

The Crafts 119

Chapter 119: First Place Is A What?

"Time's up."

A voice sounded in the virtual world.

Lucas glanced at the finished vestige before him and felt a bit satisfied. It looked like a handgun but with a futuristic appearance and strange hieroglyphs carved all over it. The weapon was powered not by bullets but by a stellar energy capsule Lucas had also created at the same time.

This meant that even if one was a Body Strengthening stage practitioner, or even worse, a human, they could still use the vestige. However, compared to a stellar practitioner who could utilise stellar energy, their power output would be weaker and they would be using only a portion of the vestige's real power.

'Doesn't matter anyway. This is a virtual world and none of this is real.' Lucas thought as he studied the handgun.

Since it was a vestige created using his new theory, it wasn't just as simple as a weapon that could shoot stellar energy lasers. Apart from the runes that could boost the power output of the rounds depending on how much stellar energy the user imbued, or the other runes with complementary features, there was one special rune inscribed on the handgun. It was called a transformation rune.

When the transformation magic rune on the handgun was activated, it could reshape the handgun into a dagger. However, it was not just any normal dagger. As the original form of the vestige was a handgun, some of its properties would be maintained despite the modification made to it. For instance, the magic runes inscribed on it.

While this might not sound as much when one considers that in its handgun form, the vestige's working principle, it becomes a bit different.

The vestige, in its handgun form, is powered by a stellar energy capsule, which can be substituted with the user's stellar energy. Through the internal workings with the assistance of some runes, the stellar energy is compressed into a somewhat unstable pellet that is fired at great speed.

The pellet is capable of withstanding the air resistance for a while before setting off once it exceeds its maximum tolerance level. It could also explode upon contact with an obstruction, giving it impressive firepower that could even damage the scales of a defence-type desolate beast. However, that's not the point.

The point is that this entire mechanic is preserved even after the handgun transforms into a dagger.

In other words, the dagger would possess the ability to fire projectiles, albeit not as accurate or enhanced as its handgun counterpart.

'However, in close range, the effect is much more impressive.' Lucas smiled.

Hot weapons have the problem of limited power. A gun would usually produce roughly the same amount of power even if fired multiple times. One could use factors such as wind direction and speed to their advantage, especially in the case of a sniper rifle, but it's not like the environment would always be on your side.

That limitation also exists for gun-type stellar vestiges, and it's more pronounced as factors such as wind can't affect it as much. Although runes can help boost the power considerably, it remains limited. But this is entirely different.

It is a well-known fact that the maximum velocity a bullet attains is at its muzzle. Upon exit, it begins to lose this velocity with time. Velocity, in turn, affects the power of a gun. This is because momentum is affected by velocity, and it can define how much damage a bullet can cause. This law also applies to stellar energy, as all energy possesses mass.

If a gun was fired at point blank, it would possess its strongest force at that moment. Then imagine if it was fired from the inside of the target.

When transformed into a dagger, the vestige could be used to pierce the target. Once successful, the user could activate the runes and fire a laser from within the target. Compared to shooting from the outside in its handgun state, the damage caused by this would be more deadly to the enemy.

'This should sell well in the real world.' Lucas thought as the virtual world began to fade out of existence.

In the next second, his consciousness recovered in his body. Lucas knew this because he could feel a weary sensation as he opened his eyes, and his soul felt different here. In the virtual world, it felt free and open, but at the moment, it was somewhat stuffy and contained.

Taking off the headgear, he left the room filled with people just like him and exited.

Continue reading at empire

As with the theoretical test, the examinees won't be made aware of the results just yet. Only after everything had been calculated and no cheating was confirmed, would the results be announced.

'System, nothing should go wrong, right?' Lucas asked the system once he returned to the waiting lobby.

Recalling how he had requested the system to prevent the virtual world's artificial intelligence from monitoring him, Lucas was a bit worried that the examiners would feel something was up.

"Host should not be afraid. The system ensured to cleanse all tracks, up until the point the vestige was completed. As it is a virtual world, cheating is almost impossible, and no one would believe that it could be hacked either, even more so by a human. The examiners would most likely summarise it as an equipment fault.'

Lucas felt relieved by the explanation.

"Hey, Lucas," Havos called out as he walked towards him.

"Well, how was it?"

"It was okay." Lucas calmly responded.

'Another okay?' Havos' lips twitched as he began to feel sad for Lucas.

'It was okay' was a line used after an exam by people who usually didn't do great. That, or a genius who felt nothing about it. But no matter how Havos looked at things, Lucas was definitely not a genius.

"Oi, Maxxy. How did you do?" Vergil appeared once again and shouted.

"You should stop being so obsessed with me." Maximillus glanced at him and frowned.

"Tch. You don't always have to be so stuck up. Chill out, party a bit more often, and hang out with the ladies." Vergil grinned.

"I wonder what your sister thinks about your lifestyle."

Vergil froze at the comment and gritted his teeth, before walking away with a huff.

In the Mertens family, there are currently two geniuses in the younger generation. One of them was the family's first-ever vestige-smith genius, who was Vergil. However, the other was a stellar practitioner genius and Vergil's older sister, Laura Mertens.

Born with an m(o)DNA count of 27%, Laura was termed a destined genius from birth. With such bloodline purity, it meant that she could boost it using m(z)DNA serums to get a total mDNA concentration of up to 30%. 30% was the hallmark requirement to reach the peak of the Apertures Opening stage.

Every family head, famous freelancer, and even the city lord had at least this much mDNA concentration in their body. In other words, Laura was a potential family head figure.

Being born with potential was one thing, but she exhibited the skills and growth rate of a genius. It was said that Laura achieved the first level for the Apertures Opening stage at fourteen. At the age of sixteen, she had already reached the second level of the Apertures Opening stage, a level that most would get to in their early or mid-20s.

When Laura was eighteen, she was well into the third level. At the age of twenty, Laura had achieved the fourth-level status.

At the moment, she was currently twenty-four years old, and not much was known about Laura's stellar level. But by following the pattern of progress every two years, it was estimated that she was at the sixth level. Even if one were to consider the fact that going higher became more difficult as of the fourth level, she would still be at least at the fifth level.

With such a sibling older than him, it was rumoured that Vergil was overshadowed by her brilliance and had focused more on vestige-smithing rather than stellar refining, as he saw no chance to surpass her. Many also suggested that his bad boy behaviour was his act of rebellion against the 'treatment' he received from his family.

As for what was true or false, only Vergil and the direct family members of the Mertens family knew, but that didn't stop Maximillus from attacking him.

Lucas took all this in strides and didn't think much about it. Second, third or fourth generation rich kids—even one-hundredth generation- Lucas had seen all. He could surmise, from his experience, that the upper class was a murky water.

After a few minutes of waiting, it was time for the results to be announced, but there was a delay in the examiners' room.

"What did you say?!" A man in a white gown roared at the humanoid robot before him.

Despite being a robot, the humanoid being actually displayed signs of fear at the man as it stuttered.

"F, f, first place, is a human."