

The Mafia 971

Chapter 971 A Man Committed and Willing to Do Anything

"Disciple Fuller, another demonstration of incredible power," said a man with a long white beard, an extremely red monkey nose, and a body as strong as a chimpanzee.

But despite the powerful appearance of this 5-Star Magus, his blue and white suit, long pants, and beautiful leather shoes gave the impression of civility and friendliness.

This was Asahel Manifold, representative of a powerful family and a renowned alliance in Light Cay. A member of a power known for its combat artifacts, special outfits, and training centers, this man was there to get to know Vicente better and come to an agreement that would be good for both sides.

Vicente knew this very well, as he had already heard from Prische about the powerful Manifold Family and the Ancient Garden, the alliance with one of the largest training centers on the 'island', run by the Manifold Family.

After his previous results, powers from Ravengarde and other parts of Light Cay had already sought him out for sponsorship. But Collins, Larissa and Prische had advised him to wait until one of the major powers approached him.

His wait hadn't lasted a month, and the powerful Manifold Family had sent a representative to Vicente's third official fight at the Combat Center.

Vicente greeted the man, smiling invitingly as he beckoned the six-foot-tall man to accompany him.

Along with Asahel and Prische, Myles followed Vicente with two other men, knowing that the three would talk, but wanting to say a few words to Vicente first.

"Vicente, enjoy your business with Mr. Asahel, but don't forget to come see me later. We have business regarding your mission with the Center," said the man who had been supervising him.

"I'll look for you in the administration wing."

"Hmm, by the way, that was a good victory. I'm looking forward to seeing you show everything you know." With that, Myles walked away from the three, leaving with his two companions to make way for Vice.

Vicente laughed bitterly and then heard something similar from Asahel.

"I'm looking forward to it, too. I especially want to see you show what you can do when you speak on behalf of the Ancient Garden."

"We can certainly arrange that," Vicente's expression changed as he said these words, and he walked across the area of the platforms without bothering to find a place to sit down.

He wasn't tired from the previous fight, and most of the time the fighting platform wing was pretty quiet, with only the people who were going to fight in official matches or training there. At least, that was usually the case, and today was no different.

"What can your group offer me, Mr. Asahel?" Vicente got right to the point.

He found the idea of sponsorship in the cultivation world a little strange. But hell, if these people wanted to give him resources for him to speak on behalf of their organizations, and it didn't go against their goals, why should he object?

He desperately needed resources, and right now, he did not even have enough for himself and Larissa.

No matter how many weeks had passed since the formation of {Golden Partners}, they still hadn't recruited. They even approached people who could be their first future partners, but they still didn't have the resources to take the key step.

However, with the help of the group represented by Asahel today, things could change quickly!

The half-chimpanzee, half-human, smiled at the direct question. "Disciple Vicente, you are important to my group, so I will not hide the fact that we will invest a lot in you. But this investment may not be everything you want right away.

We're going to give you a lot of benefits, such as the ability to cultivate in the Ancient Garden for an unlimited time, we're going to give you several special resources every month according to your cultivation level, and we're also going to give you a subsidy to help you with your expenses within the sect.

You will also receive rewards for achieving results. Whenever new residents of the island use our services and products, you will earn 5% of the amount they pay each time. This reward program will continue for a duration of 5 years. After that period, we can renegotiate new terms or end our relationship."

Vicente stopped halfway to the exit of the platform wing, somewhat impressed by this offer.

'Waiting has been good for me. This is a fascinating proposal.' He thought. '5% isn't much, but if I can reach hundreds of thousands of new users of their services, I'll have a huge amount of stone coins in my hands in no time. All I have to do is continue to fight official matches, and more and more people will watch me and eventually feel my influence.'

The Ancient Garden and the Manifold Family would not put him on a giant billboard or on TV commercials like Vicente had seen in his life on Earth. But they would certainly change his story to appeal to the general public and make them think he had become so strong because of the services and products of these forces.

Did Vicente care? The only thing he cared about was achieving his goals, keeping his family safe, and seeing his beloved daughter again. The rest could be adjusted, and he was ready to do anything!

He liked what Asahel had already presented, but he wanted to know more. "Exactly how much monthly allowance are we talking about?"

"100,000 stone coins per month and an initial bonus of 1 million stone coins for doing business with us. In addition, the cultivation resources will be classified according to your ability to absorb them.

For the time being, you won't be able to absorb them, but we'll still give them to you based on what you should be able to absorb at your current level. We'll give you an initial sum, part of the signing bonus, worth 5 times what you'll receive monthly soon, and we'll also provide you with armor and a weapon of your choice, of the highest quality you can use." Asahel was more specific, showing Vicente how generous the Manifold Family was.

These were considerable values that he desperately needed. Although he could earn more by giving up some of the signing bonus for a greater share of future profits, he felt he could accept the deal as it was.

'With months of cultivation resources and a million stone coins, I'll be able to get the first five members of the faction quickly. This will support me when I complete my first year in the sect and can leave this area.' Vicente clenched his fists as he stood at the exit of the battleground wing.

Chapter 972 Contracts and Bonuses

"Well, I'm very interested in this deal." Vicente smiled at Asahel, but before making a deal, he needed to know how far he would have to compromise. "What exactly do you want from me?"

Asahel led Vicente out of the Combat Center and into a famous restaurant in this central area of the city, a good place to make their deal official.

"The Ancient Garden and the Manifold Family will want different things from you, even though this is a single agreement.

For the Ancient Garden, you'll have to speak on behalf of the training center, say that you trained with us and that's why you've become so strong, something like that. Our men will work out exactly what you'll have to say in public, in fights, at meetings of magicians." He explained, always looking at Vicente and smiling.

"Of course, we'll give you items with the symbol of the training center, which you have to wear for a certain period in all activities you engage. This, of course, includes a ban on the use of competing brands."

Vicente nodded in agreement, seeing no problem with that. It would be too much to ask to be sponsored by a group and be allowed to use items from their rivals. Even if he preferred other brands, he would have to keep it to himself and hide the information from the public.

"As for the family, they are more specialized in creating artifacts. So we'll provide you with the artifacts, and all you have to do is use them in public for a certain number of hours each month.

Other than that, there's nothing very specific. You don't have to get involved in our problems, and you don't get any benefits beyond what's in the contract. You're free to do whatever you want, as long as it doesn't go against our interests.

The contract has a minimum duration, and for it to end before that, both sides have to agree. Other than that, there are only minor details to ensure that both sides comply with the clauses."

Vicente entered a busy restaurant, ignoring the many people staring at him, slowly getting used to the reality of fame in Anicane. He sat down at a large table in a secluded part of the establishment before asking.

"How many hours a month are we talking?"

"100 hours a month, considering the representation of both brands. That includes all the time you spend fighting in ranked matches, of course." Asahel clarified the situation after giving his orders to a waiter.

'That's a little over three hours a day... It's not much. Maybe it won't be too much trouble for me.' Vicente thought silently, leaning back in his seat as a woman poured a drink for him and Asahel.

Vicente had heard of the Ancient Garden and the Manifold Family, but he didn't know exactly what their services and products were like.

Maybe they were excellent, and their work wouldn't be a problem for him. Or maybe there were problems. After all, they were willing to pay so much for him, so that might indicate a not-so-good brand or one that was not yet established.

Certainly, the Manifold Family was strong and powerful, famous throughout Light Cay. But prosperity came not only to those who were excellent. With a minimum of quality, luck, support, and time, anyone could leave mediocrity and reach the light.

But even if the services and resources of the group Asahel represented today were weak, he didn't care and was willing to put in those hours of service.

"Very well. I agree with the terms presented so far," he said after a moment, just as the food began to be served.

The smell of roasting meat overwhelmed Vicente's senses and made his stomach rumble with hunger. Even though he was already a powerful cultivator, he couldn't deny his body's craving, and

with a single movement, he cut a piece of meat to the point on his plate, took it to his mouth, and savored it.

While his master felt the pleasure of devouring something truly overwhelming, Prische received the preliminary contract from Asahel, a document he had prepared with all the offers he had made to Vicente.

Prische, being an artificial intelligence that always defended her master—as long as it didn't hurt the sect—quickly understood all the terms of the agreement.

"Mister Asahel didn't lie in his proposals, but there's one detail he didn't tell you that caught my attention," she whispered into one of Vicente's ears. "There is a condition here that after your first year in Anicane, you must train a person named Alicia Lyle twice a year for at least ten days each time."

Vicente's eyes opened with a twinkle, and he asked, "Who is Alicia Lyle?"

Asahel wasn't surprised. "Another sponsored member of the family, someone who is promised in marriage to a family member and therefore naturally receives more from her settlement than other ordinary members. Not least because we'll give her the opportunity to train under your supervision."

Vicente saw no problem in changing hands with this woman, but he wanted more details. "The contract you gave me makes it sound like she doesn't live here. Where will these meetings take place?"

"Miss Lyle lives in Ponddown, a small city six days' journey from Ravengarde."

By small city, Asahel meant a large city by Vicente's standards, but small compared to the grandiose Ravengarde.

"I see. All right, I have no problem training this person. However, the Manifold Family will have to pay for my travel expenses." Vicente handed the preliminary contract back to Asahel so that he could adjust that part.

"We can certainly do that."

"Perfect. We can even sign the contract today. But when do I get my bonus?" Vicente was eager to put his plans into action.

Asahel understood Vicente's anxiety and smiled. "Right now. I already have most of your resources with me, and the rest we can get on a tour of the city core."

They would soon make the final agreement between the parties, with Prische receiving the promised 1.1 million stone coins, bringing the total to nearly 1.3 million stone coins in Vicente's current wallet.

Considering just this part of the membership bonus, Vicente would now have enough to bring several members into his faction!

Chapter 973 The Beginning of the Faction's Expansion

A few days have passed since the agreement with Asahel.

On the same day that he agreed to Asahel's proposal, Vicente received not only his stone coins but also the bonus resources and the first month's sponsorship payment.

In addition to the coins, he now had a quantity of high-quality pills, potions, and herbs that, just one of them, would completely revolutionize a continent like the Polaris Realm or Larissa's former home, Concordia.

But apparently, in Anicane, these resources were only of medium rank, and in deals like the one he signed that day, they were very often given in exchange for the promises of young people like him.

Still, the amount Vicente received was high enough to shock people of the same power rank as him, so the bonuses of the deal were secret. In addition, at the end of his first year, he was to be supported by the Manifold Family with men to protect him on trips outside the Ravengarde core.

Besides consumables, that would be the envy of the masses of Stonewall Outer Disciples, Vicente also received a complete set of Seventh Class armor and weapons.

As he said goodbye to Asahel later that day, the man promised that the Manifold Family would be in touch soon and that their relationship would begin in no more than 15 days. In the meantime, he

would have nothing to worry about but continuing his normal routine and business from before the agreement.

But Vicente went beyond that. In those days, he began recruiting those people who had already caught his eye in recent weeks!

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After Vicente had several conversations with Larissa and Theo, with whom the two had talked a lot since their factions' alliance, he arrived at the present moment.

In an idyllic part of the area available to Larissa and Vicente, the two of them were standing next to a lion-headed man, standing on a small pavilion and observing the view of the surroundings.

Vicente had just proposed an invitation to Rill, an Outer Disciple ranked 68 with 8-Star Archmage cultivation.

This person was not only strong and high ranking in the sect's outer wing, but he was also a fellow member of Vicente's Forge Center and Combat Center, with whom he had been interacting for the past few weeks.

At only 183 years old, Rill could be considered a great talent and had the potential to soon become an Inner Disciple or change his rank to Elder.

In Stonewall, there were two paths to follow when one left the position of Outer Disciple. Either they would become an Inner Disciple and follow the career of a disciple to one day become a warrior of the sect, or they would become an Outer Elder and follow the path of an administrative member.

This was the fundamental distinction between elders and disciples in the sect. Elders taught and kept the sect running with its rules and systems, while Disciples worked, internally or externally, and as such, had more freedom to come and go and fewer responsibilities.

In a sense, an Elder was a member pursuing a political career, while a Disciple was a member pursuing a military career within that force.

This didn't mean that Elders and Disciples were equally strong, or that Elders couldn't fight because they were politicians. Becoming an Elder was much more difficult than remaining a Disciple, and it was not uncommon for some of the most capable to follow that path.

But Rill didn't want to command the sect. He wanted to live on his own and explore the world. He was currently stationed in Ravengarde, but that could change in the future, which was his wish.

"You've formed your faction and you want me to be the third member..." Rill said quietly.

Another interesting point about him was that he didn't belong to any faction yet, except for his sponsors.

Vicente reinforced his suggestion. "Rill, with us you can quickly become a Magus and travel around the 'islands' of Anicane. Larissa and I don't want to stay in this place forever, no matter how fantastic and full of possibilities it is.

If you join us, you'll not only get the support we've already offered you, but you'll also have a guaranteed place in our group when we explore the other islands of Anicane in the future."

Not everyone had the ambition to explore the vast world of Anicane. In fact, few creatures from Light Cay and the other islands of this high-level world had such a desire, given the great dangers of traveling between the islands.

But those with more adventurous hearts, like Rill, could hardly contain their desire to discover unknown places and fantastic opportunities.

'Light Cay is not the strongest island in Anicane. One day, I'll become a Grand Magus and leave my home.' This guy, a native of Light Cay, thought as he was tempted.

"That interests me," he said to Vicente. "But will you be able to give me the support you promised? 80,000 Stone Coins a month with a 10% increase with each star level and level promotion bonuses is no small thing."

This was a high value that Larissa and Vicente had promised Rill, but only a few warrior-blacksmith in the entire sect had Rill's talent!

Those who did were usually already assigned to factions and wouldn't leave their groups to join a fledgling faction. Those without factions would prefer other groups to their own, so they would have to pay well for Rill if they wanted to have someone like him on their side.

"We certainly can," Vicente said firmly, thinking about how worthwhile it would be to create a group of highly talented individuals with great potential.

'I just need to 'sacrifice' that amount with about four more people of Rill's caliber. Once we have that number, we'll be able to run missions and attract good warriors for a fraction of the cost.' He thought to himself as he smiled at the lion-faced man.

Rill looked at Vicente, hesitant, but aware that if this guy didn't fulfill the agreement, he would suffer harsh consequences.

'This is the best offer I've ever received, and with them I'll have a lot of freedom I'll be a senior in the faction. In other groups, I'd be a junior at best, getting paid a fraction of what I'm getting now and having a lot of bad responsibilities.' He thought of the reason he hadn't joined a group yet, even though he was so talented and strong for his age.

"All right. We have a deal."

Chapter 974 Seventh Month in Anicane!

Months later, Vicente had built a faction that went far beyond him, Larissa and Rill.

Rill had been the first to join the group, but in Vicente's seventh month since his arrival in Anicane, three others had joined {Golden Partners}.

Daren, a feline woman of 9-Star 6th stage, Mabras, an apparently pure human man of 9-Star 6th stage and Alidove, a woman of the eagle clan of 8-Star Archmage cultivation, joined the group, forming the core of the faction.

After these important entries, each of them great talents given their ages and magical forms, Larissa went ahead with recruiting not-so-powerful members, supports for the strongest of the group. With three more people, her acquaintances, the group now had nine members and was getting close to the time when it could start acting more actively in the sect!

With the months that had passed, Larissa had finished her one-year period, where she was supposed to stay inside the Stonewall core, in the area protected from Anicane's extremely dense mana. Since then, alongside Daren, Alidove, Mabras and Rill, she had begun to act outside the core of the city, carrying out team missions.

In that time she had grown stronger and reached a magical cultivation of 6th stage, 5-Star, incredible progress as she was only a 5th stage magician when Vicente met her.

But she had already cultivated to a level similar to that of a 1-Star Magus on her plane, so she would eventually cultivate to that same level in Light Cay with relative ease.

Meanwhile, Vicente was entering into his last months of wait and, like Larissa, had improved a lot. He had recently made another breakthrough and reached the level of an 8-Star Archmage. With his improvements, the phenomenon of his body—which constantly absorbed mana—had diminished in intensity and he could already feel he was close to being able to cultivate and use resources again.

He wouldn't immediately make use of pills and other resources when he got rid of his current state, but having the possibility of using resources was always good.

His relationship with the Manifold Family developed well during this period, with him using their sponsors' equipment, representing the brand in his fights and even passing by their place in the area available to him in Ravengarde.

The Manifold Family's products and services had proven to be good and, as such, he had been fulfilling his agreement with Asahel beyond what he was obliged to.

Not by coincidence, the fruits of this relationship were developing for both sides!

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At the Combat Center, Vicente had just finished a training session under Myles' supervision when he made his way off platform 19.

With his supervisor accompanying him, Vicente chatted with Myles about a few matters, until he stopped at the exit of the Center, from where he could see the screens showing the positions of the Outer Disciples Rank.

Coincidentally, his current position appeared on one of the screens that alternated from time to time between positions beyond the top 100.

He had accumulated 20,000 points over the last few months, surpassing the 25,000 point mark, leaving position 838 and reaching the rank of 422 in the Outer Disciples Rank. Having only fought 14 times since the match in which he got his sponsorship from the Manifold Family, he still had a long way to go until he reached the top of the rank.

"You've improved hastily over the last few months." Myles stopped when he saw Vicente's position appearing on that screen near to them. "You'll have about 15 more fights before you finish your one-year stint within the core sect, which could earn you up to 25,000 points. Keep it up and you'll soon be in the top 200."

Vicente smiled, agreeing that his prospects were good.

Unfortunately, the rank of Outer Disciples wasn't that impressive for him. After months of fighting and winning against individuals ranked in the top 200, Vicente was looking towards the rank of the Inner Disciples!

'In another five months I'll probably be a peak Archmage or a low-level Magus. By then, I'll be able to climb the ranks easily, without exposing myself.'

Over the last few months, over 50 million Light Cay magicians had learned his name. Many knew nothing about him, but there were those who had already shown themselves to him, known where he came from, and shown themselves to be hostile.

He was safe for now, but Vicente knew he had enemies who would try to kill him the first time he left Ravengarde.

But he was taking things one step at a time and didn't want to worry too much about future problems. He had been fulfilling missions in the sect, having already completed five missions in these months, as well as being close to completing his mandatory activities.

His relationship with the Manifold Family had paid off and, besides the fixed payments initially promised, he was already receiving his share of the profits from the new consumers of the family's services, people influenced by him.

Not least because he now had more than a million stone coins in his wallet, even though he had to spend 550,000 stone coins a month to maintain his faction with its current members.

Finally, saying goodbye to Myles, Vicente followed Prisiche, making his way to the Medicine Center.

On the way there, Prisiche verbalized his current status in his three obligatory activities.

"Master, your activity with the Forge Center is 77% complete. You can already be considered a 6th stage Blacksmith by Light Cay standards and are on your way to becoming a 7th stage one.

As far as the combat center is concerned, with your advancement to 8-Star recently, your situation is 85% complete. But advancing to 1-Star Magus isn't easy. You shouldn't complete this activity until the next 6 months.

Fortunately, you are quite advanced in your medical responsibility. With 95% of the mission complete, you can become a 6th stage Healer in the next few weeks!"

Stopping in front of the Medicine Center, Vicente liked what he heard. But thinking about how much he had improved and how he was about to become a full-fledged 6th stage Healer, he couldn't help thinking about his sisters.

'I wonder how Lauren and Nina are? Have their conditions reversed?'

But realizing that he would end up ruining his day if he thought too much about the war and how Polaris Realm might be, he pushed those thoughts aside and moved on.

'The damned vampires must be in seclusion, so they're fine for now. I'd better focus my mind on what I can affect!' He moved on to his activities in this sector of the sect.

Chapter 975 Two Years

Time flew for those in Polaris Realm. While Vicente was experiencing the end of his first year in Anicane, the end of the second year since his departure was being revered by his people.

Back in Polaris Realm, especially the Fuller family's home, little had changed in the two years since the end of Demien Bloodthorne.

What had changed most was Annie, who was now older and gradually showing herself to be smarter and more active, as a child full of ambition should be. Now eight years old and at the start of her third year at the academy, she was used to her study routine, aware of many new things she hadn't known after her father's departure.

Of all the family, she was the one who coped best with Vicente's absence—the benefits of childhood, everyone said.

But that didn't mean she didn't miss him or that she was comfortable. Annie had learned to live with what she had at her disposal and was focused enough on her commitments not to think about her old father all the time.

Occasionally she would get together with her mother or her aunts to think about the future, which she always included Vicente and the Supreme Continent.

One day she would change everything—she said to herself—and turn her family's misfortune into an old memory, which would lose to the eternity of joys they should still have.

Optimistic, despite the problems in her world, she once again left her home, setting off alone for the academy, being in a small town to worry about being accompanied at all times.

As the girl left, Nova stood in the kitchen next to Lina, both smiling with the intensity that Annie always had at the beginning of the days.

"I feel like she'll be giving me a hard time in a few more years... I hope I don't lose my hair in her teens, Lina," Nova said to her harem sister, drawing a smile that was hard to see on Princess Seidel's lips.

"This is a cycle. It's your turn to be stressed, but one day it will be Annie's turn to have her children and go through the same," Lina said as she finished her morning tea.

"I hope that doesn't happen anytime soon." Nova wiped the smile off her face and thought of her man.

Unlike children, it was much harder to overcome loss as an adult. Especially when your loved one should still be alive, but inaccessible.

There wasn't a day that went by that Nova, Lina, and Layla didn't think about Vicente. This was particularly true for milestone dates, such as the anniversary of his departure, so close to being two years old at the moment.

Lina didn't need to hear Nova's thoughts to understand what was on the woman's mind. With a sigh, she stood up and said, "I'm afraid we'll have to deal with a lot of time before we reach the moment you want, sister. It's best that Annie has her life and her family as soon as she finds the man who is meant for her. Waiting for the future could prove negative for her.

We're already engaged, but she doesn't have to follow the same fate as us." She said, aware that reaching Vicente wouldn't be easy.

Two years had passed, and the continent had grown peaceful, with human forces advancing against the monsters, stabilizing previously unstable areas and strengthening the numbers of specialists on the human side.

However, the changes, for the better, were merely reflections of the current situation of the human alliance's strongest enemies. The 6th stage vampires were in seclusion, leaving their troops less able to maintain everything they had previously conquered.

However, it would only take one vampire to reach the level of an Intermediate Archmage for the entire current reality to change drastically and quickly!

Even if Lauren were working hard, it would be difficult to solve the continent's problems. And even when that happened, their progression to the Supreme Continent might not happen quickly!

They were still just Paragons and would probably still be Paragons when Annie became a magician in another six years.

The resources from the organs of the 6th stage vampires had helped the Cataclysm Order forces and the Fuller family a lot in those two years. But with all that these women and other important members of these forces had consumed during this period, only blood or organs from 6th stage vampires could help them in the future.

But there were few of these beings left and the chances of them, even after they took down a few more of the enemies, helping them to become stronger, were not good. In the end, even if they advanced to the 6th stage, they would need to reach the 7th stage if they wanted to go to the Supreme Continent in search of Vicente!

Being able to catch glimpses of the future, Lina was the most realistic of Vicente's women, her feet firmly on the ground, aware that she wouldn't be able to fulfill his wishes in a short time.

Of course, as long as he didn't change the status of the connection between Polaris Realm and the Supreme Continent. If he eventually managed that, they could leave long before they became Magus.

Nova couldn't help but agree with Lina's words after a moment, thinking about how far away they were from her beloved man.

Closing her eyes as she gazed at the sky through a window, she thought of Vicente's face and how he must look.

'I hope I can get to you without giving you a hard time. But if you can help us from your side, that would be good... In any case, don't worry about us, my love. We'll sort out the problems on the continent and Annie's future before we go to meet you.'

She clenched her fists and, breathing deeply, regained the energy to return her focus to what she could affect.

"Anyway, let's move on to meet Julian. It seems there's news from Nina's group."

Nina had left this city six months ago, having spent a year and a half there alongside her family, helping to turn this place into a safe and stable home. In the meantime, she had grown stronger through her hunts in the surrounding area, to the point where she had cleared a large security zone around the town.

Stronger than ever and seeking to cleanse the continent of invading monsters, Nina had set off with her husband and group to hunt down enemies and continue retaking human territories.

She had made a name for herself by rescuing humans taken by monsters as slaves or food, which helped her gain enough notoriety of her own without relying on her brother's story.

Lina was eager to hear from Nina and left alongside Nova, heading for the rendezvous point with Julian, Rory's father and Archmage member of the Sentinels of the Order.

Chapter 976 Lauren's Proposal

While Lina and Nova were still in the city where they had been living since Vicente left for the Supreme Continent, Lauren was a long way from the Chutha Dynasty, the kingdom she was currently queen of.

After her awakening just over 22 months ago, Lauren hunted her sixth pentagram alongside the elf who had waited for her awakening. Soon after, she was reunited with the Fuller family at Annie's current home, where she shared Vicente's last moments before his departure.

She had made a point of explaining how he had achieved the most incredible configuration of pentagrams possible, giving his family more confidence that he would succeed.

Such information had made Vicente's family, friends and allies even more determined, with realistic hopes that he would keep his end of the bargain made with the beasts of Majestic Treefrog Grove. They just needed to do their part and, eventually, they would have the opportunity to go to the Supreme Continent and meet him again.

That was what most of the people who knew him believed at the time.

In the meantime, the information spread by Lauren had transformed and reached people far beyond friends, family, and allies.

With almost two years since she left her seclusion, rumors about Vicente's legendary pentagram combination had now become commonplace across the continent.

Monsters and mortal humans alike knew how phenomenal he had been, with one side fearful of another such kind of individual emerging on the continent again, while the other side eagerly awaited the birth or emergence of others who could carry his position.

But while the continent's population of magical creatures had popularized knowledge of Vicente's magical configuration, Lauren had moved around quite a bit. After her brief stint in the Fuller family's secret residence, she acted on her brother's behalf, spreading Cataclysm Order altars across the continent while fighting monsters.

After almost two years of acting, she had been the major driving force that had brought stability to human territories and increased human dominance. Because of her actions, 60% of the continent was now under human control, an impressive milestone that had not been matched since the beginning of the cataclysm.

After almost two years of hard work, she was gradually slowing down her pace, giving her forces a chance to fight for themselves and thus grow stronger, while she began to prepare for her future struggles.

Now Lauren was in Majestic Treefrog Grove, alongside the Dragons, Elves and other powerful beings of the human alliance against the vampires and monsters.

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In a relatively flat spot in the heart of Majestic Treefrog Grove, a group of beasts of different races were gathered in front of an immense lake in the area, but without the disorganization and chaos of gatherings of low-level beings.

In one of the strongest areas of the entire continent, only Archmages were there at the moment, surrounding a woman with short black hair and sharp black eyes.

Around Lauren, two Intermediate Archmages, Vicente's former companions, were supporting her as she spoke about the current situation with the leaders of the tribes in this forest region.

Acidbelly and Tenglin, two of Vicente's old companions, were now accompanying Lauren on her journeys, having joined her about six months ago.

They heard her talking to the beings gathered there. "... We've reached a point where we should let our secondary and junior specialists enjoy the battlefield and win their own glory. Let's not fool ourselves. Quickly conquering more of the continent's wastelands won't make much difference to us in the short term.

What might make a difference is if we find the lair of the 6th stage vampires and strike while they are in seclusion. As such, I propose this council approves the withdrawal of our top specialists around the continent. I want these experts focused on cultivating in seclusion for the next four years, when it will be time for us to move.

In the meantime, our secondary men must find enemy traces and clues to the location of the vampire lair. We will attack with all the power we have in four years!"

She finished announcing her proposal to these tribes, the step she thought would be decisive in ending the calamity ravaging the continent.

In about eight years, the war against the vampires and their monstrous allies would end one way or another. Either the strongest vampires would wipe out the strongest of this alliance and have full control over the continent, or Lauren's side would have already beaten them by that time and would lead their forces, little by little, to restore Polaris Realm.

Either way, the war wouldn't last much longer!

Aware that they would have a final fight in another eight years at most, the leaders of the surrounding tribes knew they had to act before this interval ended.

"I agree with Lauren Fuller. Let's pull back our major forces and focus on preparing for the worst," said one of the dragons Vicente had gotten years ago.

The leader of the elves nodded in approval. "My people will focus on finding the exact location where the 6th stage vampires are cultivating. We will attack together with the coalition in four years from now."

The big, brown-feathered, gigantic Roc that had come across Vicente in the past took a deep breath, seeing that they were going to have another large-scale 6th stage confrontation in the continent's north.

Years ago, the Magician's Alliance had done the same against Demien Bloodthorne to stop the advance of plans related to The Purification. Now, once again, the continent would see another massive battle to stop the vampires from succeeding in their plans.

"I hope we win on this occasion. We'll be staking everything on this attack. If we fail, the enemies won't even need to advance to the Intermediate level to have the continent for themselves."

Lauren said, "If our lives aren't over in four years, they'll be over in eight. But our chances of victory in four years will be 10 times greater. So I'm willing to take the risk."

Following her words, other tribe leaders continued to agree, until everyone, by unanimity, decided to follow what she had proposed.

Soon, the continent would begin a new phase of its journey, this time an era led by Lauren and the beasts of Majestic Treefrog Grove!

Chapter 977 End of the First Year in Anicane

"One year..." Vicente muttered as he looked at the device in front of him, while Prische was standing next to him, smiling as much as her master.

In front of Vicente was his status screen on the device he had bought after his 11th month in Stonewall.

{Vicente Fuller}

{Cultivation: 9-Star Archmage (quasi-Magus)}

{Origin: Polaris Realm}

{Magical Forms: Throne of Light and Darkness; Magnetism.}

{Rank: Outer Disciple; (201st in Combat Center rank).}

{Professions: 7th stage Blacksmith; 6th stage Healer; 6th stage True Sorcerer.}

After another five months of hard work, Vicente had made very good use of the resources of the partnership with the Manifold Family and developed his knowledge as much as he could. With the help of his allies, supervisors and master, he had completed his initial three compulsory activities and a further nine optional missions.

With his fights in the Combat Center, he was now approaching the top 100, an achievement he had hoped to reach within his second year in Anicane.

But now that he was in the last minutes of his first year in Anicane, what was on his mind was the end of his limitation. The special effect that came from his promotion in Polaris Realm was about to disappear completely!

Eager to leave the core area of Ravengarde and explore the 'island' of Light Cay and its possibilities, Vicente was naturally eager and happy.

'In a few more moments, I'll finally be able to make use of magical resources again, cultivate, and leave this area.'

As big as the city's core was, this was a relatively weak area, considering that, outside the area of action of this city's formations, 100 times stronger mana was available to everyone.

With this in mind, Vicente turned his attention to the equipment in front of him, looking at the system's home screen.

{Wallet}

{Missions}

{Mandatory Activities}

...

{Status}

{Affiliations}

He ignored {Mandatory Activities}, already aware of what his duties with the sect currently were. After completing his previous activities, he, as expected, received updated duties. It was now his

duty to become an 8th stage Blacksmith, as well as to reach the 7th stage in his medical art and sorcery.

The {Missions} tab didn't catch his eye either. He currently had five missions in progress, three of which he could only do when he left the Ravengarde core and two which he didn't intend to complete straight away.

Clicking on {Affiliations}, the most interesting tab for a faction leader, as was his case, he saw a screen he had grown accustomed to over the last few months.

{Affiliations: Golden Partners; Manifold Family; The Ancient Garden.}

[Golden Partners]

[Members: 13 (Vicente Fuller), (Larissa Carstensen) ... (Jogard Loyalar).]

[Average Level: 7-Star Archmage.]

[Message]

[Distribute digital resources (resources available to the faction: 1,891,214 stone coins).]

...

[Faction missions: 3 (Escort) ... (7th Stage Beast Hunt).]

Among the options he read out, he could choose to click on the members' names, which would give him the option to find out the level, vital status and what that person was doing, or click on the other options to communicate, share resources or even check out group missions.

There were other options available to Vicente, and the system was completely different for his faction members. Among the existing buttons was the [Delete] option, which basically allowed you to remove a person from the faction.

Vicente clicked on Larissa's name, who he wanted to meet as soon as possible to join the group mission she was carrying out right now.

[Larissa Carstensen] n/ô/vel/b//in dot c//om

[Cultivation: 1-Star Magus]

[Vital Status: Alive]

[Current Position: The Flower Cliff (updated 4 hours ago).]

[Detail: Left the city core to lead a team of five on the group mission [Escort] to Mightville.]

...

[Message]

Vicente chose the option that stood out in his vision and jotted a brief text advising his companion of his current situation and how he intended to join the group carrying out the mission.

However, he didn't know if he could do it. Mightville was only five days' journey from Ravengarde, but depending on how fast Larissa's team progressed, he might have to change his plans.

'If she doesn't get this message in time, perhaps it's time for me to travel to fulfill some of my responsibilities to my sponsors.'

The Manifold Family had made demands in their agreement that could only be completed when he finished his year-long period of seclusion in the Ravengarde center. Now that there was less than a minute to go until that happened, he would surely soon be charged to travel to Pongdown.

But while he was thinking, Vicente suddenly felt a pleasant sensation, with his body stopping absorbing mana from the surroundings beyond his control. When this happened, he couldn't help but stop thinking about everything unrelated to his magical essence.

With a sigh of relief, he smiled satisfactorily. Although being able to get stronger continuously was good, on the whole, it wasn't pleasant not being in control. Also, when his sensitive period ended, all his power stabilized, with all the transformation that had taken place over the last few months finally solidifying.

For months, Vicente had felt as if he were a walking jelly, with no fixed shape or solid structure. Now, however, he felt like a rock, totally different from those months and much more impressive than when he was in Polaris Realm!

"Finally!" he said as he parted his lips, with Prisiche congratulating him soon after.

Putting the equipment in front of him aside, Vicente collected his ID and headed out of the house.

His objective? To leave Ravengarde's protected area and feel Anicane's full mana!

Obviously, Anicane's mana varied, with some places being stronger or weaker. But as Ravengarde was a powerful city, only special fantastic areas of this majestic world could surpass such a place.

Halfway there, Prisiche informed him, "Master, Miss Larissa answered your message. Unfortunately, their group has already arrived in Mightville. You'd better not waste your time going to her."

"Right. I'll see what else I can do in the next few days..." he said aloud as he passed through the barrier, feeling his heart beating hard before facing the full reality of this world.

The moment he set foot outside the barrier, he noticed a terrifying pressure hit him, immediately making him sweat as he felt as if he should prostrate himself!

As he felt this, something else inside him caught his attention.

'That feeling...' He swallowed his saliva before looking at a building in the distance, the training center of the group that sponsored him.

Running towards the building, Vicente made his way quickly, in a hurry to find a cultivation room and advance his stage!

Chapter 978 Magus

When he arrived at the Ancient Garden building, Vicente didn't have to go through the counter to get his permit and the key to a cultivation room.

As an external member sponsored by this force, he could enter any unit of this force spread throughout Light Cay, using only a pendant that Asahel had given him. Through it, he quickly got a member of the Ancient Garden to direct him to one of the best cultivation rooms currently free for use in the area.

Arriving on the 11th floor of the building, he took the elevator to the front of room 1111, where, without delay, he thanked the training center employee and locked himself in that room.

The cultivation room at this location did not differ from the training center unit in the Ravengarde core, which Vicente had already experienced. The place was a 5-meter cube with various formations that enriched the area with mana and elements. Apart from that, there was nothing really interesting there to attract attention.

With one movement, Vicente sat down on his cultivation cushion, while Prische stood in front of the room's door, eyeing her master curiously.

Sitting down with his eyes closed, Vicente controlled the mana inside his body, drawing more power from the surroundings into his soul and body.

He felt as if he were a dry sponge that was now being drenched with water, amid an immense reservoir of liquid, as big as an entire sea.

His 12 pentagrams suddenly appeared outside his body, with the Throne of Light and Darkness showing alongside Vicente's electromagnetic essence.

Prische looked with interest at his master's powers, watching as the indigo lines on his indigo pentagrams grew stronger, with little violet streaks appearing on them.

'The master will eventually raise the quality of his pentagrams to the violet grade... At that time, he will become a truly monstrous existence and surpass Light Cay's limit.' She pondered silently, imagining that his place after reaching the level of a Grand Magus would naturally be off this island.

As she thought this, Vicente felt his powers acquired on leaving Polaris Realm improving in efficiency and intensity, while his mana reached a new level.

But the most fantastic changes were taking place in his physical body. His soul was already impressive before he arrived in Anicane. But his body still carried a little of what it was on that 'mortal' plane. Now, however, his body was more like that of a god than that of a mere magician!

His bones had hardened considerably, while his muscles, tendons and ligaments had changed, becoming more flexible, resilient, with faster electrical responses and an accelerated regeneration factor.

Feeling as if he was becoming more compatible with his surroundings, Vicente noticed a sudden decrease in the pressure of mana on his body and soul. As this happened, his control over external mana improved, and with each breath he took, he brought greater quantities of elements and mana under his control.

In the blink of an eye, he changed from a 9-Star Archmage to a 1-Star Magus, with a mana 10 times stronger than the one he had hours ago.

Meanwhile, his vitality tripled and he could now live over 30,000 years longer before reaching the limit of his life expectancy. That is, of course, if he stopped advancing and eventually became stagnant at the 7th magical stage.

But Vicente was far from a cultivation bottleneck. As he finished his advance, reaching 27% progress at the level of a 1-Star Magus, he felt his Magic Gems burning on his forehead.

An indigo trace suddenly appeared in one of the two essences, initiating the transformation of his magical quality to the next step!

The Throne of Light and Darkness shook as the consciousness of this magical form finally came back to life.

'Don't conquer anything below the indigo grade. I won't accept it.'

'Tsk! You're always so demanding!' Vicente teased it, although he agreed on this point.

Now that he had such an incredible configuration of pentagrams, he couldn't give up the possibility of absorbing only the highest quality pentagrams possible.

'However, that will probably require me to hunt super-talented 7th stage creatures or more 'ordinary' 8th stage individuals.' He warned his magical form.

'Your magical base has become much stronger and you'll need more pentagrams to maintain your spiritual stability. However, it won't be a problem if you run out of the next two pentagrams until you reach 5-Star. Just don't go longer than that without them. But you can take your time to choose your future targets.'

Vicente felt this was right and agreed to do as the Throne suggested.

But the Throne warned him of something, 'However, be careful with your cultivation speed. You've never tried Anicane resources and this mana density is new to you. This means that until you sensitize yourself to this area and its resources, you will advance quickly. It's possible that you'll become a 5-Star Magus in less than 4 years. So don't get too comfortable without your next two pentagrams.'

Vicente opened his eyes slowly after this important conversation with the Throne, setting some new goals for himself.

'I'll research my options, hunting grounds and wait until I reach 3-Star of the 7th stage. Going hunting right after leveling up, when I'm still not used to this world, could be a big mistake. I'll take it easy for now.' He thought to himself, deciding how to move forward with his situation.

After almost half an hour in that cultivation room, he stood up from where he had sat earlier, his strength fully stabilized, ready to take his next step.

"Master, congratulations on your improvement in cultivation. At your current rate, in a decade you might become a Grand Magus and reach the Violet grade in some of your pentagrams!" The artificial intelligence said in a great tone, sensing how glorious would be the future of this guy she would be watching for the next few years at least.

Vicente smiled at her, but didn't invest in the subject. "Prisiche, take me to the Manifold Family post. I want directions to Pongddown."

Chapter 979 Navigation System

At a large vintage-style estate with gentle curves and several pillars on its façade, Vicente found it in stark contrast to the modern surroundings of Ravengarde.

Ignoring the design of the building, he had an easy time to access the area without the need to present himself at the entrance. The men outside a guardhouse next to a golden gate recognized him, calling his name and asking if he was all right or when his next official fight would be.

Some merely nodded in approval in his direction, their expressions filled with admiration and respect. In Light Cay, strength was even more important than in Polaris Realm, and although they had never met Vicente before, at least a dozen individuals greeted him as if he were an old companion.

As he accepted the warm welcome with a curious look on his face, Prische said to him while they made their way inside the building, "You're a celebrity in Light Cay. Few of the island's inhabitants can say that millions of people know them."

Vicente ignored the comment from the lively woman beside him as he observed the garden of the Manifold Family's subsidiary property in the city.

The guard in front of him, a 9-Star Archmage, glanced at him out of the corner of her eye as she walked ahead, an excited smile on her face that was hard to ignore.

"If you want to say something, just say it, miss. I'm no different from you." Vicente sighed as he realized he had a fan in this place.

She smiled and asked, "Mr. Fuller, you're more sensitive than you look... I was just curious about your cultivation. Have you just advanced a stage?"

Vicente had no way of hiding his current cultivation. He could even use some kind of technique to suppress his spiritual fluctuation, but with constant fighting in the Combat Center, he could hardly keep this secret for over 10 days. So he wasn't hiding by going ahead with his current plans.

"Yes, that's the case."

"Incredible!" she cheered, slowing her steps to walk beside him. "You must be eager to hunt down your seventh essence now, right? If you want, I can join your team, hehe. I'd love to take part in the hunt for your pentagram."

Vicente didn't suspect this guard, nor did he intend to accept such an offer, so he took her comment in jest. "I'm really looking forward to gaining a new skill. But I still have to study my options and prepare..."

"So you're not going out to hunt your pentagram now?" she asked, becoming more serious, almost disappointed. "I thought you were here to notify the family of your departure."

"No, I'm here on other business."

"I see. Then I wish you good luck. If you find it interesting to have me on your team, you can find me here. I'm a talented hunter, don't forget that," she recommended, stopping in a large corridor inside the estate and nodding toward a glass door over 10 meters high.

He nodded with a smile as he looked into the round, black rabbit eyes of this woman, and headed into the indicated wing.

He walked into a large room that seemed to be a historical representation of the workplace of some king or high-ranking nobleman until he saw a man waiting for him beside a large map.

"Mr. Fuller, it's good to finally meet you." The man, dressed entirely in a black suit, extended his hand, which Vicente immediately shook.

"You must be Butler Zigam. Asahel mentioned you to me," Vicente greeted the 7th stage individual in front of him, already so accustomed to the bodily differences of people in this world that he paid no attention to small details.

Vicente got straight to the point. "Butler Zigam, I don't want to dwell on this. I'm here to get recommendations on how to get to Pongdown to start my training cycle with Alicia."

"So soon?" The man was surprised, not expecting Vicente to be the one coming to ask for information to start this mission.

But given how efficient Vicente had been in nearly a year of a partnership with this group, having worked hard to generate new consumers for the family's products, the man was only a little surprised.

"I have a few issues I want to deal with that will take me away from seeing Alicia for a while when I start. I'd rather begin my meetings with her now and address those plans after I've seen her."

"I see." The man folded one leg over the other before tossing an item that looked like a pen to Vicente.

But it wasn't a pen at all, but a holographic map that immediately activated in Vice's hands as the butler spoke. "It is an artifact with a real-time Light Cay positioning system. It shows you exactly where you are and what's in your surroundings. It has the most up-to-date version of our maps, so it's very efficient. It's accurate over 95% of the time, which means you can rely on it to make your way.

Use it with your artificial intelligence and you can easily travel all over the island."

Vicente looked at that item with a shocked look on his face. He honestly hadn't expected to receive something so valuable and so easily. In Polaris Realm, an item that gave information about an entire region would be enough to revolutionize and cause the rise and fall of states!

"That..." He hesitated for a moment.

The butler recognized his mistake as he saw the troubled look on Vicente's face and laughed. "Oh, I'm sorry for dealing with this so casually. Where you come from, that kind of information must be pretty critical, right? Here in Light Cay, it's not new to anyone. Everyone has been well aware of the island's territories, cities and special areas for a long time. This kind of map in your hands serves much more as a support artifact for common activities than for conquests and the like."

Vicente felt like a country bumpkin coming into contact with technology for the first time, for a moment feeling embarrassed. What earthling was he acting like that because of a navigation system?

'It seems that Polaris Realm has completely taken over my old ways... Will the same happen here in Anicane?' he asked himself as he breathed more slowly, calming down, but somewhat worried.

"All right, I'll use this to get to Alicia."

As Vicente stood up, intending to leave, Butler Zigam held up one of his hands, indicating for him to wait.

"There's something else I'd like to talk to you about. Pongddown is a six days' journey from our location. That's quite a far journey, so there's something I'd like to ask you to take to Miss Alicia's residence for me and save me the trouble."

The man summoned a box the size of a watch case and threw it in Vicente's direction.

Chapter 980 Journey to Pongddown

"What's that?" Vicente asked the butler.

Zigam explained, "It's something for you to give to Lady Alicia. In fact, I want her to pass it on to her fiancé. Anyway, take this message from me to them. They'll know what to do after that."

Vicente saw that the man didn't want to go into details, so he asked no more questions. Willing to do this favor because of the good relationship he had with the Manifold Family, he received the box and the note, storing them in his spatial ring without ceremony.

"By the way, be careful on the journey to Pongddown. The city is quite far from our position, so be on the lookout for enemies interested in taking action against you there."

"Far away? What do you mean?" Vicente narrowed his eyes. "Isn't it only six days' journey to Pongddown?"

"It is, but that's enough for you to cross all of Light Cay to reach the east coast." The butler smiled at Vicente, once again finding himself in the situation of having to explain things to the boy.

"Master, our methods of transportation can make immense journeys in a short time. Six days' travel to Pongddown is the equivalent of two months' travel on Polaris Realm." Prische said into her master's ear.

Vicente could travel in Polaris Realm much faster than that using one of his more advanced skills. But he wouldn't make use of it in Light Cay, at least not for the time being.

In Polaris Realm, he was one of the strongest magicians, and the use of wormholes to cross great distances was superb. But in Light Cay, he was far from the level of the strongest on the island. He only had to make the mistake of entering a space independent of an average force or a combat area of two Grand Masters to put himself in mortal danger.

Until he got to know this world better, Vicente didn't intend to use such skills to move around!

"I see..." he said, recognizing his mistake, while being grateful for the information from Prische and Zigam.

He looked at the butler and said, "Thank you for the information and the warning. I'll be careful on my way."

He followed Prische and Zigam to the exit of the estate's built-up area, then headed towards Ravengarde airport, his artificial intelligence guiding him.

Halfway there, Vicente got an item to mask his appearance and then ordered Prische to assume the form of glasses, which he was soon wearing on his face.

As he entered the city's grand airport, he read what Prische was telling him.

{Master, in Light Cay, we use flying vehicles for long journeys. Although there are other methods of travel that are faster and more useful to powerful magicians, for most of the island's population, aircraft are the most viable method of transportation. They're not expensive and they're fast enough to travel all over the island without wasting our valuable time.}

The airplanes in this place were nothing like those on Earth. Not only was their top speed much lower, which guaranteed longer journeys, but they were so big that they were more like flying cities!

At Ravengarde's grandiose airport, Vicente came across just ten of these vehicles, each shaped like a pawn, floating in the air while having thousands of small windows along their sides and rear.

As he watched the boarding terminal, he paid 3,000 stone coins, the value of the one-way ticket between Ravengarde and Pongdown.

As soon as he had his travel ticket in hand, he made his way to terminal 56, one of the airport's 200 boarding terminals, one of the 20 entry points for the aircraft he would use to travel for the next six days.

'Incredible! This looks like a huge spaceship, but these people use it as a plane!' He observed the entrance to the level on which he would be traveling for the next few days.

The interior of it looked much more like the interior of a transatlantic tourist ship on Earth. There were dormitory corridors around most of the vessel, but there were also shopping areas where one could buy food, produce, cultivation items and even access to special cultivation rooms.

The vehicle had no requirements for its users to be in their cabins at the time of take-off or landing. The plane's users could simply do whatever they wanted.

'All that... Wow!' He thought silently as he reached an area where there was an immense wing of elevators with a hall that had no ceiling, or rather, no floors above it and went from the ground floor to the roof of the plane, with a view of dozens of floors.

As he walked along, he heard beeps alerting him that the craft had already taken off and begun its flight, which would last 10 days and would have 5 stops on its way, one stop every 2 days.

After two hours exploring the large Light Cay plane, Vicente discovered the prices of interesting features, but as he had already imagined, the prices were prohibitive for him. He then stopped off at a restaurant for his obligatory meal before heading to a cultivator's cabin.

There were plenty of entertainment and leisure options on this huge craft, but he wasn't interested in any of them. His plan was simpler: to cultivate, use some books he had at his disposal to continue his studies, and train his skills, mainly related to his profession as a Real Sorcerer.

As for the many absorbable resources he had with him, he didn't intend to use them straight away. As he had only just started cultivating again and the pressure of the mana environment was still new to him, he wanted to reach the end of 2-Star before making use of special resources.

He wouldn't even see the journey between Ravengarde and Ponddown and when he least expected it, he would arrive at the nearby coastal city of Light Cay, where he would soon meet the woman he had to train.

The dangers of the journey were minimal inside the craft. It was when he arrived at Ponddown airport that he had to take care, as Zigam had warned him!