

## The Crafts 92

### Chapter 92: The Four Forbidden Techniques

[[ Mission Overview: The host has finally been exposed to some of the traditional practices of vestige-smithing. It is now time for the host to announce his existence to the world and stomp all other craftsmen to the ground.

As the successor to the Crafts-God, neither failure nor mediocrity is acceptable!

Mission Description: Consecutively defeat twenty vestige-smiths in a vestige duel before the convention is over. Host is to not take any loss or reject a vestige duel during the duration of the mission.

Reward: Two Bronze Grade Cards (fourth level, second card's level depends on the level of the strongest vestige-smith the host defeats).

Penalty: There exists no penalty for abandoning the mission or failing to complete it in time. However, if the host were to accept the mission and lose a vestige duel, one random ability granted by the system would be taken away. ]]

Lucas was surprised by the notification that popped up in front of him, but he wasn't vexed by it. On the contrary, this mission actually rhymed with his plan.

There was a reason why Lucas had yet to open up his stall even after the first day had gone by. Part of his time was indeed spent checking out the other stalls and stores, but the reason for that was to estimate the quality of the vestiges produced by others. The market zone had a bunch of stores with vestiges on display, but those were just common items.

To see the rarer ones, one would either need to be a VIP of the store, or provide proof of wealth. It was only during the Silver Fig Trade Convention that one could see the best of the best without any stringent conditions.

As for why Lucas wanted to estimate the ability of the vestige-smiths, it was because he wanted to outshine them. This was just how he was back in his first life. Lucas always aimed to be the best at his craft, and in this life, it was no different.

The system mission just came in time, and what's more, it was exactly what he planned right from the start, albeit a bit more tedious.

"Hey, system, is it me or are your penalties much nicer? At least I don't have to lose an arm or die, and also, I could actually reject the mission."

The system went silent for a few seconds, before replying,

"The fourth-wall beings filed a complaint."

"Huh? The fourth what?" Lucas was dumbfounded.

'Does the system have a chuunibyou-self or something?'

Lucas decided to ignore the system and return back to the Seven Sparks Forge store. He had seen enough for today and decided to resume his project.

Because the gauntlet was intended to be a secret weapon of his, Lucas had decided to craft something new and exquisite for the convention.

Due to his lack of stellar energy, Grade 3 vestiges were the best Lucas could make using the forbidden techniques from his past life -techniques that fed on his blood and mental energy. This was why Lucas didn't have more than four Grade 3 vestiges in his arsenal. After each creation, he would need to take some time to recover his lost energy.

"If I want to make something that stands out, I need to go all out."

At the work-station, Lucas stood before a work bench situated at the centre of the room. Although it was called a bench, it looked more like the centre table in a kitchen.

Atop the table was a blueprint stretched out, which Lucas was currently working on.

'There are currently four forbidden techniques I can use in my current state, capable of making a Grade 3 vestige or even higher. All four have high requirements for a substitute to mystical energy, and the closest substitute is blood energy.'

In the world of Mana and True Qi, a witch had once tried to find a means for normal civilians, who could not practice magic or cultivation, to be able to contend against mages, cultivators, deserters and other witches. The said witch, after a stroke of inspiration, decided not to look for a solution outside, but internally.

After an intense and lengthy study of the anatomy of the human body, down to even the spiritual aspects, the witch had finally discovered something: blood energy.

Blood energy was a term used to describe a theoretical mystical energy that existed within living beings. It was the equivalent of one's vital life force, and the energy that kept the body alive. Once a person's blood energy went too low, they would either die of spiritual exhaustion or become too feeble, and might end up a vegetable.

Hence why individuals had to be careful with their blood energy usage.

Due to the unique nature of the blood energy and the studies of the witch, it was discovered that blood energy could be somewhat used to substitute mana or true qi. The issue, however, was that unlike the other mystical energies which could easily be recovered and increased, an average human typically has a fixed amount of blood energy they could store.

What's more, this amount would decrease as they aged.

The witch went a step further and created a technique that could cast spells by combining both blood energy and mental energy, a unique kind of energy that was weaker than mystical energy. But this still wasn't enough, and was merely a stop-gap to the issue.

One of the forbidden techniques Lucas knew was exactly this technique. However, he didn't use it for fights, but to create vestiges. The amount of blood energy spent on creating a vestige was less than in a battle. Also, Lucas could take his time to recover after each usage. If he instead used this for fights, the effect would be detrimental to him, especially with how often he got into battles.

The second forbidden technique wasn't exactly a taboo per say, but was more of a lost technique. Lucas happened to have chanced on an ancient relic and found it there. The technique was one that allowed a non-mystical energy user to be able to possess mystical energy by tapping energy from a unique material.

Unique materials were naturally occurring objects that could store mystical energy, like the metals used in making vestiges and so on.

This technique could allow the user absorb the energy and use readily. However, there was no way to store it in the body. As such, practitioners of this technique always had to carry a unique material on hand.

The downside of this technique, apart from having to carry a unique material everywhere you go, was that unique materials had a fixed amount of mystical energy, and it usually wasn't much. So, unless one was lucky enough to find a heavenly metal, herb or something, with a boatload of mystical energy, they would have to constantly carry a significant amount of unique materials.

This obviously resulted in this technique inefficient for combat, which was why Lucas never used it for so. However, in a work-station, it wasn't bad.

The third forbidden technique was now something that could truly be termed as a forbidden. It was a heinous technique that came about from a different research -a deserter- who wanted to fix the flaw of the Blood energy technique.

An individual's blood energy was fixed and would steadily decline as they grew older. There was no way to increase the cap, and even the rumoured methods required heavenly items that were as rare as a Phoenix. Naturally, this created dissatisfaction for many.

The deserter, was a mage who got banned from the mage society after he fixed this flaw. As for how he did it, it was with a method he deemed natural.

Since one's blood energy was limited, why not plunder from others?

The deserter created a technique that could allow the user to steal blood energy from other living creatures of blood. Needless to say, this harmed the target of the technique. If the user were to go all the way, the victim would be totally drained of their blood energy and die.

The most suitable targets for this blood energy were living creatures of blood, but the closer the living creature was in nature to the user, the more in sync the plundered blood energy would be with the user. Hence, humans were the best targets.

Both the mage, witches and cultivation societies collectively agreed to ban this technique and hunt down anyone who practiced it, terming them as devils.

As for how Lucas got his hands on this technique, that was for another day.

The final technique was equally atrocious. However, while it did plunder from a living creature as well, it didn't have the same limitations as the previous one. This technique aimed not at blood energy, but the soul of a living being.

The soul was a mystical existence that couldn't be seen or described as it was an enigmatic concept. However, a certain crazy cultivator had made a study in secret. This was after the discovery of blood energy, and that research had paved the way to it. The cultivator theorized that since the body possessed a mystical energy of its own, why not the spirit?

He tried to work with mental energy, but felt that was lacking.

Having made no achievements, the cultivator decided to stop looking for an energy, but a form. If there was no energy, why not use the form as a fuel? After all, a human body, when burnt at the right conditions, could form charcoal which could fuel a fire.

After working in that direction, the cultivator chanced on the soul, and then created a technique which could be used to strip this incorporeal form away from the target. The technique would not just seize the soul, but also decompose it to form soul energy, a new kind of mystical energy.

Compared to the previous forbidden technique, this was even more nefarious because it would deny one an opportunity at reincarnation. As it targeted all existences with a 'soul', it wasn't only limited to lifeforms of blood, as even trees had spirits.

The flexibility of this forbidden technique to direct its spear at any lifeform and also deny them the opportunity of reincarnation, made it even more hated than the Plundering Blood Technique. The creator was not only caught, but he was also executed in public. Every record of the research was also destroyed by the joint alliance of witches, cultivators and mages, or so they thought.

Because if that were so, Lucas would have never learnt about it.