

## The Crafts 45

### Chapter 45 : Return

Deep inside the tunnel that led to the Igrum steel mine, the charred walls had hardened intensely after being exposed to extremely high heat for a few minutes. The rocks in the walls had an impressive heat resistance level, which was why they birth Igrum steel ores. This was why it solidified rather than melting due to the high heat.

Even after the explosion, the entire tunnel was still intensely hot, reaching at least 200°C in temperature; this was enough to turn water into steam within a second.

\*Crack\*

\*Bang\*

At one edge of the wall, there were a couple of stones piled. The stones were pushed from the inside, falling off and crumbling the pile as a silhouette came out from it.

"Damn, I almost died back there. I really shouldn't try stuff like this again."

Lucas, whose face was covered in soot, let out a sigh of relief. He was completely naked as both the vestige he had on and his clothing could not survive the scorching flames that went beyond 1000°C.

Lucas quickly changed to one of the sets of clothing provided to him by the system's welcome package when he has just recently been transmigrated into this world. With a light this, he then flopped to the ground to catch his breath.

Even though the temperature of the stones were still scalding hot, he acted as if it was nothing. Lucas' forge back in the workshop had reached temperatures much higher than this, so he wasn't affected by the slight heat. There was also his heat resistance ability coming into play. Thanks to it, the pain of a 200°C burn wasn't even worth mentioning.

He took off the remnants of the night vision goggles on his face and tossed it away. During the collision, the goggles had almost cost him his vision. Luckily enough, the design was made such that even if the lens were destroyed, they wouldn't be able to harm the user.

After breathing in a couple mouthfuls of hot air, Lucas stood up and walked towards the tunnel's exit. There was still his gains waiting for him there. While walking, he took out a new pair of goggles from his inventory. Lucas was a cautious individual and being as weak as he was, he had to make multiple preparations and have extra sets of every important item ready just for this trip.

It took him only a few minutes of walking to get to the exit, but when Lucas glanced outside the tunnel, he was dumbfounded.

Although the tunnel was dark before, he could still see it with his night vision goggles, which also had the added feature of giving colour to the view. The cavern's walls then were red-brown, a bit like wet clay or terracotta, and there were some tiny pieces of metal ores discarded by the Green-Snout metal moles stuck on them.

However, the current cavern looked greatly different from that. Not only was it even hotter than the tunnel Lucas exited, but all its walls were covered in soot with some areas sporting cracks on them. If the explosion was any more powerful and lasted longer, the cavern might have collapsed.

Lucas glanced downwards to the battlefield. There he saw jet black shapes and objects, some of which were half ashes and the other half still maintained an indescribable form. Of the various figures down, only two could barely be made out and they were the chimera and the Green-Snout metal mole king.

The other metal moles were burnt to ashes, and even the leftovers that seemed to still have a form were mere shells of disguise. A simple touch and one would watch as the figures collapse into burnt ashes.

Looking at the work of his hands, Lucas couldn't help but feel relieved. As for pity or worry? None of that. He already knew the power of the rapid-made explosives. Back in that war, Deserters were quite difficult to kill with a regular explosive as they would simply conjure up a magical barrier.

In order to cause enough damage to shatter the barrier while also harming the target, lots of research was put into this explosive for various metals and compounds were tested. The Explosive Sun stones/Violent Sun ores were the final pick after checking the data. Their power was unmatched when it came to potentials in explosion amongst similar materials at the same rank.

The next hour was spent trying to scavenge whatever he could from the two corpses, following which Lucas now went looking for the exit of the burrow. But he was in no rush.

The deal Lucas struck with the Autumn's Gate guild was to drop him at the Astranian Forest and pick him up too. This was only natural as going back was equally dangerous as coming. The return trip would be three days after he was dropped off, and so far, only one day had gone by.

Considering there were some individuals looking for him, it would be wise to wait just before the last 24 hours to head to the rendezvous point.

Also, the original arrangement was made without knowing that the Autumn's Gate guild would be carrying out a mission afterwards. There was a chance that instead of after three days, the pick-up time would be longer. Although the odds were low, Lucas had to be prepared for anything.

Luckily, Lucas had their contact info and the team would also message him twenty four hours before pickup.

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"Any time you need a ride, just let us know alright?" Juan said to Lucas as he separated from the crew.

About four days had gone by since Lucas killed the chimera, the Green-Snout metal moles and the remaining metal moles with his explosives. After waiting a day, he received a message from the guild and reached the rendezvous location the following day. The return trip took two days, making the entire 'vacation' from start to finish take six days.

It had now been three weeks and four days since Lucas came into this world; almost a standard month, in terms of week-count [1].

"No problem. I'll seriously consider it." Lucas smiled.

The trip was filled with ups and downs, but Lucas had to admit that the Autumn's Gate guild was very professional. While they didn't eliminate his pursuers, they did hold them back, granting Lucas enough time to escape and be free from worry for a long while.

To ensure fairness in transactions between freelancers and others, the Guild Centre had developed a software for tracking mission progress and processing transactions. Once Lucas made the payment

through the software, Autumn's Gate guild would receive half after he was dropped off and the other half once he was brought back safely.

This might as well be the reason why they intervened, but it was still not an easy decision to make.

If it were any other team, they would have just stopped at dropping him off while receiving half their payment, and not involved themselves in the fight, even if it meant they wouldn't get the other half.

This attitude of the Autumn's Gate guild which was contrary to many others, made Lucas had a better opinion about them and consider them a more likely option for any possible trips in the future; although Lucas wished more than anything that he wouldn't have to be back here again.

After saying his goodbyes, Lucas departed from the group and headed elsewhere.

"He's a strange person." Lisa, the female vice leader of the guild, said in a low voice as she stared at Lucas' departing silhouette. Beside her, as well as the target of her statement was the guild leader of the Autumn's Gate guild Crimson Fang.

"Indeed. I had a feeling about that." Crimson Fang replied.

"Is that why you decided to protect him?" Lisa glanced at him.

"Someone, despite not even being a true stellar practitioner, decides to head into the Astranian Forest. Doesn't that sound strange to you?"

Lisa frowned and was about to say something, but Crimson Fang continued.

"Even if he wanted to commit suicide, he didn't need to pay for our services. There are other teams who would send him there for cheap. There are also other destinations he could go to and still achieve the same go. Since he asked for us, he definitely wanted his safety to be ensured. That means, he intended on coming back. However, he is still weak.

So I wondered, what made him so confident and daring? Was it stupid ignorance, or did he really have something to rely on?"

However, Lisa wasn't satisfied as she countered.

"And you decided to bet on him? But that's not enough. We don't even know what he was doing in there."

"You're right on that. But think more deeper, Lisa. What separates the Astranian Forest from the other regions?" Crimson Fang asked with a mysterious smile.

"It's quite big and is like a hive of different special regions. But the most notable ones are the forest area and the Cicalien Mountains. They aren't too dangerous, yet still possess precious resources." Lisa said after some thinking.

"Hmm," Crimson Fang nodded, before continuing in a mysterious tone, "when I shook hands with him, I felt his palms were a bit tough; tougher than normal. They reminded me of a certain friend of mine working in a particular occupation."

Lisa widened her eyes as she knew what he was implying. This was because she had met that friend of Crimson Fang.

"Do some more background check on him. It wouldn't hurt to know more about our customer." Crimson Fang said before walking away.