

## The Crafts 113

Chapter 113: Notification From The EVL

[[ Mission Description: Consecutively defeat twenty vestige-smiths in a vestige duel before the convention is over. Host is to not take any loss or reject a vestige duel during the duration of the mission.

Reward: Two Bronze Grade Cards (fourth level, second card's level depends on the level of the strongest vestige-smith the host defeats: sixth level).

Status: Completed

Accept Rewards: Y/N ]]

Seating opposite the checkout counter in the store, Lucas accepted the rewards for the mission. His stock of Bronze Grade cards was now brought up to three, making Lucas feel much safer.

The first card came from the mission he received to get one hundred customers within one month. The card was at the third level, and the weakest compared to the other two, however, Lucas wasn't bothered. In his hands, the strength of a third level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner could compare to a fourth level's.

Even with the advancements in genetic research, humankind was still with a limit. As for Lucas, he had lived for over five hundred years and experienced so many events and battles. His battle experience was something no human on the planet could compare to. At the same time, he was also a genius.

However, the said genius was now counting his profit with a money-grubber-like smile on his face.

'Hehe. Twenty vestige duels but if I exclude the three who gave up before the duel, that's seventeen duels. If I include the one with that freelancer, that's eighteen. Multiply that by fifty and I'm rich. Damn you, system~ You can't touch this.' Lucas couldn't help but chuckle like a kid who just stole a lollipop.

Although odd, this behaviour couldn't be helped.

The Silver Fig Trade Convention let Lucas know the difference between himself and the other vestige-smiths. This didn't just apply to skill but also finances. Whereas the vestige-smiths didn't mind gambling away fifty federal coins, Lucas was penniless at the start. Fifty federal coins deducted from his account was enough to bring him close to debt.

One cause for this was the system's taxes, but in truth, it couldn't be blamed as much. The major reason for Lucas' miser behaviour was the crazy expenses he made when making a powerful vestige.

Lucas' limit when solely using the Blood Energy Circulation technique was Grade 2. Any higher and he would have to use the other forbidden techniques instead, or Lucas would die of exhaustion.

The Materialization Technique required quality materials, and the higher the grade of the vestige, the more valuable and powerful the material had to be. To a vestige-smith or blacksmith, using precious materials just to draw energy out of them was wasteful and Lucas felt the same.

This meant that only the last two techniques could be considered. However, of the two, the Soul Dismantling Spell was ruthless and denied one a chance at reincarnation. Hence, the only available option was the Blood Plundering Technique, but for this, Lucas couldn't go around committing massacres, so he had to pick the next best option; using the blood of desolate beasts.

Each Grade 3 vestige Lucas made took a lot from his pocket as he had to buy enough desolate beasts to provide the energy for the creation. So, even with the impressive amount he regularly made from sales, he would still have to spend a boatload for the next vestige-smithing. This would continue until the system reached level 5 and gave him the key to practising stellar refinement.

"Now, to settle this." Lucas stared at a few documents projected in front of him.

Today was the sixth day of the Silver Fig Trade Convention, and although not officially a part of the event, it was the day of the auction. However, Lucas didn't attend it. He didn't even put the brown shield up for auction. The reason was a bit complicated.

Originally, Lucas thought the process for the auction was simple: create a good vestige, it gets appraised, you get qualified for the auction, it's sold, and you get your money. But the truth was different.

First off, being qualified by the appraisers and invitee was just one step. To boost the value of the goods and reassure the participants of the auction on the values of the vestiges, there was a contract every vestige-smith, who has their vestige recommended, had to sign. It was an exclusivity agreement.

The details of the agreement went two ways, and the vestige-smith could decide which of them to go by. The first option was that the auctioned vestige would not be replicated or reproduced in another form within the next three years. The only exception to this is if the vestige-smith intended to use an upgraded version to partake in the following year's Silver Fig Trade Convention.

The second option was that the vestige-smith would be granted a limited number of replica slots for five years, and not produce more than that. Usually, the number of slots was limited to seven, but could be reduced to five, depending on the Silver Fig Trade Convention organisers' evaluation of the vestige.

Another important detail in the agreement was that the organizers would take a seven per cent cut from the vestige. There was also a priority sell option to them if the vestige-smith chose the second option and intended to sell the replicas.

These, as well as a few other little details, were what caught Lucas' attention and made him refuse the invitation. Although the popularity and money he would make would have been significant, Lucas didn't like the binding nature of the contract. He wasn't averse to contracts, but the clauses just weren't to his liking.

Irrespective of whichever option it was, Lucas refused it and, as a result, didn't use his invitation to attend the event. What point was there going, especially since the destination was an expensive area?

Lucas changed the documents being projected into something else. This time around, it was still a document, but the details were different. This was a draft contract; an MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) sent by Lucy. The document detailed how their cooperation would go. Lucas, or rather the vestige-smith behind him, would mass produce as many vestiges as he could, and they would buy them all.

It wasn't a labour contract, as Novanio Tech could not determine a fixed number of vestiges Lucas would make. It was a contract of equality where whatever one side produced, the other side would buy.

The MOU also detailed that Novanio Tech would have exclusive distribution and sales rights in the regions outside of Baylands City. This wasn't a problem for Lucas, as he only had and operated one store, which couldn't cover the entire city-state. The city alone was more than enough for him at the moment.

Overall, the contract was okay, but what Lucas had a problem with was the pricing. The MOU stated that Novanio Tech would only purchase the items at a maximum price of twenty percent above market price. However, the system set the prices of the vestiges and all of them exceeded seventy percent, much less a meagre twenty percent.

This contract might be attractive to others, but to Lucas, it was bland and out of consideration.

Just as he thought this, Lucas' communicator let out a ding. As he glanced at the mail, Lucas was surprised as well as delighted.

The mail came from the Eretrian Vestige-smith League and it was a notification to inform him about the date for the exceptional basis examination.

When Lucas had gone to the EVL building in the West Wing district before, he was rejected from the registration process as he was a human. Being an official registered vestige-smith with the league would give a ton of benefits, and it would create connections for Lucas. He would also have an official identification badge that would have him recognised as a vestige-smith.

If he were to keep running the shop without these, it might end up troublesome at some point in the future. However, the rejection had affected his plans.

In the end, Lucas chose the second option, which was to take the exams for exceptional individuals.

The EVL only accepted bona-fide vestige-smiths, and the only time an exception was made would be when the applicant was a genius with potential and a passion for vestige-smithing. They would then, under recommendation from a registered vestige-smith, apply for membership on an exceptional basis. After an exam, the individual would be registered as a member if they passed.

Failure, however, didn't just mean that they won't be accepted but that one could no longer try to register as a member through this method.

The notification was a message informing Lucas of the time, date and location for the exam.

"Central Prefecture district. I guess in the end, I'll still be going over there today."

The location was within the Central Prefecture district, and the date for the exam was the next day. In order not to miss it, Lucas had to depart today as the exam was in the morning of the next day.