

## The Crafts 17

### Chapter 17 : Prejudice

"Excuse me, sir, but the management wants you to leave the building."

Lucas turned around and noticed the speaker was a man standing behind him. Looking at his outfit, he could easily guess that the man was an employee of the store.

As he turned around, Lucas was a bit surprised and questioned,

"Me?"

"That's right, mister. You." The man replied.

"And why's that?" Lucas asked.

The man frowned slightly, seeing as Lucas was still asking questions, but he replied him albeit less pleasantly.

"I've been monitoring you for a while now. From your actions, you seem be loitering around the store rather than meaning to purchase something. Our store doesn't patronise loiterers as they consume space and might affect the business of others. As such, we have to escort them out."

The man then pointed at a billboard hung on the wall.

There was indeed a 'No loitering' sign.

Lucas was surprised that a store actually had such a rule. While reasonable, it might give off a bad impression and seem like a form of mistreatment. But then again, such a rule wasn't exactly bad and gave off a premium air to a store.

However, something was weird about this.

Lucas hadn't even spent five minutes in the store, and he was already deemed to be loitering. If someone said there wasn't something strange happening, he wouldn't believe it.

At that moment, the pride of having sat on high tables and held powerful positions took over him.

Lucas stared at the man with an enigmatic smile as he asked.

"But what makes you think I was loitering?"

"You've spent a lot of minutes wandering around the store, and it's very obvious you can't afford what we sell. Security, please escort this man out of the premises."

At this point, the man was irritated and could no longer bear having a discussion on the topic.

It was then that Lucas understood what was happening. The clothes that he got after the system renovated the store weren't trendy or high fashion but average. That, paired with his identity as a human, Lucas understood a lot.

The security guard wasn't a living being, but a humanoid robot that stood guard by the door. There were three such robots, and one of them walked over after receiving the command.

"Please come with me.

Lucas couldn't sense any sign of life in it, but based just on appearance alone, it looked no different from a human being, even if its bodily expressions were being considered too.

Lucas ignored the robot and pointed at the apparel he was staring at before the drama started.

"Wrap this up for me before I leave."

Both the robot and man were stunned, looking at Lucas with a confused expression.

"What? You don't attend to customers any longer? I want this item wrapped up for me." Lucas said calmly.

The man frowned as he was about to say something when Lucas added with a loud voice, "Last I heard, the store is open to every customer. Or am I wrong?"

Lucas faced the man calmly, without any evident expression on his face.

The man knew that, at this point, he couldn't chase Lucas away. Their clash had already drawn attention, and with Lucas claiming to be a customer, they had to attend to his needs.

Speciesism might exist in Baylands City, but that doesn't mean everyone agrees with this point. An example was when Lucas went to the pub but wasn't treated differently, or when the salesgirl noticed his identity but didn't shoo him away from the store.

With the matter now escalating, the man had to let Lucas be. However, he had a plan. The trenchcoat was quite costly, and unless one either had an impressive amount in their savings or worked a high-paying job like a freelancer, it would be difficult to afford it. On average, humans couldn't work as freelancers due to their genetic disabilities.

As for other high-paying jobs, those usually depended on one's connections, and the connections a human would have in the West Wing district would definitely not be worth much. With all that in mind, the man suspected that Lucas was trying to find a way out.

"Sure, let's get it wrapped for you." The man smiled sinisterly.

'I'll see whether you can afford it or not.'

Lucas and the man walked towards the check counter with the security robot. An order was made for the trenchcoat. A bag was brought by a different salesgirl who was in charge of finalizing purchases.

While all this took place, Lucas remained calm.

The Purple Iridium ingot was pawned for five thousand federal coins. Lucas spent two thousand and eight hundred (2800) coins to purchase the store, leaving him with two thousand and two hundred (2200) coins left. However, after killing the three kidnappers and the spy from before, Lucas rummaged their corpses and retrieved a combined sum of seven hundred coins from both parties.

In truth, he got more, but the cards with the majority of the money were inaccessible to him. The aforementioned amount was in the form of cash and prepaid debit cards. For most prepaid cards, the pins weren't complicated and were sometimes recorded behind the card.

With that much money, he wasn't bothered about the cost of the clothing. The average monthly salary in the West Wing district was four hundred federal coins. Even for freelancers, this was still a sum for most.

Also, this store didn't look all that premium; otherwise, it wouldn't be here. From that, Lucas estimated the trenchcoat to cost less than a thousand, even if it was of high quality. He planned on checking it out later in detail, so one couldn't say that this was a rushed purchase, as Lucas would have both something similar while walking around the street.

Once the salesgirl returned with the item, she also reported the price to Lucas.

Normally, the price is reported before the item is brought, but the man made the salesgirl switch the order. Lucas gleaned from this that the man was probably a high ranking individual in the store.

"Two hundred and seventy five federal coins." The girl said.

Lucas raised an eyebrow, surprised it was 'cheaper' than he thought. However, the man misinterpreted his silence as a concession.

"Well, well well, I think it's ti-"

Before he could go on, he was interrupted by Lucas, who stretched out his hand with a card in it.

"You can process the payment for me now and hand me my item."

At that moment, everyone in the store was stunned. That was two hundred and seventy (270) federal coins, not some cheap change. Even rent in the West Wing district's residential area didn't cost that much, yet Lucas handed it out with an unperturbed expression. This showed that he didn't consider it as much. Then what was 'much'? Their store probably didn't even have such an item.

In that very moment, the man who had singled him out was stunned.