

The Mafia 191

Chapter 191 Results of Casey's Work

"What have you found out?" Marcus asked two of his men who had been in Martell Village recently.

Meanwhile, he smiled, hoping to find something compromising against Vicente Fuller that he could use against the bold young man who had met with Shelby Staples when he shouldn't have.

Marcus wasn't suspicious of Vicente and Cesar's relationship. But frustrated by the level of power the Mazzanti family leader had demonstrated this morning, he could only focus his anger on striking this other fool who had challenged him.

"Not very relevant, young master. This Vicente Fuller seems to be just an unfortunate young man." One of the two men said, both with rather complicated expressions.

Neither of them cared much about the situation of people not related to them. But they felt a little bad when they found out the truth about Vicente, especially since they knew that Marcus was unlikely to leave the young man alone.

"Vicente Fuller is the young son of a merchant who made his own fortune by reselling food from the less wealthy nobles of Scott Province.

His family wasn't particularly rich, but they weren't poor either. They weren't talented or unique, nor did they have significant connections to the powers that be in the province."

Vicente's father had some friends among the lower nobility of the province. But the Barons were of little importance, and he had too few contacts among them to be considered important.

Hearing this, Marcus laughed, noting that the fool who had challenged him by finding his woman alone had no support.

"So he only has this small family on his side?"

"No, he has no one." The other man said. "A few years ago, on a family trip, Vincent Fuller lost his mother in a confrontation of experts. After that, his sister was kidnapped by an unorthodox cult, and then his father died.

Today, the Fuller family consists of him, his 8-year-old younger sister, and a few friends and subordinates who have joined him recently. If there's one low-level Acolyte on his side, that's a lot."

Marcus heard this and did not feel sorry for Vicente. This young man's miserable life would not exempt him from being punished for getting close to another man's fiancée!

"Is that all? Is there nothing else remarkable about him?" Marcus asked, feeling that with this data, he already had some of Vice's weaknesses to target and punish him for getting involved with Shelby.

"There is nothing more, young master." The two men said at the same time.

Casey had done his job in time before these men reached people who knew about Vicente's guns beforehand. So, none of the Symons family investigators had discovered the connection between Vice and Cesar.

In the dark, Marcus couldn't use this investigation to hurt Cesar.

But he wanted to target Vicente.

He gave his orders, eager to see the guy begging at his door, promising never to speak to Shelby again. "All right, here's what I want you to do..."

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After a few hours, Vicente finally left the Scarlet Syndicate headquarters after making a deal with Brody Wright to hand over one of his weapons projects.

In the end, Brody had accepted that Vice would train some of his men to produce the weapons and that the ammunition would be produced exclusively by the Mazzanti family. But in return, that family would have to give 10% more of the profits to the Scarlet Syndicate faction.

From Vicente's point of view, this was a terrible deal!

However, as the weaker party, he had to sign such an agreement, or else he might not have even returned from that dinner.

But Vicente wasn't going to stand idly by!

As he walked home, he thought about everything he had discussed with the leader of the Scarlet Syndicate.

'That bastard! For now, I'll have to do as he says, but when I get stronger, I'll make him pay for forcing me repeatedly!'

The leader of the Scarlet Syndicate had already forced Vicente to join his group before, which had started the whole mess with Defiant Tyranny. Now, he was forcing Vice to hand over a model of his firearms, which could disrupt some of the young Fuller's future plans.

With all this in mind, Vicente was more determined than ever to bring all these problems back to Brody Wright in the future.

'I'll walk in the line and obey you as long as I'm weak and need stability for my men and me to hunt magic pentagrams. As soon as the situation changes, I'll deal with you!' He thought as he saw the Mazzanti estate in the distance and headed home to return to training and upgrading his group's weapons.

'Since you will have my weapons, I must take command of your group!'

...

Another day would end for Millfall, and a new day would begin.

After a night of hard work, Vicente would finish upgrading another batch of his family's weapons, reaching 75% progress on the 50 weapons he had at his disposal earlier.

Also, after training a little each time he was exhausted, even with the magic support items, Vicente had improved his mana density a little more and was about to advance to level 1!

With over 93% of the energy a Senior Apprentice could accumulate before reaching the bottleneck between the 1st and 2nd magic stages, he was very close to advancing and becoming an Acolyte.

But this time, he wouldn't use external items to get a head start. With the situation in Millfall becoming less chaotic for his family, he wasn't in such a hurry to seek artificial resources to increase his strength.

Considering where he was and how his people needed those resources more than he did, Vice didn't intend to spend on resources for himself in the short term.

As his group's operations expanded, he would soon need more people in this city, which meant more people to feed.

With this in mind, he took the day off to upgrade his group's weapons and finally try to advance to the next level!

Shortly after dawn, he would stop for coffee and give his men a few orders before heading back to the training room in the basement of the building.

He was aware that Rory had had a good meeting with Lukas' associates the night before and about the possibility of robbing the Irwin family. But he left those matters for the next day.

There was nothing more important to this young man looking to the future than his time in seclusion.

'Time to see what lies beyond...' Vicente thought to himself as he closed his eyes once more and began to meditate.

Chapter 192 Level 1 Acolyte (1)

The next day...

After Vicente finished upgrading all of his group's weapons that had not yet been modified, he was 100% focused on attempting to break through to the 2nd stage.

Having reached just over 99% progress at the Senior Apprentice level hours ago, Vice had been focused on his seclusion ever since.

In the basement of his residence, he was alone in the training area, meditating while the semi-transparent mana around him shone like small stars.

Reaching the peak of a level was not a guarantee of advancement; where one would only have to take the next step and then be at a higher level.

The magic world didn't work that way!

The difference between a 1st-grade pill and a 2nd-grade one, or even between pills of the same grade but different purities, was not just the difference of one minimum point between the threshold of the two.

Each advancement brought with it a significant quantitative difference but also qualitative improvements.

If a Senior Apprentice had 70 points of power when they reached the peak of their level, a level 1 Acolyte wouldn't have 71 points when they reached their new level. No, they could have 100 points, 200 or more. Not only that, but they would gain the ability to feel, see, and understand the world in a completely different way.

This happened more between stages of magic, but it also happened between levels of the same stage.

Because of that, advancing a stage was never as simple as taking the next step and reaching 71 points, as in the example.

In a way, what happened during a breakthrough was like a change of identity, and during a breakthrough, you would change so much that to say you would change your race would not be extreme.

To change so much of yourself, you would need more than just a little energy to get through a bottleneck. They would need a lot of energy for their level. They would have to know how to manage that mana without destroying their bodies or souls. They would have to use it to change themselves, to develop their pentagrams, and to improve the connection between themselves and their Magic Gems.

All of this and more took time and effort on the part of the person trying to advance a stage, especially if they were doing so without the help of external artifacts or resources.

But in order to make this quantitative and qualitative progress, all one needs, apart from having already reached the pinnacle, is understanding, something associated with one's natural talent.

Vicente knew that his talent was not just what his Magic Gem showed. Each of his gems had a different talent, and the strongest talent influenced the weakest.

As such, his understanding, or rather his ease in understanding this world, was superior to that of people with yellow talents.

Usually, people with this level of talent didn't have much trouble advancing from Senior Apprentice to level 1 Acolyte. For them, it was only a matter of time, even if they trained without the help of external items, to evolve their stage powers.

There was little risk of failure for people with such talents, so even though he had two gems that required twice as much mana as normal for a person of his level, Vicente didn't have any major difficulties in his meditation.

While he was collecting mana from his surroundings, he was working on absorbing this mana and, at the same time, using it to enrich his being, his senses, pentagrams, gems, and so on.

During Awakening, one would have all of this enhanced but would have no control over any of it, as everything would happen naturally and be commanded by the Magic Gem that "chose" them. But at higher levels, every time one went through the stage advancement, they would have to command all these processes consciously.

That's why it was so much more difficult and time-consuming to raise one's stage than it was to Awaken magical powers!

Vicente felt that his progress was over 100%, and after two hours of meditation, he reached the mark of over 111% progress.

Still, he didn't feel the changes were remarkable, let alone that the amount of mana under his control would be enough to raise his level.

'A level 1 Acolyte has between 2.5 and 3 times the mana density of a Senior Apprentice.' He understood that he would have to absorb much more mana to advance. 'But I have two Magic Gems. That means I'll have to absorb 5 to 6 times more mana to raise my level!'

Vicente had two talents and two magic forms. He had been aware of this since he had understood his post-awakening powers.

But because of this, he had to absorb mana to feed his two Magic Gems and his first two Magic Pentagrams!

As one raised their level, their pentagrams and gems would be transformed to a certain degree.

Of course, this wouldn't change the form of the power or the type of magic one could use, as this could only be changed before Awakening. After Awakening, at most, one could evolve into different paths depending on the type of magic pentagrams one absorbed.

But power mutations didn't happen to people who had already awakened their magical powers.

However, that didn't mean one's Magic Gem or Pentagram couldn't evolve!

As they evolved, they would need more and more mana to become stronger. So the Magic Gems would transform along with their owners, becoming capable of filtering more mana as one grew stronger.

For example, if a Junior Apprentice could absorb 1 unit of mana per training session, by the time they became a level 1 Acolyte, they would be able to absorb much more than 1 unit per training session.

On the other hand, the powers related to one's Magic Pentagrams could be improved and refined after one advanced. But this only happens if one uses their breakthrough moments to change these parts of themselves!

Normal Apprentices would only have one Gem and one Magic Pentagram to transform. Still, Vicente had two of each, so he needed more mana and attention than anyone else of the same level.

Aware of this, he didn't get nervous when he sensed the amount of mana he would need and went ahead with his basic progression strategy, gradually controlling more and more free mana and using it to transform himself.

He didn't have to do everything simultaneously, as if he were desperate. One step at a time was enough, and after that, he was confident that he could achieve his quantitative and qualitative progress.

Chapter 193 Level 1 Acolyte (2)

It had been more than 13 hours since Vicente had begun his attempt to advance to level 1 of the Acolyte stage, and he was still in that training room at the Mazzanti family headquarters.

Another afternoon had given way to evening, and the night was gradually giving way to the start of another day as Vicente meditated in that room, making the people in that building gradually more anxious.

An ordinary Senior Apprentice's progression to level 1 of the Acolyte stage took between 4 and 6 hours. But the head of this family had already been in the training room for more than twice the maximum time!

Therefore, while they were on the outskirts of this estate, the men there became increasingly worried about their leader's situation.

Some of them had even changed shifts twice, going to rest, working in the family territory, and returning to this place. However, Vicente was still in that cultivation room.

One of the Acolytes who had been there since Vicente began his meditation was one of the most nervous. He hadn't only entered the training room to check on Vice because the family leader's powers affected the entire building.

Ever since he began his attempt to advance, Vice's powers had caused everyone in the building to feel heaviness in their consciousness, as the internal metals in their bodies were affected by the magnetic waves coming from the training room there.

As time passed over the past few hours, the magnetic phenomena around that building became more intense, and all the 1st-grade magical equipment there stopped working.

At the same time, sparks would appear from time to time near sharp surfaces, and the house's walls, ceiling, and floor would look strange.

These phenomena resulted from someone with Vincent's elemental affinities attempting to advance their stage.

Aware of this, despite their leader's delay, the men around this estate still held their positions and fulfilled their duties, for their leader should be okay.

But even though they were aware of this, the people there couldn't help but become nervous, quite tense as they waited.

In the midst of this, some of them were talking among themselves.

"Why is he taking so long?"

"I don't know... He must have run into a problem."

Two men exchanged comments in low voices on one side of the building.

On the other side, near where Vicente was training, two Acolytes were also talking about it.

"What's taking the boss so long? Someone with his talent level should have finished this ten hours ago."

"Our boss' power is extreme. Maybe the level of mana he needs is very different from ours." A man who had recently returned from his rest commented, not wanting to say words that might question the level of his leader's talent. But inwardly, he couldn't help but question it.

The higher the talent, the faster the progress!

No matter how fast Vicente was in other situations, advancing one stage was the most important way to tell someone's talent level.

After all, it didn't matter how fast you could advance within a single stage. If you couldn't make a stage breakthrough in the maximum amount of time, you risked staying at the same level for the rest of your life!

There was a limit to how much one could meditate. It depended on a magician's level of power. Still, everyone had their limits, and if they couldn't progress within their limits, they would fail.

Failing to break through would make it even more difficult for them to break through in the future, which was an awful sign.

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While many of Vicente's men were worried, he was still meditating in his training room with his eyes closed.

However, if someone walked in there at this moment, they would see a rather peculiar situation.

Sitting in the lotus position, Vicente floated 20 centimeters above the ground while the mana in the air around him seemed to form a large chain over his body.

As his Magic Gem continued to glow an intense yellow, with rays of light constantly entering it, one of the points of this chain suddenly cracked.

A cracking sound spread through the area as the chain cracked more and more rapidly as if it would explode at any moment.

Seconds after the first crack, a burst came from the semi-transparent thing around Vicente as he suddenly opened his eyes to see the space around him distorting with the dense energy of the area.

Opening his eyes and looking around the room, Vicente saw and felt the consequences of his meditation, noticing the effects in the area disappear as he felt all the mana there being absorbed by the two gems on his forehead.

All the energy concentrated in the small space of this training room soon entered him as if he were a large manhole in a flooded street that, after being cleared, quickly "swallowed" all the water above it.

Sensing this, Vicente formed a satisfied expression as he noticed his level suddenly rising and stabilizing at the beginning of the 2nd stage!

As this happened, the two pentagrams inside his being vibrated and increased in size, gaining new details in their strange symbols.

At the same time, his two gems suddenly radiated a feeling of lightness to Vice's entire being, while he felt as if the colors in his surroundings had become more vibrant.

His senses multiplied, and he could see smaller things that he knew humans couldn't see with the naked eye.

He could sense the mana in his surroundings from a greater distance than before, which also gave him greater control to probe those close to him.

His sense of touch and hearing were developing. Closing his eyes briefly as he floated in the air, Vicente could almost feel the air molecules touching his skin as he heard some of his men talking on the other side of the door.

"...The effects have changed..."

Ignoring the two talking, Vicente neglected his taste buds, the least useful of the senses in this situation. He noticed a much greater attraction to the many metals in his surroundings, whether they were parts of living bodies, the building, or metal artifacts near him.

Vicente didn't gain any new abilities, as that would only come with new pentagrams. But all of his previous aptitudes and abilities have advanced a few levels.

Also, now that he was on a new level, he felt he could create even stronger and more complex spells and control more mana during his upcoming meditations.

"Perfect!" He opened his eyes again and said aloud, feeling the good sensation of progress and improvement.

'With this breakthrough, I won't be defenseless against the bloody Brody anymore!' He clenched his fists, feeling that everything might change after he absorbed his second Magic Pentagram from his first gem.

When that happened, his powers would stabilize, he would gain a new ability, and he could finally think about taking action against his local enemies!

Chapter 194 Worry?

Clenching his fists, Vicente felt the difference between level 1 of the Acolyte stage and his previous level.

The feeling he had now was so incredible that he practically didn't feel human anymore!

The difference between what he had felt before becoming a magician and after the Awakening was much stronger than now, considering the difference in the dimensions of that breakthrough. But in terms of the amount of mana under his control, Vicente now had about 20 times more mana than what he had gained from awakening his powers weeks ago.

In addition to a much greater amount of mana at his disposal, he felt as if something was missing and he could get much stronger in no time.

This was the feeling of a new 'space' opening up in his being for him to add new Magic Pentagrams to his essence.

Vicente had two Magic Gems, so he felt two new spaces available!

However, this was not as good as one might imagine. Not knowing how his powers related to his second gem, Vicente had no idea what kind of Magic Pentagram he should absorb for his second soul.

That was a problem!

He quickly realized this after his initial euphoria caused by his breakthrough.

Noticing two empty 'spaces' in himself, he became more serious and considered his situation. 'If I don't absorb a pentagram for this other gem, doesn't that mean I'll be left with part of my cultivation unstable?'

Gulp!

Thinking about what might happen if his powers continued to grow without him having the necessary stability, Vicente felt uncertain and fearful about the future.

If the mana in his body remained unstable, he could even explode!

'Shit! I had ignored that!' He thought as he looked at the ground, trying to find an answer to his situation.

Should he try to absorb just the next pentagram of his first Magic Gem? Or perhaps he should take a chance and absorb two pentagrams, the second for his gem that he didn't even know what was like.

Previously, Vice had had the feeling that he shouldn't use his second gem or the pentagram associated with it. Since his Awakening, he had never tried to understand this part of himself for fear of what might happen.

A body and soul had to have strong characteristics to withstand the powers of a Magic Pentagram. Precisely for this reason, the level of pentagrams one absorbed had to be in line with their characteristics to not destroy their foundations.

But Vicente had a yellow Magic Pentagram associated with his second gem!

This was a level of pentagram that normally only a Mage's body could withstand.

And as much as this pentagram was already associated with him, a Magic Pentagram was not something one could use without being worn down by it. There was a cost to the body of the magician who used their pentagrams.

The first risk of a pentagram was associated with the moment of its absorption when it could even destroy the body and soul of the one who tried to absorb it. However, after absorption, this essence caused physical and mental damage after each use.

If one wasn't strong enough, a pentagram could even kill them!

But if one was powerful enough, its benefits outweighed its harms, and as one grew stronger, the damage caused by the constant use of pentagrams could be reversed and ignored.

Aware of this, Vicente didn't want to use this Yellow Magic Pentagram without having confidence in himself first, so he had never tested this part of himself.

But now he was in a dilemma.

'I need to find a good scholar!' He thought of the only possibility in front of him.

Scholars didn't just develop spells and special things important to the magic world. They were the ones who knew the most about the rules of magic, how one could manipulate them to one's advantage, but also about Magic Pentagrams and Gems.

If anyone could help Vicente understand his situation, it would be some well-ranked scholar. Apart from someone like that, he was unlikely to find any good advice in Polaris Realm unless he met a magician of the highest level.

But it was easier to find scholars than top-level magicians.

'I can't tell anyone about my peculiarities, but I can learn more about Magic Gems and Pentagrams.' He thought to himself.

'I intend to go to Alpine Woodpecker Forest to hunt pentagrams. I'll take advantage of the fact that this area is close to Ironcrest to look for scholars in that city.'

Ironcrest was the second-largest city in the province, the second-best place in the area for Vicente to look for scholars who could answer his questions.

As for Alpine Woodpecker Forest, after days of studying the book he had obtained when stealing Defiant Tyranny, Vicente had concluded that the area had a good chance of being valuable to him.

Ironcrest was a city with the best blacksmiths in the province. As Alpine Woodpecker Forest was nearby, perhaps this would be an interesting forest area for blacksmiths like him.

Pentagrams had to be compatible with the powers of the magicians who absorbed them. Thus, looking for pentagrams in that area could be suitable for Vicente, so he wanted to go there.

Thinking of combining the useful with the pleasant, he couldn't help but consider a brief visit to Ironcrest to find a way to solve this problem.

Deciding to do so, he sighed, feeling there was nothing more he could do about it for the time being. He could only continue his plans until he left in search of the pentagram hunt and left the matter for when he went to Ironcrest.

"Now I have to focus on Millfall. I have to make sure my group has stability during my absence." He muttered as he got dressed, preparing to leave that training site.

When Vicente opened the door of the place that had been under the observation of the men on that estate for several hours, those in front of the entrance to the training room at that moment couldn't help but look at him differently.

But sensing Vicente's power at a new level, those Acolytes there soon formed smiles on their faces, seeing that their leader had made an important breakthrough.

"Boss, congratulations on reaching level 1!" The two of them ran up to him, congratulating him as they felt their hearts beating harder in their chests.

"Hmm, I worried you, didn't I? I needed a bit more mana than I thought I would, and it took me longer to advance... Anyway, luckily, I made it before I was exhausted." He laughed as he said this to his men while walking up to the residence's second floor.

"Now that I'm at level 1, get ready. I intend to set off on the hunt for Magical Pentagrams in a week at most." He said confidently, making those men even more excited, as they still hadn't absorbed their new pentagrams.

Chapter 195 Expansion and Stability?

After explaining his plans to two of his men, the two soldiers from the Mazzanti family quickly left Vicente to spread the information around the headquarters.

If Vicente were to leave in a week at the most, all the Acolytes and those who could reach that level in the next few days would have to prepare to be ready in seven days at the most.

After that, those who had reached the next level would probably have to hunt for pentagrams on their own, which wasn't that interesting, considering that they would have a better chance of getting something better if they were with Rory and Vicente!

Those who were already Acolytes would just have to prepare for the journey, while the Senior Apprentices who were about to be promoted would have to hurry to move up a level!

As Vicente's headquarters became more lively after his breakthrough, he left to meet some of his contacts.

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Earlier in the day, Vicente had gone public with his Cesar identity, revealing to several of his associates that he was now an Acolyte.

That morning and early afternoon, he had met with some merchants interested in joining his territory, with whom he had signed 9 more agreements for the accession of new territories under his protection.

With these new contracts, he would receive 10 gold coins from each as a monthly payment for protection, a much higher amount than the one charged to River and Zander's tavern.

However, Vicente was already planning to update his territory's security fee for each of the more than 20 establishments he currently had under his command.

Knowing that no one would complain at the moment, he took the opportunity to finally make a profit from these establishments, even disregarding the belongings of bandits or troublesome customers that his men might take.

After that, he returned to the local mercenary guild, where he didn't hesitate to hire four more men for his party, thinking ahead to the next few days when he would leave Millfall.

Alpine Woodpecker Forest was about eight days' ride from Millfall. So Vicente figured he would be out of town for 20 to 30 days once they left in a week.

When he and the core of his group would be away from the city, he would need people to continue his family's operations in Millfall.

In addition to the support of the Scarlet Syndicate, he also needed people to work for him.

Thus, in addition to some men who would be arriving from Martell Village in the next few days, Vicente would have these 4 new mercenaries the next day, bringing his group's numbers up to 60 men.

With that in mind, knowing that 12 men between Junior and Senior Apprentice level would be coming to Millfall from the village, he finished his day's business and returned to his organization's headquarters.

On his way back to his headquarters, Vicente didn't notice anyone following him, as had been the case a few days ago when he showed up in town and on his previous movements.

After his action against the assassins who had tried to kill him in front of Marcus Symons, Vicente had scared off most of those who had been watching him earlier.

Still, he preferred not to risk too much outside his headquarters, as some assassins might still be interested in his head.

'Time to take care of the Irwin family robbery...' As he entered his estate, he thought to himself. This was the last thing he wanted to do before his group left for the Alpine Woodpecker Forest.

But as he entered his building, one of Vicente's men was already waiting for him with a message from someone.

Upon receiving it, Vicente immediately saw Shelby Staples' signature and wasn't surprised.

'Congratulations on the magic step forward, Vicente. This is an important progress in our plans...' He started to read it as he walked to his office, seeing that such a woman was watching him.

'I guess it's time for you to go in search of a new pentagram, right? Take your time, but don't forget we must talk when you return. With your advance, we can begin my plans to bring chaos to the nobles of this city and accomplish some of our goals.

Anyway, don't worry about your group. In your absence, I'll try to keep an eye on your operations and help your men if necessary. The same goes for Nina. I can't visit her because of some problems, but I'll watch her.

With love, your best ally.'

He finished reading, seeing how available Shelby had become.

Sigh!

'If you weren't so slippery, Shelby, I'd trust you as much as I trust Rory.' Vice closed his eyes as he sat in his office, thinking how nice it would be to have someone else he could trust and who could solve problems like Shelby.

But that woman was capable of betraying her own family, using questionable methods to get close to him, threatening and blackmailing. He didn't want someone like her!

He wanted someone like Nova on his side. However, this beauty was part of the army and was unlikely to give up her dreams and become a criminal.

"Things are really difficult..." He bitterly laughed as he realized the one he wanted would hardly stand by him if she knew who he was.

Burning Shelby's message, Vicente soon read all the letters from his Fuller family business partners that had been waiting for him for a few days.

Rory and other members of the group could handle the affairs of the Mazzanti family. But the Fuller family affairs could only be handled by Vicente. So even when he was working as Cesar, Vicente always received messages from his Fuller family men.

When he quickly read that his representatives were working as expected, he took another worry off his shoulders.

The village was entirely under his control, and the number of men approaching his group to become his employees there was steadily increasing. Moreover, his company's business with the village merchants was growing as he had expected, given the low prices they charged compared to other competitors in the province.

Satisfied with the state of his public affairs, Vicente finally looked at the report that Rory had recently sent, which spoke of the Irwin family's circumstances!

Reading it, it wouldn't be long before he began to update some of his plans regarding the robbery of this family.

But even with the changes, his plans to raid the Irwin mansion later this week hadn't changed!

Chapter 196 The Beginning of the Robbery?

Two nights after Vicente's advancement...

After his level-up, Vicente made the necessary changes to his plans for the robbery of the Irwin family.

After taking a little longer than planned to combine his plans and knowledge of robbing well-protected properties with what Rory had passed on to him, he finally completed his preparations.

This morning, Vicente summoned his most important men and immediately went over his plans with them, giving orders to the people who would act with him.

Luckily for him, magicians in this place were completely different from humans on a small blue planet. On Earth, he would have had to give his men a few weeks to train what to do after the whole plan was ready to be put into practice.

Before much training, even a team of talented thieves would have difficulty breaking into a well-protected property and stealing safely.

To make a pertinent comparison, robbing the Irwin residence in Millfall would be like robbing a small bank branch on Earth.

This wasn't just an ordinary family's property!

If a group like Vice's didn't prepare well for a similar robbery on Earth, they might even get wiped out.

But things in the magic world were very different from Earth. There, even low-level magicians could easily learn what to do and prepare for a robbery of this difficulty with only a few hours between their first conversation and the moment of the robbery!

Therefore, after dismissing his men to prepare for the raid later, Vicente wasn't worried they wouldn't be prepared enough. There was plenty of time!

With that done at the beginning of the day, he would spend the rest of the day concentrating and ignoring what was happening in his group or in Millfall.

With the deals he had made lately, as well as his advancement and his group's demonstration of power against the young master Symons, few would stand in his way now.

The Mazzanti family expanded their operations without a hitch, gradually bringing in more men from Martell Village and taking over more posts in the city.

But with everything going according to plan, Vicente finally had time to focus on simpler things, like a raid on enemy property.

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Later that day, the Scarlet Syndicate men selected by Brody Wright arrived at the Mazzanti family building to talk to Cesar about producing the model of the firearm their group had negotiated days earlier.

Upon arrival, the group was greeted as usual, with a level 1 Acolyte quickly answering the door to greet them.

But to the surprise of the men there to learn, Cesar wasn't there.

"He's not here? But how? Our leader said he talked to Cesar about us coming here to start studying this afternoon." One of the three Scarlet Syndicate blacksmiths shouted, an ugly expression forming on his face.

"Yes, we are aware of that." A masked man in armor said in a relaxed tone. "Don't worry, the boss has gone to solve a problem and will return in a few hours. You can start learning from him tonight."

This was a setback for the plans these men had been given, but if they were going to start learning today, it wasn't such a problem.

Unlike Vicente, ordinary blacksmiths didn't learn so quickly. Most of them needed days of effort to learn how to make a new type of item.

Since these men were there to learn how to make a model firearm, they were sure it would take them two to four weeks to master what was necessary to start making weapons for the Scarlet Syndicate.

A few hours' delay would not change the time it would take them to master what they needed.

Seeing that Vice hadn't changed his plans, one of Brody's men lowered his tone and said. "In that case, let's wait for his return."

"Please accompany me." The Acolyte, one of the few at the headquarters at the moment, said and led them to a place where they could wait for Vicente.

...

Meanwhile, in the wealthy district of Millfall...

This upscale area of the city was quiet as usual, with the young daughters of rich and powerful men walking the streets of this safer part of town.

Some walked with their pets, others with friends, chatting about women's issues.

But in some parts of this area, young people were also venturing into things they shouldn't, into relationships that would be considered forbidden and would result in severe punishment for those involved if found out.

But in the shadows of the late afternoon, in the most secluded places of this area, hardly anyone would notice the rottenness of the upper order, the betrayals and intrigues going on behind the backs of important people.

Amid the forbidden actions of some, a carriage bearing the symbol of the Fuller family stopped in front of the Irwin estate, and some well-dressed and well-groomed men got out and went to their meeting with the family.

"Representatives of the Fuller family, please, this way." Said one of the butlers who had been expecting this group when he saw Vicente's men.

Two days ago, Baron Irwin had received a letter from Vicente requesting a meeting to discuss business. Apparently, Vicente had managed to get some jewels and sent some of his men to show them to the Baron.

Every noble family liked jewelry and the like. After all, jewels were a stock of value!

Some jewels were worth 100, 200, 300 gold coins!

For a wealthy family with few members, as was the case with most noble families of the kingdom, it would sometimes be impossible to carry all their coins if they had to flee quickly.

But if part of that wealth were in the form of jewels, it would be much easier to do so!

With the same volume of 20 gold coins, one could have a piece of jewelry worth 5, 10, or even 15 times that amount!

Thus, whenever a nobleman was able to increase the number of jewels in his family, he did so in order to be better prepared for a moment of escape, a danger of destruction.

It was precisely for this reason that the Baron, upon discovering that Vicente's group had such items to trade, had readily agreed to meet his business partner's men that evening.

But while these men were being led to the Baron, a fourth person entered the estate unnoticed in a long box carried by one of these men!

A masked man was waiting for his moment to strike inside this large rectangular metal box!

Chapter 197 Overcoming Barriers?

"Sir, can you show me the bathroom?" One of the Fuller family's emissaries, who was carrying a long metal box similar to the ones his companions were carrying, asked the butler who was leading them.

Hearing this, the man in the black suit smiled and showed him the bathroom in the corridor they were in.

"The second door on the right." He said, not finding it strange when the man went into the bathroom with the metal box.

These boxes that Vicente's men were carrying must have contained various items that were precious to the Fuller family. It wasn't surprising that the Acolytes sent by the young Fuller had been careful with them, taking care of what was their responsibility all along.

The butler and the other men of the Fuller family stood outside the bathroom waiting for the man until he returned a minute later with the same box in his hands.

The butler then took them to the Baron's office, where the man was waiting for them.

...

Meanwhile, in the bathroom where one of Vice's men had just left...

A masked person who shouldn't have been there was standing in front of the toilet with a red pentagram spinning in front of his right hand.

Sensing all the metallic objects on the property, including the number of magicians and people there, it took Vicente only a minute to confirm all the information Rory had gathered.

'Rory was right. The defenses on this property are on all the windows, doors, and openings with contact with the outside of the property. The only way in is through the front door, from where one of the butlers must open it for us.' He sighed, noticing that there weren't many barriers inside this mansion but rather around it.

In addition to defensive items that would make the outer doors of this place virtually impenetrable to 2nd stage magicians, there were a number of warning devices that would be triggered if one somehow managed to get past the barriers.

If Vicente had tried to force his way into this place, even after overcoming the barriers, he would have had an additional problem when the warning devices sounded, alerting all the men on the estate to his presence.

With several mid- and high-level Acoytes there, including level 7 and 8 Generals, Vicente knew he might even die if he activated one of those alarm devices!

However, with the help of the servant Rory had seduced, he had found a way to enter safely and now had the path to the estate's vault.

Sensing the location of this family's resources, he saw that all of Lena's information was correct and looked up at the ceiling.

'According to the maid, Lena, a tube runs through this bathroom and connects to the floor where the vault of this residence is located.' He immediately used the metals around his body and began to float in the air, entering the ducts to follow the safest route to the vault.

Nine magicians were in the area, watching different points of the building. To avoid most of them, Vicente used this route, leaving the bathroom and quickly following the path recommended by Lena.

To pull off this heist and achieve his goal, Vicente would have to move around the property, open the vault, and steal whatever was valuable inside before his group finished negotiating with the Baron.

That would give him about five minutes or so, considering that Baron Irwin might refuse to do business with his group and end the talks quickly.

With so little time, he moved with haste and quickly reached the second floor of this mansion, where the closest point to the vault was, following the path he had used from the bathroom.

Arriving above a corridor that led to the training area of this estate and the vault, Vice once again used his abilities to sense the presence of humans in the area.

Noticing only one person guarding the entrance to the vault, but with his back to the corridor, he quickly exited the passageway he was in and stopped next to one of the walls, looking from side to side.

Dressed as a butler, Vicente quickly assembled all the metals he had with him into a cart that would be useful for carrying dishes.

He took a deep breath and took his first step towards the man, looking down.

"Senior, would you like some tea?" He asked as he stopped next to where the man stood, drawing the attention of the General who hadn't expected to see a servant standing there.

Seeing that it was a servant, the man turned his face back to the treasury entrance and said. "No, I..."

Initially, He wasn't suspicious, as this estate had a dozen servants. But after letting his guard down at first, this man quickly realized that something was wrong because the person he had just ignored had a different magic gem than anyone he knew.

He then turned his face back to Vicente to confirm that he had indeed seen an unusual yellow gem on the forehead of the man dressed as a butler.

Pow!

Unfortunately for him, all Vicente wanted was for him to lower his guard at the first moment of contact between them!

When the man realized that this person was not one of the family's subordinates, he saw a metal bar quickly approaching his face, giving him no time to dodge.

When he felt a strong blow, the man didn't even scream before he fainted, his body falling to the ground without putting up the slightest resistance.

This was a General, someone who was very strong because of his physical abilities and martial arts. But even a good warrior could be taken by surprise.

When he was hit on the head, he fainted instantly!

'Time to act.' Vicente quickly grabbed some explosives he had in his spatial storage item and placed them here and there, just like he had done on the way from the bathroom on the first floor to this floor.

Having done this in less than 40 seconds, he finally stopped in front of the entrance to this building's vault, which had security mechanisms related to magic and magical formations designed by engineers.

However, Vicente was a bank robber and had been practicing on his estate to rob such a vault since he had eliminated the young master Irwin weeks ago.

Standing in front of the vault door, he smiled and did what he had done about 20 times in his training over the past few weeks.

'Hehe, after today, everything will be different, Irwin family!' He laughed as he moved the mechanisms and barriers in front of him, easily overcoming the defenses of an object that was supposed to prevent Acolytes, in general, from doing what he was doing.

Chapter 198 Level of Wealth?

When he came upon the inside of the Irwin family's vault, Vicente couldn't help but stare open-mouthed for a split second when he saw how stuffed the vault was.

There were three shelves on the sides of this area of about 10 square meters, with a central table in the middle of the area, under which there were also shelves.

But each space was filled with magical items, resources, coins, and precious treasures.

On the left wall, the shelves were filled with coins. There were five shelves in total, with the two lowest shelves containing only gold coins and the two highest shelves containing silver and bronze coins.

Even though silver and bronze weren't very valuable, they were the coins used daily to pay for small services in the city.

But the gold coins were the ones most used for business, the focus of this family. As such, there was a considerable amount of gold coins there.

In the middle of the shelf was a level with 15 magic stones, at an ideal height for one to easily reach them without difficulty.

On the wall opposite this coin-laden shelf was another shelf divided into five levels, just as full as the one on the opposite wall.

On the top level were 22 books that looked very old, probably records of the family's operations, but also contract books.

Below that, there were various jewels and magical combat items, but also things that could be useful for various activities, such as the analysis of precious items and appraisal artifacts.

Not every magician could pick up something valuable and tell you how much it was worth or what it could be used for.

Ordinary people would typically have to find an appraiser to determine the origin of strange objects that they get their hands on and tell them their value and usefulness. But rich people like nobles wouldn't need someone like that unless they were getting something of a very high standard, far beyond their means. For something within their financial means, they could buy artifacts made by engineers and enchanters who could do the same job.

Seeing one of these appraisal items, something that wasn't cheap, Vicente couldn't help but be interested. 'With something like this, I can try to identify the necklace Professor Julian gave me...' He thought, feeling the object around his neck.

But in addition to this shelf, the wall facing the vault door also had a shelf a few levels higher with various magical resources on it.

There were some small ores, bottles of potions and pills, some fruits, and plant roots rich in mana, which even someone with no knowledge of alchemy like Vice could sense was valuable.

'The wealth of this family is incomparable to that of the Peters family and the Defiant Tyranny!' Vicente laughed to himself in front of such wealth.

But that was the difference between a noble family and small groups that had only existed for a short time and had access to few resources.

A noble family, even a small one, could make a profit of a few hundred gold coins a month.

Often, the head of the family would accumulate wealth by thinking not only of future problems that might force him to flee but also of business opportunities, such as the auction Lukas had talked to Vice about a few days ago.

Not everyone had promising talents or the time to focus on training to become stronger, creating powerful spells, and the like. Many needed external resources if they wanted to progress in terms of mana density. If they wanted powerful skills, they needed to be able to hire good mercenaries to help them get good pentagrams. If they wanted good spells, they needed good resources to buy them. And so on.

Talent was important in this world. But one's coins could change one's destiny much more than the talent inherited from one's lineage.

A rich person with average talent could definitely go much further in this world than a poor person with high talent!

So even a Baron's family could collect something as valuable as what was in that vault!

With this in mind, Vice paid attention to the traps still in his way and moved in the only way he could.

By activating his magic ability, he made all the coins in there fly toward his spatial storage device, quickly collecting about 20,000 coins.

Of those 20,000 coins, just over half were silver and bronze coins, and the other, over 8,000, were gold coins.

This was a considerable amount for Vicente!

Not only that, but the coins in that vault alone filled his spatial ring by more than 50%.

'That really is a lot.' He laughed as he encountered this problem that everyone would like to experience.

After collecting the coins, the most difficult item to track, he used some of the metal in his body to collect each of the vials of pills and potions, as well as the roots and fruits.

This was the hardest part of his work because he had to balance each of these items on the metals under his influence, and he couldn't move them freely as he had done with the coins.

But 60 seconds after he opened the vault, Vicente managed to foil the traps and collected all the items from the second shelf he had stolen.

'I'll leave these books. As valuable as they are to me, I can't carry everything here.' He lamented his poverty.

Spatial storage items were expensive. A single 1st-grade ring could cost more than 30 gold coins because the materials needed to make such a thing were expensive.

Not only that but items that required the work of more than one professional were naturally expensive.

With a ring that didn't have much room, he left the books and some artifacts that he didn't think would be of much use to him.

But Vicente didn't hesitate to take the jewels from the third shelf and put them around his body.

'I won't be able to sell these jewels in the province, but they could be worth a lot to me in the future.' He smiled as he finished cleaning out the place, leaving behind the books and some lesser magical items such as clothes, shoes, and other tailoring products.

With magic, anything could be altered to make it special and useful to magicians in many situations. Sometimes, you wouldn't even need to wear armor to protect yourself. A suit made by a good tailor could be an excellent defensive item.

But Vicente didn't have much use for it, so he left some of these items behind before placing some explosives in this place along with the unconscious body of the unconscious man next to him.

After that, he closed the vault door and left!

Chapter 199 Night of Flames (1)

Meanwhile, in Baron Irwin's office...

The head of the Irwin family had no idea what was happening in the vault of his residence. He was standing next to one of his most important guards while the three Fuller family emissaries stood in front of him.

These three had their rectangular boxes opened in front of the Baron and his subordinate, each one large enough to hold a grown man.

Inside were some of the valuable items that this group had to show the Baron, which they had been discussing for the past few moments.

After introducing themselves and hearing a few words from the Baron, who also asked about Vicente, the men said what they had to say and showed what they had with them.

Without much to tell, in less than three minutes of their arrival, they had talked about everything they had to show, and the Baron was now wondering if it was worth buying new jewelry for his family.

'These jewels the Fuller family has in their hands aren't interesting to me... As much as they might help me convert the value of some of my coins, I'm really not in a hurry to make such a deal.' The Baron thought to himself as he silently assessed the situation.

'If only they had something really nice for me to show the local society, but these things are just average.' The Baron sighed.

Status and prestige were everything to the nobility and could help a family to stand out from others.

A simple piece of jewelry could help beautify a woman and make her more attractive to young members of other important or more important families.

Jewelry wasn't just a high-value item used to store large amounts of coins in small volumes. They affected those who wore them and could improve the wearer's defense, comprehension, and even appearance.

If one wore one of these items for a long time, one could even gain permanently the benefits it provided.

Thus, with a single good jewel, a woman, for example, could easily improve her position by attracting the attention of an heir, perhaps even a prince.

According to local stories, the current queen came from a relatively small noble family but managed to charm the then-crown prince with her beauty.

Seeing nothing among the Fuller family jewels that could help his family members do the same, Baron Irwin concluded that it wasn't worth doing business tonight.

"I'm glad you introduced me to these jewels before Vicente's other business associates. But I'm not interested in making a deal today. I already have some jewelry like this, so we'll have to do business another time."

"Really? Too bad." One of the men commented as he closed the box next to him.

"Let's see what we can get for it in town. If we get something interesting for the Baron's family, we'll come back in the future."

"Hmmm." The old man commented as he watched the men in front of him close the boxes containing the various jewels.

"By the way, I've been waiting to ask you since you arrived. Why do you use these boxes instead of more compact storage items?" The guard beside the Baron asked.

"Because we don't have any spatial storage items, so it's easier to carry everything we have." One of the three replied, dispelling the doubts of the level 8 General next to Baron Irwin.

With that, they greeted each other once more and prepared to leave this place, having 'failed' at their business.

As the Baron rose from his chair and shook hands with the men again, he and his guard suddenly became more serious, sensing something was wrong.

Vicente's men frowned and made ugly faces as they looked around and sensed a disturbance in the mana around this residence.

If one didn't pay attention to their surroundings, it might be difficult to even notice a magician using special abilities around them. However, if something was about to happen that could destroy a house and end many lives, even if they weren't paying attention, warriors like these people would notice something wrong around them.

"What is this?" When he felt this, the Baron questioned not only his man but also the three Fuller family emissaries.

But the moment he said those words out loud, the ground suddenly shook, and the sounds of explosions outside the mansion came from the left side of the place.

BOOOOOM!

A massive explosion tore down the wall on the left side of the building, and everyone there felt the earth tremors it caused, as well as the magical attacks that formed nearby.

But while the spells around the estate seemed to be cast by relatively weak men, an extremely powerful spell suddenly appeared from inside the building, causing the Baron and his main guard to turn pale.

Before they could do anything, a powerful spell based on the earth element caused the entire estate to shake, causing everyone below level 1 Acolyte to fall to the ground and lose their footing.

The higher-level Acolytes and Generals around the estate used the mana in their bodies to stay on their feet as they realized what was happening.

"Enemy attack!" The Baron's guard shouted as he moved toward the door, preparing for battle with a weapon in hand.

Seeing the man move, the leader of the three Fuller family emissaries called out. "What can we do to help?"

"Help? Stay on my side, and don't die!" The Baron shouted, finding such a comment ridiculous.

What could level 1 Acolytes do in such a situation?

He then ran after his guard while the three ran out of the office, trying to keep up with Baron Irwin.

But just as the last of them passed the exit of the office, another series of explosions erupted, this time inside the Irwin family mansion, from the first floor to the second floor of the building.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Once again, the ground shook, but this time, several pieces of wall, artifacts, and fragments of bombs flew in all directions inside the building, killing the first people there.

"Aaaaaaaaagh!"

Cries of pain rang out around the building as the bodies of several people were sent flying by the momentum created by the explosions of several of the bombs that had been scattered around the building earlier.

"Shit! What's going on? Have we been attacked?" The Baron slammed his back into a wall but was not seriously injured. However, he couldn't help but yell in anger when he saw that some fool had decided to challenge him.

But just as the Baron was about to unleash his powers and go after the cause of all this, he saw a bluish bolt of lightning descend above his guard and strike him mercilessly.

Ka-Boom!

It didn't even take a second to strike down that man, a powerful level 8 General!

Baron Irwin felt something above him as he watched and shuddered in fear.

"Shit!"

Chapter 200 Night of Flames (2)

Seeing something forming above him, the Baron shuddered at the thought that his man had just been 'fried' by one of those attacks.

Since he had no time to dodge, he just made a terrible face and prepared to receive it.

But when he saw the blue beam falling towards him from a huge hole that had formed above this area, the body of one of the three Fuller family emissaries suddenly appeared in front of him.

Baron Irwin's eyes widened seeing it, not expecting one of those weak men to actually jump in front of him!

'What?' He thought but couldn't say anything. Even before his expression changed due to the movement of that level 1 Acolyte, Baron Irwin saw that body being electrocuted until smoke poured out of the falling man's orifices.

It all happened very quickly, but Baron Irwin felt he had seen everything in slow motion, and time was passing differently for him. This didn't last long, however, and as soon as the man fell unconscious to the ground, this nobleman of the kingdom regained his senses.

Gupl!

"Quick, let's leave this place!" He shouted to the two men from the Fuller family, grateful that one of them had sacrificed himself for him but afraid that he wouldn't get another chance.

Feeling that the man's heart had stopped beating, the Baron could only leave this place at the side of these two men and perhaps thank Vicente Fuller in the future for such a man's movement.

The two men showed fear but said nothing, leaving their companion behind as they followed the Baron to one of the estate's alternate exits.

With the place under attack from powerful and daring enemies, there was little Baron Irwin could do but try to save his own life.

The attack that had killed the level 8 General on his team could seriously injure him!

As a man who valued his life above all else, Baron Irwin wouldn't risk himself for what was on this estate, nor would he fight an enemy who could even kill him!

But even though he was sure that he had to escape from this place, the man couldn't help but feel terrible about having to leave his riches behind and flee cowardly.

'Damn it! Who would do such a thing? Who would dare to attack me? I'm a fucking nobleman of the Seidel Kingdom!' He thought, feeling that he had to seek justice after leaving his estate.

Only the army and the Viscount's family could help him in this situation!

...

As Baron Irwin fled with two emissaries from the Fuller family, Vicente finally left his hiding place and stopped beside his unconscious soldier.

Having eliminated or scared away his strongest enemies, Vicente looked at this man who had had his heart stopped and was lying where he had been hit.

Vice crouched beside him, placed a hand on the man's left chest, and sparks shot out.

'That discharge was enough to stop your heart but didn't destroy any of your organs. You'll live.' He saw that his theories were correct, and after a few seconds, he felt the man's heart beating again.

With that done, he picked up the man's body and left, heading for the estate's basement.

As he left, Vicente once again cast a spell based on the earth element, causing the area where his man should have fallen to be destroyed as part of the estate collapsed.

With little opposition, he quickly went underground to a tunnel connecting this property to Millfall's sewer system.

Millfall had a very complex sewage and drainage system, with several underground galleries and tunnels. Many of the local noble families had alternative exits from their estates to this system for escape in times of need.

Vice already knew this, and when he had planned to rob the Irwin family weeks ago, Vicente had already ordered two men to dig a tunnel connecting one of these underground tunnels to an estate in Millfall through which he could escape.

The group of nobles from the Irwin family should be fleeing that way right now, but Vicente wasn't worried. Dressed as a servant of this estate and with Lena waiting for him, he was willing to risk himself alongside the nobles fleeing through this place.

Only members of this family and trusted people knew about the access to the local sewer, so his chances of escaping there without being seen suspiciously would be less than if he fled by another route.

With that in mind, he quickly arrived where several members of the Irwin family, subordinates, women, and relatives of the Baron were desperately fleeing, some injured, but most relatively well.

There was a steel door in the way, but Vicente would never have been able to manipulate it at his current level. It was designed to withstand even the attacks of low-level Mages, as were the defenses around this estate.

Just as he would never be able to enter this place without someone opening a door for him, he would never be able to leave the area secretly without someone else opening a door for him.

When he arrived, Vicente saw the people waiting for their turn to leave, each standing in front of the exit and identifying themselves to the people on the other side of the door.

To be a security point where only members of this force could pass, the door there could not be left open. Those on the other side could only open it for one person at a time.

Luckily for Vicente, one of the people on the other side of the door was none other than Lena, the servant Rory had managed to convince to join his group for 10% of the coins they would raise that night.

When he got there, Vicente didn't wait and went to the side of the door. "This man saw the enemy that attacked us. Please let us through!" He walked through, avoiding people's faces as he seemed in a hurry, blood dripping down his face and his hair covered in dust.

No one could tell who Vice was. But since he was there and wearing servant's clothing, no one suspected him at first.

When Lena heard Vicente's voice, she swallowed her saliva and said. "Let him through to the front."

Then the door's mechanisms moved, and it opened, allowing Vicente to pass through with his man on his back.

But on this side of the steel door, a level 7 General controlled the passage of people next to Lena.

Seeing them, the Irwin family guard raised his eyebrows, curious to know what that man had seen.