

The Crafts 243

Chapter 243: Monotone Lake

'The Monotone Lake is up ahead.' Callus thought as he steered the Juggernaut forward.

About three hundred and seventy three kilometres (231.7 miles) from the exit of the Valley's Teeth was the next major checkpoint, the Monotone Lake.

The Monotone Lake was a unique region within the Cayern Windway that was simply a huge lake. The surrounding land within ten kilometres of the lake was white in colour; a strange phenomenon that was attributed to the mineral composition of the soil. As for the lake itself, it spanned a huge area, being at least two hundred kilometres long. With such a massive length, the Monotone Lake was more aptly described as a sea, but its situation prevented it from being dubbed such [1].

The most peculiar point about the Monotone Lake was the fact that its waters were black in colour, forming a unique contrast with the surrounding white-coloured land. This black water was actually a strange liquid which appeared just like water but was denser and also possessed a powerful corrosive ability. Even Grade 1 vestiges would melt upon contact.

Underneath the lake were naturally geysers that occasionally blast out a force of black water, creating a jet that shoots up into the sky. Due to the fact that an official drift racing rule was for the drivers to operate within a fixed height from the ground, they became susceptible to the 'attacks' of the geysers.

Whether it was the black water's dense weight, its corrosive factor, or the force of the eruption, they were all factors that could inhibit the drivers, what's more when all these factors were added together.

"The racers are beginning to exit the Valley's Teeth. In this first lap, only one driver has been taken down but this isn't surprising. Previous records showed that the Valley's Teeth is actually the safest segment of the Cayern Windway track." The commentator said.

"Indeed. When compared to the other segments, the Valley's Teeth isn't really dangerous especially in the first lap. However, the Monotone Lake up ahead is different." Another voice sounded. It was the voice of the assistant commentator.

"That's right. Monotone Lake has a history of taking down a few drivers in each race. Apart from that, it also acts as a challenging stumbling block for racers. Changes in position occur here a lot. At least a driver would be taken down, while others were affected by the geyser eruptions."

The main commentator, who possessed the ability to influence emotions through his words, revealed a piece of information that made the audience anxious yet filled with anticipation.

"Why are the eruptions deadly? Can't they just be detected ahead of time?" Melissa, who was also in the team room with the crew, turned and asked Lucas.

Since she began to walk the path of a vestige-smith, Melissa didn't think like a simple eleven year old and she was now quite knowledgeable about a lot of technology. Lucas felt it would be a waste to have her just sit in the audience alone and brought her with him. It was definitely not because he missed having the little girl by his side.

Before Lucas could even answer, the Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith replied while stroking his beard,

"It's a bit more complex than that. However, detecting the eruptions isn't a challenge; it's avoiding them. You see, in the outer regions of the lake, which is pretty much the first one hundred kilometres (62 miles), it's not difficult to predict the eruptions. Every racing shuttle is equipped with advanced sensors and scanners, so even though the black waters have deflection properties, the geysers could still be monitored.

"However, deeper in, the deflection properties become stronger, but it's still not entirely secure. As long as the team's skills are up to the challenge, they can develop sensors and scanners that can go through the waters. But like I said before, the real danger isn't in detection.

"In the core area of the lake, the frequency of geyser eruptions is even more abrupt than in the outer areas. Apart from that, there are far more geysers there, with some being packed very close to each other. This makes it difficult for drivers to dodge them even if they've spotted the geysers beforehand. On some occasions, it wouldn't be strange to see a driver or two being forced to an abrupt stop because there's no path through. Trying to force one's way in is very risky, especially if their defensive measures aren't up to the task."

Melissa nodded, seemingly understanding what the man had said.

The Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith glanced at her and smiled, pleased with the little girl.

Although it was their first time meeting, the members of the Black Star team had already begun to treat Melissa like a princess. The vestige-smith was very pleased with her passion for learning and vestige-smithing, which was why he had offered to give an explanation for her.

Right after the reply was given, the first group of drivers had approached the Monotone Lake.

There were five racers in this first group and the gap between each one didn't exceed three hundred metres (0.186 miles). This might seem like much in racing tournaments on Earth, but a gap of less than three hundred metres in a drift race was the same as a ten metres gap on Earth; a slight mishandling or loss of focus and the positions would be swapped.

Among the drivers in the first group were the driver for the team Yoko-bunny; the driver for the Red Mouse team, Red Devil; and the driver for Lugo Vido Autos, Mason.

The other two were popular drivers in the K1 league, but the presence of the former three dropped their popularity and made it difficult for them to stand out as favourites to win a promotion. Nonetheless, their skills had been honed over the years in the K1 drift racing league, so they weren't to be underestimated.

Some of the drivers in the second group were similar to these two as well. Having the upper hand in experience with the K1 drift racing league tracks, they should technically be better drivers. However, they lacked the necessary resources, support, and most of all, a powerful racing shuttle, to be able to compete with the top five.

The first group entered ten kilometres region of white soil which counted as the Monotone Lake's grounds. Even as they approached the danger zone, none of them slowed down as doing so would put them at the risk of falling behind.

"Hmph."

Yoko-bunny's driver, who was surprisingly a young lady, snorted seeing as none of the other four slowed down.

She pressed on a button by the side of the steering wheel following which her racing shuttle abruptly accelerated.

"Heh. Little girls are always so impatient." Red Devil, the driver for the Red Mouse team, chuckled even though no one else could hear him speak.

He also accelerated his shuttle, not wanting to lose out to the young lady.

Seeing this, Mason—who drove for the LVA team—also accelerated. Those left behind were the two experienced drivers who hesitated.

Unlike the other three, they had races in the Cayern Windway before and knew of the dangers of each segment firsthand. As such, they were hesitant to make a move.

"Fuck it!"

One of them said before stepping on the gas [2] and chasing after the other three.

"These guys are crazy."

Seeing his 'companion' do the same, the last man shook his head, but he also sped up. However, he took note of his actions and ensured that his shuttle's acceleration was within a safe range where he could easily react to changes.

"They, they are speeding! All front racers are speeding without care!" The commentator roared through the mic.

The audience and spectators at home were all astonished by this. Everyone knew that rushing right into the Monotone Lake was a very dangerous act. Usually, they would turn on their sensors ahead and try to get a good scan of the lake before rushing in. As such, it was common for racers to slow down as they approached the lake.

However, this time around, the leaders in front didn't care about tradition and simply rushed right in. Although doing so seemed to help them gain a headstart, it would put them at a larger risk.

Up ahead, there were a few occasional blasts of black water into the air, forming black pillars. This was the danger every driver had to be aware of, otherwise, their qualifications would end here.

As expected, as soon as they drove into the lake, a geyser abruptly erupted as a pillar of black water shot up in the air, but that was just the start. There were multiple jets of black air fired into the air and the five racers immediately reacted to dodge them.

Simultaneously, they all activated their shields to protect their shuttles, but the protection could only shield them from the corrosive effects, albeit with a limit.

For reasons such as energy conservation, speed and so on, the power of the shields wasn't my h and it could only mitigate a part of the force of the black pillars. So, if a racing shuttle was struck by them, it would get tossed into the air right away. Continuous barrages could even see the light shield being destroyed.

However, all five drivers seemed to have eyes everywhere as they easily dodged the black pillars that struck fear into many.

At the same time as they had gone in, the second group—in which Callus belonged to—already arrived within the white soil region.