

The Crafts 131

Chapter 131: Stellar Circuits

One week later...

The past week had gone by with Lucas focusing his efforts on the open deals and commissions he had. Thanks to the tome, 'Introduction to Vestige-smithing', Lucas had an abundance of knowledge to try out. Compared to his previous self, his skills had increased by at least one step.

Using the new knowledge, Lucas incorporated it, together with his techniques, into the vestiges he was either commissioned to make or repair, creating an entire new brand and ideology that belonged to him. Once he was done with any crafted vestige, Lucas would carve an insignia on it—a hammer surrounded by seven stars.

A logo was very important in building a brand, even in the vestige-smithing industry. Every renowned vestige-smith had one, and a vestige with their crest on it was usually treated as a high quality artefact. Although Lucas wasn't exactly renowned, the "vestige-smith behind him" was.

As the one behind the brown shield that appeared in the top 20 vestiges for the year rankings in Baylands City, it was only right for such a vestige-smith to be termed as renowned and highly skilled.

During this past week, many people had come to check out the store that belonged to this mysterious vestige-smith. However, when some of them found out the one running it was a human, they were turned off and left. A few of them did remain behind, but after seeing the prices, their disgust was raised to another level and they stormed off.

Nonetheless, Lucas was unbothered. This was because there were still some who remained, squeezed their purses, gritted their teeth and paid for the items, hoping they would luck out and the rumours worth something. When they compared the vestiges with the seven star hammer insignia to other vestiges, they were pleasantly surprised and relieved.

News began to spread about a vestige-smith store that made high quality goods, much better than the others and Lucas was getting more customers daily. However, there was still a limit to this.

In the end, prejudice came out on top. Many of those who heard the news were skeptical about it. The fact that a human ran the store and the identity of the vestige-smith was mysterious, made them all the more inclined not to even bother. So even after all the publicity Lucas had gained, he only had an average of twenty to fifty customers a week; most of whom were there for the maintenance services.

Business was slow, and could even be called bad, but it didn't dampen Lucas' mood. Unlike the other vestige-smith stores, Lucas didn't take on any losses. Although he had to give the system a cut, and settle taxes with the city—something he discovered recently and almost got arrested for — Lucas still made a lot of money.

Today, he was working on a vestige which he intended to release in the market through the Novanio Tech. He had already agreed on an MOU with the company through Lucy, but Lucas didn't want to release typical vestiges into the market. To make a name, he needed to stand out.

As for why Lucas wanted to make a name for the business, he found out that missions were related to that in some way. The majority of missions he got from the system were all related to a hallmark achievement with the store.

Whether it was his first customisation order which brought about the mission to go to the Wastelands, the mission regarding gaining one hundred customers, or even the vestige duels, they were all in some way related to the store. Lucas figured out that the bigger and more popular the store got, the more missions he would receive.

The more missions he received, the faster the system would level up, aiding Lucas to achieve his goal of stellar refinement.

The vestige currently on the work bench was shaped like a spear, but it was different. The shaft was slightly thicker than regular spears, but the difference wasn't so much as to be recognisable at a glance. There were more cryptic runes on the vestige and some of them even appeared to be stellar matrices. This was the very first vestige of Lucas that had a stellar matrix on it.

However, that wasn't all.

Inscriptions, as they were generally called, were carvings and scribbles that possessed the bizarre ability to act as a conduit for mysterious energy, utilising it in such a way that they would generate a desired effect. A Strengthening rune or matrix would make whatever it was inscribed upon stronger once stellar energy was imbued into the rune or matrix.

'The major inscriptions commonly are runes and matrices, and every vestige-smith knows one or two about them.'

Stellar matrices are the products of the hyumankin and humankind's utmost efforts and struggles. As for runes, they were techniques from archaic or conquered civilisations. The magic runes Lucas used could similarly be classified as runes, although they have never appeared in this world.

'However, from the tome, it seems like there's an additional type of inscription known as circuits.'

Based on the tome, Circuits were inscription methods quite similar to the hyumankin's stellar matrix but with its differences and innovations.

A stellar matrix could be considered to be an amalgamation of humanity's electrical circuit theory and ideas with the runic technology of alien species. This didn't make it superior to the runic methods, but introduced a whole bunch of new concepts and ideas, while simplifying runes for humans, enabling them to use it even with their lack of stellar energy manipulation.

Circuits appeared to be similar, having an almost identical conception and foundation with stellar matrices, but it was more complex.

To understand better, it was like the difference between high school mathematics and engineering mathematics. Both were indeed mathematics, but the latter was much more complex, and advanced than the former. This was the same with stellar matrices and circuits.

Compared to stellar matrices that were a version of runic technology made simple for humans and hyumans, circuits were a much more complex inscription system that focused on performing more intense calculations and activities.

In other words, the effect a circuit could generate with a limited amount of stellar energy was more than a rune or a stellar matrix could do with the same amount of stellar energy.

Naturally, with this massive difference in effect, there was also an intense difficulty in learning. But, who was Lucas?

A genius blacksmith and forger as well as the youngest grandmaster of his world, a three-time Renobel prize winner in both physics and chemistry and could have been more if he didn't spend his time working for his country or meet his untimely death at the age of 37. In summary, Lucas was a heaven-defying genius when it came to material science and runic technology.

If it would take others thirty years to figure out, it would take him only three months of dedication.

What's more, the 'Introduction to Vestige-smithing' tome had smoothly transferred all the required knowledge into his head, so Lucas had no trouble understanding it.

In this past week, Lucas had already gotten used to inscribing stellar circuits, which were circuits made to support stellar energy activation and usage. For the advanced repair jobs he got, he wiped off the runes and stellar matrices on the vestiges and replaced them with magic runes and stellar circuits.

One reason for this was that the latter were more efficient, but another reason was that only he had this knowledge. In other words, if a problem crops up, or the owner wanted an upgrade, they would have to come back to him.

"Capitalism at its finest."

The system had commented after it read his mind and understood his thought process.

However, Lucas couldn't really be blamed for this. It wasn't his fault that no one knew about stellar circuits or the magic runes from his world. Although he could share the knowledge with others, was there any reason to do so? Ignoring that part, doing so might bring trouble for him, and trouble was the last thing Lucas wanted right now.

"Let's get to work."

Lucas took a deep breath and stared at the vestige. He was yet to hire an employee, so Lucas still depended on the forbidden techniques for stellar energy. This time around, he used the Materialization Technique which extracted mystical energy from unique materials.

The reason for choosing this technique was that unlike blood energy, the mystical energy contained in Erete's unique material was stellar energy. In the future, Lucas would be able to use

stellar energy, so it was best to have his presentation item appear as close as how it would be in the future.

Stellar circuit doubled as a conduit system for stellar energy while also using said stellar energy to generate an effect just like runes and stellar matrices. However, it required more calculations to pull off than the other two, and there was no margin for errors when inscribing one.

Staring at the vestige before him, Lucas activated the Materialization Technique and began to draw stellar energy from an ingot of Purple Iridium metal, which was more than capable of serving his needs. He achieved this through a use of formations and runes he drew, which required no mystical energy to pull off.

After all, the Materialization Technique was made with the idea that the user couldn't harness mystical energy.

The formation and runes combined together, appeared like a magic circle from a fantasy novel as they began to glow green. Lucas took out a carving pen, which was a vestige he made to help carve inscriptions better and accurately on vestiges. The vestige also had a similar formation as with the ingot, but it was slightly different.

At the same time, it also released a glow, but the time with the colour blue.

The stellar energy that was drawn out from the metal was attracted onto the carving pen through the formation inscribed on it. The energy then flowed into the pen, which let out a hum as this happened.

Lucas took a deep breath, focused his mind and leaned closely to the vestige. He had already determined the appearance and function of the stellar circuit, had made the right calculations to ensure that the designs were perfect, and had simulated its effectiveness as well as the inscription procedure. All that was left was to carry out the task.

Carving an inscription was just like carrying out a surgery. It required utmost concentration and steadiness, as even a slight inappropriate shift—even down to a millimetre—during the process could potentially influence the effectiveness of the inscription. As such, one needed an incredibly stable hand.

It was said that a grandmaster could carve an inscription so precise that it wasn't even a picometre [1] off.

One might wonder why this process wasn't done by machines and it was simply because, it wasn't advised. The simulation and calculations could be, but the carving process was needed to be done by hand. Using a machine would greatly lower the effectiveness of the inscription. No one could explain why, but it had been proven countless of times.

But that didn't bother Lucas because he was never a fan of using machines.

Holding his focus, Lucas began to carefully carve the simulated inscription on the vestige.

Since the material of the vestige-smith usually had good strength and hardness, not just any item could be used to carve on it. At the same time, to ensure the inscription remains and was not damaged even during battle, special items methods could be utilised. Some used a unique ink while others instilled more mystical energy to create a protective layer. In Lucas' case, it was a special ink.

The ink was one of the special items provided by the system after the store was renovated.

As the carving pen made a mark on the vestige, thanks to its durable and powerful tip, the stellar-energy infused ink submerged into the vestige, leaving behind a mark on the surface.

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A sound similar to that of acid acting on an object could be heard, but Lucas ignored it as he kept his attention on his job.

As the carving went on, a mark could be noticed on the vestige which was the rudimentary form of the stellar circuit. It took Lucas a full two hours before he had etched the entire circuit on the vestige, but the work wasn't done yet. This was merely the first step, while the second step involved repeating the process but with a different ink.

There was also a third step, but not many knew about it. However, Lucas just happened to be one of them. It was still the same focus as the other two steps, but involved a bit more processes. Due to how strenuous it was, Lucas only used the third step for premium model items like the brown shield he made. As for this vestige, it wouldn't be so lucky as to experience that third step.