

Card Apprentice Daily Log #Chapter 2696: Buying Silence - Read Card Apprentice Daily Log Chapter 2696: Buying Silence

Chapter 2696: Buying Silence

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Blossom District, Sky Blossom City, TSR Guild Headquarters

"No, Petra. There's no point in trying to bribe me. It isn't mine to trade with you," I replied, holding my ground against her temptation, as three massive stone rule ore veins were far from enough to satisfy my appetite. The more Petra offered, the more my craving grew.

"Then how about this?" Petra pressed. "I'll give you those three stone rule ore veins and liquid stone rule power ponds if you stay quiet while I try to persuade Bloodette to come with me. That's something you can do, right?"

She tried to buy my silence, finally accepting that I felt too guilty to trade the blood rule rock vein for her stone rule ore veins.

"Yeah, but what kind of friend would I be if I didn't help my friend when she needed my advice?" I continued to play hard to get, noticing that Petra was not only increasing her offer but also steadily lowering what she expected of me in return.

Petra stared at me in a sheer rage before snapping back, "The kind who, just a few minutes ago, was trying to sell his friend's valuables while she was struggling to cope with her inner turmoil and ghosts."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I replied, shamefully feigning ignorance.

"Ah!!!" Petra screamed in frustration, fully concluding that the Anti-Petruth would become a thorn in her path to bringing Bloodette back to their home.

In that moment, she genuinely wanted to kill him and beg for Bloodette's forgiveness later. However, when she noticed a tiny pair of pink eyes peering at her from within his hair, she erased that thought immediately.

Petra knew that, if the choice were left to Bloodette, she would never return home with her. Even back then, Bloodette had been fascinated by card apprenticeships and their way of life. That fascination ran deep, enough for her to risk the stability of their entire

group of friends. Now, with no recollection of that past bond, Petra believed it would be even harder to persuade Bloodette to come home instead of chasing her long-held interest in card apprentices.

That difficulty was only compounded by people like Anti-Petruth and Cortney, who would undoubtedly encourage her to stay. Because of that, Petra had planned to buy their silence. But seeing that she could not even purchase lowly Anti-Petruth's cooperation, how could she ever hope to buy Cortney's?

After thinking it over, Petra decided to double down on her plan to buy their silence. She would only leave the card apprentice regions with Bloodette. If that failed, she intended to keep trying until Bloodette eventually gave up and returned home with her.

Petra glanced at Anti-Petruth and said, "Alright. Name the price for your silence."

"Petra, friendship doesn't work like that. You can't just buy—" I stared at her in disbelief and started to lecture her, but she cut me off sharply.

"Cut the bullshit. Drop the high-and-mighty act," she snapped. "Even without my Petruth rune, I can tell you're full of it. Just name your price while I'm still feeling generous."

"Fine," I said, taking off my mask to put forward my quote. "I want at least five different rule ore veins. Each of them must be no smaller than the blood rule rock vein. That will be enough."

Seeing the sudden shift in my expression and demeanor, Petra was momentarily taken aback. She was only bluffing, she didn't think it would work so effectively. She no longer seemed to care whether I was genuinely Bloodette's friend or not. Without hesitation, she agreed, "I can arrange that."

Now that I had seen just how loaded Petra truly was, I finally understood why the card apprentices of the Five Regions were willing to risk their lives traveling deep into the Way Beyond to besiege the Supreme Beings. Compared to them, however, I chose a different approach.

I had a strong suspicion that if a Supreme Being made the request, another Supreme Being would not mind parting with a comparatively meager amount of resources. Petra's swift agreement only confirmed my belief.

"Good," I remarked before bringing up the next order of the business. "The same rates apply to Dredre, Corey, Lil' Baem, and everyone else present here, except for Cortney."

I made the demand knowing that, unlike us card apprentices, Supreme Beings did not break their promises, even verbal ones, unless they felt they were being deliberately cheated. I had no intention of screwing Petra over in a bountiful deal as this, so I wasn't worried. Instead, I began actively helping her purchase the silence of the rest of us. I

even called a few of my calamity daughter gems down to the basement specifically for this moment.

"Sure, but I'm paying for Dredre and Corey's silence. Not the rest," Petra said, having caught on to my trick. "I don't think Bloodette even knows them, and that snake keeps staring at Bloodette and me like we're its next meal."

'Damn it, I forgot about her Petruth Rune,' I cursed inwardly as a brilliant opportunity slipped through my fingers.

"Hey, I never agreed to that," Corey suddenly protested. "Unlike him, you can't buy my silence. I'll tell Bloodette exactly what you're doing right now."

Seeing Corey prepare to rat her out, Petra's gaze filled with murderous intent. Sensing the shift, Lil' Baem moved first, slithering in front of Corey as its body slowly expanded, slit eyes locking onto Petra's glare.

At the same time, another voice spoke up. "I won't sell my friendship either."

It was Dredre. She stepped forward, no longer hiding in my hair.

I walked over to Petra's side. She looked ready to fight both Lil' Baem and Dredre if it came to that, even though they were clearly far above her weight class.

I leaned in and whispered into her ear, "Just pay me. I'll handle that tattletale and Dredre."

Petra turned to meet my gaze. When she saw me nod back with my most assuring smile, I added softly, "Trust me. I'm their boss."

After a brief pause, she finally withdrew her murderous intent and calmed down.

Chapter 2697: Greed Works In Funny Ways

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Blossom District, Sky Blossom City, TSR Guild Headquarters

"Are you sure you can handle them?" Petra asked, her gaze flicking to Corey, who looked ready to report her to Bloodette at the first opportunity.

Seeing that Petra no longer intended to attack her mother, Lil' Baem returned to shoveling blood out of the basement, easing her mother's workload.

Meanwhile, Dredre clenched her grip around her nest in frustration. The demon merchant she had been assigned to aid was behaving completely out of character. Still, she chose to remain silent, having already made it clear that her silence was not for sale. The soothing fragrance from her hair and scalp helped by calming her significantly and steadying her frayed nerves.

"For the price you're paying, I definitely can," I replied. "But if you were to throw in a few extra rule ore veins, that would motivate me even more." I made no effort to hide my shameless attempt to squeeze additional incentives out of her. When I delivered, I planned to ask for a chunky tip too.

"Wyatt, stop being a greedy asshole," Corey snapped, turning on her boss. "Bloodette thinks of you as family. How can you even consider selling her out?" To her, it looked like I was putting profit above friendship without hesitation. Well, I was. So, can't blame her for that one.

Before I could respond, Petra cut in and laid down her final offer. "I'll give you twenty different rule ore veins in exchange for your silence and theirs. Do we have a deal?"

Petra's offer immediately made Corey's eyes widen. She didn't fully grasp the true importance and value of rule ore veins, but she knew enough to understand that they were priceless. Hearing that Petra was offering twenty of them to her greedy boss, Corey realized that nothing she said would change his mind.

Even so, she had no intention of rolling over just because he told her to. Friends mattered more than any boss... but she had signed a demon contract. If he truly forced her to stay silent, she wouldn't be able to resist.

"Deal. Why don't we start building the subterranean field and move those twenty different rule ore veins over so we can surprise Bloodette when she is done dealing with her ghost? I bet she'd love to see it," I said, agreeing to Petra's offer and proposing we begin immediately, timing it so we could surprise Bloodette once she had pulled herself together.

Now that I had a verbal contract with Petra, my plan was to make sure she paid in full before I delivered on my end.

Petra wasn't stupid, but she was overly confident in herself and in her own prowess. Besides, these rule ore veins didn't hold nearly as much value to supreme beings as they did to card apprentices. If rule ore veins remained in one place long enough, rule energy would naturally gather, eventually materializing into ore deposits and other resources. Simply being near supreme beings increased the concentration of their respective rule in the surrounding area, allowing others to easily sense those rules and even comprehend them.

The supreme beings themselves had no need for rule ores or such resources, but they were still part of their home, a way of marking their territory. And as it happens, you don't just give away a piece of your home to strangers offering you trash in return. Therefore, card apprentices could never get them through trade and had to try the reliable old fashion. But I had the Stone Supreme.

"Laying twenty different rule ore veins in the same location would spell disaster. I can understand two or three with proper spacing, but twenty? No. Pick a different location for each of them," Petra remarked immediately, rejecting the idea outright and calling it insane.

Listening to her, I only smiled as she hadn't objected to paying in full before I delivered what I'd promised. That was simply how Supreme Beings were. Once a verbal agreement was reached, payment was given. Whether it came before the work was done or after made no difference to them. Unlike card apprentices, they didn't even consider backing out or lying as possibilities.

That said, it didn't mean they would tolerate being cheated.

"Don't worry about that. I plan to protect and nourish each rule ore vein with its own individual pseudo-natural array formation, specifically designed for it," I told Petra, assuring her that placing twenty rule ore veins of different rules within a single subterranean field would not be a problem for me.

Meanwhile, Corey, still dissatisfied with me over selling our silence to Petra, and Cortney, who was helplessly watching Bloodette cry a river of blood, both immediately perked up at what they heard.

"Wyatt, are you trying to build a holy ground to comprehend twenty different rules?" Corey blurted out, drawing that conclusion from my words.

She had seen such holy grounds before, in Corey Park's memories. However, nothing like that existed in the card world. There were no array masters alive capable of designing pseudo-natural array formations that could nourish and protect a specific type of rule ore vein. At best, they could excavate rule ore veins from distant locations and barely manage to lay them properly. This inefficient process caused the veins to wither after relocation and eventually become exhausted through continuous over-mining.

Cortney seemed to have guessed my intent as well, having personally enjoyed the benefits of the blood rule rock vein within the dungeon seal. Corey's question only confirmed her suspicion, turning her curiosity into full-blown interest. After all, she wanted to sense and comprehend rules apart from the blood rule. But her rapid mastery of the blood rule had spoiled comprehending other rules for her. She believed a holy ground to comprehend rules could solve that problem.

I didn't bother answering Corey. I was about to press Petra into beginning the excavations beneath the city to form the subterranean field when Corey suddenly yelled, "Wyatt, I want a twenty-five percent share in that holy ground because Five of those twenty rule ore veins are mine."

Chapter 2698: Greedy Little Piggy

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Blossom District, Sky Blossom City, TSR Guild Headquarters

As a renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist back on Earth, I understood one thing: there were no such things as good ideas. There were only ideas, a dime a dozen. They only gained value, for better or worse, when you actually managed to implement them and see them through to completion.

The First Nations once believed land could not be sold until invaders taught them otherwise. Who could have guessed that selling water would become one of the most lucrative and stable businesses in the world? That was to say, without action and the conviction to do whatever it takes, ideas were nothing more than ideas.

I don't know why I suddenly thought of this. Maybe it was how I was going about building the holy ground to comprehend runes, or it was Corey and Cortney who seemed to understand what I was trying to do. Either way, seeing an opportunity presented itself, Corey didn't hesitate to seize it.

"Wyatt, I want a twenty-five percent share in that holy ground, because five of those twenty rule ore veins are mine," Corey shouted in a rush, as if afraid that if she didn't make herself clear now, she might never get another chance.

Knowing that even if she refused to sell her silence to Petra, it would be sold by her boss regardless, Corey decided she might as well claim her share instead of letting his greed go unchecked. With one move, she was hitting two birds, unfortunately neither of them was the bird she truly wanted to strike.

Even now, after understanding what her boss was trying to do, Corey still believed the way he was going about it was wrong and that he should stop immediately. She thought his goal was admirable, but the method he had chosen amounted to betraying their friend. For someone as smart as he was, surely he could have found another way, right?

Petra stared at Corey in disbelief. The same girl who had sworn she would never sell her silence and had even threatened to report her was now fighting for a cut of the deal.

In her long life, Petra had dealt with many shameless and hypocritical card apprentices, yet Corey caught her off guard.

Petra's Petruth Rune confirmed that Corey wasn't merely posturing. She genuinely believed what she was saying. That was what shocked Petra the most, that Corey could change her stance so quickly while still being sincere. For a brief moment, Petra even wondered if her Petruth Rune had malfunctioned.

"How are five out of the twenty Rule Ore veins yours?" I scoffed, rolling my eyes at Corey as I shut her down on the spot. "You didn't want to sell your silence, remember? Now stop being a greedy little piggy and get back to shoveling."

Maybe I would have considered cutting her in for a tiny percentage of the holy grounds if she'd played along from the start. But the nerve of her, demanding twenty-five percent when I was the one doing all the work, when all she had to do was nod along. Instead, she managed to botch something that simple.

And now, after I'd gone out of my way to salvage the deal she'd nearly torpedoed with her self-righteous attitude, she had the gall to come back asking for twenty-five percent of the shares. Such demands will not fly under my watch.

"I'm being a greedy little piggy?" Corey snapped, her face flushing as she shot back at me. "You're the pig. Your whole family is a pig. Wyatt, I'm telling you right now, give me twenty-five percent of the holy grounds you're planning to build, or else."

It could be more obvious that calling her a greedy little piggy had definitely struck a nerve

"Or else what?" I shot back. "Believe it or not, if you don't get back to shoveling the blood out of here, I'll have you shoveling shit in the city sewers instead."

I'd clearly gone too easy on her lately. The fact that she even thought she could threaten me was proof of that.

"You wouldn't," Corey said, disbelief flashing across her face.

She had planned to go over my head and negotiate directly with Petra if I refused. But now, she reconsidered. Shoveling shit was still shoveling shit, and no deal in the world was worth that risk. In the end, she wasn't willing to gamble on it.

"Try me," I dared her flatly.

When Corey finally turned away and went back to scraping blood off the basement floor, I shifted my attention to Petra. Before I could say anything, Cortney stepped in and asked, "How many Rule Ore veins will you pay me for my silence?"

Corey froze mid-motion and stared at Cortney in disbelief. Even though they were of different races and born to different mothers, everyone had always seen Cortney and Bloodette as sisters. Seeing Cortney so casually offer to sell her silence to Petra left a bitter taste in Corey's mouth.

Even Dredre looked astonished, yanking on my hair in pure disbelief. Those tiny hands of hers carried the strength of a ruler class, them pulling on my hair felt like my scalp was about to be torn clean off.

"Hey, Dredre, honey, careful. You're hurting me," I cried out in pain. I figured it would boost her confidence in her own strength. Not that she lacked it. After the way she handled Lil' Baem, it was clear she didn't need the reassurance. Still, a little extra confidence never hurt, especially for someone with her abilities.

She immediately let go and leaned down from above, her tiny pink eyes meeting mine as she hurried to apologize. "Sorry, Wyatt. I didn't mean to. I was just surprised."

"You and me both," I said, my gaze shifting to Cortney.

Once Cortney understood what I was doing, she didn't need to spell it out for her. Especially with Corey already laying everything bare.

As for Bloodette, she'd be thrilled as she would never have to worry about blood candies or any other gourmet blood delicacies anymore.

Chapter 2699: Petra's Possibilities

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Blossom District, Sky Blossom City, TSR Guild Headquarters

"Are you being serious right now?" Petra asked, staring at Cortney in disbelief, unable to trust what she was hearing. She had never even approached Cortney with an offer to buy her silence regarding persuading Bloodette to move to the Way Beyond with her. It felt as though she had reached for an iron axe and somehow been handed a gold one instead.

When Cortney nodded in confirmation, Petra wasted no time and hurriedly put forth her offer. "I'll give you twenty rule ore veins, each belonging to a different rule. Let's shake on it."

Before agreeing, Cortney paused and asked, "Will they be different from the twenty rule ore veins you're already giving, Wyatt?" She knew that if her friend intended to build

what she suspected, having forty distinct rule ore veins without overlap would be an immense advantage.

"That will be hard," Petra answered after a brief moment of thought and with a pensive expression she continued, "I have more enemies than friends."

In her long life, enemies and rivals had always made existence more entertaining just as much as companionship. Otherwise, after a few rebirths, everything would have begun to feel repetitive and dull.

"You have fewer than forty friends?" Corey remarked, voicing an unexpectedly sharp observation and catching Petra off guard.

"Yeah, got a problem with that? How many do you have?" Petra asked sharply. She still hadn't forgiven Corey for threatening to rat her out to Bloodette.

"Hey, I was just saying. No need to get personal," Corey replied, a faint note of loneliness slipping into her voice. The number of friends she truly had could be counted on her fingers. Then again, if she included the friends of Corey Park and Earth Corey, she could probably fill an entire village.

Petra shot her a glare, then turned back to Cortney and put forward a new proposal. "How about you come with us too? I'll give you one hundred rule ore veins, no, any resources you want. As many as you want. Name them, and I'll get them for you. Besides, my place is far more beautiful than anything in the card apprentices' regions."

Now that Cortney had shown a willingness to sell her silence, an entirely new range of possibilities opened before Petra, all aimed at ensuring she returned home with Bloodette in tow. One of those possibilities involved taking Cortney along as well. With that in mind, Petra went all out, offering Cortney a deal that would make any card apprentice alive green with envy. Even the masters would feel the sting of it.

After all, once a supreme being gave a verbal agreement, it was as good as done, regardless of time or circumstance. That meant if Cortney chose to leave with Petra, she would never again need to worry about lacking resources. Anything found in the Way Beyond would be hers for the taking, and Petra would personally see to it and be responsible for her safety.

For many it was an offer too good to refuse, but for Cortney, it was never truly an option. Her heart belonged to the orphanage. Just as I expected, she refused immediately, without a moment's hesitation.

"No, I can't come with you. If you can't produce twenty distinct rule ore veins, then make it twenty five rule ore veins, and Wyatt will tell you which ones can overlap. If you're fine with that, then let's shake on it."

From the very beginning, Cortney had planned to remain silent about Bloodette leaving for the Way Beyond. Unlike the others, she understood that Bloodette was just as curious about her past as she was about the world beyond the dungeon seal. Cortney could be selfish, could ask Bloodette to stay and abandon her search for her past, but that would have been unfair to Bloodette .

If Cortney were the only reason Bloodette remained with them, then after her death, Bloodette would return to the Way Beyond alone, where life would be far harsher without any friends waiting for her. Like throwing a domesticated cat onto the streets. The wisest choice, then, was to let Bloodette go and live her own life, rather than binding her out of selfishness.

So, when she realized what her friend was planning to do with the twenty rule ore veins he had negotiated with Petra in exchange for his and his employees' silence, she immediately recognized an opportunity she would regret missing and seized it without hesitation. If she could make this happen, she knew that even after her death, the orphanage would never have to worry about money again.

As for how it might look to Bloodette, she believed the latter wouldn't mind. Their friendship had long since transcended words and actions, ever since she signed her origin card and they had shared an innate blood rule rune.

That was also why it was easier for her to let go of Bloodette. If she ever missed her, all she had to do was use their shared innate blood rule rune to summon her or through her origin card itself. If not, she could go visit Bloodette by relying on their shared innate blood rule rune. Either way, no distance in the world could truly separate them. They were always just one thought away from each other.

"I can do that," Petra agreed to Cortney's counter proposal, but her voice lacked the earlier excitement. It was as if she wasn't sure.

Everything was unfolding far too smoothly, almost too perfectly. It felt unreal. She could understand Anti-Petruth and Corey changing their spots, but even Cortney? That was harder to believe. Petra couldn't help but wonder if they knew something she didn't. Was there something important she was missing, something she needed to know?

Her thoughts were abruptly cut short by a cry sharper than even Bloodette's constant whining. It was Corey. She was now shamelessly clinging to Anti-Petruth's thigh, bawling her eyes out as she wailed, "Wyatt, this is not fair..."

Chapter 2700: Sneak Bite

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Blossom District, Sky Blossom City, TSR Guild Headquarters

"Wyatt, this isn't fair. I knew you way before her, and we were friends first. We go way back, you and me," Corey wailed, her voice cracking as if she had just lost a member of her family.

It was just her, too. Lil' Baem had wrapped itself around my other thigh, hissing in my direction and baring its tiny fangs as it mimicked its master's outrage. I was certain Corey had put it up to this. I honestly didn't know how Park would feel about this one teaching her baby how to beg so shamelessly.

Still, I understood where Corey was coming from. It was one thing to miss out on a life-changing opportunity because of your own principles. That hurt, sure, but you could at least live with it. What really twisted the knife was watching a friend cash in on that very same opportunity right in front of you, knowing you had been standing at the same starting line.

"What do you want me to do then? I gave you an opportunity, and you kicked it away," I asked helplessly. Seeing Corey beg like this was still new to me, and it felt strange in a way I couldn't quite put into words. This wasn't the Corey I had grown used to dealing with.

Before I knew it, my thoughts drifted back to the old Corey, the unhinged one from before she became one with the darkness bound to her title demon core. The comparison was almost absurd. I couldn't help but let out a small chuckle as I imagined how that version of her would have handled this situation. She would have flipped the entire basement upside down if she didn't get her way, consequences be damned. Shameless begging wouldn't have even crossed her mind.

"Wyatt, you tell me what I can do, pretty please!" Corey pleaded, making her eyes big, watery, and red, the kind that made it hard to look away without feeling like a villain.

Under normal circumstances, I would've kicked her aside without a second thought. But she had been surprisingly cool about my relationship with Susan and the other two. Too cool, honestly. She hadn't even brought up the fact that I once promised her I wouldn't date someone she delusionally believed had been her mother in one of her past reincarnations.

Technically speaking, I hadn't broken that promise. Susan had announced our relationship to the world on her own, before she even told me. Up until that point, I'd been under the impression that she wanted space from me. So, in a roundabout way, I hadn't actually gone back on my word to Corey.

Still, the fact remained that she'd handled the whole ordeal far better than I expected. She never confronted me about it. Never complained. Never threw it in my face. She acted the same with me without giving me any cold shoulder or attitude about it.

Honestly, considering how violently she'd reacted back then, her restraint now was almost unsettling. I had a feeling Susan had something to do with that and also her becoming one with the darkness in her title demon core.

Fuck. I was starting to feel guilty. A part of me knew I was guilty, especially when I thought back to the day I made that cursed promise to her. I still remembered how much it had meant to Corey at the time. Maybe the reaction had been amplified by the darkness within her title demon core, but even that couldn't create feelings out of nothing. Yeah... in that sense, I had been a bad friend to her.

I let out a long, weary sigh before speaking. "You don't have to do anything. You've been a good friend to me, in some ways better than I've been to you. So I'll give you ten percent of the holy grounds I plan to build beneath Sky Blossom City. Now let go of my thighs, both of you."

"Eh? Just ten percent?" Corey asked, her voice thick with disappointment.

That single line shattered the rose-colored glasses that had been blinding my eyes to what a spoiled little brat she can be sometimes. I kicked her away without hesitation, disintegrated my other leg on instinct, and hopped backward in a clumsy retreat. Just in time too. Lil' Baem snapped at empty air where my groin had been a heartbeat earlier. That snake was truly sinister and ruthless.

"It's five percent now," I yelled, pointing at her as I steadied myself by reconstructing my leg.

"What? No, you said ten percent. You sealed the deal with the kick," Corey shot back, not giving me a second to argue. She pushed herself up from the pool of blood, used a cleansing card on herself and washed the gore off her body and clothes like it was nothing more than spilled water.

"Get back to work," I barked, jabbing a finger in her direction. "And if you dare slack off, I'll start cutting into your shares."

As I spoke, my eyes drifted to Lil' Baem. The snake had gone unnervingly still, its gaze locked squarely on my groin. Missing the last attempt seemed to have only sharpened its resolve. It looked like it had sworn a personal vendetta and wasn't planning to stop until it landed a direct hit.

"Yes, boss. Just watch me," Corey chirped, far too cheerful for someone who'd just been kicked into a blood pool. Then she snapped her fingers and yelled, "Baem, come over here and help mama, swallow all the blood."

She gestured at the crimson liquid dripping from the fractures in the basement's space. Lil' Baem glanced at it, then immediately shook its head, recoiling in clear disgust.

"You don't have to drink it," Corey coaxed. "You can just vomit it out later."

Lil' Baem remained stubbornly unmoved, hissing in protest. Seeing that gentle persuasion wasn't working, Corey's voice rose in desperation. "Baem, I've seen you drink and eat things way worse than this. Just this once, help mama out."

Lil' Baem flicked its tongue, clearly unconvinced, while I silently sighed in relief that its attention had finally shifted away from my groin.