

## The Crafts 263

### Chapter 263: The Taskforce

A few hours after Lucas had defeated the drudnids, during the same time the news had already broken out in the city, a taskforce had been assembled to rescue the tourists. With some time having gone past, they had already made some progress in their investigation.

The leader of the taskforce was a famous captain and detective within the Trundel City Security Force, the equivalent of the Baylands City Patrol Corps. He went by the name Tanner and was a sixth level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner.

From this, one could see the difference in terms of power and quality between the cities close to the capital and the capital city-states in other continents. In a place like Baylands City for instance, a captain would only be at the fifth level. Above that and they would qualify to be a director. But in the cities close to Belfargos City, seventh level was the minimum requirement for the director role.

Alongside his deputy, Tanner walked into a building that was recently set up outside the East Brafford relics. The building was filled with various complex devices and some display screens. There were also a dozen or so men seated in one corner, running various computing tasks.

"I heard you got more leads." Tanner asked a man with grey hair.

The grey-haired man happened to be the head of intelligence for the operation, and this building was the temporary base for the intelligence team. The other men were all members of the team and they were monitoring the relics while also trying to dig up any possible information or clues about the culprit and the event.

"Yeah, the approval just came in. We're filtering through the data right now." The grey-haired man responded.

At first, the intelligence unit had hacked the culprit's —an assistant researcher — communicator, but they only gained access to his local files and messages. As for those saved on the intranet, they couldn't gain access to it.

The reason was simple; the intranet was highly secure, so much so that no average planetary faction could brute-force their way into it.

When the Federation Assembly —the arm of government that directly ruled over the federation — decided on establishing a communication channel for all hyumans, they had to consider various scenarios. One such was the possibility of hackers, especially from alien species, trying to gain access to their network and steal data from the public.

To prevent this, the Federation Assembly decided on an intranet, rather than a typical internet [1], without only registered hyumans and citizens being able to access it.

The federation's intranet, officially called the Federal Intranet (FIN), is a complex system of networks that allowed communication within the Niera galaxy ruled by the hyumans. Within the intranet, there were also smaller networks that catered to each of the five star regions, known as star-nets. Within those star region-level networks, or star-nets, there were smaller subdivision networks for solar systems, and within those ones were also another set of networks for each individual planet.

In the case of Eretre for instance, there was the Blue Mist star-net, which was a subdivision of the Federal Intranet catering towards the Blue Mist star region. Within the Blue Mist starnet was the Kellan Solar System Intranet (KSSI), which served the Kellan solar system. Furthermore, within the KSSI was the network for Eretre.

Because of this complex subdivision system and the use of a highly secured intranet technology, it became difficult for unauthorised parties to access the network remotely, or even for authorised parties to access accounts that didn't belong to them. This applied even for security forces that wanted to hack into a suspect's account.

To be able to gain access to another's account, a request had to be sent to and approved by the administrators of the starnet. Even the security forces of a planet were unable to hack into the network due to the intense security. Their only option was to wait for approval.

Due to the advancements of technology, sending a request to a planet hundreds of light years away was no problem. At most, it would take only a few hours to send a message and receive a response.

With the approval now within their hands, the taskforce was able to gain access to the account of the culprit.

"I'm done filtering. This is what we have." The man called out to Tanner.

A couple of images popped up neatly on the display screen with various contents. Being a sixth level stellar practitioner, it wasn't difficult for Tanner to scan through them all quickly.

"Nothing." Tanner frowned.

Apart from the message that was stored locally in the culprit's home communicator which read "It's time to bring glory to the motherland", there were no other leads the team had found. They couldn't even track the sender of the message.

Tanner originally thought that once they got into the account of the man, they could find more clues, but there was nothing. All the activities on the culprit's account were normal.

"At this rate, we won't know who did it." Tanner's deputy sighed.

"What are the odds this is a terrorist attack?" The head of intelligence asked after a second.

"We've considered that, but there's nothing in it for them. The Western Liberation Army doesn't operate this far out while the Stygian Abyss, though psychopaths, usually carry out attacks for a reason. There doesn't seem to be one here so far." Tanner replied.

"Which means that there could still be one, no?" The head of intelligence glanced at him.

"Indeed. So far, we're keeping our options open, but chances are that this is the work of a research extremist, rather than terrorism." Tanner spread his arms out.

"It's been five hours now. Are you guys still going to keep waiting?" The grey-haired man changed the topic.

Normally, the taskforce should have rushed in as soon as possible to rescue as many people as they could. However, the intelligence unit found out that the teleportation formation was linked to the core region of the relics. As such, the taskforce had to make proper preparations before going in otherwise it would be no different from suicide.

Not only did they have to prepare equipment, but they also had to call in as many powerful forces as they could. Since it was the core region, they would need a couple of sixth and even seventh level stellar practitioners.

However, while Trundel City might be a large city, it couldn't really compare to a city-state. There was a limit on the number of powerful practitioners in governmental agencies. The city government would have to request other local forces for support, but some of them were on the side of the faction supporting the destruction of the relics. Another group didn't want to take the risks, while the remaining who were willing would only do so if there was something to gain.

All these intricacies and politics had led to the taskforce not assembling a proper team for the past five hours as negotiations were still ongoing.

"We should be going in soon. I've already received information that the local forces are sending support. Oh, they're already here." Tanner stared out of the building.

As a combatant at the sixth level, Tanner was quite sensitive to strong individuals. It was even easier for him to notice the latter if they didn't hide their aura.

"Inform the squad to be ready for departure." Tanner ordered his deputy.

The latter saluted and left the building right away.

A few minutes later, a team of seventy men had gathered at the entrance of the East Braftford relics. All seventy men were suited up and equipped with various defensive and offensive vestiges.

There were twelve powerful stellar practitioners in this group of which three of them were at the seventh level of the Apertures Opening stage. Of the remaining nine, four were at the peak of the sixth level while the other five were at the mid point of the sixth level.

Because of the presence of a seventh level stellar practitioner, Tanner—a peak sixth level stellar practitioner—was relegated to second-in-command. The leader of the new assembled taskforce team was one of the four directors of the Trundel City Security Force, a seventh level stellar practitioner. The other three seventh level stellar practitioners were from allied factions that were convinced to help them.

With such a powerful force, although it was too much to say that they could conquer the relics, going in and out of the outer section of the core region was doable.

"Let's go."

The director led the group and stepped into the relics.

At the same time, various media outlets were broadcasting the scene. Some of them were related to the faction of the city government in support of the preservation of the relics, while the rest were on the other side. Regardless of which it was, the two sides showed interest in the movement of the assembled taskforce.