

Domain 61

Chapter 61

Ryan also considered making Jacob and Bella use the iron bolts since anyone could learn the skill Throw, but the points they obtained were used to increase their health. So, that idea was discarded.

“Let’s get going,” Ryan said. “I want to find those survivors before sunset.”

Jacob and his family nodded, but they looked as pale as ghosts. It looked like since the monsters appeared, they didn’t try to walk in the streets. Ryan concluded that since he somehow heard their stomachs grumbling.

“Did you guys live around here?” Ryan asked. “It isn’t a good idea to travel while carrying many things, but since we don’t know if we will find any supermarket near the area where those survivors you mentioned are, we should gather water and food in the places we find still intact.”

“There are a few nearby, but...” Jacob hesitated. “According to what we heard via radio, most places that had food had been attacked by monsters or destroyed by dragons.”

“Figures...” Ryan sighed. “Well, we can always eat monsters, so we won’t starve to death.”

Jacob, Bella, and Edward showed a shocked expression when they heard that. It was only obvious, even though Ryan didn’t want to eat the monster’s meat. It would take a long while for humanity to produce their food again. So, he couldn’t think of any other solution given that the damn monsters were attacking every place with food. Although they had human-like arms and legs, Ryan wouldn’t mind eating the rest of their bodies... probably.

Regardless, the streets of Shreveport changed quite a lot in the last few days. Signs of blood were easy to find, and most buildings had become piles of rubble as if some cannon bullets had hit them. Although some houses still standing could be found, Ryan could see that they had been abandoned since monsters would probably look for humans there first.

It didn't take long for Ryan; Jacob and his family find a group of ten Sahuagins. Precisely, they just walked three hundred meters and found that group patrolling. Ryan sighed but then began to question why their numbers were so high, given that some survivors were trying to help others...

"There is a dungeon near the lake. It is the only explanation," Ryan muttered. "And something happened in that dungeon that made the purple crystal spawn hundreds, perhaps thousands of Sahuagins."

Before Ryan and the others could even begin to think of hiding, all of the monsters looked at Ryan. Those were some crazy instincts... but Ryan didn't waste time wondering why they all looked at him at the same time.

"Now that I think about it..." Ryan rubbed his chin. "I can also use Power Shot to solve the problem of my aim with the left side... how could I forget that? I guess I'm too tired."

Ryan's firing speed would decrease a little, but it was better to take a while to fire a guaranteed headshot, anyway. When Ryan pulled the trigger, all the Sahuagins summoned their water spears and tried to protect their heads, but one of them still died since the speed of that projectile increased. The creature fell dead on the ground, and its allies hesitated for a little bit. $\rho \cup ()$

"You won't die unless they hit your head," Ryan said. "If you want to keep your wife and son safe, then do your best to hold them back."

"Yes!" Jacob clenched his teeth while he was observing the Sahuagins approaching.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Ryan managed to kill five Sahuagins before the creatures could get too close, but even so, that hadn't been enough. He grabbed the bolts he had prepared to throw and then used Lesser Wind Enchantment. The beasts raised their spears to block again, but they didn't react on time. One of his bolts pierced one of the eyes of a Sahuagin, while the other fell unconscious when the butt of the bolt hit its forehead.

Three remaining Sahuagins prepared to attack Ryan and Jacob, but only that much didn't faze Ryan. One of the Sahuagin jumped and tried to stab Jacob's head, but he stopped the creature with his shield. Meanwhile, one tried to attack Ryan by the front, and others tried to stab Ryan in the air. Instead of waiting, Ryan charged forward, activating Dash and Herculean Strength. The sudden movement caught the monsters by surprise, but Ryan ignored it, and he slashed one of the bolts he still had on the monster's eyes. The creature screamed in pain while the remaining monster passed over Ryan and landed on the ground. Instead of finishing that creature, Ryan grabbed another bolt and threw it on the neck of the Sahuagin that just landed. Surprisingly, this time the projectile flew in a straight line and pierced the back of the monster's head.

Ryan kicked both of the blinded Sahuagins, making them fall on the ground before grabbing two other bolts. This time he used all the weight of his body to make his bolts pierce their faces all the way to their brains. In agony, the creatures didn't even try to resist. Hot blood gushed on Ryan's left arm and body, but he ignored that disgusting feeling. He turned to the side and saw Jacob being overwhelmed by the Sahuagin's thrusts. Fortunately, he was fast enough to follow the monster's movement with his eyes and block the attacks before they could hit his guts. However, suddenly, the Sahuagin fell on the ground thanks to Ryan that had hit it with another crossbow.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

"I shouldn't have thrown away my short spear and knife..." Ryan sighed.

Sahuagins weren't that resilient, but Ryan didn't have much choice but attack the monsters up-close since the bolts were short. Regardless, Ryan finished off the monsters that fell unconscious when his

bolts hit them without even blinking. Dirt with the monsters' blood, Ryan looked like a monster himself... at least that was what Jacob and his family thought when they saw the blood gushing on his clothes.

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Congratulations! The skill Throw has leveled up.

Throw Lv 1 → Lv 2

Effect: Causes damage by throwing objects. The weight of the object will increase the damage caused. The final damage will be the object's weight divided by ten and multiplied by 12% of your strength.

Cost: 01 stamina

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Herculean Strength has leveled up.

Herculean Strength Lv 2 → Lv 3

Effect: Increases your strength by one point per level temporarily.

Cost: 1.2 stamina per second

You obtained 01 status point.

Ryan nodded in satisfaction when he received those notifications. Fortunately, the good news didn't end there. He saw a wooden spear on the ground. It wasn't short, so it was probably a little better than the short spear he obtained from the goblins.

Wooden Spear

Effect: Strength + 4, Endurance + 2

Durability: 45/45

“Mmm... I guess this will do,” Ryan said after picking the spear, and then he looked at Bella. “Use this to cover your husband.”

“What?” Jacob asked, shocked.

“Don’t worry, she won’t get the chance to fight in the frontlines likes us,” Ryan said. “She will only help you... as you just noticed, you can’t deal any damage to a Sahuagin with a shield alone. In any other situation, I would give the spear to you, but since you don’t know how to use it with a single hand, it would be a waste.”

“Understood,” Bella said and readily accepted the spear.

“Just stay a few meters behind your husband,” Ryan said. “And don’t do anything before Jacob stops a monster. You only should attack when the enemies focus on him.”

Jacob didn’t like the idea of letting his wife dirtying his hands like that, but he was fully aware that he was putting too much pressure on someone who had a single arm. So, he didn’t complain. If anything, as long as he works properly, nothing would happen to her.

Regardless, Ryan tried to recover the bolts he used, but since the smell of blood was too strong, and he didn’t have time or water to clean them, he decided to create new ones. Dirt with blood and fat, Ryan’s grip over them would be weak, and the piercing power would decrease as well. So, the smart thing to do was to meditate and make new ones.

The third time is a charm... after walking two hundred more meters, Ryan began to hear the approach of another group of Sahuagins. After noticing that they were another group of ten, Ryan confirmed his

suspicious... something definitely happened in the northern part of the city. However, this time Ryan had enough time to prepare before the monsters could feel his presence. $\rho \int (x) dx$

When the monster group finally found Ryan and the others, one of them immediately fell on the ground with an iron bolt on the head. Since Sahuagins were aquatic monsters, their speed wasn't impressive on land. Thanks to it, Ryan had enough time to kill five more of them before they could get too close. Once again, two beasts tried to attack him, but Ryan decided to do things differently this time since none of them jumped to attack him.

Attacking them one at a time, even with Dash and Herculean Strength, wouldn't be possible. However, Ryan still had something he could use: Rage. The few points of mana he had begun to decrease at an astonishing speed, and he felt like his judgment got clouded, but Ryan also felt an inexplicable feeling of power surging inside him.

When both monsters tried to stab him at the same time, Ryan's body blurred as he moved forward, and the next moment, he pierced the head of one of the monsters with his iron bolts. Even though he had to pierce the skull, Ryan felt no resistance. The remaining monster reacted on time to see what Ryan did, but not on time to dodge the attack when Ryan kicked the dead Sahuagin toward him. The creature managed to free himself from the dead body that made it fall on the ground... only to see an iron bolt moving toward his eyes, and the next moment... nothing. Ryan had killed the creature.

Ryan's mana became empty after that. Still, the battle wasn't over. He focused on himself too much, and he had no idea how Jacob and Bella were. Much to his surprise, he saw the very moment they finished off the last Sahuagin.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Congratulations! The skill Art of Sniping has leveled up.

Art of Sniping Lv 1 → Lv 2

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.

Congratulations! The skill Knife Mastery has leveled up.

Knife Mastery Lv 2 → Lv 3

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

You obtained 01 status point.

Things didn't go perfectly. For Ryan, the best scenario was to kill the Sahuagins before they could attack, but he wasn't skilled enough to pull that off as expected. Regardless, Ryan got surprised when he received those notifications. It seemed that when used like that, the iron bolts were considered knives...

"Are you all right?" Jacob asked.

"Y-yeah," Bella replied while trembling slightly.

Ryan thought that they had worked well, but it looked like it would take a while for them to get used to the battles. It was only evident given that they were ordinary people before the monsters appeared. However, Ryan was still expecting that they could get used to it as fast as possible because, at that moment, he had to hurry to decrease the monster's numbers before they could get too closer and overwhelm them with sheer numbers.

"If only I still had my right arm..."

There was no sense in complaining since that resulted from Ryan trying to do everything by himself. Still, Ryan learned his lesson... the next time, he would grind more before challenging a boss alone.

Chapter 63

Ryan's mana finally reached a point where he could create eight iron bolts during a battle. It was a pain to sit down and use Meditation since his recovery wasn't at the same level, but at the very least, that gave him the chance to use the skill.

Class: Hunter Lv 06 / Elementalist Lv 03/-

Race: Night Demon /-/-

Rank: 1534th

Health: 29/29 (0, 0566)

Mana: 40/40 (0, 0566)

Stamina: 36/36 (0, 0566)

Strength: 10 (+3)

Dexterity: 47 (+19) (+12)

Speed: 27 (+6)

Intelligence: 06 (+6) (+3)

Endurance: 07 (+8)

Control: 06 (+3) (+6)

Mentality: 07

Luck: 13

Recovery: 30 (+1) (+3)

Willpower: 09

Coins: 168

Status: 00

Skill List

Offensive Physical Skills: Power Shot Lv 07, Throw Lv 02, Dash Lv 02, Rapid Shot Lv 02, Herculean Strength Lv 03,

Passive Physical Skills: Eagle Eyes Lv 07, Concentration Lv 07, Archery Lv 07, Accuracy Lv 06, Stealth Lv 03, Pain Resistance Lv 01, Perception Lv 02, Rage Lv 05, Precision Lv 03, Swordsmanship Lv 02, Alert Lv 02, Cook Lv 01, Stalk Lv 01, Art of Sniping Lv 02, Tracking Lv 01, Spearmanship Lv 02, Knife Mastery Lv 03, Martial Arts Lv 02, Craft Lv 02, Shield Mastery Lv 01, p???

Spells: Analysis Lv 01, Lurk Lv 01, Mana Transfusion Lv 03, Meditation Lv 05, Flame Arrow Lv 06, Appraisal Lv 01, Lesser Fire Enchantment Lv 02, Lesser Water Enchantment Lv 02, Lesser Wind Enchantment Lv 02,

Support Skills: Earth Resistance Lv 01, Fear Resistance Lv 02, Fire Resistance Lv 03, Heat Resistance Lv 04, Sleep Resistance Lv 02, Nocturnal Eyes Lv 01

“It looks like my rank improved before I could notice, but I didn’t receive any notification...” Ryan rubbed his chin. “I guess it is only obvious that I won’t be rewarded for every single change in the ranks... Still, besides rewarding those who constantly fight, what is the point of the rank?”

That was something Ryan couldn’t understand, not even after thinking for quite a while, but he could feel that it was an important piece of information, so he couldn’t just shake it off from his head either.

Regardless, soon after the third battle against the Sahuagins, Ryan could see in the distance a convenience store. Half of the store had fallen due to some monster’s attack, but the other half was still standing, and Ryan found some drinks and food that hadn’t been taken by the monsters.

“... The location is a bit bad,” Ryan said while looking around. “But we can make a stop here to rest and eat, but don’t lower your guards. We don’t know when the monsters might appear. Be ready to fight at any moment.”

“Are you sure?” Jacob asked. “Shouldn’t we hurry and reach the other side of the city as soon as possible?”

“Yeah... I’m quite thirsty,” Ryan replied. “Besides, I can tell that you guys are starving. The fights won’t get any easier, so we have to refill our tanks whenever possible. I’m better suited for the guard duty, so you guys can fill your bellies. Just don’t exaggerate, or you guys will get slower.”

There were signs of monsters in that convenience store, and thanks to it, Ryan hesitated in even drinking the water bottles that didn’t look damaged. Still, considering that he didn’t feel weird until now despite getting hit, almost crushed, and now being covered in the monsters’ blood, he probably wouldn’t feel anything in eating the things that the monsters left behind. Still, despite being hungry, Ryan only drank some water because he didn’t want to relax. Unless he keeps some level of tension, he wouldn’t hear the enemies’ approach.

Much to Ryan’s surprise, it didn’t take long for Ryan to hear some footsteps. However, those footsteps didn’t look like the ones from the Sahuagins. Those were much more irregular... a few seconds later, Ryan saw three men and two women coming from the direction he came from.

“Human beings sure are a pain in the ass...” Ryan sighed.

Jacob didn't hear Ryan's words, but he heard him sighing. He got up and gulped when he saw those people approaching. Ryan frowned upon seeing that, and he only understood why he did that when he saw the weapons on their backs.

"Maybe I'm worrying too much about monsters and not enough about humans..."

Although he found some groups until now, Ryan got lucky. Still, it looked like Jacob and his family already saw humans acting like animals in the previous days... Regardless, Ryan raised his right arm to stop those people, but that only made him feel frustrated. After sighing, Ryan raised his left arm, and they understood the meaning behind his actions.

A single woman stepped forward, she was incredibly beautiful, and despite the city's current situation, she was clean... even though she was unarmed. Her long straight blond hair was tied up in a ponytail, and her eyes were emerald green. She was also wearing a pair of somewhat thick glasses... it looked like her eyesight wasn't that good. So, Ryan couldn't help but frown while imagining how she fought without getting dirt, unarmed, and with bad eyesight.

"My name is Lilian," The blond woman said after she stepped forward. "I belong to the group of survivors who communicated with other survivors via radio."

Ryan looked at Jacob, and he approached and then nodded. Although he didn't mention it, it looked like he had given his position to others via radio. That was quite surprising given his previous reaction.

"Did you guys come to look for him and his family?" Ryan asked.

"Yes," Lilian replied.

"Why didn't you guys told him that you would come?" Ryan frowned.

"Something unexpected happened, and the equipment we used got destroyed," Lilian replied. "We also were forced to abandon our previous camp... it pains me to say this, but we came looking for survivors in order to get help from all the survivors of this city."

“... What happened?” Ryan hesitated.

“A forced dungeon break...” Lilian answered.

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Ryan massaged his eyebrows while Lilian explained to him and Jacob’s family what had happened. Just like Ryan, they understood that they had to hurry and obtain power as fast as possible. Since a Sahuagins’ dungeon appeared near the lake, they decided to use it as a base and strengthen the group. They had twenty or so survivors, and since the very moment the dragons disappeared, they began to hunt the Sahuagins. After twenty or so hours of fight, they found the dungeon’s boss, and even though they lost five of their allies, they won. Much to his surprise, all of the fifteen survivors had the chance to obtain a class. However, an idiot attacked the purple crystal, and that caused a forced dungeon break.

“Thousands of Sahuagins spawned in the next minutes, and thirty bosses appeared as well,” Lilian explained with a dark expression. “We lost five other allies while trying to escape...”

“What about the guy who attacked the purple crystal?” Ryan asked.

“... He died when it happened,” Lilian hesitated for a few seconds.

Ryan wondered if she had told the truth. Even though Lilian didn’t avoid his gaze, her hesitation was clear in her voice. Regardless, even if the idiot were alive, it wouldn’t change the fact that Ryan had a massive problem in front of him, he probably would find the treasure box at the end of the dungeon, but he would have to defeat a few bosses instead of a single boss.

“You don’t seem surprised...” Lilian looked at Ryan without hiding her surprise. “Did you already obtain a class?”

“Yes...” Ryan replied. “In any case, what classes can be obtained in the dungeon?”

“The classes are Monk, Gunslinger, and Siren,” Lilian replied. “I’m a Monk. May I ask what class did you choose and where is the dungeon you cleared?”

“You can, but I don’t have to answer,” Ryan shrugged. “But at the very least, I can tell you where you can find the dungeons I found.”

Everything was making sense now. While Ryan ignored Lilian’s irritated eyes, he began to wonder what he should do. He didn’t want to work with someone who was lying to him, but Ryan decided to forget that point because she did it to protect someone. So, at the very least, due to that kind of behavior, Ryan felt a bit relaxed around her. If anything, she looked to be the group leader, and she was the one who said she would look for other survivors, so she wasn’t a bad person. ρ??∪??(?)???

Lilian was a monk, a melee fighter. If she could fight against the Sahuagins up close, she was the perfect ally, at least for the time being. In order to reach the last part of the dungeon as fast as possible, Ryan couldn’t work alone. Although he was secretive, everyone knew that it was the smart thing to do. Lilian couldn’t do that because she was the leader of the group. Even if she wanted, she couldn’t act like that. In order to make a decent survivor’s group, Lilian couldn’t act considering her only interests.

“It looks like you guys are looking for survivors to exterminate the Sahuagins,” Ryan said. “You saw us fighting, right? Do you think we can help?”

“We don’t have any other option but accept all the help we can get...” Lilian sighed. “We need to help as many people as possible and make them obtain their classes. I don’t know how or when you lost your arm, but considering that you still look fine despite having a single hand, you will be a great asset for us. However, our ultimate goal is to help all the survivors. So, the things we obtain will be shared equally among all the survivors.”

That sounded like a pain, but as long as the items obtained are shared among those who contribute to monsters’ extermination, he wouldn’t mind. Ryan didn’t want to spend weeks working hard alone to clean the streets from the Sahuagins, after all.

“I don’t mind sharing items. As for the coins, they are shared by the system, so it isn’t a problem,” Ryan said. “However, if I find a tome, I won’t give it to others.”

“There are certain exceptions for those rules... that is one of them,” Lilian explained. “As for items, if you find a better item than the current one that you use, you can keep it. But it would be wiser to give the old one to someone else.”

“I guess that is fine,” Ryan said.

“It looks like everything is decided then. What about you three?” Lilian asked while facing Jacob, Bella, and Edward. “You guys still want to come with us knowing that we messed up before creating a decent survivors’ camp?”

“We want to come with you,” Jacob said after looking at his wife and son. “We don’t know how many of us survived, but I think that all the survivors need to band together to recover our society.”

Ryan couldn’t help but let out a long sigh after hearing that. He honestly couldn’t believe that humanity would be able to recover in his generation. Dallas got nuked and probably wasn’t the only city that was destroyed by that kind of weapon. Dragons still were around, and they would keep destroying cities... their only option was to kill all the monsters before trying to rebuild anything.

“Well, before get going, we should get all the food we can get from this place,” Lilian said and then entered the convenience store. “We lost all our supplies, so we need to scavenge all the food we can find.”

Ryan frowned when he saw Lilian moving a fallen wall and then repaired a destroyed cart with her bare hands. She didn’t look like it, but she was absurdly strong and perhaps an airhead since she filled that, and several other carts with food, and those would make a lot of noise.

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Lilian’s friends were quite a diverse bunch. Two of the man were monks, just like Lilian. They used swords. Still, despite that, they weren’t nearly as powerful as her. Despite her appearance, Lilian was a boxer, and pretty good at that. Even when the Sahuagins dashed at her while pointing their weapons at her, she didn’t hesitate in dashing toward them as well. Even though she had an absurd strength, she also could move faster and dodge the attacks of three of those monsters with ease. Not only that, before those monsters could even finish their attack movement, she could hit two of them in the face and knock them down.

“I guess those are the skills of a monk...”

Lilian was strong, and she focused on speed as well, but it looked like she didn't increase her health, mana, and stamina all that much. After killing only two monsters, she would begin to sweat quite a lot, even though she looked pretty fine.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Congratulations! The class: Hunter, has leveled up.

Hunter Lv 6 → Lv 7

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

“Are you holding back?” Lilian asked while looking at Ryan. “You aren't wounded, so you managed to defeat more than a few Sahuagins without letting them get closer.”

“I was just studying you guys' fighting style...” Ryan replied. “Besides, if I use too much mana, I will have to stop and meditate to recover my mana.”

Although Ryan could do better, he only killed four of the ten Sahuagins that appeared. After they got closer, he couldn't attack since Lilian and her friends were blocking his view. In any case, Ryan decided to tell the truth because he was interested in the skills she obtained when she became a Monk.

“A skill that boosts her strength and another that increases her speed... the last one is probably a healing skill.”

Still, Ryan could be wrong, but even if he was, he doubted that a monk would have the skill he was looking for. Considering the lack of wounds on Lilian’s body, the chances of him being right were high.

Ryan didn’t know if Lilian was the type of person who would ignore Ryan’s right arm if she could help him, but he didn’t want to ask either. If he asks, he would be forced to answer some questions as well. Ryan didn’t want to reveal the things he could do for the time being because it would take a while for him to trust other people after Daniel and Mia. Besides, eventually, Ryan would confirm his suspicions. If Lilian had the power to heal his right arm, he would discover, but his instincts were telling him that it would take quite a while for that to happen. ρ??(??(??)???)

Although Ryan wasn’t leading anymore, he felt an indescribable sense of relief, knowing that he didn’t have to kill almost all monsters alone. They weren’t heading toward the lake anymore, but fortunately, Lilian had a map that marked the locations of all survivors they managed to communicate with.

In the next few hours, they found thirty survivors, but then the sun was setting. They began to walk toward the center of the city, and there they found another group of twenty survivors. Some of them looked different from the others, and soon Ryan understood why. They were the other five survivors of Lilian’s group.

“It looks like you manage to find some survivors,” Lilian stopped in front of a blond teenager who also had green eyes. “Did you find any bosses?”

“No, it looks like they still are guarding the dungeon,” A blond young man said.

It didn’t take long for Ryan to connect the dots; the teenager was Lilian’s little brother, and he was the guy who caused the dungeon break. He looked pretty tired and somewhat depressed, but the other group members didn’t mind following him. Since that was the case, Ryan understood that he tried to destroy the purple crystal imagining that it would make the monsters stop from spawning. Ryan recalled the times that the bosses tried to taunt him in doing that, but rather than that, he felt alleviated that the monsters couldn’t cause dungeon breaks themselves.

Regardless, even though they just lost their old camp early that day, Lilian's group found a new one... the police station of the city. Half of the building had fallen but still could be used against the Sahuagins. Without wasting time, Ryan laid on a random table and then begun to sleep. He was too tired to care if strangers surrounded him, but considering that those people looked as if they had just woken up from a nightmare, they wouldn't do anything to him.

Congratulations! The skill Sleep Resistance has leveled up.

Sleep Resistance Lv 2 → Lv 3

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

You obtained 01 status point.

In the end, Ryan even got that notification before falling asleep. It was a pity that Ryan couldn't make good use of his powers as a night demon, but then again, he was too tired to care about that.

Unfortunately, Ryan didn't have the chance to sleep for long. Things suddenly got noisy, and that made Ryan wake up feeling a terrible headache. Ryan got up, and his headache only got worse when he realized that the survivors were arguing about something. The fifty or so survivors were facing each other divided into two groups.

"Are you insane?" A random gray-haired man raised his voice. "We can't fight those monsters! Our only option is to leave the city and wait for the government to help us!"

"Like I said... We can't leave the city," Lilian face-palmed. "Well, some of us can, but you can't. Do you think you can jump over a river of magma?"

"River of magma? What kind of joke is that?" The man asked. "

Ryan sighed, he had imagined that something like would happen, but he was praying that he would find unreasonable idiots later.

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That argument lasted for quite a while. Some people were demanding Lilian and his group to escort the people out of the city. Fortunately, some people already recognized that they couldn't rely on anyone else to protect themselves. Still... those people were just a small fraction of those fifty survivors.

Lilian noticed that Ryan had woken up and moved to talk with him. He already knew what she was planning... still, even though it was a pain, Ryan didn't have any other choice but to help her in order to end the commotion there. He wanted to sleep until sunrise, after all.

"This guy came from out of the city," Lilian said. "You can confirm with him that we are telling the truth. The situation outside the city isn't better... it is worse."

Ryan wanted to deny that since Cole's group was training in the slime's dungeon while John's group was keeping the goblins in check. Still, then again, how many dungeons were nearby that wasn't being watched, and how many idiots out there were also causing dungeon breaks? Even without confirming that, Lilian was probably right.

"How can we tell if he isn't part of your group and won't say whatever you want?" The gray-haired man asked.

"We saw him jumping over the river of magma, and he found my family and me before Lilian did it," Jacob stepped forward and said. "He definitely came from out of the city."

"How can we know that you also aren't working for her?" The gray-haired man raised his voice again. "As far as we know, there is a chance that you all are trying to use the people you just found."

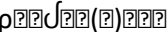
Ryan massaged his eyebrows. There was a limit of how skeptical someone could be, considering that he did see dragons a few days ago. Although Ryan was also skeptical of many things, that man just got rescued by Lilian's friends, and instead of thanking them, the first thing he does is to cause a commotion.

“Can you guys lower your voice, please?” Ryan said. “Tomorrow is an early day. Besides, your voice might attract the Sahuagins. As you can see, all the people here are just survivors that once were ordinary people... not a single person here worked for the government or something like that. So, they don’t have to sacrifice their lives to protect you.”

“What? Do you want to force us to fight those creatures as well?” The man asked.

“Nope, for all that I care, you guys can leave the city,” Ryan said. “I can even give you some directions to find some places that might be more secure than here, but you and anyone else who wants to go there will have to go alone. Just like we can’t force you to fight to protect your life, you can’t force anyone here to protect you.”

“As if I would need to be protected by a man who only has one hand,” The gray-haired man smirked.

Ryan didn’t want to, but he considered to show the man the power of his Flame Arrow. He didn’t have to kill the man just because of a single insult, nor did he want to kill another human being in cold blood, but there was another way to make all those people shut up. 

Ryan began to move toward the man, and Lilian didn’t stop him since Ryan left his crossbow on the table. The gray-haired man frowned when he saw it, but he didn’t show a single sign of fear as expected. Ryan was unarmed and only had a single-arm, after all.

“I can give you my crossbow if you want,” Ryan said. “That way, you will be able to protect yourself and anyone who wants to follow you. I can guarantee that that weapon is as powerful as a firearm.”

“... Why would you do that?” The man frowned. “Rather, where did you find such a weapon?”

“It doesn’t matter, right?” Ryan smiled and offered a handshake. “All that you need to do is to hold my hand for five seconds.”

Once again, the man frowned. He saw how powerful Lilian’s brother was, so he hesitated a little bit, but even if it hurts a little, he doubted that someone could break his hand so easily. The grey-haired man accepted the handshake but soon regretted his decision when his hand begun to burn. There was no fire, but his hand was burning. Meanwhile, Ryan was smiling as if nothing was happening.

“AAAAARRRRRRGGGHHHH!” The gray-haired man shouted in pain

In the end, the man only lasted for two seconds and pulled back his hand... Ryan didn't even try to hold him because he didn't want to wound the man. Despite that, his hand got so red and burned to the point where he could see some bubbles. Those were the signs of first-degree burns.

“That was unnecessary,” Lilian glared at Ryan before approaching the man and touching his burned hand.

Suddenly her own hands begun to shine, and then little by little, the burns began to disappear. After just ten seconds, his hand was back to normal, but Lilian was pale as a ghost. She used all her mana just to heal some small wounds... she couldn't heal his right arm.

“This is it, folks,” Ryan said. “People can obtain these kinds of powers; all you have to do is fight. Eventually, you will receive a class and be able to heal wounded people... or hurt them. I wonder how the world will be in a few months if some people have powers while others don't. Anyway... if someone needs a handshake, all that you need to do is wake me up. By the way,... did you learn a new skill?”

“... Yes... I learned Fire Resistance,” The gray-haired man replied while glaring at Ryan.

“I guess we can use this...” Ryan said. “You survived the pain and got rewarded for it... remember, power has a price. Do you want to pay the price?”

Chapter 67

Ryan was a bit sleepy, so before he could wake up for real, he laid on the table again and closed his eyes. This time, he didn't wake up for several hours, so he felt refreshed when he woke up. The police station's interior was still dark with the exception of a few flashlights, so it looked like he still had some time before sunrise.

“I guess I went too far...” Ryan sighed once he recalled the things he did with a middle-aged man.

“Yes, you went too far,” Lilian said.

Ryan’s heart almost stopped when he suddenly heard a voice coming from behind. Little by little, his eyes adjusted to the darkness, and then he saw Lilian and the blonde teenager behind him and near the police station entrance. Now that he noticed, the other survivors weren’t around, and only Lilian’s group and Jacob’s family were close to the entrance and sleeping.

“Where are the others?” Ryan asked. “Are they sleeping in the cells or something?”

“Yes, they are,” Lilian answered as if it was a matter of fact. “Those weren’t destroyed, and there were some beds there... Regardless, I have a favor to ask you. I want you to burn my hands.”

“... What?” Ryan frowned. “If you are a masochist, I’m not into that kind of roleplay. Look for someone else.”

“I want to learn the skill that man learned,” Lilian said. “Besides, you will be able to train the skill as well, so you don’t have anything to lose.”

“I guess it is fine...” Ryan sighed. “Don’t regret it later, though.”

Ryan offered a handshake, and Lilian readily held his hand, but then she began to tremble when Ryan activated Lesser Fire Enchantment. However, she countered those effects by using the healing skill she used before. Unfortunately, since she had less mana than Ryan and thus she was forced to retreat.

Congratulations! The skill Lesser Fire Enchantment has leveled up.

Lesser Fire Enchantment Lv 2 → Lv 3

Effect: Increases the power of your attacks by adding the properties of fire. The extra damage caused will be equal to your intelligence + 20%.

Cost: 05 mana per attack.

You obtained 01 status point.

“Ouch... which class did you pick to be able to do this?” Lilian asked.

“Ten kilometers south of here, there is a goblins’ dungeon,” Ryan replied. “If you go there, you will find the answer to your question.”

“... You said that you could tell that man the location of some secure places,” Lilian said. “Are you talking about other survivors’ camps near dungeons? You managed to clear two dungeons before coming to Shreveport?”

“Who knows...” Ryan shrugged. “Rather than waste time asking questions, you should meditate and recover your mana. If you want, I can help you level up Fire Resistance. That being said, I don’t think that will be of much use against Sahuagins. I also can make you learn some other skills, so hurry up and recover your mana.”

Fortunately, it looked like Lilian knew about Meditation. Ryan didn’t know if that skill could level up like that, but Ryan kept his other enchantments active, and when his mana was empty, he began to meditate.

Congratulations! For meditating for the equivalent of six hours, your mana and intelligence have increased by one point.

Ryan frowned when he received that notification... it looked like he could do other things aside from fighting monsters and level up skills in order to increase his status. That being said, it wouldn’t be easy, and it would be very time-consuming. ρ???(?)???

Congratulations! The skill Lesser Wind Enchantment has leveled up.

Lesser WindEnchantment

Lv 2 → Lv 3

Effect: Increases the power of your attacks by adding the properties of fire. The extra damage caused will be equal to your intelligence + 20%.

Cost: 05 mana per attack.

You obtained 01 status point.

Congratulations! The skill Lesser Water Enchantment has leveled up.

Lesser Water Enchantment Lv 2 → Lv 3

Effect: Increases the power of your attacks by adding the properties of fire. The extra damage caused will be equal to your intelligence + 20%.

Cost: 05 mana per attack.

You obtained 01 status point.

Two hours later, the sun began to rise, and Ryan felt quite satisfied in knowing that he could train some of his skills outside battles and even do some things like meditate to increase his status. Meanwhile, even though Lilian obtained three skills, she looked exhausted.

“That is why I told you should rest,” The blond teenager suddenly said even though his eyes were closed. “We still have to look for more survivors, and you didn’t sleep in two days.”

“I didn’t raise you to pretend that you are sleeping while observes other people, Luke,” Lilian before pinching Luke’s nose. “It will be painful, but I recommend that you at least learn those three skills and train them once your health increases.”

“Nice to meet you. My name is Luke,” Luke said and then offered a handshake.

Ryan nodded and then activated Lesser Fire Enchantment. When he noticed what was happening, Luke pulled his hand back and glared at Ryan. It looked like he only wanted to greet him and would leave the training for later.

“My bad,” Ryan forced a smile.

Just like Lilian, Luke didn't have any weapons. Since those were rare, he didn't have any protective gear either. So, Ryan couldn't help but frown, imagining how they spend the coins they obtained. In any case, despite his age, Luke looked quite strong... as if he was a boxer as well.

“... How did you lose your right arm?” Luke said after hesitating a little bit.

“It is a long story...” Ryan shrugged.

“We have time,” Luke said. “We will only look for more survivors after everyone wakes up and eat something. Thanks to your demonstration, everyone looked pretty eager to hunt monsters and obtain some skills.”

“In that case, instead of wasting time talking, I will make good use of my time to train my skills.”

Chapter 68

As expected, it was convenient to move in groups since the battles got much easier, but waiting for others to do most things was a pain. Still, as long as Ryan needs to work with Lilian's group, he would have to follow their rules. Besides, he was a bit worried about the boss they mentioned the previous day. Judging by the number of coins he could obtain alone, goblins and Sahuagins were at the same level. However, he didn't know if the same could be said of the bosses. Ryan also had to worry about their numbers...

“I don't know why they are protecting the dungeon, but it is clear that they are plotting something. Maybe I can't jump to conclusions, but I'm pretty sure we are in a race against time. Even monsters need to eat to live, but the bosses aren't hunting... that only means that their job is more important than their lives.”

Regardless, Ryan decided to train his skills since worrying endlessly wouldn't help him in any way. The most important skill he needed to train was Appraisal, so he used that until his mana was empty on the humans nearby and then meditated. He repeated that a few times, and then he finally leveled up the skill.

Congratulations! The skill Appraisal has leveled up.

Appraisal Lv 1 → Lv 2

Effect: This shows you the basic information of all living beings. The amount of information shown will increase the more the skill levels up.

Cost: 10 mana

You obtained 01 status point.

Lilian – Monk Lv 05

Health: 32/32

“Yep... I have to keep leveling up this skill,” Ryan muttered.

Luke and Lilian frowned since Ryan was constantly stopping his meditation to look at them. They couldn't tell that he was using Appraisal, but it was obvious that he was training some useful skills. Since it could be used on allies, Ryan didn't know if there was a difference in efficiency in using it on humans or monsters, but if there were a difference, it would be pretty obvious that it would be more convenient use on monsters.

Regardless, Ryan was starving so after leveling up Appraisal. He had his breakfast. Today's menu was orange juice and bread... and as if that wasn't worrisome enough, all the food they obtained the previous day was already ending since sixty people had to eat.

"I think we should divide ourselves into four groups today," Luke said. "Like yesterday, two groups will look for survivors while the other two will search for food."

"That seems like a good idea, but given that only a few of us can kill the Sahuagins, it will be difficult to divide our forces," Lilian nodded. "What do you think, Ryan?"

"What I think?" Ryan frowned. "I think today is a nice day to hunt monsters. The sky is clear, and I don't think the forecast warned about the possibility of dragons."

"... I was asking about what we should do about Luke's idea," Lilian massaged her eyebrows.

"Do whatever you want," Ryan shrugged. "I will help for the time being."

Lilian and Luke looked at each other, wondering what Ryan meant by that. It looked like they never considered that Ryan had his own goals and would only help them for a while. Ryan didn't want to involve himself with them because it would be a pain in the long run. Still, it looked like Lilian noticed that he didn't want that. p[?]j?

"Ryan... what is your goal?" Lilian asked. "Why did you come to this city knowing that the dragons might still be around and have destroyed almost everything?"

"My current goal is to clear the Sahuagins' dungeon and get the next class," Ryan replied.

"And after that?" Lilian asked.

"After that, I will look for the velociraptor's dungeon and then clear it," Ryan answered. "Before you ask the same question again, I will keep looking for dungeons and clear them."

"... Why?" Lilian frowned.

“Because everyone needs the power to survive in this world, and I’m no different,” Ryan replied. “Besides, the few experiences of interacting with other survivors led me to believe that it is better if I keep doing my own things.”

“You don’t look like a bad person. Are you sure this is the time to pursue power?” Lilian asked. “There isn’t someone that you need to look for?”

“Nope,” Ryan answered. “Those who I cared about are no longer among us. Now, I will be thankful if you don’t keep asking me questions. Our goals are aligned, so we can work together, but that doesn’t mean we have to become friends or that we have to explain to each other our motives... even though I already did it. That reminds me...”

Ryan got up and approached the group of survivors that were eating their breakfast silently and then tried to look for a couple that seemed to be rich. However, it was hard to identify people like that, considering the things that they had to endure to survive.

“Does any of you have a house outside of the city?” Ryan asked after drawing everyone’s attention.

“... Why are you asking us that?” The gray-haired man asked after a few moments of hesitation.

“Don’t answer my question with another question...” Ryan sighed. “Does any of you has a twelve years old daughter? I found a girl around that age before coming to this city.”

“I have...” The gray-haired man said.

“... What is her name?” Ryan was already ready to face-palm before even receiving an answer.

“Zoe... she has short-blond hair, she wears glasses, and she can’t walk... did you... did you find her?” The gray-haired man approached Ryan and grabbed his shoulders. “You found her, right? Is she fine?”

“Yes... she is fine,” Ryan face-palmed. “She is with a group of survivors a few kilometers away from here... now let me go.”

The gray-haired man was Zoe's father... coincidences are really scary. Still, now he could understand why he was so unreasonable the previous night. Although he didn't mention her, he talked as if he really wanted to leave the city and the motive as Zoe... even though he tried to speak for the sake of those who didn't want to fight.

Chapter 69

"Rejoice, Gramps," Ryan said. "Your daughter is stronger than you now. At this very moment, she is probably capable of killing Sahuagins without breaking a sweat."

"Don't call me Gramps... My name is Miles, and I'm just fifty years old," Miles said while he was clearing the tears off his face. "What do you mean by my daughter can kill monsters? Did you force her to fight those grotesque creatures?"

"No... I just gave her a weapon," Ryan avoided Miles' annoyed eyes.

"Why did you do that?" Miles raised his voice. "She can't even walk!"

"Would you trust the safety of your daughter on the hands of strangers?" Ryan frowned. "I know the people who are looking after her, but I wouldn't trust my life on their hands, much less the life of a kid. That is why I taught her how to use a bow. Anyway, you can go to where she is and become a burden since you don't have any power yet, or you can fight alongside the people here and safely obtain power. Believe me,... fighting alone is much more difficult than you think."

Miles gulped when Ryan raised his right arm. He was fully aware that Ryan wasn't the type who would say empty words. Given that he still was dirt with monster's blood, Ryan's words had an even heavier meaning. Regardless, Zoe asked Ryan to find his parents, but since he didn't see anyone talking with Miles, then it was most likely that his wife had passed away during the dragon's attack. It was a pity, but finding her father was already a miracle, to begin with.

Putting such things aside, Lilian got the whole group's attention and then divided everyone's roles. Some people still didn't want to fight, even though they were quite interested in obtaining Ryan and Lilian's skills. So, those would work to scavenge and carry everything they might find useful for the time being. Besides, the number of weapons in their possession was low, so, it was only obvious.

Only one group would be responsible for looking for supplies. Meanwhile, two other groups would look for survivors. As for the last group, they would approach the dungeon and see how things are there. Since the dungeon was the dangerous area, that group would be the smallest. Besides, the other three groups would need a lot of manpower to protect those that didn't obtain much status.

"The last group members will be Ryan, Luke, and me," Lilian declared. "Fighting near the dungeon will grant us the chance to encounter more monsters and obtain more drops. Tomorrow the strength of our group will be higher, so more people will be able to help, so look forward to it."

Although that was a bit surprising, it was only obvious that they needed to watch the dungeon from a distance. Besides, even though the encounter rate was pretty high thanks to the dungeon break, decreasing the number of Sahuagins would be much easier near the dungeon. ρ??(???)???

"I thought you wouldn't like my plan," Lilian said while looking at Ryan.

"If you tried to send me alone, then I wouldn't like it, and in fact, I would abandon this group," Ryan said. "However, since you two will take care of the enemies when they approach, then I don't have any reason to dislike the plan."

"Are you sure about this?" Luke asked. "I'm not the best person to doubt your plans, but going with three people to that place sounds a little risky."

"Don't worry," Lilian patted her little brother's head. "You didn't see him in action yet, but Ryan isn't half bad... Considering that he just lost his dominating hand."

"So, you already figured it out, huh," Ryan said, a bit surprised.

"The smell of blood still is pretty strong, and while you were sleeping, I checked your right arm," Lilian said as if it was a matter of fact.

"... I'm starting to wonder if I shouldn't give up on this group and challenge the Sahuagins alone," Ryan frowned. "I think I would rather die in the hands of monsters than trust on someone so creepy."

“By the way, which type of monsters you fought so far?” Lilian asked. “I know that you want to keep your abilities as hidden as possible, but you are fully aware that at the very least, you need to tell us the dungeons which you found and the monsters you found there.”

“What do you mean by ‘by the way...’” Ryan sighed. “Slimes and goblins... as you can imagine, slimes are relatively easy to deal with as long as you are fast enough or you are a ranged fighter. As for the goblins, they more or less possess the same level of strength as the Sahuagins. Give me your map. I will show you the location of the dungeons.”

Although making more people obtain classes could ease Ryan’s work, it could also cause him later. Still, he was confident that none of the people that might actually cause him problems would. The first reason was that he would never stay in a group for a long time, and the second was because he is a trained hunter. Just power wouldn’t be enough to defeat him. Some experience and skills were also necessary. If anything, he would rather give a chance to all people to obtain power. That way, he would be able to identify the troublesome individuals with ease and then get rid of them if necessary.

“I should prepare myself when the time comes... For the time being, I only found a few slightly troublesome people, but I feel like it is only a matter of time before I find some real assholes.”

So far, Ryan only found people who suffered thanks to the monsters, but his instincts were telling him that soon he would find those who were enjoying the situation. Right now, the human race was in a war against monsters, but that was just the beginning... everything could change at any moment.

Chapter 70

After readying themselves, Ryan, Lilian, and Luke left the police station alongside everyone else. Since none of them left anything behind, it was unnecessary to leave someone guarding the place. Besides, if the monsters try to destroy the building, only a handful of survivors wouldn’t be enough to stop them.

“You mentioned that thirty bosses are guarding the entrance of the dungeon, but how do they differ from the other Sahuagins?” Ryan asked.

“The only real difference is their size and the fact that they wield two short swords,” Lilian replied, showing a weird smile. “They are two meters tall, and their muscles are amazing... their attacks will hurt even if you block them with your shield.”

“Lilian...” Luke looked at Lilian reproachfully.

“Oops, sorry...” Lilian forced a smile

Ryan recovered his shield from Jacob since they wouldn't work together for the time being. While moving toward the dungeon, Ryan was more in danger than Jacob, and his family was due to the fact that they became part of the teams that were searching for other survivors. In any case, it looked like Lilian drooled while recalling the bosses' bodies... maybe she was a weirdo, or she just liked guys that looked like the terminator.

Regardless, it didn't take long for them to find the next group of Sahuagins. Although Ryan wanted to level up Appraisal more than any other skill at the moment, he focused on using all his mana to hit those creatures. Instead of headshots, Ryan focused on wounding the Sahuagins as much as possible with his iron bolts, and thanks to it, before the monsters could get too close, he killed four of them and wounded the other two.

“Heh, not bad...” Luke smiled. “Leave the rest to us.”

Luke and Lilian looked at each other and then nodded. Even though they weren't twins, their movements were almost identical... both of them dashed and knocked down a pair of Sahuagins at the same time. The other two that were unscathed aimed their spears at the siblings' faces but using a long-ranged attack from up close wasn't a good idea. Even though they were boxers, they kicked the enemies' spears and thus canceled the spells. The difference in speed was just too big... Lilian and Luke finished the enemies in just a few seconds and unharmed.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

You obtained four coins.

...

Congratulations! The class: Hunter, has leveled up.

Hunter Lv 7 → Lv 8

Dexterity + 2, Stamina + 2, Health + 1, Mana + 1, Speed + 1, Control +1. $\rho \sqrt{\int (x) dx}$

Congratulations! The skill Precision has leveled up.

Precision Lv 3 → Lv 4

Effect: Increases the chance of causing a critical hit by one percent per level on the targets, the longer the battle lasts.

You obtained 01 status point.

“Finally, the Hunter class leveled up... Well, I shouldn’t worry too much about it since today we are going to hunt the Sahuagins almost non-stop.”

Ryan didn’t know if it was just a coincidence or if the chances of finding drops increased while fighting in groups, but they found a sword amidst the Sahuagins corpses, a sword that was identical to the ones their teammates used.

“Carry this around will slow us down,” Lilian said while looking around. “We should hide these for the time being and collect them back once we return to our base.”

There weren’t many places they could use to hide the drops. Even though monsters’ chances of using that path would be low since they would exterminate them, Lilian didn’t want to leave the items in the middle of the street. So, she left them behind the energy poles that were still standing.

As expected, heading in a straight line toward the dungeon increased the encounter rate a lot. Before, Ryan would find a group of scouts once every three hundred meters, but his group was now finding once every one hundred meters. Although he wasn't fighting alone, he had to meditate for a few minutes to recover his mana, and the same thing could be said of Luke and Lilian's.

"What a pain..." Luke bit his nails. "Now that we are stronger, the monsters want to overwhelm us with sheer numbers. I don't believe that I'm doing this... Ryan, could you help me learn the skills my sister learned earlier?"

"I don't mind," Ryan said.

Luke didn't like the idea of getting hurt outside the battles, but he recognized the fact that he needed more status points if he wanted to reach the dungeon. Although they would need all their mana, it was worth the hassle to lose some minutes there to learn Water Resistance and Wind Resistance. Ryan wanted to learn those skills, but since he couldn't heal himself, he couldn't do that at that moment. Even though his hand wouldn't burn, the other body parts probably would if he touches them while activating Lesser Fire Enchantment. Self-inflicting harm was worrisome, but Ryan was determined to do everything to become stronger.

After two hours of walking, they finally reached their destination. Ryan was mostly fine despite the fact that he used a lot of mana, but Luke and Lilian were exhausted since they had to kill hundreds of Sahuagins in just two hours. They obtained a few items aside from weapons, and that made things easier for them, but it looked like using and recovering energy that frequently wasn't easy for the bodies.

While Lilian and Luke were resting behind a pile of rubble, Ryan observed the lake... a few hundred meters ahead of them. The bridge had fallen thanks to the dragons' work, so crossing it would be a massive pain in the ass. However, he didn't have to worry about that for the time being. He was more worried about the dungeon that appeared on the lake's shore. As weird as it looked, the dungeon's entrance was like the front door of a castle... even though the dungeon was underground... Regardless, just like Luke and Lilian mentioned, thirty or so bosses were in front of the dungeon entrance while it was spawning several Sahuagins.

"This will be hard..."