

## The Crafts 329

### Chapter 329: Manipulation

"It's all over."

A couple of metres away from Canza was the location where Lucas previously stood. It was quite difficult to see as the entire place had been ravaged by the barrage of attacks from Mykonos' Pen.

Canza turned around to leave as he felt he had wasted too much time here on an individual who most likely didn't possess the Aión source.

'It's too bad I wasn't able to find out how he developed his energy. He probably hid it using some kind of secret technique. Seems handy to be honest.'

Canza thought as he walked away.

He was a part of the secretive terrorist organisation, the Stygian Abyss, and was sent to retrieve the portion of Eretre's world source that was detected. Canza wasn't an original member and was instead a recruited party, so he didn't know much about the organisation. However, during his time with them, he found out that there was a unique drug the Stygian Abyss' researchers had made which enables humans to utilise stellar energy and practice stellar refinement. It was known as Xalox tubes [1] and the first shipments had been sent to Alleva district of Baylands city-state a couple months ago for testing.

Due to that, Canza figured that whatever Lucas was using wasn't the same Xalox tubes as produced by the Stygian Abyss, but something different. Hence, he was interested in it. Even if he couldn't use it, he could offer the information to the higher-ups of the organisation and get rewarded or even promoted.

But with Lucas now dead, that possibility was gone.

'I guess I'll just have them dig up on him somehow and find something from there.' Canza thought.

Suddenly, Canza widened his mouth as a sharp yet cold sensation was felt on chest. Glancing down, he could spot a blade piercing out of his chest.

"H-how?" Canza barely managed to utter as he turned his head behind.

Lucas walked out from the dust and the debris with his armour still intact, although there were a few dents and damages on it. Through the openings on the mask, a pair of cold eyes stared at Canza with no hint of any emotion.

"The previous time you struck me and presumed me to be dead, you realised your mistake almost right away. I figured you were quite sensitive to something that made you aware I was alive."

"And then?" Canza asked with difficulty.

"Proceeding with that line of thought, there could only be a few answers. It definitely wasn't stellar energy as even a fresh corpse would have stellar energy fluctuations. So, it had to be either the sound of my breathing, air fluctuations, heat signals or other life signals. After realising this, I decided to apply it right after you had me under intense pressure.

"And so, I waited for an opportunity to fake my death. Luckily for me, I didn't have to wait long since you unleashed a barrage of attacks at me. This helped me pull off my act even better as a smokescreen was created thanks to it."

"B, puack." Canza puked out a mouthful of blood.

"'But how?' is what you wanted to ask, right?" Lucas smiled but Canza couldn't see this as his face was hidden behind a mask.

"It's easy you see. There's a famous martial arts called the Turtle Breathing Technique. However, in some other place, there's an advanced version known as the Corpse Delusion Technique. It can allow one to mimic the exact same state as a corpse, from the change in temperature to even scent. With my newfound abilities, I was easily able to perform this technique without a hitch."

Canza seemed to finally understand how he had met his end. A reluctant smile appeared on his face before his body fell to the ground.

The Wild Dog was dead.

Lucas finally sighed, feeling relieved with the result.

'This is definitely my most stressful battle yet.'

Canza was definitely one of the most dangerous opponents Lucas had ever faced even though it didn't look like it.

At first, having used the Bronze Grade card in coordination with the Special Ability card and the complete Stellar Circuit Battle-Armour, a Grade 6 Canza wasn't a problem for Lucas. However, everything took a turn for the worse when Canza brought out his Grade 4 vestige; Mykonos' Pen.

Not only was Mykonos' Pen a top quality Grade 4 vestige, but it was also ranged, covering up Canza's most obvious weakness. It suppressed Lucas and made him unable to seize the upper hand once again, hence Lucas had to utilise an underhanded strategy.

'I can't just go like this.'

Lucas stared at Canza's corpse on the ground.

Originally, he planned on escaping Canza's assault, there by forcing the latter to attack William. With his sixth level strength and the Grade 4 vestige, William would have definitely lose. Canza would then fail to find the Heart of Silver on him and reach three possibilities: Lucas had it; the Satcthalle took it; or William hid it away, which was unlikely albeit not impossible.

With three various possibilities to go through, it would give Lucas some time to get into hiding, or complete the mission and finally possess stellar energy. By that time, beating Canza wouldn't be impossible. In fact, as long as Lucas got into the store and hid there, Canza would be unable to harm him. On the contrary, Canza would die once he stepped into the store.

So, regardless of which it was, Lucas could eliminate the traces of him having stolen the Heart of Silver as long as he escaped from Canza.

However, Lucas didn't escape but killed the latter. This now made it possible for William to be alive, and William was the only human who was aware that Lucas has the Heart of Silver. Worst of all, he appeared to be someone of status which meant that he could find Lucas; unknown to Lucas, William was the only son of a deputy city lord.

Having someone of influence chase after him in Belfargos city-state was something Lucas wanted to avoid. The situation would even be worse than back in Baylands City. After all, the latter was a struggle for knowledge, but the Heart of Silver was an item that could better one's potential; in other words, change their destiny. The value was incomparable.

'I still have some time left.'

Glancing at his communicator, Lucas noted he had over 90 minutes left with the Bronze Grade card's effect.

He promptly sat down and withdrew a few unique papers, a metallic liquid and some other items, including an inscription pen.

Following this, Lucas began to concentrate on creating a talisman.

With his current fourth level Apertures Opening stage ability, Lucas was able to draw a lot more talismans than his normal self could. What's more, the Energy Form Manipulation ability seemed to be a perfect fit for talisman inscription, making the process much easier and faster.

Within just ten minutes, Lucas had drawn up two different talismans on a blue paper with a black-gold metallic ink. One of them was called Energy Disperser talisman while the other was Bone-changing talisman.

The purpose of the first talisman was to disperse energy, just as its name implied.

Lucas stuck it on Canza's corpse and formed a few hand seals. Right away, a yellow pale flame appeared on the blue paper and burnt it to cinders. An effect immediately took place on Canza's corpse. The remnant stellar energy within the corpse was forcefully dispersed.

Usually, stellar energy could be stored in a practitioner's body, but once they die, it would slowly begin to disperse as the body's hold on the energy weakened. Lucas simply sped up this process using the talisman.

After a few seconds, Canza's corpse still looked the same, but it was devoid of stellar energy. From a single glance, it was impossible to realise that this was the corpse of a stellar practitioner who had died just a few minutes ago.

Lucas stuck the next talisman on Canza and muttered a few chants while forming hand seals once again. This time around, there was no flame but the talisman dispersed into star dust that sunk into Canza's corpse. Almost immediately, the corpse's structure began to change.

It began with the fingers, then the limbs, the chest and finally, the head including the face. After a few seconds, the corpse on the floor no longer looked like Canza, instead it appeared like Lucas.

At this point, it was obvious what Lucas' plan was.

Without hesitating, Lucas took off the dark cloak Canza wore and replaced it with some of his outfits stored in his inventory. He took Canza's Grade 4 vestige and manipulated it to form scars and injuries on the corpse. This way, a simple forensics would determine that the corpse was murdered using a powerful vestige.

With his experience, William would be able to figure out that it was Canza's Mykonos' Pen that caused those injuries.

After he was done, Lucas carried the corpse onto his sare shuttle—which had arrived while he was making the talismans—and departed in a certain direction. He then dumped the corpse there, made a few changes to the scene and left.

The Bone-changing talisman had an effective duration of twenty four hours. Lucas was confident that William would have escaped from the Satc'halle within this period and find the corpse; after all, he placed it in an appropriate position, the path where William would likely take to leave.

As long as he found the corpse, William would reach the conjecture that Canza had killed Lucas, which was exactly what Lucas wanted.

Since it was the corpse of a human, it held no value to William and he wouldn't be bothered about it, much less perform a forensic analysis. Instead, his thoughts would be clouded by anger

for having missed out on the Heart of Silver and he would be thinking of a way to track down Canza, who was already dead.

As for Lucas, he would have been long gone.

A perfect plan.