

The Crafts 245

Chapter 245: A Risky Move

"Watch out!"

"Oh my god!"

Gasps sounded from the spectators a few seconds after the second group had entered the core area.

Two shuttles were caught by the eruption of the geysers underneath the lake, becoming unstable right away. One of them barely escaped the black pillar while the other was tossed into the air with the shuttle's protection screen showing signs of wear.

Some of the spectators showed worry for the second racer while the others cheered on, seemingly anticipating his demise.

Callus had things better and was able to dodge the first few geyser blasts. But this was simply because he had driven in while accelerating. Just like the female driver of team Yoko-bunny and Red Devil, Callus wanted to take advantage of the fact that most drivers would slow down to create a gap between them.

"What is he doing?" Angus furrowed his brows at the scene.

The Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith similarly didn't have a good look on his face. Even Lucas couldn't help but raise his eyebrows in surprise.

The team was speechless by the fact that Joker had driven into the core area without his shields on while driving at high top speed. Any one of his actions was already troublesome but the two together was tantamount to entertaining death.

Although the Juggernaut's body was equivalent to a Grade 2 vestige in terms of durability, it was only for the lowest rank within the grade. When faced against the black waters that could easily liquify Grade 1 vestiges, the Juggernaut could only last for a while.

"Joker, what are you doing?" The man in charge of communications, Kiel, frowned.

"Boost. Energy conservation." Callus replied. Just like the other drivers in front, he had activated direct transmission. However, Callus wasn't as talented as they were and was close to suffering from a brain overload. So, he could only pass his thoughts using as few words as possible.

Although it was just three words, Kiel understood right away.

The current Juggernaut could not compare to the racing shuttles of the top teams. This wasn't just in terms of top speed and engine specifications, but also energy quantity and utilisation system. If Callus wanted to move at top speed, he had to deactivate the protection shields of the Juggernaut. This wasn't to say that the two systems couldn't be active at the same time, but if they were, the energy consumption would be insane.

Hence, even though it was risky, Callus still went on with his plan and deactivated the shields. He was betting on his skills as a driver as well as the durability of the Juggernaut to get through.

However, as Callus went deeper, the core area began to show its mettle. Even for a genius racer such as himself, he was finding it difficult to navigate through the abrupt and intense geyser eruptions.

"Joker, deploy your shields!" Kiel lost his patience and yelled through the communicator.

"Bit." Callus replied.

It had only been twenty seconds since he went into the core region. Callus planned to move in at full speed for at least forty seconds, but preferably one minute. To him, twenty seconds was still not enough.

Angus snatched the communicator and roared into it,

"Joker, stop fucking around and deploy your shields!"

If anything were to happen to Joker, even though he wouldn't be disqualified since a backup racing shuttle would be sent over, he would lose his position and this would affect his final result. Whether it was his safety or the final scores, the team wasn't willing to lose any.

This time around, Callus didn't reply as his entire attention was fixed on the Juggernaut.

"He's too stubborn." The Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith grimaced.

The man had known Callus for a while ever since the latter had begun working in their old place, a repair station for hover vehicles. Back then, the man was in charge of a team and Callus, who happened to be hired as an intern, worked under the man. He looked after him like his son and taught Callus a lot about vestige-smithing and repairs.

As Callus' senior and mentor, the man knew a lot about his personality, including Callus' stubbornness. This was a personality that was both a pro and a con.

Lucas didn't say anything as it wasn't his place to make a comment. Instead, he set his sights on the display screen that focused on the team's driver, Callus.

'He won't be able to last.'

Even though Lucas had only been to two races so far, he was still able to discern a bit about the skills of each driver, especially Callus. If the latter kept on driving at the same speed, he would eventually get caught into a mess.

And just as Lucas had predicted, it took only five seconds.

Callus was racing through the core area at a speed of almost 400km/hr, which meant that within 25 seconds, he had gone at least some 2.7km. compared to others moving below 300 km/hr, there was at least a one kilometre gap between Callus and the others. If he kept this speed up until 40 seconds, the gap would be at least two kilometres which was a significant advantage.

Nonetheless, reality had a different story.

Just as Callus was moving forward, he got caught up in a timely setup.

Three geysers happened to have reached their tipping point at that moment, gushing out a large amount of water with immense force. The eruption displaced the black water in the lake, creating three black pillars that shot up from the lake.

At the moment the black pillars burst out from the lake, Callus happened to be within their range. It wasn't that he didn't notice them through his sensors, but that Callus had no option than to take that path. There were eruptions and black pillars all around, and the only chance of survival was through this path. However, even the safe route had a significant amount of risk.

Callus could not turn to the side as there was no space to manoeuvre past them. Stopping wasn't an option because with the speed Callus was moving and the forward mentality he rode on, it would take at least a second or two for the Juggernaut to be brought to a complete stop.

If the situation was dire for Callus, one could only imagine how the others felt. They weren't even able to let out their exclamations and shock in time before the Juggernaut got swallowed by two black pillars that formed too close to each other.

"Joker!"

Kiel shouted through the communicator.

The other members of the team froze in shock, refusing to believe what they had just seen. They knew the capabilities of the Juggernaut and with a direct hit such as that, there was a more than seventy percent chance that the shuttle was forced out of service.

Even if Callus wasn't dead, his position would drop and ending the race with a position higher than the bottom half would be impossible.

"Why are you guys overreacting like kids?" Havos' voice suddenly sounded.

Angus, true to his personality, lost it and turned to Havos with a glare, preparer to curse at him

But just before he could, Havos continued speaking,

"Since when do drift racing teams trust display screens over their sensors?"

The crew froze before immediately shifting their attention to the third display screen; the one that showed the state of the racing shuttle relayed through its built-in sensors.

On the screen, the Juggernaut appeared to still be active and although it had a few damages to it, the shuttle was still good enough to compete. At the same time, the protection screen was shown to be active.

"He's still on...?" Angus was shocked.

"Of course he is. Would you prefer he's dead or something?" Havos stared at him as if he was looking at a fool.

Angus was incensed but also embarrassed at the same time. But in the end, he was relieved that the worst case scenario had yet to play out.

"You shit head. You fucking scared us." Kiel cursed through the communicator.

"Ah. Thanks for the compliment." Callus replied.

Kiel's face twitched but he gave up arguing lest he distracts Callus.

Through the display screen for the Juggernaut's sensors, they could surmise how Callus had escaped. He most likely activated his shields at the last moment, sacrificing a significant amount of energy to escape danger. As he was still moving at full speed, Callus was able to tear through the collision of the two black pillars without a scratch.

On the display screen that monitored the Juggernaut, the team were unable to make head or tail of where the Juggernaut was. As there was not much of a reaction from Callus' actions, they presumed he was swallowed by the pillars.

Now though, the truth was easily deduced.

Callus had already begun to decelerate to prevent the Juggernaut from losing too much energy. However, he did so in a stable and steady manner, ensuring that he was still creating a gap between him and the other racers.

At this point, Callus' position had progressed from thirteenth place to eleventh place. The small change was due to the fact that at some point in time, Callus had dropped from thirteenth to fifteenth. But with the stunt he just pulled, he had managed to not only cover the gap but widen it in his favour as well.

Regardless, there were still five more dangerous regions to go through, so no one was optimistic about Callus maintaining his position. However, there was still a shot at ending in the top half.