

The Crafts 142

Chapter 142: Abode Of Crime

After their short introduction, the human male with a blue mustache left the light-rail train station for his destination, while Lucas made his way over to the Gale block, where the motel that was recommended to him by the man, Virginia's Motel, was situated.

Before doing so, however, Lucas had made an agreement with the man to meet up once again later in the day, at the second recommended location, Don's Cafeteria.

This meeting was brought up by Lucas, and it was to learn more about the city and the district. Being a newcomer, Lucas barely knew much about Alleva district. Although he could look up some information on the intranet, that couldn't compare to a local's knowledge.

For instance, the man had claimed that Alleva district had the nickname of the Abode of Crime, but there was no mention of this on any site.

When evening came, Lucas made his way to the meeting point. It wasn't difficult to locate despite being a newcomer, thanks to the aid of a GPS.

"Yo."

Just as Lucas stepped into the building and looked around, he heard a voice calling out to him. Lucas was sure the voice was speaking to him because it was a familiar one—that of the man he had met earlier during the day.

"You're early." Lucas said as he took a seat opposite the man.

"Well, I had nothing going on for me today, plus someone's taking me out for a treat, so why won't I be?" The man chuckled before ordering some items through the virtual display on the table.

"So, what is it you want to know?" Discover hidden stories at empire

"Everything. I'm pretty much new here, and I don't know how the district works. Heck, I've spent all my life elsewhere, so I don't even know how districts work." Lucas responded.

His behaviour at the moment was different from his usual self. He was more free and expressive.

Growing up alone and having to move from one place to another with his foster father, Lucas had learnt to blend into society, adapt, and relate with others. The only reason why he always kept a cold and unperturbed face in his store was because that was how Lucas wanted to be perceived—someone who was serious and couldn't be joked around with.

Since he was in a different place and needed to fish out information, Lucas decided to act appropriately.

"Don't worry, I've got you." The man laughed as he received his order from the robot that approached them.

"Hmm, let's see. I'll start with Alleva district. Unlike how it supposedly works with the five districts of the capital city, the fifteen districts are different. Each district is like a small state of its own and has a bunch of cities, with one of them functioning as the capital. In Alleva's case, that's where we are now, Sunrise City.

While each city might have a city lord, the district has no head ruler. There's no central authority or standout leader, as with Baylands City's five districts that have the city lord in charge. Instead, each district is governed by a council."

Lucas was amazed by the system of government.

Overall, there was Baylands city-state and the centre of the city-state was Baylands City which was ruled by the Baylands City's city lord, and made up of five districts. At the same time, the city lord of Baylands City was the head of Baylands city-state.

However, the other fifteen districts didn't pair up to form cities as with the five districts of Baylands City. Instead, they expanded their reach and independently created cities of their own, which they lorded over. Alleva district for instance, had over five cities under its rule, excluding the central city, Sunrise City.

Each of the cities had a city lord, but the city lord's jurisdiction only applied to the city. As for the district, it was governed by a council.

"Each district council might have a different number of members, but it has to be a multiple of three, and the minimum is twelve members. For Alleva, we have twenty-one. Large right? Well, it's due to the fact that many interests are involved, so everyone has to be a part."

"Interests? What interests? And who's everyone?" Lucas probed.

"Interests are those stuff that we can't talk about in public. As for the latter part of your question, haven't you ever wondered why, despite being called the Abode of Crime, the central government at Baylands City has done nothing to stop the organised crime activities in Alleva district?" The man smiled mysteriously.

Lucas nodded. He had in fact conceived such a thought in his head before arriving here.

"Well, that's simple. They don't do anything to stop it because they silently approve of it. The best way to stop evil isn't to challenge it or attack it, but to have it under one's control. This is a philosophy the city lord of Baylands City and the head of Baylands city-state abides by, and it has been this way for generations of city lords.

As long as the crimes aren't 'overboard' and done in Alleva district, it is looked over by the government."

Lucas was surprised by this. He felt that such a decision by the city lord was extreme. There were too many dangers and problems associated with it. But regardless, he had to admit that the ideology wasn't entirely wrong.

"Since it's approved to some extent, it is only natural for various parties to want a share of the underground businesses here. After all, dirty money grows faster than clean money. There's a district in Baylands City called the Central Prefecture district, right? I heard it's the place for the fancy and rich guys in the city. But do you know that some of them make their money here? Heh.

Like I said, dirty money grows faster." The man chuckled.

Lucas raised an eyebrow and although he was surprised by this information, it wasn't to the extent of being shocked speechless. Even back on Earth, there were some countries that had secret departments which generated money for them illegally. It was either through drug trafficking or scams. Finding out the same happened here, wasn't much of a shocker.

"Back to what I was saying, ah yes, the council. Alleva's council is made of twenty-one members, and some of them are either voted in by the people, or installed by various influential powers. In fact, the majority of them are as the so-called votes are usually rigged to favour. But don't say that out loud or say you heard it from me. Hehe." The man took a swig out of the large cup of beer.

"Ah~ Beer here hits perfectly."

Lucas didn't rush the man but instead took a sip for the beer as well. On the table in front of them was their meal, which had been brought a while ago by a robot.

The beer tasted nice and it was much better than anything Lucas had on Earth. He tried out the food as well and it was great. Some of them reminded him of some local cuisine from Earth, and Lucas couldn't help but feel nostalgic.

"Great, right? Like I said, Don's recipes are based from human civilisation's era. You can't find them elsewhere but similar stores." The man laughed.

"That's right, I don't even know your name and I haven't introduced myself. You can call me Ardeen." Ardeen said.

"Yohn." Lucas responded.

Since he was in a dangerous place that was risky to trust everyone, it was only natural that Lucas would use a fake name. who was to say that the man before him was truly called 'Ardeen', or that he wasn't a member of some underground mafia that could be connected to Ramirez?

Ardeen didn't suspect a thing and nodded before continuing.

"Back to what I was saying. Alleva district is a pretty dirty place. Since the council is made up of people whose focus is the interests of their backers, the government here is awful. I guess that's why they couldn't handle the beasts tide situation properly and it swelled up."

Lucas' eyes flashed, but he didn't ask about that just yet. So far, he only knew about Alleva district as a whole, or to be particular, the situation of the government. He had yet to truly understand the district itself.

"If that's the case, the cities should be the same, no?"

"You're smart, bro." Ardeen gave him a thumbs up.

"That's right, the cities are no different. The city lords aren't installed by democracy or what shit. The council decides the city lord for each city. Naturally, every one of those corrupt members would try to fight for a position of city lord and install their puppet up there. Having a city under their control makes it easier for them to go around their illegal activities without any worries."

"Why would they be worried? Isn't Alleva open to crime?"

"That's underground, but on the surface, it still has to maintain some level of civility. The security officials also have to squash crime as well. And finally, every member of the council is an opponent to the other.

"Let's say you and I are in the council. I would want to make more than you, cause why not? Without a doubt, you would want to do the same as well. This could create a clash of interests, and we would inevitably become enemies. Once that happens, I will be on the lookout for whatever means I can use to ruin you.

Say, I happen to notice your men trying to pull a stunt in a city under my control; I'll interfere and try to profit from it. Let's say your men are trying to smuggle some nasty drugs or something through my city. I'll have the security agencies seize it, then have you pay a fee or give me an advantage in some other situation in exchange for your shipment to be let off.

"This is what most members are worried about, so they try to control as many cities as possible, while some even make alliances where their interests align."

Lucas couldn't help but finally be stunned by the complexities that hid underneath the city. A web of lies and corruption, one could call it so.