

## The Crafts 102

### Chapter 102: A Lie

"It's over." Someone quietly whispered.

Even though the Hozier-class Halberd's rating hadn't been called out yet, many doubted it could beat Lucas' dagger. A rating of 3 just about meant that the energy loss was at the level of a premium model vestige.

Even if by some stroke of luck, the Hozier-class Halberd was at the same rating, it would be a tie, but Lucas would win the duel as he was currently leading. As for winning? Only a peak premium model vestige could top this level and the Hozier-class Halberd wasn't one.

As expected, when the robo-tester called out the rating for the Hozier-class Halberd, it was a rating of 4, which meant that Lucas had won the vestige duel.

"Incredible."

Many stared at the dagger, not Lucas, in surprise. To the crowd, Lucas was just someone running the stall on behalf of the actual vestige-smith, so they didn't pay much attention to him. Rather, it was the vestige as well as the mysterious identity of the vestige-smith behind it, that got them talking.

"Since we're done, pay up." Lucas beckoned the freelancer.

"You, you cheated. Otherwise how?" The freelancer pointed at him and spat.

"This again?" Lucas frowned.

"That's enough." The overseer appeared angered as he glanced at the freelancer.

"Are you doubting my judgement once again?"

The freelancer hesitated a second, but bit the bullet.

"It can't be helped. Otherwise, how do you explain some unknown brat pulling out a dagger that could beat a Hozier-class Halberd?"

"The new replaces the old. It's not impossible for an upstart to be able to surpass an existing company." The overseer argued.

"Ha. That only works after a bit of experience. As for the vestige-smith of this dagger, we know nothing about them. Heck, we've never heard of them before." The freelancer mocked as he pointed to Lucas.

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"What's more, this fellow claims to actually be a vestige-smith? A human? As a vestige-smith? Don't make me laugh. He's clearly hiding the real identity of the vestige-smith for a reason."

The freelancer made a good point which caught the attention of the crowd. Although stalls could have anyone operate them and even participate in a vestige duel on the behalf of the vestige-smith - like with the manager of the Gold Rain Factory had done the previous day- this was only for the owner of the stall. If it were otherwise, one would have to declare the vestige-smith they were representing.

The freelancer's argument was that Lucas didn't use a vestige forged by the vestige-smith who owned the stall, but had used a different vestige from a higher ranked vestige-smith, and failed to declare such. While there was no evidence for this, suspicion didn't necessarily need one as long as the statement was convincing.

Lucas, at this point, was tired of the farce and accusation.

"You can say whatever you want, but you still owe me and you can't default on that. Considering that the overseer had already done a preliminary investigation and found nothing, by tradition, I'm innocent and your accusation is a sham. Since you've lost, you have to fulfill your side of the bet.

As for any other concerns, those should be touched upon after further investigations, if you wish to do so. The convention will be ongoing for at least two more days, which should be enough time for your investigation."

In a vestige duel, the overseer played the role of a referee and monitored the process. Since the overseer had previously admitted that Lucas was not cheating, by right, Lucas was innocent of all accusations. Even if the freelancer had his suspicions, he still had to go by the rules of a vestige duel.

The freelancer could continue his investigation after the duel, and if he turned out to be right, the duel's result would be cancelled. A new one might also be done, or the win awarded to him, depending on what the freelancer wanted.

However, at the moment, the freelancer had to follow the rules, and by the rules, it was technically his loss.

"He's right about that." The overseer suddenly chipped in.

Originally, he intended to stay out of this, but the freelancer had been calling his judgement to question which had irritated him. Also, what Lucas said made sense. It followed the standard, and it also gave leeway for doubt.

The five-day Silver Fig Trade Convention would still be going on for two more days as this was only the third day. Two days was enough time for the freelancer to request some experts from the organizers to check the equipment for any modifications.

"Indeed. He's right."

"True. This is a vestige duel so we have to stick to the rules of a vestige duel."

Lucas' supporters, or rather, the supporters of the dagger, all sided with Lucas' statement. Not only did they do so because it was correct, but because the freelancer had actually offended them by questioning their tradition.

Vestige duels were almost ritualistic to vestige-smiths, and they abhorred the practice of cheating. But at the same time, they hated when someone questioned a duel without solid evidence and only mere prejudice.

"Hmph. Fine. But I'll see how long you can laugh."

The freelancer snorted and sent Lucas the money.

With one hundred federal coins in his wallet, Lucas could finally let out the stifled breath he had been holding in. He could finally eat good food and not be frugal with his money.

As soon as the duel was settled, a few freelancers and agents from vestige businesses came over to Lucas. Without a doubt, they all wanted to know more about the vestige, its creator, and its availability status.

If Lucas handled the matter well, he could easily complete the one hundred customers mission from the system.

"Good day. Can we talk to the vestige-smith please? Or at least have his contact info?" One of the men said.

Lucas didn't answer right away. From past experiences, it was clear that no one would believe he was the vestige-smith. Even Harry, his number one customer and closest acquaintance, still believed that there was a reclusive vestige-smith behind the store despite Lucas having stated otherwise.

If Lucas were to be honest to these men, many would doubt him and presume he intends to swindle them. Some might also look down on him for that. Although Lucas could prove the truth by displaying his skill before them, that would be very disadvantageous to him.

If he did so, Lucas might end up being tagged as a 'spy' from Digress city-state, as his techniques - which allowed humans to create vestiges- was something that should probably only be possible in Digress city-state.

There was also the glaring issue of Lucas' weakness. Who could tell when one of these men would attempt to kidnap him in order to steal his techniques for themselves or have him slave all day and night for them?

All these added to his worries and made Lucas reach a simple conclusion; to create a fake individual.

"I'm sorry, but my master strictly mentioned that I do not provide any of his personal details."