

The Crafts 34

Chapter 34 : Departure

In truth, the head of the Autumn's Gate guild was slightly hoping that Lucas would commission them with a new task, which was why he said those words.

Being a top 20 freelancer squad involuntarily meant that those who could afford their services were big corporations and rich individuals. However, these parties either had their own private force, or were in an alliance with another top team, sponsoring them in exchange for their services.

Even if the wealthy individual or company was looking for an independent freelancer guild for a task, there were still other top guilds, much stronger than the Autumn's Gate guild, in the market.

Naturally, there were the occasional wealthy merchants and so on who required their services; otherwise, they would have closed shop. Even so, the number of such missions they received in a month was still not enough in the guild leader, Crimson Fang's eyes. He wanted his guild, the Autumn's Gate, to become a top ten freelancer squad, and to achieve that, a lot of money was needed.

Currently lacking sponsors, the best way for them to make that money was through missions, but they couldn't drop down their price either.

Although Lucas might be suspicious about the unwritten rule amongst freelancers, he could do nothing about it. The best option for him would be to draw up another contract with the Autumn's Gate guild and have them protect him until he returns back to the base station.

At the base station, it would be impossible for anyone to threaten him, otherwise the retaliation by the city-state's Guild Centre would be enough to end them. Even a top 500 company of Eretré wouldn't want to go against the city-state government.

Unfortunately, Lucas wasn't interested in another contract. How would they know that just this escort contract has cost him a lot? Even though Lucas could have been said to be a bit wealthy after pawning the Purple Iridium ingot, the escort mission nearly cost him 150 federal coins, and this was already cheap.

One should recall this price was made in mind with him having only four members guarding him, of which two would be official guild members. However, he had luckily ended up with all seven

official members escorting him. If Lucas were to request a new deal, he would have to consider all seven official members onboard. At that time, the price might even reach up to 500 federal coins.

Considering his expenses from when he went shopping until now, including the fee for the escort, Lucas had only two thousand two hundred and fifty (2250) federal coins left. Spending almost a quarter of that would hurt his insides and eat him for a long time, even if it was for his safety. This was especially so since it wasn't like Lucas was entirely out of options.

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At the break dawn, just right when the first ray of light struck the ground, the group had already awakened and prepared to depart. Within just a few minutes, they covered the twenty kilometres distance and arrived a few hundred metres away from the Astranian Forest. This distance was nothing to the sare shuttle and one could say they had already reached their destination.

The Astranian Forest was an astonishing vast expanse of land that could even compare with a state or prefecture in size. It was like a whole other world of its own, dominated by large greenery and massive trees towering up to twenty metres, roughly the same height as a four storey building.

Even from the sare which was flying through the clouds, Lucas couldn't see the entirety of the Astranian Forest. Just from this alone, he could now see why this was place meant only for freelancers with high ranks. One could only imagine how many desolate beasts were in here as well as the level of the strongest ones.

From what Lucas knew, the Astranian Forest was merely just one of the many regions in the Wastelands. One could think of the Wastelands as a country, and the regions within it being states. The Astranian Forest was one such 'state', and within this 'state', there were areas the size of a city.

Lucas' destination, as well as the location of his mission objective, was a 'state' known as the Cicalien Mountains.

The escort mission was only meant to stop him within the Astranian Forest, as the cost of being escorted into the Cicalien Mountains was a lot more than he could accept. However, even though they had arrived at the Astranian Forest, the escort mission wasn't entirely over.

As with tradition, the Autumn's Gate guild would drop him off a few hundred metres to one kilometre in, securing the perimeter and ensuring that nothing dangerous happened to their client.

It was at this point that the guild leader signalled to Lucas and everyone else on the ride. Earlier on, the guild leader had already noticed the rest about the hidden party trailing them. Actually, the two vice guild leaders had sensed them, but they didn't say a word to Lucas as it wasn't their place to do so.

The plan was such: the guild leader as well as one vice guild leader would drop off at a specific point and hold back the trackers. At that moment, Juan would speed off with the sare to a destination quite far from this point where he would then drop off Lucas. The other vice guild leader was present to ensure that nothing would happen during this trip.

As soon as Lucas was dropped off, they would move in another direction to create a fake trail and the contract would be over.

Lucas didn't have any problems with this plan; in fact, he couldn't even disagree with it. From the behaviour of the team, Lucas could sense their earnestness and see how much effort they put into this when in fact, they could decide not to do so. Their contract was simply to get him into the Astranian Forest safely, and already being in the region, nothing else should have concerned them.

But they went the extra mile, despite the fact that he was a human.

This impressive action bred a strange emotion in him and for a second, Lucas was tempted to tip them. But when he recalled how 'poor' he was, he eliminated that thought without any hesitation.

"Get ready." The guild leader, Crimson Fang, said as he wore his armour.

The vice guild leader who would accompany him was Lisa, as her vestige was very suited for hindering attackers and creating a defense. As for the other guild leader, his vestige and even fighting style, were all about offence, so he was better suited to move with the shuttle.

Just after the group had moved three hundred metres into the forest, Crimson Fang and Lisa jumped exited the shuttle and arrived in mid air.

Lisa unfurled her streamer and as with the battle against the Blue-gemmed Cockatrice, the streamer occupied a large area around them and formed a world of its own. At the same time, Crimson Fang abruptly pointed at multiple locations in mid air, blasting an orange ray from his finger each time he did so.

Boom

Boom

Explosive sounds broke out as the orange rays crashed into obstacles in midair. Once the air was cleared up, four figures were forced into the open. They were the trackers who were following the group.