

## The Crafts 52

### Chapter 52 : The Factions

"This branch in the West Wing district only caters to the needs of members and registration of new members. We don't have the authority to carry out exams." The android female said.

Lucas was nonplussed for a while before he sighed.

Baylands city-state government had twenty districts, each the size of a city. Even though the five districts of Baylands City comprised the city itself, they were still individually as big as a standard city on Earth. The Seven Sparks Forge was located in the market zone of West Wing district, which was pretty close to the centre.

The distance from the Seven Sparks Forge to the Central Prefecture alone was a five hours walk.

One could imagine how large the entire Baylands City was. It could even dwarf some of Earth's largest cities when comparing the two sides.

There were light rail trains and hovercars which made moving around better. Nonetheless, moving was costly. Even if one was going for a vacation, they would have to consider the difference in value between the two places. For instance, West Wing district was the bottom of the barrel among the five districts of Baylands City.

As a result of this, the economy was poorer and the cost of living wasn't exaggerated.

However, stepping outside the district, one would realise how much costlier things are and how impoverished West Wing district was. The difference was especially so when the target of comparison was the Central Prefecture district, the home of the wealthiest in the entire Baylands city-state.

Just a night at a three star hotel there might cost up to twenty federal coins. The equivalent in West Wing district wouldn't reach up to five federal coins. Nonetheless, quality was assured in the Central Prefecture district.

But this wasn't Lucas' problem. The issue was that, he was broke.

Clearing his debts made Lucas turn from an opulent human to a miser. Even worse, he was now owing Harry a favour. All the money Lucas had on hand at the moment could only help him survive, unless he sold a vestige.

'One problem at a time. One problem at a time.' Lucas massaged his temples.

"Thanks for the help." Lucas waved and left.

At the very least, he now has the registration form so once he had enough money, Lucas would fill it and wait.

'Next week is Wally's practicals. He's been doing well in training so far, so he's likely to make an impressive performance then. As long as he stands out, people would spot the value of the vestige he has and they'll be coming to me. Then there's Harry.

If the vestige I make turns out to be amazing enough, he'll advertise my business to his teammates and the freelancers who observe him in action would also be interested.' Lucas thought.

'But that's not enough. I can try to run some ads on the intranet again, but it's not as efficient. Deals would fall apart too once they find out I'm human; not everyone can be as nice as an android. Do I pose as a reclusive vestige-smith?'

Although Lucas was mentally more than five hundred years old, his experience was only in a specific niche; that is, creating magic weapons. His life on Earth had helped him broaden his mindset and knowledge, but Lucas had only spent thirty seven (37) years there, and the majority of it was studying physics, chemistry, engineering and material science.

When it came to running a business, Lucas could only apply common sense and his experience from his first life.

It should be known that despite being a magic weapons creator, Yohan (Lucas in his first life), did not operate a store. He simply forged on request and as he got better and better, there was no need to advertise himself or utilise marketing strategies. He had already become renowned for his high quality products.

In other words, all of this -running a business and marketing strategies- were all new to him.

'The number one method of building a successful business should be to stand out. Since most freelancers already have a go-to store and pretty much every vestige-smith has a strong reputation, making something common just like the rest would get me drowned in the market until I go bankrupt. Standing out would almost be impossible. Hence, I have to do something unique.'

Lucas suddenly stopped and gazed in front of him. His eyes stared ahead blankly, lacking focus in them as he was lost in his thoughts.

'There are two schools of vestige-smithing under weapons. Hot weapons and cold weapons, each with their advantages. Cold weapons are the usual blades and spears; much easier to produce but the requirement for the base material is very high. On the contrary, hot weapons, like the guns and cannons, don't have such a massive requirement for base material.

But they do have a significant demand for knowledge.'

Weapon-type vestiges, apart from the grading system, were divided into two: cold and hot weapon-type. This division also defined two schools of vestige-smithing: the Forger faction and the Multiplex faction. There were other factions and schools of thoughts in the vestige-smith trade, but when it came to weapon-type vestiges, there was only these two.

The Forger faction advocated that cold weapon-type vestiges were the best as not only were they simpler to create, but there was no need for any sort of ammunition, hence making them more lasting and reusable. They believed that cold weapon-type vestiges were the way to go, being more efficient than hot weapons and cheaper in the long run.

After all, when using hot weapons, one would need to still purchase rounds for the weapon, but such a thing was nonexistent for cold weapons.

There was also the fact that hot weapon-type vestiges were very complicated to make as they didn't just require stellar matrix inscription knowledge, but also engineering, physics and sometimes chemistry knowledge. You couldn't make a gun or a laser cannon without knowing any or all of these.

However, the Forger faction only used blacksmithing knowledge paired with stellar matrix inscription, as such the bar for entry was lower, and it was easier to train vestige-smiths.

Despite this, the Multiplex faction argued differently. The Multiplex faction believed that hot weapon-type vestiges were more efficient than cold weapon-type, the opposite of what their rivals said, because they believed and had proven that hot weapon-type vestiges had a low limitation for use compared to their adversary.

When using a spear or sword Grade 3 vestige, the amount of power one could exhibit with them depended on the strength of the user. A Body Strengthening stage practitioner using such a vestige might not even be able to bring out destructive force on par with a first level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner. But this issue was mitigated on hot weapon-type vestiges.

If the Body Strengthening stage practitioner was using a Grade 3 gun vestige, as long as they had loaded specialised rounds inside the weapon, exhibiting strength on par with a first level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner was as easy as drinking water.

If they tried their best and used better rounds, they could even possess the destructive force of a second level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner.

This was what the Multiplex faction argued: that hot weapon-type vestiges reduced the bar for vestige usage, thereby increasing the overall prowess of a freelancer. Although the cost of rounds was something to consider, nothing was free. In exchange for more power, that could not only save oneself but increase their hunting ability, what was a little extra spending?

Also, compared to cold weapon-type vestiges that required high quality metals to make, hot weapon-type vestiges didn't necessarily need such. To make a proper and very durable sword, one would need high quality steel. The higher the grade, the higher the demand for the quality of the metal.

However, although the crafting of hot weapon-type vestiges did utilise high quality materials, it wasn't always a metal and the demand for quality wasn't as extreme as with cold weapon-type vestiges. This made the base price slightly cheaper, but in the long run, the consumption of rounds might overall make it costlier.

The debate between the two factions on whose ideology was better was something that had been going on for over a hundred years. Both sides had their advantages and their appeal, so they naturally existed even until this point in time.

'If I want to stand out, I can't just follow the line. I have to be unique, but in an eccentric fashion.'

Lucas abruptly smiled. An idea just came to mind;, one that could potentially tear down the rivalry between the two factions or better yet, create an entirely new faction to face them.

Just as Lucas decided to continue walking, he abruptly sensed something coming his way.

*\*Bang\**

The sound of a gunshot reverberated in the area.