

## The Crafts 225

### Chapter 225: Miser

As Ronny imbued his stellar energy into the artefact, the ring lit up with a faint blue light before going dark. Just as he thought that the restoration was a failure, Ronny sensed a strange occurrence. He could feel that there was something different about the ring, but couldn't exactly say what it was.

"Try it out." Lucas said as he took out a metal plate and set it up.

The metal plate was made of a unique alloy and could handle attacks from even a second level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner, and would require a third level to be capable of penetrating it. It was the most suitable impromptu equipment to test out the ring's effects.

Ronny nodded and took a stance right away. He gathered raw strength into his right arm, but didn't tap into his fourth level powers. He even went so far as to limit his physical strength to roughly the same as a first level stellar practitioner.

Once he was ready, Ronny abruptly fired his fist and struck the metal plate.

*\*Bang\**

The first struck the metal plate squarely and created a dent in it. If it weren't for Lucas who held the metal plate from behind, it would have been flung away.

"Incredible." The other four men who were with Lucas were stunned.

They were all professional pioneers with the weakest of them being at the third level of the Apertures Opening stage. They had clearly felt that the physical strength Ronny exhibited was at the first level. Despite that, he had managed to damage an alloy plate that would require third level strength to be destroyed.

Although it was just a dent and the alloy couldn't be said to have been destroyed, it was a verified fact that the ring had boosted the power of a first level Apertures Opening stage attack to be on par with a peak second level.

It was clear that the artefact had been successfully restored to its original state.

The five men couldn't believe their eyes. An artefact that had gone through the hands of more than a dozen vestige-smiths and was deemed unfixable, was actually restored to pristine condition in an unknown store. What's more, the price wasn't much. It was simply unbelievable.

Naturally, Ronny was glad about the results and could almost see the price of the artefact selling for much higher than a vestige of the same grade.

Just as he was about to thank Lucas, the latter suddenly spoke.

"Check out the second feature as well."

Ronny then recalled that in the appraisal report, the ring had two abilities. The first was to boost the user's strength by a factor of one level, but this was limited to the grade coverage of the artefact. Hence, being a peak Grade 1 artefact, this boosting effect would only be capable of working on a third level stellar practitioner, and even at that, it won't be by an entire level; at best, it might be by thirty percent or so. But even then, thirty percent was impressive.

The second ability was to generate a transparent shield that could take on the attacks of a third level stellar practitioner.

With Lucas' reminder, Ronny relayed the thought of conjuring a shield and it appeared right away.

He was quite surprised that the artefact worked just as a vestige would, but he then focused his attention on the shield.

It was a faint blue shield with an alluring appearance. There was nothing intimidating or impressive about it. However, Ronny proceeded to punch the shield using the strength of a third level stellar practitioner, and it only shimmered a bit.

Ronny's eyes shone with interest as he proceeded to pound the shield continuously. After the fiftieth strike, Ronny stopped. He noticed that the shield was wavering then, but after a while, it returned to normal. Right before it was restored, it had drawn upon a noticeable amount of

stellar energy from his body. But to a fourth level Apertures Opening stage practitioner, that wasn't so much.

"The durability of the shield is impressive. Depending on the user's stellar energy, it could hold out to at least three hundred strikes from a third level stellar practitioner before cracking." Ando analysed.

Ronny nodded at those words as they were the same as his thoughts.

Even when compared to other peak Grade 1 vestiges, this artefact was still incredible. As a vestige, it could sell for at least one thousand five hundred (1500) federal coins, but as an artefact, its price would definitely be worth a few tens of thousands or more.

This was why Ronny was still speechless at the restoration fee.

Although one thousand federal coins might seem like much, charging so 'little' to restore an artefact with a value of at least twenty thousand federal coins was unimaginable. Most stores would charge based on the difficulty of restoration as well as the value of the artefact. Some even used a percentage pricing system, setting the cost of restoration to at least twenty percent of the value of the item.

This was why Ronny had avoided those big stores even though he knew that they would have someone capable of fixing it. The cost was just too much for him to bear as he was already in deep debt.

"Thank you." Ronny deactivated the shield and stared at Lucas emotionally.

Although the artefact alone wasn't enough to cover his debts, it would give him some breathing space. Also, the fact he had discovered a valuable artefact would become known and people would praise Ronny for his excellent vision and meticulousness. Other pioneers or even freelancers might perhaps invite him for an expedition.

"I just did as I was paid to." Lucas calmly replied.

Ronny shook his head but didn't say anything else. Ando, however, was interested in the Heavenly Demonic Shop. His eyes seemed to have their own thoughts as he stared at Lucas.

Despite its weird name that sounded like something right from the mind of a middle-grader, the store looked to be a hidden gem.

Ando's reason for escorting Ronny was to hopefully find such a store. Although he wasn't hoping to experience the same faithful encounter as the freelancer named Jeremy, he wanted to see whether there would perhaps be a new reputed name in the future. The Heavenly Demonic Shop was now looking to be such a store.

The artefact Lucas had restored would require the services of a first grade store or at least a top second grade vestige-smith store. Since Lucas was able to restore it even as a human, it meant that the vestige-smith backing the store was a qualified candidate for even a first grade store; in other words, a peak Tier 1 Master vestige-smith. What's more, the services of the store were cheap.

The prices of vestiges were a sharp contrast to the prices of services, but the current experience tempted Ando to check out the vestiges.

"Shopkeeper, I would like to buy a Grade 2 vestige." Ando spoke up.

Grade 2 vestiges would naturally cost less than a Grade 3 vestige. At the same time, the quality of a Grade 2 vestige said a lot about the tier of the vestige-smith.

The lowest required rank to create a Grade 2 vestige was the Tier 1 vestige-smith rank. However, a Grade 2 vestige made by a Tier 1 vestige-smith, a Tier 1 Elite, a Tier 1 Master and a Tier 1 Grandmaster, would have minute differences. But as long as the one evaluating the vestiges was a professional, they would be able to tell the difference.

However, such a difference was difficult to spot in a Grade 1 vestige, otherwise, Ando would have gone for it.

"Oh?" Lucas' eyes brightened up.

Compared to store services, the vestiges cost even more. For the current Lucas, who had spent most of his money covering his tracks, he was in dire need of money. This was because not only did Lucas have to continue his research and improve his skills, but there was now the little

Melissa who had joined him on this journey. Lucas' need for money was even more dire than the first time he came into this world.

"Go ahead and look at our catalogue. Pick whichever one you'd like. If you want a custom, let me know." Lucas smiled like a professional salesman.

The five men suddenly turned speechless. All throughout their interaction with Lucas, he had kept a bland and emotionless face. However, as soon as the talk for purchasing a vestige came up, he became a different individual all together.

'Money-grubber.'

Ronny's face twitched.

Ando recovered from his shock and stared at the list. After taking a deep breath, he settled on the cheapest vestige there was. Surprisingly, it was a cold-weapon type vestige that looked like an assault rifle.

Lucas glanced at it and couldn't help but muttering, "Go big or go home. Why be such a miser?"

However, the five men were all stellar practitioners, and being so close to Lucas, even his whispers could not go unheard.

Upon hearing those words, Ando almost stumbled to the floor, and this was while standing. The other four in the group couldn't help but clutch their mouths as they held back their laughter.

It was the first time they had encountered a shopkeeper who mocked his customers for penny-pinching behaviour.

Regardless, after receiving the order, Lucas once again left for the basement. He returned soon after since the vestige Ando had ordered was a standard vestige. It had been mass-produced by Lucas during his spare time, which he had a lot of.

"Here." Lucas handed the vestige to Ando.

As soon as the vestige touched his hand, Ando's eyes widened in shock.