

The Crafts 201

Chapter 201: A Father's Love

The conspiracy that came about due to the terrorist attack on the Central Prefecture district was something that had caused a lot of damage to Lucas, both financially and mentally.

From an attack by terrorists aimed at disrupting the city while targeting influential figures of politics, to a vestige-smith store being drawn into the mix, it was a rollercoaster of events that no one had seen coming. What's more, there was a subtle yet unofficial agreement by both the terrorists and the city's top figures to go against the store. The terrorists wanted Lucas to be taken down, while the higher-ups only cared about the vestige-smith backing the store.

In the end, Lucas simply became a figure of collateral damage, with both sides poised to get what they wanted.

Throughout the last four days, Lucas had been paid a visit by three of the top four families. The other top factions of the city had also come his way, either individually or in groups. Whether through temptations or threats, both sides had tried to pressure Lucas into having an agreement with them, and based on the designated date, Lucas had only three days to decide.

However, none of that was his concern. He was never going to work with them from the start. It might seem like they showed some respect towards Lucas by sending in influential figures to negotiate, but it was all a ploy. To these parties, he was but a pawn in the game; one that many of them would toss away once the deal was closed. As such, rather than working with any of these hypocrites, Lucas planned to go against what seemed to be his fate.

But when he realised that his opponents weren't just simple folks or on par with the alliance of companies from before, Lucas understood that he wouldn't be able to do it alone. Whether it was a trustworthy ally, or a tool he would use for his own needs, Lucas required someone to fill the gap.

When Vergil arrived and extended the invitation from his father to the Mertens family house, Lucas got a bit interested and wanted to see whether the Mertens were worth considering.

The old man, Russell Mertens, proved to be suitable for an ally from how he had described the entire situation clearly to Lucas. Although what he had said could either be the truth or a lie, Lucas decided to go along with it. But there was still a final question to be asked.

"Does the Mertens family have a hand in this? And also, why are you telling me all of this?"

Lucas stared at Russell Mertens.

Despite the latter being stronger than him and technically older, there was not a single shred of fear in Lucas' strong gaze. Whether it was his first life or his second on Earth, Lucas had met people who were more powerful than Russell; whether it be in terms of magical abilities or forces under their control.

'This kid. He has no fear.' Russell was amazed, but he didn't show any signs of that.

'Hehe. Interesting. If it's someone like this kid, he will do just fine.'

"You don't need to worry." Russell smirked.

"I understand your concerns, but I can't force you to trust us either. What I will say is that you can trust us."

Lucas frowned, and just as he was about to say something, Russell continued.

"As for the answers to your questions, I'll start with the first. Yes and no. As I mentioned before, the decision to force you under control is something that came about from the other political coalition which stands against the Bergs family. My Mertens family happens to be a part of this coalition, which is why I answered yes. Despite that, we aren't interested in forcing you under control. Rather, I'm of the same mind as the city lord, which is to invest in your store."

Russell spread his hands as he continued.

"But if I said just that without asking for anything, it would be suspicious, right? The city lord's stance could be explained as he has to consider the entirety of Baylands city-state before coming to a conclusion, but I myself need to only prioritise my family and profits. Honestly, I'm interested in the secret behind the SS vestiges, but it's not something I'm desperate to get. If your master wishes to share, I would appreciate. If he doesn't, then so be it. Regardless, it's not something on my bucket list."

Lucas narrowed his eyes as he asked, "Then what is on your bucket list?"

Russell smiled as his eyes silently praised Lucas.

"Truth be told, I also have some conditions of mine. You should know that my Mertens family is into the desolate beasts industry. For a while now, we've tried to enter the vestige-smith industry, but it is quite difficult. There are factions like the Oder family and the rest keeping us away for the sake of maintaining their balance and control. But without an arm in that industry, my family would have to forever rely on them. And so, I've always wanted to change this during my rule.

"As luck would have it, my son, Vergil, was blessed with the talent for vestige-smithing. However, because of that, the other families are even more wary of us. They believe that Vergil would be the key to our entry into the industry, and truthfully, I believe so too. However, my family lacks the proper resources to be able to raise Vergil in this path. The EVL is also limited in its teaching capabilities. But as a family head, I can't just give up here. As a father, I want the best for my son."

Lucas could already see where he was going with this, but he didn't interrupt the man.

"So, my condition for helping you is that you request your master to train my son. Like I said before, I don't have an intense craving for the SS vestige technology. All I just want is to give my son the best possible environment and resources for his growth. As long as you can promise me this, I don't mind offending my allies for this." Russell said with a confident expression on his face.

It looked as if he saw the plot Lucas was caught in as nothing. Even for a top four family, facing off against the combined forces of the other top factions in the city was still very difficult. Maybe the Bergs family might be able to pull it off, but the Mertens was only ranked third. What's more, they didn't have a solid heritage and history like the Bergs and Dufour families; even the Oder family was much older than the Mertens.

From this, Lucas had more reason to believe that Russell was doing all this, not to ensure that his family profits by having a vestige-smith, but to give the best resources to his son, just as he had said.

If the matter was simply about having a vestige-smith or a vestige-smith company, Russell could have simply joined the rest in competing for the store. He could have also spent a lot more money to hire vestige-smiths from outside the city-state. With the influence, power and resources in his control, there were many other possible options Russell could have taken to

enable the Mertens family to finally step into the vestige-smith industry. Instead, he wanted his son to be the pioneer for that.

The reason was clear; Russell thought dearly about his child, Vergil, and he wanted to provide the best that he could for him. Just as he had done with his daughter, Laura, raising her into the number one genius of Baylands City. Similarly, Russell wanted to lift Vergil to the same status.

It might be called the pride of a father, the greed of a family leader, or some other title, but one thing was for sure; Russell was a man and a father, who loved his children dearly and wanted the best for them.