

## The Crafts 104

### Chapter 104: A Frog In The Well

"Duel over. The win goes to Seven Sparks Forge." The overseer announced.

"Wow. That's the seventh straight win now, right?"

"Damn. He's been steam rolling everyone that came by."

"Incredible."

After beating the freelancer in a vestige duel, Lucas didn't have the time to take things easy. He was swarmed by a group of agents and reporters, who were covering the convention. The discussions mostly centered on the dagger, whether there were other vestiges like it, and the identity of the vestige-smith.

Lucas answered the first two truthfully, while sticking to his cover-up lie for the last question.

However, even when he was done with all the queries, Lucas still had a lot more to do. There was still the other mission from the system, with even better rewards. Lucas didn't plan on letting that mission go, as the rewards were too attractive for him, and it would also help boost his renown.

Luckily, Lucas didn't have to do much. Less than two hours later, a vestige-smith had appeared to challenge him to a duel.

The news about what had taken place had already made some rounds, and alerted a few vestige-smiths. After all, the dagger had managed to beat a Hozier-class Halberd in a vestige duel. This meant that the vestige-smith's skill was worth taking note of, and beating such a person would aid their fame.

Those confident in the task had appeared to challenge Lucas to a vestige duel. They were smart enough to use a Grade 3 vestige, as the stats of the Grade 2 dagger was something none of them could beat. However in the end, they failed; all of them.

Seven vestige-smiths and businesses, seven duels, seven wins for Lucas.

"Is there anyone who can even stop him?"

"In this region? I don't think so. The difficulty level of his opponents need to be increased for us to find the boundary."

While the spectators and 'analysts' discussed about the duels, Lucas was quietly seated beside his stall as before.

The seven vestige duels were quite profitable, not just in terms of the exposure they gave him, or the fact they helped fulfill his mission quota; they were actually profitable in monetary terms.

Following the vestige duel with the freelancer, Lucas decided to add a bet to all other duels. The vestige-smiths, who were desperate to beat him, didn't mind as they were confident in their works. But with their loss came expressions of shock while Lucas smiled counting his earnings.

From all eight vestige duels, Lucas had made more than three hundred federal coins.

'Seven duels are done but I have to complete twenty. However, the second Bronze grade card's power level depends on the strongest vestige-smith I'll face.' Lucas thought.

By vestige-smith, the system referred to the creator of the vestige and not the person standing in for the duel. So, if Lucas were to beat a stall's Grade 4 vestige as his highest rank duel, once he completed the mission, the second Bronze grade card would copy the power level of the vestige's creator.

The creator of a Grade 4 vestige was usually at least at the seventh level of the Apertures Opening stage.

A Bronze grade card at the seventh level was enough for Lucas to easily take on any opponent in the West Wing district. Even the entire Autumn's Gate guild would lose to him in combat. Sadly, the requirements for Lucas to make a Grade 4 vestige capable of challenging a Grade 4 masterpiece were arduous. He would also have to depend on one of the more heinous forbidden techniques to pull it off.

However, that didn't mean that he couldn't aim for those just a bit lower.

"Today's the fourth day of the convention. Aren't you going to reveal your masterpiece?" Someone suddenly asked Lucas.

Lucas glanced at the speaker and saw it was a previously unfamiliar but now familiar face. The speaker had been present for a few of his duels and also participated in the negotiations the previous day, making Lucas recall her identity. The speaker was a woman, and from her introduction the previous day, she was an agent of a vestige business called Novanio Tech.

Novanio Tech was a vestige business that dealt in the wholesale and retail sale of types of vestiges, specifically stellar processors. They were quite big for a company, but the vestige industry was a difficult one and Novanio Tech had many competitors due to that.

Recently, they've been trying to expand into the weapons market, but as all the top vestige-smiths were either working for a vestige-smithing business or started their own, Novanio Tech was facing difficulties entering the market.

The famed tech company decided to search low for vestige-smiths with potential and have them sign a supply contract with them. However, their standards were quite high, so they had yet to find a good partner. Even Lucas was still on their consideration list.

Nonetheless, Lucas didn't care about that.

"My masterpiece? I don't think there's anyone here worth making me show it." Lucas stated as a matter-of-fact.

The crowd went wild at his statement and soon enough, those words were spread around the region.

The public square was large and was segmented into three regions for the Silver Fig Trade Convention. The region Lucas stayed in was for the lower ranked vestige-smiths and companies - those at the bottom and near it. In this region, Lucas was already quite popular and many people were watching his every move, waiting to see his masterpiece.

So, within the first thirty minutes after the statement was made, over seventy percent of the stalls in the region have already gotten the info.

"That bastard. Who does he think he is because of a few wins?"

"A mere errand boy actually has such guts?! And a human being at that? We need to put him down to his place!"

"Just one good win, and a mere seven lucky ones and he thinks he's something?"

"...I don't agree with you there. Seven wins can't really be lucky, right?"

"Yeah, true. Ahem, I meant, seven wins against weak opponents, how's that?"

"Much better for our propaganda."

The various vestige-smiths and stall managers reacted differently, but one thing they all had in common was that they believed Lucas was tooting his horn.

Just then, a fresh announcement appeared on the forums.

A masterpiece from one of the top 10 companies had just been unveiled.

This immediately attracted attention as everyone wanted to know more about it. However, this was just the start. By the time it was 12pm, four hours after the start of the day's event, eight more companies had unveiled their masterpiece and six vestige-smiths who were popular in the community joined in as well.

West Wing district was home to a lot of freelancers, so it was filled with many vestige-smiths; after all, vestige-smithing was an occupation just like any other, only much more difficult to succeed in and requiring more talent. As a result of this, there were quite a few companies and businesses founded by vestige-smiths, but only less than twenty stood out in the West Wing district.

In a virtual press conference by one of the top twenty companies, the reporters caused a commotion, trying to have their questions answered.

"Sir, you just released your masterpiece vestige today, rather than tomorrow. Are you that confident in your work?" One of the reporters asked.

"Of course. As a vestige-smith, it's only natural to have faith in our products. This time around, although our masterpiece is only at Grade 3, it's still capable of competing with some Grade 4 vestiges out there, in the right hands." A middle-aged man with silver hair and black eyes responded.

He was a vestige-smith and the creator of the masterpiece. Usually vestige-smiths wouldn't attend the convention until the fourth or fifth when the masterpiece would be unveiled, and the man had appeared just for that.

Another reporter asked, "Excuse me, sir. I don't know whether you're aware, but there's a stall from the lower grounds making rounds recently. The stall has consecutively won eight vestige duels and one of them was against a Hozier-class Halberd, albeit a Grade 2 one, while the other duels were with Grade 3 vestiges.

Recently, the manager of the stall announced that no one is worthy of seeing their masterpiece. What do you think about that? Or to be specific, do you think your vestige is up to the task?"

It was clear what the reporter's intentions were, but he wasn't reproached by anyone. Gossip sold better than documentaries, and what these reporters wanted was a tale to sell. Intentionally brewing rivalry was also a common tactic they used to create a story.

The silver haired man was aware of this, but he simply smiled in response.

"A stall from the lower grounds actually thinks no one is worthy? Well, I don't have much to say about that. It's like our ancestors used to say; a frog in the well knows nothing. As for challenging the stall to a vestige duel? That would be equivalent to insulting our masterpiece. But I don't mind playing around with him with some random vestige.

I think that alone should be enough."