

The Crafts 40

Chapter 40 : Discovered

The Cicalien Mountains was a rocky, mountainous region, and a personal favourite of earth- and metal-type desolate beasts. It was rumoured to be filled with metal and mineral deposits, with the difference between the two being that one held metals while the other contained materials that were in a solid form but not classified as metals.

Based on the classification of metals and minerals, there were five grades: Common grade, Special grade, Rare grade, Recherche grade and Stellar grade.

When the Baylands city-state government carried out the exploration campaign of the Cicalien Mountains, they discovered seven deposits. Two medium-sized ones containing metals, four small ones of which three were minerals and the last one was a metal deposit, and one large lode filled with metals, were discovered at the end of the campaign.

The classification was based on estimations of the amount of minerals and metals in each deposit.

Of the seven deposits, only one of the small mineral deposits had rare contents, but said mineral wasn't exactly rare in the region as there was a supply point just north of Baylands City. The term 'rare' was used when compared to the minerals and metals in the other six lodes, which were filled with Common grade materials, as well as their supply on the general market.

In truth, the grade of the mineral was merely at the Special grade of materials.

This information was open to freelancers at the Guild Centre building, and many top corporations with investments in beast hunting and mining were aware of it. But what Lucas saw in this cavern implied that the city-state military's investigation was flawed.

Lucas had identified a total of eleven metals and four minerals among the materials the Green-Snout Metal moles were carrying. This meant that there were fifteen metal and mineral deposits in the mountain range; a whopping eight more than the city-state military discovered and two of them were Special grade metals, on par with the one found before.

Of the eight lodes discovered, seven were metals whilst the last one was a mineral deposit. If this news were to be leaked, the Baylands city-state government would surely consider setting up a station here.

As long as the size of the mines was worth it -with three medium sized or above deposits and at least one of the Special grade metal deposits being a medium-sized one- they wouldn't even hesitate to launch a new campaign in the Cicalien Mountains.

Opening a mining area within the Cicalien Mountains was a costly endeavour. The mountain range was located in the Astranian Forest inside the Wastelands. Running a mine entailed creating a new transportation route from the mountain range to the Wastelands base station.

Even if they intended on using Light rail trains, protection would have to be provided for those trains; otherwise, they would risk getting attacked by flying desolate beasts.

Apart from that, the mines would also have to be protected 24/7, and the miners would need to receive an enormous wage, worker benefits, and so on, otherwise, no one would want to accept the job. The materials used to build the mines and the mining station would have to be of high quality, to resist attacks by desolate beasts.

Even the equipment would have to be of high quality, since the rocks in the Cicalien Mountains were tougher than regular mountains.

These problems might not seem like a lot, but every single one of them was extravagantly costly, such that, the seven mines alone were only able to break even and not secure a profit. But if there were eight additional deposits added to the mix, the story would be different.

Even if operating expenses such as protection and employee fees increased, making a massive profit would still be very much possible.

This was the value and attractiveness of the real Cicalien Mountains. Unfortunately, only Lucas currently knew of this, and he didn't plan on revealing it. Instead, he wanted to monopolize this.

The current civilisation was developed, and conflicts that would lead to death were exceedingly rare thanks to the improved security. However, there was a greater desire for resources. As such, the government tried to encourage pioneering, as they alone couldn't provide for the masses.

One such means, for instance, was that if one discovered a mine within the neighbouring region of a city-state, he or she could own it as long as they paid a certain amount of money as both land ownership rights and taxes to the government. This applied even to the mines in the Wastelands.

Due to this benefit, a lot of big companies and freelancer squads would occasionally launch exploration campaigns into the depths of the Wastelands and other unexplored regions, all in a bid to discover a new resource point. Even professionals at this, known as Pioneers, would occasionally be spotted at the Wastelands base station.

As long as Lucas went to the Guild Centre building and the City Hall to make his reports as well as file for ownership, he could gain control of the mines. But that would be for later; for now, he had better fish to fry.

The hour of spying didn't just enable Lucas to identify the materials being mined by the moles. It also helped him construct a plan.

One of the seven new metals Lucas found was called Igrum steel [1] or Red-Fire iron. It was a special heat resistance metal that had above average ductility and malleability while maintaining an impressive degree of toughness. It was also a Special grade metal.

The most important point for Lucas here was that an Igrum steel deposit had a certain chance to produce Violent Sun ores, although a very low chance.

Nonetheless, this didn't stop Lucas from having hope.

The system gave him the mission to find Violent Sun ores in the Cicalien Mountains of the Wastelands, which at first seemed like a suicide mission; after all, Lucas had no powers. But prior to all of this, the system had informed Lucas that it had no intentions of killing him and that every mission assigned was done so based on his current abilities.

Thinking in this direction, the Violent Sun ores would definitely be in the outer region of the Cicalien Mountains as this was the only place Lucas had a reasonable shot at survival; anything further in was certain death.

It was for this reason that he had decided to use the Green-Snout Metal moles' burrow for his exploration, as these monsters were on the weaker scale of the Cicalien Mountains monster pyramid, and they resided primarily in the outer region.

Now, seeing that there was Igrum steel present here, Lucas was sure that the Violent Sun ores were also close by. The question was, where?

From the actions of the Green-Snout Metal moles, it was clear that they were mining the materials and moving them over to a storage room. As such, there were two options before him at the moment: the first was to check out the moles' storage cave as if there was any Violent Sun ores present, they would have mined it and stored it away. The second was to go to the mine and look for it himself.

There was also a third option, which was to wait at the tunnel leading into the mine for a mole carrying the ore, and kill it. However, this option wasn't even considered by Lucas was very obvious reasons; he was too weak.

'Wait. It's been an hour already now. If there was any Violent Sun ores, I should have seen them carrying it. This means that they've probably not found it yet.' Lucas thought as he stared in the direction of the mine.

Reaching this point in his thoughts, there was now only one option left for Lucas. To go to the mines himself.

After staking out for a few minutes, Lucas suddenly began to move towards his target; the tunnel that Green-Snout Metal moles carrying Igrum steel exited from. Lucas didn't move hurriedly, but maintained a cautious and slow approach, ensuring that he wasn't spotted by the moles.

Luckily, the moles were too focused on their actions, and maybe it had to do with the fact that this was their lair, but their alertness was at its lowest.

It didn't take long for Lucas to reach the exit to approach the tunnel, and it only took him thirty minutes to reach the end of the tunnel, the location of the mine. This wasn't just because the path was long, but mainly that Lucas had to proceed carefully and slowly to avoid being found. As of the moment, he had only an hour and a half left on his talismans, so he had to be quick.

Scanning around the mine, Lucas' eyes were filled with the colour red. The light was so intense that the mine was brightened up a bit. This made Lucas even more cautious as the possibility of his stealth being compromised was much higher in here.

All around were ores of Igrum steel mixed along with rocks and dirt. Igrum steel was a Special grade metal with a high fire attribute, which caused it to have a resplendent crimson colour. The space within the mine was higher in temperature despite the cave being very spacious with even the rocks closest to each steel being hot to the touch; a result of the attribute of Igrum steel.

Luckily, it wasn't at a point Lucas couldn't handle, otherwise, he would have to retreat and make a new plan.

Special grade materials were just as their name implied; they were very special and possessed mysterious capabilities. In the past, the classification of all materials were simply divided into two: Common and Special grades, with Common grades being materials that possessed no special attributes, and Special grades having one.

However, with the discovery of even more powerful and unique elements amongst the Special grades and even Common grades, the material classification system had to be rebranded.

For instance, the Purple Iridium metal Lucas had would have been termed as a Common grade metal in the past, but its toughness and strength was above most common metals. In fact, based on the new system, it was classified as a Rare grade metal, much higher than a Special grade.

Lucas stared around, looking out for any moles, before moving deeper into the mine. Since the Green-Snout Metal moles had yet to find the Violent Sun ores, it could only mean that their mining progress was slow. There was also the possibility that there was no Violent Sun ores in this mine, but Lucas was unwilling to believe it just yet.

'System, can't you provide me with some sort of help? Otherwise, how would I find what I'm looking for?' Lucas mentally communicated with the system as he hid by the walls of the mine, in a position that was in the blind spot of the resplendent lighting of the ores.

"The system is intended to help train the host, and not provide a solution to every difficulty." The emotionally absent voice responded in his head.

Lucas sighed and gave up having to request help from the system after that rejection. Instead, he began browsing the memories of his first life for a solution. Within a minute, he found one.

A technique that used one's spiritual sense to scan an area. This was suitable for Lucas because it didn't require the use of mystical energy, albeit using one would double the efficiency.

By transmitting one's spiritual senses through matter, the user could extend their senses, turning the matter into their sensory organs and probing it. In this way, whatever comes in contact with the matter appears in their spiritual vision.

One could think of it like channeling electricity through a metal; whatever comes in contact with the metal would have a part of the electricity transmitted to it and get shocked. The concept was somewhat similar although not exactly the same.

Lucas leaned on the wall and placed both hands on it, turning his focus onto the wall. His spiritual senses then extended into the wall and began scrutinizing every aspect of it.

While it sounded simple, it was anything but that, and a huge amount of risk existed. If a mistake were to be made, Lucas could potentially end up crippled mentally. However, he was already experienced with such methods from his past life, and as long as he remained calm, nothing would happen to Lucas.

Luckily, it didn't take long for Lucas to be done as he found his target soon afterwards.