

## The Crafts 143

### Chapter 143: Suspicions

"That's roughly the politics in this place, and I guess explains what goes on here." Ardeen drank from his glass.

"Then, why are you here?" Lucas asked him.

The question might seem simple, but there was an underlying meaning.

Humans were second-class citizens. In some areas, they were even treated as prey. They were occasionally kidnapped as sold as slaves, or even lab rats for biological research purposes. With Alleva district being the centre of crime, human trafficking should be mainstream here, which would make it dangerous for a human to stay in.

"It might sound strange, but Alleva district is actually the safest place in Baylands city-state for humans. Trafficking of intelligent species is the one crime collectively frowned upon, even by the council. The situation with humans here is quite strange to be honest.

"The main reason why human trafficking is illegal is because the various underground organisations need foot soldiers. Most hyumans either pursue a career in freelancing or some other lucrative job. Unlike hyumans however, we humans don't have the luxury of such options. We can only take on menial low-paying jobs, that's if we're lucky to find some. I mean, we have robots doing everything nowadays.

However, in Alleva, it's different." Ardeen said as he glanced at the robot attending to the customers in the building.

"Since most hyumans aren't taking on dirty jobs, and robots aren't, how do you put it, efficient? Yeah, let's go with that. The only option now left for these organisations are humans, and the few hyumans with a low mDNA concentration and no opportunity to turn their life around."

Lucas now understood the situation properly. Thanks to Ardeen's explanations, he could picture how the city worked, which would help Lucas a lot. He then went on to ask for more details, especially about the organisations that ran the district and those who were backed by the council members. Ardeen answered them all as there was no harm in doing so.

Although this information wasn't common knowledge, it wasn't exactly confidential either. People just barely spoke about it in public, but from how he acted, Lucas felt that Ardeen was different. Maybe he just didn't care, or he was a member of one such organisation, but Lucas didn't care.

After getting a rough idea of the district, Lucas then asked for information on the beast tide.

"The beast tide? Why the heck would you want to know about that? Take this advice from me; steer clear of that death wave." Ardeen said as he took a bite from his food.

"The death toll on paper is around five hundred thousand or so, but it's much worse in reality. At least two towns or cities have been wiped out. Considering Alleva district isn't really a place anyone wants to be, a city averages around three to five hundred thousand folks. A town might be the same or a bit less, but two got wiped out.

Sure, emergency measures were in place and many were evacuated from the second town during the raid, but the first—a city— had at least six hundred thousand folks. The second, based on inside reports, were around two hundred thousand casualties, that's a total of eight hundred thousand.

But the news drops this number down to five hundred thousand, which is the population of a single town and 63% of the original number."

"Why would they do that?" Lucas was confused.

It just made no sense.

Five hundred thousand was already a very large casualty count, and in the grand view of things, it as almost no different from eight hundred thousand. A few deaths were a sorrowful event, but large numbers were simply statistics. There was no reason to hide the numbers as the margin wasn't so wide as to matter.

Ardeen didn't respond right away, instead he stared outside the window.

After a short while, he sighed,

"Because those 'excess' casualties are humans."

Lucas went silent at the statement. It was an answer he never expected to receive. He had experienced some prejudice over his species, but over the weeks, Lucas realised it wasn't that bad. The people around eventually warmed up to him and not many treated him as bad.

Even the bad treatment wasn't so terrible, except for the time he was almost kidnapped or the time he was mistreated at the EVL head branch office.

But hearing this, Lucas understood the situation other humans, who weren't as lucky as he was, faced. Lucas had the system to help him when he almost got kidnapped; the same when he was close to death after an assassination attempt, but the other humans didn't. They were also weaker than him, and weren't lucky enough to be a reincarnated genius.

"I need to know more about the beast tides." Lucas seriously said.

The injustice committed against humans wasn't something he could fix as he was. Even if Lucas wanted to do so, he first of all had to get stronger. And to do that, Lucas had to complete all the missions from the system that came his way. Experience new stories on empire

"Still stubborn huh? Well, no problem." Ardeen refilled his cup and drank from it. He then projected a map onto the table

"The first city destroyed was here, Rosewood city." Ardeen pointed at a mark on the map.

"It's towards the south from here. The next was Garena town, northeast of Rosewood city, so roughly southeast of here." Ardeen traced his finger from Rosewood city on the map, to another mark, which was Garena town.

"The security agencies suspect that the desolate beasts are moving eastwards due to this, albeit rising towards the north, so the next possible target would be between these two locations, but this one is more likely."

Lucas glanced at the mark Ardeen's finger currently rested beside.

"Amer city.

...

Knock. Knock.

"Come in."

The door opened and a middle-aged man walked in. He glanced at the old man ahead who was going through some documents. Seeing the aged figure, the middle-aged man bowed to him.

"What's the matter?" The old man asked without raising his head, his attention still on the papers in front of him.

"Our men have sent news from the capital. Apparently, they've spotted the young fellow who got Ramirez into this mess." The man said.

"Hmm? They found the kid?" The old man finally lifted his head, revealing his identity.

He was the city lord of High Brunswick city, as well as the man Ramirez had met with shortly after arriving into the city.

"Interesting. What's that kid doing out here?" The old man asked.

"We haven't ascertained that yet, but I decided to inform you of his presence right away, just in case something might crop up." The middle-aged man replied, his head still bent low.

"You made the right decision. Keep monitoring him for now, and make sure he doesn't notice. Meanwhile, what has Ramirez been up to these days?"

"We can't keep watch on him much as he seems to be on guard almost 24/7. However, we found out that he spends most of his time outside the city with some mysterious figures. While we couldn't track his entire movement, we did notice that one of his recent spots was Rosewood city."

The old man suddenly narrowed his eyes.

"Rosewood city? Before or after?" He asked.

The middle-aged man clearly understood what was meant by the question as he answered without hesitation.

"Before."

"What about Garena?" The old man asked.

"We can't say as we have no men there."

Tap. Tap.

The old man rapped his fingers on the table.

"Get some men to Amer city and Lurdwick town. Have them survey the area to the best they can and to keep a lookout for Ramirez." The old man stopped, then added after a bit of hesitation.

"And that kid too. I have a feeling that we're about to stumble upon something interesting here."

"Yes, sir."

"What about the men Ramirez met with? Anything on them?"

"... nothing." The middle-aged man hesitated before answering.

The old man stared at him, his fingers still tapping the table.

"You know how much I hate hearing those words."

"I, I apologize." The middle-aged man immediately fell to his knees.

The old man then picked up a paper, on it were the details of a certain shipment of drugs.

Even though Alleva district allowed crime to some extent, and he was the city lord of High Brunswick, the old man preferred to record all information related to illegal activities using a paper. This made it possible for him to easily destroy copies and make them irrecoverable.

"The Red Fangs are coming as well, correct?"

"Yes, sir." The middle-aged, who still remained on his knees, responded.

"Have our shipments cleared as quickly as possible. Although their destination isn't here, they would still have to pass by on their way over to Amer city. We can't let them sniffing out our trails. Those fellows don't agree with the rules of the city, and we can't stop them even if we want to. Don't mess this up, otherwise your head alone won't be enough to appease me.

Also, find out the identity of those men Ramirez met with."