

The Crafts 272

Chapter 272: Sponsorship

After the incident, having known that Lucas was heading to the relics, Havos had given him a one week break to recover from the incident. The latter believed that Lucas was probably traumatized or depressed by the incident, after all, over four hundred people had died while he was among the few survivors. Any normal individual would find it difficult to resume work the next day after such an experience, so Havos —as the team's head— gave Lucas a break.

The next race was supposed to be in four days when Lucas decided to go to the relics. Three days had gone by since then, which meant that the next race was the following day. However just before that, Lucas wanted to strike a deal with Luka.

"It's been a while. I was really surprised to hear you would be seeing me today." Luka glanced at the Lucas who sat across the table.

He was indeed telling the truth. Since Lucas was given a one-week break, logically, he would have spent the break recuperating or something else. Instead, Lucas had called to meet him in private.

"Well, I had some things to discuss." Lucas suddenly said.

"Oh?"

Seeing how serious he looked, Luka's interest was piqued.

"I'm interested in the Black Star team's spare shares." Lucas said with a serious face.

After the Black Star team was formed by merging Luka's personal drift racing team and Callus' original team, fifty-five percent (55%) of the stocks of the new team —which accounted for a majority of the stocks— went to Luka. Thirty-five percent (35%) was given to Callus to secure his colleagues' spot in the new team and protect their interests. The remaining ten percent (10%) was left under Luka's control but didn't belong to him, but rather, to attract investors or retain talents.

"But I have plans for it." After a pause, Luka replied calmly.

Luka's original idea was to have Havos take the leftover stocks and tie him to the Black Star team through them. The value and face of a grandmaster's student was one many wanted to get but couldn't. Being connected to such a reputable individual could do a lot of PR for the team and raise awareness about them. At the same time, Luka could forge a connection to a Tier 1 Grandmaster vestige-smith and a future top Tier 1 Master vestige-smith, who could potentially reach the grandmaster rank.

No matter how one looked at it, there were too many benefits. However, Havos wasn't interested in those stocks.

Being the student of a Tier 1 Grandmaster vestige-smith, he was a talent many other drift racing teams craved for. Whether it was for his abilities or his connections, all of them were valuable to tons of drift racing teams even in the top leagues. In comparison, the Black Star team was only in the third league. Even if it had potential, Havos didn't think it was worth having himself tied to it for long. He even took his current role at the team as a sort of experiential training.

So, even though Havos was a part of the team, he could leave at any point in time without looking back.

The ten percent stocks then remained unowned.

Lucas had managed to hear about them one time during his conversation with the team members and he decided to set his sights on them.

"I'm willing to offer a good price for them." Lucas said.

"I heard you run a store in Trundel City. You're interested in official rights, correct?" Luka smiled.

The reason why Lucas entered the drift racing industry was to have the name of his store appear as a sponsor of one of the teams, specifically on the body of the racing shuttle. As long as the team he sponsored performed well, it would also lead to an increase in customers. It was pretty much the same logic as sponsorships in sports back on Earth, and it was even common and pronounced here. This was especially so if the sponsor was related to the industry of the sponsored.

For instance, the Lugo Vido Autos team was not only developed by a vestige-smithing company, but the company was also the main sponsor—having their logo painted all over the shuttle. What's more, LVA was a vestige-smithing company in the hover car and sare shuttles industry.

With the team's impressive performance in the league so far, some hover cars and racing shuttle enthusiasts visited the company's branches to check out their goods and services. They believed that the skills of the vestige-smiths from LVA had to be top-tier considering the team they not only developed, but sponsored as well, was doing great so far.

There was also the team Yoko-bunny, run by the princess of the Verantino family. They had a vestige-smithing company in the stellar processor market as their main sponsor. The company also saw a rise in sales after the team's performance in the league.

Such scenarios were common especially with the top teams as they had thousands of fans and garnered attention. The sponsors would be advertising their brands to those fans by being related with their idols.

The Black Star team was still an upstart, but because of their recent performance, they had quite a number of fans. In fact, some of them had even reached out to the vestige-smiths in the team for their services in fine-tuning their racing shuttles and hover cars.

These fans had noticed how Callus had improved from 19th place in the first race to 14th place in the sixth race. What's more, the changes done to the Juggernaut racing shuttle didn't go unseen by these people as well. As such, they also wanted similar modifications to be done on their own personal racing shuttles, which led to the increased requests to the team for private modification services.

As it stood now, the Black Star team had no official sponsor yet, even more so one in the vestige-smithing industry. If Lucas could seize that spot, there would be more traffic to his store since some of these requests would be targeted at him.

"Don't you think you're being a bit greedy?" Luka narrowed his eyes.

Usually, Luka wouldn't have hired Lucas as a member of the team; he was a human and there was no way a human vestige-smith would be better than a hyuman. But because Havos had requested for it, Lucas became a member of the Black Star team. Even though Lucas had made some achievements in the team, Luka brushed it off. He wasn't too knowledgeable about vestige-smithing, so he believed that what Lucas had done could have been replicated by someone else.

But actually, Luka was right about that.

"I'll remit my salary up to the necessary amount required for the purchase. I'll also design a top-class engine for the team, capable of securing a top five spot in the following races." Lucas laid out his terms.

He would have also added a share in the store's profit, but the system wouldn't allow that. Even when he cooperated in Baylands city-state, it was only possible because the Legacy Crafts dealership was purchasing the vestiges from him and reselling it. However in this situation, there was no reason for Luka to spend more money to open a dealership.

Hence, Lucas took a step back and decided to offer a blueprint for a new engine model. He already knew the ins and outs of a racing shuttle both from the books offered by the system and online, as well as his experience with the team. Lucas was confident that the engine he would design would perform at an efficiency rate 70% higher than the current engine used by the Juggernaut.

However, while Lucas was confident about this, the same wasn't so for Luka.

"Haha. That's a funny joke." Luka chuckled.

"Taking part of your salary to cover the cost for the stocks doesn't offer much benefits to me at all. I'd rather sell it for cheap if there's a profit behind the deal. But ignoring that, a top class engine? Heh. You have to be joking." Luka sneered.

One couldn't blame him for his attitude. The person who made the claim was a human, and as everyone knew, humans were only capable of creating —at best— a Grade 1 vestige. A top tier engine for a racing shuttle would be the equivalent of a high quality Grade 2 vestige, or even a Grade 3 vestige.

For context's sake, apart from the top three teams in the league, the other teams used engines equivalent to a Grade 1 or an average Grade 2 vestige. This couldn't be helped since this was a third tier league and the better skilled vestige-smiths were all swooped away by teams in higher tiered leagues. It was very difficult to find anymore talented ones even though Belfargos city-state had a lot of vestige-smiths.

Vestige-smithing was a very broad subject, and there were multiple areas of specialisation. One's ranking was simply a measurement of their maximum capabilities at the time, and not truly the level of skill they possessed.

For instance, when it came to designing racing shuttle engines, although rank was important, it didn't necessarily equate to skill. It was possible for even a Tier 1 Master vestige-smith, who can easily make a Grade 4 vestige, to fail in producing an engine with a Grade 3 rating. This was especially so if the vestige-smith wasn't one of the shuttle branch. Even if they were, they would still find the task difficult, although they would succeed.

So, the fact that Lucas—a human— claimed he was capable of designing an engine with a Grade 2 high quality rating was laughable, to say the least.

"I'm a bit busy now, so I will be taking my leave. No need to see me off." Luka stood up and walked away.

It was clear that the negotiations had fallen through, but above that, their relationship had also nosedived. Luka was a bit cold with his words and actions, and it showed that he thought little of Lucas at the moment.

However, Lucas wasn't bothered about that. He just sighed at the thought that finding a team to sponsor was much too difficult.

To sponsor a team, he needed money, lots of it. But he wanted to sponsor a team to make money. However, without money, he couldn't sponsor a team.

'Do I have to think of a different idea now?'