

The Crafts 173

Chapter 173: Retaliation

Following Lucy's suggestions, Lucas paid a visit to the two commissions and cleared out his debts. To pull this off, Lucas had spent almost fifty thousand federal coins alone. Luckily, he had made a windfall amount and could do so.

After the matter with the two commissions were settled, the next wasn't the EVL but the alliance. Lucas had decided to ignore the EVL's statement.

It was already a verified fact that the EVL had no real authority over every vestige-smith, and membership wasn't compulsory. Although the statement would affect the opinions of the public on the Seven Sparks Forge, it was merely just that. In the end, the world was run by real benefits. As long as Lucas could ensure the quality of his vestiges, he would still have an abundant supply of customers. The EVL couldn't threaten them or force these people not to patronise Lucas, as that was the same as ruining their business and image.

'When I get the chance, I might as well apply in a different city-state.' Lucas thought as he returned back to his store.

He had done his part for now, and it was time for the Legacy Crafts dealership to play their role as well.

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"Mr President, Mr president, you need to look at this."

At the thirty-first floor of a skyscraper, a personal assistant rushed through the doors of the office with an anxious expression.

"Didn't I tell you not to make a scene in my office? Do you want to lose your job? Don't you know I can easily have you replaced with a robot? Even if I were to look for a human replacement, wouldn't that be easy?" A man in a black suit who looked to be in his late forties, barked at the young man.

"I-I'm sorry, Mr president." The young man apologised profusely.

The man before him was the president of a large corporation in the vestige industry, Thebes Corporation. Within Baylands City, the company, Thebes Corporation, could easily rank among the top fifteen, so one could imagine how much wealth and power he controlled.

"What's the matter? If it isn't satisfactory, then prepare to hand in your resignation letter." The president said as he banged his desk.

The young man shivered a bit as he hesitated, but he steeled himself to speak. If he didn't, someone else would, and that someone else would be his replacement.

"The news. Please, check the news. It's bad."

The president frowned and was about to curse at the young man, but he held back his tongue and decided to check things out.

On the desk, there were a few buttons. The president clicked one of them and a screen was projected in front of him. After logging in and going to the right section on the KSSI, the president finally arrived at Baylands City news section. At the same time, he also found the reason why the young man was so antsy.

"Th, this... How? How is this possible? This can't be happening?" The president was shook.

Just as he was about to say something, a call came in on the display.

The president froze upon seeing the caller ID, and after a bit of hesitation, he finally picked it.

"M, Mr Chairman." The president stuttered.

"What is this I'm seeing? What the fuck is this I'm reading?!" The chairman roared.

"Do you know how much damage you've caused to this company? Are you insane? What's more, you're been embezzling contract funds?!"

"Mr chairman, I can explain." The president rushed to speak.

"I don't give a damn about your explanation. You're fired. Leave that office this instant." The chairman immediately cut the call right after.

The president turned despondent after the call, the light in his eyes gone. He couldn't believe what had just happened and struggled to accept the reality of the situation. However, reality was harsh.

"Mr president, please vacate the premises." The personal assistant suddenly said.

"...what?" The former president stared wide-eyed at him.

"You heard me. I just received instructions from the CEO that you should be sent out immediately. Please don't make this hard for the both of us and do the needful." The young man smiled.

"You, you bastard! How dare you!"

Bang

The door to the office was abruptly opened as a group of security men came in.

Two of them walked forward and came before the president's desk.

"Jeovan Pierrot, please vacate the building's premises." One of them said while staring ferociously at the former president, Jeovan.

"Are you all insane? How can you do this to me? Who gave you the right to do so?!" Jeovan bellowed.

"You know that just as well as I do. Now, please leave. Otherwise, we would have to resort to force." The other guard said.

Jeovan froze a bit, and suddenly began to laugh. His laughs were filled with both disbelief, sorrow and defeat. The two guards didn't waste any time, giving a command to the other guards who then approached Jeovan and arrested him.

Thebes Corporation wasn't the only one experiencing such a situation. In fact, there were a few other companies occupied with such events. It was an unexpected event, but it would go down in history as a memorable one. Over twenty-one senior executives of the top fifteen vestige-smith companies in Baylands City had all lost their jobs.

At first, everything was natural until a few media and news companies dropped a bombshell. It was a report about the various underground and illicit activities carried out by the senior executives affected.

If it were just those done in Alleva district, it wouldn't be worth talking about as everyone knew that Alleva was a "free zone". However, the crimes had all been committed in either Baylands City or one of the other fifteen districts bar Alleva district [2]. As such, there was enough grounds to charge them to court. What's more, each crime committed by the executives was one that would cost them at least five years in prison.

The series of reports caught everyone by surprise, and it was so damaging that the stocks of the affected companies had all dropped by at least ten percent. With such an event taking place, the higher-ups had to respond quickly and dish out damage-control measures, otherwise, the situation might become worse for them.

Sacking the key personnel involved was one example of such damage-control measures, and it was applied by all the companies. But even that had brought about a fresh wave of news for the gossip-hungry media channels.

Despite how much those top companies wanted to offer as payment to have the news forced down, many of the media channels refused it for various reasons. It was as if they were a pack of wolves that had smelled blood, and would stop at nothing until they tore their prey into pieces.

Part of the reason for this was because of the complex ownership of the media channels. Some of them were owned by holding companies or individuals who either ran companies in the vestige-smith industry, directly competing with the affected companies in the top fifteen, or were close to someone who did. Seeing an opportunity to strike down their foe, they seized it without fail.

"Well, how did you like our work?" Lucy said as she stared at Lucas' projection on her communicator.

"How did you guys do it?" Lucas was astonished.

It was just as she had said. The reports that came in, leading to the drop in stock price and sacking of high executives, was all as a result of Novanio Tech.

"It's something the company has been planning for a while now and was prepared to make our entry into the vestige-smith industry a whole lot easier." Lucy smiled.

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"We've been digging up dirt on every executive we could find. As long as their hands were stained, we would find something on them. Nonetheless, this move cost us a lot and it can only be used once. You owe us for this."

Lucas nodded, but deep down, he was occupied with his thoughts.

Novanio Tech was known to be a supplier of stellar processors. In fact, they were the biggest suppliers in Baylands city-state. Although they couldn't make stellar processors, they hired and trained a group of vestige-smiths capable of offering after-sales services. These vestige-smiths, despite lacking the ability to make one, could easily fix or make adjustments to a stellar processor.

Moving along that line of thought, it was easy to guess that Novanio Tech might have tweaked some, if not all, of the stellar processors they imported and distributed, in a discrete fashion. With stellar processors being so commonly used, from simple daily items such as communicators and laundry machines, to even more complex machines like sares and spaceships, one could imagine how much information Novanio Tech handled through their modified stellar processors on a daily basis.

Although this was just a suspicion of his, and it had been proven by various independent researchers that such had never happened, Lucas had a feeling that he was right. Novanio Tech might not have modified every stellar processor that came their way, but they should have done so with a few. What's more, they must have pulled it off using a complex technique that made Thier actions undetectable even to independent researchers and vestige-smiths.

'I should be careful with how much tech I use these days. It would be much better if everything I use is handmade by me.' Lucas thought.