

The Crafts 280

Chapter 280: Customer

The meeting ended shortly after Lucas made his statement. Since it would not negatively affect the team's performance in the race or the staff, the bet was made between Lucas and the Versoa team's core members. However, changes were made to the bet.

Orvel had originally wanted it to be as Lucas had stated, but Lerman—the head of the department of vehicle manufacturing— and Helnord —Vienna's secretary— thought it would be more fair to 'level' the playing field a bit.

They had given Lucas an extra day to the bet, making it five days. They also allowed him access to the various departments laboratories and workshops as well as their equipment, although he didn't have priority access. Finally, the winning condition was set to be for Lucas to make a much better engine rather than vehicle. The engine would now be placed into a replicated Viper racing shuttle, but without the L2.13o engine. By better, they meant at least a twenty percent (20%) improvement in performance.

While all the changes seemed to help Lucas, the last one was a bit controversial. Since the new engine would be used on the Viper, Lucas had to design one with the appearance and functionality of the Viper in mind. If he were to make his own racing shuttle instead, he would have more space for creativity and innovation.

But then again, since he wouldn't need to make a new racing shuttle from ground up and only focus on the engine, it made it easier for Lucas to be able to finish the task faster.

Nonetheless, Lucas wasn't bothered about this. Whether or not they introduced the new changes to the bet, it didn't matter to him. He was confident in developing something better within four days.

One would think that the matter of the bet would be Lucas' first concern upon returning home, but it wasn't. Surprisingly, it was his working situation.

Having taken over the Versoa team in the Bailin province, Lucas was faced with a challenge. His store and home was on the other side across the city, in Cas Lego province. Although it was only a fifteen minute trip, it was still somewhat mentally stressful.

"Big brother, you're back." Melissa rushed up to Lucas and hugged him as soon as he came in.

Smiling, Lucas patted her head as his worries disappeared from his mind. Having a cute younger sister was indeed the best thing in the world.

"Did anyone look for me?" Lucas asked absentmindedly.

This was a routine of his and he never expected the answer to be different from what it had always been. But today happened to be different.

"Yes. Some strange man came around and asked for you." Melissa replied.

"Oh?"

Stunned by this, Lucas walked over to the counter and turned on the pop-up display. He immediately went to the security footage page and went through it. It didn't take long for Lucas to find the footage of someone entering the store and speaking to Melissa.

Even though she was young, Melissa was a third level stellar practitioner which was quite high. Apart from that, she was recorded as an employee of the system and could utilise privileges associated with the status, which included the system's protection. Lucas had also informed her about this and taught Melissa some skills to protect herself. As such, he wasn't too worried about leaving her alone.

The man was a young man, probably around 25-26 years of age. He had brown hair and amber-coloured eyes. He was quite tall and wore a black leather jacket with black trousers. Based on how he dressed and walked, Lucas presumed the man to be a rich second generation.

The security footage was equipped with audio-recording so Lucas could hear exactly what the man had asked for.

"Is the owner here?" The visitor glanced at Melissa, a bit surprised by her presence.

Because of the system's protection, Melissa's stellar refinement level couldn't be sensed by anyone. She was also a mixed blood of a categorised human and a Nysa, so she didn't naturally

produce the same frequency wave as humans. Together with her appearance, this made her easily mistaken as a human.

"My big brother went out for a business meeting, so I'm in charge." Melissa said with a proud smirk on her face.

Thanks to Lucas, she had steadily conquered her fear of people and could calmly talk to anyone besides him.

"Oh, alright. When the owner comes over, please let him know I came around. I'll be coming back tomorrow." The man said before turning to leave.

"Oh, mister, what do you want from big brother?" Melissa asked.

She was thinking if it was a job related to vestige maintenance, she could accept the request and do it herself. Even though Lucas had warned her not to, Melissa had been itching to try out her hand at practical experience.

Maybe it was because Melissa looked cute, the man stopped and answered her with a smile,

"I need a revamp on my hover vehicle. I heard that the boss here is the vestige-smith who worked on the Juggernaut's exterior. I wanted him to help me with my hover car but seeing as he's not around, I'll come back tomorrow."

After that, the man left and Melissa returned to drawing vestiges.

Lucas went through the entire footage and nothing else happened.

A smile crept up on his face.

This experience wasn't exactly new, at least for others. It was one of the advantages of working for a drift racing team. As the team did well, those involved in the performance would naturally get rewarded, not just from the reward money but also the exposure.

The one who profited the most would be the driver, the head of designs and the official vestige-smith sponsor(s), as they would be the ones the audience presumed were the important factors to the team's glory. Right after them were the vestige-smith crew involved in the production.

In the past, while working for the Black Star team, Lucas had heard and seen the other vestige-smiths receive personal orders for modifications from fans and enthusiasts. As these orders were made outside of the team, the profit went to the vestige-smith alone.

Despite the others getting these contracts, Lucas didn't receive any. Part of it definitely had to do with the fact that he was more reclusive than the other vestige-smiths in the crew. However, another reason was that it was somehow revealed to the interested parties that Lucas was a human. The tag of a human would make one underrate his abilities and consider them in good light. Many would believe that he had little to do with the Black Star team's recent performance. As a result, it would be next to impossible for Lucas to get any personal orders unless one was either crazy or willing to take a risk.

Despite that, just after he left the team, someone had actually come up to him for aid. Even though he wasn't present, Lucas didn't care. If it happened once, it would happen again. Also, the man said he would come back again.

'I can't think too much about it.' Lucas threw the matter at the back of his head and went into the work-station.

He also settled in his decision regarding his work commute. For the moment, Lucas couldn't move out of the store. He had already paid a six month deposit at three thousand federal coins per month, which equates to eighteen thousand federal coins (18,000). Even if he wanted to relocate, he would only receive 80% of his deposit of unoccupied months, and having stayed over one month already, that would be nine thousand six hundred federal coins (9,600). Lucas couldn't tolerate leaving behind two thousand four hundred federal coins to the leaseholder because right after that, he would still have to pay for rent at his new place.

Hence, the best decision —at least in Lucas' view— was to stay.

Having made that decision, he promptly went to build the new engine.

During his stint at the Black Star team, Lucas had learnt a lot about racing shuttles and hover cars. Even though the system's tome had granted him the needed knowledge, there were still some basics and tricks only experienced professionals would know about.

While learning, Lucas was also making use of the knowledge to create a formidable racing shuttle engine. He could use that design for the bet, however, it would not be fair.

According to the bet, Lucas claimed that he would design an entirely new engine that would exceed the performance of the L2.13o. Since it was to be a completely new design, Lucas didn't plan on using an existing prototype in his inventory, even though it was technically new to the world. He truly wanted to make something from scratch.

Spreading the system-made blue paper on his workbench, Lucas began to map out his ideas.

As the new majority stakeholder of the Versoa team, and also one brought in by Vienna, Lucas had access to all the information of the team, including the data on their racing shuttles and modifications. Also, because of the nature of the bet, he was granted further access; although Lucas didn't need it as the previous authority already gave him the highest access.

From the blueprint of the L2.13o engine, Lucas had managed to spot some of its shortcomings. There were at least ten ways he could improve on the engine and raise its performance up to 50%. However, he was lacking the stellar energy for that.

The L2.13o was designed by a high rank Tier 1 Master vestige-smith who was an eight level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner. Even the man who headed the vehicle manufacturing department was a peak rank Tier 1 Elite vestige-smith with a stellar refinement strength of sixth level, closing approaching the seventh level. On the other hand, Lucas —using the Employee Hire Function— could only mimic Melissa's third level stellar refinement strength.

Hence, even though he knew how to improve the engine by 50%, Lucas could not achieve it with his strength. He would need at least fifth level Apertures Opening stage stellar refinement. Although he could make minor changes, that wasn't enough. Also, it wouldn't abide by his intentions.

What Lucas wanted to do was to design a new engine and not modify the L2.13o. But since the engine would need to be fitted into a Viper, Lucas decided to take inspiration from the L2.13o. It was still a creation of an eight level stellar practitioner, so it wasn't that bad.