

The Mafia 171

Chapter 171 Meeting Before the Journey (1)

When he arrived at Nova's door, Vicente realized that this woman was in her house even before he got to her door.

After talking to the army commander in Millfall, she had gone through some procedures at the local headquarters and then been released to take a day's rest.

As delicate as the local situation was now, after what she had been through the night before, she would be given the day off, regardless of the lack of army personnel that day.

Unless the Basilisk decided to attack the city, she could get her well-deserved rest without even having to obey the Commander.

But even on her day off, Nova had a lot on her mind and stood in her kitchen trying to make tea to calm herself down.

Amid her nervousness, she couldn't help but think of Cesar, the mysterious man around her who had saved her life twice the night before.

'Why did he do that?' She asked herself again when she suddenly heard a knock at her front door and was startled.

But when she looked strangely in that direction, she soon heard a familiar voice, and her stress eased.

"Nova, it's me, Vicente."

"Sigh..."

Sighing, she put down the knife she had quickly picked up when she heard the sound of Vice knocking on the door and went to the front door of her house.

"Vice, it's good to see you. You don't know what happened the night before." She said as she opened the door and saw the look in her friend's eyes.

"Really?" He smiled at her but pushed against Nova, forcing her to walk backward until she found one of the walls behind her.

Vicente quickly closed the door and wrapped his arms around Nova's slender waist, going for her lips.

Nova still didn't know what would happen between her and Vicente. Her feelings for him were strange, but she let herself do more than she should whenever she was with him.

Even though she hadn't intended to kiss him, the moment she felt his lips touching hers, she couldn't help but open her mouth and let her friend's tongue pass through.

"Mmmmmm~"

Vicente grabbed one of Nova's buttocks while his other hand massaged the blue-haired woman's seductive neck.

Feeling a mixture of sensations caused by his touches, she gradually overcame the temptation, opened her eyes, and pulled her lips away from his.

"Hah... Hah... You left me breathless..." She said this before turning her face away, her cheeks flushed.

Seeing her take a few steps away from him, Vicente smiled and asked. "You seem more tense than usual. Is there something wrong? I can listen or, if you don't want to talk, give you a massage."

She looked at him, saw that he wanted to go further with his touches, and laughed. "We can talk for today."

She knew what went through every man's mind when they were alone with a beautiful woman like her. Vicente surely wanted to take her to bed!

Even though she was a virgin, Nova was no fool. And hell, she herself was tempted to give in and experience the feelings she had...

But she was a woman who wanted to get married, who wanted to have a family. It wouldn't be right for her to let Vicente come into her life and do whatever he wanted with her without there being a commitment between them first, at least an interest in something more profound.

She was determined not to give in to his attempts until she was sure of what she wanted with him!

Vicente knew when to push and when to give his women space. Seeing the look on Nova's face, he walked toward the kitchen, smelling the aroma of his friend's tea.

"What happened? Does this have something to do with Cesar's actions the night before?" He asked as he sat down on a chair in the kitchen. "I heard that Cesar died after defying the local leaders..."

"Impossible. He's definitely alive." She walked over to the side of the boiler. "But I don't know how he is. The night before was very chaotic...? But he was alive the last time I saw him."

"Oh? You were involved in all that?" He showed surprise.

"Yes, unfortunately. I really wish I hadn't had to see the things I did..." She said vaguely, staring into space as if her mind was far away.

"The important thing is that you're okay, Nova. Everything else doesn't matter. The problems of the future can be left for later. You should think about what you can do here and now." He looked at her with interest as he laced the fingers of his hands behind his back.

"But with your report, I believe the city will finally be rid of this Cesar. Alive or not, he will definitely be captured by the royal forces after tonight."

Hearing this, Nova swallowed her saliva while expressing her concern.

"No..." She murmured quietly. "After all, he only protected himself the night before. Cesar actually tried to avoid the confrontation as much as possible."

"Eh?" Vicente's eyes lit up at the words. 'You decided to protect me?' He thought, seeing that one of the possibilities he had considered was developing, even though it was one of the least likely.

"I wouldn't expect that from a criminal associated with the Defiant Tyranny and the Scarlet Syndicate," Vicente commented, trying to get Nova to open her mouth.

Hearing this, Nova looked at Vicente but didn't say anything right away. 'I thought about telling the truth. Still, when I heard that young master Symons would make Cesar's situation worse, I felt terrible about not doing anything for the person who saved me...

I'm sorry, Vice, I can't talk to you about this. It would make me look like a corrupt person!' She closed her eyes as she turned off the magical device she was using to heat the water.

In Nova's mind, what Cesar had done the night before had been a reaction of self-defense against people who had unjustly attacked him.

He had killed army soldiers and deserved to be punished. However, he didn't deserve to be blamed for all the deaths the night before, nor did he deserve to become an enemy of the army because corrupt acts led to these deaths.

The whole problem had started because of the army members' strange actions. She didn't want his situation to reach a critical point of no return because of something wrong and because she herself had done nothing to prevent an injustice.

She knew he deserved to be punished for the dead soldiers, but she also owed Cesar a debt.

After much thought and considering Marcus Symons' bad reputation, she decided to protect Cesar and pay for it by using the second chance she had been given to remain a soldier in the royal army.

She looked at the hot water falling into a mug and thought. 'My debt to you is paid, Cesar. Don't make a mistake before me. This time, I will not spare you!'

She turned and smiled at Vicente and handed him a cup of tea.

Chapter 172 Meeting Before the Journey (2)

"Yes, but I don't know if that will help him much. Even if Cesar manages to escape trouble with the army and the Martial Court, he probably won't escape trouble with the Symons family.

Right now, the Viscount is out of town, and the family probably won't have much of a case against him without the help of the army and the court. But when the Viscount returns, anything can happen...

So even if he survived and his situation improved somewhat with the fall of the Defiant Tyranny, Cesar still had a noose around his neck." Nova said as she sat down across from Vicente.

Tasting the tea she had prepared, Vicente didn't show any concern, but he saw that he would have to deal with the Symons family soon.

"What a problem..." He told her, 'I'll have to stay away from my identity as Vicente for a few days... I'll just wait for my orders from the Association and assume Cesar's identity to deal with these issues.' He thought while smiling at the beautiful Nova.

"But are you okay, Nova? Are you hurt? I heard that even beasts got involved in the fight the night before." He said. "I heard that only you and young master Symons survived..."

"Yes, but I'm fine." She smiled at him, glad that Vice was worried about her. "I wasn't hurt too badly. I was fortunate last night. So, only young master Symons has a complicated situation among us survivors.

As for the rest, I doubt anyone survived. We're almost halfway through the day, and no one else has returned. So either everyone else has died, or they're so badly injured that they can't come back.

Either way, I doubt there are any survivors left."

"Sigh... It's so sad. So many magicians died over a stupid confrontation." He said in a sad tone. "There are so few cases of magicians with the potential to reach the 3rd stage or higher... But how many of them didn't die the night before?

I think our world is too violent, Nova."

She couldn't disagree with him, and some of the army's losses the night before were indeed unfortunate.

Every month, there are usually 10 to 20 young people in the province with Green grade or higher talents. But only 20% of them join the army. Of those who do, only half survive the first three years after leaving their first post...

'Meanwhile, we have more than 30 posts around the province... It will take months or even years to replace the four captains we lost yesterday.'

The mortality rate among lower-level magicians was not low!

This was truly a violent society, not just in cities like this one, where human-on-human actions could result in casualties. The roads and forests were hazardous, both because of the possibility of other people's actions and the possibility of magical beings of other races.

Magical beings don't need much of an excuse to clash with beings of other races, especially humans.

At the same time, the forests often grew valuable resources for humans and magical creatures, which could lead to disputes between humans, between magical creatures, and between humans and magical creatures.

In short, this was a world based on conflict, where the strongest dominated and the weakest perished or used up what little was left.

Amid this, deaths occurred on all sides of this dangerous ecosystem.

Only among the strongest magical beings was the mortality rate lower due to their rarity, but also because there were fewer things to attract their attention.

In any case, listening to Vicente's comment, Nova was sure that the army had lost a lot and their post would be temporarily weakened, just when the threat of the 3rd-stage basilisk was so close to them.

"It's too bad, but that's how it is, Vice." She commented with a sigh. "Anyway, you should be careful on your next trip out of Millfall. There are powerful beasts in The Rocky Gorge."

She lowered her voice and motioned for Vicente to keep what she was about to say a secret.

"Our army post is already preparing to deal with a 3rd-stage beast in that area. I saw it last night, and after I told the Commander about it, he's already started giving orders to increase security in the area."

"Is that so?" He frowned. "Thank you for telling me. I intend to leave Millfall in a few days. In fact, that is why I came to see you here today."

"Oh? Where are you going?" She asked him.

"Saltstar City. There are some things I want to clear up, and I'll be gone for at least a month." He told her without exaggerating, for he was already considering leaving to hunt pentagrams with Rory and the Acolytes of his group.

"All that?" Her expression changed when she heard that because she really enjoyed being with Vicente.

"Yes, that's why I came here to say goodbye. I'll be spending the next few days preparing some things regarding my departure and my plans, so I took advantage of the free time to come here and do that." He said as he looked at her lips.

"What about Nina?" She asked, trying to contain the feeling in her heart that made her shudder at the thought of going so long without seeing or 'interacting' with that bold fellow.

"I hope you'll take a look at her for me. Nina has been interacting a lot with a teacher lately. Hmmm, Shelby... Her name is Shelby Staples. But I don't know if that's a good thing. Nobles are always complicated." He said, setting the stage for Nova to step into this woman's shoes.

Between Shelby and Nova, Nina's teacher had more options. But Vicente trusted the blue-haired soldier much more.

"Shelby Staples?" Nova frowned. "I didn't expect that. That woman is engaged to Cesar's number one enemy right now."

Thinking of the trouble Nina could get into because of this woman, Nova said. "Don't worry. I'll see what I can do to take care of little Nina in your absence."

"Thank you, Nova. It's more than I can ask." He stood and hugged her again, this time without kissing her.

But as he walked to the door of this place side by side with Nova, before he opened the door, Vicente felt her stop him and grab his arm.

Gulp!

"Vicente, I want you to think carefully about our relationship before you go back to Millfall. In the meantime, I'll do the same." She closed her eyes and kissed him again on the doorstep.

Chapter 173 The Mazzanti Family Moves?

As Vicente said goodbye to Nova...

Rory and Vicente's men had already found the wounded men who weren't trapped among those who had been at the Mazzanti family headquarters the night before.

After finding those people, Rory used the resources he had at his disposal to take care of his people with healing resources, things he had taken from Ryker's body the night before.

Ryker was the leader of the Defiant Tyranny, and most of his resources were with him, as he didn't trust anyone else, nor would he leave such things in a vault.

The Defiant Tyranny faction even had some valuable items in the vaults of their outposts, especially their headquarters. However, some of the best resources, small and few in number, were always in Ryker's spatial storage item.

After Ryker's death, Rory gained access to these resources and wisely used the coins the man left behind to help heal more than 70% of the group he encountered this morning.

But Ryker had few coins on him, and Rory and his people would have to sell some of the items left by the man to get more coins to buy what was needed to treat the rest of his people.

But with those men already healed and the others who hadn't been at headquarters the night before, he already had enough to start solving his faction's problems!

After ordering some of his men to go to the commercial establishments in their area, the rest of the group split into three.

The first went to visit the local noble families, the second went to the Martial Court headquarters in Millfall, and the third stayed behind to take care of the wounded.

...

At the Ross family estate in Millfall...

A man with a metal mask on his face walked down the central corridor of this mansion while several servants in the surrounding area looked at him in fear.

This person's level, a level 1 Acolyte, wasn't necessarily frightening. However, after the rumors about the leader of the Mazzanti family started circulating hours ago, anyone associated with such a group had become famous in this city and dangerous individuals to be avoided.

This man had just arrived in this location, and the Baron had immediately dismissed his men upon hearing that someone sent by Cesar was there to see him.

"So you're here on behalf of the infamous Cesar Mazzanti? It seems this fellow survived the pursuit of the beasts of The Rocky Gorge." Baron Ross' advisor said, looking thoughtfully at the Mazzanti family soldier.

The Baron asked when he saw this person in front of his office. "What does Cesar want from me?"

"Baron Ross, don't look at me the wrong way. I represent my leader, Cesar, but our intentions are peaceful." The envoy said in a tone that was altered by mana but which carried no negative

sentiment. "Obviously, we are part of groups that have been on opposing sides, and we have reason to distrust each other.

But today, my leader wants peace. So I'm here to show you an alternative way that could benefit our groups."

"Oh?"

Some groups didn't talk to each other. Once they had a problem, they would go all out, fighting or attacking their opponents until the dispute could no longer be resolved.

However, only a few nobles followed this strategy.

In order to improve their position and become more influential, nobles would even be willing to sit at the same table with the murderers of their loved ones.

If noblemen could take revenge, they would. But if there were a greater benefit in forgetting or leaving any revenge for the future, that would be better.

Becoming more influential and powerful was better than avenging death or injustice!

As a person who thought this way and was willing to negotiate, Baron Ross became curious. "Please, let's talk in a more comfortable place. I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

...

While other meetings similar to the one above took place around Millfall, Rory was standing in front of the Martial Court, together with the defender of his group.

He and another man from Vicente's group were sitting on chairs in a corridor, while next to Rory was a man wearing an even more expensive suit than the two men from the Mazzanti family.

But this person didn't have a mask on his face. After all, he wasn't a member of the family but the family's counselor and representative in this court.

In Polaris Realm, especially in the Seidel Kingdom, one could be charged with a crime and be judged guilty or innocent. Precisely because there was a complete legal process that could facilitate or prevent arrests, there were specialists similar to lawyers on Earth to defend the accused people.

These counselors were not exactly the same as lawyers, nor did they have the same methods of operation. But their function was similar: to defend their clients by using the loopholes in the law to their advantage.

After using some of his contacts earlier, Rory had gotten the name of this counselor who was there to help him solve his group's problems with the royal forces.

"Deputy Mazzanti, rest assured. Given the information you've given me, we can free your men in no time." The counselor, Connor McLaughlin, said as he smiled at his client.

"What about our leader's situation?" Rory asked. "Cesar was framed. I'm sure the Martial Court didn't get any evidence that would authorize the army to hunt him down."

"That's a different case. I need to know what the court has received from the army to understand the case and tell you what might happen." Connor said. "But if your group solves some problems with the local nobles, I'm sure it can be solved."

"Oh?" Rory understood what the counselor had in mind and liked it.

The counselors of this world had no scruples. All they cared about was winning. And since their contracts with their clients were basically based on results, there was nothing better than getting their clients out of trouble...

"Please see this for us. With the fall of the Defiant Tyranny, there's plenty of room for groups like ours to grow in Millfall."

"Leave it to me." The tall, strong man said this as he understood that this group would be expanding its operations very soon.

After this exchange, a court guard called out the name of the Mazzanti family group's counselor, and it was time for them to begin changing their situation in front of the Seidel Kingdom's court of law!

Chapter 174 Proposal?

The next day...

After saying goodbye to Nova the day before without taking their relationship to a deeper level, Vicente spent the evening with Eve and Nina, explaining his disappearance the night before and the "trip" he had to take the next few days.

Nina was getting older and, of course, was beginning to understand that her brother needed to be away from her occasionally to deal with his own issues.

Since she had enjoyed staying at her teacher's house the night before, she didn't find the situation too bad and wasn't sad to hear that her brother would be leaving soon.

According to Vicente, she could visit Shelby from time to time, but Nova would also look in on her when he had time.

As someone who was very fond of both women, Nina liked rather than saw any problems with her brother's upcoming trip.

After discussing it over dinner, she slept with her big brother and woke up the next morning to have breakfast with him and go to the academy.

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After Nina left for the academy, Vicente left home and went to the Association to continue working on his forging skills.

But when he got there, he bumped into an acquaintance and ended up diverting his interest in coming to this place a bit.

When he saw Lukas, he waved to the man leaving the Association building, who was dressed in a cloak similar to his own, with a star on his left chest.

"Look at you! Have you joined the Association already?" Lukas asked with interest, seeing this guy he hadn't seen in days.

Seeing the guy who had already given him good recommendations and even helped him get discounts locally, Vicente smiled and shook his hand.

"We're colleagues now, Lukas." Vicente stopped before him and shook the blond man's right hand.

Lukas had already heard about his sister and her recent meeting with Vicente. Combined with that and some rumors he had heard in the Association, he now had an idea of what this guy could do much better than before.

With that in mind, he said. "Vicente, do you have some time? I'd like to talk to you in private."

Vice narrowed his eyes. "I have 10 minutes."

Hearing that, Lukas motioned with one hand to show the way to the Association building while he talked to this guy.

"I heard you made an impressive entrance into the Association. I didn't expect you to have such a talent for forging."

Knowing that Lukas was Henry's student and that Henry had a history of rivalry with Benson, Vicente wasn't surprised that Lukas already knew everything that had happened that day.

He smiled and said. "I was stimulated by the pressure of my surroundings... I've been under a lot of pressure, haha. But maybe I won't have such quick and promising results when the pressure subsides."

"That doesn't change what you've already done," Lukas commented. "But now that you're a blacksmith and probably know the value of certain things, I have something I'd like to do with you."

"What is it?" Vicente asked as he entered a quieter area of the Association where only a few members had access.

There were several individual rooms along three large corridors that Vicente himself would not have been able to access if he had been alone, even with the benefits he had received by entering this institution with merit.

But that's what he would have had if he had agreed to become the Association's chosen one!

The Millfall Blacksmith's Association wasn't just investing in one young person with a promising future.

The Association existed throughout the Polaris Realm, giving dividends and contributions to its lesser ranks according to their merit. In particular, giving 'birth' to talented blacksmiths who could accomplish great things brought a great return to such posts.

Thus, the local association had a group of chosen ones who received 'n' benefits. Among them, Lukas was one of the young 1st-stage blacksmiths who received the support of this post.

Vicente didn't know it, but Lukas was also a 1st-stage blacksmith capable of producing resources with more than 90% efficiency.

In Lukas' case, he could produce an offensive item with 97% efficiency, enough to earn him the support of this organization.

And as one of the chosen ones, Lukas had access to this special area and information that Vicente didn't have.

He answered the black-haired young man as he entered a special room in that area. "In about two months, there will be an auction in Millfall. On that occasion, among other things, a valuable resource for 2nd-stage blacksmiths will be auctioned off."

Vicente understood what he meant and smiled. "You want to buy that item? I don't think we..."

"No, you misunderstood me." Lukas smiled as he shook his head negatively. "We have no way of defeating the 2nd-stage blacksmiths who will try to buy this item. I don't know how rich you are, but there will be people willing to spend hundreds of gold coins for this item... Even if we united together, we could not afford it."

It must be said that Lukas was richer than Vicente, even without the support of his family!

Lukas already had many customers as a young blacksmith with great talent and more time in the trade than Vice. He delivered about 3 to 4 weapons every week. This gave him a higher monthly profit than Vicente's, even considering all young Fuller's operations!

Vicente already knew this because he knew the value of the items produced by the blacksmiths and how they could profit from their work if they had good talents like Lukas.

But even though they were richer than most of the young men of their level and age, it was nothing compared to the 2nd-stage blacksmiths and nobles.

It would really be impossible for them to win this auction.

What Luke had in mind was not buying but something else.

"We can't buy it, but that doesn't mean we can't have it." Lukas smiled at Vicente. "What I propose is that you join my group to take this material.

My other allies will do so in exchange for my producing weapons for them free of charge in the future. For you, I offer the right to share a portion of this item."

He wanted to steal the item that would soon be auctioned off!

Vicente's eyes glazed over as he had not expected this from Lukas.

Lukas explained himself so as not to look like a common criminal. "But don't misunderstand the situation, Vicente. This item to be auctioned can greatly increase the production efficiency of 2nd-stage blacksmiths.

With something like this, you and I could change a lot about our future in a short period.

And I can assure you that we won't be the only ones trying to steal it from whoever buys it. There will be a hunt and a fight against whoever buys this item, and none of those involved can be considered innocent.

You do not climb the stairs of success with your hands in your pockets, my friend."

Chapter 175 Alliance?

Luke had just said the truth of the magic world, not just the world of blacksmiths. If this item were purchased by a 2nd stage blacksmith at the auction, there would certainly be a dispute afterward.

Most magicians had to deal with such things sooner or later in their journeys.

Disputes over resources were common, and financial power would never be enough for one to own something.

Only with strength could one stand up before others and publicly own something of value!

"I see," Vicente commented with a thoughtful expression. "And what happens then? Let's say we are successful. What would our relationship be like then?"

Lukas liked Vicente's question because it showed that this guy in front of him wanted to have a deeper relationship after that, just like him.

The blond guy said. "We can team up and work together, Vicente. I'm going to become an Acolyte soon. Considering your score in the Association, I think you will too.

If we join forces, we can set up our own shop in the province. Millfall is already saturated with blacksmiths, but there are other cities where we can develop our skills.

At the same time, I have allies in my group who could also become your allies. I don't know what your plans are as a merchant, but like everyone else, you need alchemists, doctors, etc., right? I have some very promising contacts.

In Polaris Realm, as on Earth, one had more tremendous potential if one started early in a particular field than if that happened more lately.

As a result, low-level professionals could be more valuable than higher-level professionals with the same talent level.

Why was that?

After a certain age, which could vary depending on the magician's level and talent, one would miss the best time to improve one's strengths and understanding of the world. Then, it would naturally be harder to reach one's peak.

For example, among two people with Green talent, the youngest one with the highest level for his age was the most interesting to work with, even considering someone at a higher level.

The younger one could grow faster and reach an even higher level than the one who was already at a higher level.

Because this was the case in this and other worlds, Vicente knew the value of Lukas' contacts. Besides, he already knew that Lukas had partners in various fields and with good levels of talent.

Lukas didn't have the support of a family of blacksmiths, so he needed good contacts. If he had access to some of these people, Vice could make important allies for his family's future!

"That's interesting. I'm very interested in making contacts with local talented people." He said, looking down at the floor of the conference room he and Lukas were in.

'It would be great if my family had its own doctors, alchemists, and blacksmiths.' Vicente's eyes narrowed as he imagined that winning new allies could be the first step to turning them into mafia members in the future.

It wouldn't be hard to convince them to steal and join a group that acted against the law. The basic rule of this society made magicians more tolerant and accepting of the idea of taking what they wanted from their targets.

'I can't always rely on professionals from outside my group. A good mafia family has its own professionals who work exclusively for it.' He clenched his fists, feeling that this deal with Lukas would be perfect for him.

And even blacksmiths would be needed in his group. As much as he could easily create things with his skills, he was only one. Could Vice deal with the problems of his weapons in places hundreds of kilometers away from him?

Even with 100% efficiency, his weapons would need maintenance one day, which might not be so interesting for the head of the family to be responsible for.

Looking at Lukas and imagining that such a guy could produce weapons of the same quality as he could, Vicente grinned. "Okay, I'm willing."

Lukas smiled when he heard that. As valuable as he was to Vice, Vicente was also valuable to him.

Lukas couldn't be everywhere at once, nor did he have the time to do everything he thought he could.

With a blacksmith as capable as he was, he could greatly improve the outcome of his production and even learn more quickly.

"Okay, let's meet with the rest of my allies in three days to talk about it..."

Lukas started to speak, but Vice interrupted him. "That won't work. I won't be in Millfall in three days."

"Do you have to travel?" Lukas frowned.

"Yes, but if you don't mind, I can send Rory instead. He can arrange things with you while I'm gone."

"The redheaded guy?" Lukas remembered Rory.

Seeing Vice nod, he said. "Very well. Ask him to meet me here at the Association in three days. I'll bring him to our meeting to introduce my other allies, and we'll talk about our plans."

But will you be in town for the auction? There isn't much time left. Depending on where you plan to go now, there may not be time to come back and participate."

"Don't worry, I will be in town. I'll be out of Millfall for a month at the most."

"Is that right? Then it's okay." Lukas sighed.

"Anyway, is your family involved?" Vice asked.

"No. Not even my sister, so don't talk to her about it. Anyway, she seems to like you." He smiled.
"She said you and your friend were friendly."

Seeing the look on Lukas' face, Vice understood that this was a protective brother. "Don't worry about us. We just went shopping that day. But your sister is very sociable. You'd better keep her out of this. Involving family in such things never works out."

"I'm aware of that." He said as he stood up with a sigh. "Anyway, I won't stand in your way anymore. You're here to study, right? Get on with it. I've got some things to take care of too."

"Hmm, see you later. I'm looking forward to hearing what Rory says about this meeting."

With those words, the two went their separate ways, with Vicente quickly returning to his goal of coming to this building this morning.

As he did so, Shelby moved her allies to help Vicente at the Martial Court, and some local nobles took the pressure off the members of that tribunal.

Vicente's men worked hard to restore their leader's image and get back to business as usual.

But while allies and members of the Mazzanti family were acting on behalf of the group, the Symons family was in opposition, and Marcus stood up to hunt down the person who almost killed him!

Chapter 176 Visit to House Staples?

"What? What are you saying?" A blond, well-dressed young man shouted at one of his men when he heard some not-so-interesting news this afternoon.

"Young master, don't get angry. It's not our fault. That damned Cesar is plotting with his group to use the fall of the Defiant Tyranny to increase his influence." A red-haired woman said as she lowered her head, not daring to look at the city's most prominent heir.

A middle-aged man next to the redhead, also with his head bowed, said. "Young master, please don't be in such a hurry. We've only just begun. In a few days, we'll be able to deal with that damned Cesar. He's only won one battle, but the war still has a lot of ground to cover."

Marcus had just heard from his servants that their initial attempts to use the Martial Court and the royal army against Cesar and his people had failed.

From what he had heard, the Martial Court had suddenly reversed its position on the Mazzanti family that early afternoon. It released the Acolytes who had been imprisoned after the last incident!

Not only that but from what his men had discovered, Cesar's group was working and finding ways to clear the charges against their leader and eventually clear his name.

In other words, Cesar's situation with the royal forces was getting better by the day, which was bad news for Marcus, who wanted the head of the man who almost killed him days ago.

Thus, he couldn't help but get angry when he heard about these local changes, especially since he had always managed everything easily, but now he had problems.

"But how is that possible? Don't those damned Martial Court officials respect our family anymore? How can they ignore the support of my family? Do they think they can earn more from a few Barons?" Marcus shouted, refusing to accept the situation.

The two servants before him looked at each other but said nothing.

They both knew why the court officials were more concerned with a few Barons than the heir to a viscountcy.

That's right, Marcus was just an heir! Until he became a Viscount in his own right, his influence was comparable to that of a Baron.

The Viscount was his father, and he wasn't in town. Not only that, but Marcus' father was somewhat different from his eldest son. Many of those involved in the delicate local situation in Millfall couldn't be sure whether he would side with his son or the other local nobles.

In his absence, no one would make a dangerous decision on behalf of a mere heir!

But Marcus had a colossal ego, and none of them would tell him the obvious.

The elder said. "Young master, Cesar is mysterious and intelligent. We don't know what he might be using against the tribunal officials. So I suggest caution. We still have many fronts to deal with him."

Marcus was rash and arrogant, but he had completed the basic training to become a Viscount in the future.

Though angry, he considered the situation and took a step back, acknowledging Cesar's victory but wondering what to do next.

"What can we do? For the time being, we can't defeat him with the royal powers. So what do we have left that isn't compromising?"

"We have the alternative of hiring assassins. We can't put a bounty on his head, but we can hire assassins to deal with him and his people.

We'll use a different strategy than Defiant Tyranny. Instead of paying for his head, we'll go after the pillars of his group. This will force him to show himself and be vulnerable.

In the meantime, we can focus on our plans with the Martial Court without having the noble Symon's name associated with it." The advisor said this, much to Marcus' delight.

"Do it. No, let's go further. Use the assassins who recently attacked the Mazzanti family. They must be particularly angry after getting into trouble, getting hurt, wasting their time, and getting nothing." Marcus smiled and ordered the servant.

"Okay, young master."

With that, the man left to take care of the matter, leaving Marcus alone with the red-haired servant.

He looked at her for a moment and said. "Come with me. I want to see my fiancée's family."

"Yes, young master." She immediately moved to take her master's cloak and prepare to leave.

As she did so, she said. "Young master, are you going to investigate these recent rumors?"

That was what he wanted to do, so Marcus said. "Yes, it seems that Shelby is spending a lot of time with a man who is not me... That's very strange. I want to know what the Staples family will do about it." He smiled.

As much as Shelby hated him, and he knew it, her family valued him very much and were cooperative whenever he needed them.

'You are getting out of hand, dear Shelby. I'm going to have to punish you a little.' He smiled.

With that, he and his servant left his residence, walking slowly but already feeling much better after the treatment he had received to recover from his recent injuries.

...

After a while, Marcus got out of his noble gold, red, and silver carriage, which white horses drew.

When he arrived at the Staples' home, he didn't have to knock to enter there. One of the servants quickly recognized who was coming and opened the door for him, welcoming him as if he were at home.

"Welcome back, young master Symons. How are you today?" This person asked as he made a respectful gesture to Marcus.

"Not as well as I'd like. Where is Mrs. Staples? I'd like to talk about Miss Shelby's strange behavior lately." He said, making the servant frown and look at him.

It was no secret to the Staples family that Shelby was not easy to deal with. She didn't mind expressing negative opinions about the nobility, especially her fiancé.

But Shelby was not a foolish rebel. She had never done anything to make room for Marcus to demand things.

But this young master had come to this place with a justification to seek out one of the wives of the Staples patriarch, Shelby's stepmother.

That man was only a servant, and though he found the situation odd, he willingly said. "Please come with me. Mrs. Staples is in the garden of the mansion."

"Hmmm." Marcus soon followed this servant along with one of his servants, eager to speak to the Staples matriarch who was in charge of such matters.

Soon, he found himself in a garden where a beautiful, brown-haired, mature-looking woman was watering plants, her hobby.

"Young Marcus, what brings you to my residence today?" She asked, though her back was turned to her stepdaughter's future husband.

Chapter 177 Polaris Realm's Customs

Upon meeting Baron Staples' current number one wife, Marcus quickly said hello and kissed one of that beautiful woman's hands, a level 4 Acolyte.

After Shelby's mother's death, Amy Staples took over as matriarch of the family.

As in some places on Earth, women in Polaris Realm could have their family names replaced by their husband's names when they married and became their first wives.

But only the first wife and matriarch of the family had this right. All others had to keep their previous family names.

Amy smiled at Marcus, who was always so kind when he came to visit her.

"Madam, I'm here on behalf of Shelby. She's been seeing a young man lately, and this has been bothering me..." He said in an embarrassed tone. "Some people are already starting to say bad things behind my back."

After hearing it, Amy's calm expression suddenly changed as she stopped watering the plants in front of her. "Oh?" She opened her mouth, not liking what she had heard at all.

"Can you tell me more about this, young Marcus? If my stepdaughter does something she shouldn't, I will punish her immediately." She said, not aggressively toward him, but toward her rebellious stepdaughter.

Amy knew Shelby wasn't stupid enough to betray Marcus or do anything she shouldn't have. Although she was a young rebel, the orange-haired girl wasn't stupid enough to get involved in a love affair while she was promised to young master Symons.

However, as a harsh stepmother who dealt with the marital affairs necessary for the growth of House Staples, this woman was willing to punish her stepdaughter because of Marcus' accusation!

In Polaris Realm, the patriarchs chose the future of their children. However, the matriarchs handled the entire marriage process for children and stepchildren.

Amy wasn't Shelby's mother, but she was responsible for her and had complete autonomy to decide what she wanted as long as it didn't go against the interests of the Staples patriarch.

Marcus knew this woman would help him keep Shelby in line and smiled as he looked at Amy's mature body. "My fiancée has been seeing a young businessman who recently moved to Millfall. His name is Vicente Fuller.

I don't know if they're in business together. Still, I'm uncomfortable with her seeing a young bachelor who recently even took her into his home in the middle of the night."

"What?" Amy turned and looked into Marcus' eyes.

She didn't like Shelby. The young woman's mother was even more beautiful than Amy, and even today, the Staples patriarch confused their names when he was drunk.

Not only that, but Shelby looked a lot like her mother, which helped keep her father's memory of such a woman, which greatly irritated Amy.

Amy wanted to get rid of the girl as soon as possible, and when she heard such nonsense, she couldn't help but get angry with her stepdaughter.

'What does that brat think she's doing? Going to an unmarried man's house in the middle of the night is unacceptable! Even if they're just business partners, it's completely inappropriate!'

She knew how important the marriage between her family and House Symons would be, so she looked at Marcus with a determined look and said.

"Young Marcus, don't worry. I'll take care of this matter with my stepdaughter as a matter of urgency. You don't have to worry about this anymore."

Hearing this, Marcus thanked her and would soon talk to this woman as he walked with her through the garden, telling her about his plans and how much he was looking forward to marrying Shelby.

Their wedding was scheduled for about two months from now!

After nearly 20 years of agreement between his father and the Staples patriarch, the time had finally come for the two houses to be united with this wedding.

As he talked about it, an event he was actually more excited about because of the extra influence he would gain than because it was the beginning of his union with Shelby, Marcus couldn't help but notice his future mother-in-law.

He really liked this woman's body and couldn't help but lust after her.

'When I take over my old man's position, I will taste this flavor...' He imagined as he walked arm-in-arm with Amy.

Nobility was dirty and full of betrayals. His father had never tried the wife of the Staples patriarch, but Marcus knew of some of his old man's adventures with the wives of local Barons.

As a Viscount, his influence was so great that he could do almost anything he wanted in this city!

...

The night passed quietly in Millfall with no new public clashes.

But that wasn't the situation in the underworld of such a city!

Every noble power had already taken a stand regarding Cesar and the Mazzanti family.

Most of them had changed their positions, but that didn't mean they were now friends with the rebel Cesar. On the contrary, if he made the slightest mistake, he would once again be the enemy.

All Vicente's men had achieved by negotiating with the local nobles was to keep them out of his way at the Martial Court while they expanded their operations.

If they succeeded, they would pay fees similar to what Defiant Tyranny had previously paid these houses.

So, with no more of the immense opposition they faced from Defiant Tyranny, the Mazzanti family had the best moment in town, having recovered all of their men who had been arrested the day before.

As a new day dawned, the operations of this previously disturbed family returned to normal. They also began to grow again as more merchants sought to become part of Cesar's territory.

Amid this, Rory commanded the beginning of his family's expansions, waiting for the right moment to switch positions with Vice so that his leader could retake command.

But while Cesar's situation improved, someone important to Vicente rode into town on a brown-furred horse.

He had black hair and was dressed in cold clothes with a large hat on his head.

His skin was bronze, and he had a strange smile on his face as he rode slowly through the outer streets of the city toward his destination.

'Vicente Fuller... Let's see what you have for me.'

Chapter 178 We Are Equal?

Pa! Pa!

Two knocks sounded at the front door of Vicente's house, and he immediately awoke from his rest, somewhat startled.

Even magicians needed to rest. In fact, until they reached the 4th stage, they had to sleep, eat, and do things that ordinary mortals needed to do in order not to die or go crazy.

But these needs of magicians were less than those of earthly people. For example, a magician of Vicente's level needed only 30 hours of sleep a week, while humans in that blue world needed about 50 hours of sleep a week.

The night before, Vicente had decided to get some rest, knowing that he would soon have problems that would keep him awake.

But in the middle of his rest, someone who shouldn't have been knocking at his door appeared and warned him about someone his men should stop before even reaching his door.

Waking up with a pounding heart, Vicente immediately jumped out of bed. He quickly formed a silver armor around his body.

"What's up?"

When Vicente opened the door to his room, he saw a man with tanned skin, black hair, and tattoos all over his body staring at him, leaning against the wall opposite the entrance to his room.

Vicente frowned when he saw Casey at his bedroom door, seeing how bold this guy was to break into his house.

"You broke in here?" Vicente asked with a serious look on his face.

Casey smiled and pointed to the entrance of the house. "No, your men let me in."

'You bastard... Can your skill do that too?' Vicente understood what had happened.

Casey's ability not only allowed him to remove memories from his targets. It could also implant new memories!

Casey had just done that!

"What do you want? Why did you come here like this?" He asked Casey, sensing that there was trouble for this individual to come to him like this.

"Calm down, calm down. You should relax first." Casey laughed as he headed for the kitchen. "Let's talk about my mission and our future, Vicente... Oh, should I call you Vicente or Cesar?" He looked back and winked at Vice.

'That's it then.' Vicente quickly realized that such a guy had discovered his identity.

But he had expected that and didn't despair. As someone who should erase the villagers' memories of Vice's weapons, it is evident that Casey would recognize the connection between Vicente Fuller and Cesar Mazzanti.

Vice made his way in silence to the kitchen, where the bold individual was already sitting at the counter, a knife and an apple in hand.

"Call me Vicente."

"Well, Vicente, I've completed the mission you gave me. I've erased the memories of your firearms from the minds of all the people in that village who have seen or talked about them." Casey got right to the point. "But before I was done, a group of the Symons family began investigating the village and things related to you."

"Symons?" Vicente frowned. "Why would they do that?"

The Symons family shouldn't have known who he was and had no reason to investigate him like that. It was true that he had acted against this family, but that was something this group wasn't supposed to know.

Casey smiled at Vicente's ignorance. "You're less intelligent than I thought, haha.

That's obviously because of Shelby Staples."

Vicente became more serious as he looked at the man. "Do you think Marcus Symons did this out of pure jealousy?"

"Yes, Marcus is not known for his patience. Though promising in many ways, young master Symons has some flaws that make him unstable when it comes to women, his pride, you name it. He's an arrogant young master." Casey said, eating the apple he had cut.

"But have the men of the Symons family discovered anything?" Vice put Casey's words in his head, understanding Marcus' sensitive point.

"No. I was working, so they never found out any pertinent information about my client." Casey got right to the point of what Vicente wanted to hear.

When he noticed the Symons men arriving at Martell Village two days ago, Casey quickly realized something was wrong and stepped up his activities.

By then, he'd already erased the information about Vicente's weapons from most of the people in the village, so there weren't many left with compromising knowledge.

He had acted against them by following the movement pattern of the Symons family's group of emissaries, who, by the way, were far inferior to him.

"I can't guarantee that no one else knows about your weapons because people may have left the village during my stay and not returned. But from what you told me, almost everyone I was supposed to meet there lived there during my time, so I wouldn't worry about anyone else having that knowledge," Casey explained.

"Someone like that might never return to the village and be gone indefinitely. For your purpose of hiding your identity, I don't think people like that would get in the way of your short-term plans."

Vicente's concern was about people who could leak critical information about him to the nobles of Millfall, who could affect him through Nina.

But that concern would end once he became stronger and more influential.

"Hmm, I understand. I can't ask you to deal with people who might not even be in the kingdom." Vice said, knowing that the gold coins he'd paid wouldn't be enough for such a thorough job.

Casey stopped staring at the apple he had already eaten and looked into Vicente's eyes. "Other than that, my work is done. But I'm interested in extending our relationship. Cesar Mazzanti is someone I'm very interested in."

Vicente kept an eye on the man but made a curious expression, not knowing how to deal with Casey.

"What do you want? I know you can't talk about Cesar's connection with me."

Casey smiled and said. "True. When I heard about your connection to him, I couldn't help but imagine how interesting it could be if we acted together."

He paused for a moment, looked more seriously into Vicente's eyes, and increased the seriousness of his tone. "We are equals, Vicente Fuller.

You and I have seen and experienced similar things, and we are both unsupported people trying to live our lives as best we can and maybe get closer to our dreams.

Today, I work for aristocrats and sell my skills. But one day, I would like to be free to act as my conscience dictates.

Of course, I'll need resources to reach that moment, so I won't pretend I don't need material wealth. But I don't want to have to act for resources eternally.

Today, and alone, I'm not able to do that. But I see potential in you. And maybe we can do that together."

"Oh? Do you want to join my family?" Vicente asked, wondering what this man could mean by "we are equals."

Chapter 179 The Needs of a Don?

"Not exactly. I want to be part of a group where I have the autonomy to do whatever I want. Of course, I know I would have to give something to pay for that freedom.

But that payment would be limited, and besides that, I wouldn't have any obligation to that group. I have my own interests, and I don't want to delay them or give them up just to fulfill other people's goals.

So I don't know if it would be good for me to join your family. Maybe seeing me as an outside consultant would make more sense." Casey explained, looking thoughtfully at Vicente.

Casey had seen a bit of the cruel side of this world. He had his own problems to deal with, and that's why he had no clan ties at the moment, even though he worked for nobles.

But don't make the mistake of thinking he looked kindly on nobility. Like Shelby, he had his grudges, and the only difference between him and her was that he thought there could be innocence, or even virtue, even among the rotten nobility.

But without the same level of support that Shelby had, he had to dryly swallow what he thought about some of his clients and sell his services to all sorts of people.

Still, Casey had never given up his freedom and opportunities.

Even if Vicente were like him, he wouldn't give it up to join this young man's family.

"An outside consultant, huh?" Vice murmured, watching the movement of Casey's heart with his skill. 'He's not lying.'

"I see no problem with an outside consultant. But what would be the cost of a consultant of your level?"

Casey wanted financial support for his freedom, perhaps even military support. Only then could he achieve the freedom to only act when he wanted to.

Casey was pleased to see that Vicente quickly understood what he wanted and said. "In exchange for one service per month, which can accumulate over the year but would expire at the end of the year, I would like to receive 100 gold coins per month while I am at the 2nd stage."

This was an extremely high amount to earn per month at the 2nd stage!

One hundred coins weren't very impressive for an Acolyte, but this number of recurring coins could make a big difference!

To give you an idea of how valuable this was, if Vice promised Casey such a thing, this level 4 man could reach the 3rd stage in less than a year if he decided to use all his coins to buy artificial resources.

Of course, such an action would have its problems, and it would not be so easy to do, even if one had the coins. But it would still be possible if Vice agreed to it.

Looking at this figure from another angle, Casey could comfortably support 40 families of up to 6 people per month with those coins!

Vicente knew how high Casey's salary was and opened his mouth. "Impossible. I can't afford that."

Casey laughed and said. "I know that. How much could you pay me per month? I'll try to keep working with my clients for now, but that might jeopardize your plans sooner or later. I don't know what my clients will ask of me, but considering how important you've become, there will certainly be people who will target you."

"100 coins is too much. I can agree to pay 70 gold coins per month if I have the capacity. But for now, I can pay you 25 coins a month, but you must be at my disposal for a monthly mission.

For now, I don't mind if these missions expire like you said. But I won't accept it once I pay you the full monthly amount. That's too good a salary for your commitment to me to be reset once a year." Vicente tried to negotiate.

"How about 80 coins? And if you do not use the missions, we can drop the issue of them expiring after a year. But only 2 missions per year can be accumulated for future use." Casey made a counter-proposal.

Casey wanted the best deal possible, so he couldn't agree to owe Vice something every month that might accumulate to the point that he could become a slave to the Mazzanti family at some point in the future.

Vicente thought about it and felt that this was not a bad thing. He could still give missions to Casey once a month and accumulate two mission rights annually.

At the same time, although Casey's ability wasn't the kind you'd need all the time, it was ridiculously powerful and good to have on your side.

He had to have this person on his side!

The cost of having it would be paying that high fee even if he didn't need Casey's services!

"All right, we can do what you say," Vicente said as he showed Casey one of his hands and shook the man's right hand.

Casey looked at Vicente in surprise, not expecting this guy to accept such a deal so easily.

'Is this good enough for you?' Casey looked at Vicente silently.

He valued himself but wouldn't accept such a deal if he were on Vicente's side.

But little did Casey know that Cesar Mazzanti, the real Cesar, Vicente's former Don, paid dozens of people on Earth every month just to have them on his side for when he needed them.

The list of people who worked for that man was long. It included politicians, lawyers, doctors, police officers, and magistrates - in short, a mafia boss had to have a lot of relevant people on his side.

Vicente had learned from the real Cesar and knew how important it was to have people who worked for him and weren't just mercenaries.

For him, it would be worth it to have Casey if no one else could hire the services of this man!

That was the price of exclusivity and having someone with such brutal talent on one's side, one who could grow a lot in the future, by the way!

So he soon signed a Magic Agreement with Casey, formalizing his future relationship with this outside consultant to the Mazzanti family.

But before they could finish their business, a young girl appeared in the kitchen and saw them standing there.

"Big brother? Who's that?"

Chapter 180 Different Intentions?

When Casey saw Vicente's little sister, he looked at her small body and saw how Nina walked, noticing the aftereffects of the incident she had suffered years ago.

He already knew about the tragedy of the Fuller family, especially the limitations of this little girl.

Looking into her eyes, he felt some of the things he had already heard in Martell Village and clenched his fists.

He closed his eyes and left the kitchen. "We'll talk later, Vicente. I have an appointment now."

Nina didn't understand what had happened, but she looked at the tanned man and then at her brother, wondering if she had done something wrong.

Vicente went to Nina's side and ran a hand through her black hair. "This is a friend. Don't worry about him. He was already leaving." He gestured to her, taking Casey aside to see what his sister wanted.

"Anyway, why are you getting up?"

"I'm hungry. I'm going to get something to eat." Nina quickly climbed onto the kitchen furniture and showed her brother who stole from the pantry every night.

'That's why you're growing up so fast...' Vice laughed.

...

Meanwhile, Casey was already on his horse, riding back to his apartment in town, looking at a necklace he usually wore around his neck.

On this necklace was a small mechanism that hid a photo of three people: an old woman, a child, and a young man, all with tanned skin and black hair.

'Grandmother, sister...' He put it back and clenched his fists until his veins and bones were visible.

Casey tasted blood as he gritted his teeth and remembered a night 15 years ago.

'One day, I will avenge what that bastard did to you!'

...

The night passed, and another day dawned in Millfall...

But at the very beginning of the day, at the headquarters of the Martial Court in this city, some of its members were already there, working for law and order.

In a three-story cylinder-shaped building in the city's center, a few army soldiers could be seen here and there, watching over the area.

Inside the building, dozens of people were already coming and going through the corridors, going about their daily business.

But on the third floor of that building, which housed the offices of the city's court representatives, a door opened, and an orange-haired woman stepped out next to an elderly man.

"Don't worry, Miss Shelby Staples. By the end of the day, this person's situation will no longer be a problem. At least from the point of view of the law, there's nothing left for him to be implicated in." The old man said as he accompanied that young woman.

Shelby smiled at the old man, grateful for his 'cooperation.' "I'm glad. I don't understand why a citizen who contributes to the peace and order of the city would have so many problems... But I'm glad to have conscientious people like you around."

The old man laughed and said. "Always. I'm ever open to conversation with young people who are committed to the local good."

"Hmm, thank you for receiving me, senior. I hope you'll come to my wedding in a few weeks. We'll have a chef from the capital behind the banquet." She said.

"Oh? I'll remember that when I get closer."

After waving to Shelby, the old man returned to his office, not getting the slightest impression that such a young noblewoman wasn't happy about her upcoming wedding.

From the tone of her voice and her demeanor, Shelby seemed anxious and very happy that this moment was approaching.

But few understood what was on her mind.

'Fucking Marcus. You're trying to screw me but just wait. We'll see who ends up worse off.' She clenched one of her fists while maintaining a gracious smile as she walked alongside Molly through the corridors of this building.

"Is everything going to be all right, miss? The Symons family won't leave your friend alone." The red-haired woman beside Shelby asked.

"I know. But for now, the Martial Court is on my friend's side. At least it will be until the Viscount returns from his journey." She said, sensing that the kind of danger Cesar might face in the short term was different.

"But he'll have problems for sure. I'll send him a message through my student later."

"That's better." Molly sighed. "It would be good to avoid seeing him now that Mrs. Staples has her eye on you."

Shelby stopped smiling, remembering the lecture she had heard from her stepmother the night before.

Remembering how her bloody fiancé had sought out Amy, Shelby hated him even more for using others to act against her and Vice.

'Marcus, you'll pay me for spreading rumors about me. Just wait. I'll give you back what I went through yesterday 100 times worse in a few weeks.' She mischievously smiled for a moment before returning to a neutral expression.

'Don't think I'm going to marry a worm like you!'

...

Later, Rory had finished the first training session he had had time for in the last few days.

After almost two days of working around the clock to resolve the Mazzanti family's situation, he had found a moment of peace to do his magic training and had made some progress.

But he was still only 35% of the way to the Senior Apprentice peak, far behind Vicente, who was already close to the peak of his level.

However, knowing that he would be free of his responsibilities with the Mazzanti family for the next few days, Rory was relaxed about the delay in his progress due to lack of training.

'Tonight, Vicente will be back in charge of the group...' He thought as he got dressed, preparing for a morning of more responsibility. 'I'll use the time I have from today to get the last bit of information I need so we can break into House Irwin.'

I also have to train. I have to become an Acolyte before the local situation stabilizes!'

It was evident to Rory when Vicente would hunt Magic Pentagrams. As soon as things in Millfall stabilized enough for the group to carry on in his absence, the strongest would go out to get their new pentagrams.

He didn't want to fall behind his friend and was aware of what he would have to do during the next few days of 'time off.'

But as he planned his next few days and prepared to go and sign new deals with merchants in the eastern part of the city, he suddenly felt something wrong as he left his family's building.

Swooish!

Looking up, Rory suddenly saw a speeding blade approaching his left chest!

"Shi..."