

The Crafts 39

Chapter 39: Astonishing Discovery

Lucas followed the tunnel by the right, which took him through multiple turns, making him feel as if he was in a maze. Sometimes, the tunnel would make a turn to the right and then to the left. Sometimes, it would lead downwards or even upwards, forcing Lucas to rely on his physical abilities and make the climb.

There were even times when he would come across a junction, and relying on the previous method, Lucas would make a decision and pick a road. In summary, the journey was an 'adventurous' one that Lucas never really expected.

It wasn't until after an hour of exploration that Lucas finally sensed some movement ahead. Relying on his strong senses and spiritual soul, Lucas could feel the movements of two creatures at the turn a few metres away. Although the talismans were still active, Lucas put more effort into maintaining his camouflage as he reduced his speed and even slowed down his breathing.

When he got to the turn, Lucas peaked at the other side and spotted two Green-Snout Metal moles much bigger than the one above ground. Even the aura they radiated was a lot more ferocious, showing that these two were no strangers to murder, albeit he couldn't be sure whether their targets were humans or other desolate beasts, but the latter was more likely.

Not only were they larger, but they were also talked, and their fur was also losing its green colour and tilting towards brown. It was clear that compared to the first Green-Snout Metal mole he met, these ones were stronger by a factor. They were most likely at the fourth level, as this was the mainstream strength of most Green-Snout Metal moles.

Lucas 'glued' his body close to the walls and lowered his breathing speed by another factor as he scanned the two and waited for an opportunity to proceed. The two beasts weren't guarding the road but had simply met each other and decided to offer a 'greeting'. Green-Snout Metal moles were social creatures, so this action of theirs wasn't out of the ordinary.

After a few seconds, the two monsters went their separate routes with one heading deeper into the tunnel and another moving towards the direction Lucas was coming from.

Immediately, Lucas didn't hesitate to remain absolutely still. He even held his breath right away, fearing that the slightest of actions would attract the attention of the beast. Fortunately, the fourth level Green-Snout Metal mole failed to notice anything and continued on its way.

As the tunnel was large enough for two to walk by, there was enough space for Lucas to avoid coming in contact with it.

Once the desolate beast went by, Lucas waited long enough to feel confident that the smallest movement wouldn't attract it. From then on, it seemed as if he had closed in on the main burrow of the labour of moles as every couple of minutes, Lucas would be forced to remain still and hold his breath, as he hid from the Green-Snout Metal moles.

Accompanied with this was a problem; Lucas couldn't use his previous method to choose a route amongst a group of paths. There was one junction with four paths, all of which had been frequented a lot. When Lucas investigated, he noticed that there was almost no difference in the amount of times the moles had passed by, based on the footsteps and evenness of the ground.

In the end, Lucas randomly decided on a path and proceeded forward.

After a while, he appeared in a large open cave with dozens of tunnels leading in different directions. The tunnels were so much that it was estimated to be almost one hundred of them. Lucas was stunned by the sight, even more so scared as a few metres below, at the centre of the cavern, there were tens of Green-Snout Metal moles moving about, all at the fourth level.

Occasionally, there would be one or two exiting a tunnel and heading into another. This led to a realisation that he had finally appeared in the main network of the Green-Snout Metal moles' burrow.

As long as Lucas went in the right direction, he would find the Violent Sun ores. However, if he didn't, he would have wasted his time. What's more, he might end up unlucky and get spotted by a Green-Snout Metal mole. Once that happens, death would be the only outcome for him.

'Come on. Think.' Lucas froze on the spot and stared at the various tunnels, trying to differentiate between them and find his target.

The traffic in the cavern was much, and so, it was difficult to scan every single mole and reach a conclusion from there.

It was a good thing that the tunnel he was in barely had many users amongst the mole horde below him. This gave Lucas some breathing space to run various calculations in an attempt to choose the best possible route.

Thirty seconds later, Lucas noticed a Green-Snout Metal mole leaving a tunnel with something in its mouth. There was a yellow object within its mouth. The object was so large that a part of it protruded out from the mole's mouth, preventing it from closing the pair of jaws.

Lucas stared at the mole and watched as it exited one tunnel and entered into another. He then waited for less than a minute and noticed another mole carrying a similar material from the same tunnel but heading into a different one. Another mole also left the same tunnel but ended up going in the same direction as the first one.

It was then that a thought appeared in Lucas' head. Some of these tunnels were entrances to various mines while others led to storage houses or even the private residence of the moles.

For example, after spending ten minutes watching the desolate beasts, the route of the first mole was followed by a few other moles, all carrying the same yellow object in their mouths. There were a few, however, who exited the same tunnel but went in a different direction.

To completely understand the paths of the beasts, Lucas maintained his stealth mode and spent an entire hour monitoring as many Green-Snout Metal moles as possible. The talismans would all last for at least six hours. Not more than three hours had gone by since he activated them, so spending an hour to increase his odds was no problem.

At the end of the one hour duration, Lucas finally had a basic understanding of the cavern and its tunnels. Relying on his knowledge of metals from both self-study and information from the tome, 'An Adventurer's Manual', he had also managed to identify the majority of minerals being mined by the Green-Snout Metal moles.

Every one of them was valuable to some extent, and Lucas had even managed to spot two to three rare metals.

It should be known that during the exploration campaign decades back, the Baylands city-state military had found a few lodes and deposits of various metals and minerals. However, after checking the value and estimating the size of such deposits, they reached the conclusion that it wasn't profitable to establish a mine in the region.

The investigation at that time wasn't publicised, but news of it had spread to some extent, and so the freelancer community roughly knew the number of mineral deposits found in the Cicalien Mountains. There were seven such; two medium-sized ones, four small ones, and only one large lode. The classification was based on the estimations of the amount of minerals and metals in each deposit.

Of the seven deposits, only one small one had rare minerals, but said metal wasn't so rare as there was a supply point just north of Baylands City. The remaining six lodes were all filled with common metals and minerals.

However, from his one hour stay here, Lucas found the truth to be more than just that.