

The Strongest

Chapter 37 – Rocket Boots

The moment everyone saw the giant robot piloted by a midget Gnome, they instinctively knew he was something very dangerous. After hearing Shi Feng's reminder, they ignored the loot on the ground and immediately ran towards the forest without a shred of hesitation.

Naturally, Shi Feng would not stay behind either.

The Hazard Gnome was a very dangerous monster. It was especially true when he first made his appearance. He was even stronger than Werewolf Felt with its Death Berserk activated.

[Hazard Gnome] (Special Elite)

Level 5

HP 1600/1600

There was a very small chance for the Hazard Gnome to appear after clearing out the Wandering Gnomes and Gnome Overseers. However, his appearance also signified the start of a player's nightmare.

There was a saying in God's Domain that warns people not to look down on Gnomes just because they were midgets. If they were enraged, they could easily extinguish your life at any given moment.

In his previous life, Shi Feng met the Hazard Gnome once before. At that time, he was with an Elite party who was grinding for ore. After killing the Gnomes, the Hazard Gnome appeared. They did not imagine they would meet a Special Elite, so they had all excitedly rushed at him. However, the situation ended up in a tragedy for the twenty-man party.

The Hazard Gnome's 1600 HP must not be taken lightly. His Defense was an abnormality, capable of reducing 80% of the damage he received. A Level 4 Berserker using an ax could only take 2 HP from the Gnome. On the other hand, the Hazard Gnome's attacks were even more powerful. Everyone would get a free trip back to the city after he fired a burst of bullets.

Although Shi Feng's party had tried their best to run away, the Hazard Gnome's hatred for their evil deeds was clearly implacable. The rockets on the robot's back suddenly ignited. The steel machine that was over three meters tall rushed at high speed towards Shi Feng's party.

While being chased, Blackie attacked with his Dark Arrow as he ran.

Although the arrow had struck the Hazard Gnome, it had only caused a meager -4 damage.

Blackie's eyes widened when he saw the damage. He said in a dumbstruck manner, "Disgusting! If the robot wasn't protecting this Gnome, I could one-shot him anytime!"

“Don’t mind it for now and focus on running. Pay attention to dodging the bullets. As long as we are 1200 yards away from the mountain, the Hazard Gnome will return.” Shi Feng never thought, just after a lecture from him, Blackie’s skill would improve to the degree of being able to hit his target while moving. However, fighting head-on with the Hazard Gnome would be very foolish.

Blackie understood Shi Feng’s intentions. He turned around and started chanting Evil Whip, binding the pursuing Hazard Gnome with five thorns and greatly reducing the Gnome’s speed. With this, everyone managed to gain quite a distance from the Gnome.

When the Hazard Gnome broke free from the five thorns, high damages of -23, -24, -23, -23, -24 suddenly appeared on his head. His HP had turned to 1479 within an instant.

The damage caused by the Evil Whip was just ridiculous.

Blackie was shocked. Before, his Level 3 Dark Arrow had only dealt -4 damage. On the other hand, the Evil Whip had caused over a hundred damage total. The difference between them was just too great. Did the Hazard Gnome have that kind of fetish?

Shi Feng saw hope when the Hazard Gnome’s HP suddenly fell by a portion. The Hazard Gnome did not have any immunity towards plant-based attacks. Shi Feng immediately commanded, “Everybody stop running. Cola, get the Hazard Gnome’s Hatred and let his back face toward the group. The others attack and mind your positions. As long as the Hazard Gnome lifts up his gun, immediately dodge the muzzle. Blackie, attack immediately after Evil Whip’s CD finishes. We have a chance to get rid of him.”

Whether they would live or die before they ran out of the 1200-yard mark was an uncertainty. So, why not fight it out? Who knows, they might even be able to get rid of this Hazard Gnome.

In Shi Feng’s previous life, there were no players who killed the Hazard Gnome before. If they were to kill him now, something good might drop.

Currently, the Hazard Gnome’s Hatred was targeted towards Blackie. However, Lonely Snow was a step ahead of the Gnome, using Charge on him. He used a Whirlwind Slash on the Gnome, causing 3 points of damage.

Although the damage was low, the momentary Fainted state it caused gave Cola a chance to use Divine Strike, followed by Punishment. The two attacks caused -3, -2 damage and the additional Hatred they attracted had the Hazard Gnome locked onto Cola.

The Hazard Gnome extended the electric saw on the robot’s right arm, violently slashing at Cola. Cola blocked the attack with his shield; his body retreated three steps backward and a damage of -147 appearing above his head. Cola was shocked. When the next attack from the electric saw came, he hurriedly dodged and rolled to the side, avoiding the attack completely. Drowsy Sloth immediately healed Cola twice, returning close to a hundred HP to Cola.

“Such fierce damage,” Lonely Snow was shocked as well. He no longer dared to stay, turning around and running more than ten yards away from the Gnome. He would definitely die, even if he were only struck once by the electric saw.

On the other hand, Shi Feng was not afraid of him. He immediately arrived at the Hazard Gnome's back, using out a series of skills: Thundering Flash, Double Chop, and Chop. The occasional critical hit would also cause -16 damage. Compared to the others, Shi Feng's damage was already very high.

However, the Hazard Gnome only gave a look of contempt towards Shi Feng's attacks. He continued using his electric saw to attack Cola.

A series of fierce attacks had forced Cola to constantly retreat backward; his HP was continuously falling as well. Behind, Drowsy Sloth's healing could not keep up with the damage Cola was receiving. He could only watch as Cola inched closer to death.

At the most crucial moment, Shi Feng used Abyssal Bind. Nine pitch-black chains bound the Hazard Gnome, giving Cola a breather.

Within the three seconds[1], the Hazard Gnome had only lost 7% of his HP after being barraged by everyone's attacks. The total damage the party dealt was not even the equivalent of a single Evil Whip from Blackie.

When the three seconds had ended, the Hazard Gnome regained his freedom. The green-skinned Gnome revealed a mocking smile on his face, his tiny hands moving around and manipulating buttons. The robot's arm holding the electric saw made a roundabout slash, creating a beautiful arc. Shi Feng's entire person was sent flying. He smashed into a tree and lost 286 HP.

Cola rushed up in a hurry, his HP having recovered by more than half. He used Divine Strike and Punishment once again, trying to pull back the Hazard Gnome's Hatred.

However, the Hazard Gnome had actually ignored Cola. Instead, he lifted the gun in his left hand, aimed it and fired a burst of bullets at Shi Feng.

A barrage of densely packed bullets flew towards Shi Feng. However, Shi Feng had yet to land after being sent flying, so it was impossible to dodge the bullets.

Phantom Kill!

Shi Feng's doppelganger instantly appeared before him. The doppelganger waved his blade, continuously blocking the bullets. Meanwhile, Shi Feng had already activated Gravity Liberation. He jumped up to a treetop, avoiding the attack range of the Hazard Gnome. However, his doppelganger had already been killed. After finishing a cartridge of bullets, the Hazard Gnome started changing magazines. Afterward, he continued to rush at Shi Feng. Everyone else could only continue attacking, shaving away the Hazard Gnome's HP bit by bit.

However, Shi Feng was not easy to hit after he activated Gravity Liberation. Shi Feng also used the trees for protection. He was barely dodging the flying bullets as he continued kiting the Gnome.

As for Blackie, he would immediately use Evil Whip as soon as it was ready.

The Hazard Gnome's HP continuously fell, 64%... 50%... 30%... 20%... 10%.

When only 10% of the Hazard Gnome's HP remained, the Gnome suddenly jumped out of the metallic machine. He wore a pair of Rocket Boots and started to escape. "It can't be... Monsters can actually escape?" Blackie watched as the Hazard Gnome ran, with extreme speed, to a location without people.

The others were also shocked. They never imagined the Gnome would have such a high intelligence. He ran the moment he knew he could not win the fight.

“We can’t let him escape! We will have fought for nothing otherwise!” Cola immediately chased after the Gnome. He had been bullied by the Hazard Gnome just a moment ago, so his heart was currently filled with anger. How could he let the Hazard Gnome escape after having taken advantage of them?

“You want to escape? Not a chance!” Shi Feng chased after him with Wind Blade.

However, the Hazard Gnome was unperturbed. He sent Shi Feng a mocking expression before pressing a button on his waist. The Rocket Boots spewed out large amounts of flames, ready to fly away.

Chapter 38 – Twin Snake Ring

The Hazard Gnome’s shameless Rocket Boots shocked everyone.

They had never seen a monster that was so good at escaping before. Its human-like expressions and actions were completely different from NPCs. The Hazard Gnome was like a person pretending to be an NPC.

Two streaks of crimson flame flared, slowly lifting the Hazard Gnome into the air.

Unwillingness filled everyone’s hearts. However, they could no longer stop it, but only watch the Hazard Gnome flee with their own eyes. The mages in the party were over 40 yards away from the Hazard Gnome. Lonely Snow as well was over 30 yards apart from it. It was not within the range of Charge. Also, the Faint effect of Charge would become ineffective because the target was floating in midair. Only the Movement Speed increase would take effect.

Currently, only Shi Feng was close to the Hazard Gnome. He was only 15 yards away from it. However, Shi Feng did not have any range attacks. Even if he chased after it, the Hazard Gnome would raise over 20 yards from the ground by the time he arrived. In the end, Shi Feng would only watch the Hazard Gnome escape.

Nine Dragons Slash!

Shi Feng knew he could not catch up. He waved the Abyssal Blade, shrouded in black mist, in his hand. Within an instant, nine streaks of black mist shot towards the Hazard Gnome. Shi Feng was not willing to allow such a smart Hazard Gnome leave.

Initially, Shi Feng only thought of the Hazard Gnome as an average Special Elite. He had never imagined the Gnome to be so much like a player.

Throughout his ten years of playing God’s Domain, Shi Feng rarely saw such intelligent Gnomes. The Main God System wouldn’t simply bestow a small monster with high intelligence. Such bestowals usually had a deeper meaning behind them. For example, those human Heroes or legendary beings were all great characters. Their existences caused people to shudder.

Although the intelligence of this Hazard Gnome did not reach the level of those Heroes or legendary beings, he was still much smarter than a Boss monster. There might even be unimaginable gains by killing it.

Currently, the Hazard Gnome's displayed information changed. He suddenly became Arcus Maddox.

[Arcus Maddox] (Lord-rank)

Level 5

HP 600/600

Shi Feng felt a sense of familiarity when he saw this name. It seems that he had heard of it before, yet he could not recall anything about it.

However, the Gnome only had 600 HP. Shi Feng was confident he could kill the Gnome with the Nine Dragons Slash.

Just when the nine sword shadows were about to pierce Arcus Maddox, the Gnome took out a few steel balls from his small bag. He threw the balls at the phantoms of the Abyssal Blade.

Brilliant sparks flared up the moment the two attacks came into contact.

Hong... Hong... Hong...

A series of explosions forced the phantoms of the Abyssal Blade back. Just when the phantoms were prepared to attack Arcus Maddox once more, he immediately flew over 30 yards away. Meanwhile, the nine phantoms of the Abyssal Blade could only attack targets within 30 yards of its reach.

Shi Feng could only watch helplessly as Arcus Maddox escaped.

"Crap. How could there be such a monster? His escaping ability is just a Bug[1]!" Blackie stared at the fleeing Arcus Maddox as he cursed.

Cola was grinding his teeth in hatred as well, sending a few punches towards a nearby tree.

The other party members felt displeasure also.

Everyone fought long and hard against this Elite monster. However, just when they were about to reap the rewards of their efforts, their prize grew wings and flew away. Was there anything more depressing?

"Brother Feng, let's continue chasing it." Blackie discovered that the Gnome's Movement Speed was not fast. Also, there should be a limited amount of fuel powering that pair of boots. Who knows; the Gnome might land just after awhile.

"Forget it. Let's continue grinding Gnomes." Shi Feng shook his head. If they could chase the Gnome, Shi Feng would have long since chased after it. However, the Gnome's Rocket Boots were just too powerful. It was titled as one of God's Domain's godly escape tools. Currently, the boots had just been activated. Its speed would abruptly increase in a moment, and the Gnome would disappear in the blink of an eye. It would be an impossible task if they wished to find the Gnome.

As expected, the flames gushing out from the Rocket Boots greatly increased after a moment. Xiu! Arcus Maddox disappeared from the air, unable to be seen anymore.

“Best not let us meet again. You can dream of escaping the next time.” Blackie said in an unfortunate tone as he looked towards the spot where Arcus Maddox had disappeared.

In his heart, Shi Feng felt that it was a pity to let the Gnome go. However, it would no longer be dangerous when they grinded on Wandering Gnomes from now on. After this experience, the Hazard Gnome most likely would not show himself ever again.

“Let’s go, continue grinding on the Wandering Gnomes.” Shi Feng turned around and said to his party.

“Brother Feng, you’re still the best! How could I not think of it? If we killed all of this bastard’s kinsmen, we’ll see if he doesn’t show up again.” Blackie laughingly said.

Shi Feng was speechless. He turned around and left, no longer paying any attention to the fantasizing Blackie.

Suddenly, Shi Feng stopped his feet in shock.

“Damn, our luck really is too poor! I never thought that Arcus Maddox would actually appear here, and he was also a Level 5 Hazard Gnome!” Shi Feng tightly clenched his fists, his brows wrinkled. It was the first time he became so enraged.

When everyone looked at Shi Feng’s wrathful expression, they could faintly feel the surroundings become chilly. They could not help but retreat a step; their foreheads covered in a cold sweat. Before, they felt Shi Feng was a calm and easygoing person. Never would they have imagined Shi Feng would become so terrifying after becoming angry.

The forest around them no longer seemed lively but more like a frozen hell, silent, cold, and dark.

“Brother Feng..... are you alright?” Blackie carefully asked. He was shocked. Shi Feng was completely different from when he was mad or arguing with others. It was the first time Blackie saw Shi Feng enraged to such a degree.

“Oh, it’s nothing.” Shi Feng reacted, replying with a smile. He stored back the dense killing intent into his heart. Such killing intent was slowly honed throughout the years Shi Feng had played God’s Domain. Compared to the Tyrant Bear Cola of ten years in the future, there was nothing special about Shi Feng’s killing intent. However, at present, it was considered unbearable for Blackie and the others.

Shi Feng finally recalled the name of Arcus Maddox.

Arcus Maddox was a famous Grandmaster Engineer within God’s Domain. Three years after Arcus Maddox shocked the nation by creating the sky fortress, ‘Twin Snake Ring,’ he had gone on to establish the Gnome Empire. With it, the new update ‘Emergence of the New World’ also activated. At that time, countless Super-Guilds started expeditions towards the fortress, ‘Twin Snake Ring.’ However, all of them were annihilated, and Arcus Maddox was the cause of such a result.

On the other hand, Shi Feng was completely unaware of a great character had appeared right before his eyes. He also lost the chance to kill Arcus Maddox, so how could Shi Feng not be enraged?

“Party leader, there’s a box here. Did it drop from Arcus Maddox during the explosions?” Gluttonous Mouse, who had been silent all this while, asked as he picked up a small metallic box from the grass.

Shi Feng received the box and took a look at it. He discovered the words Arcus Maddox carved onto the metallic box. Shortly after Shi Feng opened the box, he said suddenly with a laugh, “Great! Good job, Mouse! With this, we didn’t fight for nothing after all.”

When the group saw Shi Feng in a happy mood, they knew the item must be very precious, as common items were nothing in Shi Feng’s eyes.

As to wanting the item for themselves, none of them ever had such thoughts. They had long since made Shi Feng their idol, and being able to aid their idol naturally made them happy.

“Let’s do it this way. You guys stay here to grind and level up. I still have something that needs to be done. Notify me when you have all reached Level 4.” Shi Feng kept the metallic box and hastily made the arrangements. Nobody could help him with the following matter. Only Shi Feng was able to proceed.

Everyone felt reluctant when they heard Shi Feng’s command. However, hearing Shi Feng have plans for them after they reached Level 4, their anticipation grew as they abided Shi Feng’s arrangements.

Subsequently, Shi Feng left the deeper regions of the Dark Moon Valley.

The party had Blackie’s AOE skill. Killing seven or eight Gnomes at a time was no problem at all, and their leveling speed was at least two or three times faster than the other parties.

On the other hand, what Shi Feng needed to do was to utilize this metallic box, and to forward the first step of his plans in God’s Domain.