

The Mafia 121

Chapter 121 Senior Apprentice?

Pa! Pa!

The front door of Vicente's estate was knocked on twice before a voice came from outside.

"Open the door! We're here to see your leaders!" A man shouted, startling the several men who had taken up positions around the estate.

Even as they watched the street in front of them, some were surprised to see the three men dressed in red and black armor.

Level 3 Acolytes like such people moved very fast!

As they rushed to this place, they surprised the several Intermediate and Senior Apprentices who were watching the surroundings.

Looking at the exit of their building, one of the level 1 Acolytes who had not been surprised by these newcomers, ran to the main door, knowing that they were not enemies.

These men had been watching them on behalf of the Scarlet Syndicate. They were there to protect them in case high-ranking Defiant Tyranny people attacked them.

Vicente and his strongest men had already noticed these people staying in buildings near theirs. By noticing the disturbance their mana caused, Vice's Acolytes already knew where these three came from.

Opening the door, the first level 1 Acolyte asked. "Misters, what is it? Did something happen to force you to come here like this?"

"Something indeed happened! Everything has happened! Where's your damned leader? We need to talk!" One of the three men shouted, in a hurry to solve the problem that had just come to them by order of their leader.

"What happened?" The other level 1 Acolyte arrived at the entrance of this post with a strange expression on his face. "Our leaders are busy. They left us in charge of this place."

"What?" One of the level 3 men shouted. "Don't tell me that bullshit! This is urgent. Call your bosses, or we'll do it ourselves!"

The people in the entrance hall of this mansion soon became tense, their hands tightening around the weapons at their waists.

Twelve of their members were meditating at that moment, striving for breakthroughs. If they happened to get in their way, they could lose the effects of the resources their men had already absorbed or even risk their lives!

But one of the three asked. "You attacked Defiant Tyranny? Are you the ones responsible for the chaos in the city? Are you aware that the royal army is on the streets, and everyone is at risk?"

Hearing that, the men there, still unaware of what had happened in Millfall after their action, were not surprised by the Scarlet Syndicate's reaction.

The royal army could impose a curfew when problematic situations arose. During this period, which could last up to 2 days, the army could make arrests without following the usual protocol.

In other words, this was a time when those who had problems with army members could suffer greatly!

Raids, arrests, beatings, you name it. Soldiers could basically do whatever they wanted during curfew, and they wouldn't be punished as long as they didn't kill anyone.

Amidst all this, the operations of groups like the Scarlet Syndicate could be disrupted.

"This is happening? Shocking!" One of the two level 1 Acolytes said.

But he was not as good an actor as Vicente or Rory. The three men realized that this and other people there had strange things on their minds.

"You..." The leader of the three became more serious as he thought about the possibility that they had brought this trouble upon everyone.

As the other two facial expressions became even more serious and the mana around them became even more chaotic, a dozen men in the entrance hall drew their weapons.

"Misters, let's act more calmly. We are allies. There is no need to exalt ourselves." One of the two level 1 Acolytes commented, sweat dripping from his brow.

One of the three men could no longer stand the audacity of these people and jumped at the two Acolytes from Vice's group.

"You bastards! You did it!"

Meanwhile, one of the other two ran toward where he thought there were several people in the basement of this building.

Bang!

The first of a rain of shots came from the guns aimed at these three, charging mana into themselves as they moved quickly against their targets.

Just as they were about to hit their targets and bounce off in troublesome directions, all the bullets around this entrance hall suddenly stopped in midair.

At the same time, the Scarlet Syndicate men stopped moving as they felt something stop them.

One of them felt his feet sink into the floor, while the other felt handcuffs appear on his feet and pull him down.

The third frowned at the sudden change as he prepared to act in defense of his teammates.

At that moment, a mana-distorted voice came from behind that person. "Scarlet Syndicate, what are you doing in my headquarters?"

"Boss!" Vicente's men looked at him, seeing the metallic mask on his face and various sharp artifacts floating around him.

As he walked, bluish sparks shot from Vicente's body, connecting various parts of the armor on his body to his mask and the weapons floating in the air.

The level 3 Acolyte looked at Vicente and felt a shiver run down his spine, not understanding why he felt that way about this person.

But he and his companions could clearly sense Vicente's magic level from the density of his mana while noticing that the red pentagram in front of one of his hands was more prominent than before.

'This guy has advanced to the level of Senior Apprentice!' The third of those men, the group leader, looked at Vicente in silence.

One of these two men tried to take his feet from the floor and failed, while the other hit the ground face first after being thrown off balance by his jump.

"Aaagh!"

"Damn it! Let me go!" The man with the dirt-covered foot shouted.

Their leader then said to Vicente. "It seems that young Cesar has just advanced... Congratulations on becoming a Senior Apprentice. But did you do it by stealing the Defiant Tyranny posts?"

Young Cesar, I have nothing against you. But this will cause problems for all of us. What will you do to repair all the damage caused by your actions? The faction leader is furious."

"Action against Defiant Tyranny? I have nothing to do with that. How could I attack such a strong group? I'm afraid they'll attack me for the previous confrontation on my property. That's why I was in seclusion." Vicente lied through his teeth.

Chapter 122 New Deal ?

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Hearing Vicente's words, the level 3 man who looked at this guy's mask could not tell whether it was a lie.

In particular, he thought that the behavior of the men around him and Vicente's sudden advances were suspicious. But he could not detect any hint of lies in the words of the leader of this group.

"Are you serious? I'm afraid my leaders won't believe you, Cesar! How do you explain that some of your members are meditating in search of breakthroughs?" This man asked, feeling the mana disturbance coming from this estate's lower level. "We know that your group can't afford to have so many resources to ensure so many breakthroughs simultaneously!"

"Is that so?" Vicente asked in a humorous tone. "You underestimate me. Just because I do business with you doesn't mean I don't have other side activities. What kind of idiot has only one source of income?"

"Oh? Do you have other businesses besides this one?" The Scarlet Syndicate emissary believed Vicente.

Everyone had their own past. Before starting this venture, Vicente probably had his businesses and methods of paying his bills. Otherwise, he would never have been able to form this group and start his activities.

"Of course," Vicente said. "But those businesses have no bearing on my agreement with the Scarlet Syndicate, so I won't talk about them. The point is, we have nothing to do with Defiant Tyranny's problem, although we are happy about what happened."

As he said that, Vicente released the two men he had restrained with his ability or one of his spells.

"But it was good of you to come." He said, taking charge of the situation as he walked through the entrance hall, his men looking carefully at the three of them.

Meanwhile, the two men got up from where they had fallen or gotten stuck and looked at Vice as he spoke.

"Defiant Tyranny will surely blame us for what happened, even though they have no evidence against my people. So, I want you to help me clear this up. If you don't protect my group, we will lose our operation under the attacks of those bastards."

"Huh? You want our help?" The man who had his foot pressed early asked, not liking 'Cesar's' behavior.

Cesar' was acting like he was their boss!

They had come to this place to teach 'Cesar' a lesson, but now this guy was acting like they were there to support him...

"We can make a new deal if you want..." Vicente's eyes glittered under his mask. "Protect me for the next two weeks. If I can't solve my problems by then, we'll do whatever you want. From handing over 100% of our operation to even the design of the weapons you see in my men's hands." He proposed, knowing that this would be tempting even for these people.

Immediately upon hearing this, everyone there became more serious, especially those three men. They felt how powerful those weapons were in the hands of mere Apprentices!

'If something like this can withstand the power of the Acolytes...' The group leader pondered silently, thinking that this might be what his group needed to grow beyond the vicinity of Millfall.

With something like this, his group could become one of the biggest underworld organizations in Scott Province in a few years!

Unlike Vicente, they had the resources to produce hundreds of such weapons using 2nd-stage blacksmiths!

Even the two most hostile and least intelligent men saw what they could bring to their criminal faction if they agreed to make this new deal with Vicente.

After a meaningful look at each other, they agreed and their leader said. "Very well. If you are willing to sign a Magical Agreement with us, we will assure the faction leader that you have nothing to do with what happened tonight, and we will protect you for two weeks. After that, you must report your projects and operations to us."

The man's words implied that Vicente's group would surely fail, and in two weeks, they would have to deliver everything he had promised.

Vicente said. "Yes, if my group cannot care for itself after these days, I will do that."

The tempers of the people there eased as these two agreed, and soon they signed the agreement.

"What do we do now?" The leader of these three men looked at Vicente, feeling very good after making this great deal.

Vicente said. "First, go back to guarding the area around this place. Call for reinforcements from your group if necessary. I will stay here with my men for the time being. I think the next 24 hours will be the most complicated."

The three agreed, this time feeling much better about taking orders from Vice, who had made a terrible deal with them.

In two weeks, it would be impossible for this small group to increase their strength enough to face Defiant Tyranny alone!

But Vice had something else in mind as he watched these men leave his estate.

One of the Acolytes from his group approached him and asked in a low voice. "Boss, congratulations on your progress. But can we do what you promised these people?"

Vicente did not answer this question with words. He used his ability from his first pentagram and took the weapon of this level 1 Acolyte.

Under the eyes of half a dozen of his men, Vice quickly melted the metals of this weapon and slowly reshaped it in a slightly different way.

After 3 minutes of this, and with the people there watching him in silence, Vicente finished remodeling the weapon.

Taking off his mask, seeing that his group had returned to normal after the departure of those people, Vicente smiled at his men and said. "With my advancement, my forging skills have greatly improved. I present you with version 2.0 of this pistol. With it, you will be able to use 100% of the power of an Intermediate Apprentice without damaging it!"

Everyone standing around Vice opened their mouths when they heard this. If this were true, they would reach the beginning of the 2nd stage regarding their fighting proficiency!

Seeing that his men were extremely impressed, Vicente did not hesitate to demonstrate the power of that weapon by firing it at one of the side pillars of the hall.

Bang!

The cannon of the weapon shook, and a bullet came out of it without damaging its structure. At the same time, it had much more mana in it than Vicente's men knew their non-upgraded weapons could hold when firing bullets.

Everyone there swallowed their saliva, especially the two level 1 Acolytes, because they felt that even if they used all of themselves, they would not be able to defend themselves against that bullet!

Chapter 123 Intervention

Seeing the damage his shot had done to the pillar he had fired at, Vicente was pleased with the new version of his pistol.

It was even more powerful than the "temporary version" he had used earlier against the level 3 Acolyte that had exploded in his hands.

According to Vicente's calculations, a distracted level 3 Acolyte would be seriously injured if hit by a bullet like the one he had just fired. In contrast, a distracted level 2 person would surely die.

His men also realized this and became excited at the thought of having more power in their hands to defend themselves and act on behalf of the group.

"Incredible!"

"The boss is truly unparalleled! With these weapons, we'll make those bastards who are harassing us regret what they've done!"

Some of the Senior Apprentices near Vicente commented at the same time.

Meanwhile, one of the Acolytes got his weapon back, eager for Vicente to make new breakthroughs and for people of his level to be able to put all their strength into shooting.

If that happened, even people with little talent like him could become relevant!

The other Acolyte asked. "Boss, when will we be able to have weapons that can withstand the power of someone at my level?"

Vicente looked at the man and said. "I am not sure. I guess when I become an Acolyte, not before. But for weapons that can withstand the maximum power of Senior Apprentices, that will happen soon. I just need to improve my knowledge of forging a bit, and I'll be able to do that."

It was straightforward for Vicente to estimate his 1st-grade weapon production ability. As a 1st-stage blacksmith, what he lacked to produce items with 100% efficiency was understanding and mana.

Once he became a stronger Senior Apprentice, finished studying the material Benson had given him the night before, and practiced with the hammer, he was confident that he could produce better weapons.

The men in the area were happy to hear this, as several of them were Senior Apprentices and naturally wanted to be able to use these weapons to their full potential.

"Great!"

"That's why the boss made this deal. He actually didn't go crazy as I thought..."

Those who had not yet understood the reason behind Vicente's deal with those men understood where their leader's confidence came from.

If they could use peak 1st-grade weapons, even if they could not destroy Defiant Tyranny, they would be able to protect themselves!

However, it was not only the quality of their group's weapons that were improving. The group was getting stronger with the resources they got from their operations and robberies.

Vicente saw his men growing in confidence and gave his orders.

"Tell all our men to bring their weapons to me. I will upgrade 3 of them per hour for the next few hours. Organize among yourselves to get your weapons upgraded.

Oh, bring your ammunition as well. It will be good to upgrade them as well."

...

One hour later...

While Vicente's group was vigilantly following their leader's orders, several Defiant Tyranny experts appeared near his building.

However, as they ran with fury in their eyes, the level 3 and 4 Acolytes of this group suddenly ran into some of their old rivals.

"Stop right there! This is your limit, members of the Defiant Tyranny!" A level 3 Acolyte shouted as he appeared from the shadow of a chimney above a rooftop.

Another 4 men appeared in various buildings along the street, causing the group of Defiant Tyranny heading for Vicente to pause and reconsider their actions.

"Damned reds, what are you doing? Do you know what your protégé has done to us?" The level 4 man leading the group shouted angrily, questioning these people.

"Cesar and his group have nothing to do with what happened. We have already established that." One of the men sent to this place to protect Vicente's group shouted.

After the leader of his group found out about the deal the three men from early had made with Vicente, he immediately put aside his concerns about the guilt of such a young man and decided to protect him. If his group could get their hands on Vice's weapons, temporarily standing by him would be worth it.

Even though the initial agreement between Vicente and the Scarlet Syndicate said they would protect him, that didn't mean they would do so in every situation!

If Vicente's group lost its operation or were caught by royal forces for crimes such as theft and murder, the group would not defend them.

The agreement served to fend off the actions of opponents who tried to operate from the shadows. But those who acted through official forces were not the responsibility of this group to stop them from getting to Vicente!

Revenge was a natural right that even the royal family of the Seidel Kingdom approved of, so Defiant Tyranny would have the right to act against Vicente's group tonight if they had any evidence.

But with the new deal Vicente proposed, even if he were guilty, the group would help him during these two weeks!

"If you insist on threatening our innocent partner, we will fight." Another man from the Scarlet Syndicate said, moving his mana as his Yellow Magic Gem glowed.

"If you want to blame our partners, get proof of their guilt. In the meantime, no one but the royal army will approach the headquarters of Cesar's group!" Another man from that faction said, trying to get those people away.

"Wretches!"

"Do you know what will happen if you follow this path?"

"Perhaps they are the real names behind what happened at our posts tonight!"

These men remarked, not at all pleased to be stopped by such rivals.

But they couldn't just start a fight there. If they did, they might start an unauthorized war between their factions, making things worse for their groups.

Defiant Tyranny wanted revenge, but they didn't really know who had attacked them. Uncertain, these emissaries decided it would be best to retreat for the time being.

"This doesn't end here!"

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After the intervention of the Scarlet Syndicate faction men, three more hours would pass before Rory would finish his breakthrough attempt. This time, he made a breakthrough on the same night as Vicente.

But as he left the headquarters training room to rejoin his group, before even learning of Vicente's weapons upgrade, Rory was moving along with his people when he heard a knock at the building's front door.

"Open the door! We're from the Royal Army!" A voice shouted from outside.

Chapter 124 How?

Hearing a voice he already knew, Vicente remembered the blond man who had come to talk to Nova at the local mercenary guild a few days ago.

He ordered his men to put masks on their faces and went to the entrance of his building, opening the door to the group of royal army soldiers knocking at his door.

Rory immediately looked at Vicente when he saw a blue beauty standing outside the building along with 5 other members of the royal army who were there for business with his group.

Vicente looked at Nova and smiled. "Captain Bain, it's good to see you again." He said, ignoring the other 5 soldiers, especially the blond level 4 man, the same as Nova's and the rest of the personnel there.

Most of them were men. Seeing this criminal talking to Nova like she was his friend made them feel irritated.

In their eyes, 'Cesar' was a criminal. How could someone dirty from the underworld speak to the beautiful and fair Nova?

Even the other woman in the group narrowed her eyes and looked at Vicente.

Nova already knew how this guy was and said. "Cut the small talk, Cesar. We are here on serious business. Did you attack a Defiant Tyranny building tonight?"

Defiant Tyranny was officially a mercenary group that provided support services to local businesses. Outside the underworld, it was an organization that 'played by the rules,' paid 'taxes,' and, as such, had its rights.

If they did things in the underworld that they shouldn't, few would talk about it, as there was no official record of the group in the Martial Court or the royal army.

Even if everyone there knew the kind of things Defiant Tyranny did, they were there to act on behalf of one of the local organizations that criminals had just attacked.

Vicente saw how corrupt this royal family organization could be, but he said nothing. The corruption of the leaders of these people could also be useful to his interests!

He replied to the beautiful Nova. "No. I spent the night with my men working on our projects. I meditated for most of the night, as evidenced by my cultivation. I just advanced and became a Senior Apprentice." He said in a good-natured tone, annoying those who felt he was to blame for what had happened that night.

"Can you prove it?" Nova asked.

"I have all my men as witnesses that I spent the night doing this." He pointed to his building with one of his arms.

Rory explained. "I personally trained with Cesar tonight."

"Tsk! I don't believe it!" The blond man in royal army armor exclaimed.

The other woman in the group added. "Your people don't count as witnesses, Cesar. They're obviously protecting you in case you did something you shouldn't have."

Vicente was silent as Rory said. "We don't have to prove our innocence, Captain. It's the people of Defiant Tyranny who have to prove us guilty. But they have no proof of that, do they?"

"If that's all you have to say, good night," Vicente said to these people.

As strong as the royal forces were, greater laws still prevented them from acting tyrannically. Even in the current situation, where they could act and justify themselves later, Vicente wasn't afraid of them.

After a few conversations with Nova, he realized she seemed honest, even though she worked among the corrupt. He honestly didn't think that these people would attack him without evidence.

However, he thought that this did not mean that Vicente was unprepared!

If they acted, they would be in trouble, as almost half of the men on this estate had their upgraded weapons pointed at Nova's group!

The blond man saw Vicente move to close the door and put his foot down halfway. "Not so fast, Cesar. Why are you in such a hurry? Are you hiding something from us?"

"Not at all," Vice replied, annoyed by this man. "Do you have anything else to say? I know you don't have evidence against my people."

"Let us in." The blond man said with a smile on his face. "If you have nothing to hide, let us search your property."

Defiant Tyranny had already announced that one of its men was missing. As a result, several groups of the royal army were already knocking on the doors of local forces that might have acted against this criminal faction, searching for traces of the body.

If they found it, they would have the proof they needed to act!

The commander had ordered his men to be neutral and not favor any side, just follow the real rules that night. But this blond man felt that 'Cesar' was lying and was to blame for all the chaos tonight.

Vicente looked at the blond man while Rory watched him in anticipation.

"Some of my men are meditating. Could you give us a few hours? I don't want to risk my people's lives. I can stay by your side while they finish. Being near Nova is always nice." He said in a hateful tone to the men over there.

"You bastards!"

"We will not do what you say! Captain, let's go to the building!"

Some of them encouraged the blond man, the leader of this group.

"Tsk! Being watched has never stopped anyone from meditating!" The leader of those soldiers said. "Open the way now, or we will act!"

Vicente opened the way and allowed these people to enter his property.

He had already disposed of the body of the man he had kidnapped. But he did not want to let these people into his property because of the things he had stolen from his enemies. There were things there that could give away what he had done hours ago!

'Are we going to be okay, Vice?' Rory felt his back sweat at the thought of those items in the vault of this property.

But Vicente scared Rory even more with his following words.

"You want to see my vault?"

Gulp!

'What are you doing, Vicente?' Rory's eyes went wide.

Nova saw that her leader was trying to cause unnecessary trouble and stepped forward. "Yes. I'd like to check your safe. Rest assured, Cesar, we will keep the secret of your possessions if there is nothing compromising in your vault.

He then led the way, leading them through this property directly to where the vault was.

Halfway there was the training room in the basement of the building, where one of the men from the group of soldiers promptly went to search the area for bodies.

Rory went with this person to this room. At the same time, Vicente followed alongside the other 5 royal soldiers to the vault, a place completely surrounded by metal, specially built for Vice.

This vault had a door similar to bank vaults on Earth, a bit different from what you would find in the Polaris Realm.

But these people didn't pay much attention to that, and soon they were looking at Vicente, waiting for him to open the door.

"What are you doing? Why don't you open it?" The second woman in the group asked.

"This vault is special. It can only be opened if I use my ability..." Vicente explained. "Do you have a problem with me doing that?"

"Open it!" The blond shouted.

Hearing this, Vicente laughed under his mask and didn't hesitate to show his bright red pentagram and move the metals behind the door.

A minute and a half later, a loud click sounded, and the door moved.

"Please..." He motioned for Nava to go ahead and see what was inside.

When she opened the door and saw the approximately 10 square meter interior of this vault, Nova soon noticed over 80 gold coins of value in there, but nothing out of the ordinary.

"You got a lot of coins in here, huh, Cesar?" One of the men commented, feeling suspicious but seeing nothing that would give away Vicente's connection to the night's robbery.

"There are a lot of bandits around here that your group can't catch. I got a good chunk of those coins from them." Vicente replied, taking the opportunity to tease these people.

"You can't be serious." The leader of these soldiers said with an ugly expression on his face. "Where did you get the rest of these coins?"

"I had a life before I started my business in Millfall. Jeez, it seems I can't even have an inheritance." Vicente said in disgust.

At that moment, Rory came in with the other soldier, surprised to see this place practically empty of the items Vice had stolen that night.

'Where are the books and artifacts?'

For the next forty minutes, the group of soldiers would search Vicente's entire building. Unfortunately for those who wanted to see the fall of 'Cesar,' they would find nothing there.

Forty minutes after arriving at that place, those six soldiers left Vicente's property with nothing, thinking that he really had no connection to what had happened that night.

But Rory was curious when he saw these people leaving and asked.

"How? Even our men's weapons and armor are gone. What did you do with them?"

Chapter 125 A New Day?

Upon hearing Rory's question, Vincent smiled.

It was natural for his friend to ask him how he had managed to disappear so many items that could be linked to the night's theft.

They had no secondary dimensions storage, so there was only one way to hide their belongings around this property.

But how had Vicente done it without the soldiers noticing?

"The moment I led their group to the vault, I not only manipulated the mechanisms of that door. I did it with all the contents of the vault, including the armor and weapons of our men in this building."

"What?" Rory exclaimed in surprise, amazed to hear that his friend had done such a thing.

At first glance, it might seem easy. However, Vice had manipulated metal not only near him but all over the building while standing in front of the soldiers.

He had done it so quickly that none of the six level 4 Acolytes soldiers had noticed, and only a few of his men had noticed what had happened.

But instead of transforming these metallic and non-metallic items, Vicente had simply moved them to other areas of his property, behind the walls of some of the rooms.

Vicente had several metal structures on this property that could be used to store items out of the reach of ordinary magicians.

There was even a way to notice these items if they had a special ability, but since most of them were low-level and didn't emit strong fluctuations, Vicente's movement was enough for him to hide all these materials.

Vicente went ahead of Rory and led him back to the vault of this estate.

Upon arriving there, he immediately repeated what he had done earlier and opened the metal walls of that place, revealing books, jewelry, coins, and other valuable items that had been stolen from their enemies' property.

As he closed the metal walls of this place again, Vice declared. "I did it here and managed to manipulate the weapons and armor with our men to the walls or even the ceiling of our property... But it was close, man. I almost failed."

Fortunately, he had been promoted to Senior Apprentice level. If that hadn't happened, Vice's control over his first Magic Pentagram wouldn't be enough to make those moves without drawing the attention of his enemies!

Hearing this, Rory sighed, relieved but also impressed by how far Vicente had come.

"That was pretty impressive. You bought us more time against the royal army." The redhead commented as he looked at the items in the vault.

Vicente laughed but soon changed the subject. "Anyway, congratulations on advancing to the next level. At this rate, we'll reach the 2nd stage in a few weeks."

"Hmm, it will be good if more of our men achieve the same. That way, we can hunt Magic Pentagrams together and strengthen the whole group at once."

Hearing this, Vicente looked towards the training room where the 10 men, 9 apprentices, and 1 Acolyte were meditating.

As people of lesser talent than the two leaders, it was only natural that these people would take longer to seize opportunities.

"Let's see what happens in the next few hours. The result of our men will help us not only to increase our current forces but also to gain new members for the family."

...

Hours later, as night gave way to day, the leaders of Millfall's largest coalitions were already aware of the night's events.

Defiant Tyranny had been attacked and lost valuables relevant to the group and some of its men, not only to Vicente's actions but to those of his men who had destroyed buildings of the said group.

As much as this group tried to go after Vicente and use him as a scapegoat, they failed because they had no evidence to use the royal army against the young man, but also because of the Scarlet Syndicate.

To the other local powers, the Scarlet Syndicate seemed very committed to supporting Vicente. At the same time, the Defiant Tyranny could not do much. Weakened, with no evidence to support the use of official forces, and with their major enemies united, this group could only temporarily back off their actions against Vice.

Royal forces were still in the city, and several incidents involving small groups of soldiers and locals had been reported that evening.

But none of them involved Vicente and his group, and for the time being, they were fine, even if they had drawn more attention to their operations.

However, those most interested in him were the Scarlet Syndicate and Defiant Tyranny.

The other local powers doubted that Vicente had acted against Defiant Tyranny and was only interested in his group connection with Scarlet Syndicate!

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At the estate of Viscount Symons...

In Millfall's largest and most luxurious residence, the Viscount was up early in the morning, listening to updates on the night's events.

Beside him was his most trusted subordinate, but also his eldest son, along with the informants who had just finished reporting the latest updates.

"It seems that this group of Cesar's has a lot of potentials, no?" The Viscount's chief subordinate said, feeling that the Scarlet Syndicate's actions were a bit too much for a group with a territory smaller than a city block.

"They probably know things we don't, father," Marcus said to his father.

Viscount Symons, an elderly-looking man with blonde hair mixed with white, heard this and advised his eldest son. "Marcus, I want you to keep an eye on this little group while I'm out of town."

The Viscount was preparing to leave for the province capital, where a meeting of the provincial nobles would be held at Duke Scott's estate in a few days.

His son and his right-hand man would stay in the city, so he could not help but guide his heir. "Things can change a lot in a matter of days or weeks. Perhaps this situation will develop to the point where we have to move, but I am still absent.

So don't hesitate to act if necessary. Our family will not become a noble house with a Count if we do not pay attention to what is happening in our city."

"I will do my best, father." Marcus said as he made a respectful gesture, thanking his father for the guidance.

Watching his son leave, the Viscount said to his right-hand man after he was alone with this man. "Advise Marcus. He is talented and knows what he is doing. But he is only a young man who can make mistakes if he gets carried away with his emotions."

"I will do my best, Your Grace."

...

Meanwhile, at the brothel in the center of town...

"Wretches!" The leader of the Defiant Tyranny faction shouted in frustration after a night of nothing but losses for his people.

"The damned are united against us! Boss, we must do something! We must use the army to our advantage, or we will soon be in trouble."

"Yes, the damned Scarlet Syndicate is getting bolder. We need to take them down. I bet they have something to do with what happened to us the night before."

The men comment to the group leader, full of rage and wanting to act on every possible front.

"Boss, let's use the card we have up our sleeve. If we don't move the army in our favor, we won't be able to do anything." One of the strongest people there commented, looking at their leader.

"Are you out of your mind? If we use this, our relationship with the army will be ruined. When the Commander leaves his local position, we will have an enemy in the province capital." Another said, knowing that the card up his sleeve was to use the evidence they had against some corrupt local soldiers.

Threatening influential people had its risks, and some there did not want to take those risks!

"Before we do that, offer the Commander a new deal. Maybe he still needs something. But even if he doesn't, something can always go wrong with his family... Accidents happen." The leader said, thinking of the only way he could consider without putting his group totally in danger of retaliation from the Commander of the local royal army post.

"In the meantime, I want our men to block any action from that damned Cesar. Put a price on his head! I will pay 200 gold coins to whoever brings me his head!"

There were assassins in this society who sought rewards like this. Two hundred gold coins were not a small amount, even for level 5 Acolytes, so this was not a reward that would be looked down upon!

The men present saw their leader's determination and did not disagree, feeling that eliminating this nuisance was worth the price.

...

As the leadership of the Defiant Tyranny plotted against Vice, he stood on his property, facing the 10 men who had succeeded in their meditation the night before.

After absorbing the essence of the resources stolen from the Defiant Tyranny, new Acolytes and Senior Apprentices emerged in 'Cesar's group!'

Chapter 126 Improvements and the Search for New Members?

After more than 10 hours of meditation, the last of Vicente's men had ended their one-night retreat and awakened with new powers.

This time, none of these men had failed in their attempts, with 5 Intermediate Apprentices becoming Senior Apprentices and 4 Senior Apprentices reaching level 1 of the Acolyte stage.

The one Acolyte who had been given a chance to cultivate with 2nd stage resources the night before had also improved his strength, bringing his mana closer to level 2. He was still a level 1 Acolyte, but he was now the strongest in terms of magic level in the group.

Vicente looked at the Acolyte and advised him. "Logan, be careful with your cultivation from now on. Your mana should become more and more unstable from now on, so you should double your attention on what you do. Otherwise, you will explode."

The man who was closer to level 2 than at the beginning of level 1 heard this and nodded silently, knowing that his situation was delicate. Without the second Magic Pentagram, he really would have to meditate, fight, use his mana, and, in short, do everything more carefully.

Theoretically, it was safe to go to level 2 of the 2nd stage with only one pentagram but to do so, one would have to be 100% attentive with one's mana!

Otherwise... Boom!

"As for the rest of you, we're going to change the group's division of labor a bit from now on..." Vicente said, and with Rory's help, he soon explained to the ten people who had just left the training room and the other Acolytes and Senior Apprentices how things would work from now on.

Vicente had spent the last few hours upgrading the weapons of all his men. Not only that, he and Rory thought that they would be attacked in some way.

In order to protect their territory and make it more attractive to other merchants in the area, the group's Acolytes will be working with the Senior Apprentices in those shops starting this afternoon!

After briefing his men on how things would work from now on, Vicente saw the first groups leaving from there before he left with Rory.

...

After some time of walking through the city's shadows, Vicente and Rory entered the building of the local mercenary guild.

As they approached a group of mercenaries outside the lobby of this building, the two of them spoke in low voices.

"Did you ever do anything with that woman?" Vice asked.

Rory looked at his friend from under the mask on his face and said. "Sort of. I took her somewhere, and we exchanged a few caresses..."

"Oh? You're way ahead of schedule, huh?" Vicente laughed, imagining that his friend was enjoying this part of their plans.

Rory understood Vice's comment but didn't go into details. "Anyway, I'll talk to her about the Baron at our next meeting. If all goes well, I'll make our first contact at the residence after that."

"That's good. Take your time. First, let's solve this problem with the Defiant Tyranny." After saying that, Vice stopped next to a table in that area where some of the Martell Village mercenaries were standing.

"Fellow mercenaries, we can sit down. We have a deal to offer you." Vicente said, changing his voice so these people wouldn't recognize him.

The moment they saw those two standing next to them, the mercenaries who could not use magic and had no magic gems on their foreheads, looked at those two with a frown.

Not everyone could use mana. Therefore, some became warriors and followed the 9 levels of the bodily path.

Some of the mercenaries in this world were warriors, and it was not uncommon to find such people in buildings like this.

But Vicente and Rory did not underestimate these people because of the lack of magic gems in their heads. Warriors could fight people who could manipulate mana.

If you reached level 9, such a person could even challenge a Mage!

Knowing this, they were eager to enlist the services of these level 6 and 7 warriors!

However, while they knew the value of these people's strength, they also knew the problems that 'Cesar' was involved in.

Even though they did not know who 'Cesar' was, they knew that these two were associated with such a figure, and they immediately did not like being approached by these dangerous individuals.

"You've got to be kidding." Said a level 6 warrior, looking seriously at Vicente. "We're not going to work for a group that has everyone in Millfall paying attention to it..."

"Not even for 10 gold coins per month?" Rory questioned.

These men were capable of fighting Acolytes. So how much they deserved for their time and efforts was far more than the many Apprentices who worked for these two.

"10 gold coins?" One of those 4 men Vice and Rory had just approached, alongside the two individuals who had brought Vicente and Nina from Starsalt City to Martell Village, asked with interest.

With that amount of coins, he could go a few months without working and still get resources to try to improve his strength.

They couldn't buy pills or potions to improve their strength with that alone. Still, they could get resources to temper their bodies and improve their understanding of their martial arts.

For warriors, this had as much potential to increase their strength as using pills and other magical resources in magic.

At the same time, this was an amount that even they would take 3 to 6 months to get in normal situations!

Thinking that they could earn a lot of coins quickly, those men hesitated a little, even though they knew the risks.

"10 gold coins? Are you guys serious?" Soren asked Vicente.

Vicente looked at this old acquaintance and said. "Yes, 10 gold coins each per month. What do you think about that? For now, we can only hire 4 people, and we don't know when we will get more people for the group.

None of these people knew about the reward of 200 gold coins on Vicente's head, so they did not consider it and soon discussed that it was worth at least trying.

If they saw that there would be too much trouble on this job, they could terminate their agreement with these people. And, heck, every job has its risks.

For the right price, anyone would be willing to do almost anything!

"OK, I agree to this job. But what exactly are we going to have to do? And why us?" Asked Wesley.

"You'll have to work in the shadows for our group, keeping watch and gathering information from our enemies. In practice, they won't interact with us much." Vicente said, showing a positive point for these men to serve him. "Think of it as an outside job... And as for why you and not others, it's because we heard about you from one of our men. He said you were trustworthy, which is why we are here."

That was enough for these men, and they were not suspicious of Vicente's intentions.

As they agreed to join Vice and Rory, the young black-haired man had something in mind.

'I will show you the benefits of joining my family. In the future, some of you will go from being mercenaries in our service to becoming members of my family!'

Chapter 127 Trouble in the Territory?

?

Two days had passed since 'Cesar's' group attacked the outpost of the Defiant Tyranny faction...

Vicente had spent some time by Nina's side these days, but she was aware that her brother had some troubles on his mind, judging by the behavior of everyone around.

As a curious girl interested in her family's future, Nina did not push her brother during these last free days she had before her classes at a local academy began.

Meanwhile, Eve had tried to compensate for Vicente's absence, but the nanny had her own limits and knew that Nina was aware that something was going on.

Unfortunately, there was nothing more she or Vicente could do than they had already done to keep Nina out of their problems, and they could only continue not talking about the problem.

At least Vice and his men had handled enemy pressure well and were only acting on their own territory, where the people of the Scarlet Syndicate would protect them.

But every one in his group was already aware of the bounty of 200 coins on his head. Because of this, Vicente had avoided appearing in public with his Cesar identity, knowing that assassins were already watching him.

But even though he avoided acting on behalf of his criminal group, Vicente was aware of all the affairs of his people and had led the group in the face of new challenges!

In a plaza not far from where his men protected the shops, Vicente stood on a wooden bench and threw bread crumbs to the birds in front of him.

As he watched these birds and the small lake not far away, someone smoking on a bench behind him spoke in a low voice that the two of them could hear.

Covering his mouth with his hand, the gray-haired man said. "Chief, the number of incidents in our territory has increased greatly since that night. We have recorded 21 attempts at confusion or robbery in the properties under our protection."

Upon hearing this, Vicente easily understood that this must be an enemy strategy to wipe out their profits and drive the Scarlet Syndicate away from their side.

Vicente was a criminal with years of experience. On Earth, people did not have special powers that forced any criminal to be unusually creative in order to accomplish certain feats.

In a way, this world had more difficult circumstances for criminals.

In Polaris Realm, all one needed to steal was to use mana and strength, which many people had above normal.

As someone who had developed in that difficult environment, Vicente had already anticipated such a move, which was why he and Rory had changed the shifts of his men in those places.

"And?" He asked, wanting results.

"As the bosses expected, the Acolytes and the new weapons made a big difference. Our group was able to contain 17 of those incidents and collect the criminals' belongings. But in 4 cases, we had to use more force and ended up with some dead bodies." The man said before taking a puff on his cigarette and blowing the smoke out of his nose.

"We collected a total of 12 gold coins yesterday alone. Unfortunately, the thieves and men who attacked us had little with them. They probably prepared themselves before going to our posts."

"Hmm, that makes sense." Vicente muttered as he stood up, and slapped his hands together, wiping them clean. "Ah, the day is beautiful." He smiled, hiding his communication with that man.

"I think I need to study a bit. Becoming a 1st stage blacksmith is the way." He said, letting his man understand the message.

'So we have to hold our position for now?' The man wondered. 'Let's hold out until we get better weapons!'

Vicente left from there, heading for a meeting scheduled for that afternoon.

...

"Nova, it's good to see you again," Vicente said as he surprised the beautiful blue-haired woman waiting for him outside a local restaurant.

Feeling someone touch her shoulders, Nova immediately jumped and put away the mirror she was looking into.

When she turned around and saw the handsome black-haired young man she had seen more and more, she smiled at him and said. "It's only been a few days, hasn't it? It's not even a week since Nina's birthday."

"Is that so?" said Vicente. 'I think it was only two days, but you don't know that.' He gave her a restrained smile.

"Anyway, many things have happened recently, haven't they? I've heard strange rumors these days I've been out of town. Can you tell me what happened?"

"You were out of Millfall?" Nova was not surprised. As a merchant, it was natural for Vicente to travel with a certain constancy.

With that in mind, she had her question about why he hadn't looked for her these days answered.

"Yes, I had a little business trip. I was gone for three days and returned this morning... Who knew? After only those days away, I heard shocking things about the movements of the local powers." He said, trying to get the woman to talk more than she should.

Nova sighed and said. "Indeed. I sense that the powers of the underworld are beginning to stir... I fear that some battle for the sovereignty of Millfall will take place soon."

The ruler of Millfall was only one, the same as every city in the province and the entire kingdom, the king!

However, each town had a person who unofficially led the area.

In Millfall, it was Viscount Symons, but depending on how you looked at things, this man was paid by the local criminal groups to turn a blind eye... Who is to be feared most? The one who turns a blind eye, or the one who pays those who turn a blind eye?

In any case, there wasn't just one person behind that, but Nova feels that it could very soon change.

"Some groups are weakening, while others are strengthening. That act two nights ago is a worrying indication, Vice. You need to be careful, especially with Nina. The city will get a little dangerous from here on out."

"Is that right?" He expressed concern as he walked alongside Nova to the restaurant just ahead. "Can you tell me something, Nova? I have business with some local nobles. I wouldn't want to get into trouble because of the relationship some of these nobles might have with these factions."

She looked at Vicente and said in a low voice. "I will see what I can do for you if you give me your business partners' names. But for now, as long as you do not leave your residence at night and avoid the city's outskirts, you will be safe."

Also, beware of establishments on the east side of town. There's a new group in the city operating out of that location. I've heard rumors that troublemakers are keeping an eye on that area."

"I'll keep that in mind," said Vicente, knowing she was talking about his territory.

With that said, he didn't touch on the subject any further so as not to alert Nova and was soon settled with her in that restaurant, eating while listening to a bit more of Nova's story, getting closer to her.

While waiting for their ordered food, Vicente and Nova talked a bit about their lives.

She asked about how Nina was doing and offered to help Vicente if he needed someone to take care of her in his absence.

Nova was very excited to hear that Nina was doing well and would start classes the next day. Not only that, the young girl loved the gift from this blue-haired beauty, so Vicente didn't miss the opportunity to thank her once again.

Vice had his own nefarious interests in Nova, but he already looked at her differently because of the way she had treated Nina.

He was naturally attracted to Nova, but he also wanted to use her to learn about the royal army. But Nova made it difficult for him by being so kind and interested in Nina.

After telling his companion about his younger sister that afternoon, Vicente asked. "But what about you? Where are you from, Nova? Is your family from Millfall?"

She smiled subtly and shook her head. For some reason, even talking about common things with Vicente made her smile.

"No. I'm from Dryhaven. My family still lives there. They are in the fishing business." She said truthfully.

Nova came from a stable home, with a mother and father still alive, a younger brother, and two sisters. Her family could not be considered wealthy, but they were as well off or better off than Vicente's family before his parents died.

She said with satisfaction. "Although I had to divert part of my journey because of my family's business, I love my parents and siblings. But I always wanted to become a soldier of the kingdom, so I couldn't help but leave them after I awakened my powers. However, I still visit them whenever I can. I really enjoy family time."

Hearing this, Vicente signaled his interest in finding out more about this woman.

Talking about intimate things like that was essential to building a relationship. For someone who was more interested in just getting this woman into bed, this was essential for Vicente.

"Dryhaven, huh? You're nowhere near home." Vicente commented to her.

Dryhaven was a city of about 90,000 people on the east coast of Scott Province. It was closer to Millfall than Saltstar City, but it was still a journey of over 12 days between that city and the Bain family's home.

Nova nodded and said. "Yes, but there's nothing for me to do. After I was invited to join the army in Dryhaven, I soon spent some time studying at the post in that city. As soon as I graduated, I was sent here."

The Seidel Kingdom army had two types of methods for selecting its soldiers. The first and simplest was by invitation, something high-ranking soldiers could invite whoever they felt was worth having on their side. The second was through the Seidel Magic College.

At the college, even if one did not have great magical talents with an affinity for battle, as was usually the case with those invited to the army, one could still become a soldier or even strive to become a noble of the kingdom.

But once a youth from the Seidel Magic College, or someone invited by that organization, joined the army, they would spend time studying at their city's base.

The army had its hierarchy and positions that depended not only on the magical level of its soldiers but also on their knowledge, skills, merits, and so on.

Upon entering this organization, one would spend time learning the laws of the kingdom, its history, etc., until one became an actual soldier and was assigned to duty.

"I am currently working on becoming the Commander of a post. As much as I have to be away from my family, I'm happy. It is my dream to become a great soldier and one day reach the highest rank in the army." She said to Vicente.

"That's great," Vicente said. "Being a high-ranking soldier is one of the best things in the kingdom."

Vicente was sincere. As much as no soldier would have the best results in their life if they followed other paths, the path of the kingdom's soldiers was the most stable and secure one could take.

By being free to act as and when one wishes, one could have the chance to grow substantially with a successful business. But the chances of such a venture working out would be very slim.

On the other hand, being a soldier gave magicians as much predictability in life as having a graduation on Earth. Was having a degree a guarantee of prosperity on Earth? No, but it could at least provide a living.

In the Seidel Kingdom, being a member of the army meant stability, a livelihood, and a chance to reach high levels without risking too much.

The royal family was the strongest and most influential in the kingdom, the only one with the right to have an army. It was a huge organization present in hundreds of cities like Millfall.

Soldiers of this organization had a great chance to get the resources they needed to grow without having to venture out into the vast world. As long as one had talent and competed for high-ranking positions in the army, even reaching the end of the 3rd stage was a likely thing for people with talent like Nova's.

For this woman, it was only a matter of time before it happened, and she wouldn't have to risk herself like Vincent had to.

So he didn't despise what being a soldier of the kingdom meant, even though he had no interest in giving up his freedom and opportunities for it.

But for 99% of the people in this kingdom, doing what Rory had done would be madness. The decision that people like Nova had made by accepting the soldiers' invitation to join the army was what the overwhelming majority would make.

Anyway, the two continued to talk about their lives, sometimes Nova talking about her interests and background, sometimes Vice talking about himself.

They ate lunch at this local restaurant while they talked, getting to know each other better.

At the end of an hour of meeting each other, it would be time for them to go their separate ways.

As experienced with women as Vicente was, Nova had a hard time letting go of "certain things," so he didn't get a chance to walk her home that day.

But a new meeting between the two was already scheduled for the next few days when Vicente told her he would be staying in town until his next trip in about 10 days...

Knowing that he would be gone for a while after that, Nova agreed to meet with him a few times during that period before the "trip."

Chapter 129 Vicente's Facade?

Two days later...

After his previous encounter with Nova, Vicente would meet her again tonight, this time for dinner at a local restaurant.

But at the beginning of the day, Vicente still didn't have that nightly rendezvous in mind. After a hearty breakfast with Eve and Nina, he saw them getting ready to leave for the academy, where his little sister had started her classes the day before.

After they left, Vicente quickly left the house, heading for a meeting with some of his men in one of the taverns under his protection.

Vicente did not go to his headquarters, nor did he even return to wear his mask and armor, which had already become the familiar marks of the man with a 200 coin bounty on his head.

As someone wanted by assassins from outside and Millfall itself, he avoided encounters with his men known to be part of his group.

But not everyone on his team was part of his family's crime group. Some of his men who were part of that family acted as Vicente Fuller's subordinates in his business, not as Cesar's subordinates.

As much as many of his men and business partners knew his real identity, Vicente was not worried about information about him getting out.

As a cautious man, he had included confidentiality clauses about the identities of those involved in his business in every deal he made. Even under threat, his clients or men could not talk about who he and Rory really were.

So Vicente dared to walk around Millfall as if he didn't have such a large reward on his head and even went to some of the establishments in his area daily.

In the days since the robbery of the year, his group had handled the actions of Defiant Tyranny's men well, managing to stop over 80% of enemy attacks before their contractors were even harmed.

Even under constant attack, Vicente's group of partners were happy, and the day before, his territory had actually increased in size with new contracts.

As the days passed and Vicente's territory became more stable, more merchants in the area became hopeful about the offers already made by Vice and his men.

It might seem premature to ally with Vicente and enter his territory. After all, it hadn't even been a week since the big Defiant Tyranny incident. However, for a faction whose leader was threatened with 200 gold coins, standing up for those days was impressive.

As a result, Vicente had made 4 more deals the day before, bringing the total number of establishments protected by his people to 14!

With this number, he already had almost 2 blocks of Millfall under his protection.

His group's income from these deals with business owners had also increased, and now the group had a monthly income of 49 gold coins.

In the past few days, they had also collected another 10 gold coins in valuables from enemies. Knowing this all, Vicente was excited about the future of his faction.

As much pressure as they were under from many sides, it was precisely this pressure that was pushing them to become stronger and more relevant!

In the meantime, he had been developing his forging skills, reading the books Benson had lent him, and doing the training his master had encouraged him to do.

With that in mind, Vicente arrived at Zander and River's tavern, where he immediately got a table.

When they saw their boss there, the guards of this place didn't look at Vice too much to avoid suspicion. But they all couldn't help but admire their leader's courage to walk the streets and even come to this place with such a large reward on his head.

'What great courage!'

'I wouldn't do that!'

'The boss is truly dignified. He acts as if he owes nothing to anyone.' The Acolyte, who was watching the area, thought to himself as he smiled.

Meanwhile, two of Vicente's men, who had been sitting around the area waiting for him, quickly moved when they saw him there.

They had no masks on their faces like the men on guard.

After sitting down in front of their leader, the two greeted Vicente before tasting the snacks already left on the table.

One of them then said. "Boss, we bought some of the ores you requested. We are also stockpiling the cheapest pure metals we can find."

"But some of the items you requested are rarer, and only blacksmiths from the Association can access them at affordable prices. I don't think it's worth it for us to try to get some of them outside the Association. It would be too expensive." The other informed Vicente and showed him a list of what they had bought and what was missing.

Seeing some of the most important materials he needed to make new weapons and also improve the quality of the items he already had, Vicente said. "Hmm, I agree. I'll try to focus my time in the next few days to get closer to the level needed to pass the Association's test."

When I get my license, we'll use it to buy the materials missing from this list. For now, keep up the good work."

Since he was "unable" to act on behalf of his group in these post-robbery days, Vicente had a lot of time to read about and practice his forging skills.

He had gotten great results from his practice. As he practiced extracting metals from ores and practicing the things he learned from the books, Vicente increased his mana density at a magnificent rate.

As a result, he had jumped from about 7% progress at the Senior Apprentice level to about 24%, just with the training he had been doing these days.

With an improvement of about 3% per day, he was rapidly becoming stronger!

As he got stronger, his forging skills improved proportionally, and he found it easier to master the techniques from the books he had been reading.

In addition, Vicente had helped Rory with his training by sparring with him every other day, which had contributed to his improvements in magic.

"But tell me about our business," Vicente said after drinking some of what was in his mug. "Is the village doing well? How are our merchants?"

"As for that, everything is going according to plans..."

The two men began to report the latest data from Vicente's trading company operating out of Martell Village.

As much as Vicente focused on increasing his family's power through the underworld, he did not neglect operations that could give him cover in the light of day.

As a criminal, he knew the importance of having a good front for his illegal operations!

Martell Village was his first domain, so he had other reasons to value it.

Anyway, when this morning's meeting was over, Vicente soon left to meet Rory in another part of the city, curious about how his friend had acted with Lena and the Irwin family but also about the results of his new mercenary contractors.

Chapter 130 Information and Plans?

When Vicente met Rory later that day, he immediately heard something from his friend that he hadn't expected that morning.

"We finished studying the contents of the books we stole from Defiant Tyranny," Rory said in a low voice as he walked beside Vicente, dressed in a large black coat.

Vicente was also wearing a coat over his suit, his hands in his pockets as he watched the movement of the central Millfall. "What have you found out?" He asked, but without showing much interest on his face.

Rory said. "Of the three books you stole, one is an accounting book. It contains information about Defiant Tyranny's operations, its projects, where its currency comes from, and where it goes."

Accounting in organizations large and small was not just for tax time on Earth. Even in the blue world, records of operations were kept before groups even thought about paying taxes.

In Polaris Realm, one did not have to pay taxes on business operations. The only taxes in many states, such as the Seidel Kingdom, were taxes on property and government services. But even then, groups like the Defiant Tyranny kept records of their actions so that their leaders could keep track of their own actions.

How did they know that their own members or other individuals were not robbing them? The only way to know was to keep a record of their operations.

The register in question recorded much of Defiant Tyranny's operations over the past 5 years!

Upon hearing that they had it in hand, Vice could not keep his lips from curling into a bow on his face.

"This is fantastic." He muttered.

With the countable book, he and his group could track their enemies' operations and not only disrupt their business but also rob them!

For example, from the catalog in question, Vicente's group could know what Defiant Tyranny's main sources of income were and where most of the coins were going.

Not only would they be able to reach the big names in that group, but they would also know how to hurt those opponents most effectively.

They could also use this data to find useful information about business opportunities in Millfall.

Every action had a reaction. If coins were leaving one place for another, people would be willing to pay to change that reality, as well as those interested in spending less on certain operations.

With that in mind, Vicente and Rory naturally understood the immense value of that book.

"But that's not all," Rory said. "In the second of the three books, we find pertinent information about local nobles and rich men.

Boy, there's a lot of compromising stuff in those books."

"Oh?"

Like on Earth, one of the best ways to get things done in the Polaris Realm was to threaten to destroy the image of public figures.

Even if these nobles and wealthy people had a lot of power, they all had someone to fear!

High-level people, opportunistic nobles, and last but not least, royalty!

"This is music to my ears." Vicente laughed as he thanked Defiant Tyranny for doing him the dirty work.

As criminals, it was only natural that they had to keep track of the compromising things of their partners and allies!

How could they stay in power if they didn't have things to use against their partners?

Vice asked. "Is there any other positive information for us?"

"The third book also had some strange information. It had no data from our enemies nor from people involved with that faction in Millfall. The book talks about something in the area of Alpine Woodpecker Forest."

"Alpine Woodpecker Forest?" Vicente frowned. That was a forested area near Ironcrest, the second-largest city in Scott Province.

"Yeah, we don't really understand what this book is for. It looks like a manual on how to get to a particular area of this forest. I can't tell the value of it, but given the shape of the book and the ancient inscriptions in it, I feel like it's like a treasure map.

But I can't tell if it leads to something valuable or to unnecessary danger." Rory finished talking about these findings.

The Alpine Woodpecker Forest was a vast area, over 15,000 square kilometers, where a race of magical beasts ruled.

It was not easy to enter or leave this area without getting hurt. Still, there were many stories about this region all over the province, things that tied Ironcrest's success to this forest.

Ironcrest was founded 300 years ago and quickly became one of the province's largest cities, even without access to the sea, which was important for any city.

But even though it was only the second largest city in the province, it didn't lose much to Saltstar City, and in fact, it was much better than the other city in one thing. The forging art!

Rumor had it that the best 3rd-stage blacksmiths came from Ironcrest, and the rarest resources for 3rd-stage blacksmiths could only be found in this city in Scott Province.

Knowing this, Vicente kept the Alpine Woodpecker Forest book in his mind.

"Hmm, let's check this information in the future." He said to Rory. "For now, let's stick to what's within our reach and what we can understand."

"What are you planning?"

"The Defiant Tyranny is clearly not going to stand by while we grow and act against them. I believe by now they must be threatening some of the people they have evidence of compromising acts against." Vicente said with a serious expression. "Then let's counterattack!"

Send some of our men to visit some of the names in the second book. Show them what Defiant Tyranny is up to and turn them against this faction.

Meanwhile, have some of our men give me the details of what's in the first book, especially the main coin streams of that faction. I will act to hurt them a little more."

With these words, Vice watched Rory leave and make his way to where he planned to meet one of the mercenaries he had hired earlier.

The mercenaries had signed magical agreements with him, promising not to talk about his identity. They already knew who Vicente was, so they could find him without him having to disguise himself or risk alerting the assassins who would surely be lurking around.

But these men were not so happy to have been chosen by a fellow villager. On the contrary, after they had signed their agreements with Vicente, they had all been quite angry when they found out about the bounty of 200 gold coins on their chief's head.

If they had thought about Vicente's previous proposal for one day, they could have kept those coins by acting against him!

Unfortunately, they were now allies and could only follow what they had promised Vice.

When Vicente saw one of these unfortunate men at the local mercenary guild, the meeting place they had arranged for each other, he ignored the serious look on Wesley's face and sat down across from him.

Wesley and his partner were still shocked at how far Vicente had come in such a short time after the Fuller family tragedy. Even though they were a little sad about the mistake they had made in agreeing to follow Vice, they felt strange about the young man.

To them, Vicente was still the young man who had lost his father, mother, and sister in a matter of weeks. Even though he was so strong and influential, they still felt sorry for him.

With this mixed feeling, the man sighed as he looked at the black-haired young man in front of him. "How is little Nina?" He asked before talking about serious matters.

"Good. She recently started at a local academy. Anyway, tell me about your observations." Vicente was direct with his words.

These mercenaries did not act directly with his men but rather kept an eye on the movements of the Defiant Tyranny, but also of the army, which Vicente considered corrupt and acting against him.

Wesley then said. "Well, some of Defiant Tyranny's high-ranking men are indeed getting involved with members of the royal army. Recently, a level 4 Acolyte met with the number two of the local rank of the royal forces.

My companions and I feel that they are trying to influence the army to move against you, Vice."

"As expected..."

"Also, some of the other factions in Millfall have been meeting with the leaders of the Defiant Tyranny," Wesley said solemnly. "Soren saw some nobles and even an envoy of the Viscount meeting with number three of our enemies, Vicente. I'm afraid we're going to be in big trouble soon."

Vicente heard this, and as his face grew darker, he thought it made sense.

As much as Defiant Tyranny had been a competitor to some of these local factions in the past, their downfall was of no interest to anyone but the Scarlet Syndicate. As the largest competitor to this other local underworld group, they could not fall, or Millfall's stability would be destroyed.

Nobles would lose an ally capable of doing things they could not, while others might be forced to act against their own interests to avoid punishment.

If the Defiant Tyranny fell, many operations would be hindered, and there would be a risk that the Scarlet Syndicate would take over all of Millfall, which was of no interest to anyone but that group.

Understanding this, Vicente sighed and said. "I will communicate with the Scarlet Syndicate to see if I can use the strength of that group to buy us some time. But don't worry. I already have plans against Defiant Tyranny's movements."