

The Crafts 212

Chapter 212: The Truth About Everything

Russell Mertens left the office with no strange reaction or emotion on his face. It wasn't until he was quite far from the City Lord Manor that he sighed.

"Is there a problem, sir?"

The hover car Russell rode was quite similar to those luxurious cars on Earth, except for the fact that it was more technologically advanced and expensive.

In the front seat sat a man who looked to be quite old. He was the butler of the Mertens family and Russell's personal assistant for over thirty years. In a sense, one could say that he was the only person Russell could trust with his back.

"The city lord has changed." Russell sighed as he recalled the conversation he had earlier.

He then went on to narrate the experience to the butler.

"Forgive me, but nothing seems to be wrong." The butler replied after listening to the narration.

"Say what's in your mind." Russell wasn't buying the query.

"...you're right." The butler sighed.

Initially, he didn't want to add to the family head's suspicions as he knew how close the latter was with the city lord. While others might have seen the relationship between the two to be that of a political godfather and a sponsored candidate, it was actually closer.

Russell was older than the current city lord, by at least two decades, and they knew each other before Noah began his political campaign. He had treated Noah as a son and a close friend right after the two began cooperating. Their relationship became so close that when Noah brought up the idea of competing against the Bergs' candidate, his step-brother Fredor, Russell sided with him and had even advertised him to the other families.

It was thanks to Russell's help that Noah was able to gain a large political force to support him, which became known as 'The Other Side'; an alliance of top factions that were against the Bergs family and their allies.

Knowing how close Russell was to Noah, the butler didn't want to harm his master's feelings.

"He actually said he wasn't aware of what took place. The situation is currently unstable and anyone with half a brain would know that the balance could be tilted at any moment. It's unbelievable to say the least, that the city lord wasn't monitoring the situation." The butler sighed.

"Indeed. But there's something else to consider." Russell narrowed his eyes as his facial expression took on a dark turn.

"He had told me Nolma had informed Munroe, who in turn spoke to him. Obviously, this is as good as exposing his lie, yet he did that. Noah wouldn't make such a mistake. That could only mean one thing; he's warning me."

"But why would he do such?" The butler was perplexed.

It wasn't like Russell was purposely going against him. If anything, Russell's plan with his proposal to Lucas was originally supposed to create an opportunity for the city lord to step in and reinforce his power. So, one could say that they were both on the same side.

"I guess for once I miscalculated something." Russell let out a wry smile.

"Everyone thinks that the city lord is taking a step back and granting an owed favour to The Other Side, which helped him seize power. I, for one, had even wanted to create a chance for him to step back in without burning bridges with them. But we were all wrong; we actually misjudged him. All of this isn't the top factions taking advantage of anything; it's a big trap set up by Noah."

The butler froze for a second, but after a while, he widened his eyebrows as he was overcome by horror. Having been by Russell's side for years, it was inevitable that the butler would be exposed to the various degrees and layers of schemes used in politics. With Russell having given him a hint already, he could finally see the big picture.

Yes, this was all a trap by the city lord, Noah Bergs.

At first, everyone thought that the Stygian Abyss had some unsettled hatred with the Seven Sparks Forge store owner. As such, they had falsified scenes of using a vestige from the store in hopes that the Baylands City's factions would clamp down on the store owner. This was later confirmed with evidence by the independent investigations of the various top forces, but that didn't mean they would just brush it off.

Instead, the top factions took this as an opportunity to do just as the Stygian Abyss wanted, but didn't stop there. They went an extra step ahead and began a covert struggle to takeover the store and its technology. In the process of doing this, they had gotten on the bad side of the city lord, but for various reasons, the city lord could only let them be.

Russell, being a close friend and ally of the city lord, had tried to create an opportunity for the latter to step in and reinforce his hold over power without offending his allies. However, it turned out that that was all unnecessary. The city lord never needed any help.

In fact, just as the top factions had taken advantage of the performance of the Stygian Abyss, the city lord —Noah Bergs— had done just the same. He had let the top forces face each other not due to some magnanimity or favour, but simply because he wanted them to weaken each other.

Even though the city lord was a supreme title in Baylands city-state, the threat of the top factions still existed. Just from the fact that the Bergs family had three concurrent city lords, although Noah —the third— was rebellious, goes to show just how powerful these families were. It was even rumoured that the Dufour family also had connections with the Oklo Dynasty.

The heritages, wealth, influence, and power of the top factions were all something no city lord could easily ignore. While some city lords closed an eye to it, for some, it would leave a terrible taste in their mouth. Noah happened to be a part of the second group. What Noah planned to do was to bring all of that back under the control of the city lord. However, this in itself was difficult, the reason being that these forces were tough nuts too tough to crack.

The City Lord Manor did have its fair share of experts as well as the officially recognised authority from the Oklo Dynasty. But if Noah was to begin targeting the factions directly, they would all collude to impeach him. One should recall that the cabinet possessed the ability to impeach the city lord, if found guilty of threatening the city's peace.

Although such ruling would have to be confirmed by the Oklo Dynasty, until then, the city lord would lose his power and the three deputies would take charge. These deputies happened to be

persons from the top factions however. As long as they took control, they could undo all the damage and pass regulations and rules to obstruct such actions again.

Hence, the only way for a city lord to regain full control over them was to have them weakened before targeting these forces. And the best way to do that, was to have the top factions fight themselves.

Even with this idea in mind, it was very difficult to realise. The problem was finding a suitable bait that could be used; one so tempting that everyone would be greedy for it. A secret, item, technology, or object so alluring that even if one side held it, the other couldn't sit still.

For days, weeks, months and years, Noah had tried to come up with something but failed. That was until Lucas, or rather, the Seven Sparks Forge showed up.

The SS vestiges were unique vestiges developed with a technology that had never been seen anywhere on the planet. Even when considering the entire Kellan solar system, there was a very high chance that such technology didn't exist. The transformative features, the upgraded stellar processors, and God knew how many more technological secrets and advancements the store still kept hidden.

Such secrets were more than enough to create a new top faction; one so powerful that it could compare to the Lester family or even the Lin family of Paros city-state. Both families were top powers that had businesses spanning across the entire solar system. The wealth they controlled could easily overwhelm Baylands city-state's top four families combined. The Lin family was even more outrageous. They were so powerful that not even the Oklo Dynasty, the planet's rulers, could afford to easily offend them. This was because the Lin family in Paros city-state was merely a branch of the main Lin family. The main branch was located in Mandora, the planetary capital of the Kellan solar system, and they were a powerful family on a solar system scale.

The fact that the secrets of the Seven Sparks Forge store could potentially create such a powerhouse was too attractive for any of Baylands city-state's top factions. Even though some might not have dreamt that big, becoming the undisputed number one in Baylands city-state was definitely doable.

With such a bait, Noah could not help but be more pleased. This was because no matter which family successfully convinced Lucas to work with them, the others would never sit still. The agreement of trying to convince Lucas to work with them was simply paper-talk [1]. They just

hoped that he would agree so they can have the moral standpoint, but in reality, all sides were prepared to wage war against the other if they lost.

Russell's plan of trying to get the city lord in would have exposed him because the city lord had no intentions of doing so. While Noah could successfully fend them off, that wasn't his goal from the very start.

As such, when he found out that Russell had invited Lucas to have a discussion, it was most likely that Noah had ordered Nolma to trespass on the Mertens family estate and arrest Lucas. This would prevent the possibility of the two successfully working together, which would then force Noah to act.

Russell was convinced that this was the truth, after all, it was impossible for Nolma to be so confident enough to act against a top four faction, even with the backing of another one. This was because Nolma was a government employee and worked under the city lord. Even if the top factions could influence such agencies and personnel, Russell knew Noah's personality and he was confident that the latter had complete control over his men; at least those at the top. What's more Noah had hinted at this when he mentioned that Nolma had informed Munroe, Noah's right hand man, about the operation. This was the vague warning Noah had given him.

In other words, the only reason why Nolma had boldly trespassed on the Mertens family estate was because he had the city lord's support; it was never the support of the other top factions. What's more, since the other top factions never really knew much about Noah, they would still be confident that everything was in their control, meanwhile, they danced atop Noah's palm.