

The Crafts 181

Chapter 181: The Visitor

"I didn't expect you to open the door for me." A middle-aged man who sat opposite Lucas smiled as he stared at the latter.

"Neither did I." Lucas calmly responded.

Although he said that, the only reason Lucas had let him in despite the store being closed was because the man was a human. Having a human pay him a visit was very rare, even more so, as urgently as the man behaved.

The man awkwardly laughed a bit before clearing his throat.

"I'm here for a business proposal."

"Oh wow, I almost thought you came here for charity purposes."

Kelvin, who was on the side, choked on his drink at Lucas' comment. Even Melissa couldn't help but cover her mouth and hold back her stifled laughter.

Once again, the man felt embarrassed, but he held back his anger.

"Let's get straight to the point." He leaned forward and said.

"Supply us with vestiges, and we would offer you protection, a hideout, and resources."

"Why would we need protection or a hideout?" Kelvin couldn't help but interject.

However, Lucas didn't say anything, choosing to instead stare at the latter in the eyes. Read new chapters at empire

"Who is 'we'?"

The man smiled at the question before explaining,

"You're pretty smart. We are an organisation dedicated to ensuring that everyone lives an equal life with equal rights and treatment. We are after the erasure of the current status quo which is the social hierarchy that exists amongst us, just because of our species or race. In summary, we desire to destroy the caste system that exists in our society today."

"Terrorists." Lucas narrowed his eyes.

"No, not terrorists." The man hurried to explain.

"While our goals might seem the same, our means are different. The average terrorist utilises forceful means and chaos to make their voices heard, whereas we try to do so within the bindings of the law."

"Then why do you need vestiges?" Lucas questioned, clearly not believing the man's words.

"For self-protection." The man said, before placing a badge on the table.

Lucas glanced at the badge for a moment, then picked it up to study it. It wasn't anything special and was shaped like a square. However, upon further scrutiny, he noticed that the craftsmanship was impressive. The badge wasn't a vestige, but it was so close to being one. It was obvious that whoever made this was right at the doorsteps of becoming a vestige-smith, but was still lacking the most important component; stellar energy and rune technology.

Apart from that, it was pretty much a quasi-vestige.

Ignoring the sigil on the badge, Lucas flipped it over and saw a few words that caught his attention; Digress city-state.

"We are the resistance, or better yet, the fighters for Human and Crossbreed rights; an official organisation recognised by the city-state government of Digress city-state. We are very much legal and not terrorists." The man smiled.

Lucas didn't say anything as he was recalling what he knew about Digress city-state. Compared to his previous thoughts on it, Lucas had learnt more about this unique city-state later on.

Digress city-state was located in the Beast continent, which was quite far from Baylands city-state's Groeten continent. It was also the only city-state that truly treated humans and crossbreeds equal with humans. This was because it was formed majorly of those two species.

Being so unique, it was inevitable that Digress city-state would attract the attention, and perhaps, disgust, of the other city-states. With the existence of terrorist organisations, which happened to be formed of similar members as the city-state, it made all the other eleven city-states [1] suspicious of Digress city-state. They believed that it supported and even hid the terrorist organisations in its environment, and so, desired its downfall.

With humans being innately weaker and the population of crossbreeds being nothing compared to that of humans, conquering the Digress city-state didn't seem like a difficult task. However, it had managed to survive for this long.

This was because, apart from its meagre strength, Digress city-state had received official recognition from the Oklo Dynasty. Hence, it became a true city-state, despite actually being made of just one city, whereas the other eleven had other districts outside the main city.

Digress city-state was the weakest of the twelve city-states [1], but it had the protection of the Oklo Dynasty which had kept it existing for so long. Nonetheless, the other eleven city-states found ways to bypass this protection and make the city-state suffer.

They placed sanctions on trade with Digress city-state, forcing it to be self-sufficient. They also limited the rights and freedom of citizens of Digress city-state whenever they came into their states. Also, the treatment wasn't the best for a Digress city-state citizen, and this was something Lucas had already experienced despite not being one. He always had to make sure that he wasn't mistaken for a citizen of Digress city-state, otherwise, those around might make life difficult for him.

A citizen of Digress city-state would always be suspected of being a 'spy' even if they were a mere tourist.

"So, then what do you need the vestiges for? You said to protect yourself, but from who? It's not like you're asking for a few, but a bulk order." Lucas asked, not yet convinced.

Who was to say that some of the citizens of Digress city-state weren't actually terrorists as well.

"As you may know, Digress city-state is seen as an alien among the twelve city-states. We occasionally have skirmishes with one of them who are located in the same continent as us. Also, we're making preparations for a war that might break out in the future." The man seriously said.

"A war? But who would dare to wage a war this era?" Kelvin couldn't believe what he was hearing.

After the Oklo Dynasty took charge over hundreds of years ago, the only wars humankind has faced were wars against desolate beasts. A human war had never been waged as the Oklo Dynasty forbade it. Once a city-state attempts to wage a war against another, the Oklo Dynasty would step in and dissolve the authority within the city-state, before installing a new one that follows their regulations.

"You seem to be forgetting something. Back then, there were no terrorists." The man said.

Kelvin froze. Lucas, however, already figured this part out.

"Seems you guessed it already." The man said, seeing Lucas' calm look.

"This is exactly why we need to prepare. We don't have vestige-smiths in our numbers and we lack the knowledge to train them, so our only option is to outsource our weapons. But as you already know, the various city-states have imposed sanctions on us, so we can only approach independent vestige-smiths like yourselves. But even then, not everyone would want to work with us."

"So you figured that I would, since I am a human, right? Sorry to disappoint you, but my answer is no."