

## The Crafts 162

### Chapter 162: Arken Pillars

A strange invisible wave was released from the four pillars spreading into the two hundred metres square space. The wave moved rapidly, with the one coming from the pillar closet to the duo, taking only three seconds to reach.

As it passed by Lucas, he suddenly felt a change take place. The Stellar Circuit Battle-Armour he had one began to feel heavy.

Originally, the set of vestiges was indeed hefty, however, thanks to a special magic rune drawn on it, the weight of the vestige felt light to the user. This allowed Lucas to be able to perform high-speed manoeuvres and attacks despite the bulky weight of the vestiges, like the gauntlets or the boots. However, the runes seemed to not be working as well even though Lucas was powering them with his stellar energy.

'So this is the cause.' Lucas thought as he sensed a strange frequency permeating through the air.

The closer he got to the pillar, the more intense the frequency was, forcing Lucas to abandon his plan of approaching it.

The frequency was interfering with the magic runes, affecting the flow of stellar energy into them, which in turn prevented the runes from performing their functions. In this case, the magic runes were for a weight-less effect, which made the vestiges weigh less than they really were, allowing Lucas to move comfortably in them.

To counteract this effect, Lucas had to expend more stellar energy than usual, using a part of it to block out the frequency. Nonetheless, this was only a temporary measure as it wasn't so effective. The frequency had the strange ability to ignore his stellar energy hindrance and act on the magic runes regardless.

Lucas' attention was suddenly drawn to some of the inscriptions on his vestiges. They were still functioning properly despite the influence of the frequency unlike the weight-less rune.

"I told you; you will die here today."

Noticing that Lucas' speed had dropped, Ardeen sneered before taking aim at Lucas once again.

\*Pew\* \*Pew\* \*Pew\*

Multiple shots were fired, but unlike the previous ones, these were without any special rounds. In other words, it was just compressed stellar energy.

Ardeen could see that even with the frequency's interference, Lucas' speed had only dropped and not come to an abrupt stop. He suspected it had to do with Lucas resisting the effects, so he decided to instead deplete Lucas' stellar energy while conserving his most powerful shots.

Lucas dodged the shots he could and blocked off the rest using a stellar energy shield, which was just as Ardeen had predicted. However, while he did so, Lucas was also trying to understand the abilities of the light pillars.

'The first was some kind of spatial displacement. But I didn't sense any signs of that, so it could either mean the technology is too high-end for my senses to capture it, or it wasn't spatial displacement.'

Lucas' eyes flashed as he rapidly guessed the various possibilities that it could be, until he found one.

'Illusions.' Lucas narrowed his eyes.

It would make sense to think that the scenario was an illusion created by the light pillars. It was either that all he saw at the moment was an illusion, or that the light pillars would structure one at a certain point in time, for instance, right when Lucas moved to attack Ardeen.

'It could either be passive or active. If it is the latter, then I just need to time my attacks properly. However, if the illusion is passive and already being played out, then I have to find a way to discern the real from the false.'

As his thoughts whirred into motion, Lucas detected that the frequency had increased in intensity. It was becoming difficult to impede it, costing Lucas more energy to do so.

Frowning, he delved into the matter, hoping to identify what exactly it was. In the course of doing so, however, Lucas had taken a lot of shots from Ardeen and his energy was depleting rapidly. The cuirass vestige of the SCB was visibly damaged at this point. If it wasn't due to the qualitative change brought about by the Vis receptacle —elevating the cuirass' defensive ability to Grade 4— it might have turned defective.

With his brain running at full power, it took Lucas only a few seconds to understand what exactly was going on.

The frequency seemed to target runes and stellar matrices, inhibiting their ability to conduct stellar energy and generate a desired effect.

The weightless rune Lucas used on the vestige was a lot similar in structure to the runes used in this world. As such, it was affected by the frequency released by the light pillars. However, the other runes carved on the vestiges were entirely different in structure and design, resulting in them not being affected. The same held true for the stellar circuits Lucas had inscribed on the vestiges, as those were even more complex than stellar matrices.

Without having studied such inscriptions before, it was inevitable that whoever made these might pillars would not be able to interfere with the inscriptions. The weightless rune just happened to be a victim of a coincidental circumstance.

As long as Lucas could switch the rune, it would be immune to the frequency. However, forget switching the rune, he couldn't even take off his vestige as the very second he did so, Lucas might die.

'There's no time left. I guess I'll just have to do this.' Lucas hardened his resolve.

'Retrieve.'

In the next second, the cuirass, boots and some other parts of the Stellar Circuit Battle-Armour disappeared, leaving behind only the pair of gauntlets.

Ardeen was surprised by this, with the revelation of Lucas possessing a spatial vault making him question who exactly the latter was. However, he was more stunned by the fact that Lucas had taken off his armour, albeit not surprised by it. Ardeen had once tested out the Arken Pillars himself, and he knew how frustrating they were.

For Aperture Opening stage stellar practitioners below the tenth level, who could only perform their best with a vestige, losing the ability to use one was equivalent to losing an arm and a leg. The Arken Pillars were made to target those arms and legs, interfering with a rune or stellar matrix' ability to use stellar energy, thereby making a vestige no different from a block of metal.

With Lucas taking off his armour, except for the gauntlets, Ardeen was confident that he could end the battle right then and there.

'90 seconds left.'

Ardeen immediately switched his vestige's cartridge to utilise specialised rounds.

For gun-type vestiges, although they could be fired using one's stellar energy, their most powerful form was when the rounds being used were specialised ones.

Specialised rounds were made with unique materials and methods, enhancing the firepower of a gun-type vestige to the peak of its rank. As such, even an average Grade 3 gun-type vestiges could explode with the power of a peak Grade 3 vestige using a combination of specialised rounds and one's stellar energy.

Also, Ardeen's vestige, despite its handgun appearance, wasn't an average Grade 3 vestige, but a very powerful Grade 3 vestige, close to the peak of the rank. With a combination of specialised rounds and his fourth level energy, taking on Lucas who was with only a pair of Grade 3 gauntlets would be no problem.

"This is the end for you." Ardeen said as he aimed his vestige at Lucas.

\*Bang\*