

The Mafia 1031

Chapter 1031 The Situation of Nan's Group (1)

Days later, Vicente, Prische, Rex, and Larissa were arriving in the area where Vice had made the agreement with Nan's group earlier.

After traveling quietly to the airport in a town close to the meeting place, the group made their way on foot to where they were now, about minutes away from their goal.

No assassins had tried to act against them during these days, unlike what had happened during Vicente's last year of seclusion.

The last few months had been perilous for Vicente. Luckily for him, the missions he had created with the Dark Hands system had helped him avoid many problems and foresee several others. The Elders of the sect had also helped him, which allowed him a good period of seclusion and rapid magical growth.

This trip had been very well planned for months, and everyone in his group was wearing disguises to protect their appearances and magical fluctuations.

So, as they arrived at the meeting place with Nan's group, on the day of the five-year anniversary of the agreement with that group, they were not immediately recognized by the group camping in that area.

Six carriages in all were positioned strategically around an area of around 3,000 square meters. There, larger and smaller tents were divided with spaces between them for the members of the camp to move around, while some men and beasts stood guard on the ground or in the branches of the trees.

Meanwhile, campfires lit up the late afternoon in this wooded area, close to the road Vicente and his people had taken to get from the nearby town to there.

The guards watching the side Vicente's group had arrived on raised their weapons as their late 7th stage auras became more prominent.

Vicente smiled as he saw from afar the figure of the dwarf and the elf he had met years ago, recognizing this group as the one he wanted to find.

Around 40 people were around that area, counting those resting in their tents or relaxing by the camp's major fire.

Seeing that these people wouldn't recognize him as he was, Vicente changed his appearance to the one he had presented to Nan's group back then.

"Friends, it's me, Benson King." Vicente used the same name he had told them back then. "Those next to me are Rex, who you've seen before, and Larissa, a friend."

The moment Benson's name sounded, the guards lowered their weapons, while Garnot and Hervi, the elf, and the dwarf, stood up and looked in his direction.

"Benson King?" They both murmured strangely, while their eyebrows arched significantly.

"How is that possible?" Garnot, the elf, asked in incomprehension. "How did you cultivate so quickly?"

Nan left her tent, drawing Larissa and Rex's gazes to her 1 meter tall, blonde hair and adult body, pointed ears and shining teeth.

"Benson!" she shouted in an extremely satisfied tone, feeling the power of this individual with whom she had previously made a temporary agreement, hiding her dissatisfaction at not having made a stronger agreement at the time.

'I didn't think he would grow so strong in these few years...' She smiled at him as she signaled the guards to let them into the camp.

"You really are a great talent, Benson. I was right to make that deal with you before... I just wasn't any better at not tying you to me permanently at the time." She joked with him, as Vicente walked into the camp with a smile on his face, too.

The fact that he had waited to decide everything now paid off handsomely. Now he could bargain for whatever he wanted, and Nan could hardly refuse.

He greeted the dwarf and the elf before stooping and kissing one hand of the beautiful fairy, who floated in front of him and blushed at his touch.

"Well, I'm ready to leave. My affairs with my sect are settled, so I'm prepared to sign a definitive agreement with you."

Hervi and Garnot narrowed their eyes, obviously interested. They, too, were ready to leave Light Cay, having already completed their official business on the island and only being there to get one more helper for the journey back to their native home.

The journey by sea was dangerous. Even though their group was basically made up of high-level Magus and some of them could temporarily fight on the same level as newly promoted Grand Magus, all the help they could get now would make a big difference later on in the journey.

Normally, Grand Magus didn't travel with groups like theirs. Grand Magus had their own groups and outrageous demands for transporting people or accepting new subordinates.

Magus groups had to get by with as many companions as they could and the risk of not reaching the end of their journey was over 50%.

Even though Garnot had some reservations against Vicente, he sat around the major fire at Nan's call with curiosity to know what this human would demand of his group.

"To the point. Good. I'm really curious to know what this exchange between us will be like." Nan sat down, looking mainly at Vicente, but alternating her gaze between Rex and Larissa, too.

Vicente pointed out a few things he wouldn't give up by joining this group. "Well, to begin with, my two companions here will go with me on this journey. But while we have the same initial goals, I don't rule out the possibility of us going our separate ways later on. As such, I would like you to treat us in our agreement as different entities. That is, even if I agree to something, Larissa, and Rex will not be obliged to follow the same path as me and vice versa."

"We can do that." Nan agreed with this initial term.

"That includes, of course, that you will give them the same possibilities of choice as for me. We won't join any group on your island out of obligation or because you recommended it. In return, you will assure us you will do everything possible to ensure that the force you represent does not turn against us if we choose a group other than yours."

This was a more complicated term that made the three foreigners look at each other. But they agreed on the point that they would try to help them with everything they could, although they couldn't guarantee that it would be enough.

"Finally, you will hand over pertinent information that you have had access to throughout our journey together. In exchange for these points, we will provide you with our strengths and special abilities to help your group reach our destination in one piece or even take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to us.

I also guarantee that we will consider proposals from your group and give you preference in future deals, although we can't promise that we will always do business with you first rather than with third parties." Vicente completed the fundamental requirements that had to be in their agreement.

Nan pondered for a moment, thinking about what she wanted initially and what he was offering. As much as Vicente was going to have, in a way, a lot more rights than the group that would give him a ride, she remembered very well how he had seemed strong enough to take them on years ago, when he was 6 levels weaker.

"All right. We can go ahead with those requirements of yours." She agreed, showing him her small hand to shake.

Chapter 1032 Nan's group situation (2)

Signing a definitive agreement with Nan's group wasn't difficult. In the group's first 20 minutes together, they worked out a complex agreement involving Vicente's requests, but also important details for both sides.

Vicente, Rex, and Larissa would travel with Nan's group and maintain a partnership until they reached the fairy Nan's group's home, Amea.

In Amea, they could follow Nan's group's recommendations or not, and the fairy's group would have to help them avoid problems with the force she belonged to, in case the trio decided not to join that group and members of it decided to retaliate.

This help from Nan's group in Amea also included keeping his powers and origin a secret from anyone who didn't need to know.

Because of the agreement in question, Vicente told his real name to Nan's group, no longer so worried about repercussions related to knowing this information.

The other terms of their contract were standard things so that both sides could get along well during the journey.

With that settled, the group didn't leave immediately. They gathered to eat and drink for the day, and talk about their journeys before uniting in that forest area. They wouldn't be leaving until the next morning, so Vicente soon told his stories and began to listen to Nan's side of the story as he finished with his own.

Nan was on the island to make deals with Stonewall, mainly. The force she belonged to was a dominant force on her island, just as Stonewall was for Light Cay. Forces like this used to maintain friendly relations with each other, especially with islands close to each other.

Anicane had over 10,000 islands, and the closest to Light Cay was Amea, an island six months' boat ride from the coast where Nan's group would soon be leaving.

Hearing how long the journey to Amea would take surprised the three individuals who had never traveled through Anicane before. It must be said that the speed of Light Cay's boats was not negligible. With the island's advanced technologies and its trade relations with Amea, both islands had boats that sailed so fast that, if they were in Polaris Realm, it would be enough to go from the southernmost point to the northernmost point of Polaris Realm in a week.

Vicente felt a little better about the size of Anicane because of this information, understanding why it was so difficult to get information from other islands or in-depth information from Anicane in Light Cay.

Anyway, the journey between islands was long and dangerous, but Nan's group had braved the dangers and come to Light Cay to acquire weapons and tools to deal with the threats in Amea. Supposedly, an enemy group from the force behind Nan's group was moving to rebel and take control of Amea.

Nan's tribe was doing its best to avoid a rebellion and, of course, to avoid losing sovereignty over Amea. Besides Nan's group, four other groups were traveling around the maritime region near Amea, looking for defense and control mechanisms against their enemies.

Her tribe's enemy force had found a method of growing as strong as them and put them in the delicate situation of having to seek outside help.

As far as Nan's group was concerned, she had obtained the weapons and tools she had set out to get, and now it was time for her group to return to help her people.

Larissa and Rex were a little worried about discovering that a widespread rebellion could await them at their destination, but Vicente didn't see that much of a problem. In the words of Nan and his advisors, Amea had a medium power similar to Light Cay's, but was less technological and more focused on innate magical powers.

In practical terms, this represented a lower average cultivation level than Light Cay's, since the natives of the island they were on now were magically weak but strong with their weapons and artifacts.

Either way, the same level of threat was something Vicente preferred. From what little he knew, Amea was closer to more powerful islands, so this place would be a stopover for him before he moved on to more powerful areas of Anicane.

As for facing an ongoing war on his arrival in Amea, that could be an opportunity for him who was at the end of the 7th stage.

In addition to the fighting and resources that always came from confrontations like this, Vicente couldn't help but think of information about Anicane that he could get from the remnants of forces and specialists that had already fallen or were still to fall in Amea.

He doubted he would have all his questions answered, but perhaps he would get more answers about the Nine Paths when he arrived in Amea.

The group finished their conversation in the middle of the night, everyone now aware of what each side expected from the journey and the arrival in Amea, as well as their responsibilities during their partnership.

At the end of the conversation, the most important members of the group went to rest, letting the last few hours until dawn pass quietly.

With the dawn of a new day, Nan's group would dismantle their camp just before daylight, and the group of carriages would set off from the area south of Light Cay. From there, they would head for the southwest coast of the island, from where they would set off.

The journey by carriage, even with Light Cay's modern vehicles, was still a long one. It would take two weeks for the group to reach their starting point, if nothing were to get in the way.

At the beginning of the journey, nothing would stand in their way. They would make their way through the first few days of the journey calmly, with the Stonewall trio joining in the surveillance of the surroundings and guarding the group.

Aware of who Vicente really was, Nan's people would be a little worried about attacks aimed at taking his life. But as they were traveling and avoiding cities, without getting involved in resource hunts or contacts with local tribes, things went well initially.

The journey progressed so well that, with three days to go until they reached their destination, the group felt they could leave Light Cay without any problems.

Vicente hoped so, but he was prepared in case something surprised them!

Chapter 1033 View of the Sea

Towards the end of the afternoon on the group's last day of travel, Vicente spotted the vast and seemingly infinite sea on the horizon, watching their final destination at Light Cay with a smile on his face.

The convoy's group of carriages continued traveling up the final mountain peak on their way, from where they had a wide view of the island's southern coast, where they would begin to descend in the next few minutes.

Between tonight and early next morning, they would be at their destination, where Nan's ship was waiting for their group!

Larissa looked out over the Sea of Stars, where she could finally begin her search for her fellow friends from her plane. Like Vicente, she wanted to explore Anicane and better understand the laws behind this great world.

Meanwhile, Nan and her two advisors were also looking at the sea in the distance, finally close to returning home. They were worried about what had happened in their homeland in the seven or so years since their departure.

Nan's tribe was not weak. They had great experts and many allies, so she was confident that her people had not succumbed in the meantime. But she and her companions didn't know about their friends and family who might have fallen. That was what worried them.

But experts as strong as them, with many years of experience, were not overwhelmed by worries beyond their control. Despite their worries, they were more focused on Light Cay's imminent departure and the successes they had had on the island during their years on the mission.

'We're finally returning.' Nan thought silently, enjoying the view and the refreshing breeze at the end of the day, while the window of her carriage was open. 'These last few days have been very quiet and everything shows that tomorrow afternoon we will leave the island without further ado.'

She looked at Vicente's face and sighed. 'Now all we have left is the challenges of the sea voyage. I hope he can help us maintain our group numbers at the end of the journey.'

Journeys across the Sea of Stars were naturally fraught with danger. Nan's group experienced this for themselves, having lost a third of their numbers before reaching Light Cay because of these dangers.

Because of the dangers ahead, Nan's satisfaction was restrained. Getting back was great, but part of her heart was filled with worry about the journey, with expectations for Vicente's action.

However, while she was thinking about this, ignoring her surroundings, focused on Vicente, she felt him suddenly disappear from her side, while a strong aura left the confines of his soul to show itself in the surroundings.

Frowning in incomprehension, Nan looked around her carriage, noticing her advisors turning pale. As soon as her eyes reached the opposite side of the sea, outside the carriage, she saw her men, led by Vicente, positioning themselves against a group that had come out of nowhere and started attacking them.

She paled as she felt the auras of the enemies, mid-level Grand Magus!

"What?" she asked in shock as she moved to get out of her carriage.

But as she reached for the door handle, her two advisors, as well as Larissa, stopped her.

"Leave that to Vicente," Larissa said in a deep tone, aware that in a situation like that, there was nothing they could do to help.

Rex stopped in front of the carriage and prepared to defend the group from enemy attacks, which were obviously aimed at Vicente.

Vicente looked at his opponents, whom he had noticed an instant before they launched this surprise attack, distinguishing the elders of two rival Stonewall forces.

"Mislead Vanguardians and Disciples of the Obscure..." He muttered to the old men dressed in black, some in gray armor, all there with venerable and evil appearances.

The enemy group had already entered a formation and several magic circles were already surrounding the area, an indication that attacking in readiness or delaying their movements a little wouldn't make any difference. Vicente then asked. "Why are you attacking me? Do you realize that I'm leaving the island?"

"We won't allow you to leave, Vicente Fuller!" said one man as his finger seemed to draw one of the magical lines behind the circles around Vice.

"We're well aware of your plans for Stonewall. If you were just going to leave the island, we could ignore you. But since you intend to continue serving them, don't expect us to give you the option of leaving Light Cay!" said another of the men, as a suppressive aura fell over Vicente, with barriers separating him from the members of Nan's group.

"It seems there are traitors in my sect..." Vicente muttered with a quizzical look on his face. "It's lucky for them that I'm leaving the island. But they could have used this chance to get rid of you, you know?" He asked with a defiant tone, looking at the men suppressing him as if he were the one to suppress them.

"Hahaha, you must be confident, young fool. Don't think we're like the idiots who acted against you before. We know exactly your weaknesses," said a third individual.

Vicente couldn't deny that this group had come close to doing the suppressive work necessary to bring him down. He could feel the magic circles with anti-magnetic energy acting against him, while a strong light element created golden beams of light suppressing the darkness of his powers.

If it weren't for the fact that he also had an affinity with and powers over light, Vicente really would have been suppressed!

'Someone high in the sect has leaked information about me...' He looked at the men with disgust on his face, almost feeling like delaying his trip to go back to the sect and deal with it.

But his commitment was to his wives and daughter. If there was a traitor in Stonewall, too bad. It was time for him to go and he wasn't interested in solving problems like that.

His job was to help the sect outside Light Cay from now!

Then, as the enemies thought they had Vicente suppressed, one of them attacked by moving against the black-haired boy, aiming for the neck of the boy unable to summon his pentagrams.

"Die, Vicente Fuller!" said the enemy with a hideous look on his face.

As he was about to reach Vicente, a broad smile appeared on the young human's lips, just before pentagrams unusual to see even in Light Cay emerged from his body along with several golden blades of light.

Chapter 1034 Post-Battle Departure

Suddenly, several arrows of light flew out of Vicente's surroundings, attacking those against him, surprising the opponents, who only knew about Vice's powers related to darkness and magnetism.

The fact that they were using magic circles of light to suppress him didn't help. With the light generated by these Grand Magus' own powers, Vicente's attack gained power, reaching the surroundings with much more force than he launched.

"Trying to suppress a light magician with light was really dumb." Vicente laughed as he muttered to himself, quickly summoning a series of items as the enemies retreated. They rapidly deactivating the light part of their suppressive magic circles.

The Grand Magus frowned, with the man who had attacked Vicente at point-blank range turning pale as he felt a puncture wound in his abdomen.

"Wretch! Where did that come from?" the man asked as a malicious aura formed around him, coming from Vicente's powers.

Vicente's negative powers kicked in, no longer suppressed by the actions of his enemies.

"Shit! How is that possible? He uses darkness and light concurrently!" One of the old men was horrified to see this combination of powers. He was already protecting himself behind a magic shield.

Their bad luck was that the battle in which Vicente had first used his Eighth Class Real Sorcerer abilities months ago had remained a secret that only he knew about. As soon as he showed his powers over the element of light, he prepared an altar, forcing the man with a wound in his abdomen to fall under the power of his curse.

Nan and the others watched as, while the enemies retreated from Vicente's arrow attack, a realm of darkness formed around the area, bringing forth creatures of darkness armed, strangely, with weapons of light. Meanwhile, an altar formed around Vice, making him more frightening, as if he had temporarily ceased to be a Magus and had become a Grand Magus.

The first enemy to almost hit Vicente exploded, sending blood and body parts into the surrounding area, but while in Vice's direction, the blood decomposed until it disappeared, in the Grand Magus' direction, this didn't happen. The blood mixed with an evil black mist reached the first of those Grand Magus, who were extremely surprised by what was happening, touching him and making him open his mouth in horror.

"Aaaaaagh!"

The first of them screamed before the others felt the same, touched by blood and corrosive remains, a trick of Vicente's sorcerous powers.

"Hehe, it's bad, isn't it? If attacked by someone stronger, so suddenly... Yeah, I don't like it."

Vicente toyed with these frightened and grieving Grand Magus, turning the situation in his favor while showing the difference between a Real Sorcerer of the Eighth Class and the simple Grand Magus from Light Cay.

Face to face with absolute power, these men, accustomed to a different standard of combat, suffered as their bodies were corroded from the outside in.

"Sigh! Well, I'll collect your resources and consider it a parting gift. Let's call it a night." Vicente clenched one of his fists, completely consuming the vitality of those men with the poisonous remains of his powers that had already penetrated those bodies.

The souls of the other local experts there collapsed in front of Vicente, their unstable crops weakening, breaking in half under the attacks of the true expert in the field.

Nan's group hadn't expected so much power from Vicente and couldn't help but watch the situation being resolved with apathetic looks on their faces, their mouths open in shock, their minds trying their best to process what had just happened.

Suddenly they had been surrounded by enemies and then, just when they thought they were going to have problems, Vincent easily overcame all the enemies, taking out a bunch of Grand Magus bodies as if they were weak individuals.

"That..."

"It's really shocking." Larissa commented to the group inside the train's main carriage. "When he told me he had killed a mid-level Grand Magus months ago, I didn't believe him. But it seems that only a high-level Grand Magus could stand against him these days... Maybe even someone like that would have trouble confronting him!"

The three individuals with Larissa in that carriage couldn't help but agree with her ultimate words, seeing their already high expectations falter in the face of reality.

They had made a much better deal than they had previously believed!

'That's Vicente's full power?' Nan looked at him, gradually losing the expression of a moment ago to reveal a satisfied smile.

With someone so strong in their group, overcoming the challenges of the sea journey ahead was just a detail!

Unlike Magus, Grand Magus as strong as those Vicente had defeated, had little chance of suffering in the Sea of Stars.

The Sea of Stars was certainly not to be underestimated. But as long as the Grand Magus didn't take unnecessary risks, the chances of survival on a short journey like theirs were great.

Finally, Vicente collected the resources of the dead in the area, adding more riches that would serve him and his companions well on the journey ahead.

Returning to the carriage under the gaze of the group's guards, Vicente retracted his powers, aware that there was no other group of enemies around for him to worry about.

"We can continue. I don't think any other groups will attack us on the rest of the way we have left to complete," he said as he got back into the main carriage.

"You didn't tell us you were already an Eighth Class Real Sorcerer." Nan commented in a low voice.

"I didn't tell you about my elemental affinity with light, either." Vicente added with a smile. "My enemies didn't know either. Lucky for us. If they hadn't used their powers to try to suppress me and been weakened by it, it would have been a little more difficult to eliminate them. It's a good thing that I'm the only one who knows certain secrets about myself."

With those words from him, the group got moving again, with Nan and his advisors asking Vicente if that battle wouldn't have repercussions for Stonewall. But he wasn't worried. From the moment he left the sect's headquarters earlier, he was committed to acting only to fulfill his new duties, which did not include acting on the island.

So they would travel the rest of the way to the coast, where the next day they would reach their last point at Light Cay!

Chapter 1035 Goodbye, Light Cay!

The next morning, the group reached the coast, where there was a beautiful city, small by the island's standards, but big enough in Vicente's eyes to cover part of the horizon.

As soon as they arrived in the city, the group crossed the main land route, arriving at the ocean avenue, from where they could see not only a beautiful beach with coconut palms but also several ships coming and going from one of the city's ports.

Light Cay was a technologically developed island, so transportation there drew a lot of attention, with many of the island's native creatures coming and going all around. The cultivation life wasn't the biggest concern for most people in a city like that.

Fishermen were only concerned with making a living for their families, while vendors sold their wares in stores throughout the city.

Children could be seen around the city, offering services that ranged from guiding to selling information and spying.

The group heading for the port ignored these approaches to them and much of the movement of the city to focus on the ships as big as buildings coming and going from the port ahead.

"Are we leaving straight away, or do you have something else to sort out locally before we leave?" Vicente asked Nan. He was already ready to leave.

Larissa looked at the little fairy next to her and heard from Nan, "Hervi and Garnot are going to get some supplies that my group ordered earlier, but that won't take long. We're already a few weeks behind schedule for the delivery of these resources."

"Our products are certainly waiting for us in some shed," the dwarf said with a smile on his old face.

"What about your crew?" Larissa asked Nan.

"We have the rest of our people on our ship. Otherwise, we're our own crew. Originally, we didn't come to Light Cay looking for allies like you, but for weapons. Since we weren't lucky enough to get any more companions for this trip, we don't have to wait for anyone else to join the group."

"Well, Larissa, Rex and I will wait for you to finish collecting your resources on the group's boat," Vicente said as he finished and went back to watching the square cobbled street, so well paved that their carriage didn't even shake.

Nan, Hervi, and Garnot said a few more things to each other until the group reached the port, an area as large as Ravengarde Airport, with a tranquil seaside area and a water mirror so large that one could get lost analyzing the beauty of the area.

In this place of clear water, a 12-storey building with a façade covered in mirrors welcomed Vicente's group, concurrently as many people, carriages, and other types of vehicles came and went through the area.

Most of the people and vehicles around the port had no off-island destinations. Most had destinations on other parts of the island, as the sea route was one of the best for transporting cargo around Light Cay.

Few people used boats to travel, as the planes common on the island were much faster. However, just like in any other place, there were individuals who dared to defy the norm and opted to travel by boat.

Minos, Larissa, and Rex saw the area for the first time, and watched with curiosity, also seeing the sailors returning from more distant fishing trips, with ships full of sea creatures that would be sold and consumed soon.

After passing the previous building, where there was something like a customs office, the group followed the path that would lead to where their boat was already docked waiting for them.

"This port is huge... I thought I'd seen it all, but this area we're passing looks like a city avenue, even though there are boats on either side of us," Larissa said, as she gazed at the grandiose ships of Light Cay. Most of the ships were so large that everyone in the carriage had to bend their necks to see the full height of those metallic marvels.

Vicente felt particularly good surrounded by so much metal, while Nan smiled as she explained to them. "All of Light Cay's mineral and food production travels by sea at some point on its journey of commercial exploitation. That's why there are so many cargo ships here. But some of them are deep-sea exploration ships, ships that arrive at the edge of the island's territorial sea, where the naval dangers begin.

These are some boats on our way, vehicles used by large groups of marine explorers looking for underwater riches."

"Are there underwater societies in the Sea of Stars?" Vicente asked. "I've studied a lot about Stonewall, but there's little information about what lies beyond the island. Some books I've read imply that what lies beyond the island's territorial sea is just death. But I don't believe that."

"You're right, there are underwater societies in the depths of the Sea of Stars. In fact, some of these societies are one of the three calamities that can victimize groups of travelers like ours," Nan said as the group stopped next to a green ship, her group's marine vehicle.

By this time, Hervi, and Garnot were no longer with the group, having left to go and collect the resources Nan had ordered earlier.

Nan continued while the rest of the men who had stayed behind with them transported their resources in the carriages to the ship. "Beyond the territorial sea of each island, there are underwater territories of unusual and extremely powerful races. It is possible to travel and explore these areas, especially near the territorial sea's limits. But this involves extreme danger, something for the strongest and most experienced, not a group trying to get home."

Vicente understood her message and said, "Don't worry, I want to get to Amae as much as you do. That's a question I have for the future. For now, I want to avoid unnecessary problems."

"Well, that will make our journey easier." She sighed.

"By the way," Larissa asked, "how common are groups like ours departing from islands such as Light Cay and Amae?"

"It's rare, but it's not so unique that people on the islands are shocked by foreigners. Groups like ours leave islands like Light Cay in the dozens every year. Most of them don't make it to their destination and most of those who do, don't make it back home. But everywhere in Anicane there are groups known for leaving their homelands, traveling across the Sea of Stars and returning to tell their stories."

"I hope our group is one of those." Larissa smiled at Vicente, genuinely interested to return in the future and see what happened to their faction and the sect.

They finally left their carriage, entering the large ship capable of carrying up to 100 people simultaneously in comfort.

They would wait there until mid-afternoon, when the rest of the group would return with their resources. After paying the toll to leave the port, they would begin their sea voyage at dusk!

Chapter 1036 Dangers of the Sea

Vicente's group left Light Cay in the early evening, sailing through the island's territorial sea amidst the almost frightening darkness of this marine area.

Light Cay was a very technologically advanced domain, and from afar, the group could still see the glow of the cities that lined the island's shores. This glow made everything that wasn't glowing even darker, hiding some of the brilliance of the stars in the sky.

Meanwhile, their boat rocked with the waves, an icy cold wind coming off the sea towards the island of Light Cay.

But all the crew members protected themselves inside the ship's closed compartments, taking advantage of the fact that this was an automatic vehicle with several layers of defense that allowed the crew to travel without so much tension.

Even so, Vicente was in the ship's cockpit at the moment, accompanying the group of experienced sailors from Nan's tribe who had stayed with the ship during her trip around the island of Light Cay.

Nan and Larissa were beside him, with the little fairy flapping her bright wings to observe the same thing Vicente was watching.

Big, nervous waves and a gray sky were waiting for them in the distance.

Nan said to him, "The Violent Sea has three types of dangers that almost every traveler has to face on their journeys. These three types of dangers are responsible for over 85% of the losses in groups like ours, so sailors need to be aware of them."

Aware that Vicente intended to make other trips like this in the future, Nan took the opportunity to teach him a little of what she knew.

"The first of these dangers is the existence of underwater natives beyond the territorial seas of the islands of Anicane.

The territorial sea of each island has its common populations of aquatic beings. But these are usually creatures that conform to what we find in the island's forests. In a way, the territorial sea is like the great underwater forest of these islands. They are the aquatic extensions of these domains.

But beyond the territorial sea you find some very unusual beings, who recognize themselves as sovereigns of their own domains and enemies of anyone who tries to challenge them—which includes the mere passage of a boat through their domains.

These tribes beyond the territorial seas are strong, so we set a safe limit for travel to these points."

Several possible explanations told what was behind the different behavior of aquatic beasts from territorial seas and extraterritorial seas.

Beasts in the islands' areas of influence could be stronger than those influenced by the islands. They could be in search of food or resources. This could be a measure to limit those able to go to other islands, something, in Vicente's view, likely, given the way Anicane's truth was kept secret.

In short, there were a variety of justifications behind the peculiar behavior of these extraterritorial creatures.

"The second form of danger is intense weather phenomena. You're seeing the clouds of a storm ahead. But there are parts of the sea that are so terrible that the wind itself can tear apart unprotected Magus bodies. That's why our ship is sealed and we can't open the doors and hatches.

A storm can form in a few moments in this place and mere fragments of sea storms are capable of destroying sensitive tools and unprepared living beings.

There are other special phenomena, such as tsunamis, space storms, and others that seem less risky, but are just as terrible.

On my journey to Light Cay, we experienced a particularly unique phenomenon where we spent 10 days in an area completely devoid of mana. At first glance, this doesn't sound terrible, but if we use

our energies for anything in such a place, we can quickly reach a state of exhaustion and vulnerability...

Don't underestimate the phenomena ahead. Sooner or later, we'll pass through a place affected by something like this."

She said this while Larissa and Vicente watched her attentively, she with her mouth open and he with his eyebrows knitted together.

"Finally, the third type of danger is what we call Dimensional Entrances. Don't ask me what they are and what they lead to. But there are these parts of the Sea of Stars where portals suddenly open, taking creatures to other places.

Are they alive? Is it possible to pass through a place like that and come back? I don't know. Millions of years of history tell us that whoever enters a Dimensional Entrance never returns. So if you see something like this, run away. These entrances have attractive powers that will make you enter a state of inability to escape from a certain point, which is often unclear."

"There's no pirate or competitor action traveling through the Sea of Stars?" Larissa asked, seeing in front of her several bright spots in the sea, ships passing through the area.

Nan shook her head negatively. "It's not that there aren't dangerous ones, but they represent a fraction of what happens in the Sea of Stars. Given the vastness of this sea and the large number of islands in Anicane, it's possible to make entire journeys without once encountering beings traveling between islands.

But there are certainly magicians and magical creatures who will take advantage of any opportunity they get. So an encounter with a strange group in the middle of a sea voyage could be dangerous too, despite the low probability of such an event happening."

"Are there any islands smaller than Light Cay on the way? I mean, stopping points or even underwater areas that we'll go deep into?" Vicente asked.

Nan shook her head in denial. "There are indeed places smaller than the natural islands of Anicane, archipelagos, and large volcanoes with small land areas available along the sea. But these places are extremely dangerous and are usually already occupied by the natives of the areas beyond the territorial seas.

Unless something terrible throws us into these areas, we'll avoid them. This includes the underwater world.

The natives of the sea already attack us for merely crossing their territory. What would happen if we actually tried to explore these areas?"

Vicente understood, but wanted more information. "Are there no records of explorers in these places? In a world as vast as this, some answers about Hell and Argardus might lie at the bottom of the sea."

"There certainly are. Not that I've accessed them, though. But there is a group on my island that might be interesting for you to approach. They are individuals who go to the border points between the territorial seas and the outer sea." She indicated by summoning something from her storage item.

Vicente held up her slight note with a name and address written on it.

"When we get to Amae, I can show you the way to this group. But I warn you, joining any tribe on the island means you'll have to give up some of your freedom in complicated matters."

"I'll keep that in mind." He put the note away, leaving that matter for the future. "What worries me at the moment is when we'll start suffering from those dangers you mentioned."

Nan looked to the sea again, sighing. "It won't be long, unfortunately. In three weeks, we'll be out of Light Cay's territorial sea. After that, we'll be susceptible to the dark Sea of Stars for months."

Chapter 1037 Fury of the Stars

The ship's violent rocking intensified as the group ventured beyond the relative safety of Light Cay's territorial waters. Waves of unprecedented size, dwarfing anything Larissa and Vicente had encountered in their previous voyages, battered the vessel relentlessly. Each collision felt as if the ship was striking hidden reefs, the floor beneath them shuddering with each impact.

The tumultuous sea rendered standing impossible. Every passenger remained firmly seated, safety belts cinched tight around their bodies, a stark reminder of the perilous journey they had undertaken.

Amidst this nautical chaos, the Flaming Lion, reduced to his diminutive form, was lost in a haze of misery and nausea. Unlike the magicians and special beings capable of regulating their senses, the beast's attributes were intrinsically tied to his physical form. The heightened sensitivity that usually served as an asset now worked against him, amplifying every pitch and roll of the ship.

Cradled in Larissa's arms, the once-mighty creature looked pitiful, his usual vitality sapped by the merciless sea. His condition was so dire that he seemed to teeter on the brink of death, a sight that filled Larissa with a concern.

A brilliant flash of lightning suddenly illuminated the turbulent night, drawing the travelers' attention to the windows. The white streak carved through the hazy sky, disappearing as quickly as it had appeared, leaving behind a momentary afterimage in their retinas.

The tempest outside seemed to rage with a personal vendetta against their small vessel. Even the surrounding mana, far more potent than anything they had experienced on Light Cay, felt hostile. It seeped through minuscule gaps in the ship's protective barriers, allowing the crew to feel the raw, terrifying power of the elements they were challenging.

"What kind of phenomenon is this?" Larissa's voice was barely above a whisper, her usually vibrant face now ashen. Her lips were parched, and her large, clear eyes, typically full of curiosity, now reflected a deep-seated worry.

Nan empathized with Larissa's palpable fear. Experiencing the Fury of the Stars for the first time was indeed a terrifying ordeal. Even though this was Nan's third encounter with the phenomenon, she couldn't suppress the flutter of dread in her heart.

Before Nan could offer words, the elf seated beside her spoke up, his voice carrying a mix of awe and trepidation. "They say that when the seas convulse like this, it heralds the rise of emerging pillars, taking the place of Anicane's mightiest ancient experts."

The dwarf, his knuckles white from gripping his seat's supports, added gruffly, "Fury of the Stars—that's what we call this maelstrom we've been enduring for the past few hours." Despite his secure belt, the ship's violent rocking tossed him from side to side.

"Fury of the Stars?" Vicente asked, a spark of curiosity igniting in his eyes despite the fear etched on his face. Aside from his encounter with Demien Bloodthorne, nothing had ever made him feel so vulnerable.

Nan seized the moment to elaborate, her diminutive form belying the weight of her words. "Fury of the Stars is a poetic moniker. We're traversing the Sea of Stars, after all, and the ancient sages have always viewed the phenomena here through a rather unique lens."

She paused, allowing her words to sink in before continuing. "But don't dismiss the notion that this turbulence is linked to the rise and fall of great figures as mere fancy. When you disturb the equilibrium of any system, there are invariably consequences. A single stone displaced can trigger unimaginable destruction or usher in unprecedented prosperity."

Her voice took on a more somber tone. "When the Transcendents find themselves at odds, it's then that we mere mortals face the greatest trials in our journeys!

The downside of this phenomenon caused by these titans... well, we're experiencing it firsthand. At any moment, our ship could be torn asunder, leaving us to face this tempest alone.

However, there is a silver lining to this storm cloud."

"Oh?" Vicente leaned in, his eyes locked on the fairy, eagerly awaiting her next words.

"Even the native denizens of these treacherous seas suffer during the Fury of the Stars. This tumult could be our opportunity to cover vast distances relatively unmolested. And who knows? We might even stumble upon the remains of those less fortunate souls who succumbed to this storm's wrath!"

The elf, his tone tinged with pessimism, added, "But to reap such benefits, we must first endure until this chaos subsides." His gaze remained fixed on the reinforced glass separating the control cabin from the chaos outside.

At that moment, every protective formation on the ship sprang to life, drawing heavily on the mana stored within the vehicle's energy crystals. Despite this formidable defense, parts of the ship's control systems flickered and failed intermittently. The passengers winced as sporadic jolts of energy coursed through the cabin, a stark reminder of the relentless assault they faced.

Gravity itself felt alien and capricious, rendering even the simplest movements a Herculean task. The travelers found themselves at the mercy of the sea's chaotic whims, their bodies tossed about despite their secure restraints.

The corrupted mana seeping into the ship continued to disorient the crew, their senses reeling under its influence. Yet, in this moment of despair, Vicente stood firm. As the strongest among them, he summoned his powers, manifesting one of his magnificent pentagrams.

A palpable shift swept through the cabin as Vicente's magic took effect. Each crew member felt their heartbeat steady, a subtle yet unmistakable easing of pressure washing over them. The oppressive atmosphere lifted slightly, offering a momentary respite from their overwhelming anxiety.

"I'll do my utmost to maintain your physical and spiritual conditions," Vicente announced, his voice strained but resolute. "We must press on. We will overcome this trial and claim the spoils left by those who faltered on this treacherous path!"

The men controlling Nan's ship silently agreed, having no choice but to work hard.

The Fury of the Stars could last a whole week and they were only on the first day of this terrible storm!

...

Days blurred together as Vicente's group endured the relentless assault of the Fury of the Stars. The seas and skies seemed to harbor a particular vendetta, their fury surpassing even the limits known to Nan and her seasoned companions.

What should have been a week-long storm stretched into an unending nightmare, reaching its ninth day that afternoon.

The once-pristine ship, fortified with multiple protective formations, now bore the scars of its harrowing journey. Rust marred its surfaces, and its magical barriers had shrunk and weakened. Yet, despite its battered appearance, the vessel remained intact, its crew bowed but unbroken.

Even Vicente, the pillar of strength among them, was a shadow of his former self. His skin, now pale as parchment, clung to his bones, veins visible beneath the translucent surface. This decrepit figure stood in stark contrast to the vibrant man of mere weeks ago.

Pain etched every line of Vicente's face, his parched skin, sunken eyes, and inflamed gums. Yet consciousness clung to him, an indigo pentagram glowing around his form as he continued his tireless efforts to protect the crew.

In this state of near-collapse, Vicente's bleary eyes caught sight of something extraordinary—a different quality of light on the distant horizon. A celestial glow pierced through the roiling clouds, illuminating an area not far ahead.

"Brace yourselves," he croaked, his voice barely above a whisper. "We're breaking free of the storm!"

Following his words, the ship's defense systems shut down and all the pressure that had been attacking them for the last few days disappeared!

Chapter 1038 The 8th Stage!

The instant the ship's defensive systems deactivated, a palpable shift in the surrounding atmosphere washed over the entire group.

The elements, which had seemingly waged war against them—oppressing their bodies and inducing nausea—suddenly retreated, granting them much-needed respite.

Simultaneously, the dense mana enveloping them maintained its potency, but no longer exuded an aura of menace. In fact, they all sensed an opportunity to finally absorb this precious ethereal energy into their souls without courting unnecessary peril.

Vicente, particularly attuned to this change, seized the moment and immediately began to cultivate. He ceased his efforts to aid his companions, allowing his own defenses to lower in the process.

With eyes closed, he took stock of his body's current state, realizing with a jolt how precariously close to death he had teetered. His soul, once an impenetrable fortress, now resembled little more than a gossamer veil of transparent glass—tattered and fragile.

Though he wasn't crippled or afflicted with life-threatening injuries, his entire spiritual essence had been so severely depleted that he was certain another day under the Fury of the Stars' onslaught would have proven fatal.

His muscles had atrophied to an alarming degree, leaving his bones feeling like desiccated twigs, brittle and susceptible to the slightest pressure.

Yet, against all odds, he clung to life. Free from mortal wounds or lasting damage, Vicente began absorbing the ambient mana. As the ethereal energy suffused his being, he felt his strength regenerating at an exponential rate, a newfound vitality coursing through his veins.

Vicente's crewmates found themselves in similar straits, their conditions varying only in intensity. Some, blessed with naturally hardier constitutions, appeared less scrawny than Vicente. Others, possessing spiritual advantages, seemed physically more depleted but maintained a stronger spiritual resilience.

Larissa, previously the most vulnerable member of the group, had borne the brunt of the ordeal. Yet, to Vicente's relief, she still clung to life when he last checked on her moments ago.

Following Vicente's lead, Larissa began cultivating the ambient neutral mana. To her astonishment, she experienced an unprecedented ease in absorbing the ethereal essence, as if her very being had become a conduit for the energy.

'What's happening?' she marveled internally. Turning her awareness inward, Larissa witnessed a profound transformation unfolding within her magical core. One of her pentagrams, the mystical constructs that formed the foundation of her power, was undergoing a metamorphosis!

Vicente, however, sensed no such dramatic change within himself. While he noticed additional violet lines materializing on his indigo pentagrams, his current condition evidently fell short of triggering a qualitative leap in power.

Vicente felt his soul expanding, first regaining its previous robust state before swelling to encompass a new, greater volume. His aura, pulsing outward from his being, subtly warped the surrounding space. Non-metallic objects in the vicinity gained metallic properties and levitated!

The crew members, each taking advantage of this moment to bolster their strength and recover, became aware of Vicente's extraordinary situation. Several of them snapped their eyes open, their gazes converging on the command chair where he sat in the ship's control room.

The crew remained steadfast in their positions, securely fastened by their seatbelts—a stark reminder of the catastrophic event they had just endured.

Rex, sensing the imminent change, extricated himself from Larissa's embrace and focused intently on his master. The Flaming Lion could feel the transformation Vicente was about to undergo.

A broad grin spread across Rex's muzzle, replacing the queasy expression that had marred his features mere minutes ago.

As Vicente's aura expanded, he felt his body undergoing a remarkable metamorphosis. Atrophied muscles regenerated, brittle bones fortified, and his sensory perception sharpened to unprecedented levels.

'The 8th stage! I've finally reached the 8th stage!' Vicente exulted internally. He could feel his progress towards the Grand Magus stage crystallizing.

Vicente's mood soared, the harrowing ordeal they had just survived forgotten as he reveled in his achievement. Just over six years after his arrival in Anicane, he had attained the legendary 8th stage!

His soul solidified at the 1-Star level of the Grand Magus stage, while his physique transformed into a version of himself that was more robust, powerful, agile, and responsive than he had ever dared imagine.

In that moment, Vicente was certain that if he were to face the Fury of the Stars again, he would not only fare better but also be able to offer enhanced protection to his companions.

Yet, this was not the entire extent of his advancement. Even as he sat in his command chair, Vicente sensed he stood on the precipice of another qualitative breakthrough—the addition of his first violet essence!

'Once I absorb my next pentagrams, I'll have the opportunity to acquire the first violet essences of my powers,' Vicente mused, his fists clenching reflexively.

With violet pentagrams, he would ascend to a level attainable only by Anicane's elite, cementing his status as a true expert. Perhaps then he could finally encounter beings willing to discuss the enigmatic Nine Paths with him!

The thought buoyed his spirits; perhaps the gulf between him and his women wasn't as vast as it had once seemed.

'Now you must seek out violet essences,' a voice resonated in Vicente's mind, drawing his attention to the Throne of Darkness and Light.

'Isn't that a bit much?' Vicente questioned internally.

'Not at all. Absorb an indigo essence in your alternate magical form, and that should suffice to elevate one of your pentagrams to the violet grade. When my time comes, you'll be prepared,' the Throne's consciousness replied dryly.

'You're a real Grand Magus now. Your prowess as an Eighth Class Realm Sorcerer will be substantially enhanced, making it entirely feasible for you to achieve what I envision.'

Vicente pondered this, agreeing as he found himself unable to quell his excitement about reaching the pinnacle of pentagram quality.

'But proceed at your own pace,' the Throne added, concluding its counsel. 'Amae is not the place to discover my pentagram. Explore other islands—preferably a location highly compatible with my nature.'

As Vicente's power grew, the Throne seemed to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. Vicente had long since recognized this and didn't find its comment strange. He vowed to do his utmost, acknowledging that it would be a gradual process.

The Throne, however, showed no signs of impatience. Progress in the 8th stage was expected to be even more lengthy than in the 7th, affording them ample time to journey to Amae, settle their affairs, and move forward.

With this tacit agreement in place, Vicente redirected his gaze to his ship, observing his companions as they continued their post-calamity ascension.

Chapter 1039 Strengthening and Plans

Some time after Vicente's promotion, he watched practically everyone on the ship go through situations similar to his.

Some only improved one level within their stages, others managed to improve a level and still get improvements in the quality of one of their pentagrams. But one person in particular stood out for achieving more than one advance in a single opportunity.

While those who advanced stages, as had been the case with Vicente, stabilized their bases, Larissa opened her eyes, finding herself 2 levels stronger, with a pentagram in a new color.

She felt her strength at the peak of the 8th stage, and couldn't help but crack a big smile on her beautiful face. Her talent was naturally formidable. It wasn't as good as Vicente's, but she was still someone from a lower plane, with great possibilities for advancement in Anicane.

She unfastened the belt around her body and went to Vicente's side, walking with a new energy, already fully recovered from the wear and tear of the previous situation.

She had been the one who had suffered the most previously, but after the opportunity, she was one of those who had benefited the most, narrowing the large gap that existed between her and Vicente.

"Well done. You've made good progress. Given how much you've improved now, it's possible that you'll get another breakthrough before this trip is over." Vicente said with a happy look on his face.

"Hmmm." She nodded before congratulating him on advancing a stage and becoming the group's first Grand Magus.

But Vicente wouldn't be the only Grand Magus in this group on the journey ahead. Three other individuals, members of Nan's group, advanced in cultivation and became 1-Star Grand Magus too!

Some of those who hadn't grown as much in power had managed to improve to the peak of 9-Star and stand on the threshold for advancement, giving the group hope of breakthroughs before the end of the journey.

Nan thanked Vicente for the opportunity. "Thank you for your efforts, Vicente. Without you to keep us alive this far, we wouldn't have survived."

He didn't press the issue, having only done his duty. "Don't worry about it. Now we have to prepare for what lies ahead. I imagine that today's chance wasn't the only opportunity that will come our way."

She looked in the same direction as Vicente, to the place from which they had passed and left the area affected by the Fury of the Stars.

Nan agreed with him. "Indeed." She looked at the captain of the ship and said, "Get our men into position. We could find traces of shipwrecks or the bodies of experts at any time within the next few days of travel. Be ready to start resource-gathering operations!"

Although groups like theirs were difficult to find leaving the same island, there were many, many sea travelers along this great sea. After a phenomenon as extreme as the one they narrowly survived, several groups had certainly perished and should have left valuable bodies behind.

That was the group's short-term goal: abandoned ships, the remains of ships and corpses!

But Nan warned Vicente in case they were out of luck. "There are two negative possibilities in our path. One, we're unlucky enough not to find anything, or two, we find something, but other survivors like us find them too."

"I see... I'll keep an eye out." He said, realizing that getting that far was no guarantee of greater gains than what they had just achieved.

Vicente was already a magician used to possibilities, so he didn't let himself get carried away by the chance of great riches easily. Whatever came to them would probably be through the efforts of the group.

He was fine with the way things worked out. In fact, he wanted to find some competition. Having advanced a stage, he was looking forward to testing his powers as well as his ritualistic skills.

"Let's move on!" Warned the ship's captain as he resumed his position, with the large group of crew members finally leaving their celebrations over their improved powers to turn their attention to their respective jobs.

Larissa and Vicente watched Rex lie down in a corner and go into hibernation, the natural process for beasts to process their enhancements.

"We'll be without him for a while," Vice said to the white-haired girl next to him. "But he'll probably be a Grand Magus when he awakens."

"That's good. A beast like him in the 8th stage is very different from what we saw in him. He'll perhaps become capable of dealing with all our affairs in Amae without you having to get involved." She joked with Vicente, although she really felt that Rex would be that strong.

"I hope so... It will speed up our journey to the other islands."

For the moment, Larissa seemed keen to continue her journey with Vicente and Rex, even if the possibilities were open to her.

She wanted to find her plane mates who had come to Anicane before her, take a message from old comrades and hear the stories of these individuals who had come before her. Her commitment wasn't as strong as Vicente's, but for now, she was willing to do the same as him to complete her plans.

But this wasn't just a chance to fulfill a mission for her. It was a way for her to grow stronger. Larissa wasn't unaware of how beneficial it could be to travel alongside a talented monster!

"We'll be able to focus our attention on getting maps and information on how to get to other islands."

Traveling through Anicane and the Sea of Stars was complicated because most places and people didn't know how to get from one side of the great world to the other. If someone wanted to explore the great world, they had to travel little by little, collecting information on each island they passed, until they came up with a patchwork map of their own.

Only after a long life and a journey across the seas would one be able to get from one side of the world to the other without having to stop.

Now Vicente and Larissa had the information they had managed to buy in Light Cay and were planning to do something similar in Amae!

Chapter 1040 Competition?

The next few weeks passed in the blink of an eye, marking a prosperous period for the group traveling through the dangerous Sea of Stars between Light Cay and Amae.

As they had expected, they came across the corpses of creatures killed by Star Fury on the way ahead, ships with dead crews or even the remains of destroyed ships.

Even though they were heading in the opposite direction to the path they had taken, they were in the path of the Fury of the Stars.

The Fury of the Stars didn't necessarily happen in just one place. It could happen over a large area and have some points where it didn't affect, creating almost enclaves of safety. When Vicente's group left the region they were traveling through and which was under the effects of the Fury of the Stars, they didn't necessarily leave the phenomenon behind. They could have entered one of these enclaves, or the phenomenon could have ended, giving the impression that they had left the affected area, when in fact the phenomenon had weakened throughout all the area it had been affecting until then.

As a result, the group encountered scourges of this extreme phenomenon on their way, and were lucky enough to find no survivors or competitors in their first chance encounters.

This gave them virtually risk-free earnings in the first few weeks, with the group collecting the remains of valuable sea creatures, the remains of ships and various magical items from crews who weren't as lucky or successful as them.

The group hadn't been trying to travel slower or around that region to find more such remains. They were merely continuing on their way to Amae, but for now, they were still finding the remains of victims of that calamity.

Amid this, the crew were gaining valuable resources for their future when they landed in Amae.

At sea, most of the items they had collected so far would be of little use. As for the possibilities of improving their strength in the short term, the resources they had got weren't that incredible. They were good, but the entire group had improved their cultivation recently. For something like this to happen again, something out of the ordinary would have to present itself to them.

But these good days after the calamity were not foreign to the members of the group. Nan, in particular, told Vicente that despite the dangers, the Sea of Stars wasn't a chaos of danger 100% of

the time. There were quieter areas and, after special phenomena like the ones they had endured for days, it was common for the journey to become quieter soon afterwards.

After all, not only were travelers on the seas weakened and more careful in their movements, but the people of the seas themselves were wary of moving outside their domains. At the same time, powerful phenomena could interfere with other phenomena, temporarily suppressing problems near groups like theirs.

And so, the group reached the beginning of the second month since they survived the Fury of the Stars and achieved their various cultivation breakthroughs.

...

The group was sailing through another day that looked like it would end quietly, when suddenly one of Nan's observers spotted something on the horizon ahead.

Their ship's signal sounded, alerting the entire crew that an opportunity or a problem lay ahead.

The experts at distinguishing whether it was a problem to dodge or an opportunity to exploit moved first, while Vicente left his cultivation room.

He met Larissa on the way to the ship's control room, leaving Rex behind in his hibernation that had lasted since the end of the Fury of the Stars.

"Looks like we've got the remains of a ship just ahead," said one man in the control room, as Vicente and Larissa joined the group there with Nan, her elf, and dwarf advisors.

Nan said to the people there, "Be prepared for competitors. Let's move to collect the resources from this wreckage." Her voice resounded throughout the ship, alerting her men.

As much as they hadn't faced competition or problems in their opportunities so far, the group was humble enough to know the risks. It wouldn't be now that they thought trouble would never catch up with them just because of the luck they'd had in the recent past.

Vicente moved to another area of the ship, from where he could easily get out of the sealed wing of this vehicle and take action if necessary.

His hands were itching for a confrontation, with his anxiety making him wish for some battle so he could test his newly promoted 8th stage powers.

Vicente didn't want problems with extreme phenomena like the one above. He wanted live, intelligent opponents, with whom he could stretch his muscles and test his strength against that of brave sea voyagers or underwater natives.

Their ship continued in the same direction as they spotted the remains of the wrecked ship, keeping their course unchanged for a few minutes until they could get a better look at what they would have to deal with.

Finally, close enough to check out the remains of the wrecked ship, the crew spotted small boats hidden near the wreckage, with several sea creatures hidden on the surface or in the small boats.

"Enemies!" Shouted one of the first observers to notice a dozen men in colorful skins and the heads of different types of creatures.

"Sea pirates!" Nan realized who these individuals were, apparently waiting for a group like her own—one problem she knew could befall them.

These were natives of the sea who deliberately acted against groups like theirs!

"Open the passage for me," Vicente said, mindful of what the people in the cockpit were talking about. "Let's see what they're capable of. We're already too close to ignore them and walk away. So let's fight!"

The ship's captain obeyed him without waiting for Nan's authorization, agreeing that there was only one possibility ahead.

Vicente felt a cabin similar to an elevator rise, until he appeared at the bow of the ship, outside the area protected by Nan's vehicle defenses.

As soon as Vicente moved, the fish men moved similarly, with a structure identical to a submarine appearing among the wreckage that he now didn't know if it was real or forged by this group of submarine pirates.

But he didn't hurry with his doubts. One way or another, he and his companions would soon find out what this situation was all about!