

The Crafts 160

Chapter 160: Lucas Versus Ramirez 3

"Arctic Slash."

A deep blue aura suddenly burst from it and darted towards Lucas, bringing with it an intense chill that immediately affected the surroundings.

Lucas, who was still descending from midair, appeared to have nowhere else to go. In fact, he truly didn't as one of the flaws of the vestige was that it couldn't perform consistent boosts. As for the flying function, there was too little energy left, so it looked like Lucas was doomed at the moment.

The blue blade aura from the sword brandished its way to Lucas, and just when it seemed like the battle was coming to an end, Lucas thrust both arms forward.

Once again, the blue light glistened on his gauntlets, letting out a small explosion that impeded the blue blade aura. Thanks to that, Lucas was able to land safely.

However, Ramirez wasn't a one-stroke man. He had appeared beside Lucas just as the latter had landed on the ground, brandishing both swords at Lucas.

At first, Lucas was able to keep up with the attacks and even respond back. But as the battle went on, he noticed that Ramirez was getting faster and faster. Lucas turned to defense and tried to hold his edge, but his opponent's attack speed increased once again and Lucas was now on the receiving end.

In the end, Ramirez was right. There was only so much a vestige could do for Lucas and this was in regards to raw power and not reflexes. The only reason Lucas was dominating at the start was due to his battle experience and knowledge. This allowed him to utilise the raw power effect of the vestige to increase his attack speed.

This was the same logic as using an explosion to move faster, but Lucas did this on a smaller level with more precision. At the same time, he relied on his battle instincts to be able to predict and react to Ramirez's attacks.

Regardless, there was a limit to what Lucas could achieve through this method, and it was still lacking to be able to take on a fifth level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner. If the opponent were a third level, Lucas would easily win. Against a fourth level, he could fight and retreat as he pleased.

However, he still wasn't willing to use a Bronze card just yet. It would grant him a fixed level of strength for two hours, so Lucas valued the item more than anything; except his life of course. Unless he was truly being threatened, he would rather not use it yet.

"Is this all you got?"

Ramirez grinned as his sword managed to slip last Lucas's defence, sending the latter flying back a few metres.

"Where's all that vigour and attitude, huh? In the end, you're just a measly ant relying on a fancy tool."

Lucas lay flat on the ground, groaning as he held on to his side. Although he had on a Grade 3 cuirass that protected him, the force from the slash had passed through. This was still considerably better than being cut into two, but it was still painful.

"Damn it." Lucas cursed as he stood up.

"You still don't know when to quit, huh? No problem, I don't mind having you entertain me some more." Ramirez chuckled as he flexed both wrists.

Bam *Bam*

Dum *Dum*

Just as the two were about to resume their battle, they froze due to their senses picking up something. The stones on the ground shook while the trees vibrated. A series of low dull and thumping sounds were heard by the two, albeit it was still quite faint. The air felt eerie as the events that took place increased in intensity.

This was the sound of death and destruction; the desolate beast tide was approaching.

Although the desolate beasts tide was heading in the direction of Amer city—which was in a direction away from where the duo stood— due to the expansive size of the tide, there was a chance that some of the desolate beasts might spot them. Once that happened, it would be more than just a mere one or two heading towards their location. In the best case scenario, it could even be a small unit, which wasn't too much of a problem.

However, in the worst case scenario, it would be a force as large and powerful as the one that wiped out Southvale village. Against such a force, the duo would have to wait for their deaths as their chances of survival would be slim.

'Looks like I have to end this quickly.' Ramirez thought.

Despite being one of the culprits for this situation, he didn't have a guarantee to ensure his survival if he was caught in it. Hence, Ramirez needed to end the fight quickly and leave.

"I guess you die here then." Ramirez said as his energy shot up once more.

Compared to before, Lucas could sense that he was much stronger. This was the true strength of a fifth level stellar practitioner and not what he has seen earlier.

It probably had to do with the fact that it had been so long since Ramirez had to fight with his full strength, which was why he was losing at the start. But having now warmed up a bit, it was getting back to him.

"Sigh." Lucas took off the helmet that covered his face.

Ramirez raised an eyebrow, wondering what was going on.

"Release." Lucas said, activating the lowest ranked Bronze Grade card in his collection; one that would grant him third level Apertures Opening stage power for two hours.

Ramirez widened his eyes in shock as he could sense the nearby stellar energy being drawn into Lucas' body. Following this dramatic occurrence was a drastic change in Lucas as Ramirez could now sense stellar refinement effects on him. It started from the first level of the Apertures Opening stage before abruptly rising to the second level, only settling down at the third level.

"What was that?"

Ramirez was shook, displaying an obvious expression of both confusion and stupefaction.

Although he had not been to Digress city-state, Ramirez was aware of the secret that allowed humans to exceed the limit of the Body Strengthening stage. However, even that secret could not hide one's strength in plain sight, and it was clear at the start that Lucas was without stellar energy.

This left Ramirez stunned, as he couldn't understand who or even what exactly Lucas was.

However, he quickly recovered after seeing Lucas' newfound energy stabilise. It was only at the third level and shouldn't be a threat to him.

'Wait-'

Just as Ramirez realised something, it was too late; Lucas had already appeared in front of him, even faster than he had ever been before.

'Shit!'

Ramirez cursed inwardly as he moved to the side, but it was as if Lucas had read this move as his leg mover in the same direction and struck Ramirez.

Bam

Ramirez widened his mouth in pain as he was shot back by the force of the kick. The blow was so intense that he had barely maintained hold over his swords.

But Lucas wasn't done yet.

Lucas spread his palm open and faced it in the direction of Ramirez. In the next second, a blue beam of light burst from the gauntlet, darting over to Ramirez at a speed that he could barely react to.

Clang

Ramirez blocked with the blue sword, but it was forced out of his arms by the beam, leaving him exposed to the attack.

Spurt

A hole opened up on Ramirez's right shoulder as he stared appalled at Lucas with pain coursing through his mind. He could feel cold air formed from the passive chill aura of the blue sword go through his wound. He couldn't even feel his right arm again which meant that it was essentially disabled. But despite all of that, Ramirez's thoughts weren't on them. Instead, Ramirez was stricken with fear and agitation.

For the third time in his life as an underground boss, Ramirez was afraid.

The very first time was an incident that made Ramirez retire. The second was when the Evonika-Hyuman crossbreed, Ginon, had met with him and convinced Ramirez to work for them. That was about five years ago, and it was the very first time Ramirez had understood what it meant to truly face death, despite being a former freelancer and at the fifth level.

Today happened to be the third time, but unlike in the previous times, Ramirez was very well aware that he would die today.

Even though he still had his stellar energy, a working arm and his peak quality Grade 3 vestige, Ramirez had no confidence in retaliating. Instead, he felt that doing so would make him no different from a cockroach trying to cling to life by all means, yet dying in the end.

"You, you can't do this to me! You can't! They'll come for you. They'll hunt you to the ends of Erete if you do so!"

Ramirez yelled, fear clearly visible in his eyes as he gripped the red sword tightly with his left hand.

However, his wails did nothing to deter Lucas as the latter had made up his mind long ago.

"Be quiet and die."