

The Crafts 151

Chapter 151: Target Found, But Who Else Is Here?

The group eventually made their way to the outpost with the survivors. The outpost was located further in, but since there weren't enough shuttles, the civilian survivors had to be carried out with them as well. Once there, they could then be assigned to the appropriate transportation vehicles which would ship them out of the area. Naturally, Lucas tagged along.

The outpost was much like the Wastelands base station, but on a smaller scale. There were a couple of buildings, with some serving as residential areas for the military or training facilities. There were also places where they could go and relax or stock up on resources. The streets of the outpost were filled with individuals who were at least at the first level of the Apertures Opening stage.

Due to the fact that the outpost was only recently completed, it had even less facilities than the base station. But it still has just enough to serve its purpose.

Thanks to the efforts of modern day technology, building houses could be completed quickly. One could either utilise nanotechnology or robots for the construction of a building. They could also buy a moveable one and erect it on the designated foundation. This was the typical method used by the military.

With the large amount of annual funding, the military had bought a lot of moveable buildings which they used for setting up outpost stations. These moveable buildings had impressive defence, so much so that they could survive a direct missile shot. This was all thanks to the fact that the building was properly made with durable materials, all thanks to experienced vestige-smiths.

That's right; the moveable buildings used by the military were all vestiges. Although they weren't as useful as other vestiges, and were only limited to Grade 1, these buildings were made with defence in mind. As such, they were capable of withstanding a desolate beast's assault for a long while.

The outpost consisted of these buildings, especially the core buildings that served as the operating centre for the army. The majority of buildings were either two floors or less [1], but there were about three that towered more than three floors.

One of them stood out the most and was located right at the centre of the outpost, reaching an impressive height of about seven storeys, or at least 23 metres.

'That's probably the control centre.' Lucas thought.

Later on, the group's sars shuttle landed on the helipad at the landing strip. The civilians were escorted to a new site for their departure. Many of them profusely thanked the team before leaving.

"So where are you going from here on?" Nafir asked Lucas.

"To find what I came looking for." Lucas answered before walking away.

Nafir smiled but didn't stop him. Instead, he left with Lily for a briefing with the outpost's head.

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A few days passed by, the majority of which Lucas spent moving around the area in search of traces of the Jaburian desolate beast. If he were still at the outpost, Lucas might have been able to ask for help, but he didn't want the Red Fangs to have any idea of his purpose here.

Luckily, Lucas had managed to find a trace of the monster, and he was currently tracking it down. Although the Jaburian was rare, the rumoured sighting of it here turned out to be true. The problem, however, was that Lucas was already deep into the area, and if he kept going on ahead, he would soon approach Garena town.

Garena town was currently surrounded by a frontier known as the black box perimeter. The black box perimeter was about two kilometres away from Garena town and circled around the entire town. About sixty-six (66) kilometres away from black box perimeter was the boundary perimeter, which was still within the region covered by Garena town's influence.

The outpost was about twenty-seven (27) kilometres away from the black box perimeter.

This meant that in the last three days, Lucas had already covered almost twenty kilometres of distance. Truth be told, he considered this quite slow, but the reason for his pace was due to the fact that Lucas still had to keep a lookout for the monster he was looking for.

"The black box perimeter is said to keep out the majority of desolate beasts, but there's still quite a few that got through." Lucas sighed as he stared at the footprints on the ground.

Compared to the boundary perimeter, the black box perimeter was more thorough and secure, but there were still a ton of escapees from Garena town. The footprints, for instance, came from two different desolate beasts. One belonged to the Jaburian desolate beast Lucas was pursuing, while the other was from a different desolate beast.

Apart from this, he had also encountered a few desolate beasts on the way, most of which he avoided, but for those that sought death, he granted it to them.

Lucas sighed before continuing his hunt. He was cautious enough to avoid the attention of other desolate beasts, not because he was afraid, but because he wanted to avoid drawing attention from the surveillance drones that occasionally flew by.

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After tracking the footsteps for a few minutes, Lucas finally arrived at what seemed to be a cliff wall. Two desolate beasts aggressively faced off against each other in the area, damaging the terrain beyond repair.

One of them was a huge ape-like monster with sharp fur and long arms. Under the sunlight, the fur glistened as if it were made from metal. Its red eyes gave off a demonic glare with the vertical pupils staring ferociously at its target. Two fangs dropped out from the upper jaw of the ape making it appear like a vampiric creature.

However, the most noteworthy feature of the monster wasn't its appearance, but its size. It was simply very large.

In terms of height, the desolate ape easily dwarfed a three storey building. Just the size of its fist alone could compare with some of the smaller sedans on Earth. The thickness of its arm was the same as having two humans stand side-by-side.

Such a ferocious beast was an opponent very few freelancers would want to face. What's more, its energy was clearly on par with that of a fourth level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner.

The desolate ape's opponent was similarly not ordinary. The creature looked like a panther but was massive, reaching up to two metres on all fours. While it was much smaller compared to the desolate ape, the desolate beast showed no signs of fear. It easily dodged the attacks of the desolate ape, twisting and turning at the right moment to dodge the attacks with minimal effort.

Speed wasn't its only speciality as each time it counter-attacked, the force of its attacks could create a dent on the hard ground and even force the desolate ape back. Despite being at the same power level as the desolate ape, anyone could tell that the pantherian was the stronger party of the two and would end up as the inevitable winner.

However, Lucas surmised that this would only be true as long as the pantherian managed to keep dodging all the attacks of the desolate ape. If any blow managed to land or even graze the pantherian, it would be all over. This was because compared to its opponent, the desolate ape's strength and power wasn't something the pantherian could compete with.

"Found you." Lucas smiled.

The pantherian was exactly his target for this mission; the Jaburian desolate beast.

[[Mission Description: Using the hide of a Jaburian desolate beast freshly acquired by the host, create an exquisite leather armour at Grade 4, within one month.]]

According to the mission details, Lucas had to retrieve the hide of the monster with his own hands. Although it wasn't spelt out, the mission required that Lucas freshly harvested the skin himself, which was essentially the same as killing one.

Although unlikely, if Lucas waited for the desolate ape to win, he would save himself the stress of killing the Jaburian himself. However, the ape would surely have a bite out of the monster—a behaviour amongst desolate beasts—and this would damage the skin. If he wanted to prevent that, Lucas would fight the ape right away.

On the other hand, the most likely scenario was the Jaburian winning against the desolate ape, but if that happened, Lucas would be facing the stronger of the two. Even if it were a bit tired out or injured, the battle won't be an easy one.

'Well, the situation is already much better than I've wanted, so any result is okay.' Lucas thought.

He then began to survey the area, understanding the terrain and environment to the best of his abilities.

As soon as a winner was decided between the two, Lucas would have to kick-off another fight. If he wanted to win with less difficulty, Lucas had to be able to make use of the surroundings to his advantage.

In the course of surveying the area, Lucas' sight was suddenly attracted to a spot on the cliff, where a small shallow cave existed.

Staring at the cave, Lucas noticed a silhouette inside which turned him speechless.

'Is that...!!'