

The Crafts 332

Chapter 332: Mason

After the meal, Lucas left with Melissa and Vienna for the Bailin province where the Versoa Team Co's building was located.

This time around, Lucas didn't need to take a light-rail train ride as Vienna had arrived with her hover shuttle. It was a top model hover shuttle but with some modifications. For instance, the engine had been modded to exceeds the typical limit and produce more power, the body was refurbished and painted with a custom colour, and the interior had been swapped out with a more luxurious finishing.

Having worked in the racing shuttle industry for more than two months now, Lucas knew a lot about these details and could already estimate the price. Just the base model for this hover shuttle alone was a staggering price, much less the renovations. This made Lucas wonder once more what exactly Vienna's identity was. However, he didn't let the question bug him too much.

Whether she was a mafia boss' beloved daughter or the Oklo Dynasty Emperor's secret love child, none of that concerned him as they were only business partners at the moment; at best, she would be Melissa's irregular babysitter. This nonchalant attitude was simply because Lucas wasn't the type to take advantage of those close to him. So, their background didn't matter.

Back on Earth, even after he became the most wanted and awarded scientist, Lucas still spent his time in orphanages taking care of little children. He also donated to charity, specifically those of disabled people—a tribute to a friend in his first past life who lost his arms and was crippled while protecting him.

To Lucas, your background didn't affect how he treated you, but rather your personality. This was a code he had lived by for long, even during his time in Baylands city-state.

"We're here." The driver's voice sounded.

Although the vehicle could be automatically driven, Vienna had a driver who also doubled as a bodyguard with her whenever she moved around.

It took only around twenty minutes or so, for the trio to arrive in Bailin province. It was much slower than a light-rail train, which had an average speed of 700km/hr (435 mph) and would

take only fifteen minutes to get there. But this was because moving at such a speed was illegal for personal vehicles. However, the journey was more comfortable than in a light-rail train. There were also a few desserts and sweets, with a display device broadcasting some entertainment channels to keep them occupied.

Alighting from the shuttle, the group made their way to the administrative building where Lucas was to receive updates on the team.

Helnord, Vienna's secretary, was already present there.

"It's been a while, Mr Lucas." Helnord greeted, but for some reason, Lucas felt that his tone wasn't as pleasant as his words.

"I guess so." Lucas nonchalantly replied.

Despite the latter having offered assistance before, Lucas was aware that Helnord didn't like him; he only carried out his duties as Vienna's and the VTC's (Versoa Team Co) secretary.

"Good afternoon, chairwoman."

A voice sounded right then.

Lucas noticed that there was someone walking behind Helnord, dressed in a black leather jacket with a white t-shirt and black jean trousers. It was a new face he had not seen before and belonged to a young man around twenty-five years of age —older than Lucas' physical age of twenty three.

Vienna nodded at the young man and spoke to Lucas.

"He's our new driver."

Lucas was a bit surprised by this but didn't react out of the ordinary. The surprise was because most skilled drivers were usually in their thirties as that was the peak period humans in Eretré had reached their stellar refinement potential.

For a drift racer, stellar energy was an important factor as it was a gauge of how much of an engine's ability they could utilise and control, as well as an indicator of their reactionary abilities.

A driver at the age of twenty six, although not uncommon, usually only drove for teams in lower leagues. Most top teams, especially those who aspired for more, hired experienced and older drivers. The youngest they would go for was a driver in their late 20s rather than one in their mid 20s.

'The situation is probably worse than I thought.' Lucas sighed inwardly.

A drift racing team usually had two drivers; a main driver and a backup. However, the Versoa team lost their backup driver during the East Brafford relics crisis while the main driver, Reto, quit after being instigated by the faction of the company's third major shareholder, Guilla.

This led to the Versoa team being stuck in a terrible situation as the season was underway and they couldn't exactly hire a new driver. They could only find an available driver that hadn't signed any contract with a team as transfers during the season were banned. However, such a driver was usually either unprofessional or lacking in experience. They could also try to get an experienced driver out of retirement, but the costs for that was massive and they would still have to try to get the driver back in shape.

Vienna seemed to have given up on the season after firing the members of three departments and losing their drivers. So, she probably settled for an average driver who was available, not really caring about the performance of the team anymore.

Naturally, her actions had upset the other shareholders, and under the lead of Guilla, there were attempts to oust Vienna from the chairwoman position on the board. If it weren't for the fact that both Lucas —the majority shareholder— and Jermaine —the fourth largest shareholder— were on her side, together with Vienna herself being the second largest shareholder, she might have lost her position. But even so, as the team's position worsened, it would be hard for her to keep it going. This was why Vienna was glad that Lucas wanted to help her, although she didn't know how he would do so.

Knowing what had happened, Lucas understood that while he could improve the quality and performance of the Viper racing shuttle, the other important criteria to success was the young man in front of him.

At the same time Lucas studied the driver, the young man also stared curiously at him.

Helnord had informed him that the chairwoman was coming. Accompanying her was an individual who was the largest shareholder of the company and the head of the Designs and Energy department. He was also the temporary head of the Material Manufacturing, and Simulation and Testing departments. In summary, a really bigshot.

The young man was named Mason, and he was previously a driver for a third tier league team. However, that team was disbanded two years ago and he lost his role as a driver. Although he managed to make a living by taking on roles as a backup driving or engaging in duels, Mason still dreamed of driving in an official circuit in the league. So, when he was approached by a tier two team, he was stunned and didn't hesitate to accept, believing this was his big break.

However, after arriving at the team, Mason understood the reality of things and realised that he was simply there to just fill in a spot as he always did in the past. Once the season was over, he would eventually be sidelined or even fired once again.

Despite that, he didn't fall into depression or anything like that. Instead, he tried his best to understand the vehicle, sync with it and perform well in the circuit. But reality was much more difficult than his one imagined it.

The second tier Nadire Underground League was much difficult than Mason had expected that he could barely compete in it. Although part of this was because he had abruptly arrived and was still not used to the racing shuttle, Mason admitted that he was inevitably still lacking in skill and experience as well. This further cemented his belief that he would be shipped out of the team once the season was over, but he didn't want that.

As such, when he heard that the team's founder and owner, alongside the current majority shareholder, would be present, he decided to show up and try to make a good impression. At the very least, even if he wouldn't be the driver next season, he could get the second driver spot for the team.

"Good day, I'm Mason Cloud and it's nice to meet you." Mason stiffly smiled as he stretched out his hand towards Lucas.

'This guy should be younger than me, no? And he's already a majority shareholder of such a large team. Damn, being born into a rich family sure is nice.' Mason thought, believing Lucas to be the young master of some powerful family in Belfargos city-state.

Most of the owners and big time investors of drift racing teams in unofficial leagues were the younger generations of powerful families. The older generation tend to invest in teams in the official leagues instead. However, there were some exceptions, for instance, the other shareholders of the Versoa Team Co.

"Nice to meet you as well. I'm Lucas Saunters." Lucas greeted back.

'Saunters?' Mason was a bit confused as he didn't know of any top family close by with that name, but he immediately his his confusion.

Nonetheless, Lucas spotted it but didn't think too much about it. Instead, he stared at the latter and suddenly said,

"Let's see what you got."