

## The Crafts 48

Chapter 48 : The Dark Side Of Hyuman society

The next day came quickly, the second day of the fifth week of Lucas' stay in this new world.

Lucas had been busy all throughout ever since he met up with the highschooler. Apart from the 'encouragement' he got from the system, another reason Lucas was desperate to make money was that his debt was piling.

When he first came into this world, lacking any financial ability whatsoever, Lucas had to pawn an ingot of Purple Iridium metal to the Vinis pawnshop. This decision of his had brought about a significant amount of thrill and danger to his life, but it also helped him to stabilise himself in this new world, buying a communicator, a house and grocery items.

The first month had gone by, so it was time to pay the loan. Lucas had taken a five thousand federal coins loan, and with a fifteen percent interest rate, meaning he had to pay back five thousand seven hundred and fifty federal coins.

For every week he defaulted, he would pay an extra five percent, and not on the principal amount, but the outstanding amount after the first month, which was the initial interest and the principal.

This seemed like a rip-off, but it wasn't. The interest rates were bigger than banks, but for the fast response and good offer of ninety percent the agreed collateral's value, it was a good deal. Also, the Vinis pawnshop was a registered financial institution in the government's records, which ensured security for every transaction. With that in mind, the rate was acceptable.

Back to reality, Lucas was in need of money; dire need. Once this week ends, he would have to pay five percent extra, bringing his total debt to six thousand and thirty seven federal coins, five pences. There was the solution of using the Purple Iridium to pay off the debts, but for Lucas, that was a last resort he had no intention of using.

Inside the store, apart from Lucas who was sipping a cup of a drink similar to ice cola, the young boy from the previous day was on the opposite side with both knees tightened together, clearly anxious.

Ever since he arrived at the store, the young was kept aside by Lucas. Even when the latter left from the work-station, he didn't say a word about the vestige and just told him to wait.

\*Ding\*

The entrance door was opened as a figure walked into the store.

"Oh, you're out?" The newcomer said with a informal tone of speaking.

The newcomer was a black haired man and one familiar to Lucas. In fact, his arrival was as a request from Lucas. He was one of Lucas' earliest customers and had been a regular ever since. His name was Harrison Reid, or Harry for short, and he was the leader of a team of freelancers.

After witnessing Lucas' skill with his eyes, Harry decided to introduce a couple of his team members to Lucas who eventually became regulars. There was no reason for this other than the fact that Lucas' basic repairs were better and much cheaper than the others. Even if they were freelancers who made a lot of money, their expenses were also a lot, hence the desire to find a proper balance.

If they could save more on repairs while getting better quality and service, then why not.

"Did you bring it?" Lucas asked.

"Of course. It's a bit difficult to get ready with such a deadline, but you're lucky you met me." Harry smiled.

Lucas nodded then glanced at the young boy.

"Wally, right?"

"Yes..."

Wally O'Connor was the name of the young highschooler which Lucas found out earlier.

"Do you know what it means to have a vestige?" Lucas asked him.

"...I don't understand."

"Let me change it then. Do you know the requirements to own a vestige?" Lucas stared him in the eye.

"Y, yes. Everyone is taught about this in school." Wally nervously replied.

"Have you fulfilled any one of them?"

Wally turned quiet.

"Then how do you expect to use a vestige for your practicals?" Lucas asked.

"I, I don't know. I, I just wanted to sneak it in and use it just this once. Even if it's seized from me right after, I don't mind. I just need to get a good score." Wally replied tensely while shivering a bit.

Lucas frowned and began to radiate an overbearing aura subtly.

"Do you know that if you're found out, not only would you get jail time despite being a minor, but I'll also have my store forcefully closed and get arrested? Your actions had almost jeopardised not just your future but also mine."

"I know, and I'm sorry. But I don't have a choice." Wally retorted.

Tears began to flow from his eyes as he continued.

"I'm not strong like the others. My arms are weak. I look younger and weaker than my age, and no one takes me seriously. I've always performed badly in the practicals, but if it goes on, my grades would be badly affected. I had no choice but to take the risk. My family is just average.

We're no better than a human. My parents aren't talented in refinement and neither is my older sister. But I'm different. I'm the only hope in the family, but even then, I'm a failure."

Wally began to cry.

"15%." Wally muttered. "Even though I'm the hope of my family, my m(o)DNA concentration is only 15%. I'm an utter failure."

Lucas was surprised as he didn't think the boy's mental resilience was this weak. He almost began to feel bad for him even.

An individual's future accomplishments in Stellar Refinement heavily depended on their mDna count; to be specific, the m(o)DNA. It was both the greatest creation of humankind, but it also created rifts in society. The higher one's m(o)DNA concentration was, the more potential they had.

Even if they reached the limit of their potential, they could increase it by injecting themselves with m(z)DNA serums, thereby increasing their total mDNA count. However, this was limited to only thirty percent of their m(o)DNA. From this, one could see the importance of a higher m(o)DNA concentration.

Humans couldn't produce m(o)DNA, and so serums with m(z)DNA couldn't work on them and would instead kill them. This was why the human race was looked down upon; they couldn't utilise stellar energy no matter how hard they try. But hyumans weren't spared from this discrimination either.

Anything less than ten percent m(o)DNA concentration was termed as trash and no different from humans, because the serums would similarly not work on them, although it wouldn't kill them.

With a very low m(o)DNA concentration and no possibility of an increase in overall mDNA count, hyumans with less than ten percent would have no future in stellar refinement. Even if they tried their best, they would most times get stuck at the Body Strengthening stage just like Lucas, or at best, make it to the first level of the Aperture Opening stage.

It was rumoured that Digress city-state had a way around this, but no one could confirm that as the city-state was not just far, but it barely had any contact with the other city-states.

For one to be a hyuman considered with a potential in stellar refinement, their m(o)DNA concentration had to be at least fifteen percent (15%), and this was just the barest minimum. It was exactly why Wally was depressed. He might have the highest concentration in his family, but outside of that, he was trash.

One could only imagine how much suffering, bullying and mistreatment he had received for this.

Even if Wally worked five times as hard, could afford serums, and gave it his all, his mDNA would reach a count of nineteen percent (19%) [1]. With such an mDNA count, reaching the third level might be his greatest achievement.

Although mDNA count was usually used as an estimation of one's talent and could be wrong, since it had to deal with genetics, it was mostly accurate and became the mainstream method of determining one's potential.

"Enough crying like a little kid already. You think I care about your sob story?" Lucas used one finger to pick his ear.

"I came here to talk to you about how you almost got me into deep trouble and not listen to your backstory."

"Damn. Even I can't be this heartless." Harry muttered from one corner.

"I, I am. Sorry." Wally hurriedly bowed down and apologised sincerely.

"Sure, whatever. Either way, I've already made a promise. I can only blame myself for not predicting this situation." Lucas sighed, before stretching his arm to Harry.

"Hand it over."

"Hold up. That's for this kid?" Harry was surprised.

"Yeah, who else? Do you think I need something like that?" Lucas stared at him as if he was looking at a fool.

Harry froze for a second, then palmed his face. Lucas was right; he was a vestige-smith, so why would he need that?

"Sure." Harry then took out a communicator and projected a piece of paper.

"All you have to do is scan it and it will be transferred over to the communicator." Harry explained.

Lucas couldn't help but be amazed by the technology of this world, but now wasn't the time for that.

"Oi, kid. Scan this document and go sob elsewhere."

"Eh?"

"Don't make me repeat myself."

Wally was confused but he immediately did as he was told.

As he scanned the document, he took a glimpse into it and saw the header.

"This, this..."

Lucas pat his shoulder and said to him, "Make good use of it, and don't get it lost. Understand that you're my living, breathing and walking advertisement."

Wally was confused by the statement, but that didn't stop him from dwelling grateful to Lucas.,

"Thank you, mister. Thank you very much." Wally bowed his head as his eyes gushed out with years, but this time not of sadness, but gratefulness.