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Chapter 218: Ronny

Different from Baylands city-state and the rest, the unofficial Belfargos city-state was surrounded by a couple of desolate beasts domains. Considering it was the capital region of the planet, one would expect it to be devoid of such threats. Being so close to a desolate beast domain placed the region at a risk. It was even worse since Belfargos city-state was surrounded by them with a lot of them being classified as major domains.

In the case of Baylands city-state, only the main city —Baylands City— was neighbouring a major domain, the Wastelands and some minor ones like the Bayena Plain. This was because the original Baylands City was built to be a fortress city to prevent the desolate beasts from flooding out of the Wastelands. As for domains like Bayena Plain, they were left to exist as a means for employment and to train the younger generation.

However, Belfargos city-state occupied a continent alone, and it was next to impossible to swallow such a large space by itself. To put this into perspective, the Bernin continent was the size of Europe while the region of Belfargos city-state was the size of France and Germany combined. While it was very big, there were still a ton of unexplored regions and land in the area. These unowned plots were then occupied by desolate beasts, who could proliferate without concern.

Although with the power in their control, the Oklo Dynasty —a power more than three thousand years old— could have wiped out all the beasts, they didn't. The reason for this was just the same as the minor domains close to Baylands City.

The Oklo Dynasty didn't expand its control in the territory simply to let the desolate beasts population flourish and act as a resource spot for the city-state. In other words, the vast expanse of land was their 'farm' and the desolate beasts were their 'farm animals'.

Only the Oklo Dynasty could be this confident and bold to pull something like this off. If it were any other power in their position, they would have been assaulted by the desolate beasts and wiped out.

The existence of so much unexplored regions and land controlled by desolate beasts, gave birth to a rise in occupations related to desolate beasts. As a result, Belfargos city-state became the city-state with the largest number of freelancers and pioneers.

For other city-states, only the capital city or cities close to a desolate beast domain, had such occupations. But in Belfargos city-state, every major city was home to freelancers, vestige-smiths and pioneers. This was because there were enough resources to go around, and with every city surrounding Belfargos City, they were also exposed to the desolate beast domains.

Ronny, a fourth level stellar practitioner in Trundel City, was a freelancer who doubled as a pioneer as well. He also had quite a good reputation in the industry.

Unlike the job of a freelancer that simply dealt with hunting desolate beasts, searching for materials or escort services, pioneers had it harder. They usually worked in unexplored zones, relics and other dangerous sites. They were the vanguard forces, which made their job riskier, but the pay was worth it.

While freelancers frequented regions that saw multiple visitors every day, pioneers went into the unexplored regions that barely anyone had stepped foot in over a decade. As such, they usually get their hands on treasures and rare items, since they had the 'first pick' rights.

In his last outing, Ronny had visited a relic that was believed to have been the home of an ancient civilisation. In this relic, he discovered a unique item. It caught his eye right away, and his instincts as a pioneer told Ronny that it was quite valuable. So, he kept the ring with him despite not knowing its function.

After returning back to Trundel City, Ronny had visited a few vestige-smith stores and appraisal stores to try and find out the value of the ring or its function. Regardless of whichever store he went on, no one was able to give him a satisfactory reply.

This wasn't to say that Trundel City lacked talents in this department, but Ronny had instead gone for the third grade stores and below. As for those higher ranked, the consultation fees were too much for him. There was also a chance that the ring would just be an ordinary artefact or a piece of junk. If that were the case, Ronny would be suffering a great loss.

Hence, Ronny went for the cheaper stores to minimise his loss. However, that decision came to bite him back and none of them were able to figure out what the ring was exactly. An assessor from an appraisal store had managed to give him a bit of information, identifying the object as an artefact. It was due to this appraisal that Ronny had not given up yet.

Contrary to vestiges which were products of human and hyuman research, artefacts were products of other civilisations or even ancient races.

Hyumankin didn't originally exist in all the planets of the Niera galaxy as they did now. Instead, they had migrated from their home planet. As they became stronger, won wars and seized planets, they also migrated into these planets and expanded their bloodline.

Some of the original habitants currently coexisted with hyumankin while some had been wiped out and forced into extinction. In some planets, the inhabitants the hyumankin had met with weren't the original natives, as the natives had been wiped out by the new inhabitants. In a few other planets, multiple species had risen and fallen. All of these resulted in the existence of relics of ancient races.

With hyumankin now controlling these planets, the relics were left for them to explore. Some of them became rich overnight from their exploration, while others had gained nothing with some losing so much as their lives. The occupation of a pioneer was risky, but in exchange for the risk, the rewards were great. But this wasn't one hundred percent of the time.

"Why don't you just forget about it, Ronny? You've already spent over six hundred federal coins on appraisals alone." One of his friends advised him.

Ronny had a very small reputation in the pioneer community because he was quite friendly with others. Today, he went out with some of his close friends, and everyone of them was aware of his predicament.

"He's right. Although you've confirmed it's an artefact, it might be a dud. Just sell it as one." Another one said.

Not all artefacts were of value. While most artefacts were the ancient races' equivalent of vestiges, some of them weren't even as powerful as a Grade 1 vestige. Some could not even be used as weapons, and were merely items of luxury or just for fancy. These artefacts were usually termed as duds by pioneers.

Even though duds weren't as valuable as the more useful artefacts, they were still of some value to researchers and certain vestige-smiths. The distinctive and rare runes used to make artefacts as well as the extraordinary methods and materials used in making them were of research value to these vestige-smiths.

However, it didn't mean that one could sell these duds at a high price; after all, their usage value was either nonexistent or very low. It was why Ronny was unwilling to do so.

At the same time, what if the ring turned out to be an exceptional artefact? Wouldn't he be suffering an even worse loss if he sold it at the value of a dud?

"Na. Never. I'd rather eat my loss as it is." Ronny gulped a mouthful of beer after shaking his head to the suggestion.

The others sighed and some shook their heads, wondering why Ronny was so stubborn.

Even though pioneers made more than others and there was a higher cashflow in Trundel City, six hundred federal coins was still not a small amount. One should recall that in Baylands City, four hundred federal coins was the minimum salary in the West Wing district. Even for the luxurious Central Prefecture district, this value was merely raised by one hundred federal coins.

"In that case, why don't you try out the new stores?" suggested one of the pioneers who wore a black shirt.

"The new stores? You might as well go to a love hotel." The first man joked.

Generally, new stores weren't looked up to a lot. This was because the owners were startups or foreign companies trying to break into the market. Compared to the locals who had already developed a reputation, it was difficult to ascertain the level of expertise a new store had.

One should know that vestige-smith stores didn't just sell vestiges. They also offered services such as repairs, maintenance, custom creation, and even appraisals.

"I'm being serious. Or have you forgotten about Jeremy and the White Fox shop?" The black-clothed man said.

Everyone's eyes immediately sharpened.

Jeremy was a freelancer, but he wasn't famous or strong, at least not until recently. It all started over a month ago, when Jeremy patronised a new store.

Back then, the store had only been open for three days and so no one paid attention to it. After all, every week or so, a new store opened up and would close down within three months. However, Jeremy decided to try his luck and walked into the store.

After a bit of window-shopping, Jeremy eventually bought a random vestige at a suspiciously low price. What's more, he wasn't even informed of its grade. It wasn't until he had tried it out after getting home did he realise that it was a Grade 4 vestige.

A Grade 4 vestige was a valuable piece of equipment. In other city-states, only the strongest freelancers and personnel or those from top factions would have one. This was because Tier 1 Masters were rare.

Although Belfargos city-state had more Tier 1 Master vestige-smiths than an average city-state, Grade 4 vestiges still didn't sell for cheap.

With a Grade 4 vestige in hand, a stellar practitioner's strength would be boosted by at least one level, and maybe up to two. From this, one could see how valuable they were. To have bought one at a ridiculously low price was a miracle that occurred once in a blue moon.

When Jeremy returned to the store to try his luck again, it was closed and the owner had disappeared.

After that incident, Jeremy went on to use the vestige and become famous. He had even narrated his experience to others in hopes that someone would help him find the store owner to thank the man, and maybe try his luck once again.

"Who knows, you might be as lucky."