

It would be too weird if that were the case. Then again, everything that was happening to Earth was weird. So, one or two more crazy things happening wouldn't surprise Ryan or everyone else. In any case, after his mana was full again, Ryan returned to the intersection and followed the path on the right since he could see some signs of goblins' footsteps there.

This time he found a group in which one of the goblins was awake and watching the surroundings. The creature had enough time to wake up the rest of the group with its grunts before Ryan finally could see them with his eyes, so he didn't have much choice but to fight them while eight goblins were running toward him. ρ??(??(???)???)

“There is no other choice...” Ryan muttered and then pointed his left hand toward the creatures.

Ryan fired a Flame Arrow and then burned the face of one of the goblins. Since he was leading the group, his fall slowed down their charge, and Ryan had enough time to kill four goblins before they could get too close. But in the end, he had to grab his short spear in order to protect himself.

Still, when the three remaining goblins leaped to attack Ryan. one died before it could land any attacks thanks to a dark on the head. Half a second later, the crossbow was ready to be used again, but Ryan didn't have time to aim. So, instead of attacking, Ryan used his short spear to block both goblins' charge. Even though the spear increased his strength a little, Ryan wasn't strong enough to stop both creatures in mid-air. His body and left arm got pushed backward, but at least that bought him enough time to aim with his crossbow.

The remaining goblin still managed to grab Ryan's left arm and prepared to bite him since the creature didn't have a weapon, and Ryan focused on killing first those who did have weapons. However, before the creature's mouth could get too close, a knife pierced its ear and damaged its brain.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Spearmanship.

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

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! You have learned the skill: Knife Mastery.

Effect: Increases damage when using knives by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

“Phew... that was a close one,” Ryan sighed in relief. “I knew it wouldn’t be easy to clear this dungeon, but I didn’t expect to see monsters from up close while they are alive.”

Even though Ryan decreased by a lot the amount of time he needed to prepare since the crossbow could reload automatically, the number of goblins was just too large. Although that was already impressive, he could only shoot two darts per second. Unlike the slimes’ dungeon, that one had too many bifurcations, and not a single path was a straight line, so Ryan couldn’t always attack first.

Ryan probably could use magic faster than that, but he didn’t have enough mana even to slay all the goblins that were spawning, much less to slain the one hundred fifty goblins that ran to the dungeon.

“No drops again...” Ryan sighed. “Two more knives and two short spears... loot is loot, but with whom can I trade these?”

Unfortunately, Ryan couldn’t carry that many weapons once he clears that dungeon, so his only option was to negotiate with Daniel, Mia, and John. Just thinking about it was enough to make his head throb. In any case, Ryan grabbed the items and his backpack and then put them near the entrance since he was tired of carrying so many things.

Chapter 40

It wasn't easy, but Ryan had to adapt to the situation. The goblins divided themselves into groups of eight to ten, and they took residence in the dead ends of the dungeon. Since it was difficult just to stop moving and shoot, Ryan was forced to learn how to shoot while running backward. His aim wasn't steady, so his accuracy decreased quite a bit. Rapid Shot could help him with that, but since that would increase mana's cost, he wouldn't be able to slay all the goblins before running out of mana.

Congratulations! Your class, Hunter, has leveled up.

Hunter Lv 3 → Lv 4

Dexterity + 2, Stamina + 2, Health + 1, Mana + 1, Speed + 1, Control +1.

Congratulations! The skill Archery has leveled up.

Archery Lv 5 → Lv 6

Effect: Increases damage when using bows by one percent per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Concentration has leveled up.

Concentration Lv 5 → Lv 6

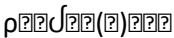
Effect: Increases passively dexterity by one point per level.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Eagle Eyes has leveled up.

Effect: Increases the range of long-range weapons by one percent per level.

Eagle Eyes Lv 5 → Lv 6

You obtained 01 status point. 

“In the end, it looks like my only option is to become a magic archer or something,” Ryan frowned. “I doubt that this will be the last time I will face a similar situation, and I’m pretty sure to create more powerful arrows, I will have to spend more mana.”

Little by little, Ryan was beginning to understand that he wouldn’t be able to increase only his dexterity. Raw power was important, but not to waste time producing arrows and bolts, he would need more mana, and he can’t recover mana faster without recovery. Also, he wouldn’t be able to aim faster without speed... for the time being, he was neglecting his health, but that was dangerous. It wouldn’t be weird if Ryan ends up finding a monster that can one-shot kill him with ease.

“If I want to keep fighting alone, I will need more spells like Flame Arrow, and that means... that I will need more mana,” Ryan said and then sighed. “A splendid vicious cycle indeed.”

Fortunately, his skills were leveling up quite fast, so that was one of the things that were helping Ryan to stay focused. In order to be able to use Rapid Shot, Ryan used those points he obtained and increased his mana. It was annoying to run and use a long-ranged weapon simultaneously; besides, it was much better to use a skill since it could level up, become more useful, and even grant Ryan status points.

After that, the battles got much easier. Even though the enemies were less than ten meters away from him when he found them, Ryan managed to kill the goblins before they could get too close. He had to spend all his mana during these battles, but that was only obvious. However, after killing the one hundred fifty-five goblins that escaped to the dungeon, he began to find some empty dead-ends around midnight.

“I don’t like this...” Ryan said.

At the same time that happened, Ryan didn’t find any more footsteps on the ground. That only meant one thing, he had killed all the goblins that escaped, but the ones who had been spawning for the last

seven hours didn't leave the end of the dungeon. Maybe the number of goblins that were spawning there was lower, but Ryan wouldn't bet on that.

Aside from the boss, Ryan imagined that he would have to face the boss and more than two hundred and fifty goblins at the end of the dungeon to clear it. However, that was impossible. Even though he got stronger and he was exhausted, Ryan was sane enough to understand that he wouldn't be able to do it. In fact, approaching the end of the dungeon at that moment would be a death sentence for Ryan.

"Now then... what should I do?" Ryan asked while rubbing his chin.

Ryan had a few ideas about how to solve that problem. It would be hard to succeed with his level of power. Ryan's first idea was to rely on Rapid Shot, but since he couldn't level up the skill without fighting, he discarded the idea. He could duplicate his firing power by buying another crossbow since that weapon didn't have a powerful kick, but even so, he didn't have enough mana to use it even a single crossbow non-stop for more than a few seconds.

The better option would be to solve the situation with magic, but Ryan only had nine hundred coins, and the cheapest tome was three thousand coins... In the end, Ryan was forced to discard that idea as well. In the end, he decided to use the same strategy he used early. He aligned his arrows in a straight line and put them on the ground five meters away from each other.

"I don't know when the goblins will leave the end of the dungeon, but in a confined space like this and with my arrows aligned, I will be able to kill them without letting them get too close," Ryan muttered. "... probably."

Congratulations! The skill Meditation has leveled up.

Meditation Lv 3 → Lv 4

Effect: Restores four points of mana per minute.

You obtained 01 status point.

Two hours later, Ryan had created four hundred arrows, and they were ready to be used. He was so exhausted that he decided to sleep while he waits for the goblins to appear. However, the image of four hundred goblins running toward him didn't let him fall asleep. Still, Ryan had no idea what he could do to scare or at the very least slow down an army of goblins. Still, after thinking for a while, he had an idea... he would use the corpses of the goblins he killed.