

The Crafts 22

Chapter 22 : Seven Sparks Forge Opens For Business

The next day came soon enough. Today, Lucas was going to finally launch the store and begin operations after staying over a week in this new world.

The time slated for the opening was 12pm, but there were still a few hours before then. Lucas spent the time at the work-station, improving on his skills.

Ding

Just as Lucas had spent a couple of hours at the work-station, the bell at the entrance rang, signalling an entry from the outside. This bell was special in the sense that the sound could be heard everywhere within the store's area, even from the backyard. However, it wasn't as loud or glaring as one would think.

At the same time the bell rang, Lucas received a notification from the system.

[[Congratulations on opening the store, Seven Sparks Forge.

Mission Description: The host has been delaying, and as such, the system is being forced to take action.

Overview: Open the store within thirty six hours.

Rewards: Basic immunity package for craftsmen.

Penalty: Death.

Status: Completed.

Accept rewards: Y/N

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Congratulations to the host for levelling up the system. The system store is now available, inventory expansion has taken place, as well as a few other features.

Lucas was pleasantly surprised by this series of notifications as he ignored the bell.

"Yes."

Suddenly, Lucas felt an abrupt sensation creep over his body as invisible changes began to take place. At the same time, the system's voice sounded in his ears.

"Host has received Basic immunity package for craftsmen. Heat immunity increased by up to 2000°C (3632°F). Cold immunity increased to -150°C (-238°F). Poison immunity for Grade C and below poisons and diseases is granted. Shock endurance is increased by 20%.

"As a bonus for levelling up the first time, healing factor is increased by 1.5x. Strength, endurance, vision, and senses are increased by 30%."

Lucas was all smiles after the system informed him of the changes to his body. They might not seem like much, but they were very helpful, especially the basic immunity packages. These weren't mere resistances but immunity, the difference implying the effect.

To understand how helpful those were, the average temperature of molten magma is between seven hundred degrees Celsius (700°C) and one thousand and two hundred degrees Celsius (1200°C). In another context, that would be 1300°F to 2200°F. But Lucas was now immune to the heat of up to 2000°C. This meant that he could dip his hand into magma and feel nothing. His skin wouldn't get burned either.

The same applied for the cold immunity effect Lucas received as well. The coldest temperature recorded back on Earth was -92°C (-133.6°F) [1]. The immunity level granted by the system was much higher. Although he had yet to understand the grading system, Lucas was confident that the poison immunity would be equally effective.

After receiving his rewards, Lucas got up and went to the lobby area. He noticed that there were a few individuals already seated and checking the place out. Although there weren't many, there were

at least twenty of them present. Some had a malevolent vibe or the scent of blood on them, with a strong aura being radiated from their body.

Just this one look made Lucas easily guess their identities; freelancers.

It seemed like the advertisement he had posted on the intranet was quite helpful. The somewhat small number didn't mean that the advertisement's reach was small, but that people wouldn't easily check out a new store in a secluded location right away. Having this many people present was already better than what Lucas initially expected.

"Are you the owner?" One of them asked.

"You can say so." Lucas nodded.

"Welcome to Seven Sparks Forge. How can I help you guys today?"

Another of the men glanced around and said, "Your store looks alright, but it's quite lackluster for a grand opening day, don't you think?"

Lucas glanced at the other and noticed the man had black hair. Most humans usually had coloured hair, and while black wasn't strange, it wasn't pretty common.

"I'm merely opening a shop, not throwing a party. All that fanfare is quite tedious for me."

The black haired man smiled at Lucas' response and didn't say anything else.

At that moment, another character narrowed his eyes as he stared at Lucas.

"You're human, aren't you?"

"What about it?" Lucas looked at him.

"Tch. What a waste of my time." The man grunted and left the building. Some of the other guests did the same after Lucas' confirmation.

While it was uncertain whether they acted as such due to prejudice against humans, the most likely reason was the weakness of the latter.

Vestige-smithing required one to not just be skilled with handling metals but also with controlling stellar energy, since runes and stellar matrices depended on them. For humans who were limited in their ability to manipulate stellar energy, due to their genetics, they were innately horrible vestige-smiths.

In fact, it was impossible, at least to the knowledge of the citizens of Baylands, for a human to be a vestige-smith; a blacksmith was possible, but not a vestige-smith.

Also, even if the best blacksmiths were comparable to vestige-smiths, looking at Lucas, it was obvious that he was too young to be such a blacksmith.

Many of the guests today came to check out the store as it was advertised as one run by a vestige-smith. With a human being in charge, and one quite young at that, it was natural for them to think they had been tricked and depart in anger.

At the moment, Lucas' guests had dwindled down by half.

"What about you guys?" Lucas glanced at the others.

The man with the black hair smiled as he replied, "You don't need to worry about me. I decided to try my luck here, so until I've done that, I don't plan on leaving early."

The others replied in a similar manner.

The appearance of the store owner was unexpected, but they still remained behind, hoping to luck out.

Fraud was highly frowned at and cracked down on thanks to modern technology. The penalty was also severe, so very few individuals engaged in such. This made some of the guests decide to still risk it and check out Lucas' store.

The advertisement stated that a custom-made vestige could be claimed if one won the roulette spin. At the same time, there would be free maintenance for the first ten individuals on their vestiges and weapons for the following three days.

If it turned out to be a lie, Lucas would be arrested for fraud and deceit, and the guests would be compensated for their losses from Lucas' possessions. If everything were true, they would have cashed out greatly.

One should recall that custom-made vestiges were very expensive. Apart from that, it wasn't easy to meet with a vestige-smith to have one made. Most vestige-smiths worked for big corporations and only took special orders from notable individuals. Having someone close by would be advantageous for these people, hence why they rushed to be the first.

If Lucas turned out to be a grandmaster blacksmith or do the impossible and be a capable vestige-smith, being the first of his customers would help them build some sort of relationship with him; a relationship that would offer more profit than loss.

"Alright then. As promised, the first ten individuals get free maintenance while the rest can make their orders." Lucas said. At the same time, he appeared behind the checkout counter and turned on the monitor. He went through the security footage and ascertained the order in which the people arrived, determining the first ten individuals, excluding those who departed.

There were currently twelve individuals in the store, so only two wouldn't be able to access the promo.

One of the twelve, the first to arrive, walked up to the counter.

"Maintenance. It got damaged while facing a Nolkin."

As he said this, the man placed a short-sword on the table.

From the special reward, 'An Adventurer's Manual', Lucas knew that a Nolkin was a type of desolate beast that could fly and also dive into the water. It was a weird creature with wings and gills, looking like a mix between a batoid (manta ray and/or sting ray) and a bird.

They usually spend one cycle of the day (day or night) either underwater or in the skies, then spent the other cycle in the other location.

These creatures were quite common in the Wastelands and a popular hunt for freelancers due to the fact that there was a large market for their body parts.

However, the problem most freelancers faced when fighting a Nolkin is that their saliva was corrosive and these creature usually coat their claws in them. As such, hunting a Nolkin was a money-burning affair because at the end of the battle, one's weapon would usually be damaged.

Nonetheless, as long as the hunt was successful, the freelancer would make a profit even after considering the fees for repairs.

Lucas nodded and received the short-sword. He checked it out and slid his finger across the blade.

"A basic repair would take thirty minutes, but if you're interested in the advanced repair, it would take two hours."

"What's the difference?" The man asked.

"Basic repair is just as it means; I'll simply repair your vestige and it would be as good as new. The advanced repair means that I'll make some new changes that would help. In this case, I'll increase the corrosion resistance of the sword. If I'm correct, it gets worn out after one battle, right? I can increase its resistance and should be able to last three to four battles against a Nolkin.

Any higher is impossible due to the materials used in making weapon." Lucas calmly replied.

The man was surprised, as this was the first time he had heard of it. Other stores would offer what Lucas called the basic repair and it took them one hour. Compared to Lucas, that was twice the repair time. In fact, it was much more.

Lucas had to attend to customers first before working, but those stores had a division of labour system in place, with employees dealing with customers and those handling the repairs. In other words, although Lucas said thirty minutes, it would take less time if he were to leave the counter and go work on it now.

Also, there was no such service like the advanced repair in those stores

"The advanced repair, please." The man replied.

"Anything else?" Lucas asked.

Maintenance was free for the first ten individuals, whether it was a basic or advanced repair. If he wanted to make profits, they would have to make a purchase or ask for a new service; otherwise, Lucas would have to attend to nine more people first.

The man shook his head and went away to take a seat.

He just wanted to check out the validity of this new store, which is why he went for the free service as well as using an auxiliary vestige. That way, even if things turned out for the worse, the man's losses wouldn't be much. If they report Lucas as a fraud and he gets arrested by the patrol corps, the man would be reimbursed for his weapon.

"Next person." Lucas said.

"No need, we can wait." The black haired man spoke up at this time. He was next in line, but in no hurry to be attended to.

Just like the first person and everyone else here, he just wanted to try his luck. Now that someone has provided an opportunity for Lucas to showcase his skills, the man didn't need to get attended to for the moment.

Lucas glanced at him and everyone else in the store, easily reading their minds. He wasn't bothered, however. Humans were innately suspicious and skeptical, and while humans were an advanced species, they still descended from the former.

Lucas nodded at the men and then turned around with the short-sword in hand, heading into the work-station. It was time for him to make his official debut in this new world.