

The Crafts 268

Chapter 268: Here Comes The Rescue

Seeing the lady he had sacrificed himself for, the middle-aged man whose skin had already turned red as his colleague, had mixed feelings in his eyes. On one hand, he was angered, anxious and worried for the young lady, and on the other hand, he was happy that he meant this much to her.

Having looked since she was twelve, the man had already thought of her as a half-daughter of his even though he knew that wasn't possible. When he was assigned to protect the little girl eight years ago, it was a permanent job; one he did because of the pay. But at the moment, it was simply because of his fatherly feelings for her.

"Get away now. It's not too late." The man said.

Although she had managed to block an attack from the drudnid, the young lady couldn't contend with it. One was a fourth level stellar practitioner who could even compare to a fifth level stellar practitioner, while the other was a peak third level stellar practitioner. Even a five year old could tell who would win, as long as nothing out of the ordinary happened.

"It's too late." The young lady wryly smiled.

She was right.

The drudnid had caught sight of her and its focus was locked on her. Even if the man tried to hold it back again, he was severely injured and the fight had already taken a lot out of him. There was nothing that could be done in that regard.

"Damn it." The middle aged man cursed. He wasn't angry at the lady, but himself. He was angry for his weakness.

Earlier, together with his partner, they had faced off against a fifth level drudnid in the core region. Such a monster was roughly equivalent to a sixth level stellar practitioner. What's more, it had a fractured rate of only 30%, which meant that it has seventy percent of its programmed consciousness intact. It was too much for even the two of them to handle and they had gotten severely injured.

The group had only managed to escape after using a lot of their trump cards and detonating two top quality Grade 3 vestiges. After that, they stumbled upon a trap and got teleported out to the inner region.

If the man had been strong enough, there wouldn't be a need to detonate those vestiges and it would have helped greatly against this drudnid. If he was strong enough, he would have been able to save his best friend, protect the young miss and defeat the drudnid. But in the end, he was weak.

The drudnid wasn't one for emotions. It ignored the melancholic vibe being exuded by the duo and charged at them.

The middle-aged man was too weak to dodge while the young lady couldn't even react in time.

The drudnid's weapon swung at them, intent on taking the lives of the two with one hit. But just as they were facing their death, a shadow appeared above the drudnid.

Bang

A loud metallic noise sounded ahead of them as the drudnid crashed to the ground. Above the metallic creature was an individual wrapped in body armour with his fist hammered down on the drudnid.

The new arrival was Lucas who had been stalking them in the dark. Having waited for an opening from the start, Lucas finally made his move seeing the drudnid's entire focus on the duo.

Unlike a robot, a drudnid operated using a consciousness which made it inadvertently have the same flaws as humans; letting its guard down. If the drudnid was controlled by an artificial intelligence, it would have been on alert at all times. But as it was controlled by a consciousness, the flaws of one existed within it.

The moment when the drudnid felt that it was in control and had won, happened to be the exact moment its guard was dropped. That in turn became the best opportunity for Lucas to attack and he did just that.

The middle-aged man and the young lady stared wide-eyed at Lucas, surprised by the latter's presence yet glad.

However, the emotions were cut short as the drudnid exploded with an incredible mental force which shook Lucas off it and blasted the young lady and the man away.

Thud

Lucas landed on his two feet and gained his balance right away, relying on the weight of his battle armour. He glanced at the drudnid. V

Two slight dents were visible on the back of the drudnid.

Seeing this, Lucas couldn't help but let out a low sigh.

'As I thought, it's much tougher than the others.'

The Apertures Opening stage consisted of twelve levels and each three levels made up a sub-stage, making a total of four sub-stages. The first to third levels made one sub-stage whilst the fourth to sixth levels made another sub-stage.

Every sub-stage was an important phase that indicated a qualitative change, not just in an individual but also in a vestige.

Originally, vestiges were graded by the same principle of sub-stages until newer and efficient methods were developed; which turned the initial system from four grades to the current six grades. In truth, the current systems still had traces of the previous one as Grades 2-5 were essentially the same vestiges for the four sub-stages. But Grade 1 and Grade 6 were the products of modern vestige-smithing, with Grade 1 being a simplified version of the first sub-stage vestiges (or Grade 2) while Grade 6 was an extreme version of fourth sub-stage vestiges (Grade 5).

The drudnid —power-wise— was the same as a fourth level stellar practitioner. To be able to create such a being, vestiges, or rather, artefacts, on par with the second sub-stage had to be utilised. This made not just the raw power, but also the quality of the drudnid's build, ahead of the third level drudnids. It was not just stronger, but also tankier.

'If only it wasn't because of them.' Lucas sighed again.

The Stellar Circuit Battle-Armour he currently wore was dimmer and gave off weaker signals than it did before. It appeared just like a regular third level battle suit rather than a fourth level one. This wasn't because the vestige was damaged, but because Lucas had downgraded its performance. The reason for this was because he wasn't the only one present.

Learning from the events in his past life and Baylands City, Lucas didn't want anyone to find out that he knew how to generate a qualitative change in a vestige through quantitative means. If this was found out, lots of powerful individuals would be on the hunt for him as before.

As such, Lucas had to step down the performance of the Vis receptacle —the most important component of the SCB that created the qualitative change. By doing so, the power of the Stellar Circuit Battle-Armour dropped from a Grade 4 vestige to a Grade 3 vestige.

Logically, a top tier Grade 3 battle suit should still be able to cause severe damage to the drudnid, but the user was an important factor to the performance of the battle suit. In this case, Lucas wasn't even at the first level of the Apertures Opening stage, so he couldn't even bring out the true power of the vestige.

A Grade 3 vestige was the equivalent of the second sub-stage (fourth to sixth level), but in Lucas' hands, it was already impressive that he could deal second level power and occasionally exhibit third level strength.

Seeing the drudnid stand up, Lucas turned towards the man.

"Cooperate with me or we die."

The middle-aged man was initially stunned by the appearance of a battle armour and wondered who could be inside it. However, hearing the words of the other side, he glanced at the drudnid and frowned.

The other side had struck a surprise attack, yet it was far from enough to take down the drudnid. Even so, the middle-aged man didn't look down on the hero who saved their lives. On the contrary, he wondered how they could beat the drudnid as they were lacking firepower.

As for running away, that wasn't an option. The newcomer seemed to be at the second or fourth level with a Grade 3 battle armour, which pointed out their weakness. If he tried to escape, it was possible for the other side to do the same and no one could say who the drudnid would chase. Even if the other side didn't run, with their weak strength, the drudnid would end the battle in seconds before pursuing the man and the young lady.

Hence, there was only one suitable choice at the moment; to work together and defeat the drudnid.

Coughing a bit, the middle-aged man gave his answer immediately.

"No problem."

It might seem like so much time has passed from the moment Lucas and the duo were blasted away until the drudnid stood up, but only three seconds had gone by.

Even though the man was injured and he has to battle with his suit at thirty percent, Lucas didn't think he would lose.

Firstly, his battle skills surpassed that of the drudnid's after having watched a couple of them.

Secondly, even though his attack had failed to cause much damage, Lucas never counted on his physical attack when dealing with drudnids. It was his mental power.

When he struck at the drudnid, Lucas had dealt a bit of mental damage to it. However, because its consciousness was much more completed than the others, the drudnid didn't 'die'. On the contrary, it had even counterattacked ferociously with its own mental energy, but that didn't dampen Lucas' resolve. Instead, he understood that he had to just use more mental power the next time. After all, the drudnid's consciousness was fractured and not complete, so this weakness to mental attacks would always exist.

If one cup of water wasn't enough to wash off a stain on a car, then what about one bucket? Or an entire ocean? That was the same concept here.